DIARY OF LAWRENCE B. CUMMINGS
SSU 3 (Car #127) & SSU 4 (Car #184)

Volume II: 5 December 1916 - 13 August 1917

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For Talbott and Jack Cummings

Second Book

Diary of Laurence B. Cummings
Ambulance Driver - American Field Service
August 6, 1916 - Feb. 6, 1917
Written in the field
December 23, 1916.

Well, young timers, it's been a long time since I had a chance to scribble. Somehow things have been all jammed together without any breathing place. But now I'm going to try to tell you more about it from the day I left Paris at the end of my permission. December fifth. I felt like an Arctic explorer, outfitted with a big and ratherromaless goatskins coat and enormous felt boots, and I was sure that when once I appeared so pamphleated I should never be able to shake the nickname of "G" which the section had fastened upon me, for once having had the tenacity to wear the time-honored ditty, "I took the old mare over to the county fair." I was also inclined to squirm from the effects of a paratyphoid inoculation, but that seemed to be the regulations accodlate of permissionaires. White and Wallace met me at Basle Dug and we whirled off to different in the teeth of a stinging snowstorm. It was good to see the fellows again, though I had regretful longing for the sheets of the Continental when I pulled up in my blankets in the Auberge des Rats. I found Othimers about to leave to join Section 9 on duty in the Borge under lies brother as lieutenant and in his place Army installed as bunkmate. The last time I saw him was at his father's house.
as Cambridge— as a small boy of eight who walked down the centre of the table after dinner. Porter, a western "sky pilot," had also joined the section. Next day to my disgust I discovered Indianapolis gone lame with burn bearings and had to get Fowler's car ready for my frequent of twenty-four hours at Jour. I got to the little village off in a valley near Dombrova in the middle of the afternoon and took up my lodgings in the Bureau of the medecins d'urnissonaires—the customary kitchen with a huge cave of a fireplace. A little corporal, and a private, commonly known as Pinard Pete, the horse wranglers, acted as hosts. On the other side of the wall the majois horse stamped and neighed in his stall. The first words were "Have you heard? The Boches are attacking. They have taken trenches on Hill 304!" I couldn't credit it. We had been expecting the French to strike the blow. But a minute later, in came the medecins d'urnissonaires—old Milliers. He went to the telephone and called the C.B.C. at Juberncourt. "There is a German attack on 304. Send up three extra caras to Eimers. Orders two more bravearders to the poste there and five more to Monteville. Without doubt we shall counters attack tonight!" and out he went. I expected to be sent up, but as time passed and no
word came, I ate my dinner with Raymond Petre and the corporal out of the garde. Served from thejeux, 
chicken across the street and reheated, and turned in on the board bunk in the fireplace. All night the rounds of 
and artillery officers came and went. At seven in the 
morning the telephone jingled and I got the ritualistic 
word that we were famous as well - "Bois monter a 
Cernay." It was a miserable morning - a "Smoky 
mist" beating against the ears and mist shooting in 
broadcasts from the wheelers. As I climbed the hill of the 
Bois de Bethmale, I got the sound of the big guns 
in the fog. Montgiville was dripping and deserted, 
ominous in its shattered desolation. The road beyond 
was empty. I'll admit I had a very poor stomach 
for the drive. But soon as I got along by the flooded 
abreis Big's car appeared around the Chatsanourt 
turn. He pulled up. "Things doing?" he said, and drove 
on. I ground up the hill and rounded "Strafer's Corner," 
as called from the persistent attention of the Boche 
artillery at that particular point. There were no new 
shell holes and everything was quiet in the trenches 
as I coasted down past the scene of my former 
former fame - now dubbed "Cunningham Corners." Dropping 
fast heaps of coiled wire and racketed up lumber in
front of the Genie quarters in Erness. I reached the corner where the shattered church tower stands. "Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue," the facetious members of the section call it, though none feels facetious in passing it, as it is the most shelled spot in the ruins. From there "Logan's Alley" leads over a rocky narrow way to the courtyard of the ruined chateau. I barged my way there, and found dozens of bandaged soldiers waiting. I loaded quickly and got away for Belleau Wood, passing Moffat going up. At Belleau the triage hospital was crowded. Our cars had brought the men in fators than the evacuating cars could carry them to the other hospitals. Boche hand grenades had done deadly work. I returned to Erness for another load after Bigelow and I had gulped a hasty cup of coffee at Juvincourt. The first Homme still lay ominously quiet in its shrouding mist. The French batteries split the air. Little de Clergy was working quietly in the courtyard mortar-laying his blisters. We had nearly all of them for the moment. On the returns trip I passed Poire's cars. A helmeted figure sprang out and spoke to me — our Chief, going up to stand his trick with the rest of us. At Juvincourt I got orders to return to Jomy after unloading at Belleau. At Jomy I found my little corporal friend crying his
heart out. He showed me a letter from headquarters in answer to an inquiry of his about two brothers at the Somme, telling him that the doctors had disappeared—"probably pulverized," so it said, by a shell. Another incident almost unnoticed in the ghastly wholesale business of killing! It was dark when I reached Offecourt. The camp was almost empty and a few lonesome cars instead of the usual throng. It showed that the section was busy. Soon we saw from Barrolley in bringing Perry and Fowler and a "muse bird," Amory, and Piccardelli, the repeatability. Perry and Fowler did not wait even to change clothes but dashed off to Jubecourt and Ernevay. There, so we learned later, they had to work on the outskirts of the village until an unusually precocious bit of shelling stopped. The French counterattack was on and the Boche were retaliating on Ernevay. It seems that the enemy took several hundred metres of first line trench and were then driven out again except from a small salient. It took the French several days to dislodge them from this foothold. Nothing was gained by either side, but hundreds were killed and wounded. For several days and nights we were very busy, keeping four ears at Jubecourt. The prohibition of day driving to Ernevay
had to be disregarded. One night it got especially hot at the château. We were sleeping on bunks laid on the hallway of the G. B. D. annex, on the discomfiture of Parrot, the punk-whiskered keeper of the infirmerie. At varying intervals the telephone lines would come chuffling in with his electric torch peering among the sleeping forms until he found his victim. Then would come the inquiry in a grarce stage whisper: "Est vous got monty a lems?" and the blankets would be tossed off and boots pulled on. A few minutes later you would hear the hum of the motors mounting jubilee hill in the snow. I got only to Montrevelie, but the fellows who reached the château found all the wounded—especially Amory who had to seek shelter under a tree. Big's ear was hit by a bullet once through the radiator and another through the front of the body just where Melungeons had been sitting an minute before. The château wall was hit repeatedly. The men said that the scenes in the dressing rooms of the abri were horrible. Deel told of carrying two men. She said to the others that he had seen one of his comrades shot down in the No Man's Land between the trenches. Both legs were shot away. "You've seen a worm that has been stepped on?" he said. "That is how he squeirmed. So I shot him!"
Meanwhile we had some changes in command. Ware left us, possibly for the flying corps, and Stewart and Lebou were assigned to the new Sabratha section. Instead of appointing as a new sous chef Perry instituted a system of officers of the day among the "old birds." I got the first job, not a weighty one, and failed utterly in inspiring proper respect in the breasts of my underlings, notably Fowlers and Twitchell, who organized a green apple battery. At touch of winter played havoc with our cars. Petroleum oil necessitated jacking up rear wheels and running the motors with the heat of the engine at the gears free. Poor essence added also to our difficulties and our bodies of mean gasoline often froze. The suffering in the trenches was frightful. Day after day we carried scores of "poisoned gels" to the hospitals. One afternoon on the road to Juvocourt I saw a significant sight - the foreign forces of the allies on the march - not black Senegalese or blue-eyed Tunkoos, but the real fighting men - the attacking Guerriers - Moroccans in khaki and red fezaz.

Except for the bitter cold you might have thought for a moment that you were in Egypt as the train of mitraillette machines passed.
Another funny frequant again fell to my lot, but I spent most of it on the road. It was a noisy night in that valley of death under 304. Dell and I pulled in together at the chateau. The brave ardeiros came bustling about with the usual confusion. Up on the hill a new French battery of "big ones" was cranking. Then came the rocketing whine of an arrecie. The brave ardeiros nentilled into the sky or dropped on the ground. "Mutteren-schon, dearest," (Get down!) they yelled. I wanted to, but Standa and Dell stood calmly at the end of his car where the cockpit had just been placed, and the night made me afraid to duck. The shell burst somewhere and the etcars dropped shattering about, the doors probably upward and then dropping. Another buzzed in. Before we finished loading and I was glad to get underway on the next trip I got up ahead of Dell. Two more "hates" whined in and burst. Then Dell rolled calmly up. Porters, his orderly, told me afterwards that one of the shells hit the church tower above them just as they reached the corner. The church has its significance for us all, for each of us has had his experience at that corner. The relie that I prize most is a little cross there that Eme Fowlers found there and gave to me.
Effecourt, December 30, 1916 - On the fourteenth we read in the papers of Germany's offer of peace. I saw a fit answer to it next day when finishing my
gory pilequet. I got a call to Bethlaimville and wound slowly up the steep ascent, dropping again into the
half ruined little village. Just above me loomed the
dark bulk of a canvas balloon floating like some
creation of the air, its big French marquises and
antennae streaming. As I returned along the edge of
the ridge the great battlefield of September unrolled in
a panorama. Below me stretching from the Forêt
Dorme to the peaked height of Saux - yawned browns
and yellow hills seamed with trenches lines and
spotted with brown tree clumps. Along the length of it
sankers flashed from these tree clumps, leaping out
here and there quicker than the eye could follow.
The slopes seemed crackling with an surcharge of
electricity. Over on the Boche lines white smoke
clouds burst out marking the fall of the shells.
The hillriders spat out with them, and the wind
sweeps them out in mist. The air shook like distant
thunder. It was the artillery preparation for the
infantry attack on the Côte de Poivre, though I did
not know it then, and a few hours later the
fire swept into the German fort, taking a toll of eleven thousand prisoners. It was a tremendous shelling—over 100,000 kilos' weight of projectiles were hurled against the Boches that afternoon, and the taking of the hill pushed them back eventually to the point where they began their attack on Verdun nearly a year ago.

