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serving in army during World War I  
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Co. M

1. Left Camp Meade on July at 6 pm, got aboard ship, 1 pm July 7. Left N. York 6:30 pm July 8. Spent 7 days on the water. The weather was very good except for the last day, which was very rainy. Arrived in France on 6:30 pm July 15. Got off the boat at Brest, were put on a lighter with some 2000 men. Were set ashore at 7 o'clock, formed in a column and marched up through the city. The whole 314 Reg. Inf. were in line (one of the things that we noticed was that other Am. soldiers had been there as the kids all were asking for cigarettes, also chocolate, and were singing Hail, Hail the Gags all Here). We marched from 7:30 till about 2:30 in the am, in the rain. The packs got all wet, also as heavy as H. It was go forward and to the rear, all the time in the rain, and as dark as a pocket. Some of the new men had been only in the army 4 and 5 weeks. After laying in the ( )? so long without the proper exercise they could not carry their packs (I carried mine and some poor suckers who could not carry his). We got to what was called a rest camp at 1:30, in the rain. The Com. officer would not let us pitch tents, so we laid on our packs the rest of the night (damed near froze and drowned), Mud up to your shoe tops. Then to top the thing off, setting up exercise in the rain. We were in the rest camp from the 16th of July, put up our tents ( Noon )? as they keep us moving all morning. It surely took all the joy out of life. That was one place where it could rain enny time of the day or night without the least bit of trouble. The boys had not been at the rest camp ( it don't mean what it says) one hr. after daylight that they knew where to buy red wine, white whine, and champain (vin Russe) (vin Blanc), my french is improving, I have been in France 2 days.

It was a case of putting out a guard to keep the men from quitting the army for good. We made the excuse go to the brook for water (for

2. booze). But the (pairer)? way was to get booze for the Sgt. use their coats with the stripes on to get past the guards with a detail to carry the bottles, Champain was \$2.00 a bottle, the best ever, the Vin Russe was 40¢ per Quart, not so bad at that price.

I went out with Supply Sgt. O'conner on detail for water, and having my canteen, I had it filled a number of times, as the detail was quite large (Beaucosh Enzig-zags) much drink.

On the 18 th July we went on parade in Brest. They said the French people never sn army parade so we were to be the goats, we paraded and the people hardly looked at us.

On the 17th of July we were on detail at the docks. They brought the lighters in from the ship with all the stuff they brought from the states, some job ans as usual much rain to make things more pleasant for us.

On the 19 we got up at 2:30 A M rolled our packs (in the rain) had our breakfast of bread and bacon in the rain and marched to Brest, entrained at 10:30 am Sept the 19-20-21 of July on the train. They were all box cars, 40 hommes, 8 chavoux, it was one of the most disagreeable rides I have ever taken. There were enny where from 40 to 48 men per car, their cars are much smaller than ours. All the days on train were the same. Our grub was put on the train at Brest, it was mighty scarce, the same as at Brest-Rest Camp, On July the 22 nd we left the train at a place called Chattiloiu-Sur-Sein, at 7 o'clock in the am. It was very cold, some of the boys found a switch station to go in. The frogs (Frenchmen) had a nice fire going, so we stayed there to get warm. We left there on our empty stomachs with heavy packs. The first mile or Killos on Trench was not so bad, but as the sun krept higher, and the miles crept up, we began to play out. Soon the men were to be seen on the roadside. We saw men in billets and thought that soon we would be in

3. some nice bars ourselves but we had a long way to go yet.

July 22nd we arrived at Massault at 2 pm. We were hardly able to move a foot. Just before we stopped we were out of water, and being so hot that afternoon, had to throw our packs and go in light like an engine, sending wagon for our packs. Were put in a sheep pen after cleaning manure out.

On the 27th we got out of bed 2:30 am but did not leave till 7 o'clock, as our trucks did not come in time. We rode in trucks untill 4:30 pm, arrived in Gilley, in the rain, as usual, and had one hell of a time finding billets for our platoon. The town was one of those towns where the people have their manure piles in front of the house. You tell how much the man is worth by the size of the pile. We Policed the town, that is cleaned up, as that town was never cleaned up before. That is where we got our training to fit us for the work that was ahead of us.

On the 8th of Aug. one of our best Corp died, Thomas Coughlin by name. He was one of the first fellows I have ever met, always ready to help a fellow out, anytime, the Co. as a whole misses him very much, it was quite a blow.

