

"Tap."

BY GEO. A. DEPP, AUTHOR.

It was anything but a very dark and stormy night. The Brigade was in the line, with Headquarters in Fulamud Trench. The Signal Office was in the usual dismal, damp, and foul smelling 2x4 chamber of a deep dugout. The gang all had crusts on the top of the "bean" from "making contact" with the low ceiling.

The all night shift was on duty, the line-up being as follows:—Sapper Bigboob, supt. Sapt Shakurfone, the star push, holler and pull artist on the commutator. Sapper Sendsemfast was holding down the Divisional Sounder, with Sapper Receivesemslow, as his side-kick, on the "peanut roaster" to the Battalions.

It had been very quiet for the last couple of hours, and the boys were getting drowsy, and dreamily thinking of their favourite female, Mademoiselle Yvonne, at the old "Staggerin" estaminet, near the rest billets.

Suddenly the Supt. jumped up excitedly, and cried, "Listen, gang, what is that?" They all listened, amid complete silence, to an irregular, metallic tapping, which seemed to come from underneath the floor.

"I know what it is," ventured Bigboob, "its these Huns, tunnelling underneath. What shall we do?"

"You had better call Corpl Dolittle," suggested Shakurfone.

The Corporal showed up in due time, but promptly decided it was too big a job for him, and decided to call Sergt. Lynes.

Sergt. Lynes strode in a few minutes later, with his M.M. and bars glistening in the candle light. He decided, after a "Listen," that as the tapping came from underneath the office, it was not his affair, but up to Sergt. Hoffice.

Sergt. Hoffice reported, listened, and decided it couldn't be adjusted. So, after a conference with Lynes, decided to get the "old man" out of bed.

In a few minutes, the Signal Officer strode in, bringing with him a crimson glow, which, on second sight, developed into the Orderly Officer.

The Signaller Officer decided to leave things to the Orderly Officer, who stopped, looked, listened, and said, "Rawther extraordinary, doncher know, but it's a matter for the Intelligence Department."

Intelligence was called and breezed in, listened solemnly for a few seconds, and arrived at the conclusion the matter was "too deep" for his scouts, and sent for the "Beer Emma."

The "Beer Emma" promptly oozed in. The left end of his upper lip cover was beginning to curl, the result of the last two months' practice of twisting it scornfully. He listened carefully for about a minute, and said to his crimson hooded colleagues:

"This affair must be given the most careful consideration. We will have to wake up the Brigadier and 'Q' Branch, and get out an operation order."

"Q" Branch and the Brigadier were woke up. The Brigadier, on hearing the details, exclaimed, "I have been expecting something like this to happen, as the Bosches tunnelled this area pretty thoroughly before the advance, so carry on with the operation order."

In a few minutes the Orderly Room was astir. The operation order was soon completed, and everybody was in a bustle of preparation to carry it out.

Twenty minutes after Sapper Bigboob had heard the tapping, there issued out of the dugout into the trench, a small party of Orderly Roomites and Signallers, armed with rifles, and thanks to the efficient co-operation of "Q" Branch, picks and shovels were supplied.

They were placed in charge of the Signal and Gas Officer, under the direct supervision of the Brigadier and his staff.

After the party got into the trench without any casualties, despite the heavy shelling half a mile distant, the Signal Officer "got an idea," which he promptly passed on to the Orderly Officer, who, in turn, passed it on to the "Beer Emma" for consideration.

The "Beer Emma" considered, then consulted the Brigadier, who thought it was a good "idea," and issued instructions to "carry on."

The Signal Officer's idea was this: Next to Headquarters dugout was a dugout occupied by the Brigade Runners, otherwise known as the Secret Communication Section. Their sleeping chamber was in direct line with the Signal Office, but a few feet lower, so it would be a good place to "listen" and get a more definite location of the "Kaiser's Tunnelling Gang."

They cautiously proceeded down the steep and slippery steps. The tapping becoming more distinct now, the Signal Officer was patting himself on the back, also having visions of Buckingham Palace, the King pinning bright coloured ribbons on his manly chest, etc., for being the originator of the "idea."

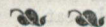
They proceeded down the passageway to the sleeping chamber, the tapping getting louder as they descended.

The Brigadier, who was in the lead, stopped for an instant, as he came to the gas-blanket covered door, then jerked it violently aside, and behold!

Calmly breaking up a trenchmat into firewood with a pick was Pte. Whizzbang Dodger, a runner, who had got back from a run about a half-hour ago, and decided to start a fire, and have some Oxo before retiring to the land of dreams and crumbs.

The Brigadier gazed in silence for a moment, then uttered the word, "Sold." Turning on his heel, he exclaimed, "Let's go and get a drink, then back to bed."

The next day there was an issue of "Croix de la Guerres" to the Brigade. So the staff decided, as the only O.R. of the Brigade staff, who wasn't mixed up in the past night's farce, was Quartermaster-Sergeant Rummstealer, he should be the recipient.



Editor gets into Trouble.

They tell lots of tales on the Editors, but this is a new one: The Editor of a Kansas paper went to attend a party given by one of his neighbours, where just a few weeks before, the home had been blessed with a new baby. The hostess met him at the door and, after the usual salutation, he asked after the baby's health. The lady was hard of hearing, had a bad cold, and, thinking he was asking about herself, answered that although she usually had one every winter, this was the worst one she ever had, it kept her awake at night a great deal, and at first confined her to her bed. Then, noticing that the Editor was acting very strangely, she said she could tell by his looks and actions that he was going to have one just like hers, and she asked him to come in out of the draft and sit down.



Seaford.

Some natives call it paradise, and others call it heaven, Although it rains five months a year, and pours the other seven.

They say that Eve and Adam used Seaford as a park. If that is so, how well I know why Noak built the Ark.