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Oliver Wolcott's Diary

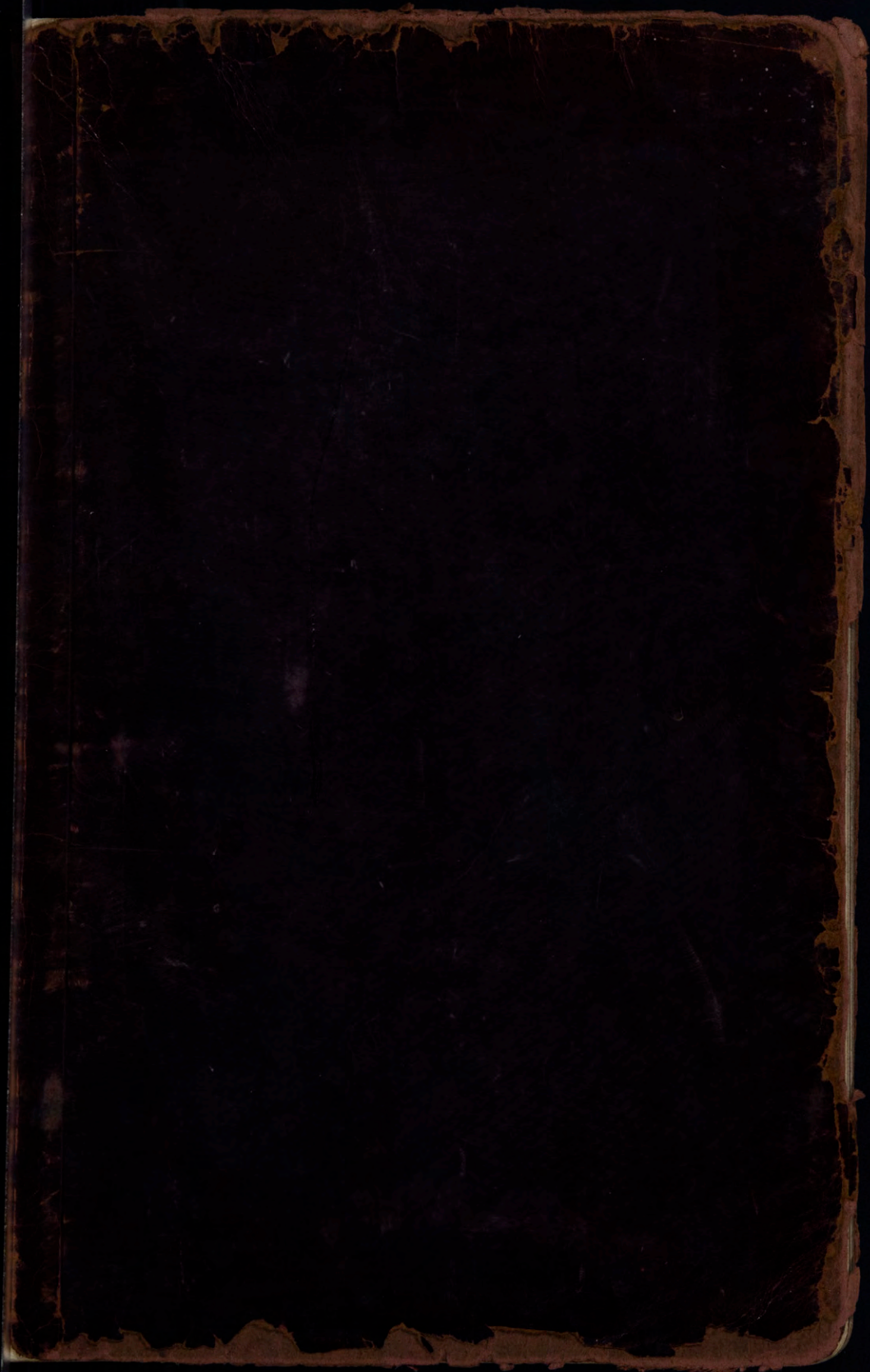
1916 February 12- July 5

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Archives of the American Field Service  
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Oliver Wolcott

American Ambulance

S.S. U. 2

Convers automobile

par B.C.M.

Paris

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Sailed from New York on La Tawaine  
Feb. 12, 1916. Burr, Rantaul, Davis,  
Coolman, Bigelow and myself from  
Boston, Perry from New York and  
Powell and McGinn. Rough uncomfortable  
voyage with poor accommodations  
but good food. Blowing great  
gales most of the way and we  
had to run into the gale at  
half speed all one day. Had one  
French soldier in uniform on  
board. Our first real sense of  
the war was seeing the waterland  
and the other interned German  
lines in New York harbor. A  
few days before getting to the  
war zone we had boat drill  
with all the passengers taking  
part in life belts. On the 22nd  
we saw a converted liner patrolling.  
That night we were all ordered  
to stay on the top deck with our  
life belts at hand, and all  
lights were put out except in the  
saloon and smoking room, and all

part holes covered, The pilot  
boarded us at about one o'clock  
and were then allowed to go to bed.

~~Paris~~ This is going to be  
written in Spanish. March 2, Our  
first impressions of France were lots  
of men in the streets, lots of uniforms  
of all sorts, and no excitement of any kind.  
There were bearded ~~middle~~ men in steel  
helmets and blue-gray frock from the  
trenches, old style uniforms and all  
~~the~~ excellent train service and no  
lights and few taxis in Paris.

On the windows of trains and everywhere  
is posted "Taisez-vous, mettez-vous,  
mes crâbles amis vous éviterez."

In Paris English, Serbian, Belgian,  
Italian & Russian uniforms everywhere.

Many closed shops "Toute la  
personnelle mobilisée depuis le 2 août,"  
and most of the others close for lunch  
etc. The Ambulance here is poorly run,  
with nothing to do now, the hospital  
is almost empty, a few convalescent  
with pains gone, or bad legs or arms

all very merry and joining in a  
tremendous snow fight of the whole  
hospital personnel. We sleep in a  
garret, 40 of us chaffers, rather  
terrible arrangements but fine food. P  
Lots of papers to get, driving test etc.  
Chubby and I and several leave for  
Verden tomorrow, the hottest battle  
of the war, going down on over  
the Marne battle field. I killed,  
but too busy to write more.  
Again, same day, we have seen Victor  
Chapman + dined with him, most  
interesting. He saw a machine gun in  
the foreign legion, told of having to evacuate  
trench when aerial bombs arrived,  
awful things. 40<sup>th</sup> corps broke in retreat,  
mostly shot. Another regt wouldnt charge,  
killed by 75s. ~~Barbed~~ Dropped  
bombs in air raid, explosion, incendiar  
and burning. Now a pilot. French  
distast English, stop for tea, unpunctual,  
cant be depended on. French n.c.  
Prize till of running out of gas  
20 miles from home + having to glide

clearing German trenches by 600 metres  
only. Bullet thru tank. March 3, off at  
seven, pick up Wolf, an guide, a French  
automobile caps man at the Porte St. Denis.  
A gentleman + a carter, at Meaux we  
enter war zone and have to show papers  
3 or 4 times from then on. Here the graves  
of the Marne start, scattered in the hills  
fenced with rustic wooden posts and with  
rustic crosses. Some small cemeteries.  
I scouted all graves at first, but my  
arm got too tired. We saw a few wire  
entanglements left, ugly looking things, and  
I shuddered to think of Victor's description  
of his friends' sticks on the "clottesline".  
Lunch at Matricial, in a hotel whose  
wine cellar had been looted by Germans.  
Wolf told of being in the infantry, 50 kilometers  
a day's march, then the battle, the carter  
to change and a bullet ranging from the  
dree to the buttocks as he rose. He lay  
on the battlefield and finally was put  
in a barn full of wounded, so full  
that he had to lie at the door. A  
German shell came in, killed all

He wounded and blew him and the  
door 30 yds. into the street. He also  
told us of Doc Archer's quick, the  
Duc de Clermont-Tonnere, one of the  
3 proudest French families. After lunch  
we passed a village with a lot of  
houses destroyed by shell fire, some  
soldiers fitting barbed-wire on folding  
wooden supports that rolled up,  
and more and still more grass,  
transports of all kinds, with all loads,  
and soldiers everywhere. Bad mud  
and roads, but too good. Spent  
night at St. Bezeires, hotel full  
so Wally and I were sleeping in a  
queer French house which we entered  
in the dark without seeing a soul.  
Made about 2000 ft. and I had one  
blow-out. Tired. March 4 Start  
for Bar-le-Duc. Roads very bad &  
covered with mud. Sled with auto truck  
cavays, going both ways, and all the  
villages were full of Moroccan troops.  
These were the "trains d'assaut" sent  
in to make assaults. At Bar-le-Duc

we got gas at the auto park, crowded with military machines of every description and had lunch. The train had been bombed by Taubes once they told us. Our guide was told the section had left Mentharon, but we went on to Saully, past avalanches of trucks, ammunition + commissariat depots etc. At Saully we see 30 German prisoners + two officers, fresh caught, being loaded into trucks. We also dropped our guide there, as we ran into one of the boys. He took us along over a road that was shelled spasmodically, past an aviation camp. We are at the Chateau at Petit Mentharon, sleeping in a stable left with a lot of French. The crowd all seem fine. We mess in a little stable kitchen, filthy and crowded. The cannon raved all the time and as we were being shamed around we heard a ripping noise as a shell went over, to explode beyond us, near a bridge. The explosion was very loud, and

the rip a great noise. They go over  
a  $\frac{1}{2}$  doz a day or so. The left was  
so crowded that Chubby + I slept in  
his car, with the guns roaring in the  
distance March 5. A Taube flies over in  
the clouds and drops three bombs  
about a mile away. They make a  
big explosion and fall with a sort  
of whistling buzz. We could just  
glimpse it between clouds. We saw  
pretty ghastly wounded being loaded  
and the mortuary with 5 corpses  
+ one dead German, pretty bad. We  
took them to Ban-le-due, a big  
46 K. area. Lots of French planes,  
and constant camerading. We  
have moved into a hilly little one  
room house in the chateau  
grounds, and have picked out steel  
helmets and belts. We matched + Secant  
got the best car, I the worst, and  
Chubby wants. Suroosh and I went for a  
trial run in my car over a shelled  
road. She went fine. Cuswood's  
car is full of shrapnel holes.

Clues moved down to sleep with us &  
seems a caker. A brutally cold night  
and none of us slept much. At 11.30  
there must have been an attack, as  
the guns were absolutely continuous for  
ten minutes. Also heard some more  
shells whistle over. Saw a lot of  
stationary balloons during the day,  
all French but one. Manned by Made  
on trip to Saunens in A.M. with 4 axes,  
and in P.M. with 5. One beside me, very  
grind, lives in Canada. Joffe and his  
staff passed us in cars very slowly  
in a block, and I had the pleasure of  
saluting him from 6 ft. off. His  
headquarters are supposed to be in  
Saunens. Roads blocked with canions,  
both of provisions + men, mitrailleuse  
sections, batteries of 65's etc. Saw a  
lot of bivouac camps + aeroplane  
stations. Saunens is 15 hrs and we  
had even to an English section there.  
On my P.M. trip I had a blow-out  
and sent my wandal on by a French  
canion. They all shook hands +

washed me back. Then a car pack  
came along + impressed a road  
gang to help my very anxious.  
None in dark with light. Glass  
of hot rum that Emery Pottle  
got in Bar-le-Duc before bed,  
good sleep. Cars all day, but  
no aeroplanes, or shells over vs.  
March 7. Looped around all morning,  
helping Ben grind valves etc. In  
P.M. had a trip to Saarlouis, ~~and~~  
~~we~~ changed a ply on the way, and on  
way home my axle broke, it didn't break  
down, but gears slipped. Left it in  
Senoneux + got a ride home with Grissold.  
Usual traffic on roads, including a 75  
regt. going into repos, having lost 200  
men + 400 horses, pretty hot for  
artillery. March 8 Pottle has sciatica  
so I went to Bar-le-duc with him,  
3 cashiers. Did shopping for the shop  
+ got an oil stove in the store room  
+ a fine lunch + then had a  
fine drive home, good weather +  
much warmer. Call for 7 Tomonau

