

Soon after we moved off, our platoon officer had his leg shattered and had to fall out. As I passed him he called me over and handed me fifty francs—though at that moment I had little hope of ever spending it. He was a good scout and we all liked him. When I left him he was trying to stand on his damaged leg, all the while swearing lustily at the Boscche.

With the Sergeant in charge we moved on, following the barrage as closely as we dared. We found the German wire entanglements utterly demolished. The men, to escape our barrage, had taken refuge in deep dug-outs. Before they had time to get out and open fire, we were upon them. They had a choice, then, of coming out quickly and surrendering, or having bombs thrown into their dug-outs. As a rule they chose the former. One German officer, who thus surrendered was good enough to give me his revolver and field-glasses. Red Brady got his Iron Cross, wrist watch and the buttons off his tunic. Red was almost rude to him.

As we advanced, our losses from machine gun fire were very heavy. The boys of our section of bombers worked their way around one of these guns, and were able to put it out of business. These German machine gunners were brave men, and stuck to their guns to the last. It was here that Ted. S—— was killed.

A few minutes later I ceased to take an active part in the proceedings myself. What happened afterwards seems like a dream. I dimly remember lying in a muddy shell hole, cold, wet and altogether miserable. I remember listening to the "crumph" of each shell and wondering if the next would bear my name. A wounded Heinie crept in beside me only to die. I wrapped myself in his ground sheet, but still shivered with the cold. Dozens of prisoners passed me, doubling in their haste to get out of the fire zone. Finally one came close to my retreat. I called out, and he came over and bound up my wounds. Using the ground sheet for a stretcher he and three companions carried me back to a dressing station, and I saw no more of them.

I have only dim recollections of what happened afterwards, but I know I was fearfully cold. Apart from that, I seem to have lived a whole life in which chloroform, sickening awakenings, injections for tetanus, questions regarding my religion and next of kin, and agonizing rides in rough ambulances were strangely intermingled. Sometime when my brain is clearer and my hand steadier, I will write you a letter describing "France as seen from a stretcher." In the meantime, I am trying to forget. Your affectionate brother, DUNC.

P. S.—This hospital is surely a home from home. I wish I could stay in this cot for "the duration." What a luxury it is to have a pillow to put one's head on.—D.