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Samuel P. Fay's Diary (2)

1915 July 6- August 27

Digital ID: 1_053_2

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JULY 6 - 11.

Brenner and I left Paris on the eleven thirty-two train for Dunkerque each with our blanket roll and a small dunnage bag. Our military passes allowed us only a second class ticket but by paying the "supplement" we went first class. Although we were on hand over half an hour ahead of time the train was already well filled with French, English and Belgian soldiers and officers bound for their regiments, which they would rejoin at different points at the front. In our compartment was an elderly man, who only intended going a short way, so we looked forward to plenty of room in which to stretch out and sleep. However, we were disappointed. Soon two Belgian officers joined us. That gave us only a normal amount of room and after reading and talking for a while we tried to sleep sitting up. It was not very satisfactory and our slumbers were rather spasmodic as the train, which only crawled along, stopped every few kilometres. First I slept with my left cheek pressed on the side of the arm and then with my right cheek on the other side.

After sunrise it was impossible to even slumber and as the country was very beautiful I looked out of the window more or less. Later we came to fine cultivated fields with wheat, oats and barley as the chief crops and for long distances we went through that type of country. The wheat and oat crops especially were fine and ripening fast. The effect was very beautiful as the wind blew in waves across the fields of growing grain. Owing to the intensive cultivation the crops were much finer and the yield heavier than is the case in Western Canada, where I have seen the crops the last three years. There was no dining car of course so we got no breakfast, but a bottle of vichy, which I brought along, was a great help. All along at every station we passed soldiers. Finally we came to some enormous camps of British troops, - the largest being near Etapes. The tents stretched for miles and the rows of white canvas were very effective in the early morning sunlight. About noon we reached Calais and there having an hour's wait had lunch and a delicious one it was for only three francs. In spite of the war the food is good everywhere and although more expensive not very much so. Then we started off on another train for Dunkerque, which we reached three hours later.

A telegram had been sent to have an ambulance meet us, but no car was there. However, a St. John's (British) hospital ambulance was at the station on duty, and they offered to take us up, as another car was due to relieve them shortly. The English lad, who was about twenty-two, was a nice looking fellow with clean cut features, so typical of most of these young Englishmen in the British Red Cross here. Whether they are men not fit for military service or merely have taken up this form of work to get out of the army I am not sure, but I am afraid it is the latter. At the other end of the town he left us at the American Ambulance villa, which is in a block of brick houses on the beach, for the sand comes right up to our door. For miles in both directions stretches the beach and it looks good (with prospects of swimming) as it is three years since I have spent the summer with the breeze blowing off the sea. The ambulances, all Fords, were stationed outside and showed the effects of the hard steady service they have had. The sand continually whirling around and under them, with the frequent rains they have had here, made them look like old relics. We went inside and after hearing so much about the comfortable villa, with its sea bathing, were rather disappointed because the rooms inside were none too clean, - apparently brooms were a scarce article in Dunkerque. One flight up is the sitting and dining room in one, with a little balcony, overlooking the beach and water, and above are three floors with two little bedrooms on each. There were one or two beds, but nearly all of the men quartered there sleep on mattresses on the floor. The next morning after breakfast, I went up to get a broom and sweep out our room, but I found one of our room-mates (for there are five of

us in our room) already at the job. After a while, the room looked respectable, but not until we had filled a five bushel basket with dust and dirt and rubbish! Half an hour later another of our room-mates, appeared in the same room, intending to do some work himself! But to his surprise, he found the room all spic and span.

We were both assigned to our Fords, but will not go out to Coxyde, which is near Nieuport, at present. Half the squad is there and we will have to wait our turn. It is interesting here on the beach, as soldiers, cavalry and aeroplanes go by all day long. Also torpedo boats, which patrol the coast, follow closely along the shore in pairs. The town is full of French, British and Belgian soldiers. Since the last bombardment (June 22nd) most of the hospitals here have been evacuated and many stores deserted. The effect of the dropping of a lot of 17 inch shells into Dunkerque is terrific, and many buildings, as well as a church, have been blown to pieces. During the bombardment the men had interesting work, as they went about the city, rescuing the victims of the big shells, which often struck close by them. The gun was located about twenty-three miles away and the British shelled it and they think put it out of action. Every few doors (every house that has a good cellar) there is a red flag and a big placard which reads "Refuge en cas d'alerte". So when the bombardment starts up again, people can dive into a good cellar. But the trouble is, I should think, there might be a chance of being buried in there for good. The men, some of whom have been here since January, have had interesting and thrilling experiences at the front, going to the battle fields just back of the trenches for wounded. Now it is quieter, but the Germans soon will start a big desperate offensive movement for Calais, and then there will be enough work for all.

I am trying to locate Symes and Jones, the two Canadians, who were on our trip in British Columbia last year, but I think it will be difficult work. They are with one of the Canadian Contingents, but goodness only knows where they are. The food is very simple here and almost scanty, as all we get is meat and one vegetable (generally beans) and bread and butter with coffee or tea of course. Consequently we are apt to buy some fruit or cookies, during the day.

To-day, (the 9th) I spent a good part of the time in overhauling the car, which has been assigned to me. It has not been gone over since last January, when it came here, and during that time, it has seen almost continuous hard service. I started out by taking the head of the motor off to clean the carbon off the cylinders, then ground the valves and wound up by filling the grease cups, oiling the car and going over every bolt and nut. So this evening it is in fine running order once more. To-morrow, after I have patched up three spare tubes, the car will be all ready for service at the front, where I expect to be sent early next week on the next shift. This is really a bully spot and the work and life far ahead of that in Paris. In the first place, all our loafing moments are spent on the little balcony that hangs over the beach. It is always lively in front as there are lots of cunning little children playing about and we often go down and join them. Also there is a continuous stream of British, Belgian and French soldiers and officers going along the walk below and horsemen patrolling the beach, as well as sentinels. Just now the twin torpedo boats are going by on their search for stray mines and general patrol work. Aeroplanes have been very numerous, for as it was a perfect day, with fine atmospheric conditions, it looked as though the Germans might start bombarding and they were on the look out for "taubes". However, the wind was the wrong way for the Germans. At such a great distance, the conditions must be perfect for the big guns. The shells are supposed to go five miles in the air, so that they come down almost perpendicularly, which accounts for the absence of any noise or warning which ordinarily precedes an exploding shell. Here the bird life is not especially interesting for swifts and barn swallows (except of course for the ubiquitous English sparrow) are the only ones seen. In spite of the fine beach, there seem to be no shore birds. The first chance I get I am going to take a long walk a-

long the shore.

I forgot to mention an extremely interesting incident that took place in Paris the day I left. As I went in to the bankers (Hottinguer) to get some money, a man dressed in a French soldier's uniform was already ahead of me at the counter, and talking to the clerk, was back to me, so that I could not see his face. I sat down to read the paper on the desk, which happened to be the good old "Boston Transcript". As the man talked his voice seemed very familiar for he was talking English and with a distinct unmistakable Boston accent. As he turned around, I recognized Henry Farnsworth. He had enlisted in the Third Regiment of the Foreign Legion last November and had been near the front ever since, but had yet seen no real fighting. He was disgusted with it in the absence of excitement and would have been glad to get into more active and exciting work. Two days previously, he had given his letter of credit and a draft to a Greek soldier in the legion, with instructions to leave it at the bankers or meet him there two days later. The Greek hadn't turned up and he was in a bad way, as he didn't have any money. I said I would sign his check to help him out and at just this moment I walked the Greek with his hands full of letters. That settled the situation successfully and in a few minutes he had his money, which put him in good spirits once more. He looked as if the life had agreed with him for he appeared healthy and well. I left these two together and Farnsworth asked me to tell his family that he was all right, when I returned home in the fall.

To-day (Sunday) was dull and the clouds very low so that there was no chance of any "taubes" being around or of a bombardment, consequently, there was not a single aeroplane over Dunkerque all day long. A. Piatt Andrew, who is the inspector of sections at the front, turned up to-day with Freeborn in his Peugeot car and went out to Coxyde for the day. Being Sunday it was rather quiet. Put patches on three extra tubes, all of which were either badly punctured or blown out. To-morrow, four of us leave at nine in the morning for Coxyde, where is the squad nearer the front, and our turn will probably last about ten days. It has been very quiet there lately, so there will not be anything of excitement going on. However, it will be interesting to be closer to things and more ruins to see.

JULY 12 - 14.

To-day was an interesting one for I saw the war from a new side,- a nearer view and here are a few first impressions. Four of us, Haney, Brenner, Lyon and myself left the quarters at Dunkerque at half past nine, in our respective cars, to join the squad at Coxyde, back of Nieuport. All we took along were our blanket rolls, toilet articles and a change of underclothes. Our time here varies from ten days to two weeks. All the way we passed fields of wheat, oats and rye that grew along the canals and they were fine looking crops,- no wonder the Germans want this corner of Belgium as well. The road was very bad, parts of it being "pavé" in the center, others only macadam. In either case it was all cut up by the continuous heavy travel of the last year. In places, it was so rough that the little Fords seemed to bounce from one high cobble-stone to the next,- just hitting the high spots as it were. All the way there was a continuous stream of vehicles going in both directions, for this is the main route of travel between Dunkerque and Nieuport,- two important links in the chain of communications. Once in our place we had to keep it, for it was impossible to pass any thing and we were enveloped in a cloud of dust. The vehicles included everything,- Paris motor busses, Pierce Arrow trucks, English motor lorries, limonsines, staff cars, horse or mule wagon convoys, armored motor cars, ambulances, field kitchens, with their fires always going, light artillery, heavy naval guns etc. Every thing seemed to have been included. Besides there were soldiers marching in all directions and sentinels posted every kilometer or so, some of whom would stop us and demand our

papers. It was awfully interesting coming nearer to the activities of war and it gave one a good idea of the amount of detail, work and planning going on back of the trenches.

We followed a canal some distance and passed several armored canal boats, which were mounted with guns of several sizes,- the largest being about a six inch naval gun. Several towns we passed through showed the effects of shelling carried on by the Germans and many houses had been demolished. In fact, some of the villages,- one, Furnes, was practically deserted, as the poor Belgians had become discouraged at having the walls continually falling about them. It was rather a forlorn and pathetic sight to see a good sized town entirely uninhabited, its streets deserted,- houses in ruins and windows broken in all directions. But strangest of all was to go through some streets where there were no signs of the recent bombardment and to see a town thus with not a living soul in it, only here and there a stray half starved cat or dog, was weird in the extreme. It seemed as if for a moment we had stepped into a different world.

A canal boat, we passed, was flying the American flag and they told us it was a Belgian relief ship, run by Maxine Eliot, to take care of and feed the refugees. Finally, we reached Coxyde, a little Belgian town of a few houses, tucked away in the sand dunes, and saw a whole line of Ford ambulances standing along the side of the main street, parked on the side-walk, or at least what would have been a side-walk, if one had existed. Here was our home and we found some of our old friends working over their cars. After getting rid of our load of "essence" (gasoline), which we brought up with us, as that is the way the supply is kept up here, we put our cars in place and made ourselves at home. This spot is the dustiest imaginable, as the wind draws down the road between the sand dunes and the dust and sand is continually whirling about us and our cars. For six months, they have stood out in the dust and rain, have been run steadily over the roughest and almost impassible roads so that they have seen the hardest service imaginable. Yet they hold up well, but need continual watching. We always go over our cars every day, examining the bolts and nuts, besides keeping them full of water, gas and oil and greasing carefully, so that with minor tinkering too it means an hour's work each day spent on the up-keep of the cars.

Lunch came at noon and we were surprised to find the food excellent,- better than it was in Paris and of course better than at Dunkerque,- that would be easy. We had crevettes, soup, meat balls and three vegetables, cookies and coffee, and all served hot with fresh plates for each course. I ate like a hog and enjoyed it all. Our eating place is in the house of a Belgian family, and while the conditions outside and about the house are very filthy, as is always the case in a little village of this kind, yet the food was clean and well served. I didn't quite dare drink the water, after having taken one look at the well and its surroundings. In fact, I am almost ashamed to put it in the radiator of my car! This town of Coxyde is central, as every thing, motors and troops go through to the trenches beyond at Nieuport and further down the line. There is hardly a minute during the day that something is not going by, so it is always noisy and dusty. We had several calls this afternoon and went to the station at Adinkerque twice with soldiers and wounded. There are three sets of ambulances here, for besides ours, there are some French cars as well as English (the Hector Munroe ambulance), consequently, now that things are quiet along the trenches, the work is light. One day (as yesterday) we were on day service,- that is we were ready to take odd jobs which even in quiet times were quiet numerous. To-day we are on the service at Nieuport Bains and to-morrow at Nieuportville etc.

Troops were continually passing on their way to and from the trenches. They spend four days there and four days away "en repos". During their rest days they pass their time in little huts, sunk among the dunes, all about us and come to this cross road to pass away the time. These huts are well hidden so the German taubes, in flying overhead can not see them,- otherwise their guns would shell them out. A good number of Belgian troops passed by me on the road

in Adinkerque, all dressed in Karki, their new uniforms, and with several buglers in the lead, playing a march, it made a very inspiring sight. After supper, (which was as equally good a meal as lunch) lots of the men resting from the trenches, gather around here as the wine shops are only open between six and eight o'clock and the soldiers make the most of those two hours. Then they have a kind of sports. This evening two men, stripped to the waist, had a wrestling match, which lasted some time until the smaller man (who by the way was wonderfully tattooed all over) threw the heavier one. It was all done in the best of spirits and was one of the most amusing sights I have ever seen. Fully a hundred soldiers stood around as spectators, laughing and cheering. One man had a German rifle he had captured but as he wanted twenty francs for it, no one bought it, - a little steep in war times!

The noise was considerable during the evening, with groups of men standing about talking or singing. As Haney and I had to be off at four in the morning with our cars, we turned in early. The most comfortable method is sleeping on one of the dirty blood-stained stretchers in your car, for our cars are really our houses and we sit in them continually to read or write or talk. We have a little guard room, about ten by twelve feet, and one small bedroom, where two men sleep on the floor, so that our quarters are extremely limited. However, rolled up in my blanket, with my clothes on, I was very comfortable and in spite of the noise was soon sound asleep. Before turning in I asked the sentry to wake me at four and gave him a couple of cigarettes, to serve as a gentle reminder, and tied my handkerchief on the steering wheel, so that he would know in which car I slept. After I had got comfortably asleep, a soldier woke me up and wanted to know if I would take care of a little puppy he had in his hand, during the night. As much as I should have liked to look after the pup, it was impossible on account of our early start, and of course he wanted the dog in the morning again.

At the appointed time, the sentry woke me and I awoke Haney. It was already after sunrise and a beautiful clear, fresh day. My car starts hard in the morning. All of them do owing to the heavy oil the army supplies us with, but mine seems to be the worst of all. The only way is to jack up one of the rear wheels and then she starts immediately. Then by breaking her enough to stop the wheel, but not the engine, I drop the jack and the car is ready to go. We waited on the corner for the doctor, who always accompanies the cars to Nieuport Bains, but he never turned up, so we started off without him and after going over the usual roads, turned to the left and came to the ocean. Sentries stopped us every little way and demanded our papers. The main or only street of Nieuportville runs parallel to the beach and right at the edge of the dunes. It was a forlorn looking sight as nearly every house had been hit by the German shells. One or two sufficiently intact were used as first aid hospitals "Postes de secours". Here the men are brought from the trenches just below and patched up sufficiently to allow them to be carried to a base hospital. Marmite holes (made by shells exploding) were all about us, - those in the roads being roughly filled in immediately by the soldiers, to allow motors to pass. We had to pass through two bullet proof walls of sand bag, running across the main street of the town. This reduced the danger, as a bullet was only vulnerable in one section of about one hundred yards between these walls. Each wall was a double one of parallel lines of sand bags and the two ends overlapped each other a few feet, so that it was necessary to make a sharp right angle turn to get through. Some days the Germans are shelling too heavily for the cars to go in so the wounded are brought outside. We stopped at three "Postes de secours" and found only one wounded to take away. He had been shot in the shoulder, - the ball was still there, and the man was suffering rather badly and his coat was covered with fresh blood. Here the trenches are close to the town, on the Yser river and canal and we had hoped to go down into them, but the doctor had not come with us, so it was impossible. There were some fine subjects for pictures but it was too early in the morning for good results. There was one new cemetery among the ruined houses, with about fifty graves, - vic-

tims of the recent fighting here. Haney took the blessé in his car and we returned, reaching Coxyde as the soldiers off duty were turning out for roll call in the streets. The French are the only troops here, for they still hold this part of the line, as they don't dare trust it to the English. The former's troops consist of Territorials, Zouaves and marines,- the latter a tough crowd of soldiers, but strong, young and fearless and wonderful fighters. This first twenty-four hours has been an interesting one, but there should be plenty more still more interesting ones to come.

