

soon reached a point about two miles opposite Péronne. On the way, just as we were later to experience in proceeding to the British front, we were given many opportunities of judging of the herculean efforts, the marvellous efficiency of the French war machine, of the magnificent organisation behind the lines.

But on the roads the presence of war is everywhere and constantly in evidence, consisting in an almost continuous stream of horses and armed men, uninterrupted lines of motor trucks, grey with dust, busses, gun carriages and guns, waggons and lorries of all sorts loaded with ammunition and supplies, ambulances carrying the wounded, battalions of cavalry, infantry and artillery.

From an observatory, hidden in the Eagle Forest, and with the aid of binoculars, we got our first view, and a very good one, of the battle line opposite Péronne and Soissons; we heard the roar of the guns and saw the explosions of shells and shrapnel all along the line of trenches. We saw many German and French aeroplanes, scouting over the battlefield, and the sky covered with explosions of the shrapnel guns directed against them, some of the shells passing over our heads or uncomfortably close by. In fact, on several occasions, we were ordered to take prompt refuge in the dugouts nearby; one of those made in a huge quarry all cut out below the surface, which affords sleeping and living room for 600 men and is capable of sheltering 2,000. We visited several other very large dugouts made in similar quarries.

All along the actual battle line, in the immediate vicinity of the trenches, the evidences of the terrific and devastating work of the giant guns are numerous and conspicuous, farm houses and buildings are all in ruins or wholly wiped out, trees are torn, broken down or swept away and the soil horribly ploughed and upset. It is a matter for constant wonderment that women and children can find the sublime courage to carry on their farm work in such close proximity to the really immediate theatre of the war. We were told that it is impossible to keep them away from the zone of actual danger and that not even the death of not a few of them has been sufficient to frighten them back to their homes.

The pursuit of enemy scouting aeroplanes by the shrapnel guns makes a most beautiful and exciting spectacle. The days during our visit were beautifully clear and bright, the sky was of that deep blue which it often has in Canada. On several occasions we saw 5 or 6 scouting aeroplanes flying from five to seven thousand feet above our heads; guns from all directions kept up an incessant fire, the shrapnel exploded below and above the machines, all around them, and yet they got away in time and escaped. It is seldom that the flying machines are brought down by the shrapnel from the trenches; they have been destroyed almost together in aerial combats.

It was in close proximity to Péronne that I first saw the famous "75" French gun at real and earnest work, and I was allowed to fire two shots from it into the German trenches; but as these were separated from the French masked battery by a ridge I was not afforded the satisfaction, though I was permitted to entertain the hope, that the shots were well directed and had accomplished what was expected of them.

One of the gunners in this battery, a man over 50 years of age, pointed out with a field glass the ruins of a house among the wrecks of Péronne, and he explained that that was all that remained of his home,