

Jim—A Soldier of the King

By Sergeant Arthur Guy Empey Author of "Over the Top," "First Call," Etc.

Mr. Empey's Experiences During His Seventeen Months in the First Line Trenches of the British Army in France

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We were machine gunners of the British army stationed "Somewhere in France," and had just arrived at our rest billets, after a weary march from the front-line sector.

The stable we had to sleep in was an old, ramshackle affair, absolutely overrun with rats, big, black fellows, who used to chew up our leather equipment; eat our rations, and run over our bodies at night. German gas had no effect on these rodents; in fact, they seemed to thrive on it.

The roof and walls were full of shell holes. When it rained a constant drip, drip, drip was in order. We were so crowded that if a fellow was unlucky enough (and nearly all of us in this instance were unlucky) to sleep under a hole, he had to grin and bear it.

At one end of the billet, with a ladder leading up to it, was a sort of grain bin, with a door in it. This place was the headquarters of our guests, the rats. Many a stormy cabinet meeting was held there by them.

On the night in question we flopped down in our wet clothes, and were soon asleep. As was usual, No. 2 gun's crew were together.

The last time we had rested in this particular village, it was inhabited by civilians, but now it was deserted.

I had been asleep about two hours when I was awakened by Sailor Bill shaking me by the shoulder. He was trembling like a leaf, and whispered to me:

"Wake up, Yank, this ship's haunted. There's someone aloft who's been moaning for the last hour. Sounds like the wind in the rigging. I ain't scared of humans or Germans, but when it comes to messin' in with spirts it's time for me to go below. Lend your ear and cast your deadlights on that grain locker, and listen."

I listened sleepily for a minute or so, but could hear nothing. Coming to the conclusion that Sailor Bill was dreaming things I was again soon asleep.

Perhaps fifteen minutes had elapsed when I was rudely awakened.

"Yank, for God's sake, come aboard and listen!" I listened, and sure enough, right out of that grain bin overhead came a moaning and whimpering, and then a scratching against the floor. My hair stood on end. Blended with the drip, drip of the rain, and the occasional scurrying of a rat overhead, that noise had a supernatural sound. I was really frightened; perhaps my nerves were a trifle unstrung from our recent tour in the trenches.

I awakened Ikey Honney, while Sailor Bill roused Happy Houghton and Hungry Foxcroft.

Hungry's first words were, "What's the matter, breakfast ready?"

In as few words as possible we told them what had happened. By the light of a candle I had lighted their faces appeared as white as chalk. Just then the whimpering started again, and we were frozen with terror. The tension was relieved by Ikey's voice:

"I admit I'm afraid of ghosts, but that sounds like a dog to me. Who's going up the ladder to investigate?"

No one volunteered. I had an old deck of cards in my pocket. Taking them out, I suggested cutting, the low man to go up the ladder. They agreed. I was the last to cut. I got the ace of clubs. Sailor Bill was stuck with the five of diamonds. Upon this, he insisted that it should be the best two out of three cuts, but we overruled him, and he was unanimously elected for the job.

With a "So long, mates, I'm going aloft," he started toward the ladder, with the candle in his hand, stumbling over the sleeping forms of many. Sundry grunts, moans, and curses followed in his wake.

As soon as he started to ascend the ladder, a "tap-tap-tap" could be heard from the grain bin. We waited in fear

and trembling the result of his mission. Hungry was encouraging him with "Cheer, mate, the worst is yet to come." After many pauses Bill reached the top of the ladder and opened the door. We listened with bated breath. There he stood:

"Blast my deadlights, if it ain't a poor dog! Come alongside mate,



"Blast My Deadlights, If It Ain't a Poor Dog!"

you're on a lee shore, and in a sorry plight."

Oh, what a relief those words were to us! With the candle in one hand and a dark object under his arm, Bill returned and deposited in our midst the scariest-looking specimen of a cur dog you ever set eyes on. It was so weak it couldn't stand. But that look in its eyes—just gratitude, plain gratitude. Its stump of a tail was pounding against my mess tin, and sounded just like a message in the Morse code. Happy swore that it was sending S. O. S.

We were like a lot of school children, every one wanting to help and making suggestions at the same time. Hungry suggested giving it something to eat, while Ikey wanted to play on his infernal Jew's-harp, claiming it was a musical dog. Hungry's suggestion met our approval, and there was a general scramble for haversacks. All we could muster was some hard bread and a big piece of cheese.

His nibs wouldn't eat bread, and also refused the cheese, but not before sniffing at it for a couple of minutes. I was going to throw the cheese away, but Hungry said he would take it. I gave it to him.

We were in a quandary. It was evident that the dog was starving and in a very weak condition. Its coat was lacerated all over, probably from the bites of rats. That stump of a tail kept sending S. O. S. against my mess tin. Every tap went straight to our hearts. We would get something to eat for that mutt if we were shot for it.

Sailor Bill volunteered to burglarize the quartermaster's stores for a can of unsweetened condensed milk, and left on his perilous venture. He was gone about twenty minutes. During his absence, with the help of a bandage and a capsule of iodine, we cleaned the wounds made by the rats. I have bandaged many a wounded Tommy, but never received the amount of thanks that that dog gave with its eyes.