Bun tells me Turbos dropped bombs here today, with shrapnel breaking all around them. One French aviator was brought in wounded ~~and~~ before I left, 2 bullets in leg but needed lines. In all today 2 pilots + 2 observers were killed + 2 observers wounded, all reaching our lines. First casualties of the war in the aviation camp here. All outnumbered by Fokkers when in slow Courdon machines. March 10  
My dates have been off as I've seen a paper that this is the 10<sup>th</sup>. Cracked up + got ~~the~~ ready for blosses + then found my tube sticking thru the shoe. Changed the ~~shoe~~, poked ~~it~~ <sup>at tube</sup> + put in another. Found I had an over-size shoe, so changed that. Wheel was loose, so tightened it + then did the other + had to change a bearing. Then looked till 4, when a call to Landrecant with 3 blosses. Roads awful, full of holes + greasy in the snow which fell all day + was bad on the eyes. Fresh

shell holes in Ansement. Dead horses  
en road. One poor blessé had his  
grain all shot away & had a bottle  
attached to urinate in, he groaned at  
every jounce, and careful as I was there  
was bound to be some. Boed in dark  
post artillery, address sounding of  
guns & horses half seen in the  
dust, going to the front at Vétrat  
& some coming back en repos.  
Incessant cannonade all night &  
today & shells over our quarters.  
We heard tonight that the French  
have retaken Duvalmont & Fornos  
& advanced 4 ks. Here we  
supper, only hear big guns  
but really it has been so continuous  
all day that you couldn't tell  
individual reports. Slight let-up  
tonight. Burn at Bar & will  
probably stay there. A Moroccan  
regiment went by today, wild hood  
nosed dark faced Arabs with buzzy  
beads in bunches. March 10  
Boed to old calendar. Trip to

Sawhorses in P.M. Changed a spare plug.  
5 osses. Very nice one beside me. Said  
they were in nois campagne and had  
retreated 15 lbs. without being actually  
attacked. Their general had committed  
suicide. They were robbing the Boches  
and taking a lot of prisoners. Rumor  
today that Boches have advanced  
5 lbs somewhere. 3 hostile planes over  
here today. Lots of troops on roads  
and one ~~platoon~~ part on train.  
Lots of dead horses. Quiet all day, but  
pretty heavy bombardment tonight.  
Civilians all leaving + pretty pitiful  
refugee wagons on road. Our store  
has left. Been still in Bar with  
low speed band gone. March 11  
To Bar-le-Duc with 3 caudées,  
+ 1 ossis. Light rain, good sun down.  
Waited my turn with French officers +  
privates + got a hot bath. Excellent  
lunch at mechanic's shop + shave  
afterwards. Chubby still studs the  
charging brake bands. On way  
home had to change a tire in

a foot of perfectly liquid mud.  
Fairly quiet, not many shells shot.  
Passing an ammunition depot I saw  
the new shells that have a taper  
to the rear, also a battery of  
new 75s on a train at Bar. Most  
of the villages en route are  
at least semi-ruined. Lots of  
refugees on the roads, plodding  
pitifully thru' the mud behind  
carts loaded with their all.

All hay here requisitioned today +  
slaughtered in a horse dam the  
road. March 12. Took 3 coaches  
to Bar + changed one tire + 2 plays  
en way. Good luck + have with  
Enemy dig. Beautiful day, but  
showers. Carried 10 French + 4 German  
saucisses up at once. Two new  
big French guns near us. Bosch  
prisoners cleaning streets in Scallie  
All of us at home tonight

March 13 Locked around all  
day, helping Enemy clean plays etc.  
Had a horse cleaning + made the

place look pretty well, saw  
a Bosch plane in the distance  
with shrapnel bursting around  
it and leaving little black clouds  
hanging in the sky for minutes  
after the initial white puff. Lot of  
French planes & saucisse as it  
was a beautiful day. Germans  
shelling Amcment again. About  
a dozen shells whistled over,  
before breakfast and at noon.

Incessant bombardment to  
North tonight. New code gave  
us good chew for lunch and  
supper. March 14 Boden +  
~~Self~~ took Sorato, the Mec. and  
myself to Semancant to fix my  
rear axle. Had a hard job in the  
mud that took till late in the  
P.M. Interesting talks with soldiers.  
Shells over quarters before starting,  
saw two burst in the field  
beyond us. Also a regular  
shrapnel bombardment of three

whodropped barrels  
Basel plans, Two batteries of  
Vermandois 155's went past us,  
painted in green patterns of green  
and yellow. Have seen white  
horses painted green. We hear  
that the French have over 600,000  
men in this sector. Got back  
about 4.30 and saw fire flares  
of magnesium lamps in the black  
clouds about German planes,  
Long Talk with French doctor,  
half American and speaking  
perfect English.

March 25 A long jump. I had finished  
my diary on the 14th and we were just  
turning in when we got orders to pack  
up, leave our baggage, and report at  
Vadelaincourt. I had no head-lights as my  
generator was smoked and had to change  
2 plugs before starting. Vadelaincourt  
was near Suresme, about 15 k. off.  
Once there we had an interminable  
wait, and finally were loaded with  
cavaliers and sent to Revingny. As  
we waited they were taking off a

gangsters are at the windows beside us. The roads were crowded and boggy, no headlights, cold and a drizzle of sleet falling and we drove all night. Reims is 15 k. beyond Bar le due, and it and the next village were in ruins, shelled out at the Marne. We saw the famous 20th Corps just arriving for the fight at Reims. We unloaded and started back just as the first gray light showed us the utter ruin and desolation of the city. As we left a motor search light went by us, one of those responsible for the destruction of the Zeppelin there. We came around a corner in a little street and saw a jewel of a little church, shattered, but only in a way that emphasized its picturesque. That night ride was awful, you really went to sleep over the wheel and were to trust her as she made for the ditch. The eye strain was awful too. We breakfasted in Bar le due and then came out here and kept on working till night.

We sleep in our cars and our stove is installed in a sort of niche in a wall beside the inevitable manure, the niche about 10 by 8. We have rigged a bench outside with some canvas on it. I have just had my tailed articles in the car, but got into Bon le due and got some cloths finally and the diary etc. We make about 2 trips a day to Saulesne, only about 5 fr. the round trip and the English section here does the same, some very nice chops. A lot of aviation here, and the famous Navarre is at the field. We have seen the most famous regiments in France going up to the front, and one played itself thru the village with its bugles and drums. We have seen 155s on carriages that look like guides and are painted in yellow & green shades and lay over, 15 or 20 ft., resembling behind tractors. Lots of 75s always.

The aviation field here is a great sight. Three little Neopats that two men can push painted in queer colors of green, yellow and maroon, powder as ~~Famas~~<sup>Sovis</sup> for bombardment, double and single Caudrons and others. In the Neopats the machine gun points into the ear and is above the pilot's head, with a sight below and a string to the trigger. The night we got here the guns were going strong and the whole sky toward Verdun was lit by a strong red light that rose and fell, probably scattering bombing. Every night we see the flashes of the guns and hear the distant rumble. Several of the boys have messaged off into Verdun and say it's very interesting and I must too soon. Rotten cold muddy weather now, but we've had some nice sunny days. I'm on duty detail, washing dishes now for the day. March 29 Another jump, but it has been raining when it wasn't



siphoned through hoses into the  
water receptacles. The French soldier  
drinks no water, only Pinard, the  
red wine, and rum & jico (coffee). We  
drew "Bikesh" (meat) from a Paris bus.  
Gaylor in the section got Talking &  
told us of his work in Belgium &  
France with the Relief Committee.  
Disbelieves atrocities, but hates Bosch.  
Bosch put interned Frenchmen to  
work generating electricity for German  
trucks, later found that a secret  
wire was providing the French trucks  
as well. A munition train, a Red  
Cross train & a gasoline train  
were in a station. A French aviator  
dropped 2 bombs on the munition  
train and blew it, the station & the  
Red Cross train all to bits. The  
gas train, miraculously spared, was  
moved to the next station, where bombs  
got it the following day. Germans  
couldn't make a box of cartridges  
without the French blowing it.  
Information perfect. Now for

some Verdun gossip. In this sector  
we have 600,000 reserves who have  
not yet been used. We have 5,000  
Troop carriers, seating 30 men  
each + God knows how many  
others. 500 aeroplanes guard the  
main Bar-le-Duc-Verden road  
from air raids. Some buses  
even have dark tree stumps  
painted on their <sup>gray</sup> green bodies.  
Always a trickle of Besch pursuers.  
~~Now for the big act.~~ Sporadic  
cannonading, quite incessant all  
last night + early this morning.  
I sharpen my pencil for the big  
event. I have been where the Kaiser  
would give his boots to be, in Verdun,  
and while shells were dropping into  
the city and its best street was in flames.  
On the 27<sup>th</sup> "Swiss" Man and I slipped  
off and started for Verdun, main road  
crowded as ever, 15% of it. Ammunition  
was stacked in a field and covered  
with branchsto fool air-craft. You  
suddenly came on the train at a bend

in the valley, huge old stone walls,  
pecked white by modern shells and  
the trees splintered stumps from the  
war had. It made you a bit  
nervous to have to change a plug  
here and here shells exploding in  
the town and see the black mantle  
burst on the hills beyond. No traffic  
at all, no one questioned our right to  
be there. Right through the gate and  
up the hill by three shell holes  
about 15 ft in diameter and so  
deep that the mangled remains of an  
automobile in one could not be seen  
till you were above it. Street blocked  
because something had tilted all the  
houses into it. A few stanzas, sooty  
shells. Grand and into the main  
town. Out of an old gate at which  
a free engine pumped and onto a  
bridge, on which we stopped to  
fix a wiring. Sentinel comes out &  
politely advises us to move on a  
bit, as the Bosch shell this  
spot regularly. So nice we couldn't

refuse him. From across the river  
we see the shattered houses on the  
water front and the smoke & flames  
behind. Bod goes over another bridge and  
stop at the burning section to take  
pictures. The Bomb made a few  
more houses in it down every day,  
about this time we were told, but  
the shells burst more in the center  
just then. Street full of trucks &  
Belms and soldiers pumping water.  
Opposite is a sand bag bank  
proof and just above an ear a  
shell hole where a shell burst  
on the house wall & killed 5.  
No civilians, just uniforms. Germans  
6 hrs off. My film gone, but Si  
Takes lots of pictures of soldiers, two  
insist on an going up the street  
with them. They pose in front of  
a house where whole body has  
been shaved off and whose core is  
choked with rubbish that was  
walls. It was the mess for all  
the officers till a 380 arrived.

They give me the bronze eagle from  
a German helmet. Then we pose  
along home leaving behind us the  
tarn with its wreaths and smoke  
and the shells topping away still.  
All the troops in it in fine  
spirits, say the line doesn't budge  
& is slaying Germans in heaps.  
Remember yesterday tho, that a  
Midi brigade has broken and  
surrendered, they always do. There  
are 12 rows in the cemetery now  
that was started just before we  
came, and still they are busy  
digging. Every day we see the pathetic  
funerals. A boy with mine, one  
with a cross, a priest in purple &  
then the ridety hay wagon carrying  
the rough coffin (the coffin makes  
incidentally is a very good friend  
of ours) draped with the tricolor on  
which is written "Mort pour la Patrie".  
As it passes the soldiers all  
salute, every couple of days  
a mother comes to see her son.

er a wife her husband, and is escorted  
not to a tent, but to one of the  
little wooden crosses on the hillside.  
A colonel and his wife are weeping  
today at the grave of the son they  
came too late to see. April! The  
graveyard is with close inspection, a long  
ditch is dug, the bodies are put in and covered  
till the ditch is full, then a little mound  
is made for each and a wooden cross  
sticks up with the name regiment and date.  
A couple matronly women from the men's  
fellow non-coms etc. are here and there.  
The mounds are only about a foot wide  
and they are two rows ahead of the  
fellow who makes the crosses now. A little  
apart are a row of Moroccan graves,  
each a covered so they face the east. On  
each is a headboard cut in minute shape  
with a star and crescent on it, some  
Arabic writing and the usual name, regiment  
& date. We run from here to Sakhum,  
Sakhum and Sakhum to Chauricet.  
The Franciscans at Sakhum are a  
genial crowd, all ~~are~~ curies and all

restless as franc-tireurs. They all beam  
when they see me, and rush up to shake  
my hand and love to be jollied about  
what good company it is for a good  
winter. A Hesse yesterday was  
telling me of the gas shells that made  
you weep like a baby, and of the  
Boches coming on in French uniforms.