Soon afterwards I got the Billiers' courage assignment with Bigelow—a twenty-four hour visit at the triage hospital, taking the wounded and sick to the various hospitals after they are brought in from the forties de secours and "sorted." This time we saw all night long on our trips to the shed-like hospitals at Froidons, the Bois de Ravage, and the long lines of barracks at Fleury flanking the tracks, where the constant loading of the red-cross trains goes on. I remember the evening well. I was returning from Fleury where I had left my load of mud-plastered, tired patients. Across the snowy-touched fields a little red-tiled village lay clustered about the church spire. It was just dusk. Away over the hills came the flashers and thudding of the guns. And then, clear-toned and sweet, the Angelus rang.

I liked these ways through the little villages with.
the shifting soldiers groups. There is movement everywhere - trains of wagons, motors, cannons. The soldiers are forever meeting and parting - painting each other with the somewhat ironic statement - "Pax chaud!" - and shaking hands left-handed. Now and then an old cavalry officer, white cap and sabrette passer, stooping under his burden of faggots, or a shuffling sed 'eroul' beyond the age of service, drives his big brown horses past, hitched tandem to his hay 'chariot', plodding along afoot at the leader's head. Rubble walls and the rooftops form the inevitable background for the gray-blue uniforms as the soldiers loiter about. Swift streamers race under bridges turning noisy mill wheels. But sentries stand guard at the bridge heads and the wells. The war enters everywhere.

I had one amusing experience with a Boche prisoner at Belle. He was a little snuffy fellow, wearing the regulation brown denim clothes and marked with the white initial P.C. of a prisonnier de guerre. He was to go to the hospital at Soilly, where the detention camp's sheds stand behind the wire barricade. I waited for an hour for the arrival of the homme de garde who was to escort

(1)
the fearsome captive. The garden was full panoplied with helmet, cantonnece belt and fixed bayonet. But when we arranged our corsetage I was somewhat surprised to have these guardian spirits cooly shut up in the ambulance while his charge mounted beside me. We got quite chatty before we reached Souilly. The little Boche confided to me that he had plenty to eat and wear and was well treated and that he wanted the war to end so that he could go home to his farm and bolriers and work on the tramway in Berlin. We were quite aquainted with repeated "Ja" and "Oui".

One morning when I was frequent care at Jubecourt I took the medicins chief, familiary known as "Pouf-Pouf," up to our new poste in the Forêt de Issy, just west of Esnes, suggested about over half-frozen very muddy roads through thick woods where battery's roared among the splintered trees, and finally came to the end of the road. The officers got down and went on ahead to look over the ground, leaving one to fraternize with the soldiers who trudled about their fires near rows of stacked grens, while standing there I saw a fearful sight—a corpse of a soldier borne by on a stretcher, just a mass of bloody bandages and returned blue cloth and bird flesh. It seemed impossible
that such a thing could ever have been a man—this ghastly thing found lying in the woods unburied! The crude horror of it! The bestial rending of flesh!

That night, the first one for us, I got a call to the new post. It was why black in the woods and the road showed only as white glimmerings under the trees. The net result of my run was a slide into a ditch, a collision with a tree felled by a shell across the road, and an encounter with an out-of-control car in which old Indiana boys had happily come our victorious. After this somewhat eventful trip we were instructed not to make the same except by daylight.

Much chagrín had been caused our friends of the G.B.D. by the announcement that the Franceards and others members of the Service de santé must go into the line regiments and be replaced by the territorials. None seems keen for the change—and it is small wonder. Life about the hospitals, for all its grimness, is a different thing from the horrible existence in the boggy and dug-outs with the half-frozen mud knee-deep. Even in the camps the mud is a curse. It is as slough of death on the one back of the triage. I went there one day and encountered a wild
bears happily domesticated, that snuggled at me, with
great earnestness begging for tid-bites. Our remaining
domestic partners still continue to be the pride of the
several hearts of the practical Robert, Cezaré, and
Salvatea, the little fur corporal. They absolutely refused
to immediate huns for our Christmas dinner, which,
by the way, was held a day late. On Christmas night,
however, we had an impromptu celebration with A.
Matt Andrews and Ex-Ambassador Bacon as guests.
We sang to the accompaniment of Fortehelli's harmonica,
and listened to Twitch's account of a typical turn to
Ermes, once immortalized in the first issue of the
Effecourier. Mrs. Bacon caught the spirit of things—
so much so, indeed, that she wanted to make our
Ermes tucks and sport us as buffet as orderly when
a call came in. She was wearing our uniforms, and
we fitted him out in my fur coat and somebody's
deer's carque. He is our awfully good sport. He kept
on a brasseard at Julesver and made the four-
thirty run like an "red bird." He rued afterwards that
he thought one of the coffins on the forsh at Julesver
offered better rat-protection than a brasseard. Our
Christmas day we had a diminutive tree in the dining
room. The Kathrines got useful gifts and the rear
of us were favored with pretty amusing ones. We gave
the ladies silver cups and Perry a silver cigarette box.
I missed the dinners, going up as orderly on Bar 2 at
Jubécourt. But I felt pretty Christmassy just the same,
for yours gifts were in my pocket, little ones, and the
thought of you was very warm in my heart. Dear
boys, I wish that I could see you!

Jubécourt, January 2, 1917. - Things have been
warming up on our sector. We keep hearing
repeated rumors of attacks on 30-47 and the Bois Homme.
The Boches keep shuffling away, taking a few meters
of trench with hand grenades, and then being dis-
lodged by the furious fire from the French Batteries.
One night, the trench ordered all cars ready to roll,
and there was activity of preparation. Lanterns
shining among the cars, and motors humming;
but though most of us slept in our clothes no
one was called out. Next day, however, we got it.
Dec. 29th, I was second car at Jubécourt, going up
to Montgelville with the ravitaillement at four in
the afternoon and taking the usual French breakfast.
We are orderly. From the top of the Bois de
Bethlemville, we could see an unusual amount
of shelling. When I got back to Jubécourt a call.
came in for times. It was just dusk as I started up
and we drove as orderly as our first runs together.
We had just topped the crest of jubilee hill and
started on the winding road over the bleak fields
where the air along the horizon began flashing with
long bands of light, vibrating and flickering like
heat lightning. It grew as might come on widening
and mounting until the whole sky was ablaze. We
rushed through embarks and into the Bois de
Bethlauville, above was beyond the gaunt line of
woods, the air was ablaze with red light like the
reflection from some huge fire. As rows struck us
that seemed to rock the car. Then we topped the crest.
The valley lay below, restlessly with angry light. On
either side, in the woods, great sprays of flames leaped
as the big pieces fired. Beyond on the slopes the
batteries sent out. Further, over the distant hills
the shells burst like white electric sparks. The
noise was terrific, continuous, like the roll of
a thousand drums, but raging and falling irregularly.
The crash of the great pieces split like tunnel with
repeated shocks. Every French gun from the Meric
to Avocourt was firing in a tremendous two de
barrage. The valley rocked and staggered with

conclusion. As we went on the devils dripped gum.

Fierce red bursts of flame leaped from the blackness, high in the air, as the shrapnel shells let go their blast. Great waves tore over us with a continuous, asphalt and whine, streaming from the huge cannon behind us, just as bullets from a repeating rifle. The road was light as day. Beyond Montezendt I felt a curious sense of exhilaration as though the moon and light were our intoxicant. (Powers and Jevett afterwards said they felt it too.) Beyond the post and first Strausen Cornere the right turned green.

Star shells were floating over the most skinny, and 304 in endless succession. Below them the smoke curled in black clouds as the shells exploded. Rockets streamed up and balls of red and green signals dropped from them. The valley as we went down it was green in the greenly light, with its tinge of green; and beyond, back of the German lines, great sheets of red light flared. The wagon and bushes by the road alongside were black, the shell holes in the road and clitches and the fields, round pools of water that threw back the light, ahead the ruins of Esne, wavering in the pulsating flashes, and above them the crest of 304 belched fire like a crater.