A lot of new troops, more territorials, arrived this morning in motor trucks. Apparently, to-morrow being the fourteenth of July, the French national holiday, either the French will celebrate or the Germans will take it into their heads to start something. At this moment, the artillery is booming at Nieuport, showing some signs of activity and it is thrilling to hear it. I certainly hope there will be some excitement while I am here. Apparently, they are shooting at an aeroplane. Laurie Runsey turned up this morning from his twenty-four hour tour at Adinkerque, which comes to each man about once a week. He has been here since the end of January, when the squad first came to Dunkerque and for about three weeks saw some lively times between Popheringue and Ypres, where there was heavy fighting in April during the second battle of the Yser. Most of the work there was at night and sometimes under shell fire. Often the cars would go down into a newly made marmite hole in the road, but a Ford apparently seems to be able to get out of anything it can get into. To-day, during the afternoon, there was a good deal of shelling going on by the French 75's and the Germans too. Two of the men walked to Nieuport and went through Oest Dunkerque on the way. The Germans were dropping a few shells in that town and the 75's were firing over their heads. While we were watching a French biplane sailing over the lines, the German air gun started booming and it was a fascinating sight to see the aeroplane flying high, while each report from the German guns would be followed by a puff of smoke near the aeroplane, as the shell burst close by. Of course none of them did any damage, as they seldom do to these swift flying machines.

To-night is the time when the troops in the trenches are relieved, for it takes place every fourth night. As we finished supper, we heard the bugles and went out to find a battalion coming up the street from the trenches, with a band at its head, proceeded by the Colonel and his staff. These men were halted and did a left turn, bringing them into double ranks, along the side of the road. The bugles then sounded "Au drapeau" and while the men in ranks stood at attention, we all saluted. Then the band played the Marseillaise and it was the most impressive spectacle I have yet witnessed, made all the more thrilling by the booming of the artillery continually going on beyond. Finally, the men removed their bayonets and were dismissed. They were a cheerful crowd and were as happy as larks to be back from the trenches and have four days off to loaf. Some of them immediately went to get a bottle of wine and became very genial and enthusiastic before long. Meanwhile, the band began playing, first with "Spearmint", an American piece I think, then a selection from Mignon, which reminded me of our opera party only Sunday before last,- and what a change in scene! As the band played, one battalion after another came down the road, with all their equipment on their backs,- a heavy load for complete it weighs about forty pounds. They went by cheerfully, often laughing and joking, although they were on their way to the trenches for four days' duty, from which some of them would never return. In spite of their light heartedness, there is always that pathetic element to be considered. Then the bugles sounded the retreat and I rolled up in my blankets to sleep. It was noisy as usual and the horses and mules, tied next to my car, kept up a continual fighting and howling all night. Each fight woke me up and it sounded as if one of the animals was being killed. All night long troops marched by, returning from the trenches, but they were quieter than usual.

At four my friend, the sentry, woke me up and Lyon and I, after stopping

for the doctor, went to Nieuport for wounded. Several times sentries stopped us for the pass-word, which we whispered to them, as we slowed the car down, but without stopping. We went through Oest Dunkerque, which they were shelling yesterday, and then came to Nieuport, about which I have heard so much. Every house in the town is in ruins,- many of them nothing more than a pile of mortar and bricks. We stopped at three "Postes de secours",- first aid hospitals, which were in the ruined buildings, but only at the last one was there a blessed for us. Poor man he had been hit by a piece of shell in the face, just below his left eye so that his whole cheek was torn open and all his upper teeth smashed. He was wounded last night and was suffering a lot, and his face and coat was a mass of blood. We carried him back and left him at one of the temporary field hospitals at Coxyde, to have his wound dressed. Then he will be sent by train from Adinkerque to some permanent hospital. As we went along the road to Nieuport, the 75 mm. guns were booming away from their hidden positions along the road and the shells would whizz over our heads,- making a thrilling sound. In Nieuport it was quiet and this morning the Germans were doing no shelling.

To-day is July 14th, the French national holiday, and we thought they would attempt an advance, as the last two days many re-enforcements have arrived and several batteries of 75's have gone by us here in Coxyde. Townsend, who is the temporary squad leader here, went to Dunkerque yesterday evening and returned with the news that we are to leave here in two days, as there is so little to do, and go to a place called Woestend, near Popharingue, which is behind Ypres, where the squad was two months ago. It should be more interesting there, as it is closer to the lines and we will go back of the trenches at night for wounded,- at night because being so near the trenches, it is necessary to do it under cover of darkness as much as possible for the Germans have been known to shell red cross cars and ambulances. I will be sorry to leave this place so soon after arriving, as I like it. However, we will be near the English troops, though of course we will still be attached to the French Army as here, and I may find a clue as to the whereabouts of Symes and Jones,- the Canadians who were with us on our trip west last year and who enlisted in the Canadian contingent last winter. I have just finished washing my car out, getting rid of all the blood from the soldier this morning as well as the dirt, so that it looks like quite a respectable bedroom now.

A lot of soldiers seemed to have been going past after breakfast, so Lyon and I investigated and found that two battalions of the sixth Territorials were going to have a review and some men were to be decorated. The different companies assembled separately near by their quarters, fell in, fixed bayonets and marched through the town to a small field beyond. It was one of the most picturesque sights imaginable as the soldiers, with bayonets glistening in the sun, went through the narrow streets, which were lined on both sides by quaint, little, red brick or white-washed houses, so characteristically Belgian. Then the colors came by, preceded by the band playing a stirring march that made your blood tingle. Anybody ought to be able to fight with such music to inspire and encourage him. We went beyond to a field, where about a thousand men, just back from the trenches, were lined up by companies, in such a way as to form a big hollow square, on one side of which was the band with the colors in front. There the lieutenant colonel, who was the highest officer present, read off a long list of about sixty names of soldiers and officers who had been "Cit  dans les Ordres" for bravery. They were ordered to form in line in front of their respective companies and then one by one the "croix de guerre" was pinned on their coat and each man was kissed on both cheeks by his commanding officer. The poor man had to do lots of kissing before he had finished. First the list of men was read who were to be decorated but who had since been killed or had died while performing their brave deed and then the drums beat a tattoo. At the end the band played "Au Drapeau", then the Marseillaise, while the distant booming of the guns told of the continual bombarding going on not far away. It was awfully im-

pressive to see part of a regiment, just back from the trenches, drawn up in ranks at attention and the men being decorated and then hearing the band play music that stirred you through and through. Finally, the men marched off with the band in front playing "Le Sambre et Meuse",- a wonderful march, and when they reached the Colonel's quarters in town, the band played once more "Au Drapeau" and the Marseillaise, which was the end to a morning which I wouldn't have missed for any thing.

Directly after dinner, Lyon and I started off on foot for Nieuport, as we were off duty, because of our four o'clock morning work. We passed through Oest Dunkerque, with its many houses in ruins, for the Germans have dropped numerous shells in that town, yet the inhabitants still have enough courage to stay there. Contrary to the general rule, in some partly demolished houses they still continue their stores and wine shops. Some houses had one whole side cut off sheer, leaving the other half intact and with the furniture in place and the pictures hanging on the walls, presented curious sights. Further on we passed an open field, in the center of which, were several guns for shooting at aeroplanes and curiously enough, the guns were not concealed but in plain sight. Here are the "Bois Triangulaire" and on one side of the road, the French 75 and 120 mm. guns are concealed, while on the other are British light artillery and naval guns, for they have a 6 inch and a 9.2 inch gun set up. Every few minutes the guns would go off with a loud report close to us, but as there is practically no smoke, it was impossible to tell where they were hidden. At night they used shells with a heavy black powder, for the dense cloud of smoke entirely conceals the flash, that would give away the location of the guns. As we continued the reports grew louder, for we were now in front of the guns. Soon we had reached Nieuport and a desolate looking sight it was for there scarcely is a single house that isn't demolished. Here was the line of trenches taken from the Germans many months ago. Some houses were nothing but a pile of bricks and mortar, while others still had their walls standing. We went into a great many but the "looting was poor" as the Zouaves had carried away, as souvenirs, everything which was interesting or small enough. In the curé's house all his nice carved oak, Flemish furniture was smashed to pieces and his library of books scattered about the floor in confusion. It did seem wicked that so much property should be destroyed. We picked up a few interesting papers and old theological books, in French and Belgian of course, that would be of interest. In one house we took away some white tiles, on which were figures. These we dug out of the fireplace. There were no two the same and all were interesting in design. I would give a lot to have time to thoroughly go through all the houses. Soldiers were billeted about in the ruined houses and for this reason the Germans still every day drop in a few shells, but none fell during our stay.

The church, next to the curé's house, was an interesting ruin and we walked all through it. Just outside is a cemetery with hundreds of French soldiers buried in it. Each grave was curiously decorated with tiles taken from the fireplace in the houses or with some little figure, picked up in the ruins of the houses by the dead man's comrade or friend and there were flowers as well placed there,- wild ones which had been gathered in the near-by fields. Each grave had its wooden head-board and crudely written were the name of the soldier, the date of his death etc. In a few instances there was but a number and the word "inconnu",- a pathetic sight. One soldier asked me to take a picture of him, standing along side of his comrade's grave, which I did. He wanted a picture for himself and the man's wife as well, so gave me his address and I shall be sure and send them to him. About thirty Germans also were buried there, but only two with head-boards, as the rest were "inconnus". Some men were busily engaged in digging fresh graves for some recently killed soldiers. Near-by was an enormous hole about thirty feet in diameter and ten deep, where a big "Jack Johnson" shell had fallen,- probably about a fifteen inch one. It seemed queer to be in this town, seeing the church, big hole etc., all of which I had seen in pictures in Paris, never thinking at the time, that I would ever see them.

The reports of the guns (French and British) behind us were terrific. They were followed by the whistling of the shells over our heads and then by their explosion, among the German trenches. But most interesting of all was to hear the peculiar whistling of the German shells, as they flew through the air, just above our heads, on their way to the town of Oest Dunkerque and the Bois Triangulaire, where were located the batteries of the Allies. It seemed funny to think of their going so near us, yet being intended for someone else were perfectly harmless to us. Their sound was a "zirr-rr", whose note did not change, which showed the shells were not falling but going straight on. The sound of each shell lasted for perhaps two seconds. Aeroplanes of both sides were flying high up along the trenches, each observing the artillery fire of the other. Meanwhile, guns were firing at them continually and little puffs of smoke in the air, followed by small reports showed where the shells were exploding. None took effect, as they seldom hit an aeroplane. An English marine took us about and showed us an old sardine factory, where their guns had been for a while and where the artillerymen had lived. The walls were extremely thick and although shells fell on top and against the sides, they felt secure, for nothing except a big shell could pierce their retreat. We went along with him down to the Yser river, famous now in history for the bloody battles that have taken place along its banks. Nearby are the reserve and then come the first line trenches. The sentry wouldn't let us go beyond, as a trench identification card was necessary, so we said goodbye to our English friend and turned back to Nieuport for a little more looting. Between the Yser and the town is a deep zigzagging connecting trench or "boyau", in which the soldiers walk going to and from the first line trenches, so as not to be a target for the artillery. Any bodies of men would be detected immediately and shelled, but there being only three of us it wasn't necessary for us to go by the way of the "boyau".

At Nieuport it began to rain and by the time we had reached Coxyde we were well soaked. It looked as if we might have an exciting time on the way through the Bois Triangulaire on account of the German shells and we certainly did. We heard the singing of the shells, but now the sound was different, for it was on a sharply descending scale, which meant they were dropping fast. You can always tell by the sound whether they are only going over head or whether they are dropping. The descending scale in this case was followed by a terrific explosion as the shell landed near by in the woods and it was not a pleasant sound, particularly because you could hear the shell coming and you knew it was coming mighty close, as the batteries at which they were aiming were on both sides of us. The small pieces whistled as they went through the air past us and we could hear them patter as they struck the ground. We found several pieces of shell, some of which were still very hot, and also two holes where they had struck in the road. We stopped at a little dugout bomb proof shelter, at which we had stopped on the way over, at the invitation of an English gunner outside. It was a telephone central switchboard, with about twenty connections and while we were there the man made several connections, between the officers' quarters, the observing station and the gun positions to direct the fire. It was realistic warfare in the extreme. This time we went in to get definite information whether the road beyond was being shelled. But instead of our former friends were two officers who rather resented our intrusion. They, thinking we were in our cars, told us it would be best to get along speedily, as it was very dangerous there along the road, for two shells had only just fallen. However, we already knew that much! So we continued on in the rain, with the shells still "zirring". It was my first real experience under shell fire at close quarters and what interested me most was the sound of the shells indicating whether they were dropping or not and the peculiar sensation of uncertainty and utter helplessness. We reached home in wet clothes and without any dry change. However, my underclothes were dry so I slept warmly, incidentally going to bed early and sleeping ten hours, - something I haven't done since leaving home.

To-day (July 15th) it was quiet and I only had one call,- to take some convalescents from the hospital, in the dunes, to the station at Adinkerque, where they will go to Paris. Not two hundred yards from the station, a terrific storm struck us and it rained so hard that during that little distance, we were simply soaked, and my clothes had only just dried out from yesterday's wetting. Then it started to hail and stones as large as the end of one's little finger were driven by the furious blast, so that facing it would have been impossible. But by then we had reached the station and I climbed into the car, with the wounded and talked to them for fifteen minutes until the storm was over. It was the most violent of its kind I have ever seen. Part of the evening I spent in a little wine shop, with some French marines, drinking wretched red wine and had an interesting time, incidentally getting some good souvenirs. Just now, a battalion of Belgian soldiers has gone by on their way to take up their four days' tour in the trenches. They were a nice appearing lot,- but some of them mere boys of eighteen to twenty. They, like the French, all have their goggles around their hats for instant use, as a protection to their eyes against the gas. In a pocket is their gas mask, so they are always prepared. The various companies of French soldiers are also assembled for roll call, previous to starting off for the trenches. It was inspiring to see these Belgians go by, all as happy as larks,- one set of buglers playing a march, then further on a boy playing an accordion. One company was singing the Belgian national song and at the end the boys burst into the Marseillaise, so that it simply made your blood boil and stirred you to the very core. Such scenes always stir me, no matter how often I see them.

Towards dusk the marines came by on their way to the trenches,- company after company of the Second Regiment. All had their full equipment, which consisted of their rifle, cartridge belt, containing one hundred and twenty rounds, bayonet, entrenching spade, extra pair of boots, tin pan and cup, blanket, knapsack, with miscellaneous clothes and belongings and strapped in the center of their pack, a big round loaf of bread, which was for their four day tour of duty. Of course they had meat, potatoes and coffee besides, for their meals, served from the portable kitchens. As they went by, men dropped out here and there to say good-bye to a comrade and joined the ranks again at the call of a sergeant, whose watchful eye missed nothing. All the men were joking, laughing and singing,- some making jokes about being killed or killing some of the Bosches. Many of them were "un peu gris" from the effects of too much red wine and their actions were funny in the extreme. My friend, who was in the wine shop with me during the afternoon, came along in the last company, now perfectly sober, and walking along with a big stick for a cane yelled "Au revoir mon vieux". The hat he had given me as a souvenir was replaced by another one. Any marine who knew a single word of English, which usually was "Good-night" or "Good-bye", would call it out to us, as he passed, anxious to please the "Englais", for many of them do not know we are Americans. But those that do and know that we are here as volunteers, serving without pay to aid the French, are tremendously impressed and think the world of us. In fact, our squad is much the most popular for they like us much better than the English or even French ambulances,- I think probably because we all like to associate with them and do little things that please them, consequently, there isn't a thing the French soldiers won't do for us. Also our men are always on hand for rush calls, whereas the English are apt to be hidden away in some wine shop or off bathing.