A couple of days ago I went back to  
Petit Montchaux. They were digging fresh  
tranches just back of the crest of the hills,  
plain zig-zag lines, with barbed wire  
about 50 yds. in front, and more down  
on the river meadows. Stakes about  
 $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. high and wire not very tight  
running all cross-ways. The railroad  
embankment is between the meadows and  
the slope of the heights, and on the up-hill  
side of it were T-shaped machine gun  
emplacements, lined with chicken wire, every  
50 ft. or so. Two imminent ~~shooting~~  
barracks stood in the field, but each  
sheltered a gun that had been fired  
on a Bosch plane that morning.  
Had a long talk with the

young doctor who is half American.

He said a friend of his at the aviation field dived through the tail of a Boech machine and cut it off on one of his first flights.

The usual atrocity talk came up and he told me that at the first of the war he was with some cavalry near Charleville.

They had a machine gun, and easily prevented a Boech cyclist detachment from crossing a bridge. They disappeared and ten minutes later appeared driving civilians before them, men, women and children. The French retreated.

A big new munition depot at Le Mans, with stacks of all kinds of shells, from 75s in wooden boxes up to shells four feet high, 380s and such.

The anti machine gun sections are interesting, some are poor trains, but in most both the guns and ammunition are carried on little <sup>flat</sup> two wheeled carts slung about 3 feet from the ground with one horse driven by a soldier on the cart.

Slight intermission to snap-shot a regiment of artillery going by, a few detached observations new. Most of the trucks are Forded, White, or

Berliet. These are some jefferies, tractors on all wheels, used for pulling the heavy artillery. a few are always lying in the ditch, warning helpless legs at the sky. The French soldier is practical and sloppy. He looks like a royanuffin, but he is there. He carries a new pair of fatted shoes on his knapsack, a knapsack and not a roll (his bedding roll is over the top of it) and his mess-kit is piled on top, a tremendous affair compared to ours, but who would like to live indefinitely on a U.S. mess kit? His bread is tough and is generally covered with dirt, but it keeps, is most nourishing and quite good when you are accustomed to it. He gets the potatoes, lentils or beans, fresh meat and lard. Also very good canned meat "singe" and army biscuit. His rifle is extremely long, as is his bayonet, but the action is clumsy and gums up in the trenches. Some carry the "hunk-downer" a bayonet made into an eight-inch dagger. The cavalry are well mounted, on the

splendid Saanen saddle, with a scabb  
that is too heavy and clumsy, made for cut,  
but with not quite the curve of an old one.  
On the pommel he carries two ledgers for his  
personal stuff, and a nose bag of grain that  
goes right across, a lot of grain. On the cante  
his flasket roll and covercoat and grooming  
tools in a bag. I saw no fitted shoes.  
The scabb hangs just behind the left leg,  
curving slightly forward, the tiny cabin is  
slung on the back, all wear the steel  
helmet, but no lances are visible now.  
Used mostly for guarding prisoners and  
communication. The bridge is a cable lit,  
over a gutter, the snuffe lit snopping  
into the cab by a chain & bar. There  
are gendarmes all around regulating  
traffic, and sometimes mounted ones  
escort prisoners. They have a silver  
helmet ornament. The chasseurs à pied  
have a green car de chose and  
are marder troops and know it.  
The artillery again are practical, wagons  
of all sorts piled with miscellaneous  
stuff, caissons ditto, and long

group of 75, mostly painted gray, but some in  
the mottled yellow and green. A lot of them  
have names painted on them "La Perse" for  
instance. New aeroplanes. They are  
housed in great enormous sheds of green  
canvas over a framework, six or so to a  
base. The air corps are all full of swart  
and have an army of mechanics etc. Their  
cars often are named and some have letters  
lacked on the wings, or shooting stars etc  
painted on them. The engines are almost all  
Rhones, rotary, beautiful pieces of work.  
The tails are painted in the tri-color, and  
red bull-eyes are on the wings, except  
in the mottled Neupats. The guns are almost  
all Lewis, either with or without the jacks,  
no jacks in Neupats, they go so fast that they  
shoot few shots. Visits, single and double  
Caudron, Maurice Farman, a few Morane,  
a single Monoplane, and one + 2 passenger  
Neupats. They got 3 Berdies yesterday.  
The other evening a single Caudron  
looped the loop 3 times as it came  
down, saw eight. Many have painted  
up projectile holes in their wings, mostly

machine gun, for the hand guns do very little.  
In a receipt the lateral direction is  
controlled by a bar to which the feet are  
strapped while the up and down and ~~power~~  
banding control is by a single upright bar.  
On it is what looks like a bicycle hand-  
handle handle, which fires the machine gun.  
In front of the operator is a map, in a  
case with screws to turn up a new sector,  
there is a glass floor plate at the bar,  
and dial of many kind, gasoline up.  
On some the machine gun is mounted  
off, that is 2 men receipt. It runs  
around a track around the core-part of  
the observer, with a second track some  
two feet above, for fire upward.

Well I've had a trip to Chaumont with  
an Taxi-driver, Tavernier, as a passenger.  
He gets his car from the Cie. Francoise,  
one of 2 big houses. They have 6,000  
Taxis and do body-building, living-etc  
and all. He pays for the gasoline and  
keeps his tips and 27% of the Taxi-meter  
reading. They do all tyre work, oiling  
etc. He only runs it, and averages

15 fr. a day. As he doesn't drink he puts  
by what he calculates he would so spend  
2 fr. on a last day,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  on another etc, and  
then takes a day off fishing, for he is a  
Green fly-fisherman, he ~~gets~~ takes a vacation  
at the sea shore each year besides. Chubby  
got into the village club of 3, the coffee-maker,  
the latrine-cleaner and another. They were  
full of Pined and some hair prescribed  
anardant scraps under their breasts, the  
law made them soldiers, but they wouldn't  
tell their brother. A little of this sort  
of thing among the road-making territorial  
but the spirit of the active troops is the  
first thing ever. They know they've got  
it on the Germans. Sunning ourselves in  
a field on our cars, after a picnic  
bunch out of our bottles, tony fish, pâté,  
croques, omelets, chocolate, and cheese +  
Bordeaux. Beautiful spring day and  
we are restless, yet lazy, need an  
opium fix. I must crank my car, and  
warm my radiator water for a shower.  
Later. A few additions. First Chubby had  
a job near Verdun the other day and

had a shell land so near that it  
splattered dirt on him. Next a strong Rader  
brought back from Pat à Massa. The  
Bosch bombarded the first line and the  
French, as was usual retired from it,  
leaving a few gines only. One old  
territorial gine was there waiting to  
repair the trench with no weapons, when a  
fully armed Bosch tumbled on top of  
him. The old gine took his steel  
helmet and broke the Bosches arm,  
knocked him out and brought him  
back as a prisoner. He got decorated  
of course. As to bicydes. We neglect  
them in an army. In open campaigns  
they are fine, and also in the trench  
warfare. Telyphans etc. are often  
rendered impracticable by bombardments  
so agents de liaison or bicydes are used  
for communication. A bicyde man  
can go farther and faster than a  
horse, he is more inconspicuous  
and doesn't use oats and hay. Also  
he can take care anywhere with his  
steed. Only he cannot go cross-country

April 3 Yesterday was a hot spring day. We were  
awakened by the rattle of distant drums, then  
we heard the clear notes of horns above it, and  
next the full crash of a brass band; a regiment  
was being played through the village. It was  
like a play. A great grey walled barn with  
a loft opposite in which the English were  
dancing, the early spring light with brilliant  
rays of sunshine coming in from the side  
where the roof didn't quite meet the wall,  
and working up to this and the music  
outside. The music rose and we heard  
the tramping feet, then died, to rise fainter  
and fainter and die away finally as it  
came, the trumpet first, and the drums lingering  
on till their sound became confused with the  
drum of the listening blood. These wild  
lively French marches are the essence of  
the élan of war. After breakfast we boarded  
in the sun till an officer asked us to take  
him to Ordes. We left Sures and I left  
him there and went to Sully where Si  
got a helmet off a Boche prisoner at  
work in the streets, in exchange for a  
cap and some cigarettes. Then picked

up an officer and came back. We passed  
Lombard and I made up files. Got talking  
with Viter, an old lance-corporal who lives  
some 10 kms. off, near Clermont-en-Argonne. He  
is some sort of a local dignitary in the  
village and says he'll take us wild boar  
hunting and find dogs, beater, rifle etc.  
for us. We shall arrange it if we are not  
moved, for a boar's head, taken under  
the Krumpinze's nose, would be a fine  
trophy. Today Si, Chubby and I are going  
to Verdun *sauvenir* hunting, with hopes of  
getting into the trenches. Here's luck.

April 4 We went up and went into the  
barracks and asked for wounded, no luck, but  
it was only a blind, then we gave out  
cigarettes and chatted. They said there were  
no *sauvenirs*. Chubby met a lieutenant he  
knew who told him to come to dinner at  
6, as the commandant of Verdun was  
coming around and they were busy  
then. We didn't find it suspicious to open  
the subject of trenches, just as we were  
about to leave a couple of lieutenants  
came up to me and asked if we ever

went to Ben, and if I could mail <sup>two</sup> bundles  
there for them. I said surely and then he  
said he knew we liked souvenirs, so he  
would get a casque for me. He came  
back with the bundles and a perfect  
German officer's helmet. It has a cover,  
is spotless underneath, with the rosettes  
on the side, the brass chin strap, eagle,  
and the paint, raveled, first is artillery.  
It can't be beaten. Then we went down  
the street that is worst ruined and found  
a Paris fire engine with its red paint  
still showing in spots through the war  
gray coat. A most genial gang of  
parapies were quitting work on a  
smouldering cellar. We chatted and took  
their pictures in front of a ruined  
line of houses. They are Legoff,  
Beten, Lavere and Bischoff (?) 10<sup>e</sup> Cie,  
12 Rue Philipp de Girard, X<sup>e</sup> arrond.  
Paris, near the Gare du Nord. They  
promised us a lot of souvenirs if we'd  
come to their quarters at the Mairie  
that afternoon. We parted and started.  
Incidentally I was to call at the

barbeds for a bundle a sergeant  
wanted to send. We had just got out  
of the street when there was a wail  
and a terrific crash in it behind us.  
We put on speed as more came, and  
went past the barbeds with all our  
friends quivering out of the windows  
and yjering at us. It was a constant  
Bang — Bang Bang, too fast to count  
and everywhere sentries were ducking  
into their sand-bag shelters and the  
whole town was taking cover. As we  
left the town two shells went off  
about 100 yds. rather less, to our left and  
 tremendous clouds of smoke and dirt  
arose. All over the heights hung  
black shell clouds and the city  
was full of them. We came back  
to houses, bright sandbags and cades  
and lunched in the car. Then  
Chubby found a barber who was  
Coiffeur des Dames at the Grand Hotel  
in Paris, as well as at Nice, Monte Carlo  
and Cannes. He did a good job on  
Ben and I must get one soon.