It was impossible to tell the "defects" from the "arrives" in the
Hicous tumult seemed centred there. Shrapnel and big shells were falling like rain, and mitrailleuse and rifles cracking through the dim torrid that men were fighting in that hell. But, we passed a few straggling groups of soldiers and a lumbering cart or two, and then came the trial of an ambulance whistle and a little Ford roared up—Jewett coming out alone from Somme with his wounded. In we went, and crumpled mound in the chateau courtyard. Down in the abri the surgeons were busy. There had been a Boche grenade attack on 384 in the afternoon, and now the French batteries were blasting them out of the slight footing that they had gained. As we waited the firing slackened, rose again, then died away until only an occasional shot sounded, and when we started back along the road over which that one of shells had just been curving the night was quiet. It was an eventful night for Section 4, however. Little Goward on duty at Kerns kept calling for more cars. It had begun to rain, a lashing, stinging wind-driven blast that blinded you and tore at the ear. It was next to impossible to see the road and there was no moon. We passed car after car, and then things began to happen. Jewett hit a team beyond Dombeski.
and went out of commission. Harrington took out his transmission— we were all loaded heavy—and on our second trip from Earness we came upon a group of three cars at the top of the hill beyond Brocourt. Parrott taking over Harrington's load, and Wallace on his way up. Fowler and I made one more run to Earness. We covered something over one hundred miles that night, moving along through the dark. I remember how we ourselves seemed to be stationary with the dim glimmer of moonstreaming under us. At last in the courtyard I burnt our two bands, and limped away after working on the transmission in the dark, not daring to trust the old car further. We went to Arques and took Fowler's car. Returning to Julliacourt we got a call to go to Parrott's rescue at Montgeville. We found him in front of the fortie there with a bent steering gear—the result of a head-on collision with Wallace in the middle of Earness. We took over his load and he limped home. That cleaned out the forties. And at everybody running next day and the night after that, we were nearly all at it again. It was a night of horrors. I went up as jewett's orderly on dec 2. At dinner at the julliacourt hotel a call came and up we went to Earness. I stumbled down the cobbled
sloped into the abri, made my way past the dim barrels behind the wooden columns, loaded with the tired, half-frozen figures, and so into the further vault. It is a cellar room, barrel-vaulted, dirty whitewash smeared over the rough plaster. Down the middle runs a double row of true barrels, showing up the roof. At one end stands a little table and a washstand. At the other, stacks of bandages and surgical dressings fill a tier of shelves. The place is flooded with the blinding white light of carbide lamps. A stench of acetylene, others and warm blood. The place is a shambles. Sling on stretchers between the columns, two bandarier hanging. Bandariers stand in close groups about them. White-robed medics, red to the elbows, are working with snipping scissors. There are things on the stretchers, metal frames. The bandarier are lifting one of them - the cleaner - stripping off the uniform and the filthy shirt. Others hold great compresses and bandages ready. The floor is littered with wads of cotton and gauze stained bright red. A bare arm is suddenly held up under the light. It is streaming blood - spurtng it from jagged holes in the white skin. The hand! Red too, with a mass of blackened flesh protruding from a
hole through the back of it. A groan - inarticulate - half scream - but like and horrible. My God! The man's face where the light hits it - those hanging sheets of flesh that should be features! He is trying to speak, poor devil, through that wound of flesh and blood-bubblers. - A surgeon deftly and mercilessly awasheth the thing in bandages, but the crimson stream burst through - there on the floor is another stretcher. Surely the man on it is dead, with that ashen face, the dark red pool is forming on the wet floor where a trickle of blood drips. How still he lies! He is covered with a slime of grey mud from ear to sodden booty. There is another and still another. Off in the case of a place through the loss dark red blood oozing seeps from their unsmear'd faces.

And away two more lie - it is a piece of horror - if only one of those still forms would move! - The

screaming priest prowls about in his black cassock. The surgeons work swiftly, attempting only dressings of a temporary sort. Stretcher are unslung and others moving up. The door puzzle, few and the helmeted regimental brandarders, bear in still more letters. Oh one is a brandarder, shot down while carrying a blessèd back from the front line. They half-struck him. He has been shot through below the
want as little wound hole only showing on each side. He is quite calm as they work on him. He calls a coroner and dictates a letter, "A man, more!" to his mother. (I carried it down later and felt honored in doing it.) Gaynard tells one how the others were wounded. It seems that up beyond Ypres on the Bethencourt road a group of infantrymen were gathered about their "cuisine roulante" getting their soup. A shell fell in the middle of the crowd, killing them like rats. Seventeen dead and a dozen wounded in the toll. More are dying now here in the post. Out between the bunkers in the dark cellars they are working over as many badly wounded in the stomach. He is in convulsions. Finally they wrap him up and carry him out. He is dead when they reach the cars. More cars have arrived - the boys come stamping into the aban in dripping raincoats and helmets. From the outer room as they open the door comes the sound of low moans from the wretches in the agony of "trench feet." As described thing above means the fall of a shell near the church. They are getting ready to load. The bearers walk the stretchers out through the pillars, and we follow up into the courtyard. It is full of cars across the square outline of
four shovels dimly above us in the darkness. A red flake from somewhere near lights the place. A crash! A shell at the church corner where we must pass. ANOTHER! ANOTHER! The stretcher are slid in. Motor cough and hum. Someone calls "Attention," and from around the corner comes a silent procession — stretcher bearers with shovels on their shoulders, four to each they cross the court. The dead! Seven more of them. Harrington pulls out. We follow down "Hogade Alley." A star shell helps us clear the shell hole at the corner by the church and we make for the road.

We had to take these wounded to our old trough of Claire's cheese, for they were of the 65th Division. There were only a couple of bandage bearers there and a pottering little doctors, so we carried our men up the muddy path and laid them on the floor ourselves. Some had shattered legs and mourned carelessly while the slow process of "sort" went on. Such an endless reading of "field" and writing in books!

Going back by bombard, the lorry overtook us as we waited at the railroad crossing with orders for Emsos again. Included only this time, free of
them. Jewel's car failed to "function" properly and stalled in the middle of Homeark hill. Only the arrival of Harrington and White with a ferrying of loads and shoulder work got us up. Finally at six o'clock we settled up in our blankets on the brick floors of the post at Jubes court and got our hours' sleep, our first of the new year.

The afternoon brought more work. Bigelow and I set out for the Couture d'Esteve in the Forest de Herse, getting into the woods at twilight. We passed plenty of fresh shell-holes; "shells never" filled tree branches out of the way from where they had been shot and somehow reached the post. But there Bigelow went on facing the smashing his driving gear in trying to turn around on a log bridge. We found a telephone called another car, and then made our way to a quiet little troglodyte village - small huts set among saplings with curving paths grotesquely suggestive of a Japanese garden. We entered one and fairly dropped down a steep flight of steps into a tiny abri ten feet underground. We bunk were enough for three filled half the room - a table and a little bench the rest. In the clay wall a fire burned. There we stayed and ate our new
year's dinner - a can of sardines - while three barnacles entertained us for three hours. Occasionally the can of a place trembled with the discharge of a nearby battery, and finally we heard the hum of a motor and climbed out to join lions on the return trip.

Oh, little sons, something is wrong with the world. The unutterable horror of all things will it bring us anywhere? I can stand the terrifying things - the blood, the wounds, the suffering. I have got over the revulsion at seeing men living in slimy burrows like mites. The mere mechanisms of warfare grows commonplace. But the hideous fact that there are men - men with ideals and faith and love - men to whom life is a sacred thing, or was so once - that these are men seeking coldly to destroy the lives of other men like theirs is something that constantly grows more terrible. It shatters your whole belief in what seemed good in man - almost every thing that you have relied upon. Cannon shots under you and leaves you bewildered and adrift. What are we, after all?
Hecourdt, January 7, 1917. I've just been reading my last entry. It sounds pretty ghastly and so I'm going to turn to the pages of the "Affeeourier" for something that isn't depressing. The "Affeeourier", you must know, is a remarkable publication. There has been only one issue of the magazine and only one copy of that, laboriously produced for our Christmas celebration by Dell, Twitchell, Bigelow, Denison and Russell. We are proud of it—mainly because it is not like "Friends of France", the official publication of the Ambulance Field Service, described by its members apparently to offer documentary evidence that we are all heroes beyond dispute. We must be heroes, because we have distributed several thousand copies of "Friends of France", admitting the worst impeachment. That book, I may say, is not popular with Section 4. But we have our heroes in Sec. 4—and hence the "Affeeourier".