During the night, about one, I was awaked by soldiers marching past and knew that the marines of the first regiment, relieved in the trenches by their comrades, were on their way back to their camp. The other night the Zouaves went through, but they were quiet. The marines are on the contrary noisy and came by singing wildly. As one company came around the corner they burst into the Marseillaise, and as I lay on my stretcher in the car, wrapped in my blankets, listening to those men just on their way back from the trenches, where they had left some of their comrades never to return, singing that inspiring song in the dead of night,

it seemed so wonderfully strange and yet so real, that I wondered if perhaps I was not dreaming. An hour later they had all passed and it was quiet again for a while. Then about daylight, I woke up and suddenly heard a terrific report of a gun,- the biggest I have yet heard and then followed a long loud "zirr-rr", as a German shell of some big calibre passed over the house tops. It made a terrific sound and could be heard for several seconds,- it seemed a minute. It was the only one and where it was bound for, I don't know. The report was so loud that at breakfast everyone said they had been waked by it, except one sleepy head whom nothing could stir up at night. Balbiani was here yesterday and said at Dunkerque they had a raid by half a dozen Taubes, which dropped many bombs, but did little harm. There have been two captive balloons in the air,- one here and another near the town of Furnes,- French of course, used for observing the effect of the artillery fire. This morning the cars returned from Nieuport Bains with only one blessé but he was a bad one, as an aerial torpedo thrown from a gun in the German trenches had exploded between his legs and he was terribly torn. The next trip there, is at eleven,- then seven and nine in the evening. The four A. M. cars rarely get more than one or two wounded. More men are hit during the morning and the daylight trip only gets those wounded during the night, which is very few. The last few days several large French guns, 155 mm. calibre I think, have gone by here, drawn by sometimes sixteen horses, so it looks as if they were preparing to do some more serious bombarding to compete with the larger German guns. The trench warfare here is really at a standstill and is likely to remain so, for it is more important and easier for one side or the other to break through the opposing lines further south,- around Ypres or Arras, which when done will force the enemy to fall back in this region.

JULY 15 - 20.

Word came late Thursday afternoon to return to Dunkerque immediately and packing up was a matter of a few minutes only, as each man carries his blankets and few personal belongings in his car all the time, and so it only meant loading on a few boxes of "essence", tires and some odds and ends from the guard room. We all hated to say good-bye to this spot at Coxyde, because it is very unlikely that we will find another one as interesting or as near the front, where there is so much continually going on. It began to pour just before starting and it was a wet ride of about an hour. My car had no protecting hood and canvas shield like the other Fords, so the rain, driven by a heavy wind, made it almost blinding and the only way I could see was to keep one eye closed all the way,- the windward eye! Driving pretty fast in a little light Ford, over mile after mile of slippery cobble stones, for the streets are all pavé, with one eye closed, was rather an amusing situation. However, I kept perfectly dry in spite of the heavy driving rain and we all reached the villa at Dunkerque at supper time. I had the great pleasure of finding seven letters,- many of them from home but unfortunately there was so much to do that night that it was the next afternoon before I had a chance to read them all. But when the time came I most certainly enjoyed them. With twelve extra men in an already overcrowded house, the prospects for sleeping did not look any too good, so I turned in, in my car, and laughed at the rain pouring outside. There were a good many leaky places, but I managed to lay my blankets away from under them and so kept very dry.

We were up early and each loaded a full box of "essence" in his car for our supply at our new place, and left at nine. Again, just before starting, the rain began, but it was far heavier than yesterday,- a real downpour. Only four cars remained behind,- making seventeen in our convoy and as we all went through the towns, the Fords looked like a lot of insects, scurrying along the road, and everyone turned out to see these imitation cars, at the same time crying out "Vive

les Anglais". The country was extremely picturesque with canals, old windmills and red tiled brick houses everywhere. The roads in France were fine but on crossing the Belgian line they became very bad. An hour later we reached Crombec,- our abode for the present. It is a much more picturesque little town than Coxyde and has an interesting old church, and many of the houses have little gardens overgrown with pretty flowers. On the way we passed many Paris busses and it seemed queer to meet them way out in the country. They are used for carrying meat and food for the army. Also we met many troops on their way to the trenches and passed the headquarters of the general and staff of the 45th division in a small town. For a long ways back of the trenches, there are troops, convoys, wagons of all kinds and all the incidentals that go to the support of a big army in the field. In this little town of Crombec are hundreds of wagons and horses in camps scattered among the field,- all a part of this big transportation system.

On arriving, it stopped raining, and we dried out our things. Here we are to replace a squad of twenty-five French cars, Panhards, and as we came in and saw these beautiful big ambulances, parked in a field, they presented a fine sight. Yet they aren't able to stand the work on these bad roads, and so we are replacing them with these brokendown little tin Fords. To-morrow we will get straightened out, when they leave, but to-night we merely put our cars in another muddy field temporarily. We had dinner at a "Herberg" or wine shop, for every other house seems to be one, and our table was set outdoors under a strip of canvas, to keep off the rain. It was placed between the house and the barn and pigsty in a dirty little muddy courtyard, full of pools of filthy, stagnant water. Not an appetizing place to eat, but in this life those little things don't make any difference and we all ate heartily of a very poor meal, served with the usually bad Belgian beer. The food was cooked alongside our table on a wooden stove,- a novelty to me for I had never seen or heard of one before. These little Belgian towns and houses are as picturesque as can be imagined, but they are dirty and filthy as they can be,- I have never seen anything at home that can compare with them. To look at them from a distance, with the eye of an artist, is a real source of pleasure but from the standpoint of comfort and cleanliness, it is best to look the other way, towards the green fields of growing grain.

Half of the squad remained here while the rest went on to Woestend, a few kilometers beyond. We will replace them next week and take turns at that work. It should be interesting, as they run down at night for wounded to the "postes de secours",- first aid dressing stations, only a few hundred yards back of the trenches. The roads are bad,- full of shell holes, and it makes it hard driving for of course no lights of any kind can be used. There wasn't much to do in the evening so we went into one of the numerous "Herberg's", just before supper and had a bottle of rather poor "vin blanc". It was a funny little place with tiled floors and none too clean. We had supper inside the bar to-night, as our squad is so much smaller now, and to our surprise on the wall behind us was nailed a long colored picture of Brooklyn Bridge! It rained lightly all evening but the wind blew a gale, and having changed, was blowing into our cars from behind,- the only bad quarter for us, so it was hard to keep dry. However after getting inside, I tied the canvas flaps down, rolled into my blankets, and slept like a log for nine hours. The car rolled and jumped about like a ship, so I thought sometimes the wind would blow it across the field. Curled up in these little cars at night, out in the country, you can certainly sleep wonderfully. Yesterday, we passed some trenches and barbed wire entanglements,- the latter being the first I had seen. They were wicked looking contrivances and instead of the wire being strung on short posts in a haphazard way as I had pictured, it was done in a very systematic way on a regular plan.

This morning early was beautiful,- the air being clear and crisp, like an early August day at home. Soon after daylight the German guns started up and kept up an incessant bombardment for a couple of hours, with some of their

77 mm. guns. Then I got up and took an hour's walk among the fields of growing grain and it was fascinating in the quiet of the morning to get away from the horrors of this war, even for only such a short time. The troops here are mostly native Algerians and Zouaves. In talking to one of the latter last night, when he found we were Americans from the United States, he wanted to know if Spanish was the language we spoke! Yet that really isn't so strange after all, as they don't distinguish between North and South America, and in the latter hemisphere of course the language is almost entirely Spanish. Saturday was quiet and there was literally nothing to do except to change our location to the barn-yard, where the French cars were parked, which we have replaced. An aeroplane just flew over head and a captive balloon seen far away over the lines are the only incidents of the day. We all spent a lot of time washing, cleaning and overhauling our cars, ready for these very bad roads. Guns started booming at daylight and have been going ever since in the direction of Ypres. Sunday was equally quiet and nothing happened. Every evening about three, a convoy of about ten big Paris busses stop along this road, all loaded with sides of mutton and beef, and smaller wagons, drawn by two horses or mules, back up and part of the load is transferred to them. Then the busses go on to another center where they repeat the same process, while the wagons distribute the meat among the different camps. The system of this organization is wonderful.

To-day, the nineteenth, we all were busy during the morning. I had four "assis" to take from a little field hospital to Poperinghe. The above hospitals are very hard to find, as they are usually up some little side lane, in a farm house. The road to Poperinghe was bad "pavé" and it must have been uncomfortable for the "blessés". I know it is uncomfortable enough for us, although this jolting about settles your breakfast well and gives you a fine appetite for dinner, eaten sitting at the table next to the pig pen. Saw lots of English troops all along and artillery as well. In one field the men were going through charges and throwing hand grenades. How different the effect of this same thing, only a little way beyond in the trenches. It is awful to think of the practice a soldier must go through in the methods of best killing his fellow creatures. At Poperinghe many buildings were in ruins from the German shells. We left the wounded at the neatest and cleanest kind of a tent hospital, close by the tracks. Here they are loaded in the cars and sent by train to Paris and other base hospitals. Very likely some of these men may be taken out of the train at La Chapelle in Paris, by men on the Paris squad of the American Ambulance and transported by them. In the afternoon I spent most of the time working on my motor, taking the commutator apart, cleaning it and also overhauling the rest of the engine, so that it now is finer than ever, except that because of the heavy oil, it is still as hard to start. A few Algerian horsemen (Spahis) are camped in the next field to ours and they are very picturesque, in their brilliant costumes, - certainly fine marks for the enemy. All their horses transported from Algiers are a splendid lot. At night the sky is lit up brilliantly by illuminated bombs, thrown up from the trenches by both the French and Germans, so as to prevent any night attacks or surprises by the other. First one takes a turn at throwing them up and then the other.

Tuesday, the twentieth, was like the previous day. In the morning I took three "couchés", - all "malades" not "blessés", in my car from Ambulance #2, which is at a little farm house, to Poperinghe. They said there had been more wounded arriving to-day than for several weeks, so it begins to look as if there was an offensive movement beginning, - no doubt that explains this incessant cannonading, - which always precedes an infantry attack. Also last evening, a whole regiment of French artillery of 90 mm. guns went by towards Ypres. Another French aeroplane was fired at, but of course not hit. It is very interesting to watch them through the glasses, for this time I brought my twelve power Zeiss binoculars and they make such spectacles wonderfully vivid. Most pathetic of all are the little cemeteries alongside of the farm ambulance hospitals, some with more

than two hundred graves and all with a dozen or more dug in advance, ready for the new victims. A little mound of earth and a wooden cross or head-board with the name and date are the only things that signify the soldiers last resting place. The French soldiers do not live in tents in the field at all, but are billeted around in various farm buildings,- sleeping in barns or in out houses. The English don't do this so much, as they have a good many tent camps. It was interesting to notice that all their white tents had been painted with various colors, in streaks and blotches, so as to render them inconspicuous. For when seen by a "taube" from above they thus blend into the landscape. Lyon just came in from Woestend, where the other eight cars are, and said the Germans have been shelling them for an hour with 77 and 105 mm. shells. They all dropped within a small radius, in a field not a hundred yards away and for a while it was very exciting. However luckily no one was hurt. He said it was a fine sight, seeing the shells explode so near by. Later we found that one man had been killed, his head being cut off, and another badly wounded by these shells,- but fortunately none of our men were touched. Our meals here consist mostly of pork chops, but at times they vary our menu with rabbit. However, each time there seem to be fewer cats around, so it begins to look suspicious.

At Coxyde I got a blouse and striped jersey from one of the marines and on cool nights the former is fine to slip on before going to bed. There an amusing incident took place while a company of marines was going through town on its way to the trenches. Along behind were two soldiers following, with neither gun nor equipment of any kind, both quite drunk. Their officer seeing them stopped and asked them where they were going. Perfectly serious, one soldier drew himself up and said "Captain, we are going where duty calls us"! Even in war times, there are many incidents full of humor. At this everyone standing by roared. Even the captain smiled and the incident was closed in a humorous way,- quite a contrast to the way the same thing would have been done by the Germans. It is wonderfully interesting to see the close feeling between the officers and men in the French army,- one secret of their fine spirit. Wednesday, the twenty-first, was the same as previous days and nothing new to add. Went to Popheringue, as usual, with a car load of wounded,- all "assis". It is awful at these hospitals, seeing the agony the men go through, having their wounds temporarily dressed to stop the flow of blood. Yesterday an English Tommy turned up at our "Herberg", during dinner, and sat down and had a glass of beer with us. He told some interesting stories of trench life, but worst of all was his description of the dead bodies, that lay unburied for weeks at a time, between the lines of trenches. It must be horrible for a man to see a comrade of his, lying dead before his very eyes, day after day. He spoke of the spies in Belgium and how the Mayor of Armentiers was caught and executed,- it doesn't seem possible,- a Mayor of a French town. This Britisher, who was of the West Yorkshire regiment, was a mighty nice sort. The air has been full of French, English and German machines all afternoon and shells have been bursting all about them,- a continual boom of bursting shells following the sudden appearance of little balls of smoke,- the white ones indicating French shell bursts and the black the Germans.

JULY 21 - 31.

I had an officer with a very bad case of appendicitis to carry this morning from Beveren to Popheringue. He was suffering terribly and it apparently was agony for him to be moved about on his stretcher. However, the doctor, who came along with me, gave him a dose of morphine before starting. We had more than twelve miles to go, over the roughest of Belgian pavé roads and although I went as slowly and carefully as possible, the lieutenant must have suffered a great deal. However, he said he had had a comfortable trip. The doctor was very nice and I had a pleasant morning with him, as a companion on the front seat with me.

He was very appreciative of everything done and looked upon it as if we were doing them a favor. Since being in France the last two months, my whole opinion of the French has changed. Especially here, during the last two weeks, living with the soldiers, has brought me in closer touch with the real spirit and character of the French people and I don't believe there are any finer, braver or more appreciative people in the world. I have the greatest admiration and respect and even love for these wonderful people, who in this crisis are ready to sacrifice anything or everything. The whole nation is united, as England is not, and each individual is prepared to do his share and more too, which shameful to say, is not so in England. Conditions that exist across the channel to-day could never be so here in France and I believe the fundamental reason is because of the wonderful national unity, spirit and unbounded patriotism of the French. On returning to Beveren, with the doctor, I stopped a minute at the quarters, while some of the officers were at lunch, and had a glass of wine with them. This evening it rained steadily and there was a continual boom of heavy German guns,- the heaviest by far that I have yet heard. Some poor town must be getting it badly. It poured hard all night and we all got quite wet, for after this dry weather, the seams in the tops and sides of the cars have opened up wide and it took some hours of rain, before they swelled up. To-day, the twenty-third, I did not go out though all the other cars did. In the afternoon, Putman, who has been quite sick the last week, was carried off in his ambulance to Dunkerque. It looks like typhoid, but I hope not. Ryan has also been very miserable and sick with a big boil on his lip, and had it lanced to-day at one of the field hospitals. This is a muddy spot when it rains and pools of water are all about the yard. At dinner, the wind was in the wrong direction, and the smell from the pig pen (which is next to our table) was far stronger than the odor of our pork chops on the table, so our landlord produced a bottle of strong disinfectant and emptied its contents around the court, so that there was quite a confusion of odors and it smelt as if we were eating food sanitarially treated by the most approved methods. Very quiet at the trenches and in the air to-day,- owing to the violent wind. Went to Poperinghe as usual on Friday and it rained most of the day, so we were uncomfortable all the time. Bremner and I took a walk after supper and returned by moonlight,- it was beautiful.

Heavy showers all morning and the trip to Poperinghe not especially pleasant. Had two couches,- one which I picked up at Ambulance #4,- the other at #2,- the former sick, the other wounded in the temple. At two-thirty, five of us left our farm yard for Woestend, where we will replace the other squad for the coming week. Soon after arriving the others left one by one for our quiet town of Crombec. Here things are very different for we are much nearer the trenches and instead of the captive balloons being in front, they are behind us. We are stationed at an "ambulance" (military hospital) on the main street. Behind us is a bomb proof, underground shelter to duck into when the shells fall, as the town is bombarded regularly every few days. Within twenty feet of my car is the end of the reserve line of trenches, in front of which is a tangled mass of barbed wire, which the soldiers have been working on this evening. Had a man with pneumonia to take to Poperinghe, soon after arriving, and all along were strings of teams, motors and convoys, to say nothing of the troops,- French and English, marching along the road or sitting in groups about their camps or in front of the houses where they were billeted.