Sept. 5th we were on a problem.. The Col. came out after us, said we were to move the next day, so we went back to Gilley, everything was a hustle and bussle for a few hours (from 6pm to 6 am).

Sept. 6th, with heavy packs on, we started on a hike of some 15 kilos it seemed like 115 to us, with all our belongings on our backs. We had gone perhaps 3 1/2 kilos to a town called Generires, there they took our coats and put them on the trucks. The 1st Platoon under Lt. Frick hired a wagon to put the platoon packs on. All was going

4. fine until Capt. Freeman took all the joy out of life by making the men carry the packs. The other platoon gave him the big laugh, so under a big pack and warm sun we went on and on.

We entrained at La Ferti at 4 pm loading the wagons and kitchens, in fact, all that we possessed for the Regt. In the course of the work it rained as per usual. This took place Sept. 8th 1918.

Sept. the 9th at 5:30 am we detrained at (Mu say)? unloading all our equipment and getting our mess at 7:30. We left there on a hike of about 8 kilos, as usual much rain to make it more pleasant. We arrived at Bar-La-Duc on the 9th Sept., going to a frog camp on the outskirts of town.

Sept. 10th, no permission given, but some of the boys took leave, myself, being a good soldier, I went also.

Sept, 11th, passes given from 2 pm until 6 pm, just made it back for retreat, very fortunate in buying beer, champagne and cognac.

Sept 12th spent at Bar-La-Duc on pass again without permission. Was stopped by an M. P. gave him a good line, got away with it, but he told me to get out of town, not sweet. Had my first good meal at Bar-La-Duc one night at the Hotel America. No bread with the meal as we had no bread tickets (out of luck).

Sept. 13th left Bar-La-Duc at night on trucks, rode all night, no smoking allowed on the trip as we were close to the front. We could see flashes of the big guns, and hear a dull rumble on the front.

Sept. 14th at 2 a. m: we left the trucks, hiked uphill for about 3 kilos, went into billets which were in Broken woods. The day was spent in sleeping, no kitchen today, no eats, except our reserve rations, very poor eating.

Sept 15th Sunday am, about eight o'clock while sitting along the edge of the with Lt.

5. Herk, we received our first baptism of fire. The Germans were registering as they call it on the woods. They must have knew that there were troops in the woods, it was very necessary that we keep out of sight. I saw air battles between planes, also saw anti-aircraft guns fire from both sides, fire at the planes. You could see where the shells burst, by the puff of smoke in the air. When the shots burst in the clouds directly above you, the pieces of shells could be heard dashing into the ground around us. And amusing part of our first shell fire was that the first shell came over and lit in the field just about 50 yd in front of where we were sitting, of course, we heard the whistle and then a great explosion, also seeing the earth flying in every direction, also throwing some on us. Most of the men were still in bed when the first shell came over, but when the second one fell, most of them were up and doing. The Major and our captain came out of their shacks with their packs and partly dressed yelling for us to get in the dugout, which would not hold more than one twentieth of us. They sent over about 15 or 20 shells at about minutes intervals, was some excitement but no one was killed. Sept 16th we left there about 11 o'clock at night, were all lined up in a column of squads waiting orders to move, when we heard a motor of an airplane. At once we knew it was (Bausla) ? plain by the hum of the motor. It came closer and closer all the time. It seemed as though it was a few hundred feet from the ground. As it seemed to get over our heads, we heard an awful crash, and then another, and in a few seconds another much closer that took the nerve out of us greenies. I crawled down along a hedge row, and tried to get all of myself under, my pack and helmet, but it seemed very small that particular time. Some went sprawling down through the woods for the dugouts, well all directions, some got behind trees and in enny