I wish I could publish the single extant copy of the magazine and so I am going to quote some extracts. Here is Twitchell's account of "A Trip to Earners":—'Twars rainin' a mite when we set out, but 'twizard long afore she commenced to clear up like an; by the time we come to town broad things was bright and shinin'. We set out round a corner where there was a God's quantity o' children a playin'. "Father a pity," says I, to bring them young critters up a speakin' of a foreign language. But Mrs. Cummins, he ain't say nothin'. Eva, sir.
we come up through the Boys de Bethlehem, which ain't no more in a stand of timber, most of which ain't standing at all. Down to the bottom o' the hill we come on a crowd o' houses all bottom side up. Says I, "Is calculator that ears one o' them fresh air colonies folks talks of." Says Mr. Cummins, "Not presently." Well, the others side o' them houses we followed what was once a road. They'd been done a powerful lot o' diggin' there too, I being tell yer! Holes! Damn one if them mudders wasn't so plumb full o' holes ye could scarce tell which was mudders and which was hole. Says I, "What's them holes a' doin' there?" Says he, "Them's shell holes." "They be!" says I, "Must be an ommenful big critter laved in them shells!" Just 'bout then there come a twiddle commotion like there was several express trains all a fightin' to see which could git down the first. Mr. Cummins he commenced a using plenty powerful language, and I noticed we didn't slack up none. Why, we was so passin' them holes that fast it 'peared like they was all one trench! And twent long afore we come a chargin' over a few stone walls and hand up on a rock pile long side o' an runway. Mr. Cummins he explained to me later on an hour that ere runway was the remains of a photo. They certainly didn't bother about leavin' much. Naturally I follers Mr. Cummins when he
goes a chirpin' down a hole into the cellar o' that ere open-
cour enclosure. I ain't knocked my head more'n a dozen
times afore I come to find we was a standin' in a sort o' room, with critters o' all sorts a hollerin' somethin'
disgraceful like at Mr. Cummins. But we was able to git
out with only one a hollerin' us. Two of 'em. Mr. Cummins
he calls "arres", but they don't say much then: when they
was all tuck in I looked round for a place to set an' I
came to find there wasn't none. "You set on the
An' I walks back to Brighton.

Surely that accounts show'd full with every the heart of
every editor of "Friends of Freedom." Isn't it worthy to
be immortalized in the same volume of heart-throbs
with these tales of hair-breadth escapes as told by the
escapers themselves since 13 frames. 50? And here are
Dell's "Song of the Ford":

Systems engendered me, Henry travelled with one,
God made my image of earth and as a snow.
But chance interfered with me, someone miscarried me.
Tity my lot. I was born too soon.
Born too soon in a world not made for one.
Where are old Joshua, Caleb and Caleb?
Where are the plow, the harrows, the tractor-flows.

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The road to town at the end of the week?
Ever seen Kelmer's? See what they did to me.
After Bordeaux, and the chief Peter Kent.
Where are the Jersey roads - where are the easy loads -
Where is the fun with a rear axle Bent?
Bent under mechanics, lawn-bows and ritual meals,
(My spirit is low when I'm summoned in French.)
But what causes I say of the holocaust; the water-way,
Made by the things that they take from the French?
But give me your blessing, and your wish do your self-end;
I know what you mean when you say "15/8."
And once we are headed back - damm the old muddy track!
Damm the old Germanies and let em "Raté!"

Could Emery Polette do better?
"(15/8 in the number of the triage hospital.
"'Raté' is our word for shell-fire."

And here it is noon ed "Big" lifts up his voice in song-
'Twas roving, and the flighty Ford
Died snort and amuffle on the hill.
All Shelly was the road at Eenes
And also Montgatville.
Beware, the Guffy Boche, my son,
The other while, the shrapnel screams:
Beware, the Bois de Bethelannville
Or you will bust a seam.

He took the turning crank in hand,
Long time he cranked and cranked in vain.
Then needed he against a tree
And then he cranked again.

One, two, one, two; and through and through,
She coughed and spluttered chug-a-chug.
He took a wrench and break the uten,
He changed another plug.

And didn't you see the Guffy Boche,
And bring some blesses back to bible?
Tis even so, my Commodore.
Those damned old Ford's are hard to bell.

We call Perry the "Commodore," for obvious reasons.
The "Undercover" also published "Scientific Facts." Here are a few choice excerpts:

About Abri. "Abri" is pronounced a-ber-ee. It is a shelter with a hole under it. In the present war, it has replaced the ancient guillotine. A shell, falling on an abri, makes life commonplace for those within. In consequence of this civilians are forbidden the use of this safety device. In the construction of an abri, the fact of prime importance is the determination of the commonrendez-vous of the unbound shells. The point having been determined, the abri is placed in the hole dug for that purpose. Hence the familiar proverb: "A shell in any abri is worth two in the street."

Burros. The burro is raised in Algeria and set down in Monte Carlo. He should not be confused with the Algerian rabbit-Nor-burros, which of course cannot be raised. While the peasants of Algeria were raising burros, the enemies of Verdun were raising hell. It was this peculiar coincidence, coupled with the fact that the burro is the only beast that can be fitted into a trench at any angle that induced General Joffre to import this little fur-bearing quadruped to France. As far as can be ascertained the early...
years of the annual are spent in a stern school of
Stoicism. So efficient is this training that neither
the Sphinx nor the North Star can claim a thicker
skin. But like the magic "Open Sesame" of Ali Baba
there is a "mob" to which the burro is susceptible.
When a case of burro is apparent on the radiator
one need only whisper "Bicky!" when the road
suddenly becomes burroless.

All this nonsense, while intended primarily to
create a little fun for the motion, was a sort of
protest against the cant and sententiousness that seems
to have somehow got into the published accounts
of our work. It is, of course, a parody draft of the
"Friends of France." There is happily in Section 4
a common-mode attitude towards the work, avaroed
with a wholesome sense of humor that does not in
any way lower the standard that has been set by
unspoken agreement for conscientious, sympathetic
work. The views shun mushy sentimentality as they
would the plague, but I have seen the ones loudest
in their protests against that sort of thing the coolest
under still fire and the gentlest with their wounded.

What they dislike most of all is the published accounts

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of Ambulance life, such as some men who have
gone home have put in the papers or such as appeared
in "Friends of France." These accounts are read aloud and comments invited, which never fail in
forthcoming. To say the least, it is bad taste to label
yourself as Hero, now admitting that you are one
which they don’t admit. Unfortunately too some of the
people in control of Ambulance affairs have their eagerness
to get more funds and more men, have allowed
their propagandistic literature to get a little florid.
There have been too many references to the "flower of
young American manhood," the century-old debt to
France," "the blood of Lafayette," and similar not. That
may be necessary to create interest but it is mighty
distasteful to the average man on the inside, and
there is a strong feeling of disgust over it in our section.
We were well launched in a discussion on this
more than the other day when a few inspired
voicers lifted up in harmony with the tune of
"I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier," only this
is when they sang—
"I didn’t raise my boy to be a German.
I brought him up to be a Friend of France.
To help exterminate the Tetrons forever.
Who first the Belgian babies to the cause.
We're here to rally round our Fowr, Andrews.
And propagate the Blood of Lafayette.
There'd be no war today if we Belaln they'd say.
I didn't raise my boy to be a German!

Friday, January 16, 1917. Twitchell and I were just finishing our forty-eight-hour furlough here—a decent institution to save our souls. We have had a quiet time of it except for an abortive "urgent call" to Locarno last night. We found only three mailmen, changed as tire and eventually rebuit the motor car route. Just beyond the Chattanocourt corner on the side of the road, as it rises to Strakers, Locarno a new battery has been installed. Last night the Boeeks were after it. We saw two carriages there. As we advanced, the last one close enough for us to get the sulphur fumes, we wisely passed. There has been some considerable shelling of the road lately. Long continued rains and snow have played havoc with the roadbed. Except for an occasional glimmer the sun has not shone for over three weeks. Down near the Chattanocourt corner two abysmal lakes of mud appeared, squarely across the road. Practically every car got stuck there, and rear springs and axles snapped like fife stems.
I took a new man, Rothermel, up with me as orderly one night. We foundered like a sinking ship on the way up. The old car sunk to the crew guards, and I had a good view of the roof until a passing company of troops pulled us out. The crew finally filled the holes, but a trip across has become a sort of obstacle race with the course laid through little shell holes, and tumbled and coils of barbed wire that have fallen from the wagons. Much to our surprise, both of us came upon a fresh shell hole near the top of the Bois de Bethelmannville on our return trip one night. We thought it just a chance shot so far back of the usual zone of fire, but three nights ago the Boche's threw more than twenty shells into the cross roads there, though none hit the road. Twitch and I saw the holes as we passed last night—black in the white surface of the snow. The night that I went up was the quietest that I ever saw on the mictures. The full moon came up on the sky-line through the black tree trunks, in the Bois de Bethelmannville, flooding the snow drifts with silvery light, and for a little while the sky was free from the lurid flashes of the guns. Another night
with Eric Fowler was a snowy one. When we made the early morning run in the dim light we found an unbroken sweep of freshly fallen snow across the bleak open country between Buvouch and Fonsable just as wheel track was visible and we had trouble in keeping to the road. Snow had a ghostly look in the moonlight with the shrouding snow upon the blackened timbers, and that omnious quiet hanging over that always seems death-like. You never know how the silence may be broken. Breeze and wind got into a lot of bad shelling all along the road the other night directed not against the batteries alone but the road as well. It was the night of a relief (changing troops) and the Boche's evidently knew it. To add to variety a gas shell exploded at the corner of the chateau and the farmers were pretty unpleasant in the abri for a while through ever to a dangerous point. Everyone has a horror of the gas. Not long ago several gas bombs fell near the post at the Conflant d'Evers filling the woods with the deadly vapors. Everyone took to their masters. Surely somebody had the forethought to cancel a call for an ear.