Then we started back to Verdun. We  
got near the gate and the shells were  
incessant, and far too near for comfort,  
so we all decided it foolish to go in  
not on duty, but just on a jay ride  
and started back. We took a side  
road and passed about 4 villages  
that had been shelled out at the  
Mame. Finally we found a nice  
sunny lawn well off the road,  
which was terribly dusty, with a clear  
cold stream about 3 ft. deep. We  
all stopped and had a wonderful  
bath, though we had no soap. Then  
basked in the sun till we were dry  
in the pleasant cool that comes after  
a broiling spring day. Then home to  
dinner. This morning ~~we~~ we heard that  
at 2 o'clock yesterday an incendiary  
shell fell on these Verdun barracks  
and killed 40 of the smiling little  
chaps we had been joking with. Rather  
lucky we didn't lunch with them as  
we had planned. It makes you sick  
to think of those men you saw

so cheerful and finally being blown and  
burned to bits. A loss sands as usual  
till you know the crowd. At breakfast  
Thomson and Carden joined us, having  
literally dropped in on their way  
back to Bar from over the German  
lines in their 80 Neupats. Navane has  
one of the few new 120 Neupats and flying  
from an field got us German dog  
before yesterday, and three yesterday,  
his first flight since getting back  
from Paris. Thomson missed three Boshes  
this morning at about 50 yds, firing  
off both his drums of 47 cartridge  
each. Carden's gun jammed when  
he was sure of a Bosh too, so both  
were pretty rare. They say the Boshes  
won't fly beyond their line of  
saucisses now, except for casual ones,  
so the French hold over the German  
lines. The other day the French  
for a little moral effect flew over  
the German lines in 20 machines  
in a wild goose wedge with the  
Captain at the apex. Carden was

the last man on the left and suddenly turned around to find 5 Boches right behind him. He decided that the fellow who ran got killed, so he turned and charged them, shooting off his fuel dropper, then dove 1200 metres into his engine at full speed and lost them. After breakfast we strolled up to the field where they got ready to go. They put on one piece for lined suits over their cloths. Fur lined boots, all strapped under the trousers, wooden clogs, with a fur one outside and the clogs strapped around by a muffer and fur gloves with wooden rivets underneath. Their gun sighting apparatus is wonderful. Instead of the sight I have described there is a tube about 1 in. in diameter and 4 inches long with cross lines in it and plain glass. For dark days there is an electric lighting device that by means of prisms makes the cross lines luminous. I have went up first,

circled around and waited for Carden  
who went up, got his altitude and  
took the lead and off they went to  
Bar. Carden says there are two lakes  
near there that make steering easy,  
otherwise you follow roads or  
streams etc. We hear that over  
1,000 wounded were evacuated from  
Verdun last night and Carden said  
it was burning hard in 3 places  
when he left there at 6 last night.  
Buns still at 5 hard, and there  
were flashes all over the horizon  
last night as we went to bed.  
Raining now and I shall write  
some letters, no duty till 1:30.  
I forget to say that while we were  
in the caserne at Verdun the  
commandant turned up some enough  
and the guard formed, fired  
bayonets, presented arms and were  
inspected by him. We hear that  
the bombardment was all big stuff,  
mostly 380's. They did not have quite  
the rip we had at Ancre, more a wind.

April 5 Sad news of the bombardment. A lot of old territorial birds were breeding nests in the grain store-house. A shell came in and they all took shelter under flour sacks. Then an incendiary shell arrived and from 2 to 300 were burned up. Yesterday morning was uneventful, but in the afternoon we got a trip to Renigny, 15 cars. Tavernier the taxi-driver came with me, and we took back roads - Speccant - Fleury - Waly - Traicant - Laleycant - Brabant-le-Roi - Renigny. Brabant had been fired by the Germans and most of the others were more or less ruined. In a burned village the chimneys are standing, in a shelled one all is rubbish. Saw an Renigny section and chatted a bit and came home, getting caught in a bad rain and having to clean a plug. Tavernier tried to drive and almost wrecked us. It was a beautiful trip down, the woods showing already the tender green of the sprouting leaves. Today

It is muddy and raining. Cy and I went to  
Briques Lennes and got a haircut in  
a stable among manure heaps sitting  
on a gas can then a company butcher,  
who in peace time was barber at the  
Hotel Chatham in Paris and at Nice  
and Monte Carlo in winter. We wanted  
to go to Verdun, but there was a cold  
so we came back to try to get a  
trip and are waiting in hope now.

Bad rumors yesterday that we had  
lost two kilometers near Vaux.

A regiment of 750 is going by and we  
did yesterday, coming from the Anas  
line that the English have taken over.  
At night in the aviation field they pour  
gasoline on the ground and light it, making  
an arrow showing the direction in which  
to land, on the best place. April 8 Just  
got some dope on machine guns. There are  
3 companies of 8 guns each to a regiment, 24  
in other words. To each 4 guns there are 36  
mules, carrying six boxes of ammunition, 300  
rounds per box. 20,000 reserve follows in  
2 wagons, or rather the little carts, which do

carry guns sometimes. St. Etienne, Hotchkiss and  
Cott they mostly are, on tripods feeding by a  
metal dip of 30. April 10 My birthday was a  
big day. After lunch Cy and I started for  
Verden. The roads were jammed with troops,  
apparently an army corps is going into ops  
and a fresh one going up, a lot of it  
coming from the rear areas where the  
English have taken over some trenches. No  
shells were falling in the town, so the trip  
was uneventful in that line. The recent  
bombardment had made it even more of  
a mess than formerly, but the fires  
were about put out, just smoldering a  
trifle in the ruins still. We drove  
straight to the Papiers' quarters in the  
Maine and I asked the captain, a  
very nice fellow, for our hints. They were  
very genial and I explained to them that  
we hadn't been able to develop our  
pictures yet, and then broached the  
subject of Bush sawn. They said  
there weren't any, but one fellow  
piped up from the edge of the  
crowd and said if the captain would

let him go for ten minutes he would  
get us some. We lived in Verdun and  
guided our car to his house, which looks  
in the ruin. En route we had to lift  
two horse bins over the car roof. We  
unlocked the house and we entered a  
little wine shop with the back  
end in pitiful ruin from a shell,  
fragments of which she gave us. We  
led us upstairs and started passing  
things out as our eyes popped. We  
gave us two helmets, one perfect but  
the other minus an eagle, 3 rifles,  
one minus a bolt, a bayonet and a  
saw bayonet, an officer's sword, a  
canteen, two fuse tips and 14 aeroplane  
flèches. <sup>like cartridges</sup> Some haul! We gave him  
a lot of cigarettes and 20 francs which  
I had the hardest time in the world  
forcing on him. I wanted to give him  
more, but it was all we had with  
us. We came home by side roads,  
and stopped on a rolling hill  
to gloat over the loot and there saw  
a picture. Opposite us was another house

hill with a track winding down it across  
the fields. Down the track came two  
troops of cavalry in their steel helmets,  
beautifully mantled with white ermine  
showing here and there among the  
bays and blacks. It was a Meisnieu  
that gladdened the eye of a cavalryman.  
We got bars and Victor the Brancardier  
turned up and Chubby and I took him  
some 15 kilometers to Rascant, his  
home for supper. We found a beautiful  
big village and a fine home. His  
wife was delightful and his daughter  
was young, good looking, and perfectly  
educated, she was in school in Belgium  
when the war broke out. The son  
was a nice boy of about 16, very  
keen on hunting. There was a boy  
of 10 or so too. We had a feast  
on good bread, an excellent omelette  
with sausage in it, and Bordeaux  
wine with coffee and Kirschwasser  
afterwards. The whole family sat  
around entertaining us and we  
chatted and laughed together for

a long time. Victor nearly killed  
Stubby and me by insisting on showing  
his family the brass he had got on  
his back, law damn. Finally we  
left after the daughter had pinned  
a flower on each of us, and the  
whole tribe came out and saw us off.

Victor incidentally showed us a  
huge boar's head they had got.  
The Germans had cut off his <sup>two</sup> ~~two~~  
tusks and the tips of ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> ears and  
had made bayonet holes in it.  
The hunt seems to be off. There are  
only two more, and they only know  
two days ahead; also they use  
shot guns and most of the village  
guns were destroyed by the Boches.  
We came back over heights in  
the dark with the guns ~~was~~ of the  
organs flashing, and through villages  
their ruin half seen by an headlight.  
Only in inferno could you dine  
that way into a French peasant.  
The next day, the 8<sup>th</sup> Pottle got  
some old tating and lumber at of the

medicin chief and all hands turned to.  
The result was a large tent of canvas  
tent with a big table in it, a sideboard,  
very mission, with two shelves, a coat  
rack and a table for literature. Under  
it pins near by is the kitchen, a  
tent with a board floor and the  
lugs lashed against it for a stove  
room. All improvised from odd poles  
and bits of canvas wired together.  
We have even dug a well for cooking  
water, stealing rods from a road  
gang. We are in a nice field with  
trees, next door to the aviation field.  
The brood is next door and the  
spring not far off and a latrine  
is handy. It is the regular French  
model. A low hedge of boughs and  
stems surrounds a big pit, across  
which are a lot of plants at  
about eight inch intervals, on which  
you stand in the manner of a  
straddle trap. Yesterday I took a  
cured soldier to Saillly and gave him  
over to the Gendarmes de l'Armée, Provosts

department I suppose. On the way back I had just gone through Lannes when I saw a cyclist talking to a gendarme. The cyclist was shabby ~~and~~, dusty and unshaven and stung about with bags of stuff, but I caught a glimpse of his face and it was Louis de Santiago! I stopped and fell on his neck and brought him back here and he and Chubby and I pinedled ~~off~~ in a grave out of my car loaders.

He is an infirmier and capit de liaison and runs errands on his bicycle. He is about 14 hrs off in the trenches at a place named something like Chateausant <sup>Chataucant</sup>.

He was wounded by a spent bullet in the shoulder some time ago, said it felt like a hard blow from a stone. He has pretty close shaves now as he beats it about. The war strength of a regiment he tells me is 3200 men, counting its combat and supply trains etc. He left us at about 2 and said he'd try to get back in 3 or 4 days now that he knew the way. Last night we saw a great sight

at the aviation field. An automobile generator stood there with two big searchlights elevated on poles above it, on either side were ten to 4 more lights standing on tripods some 20 ft. high. The ten made the field a blaze of light. We stood and watched 4 Fannans go off on a bombing expedition. They would speed up in the glare of the searchlights and soar off into the darkness, the little light above the pilot's head would glimmer in the black and then be switched off and you could just glimpse the machine flitting like a great bat in the moonlight. It climbed up and some ten minutes later they came back as it was too dark to fly. First the bat like shadow, then the little light and suddenly the machine swoops into the glare of the lights, looming up unconceivably big glides to the earth, bumps a bit and stops. The first two came

down freely, but the third, after  
killing the earth perfectly, had too  
much momentum and coasted into a  
parked staff car, smashing the car  
and shield ~~to~~ up and apparently  
not hurting the plane or the only  
part that hit was the bombs  
underneath. As every one ran up  
the pilot yelled "in a minute, for  
bombs!" and the crowd scattered  
for a minute, to collect again  
soon and watch the bombs  
unloaded. We had a great chance  
to see the methods. In most machines  
the bombs are carried two on each  
side pointing down, and five  
slung underneath pointing forward,  
all released separately from the  
observer's seat by separate wires.

On one machine the bombs were  
carried two in each of a couple  
of slots inside the car and none  
underneath, so that nothing protruded  
from the body. The sighting device  
was on the side, a sort of quadrant

that there was not light enough to observe closely. The bombs were about a metre long and 4 in in diameter and torpedo shape, with 4 fins at the tail with a tiny propeller between them and a set of points at the head, weighing 12 lbs. each. The propeller is a safety device. It has to revolve a certain number of times in the fall before the contact device becomes effective. I am told there are two liquids within that are set free to mix by the propeller action. Before this aviation spectacle we went over to Oscho after supper and heard the tail end of a concert by the territorial band. They played a Faust selection including the waltz, and another cooking tune I didn't know. It was some sight, the band standing in a ~~semi~~-circle in the little village street in front of a picturesque gray house, with the blue clad soldiers around

them and more perched on a  
grassy bank, all beneath a  
superb evening sky. Today is a  
perfect sunny day, but a terrific  
bombardment is going on, as there  
was yesterday afternoon and night.  
There are some terrific explosions  
at intervals very near us, and there  
is a hot argument as to whether  
they are arrivals or departs.  
I have a pile of letters to write  
and will do it. Later all done, I've  
passed baseball and been talking to an  
ex-aviator pop on the hill who has been  
reduced to driving a camion by a bad  
heart. He says the Folders have it on all  
except the Condor + Newport. He is rather  
sour on aviation, says you start as a taxi  
driver or bombardment Versus that fly only  
at night, have to take all orders from the  
flier who gets the medals, only the older  
men get decent medals. The quack  
I thought was a bomb sight is a wind  
velocity apparatus. Another type is a  
tube about one inch in diameter + six

long, from which a tube runs to a  
gauge inside which registers the velocity. Also  
a lot of machines have a tube run  
3 ft long in running down into a pulley at  
the bottom. When the machine is up, wires  
are let down and wireless messages can  
thus be sent. The plant is a strong one  
for receiving however. My friend said there  
was a lot of enthusiasm in aviation  
he will say "the wind is too high, send up  
a private." An observation on French  
infantry. On his shoulder is a stiff  
shield of steel "whole-brace, there is also a  
rod of steel about an inch high. Thus  
the pivot of the post and rifle is  
distributed and the rifle <sup>etc.</sup> is kept from  
sliding off. April 15 a forgotten observation  
about aeroplanes. In the floor at the very  
bow is a glass plate for observation.  
Just back of it is a trap-door for the  
camera. The other day Lewis came back  
and lunched with us, he said his  
regiment had lost 800 the day he was  
with us before. The Bosch artillery  
caught them in a communication trench.

