

the word is passed along to "stand down!" The usual sentries are kept at their post and the remainder file to the platoon officer's dug-out to take their "tot" of rum—about an egg-cup full. If there are no urgent fatigues the men snatch a little sleep, for a few hours later on, fatigue parties are warned off to fill sandbags, dig dugouts, repair trenches smashed in by enemy shells; dig drains, repair "bath matts" (flooring of trench), etc. The sanitary squad is an independant party and is responsible for the cleanliness of the trenches generally. As evening approaches, a ration party is told off by sections (four sections to a platoon, sixteen platoons to a battalion) to proceed to the ration dump to draw rations—bread, meat, butter, bacon, jam, cheese, etc. The mail is also brought up by the ration transport wagons from the "transport lines" in rear of the fire zone which is sometimes four or more miles away. As soon as it becomes dark enough, the ration party wend their way down the long communication trenches to the ration dump. The transport sergeant or the quartermaster sergeant calls out the names of the company, platoon, section, or headquarters, and the men receive their rations tied up in sandbags. One man carries two sandbags, one over each shoulder connected by a cord. In winter coke and charcoal is supplied for the dugouts which also arrive in sandbags, or as Tommy terms it a "gunny-sack." The mail is taken to headquarters and distributed to the various sections. The arrival of the mail is eagerly looked forward to, as a letter from home kindles new life in Tommy. Many pairs of eyes are directed on parcels when being opened, and a mutual distribution is made among the friends of the owner of the parcel. Words of comfort greet the unlucky boy who has not received word from home, and he hears news of the doings of his home town through other boys who have been favored with a letter. Newspapers are passed around and so the boys keep in touch with the outer world. The happy hour over, the boys file out of the dug-out to duty "on top," leaving their parcels and rations in the dugout. If the area is rat infested, and in most cases it is so, then in the morning when the troops go into their dugout there is a possibility of a raid by rats having taken place during the night and a considerable portion of the boy's larder is diminished. During the morning there is talk of a possible raid on a section of the enemy's lines and volunteers are called for to take part in it. Always more than the number respond and after careful selection the men chosen re-

tire to their dugouts to rest up for the offensive, (later a different method was adopted for raiding parties). As the hour for "over the top" approaches, the men's eagerness to "strafe the Hun" becomes acute. They assemble in a selected part of the trench and await the signal to go "over the top." A barrage on the enemy's trenches lifts and the boys, with bombs, rifle and bayonet rush swiftly across no man's land on to the enemy's first line trench. They are soon busy with bayonet and bomb. Men specially told off to look after dugouts, carry a Stokes' trench mortar bomb. The order to the boche is to surrender, if he hesitates long he is the recipient of the trench bomb, it is heard bumping down the steps of the deep dugout and after a few seconds pause there is a loud explosion and the hesitating boche is no more. Meanwhile the few live Huns on top are hustled back to the rear as prisoners to be afterwards interrogated as to identity, strength, number of their regiment, where from, how long they have been in the line, location of machine guns, trench mortars, etc., etc. After the raid is over the men retire to their own lines as quickly as possible in order to avoid retaliation by the enemy, also to escape their bombardment. Once safely in their own lines they are hospitably received and congratulated on their achievement. Rum is served to them and they retire to a well earned rest.

These raids may take place several times during a regiment's stay in the front line and are conducted at different times of the day or night. News of relief is welcomed, and the troops prepare for evacuation, the same preliminaries are gone through as when they entered the front line and "took over" from the other regiment. Everything ready and duties properly relieved, the order is given to move and the troops file down the muddy trenches to the communication trench which is nearly always in better shape than those of the front line. The relief is kept secret but in some cases the troops are subject to a strafe when going out and coming in, and invariably lose many men. Rain and mud is the curse of all troops but these are the least of Tommy's worries when going out to billets. Of course, many are the conjectures as to the nature of the billets and the village they are located in. After a long and miserable march, stiff and sore with their stay in the trenches and feeling dirty, they arrive at their rest quarters.

Orders are shouted out, and flash lamps like constellation of stars flicker in and out de-