Fribourg, Jan. 16, 1917. Twitch and I came near a real adventure on our return from Fonsable just now. A thick wet snow has been falling and freezing on
the road. We drove into it, blankets as if piled up about our shoulders. We passed companies of troops, trudging up to the lines, suddenly appearing out of the swirling storms, their blue overcoats and helmets powdered with white, their mustaches and beards tuffed with ice. The gendarme sentry in his little wooden box at the bleak crossroads, near the Bois St. Pierre, stood knee-deep in a drift with the wind lashing the sleet about him. Twitching, ears flapped and skidded like an unharnessed cart and up edged along to the top of Jubiescourt hill. There trouble commenced. The hill road, bending and curving along the precipice there, was clogged with horse-drawn wagons and carts, horses straining and slipping as the whips whistled and cracked, wheels grinding. Our ears took a slide, crab-fashion, and to save a collision with a huge wave Twitch turned the front wheels onto the little parapet of earth that shielded the edge. The outer wheel caught in a clump of bushes and the axle brought up on the dirt and, happily, there we stood. Seeing the futility of trying to extricate the cars or of continuing our trudging down the precipice, we reversed our blanket rolls and knapsacks downhill to the hostel of the G.B.D. There we met the scanty...
setting out with the medicin chief to inspect the new sector of the city. We tramped alongside as they began the ascent, near wheels churning and churning. Soon everyone was out pushing and grunting, and with many stops and much conversation we finally got the Delage up the slope. It was a precarious ascent. Cars, ambulances, and ponderous cannons were rolling down the hill like drunken elephants. Our luck seemed to guide their ensuing course. Tonight only one car, chain-equipped, will go to Genera, and so nosotros a charro will do the evacuating from my perspective. There will probably be no snowballing at all if we ever do. The field cars had a fantastic look for the past few days with cottony white tufts on the wattle work and surrus of snow and frigid air on the parked cars. Starting your motor is fraught with some risks, as the curious onset immediately half you with snowballs as soon as the engine begins humming.

We had a new experience the afternoon that we arrived. In the twilight sky a great "saucer" was floating, swaying slightly on its tethers. As we watched it began to descend. The fat "fins" gave it a weird resemblance to an elephant head as it came down. We hurried to the others end of the village and got to the landing
place just as the observer was stepping out of the basket, hooded like an Arctic explorer. Dozens of soldiers were grasping the handles and attaching sand bags to the great bellows as it billowed over them. In a few minutes the crowd of them ran down the hill propelling the big, multi-colored bag floating over them, sharply outlined against the further snow-covered hillside and looking curiously like a colony of ants with a fat grub worm. The big automobile with its drum and barreled up as we. The cable winds about a steel cylinder, propelled by a second motor in the truck, not at right angles to the ear.

In white of ours being at the front, we lead remarkably constructed lives. Few of us have seen a gun fired or been in trenches. Our work is laid out for us and we can't deviate from it—conditions that probably would seem curious to anyone on the outside. We are very small cogs in this huge mechanism of war—and our efficiency depends on how closely we stick to our job. Sometimes I lose sight of the fact that our sector, important as it is, is only a small portion of the great battle line that twirls its vast way for hundreds of miles across Europe. Think of being the directing hand of all that line—Juwel, the new
general with the victories of the Côte de Poivre already won! A glorious task but a ghastly responsibility—dealing in this wholesale business of human lives!

How comes the reply of the allies to Wilson’s question— "What are you Fighting For?" Germany has not yet answered. Does she really know? Does anyone?

Glorieux, January 24, 1917. Well, buddies, I'm coming home to you. Much as I feel I ought to keep on here, I can't stay away from the sight of you any longer, and when my time is up with Section 4 I'm going back home to you. It's been a long time, little son. An awfully long time—so please yourself. Well, let's get along with the story. The day after the Blizzard we had to go out in the field with shovels and dig out our shoes from the big white snow-drifts. Wheel-chains came into great demand. We could only muster a few pairs, and next day, Perry having gone into Barle. Due to see Turbult and Harrington off, I went out in 440 to borrow chains from Section 2. They were temporarily quartered in barracks at Glorieux close to German. We took the road through Boedelan court, striking across past the aviation hangars and came out upon the grand Route to Bedun, the "Route Secré." We met and passed
long trains of revarassement - the big motors cannon;
huge juggernauts of the road, hooded forage wagons;
two-wheeled carts piled high with hay; long "chariots"
of lumber drawn by fours and six big horses; long streams of traffic going in both directions. Peddling peddlers trudged
along by the horses heads or pulled on the seat, and
others walked behind changing to smalls or massa brake
wheelers. Batteries of motored 75's moved by at the top,
six horses to each gun, a helmeted artillerians in the
saddle of each nears horse. Ammunition carriages
rumbled in their train. Smart-topping cars dashed by
filled with staff officers. Blazoned homes shrieking Little
processions of the mitraileuse carriages like two-wheeled
culver went along followed by Kearney milers in single
carriages. And by the roadside stood Boche prisoners,
cracked rock road there clink along the roadway. Every
where there was movement - blue figures against the
white background of the snow. We edged our way through
the traffic, and at last reached the little village of Regret
on the kilometers stones 60 significant number appeared
"Kermains." At a fork in the road we turning to the left
through the half-burned village of Glorieux, doubled back
on a parallel road and drew up among the brown
plank, one-story barrack sheds. The Ford ambulances of

Sections 2 were drawn up in line on the frozen road, flanked by the bulkier French ambulances. We went inside one of the long sheds and found Weber, chief of 2, busy with his packing. He had no chance for rest, with a few minutes to spare. Dell and I climbed the hill back of the barracks. A short tramp over the snows through a line of rusted barbed wire entanglement and across crumbling abandoned trenches brought us upon the little platform. Beyond was a sunlit valley flanked by snow-covered hills. There was a vague glimpse of huddled roofs below—the long beleaguered city of Verdun. Somewhere out of the murk came the mutter of the guns, muffled and ominous. It lasted only a few minutes and then we went back to the car, driving home in time for one to read off my blankets and report for night duty at the deep war Casualties Triage. The afternoon dragged out in the bare whitewashed room. Ambulances drew up at the door unloading their freight of weary, mud-stained soldiers. They came limping in through the creaking door carrying their dripping packs and rifles to sink down dejectedly about the stinking, red-hot stove. Some were swathed in bandages under their coverings or carried crippled arms in slings. Others hobbled on swollen, bandaged feet. Sometimes the
Brancardiers bore in a stretcher with a "corbe" from
injuries muddy bleed blankets. One attendant draped
the breech cloths of the rifless seeking cartidges. Another
bottled out weak tea. The medecin in charge went about
consulting the little tickets tied to each mans coat. Many
unders checkered shorts. Examining tongues. Now and then
a brancardier becomend to a man and quickly jabbed
the anti-tetanus hydermantine into the tissue flesh at the
wound. At a table a corporal called out names and one
by one the men answered giving recruit ment numbers and
service class, sometimes consulting their wrist plaques.
Slowly the fevile would be made up and as load sent
off to an emergency one to some base hospital at
Fleury, Faviolles, or Juvreville. Now and then there would
be a cheerful chat between man in the tired group. I talked
with one a brancardier just in from the Bois d'Arcour.
Beyond Hill 304. He told how he slept in the first line
trenchs, a hand grenade in each pocket, ready to jump
up and throw them at the first warning of an attack
from the Boche trenchs just across the wire entangle-
ment. He explained the reason for using the stiff-arm
overhand throws, like our English cricket Thames, saying that
this way put the weight of the body into it and saved
fatigue in continued throwing. He said he could
throw a grenade accurately twenty-five meters, but few men in his battalion could throw forty. Like many others, he was sanguine over the end of the war coming within six months. He told me that one ought to and his comrades climbed out of their trenches, knee-deep in freezing mud, and lay along the parapet, calling to the Boche to do the same. The Boches readily complied and they fought the night very amicably. After dinner up on the muddy hill, I had a call to carry two Boche prisoners and then guard to Soilly. All went merrily with our party and when we arrived at Soilly we all joined in a cup of coffee. I asked the little Boche for a piece of bread, and he let me cut a button off of his coat — the Bavarian cow — which I have since had mounted on my bouquet.

Rumors of an advance of retreats for us were finally confirmed. By direct orders to get ready to move from Soilly on the 20th. I was assigned as Fowler's orderly on the first car at Jullieux. It meant our last night of Earner — something which I cannot confess caused me any regret whatsoever. It was a busy night, making four round trips. The officers of Section I were at the chateau arranging to take over the post. When we first arrived, it was...
still light enough to see gunn’s traces in the smoke.

A number of our boys had posted each side of the road at ‘Strafers Corners’ and down at ‘Cummins Corners’ two big fellows had thrown cloths over the roadway, spreading great black smudges over the runners from the craters-like mines of the lancers close by.

