

"OUTWITTING THE HUN"

By Lieutenant Pat O'Brien

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DRIVEN TO DESPERATION BY HUNGER, O'BRIEN GOES BOLDLY TO A BELGIAN HOUSE AND ASKS FOR FOOD.

Synopsis.—Pat O'Brien, a resident of Momence, Ill., after seeing service in the American Flying Corps on the Mexican border in 1916...

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

I ran up the bank of the canal quite a distance and then swam to the opposite side, as I reasoned they would not be looking for me there. I found a sheltered clump of bushes that were in a swamp near the canal and in the driest part that I could find I crawled in and made myself as comfortable as possible...



I Kept Pulling and Crawling Up That Infernal Bank.

My, and it was here that I came nearest of all to giving up the struggle. The Meuse at this point is about half a mile wide—as wide as the Hudson River at West Point. Had I been in normal condition I wouldn't have hesitated a moment to swim across. San Diego bay, California, is a mile and a half wide, and I had often swum across and back, and the San Joaquin, which is also a mile and a half wide, had never proven an obstacle to me...

warm potatoes ravenously and I drank four glasses of water, one after another. It was the best meal I had had since the "banquet" in the prison at Courtrai. The woman of the house was probably seventy-five years old and had evidently worn wooden shoes all her life, for she had a callous spot on the side of her foot the size of half a dollar and it looked so hard that I doubt whether you could have driven a nail into it with a hammer! As I sat there drying myself—for I was in no hurry to leave the first human habitation I had entered in four weeks—I reflected on my unhappy lot and the unknown troubles and dangers that lay ahead of me. Here, for more than a month, I had been leading the life of a hunted animal—yes, worse than a hunted animal, for nature clothes her less-favored creatures more appropriately for the life they lead than I was clothed for mine—and there was not the slightest reason to hope that conditions would grow any better.

As soon as darkness fell, however, I crawled out of my hiding place and worked up to the line and got a pair of overalls for my industry. The pair of overalls was the first bit of civilian clothes I had thus far picked up with the exception of a civilian cap which I had found at the prison and concealed on my person and which I still had. The overalls were rather small and very short, but when I put them on I found that they hung down far enough to cover my breeches. It was perhaps three days later that I planned to search another house for further clothes. Entering Belgian houses at night is anything but a safe proposition, because their families are large and sometimes as many as seven or eight sleep in a single room. The barn is usually connected with the house proper, and there was always the danger of disturbing some dumb animal even if the inmates of the house were not aroused.

fields I came to a road. It was one of the main roads of Belgium and was paved with cobble stones. On these roads you can hear a wagon or horse about a mile or two away. I listened intently before I moved ahead and hearing nothing concluded that the way was clear. As I emerged from the field and got my first glimpse of the road, I got the shock of my life! In either direction, as far as I could see, the road was lined with German soldiers! What they were doing in that part of Belgium I did not know, but you can be mighty sure I didn't spend any time trying to find out. Again it was necessary to change my course and lose a certain amount of ground, but by this time I had become fairly well reconciled to these reverses and they did not depress me as much as they did at first. At this period of my adventure, if a day or night passed without its thrill I began to feel almost disappointed, but such disappointments were rather rare. One evening as I was about to swim a canal about two hundred feet wide, I suddenly noticed about one hundred yards away a canal boat moored to the side. It was at a sort of out-of-the-way place and I wondered what the canal boat had stopped for. I crawled up to see. As I neared the boat five men were leaning it and I noticed them cross over into the fields. At a safe distance I followed them and they had not gone very far before I saw what they were after. They were committing the common but heinous crime of stealing potatoes!

CHAPTER X. Experiences in Belgium.

I think that one of the worst things I had to contend with in my journey through Belgium was the number of small ditches. They intercepted me at every half mile or so, sometimes more frequently. The canals and the big rivers I could swim. Of course, I got soaked to the skin every time I did it, but I was becoming hardened to that. These little ditches, however, were too narrow to swim and too wide to jump. They had perhaps two feet of water in them and three feet of mud, and it was almost invariably a case of wading through. Some of them, no doubt, I could have jumped if I had been in decent shape, but with a bad ankle and in the weakened condition in which I was, it was almost out of the question. One night I came to a ditch about eight or nine feet wide. I thought I was strong enough to jump it and it was worth trying as the discomfort I suffered after wading these ditches was considerable. Taking a long run, I jumped as hard as I could, but I missed it by four or five inches and landed in about two feet of water and three of mud. Getting out of that mess was quite a job. The water was too dirty and too scanty to enable me to wash off the mud which I was covered and it was too wet to scrape off. I just had to wait until it dried and scrape it off then. In many sections of Belgium through which I had to pass I encountered large areas of swamp and marshy ground and rather than wade the time involved in looking for better footing—which I might not have found anyway—I used to pole right through the mud. Apart from the discomfort of this method of traveling and the slow time I made, there was an added danger to me in the fact that the "squash, squash" noise which I made might easily be overheard by Belgians and Germans and give my position away. Nobody would cross a swamp or marsh in that part of the country unless he was trying to get away from somebody, and I realized my danger but could not get around it. It was a common sight in Belgium to see a small donkey and a common ordinary milk cow hitched together, pulling a wagon. When I first observed the unusual combination, I thought it was a donkey and ox or bull, but closer inspection revealed to me that the cows were being used for the purpose. From that I was able to observe there must be very few horses left in Belgium except those owned by the Germans. Cows and donkeys are now horses and mules. Altogether I spent nearly eight weeks wandering through Belgium, and in all that time I don't believe I saw more than half a dozen horses in the possession of the native population. One of the scarsest things in Germany, apparently, is rubber. For I noticed that their motor trucks, or lorries, unlike our own, had no rubber tires. Instead heavy iron bands were

