

A Night with the Battalion Scouts in "No Man's Land."

"Patrol of two men required at once!" raps out the Scout Officer. "Report immediately to O. C. 'D' Company."

The night is dark, and a drizzly rain is falling as we leave our comfortable dug-out, after having received our instructions. Buttoning up our jacket collars and pulling our balaclavas well down over our faces, we clamber on to the firing-step and await an opportune moment to get over the parapet. The time comes! The star shells have ceased their vigilant search for a moment, and the enemy's snipers are holding their fire.

Over we go. A low curse from Scout "A." He has forgotten to transfer a few precious francs from these d—d front trouser pockets to a more secure spot, and in sliding down the parapet the coins jingle merrily to mother earth, and are lost for ever in the mud.

Crouching low we make a bee-line for a small opening in our entanglements used purposely by patrols. On clearing our wire we take a small but powerful bomb from our pockets, and cocking our revolvers we commence our journey across "No Man's Land" to the German trenches.

Zip! Up goes a flare illuminating the land for a radius of several hundred yards. We crouch low, hugging the ground as a lover hugs his—nuff said! From experience we know that both sides will pour in a heavy fusillade immediately the star shell dies out; also that the enemy's sentries are anxiously straining their eyes in order to detect signs of Johnny Canuck (they call us "The Madmen") Patrols, so it behoves us to exercise considerable caution.

Taking advantage of the noise caused by rifle fire, we crawl forward for a short distance, our eyes and ears very much on the alert, for we know not the moment we may collide with

a hostile patrol. Down! We are at centre field, and can plainly see a figure a few yards in front. Crack! A faint rustle of grass and our fingers tighten on the triggers; our eyes are strained to the utmost, and we fear that the thumping of our hearts may give our position away.

We lie perfectly still for about fifteen minutes; but, except the occasional thud of a bullet close by, and the scream of a few ricochets, everything in our near vicinity is quiet. We move forward by inches to investigate our apparent opponent, only to find the dead and fast-decaying body of an unfortunate soldier who has fallen gloriously in a "charge" some time back. The rustling was caused by one of the many monster rats which frequent the trenches and the ground between the lines.

We are now within fifteen yards of the German parapet, but cannot advance further on account of a sniper being suspicious of our presence. Ping! A bullet digs its nose into the earth a few feet to our left. Hiss! Another clips the grass above our heads, and we start thinking of Home, Sweet Home, and—our past sins!

We are compelled to make our stay at this point somewhat longer than consistent with comfort, but at last we make a break, and back-pedal, by inches of course, until a convenient shell-hole is found. There a few twists are made, which would make an eel turn green with envy, and we are on our return trip. As before we await a lull in the firing, then scramble over the parapet to "safety."

We hand in our report, and stride back to our little dug-out in the West, wet through with slime and water, but happy in the thought of a dry bed and—a snort of RUM, yum! yum!!

J. M. M.

PERSONALS.

Major D. S. Mackay has just returned from a week's leave in England, being called there by the death of his father.

It is expected that Major R. M. McLeod will shortly issue invitations for a reception to be held in his new palatial dugout in the cellar of Hennesay's Château.

Major D. S. Mackay has temporarily joined the Brigade Staff.

Mr. Lorn Cameron has left the Battalion for a while to take charge of the Army Timber Limits in Northern France. It is reported he sleeps between linen and lace and dissipates each day by having a bath before breakfast.

Captain Heyman and Mr. Complin, who have been ill, are now convalescing at an interesting old château.

Major Rodgers has left the Battalion for a few weeks to superintend the installation of heating apparatus in all billets. He says he hopes to warm up the whole of the Second Division this winter.

Mr. Harold J. Riley has returned to duty with the Battalion after attending a three weeks' machine gun course near Army Headquarters.

Mr. Prawl-Pierce is now in Kent, convalescing from the recent wound he received at the front.