That night I was on duty at Bure de  
Mala all night, got 2 trips to Chaumont and  
2 to Vadelaincourt. Had a good time in  
between sitting around a stove in a tent  
with tea on top, and chatting to the blessés  
as they came in from Metz, Hamm, Sans etc,  
a lot wandered that night. Outside it was  
raining and hailing and blowing a gale,  
so you could hardly keep your eyes open.  
A curious young Chasseur lieutenant came  
in slightly wounded, he cursed at abris, said  
he'd been wounded twice, always in abris.  
Welding all around trenches under fire all  
day, got sixteen and more core straps  
cut, never touched. 5 minutes in abris and  
wounded. Saw cosques save lives of ~~12~~ 12  
men in his company that day. His captain's  
was thrust over his ears, but he won't  
bunt. This lieutenant was full of pep and  
enthusiasm. His company, he was commanding  
as the capt. + 1st were killed, broke clean  
through the Baches in Champagne, but he  
had orders to halt, though his men were  
begging to go on. He said a whistle  
could be heard, and one always started

under. He said 15,000 shells were counted falling  
on Joux the day before, but only 100 were  
killed. For every German shell the French  
fired 4. The Bosch losses were fearful.  
Lauris said a regiment took some trenches  
at Chateaucant and so few were left  
that 2 companies of French counter-attacked  
successfully. The little boat was put on  
a stretcher, for they would take over at  
Vedelaincant or Chameant. When they  
unloaded him he wanted to get up, the  
Innocentians asked if he could walk, "Well,"  
he said "I can run". Yesterday I got a  
trip to Fribourg and one to Queen de Mde.  
A mild weather continuing, sleet, hail, rain,  
ten minutes sun, repeat ad. lib. Same today,  
but we've got a stove in the tent now,  
and a mandarin + quater that help. Inspection  
is due today and we've been cleaning up  
cars in a hard storm. Well a new  
mantar. Turned in last night and was  
just falling asleep when there was a  
lot of yelling and a red light  
outside and the English chauffeurs started  
jumping over their left. We started to

dress leisurely to help on the fire. I had all  
but one puttee on when ~~the~~ an  
Englishman ran in and said we had  
just time to get out. Flinging on the rest  
of my clothes and sprinted out as the  
door caught. It had started in the  
English gasoline supply by candle  
lamp. Filling and the ~~shed~~ was certainly  
blazing and the barn too, the flames  
roaring through the floor of the left  
where the English chauffeurs slept. The  
ponies lost all their shit, but we  
only lost our blankets, as our other stuff was  
in our shop. Chubby lost a sweater tho'.  
I ran around behind with a ladder  
and started for the roof for a try at  
the blankets. I was nearly up when  
at a door below me a Frenchman  
started yelling. The Englishman's French  
chauffeur was trapped and 3 men were  
trying to get the door open. I brought  
the ladder and we drove it in and  
a highly excited Frenchman in  
drawers and socks studied at. Then  
we loaded our own gas and got it

over across the street up the hill. By this  
time an antiquated hand pump had  
turned up and a crowd of foot headed  
soldiers. They managed to save the  
next horse with a hose and a bucket  
line, but there were rich incidents. The  
sweetest incident of all got the steam  
of a hose right in the face and the  
one man who'd climbed to a decent  
position to work had dropped it and  
lost all his labor. Finally it burned  
out and we pulled by the cabin to  
steal some mattresses and blouse  
blades salvaged from next door and  
turned in in the mechanics shop. Quite  
exciting! I saw a little parachute made  
of silk, saw foot square, ~~that~~ the other  
day, that is used for the basic exercise.  
A ~~light~~ <sup>plate</sup> is suspended from it and  
the whole shot from a kind of  
mater. <sup>patent.</sup> (The French use a pot of shot gun)  
Two days ago there was an  
awful crash, a merchant caravan had  
blown up at Lemnos, killing five  
men and unnumberably fooling to  
kill another. Two other caravans were

wanted. That's God I didn't go over, Chubby  
was haunted by it. One of the minor  
horrors was the remains of a man  
blown 50 yds. He had bled twice,  
leaving his arm in one hole and his  
liver in another. Again that's God I

didn't go. April 25 We have been just  
existing since my last entry, for it has been  
raining steadily when it wasn't hailing or  
sleetng. Liquid mud everywhere and cold wet  
feet always till I took to sabots. We have had a  
little work, I've been on the night duty  
again and we've been trying hard to pass  
the time between meals and sleeping.

Several cars have gone because of the  
difficulty of getting out of an muddy field.  
Though all the rain everyone has said it  
would clear up Easter, and sure enough it  
did. One night Chubby and I dined with the  
non-coms mess here and had a great  
time. The regiment is the 4th<sup>th</sup> Territorial  
who stood the first shock before Verdun,  
now at water road building. We had  
the most delicious rum cocktail I have  
ever tasted. I sat between a lawyer

and one of France's best architects and we had a time. Later that evening in the club I got talking to a Corporal Nicolas, who runs a sort of Express Co. in Paris. He said they were in front of Verdun with not even trenches, just sheltered behind gabions filled with dirt, all old men, fathers. The Germans bombarded for a hundred hours, but their losses were very small and they held on. He said "They expected we'd run, we did terrifically but we held and held". Finally they retreated grumbling and lay 6 days without light or heat in a railway tunnel. He was a great man on patrols and told me stories of them. Said the high sides on the German side were a great advantage for night work. Told of seeing a German point running through the woods and finally deciding not to shoot but to let the rest come on. The same man was shot 300 yards off later and they got the rest. He said the Germans in their patrols paid less attention to cover than to order and marched

understandingly to their goal. The French  
have the fault of over confidence after  
a while, they take great precautions for  
half an hour and then think there is  
no enemy for miles. A Frenchman the  
other day confessed this weakness for me  
"We French can create, but we can't  
perfect, we haven't the time". On  
Easter afternoon we went to a concert at  
Osches, given in a great barn hung  
with lanterns and decorated with fir boughs.  
There was a little stage at one end, and  
the band in a loft. We have fine  
band music and some solos on a  
"mandoline" that were one of the prettiest  
things I've ever listened to, clear silver  
tinkles and beautiful bass chords. There  
were a lot of songs and recitations, some  
by men who in "civil" had great music  
hall reputations. Songs very French but  
dripping. In the evening at Badelincant  
we went to Mass in a stable fitted  
up as a chapel with a little altar  
and tapers and fir branches on the  
walls. A very pretty little service

with a sort of military litany calling  
on the soldier saints in which all the  
standing audience joined. It sounded like  
the echoes of far-gone battle cries. Then  
Bayard, the Lt's orderly hit a singer at the  
Comique, sung. He was wonderful. After  
we left Chubby who had been much  
interested at the elevation of the host  
said he wasn't much on religion and  
asked me what was the meaning of the  
damn clause! Ben and I got to Barr  
and had baths ~~at~~ and good food and  
an amusing ride home with 2 of the  
English chauffeurs. We went beyond  
Bar to Scudles in search of Louis de  
Sartiz, but his regiment wasn't there.  
Mrs Doc Archer came down and  
had a long talk with me about the  
section. He hinted at giving me a  
section if I could stay beyond my  
six months, but I told him I couldn't.  
Well this is clean-up day. My  
motor is done, and I must wash the  
car after lunch. April 27 It has  
changed to brooding hot weather now

and still there is nothing to do. The heat is really awful and the dust is beginning to be very bad. We pass a little horse-bald, wash cans etc. and chat with soldiers continually. In the evenings we stroll up to the aviation field and watch movies coming home in the afterglow, or see a searchlight drifting over-head in the dark who looks like an errant star whose some place is wandering. Long talk yesterday with our friend Renaud of the 4th about everything under Heaven. He says Joffre is rather a name than a great general, the name under which the orders of the great war came down to captains. Petain and Costelneau are the big men. He said that when they were on the Verdun front a deserter told them 2 weeks in advance all the German plans, i. e. 100 hrs. bombardment beginning at 6 P. M. Feb. 21, then infantry. He also spoke of going out to ward & capture a German to get information, 50 fr. reward. Their guide or deserter told them his name. He was a famous spy. The setbacks

would get orders from time to time to  
pass "X". He would go through the lines  
and re-appear ten days perhaps later. He  
also said the gossip was that Vedunis, who is  
up here is engaged in dropping spies and  
picking them up behind the German lines.  
At one time when before Verdun his regiment  
was shelled with lodzyna gas. It smelled  
of apples and made you weep so your eyes  
closed. They had had shells full of irritant  
explode among them and an attack by what  
seemed a new gas. The clank came at  
supper one day and an order was received, but  
no good results. The next day at least the  
same time the men started dropping, their  
hearts congested into hard balls, dying as  
if struck by lightning. Last night three  
soldiers full of Pinard wandered in and  
entertained us. One played the flute  
marvelously, giving us all sorts of tunes,  
Soubre et Meuse and all. He was also  
quite an acrobat, diving over two stooping  
men, landing on his hands and  
turning a hand spring. Another sang  
a lot of songs well, and the

third and dumbest was the greatest living  
comedian. I never saw such a funny face  
and get-up. He gave us "poses plastiques"  
with an old rifle, mangled post, etc. and  
generally was the most amusing goat ever.  
More dope than Belmont. He is 38 or so  
his regiment. They were sent one to guide  
a young active regiment in an assault, advancing  
at the double in line of columns of squads on  
various roads. He said his men were all in  
when they arrived and all the work then  
was done by the others, young men from  
18 to 28. I guess there is something in this  
idea of grasping your man by the eyes.

He tells me that there was very little idea  
of revenge for 1870 in France before the war,  
but Abscon + herain have always spoken  
German and that if they were 20 yrs. in  
France they couldn't pronounce a French **GP**.  
A little observation on the dress of French officers.

The medals of rank are merely a short wide  
long strip of gold (silver for cavalry) on the  
cuff. 1 for 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt and so on up to a Lt. Col.  
5 mixed gold + silver, Col, 5 gold, general  
a star. In action they are fastened into the

cuff. In charge the officers generally take a  
rifle and bayonet. Very sensible all of it,  
April 28 The other day one of our <sup>observers</sup> ~~pilot~~ came  
in wounded in the foot, but he'd got the  
German. His machine, a double Caudron, had  
4 bullet holes low down on the front of the  
car, a bullet had crossed a strut over one  
of the engine gendras, and there were several  
holes in the wings. Yesterday one Caudron  
came in looking like a slaughterhouse, all  
blood. The pilot got a bullet through the  
wrist and had his other thumb shot off.  
He steered with one hand and stuck the  
other over for his observer to bandage  
and this got both bandaged and  
brought his machine home safely. Pretty  
good. Went to L'Hermines for raitaillement  
and then Scully for bread today and  
washed an ear. Yesterday afternoon I took  
a side Bosch from Scully to Benete-Saux,  
Cy was with me and I rode inside, both  
so as to talk with the prisoner, and also  
to guard him, for I was responsible. He  
was pretty sick, but a nice chap, a  
nan-car. Had been a prisoner a

used, after being before Verdun since the  
first of the war. Said Verdun was too  
strong for them, but Germany would only  
be beaten by starvation. Well treated  
by French, but little to eat. Said food  
etc. very expensive already in Germany.  
No ransom towards America. Quite an  
interesting chat, my German was so rusty it  
needed. Gave him cigarettes and he cut off  
a button for me. April 30 Wednesd yesterday  
lay sand of banks and dropped fire, a B-26  
said that got scared off before it could do any  
damage. In P.M. strolled about aviation field,  
dropped into German and some others. A bunch  
of Neupats came in each into what looked  
like a black stick protruding near each  
wing tip. They swooped down and suddenly  
there was a hiss and jet of smoke from each  
wing and a sort of rocket fell, like a  
golden rain spouting fire as it went. It's  
a new device for igniting Doodle and Zeps.  
The Neupats that are painted in the brown  
and green colors above are a sky grey  
beneath. Saw a lot of the new 110s and  
heard a 200 was coming out. One

had a big hole and several little ones  
in its gas tank from a shell. This  
essence lasted exactly to the field. I tried  
to see what the searchlights on the Farnas  
look like, but could only find the quarters,  
about half way out on our way driven  
by a little propeller. Some of the machines  
have a long box protruding some 14 ft.  
below, about six inches square. It is to  
take a new type of telescopic camera that  
has about the same dimensions and is said  
to be wonderful. This morning we were  
awakened again by firing, some very  
near, the 88mm gun probably. We could  
hear the scream of the shells. We piled  
out and saw a Bode unleashed into the  
crosses during and a bank of other  
machines that could not be made out.  
Shrapnel was breaking all over the  
sky and mixed with it was the ret. of  
the aviator's machine guns. An aviator  
told us later that three of five German  
planes fell in our lines, two near Sordly  
and one near Dugny. He himself had  
tracked + exploded the ammunition of a

