

« THEY NEVER BELIEVE ME. »

Freddie is our Scouter — cool, yet full of fire
Crawls in mud from dark to dawn — thrives on
German wire

(Also writes those fairy tales you see in the « Daily
Liar »).

Wonderful these stories are — one can scarcely tell
Which is truth or fiction — they are done so well
(Of course his gang of scouters back him up like
hell)

Went through STATION WOOD one day — heading
for the track
Snooping all around the place — never once looked
back

(Looking round for souvenirs which never he'll
get back).

Back came word from Freddie then — « Send up
troops toute suite ;

Not a sign around of Fritz — seems he's got cold
feet »

(Freddie's way of putting things is often rather
neat).

O'er the track went Freddie's gang — one eye peeled
for Huns

Didn't find a sign of one — but found some monster
guns

(Promptly sent back word — « Eight inch — and
of ammunition — tons. »

Sent a man to measure them — found them only
six !

Reported to Brigade as eight — in a rotten fix
(Freddie's stories sometimes, want a grain of salt
to mix)

Questioned Freddie closely ; how he came to get
His report inaccurate — said they'd shrunk from
wet

(Got the habit badly of exaggerating yet)

Again off went our hero — heading for a mound ;
British Plane ahead of him came crashing to the
ground.

(Seems when trouble's in the air, Freddie's always
round).

Pilot and Observer — still unhurt the two
Gazed around them helplessly — not knowing
what to do

(Men are apt to be that way after falling from the
blue)

From behind the mound came Huns — heading
for the plane

Freddie loosened up his limbs — got on the move
again

(He HAS been known to move sometimes — when
there's anything to gain.)

Reached the plane ahead of Fritz — grabbed a
Lewis gun

Promptly spread a shower of lead all around the
Hun

(Never smiled a little bit — but seemed to think
it fun).

Freddie is a proud man now — saved of airmen,
twain

Salvaged all the maps and guns from the damaged
plane

(Thinks it was quite easy — would do it all again).

Some day in the future, the good old 1st B. C.

Will be the proud owners of a bold V. C.

(Perhaps you don't believe us ? Well, we'll wait
and see).

Iddy-Umpty.

RED TAPE AND RAT TRAPS.

Once upon a time there was a clothing store, and
in order to prevent damage to the clothing the
store-keeper was authorized to keep a cat, and a
daily subsistence allowance of three pence per
diem was granted.

Profound peace reigned in Europe and a Staff
Officer devoted his leisure to a close enquiry into
the care of clothing. The result of his labours was
an announcement in the « Changes in War Mate-
rial » that the cat was declared obsolete and would
be replaced by « Traps, rat, wire, Mark 1. » and
that traps would be issued in the proportion of
one trap, rat, to every 10 suits of clothing.

The Officer — i/c Clothing Store having 573 suits
of clothing in stock, accordingly indented for 58
rat traps. This was objected to and only 57 rat
traps were allowed. The Officer i/c Clothing Store
respectfully pointed out that under these circum-
stances the remaining suits of clothing would be at
the mercy of the rats. After a prolonged correspon-
dence which involved several War Office depart-
ments the extra trap was sanctioned.

The War Office then issued a pamphlet with
detailed instructions on waylaying rats, and an
Army Form was introduced which was to be
rendered monthly in quadruplicate showing the
amount of rats caught and the proportion of rats
caught to traps set. Mice were to be entered in
the column of Remarks. In order that the Officer
i/c Clothing Store might not take credit for mice
as rats, the measurements of each rat caught was
to be entered on the form.

The Officer i/c Clothing Store then indented for
a carpenter's rule. He was met with the reply that
Rules, Carpenter's were only sanctioned for sta-
tions where a Carpenter's Shop was authorized.
This involved more lengthy correspondence and a
somewhat acrimonious passage of arms with the
Financial Branch of the War Office, but so jealous
is the War Office of the efficiency of the British
Army that the Carpenter's Shop was authorized
and the Officer i/c Clothing Store was thereby pro-
vided with the Carpenter's rule.

Some months had meanwhile had passed away
and the returns had been faithfully rendered as
ordered, but — in blank — Not a sign of a rat. The
War Office determined to see the matter through,
took expert advice on rat traps and a new trap,
rat, was devised which was published in « Chan-
ges in War Material » and was called « Traps, rat
galvanised, Mark 1 » and a system of drill was
elaborated which commenced with « Set-Traps »
and ended with « Ease-Springs » and a Warrant
Officer was sent down to expound it. A course of
instruction was to be started and those who attain-
ed a high standard of proficiency were to wear
crossed rat tails in gold on the left sleeve. But in
spite of all these provisions the returns were still
rendered blank.

The War Office was temporarily dismayed, but
recovering quickly its presence of mind, it sent
and enquired of the Officer i/c Clothing Store what
bait was being used. The Officer i/c Clothing
Store replied that as no allowance for bait had
been granted, no bait was being used.

An extraordinary meeting of the Army Council
was then assembled and it was decided to direct
the Officer i/c Clothing Store to strike the Traps,
rat, off his ledger. The cat was then reinstated with
a subsistence allowance of 2 1/2d per day instead
of 3d and orders were given for a reversion to the
former system.

The Staff Officer responsible for these brilliant
manœuvres then sank back in his chair with a
sigh of relief and a pardonable sense of satisfaction
for duty nobly performed, and so, incidentally, did
the Officer in charge of the Clothing Store.