

"dug ourselves in" and wrestled with some bully beef and hard tack. This finished we picked up our shovels and picks and started out. We were just about one hundred yards from our "dugout" and in a very exposed place, when they started the fire works. There was a sand bank there and we rushed for it. I dug a hole with my nose and hugged it tight. You would think the ten of us were frozen to the bank, we lay so close. A shell hit the bank immediately above my head and two of us were absolutely covered with sand and clay. There was a dirty, green, slimy pool immediately behind where we lay. A shell burst right in it and presto, we were all covered with green slime and pieces of frogs and everything. After about fifteen minutes the fire subsided and our guns started to go. It surely was the sweetest music to hear our shells whistling over there and making the Germans keep quiet.

"When it all stopped I shook myself and took a look around. My haversack was riddled and there was a great piece of shell imbedded in my tin of bully beef. My emergency ration of biscuits was all broken up into crumbs. A cartridge pouch was completely shot off my belt and not a shell in it exploded. Two of our boys were wounded. I had a piece of shrapnel in the fleshy part of my thigh. I got it out yesterday and am "right as paint" now.

"Just about this time I saw some of the finest examples of pluck that a person could see. One sergeant had a great piece torn out of his right arm. He calmly put his left hand into his pocket, pulled out a knife, opened it with his teeth, and slit his coat sleeve. Then took a field dressing out of his pocket and bandaged himself. When it was done he called the corporal of his troop and gave him charge. Another place there were two fellows carrying ammunition to the front trenches. The front one got wounded and said 'Say, mate, can you possibly carry the two boxes up? I'm wounded'. Just as he said it the other chap fell. He said, 'By Gosh, I copped it myself, Jack'. Then No. 1 said that the boys in front might be badly in need of it and that they would have to get it up anyway. So away they went; one with blood oozing out through his puttee and the other with his arm nearly shot off. These are only a couple of the thousands that happen every day. Americans are, and always have been, rather too ready to look down upon the Britisher as a good-for-nothing lady-like sissy, but if you only saw him as I did you would 'take off your hat' to him as the pluckiest and most manly fellow in the whole world. You should see them go and pick up a wounded comrade under shell fire. Perhaps I had better describe shell fire. First you hear it coming as a dull moan, then it gradually develops into a weird whistle, then a shriek and the earth rocks under you; you are covered with mud and earth and you are glad you are alive. Simultaneously with the bursting of a shell come the cries and moans of the wounded. When you are exposed to this for quite a while it gets rather nerve-racking. My left ear is singing yet.

"To continue my narrative, though, it was utterly impossible to work that afternoon, so we went into a dugout and rested, all dust. When dusk came we carried out the wounded, and another fellow and I went up to headquarters. An officer there took and gave us a fine hot supper. This finished, we marched right back to the trenches. It was midnight when we got there, and we worked till 6 p.m. the next evening, fortifying a communication trench. While we were here a party of Germans came along with bombs to try and throw at us. We fixed our bayonets and started to climb over the parapets. Just as soon as they saw the steel they ran as fast as their legs could take them. The day passed rather