The slope of 304 was streaked with black where the rain of shells had fallen on the white. Sometimes the effect of the shelling seemed intensified by the new setting. We made two runs during the night, and on one of them carried down a lieutenant slightly wounded in the forehead—his fifth wound. We sat between us and chatted all the way in. I told him something that I had been anxious to be sure of for some time. He had been on the sameweeney mine June at positions on 304 and from Fomme and in the Fauxasse, the valley between. He said that our cars were plainly visible to the Boche’s from the time we emerged from the Bois de Bethanvillers until we reached Montjoville, and again from Strafers Corners to Cummins Corners. The information was not reassuring, our passengers also told us that the Germans had never been dislodged from the position on the crest.
of 304 that they captured in the attack on December 7th. He told us something of the trench life with its
three periods—eight days in the front line, eight in
the second, and eight on rest in the Bois de Bethen-
courtville. At some places in the line, the men stand
almost elbow to elbow, at others, at intervals of
thirty metres. The trenches here and there approach
the Boche trenches very closely—the distance between
two opposing posts is about one and a half
metres, a belated shell took us up to
Emers on our fourth run. 5:30 a.m. in the
morning in broad daylight, so we came back. I
mounted the mound and stood and looked out over the
roof of the ears at the front, as we climbed
to Scrabbi Cemetery. The gloomy lines of men, zigzagging over it, went
the broad figures of the wire entanglements and the
narrower black trench, lines, and Coyons, sharpened
against the boxes. Great armadillos of black, were
spread over the white, spotted with the black dots
of the new shell-bullets. There were places where
these armadillos and dots followed the trench lines
underlining them in black, with rays of black
spreading out beyond them where the fiordes had
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belched across the snow. The markers of these outlying quarters told plainly from which side the shell had come and made a kind of graphic map of the zone of fire. French and Belgique alike, I had no regrets at seeing my last of the dreary hill, but thanked my lucky stars that now work on that never was over.

If only there were no need for work or anxiety! If only the end could come, as so many others expect, before next June! The world is war-weary—both France must win!

Grenier, Jan. 26, 1917. I have more than a regretful feeling at leaving the work over here, forever, even though my longing to see you overmasters every other thought. I have made some very loyal friendships here in Section 4 that I know will outlast the war. It will seem strange to get back to the ways and cares of normal life, where one does not sleep in one's clothes to keep warm. (I blush to confess to having had mine on continuously for nearly six months.) I fear I may hunt for the date stamped on the bread or attempt cutting it with my knife, treading it steadfastly against my breastbone the whole. The lack of the sweet red wine, "Ruinard," no denser to the heart of every French will be so keen, but I shall miss the great bowls of milk, "Ruinard Americain," so-called. And I shall go far before I find another cork like
ours new "existot" who lately graced the kitchen of Dumbarton, the Machiavellian ambassadors from Austria at Washington. Since his advent we have had small need to make known our wants at the window of the "greenery" in the little village houses where some shrewd old dame dispenses confiture and cigarettes to insistent foreigners under government supervision. I shall miss the sound of chattering Frenchies, even the burned and guttered "moli". But, thank heaven, I am going home!

When Fowlers and I got up to camp from Dulcey we found it all committed. Our little bunk rooms were being rapidly stripped and our belongings loaded into the cars. I rather hated to go about dismantling our little cubby but it was soon bare, with the little rusty stove standing lonely watch in the middle. But on the terrace was piled a heterogeneous assortment of cast-off clothes and equipment, and such odds and ends as brass shell cases, and even shells once brought proudly in as souvenirs and the Frenchmen found rare hunting there.

Next day, January 22nd, we broke camp. Dall coming in from the eastCarries news reported shelling clear over the Bois de Bethelville.
on the Donbass side. Some of the men, wounding men in the regiment of the new division, going up to relieve our 64th. Our main effort was first to move the rolling kitchen from its berth and close it behind the white truck, and then we started out in convoy in groups of six. I brought into the first group, the white truck at the head went as triumphantal trail of smoke, streaming from the kitchenette as the cortege proceeded with the preparations for our departing. It was abominably cold, but the air was crisp, and for the first time in weeks the sun was set setting the snowy fields aglitter under a blue sky. We went through Soniey and took the Grande Route. A busily run of an hour or so brought us to Glories and to the barracks sheds for our “refurb.” The idea of going to bed was for a rest, truth was all as a little incongruous, but with us the unexpected is expected. We soon had our beds lined up in the big bare rooms, and in a surprisingly short time we found our trestle tables set up in quadrants with steaming hot luncheon ready, even though we nearly upset the kitchenette in uncoupling it. After luncheon several of the men got leave to go into Berdum, and some of the rest of us climbed the hill behind the barracks. Then
time the air was clear and the whole amphitheatre of hills, by spread out like a map before us. All around us the smooth white plates rolled in even undulations marked here and there with dark tree clumps and capped by half-defied mounds of the gloaming forties. To the right below us in the valley lay Sedan, the twin square towers of the cathedral standing out sharply and high above the white mound of the citadel and the dark line of the squat fortifications wall dark against the snow. Searching to the left on a wide curve flowed the Meuse, the line of poplars along its borders half marking the yellow walls of the quarry, coming with it went the line of the canal. Beyond the grove of Barracks buildings of Gardin Fontaine as ever they stretched the white slope of Mt. Michel high from the quarry at its western extremity by the curve of the canal well to the east beyond Sedan itself, its airy surface lined with trenches and boyaux, the northern rampart of the town which held through the year long Boche attack. Further to the left, across the Meuse from the quarry, the crumbling sides of Chassey Hill overlooking the waters, and still further the even sky-line rose to what we took to be the Fort de France. Marne itself lay hidden behind Chassey fort, but the buildings of Brass were clearly visible further.
down the river. Beyond, meeting into the distance, the
hulls rose again - Côte de Tobe beyond Branc, Côte de
Pouse, stained and smeared with far-flying artillery
fire, and over the quarry in front of us the
shadowy lines of the heights of Werdenberg.

Dournout and Bour were hidden behind St. Michel.
We were looking into the arena of the world's great
battle, and as we looked the guns roared sending
the echoes reverberating and thundering along the hills.
The shrill of the shells was plainly audible, and all
about from unseen batteries white flame leaped out in
lighting flashes. Circling overhead and heading away in
straight flight for the German lines, the aeroplanes
hummed - big fighting planes and little trench
planes: the trench planes plainly visible as they passed
overhead before they swooped into almost transparent
visibility except when they flashed the sileurs in the
slanting light. It seemed to us that the firing was
probably being directed beyond the Côte de Pierre
against the Cote de Tobe, the hill still held by the
Germans. As we looked shells burst across from us
by the quarry - Boche arrived hunting the batteries.
It seemed incredible that such as few weeks ago
the Germans had been at the very thresholds of Belgium.
just over St. Michel and songs - and that they had been hurled back not only from those positions but from the distant Côte de Fovic as well. Coming down the hill again and past our barracks we started on a walk to Jordan fontaine - Bigelow, Balch, Fowler, Denison and I. We stopped at the cross roads in German to watch an aeroplane overhead. It was flying in a crooked course. Leaping as unnoticed a trail of white smoke that hung in the air like an ominous cloud. No one could explain the signal - either over the guardhouse or entry in bus box there. We turned the corner to the left and climbed over the brick and down into the streets of Jordan fontaine. As the battered brick barracks there. One each side of the road were the ruins of little tawdry cottages, some almost intact except for single gaping shell holes and bearing fantastic names like "Bausageur." Dooms in the town we passed one house with the corner ruffled chimneystack. The little living rooms with its tawdry furniture was open to the street like a stage-sett. On many doors placards were posted forbidding entry into these wrecked homes in fear of military punishment. We came back to barracks at dusk. The scene in the big wooden rooms was typical. Cantine trunks.
and duffle bags had been unpacked and their contents strewn about, and the boys, wrapped in their heavy coats, were sitting in groups on the camp beds. Little kerosene lamps were burning on the shelves around the walls, and the air was blue with tobacco smoke. Suddenly the place shook with the thud of an arrive. Another landed somewhere near and another. We thought of the Red Cross painted on the roof of an adjoining barracks with an obus hole through one of its arms.

Next morning, equipped with cartridge and extra ammunition, according to orders, four or five of us went into Jerdum. As we paraded the cross road and then up a road we saw the holes in the street and house walls, and the letters of broken stone and plaster made by the shells thrown in during the night before. We passed on along the tree-lined road past the charred remains of the Escuela dels Pellers and after a turn on two came in front of the gate to Jerdum, right in the black slope of the massive walls that guard the Citadel. We crossed the moat, stopping on the causeway to look down on the tangle of barbed wire. Below - silent commentary on the transitory efficiency of the great ditch as a defensive work - we passed the sentry unchallenged and entered Jerdum. As we well kept road, virtually a boulevard, curved up the hill before us.
mounting the little eminence that forms the west part of the city guarded with the great walls and called the "citadel." Barren arrangements covered the open spaces everywhere, stretching from curb line to the wattle work at the tops of the walls. Little shops and towers were opposite us, all more or less chalk marked. We climbed to an open square with a half razed church tower supporting the iron framework of a wireless plant. Half-battened walls of an empty casern enclosed the place and pine trees lined the borders along the further side. We looked down over the roofs of the city and the Hense. Climbing down an easy stairway we came upon a paved street skirting the large wall. Tunnel-like openings led into the great fortification - paved and electric-lighted with little narrow-gauge tracks. Poilus were going about easily, somnious, rumbling by and troopers marching. The place - both impregnable - a well ordered city as hundred feet under solid masonry and natural rock. In there an army could stay in safety with its stores, its ammunition, its bakery, even its "movies." Delancy and I strolled about together. As we walked the young marshellade logic, his croix ribbon on his breast, told me stories of his part in the battle of the Iname and how his young wife, fours...
months after their marriage, made her way from Germany
to London and finally to Paris, hiding in fields and
wading through swamps, we crossed the Rhine.