About supper time (here we eat in a nice clean room, by the way, and sleep on a bed of straw in the loft) the air was alive with French and German machines and the guns were popping away. It was very exciting, as the batteries are stationed all around us. The whole sky, in places, was dotted with little puffs of smoke, where the shells were bursting. Several German machines were almost over our heads and the guns nearly got one. The shells were exploding all around it, each one getting nearer than the last and it looked as if the machine was running directly into the puffs of smoke. Finally, the aviator lost

his nerve and turned his machine around and headed the other way. The shells were bursting all about him, when suddenly the car shot downwards and we thought they had winged him, but soon he apparently recovered, as he hurried back to the German lines. Then a cloud of smoke poured from his machine and we thought it was on fire. Again we were deceived for he flew on out of sight, getting lower and lower so that we thought he would not reach the German trenches. The French troops opened fire on him, as he sailed by low down but at terrific speed. Apparently he managed to return to his own lines, but there was no question that his machine had been disabled and that he himself had had a narrow escape. For two hours these aerial battles continued and they were the most spectacular sights I have yet seen. At times they were very thrilling.

Budd went down to one of the "postes de secours", back of the trenches, on a hurry call and returned with a terribly wounded man. A shell had burst so near him that his clothes were literally torn from his body and it is needless to say that he was badly cut up. When he was carried away on a stretcher he cried, not from pain, but because he did not want to leave the trenches and his comrades! Such bravery is almost unbelievable. All evening the guns were booming steadily. Behind us is a French battery, whose shells go whizzing over the town. Their noise is terrific and they just seem to cut through the air as they go over our heads. The latest rumor is that the Yser canal is dry, for the French have in some way diverted the water. It looks as if they were preparing for a big attack and now they may be able to cross on foot when the mud dries.

At half past eight, about dusk, I went down with two "brancardiers" to the "postes de secours". We went through this town, passing several houses which are partly or wholly in ruins, for the Germans are beginning to bombard it, then along a fine stretch of road, - the best I have seen yet, to Elverdinghe. This town is in a sad condition, for it has been under shell fire for many months, and its picturesque church, among many other buildings, is completely in ruins. After leaving the town, we took a narrow road, flanked on both sides by wheat fields and ahead of us saw a row of trees, which marked the course of the famous Yser Canal. On this side of it are the first line French trenches and on the other, are the German's. We passed many troops scurrying along the roads, in the dusk, and filing into the communication trenches, on their way to relieve the other soldiers. Here they have four days in the first trenches, four days in the second line and eight days "au repos". We passed one of the reserve line of trenches, filled with men and it was a very realistic sight. On we went, finally arriving at a little farm house, protected by barricades of sand bags, as a safeguard against the bullets that whizz by from the German trenches. Here we were between the third and second trenches and the first were only a few hundred yards beyond us. Both sides were continually throwing up "fusées", which looked like big sky rockets, as they burst high up in the sky, lightning up the fields so brilliantly, that sometimes it is possible to read a newspaper half a mile away. We could not use lights of any kind of course, for only inside the farm, behind shaded windows, was it possible. A doctor and several brancardiers were there in attendance and told us there were five wounded, which meant making a return trip as that was more than we could carry at one time. Two of those we took on the first load were in bad shape, - one with a terrible head wound, the other with a badly smashed arm. The former had to have his arms and legs tied to prevent him from struggling. Six men (which included two of us on the front seat) in a poor little Ford made quite a heavy load over roads that were none too good. Those poor men must have suffered terribly on the return trip for they groaned and moaned all the way. It's awful to hear them and know there is nothing to do but to drive slowly and carefully.

After having their bandages examined at the ambulance in Woesten, one of the cars took them from there, where we are stationed all the time with the cars, to one of the fully equipped operating hospitals at Crombec, a few miles beyond. The ambulance at Woesten is the central receiving station for all wounded from the various "postes de secours" of this division, of the French army, which holds a few kilo-

meters only of line in between the British and Belgians. From here they are sent to different places. "Malades" nearly all go to the Poperinghe ambulance and are from there sent by train to Paris or other permanent hospitals. Wounded are sent to ambulances such as those at Crombec. Here if very slightly wounded they remain until they have recovered. If very badly wounded they remain only as long as is necessary before they are fit to be sent to Poperinghe and thence by train to a base hospital,- perhaps in some distant part of France. So each wounded goes through five various ambulances or hospitals, the fifth being his final one. To ambulance #3 in Crombec all the worst cases are sent and the death rate, awful to say, is one in three.

On the way back from the second trip, we found the road full of troops,- re-enforcements, so the brancardiers said, as they are expecting something to happen on one side or the other. The blue gray of their uniforms, in this light, made them almost invisible. We also met carts and wagons with supplies as well as caissons taking ammunition down to their batteries. The 75's are beautifully hidden in the hedges and in the edges of the woods. A protecting screen of brush and bushes makes them invisible to the aeroplanes and the Germans have been unable to locate them. When I returned there were three men fixed up and ready to go to Mrs. Turner's hospital at Rousbrugge, about twelve miles away, so off I went with them. By now the moon, nearly full, was shining brightly and it was easy to see the way. It was a long lonely ride, with no one to talk to and three badly wounded men inside, groaning and moaning in pain. Sometimes the work is heart-breaking. But almost the worst part of all is the sight of the men at the "postes de secours" just brought in from the trenches, actually dripping with fresh blood,- with their hands, faces and clothes still wet with it. On this lonely ride every little way sentries would jump out in the road crying "halte-là". It was necessary to stop the car a few yards away from them and then answer back "ambulance", whereupon one of the two sentries would approach to identify us, meanwhile holding his gun carefully in both hands. Some demanded our papers before they would allow us to proceed, while others were satisfied with our whispering the pass-word, which by the way changes every twenty-four hours. Once the sentry was not very wide awake and I got by before he jumped out,- that was on the way home and I was moving along pretty fast, but I stopped in an awful hurry, putting my brakes on hard. These half asleep Zouave sentries some times are as likely as not to take a pot shot at you, if they think you are going by without stopping, and so it pays not to take any chances. I passed troops,- more re-enforcements either marching or bivouacked all along the road, and it was weird, coming suddenly on these silently moving bodies of men. The only other time I had been over this road was yesterday and at night things looked quite differently, yet I managed to make all the correct turns without getting lost. I returned soon after midnight and went to bed for a couple of hours. Before three I was awaked again and we visited three "postes de secours" after daylight but there were no more wounded which was a pleasant relief. Then rolling up in my blankets in the straw I was soon sound asleep, not waking up until eleven,- just before lunch.

Townsend went down to one of the 75 batteries and had an awful time getting to it across the fields. One of their own shells had exploded and two men were badly wounded. When they arrived they were a sad sight,- all bloody and cut up. One man's hair was terribly burnt and a piece of metal, the size of one's finger, driven into his cheek, was still sticking there. After being fixed up, they were taken to ambulance #3 at Crombec,- the one where the mortality is one in three. All day there have been aeroplanes over head and all day both sides have been wasting ammunition on them. Also the heavier guns have been firing steadily,- the German shells apparently being directed against a French battery, stationed a short distance in front us. Here we sleep in the loft of a house opposite our cars and sleeping indoors on straw is a great luxury,- only the fleas are altogether too thick for real comfort.

This afternoon (the 26th) we had an exciting time. Just as I had finish-

ed writing a letter, I heard a familiar "zirr" on a descending scale and as I rushed out into the street a loud explosion occurred and a big cloud of smoke and dirt flew way up in the air near the church. The "medecin chef" ordered us to run the cars further down the street, so as not to have any of them hit, but being slow, I was the last to get away, and a second shell struck, - this time nearer, in a field behind us. Unfortunately, I was too late in getting out my Kodak for a picture. We ran the cars down a couple of hundred yards and then returned. After the third shell struck I saw the best place to photograph them and went around behind the houses, where they were landing. The reserve trenches and bomb proof shelters were full of soldiers. Finally, I picked out a bully place, on top of one of the trench mounds, with nothing but a field of wheat between me and where the shells were landing about one hundred yards away, so that I had a clear view for pictures. The fourth shell I photographed, and I could hear the pieces flying by me through the air. The next made a wonderful cloud of smoke and dirt, landing in the yard behind a house, which faces on the street, and not twenty feet from it. This I got a fine picture of. Things were getting pretty hot now and the soldiers not already in the shelter of the trenches, ran off in all directions. After watching a few more wonderful explosions and listening to the fascinating "zirr" that told of the on coming shell, we were ordered to take shelter in the bomb proof by the "medecin chef". Here inside, seated on the benches, were about thirty officers, doctors and soldiers. But it was too interesting to remain quietly there, so two of us sat in the entrance and watched the explosions. It lasted about an hour and then we went around and picked up jagged pieces of the exploded shells. They were everywhere within a radius of three hundred yards and were still so hot that it was almost impossible to hold them in your hand. Fortunately no one was wounded and not many houses damaged, for the shells all landed just behind them. The sheds, of course, were blown to pieces and windows broken everywhere. The holes were about five feet deep and twelve in diameter, and it was pitiful to see the houses of these poor, innocent people damaged, but they were cheerful and not only didn't seem discouraged, let alone being afraid, but were busily engaged digging in the holes for the noses of the shells! We picked up a few interesting pieces, which were scattered everywhere. The shells were 210 mm., about the eight inch variety, which is nothing very small. Only once before have they thrown these big shells into the town. All the pieces were frightfully jagged and the kind that make terrible wounds. One shell landed on the edge of the cemetery and tore up some graves of recently buried soldiers. This was the most interesting shelling yet.

Later we were visited by a whole flight of "taubes", to inspect the damage and the guns boomed away at them. However, they flew over the town and got all the information they wanted, before being driven off. Lots of captive balloons are about, - I counted nine in all, - French, Belgian, British and German. This evening it looks as if we would have another, but more serious bombardment. For nearness to the German trenches, the work of going to the "postes de secours" and excitement of being frequently bombarded, this is probably the best place of all the squads of the American Ambulance at the front. To-day (the 28th) we had several day trips to the "postes" of urgent calls for very badly wounded men. We went by way of Elverdinghe, which town is all in ruins and of course there is no one living there, yet still the Germans drop in shells every day. But the sentry stopped us and refused to let us pass, as orders were to let nothing pass in daylight hours, because it would only attract the Germans' artillery fire and result in their bombarding and destroying the road and anything passing. But we had to get down, so we went back a short distance, made a detour across the fields and ended up on the same road, but beyond the post of the sentry. We found two wounded men at a ruined farm house, which is now used as one of the "postes". Alongside of it is a battery of 75 mm. guns, hidden beautifully in an artificial hedge and line of bushes. It has been there now for several months, yet so carefully is it concealed that the German aeroplanes have not succeeded in locating it.

The muzzles of the guns were pointed directly at us, for we had to go only twenty or thirty yards in front of them. Probably they were already trained on some German position, waiting for instructions later on to open fire. A number of "taubes" were about and all the 75 mm. and 120 mm. guns in the neighborhood, except these, were blazing away at them. There were lots of badly wounded men to-day and two died in the cars, between the "poste" and this ambulance, - perhaps a fifteen minute ride. In places the trenches are only thirty yards apart and both sides use bombs and aerial torpedoes with terrible results. These which have a maximum range of only about two hundred yards are discharged from a small short ~~range~~ cannon.

This was our night on duty and at the nine o'clock evening call, I went with a doctor to a different "poste" and found only one blessé. We stayed for a while at the farm "poste", talking to the other two doctors. On returning as we found there were no urgent cases to carry to the operating hospitals beyond at Crombec, until morning, Budd and I went to bed. But we had no sooner pulled the blankets about us, than up came a man saying that both cars were needed on an urgent call for seven wounded. The bicyclist, who came up from the "poste" with the message, took us back by a short cut across the fields, as he said the way was good enough. Luckily the moon was full and it was very clear, and our cars were light, for I had only three in mine and Budd four in his. We should have had only one "brancardier" in each car but they are great joy riders and like to take the evening trip down to the "postes", especially on moonlight nights. The ditches and holes were something terrible, and in places where the trees shaded the road, a man had to go ahead and pick out the way for us, as marmite holes from the big German shells were everywhere. Once in a while, the springs would fetch up with a bang and one jounce was so bad that Budd's tires, which were tied on the top of his car, flew off into the field. The mud was very bad and if it had been worse we couldn't have crossed here. As we went to a "poste" beyond Dr. David's, where we had been the other night, the way was familiar. The sky was full of fusées, for in spite of the bright moon, the light is not sufficient and guns were booming away, for apparently the French were shelling some German road, where they suspected troops were moving about on their way to relieve the others in the trenches. Rifles were popping too and the bullets made a "twing" as they went by now and then. Troops were everywhere, - in bomb proof shelters, lying along the road and behind hedges. Though we expected to find seven there were only five, so I took the first two and Budd stayed for the others. In my car was a lieutenant, whose foot was so badly shattered, that he had to be taken to Crombec immediately, to have it amputated. The next morning when I looked inside I found the floor of my car and the stretcher he had been lying on were a mass of clotted blood.

The most interesting call was one to a "poste" only four hundred yards from the German lines. It was an underground bomb proof shelter made of iron plates covered with earth and beautifully hidden by trees and bushes, which were massed about it. Here there was no one to take away and it was a relief to find an empty "poste" at times. It is too dangerous to bring the cars here by daylight, as the road is in plain sight of the Germans and very near their trenches, so the wounded are brought out further back on little hand push-carts. As we walked across the field to the car, a bullet came singing by our heads, - the closest one yet. At such close range the noise of the shooting is quite terrific. I got some sleep between twelve and three but it was interrupted on account of dodging these marmite holes and avoiding deep ditches going across the fields in the car. Just as I would dose off, I felt I was dropping into a hole or a ditch and I would awake with a start! I went to bed at half past six, as the others were going to breakfast and slept until ten. On the way to Crombec, at half past five, we had a terrific rain storm, with a gale of wind, - just a typical Belgian down-pour, such as happens nearly every day so we are used to them now. In the afternoon a "taube" managed to get by the guns by flying high up. Although the guns

all about us were shooting and the air all around the taube was a mass of puffs of smoke from the bursting shells, the pilot kept his nerve and disappeared towards Poperinghe. It is an unpleasant sensation to have a "taube" directly overhead and the shrapnel bursting above us, for according to the laws of physics, all those bullets come down as fast as they go up, and when they reach the earth they attain the same velocity as they had when they left the muzzle of the guns. However, there is lots of space about us and plenty of room for the thousands of shrapnel bullets to drop. As the German machine went overhead, we heard for a couple of seconds a loud "swish" and then a dull thud on the earth, just behind the cars, as a steel shrapnel casing fell from above. We searched carefully in the field of oats besides us, but never found it. Undoubtedly, it was partly or wholly buried in the earth. In spite of the continual booming of the guns and whistling of the shells as they go overhead, what makes us realize most of all the nearness of the trenches, is the sound of the rifle shooting in the distance. At night when there isn't so much noise, due to the rumbling of teams going by, it is more noticeable, especially so, as when we lay in our blankets on our bed of straw, in the attic of the house.

To-day they bombarded Poperinghe and the shells whizzed overhead with a great noise. I had three blessés to take there and to Rousbrugge, but went to the former place first. Had I gone the other way I should have arrived at Poperinghe just during the shelling,- so by going the wrong way I missed the excitement. Budd went there to get our daily supply of food and didn't return for three hours. Thinking he might have been hit, one of the cars went in search and found him on his way back. He had seen the shelling from a hill and so had a wonderful view of it. Our meal was thus delayed in the absence of food so we lunched an hour later than our customary time. The fleas are terrible in this attic of ours, with its straw covered floor, and I have been nearly eaten alive. Also in our dining room the flies are so numerous and voracious that they are entirely beyond description.

This evening I went to the artillery "poste" to get a gunner, who in cleaning his revolver had accidentally discharged it. The bullet went through his hand and then into his knee, so he had a couple of nasty wounds as a result. Bremner returned to-day with a beautiful bunch of roses,- a gift from some artillery officers and they certainly are a great addition to our dining room table. To-day between five and half-past six in the morning there was a heavy artillery bombardment on the part of the French and it has continued intermittently all day,- much heavier than has been the case since we have been here. On the road to Poperinghe and also to Crombec are two interesting places where they make barbed wire entanglements, "chevaux-de-frise", wicker baskets (to fill with earth for the parapets) and many such things.

To-day I met a Belgian battery of mitrailleuses, each gun of which was drawn by a pair of dogs and it was a very pretty sight. They were all laying down resting and it looked as if they had had a strenuous hike, as their tongues were hanging out of their mouths and they were panting hard. The French caught two spies here the other evening both Belgians, who were found cutting telephone wires and needless to say were shot immediately. I am glad they didn't discover the cut wires the other evening, when we were prowling around the trenches, or they might perfectly well have suspected us. Budd and I are lucky for being on duty the first day here, we get three nights this week, and so end up with our last night on duty. Budd on returning from the underground "poste" said that the bullets were whistling altogether too freely all about them and that some came very close indeed. It is a mean place, as the ground is level there,- in fact the German trenches are somewhat above it and they sweep it pretty continually at night, with rifle fire, so that it is always a hot spot and the car has to be left in the most exposed place of all, from which a short walk of a hundred yards, across the open field, takes one to the "abri".