HER REWARD By MARGUERITE HAGGERTY Situated on a lofty height, nestling amid a grove of nature's luxuriant pines and elms, stood an old-fashioned country mansion. On the shady veranda of this ideal beauty spot was seated a sweet-faced girl of seventeen...



Burying His Uniform at Night.

In Belgium, after weeks of hardships and narrow escapes from recapture, O'Brien finally finds a man whom he believes to be his friend. Cheered by the prospect of final escape, he gains courage to continue his heartbreaking tramp through Belgium. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Diagram Showing How O'Brien Lost Precious Hours by Swimming a River and Later Finding That He Was on the Wrong Side and Had to Swim Back.

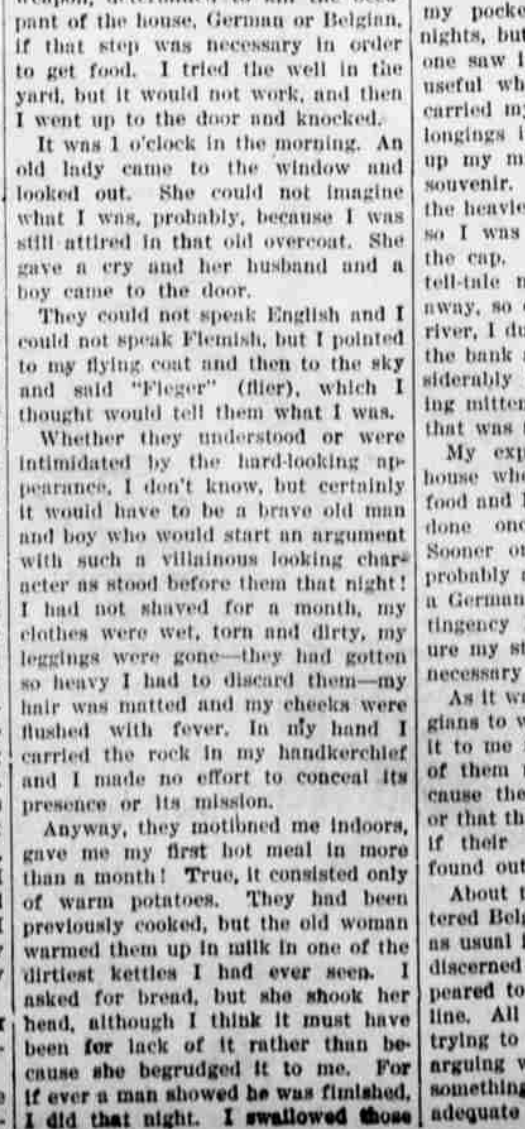


Diagram Showing How O'Brien Lost Precious Hours by Swimming a River and Later Finding That He Was on the Wrong Side and Had to Swim Back.

DO NOT APPEAL TO VISITOR PEANUT PUT TO MANY USES Nutritious Oil and Palatable Butter Derived From the Humble "Goob-er," Beloved of Childhood. The peanut isn't a nut at all, but a member of the pea, bean and clover family. It is a legume and gathers nitrogen from the air. Peanuts do not grow from roots, but on shoots which grow out from the plant above ground...

Bad Language Astonished Horse. A horse's surprise was recounted in court the other day when a gamekeeper was fined a dollar at Thaxted, Essex, England, for using bad language. A woman who preferred the charge said that a horse near her cottage "laid back its ears and turned its eyes in great astonishment toward the swearing gamekeeper."

Strive to Keep Soul Youthful. My body's old, but that's not my fault. I'm not to blame for an old body, but I would be to blame for an old soul. An old soul is a shameful thing.—Margaret Deland. A new oil-burning apparatus heats and lights the room at the same time.

How to Remove a Pest. Flora—The idea! Here is a doctor who says that yawning will remove that annoying buzzing in one's ears. Laura—That's true. The other night after young Mr. Jones had been talking steadily to me for three hours, I yawned twice and he went home. Heard in Court. "What is your age, madam?" asked the judge of a witness. "Your honor," answered the lady diplomatically, "that is something I will leave to your kind indulgence."