Then the billet door opened and Sailor Bill appeared. He looked like the wreck of the Hesperus, uniform torn, covered with dirt and flour, and a beautiful black eye, but he was smiling, and in his hand he carried the precious can of milk. We asked no questions, but opened the can. Just as we were going to pour it out Happy butted in and said it should be mixed with water; he ought to know, because his sister back in Blighty had a baby, and she always mixed water with its milk. We could not dispute this evidence, so water was demanded. We would not use the water in our water bottles, as it was not fresh enough for our new mate. Happy volunteered to get some from the well, that is, if we would promise not to feed his royal highness until he returned. We promised, because Happy had proved that he was an authority on the feeding of babies. By this time the rest of the section were awake and were crowding around us, asking numerous questions and admiring our newly found friend. Sailor Bill took this opportunity to tell of his adventures while in quest of the milk.

"I had a fair wind, and the passage was good until I came alongside the

quartermaster's shack, then the sea got rough. When I got aboard I could hear the wind blowing through the rigging of the supercargo (quartermaster sergeant snoring), so I was safe. I set my course due north to the ration hold, and got my grappling irons on a cask of milk, and came about on my homeward-bound passage, but something was amiss with my wheel, because I ran nose on into him, caught him on the rail, amidships. Then it was reel boarders, and it started to blow big guns. His first shot put out my starboard light, and I keeled over. I was in the trough of the sea, but soon righted, and then it was a stern chase, with me in the lead. Getting into the open sea, I made a port tack and dove to in this cove with the milk safely in tow."

Most of us didn't know what he was talking about, but surmised that he had got into a mixup with the quartermaster sergeant. This surmise proved correct.

Just as Bill finished his narration a

loud splash was heard, and Happy's voice came to us. It sounded very far off:

"Help, I'm in the well! Hurry up. I can't swim! Then a few unintelligible words intermixed with blub! blub! and no more.

We ran to the well and away down we could hear an awful splashing. Sailor Bill yelled down "Look out below; stand under; bucket coming!" With that he loosed the windlass. In a few seconds a spluttering voice from the depths yelled to us, "Haul away!"

It was hard work hauling him up. We had raised him about ten feet from the water, when the handle of the windlass got loose from our grip, and down went the bucket and Happy. A loud splash came to us, and, grabbing the handle again, we worked like Trojans. A volley of curses came from that well which would have shocked Old Nick himself.

When we got Happy safely out, he was a sight worth seeing. He did not



Got Happily Safely Out.

even notice us. Never said a word, just filled his water bottle from the water in the bucket, and went back to the billet. We followed, my mess tin was still sending S. O. S.

Happy, though dripping wet, silently fixed up the milk for the dog. In appetite the canine was a close second to Hungry Foxcroft. After lapping all he could hold, our mascot closed his eyes and his tail ceased wagging. Sailor Bill took a dry flannel shirt from his pack, wrapped the dog in it and informed us:

"Me and my mate are going below, so the rest of you lubbers batten down and turn in."

We all wanted the honor of sleeping with the dog, but did not dispute Sailor Bill's right to the privilege. By this time the bunch were pretty sleepy and tired, and turned in without much coaxing, as it was pretty near day-break.

Next day we figured out that perhaps one of the French kiddies had put the dog in the grain bin, and, in the excitement of packing up and leaving, had forgotten he was there.

Sailor Bill was given the right to christen our new mate. He called him Jim. In a couple of days Jim came around all right, and got very frisky. Every man in the section loved that dog.

Sailor Bill was court-martialed for his mixup with the quartermaster-sergeant, and got seven days field punishment No. 1. This meant that two hours each day for a week he would be tied to the wheel of a limber. During these two-hour periods Jim would be at Bill's feet, and, no matter how much he coaxed him with choice morsels of food, he would not leave until Bill was untied. When Bill was loose Jim would have nothing to do with him—just walked away in contempt. Jim respected the king's regulations, and had no use for defaulters.

At a special meeting held by the section Jim had the oath of allegiance read to him. He barked his consent, so we solemnly swore him in as a soldier of the Imperial British army, fighting for king and country. Jim made a better soldier than any one of us, and died for his king and country. Died without a whimper of complaint.

From the village we made several trips to the trenches; each time Jim accompanied us. The first time under fire he put the stump of his tail between his legs, but stuck to his post. When "carrying in" if we neglected to give Jim something to carry, he would make such a noise barking that we soon fixed him up.

Each day Jim would pick out a different man of the section to follow. He would stick to this man, eating and sleeping with him, until the next day, and then it would be some one else's turn. When a man had Jim with him, it seemed as if his life were charmed. No matter what he went through, he would come out safely. We looked up on Jim as a good-luck sign, and believe me, he was.

Whenever it came Ikey Honney's turn for Jim's company, he was overjoyed, because Jim would sit in dignified silence, listening to the Jew's-harp. Honney claimed that Jim had a soul for music, which was more than he would say about the rest of us.

