

Sometimes I would go out to him or with him, and we would lie together silently watching and listening while the German star lights soared over our heads; and later when we returned to the trench it was always the same formula, 'Now, Skipper, you turn in 'till "Stand to!" I'm fresh as a daisy and everything is quiet,' and though I looked on him as a son, he almost played the father to me, always worrying because I would not sleep at night.

"One of his escapades he probably told you about, when he took his batman, Laxton, who could speak German, and in daylight waded down the Douve up to their necks in water, and when right under the German parapet started a conversation with the enemy to try and ascertain whether they were Saxons or Bavarians.

"It was always a bitter disappointment to Harold that he was not in the raid of November 16th, which was worked up while he was on leave. He came back and was in the front trench, but Col. Odum would not give him a place, reserving him for the next offensive.

"The last time we were under fire together was during the sharp night bombardment after we went back to the trenches on the 10th of December, when we were destroying the 'barricade' on the Messines Road which had been put up while we were away on our brigade rest.

"Shell fire at night in a flooded trench is a horrible thing and it brings out all that is best in a man. One night it was very bad, and though I had thinned out the garrison of the trench, the casualties were rather heavy. The first was one of the sentries on the extreme right. Harold was on his way to see if they were all right, when he heard one was wounded. He told me afterwards what his thoughts were as he bolted from traverse to traverse while the big black 5.9 shells were bursting overhead with a terrific noise, but he never faltered, and a little later I found him under a fallen tree-trunk, putting the finishing touches to a poor chap's bandaged head. While there, the word came that there were a number of men killed and wounded back near where we had come from, and away went Harold faster than I could follow him, and when I got to him he was toiling among the poor shattered wrecks of humanity, trying to wash the slimy mud from a poor fellow's shattered hands and arms. And yet, after it all, he would be quite bright and cheery, only solicitous that his 'skipper' should turn in for an hour or two.

"There is not anything more I can tell. I was not with the Battalion on the black night when he gave up his life for his men, but I saw these men when they stood at his graveside and heard their broken words as they shook hands with me again. Very few there were there, who would not have willingly have taken the place of that quiet form if they could have given him back to you, and this must be your chiefest solace—that you had a son that could so inspire strong men.

"It may be they will give him the V. C.; he deserved it well; but if they don't, you will always know that his memory will always be in the hearts of his men and brother officers, and this will inspire them with some of the courage he so abundantly possessed."