

C. M. BRIST'S SONS, Publishers.

ESTABLISHED 1855

WITH AMERICAN FIGHTERS

Vivid Description of Scenes on the Battlefield.

SOLDIERS WHO ONLY GO FORWARD

Terribly Hot Work on Firing Lines—Enemy Puts Up Strong Resistance, But Nothing Stands Before Terrible Determination.

The artillery fighting on the American sector where the Germans are being driven by our boys back upon the Aisne river is of the most intense nature.

Edwin L. James, whose cable dispatches to the New York Times are so vividly descriptive as to take the reader into the midst of battle, writing in his paper says:

"The present artillery engagement is the largest in which the Americans have taken part. We have been unusually successful in getting our guns up and in place, and they are taking enemy areas clear back to the Aisne ranging on roads and lines of communication.

Some gunners did between the enemy and the Vesle the enemy is having an unhappy time of it.

German artillery work hampered our bridge makers yesterday, but nevertheless they made progress. The nature of the fighting by the foe is shown by the fact that our men in Flanders today are much pestered by German snipers, who remain hidden in garrets, and are picking off our men here and there. These warriors get no quarter where Americans locate them. As there is written the town has not yet been entirely cleared.

"The extent in which they left such large quantities of munitions behind gave the Germans a chance they did not overlook to play one of their favorite kinds of warfare on the Americans. All through the villages and farmhouses he left infernal machines.

One of his especially devilish armaments was a conspicuous spot, connected with an ordinary telephone wire, reaching ahead into his line. When he believed Americans were near the train, he would set off the explosive by electricity.

Numerous infernal machines were arranged in dugouts so that any one stepping inside set them off. Yesterday a pile of ammunition exploded two days after the enemy had left the spot. It is believed it was set off by a time bomb arrangement.

There were found in many places yesterday and warnings against them were issued to all our troops.

The Americans yesterday made prompt use of some of the captured Boche material. Because of our rapid advance we had need of extra engineers to work on the badly shelled roads. A whole regiment of pioneers was equipped out of a stock of tools left behind by the Germans. Incidentally in the German materials left 1,000,000 good 77 shells have been found.

Ludendorff, in a statement yesterday, said that if they were German villages which were being left behind it would be dolorous but fortunately the villages left were not German. According to the view in this army a civilized person would have said that any villages behind a German retreat were dolorous villages. What the German invaders did not do to the French villages south of the Vesle the American and French shells compelled. It seemed almost a sacrifice to level so many pretty places, but Foch knew it was a greater sacrifice to allow the enemy to stay in them and lay plans to attack Paris.

The whole countryside is peppered with shell holes by tens of thousands, many formerly fair fields having so many shell holes that one can literally step from one to another.

Some of these fields are bloody fields. One I saw yesterday I can never forget.

To east, west, and north of the road lay a wheat field from which the enemy had harvested the grain before the battle came. To the south of the road a hundred yards away lay a stretch of woods. North of the wheat field was a large wood.

In a small field south of the road lay a row of bodies of Americans where German machine guns on the south side of the road had opened on them. What could cause a greater thrill than to walk forward to the road and see the bodies of the German machine gunners in their dead from beyond wounds?

On the north side of the road were dugouts with the German soldiers about which told that our men had made them, and then fifty yards away and stretching back lay dead Germans.

"That scene along the road told an eloquent story. The Americans had charged toward the road, only to be met by German machine gun fire. Rushing on and suffering losses, they had bayoneted some of the gunners and put others to flight. They had then taken positions on the north side of the road and met a counter-attack, killing the Germans I saw lying beyond. The whole story of the battle lay there plainly.

Far north of the road out of the wheat field could be seen orderly rows of shell holes, where our accurate artillery had laid down a creeping barrage, behind which the troops had moved to the faces' positions at the edge of the wood. Here and there lay the body of a boy in brown who had paid the great price.

On the edge of the wood I walked and there was a picture that will ever linger. In a pit perhaps fifty feet long, twenty feet wide, and fifteen feet deep the Germans had established a strong position with emplacements in the sides for machine guns—maybe twenty of them.

There in the bottom of the pit in utmost confusion lay fifteen or so dead Germans and perhaps ten Americans. In front of the pit lay nine dead of our men.

The Americans had charged those machine guns even into the pit, where they fought hand to hand with the gunners. It seemed that while fighting there in the cockpit a shell had fallen among them.