6. place they could find. After the plane had dropped all his bombs, about 6 in all, he opened up with his machine gun. After the excitement we left the woods, also left most of our equipment. After hiking about 10 kilos falling along side of the road often, on account of planes, as it was very moonlight. Sept 17th arrived in Ricicour woods about 3 pm, slept on our packs till morning. When I woke up it was raining as usual and certainly put me in fine spirits. Spent the day in our pup tents, putting limbs brush and grass on the tents to keep the Bosch(?) planes from seeing us. The other buglers and I were on the watch with our glasses. Everytime we saw or heard a Bosch plane, we blew attention, then the men cralled under the tents and brush. After the plane had passed on, we sounded all clear. Sept 18th Still in the ricicour woods. Someone had sprinkled clorid of lime in the latrine, of course it gave off an odor which we thought was gass, so the alarm was sounded, all had their masks on until we found out what it was. Sept 19th at night one more move of about 2 kilos, still in the same woods. At all times we were carrying our masks at the alert. We expected to have Jerry send over some shells, but he did not. The woods were full of artillery (French). I saw my first ranks in the woods, there must have been 200 of them there to help us out on the drive, which was soon to take place. It rained again today, something new. Much Sept 20 still in the same woods. Much rain again, much air fighting, One of our flyers shot down a Bausch observation balloon, this after noon. It came down in flames. We saw the observer jump with his parachute. Just received orders to pack up and move out tonight

7.

Sept 21-22-23-24 all spent in these days in the same woods, all night long gas alarms and no gas at all. Beaucoup air battles( nothing to see 50 or 75 plains in battle formation), the mud over the tops of our shoes, rain all the time, living in pup tents.

Sept 25th all packed up, our blankets and all we own are turned in, we just have our rifles 220 rounds of ammunition, reserve rations toilet articles with light packs, also our overcoats and raincoats. We left the wood as soon as it got dark, in a column of squads. Later on we went in toos, as we got out in what was no mans land. We came along the top of the trenches as the trenches were old ones. We could not follow them they were all fallen in, so we went along the top there for about 2 miles, through wire and on roads that had been much shell fire. The sky was lit up continually by big guns on either side. Finally we climbed, then before we reached the crest, took a trench that went through the hill, which was in good shape, had a slat walk in the bottom of it. Now and then a broken slat would throw one of the fellows, and you could hear him softly swear to himself. On reaching the top of the hill, we came upon a marked road which our engineers were repairing, so as to move artillery, ammunition, and grub over. All the time from 10 o'clock PM, our heavys had been firing from our rear. The sky seemed to be alive with whistling, screeching, presents of iron and steel for our friend Jerry. WE followed the road a short distance, then pulled off the road in platoon fronts, one behind the other, with connections on either side with some of her outfits. After we were spread out about 8 to 10 paces between men, we were told to lay down and get rest. Of course, that was impossible, for we had just got settled when they opened our barrage at 3 am, and it sure was one of the heaviest barrages ever put over.

8.

There were some 2800 guns in all, with heavies light and one pounders to help out.

Soon the word came back to us to send out men to cut the wire. We had been supplied with wire big cutter, so the men started out, but returned with the news that the Co. in front of us had already cut the wire.

We were on hill 304, which had been mentioned so much in the papers (Dead mans Hill) it was called. Where the Germans lost some 800 thousand men, the French losing some 600 thousand, that is what we had on our hands.

I was in a large shell hole with the Captain and occasionally had to take a message to one of the platoon leaders. The ground was full of old trenches and shell holes and barbed wire. Once in a while you could see a flash some distance here and there, knowing the german artillery was landing on our lines.

Sept 26 The rumors came along our lines with the word that at 5:30 our Artillery would put down a smoke barrage over for us, so we could advance. The Artillery lifted the barrage at 5:25 and the smoke shells began to burst in the air some 1000 yds ahead of us. It was quite dark yet. We were on our way, down in shell holes, through wire and over it, down and over the old trenches, with the smoke shells bursting in the air, then a heavy smoke that settled close to the ground. We kept going until we got into the smoke ourselves. There we came in to heavy machine gun fire, also by high explosives, hearing a faint screech in the air, then louder, then an explosion. One landed behind me and looking I seen men flying every direction. And then one in front of the skipper of which the concussion through him on his knees. About that time one of our best runners was laid out. We were just going into the woods ( or what had been a woods at one time, not a green leaf to be seen anywhere) when I

9. heard a Queer sort of zip-zip in the air and around my head, and around my feet, and all over. I soon found out they were machine gun bullets. Guns on our flanks, in front and I began to think in the rear, which proved to be true, for we were going so fast that some of the Germans were never seen by us at all, so just as soon as they got a chance, they opened up on us.