Once, at daybreak, we had to go over the top in an attack. A man in the section named Dalton was selected by Jim as his mate in this affair.

The crew of gun No. 2 were to stay in the trench for overhead fire purposes, and, if necessary, to help repel a probable counter-attack by the enemy. Dalton was very merry, and hadn't the least fear or misgivings as

to his safety, because Jim would be with him through it all.

In the attack, Dalton, closely followed by Jim, had got about sixty yards into No Man's land, when Jim was hit in the stomach by a bullet. Poor old Jim toppled over, and lay still. Dalton turned around, and, just as he did so, we saw him throw up his hands and fall face forward.

Ikey Honney, who was No. 3 on our gun, seeing Jim fall, scrambled over the parapet, and, through that rain of shells and bullets, raced to where Jim was, picked him up, and tucking him under his arm, returned to our trench in safety. If he had gone to rescue a wounded man in this way he would have no doubt been awarded the Victoria Cross. But he only brought in poor bleeding, dying Jim.

Ikey laid him on the firestep alongside of our gun, but we could not attend to him, because we had important work to do. So he died like a soldier, without a look of reproach for our heartless treatment. Just watched our every movement until his lights burned out. After the attack, what was left of our section gathered around Jim's bloodstained body. There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd.

Next day we wrapped him in a small Union Jack belonging to Happy, and laid him to rest, a Soldier of the King.

We put a little wooden cross over his grave which read:

PRIVATE JIM, MACHINE-GUN COMPANY; KILLED IN ACTION APRIL 10, 1916. A DOG WITH A MAN'S HEART.

Although the section has lost lots of men, Jim is never forgotten.

MRS. TURNER STUDYING BABY HYGIENE.

SHE ASKS the Physician.

"My dear Mrs. Turner" said the family physician, "I can only repeat what I have said so many times—that not only must we see to it that the child properly assimilates its food, but, equally important, that the waste products are properly eliminated. Infant—or Child—hygiene plays an immense part at this day. The proper feeding of children is today an exact science and it has brought with it the knowledge of how to keep the child's alimentary tract in the proper condition. Have you noticed how many physicians now specialize in children's diseases? Those men have at their command all the treatises on the maladies of infancy and childhood. Naturally they have the advantage over the general practitioner. But, do you think the specialist has more success in treating the children than has the physician who brought them into the world; who day in and day out sees them, watches them and notices all their little individual peculiarities? The specialist comes in as an outsider and has to learn of these things. The family physician knows them."

"One of the best known physicians in this country puts the matter of sanitation of the alimentary canal into a terse sentence—'Clean out, clean up and keep clean.' Surely what is true about the grown-ups is still more so in regard to children. The grown-ups can think for themselves. But the baby? Ah! you get the point? Food that may suit one child may be absolutely unfit for another, the ice cream cone, the tempting watermelon, the ever so desired green apple, these and many more cause the woe, which may be soothed by remedies that cannot be given to the infant or small child, such as Castor Oil a most nauseating old-fashioned remedy. Now, to tell you the truth, I very rarely give Castor Oil. For years and years, in my own family as well as in outside practice, I give Fletcher's Castoria and I know of scores of other physicians doing likewise. You ask why? Well I have had nearly thirty years experience with it, that is why. Experience teaches. You, Mrs. Turner, are still young and have only your first baby to worry over and because his little stomach is out of kilter you are scared. Now, just do as I tell you. Give him Fletcher's Castoria as directed and you will find that your boy will be very comfy."

"But Doctor" broke in Mrs. Turner, "are you sure there is nothing injurious in Fletcher's Castoria?" "Why my dear Mrs. Turner right on the wrapper of every bottle you will find the formula. And since you are of such an inquiring turn of mind, if you will some day come over to my office I will read to you what the textbooks say about those ingredients and explain it to you in every day lingo."

The doctor's candid talk convinced Mrs. Turner that Fletcher's Castoria was the remedy for her to keep in the house and any other mother who takes the trouble to ask her physician will receive the same advice.

Ware Souvenirs.

Even "kultur" has its limitations. One of these is brought out in a letter from Private Ralph G. Kilbon of the Sixteenth engineers. He says: "I am in a dugout that was very hastily abandoned by a 'kultured' Boche. He was 'kultured' enough to have a nice feather tick in his bunk, which I appreciate in spite of the fact that even his 'kultur' didn't keep it from being alive. However, he left me his helmet for a box and plenty of candles to light up the place. There is everything in the line of souvenirs that one could ask, but everything I have goes on my back, with an overcoat, blankets, raincoat, shelter tent and extra clothes, so the souvenirs will stay just about where they are, unless somebody comes along with a truck."

Breaking It Gently. Kind Old Lady (visiting penitentiary)—Ah, my poor fellow; you look like an honest man. Why did they put you here?

Poor Fellow—Yer right; it was a shame, leddy. They put me here just fer tryin' to open up a little business. Kind Old Lady—Why, that was an outrage! What kind of a business was it?

Poor Fellow—The little business on the front of a safe.

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