

A Tragedy

(Quartermaster-Sergeant and Company Sergeant-Major discovered walking along promenade closely immersed in discussing affairs of state).

C.S.M.—You see Quarter, if they bring up reinforcements from Vladimir Vholinsk and cut off the retreat from Bucacz Storovitsch front they will force the retreating army into the marshes round Kolopineskarvitch.

First Small Boy—(rushing forward) Please mister 'av yer any cigarette cards?

C.m.S.—No sonny I haven't, don't smoke them! As I was saying, Quarter, if they can bring up their artillery from the Sertchipela-Lucholodo and so disorganize General Blunpzerh's lines of commun—

Second Small Boy—Got any fag cards mister?

C.S.M.—No! No! I haven't. No!—er,—cut off General Blunzerh's lines of communication with Wetzizenski, then if they can bring cavalry through the Carpathians via Vldorosvernovitsch they will—

Third Small Boy—Any fag cards govenor?

C.M.S.—D—No! I ain't, darn you—that is via Vldorosvernovitch they will force Generals Phfunkovitch and Chopaboutabitsky to reorganize on the front Prysmelinyz-Seriptololsck-Polowernipq, thereby losing the fortified position of Jostipolinkx which—

Fourth Small Boy—Give us a fa—

C.S.M.—Gol darn your everlasting pestering little hide, etc., etc., etc.

(Extract from Routine Orders No. 3301K). C.S.M. _____ was this day sentenced to fourteen days Cold Spinal Douche, for wilfully, on the night of the Fifteenth, throwing a small boy over the East Cliff.

H.S.S.

The Communication Trench

It's a dark and stormy night! The rain comes down in torrents. A band of soldiers resembling pack mules and soaking wet are wending their weary way up to their favourite craters and shell holes.

"Hole H-O-L-E" The cry passes along, and just as you realize what it means you drop through the trench mat up to your waist in thin liquid mud. The man behind falls over you and packs you on the head with his rifle. After a scramble you struggle out and find that one of your gum boots is missing. You grope about for it and get the mud all over your face and hands, while your pack flops over your head and knocks your nose into the trench mat. At last you get the boot out and find it is half full of mud!

By this time the men behind are asking if you are looking for souvenirs, and say that if you don't move they'll give you a souvenir worth keeping! So you put on the boot and trudge forward.

You intend to make no more mistakes and keep your eye fixed on the trench mat all the time!

Thud! you see hundreds of stars and your head feels as if it is knocked off. When you recover you find that you have run into a piece of overhead cover, through trying to keep your eye on the trench mat. The result is that your head spins round and you keep running into the side of the trench.

The men behind murmur something about "Rum jars." But every thing, even communication trenches, comes to an end, and at last you emerge into the front line, and sink down into a mud hole to get a bit of rest. When someone shakes you by the shoulders and says, "You go on sentry duty tonight and there will be a rifle inspection in the morning." You crawl to your post and your mind is filled with things unutterable. You mutter between your teeth, "Gawd help any German I see tonight"!!!

SERGT. _____

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