There were very few trees standing, most of them had been torn tottally down, but they made good hideing places for a sniper or maching gun. A number of pill boxes of Steel and Concrete scattered all thro ugh the woods, but our Artillery had done their bit, for it put the trenches, pill boxes, and the dug outs, if not very deep, on the bum. One of the first thing that made me wish I was back on the farm, was going along not looking at the ground, but ahead, to see if I could get a crack at one of those Bosch. But I came to some wire, and in jumping and climbing over, I looked down on the ground just where I was to step. There lay one of the biggest dutchman I ever saw, but he had been there quite a long time as there was nothing left but his bones and a few strings of clothes. His boots were still on his legs. I made one leap and kept going, but left me feeling Queer in the head, but soon got used to that, in fact too soon. We were held up by maching gun fire, and laying in a trench that not 5 or 6 hours before held germans, but now they had all pulled out for the Fatherland (those who could get out). They say a rabbit could not get thru through that barrage.

It was not long before our Automatics had cleared up the nest that was holding us up. We started forward again, down a trench, past dugouts that in the door of one, was five dead men (Baush). One was standing on his feet with his head touching the floor. One other stood

10. up in the corner, and three were lying down. We passed that and kep t on going up the trench. The Capt. was first, with Lt. Grace next, and the men in column. I saw them hesitate and then go on. When I got up to where they first stopped, I saw the reason, that in the trench, stretched out on his back was a big dutchman. He had been struck with a baynet in the brest, also a granade had hit him in the jaw, just about taking his head away. That sure made me sick. Blood was smeared all over the trench, on the sides and bottom, and in order to pass, one must step on the fellow some place, it seemed hard, but I can step on the suckers now if they are alive or dead. Some of our fellows were put out of the fight in the first, some were killed before we went very far, and the ones that were wounded didn't receive first aid for a long time.

It was just keep going on, perhaps stopping a few minutes to clear up a machine gun nest. The first day the artillery fire was not so bad. We had some tanks with us. In the afternoon, on entering a strip of woods, toward evening, we seen 6 germans coming out of a dugout that the tanks were firing on, two tried to run away, but we shot them both. Don't know if I hit them or not, for there were several of us shot at them. The other four coming toward us with their hands up, but the boys shot two of them as they were coming down the path. The other two finally reached us, the one was all shot up, but the other fellow was not wounded so bad. They were Prusian guards. Then as we reached the other side of the woods and came out in the open, there was a German stuck his head up about 100 yards ahead of us, also throwing up one arm and yelled Comerad with all his might. At that we sort of left our rifles down, and the devil opened a machine gun on us, getting quite a few. I stood close to the ditch by





11. the roadside, and believe me I was running my nose right in the bottom of the ditch. Well one of our tanks went out in the field to rout him but, but we were in clear view of the city of Mount Falcon, which sits on a hill. The tank only got about 50 yds from the edge of the woods, when a high explosive shot from the town making a direct hit, and caved the tank in. We also shot snipers out of the trees there in the woods, that had bark tied on them, so they looked like the wood. Unable to go any further, as it was getting dark, and them having such strong position. That night we slept in shell holes with the Bosch only a few hundred yds away. We had nothing to eat or drink since the night of the 25. Those out on post, but they stopped up and gave us a few grenades, in spite of the guard, also snuck in the woods and took one of their machine guns we had captured. We never knew it until next morning, and found they had snuck threw our lines. Our machine guns kept up a continuous fire all night, had they only knew that they had us like rats in a trap. A very sad thing happened at 12 o'clock. They were changing the guards, when the sentry challenged someone he saw in the dark. The person did not hear him and kept on coming. The man had one of the training automatics, and he pulled the trigger and the man fell, with cry of pain, two or three bullets in his chest. They went out and carried him in, the poor fellow only lived a short time. They took him out and put him in a shell hole, with a cross to mark his resting place. At one time, they gave the alarm that the Bosch was attacking. All men got ready, but it was a false alarm. I slept most of the night, for we were very tired.

Sept 27 Came out the trench about 4:30, started on our way again. They got a good

12. many of the boys, as the machine gun fire was very thick. We took our first town this morning, which lay in the valley named Nantillois. There were a few Germans left in the town, who put up their hands and hollered Komrad. I had a little slum at a german kitchen, also some tea and applebutter. I did not eat any of the bread, as it was very rotten like saw dust. Then we came to the town of Mount Falcon. It was on a high piece of land and it was quite a job to take it, but never the less we took it from them. Malloncourt was taken just before the first town mentioned without much trouble.