I went down to the Zouave "poste" with a doctor and found three blessés

and as we were loading them in the car the "brancardiers" brought in another badly wounded man on a stretcher, who needed immediate attention, so we lifted the other two out and made room for him on the "upper floor" of the car. He was wounded in the thigh, arm and side and as they lifted him off to another stretcher, there was a mass of blood all over the one he had been on, so that he must have been very weak from losing so much. There were so many that I carried another man outside as he was able to sit up and left the doctor behind, and it was a forlorn trip across the fields on returning to get the remaining two "blessés". After waiting a long time at the quarters at Woesten, there were so many men to evacuate as to require three cars, and as it happened, Johnson had had so much coffee for supper that he couldn't sleep, and so had come down, saying he would help out. So it saved us from waking up some one for an additional car. I got to bed at half past one, after completing this last run to the hospital at Crombec, but didn't get much rest as later I was awaked for the morning call. We went to the most familiar place,- the Zouave "poste". On arriving the "brancardier" said there were two "blessés" and after preparing the car to receive them, we went into the barn where the men lay on the straw, awaiting transportation, and on getting ready to put them on a stretcher, found one had already died but a few minutes ago,- poor lad he was only about twenty-five. There he lay stretched out on the straw, as if he were asleep, with no expression of pain or suffering to mar his features. And he had such a fine face,- one of the finest I have seen for a long time. His partly bared chest, covered with its encircling bandages now deeply dyed with a big crimson blot, told too plainly the reason why this form once active was now limp and lifeless. It was an extremely sad sight, to see a young man in his prime, suddenly deprived of life. As we went outside and saw high up in the blue sky the moon slowly turning from gold to silver and in the east the soft colors of the early dawn tinging the morning sky, while in the trees above our heads a bird was bursting into a beautiful song, full of rich notes, it seemed a perfect setting for the passing away of such a noble self sacrificing son of France. It was one of the most impressive, as well as one of the most beautiful and inspiring moments I have ever known; and I believe the others felt it too, for no one spoke for several minutes.

To-day Budd and I spent a couple of hours at Elverdinghe, taking photographs of the church and buildings, during the morning, as we were off duty. After having finished, we found that carrying Kodaks was a serious military offense (for it is now prohibited in the English army and the English are in charge of that town now) and further, anyone found in a building was liable to court martial for looting, so it was fortunate we were able to accomplish everything without getting into trouble. We found two Zouave officers, who also wanted to take photos, so we all combined and watched for any signs of approaching English troops, while the other snapped the views. Soon after we left, Elverdinghe was bombarded, which was very much of a daily occurrence, for the Germans hoped to be able to drop a few shells among the troops on the march or hit some supply wagons as they passed, and we could hear the guns fire and then the explosion a few seconds later in the town. Brenner had gone to one of the "postes" and on returning through the streets for a few minutes had all the excitement he wanted, for the shells burst close by in the buildings along the road. The English guns there are well concealed, for many of them are in the buildings themselves. In the spring when this squad of ambulances was here, they were billeted in the town at the "Chateau". Then all the civilians were living in their houses, but as the Germans decided to demolish the town, the inhabitants were slowly forced to evacuate and finally the continual bombarding made it too hot for the cars, so the squad finally had to move away too. Now there is no one living there and not a single building intact,- in fact many of them are only a heap of bricks and mortar.

Many German aeroplanes were overhead this morning but refused to be scared off by the hundreds of shells the British and French guns fired at them. All day there has been a continual artillery duel,- first we hear the loud report of the

shot and then in the distance a faint "boom" of the shell exploding in the German trenches or near their artillery concealments. It is fascinating to hear the whistling of the shells, for they make an awful, angry shrieking as they cut through the air. Brenner just brought in another man terribly torn up, but he died in a few minutes, just as they were preparing to send him further on. These views of the war at such close quarters are terrible and brings the horrors of it home more than anything else can. Later in the afternoon we all left Woesten when the other squad came over to relieve us. Kingsland took my car, as it formerly belonged to him and I found one ready for me when I reached Crombec. It has been completely overhauled and is like new, as many of the parts have been replaced. Ryan went to Dunkerque this morning and as I was ordered there for the following week, I started off alone, but had no difficulty in finding the way, after having been over it once before two weeks ago, in that pouring rain. The car ran finely, but I came very slowly owing to its having new cylinders. On arriving I found Ryan and Putman and as they had finished supper and there was nothing left to eat, they came down and sat with me at the "White Café" on the beach. Yesterday seven "taubes" flew over Dunkerque, dropping bombs at the Aviation Field at St. Pol, but it was impossible to find out the extent, if any, of the damage done. All the guns were firing at them and one shrapnel shell came down on the house almost next to this one. It had not exploded in the air, owing to some defect, but when it fell in the house, it did what it should have several seconds previous and blew things to pieces there. Luckily no one was within and so there were no casualties. There is practically no work here, but I have quite a lot to do in fixing up my car and as soon as that is done, there will be a loaf for the rest of the week.

August 1 - 11.

There is nothing to write of this week, as nothing has taken place worthy of mention. Each day I have done some more work on my car, going all over it thoroughly. The last man took such bad care of it that the grease cups were rusted on and I had to fill some of them eight times before there was enough grease inside! Our only work has consisted in doing errands and getting the mail, as well as taking turns driving the Countess _____ out to one of the hospitals at Bourbourg. Each day I have taken walks up the beach at low tide and the smell of the salt air has been wonderful. Most important of all,- there is a place near by where we can get hot showers and we have made the most of our opportunities and are ready to return good and clean. Among the other enjoyments are the "patisserie" shops, which are numerous as in all French cities, and about twice or three times a day we drop into one and eat these wonderful cakes, until we have our fill,- consequently, it has been possible to put on several pounds, leading this sort of a life.

On August eighth our turn came to return to the front and we intended leaving Dunkerque at quarter past five in the afternoon but we had three doctors to take back with us and they were late of course. Then we had to load up the cars with provisions, which they were taking back for their week's supply,- among which was a big case and a cask of wine. It was the last thing to go on board and of course they put it in the very rear, so that all the weight was behind. After an hour's delay, we started but before going far we had a puncture. It was the first one for me during my month up here, but it only took a few minutes to put in a new inner tube. We reached Crombec at dark,- too late for supper and the "fusées" from the trenches beyond were lighting up the sky,- so that things had a very familiar look. This week we are to stay here at Crombec. Some changes had taken place for two men had left and soon several others are leaving for good, so the squad will be very different by the first of September. Two new men arrived from Paris last night. Last week they had two bombardments

at Woesten and more damage was done, as about twenty horses were killed from a shell landing near a picket line and several soldiers wounded. There was quite a lot of work last week,- some cars made as many as four trips to the "postes" in one evening.

An interesting letter from the squad at Pont-au-Mousson, was read in which it described their narrow escape during a bombardment. They had all left their house to go to supper and one man only had remained behind asleep. A shell shortly exploded in front of the house, doing much damage and the cook and orderly, both of whom were Frenchmen, were killed. The men in alarm returned hurriedly for the man left in the house, when suddenly they saw him appear from behind them. Apparently he had stayed only a few minutes after they had left. Altogether it was a very narrow escape. Our house at Woesten stands a very good chance of having the same thing take place, as it is right in the town and the German shells strike and burst near by,- often less than a hundred yards away. All the cars are being overhauled one by one, and for this purpose two men came up from Paris a week ago and the yard here now looks like a repair shop. An overhauled Ford is quite a different thing from what it previously had been. I spent all day in going over my car from top to bottom and now it is in fine shape, as well as all the tools and extra equipment. This morning the air is full of those miserable little black flies, as bad as midges at home, and they crawl over your hands and face and it nearly drives you crazy. It would be better if they would only bite and be satisfied, but this continuous crawling is at times almost unbearable. It reminds me of our trip in British Columbia last summer.

At daylight an extremely heavy bombardment began between the English and Germans and lasted for five hours. I wonder what the result was and if the shelling was followed by an infantry attack. It was possible to count as many as a hundred artillery shots a minute. At that rate 30,000 shells were used up and in only a small section of line, probably a mile or two in length at the most, that is quite a lot. Captive balloons and aeroplanes and the guns popping away at the latter, keep things interesting here. The sun is out bright this morning and it is hot,- hence so many flies,- so that rainy weather is almost preferable. Took a load of "couchés" over to Poperinghe this morning (August 9th) as usual. The Germans were bombarding it with 210 mm. shells and several exploded along the main street, as we were in the town. The M. P. (military police) suspended traffic, but the ambulances of course had to go along, although they tried to make us go by a roundabout way, which was too far and took too long. As we passed the British ambulance, we saw car after car full of wounded standing by the gate of the hospital awaiting their turn to be carried in,- there was fresh blood everywhere. This was the result of the morning's fighting and as we later heard the British and French had retaken three trenches, which the Germans had recently taken from them. On the way home, the shells were still bursting in and near the square at Poperinghe. An English gun near Crombec was booming away at intervals and from its sound it must have been a very big gun, which has been placed there recently. Undoubtedly they were using it against some city or town behind the German lines. From the reports we hear, Dunkerque was bombarded again yesterday, so I have missed it once more.

It is raining now,- great weather,- though only an hour ago it was hot and the sun shining brilliantly. Townsend has just come in from Woesten and says there is a big German gun opposite them that is firing on Dunkerque. Its report is so loud that it seems only a few yards away, instead of several miles. So that instead of the gun which we thought was an English one near by, this is the one we heard. It is nearly four miles from us, and the terrific whistling, following the report, is that of the shell going over our heads on its way to Dunkerque. As we entered Poperinghe all the women seemed to be busy making lace,- each seated just outside her door,- and it presented a very industrious scene. But on the way back all was different for the bursting shells had scared them and no one was left on the streets. In fact doors and shutters were closed to pre-

vent the glass from being shattered from the concussion, and the town had a deserted look. One minute there was activity and bustle everywhere and another the town was empty. It was a pathetic sight. Even the streets were clear of teams and horses for traffic was stopped owing to the shelling and the possible subsequent damage to convoys. But ambulances had to get to their destination, although they tried to keep us out. At each explosion a cloud of black smoke would arise above the house tops. Most of the shells seemed to be bursting near the square and along the main street. I didn't hear of the casualties. People had congregated in the fields or on a sharp hill at the edge of the town, to watch the effect of the shelling and no doubt some of the less fortunate ones saw their own houses destroyed before their very eyes. Even after being wounded in the trenches there is no let up, for the ambulances stood a chance of being hit, as they went through the town, and that was the most pathetic of all, to think that these poor helpless forms, lying stretched out inside, might any minute be finished for good, right in sight of hospitals and possible ultimate recovery.

To-day (the 10th) it was very foggy at sunrise and everything dripping wet, but no flies thank heavens. Later the sun came out and the heat was terrific,- by far the hottest day yet, and needless to say the little, black, crawling flies swarmed. Lots of troops and mitrailleuses passed through Crombec at noon. Yesterday the Zouaves, who returned from the trenches the previous evening, brought a small pig with them, which had escaped from the German trenches, and running across the intervening space, had taken refuge within the French lines. It seems strange that even the pigs can't stand the Germans! We got the soldier, in whose possession he now is, to bring him out from the pen,- then we tied a captured German helmet on his head, blackened a mustache, like the Emperor's, and while the Zouave held him, we took his picture. The pig struggled hard and squealed loudly, but he had to submit to the ignominious treatment.

I was sent over to Woesten to replace Robertson, whose car needs overhauling and Ryan followed to take Brewer's place. The rest of the squad here now, is Budd, both Townsends and Gile. As I came into the ambulance yard all the sights and sounds were familiar,- "taubes" were in the air, cannons were booming and shells were bursting about them, as well as in the German trenches. Soon a call came to go to the "poste" of the "Tirailleurs" and I went down with a "brancardier". It was in mid-afternoon and the sun was bright. We passed a battery of 75's, the one that is so well hidden in the hedge. The last time I came by, it had gone but now it has been replaced by a new battery. It is so well hidden that I passed by several times before I discovered it although the first gun is within twenty feet of the road. It is simply in a hedge between two broad open wheat fields, but its concealment was cleverly done with the further assistance of additional bushes arranged in a natural manner. One day as I passed in the car, the nearest gun went off with a terrific explosion and I nearly jumped out of my skin. After that I knew the exact location of one battery at least! This "poste" was a new one to me and as the man went inside, I took a picture of it. While doing it I heard that familiar descending "zirr", as a shell came by and exploded in the field behind me, with a loud report. That was the first time it has happened to me while at a "poste". There are sometimes lots of bullets whizzing by, but not often shells bursting so close. Meanwhile, the French shells were buzzing through the air, above our heads, bound for the German trenches and a few seconds later we could hear them explode,- always wondering what effect they had. I returned with three badly wounded men and came through Elverdinghe. They still shell this town every day and many fresh ruins were about since my last visit ten days ago. Troops were everywhere in the reserve line trenches and it seemed there were a great many more than when I was here last. On reaching the ambulance, the shells continued to fall, so three of us went down to get some pictures and before the bombardment was over, we managed to photograph some of the bursting shells from the trenches. When we thought they had stopped firing for the day, we went over to the shell holes, visiting three and dug out the brass

time fuses as trophies, for these make the most interesting souvenirs of all and are scarce now, as they use many more percussion shells than time fuse or shrapnel. They were all of one size, apparently the 77 mm. These fuses, dug out from a hole made by a shell bursting near us, while they are still so hot that you often can't hold them, make one of the most interesting souvenirs of all. We also got some more from some of the peasants, living near by, who were ready to part with them for a few sous.

In the evening, I had to take two doctors to Mrs. Turner's hospital at Rousbrugge to see an "infirmier", who had a violent attack of appendicitis, and then I continued on to Killeme with a "malade", who was returning to his regiment, which is there resting from the trenches. We went by the wrong road and had much difficulty in finding it,- in the dark without lights. It is easy to lose the way, going in the dark, along narrow, winding, country roads with numerous turn offs, especially on the way home alone, when everything is the reverse and looks so differently. It is always very necessary to watch every land mark carefully. I picked up the doctors on the return and we came home slowly and as luck would have it had to pass two battalions of artillery, on a narrow road with deep ditches on both sides. The dust was awful and we could scarcely see at all, and so we crept along. It is a weird feeling to be crawling along a road at night, and suddenly have a big wagon loom up just in front. It almost always means jamming on the brakes hard, as it is impossible to tell at first glance, whether the cart is coming or going. Sometimes, as we come on them, the first warning we have is a light flashed in our eyes,- usually so bright that it completely blinds up for the instant, and so makes it worse than ever. An accident is very easy under these conditions and it is necessary to take every precaution to prevent one, for with badly wounded men inside, it is a serious thing to have happen.

AUGUST 12 - 16.

They bombarded Elverdinghe again to-day and we heard the shells bursting with loud reports. Also while a French aeroplane flew above us, the Germans kept shooting at it. Finally, a shrapnel casing fell down in the field next to us, with a wild whistling sound, as it tore through the air. There were several daylight calls to the "postes" and there will be work to-night for all night, as there are quite a lot of wounded. This morning Ryan brought in three wounded from the "Tirailleur poste" and when we took them out of his car one was already dead. To put a live human being into your car and then a quarter of an hour later to take out a lifeless form is always a terrible shock, no matter how often it may happen. They had to return over a terrible road, across the fields full of deep ditches and shell holes and the trip had been too much for him. He was shot through the lungs and was in bad shape when put in the car. I went down for two more at the same "poste" but neither of them were bad cases. The picture presented there was a typical one. An old ruined farm house and barns served as the "poste" and about it were many Tirailleurs, occupied in various ways,- some however only loafing and smoking. Behind one barn were two of the movable military kitchens, where the cooks were busy preparing dinner for the men. On another side was a little graveyard dotted with a dozen or more rude crosses, showing where a few of the most recent victims had been buried. Two soldiers were in the act of putting a few wild flowers, which they had gathered in the nearby fields, on a grave of one of their comrades, while a third was busy digging a new grave. The French have a great deal of sentiment and feeling and take great pleasure in decorating the graves of their fallen friends.

