

## ST. JOHN SOLDIER TELLS OF AIR RAID

Men Awaiting Medical Boards Were Hit

### A TRYING EXPERIENCE

Some Fifteen Bodies Taken Out; Soldiers Were Absolutely Followed Each Other and Dropped Bombs; Girl Drivers Brought up Ambulances

The following impressions and experiences of an air raid in France was written on July 26 by a St. John soldier:— It was about 11.45 p. m. when the warning was given and I hurriedly donned all my clothes before leaving the hut. We had been told to go to a certain dug-out if a raid occurred. We went and found the dug-out full and men crouched all round the entrance. We therefore decided to hug a sand-bag barrier. It sheltered us from shrapnel on one side, but we were entirely without protection if anything came down on our right.

No sooner were we in position than the first raider could be heard approaching in the distance, and our enemies put up a terrific barrage. He came straight on and passed directly overhead, luckily for us he dropped nothing then. Within two minutes he had reached his objective or else our barrage was too close. At all events he released five large bombs.

The explosions were severe and shook the camp. We realized he was dropping "big stuff." We crouched against the sandbags to escape the shrapnel which was coming down thicker than I had ever experienced before.

As soon as he had released his load he immediately made off with our searchlights and "Archie" in hot chase. We stood up and breathed easier and conversation sprang up along the line. We were not to rest for long and in about two minutes from the departure of the first, the second arrived.

We went through the same programme again, crouched down and hoped the falling shrapnel would miss us and that Fritz would not "kick out his tail board" until he had passed over our position.

There was absolutely no sign of fear and the men carried on a running conversation with mostly humorous topics. The older soldiers related cheerful tales of how they narrowly escaped death at such and such a place. The younger soldiers (fresh drafts from Belgium) sat tight and waited for whatever was in store. They paid no attention to the stories of the older soldiers.

This second Fritz dropped his load several hundred yards from us and only the shrapnel kept us hugging our barrier.

We again stood up for two or three minutes and then the third raider appeared.

This time he came much closer and the bursts of flame and falling debris warned us that we were uncomfortably close and in a line with the falling bombs.

We crouched even lower and each man must have realized that another minute would spell life or death. The conversation ceased, I hardly breathe, so acute was my hearing. I was listening for the whistle of the next one. It came, we heard the whistle and that meant we were alive when the bomb struck. It was behind and slightly to the left. We heard the crash of breaking glass and the twang of shrapnel rushing to imbed itself, where?

Luckily we were on the right side of the sand bags and so received nothing. This one now made off and again we breathed freely. We began to look round for a trench, because we now realized we were in for a systematic raid by relays. The planes were arriving at the rate of one every five minutes, which meant you had three minutes crouching and two minutes to stretch and breathe easier.

Before we could find a more suitable protection the fourth plane arrived and was immediately engaged by our "Archie." He was caught by the searchlights and the sky was literally plastered with bursting shrapnel. It was too hot for this fellow; he was forced to turn off before he reached his objective.

We watched him as he tried to out-manoeuvre our defences. He was unable, however, to elude our beams and he dropped his whole load and made off much faster because much lighter.

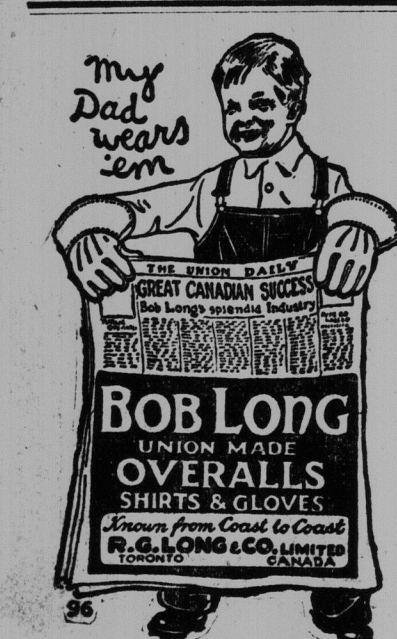
This load, dropped on our right and unprotected side, luckily they were too far away to harm us, but they at least showed us the folly of remaining any longer and trusting to luck.

We found a man who had an idea of where to find a trench and off we started on the double. We found a very poor one and debated as to whether we should stop there or go farther on. The fifth Hun arrived and settled our argument. We stopped.

We stretched out in the ditch and waited. This one made good progress and reached his apparent objective. He let go and then made off. We knew they were at least half a mile from us. We again started on the search and found a trench about four feet deep. We climbed down and awaited further events.

