

thought. It was all wrong from a standpoint of war—artillery war. Again his glasses travelled over the enemy territory with bloodthirsty intentness, searching, searching, searching. “Ah-h-h-h!” The flash of a shovel moving up and down with piston like regularity in the German support trenches caused the exclamation. With glasses riveted on the spot, he saw several more shovels come into action, the sun gleams catching the blades as they showed above the earth line—a working party of at least fifty. “Suspected sap,” he wrote on his trench map, rapidly worked out the range and ‘phoned the battery.

Ten rapid rounds were plumped upon the digging Huns. Pieces of board, corrugated iron and showers of rubble shot skywards above the smoke bursts of the high explosive. Slowly the smoke drifted away on the calm air. The shovels were not, nor was work resumed that day.

Ten rough, wooden crosses, barely showing, rewarded the F.O.O.’s swift scrutiny the next morning. The battery heard the wounded would probably bring the casualty list up to thirty—plus a wrecked saphead. “Not so bad,” modestly thought they, “for an opening shoot.” They might make something out of the place after all! A little later the F.O.O. was wiping his glasses and staring amazedly at the German trench graveyard. Up and down, up and down, catching the sun rays, worked a small army of shovels, seemingly winking contempt as they bobbed above the level. The battery got a hurry up call and smothered the “saphead” with twenty whirlwind rounds—bursts that filled the air with assorted trench debris and brought joy to the heart of the F.O.O. And the shovels were not, nor was work resumed that day.

Lines of care and creases of anger appeared upon the brow of the young gunner man when he focussed his glasses on the cemetery next morning. At least fifty rough wooden crosses were showing, but an even greater muster of shovels plied up and down with maddening, flashing regularity at the “saphead.” Down at the gun pits the men took the news as a personal affront and shoved the long thin shells rapidly into the breeches of the wicked little guns, that coughed spitefully