We returned as usual through Elverdinghe and it was pathetic to see so many houses all torn to pieces. One house,- a typical example of many, had one

whole side blown out, in fact it was literally cut in half. Upstairs the pictures were on the walls and a sewing machine with chairs and tables in place. On the ground floor the dining table was in its usual place and plates and cups were there, as if the occupants had hurriedly fled about meal time. Of course there was rubbish about and broken pieces of crockery and furniture were scattered in all directions. We heard shells dropping in the town during the morning. In the evening it began to rain and for two hours it poured as it only can in Belgium. I had to make another trip to a "poste" and going across these soft clay roads, with no foundation of any kind, in a light car, is ticklish work, as they simply slide from one side to the other, and it is exceedingly difficult to keep from going into the deep ditches on either side. Two of my men had bad head wounds, about the eyes, and were so bandaged that they couldn't see at all and we had to lead them up to the car and then put them in. Such sights as those are the kind that are heartbreaking. Now they are lying inside the ambulance here, stretched out on the straw, - just silent figures. Before long we will evacuate them further along the line and eventually they will reach a permanent hospital. It seems sad to think of these native Algerian troops, lying about wounded in a strange land far from their homes. It is going to be a miserable night going to the "postes" because of the mud and rain and it certainly will be dark. Townsend came back with a fine brass shrapnel head and also numerous shrapnel bullets, he picked up near one of the French batteries of 75's, located a short distance in front of us. As I left the station here this evening, they were preparing for a funeral, which is however almost a daily affair, and as I stopped in the village of Crombec to buy a bottle of mineral water, one was just taking place there and the procession was passing through the main street, in front of the church, on its way to the cemetery. In front walked one of the "infirmiers" (hospital orderlies), who carried the rude cross, with its painted inscription, which was shortly to be placed at the head of the grave. Then came the curé, in his white robes, chanting lowly, following whom were four more "infirmiers" carrying the roughly made coffin. A few more "infirmiers" and one solitary soldier, hobbling along with the aid of a stick, completed the cortège. Nothing could have been simpler, yet nothing could have been more impressive.

It certainly was a dark night as I thought. However, before we went down to the "poste", the rain stopped and the stars came out, yet the darkness along the wooded roads was intense and we had to crawl along the whole distance. It was hard on the eyes straining into the darkness. Soldiers were impossible to see until you were already on them, but they could hear the engine and so had some warning of our coming. The only way it was possible to see a team was by keeping your eyes glued on the road, which was a little lighter colored than its surroundings. Once in awhile a large dark object would appear and that was a signal to put on the brakes and stop, for it was impossible to tell whether the team was coming or going. If it didn't immediately loom up, it was evident we were both going in the same direction and shortly he would turn out for us to pass, which was ticklish work with the muddy, slippery roads and a deep ditch on the side, which was impossible to see. It was weird the way things loomed up suddenly. In little hollows the mist was very bad, so that you couldn't see at all, but simply went on low speed and trusted to luck that nothing was in the way. For the first time I returned without any wounded from this "poste".

I hadn't been in bed half an hour when I was waked up to take some wounded away to the hospitals at Crombec. As there were lots of teams along the main roads, it was necessary to go very slowly. Now and then I passed troops resting along the sides of the road and the only way I knew of their presence was from the lights of the cigarettes and pipes, for nearly all the soldiers smoke at such times, and then the appearance of these glowing cigarettes reminded one of a swarm of fire-flies on a June night at home. Once in a while a man would strike a match and then there loomed up the rows of stacked guns and huddled forms of soldiers beyond, but it was only for an instant for the match would speedily go out

and all would be in darkness once more. It was a strange feeling to suddenly have a body of troops revealed to you in the darkness and then as suddenly have it lost to view. Later on when off the main road, I lit the side lights of the car but found it really made matters worse, as the glare interfered with my sight and the oil lights weren't strong enough to show far enough ahead. Even at two miles distance from the trenches, lights are forbidden on the cars along the roads. The sound of the rifle shooting was quite frequent and much louder than usual, so that the trenches seemed much nearer than they really are. On returning I went to bed but not for long as after an hour's sleep I was again called. Once, in the darkness I passed by one of the sentry posts without realizing it, and as it seemed too late to stop, I kept on but opened the throttle wide to speed up the car. I must admit that I felt a little nervous, until I had gone about two hundred yards, as I had a feeling they might take a shot at me for not disclosing my identity. On the morning call we met a man, before we reached the "poste" who had just been shot badly through the jaw and was suffering intensely, so that he couldn't speak or open his mouth, for his jaw bone was smashed. A bullet had hit him while working there along with some other soldiers repairing a connecting trench, alongside of our road. There have been quite a few similar cases near that same place recently.

Another man died in Townsend's car last evening on the return trip, but so far my Ford has had a clean record. He and his brother went to what is left of the town of Lizern and were within two hundred yards of the German trenches. While crawling around on their hands and knees to keep from exposing themselves, they found a dead German, who had been lying there since April, for it was then that they were driven out from that town by the French. They also found an old rusted German gun, a helmet cover and various other souvenirs in the fields where there was desperate fighting last spring. Having the morning off duty, owing to being up all night, I preferred going exploring rather to sleeping, so I went back of the church to the farms where the shells fell Wednesday afternoon and asked several Belgians if they had picked up any copper fuse heads, but at first met with no success, so I walked on down to the edge of a large expanse of broad fields and listened to the rifle fire in the trenches beyond. About a mile further on I could see the line of trees along the Yser Canal, where are the trenches. All about were nothing but ruined farm buildings and trees cut off short by the shells. Just before reaching town on the return I stopped to question another Belgian on the same subject of fuse heads and he told me of a man, who lived in a house I had just passed, who had dug up lots of time fuses from the shell holes. At my request he conducted me to the individual, who was a baker. On the way an officer, who had seen me pass his house twice before, seemed suspicious at seeing me in company with a Belgian peasant and so came out to stop and question me, but was thoroughly satisfied with my answers. At the baker's we found a whole sack of about fifty time fuses. The son had been picking them up for months. They had a "corner" on the market and were hard customers for they wanted a franc apiece for them. During the negotiations, two young soldiers, - Tirailleurs, came in and we had an amusing time trying to drive a bargain, which was very difficult as the baker could only speak Flemish. Their price was seven francs for ten. Finally, I left as they would not come down in their price, but as I was leaving for Crombec an hour later, there to be for the following week, I wanted them badly, so returned and ignominiously paid their price. The two Tirailleurs were an amusing pair. One of them gave me a picture of himself, which he signed. He had it taken to show the "croix de guerre" he had won, which was pinned on his chest. That one was a sergeant but the other, who was only eighteen, was a private. He was in the class of 1916 but had enlisted before being called. We retired to a wine shop and opened a bottle of vin rouge, - poor like most of the franc-a-bottle wine, and we had an amusing half hour together, as they were a hilarious pair. To-night they return to the trenches again, which they think no more of than going in to get a drink. We parted the best of friends

and I promised to look them up four days later on their return. I went home with the bag of time fuses slung over my shoulder, and it was a heavy load. Everyone was wild at the return of a successful spoil hunter and wanted to get the rest, so back we went with a car and got twenty more and later some others returned for the balance. That Belgian made a fortune and no doubt found selling fuses much more profitable than baking bread for the French soldiers. By this time the other cars had come to replace us and we had to return to Crombec. I thought I would stay on at Woesten for my regular week, having come three days ahead of time to replace a man, but was disappointed and had to return with the others. On nearing Crombec we found a company of soldiers putting up barbed wire entanglements and building trenches, in case of necessity later on. They are certainly taking wonderful precautions against the Germans breaking through the lines, for the reserve trenches now extend about six miles behind the first line trenches along the Yser Canal.

AUGUST 17.

Last night about dark I ran my car over to Ambulance 2-45 to pass the night in it there, for this morning I had to take one of the doctors over to Elverdinghe to do some work. We were waked up by an "infirmier" at three in the morning, but having only my boots to put on and no breakfast to eat, we were off in a few minutes. Besides the doctor, an "infirmier" came along to stay with the car to see that nothing was stolen, for two days ago, when Campbell went on the same trip, his dog was taken. Although he greatly regretted it, the rest of the squad were as greatly pleased, as most of the time the dog was an awful nuisance. We lit the head lights, - the first time I have used them, and so were able to go along fast, - meeting nothing on the way. Before reaching Woesten we turned them out, as they are forbidden on the main road, and proceeded in the darkness. Having driven that way often I was used to it and knew the road well, but the doctor was nervous and wanted me to blow my horn at intervals of a few seconds, like a ship in a fog. However, I persuaded him there was nothing to fear and so we continued on quietly. On reaching Elverdinghe we left the car just inside the gates of the "chateau". Before starting I asked an English "Tommy", who was on sentinel duty, if it was all right there. He said perhaps it would be better to put it a little further inside and to hide it behind a clump of bushes, as under a tree next to the gate was mounted an eight inch naval gun, which was placed there last night! So we took his advice. Later when we returned in the middle of the morning, we found the gun so well concealed by bushes, which were naturally grouped about, that had we not known of its existence we should have passed it unnoticed. Even being aware of its presence, it was extremely difficult to see its outlines through the bushes at only a distance of six or eight feet. They have now located the big German gun that has been firing on Poperinghe, and as the former location of this English gun was too far away to reach it, they changed its position here only last night. The Tommy said that if the morning was bright and clear, so that their aeroplanes could well observe the effect of the shooting, they would open fire on the German gun. However, as it later turned out the morning was overcast until eight, and up until the time we left Elverdinghe, about thirty, we had heard no reports from the gun so concluded it had not been fired.

Loaded with canteen, Kodak, films, binoculars, chocolate, oranges, cheese, etc., we started off just about daylight. Our work was to visit all the known cemeteries, of which the doctor had charts, where were marked the names of the buried soldiers in order to get the names of those buried since the map was made a few months ago, and also to locate all the new little cemeteries and scattered graves in this section of the French line which is about five kilometers in length. It meant in covering this distance also covering a depth of about a mile from the first line trenches back, - taking in all the cemeteries at the various half dozen

or more "postes de secours". The trip had in it great possibilities of being an interesting one and as it later turned out, it certainly was, for among other things we spent two hours in the first line trenches on the bank of the Yser Canal, only thirty yards, or the width of the canal and its banks, from the Germans.

The doctor wanted to start in at "boyau" #8. "Boyaux" are the connecting trenches that run to the third, second and first line trenches, starting from a distance of about one and a half miles behind and all troops and individual soldiers are supposed to keep in them when they are moving about. Otherwise the "taubes" and German captive balloons would have too easy a time in seeing the dispositions and location of the reserve troops and at a signal the batteries across the canal would open fire and cause much havoc. As all of this region is as flat as the prairies in our western country and treeless except for a little clump here and there, or a single line of trees on each side of some main road, it is very important to keep in the "boyaux" to prevent being seen by a German sharpshooter and get "picked off". Knowing well the location of all the "boyaux", I led him to #8 and we started on our way just as it began to get light in the east. It was a typical dull gray morning, the sky being overcast and it looked like rain, yet a number of birds were singing, - one in particular having a beautiful song, and that gave things a more cheery aspect. The "boyau" instead of going straight, as one might imagine, zigzagged and made little short turns similar to the circuitous course of an old Indian mountain trail out west. The reason for this being of course for further safety from shells or shrapnel, for the Germans often fire on the "boyaux" in the hopes of catching troops on their way down. A trench that went perfectly straight and so parallel to their line of fire would be as good as no protection at all, for the guns could rake it for its entire length. They are dug out three to four feet deep and the earth, piled either loosely along the sides, or in rows of sand bags sometimes to the height of two to three feet in exposed places, gives a good protection. Being tall I could in many places look over the top, for the trenches are dug for the average Frenchman, who is not a six footer. Little ditches of about two inches deep are dug along the sides of the bottom to drain the water and as the width is about two feet at the most, it means the center path is more or less crowned, and in wet weather, owing to the clayey soil, you slip continually unless your boots are studded with nails. Every fifty feet or more big holes are dug in the bank or transverse trenches of about ten feet in length, at the end of which is a big round cistern-like cavern which takes care of the rain water. The trenches are thus well drained and very well made. Often, near demolished towns, they are well paved with bricks or flat stones, so the walking is much improved, especially in wet and muddy weather.

On our way down we passed many farm houses in ruins. All the time the firing of rifles, cannons, bombs, torpedoes etc. was going on, - the various reports of discharge and explosion giving a great diversity of noises. Finally after walking some time we came to a spot where the doctor understood there was a little cemetery of forty to fifty graves, which had been passed by unnoticed by them two days previously. So we jumped quickly over the parapet of the "boyau" and dropped in the long grass and slowly worked our way on hands and knees to the protection of a ruined house. It was necessary to proceed with great caution, as the country here is flat and we were in plain sight of the Germans, who were less than four hundred yards away; and in the trees about the trenches were plenty of wide awake sharpshooters. Once inside we looked about, but could see no crosses sticking up in the growth of weeds and grass in the fields, which in peace times would have been growing beautifully cultivated crops of wheat or oats. Then for several hundred yards, we crawled on all fours, or went along crouching low and then squatting down to rest. We kept about fifteen yards apart as an extra precaution against being seen by the Germans. It was a weird sensation as we paused in the dew soaked grass which concealed us and took in the situation. Already it was broad daylight, but as the sky was over-

cast, the rising sun was not visible. In front, along the road, which ran through the remains of the little town of Boesinghe, was a row of beautiful big elm trees many of which had been broken off like pipe stems by the big shells and beneath them the ground was covered with branches and trunks, lying in a confused tangle. On our right towards the Yser Canal, a mist hung over the fields, and it gave the scene an even gloomier and more desolate aspect. The noise was incessant and at times was almost deafening. Behind us we heard the reports of the French artillery while in front came the loud "booms" as the big shells or bombs burst in the German trenches. A continual "crack" "crack" told of the rifle firing along the lines, which at times was very loud and with the echoes it seemed terrific. The bullets sped overhead whistling as they passed and made a dull thud as they buried themselves in the earth or a loud whack as they came in contact with a wall or a tree. Once we exposed ourselves too much and a German sharpshooter apparently spotted us, for a bullet whizzed through the grass between us. At that we changed our position quickly, so to avoid any more bullets he might fire at the same spot, and then squatted still for a minute. The doctor was a rather nervous man and at every report of a French or German rifle he would jump, so needless to say he didn't have much rest.

We continued on our way as before, through the growth of weeds and then when near enough made a dash, one by one, and jumped over the parapet into the "boyau". But just as we did this, no bullet whizzed by our ears as would have been the case in a story book! In another minute we reached the town of Boesinghe, the ruins of which we had seen in the distance for some time. What houses were still standing had their roofs and walls also torn to pieces. We stopped at the "chateau", where formerly lived the Count of Boesinghe, and here some soldiers gave us a cup of coffee, which tasted good as it was the first thing we had had since getting up. The grounds and house, though very simple compared to most "chateaux", were still very beautiful or at least were once so, but now all was a mass of ruins. The greenhouses and grapery scarcely had a pane of glass left and the lawn was just a mass of big holes made by the exploding shells. Beautiful big trees had been cut down by the shells and the fallen timber all about was a reminder of our trip in the mountains out west in British Columbia last summer. A soldier escorted us from here as a guide as it was confusing, for the "boyau" had ended and the remaining walls of the houses served as the protection, with here and there a pile of sand bags or furniture blocking up some hole in the masonry, caused by an exploding shell. Thus finding one's way to the trenches, through this maze of ruins, was very difficult. Here we were about two hundred yards from the German trenches and we could plainly see their exact location from cracks or little holes in the walls. On our left was the church, - nothing of which remained but the lower part of the walls and the bare window arches. Before leaving, we went all through the cemetery and around the church to see if there were any new graves, but found only three. Many were covered with the fallen masonry and so further identification of the broken and splintered headboards and crosses was impossible, but all these had been recorded, so it mattered little.

Here the most interesting part of our work began as we started for the trenches, but not at first through a "boyau", for there was a better arrangement. A street of a hundred yards in length ran directly towards the canal and by connecting all the houses on the right side, through the lower rooms, by big breaches made in their walls, we had a fine secure passage-way. It was a novel means but served its purpose well and was certainly the first time I had ever passed through a block of brick houses in that way. The doors and windows on the back side had been filled with sand bags or in some cases merely covered with an old shutter or piece of furniture. As the latter served only to shut the passing soldiers from view and not as a protection against bullets, it was necessary to stoop low on going by. Some little passages had very low barricades and owing to my height the doctor was worried that we would be seen by the German sharp-

shooters and attract their fire, so he kept continually looking around and saying in an undertone "baissez-vous". But his extra precautions were not necessary for I was very particular myself to keep well down out of sight. Then we once more entered a "boyau", well built and paved, with high parapets and many quick turns, so as to be very safe and suddenly we emerged in an open space behind the trenches. It was so unexpected that I asked a soldier if this was the first line! He smiled and pointing in front, said in a rather subdued voice, - that the German trenches were only just on the other bank of the Canal, about thirty yards away. It didn't seem possible. Here the trenches are about as close together as on any other part of the whole line and in their appearance and construction were far different from what I had expected to find. The ground was very favorable for it sloped away from the canal bank quite a bit, so that one could stand upright as far as one hundred feet behind the big parapet in front and still be under its protection and of course invisible to the Germans.