All along the edge of the wood

NEGROES UNDER FIRE

Black Troops Stand Ground Without Flinching.

WHOLE REGIMENT CITED FOR BRAVERY

Description of the Splendid Manner in Which they Handled Machine Guns and Artillery—Not Frightened at Anything the Enemy Can Do.

With the American Armies in France, June 25.—(Correspondence of the Associated Press.)—One regiment of negroes in the American army, (Number deleted by censor) has had its baptism of fire on the fighting fields of France and acquitted itself so well that the French commander of the sector has cited the whole regiment as worthy of receiving the war cross. This regiment's repulse of the enemy attack on the early morning of June 12 (possibly at Belleau Wood or Bourches) was briefly referred to in the official communiqué.

A later and official report of the engagement brings out interesting details and gives credit to the officers and men for fine fighting qualities displayed in their initial operations under shell and machine gun fire. The French commander of that sector has given the regiment the highest possible commendation for the results accomplished and the splendid fighting spirit shown by the American negroes.

"For several days preceding the attack there were evidences that the enemy was preparing to strike a blow. Two days before one of the main points held by the regiment had been subjected to a strong bombardment of nearly 100 shells, gas and shrapnel. Prior to the heavy enemy artillery barrage occurring on the morning of the 12th, our advance groups heard movements apparently of narrow-gauge track trains in the wood back of the enemy lines, indicating they were getting ready for an attack.

Every preparation had been made for meeting the move if it came. Besides the usual combat groups at the main points of the line, a special machine gun section occupied a special position on a small knoll projecting into the enemy line. It was accompanied by a combat group detailed from reserve company to carry rifles and hand grenades.

It was 2:15 on the morning of the 12th that the order to 'stand to' was given and all combat groups and the machine gun section took their fighting position. The enemy artillery now opened a violent bombardment, engaging in a 'box barrage' five of our main groups and the special machine gun position. The lines of this box barrage are well defined on the ground, showing the outer circuit with a considerable scattering of shells. The shells were mostly 77s, with some 155s, gas, shrapnel and high explosives. One of our points received particular attention, probably by minenwerfer, the craters of which were two yards in depth and five yards in diameter. The artillery bombardment was extremely violent until it stopped after 30 minutes.

Meantime under cover of the artillery, the enemy infantry began its operations, adopting the filtering process by which detached groups advanced forward at a number of points instead of moving in mass formation. One group came on with two light machine guns, firing a rather intense fire into one of our positions. Another group was estimated to be about 25 or 30. At another point on our front a stationary enemy patrol took position, firing with two small machine guns. Now and then squads would dart forward from their gun positions. Eight Germans got up to the wire in front of one of our positions, and four others approached another point. Besides these assault forces which reached our line, there were undoubtedly additional enemy groups in assaulting columns and supporting columns which were unable to enter the field.

The special machine gun group under command of Lieut. L. E. Shaw, was in one of the most exposed centers of the fighting, being under terrific artillery fire and the fire of two German machine guns. Lieut. Shaw handled this very difficult situation with cool bravery. The enemy barrage was so close that it was impossible to stand up and Lieut. Shaw controlled his guns by rolling from one to the other. His two guns fired five thousand rounds.

Under this violent onslaught the men stuck to their posts, carried out every order without hesitation, often under galling fire, and showed a high degree of skill with their weapons and coolness and courage. Each machine gun jammed three times, was partly disassembled and cleaned under fire, continuing in action throughout the engagement.

One team fired fourteen clips when the gun jammed. Reporting this to Lieut. Shaw they were ordered to clear the jam. While under intense fire of artillery and machine guns they coolly dismounted the gun, re-mounted it and continued firing until ordered to cease. The fire of this machine gun section was doubtless unexpected by the enemy, and this fact coupled with the effective fire laid down was chiefly instrumental in causing the withdrawal of the enemy.

There were instances of individual bravery during the action. Private Howard Galliard with a small rapid-fire piece was unable from his position to get a good fire to bear upon the advancing enemy groups, so he coolly and with entire disregard of danger, mounted the parapet, and while enemy bullets were flying around him, fired his rapid fire piece from the hip, first at one group and then at another. Private Smithfield Jones and George Woods are especially mentioned for their coolness in the face of violent shelling when they dismounted the machine gun and then reassembled them and continued fighting until the close of the action. Lieut. R. C. Gramme was in command of the group which received the brunt of the enemy fire, besides the barrage, added a heavy fire of large minenwerfers. There was no flinching; the group always worked under perfect control, keeping all combat posts

WITH SAPPEERS AND MINERS

Much Fighting Goes On Under the Ground.