Bruxelles - February 1, 1917.- All about us were stone
buildings of importance - the theatre and hotel de ville.
The style of architecture was remarkably good with
excellent carving over the grey stone portals. The letters of
the bombardment had been cleared away, but inside the
doorways, the rooms were choked with heaps of plaster
and shattered glass. I noticed much good furniture-
richly carved oak presses and chairs. All the outer
walls carried the foot-marks of the rain of shells.
The sight in the narrow business street was horribly
defressing. At a corner stood a little café - a sort of
bar. The tables and chairs were still in place, deep
in dust, and all about was all letters of broken glass
and empty bottles. Garish placards advertising
different carriages hung askew on the walls, and an
automatic music box - half smashed - stood on the
counter. In the door a vis a man, stove, its gift
cases all rusted and tumbled about. In a modiste's
windows the wax effigies lay stuffed - a ghastly
resemblance to human torsos. I thought of Pompeii,
and the suggestion was still stronger in another.
street where only brown rubbish heaps and low shattered walls powdered with snow gave indication of the buildings that had been there. At the sidewalk edge, little black holes led down into the cellars, now transformed into airy. Surprisingly little of the town, however, has been demolished, and most of the buildings are almost intact. The streets too are lovely, though only with military activity. We walked to an old gateway by the river's edge—a mediaeval notice with twin gray turrets, portcullis, and gargoyles, luckily unreached. In the shadows of its towers were working and a uniformed gendarmerie street guard. As we mounted the hill to the cathedral we passed a building at a bridge corner. Hanging over the water was a little balcony room, once enclosed once, but with nearly every pane shattered. - the officers' library. Scores of volumes were ranged on the shelves, and books lay open on the tables surrounded by tumbled chairs. All the while we heard the thunders of the guns, and once the rapid firing of a 75 made us look up into the blue where the shrapnel puffs were bursting close about as flying Boche. Going up a narrow street we came out in the little space beside the cathedral wall. About us were grey stone houses that might have been
Built under Francesco I. The sculptured cathedral was cut off the ruins. A sentry stood at the doors, saluting as a general and his party entered. We went on after a festive consultation with the prior into the octagonal court of the bishop's palace, that faces the twin towers. Here the shells had done their work, smashing the disillusioned archers. We made our way through the debris and into a little, improvised chapel, furnished evidently with fittings from the cathedral. There were some good paintings— one Presentation at the Temple, in the style of Titian, being especially good—and some stained glass windows, quite intact, but in the adjoining hall, St. Jerome was cut by rebels. We threaded through rooms after rooms over rubbish heaps and came to a museum. A room of some pretension filled with stone sarcophagi and Latin tablets. At the foot of the altar way outside, under the marble list of bishops beginning with the fifth century, was a group of portrait busts—a whole galaxy of Napoleon's victims among them. One little, Elginian head was a sore temptation, but we withstood the frugal absinthe and didn't look. A mummified head lying among a group of dusty stuffed animals was not so alluring. The brigandines, I regret to state, afterwards...
abducted a stuffed dog. We went back to the cathedral door and were allowed to peek inside. The interior was not remarkable for anything but its size. Shells had knocked a big hole in the roof over the baldachino, and crumbled stone lay about the nave. The church traffic was stacked haphazard about the columns. Somehow there was nothing of the sadness that hangs about the little shattered village church of Fromelles. The morning, however, spent in the quiet town with a mane that unquestionably will go down in history before Waterloo, was full of new impressions and interest for me. But somehow the horror of war was not overwhelming there. It was along the sleeking trenches and on the lonely shell-torn roads that war is grimmest.

That afternoon, just before dusk, Eric, Fowlers, and I went for a walk from Glencoe along the Serre road. I had mistook some 75 shell casings strown along there, and wanted a couple for pieces to make into a cigarette box. We had acquired our trophies and were sauntering into Glencoe near the cross roads when a shell ripped through the air over us and crashed through the wall of a house in a celotex cloud of black smoke. It was unexpected, to say the least, and did not make our passage of the
corner, especially inviting, particularly as these "c.Scott's birds" usually fly in company. We got by with our usual untoward incident occurring, however, and came even insisted on paying his respects to the centurion in his wooden box against a wall in that evil place. He showed us a large piece of shell that had pierced his little shelter, but expressing—what did not make me any more eager—continued the enjoyment of his society. Next morning a few of us set out in the Lieut., and 1's cars to visit our new sectors further to the west of行程, in the Argonne, we advance over the frozen road in the bitter cold through Dambeck力量, 144-court and Parois, until we came to Clermont under the fine covered hillside. The roads were along with troops and artillery. We pulled into 144-court long enough to pick up a guide and to inspect our future quarters—a barracks occupied by our English ambulance section which we were to replace. We found the men typical middle-aged Brits, tubbed and scrubbed—though heaven knows how they accomplished that commendable result. However, each has his own machinery, their work can hardly be called arduous. Among them we over the author, Jerome R. Jerome, halt
and grizzled, too old to be accepted as the ranks, but still "doing his bit." After a brief chat we raced off again through Parcours and into the woods up toward the lines. A short run brought us to Camp Dewey in the woods, where we inspected dug-outs, and then started back. At a fork in the road two anti-aircraft guns were stationed, 75's mounted on motor trucks. As we came alongside they began firing. We piled out and stood at a point between them. High overhead against the cloudy blue sky two Boche planes were flying. The guns—first one for a few shots, and then the other—short flares, the report beating against our ears with that smacking sound characteristic of the 75. I could feel the ear flaps of my cap strike my cheek at each blast of sound. The barrels of the guns were tilted high, plunging back with the discharge and then smoothly sliding up into position. Between the two guns a group of officers stood at some kind of apparatus, calling range numbers. As gunners seated by each gun pulled the trigger, and others inserted the shells with time fuse set and locked the breech. The brass case dropped out after each shot. All around the roaring planes
the cottony plumes appeared, but the Boers got away.

It all seemed like a gigantic trap-shooting.