German battery near Vaux. High wind yesterday and our field said that on this side of the Meuse he couldn't rise to over 1800 metres, try as he might; as soon as he crossed he shot up, to fall again on returning. This morning we went to the funeral of Peattie one of our good men. He was all shot up in his report ten hrs. in the German lines, but got back and fell dead in our hands about 100 metres up, with a bullet through his head and two in his kidneys. The little stone chapel was full and about half the crowd stood in the street with bowed heads as the casket went on within. Then the coffin was borne out by his mechanics as a squad of soldiers presented arms, put in a caisson and the procession started. First two boxes with a cross and holy water, then soldiers, then a man carrying a cushion on which were pinned the dead man's Legion of Honour, Medaille Militaire, and Croix de Guerre with 4 Palmes, next others carrying wreaths and then the tricolor-draped coffin on a caisson flanked

on either side by four soldiers with reversed  
arms, after it the bare headed crowd of  
Officers of all arms and grades mixed  
with privates etc. At the grave the coffin  
was lowered in and the priest said a  
short prayer and sprinkled holy water  
with the sign of the cross. Next the dead  
man's mechanic with tears streaming down  
his face threw in a glob of dirt on the  
coffin and then all the mechanics filed past  
and sprinkled holy water into the brush  
that was passed from hand to hand.

May 4 I was on duty at Queen de Mala  
Sunday night. Nothing doing except an  
early trip to Vaddaincart till about 2, when  
I got a trip to Deux Nords. All night the  
guns were thundering and as it was dark  
we could see the red and green flares  
and the fusées éclairantes hanging in  
the air. When I got to Deux Nords it  
was dark, but as I waited the first  
grey light began to appear and a  
multitude of little birds started  
singing their heads off. That chirp  
heard over the heights was an

experience to remember. The valleys were misty  
changing to mauve and royal purple, spires  
and regular cact trees were outlined blood  
against a sky that was always changing  
color, and always beautiful, pink, red, orange,  
yellow, with purplish clouds and, just as  
I got to Cuernavaca, a spindling of  
feathery shrapnel far on the horizon.  
I arrived to find the yard flooded with  
ambulances full of the most ghostly wands.  
The French had taken 700 meters at Mat  
Horne the day before and the Germans had  
been counter-attacking all afternoon with  
flares and etc. At night a French attack took  
2 tanks + 200 prisoners. This we picked  
out from the wands. I saw one French  
car in which 2 men had died out of 6.  
I was given a man to rush to Badalmeat  
he was bandaged all over except for  
2 inches of grey green face. His whole body  
contracted itself with his panting, and grey  
foam streamed from his mouth. The  
other two with him were bleeding through  
their bandages and left pools on the  
floor of the car. My hand driving I

got them there still alive and returned to  
take me, with ghastly burns and every  
other kind of mutilation possible. Yesterday  
the Order had came over and gave a  
wonderful concert in the hospital yard  
that I listened to between trips. It was  
heart rending to hear the feeble hand  
clapping from the hospital tents and  
buildings after each song time.

May 6 Had to change my first type on  
the road for a long time yesterday in  
a very hot and dusty place. Graham  
stopped and helped, so my wounded weren't  
kept waiting long. A terrific wind sprung  
up at supper time and very nearly  
carried our tent away. Three sausages  
actually were carried away after being  
hauled down and flew off empty. Some  
time ago the rope of a sausage was  
severed by a Newport accidentally and its  
occupants had to jump out into paratroops.  
There were a lot of Moroccan and  
Seythless wounded yesterday, the  
aftermath of an counter-attacks  
which continues. One of the

first looking man I've seen was a colonial  
non-com yesterday. (In colonial regiments the  
non-coms and high privates are French). He  
was in khaki with an arm in a sling and  
a line of medals. His face was deeply  
bronzed, a fine strong face with curly  
black moustache, and on his head was  
a vivid red fez with golden ornaments on it.  
One of the Canadian squadrons is leaving  
for Champagne, near Verdun. The rumors  
are that a big offensive is coming there and  
that the 20th Corps and a lot of colonels  
have gone there the assaulting troops. The  
gossip is that a great aeroplane attack is  
to descend all the German railways and  
then held till pop loose. The rockets we  
saw the other day were for this purpose, and  
the French have a compressed air canon  
with a new flame-spouting shell that  
is expected to do the trick. Navarre tried  
one out on his plane recently and got  
a Drocum early. Yesterday a German  
plane painted like a French one shot at  
one of ours from 5 metres off, but missed  
and the Frenchman got him. Day before

yesterday one of the Germanes Neypats was  
smoked at the second shot by a German  
gun, having been forced down to it  
by two Folders. The Germans seem to  
be clever at team play like this.  
The country round about is beautiful  
now. The season has changed at one burst  
from a perpetual rainy cold winter to  
full summer, still however with occasional  
showers. The horse chestnut trees in the  
village are in full bloom and are  
marvelous in the lay summer twilight,  
while all the woods are in full foliage  
and the apple trees blossoming. A couple  
of days ago Cluby, Hoelder and myself  
picnicked on the way back from Seilly  
in a wonderful broad forest on the Ordes  
road, where the great trees stood clear  
amid the tender green of the younger trees.  
We sat on a great felled trunk in  
a chasm of shadows and an old  
woodcutter came as we ate and talked  
to us about the woods and their  
life. We gave him some Petit Beunes  
for his old daughter on leaving and

he said he'd have been made as a  
nose guy. In Scilly we tried to photograph  
the prison camp of law shed and tent  
into a double row of barbed wire and  
sentries between and prisoners working,  
and looking inside. We didn't dare to do it  
too near though, so it may not show up  
well. The prisoners are quarantined two  
weeks in Scilly before being sent into the  
interior. May 14 A long spell of bad  
weather has prevented my writing. A new  
cannon arrived the other day that is  
perfectly tremendous, a regular Canadian  
looks like a Newport beside it. Its  
wing spread is terrific, it is long, and its  
fuselage is enclosed and stream-line.  
It looks like a Zep. The rudder is a  
single tremendous upright, like the Newport.  
It is driven by two sets of engines in 2 galleys,  
each 12 cylinder Renault stationary motor,  
air cooled (only the Vauxin is water cooled).  
In the bow is the seat for an observer,  
whose machine gun sweeps everything  
ahead, next comes the pilot, and then a  
third man with two guns, one sweeps

above to the rear, and the other flies below  
through a hole in the floor. Its trial  
flight here was a great sight, with 2  
Newports skimming around it like sparrows  
round a hawk. It is supposed to be  
fast, 150 kts. Got a lot of French loot  
at Avenue de Mala recently, and saw  
grenade practice in the field, the  
grenades being thrown in volleys and  
sounding like blasting, while a huge  
cloud of smoke drifted by. May 16  
The officers' "gallias" are cancelled in action,  
either by being turned into the cuff, or  
detached. Saturday we were invited by  
the B.I.C., the Lt's old regiment, to Oserville  
for a concert. There was a special  
program, including "Jacks Doodle", and  
the "Spangler Banner" to which we stood  
at attention and saluted. The regiment  
was a splendid active one, healthy  
sturdy fighting men, and the officers a  
quintessence crowd, most of them wounded  
several times and wearing wound  
gallias on the right arm. We were  
presented to the General of the army

who made us a little complimentary speech,  
and there was a second general treat too.  
All got up for us and very nice. The  
buglers in the band had a wonderful  
stunt of twirling their trumpets in unison  
as they raised and lowered them. Sunday  
two of the officers came to lunch, a capt. &  
a Lt. They said they'd ask the Col's permission  
to take us through the trenches to which they  
are going in a couple of days, at Vanquais,  
a very hot place near Mont Hamme.  
Went to Bar yesterday with Howells and  
Criswell and came back with an  
aviator, a canier driver and a bombardier  
as passengers. ~~Foot~~ The drive down  
was splendid, a hard rain in the  
foree all the way, the roads were  
full of active regiments and some  
heavy artillery going up; a new  
army camp they say. It had cleared  
up so we came home and was a  
beautiful sunset, after the rain evening.  
Today is very fine and hot. Just  
after lunch another active regiment  
went through. First came the band which

wheeled out in the village and played them through, while the colonel and staff sat their horses near by. It made your hair tingle to see these soldiers singing past on their way to death at Metz House, every man a husky fighter, while the band played marches and marching songs; the second battalion went by to "Au près de ma blade", a lot of munitions, machine gun sections etc. are going up, something doing. May 20

Got dope from an artillery observer on the flare signals. Red means increase the range, green means decrease, and three rockets together mean to open a tin de bonnets.

Yesterday morning I went in with Pottle at 5.30 to market in Bar, beautiful fresh morning. The market was fine and the smell made me think of my first impression of France, the Cherbourg market. Countless little stalls, behind each a woman, or a boy or old man and edging by a crowd of women with baskets and net bags, and soldiers. Everything was on sale, meat, fish, vegetables,

candy, preserves etc. You pinched cabbages  
and compared prices and generally had a  
time. Then we bought cherries and bricks  
and went to the shop for breakfast, big  
loaves of coffee and butter for our breakfast.  
By the way there is a near sugar  
famine on, a lot of villages have none  
and some stores in Ban displayed  
signs saying "Pas de sucre". Returned  
in awful dust. After lunch a double  
Caudron whose motor had gone dead  
fell on the hill behind the hospital in  
the worst possible ground. It was all  
crushed, the tail wrenched around the  
body and the motor well in the dirt,  
but both men walked off, only one  
having slight injuries on his arm. That  
evening Thibaut was to take me up in a  
Veisin, but his machine wasn't working  
so he'll do it later. He however showed  
me all over his car. The seats are  
in front of the motor in one box. In  
front of the pilot are gauges for altitude,  
speed in the ground, gas and voltage.  
A little propeller and dynamo in one

wing furnish current to run two little lights on the wing tips, to make them visible at night, a cockpit light, and three searchlights on a bar below the body. They can be tilted by a lever in the cockpit and are for lighting up the landing. All lights were by buttons in the cockpit and the Visim has a regular crank here too. The bombs are carried inside and the safety cap unscrewed just before they are dropped by hand over the side. Wire loops on the side are for lighting. Heavier bombs are carried in holders screwed on the side. The "lead" is estimated by the speed dial and weather reports of wind velocity. A telegraph on one side operates the wireless that unearns through a tube when the machine is up. All was very interesting. I think I forgot to mention 2 things in the post. One was seeing three great wild boars trot across the road in the glare of my headlights some nights ago. The other was the

new camera installation on the Farmans.  
A box protruding some three feet below  
to take a telescopic camera of  
corresponding dimensions. The old Farmans  
are no good, shaver than a Veisin and  
less stable. The Veisin has <sup>one</sup> telescope  
~~and~~ springs and thus made ascent and  
descent comfortable. Last night and  
today there has been a terrific incessant  
bombardment of big pieces and the  
news is that the Boches are attacking  
here and in Champagne, stealing the  
offensive from the French. Bad air news.  
Berlatti, who has got 5 Boches, was  
attacked by 5 yesterday and now lies  
in an ambulance, - bullets through his  
heart and forehead. No one on hearing  
it dashed off and got one, his 1st, ten  
in an hour and nine in the Boches! He  
has painted his machine red and is  
constantly pulling dices and dead  
leaf falls and loops etc. as he  
comes home, or doing a banding  
rise. We hear he's dropped a letter  
telling the Boches where the red one is.