The sixth arrived on time, but was immediately caught by our "Archie."

My Dad says I am a hero.



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immediately caught and held by our searchlights. He was turned away and there he was directly overhead and in the lights. We immediately crouched and this time I thought we were really to get it. He invariably drops his load if unable to dodge our searchlights.

He attempted to dodge and passed a little ahead. Then, unable to lose our lights, he unloaded three large ones and made off. One hit directly in the centre of a depot of men awaiting medical boards. The two others lit right beside a large cinema and blew the sides in and roof off and buried the three men who ran the cinema. They were dug out alive and can be considered very lucky.

This was the last raider for that night. The alarm was blown at 11.45 and the all clear about 1 a. m.

At 2.30 I stood beside the hole in the centre of the medical depot. I watched them dig out several bodies. In all I saw fifteen dead bodies and several wounded. The ambulances were early on the scene and it was surprising to see the girl drivers, they backed up their cars and stood down while the wounded were loaded.

The courage of our English girls is wonderful and it was an example for coolness and quiet determination. It is not permissible to state the number of our casualties, but it was a very severe raid.

JURY DISAGREES.

In the case of Walter Pike, a soldier charged with breaking and entering, which was tried before His Honor Judge Armstrong in the county court yesterday afternoon, the jury could not agree as to a verdict and the defendant was remanded for a new trial. They brought in a recommendation that the prisoner be handed over to the military authorities.

Already allied airmen are heavily bombing the Moselle region around Metz and its outlying fortifications, having dropped many tons of bombs on the strategic railways leading from the great fortress, and it is not unlikely that without reason to expect that with apparent supremacy in the air Metz and the surrounding country henceforth is to be in check.

Meanwhile the manoeuvrings of the west front around Cambrai and St. Quentin should not be lost sight of by reason of the present American offensive. Here the British and French daily are enlarging their gains in the process of outflanking and capturing these two important towns, which are all but within their grasp. Farther to the north in Flanders, the British also are keeping up their encroachments in the region of La Bassée and Arras, where both of which places are imperilled.

## HAVE LEVELLED THE SALIENT

U. S. Forces Complete Promptly Initial Task Assigned to First Army—The War Summary

New York, Sept. 13.—The Associated Press tonight issued the following: The American First Army has carried out with the utmost despatch the initial task assigned to it.

This task was the leveling of the famous St. Mihiel salient in Lorraine, and it is a little more than twenty-four hours not alone had the work been accomplished, but General Pershing's men had all the important towns, villages and strategic positions in the sector within their hands and were standing on the banks of the Moselle River at Pagny, looking across the stream into German territory and the southern outer fortifications of Metz, the great German stronghold in Lorraine were only four miles distant.

Large numbers of Germans had been taken prisoner—more than 12,000 had been counted and others were still on their way back to the prisoner cages—any many guns and machine guns and tons upon tons of ammunition and other war stores were in American hands.

From Hattenville, situated in the foothills of the heights of the Meuse, on the north, across the salient eastward to Pagny, the Americans have closed the mouth of the big sack that extended southward to St. Mihiel, trapping within it by their rapid advance all the enemy forces who failed to take refuge in flight when the great bombardment, Thursday morning, heralded the approach of the offensive.

In addition, along the eastern side of the heights north of Hattenville the Americans have debouched from the hill region and are astride the railroad running from Commercy to Verdun. Likewise the Thiaucourt-Metz and Nancy-Metz railways are in American hands.

Beginning in the northwest and crossing the salient eastward Les Eparges, Hattenville, Pagny and Pagny and all the ground lying between them are in American hands. The town of Vignoulles, Thiaucourt, Punt-A-Mousson, and St. Mihiel are far in the rear of the present line.

Montz, the dominating height in the centre of the salient and from which much trouble had been expected, fell without fighting. Among the numerous prisoners taken were men from Austro-Hungarian and Italian ranks.

Although the operation of the Americans has been described as having "limited objectives," nevertheless cannot but have a more important bearing on the future of the war. From the straightened line, growing out of the obliteration of St. Mihiel salient the Americans now are in a splendid position to act with their brothers-in-arms on sectors eastward when the time is ripe for a strike into Germany direct. Also they now are aligned on territory from which it is possible to get behind both the Meuse and the Moselle River and thus make null the reported plans of the Germans to strike their front along the Meuse should they be unable to hold the Allies in the west in check.

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