We next rushed into birchilly—a ruin of desolation—and then followed the Lieut’s car back over the small Ford stream frantically to keep up. Changing later with the Lieut, I rode home to Glorieux in the Delage, and for a while I felt as though I had shot out. That afternoon some of us again climbed our observation hill behind Glorieux. There was not a considerable amount of artillery firing. The rifle fire was bursting in victory, red flame over the quarry, leaving wreaths of white smoke in the twilight air. At the foot of the quarry a big piece was firing, its flashes white as lightning, and at dusk over on the Côte de Poirre a smouldering battery let go so fast that a constant flicker play along the hillside and the report came rolling to us like the beat of a giant drum.
kept morning Delamay asked me to take a walk with him and not knowing our destination I went along. He led me to the area behind the barracks where the wooden crosses stretch in thick-set lines, marking the graves of the men brought back daily from the trenches. At the far end some poilus were digging a long row of new graves - a ghastly preparation, as we got near we saw a twisted figure in uniform laid on the snow - a frozen corpse - the blood black on the blue overcoat, the head mercilessly covered by a piece of sacking to which a metal number tag was fastened, but the gloved hands clenched upon the breast. I saw things that turned me sick - too horrible to describe here - and could not stay to see the poor devil burned, as they do it here sometimes, without winding sheet or coffin. Again that afternoon Joe Parrott and I climbed the hill drawn by the formation of that great battle panorama, over from the ripe gueule came the continued sound of a tir de barrage and we knew something was doing near the front. Some day we learned that the Boche's had made a heavy strike against 304, taking nearly a regiment, and heavily bombarding Zonnebeke. As far as Section I was but as it entered the
court of the chateau. But luckily one was burst. As Joe and I watched we saw big shells landing near the Fort de Merrer, repeatedly shooting up huge columns of black smoke like jets from a volcano. The shell screams and the crashes would come to us long afterwards. By this time the discomfort of the frigid dirty barrack and the periodicity had made some of the more adventurous spirits reactive, and next day Fowler, Dawson, Gooch and Russell started off exploring. They had actually got almost to Bass where Abraham again breaking over them and several big shells for the canal beside them shooing the waters up in short jets. They stood not upon the order of their going. Meanwhile I, having berated them for a pack of useless idiots, virtuously betook myself to my nearby distant hilltop for a last look at verdun. I had scurried come back to barrack's when a shell the first in weeks landed on the hill. That night at midnight I heard a big one heavy over our shed and burst somewhere in glaucine. I snuggled near and we listened to eight o'clock. Sweet repose! The morning of the 27th found us up at six and busily loading. It was below zero Fahrenheit, and the coal had played havoc with radiators and water jackets in
hut of drains, cocks, and glycerine mixture. We finally got underway and with many hitches, ultimately pulled into Fierencourt. We parked the car in the icy square of the village in front of the gray walls facing the old fountains, and solicitously pushed our kitchenette into a barnyard among chickens and strutting turkeys, the cook placidly preparing luncheon meantime. We had hardly finished our meal when I rolled 4:40 out for lunch. Dennis, Eric, my orderly, we stopped first at the Grande Le Bonte, the new quarters of the G.B.D., a lovely cooking little chateau facing a great court of facing buildings. From there we went on to the woods. It was all very quiet and white, but we passed places where the snowy surface was fitted with old shell holes, and cut by the fretwork patterns of the trenches. The tattered remnants of an artillery screen flapped crazily between us and the distant Boche lines. Then entering the thick woods with the hedges about us, we climbed up to the little city of dugouts and stopped at the little sunken cabin where the tiny tricolor and red cross fluttered. Duarte, Solle, and old braaardsiers furnished welcomed us and led us to our own little, alone, a half sunken cabin just big enough for two bunks, a table and a fireplace. Sun came in through the windows in the
door at the foot of the wattle cabin and a fire was crackling in the chimney. We were delighted until we found countless packages of cartridges under our bedding and read over the door: "Depot de Cartouches - 80,000." The cozy arrangement of the little cubby hole offset even this disadvantage, and we even refused to be disheartened when twenty balles beloed up to the little chimney and showed us where no shell had knocked off the chimney and peppered the flimsy wall with black holes. The room was at dinner time. It is true there were not enough plates and we established a community interest in the pot as it came from the stove, but everything tasted good. It was very quiet here in the forest. Almost the only sounds were the noise of an occasional wagon or the voices of the soldiers in the dugouts above us. But we were only a few hundred metres from the first line. That evening we had a sledge to take to Rarecourt. We tried the road through Reuilly, missed the turn and were off in full cry for Barcenes and the Boches when a group of boches just us right. We ultimately picked up a full load of the Reuilly postes and got them into the Rarecourt trench, returning to our Dormin camp for a good sleep and leaving regretfully the next morning. Before we
started we climbed the hill to the dugouts - ad cliff dwellers' sort of village - tier upon tier of little huts, half caves, half cave, set into the hillside and heavily reinforced with wire and rock against bombardment. All about us the 75's were cracking whitely sending their shells over the tree-tops, but we heard no reply from the Boche, unless the distant muffled "Put-put-put" of a mitrailleuse may have come from their trenches. Flavescourt seemed a lonely city after the woods. It is really a very picturesque village with squatly grey houses and archways. The tobacco shop is a pleasant room with an huge black fireplace, crane and hob, and two granit old cupboard beds. To make the picture complete a white capped old dame sits in the chimney place. Troops swarm in the streets; some drilling, some talking about the icy little fountains. Artillerymen drive their guns and caissons up the slippery hill. And from the red church towers with its blue clock dial the quarters hours strike in deep, tonned music. Our barrack is "abonnement froide": water freezers, cold in buckets and bidons, and your breath freezes on your blankets. In consequence we stay there as little as possible and frequent the washerwoman's kitchen.
with Marie Louise, the year-old baby, and Julie, the tortoise. There we drank tea around the hearth, and listened to our hostess's chatters while she brewed some tea and stitched up rents in our uniforms. One of her highest prized possessions after Marie Louise and Julie and the clock is a Boche helmet, and she has many tales to tell of how the Boche carried her off to St. Lo in front of the fight at the Ferme Baux Follard. As the time grows short I value these friendly little scenes—these side-light affects. I thought of this last night when we sat around the table after dinner singing our Section 4 songs, and some of the old ones from home. I shall miss the youngsters; calling one "By" and the rest of their Brazil. I have grown very fond of them—Erie Fowler with his plucky head and infectious laugh; "Benny" with his absurd little mustache and remnant of story-telling; Don Moffatt with his "choir-boy" face; old Joe Parrott all good nature and French idiom; "Bog" with his boy's enthusiasm in spite of his thirty-nine years; Wallace trying to cover his damned head with a raffish beard; Twitch with his anxious head; serious-minded Russell; Harrington, Goovey, Belting, Jewett, Dell, Thomas—the "old birds" drawn close.
by the things that we have shared in the months together here. The new men are yet to be proven. I shall miss the quiet talks with Perry over our common interest in the section. I shall miss old Palmett with his jocular ways and friendliness, obliging little Sauer, temperamental Andre, Beers and his souvenir, fat little Sabatier, insomtochial, Deyancy and the priest, very much, the officers and gentlemen. There have been some happy hours to me with these men scattered through this half year of war, and I find as the time comes to leave them that I have grown closer to them than I realized. Friendship is a very precious thing, little son.

Paris, February 12, 1917. To trips over icy roads to Bessancourt in a wretched four-seater for fermeuse men, another frequent trip was made at Camps Desmoulin, and a cold twenty-four hours in glacial Parcevall ended out the last three days of January. Then I got the Bourreux frequent and spent a hermit-like day and night in the little shanty assigned me, nursing a smoky coal stove and scribbling. When Denny came to relieve me, Russell arrived with a load of malacodes and the news of Germany's reply to Wilson—submarine war on everything afloat in the waters.
around France, England and Italy. I could not
believe it until I read the papers in camp that
night. Next day I was sent out on my last duty
as a driver - to the post at Bon Abre. Moffatt had
the adjoining post at the Carrefour and we rooled
out together to the farm to locate for the rations
ment. There I said good-bye to Plof, Beuf, Leuring;
Rowe, Potez and the others old friends of the G.B.I.
with whom we have worked so long - and I hated
to leave them. Thus Don and I rode for the woods,
each of us carrying an officer. When we reached
the chief abres at the camp post we found Du Clegers
in charge. He consulted with the officers and
then called all his bugbcdiers into the abre.
In a few minutes the little narrow cave was
filled with the their intent faces crowding about
the smoking little lamps. Each answered "Present"
as his name was called. Then in a business-like way
Du Clegers told them a gas attack was expected. He
ordered every opening covered with sheeting, buckets
of water nearby, the respirators in place and the
chemical solutions ready. Then he issued extra
masks. I he insisted that I try mine on for him.
It was not a happy time for any of us down in
(60)
that burrows, but the three of us managed to keep up conversation during our dinner. Then I drove
Dre Clergy to other posts where he made the same arrangements. Finally we turned in on the bunkers,
but no gas came. (As a matter of fact, it took place a day later further to the west, and penetrated
several kilometers.) Next day Moffatt and I talked
about while he was not engaging in getting the ice out of his radiator. Occasionally squadrons of troops
passed on a 75, sliding erratically from one side
of the glazy road to the other. A few maladroit
reported for evacuation. Now and then distant
75's fired at targets of convenience. At dusk, Denny
and Russell rode back into our relief, and I drove
back to Rennes. I was I was so grateful to finish up my last
unloading at this stage. Next day, February 5, our
papers came with our ordre de mouvement for
Paris, and with them came the news that we
had broken off diplomatic relations with Germany.
The possibility of our going to war has been drummed
me beyond expressions. My country! My people! To be
plunged into this welter of blood that we call war!
May God avert it!
It was hard to say good-bye to the boys. Perry drove me that night to St. Menelowl. Eric and Danny climbed in, and when Big and Bill Wallace and Don Moffatt saw us off I had a lump in my throat that I couldn't swallow. We found the train waiting in blackness. A few hardbatters, and I pulled out in the dark - my six months over.

Fort Harrison, Virginia.
2nd Company, 9th Provisional Training Regt.
August 13, 1917.

I scribbled the last of these pages just after our break with Germany. There followed days of impatient waiting and futile inquiry at the steamship offices, while the cloud swept swiftly westward toward America. Then came our dash through the submarine zone from Bordeaux on the Rockambœuf, and finally Billy Parceel and I landed in New York early in March.

Do you remember those few happy days that we had together then at Dover and Poughkeepsie? That was the last time that I saw you, boys.

The inevitable declaration of war came soon afterward, I saw only one way clear - to join an
soon as possible, and on May 14th over five thousand
furs—formerly Indians, Ohio, Kentucky and West
Virginia—gathered at Fort Harrison, a young city of
brick barracks and acres of wooden campments, to
begin the three months' work of training to be officers
in the great new American army. It has been
strenuous enough. Driven and advised by
unrelenting but kindly army officers, under the
leadership of General Glines we have sweltered
through the summers, studying, hiking, practicing
marches under our packs, digging trenches,
throwing dummy grenades, learning the new
bayonet work, going on recurrent night maneuvers,
parading before political notables, until these
last days have arrived. We have appeared before
board after board for examination, and now at
least our brief preliminary work is over. Captain
Halle has told us of our commissions. To me
the responsibility of my captaincy is a heavy one.
I think constantly of those boys, now full of
youth's life, whom someday—soon perhaps—I
shall take into the trench lines along those
terrible guns battle hills in France—Boys, each
as dear to someone as you are to me. But
we must win, however heavy the cost, giving all that we have in us to give.

I have left these notes just as I wrote them. They are crude enough, but they may give you some impression of those days in France better than if I tried to write them over. I hope with all my heart that when you read them the Great War will be nothing more than a memory to us all, and that the peace with honors for which we are now fighting will have come to this torn, tortured world.

Lawrence B. Cummings