To resume, another French plane was lost this morning, a German observer was killed yesterday, and two Scribly machines lost. However we got 5 Bochs the day before, and a Boche observer just walked by followed by a mounted gendarme. May 24 For several days the Neupats had been practicing with the rockets for saucisses, some had 4 or 5 lengths of small pipe lashed horizontally between their wings at the tips, thus they got a regular shower of rockets. On the 21<sup>st</sup> they all went out early and got 8 out of the 12 Boche saucisses, the other 4 being pulled down. One Neupat was lost. All that day the commanding was terrific, as we were to attack Duvaumont. We had orders to move to Bar the 23<sup>rd</sup>, so the Brits. were to take an night service, but they had so much to do during the day that we went up. We got flooded at one and had to call all our cars and get 8 Brits

to go to Fleury les d'Amiens. I was on the go  
all night, 3 trips to Chaumont, 2 to  
Fleury and 2 to Sodelain court, some  
2.10 Rs. with 31 wounded, got back dead  
and turned in for an hour's sleep, then  
a trip to Bar-le-duc. Long delay there,  
so I didn't get back till 7.30. Got up  
at 6 next morning and went to Nubécourt  
and from there to Bar-le-duc. The  
Nubécourt medical chief rode with me  
and was perfectly delightful. Home for  
lunch, and should have gone to Bar  
again, but I had a broken front  
spring and worked on the car. To bed,  
but at 11 all hands were called  
to Avenue de Mala and worked till  
7 this morning, the 25<sup>th</sup>. Turned in  
and got called at 1.30 for Bar-le-duc.  
My right rear roller bearing is gone  
so I am alone in camp. They are  
sending crowds of axes down in  
troop caissons to Bar, the trains are full  
up, and most of the hospitals are too.  
At that the men from Chaumont  
say we're only getting the light cross

as only those who can walk can get to the rear, the rest are lying there. Henry talks with a bunch of young class of '15ers. They had been gassed by a new method, gas rifle grenades, that arrived with no warning and knocked you out before you could get your mask on. The one I talked with principally had been knocked right out, but was doing finely. He said if he breathed hard he had a bad pain in the lung, but was otherwise all right. His friend was not affected till next morning and was fearfully sick, lying there gasping and moaning and vomiting. The tent was full of such ghastly gas cases. They described the colored troops bursting out of the trenches with no rifles, but a bayonet in their hand and knives in their teeth, letting out the worst yell ever heard. The Germans couldn't stand against them they'd dig them in the stomach with the bayonet and slash their heads off with the knives. The

French attacked a company at a time  
in groups of 12 with 50 ft. between  
lines, but the Germans came by  
divisions poured six deep. All said  
the German infantry was useless.  
My friend had lain in the German  
lines pretending to be dead till the  
French re-took the ground. Document  
is being taken and re-taken and the  
most terrific bombardment is going  
on. A French plane has just come  
in and says the Germans are making  
a "fantastic" attack, and the French  
are calling for reinforcements. Now  
for aviation. Thebaut tells me that  
6 Urisis went on a daylight  
raid recently and 5 fell in flames  
in the German lines. Daylight  
bombing is about over. The bombing  
machines are too slow and a host of  
fast planes rise and block the  
homeward path and either get the  
raiders or force them down on the  
anti-aircraft guns. The funeral of  
Berlot was more than impressive.

A rough shrine was put up under the trees and the coffin in front of it, another pilot and an observer were buried also.

In a great semi-circle stood troops and a brilliant assemblage of wonderfully uniformed and medalled officers. Among them was Navarre, always keeping in the rear and quietly dressed. The chanted service was most impressive and then came the slow march to the cemetery and the sprinkling of the grave by all. Another impressive thing was a presentation of the Legion of Honour to a wounded doctor. The Orches band was there and a company of soldiers. The doctor with his head all bandaged supported himself by a chair in front while the band played and the soldiers presented arms. Then the medicine chief read his citation, praising his courage and then struck him on both shoulders with his sword, pinned on the medal and kissed him on both cheeks. A march past of the troops completed it. The American

anation squads has come to Bar  
le due, and Victor Chapman and  
Norman Price have been looking  
for me here a number of times, but  
I've been out. Yesterday Rockwell was  
here to lunch with a fresh wound  
in his hip where a bullet passed  
through taking a tooth with it. The  
whole squadron has been in action  
15 miles in Roche territory. He  
was quite cheerful and unbandaged.  
Lata Hall, a Texas cowboy came in  
and then Coradin, who has just got  
the Médaille Militaire. They had  
got a Roche but had had the  
small bone of his elbow broken  
by a bullet; doing well though.  
Hall had been in the foreign legion  
and is a character. Had seen the  
English in regular disgraceful route  
before the main, small bodies  
of them lost in their flight without  
even rifles. The Germans are formidable  
in the air now. They have a  
1,000 shot machine gun to the Lewis' 47

and no open fire at extreme range and try for luck shots. Ballot was killed at 500, while the French never shoot over 100. Also the Boche use explosive bullets, like little shells, and the new Christie de chasse is faster than the 30 Newport. Prince came again today while we were all asleep, he'd been badly shaken up in a forced landing when his gas gave out. Victor had a narrow shave, his machine being riddled and bullets passing very close to his body. The squadron has got 3 Boches however since arriving. Freeman, one of the new men, has been telling me about going down with the Lusitania, a terrific account. He says the sailors behaved very badly, and also blames the captain for disregarding instructions to keep 60 miles further out. Well no more at present, I must try to catch up a little sleep. June 2. On May 30 Victor turned up and lunched with us, as entertaining as ever. He said that made the 3<sup>rd</sup> Newport

Prima had smacked. Vito's machine was all shot up, in particular three holes just under his seat, and his sleeve was cut by a bullet that had exploded there while grazing by, giving him a blow, but not scratching him. His gun had jammed. He described the sighting for bomb-dropping more in detail. You take two observations, one at fixed angles, taking the time between. From this time and your altitude a table gives you the amount of "lead". Just after lunch a New York World man turned up with a movie machine and took us shooting up, at lunch, in a group, rushing to our cars, and a faded *paste de papiers* act in Beauzic, at which later I am glad to say I didn't assist. After his going we got the order to move to Bar next day. Half the cars went in early in convoy, dumped bedding at our quarters, a section of an old monastery school now used as a barracks, and went on duty, the rest following later after packing up. The quarters are fearfully picturesque, a good courtyard with stone balconies and quaint

coming everywhere. The duty is to stay on  
call either at the station, at the sorting  
hospital 50 yds. down the road, or at the  
big hospital near the station. Hours of  
loafing and lots of short & long trips  
regular Taxi-work. Tax carry about 50 a  
day. Now to come to the big event. On  
June 1 I was on duty at the sorting  
place at about half past twelve when I  
heard an airplane motor and saw a  
Nepent very low overhead; my eyes went  
higher and there were three silvery white  
planes against the blue sky. Near their wing  
tips was the black iron cross. Almost  
at once the bombs started crashing around  
the station. We saw wildly fleeing crowds  
and explosions and flying shrapnel and men  
falling. I was first in line and crawled  
up and started for the station, a bomb  
bursting in the place de la base when I  
was nearly there. A man staggered and  
fell almost beside me and I stopped,  
loaded him up with one of the fellows'  
help and whirled him off. Then the  
planes came back and the bombs

became incessant, all over the train, the people dived back. I stopped my car outside the Hotel de la Gare, they were loading a wounded boy and a woman on another car and for the minute there was nothing to do and I stepped into the door way opposite. From inside I heard screams of "Am secours" and found a man in the back of the house, lying on his face with his entrails showing through a fearful hole in his back. He had really crawled into the hole from the dining room. I called Paul from across the street and we lifted the open watch as a stretcher and got him in my car and I took him to a hospital near the Place Reggie. The Bd. de la Rochelle was absolutely deserted as I sped up it, except for a crowd in the door of the Café de Commerce, and I could see 4 Boches overhead, while all around the banks were crashing. As I came back that crowd had disappeared. Suddenly a bomb hit close behind me, then another and another, getting nearer and nearer till

I thought the last ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> ~~have~~ hit my  
tail board. Then one lit just ahead  
on the horses to the right, and great  
rocks crashed down in front of me.  
One chunk bounced ~~straight from~~  
~~the~~ and hit the woodwork just back  
of my head as I automatically ducked.  
As I turned and crossed the river  
banks were lifting on the river road  
and wounded horses were about. This  
does not pretend to be a coherent  
account; it was a sort of nightmare  
experience with incidents sticking out.  
Getting to the station too late to get  
May an Englishman and several others  
and seeing the pods of blood and  
spattered flesh as the others loaded them,  
turning back to the hotel and taking  
a dead woman and a wounded  
little boy, so brave through it all.  
I shall never forget the awful rage  
that swept over me as we loaded  
them. For half an hour the bombs  
fell and for half an hour I was  
reluctantly getting wounded on

stretchers, loading up and speeding to the  
hospital, carrying about 15. Everywhere was  
blood and flesh and broken glass and  
shattered masonry, ghostly wailed and  
dead that were laid aside till the  
wounded had been cared for. Through  
it all we looked and wailed, the  
only living creatures on the street. Finally  
Sherwood started floating in the air  
and the B-29s left. I glimpsed 4 just  
then, very low. Still we kept going  
carrying wounded and corpses. As I looked  
one poor old civilian I asked his  
wife to come. She said she wasn't  
well, ~~though~~ dressed poor old thing, but  
finally her eagerness made her come.  
I carried a little dead baby,  
and more dead women. All through it  
there was a helpless sensation of fear.  
I sweat hard, had an awfully dry  
mouth and was always conscious of  
the planes overhead. You wanted  
awfully hard to duck for shelter, but  
a sort of social pride kept you  
going. After it, all Bar was cracking

us up. I heard a girl say "Ils n'ya  
que les Américains qui n'ont pas peur  
quand les Taupes viennent!" The section  
really did do itself proud and it  
was God's mercy no one was hit. An  
éclat just missed Barclay's head  
and made a hole in his ear, but  
the real escape was Gen. Holt's, a  
bomb landed fifteen feet from him  
and didn't explode. After that Powell,  
just behind ~~me~~ saw Vell's head  
loose ~~was~~ on the Blvd. de la  
Rochelle ~~just~~ took the river road  
just as the bombs fell there. After it  
was over we all got really scared,  
and the whole town now gets a panic  
if a Newport flies overhead, or a crash  
is heard. Never will I forget the  
awfully helpless feeling as I ran  
into it all at the first, with panic  
stricken people tearing the other way  
and the bombs crashing just ahead;  
or my sensations on the Blvd. de la  
Rochelle. Altogether 52 were killed and  
over 160 wounded, 15 planes attacked

and three between 50 and 80 balls.

June 7 The funeral of the victims was very impressive. A trier dropped altar was erected in the Place Exelmans and a lot of chairs in front of it, the crowd being kept back. Then down the street came the sound of a death march, played very slowly, and the band with muffled drums came on, followed by a guard of soldiers with reversed arms, then clergy and then the hearse, ~~the~~ twelve great trier dropped waggons drawn by three horses and with French flags flying from the shields on their sides. Each was followed by a host of mourners, women crying their hearts out, and soldier sons weeping with them, and soldiers following the bodies of companions. In the rear and most pathetic of all was a white wagon full of children's corpses. A host of high officers and Mrs. Poincaré followed on. At the square the hearse drew up on both sides of the altar and there was a most impressive service, and then the procession filed off to the cemetery.

