

To Officers and Men, E.T.D.

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THE HUN'S BOOBY TRAPS.

Detection by British army investigators of German "booby-traps" saved the lives of many an officer or man of the British armies during the period when the Germans were retreating from France. "I am convinced," says one officer, "that we nipped many of the Hun's favorite plans by capturing near Bray a little factory where he made his booby-traps. When we occupied it we learned much from the partly completed traps we found lying about the place.

"One of them was an iron plate. This the wily Hun dropped in a roadway so that it would likely be trod upon by soldier or horse of our advancing troops. The plate was in two parts, with a spring inside, and usually contained a detonator connecting with a heavy charge of explosive. When the weight of the foot was removed, the spring sprang into place and exploded the detonator, and the damage was done.

"These spring detonators were the Germans' specialty. They consisted of a tube containing a little spring with a hook at one end. Attached to the hook was a string or wire connecting with the explosive charge. Any arrangement by which the spring could be distended and then suddenly contracted served to jerk the string, and the charge was exploded.

"One night I received a call from our lieutenant-colonel who had spent the day directing movements from a recently captured German dugout. He told me he was nervous, and believed he was associating with a 'booby', and asked me to send him a squad of engineers to look it over. I went myself.

"The colonel sat in the dugout, about ten feet down, on a chair by a table. Directly in front of the chair was a petrol can and it was the can he feared. He had noticed it early in the morning when the dugout was first occupied, but had been so busy during the day he had had no time to examine it until evening. Then he found nothing, but he had a 'hunch' that it was a trap and wanted expert assistance.

"I dug a little trench around the can, but could find no wires, and then tapped it, but received no sound other than that which might come from any old empty can. There was nothing to do but

open it, and borrowing the colonel's can-opener I went at it as gingerly as I could.

"It was partly filled with about eight pounds of one of the most deadly powder explosives known to science. This I removed very carefully, and in the bottom of the can found the spring detonator. It had been fastened to the bottom of the can in such a way that if the can had been lifted from the floor of the dugout the charge would have exploded and the colonel and his party would have been blown to bits.

"The colonel paled a little when I showed him just what he had been associating with all day, and very fervently thanked himself for obeying his 'hunch' to let that can alone."

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