MANY SOLDIERS MEET DEATH THERE

American Engineer Tells of Some Thrilling Experiences in Tunneling Under Flanders Mud and French Chalk.

Our work in the Flanders trenches was almost entirely confined to mining. As soon as the Germans had been beaten in their drive in August, 1914, they had entrenched themselves and wherever the trenches of the Allies were within 100 yards of their own they had proceeded to start mining. No man's land. Early in 1915 they exploded a large number of mines under the Allied trenches. The French and British immediately organized tunneling or mining companies and proceeded to counter-mine.

During 1915 they were mostly engaged on the defensive in these operations below ground, but towards the end of 1915 and in 1916 and 1917 the Allies succeeded in reversing the state of affairs and were quite active with offensive mining.

When I reached the trenches early in the first week of January, 1916, the British company I was with had succeeded in sinking a number of shafts (not, however, without having several of them destroyed by the enemy during their construction) and had driven a number of galleries well over towards the Hun lines. Our trenches here opposite Formelles averaged from 80 to 150 yards apart. On account of shallow water level we averaged a depth of about 25 feet below the surface, and only by constant pumping with hand pumps were we able to keep up the progress in our galleries. The soil was generally a blue plastic clay. At intervals we would strike running sands and when this happened we usually found it wise to abandon the drive and start new workings.

At the outset many of our tunnels also were destroyed by enemy 'blows' but we succeeded in putting in quite an elaborate system in the course of time. The frontage we were operating on had a frontage of approximately half a mile and on this front we had some sixteen shafts. From the shafts we drove a complete system of defensive galleries.

There is a very marked difference between mining in clay and chalk. Later on in the Vimy Ridge area we had considerable mining in chalk. In clay it was possible for the Germans and ourselves to tunnel to within a few feet of each other before we could hear any sound of mining; and chalk, on the other hand, is possible to hear from much longer distances, especially where the chalk contained any amount of flint.

To insure silent working in the clay we would use grafting tools instead of shovels. No nails were used in the timbering, all sets being wadded with sand bags. Blankets were hung in the end of galleries to deaden the noise. As we approached nearer to the enemy, the men working in advanced tunnels would have to use canvas shoes or work in their socks. As the men in the galleries were dependent on the silence, the work was carried out almost noiselessly. When we reached within striking distance of the enemy we would build a charge chamber and load it with gunnecott, connecting up with detonators and a double set of leads to the charge, and at the right moment fire these charges from the trench above by means of blasting machines. From this clay soil and at a depth of from 20 to 75 feet, we would blow craters sixty to seventy feet wide with a small charge of 600 or 700 pounds of gunnecott.

As a matter of fact when we met the Hun below ground in No Man's Land we would endeavor to fire 'ammunitions,' that is, a charge calculated to destroy enemy galleries but not to break the surface of the ground. We would usually carry on our work until we heard the Germans talking. When you can hear the enemy talking in clay you can bet they are pretty close. On some occasions we have in this way fired our mines when within three or four feet of enemy mines.

Deep Under Earth. Trench mining in clay is much more dangerous than in chalk on account of the difficulty of hearing operations going on in the top of them. In the chalk country further south, in the Vimy Ridge trenches and the Somme area, we were mining at much greater depths. Some of our mines were 150 feet deep, and after the battle of the Somme we found the Germans at Fricourt had a mine system 200 feet deep. For these chalk mines we used a different and much stronger high explosive than gunnecott.

With the British we used individual mine charges as large as 100,000 pounds. These would blow coneshaped craters several hundred feet in diameter and well over 100 feet deep.

Some idea of the terrific force of these mines can be obtained when you compare the bursting charge of the Mills bomb, which contains four ounces of ammonia with the single mine charge of 100,000 pounds or 400,000 times that amount. You cannot see a hand bomb like the Mills burst without having some respect for its destructive qualities—particularly if you are close up.

Nearly all of our work on these Flanders mines was done by hand. At times our galleries and tunnels would be half full of water and it required constant pumping, day and night, to carry on with the operations.

All the dirt was handled in sand bags and brought out from the main galleries on rubber tire mine cars and hoisted to the surface by windlasses.

Losses Not Heavy. We were very fortunate in our work below ground, in not losing more men than we did, but it required constant and careful listening to avoid casualties. We could distinguish in time the nature of the sounds of the

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