A host of private friends are going on also, for ~~the~~ many of the wounded are dying. Major's arm has been amputated and there is doubt as to whether his leg can be saved. Two pathetic incidents stick out. The evening of the bombardment a very polite small French boy came sobbing by and told us that his little brother was seriously wounded and two of his friends killed. The way he took off his hat and "mourned" us, in the midst of his tears was really touching. Then the next day I went to get another bank station at a house. I found a young man, not very seriously wounded, but his poor old mother was in a state. She had lost her other son at Verdun and mingled with her peasant's distrust of the hospital was her awful fear that she had done wrong in not sending this one to the hospital at once. She was petting him and giving him a load of wine and money for tobacco and every little comfort she could think of. The Boches bomb

had liquid air as a bursting charge,  
the first time they've used it, though the  
French always do. That was why there  
was no smoke when they burst. To  
eatime, we dined with the American  
officers and had a fine time. Their French  
captain certainly had a marvelous  
collection of photographs. Today the  
Vosges section broke into two, and  
Perry of section 4 turned up too. I  
forgot to mention I had gone through,  
but I didn't see them. I lunched with  
a lot of B. Cookman, John Marver,  
Dan B. [unclear], and Henry Hill. Altogether a  
very social day. Andrew was here two  
days ago and wanted me to sign up for  
six months more as T's command. I  
told him I wouldn't promise or in any  
way lead him to think I would more  
than serve at my time, but that I  
would not of course leave him in a  
hole and would think things over seriously  
when the time came. Under these  
conditions I told him I'd take the job.  
I didn't see him before he left, so I

don't know whether he wants me to  
take it under these circumstances or  
not. He says he'll send us ten  
more new cars inside a month, five  
have just come and will give us good  
new ones. The section by the way was  
congratulated by ~~the~~ headquarters  
for its services in the bombing.

June 8 Talked with 2 "pet deurs" in  
singed clothes. They spray burning  
fluid either from fixed tanks in the  
trenches, or from a portable one on their  
backs. A hand pump supplies the pressure  
and a flame ignites it at the nozzle.  
The liquid is a mixture of oil, gasoline and  
Derosine. It is used on attacking forces from  
the fixed tanks, having a range of about  
30 yds, and is used for cleaning out  
abris from the portable tanks. Dined in  
the station the other night and had an  
interesting talk with 2 French artillerymen  
and an infantry lieutenant. They told  
of Germans establishing barbed wire  
with gas shells in various etc. Also of said  
that dummy guns were much used to

amuse the German gunners and get heavily shelled. The French move them around in batteries to keep up the deception, and often plant them nearby to distract attention from an actual battery. They said the worst gun, worse even than the 110 was the Austrian 130. The velocity is so great that the shell arrives right on top of the report so that no time is given to hunt the shell. The officer told us that they'd learned from the Germans to always stagger their barbed wire, or arrange it in runways etc, so that attacking troops getting through it will present their flank to the machine guns that will thus get in their best work. June 19. There had been constant rain since from June 1 to the 17<sup>th</sup>, that is there was a lot of showers every day, a little sun and a lot of heavy rains. The 17<sup>th</sup> was a good day, ~~and sun~~ The day before Lovell had gone to Paris, leaving me in command, I'm now chef. Also Graham and Pottle left by train for good, and Mann and Riggs took cars to Paris to get their teeth fixed. A new French

lieutenant, Robotanashi, arrived, who seems  
a wander. Well at noon on the 17<sup>th</sup> there  
was a bomb alarm, and one German  
scout plane was seen towards Rerigny,  
all air planes were up though and nothing  
happened. Since the first bombing signs signs  
have been put on houses all over the  
Town "Caves Vartés. <sup>par</sup> <sup>personnes</sup>".  
At the alarm everyone looks for them, the  
alarm being a siren. Well we had  
another false alarm that afternoon, and  
then at 8 at night (new war time) the  
Germans really came. The alarm got  
almost everybody under cover before the  
planes appeared. The station gang joined  
us in the hospital yard and we watched  
for planes, and very soon we heard the  
anti-aircraft guns and saw five planes  
overhead. We all went into the hallway  
of the hospital and the bombs started  
crashing around town. Twice I started  
out to see if it was all over. The  
first time I just got out in the  
court in time to ~~see~~ hear the  
whistle of a bomb and beat all

records in doors. The second time I  
got pretty well out in the yard and a  
bomb crashed not 40 ft. from me, on the  
roof of the glass covered passage  
leading to the Place de la Gare. I dove  
for the door again and as I went  
saw out of the tail of my eye the  
 éclats and debris flying around me.  
The bomb killed two men about  
20 ft from me and wounded two  
more, and the concussion nearly  
knocked me down. The next day we  
found éclats at the other end of the  
yard that couldn't have missed  
me by much. As soon as the  
bombing was over we tore all over  
town, but there were very few victims,  
some 4 killed and 12 wounded in all.  
Two lucky bombs, tho' they missed  
a train, took a section of rails out of  
the rails on a siding, several houses  
were also well riddled by bombs  
dropping in front of them. Only about  
half as many bombs were dropped  
as the first time, and they were well

scattered all over town, no pretense for instance of concentrating on the station. A general congratulated one of the squads that evening and seemed well pleased with our work. I forgot to say that that afternoon Holt and I had a fine time with some perles, one of them a Russian ex-legionary who remembered Viter Chapman. About midnight there was a Zep alarm, and at the quarters everyone on the top floor came packing down, the French for the cellar, but the other boys to turn in with us. Nothing came of it, tho' apparently these alarms are all real, but the enemy is often stopped on the lines. Yesterday morning there were two alarms, and then at noon about two o'clock a third, and sure enough we soon saw four planes, with in advance a black plane with white crosses, Bobber I think. Everyone was well under cover and there were not more than six or eight casualties all told, though a lot of bombs were

dropped. Again we tore around town  
after it. Most of the side roof was  
gone off the house that is Petain's headquarters,  
but no one was hurt. A lot of balls  
fell on the aviation field and there  
was one slight wound and a small  
shack pretty well shattered. I got a  
fuse tip from a mechanic who had  
dug up three. As I drove up there  
Cawdin and the Captain came in  
and rushed to the telephone to see  
if a observer had seen a German  
plane. Cawdin thought he had gotten  
them. They told me that Victor had  
attacked the black Bode plane and  
got his machine well shot up and a  
gaze on the head when a bullet  
went through his helmet. He'd got  
bandaged at Fridos and was flying  
home. Soon after we got back to the  
yard a call came from the aviation  
field for a car with two stretchers.  
Haveler and I rushed up to in his  
car and were directed up the  
road to where a column of smoke

across in the midst of a crowd. A  
Breguet, just starting off, had fallen  
from about 20 yards up and had  
caught fire instantly. Under it had  
been pinned the two aviators, we trust  
killed by the fall. When we got there  
the wing was skeleton and the  
gasoline was blazing fiercely over the  
motor and car, a badly damaged detached  
arm and shoulder piece. After ten  
minutes it got the wing got cool enough  
so that the ground crew could drag the  
machine, still blazing, away a little, and  
push the training centre over with bits of  
frags. Out of the debris they raised two  
bodies and carried them clear on a  
shard board, while the smell of  
burned flesh effaced the sweet smell  
of the meadow grass and flowers.  
Fire extinguishers had to be played  
on the corpses, ~~and~~ which I shall  
not describe. Finally we wrapped  
them in canvas ~~and~~ put them  
in the machine and took them to  
the chapel at the Hospital Mate, with

a crowd of their friends following in a car. After we'd taken them out the car reeked with the horrible burnt smell and there were charred fragments on the floor and a little pool of not blood but gravy. It was the craning horror I have seen over here.

Last night Walter got back from Pont, bringing flowers and a basket of strawberries from the garden of the house the section lived in. He says the French tried out a new 520 near Pont. They fired 2 shots, the concussion almost shook the town to pieces, and 300 were killed in Metz. There was another alarm at about half past eight last night, and yet another early this morning. We all pray for rain now and today the clouds are low and thick, though the sun is struggling to get through - July 5 Victor's uncle, Mr. Charles, came to see him, and we had a long talk at the station café. Victor told of his narrow escape. He was flying toward San Boche, keeping them in

view, when the black plane of Balle  
suddenly dove on him from behind, it  
was a regular ambush. Victor dove, with  
Balle on top of him, but Victor over-dove,  
turned over, and so escaped. He flew  
low holding together with one hand the  
rod that catches banding, it was shot  
in two. He showed it to us and had  
given it to Mr. Charles. We saw the letter  
off at the station and then Victor went  
off to the field. I never saw him again.  
That same day came the news that  
Balsley had been very seriously wounded  
and was at Vadelaincourt and the next  
morning Balle arrived, having been sent  
from Paris to see him. I took him out to  
Vadelaincourt and we were delighted to  
find Balsley cheerful, with a fair colour,  
and a real handgrip. He had his  
hip broken up and a lot of fragments  
in the stomach, but luckily the  
intestine was not pierced. The doctor  
gave him a 75% chance, but the  
seriousness of his wound was  
proved by their giving him the

Croix de Guerre and the Medaille Militaire  
without waiting for a citation. He  
showed us the bullet fragments they  
had gotten out of him. First there was  
a slender steel pencil about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch  
long by  $\frac{1}{16}$  in diameter, tapering down  
to a flat point, then there was scraps  
of jacketing and some lead. Apparently  
there was lead around the steel core  
and an air chamber in front of it,  
a most effective dum-dum, rather on  
the principle of the Ross bullet. Baskley  
had sailed into 14 Boches single handed,  
his first fight I believe, and his  
machine gun had jammed. After  
seeing him we saw a mess and a  
brancardier being decorated and then  
saw old friends and heard all the  
news. Renaud was especially glad to  
see us. The graveyard was bigger  
than ever, and there had been a  
lot of air activity and we had  
had several losses, including the  
big 3 man Caubren. Also the  
Boches had dropped some bombs,

several just back of the hospital, and  
on right where an old tent was.  
They had also bombed Saily, killed  
4 out of the six cooks in town, and  
a lot of prisoners in the camp, rather  
poetic justice. We went back by the  
main road and then started out in  
the Lt's machine to dice with section  
4 at Ippecant. We had a lot of  
the table, but got there for the  
dinner Rantal was giving for his  
Cris de Cris. There were lots of  
speakers and afterwards I had a long  
talk with Perry about his methods etc.  
They ran up to just behind the  
Mat Home now and are catching  
hell, all kinds of shells ~~and~~, including  
gas. More the table going here.  
The next day we heard the bad  
news that Victor had been killed  
and they told me about it at the  
field. Minnie and someone else  
swooped on a Boche, a second  
one swooped on them and Victor  
and the Captain swooped on him.

then something must have got Victor.  
None of them saw him fall, but  
a French aviator saw his plane  
falling with both wings broken.  
The papers were very nice about it  
and said he got two of the Bords  
before he fell. War gets the best and  
he was it, absolutely simple and  
unspoiled always and with a daring  
that checked at nothing. Saturday  
morning, the 23<sup>rd</sup> I got a cable  
to come back as the Troop was  
mobilised. I put in for an order at  
once, but the next Saturday's boat  
was the first available. Doc Anderson  
came in answer to my wire and  
we talked things all over at length.  
I handed the finances over to Ogilvie  
and made him acting pay-chef  
till Doc should send down Walter.  
A wounded boy from section 5  
came in, also the second one of  
them who has lost his nerve.  
They are catching hell, sleeping  
under shell fire at Dugny, and

running up to Ft. de Tarames I think  
it is, under fire all the way. Austin  
Mason, their chef, I saw in town for  
a moment. Monday we got orders  
to move Tuesday to - Petit Menthain  
to do the same old war. The 1st.  
and I went out to look it over. They  
have got a lush screen along the  
Grilly-Menthain road now, the  
result of too much shelling. We saw  
shells landing up the valley, but  
none near. We are taking over the  
quarters of the French section and  
should be very well off. The staff  
of the hospital has changed and is  
very nice now. They say the Bodes  
still shell Arcement and Villers  
and that 60 planes dropped bombs  
around a few days before. The  
next morning, as my order still  
didn't come, I went up as a driver  
in a car 62 with Chubby, who is  
to fill Walter's shoes in Paris  
till Galeati gets back. We

alternated at the wheel and made  
Paris very pleasantly in about  
8 hours, with one blow out. In Paris  
had a hectic time getting a saddle  
etc. and clearing up things at the  
ambulance, also a party with Bob  
Moss, and one with Rantoul, who is  
really ruined by his *Cris de  
Course*, met a cavalry Capt. Boyd  
at the Embassy and lunched with  
him and his wife, getting a heap  
of Mexican dope. Called on Mrs.  
Lee Childs and then had a  
terribly hot ride to Bordeaux  
Saturday. Had a marvelous  
farewell dinner at the "Chopin fin"  
with a Mr. Baynes I met on the  
train, and then embarked, stuck on  
a mud bank mat of Sunday  
and were sham over the naval 75  
masted off. Are now well at  
sea, on the boat I swear never  
to step on again — ha Tarraine.  
So this diary finishes with a typical  
example of my best!

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