First of all is the front parapet which stands perhaps seven feet above the level of the ground and as the trench is dug four feet deep, there is an eleven foot protection. The parapet is made exclusively of sand bags, several in thickness, so as to withstand the explosion of the large bombs, which contain one hundred fifty pounds of powder. In it are little loop holes but they are almost all filled up with leaves or material easily removable. The only observation holes are little bits of things too small for the Germans to see at thirty yards distance. There is a shelf of two feet in width where the bottom of the wall of the parapet begins, - on a level with the top of the actual trench, and it is here that the men on duty stand watching, - rifle in hand. Sometimes this trench makes a detour behind the parapet for several feet and in this angle is a bomb proof dug-out or "abri" whose roof is covered with alternate layers of logs, sand bags, sheet iron and turf, so thick that the big bombs on exploding can not penetrate. For a depth of thirty feet in places there are numerous such "abris" and there is literally a maze of trenches, winding in and out among them, so that we often would get the wrong turn which would end in a blind trench, against a wall, or would stop at the entrance of an "abri". It was surprising that it was possible to get lost so easily in the trenches. The picture that I saw was an interesting one, as it was early in the morning, only about six o'clock, and many soldiers lay under their blankets asleep on the shelf, under the protection of the parapet, although most of them were underground, safely hidden in the "abris". Behind, about one hundred feet, were many graves of men who had been killed there and we made a list of all the names on the head-boards. However, as I found the doctor could do the work just as easily himself, and as there were numerous things of interest to see, I left him and talked to the soldiers. Breakfast was in progress, consisting of coffee and bread, and they kindly gave me a cup with a little bit of brandy in it, which is issued to them. The sergeant has charge of the supply and pours out indiscriminately a little in each cup. I gave them my oranges and most of the chocolate, which I had brought for our lunch, as I knew it meant more to them than to us, and also some cigarettes with which they were thoroughly pleased. These French soldiers are certainly a fine appreciative lot of men. Then I took some pictures but it was still early and the sun hidden in the clouds made the trenches very dark so that it meant making long time exposures. The sergeant gave me a periscope a hand made one of a simple box with pieces of mirror, which had a bullet hole through the top, and I stuck it above the parapet and saw the German trenches, - a high wall of sand bags exactly the same as were those of the French. Then I peeked through a hole and also stuck my head above the sand bags, close to a tree, and saw the trenches twice with my naked eye, but I only kept it there for a second, as they said more men were killed in the trenches in that way than in any other. By this time things were rather quiet, with only now and then a little spasmodic rifle firing or some cannons going off. As we went on, passing groups of men sitting or standing about, many of whom were just getting up, after their night's rest, we noticed the entire absence of officers. In fact we saw none until just before we left

the trenches, when we met a captain and a second lieutenant, who had just waked up and were looking very sleepy. I noticed at intervals, about fifty feet behind, little squares fenced off with barbed wire and at first I didn't see what they were for, then I noticed in each one lay an unexploded German bomb, just as it fell. Some of them were of the 80 mm. type, carrying one hundred and seventy pounds of powder and the fences were built to prevent soldiers from stumbling on them in the dark and having them explode. That was one of the most interesting things of all. We came to one piece of the line about fifty yards long, which was a rough looking spot, for this was where most of the German bombs and torpedoes, thrown from their trenches, landed during the night. The ground for a radius of fifty yards was full of deep holes and all torn to pieces, - even the parapet was well battered and needed repairing every night to keep it intact. We were warned of this spot before reaching it and told to hurry past as two big bombs had landed there only a few minutes before. However, in daylight, if you are careful, there isn't much danger, for not only can you hear the report when the gun is discharged, but as well you can see the bomb or torpedo coming through the air and so have about two seconds time to jump out of the way. Unfortunately none fell during our stay and so I didn't have the satisfaction of seeing one. In the center of all this torn up ground stood a little short cannon, with its muzzle pointing skywards. It was like a little gun used on a yacht for saluting purposes, for the barrel was only about eighteen inches long and two in diameter. The tail of the bomb, only, fits in the barrel for it is not necessary for them to go more than fifty to a hundred yards. They are on being discharged simply tossed up into the air and after taking a semi-circular flight above the canal, they fall fifty yards away behind the German parapet. They are composed of three parts, - the tail that fits into the muzzle of the cannon, the fins and the main body of the shell containing the explosive charge. These fins have the same function as the rifling in a cannon or gun, for they keep the shell going head on, by making it revolve rapidly.

Some of the men have made collections of various kinds of buttons off soldiers' uniforms and as I started to do likewise only yesterday, it seemed like a good chance here. Each time I saw a soldier with a different sort, I offered to exchange one of my red cross buttons for one of his as a souvenir. Needless to say most of them thought it an excellent idea, but as all the troops here were the First Regiment Colonials the variety was limited. Some of them had coats of other regiments issued to them however and so I managed to get four or five kinds of buttons. When I had finished my coat was well stripped of red cross buttons, but on returning, I sewed on the newly acquired ones, which were especially fine souvenirs, being obtained like that from soldiers in the trenches, while only thirty yards from the Germans. Much to my regret the work was done and so we said good-bye and returned by the "boyau" whence we had come. Near the "chateau" we met the commandant (major) of the battalion, which was in the trenches, who was an extremely pleasant man, and he asked us to come into his quarters at the "chateau" and have a cup of coffee. To this we readily agreed as we had had nothing to eat yet, - only the two cups of coffee which the sergeant had given us in the trenches.

We went into the hall, which he had fixed up as his quarters and a strange looking place it was. On the side towards the trenches were piled sand bags and barricades of all kinds as a protection against bullets and exploding shells, for in spite of the ruined condition of the town, they keep shelling it all the time, and bullets are always flying about. The lieutenant seeing my interest in the furniture etc. showed me through the rooms and we waded about amongst the piles of debris all over the floors. They had saved some of the nicer chairs, two marble figures and two beautiful old chinese vases, besides one or two pretty gilt mirrors. The Count of Boesinghe, the owner of the demolished "chateau", apparently is living in Paris now. That reminds me, in the trenches I saw a beautiful mahogany and gilt mirror hanging up outside one of the "abris" on the sand bags, where it was used by the

men for shaving, and also some upholstered chairs as well as numerous quaint wooden chairs and tables that would have interested anyone with a knowledge of antique furniture. What a strange sight it was! Also a metal street letter post-box was hung up on the sand bags,- probably taken from the ruins of Boesinghe.

The Commandant was a charming man and asked all about the American Ambulance and when he found that all the drivers were volunteers and the conditions under which they worked, he was immensely pleased. Also he asked questions about the United States and what business we were engaged in at home and seemed greatly surprised at the fact of so many men having come over to do this kind of work. Soon it was time to leave here. This is a strange life,- meeting lots of pleasant officers and men for perhaps half an hour and then parting, never to meet again. We returned by the way of the same "boyau". The doctor wanted to take #9 to the railroad station of Boesinghe, but as all the men we met said it was dangerous, owing to the fact that the walls were low and the mitrailleuses were kept trained on them firing a good deal at the low spots, he lost his nerve. Finally we ended up at the "poste de secours" of the Zouaves, the one that I have been to so frequently from Woesten. Here were some more graves and after getting all the names, we sat down and ate our meal of bread and cheese and wine, after which we felt much better. The sun was out bright now and I got a fine picture, which I have wanted to do for some weeks, as this is a familiar spot to me. The Germans were firing at the "boyau" beyond us, #6, but out of a dozen or fifteen shells that whistled by us, not one exploded, which showed how inferior was the ammunition. After half an hour's walk, over a familiar road, through the fields, we reached the "chateau" at Elverdinghe and started home in our car, but as the doctor wanted to lunch with the other doctors at Woesten we stopped there and Townsend, who is in charge of that section, had their lunch half an hour earlier, so I could lunch with them. Everyone was envious of my trip, for so many have made plans with the doctors to go to the trenches and then had them fail. I was luckier, for I managed to get there without having yet tried to plan any such trips, simply the opportunity turned up and I grabbed at it.

There was nothing to do in the afternoon at Crombec. All of our crowd of young tow-headed children was around,- the boys from five to ten all smoking cigarettes,- at least all who had them. We decided to cure the five year older and so gave him a cigar to smoke but he went right through it much to our surprise, and finished it without a qualm! When the Paris auto busses arrived later on in the afternoon and were unloading their sides of meat, a man fell and broke his leg, so one of our cars carried him off. It is strange how easily one can meet with such an accident and that it isn't even necessary for the soldiers to be in the trenches to get hurt. There is a new, but extravagant scheme here in building the trenches and "abris". They pile up a lot of bags filled with Portland cement and when they are in place they pour water over them, so that they harden like a wall of rock. Nothing can penetrate that kind of construction when it is covered with a deep layer of turf. To-day Sibley, Haney and Colton left for Dunkerque on their way home to New York, and they were certainly a happy crew to have their work all done, for they all have been here a good many months,- one since early winter.

Three new men arrived to replace those who left and are now at Woesten. Next week it will be our turn there again and we will have a full moon, as we did once before, which will make the night work a great deal easier. Last week we were there for three days and one of the men (Ryan) had "blessés" die in his car on two different occasions. At one of these times at the "poste", they put a man inside who was as good as dead and the jolting of the car speedily finished him, for on arriving a few minutes later they found he had died on the trip. Ryan said they put him in to get rid of him and have his death appear on the records of the next hospital, for the aim is to have as few deaths as possible. No doubt he was right. He has much difficulty, as he can't speak a word of French and was rather indignant over it. Yesterday, I found him sitting in his

car, in a pensive mood. Suddenly he asked me how to say in French "he is dead" and then when I told him he said what is "is he dead" and I told him that too. That was all the French he cared to know for the present and the next time he is at Woesten, he is going to make frequent use of those two sentences, and vows he won't have them "put it over on him" again! For he doesn't like the idea of their putting men in his car, in no fit condition to be transported. Two deaths in his car in three days didn't seem to appeal to him for it looked as if he was a bad driver.

Lately I have been drinking so much aerated water, owing to all the water in these Belgian wells being dangerous, that I now dislike the taste of ordinary water and it takes a little while to get accustomed to it again. The doctors made an analysis of the various beers and found them so full of microbes, owing to the impure water used, that beer is now forbidden to the soldiers and as a punishment, all the wine shops (Herbergs) in many towns are closed for a couple of weeks. And all the time we have been drinking beer with our meals, thinking it was safer than the water! With all the filth and dirt in these Belgian towns and the dangerous wells and water supply, it is a wonder any one can live here. But I suppose through many generations they have gradually become used to it, so that to-day these people are almost immune from certain kinds of diseases such as typhoid. Certainly seeing these dozens of tow-headed youngsters, playing around, no one could think of them of being anything else but healthy from their looks and rosy cheeks.

AUGUST 18 - 27.

To-day makes the end of the sixth week being on the Dunkerque squad and also it is just three months ago to-day that I reached Paris,- a day that I will long remember as one of very vivid impressions. Six weeks more and I will be back in Paris, so the time is just half over. I have been feeling miserable the last few days with a little fever and a cold, so I think if I can't get over it, I will go to Dunkerque on Saturday and take my turn there again, as much as I hate to give up my week at Woesten. This morning Kingsland was going to take the doctor on his last trip "grave hunting", but after going all the way over for him, the doctor lost his nerve at the last minute and refused to go. He is a nervous man and the day I went with him he didn't care much for the job, especially when there were any bullets whizzing around us. I feel worse still this evening with my miserable cold and planned to go to Dunkerque to-morrow, until I can get well, but Ned Townsend persuaded me not to give up the week at Woesten, when we change to-morrow, so I told him I would go there if I felt better in the morning.

We went around to our café after supper, while "Mac" played the piano, which is terribly out of tune. He plays ragtime wonderfully and it sounds good to hear some of it once more. The only trouble is that the piano is very bad,- evidently never having been tuned and besides the keys stay down when they are struck, so that it really takes two to play,- one to push the keys down and the other to push them up! As the church clock was striking eight, we left for that is the hour when all "militaires" have to leave the cafés. It was just about dark and as we came out we heard the rumble of heavy wheels and saw a battery going through town. However, as it turned out there were no guns, only caissons on their way to the batteries at Woesten with a fresh supply of shells. It always thrills me to see a battery of artillery go by, and especially in the dark and when it is a veteran one that has seen many battles. We stopped to watch it pass,- calling out once in a while to the men, "Cassez leur la gueule" or in English sometimes "Give them Hell"! It always amused them.

I turned in early and in the morning my cold seemed better, so I decided to chance it and go to Woesten, in spite of the miserable, wet, rainy morning. This weather is awful and it is hard to get the best of a cold when you are always chilly and damp. The summer, what there is of it, is over now and the even-

ings are pretty cool. I noticed that they set up an iron stove in one of the cafés yesterday, so they must be expecting cooler weather in September. Before leaving I had to fetch a man whose horse had just rolled on him and broken his leg. He was a Dragon and we took him along very slowly to the hospital. Just before lunch the Seventy-third Regiment of Territorials went by on their way to Woesten, for their tour in the trenches. The men were an old crowd, all in the neighborhood of forty or more and all having mustaches of about the same color, it made them look almost exactly alike. They were a veteran lot and certainly looked it. Apparently they had not suffered many losses, as the regiment seemed quite full. A band was with them and it was fine to hear a stirring march played by a military band once more. It stayed in the square and played as the troops marched by and then left with the last company playing "Le Sambre et Meuse" and as the troops turned the corner the strains were soon drowned out by the tramp of feet on the "pavé" road. The men all had on their new metal helmets, painted blue, and they looked very practical and quite good looking besides,- but I guess they aren't very comfortable at first, judging from the way the men wore them. As the Germans have been bombarding Woesten with gas bombs, we have been issued gas masks as a protection. I think it will be harder to get pictures of exploding shells, as it will be more dangerous to get as close as formerly.

Now I am glad I decided to stay as I feel a hundred percent better today. The air is clear and fresh this morning, like a September day at home and you can't help feeling finely. Our gas masks were issued to us this morning. Two days ago fifteen asphytiating gas bombs fell, not a hundred yards away, but only three exploded. The smell of the gas was not disagreeable,- in fact it was rather pleasant. Last week out of a dozen German shells that I watched, none exploded, so they seem to have some very poor ammunition. Early this morning the French 75 and 120 mm. guns, near our house, were carrying on a furious bombardment,- by far the hottest I have yet heard, so that it was hard to sleep as the noise was so terrific. I went to Poperinghe with one "blessé" and did the marketing for to-day, as well as various other errands. I noticed all the shutters were on the windows and the stores closed, as I came into Poperinghe. Also no people were about, neither were there any teams on the main street, which usually is so crowded with them. Having to do the marketing it was bad with so many stores closed. As I passed a group of English Tommies, I heard them whistle and yell at me and thinking I had a flat tire, stopped further on. Whenever you think you have one you can always imagine you can feel it. But on examination all four were found to be in good condition. Later on I heard they were bombarding the town and were shelling the houses on the right of the road but the noise of my engine prevented me from hearing the shells. The English had evidently intended to stop me and prevent me from going by that road. There are so many guns booming on all sides and so many shells exploding that it is hard to keep track of them all. On returning to Woesten a furious fire was going on, directed against a German aeroplane, but without result.

We tried our gas masks on and no wonder they are good for not only gas fumes can't penetrate the closely woven material but neither can the air, and in the few minutes we had them on we nearly died of suffocation. Apparently, the material is treated in some solution that neutralizes the effects of the gas, so it is very important not to get the masks wet. The 22nd, Sunday, was the noisiest day yet and hour after hour from daylight on, the French carried on a furious bombardment with the 75, 90 and 120 mm. guns. Later in the evening several "taubes" flew over us fearlessly circling around again and again, in spite of the incessant and well directed artillery fire against them. Many shrapnel bullets falling from the height of a mile pattered on the ground all about us and around the cars, and we picked up a number of them as souvenirs. In spite of the hundreds and probably thousands of shells fired, there was only one wounded brought in,- he was hit in the hand. About five, the "taubes" began signalling back to their lines and then the German artillery started shelling, evidently trying to

hit the batteries which the "taubes" had been trying to locate. This ammunition was good and all the shells exploded. Salvo after salvo was fired as we watched them burst but it was impossible to tell what effect they had.

The French aviators here refuse to go out to meet the German aviators and would turn around when too near them. Undoubtedly, the machines here are inferior to the Germans and so probably the aviators have orders not to get into a fight. The other afternoon they had one and the German was apparently driven back disabled. One "taube" nearly got hit yesterday and the bursts were so close to him that he became scared and dropped a few hundred feet quickly to a lower level. This morning I carried a poor man with the whole back of his skull torn off and his brain injured. He was in a coma and was a hopeless case, yet they were going to operate on a chance that some good might result. At first on getting up my cold seemed better this morning, but I got a chill on the half past four ride to Westvleteren and for the rest of the day I felt worse than ever, with a fever and aches and pains all over. If it gets worse to-morrow I shall go back to Dunkerque, where I can keep warm indoors and get over it entirely that way. Anyway I will take my turn there next week and get a new start for the last month on the job. The rest of the day I spent in my blankets, curled up in the straw in the attic, burning with a high fever and aching in every muscle. The doctor came to see me that night and took my temperature, finding it was above thirty-nine degrees Cent. (102.2°F)

For the next few days I stayed there, eating a little soup or tea brought to me twice a day by one of the men. I never felt so miserable in my life, especially as the quarters and conditions were rather uncomfortable. In spite of my sore throat I was unable to get any gargle until the third day and then the "infirmier" forgot it, so I didn't get it until my throat began to get better! Colonel Noble, a charming elderly Englishman, who has a London auto-buss here fitted up with hot water boilers to make tea and soup for the soldiers, was very nice to me and sent up some soup and crackers and once he brought it up himself. One afternoon we had a hot bombardment and for half an hour a German gun sent over a lot of 150 mm. (6 inch) shells. They all whizzed by the house like express trains and landed in a field across the road, less than a hundred yards away. I was too sick and miserable to care how close they came, and they weren't but a few feet away as they passed the attic. The last one I thought was coming through the house, it was so close, for the building trembled as it passed. It only landed fifty yards away and not twenty-five from the ambulance. Fortunately it didn't explode or it would have shattered the hospital, - which is only a small wooden frame building, - lightly constructed. All this was told me later by the men. As the first shell struck they cranked up their cars and ran them down the road out of danger, but mine was left behind as there was no one to take care of it and fortunately no shell came close enough to hurt it. There was a foot-ball game going on among the "infirmiers" in the field alongside of the ambulance and when the first shell struck in the edge of the field they all ran for the trenches and dugouts, - disappearing like a lot of rabbits. One poor woman ran down the road carrying a young baby in her arms, and being met by her husband, transferred the child to his care, - he being the faster runner. On all sides people fled and all the wounded were immediately moved out of the ambulance and carried off. One poor "blessé" was on the table having his dressing changed, and the doctor continued finishing the job, perfectly cool, while the shells were whizzing past. About the middle of the bombardment, Ryan ran upstairs and wanted to know if I heard the shells and knew we were being bombarded! That was the only humorous event and miserable as I was I couldn't help laughing. It would have taken an awfully deaf man to have missed those loud whistling sounds. The shells that fell last week back of us and didn't explode all have little barbed wire fences built about them, so there will be no danger of anyone running into them in the dark, for any further jar is liable to cause them to go off. Probably these shells that didn't explode will be treated in the same manner.

The next morning a "taube" flew overhead and dropped four bombs that exploded with a terrific noise. One went through a house a few doors away and tore things up pretty badly. In the afternoon, one six inch shell whistled by and exploded in a potato patch on the other side and less than seventy-five yards from the ambulance. Strangely enough no more fell. The "medecin chef" thinks things are getting too hot now, so he is going to move the hospital in a few days a mile down the road. The first thing before long, a shell will drop on the place and there will be nothing left of the building and no need of moving. There is not much doubt but the Germans are trying to hit this place, as their "taubes" have flown over here so much that they know perfectly well its location. I guess this is about as hot a place on the line, where any cars are stationed.

One day there was a terrific bombardment lasting all day long and the houses shook continually from the reports of the guns all about us. Later we heard the Germans had smashed in a section of the French trenches along the Yser Canal and the latter were forced to evacuate them, but during the night they had returned and rebuilt them. The Germans apparently haven't much ammunition to waste about here, as they don't fire one shell to twenty that the French do, and what shells they do fire are of pretty poor quality, as many do not explode, but merely bury themselves in the ground or else following a serpentine course just under the surface for a few feet they jump out and lay on top of the grass, perfectly whole and unscratched. Until one sees the ground torn up and deeply furrowed just beyond, it looks as if these shells had been gently laid on the grass by hand. The first one I saw puzzled me as to how it got there. Of fifteen shells they fired one afternoon, only three exploded and the only casualty was a dead Mole! These Germans are remarkably accurate shots! Before leaving Saturday, I took a photograph of a soldier squatting alongside of one of these unexploded shells, on which was perched a little tame sparrow, which he had raised as a fledgling from its nest! I hope it comes out well, as it will be an amusing picture.

The last time I went down to the "poste de secours" just before I was laid up, we smelt very distinctly the asphyxiating gas from the German shells, which they had fired, and each trip the men say it is strong,- especially so on damp, misty nights. One evening near the end of the week, we had the greatest excitement and hottest bombardment yet and we are beginning to think that the shells which didn't explode were sent in by the Germans with that very intention, as a sort of decoy,- to make the people indifferent and careless. That night I felt so much better that I came down to supper,- to the farm house across the street, where we regularly eat. All previous times the shelling had taken place before our hour for supper, so we had begun to think that the Germans had forgotten us. About quarter of eight as it was getting dusk, and while we were waiting for our coffee at the end of the meal, a loud zirr on that tell-tale descending scale caused a lull in the conversation. Then came a terrific crash, as a shell exploded behind the house, which made us jump to our feet and rush out. What happened in the next hour would take pages to describe and besides the pathetic as well as the bloody sights, there were many funny incidents. At such times, when shells are bursting only a few yards away, the only sane thing to do is to seek shelter and to get there by the shortest and quickest way. As I rushed out the door, the first men who had gone out, suddenly remembered their hats and were hastily returning for them. Then everyone made for their respective cars to take them away, as the orders of the "medecin chef" are to run them down the road a few hundred yards out of danger as soon as a bombardment of the town begins, so that they will not be hit. We had no sooner left the house when two more shells struck, for they were coming in pairs now, and from the crash they must have exploded close to the shed, only a very few yards from us. From the pieces that flew through the air past us, it was evident that they couldn't have been far away. Why no one was hurt was a mystery. All this happened in a space of seconds, although it takes longer to tell it, and it was not until later on in the evening, when we were all together again, that the details came out.

Everyone cranked up his car and jumped in,- Townsend being the quickest

and first to get away, headed for the little passage-way over the ditch into the street. But Gile in his haste stalled his engine at the very entrance itself and so everyone was held up. "Crash, Crash" came two more shells, all seeming to strike around our farm house where we had just been eating and more pieces showered about us. So thick were they that the next morning in the area where the cars were, we found the ground literally covered with pieces of shell. Gile quickly started his car and going over the passage-way, relieved the congestion and one by one the men drove down the street. Meanwhile Ryan was working for all he was worth cranking his Ford, but it wouldn't start, when suddenly it occurred to him he had neglected to turn on the switch! It is funny how easy it is to forget things under the stress of excitement. Then as the engine started, his car jumped forward as these Fords often do and it was a comical sight to see Ryan in front of his car, with feet braced and arms extended, pushing against the radiator trying to hold back his unruly "bus". However he was pushed slowly forward several feet before the car quieted down and came to a standstill. Sometimes these tactics are impossible and the only solution is to jump into the car immediately and put on the brakes before any damage can be done. But this delay was in reality only a matter of seconds and he was speedily off, disappearing around the corner. We certainly laughed over all these incidents after they were over but at the time we didn't think of that side. As the cars went by out of the danger zone, men, women and children, horses and teams streaked down the road away from town, everyone terrified at the loud double explosions that followed the ghastrling whistling of the shells, as they came through the air. To see the civilian population running down the street was pathetic, but to see the doctors and "infirmiers", who were off duty, walking away, each one trying to look brave and fearless and each one afraid to be seen walking faster than the other, although they all would have preferred to have run, was most humorous. Starting for the dugout another pair of shells burst, all of them in the same place, around our eating house next door and I crouched in a ditch while the "eclats d' obus" showered about me, fortunately only being hit by small pieces of dirt.

As I reached the door a soldier appeared dragging a comrade who had been badly wounded and we pulled him in through the entrance into the underground shelter. Half a dozen men had been kicking a foot-ball behind our house when they heard the first shell whistle. Ordinarily there are twenty or thirty there towards dusk after their supper, but fortunately to-night there were only a few. As they heard the noise they all turned to run and just before the shell struck they fell on their faces flat on the ground,- the safest possible position. One unlucky individual, thinking he had time to reach the protection of a nearby wall, continued running. His judgment was wrong and he ran deliberately into the shell which burst less than five yards in front of him. His comrade ran back to his rescue and dragged him into the dugout. He was laid on a stretcher and there was no doubt that he was fatally hurt, as he was a mass of blood and his features were hardly discernible. They immediately cut off all his clothes and such a sight I never saw. Both of his arms and even his legs, from his toes to his hips, were a mass of wounds, more than sixty in all, for the small pieces had literally ploughed into him and he looked like a man who had been hit by a charge of big shot from an eight bore shot gun at close range. Fortunately there was no wound in a vital spot and only a half a dozen small ones in his chest and neck. The worst were several on his forehead, but they did not at first sight appear to be very dangerous ones. How a man could be hit so many times without being instantly killed was a mystery, especially as he was facing the shell when it burst, as every wound was on his front side. They painted him all over with iodine and then the "médécin chef" stood over him and by the aid of a lantern wound yards and yards of thick gauze around him. Meanwhile, the shells were continually bursting in pairs outside,- scattering the pieces in all directions and the effect was terrifying. One of the "infirmiers", standing next to me, was wounded in the leg, as a piece flew through the entrance.

The other men were more fortunate and all escaped with only minor wounds. One who had the presence of mind to fall flat, did so just in the nick of time as he was as near to the shell as was the badly wounded soldier, but because of his position, was only hit in a few places. A gash on his forearm and several wounds in his neck and cheek were all he received. But being within five yards of the shell, when it burst, he was covered with earth and the combination of the terrific crash at such close quarters, with the big clods of turf falling upon him, completely shattered his nerves and when he entered the dugout he was trembling with fear. The shock had been terrific to him and he didn't know whether he was only scratched or badly wounded. In his nervous, excited condition and talking vehemently, he was quite a contrast to the poor man who had been riddled through and through, and was lying on a stretcher with the "médecin chef" in attendance standing over him. He suffered in silence, never murmuring or complaining the while, or even in any way showing the agony he was enduring. Now and then he addressed a few words to the doctor in a quiet calm way and was appreciative for all that was being done for him, so typical of the bravery of these wonderful French soldiers, who often in their dying moments or under the stress of the most hellish pain, murmur a word of thanks to the one who has tried to make him comfortable.

As three of the men returned another shell whistled and they all ducked for shelter. Ryan and Townsend dropped into a little shallow refuse ditch, but at night when you can't see, you appreciate, especially under shell fire, any depression in the ground, no matter what its use and what it may look like in day time. Gile, made for another ditch, but in his hurry slipped and fell on the bare ground, tearing a great hole in his trousers, and slid all the way, disappearing head first over the edge and as some one said, "if he had been on his way in from third base he would have made home plate easily!" After a while things subsided and Townsend brought his car up and carried away the wounded sergeant. Except for the space between his hips and the lower part of his chest, which was bare, there was not an inch of his body that was not bandaged. Even his toes and fingers were wrapped up and all that was visible of his head were his nostrils.

Everyone was pretty excited, as it looks as if the Germans mean business now and are going to clean up the town entirely. Ryan left for the usual eight o'clock visit to the "poste", during the excitement, but as it happened the last shells had just fallen. He had to pass through the village and as they left, the "infirmier" with him began shaking hands with his comrades and saying good-bye, so that he got uneasy and began to wish he too had someone to say good-bye to! His muffler is cracked and his engine makes an awful racket, so that going through town he couldn't tell whether any shells were falling or not, but he imagined they were and that was just as bad. He is very amusing and sees the humorous side of everything that happens. When we later discovered that the second shell had hit only ten feet from our eating house, as we were running away from it and that the first one passed just over the roof, we were beginning to think how lucky we were not to have all been killed, for we certainly would have been if the shell had been a little nearer. As it was, it killed two horses and a pig in the shed adjoining the house. So we have been about as close to bursting shells as any one can be, and yet be alive or at least without being seriously wounded. All our windows were blown in and Ryan said, with his usual humor, "thank heavens the flies can get out now!" Someone suggested that it would be well to be careful about eating any of the loaf of bread left on the table, as it might have a lot of small pieces of glass in it. But someone said he thought it was "much more to the point as to where we ate rather than what we ate"! And he certainly had the right idea.

The next morning we went around to see all the buildings shattered by the bursting shells and found some had been pretty badly demolished. One shell burst in the main street and tore a big hole in the "pavé". Several others burst in the potato patch just behind our house, so that now they have burst on every side of both our sleeping house and eating house, from ten feet to one hundred yards away.

That is making conditions pretty hot to live under. Lots of people moved out of town to-day and one can hardly blame them. Most of those left now sleep in their cellars, which begins to make us feel that our attic is rather a precarious resting place. However in a few days when the hospital moves we will have to move too, so as to be closer to it. To-day is our last one here as the "médecin chef" has given orders to move before the building and cars are all blown up, and we are all wondering what it will bring forth.

Last night when we went to bed the big French guns were doing a lot of firing, but most interesting of all, were the mitrailleuses, which were going furiously in the trenches for an hour. It was the first time that we have heard them so well and it sounded like an attack. To be able to hear the rifle shooting every night, as we lay in bed, shows how close to things we really are located. Late in the afternoon the Germans peppered the battery in front of us with shrapnel and it was pretty to watch the white puffs of powder as the shells burst among the trees, a little ways off. A Belgian artilleryman looked at the unexploded 150 mm. German shells, which fell a few days ago, and said that they had been captured from the Belgians. Possibly they may have been fixed by them so as not to explode, before they were captured. All afternoon was spent in moving the interior furnishings, supplies etc. of the hospital and our own belongings too, so that by this evening the ambulance will be in a safe location. It certainly was a good example of being shelled out. This evening we heard that the sergeant who had been so badly wounded last night by the first shell, died in the hospital at Crombec soon after arriving. Poor man was more seriously wounded than we thought.

All day the feeling was intense, everyone expecting any minute to hear a shell whistle followed by an explosion. After having escaped so many times and this being our last day, everyone had a sort of presentiment that at the last moment someone might get hurt, just as we were on the point of moving from the dangerous spot. At seven, many of the civilians moved to the edge of town to avoid the shells and then the feeling was most intense of all, as that was the hour the Germans had picked out the last two nights. Everyone finished ~~his~~ supper hurriedly and no time was wasted over coffee at the end! But nothing happened and we went down to our new quarters peacefully, about half past seven.

It was a beautiful night and the moon, now almost full, rose slowly above the trenches. In the past I have always associated it, either out west among the mountains or at home, with peace and quiet. But no one could have any suggestion of such to-night. When it rose it came from a misty cloud and was of a reddish color, so that it served as a reminder of the bloody scenes which were being enacted beneath it. The picture fascinated me and for half an hour I walked up and down the road, in front of the ambulance, listening to the booming of the French ^{guns} ~~explosions~~ nearby, followed a few seconds later by the distant reports of their exploding shells. In the east, the sky, in spite of the brilliant moon, was illuminated by the lighted fusées from both sides and the rifle fire, which was incessant, was now and then punctuated by the "rap rap rap" of a mitrailleuse. Here where I stood it was peaceful enough but where the shells were falling and the bullets were whistling it was a question of how long one could exist. This was my last night at the front, and this is the picture that will always remain in my mind. If one could only have entirely closed his ears. how tranquil it would have seemed, yet how deceptive of the real conditions on all sides.

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