

Gunner Depew

By
Albert N. Depew
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Ex-Gunner and Chief Petty Officer, U.S. Navy
Member of the Foreign Legion of France
Captain Gun Turret, French Battleship Cassard
Winner of the Croix de Guerre

DEPEW GOES "OVER THE TOP" AND GETS HIS FIRST GERMAN IN BAYONET FIGHT.

Synopsis.—Albert N. Depew, author of the story, tells of his service in the United States navy, during which he attained the rank of chief petty officer, first-class gunner. The world war starts soon after he receives his honorable discharge from the navy; and he leaves for France with a determination to enlist. He joins the Foreign Legion and is assigned to the dreadnaught Cassard, where his marksmanship wins him high honors. Later he is transferred to the last forces in the trench at the Flanders front. He has his first experience in a front line trench at Dixmude. He witnesses a new vengeance when Germans hide behind Belgian women and children.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

The lieutenant came back with the stretcher bearers and he asked one of them, so the boy could not hear him, if the boy would live.

The stretcher bearer said: "I don't think so. One through his chest and right leg broken."

The boy had kept quiet for a while, but all of a sudden he yelled, "Give me a cigarette!" I handed him a cigarette but he said: "I had found in the dugout. We were all out of cigarettes. So they lit it for him and he kept quiet. As soon as they could they got around the corner and the boy was dead. I guess he had been a communication trench to a field hospital. The lieutenant and I walked a little way with him and he began to thank us, and he told the lieutenant that he had been a father and a mother to me."

And the lieutenant said to him: "You have done well, old boy. You have done more than your share."

When they started into the communication trench the boy began to scream again. And the lieutenant acted like a wild man. He took out his cigarette case, but there were no cigarettes in it, and then he swore and put it back again. But in a few minutes he had the case out again and was swearing worse than ever and talking to himself.

"The boy isn't dying like a gentleman," he said. "Why couldn't he keep quiet? I do not think he meant it. He was all nervous and excited and kept talking out his cigarette case and putting it back again."

The other officer had gone on to inspect the trenches when the boy rolled into the trench and a police came to tell us that the officer had been killed. We walked back to where I had been and there was the officer. If I had been there I would have got it too, I guess. He was an awful mess. His veins were sticking out of his neck and one side of him was blown off. Also, his foot was wounded. That is what shrapnel does to you. As I crawled past him I happened to see his foot and he cursed me all over the place. But when I tried to say I was sorry I could not, for then he apologized and died a moment later.

There was a silver cigarette case sticking out of the rug where his side had been blown away and the lieutenant crossed himself and reached in and took out the case. But when he pried open the case he found that it had been bent and cracked and all the cigarettes were soaked with blood. He swore worse than ever, then, and threw his own case away, putting the other officer's case in his pocket.

At this point our own artillery began shelling and we received the order to stand to with fixed bayonets. When we got the order to advance some of the men were sick and the whole bunch after them, and believe me, I was as pale as a sheet, just scared to death. I think every man is when he sees over for the first time, every time for every man. But I was glad we were going to get some action, because it is hard to sit around in a trench under fire and have nothing to do. I had all I could do to hold my life.

We ran across No Man's Land. I cannot remember much about it. But when we got to the German trench I fell on top of a young fellow, and my bayonet went right through his neck. It was a crime to get him, at that. He was as delicate as a pencil.

When I got back to our trenches after my first charge I could not sleep for a long time afterward, for remembering what that fellow looked like and how my bayonet slipped into him and how he screamed when he fell. He had his legs and his neck sticking under him after he got it. I thought about it a lot and it got to be almost a habit that whenever I was going to sleep I would think about him and then all hope of sleeping was gone.

Our company took a German trench that time and along with another company four hundred prisoners. We had to retire because the men on our sides did not get through and we were being flanked. But we lost a lot of men doing it.

When we returned to our trenches our outfit was simply all in and we were lying around in the front line, like a bunch of old rats in a narrow alley. None of us showed any signs of life except a working party that was digging with picks and shovels at some bodies that had been frozen into the mud of the trench.

I used to think all the Germans were big and fat and strong, and, of course, some of the grenadier regiments are, but lots of the Boches I saw were little and weak like this fellow I got in my first charge.

It was a good piece of work to take the prisoners and a novelty for me to look them in the face—the fellows I had been fighting. Because, when you look a Hun in the eye, you can see that he is a fellow. Even if you are their prisoner you can tell that the Huns are yellow.

Maybe you have heard pigs being butchered. It sounded like that when we got to them. When they attacked us they thought to beat the band. I guess they thought they could scare us. But you cannot scare machine guns nor the foreign legion either. So when they could not scare us they were up against it and had to fight. I will admit, though, that the first time Fritz came over and began yelling I thought the whole German army was after me, and that Kaiser Bill was playing the drum. And how they hate a bayonet! They would much rather sit in a ditch and pot you.

I admit I am not crazy about bayonet fighting myself, as a general proposition, but I will say that there have been times when I was serving a gun behind the front lines when I wished for a rifle and a bayonet in my hands and a chance at Fritz man to man.

It was in this charge that our chaplain was put out of commission. As we were lined up, waiting to climb on to the fire step and then over the parapet, this chaplain came down the line speaking to each man as he went. He would not say much, but just a few words, and then make the sign of the cross. He was in a black cassock. He was just one man from me as we got the word and stood up on the fire step. He was not armed with a gun, but I will say that he was found on the step and stuck his head over the parapet and got it square, landing right beside me. I thought he was killed, but when we got back we found he was only wounded. The men who saw it were over the parapet before the order was given and then the whole bunch after them, because they, too, thought he was killed and figured he would not say much, but just a few words, and then make the sign of the cross. He was in a black cassock. He was just one man from me as we got the word and stood up on the fire step.

While half of us were on the firing line throughout the day or night the other half would be in the dugouts or sitting around in the bottom of the trench, playing little games, or mending.

Our first line was just on the outskirts of the town, in trenches that had been won and lost by both sides many times. Our second line was in the streets and the third line was almost at the south end of the town. The Huns were hard at it, shelling the battered remains of Dixmude, and to the right, stretcher bearers were working in lines so close that they looked like two parades passing each other. But the bearers from the company near me had not returned from the emergency dressing station and the wounded were piling up, waiting for them.

A company of the 2nd Legion Etrangere had just come up to take their stations in the crater, under the parapet of Dixmude. I shall landed among them just before they entered the crater and sent almost a whole squad west, besides wounding several others.

Almost before they occupied their positions the Huns were laid and reached back to us, and the order came for us to remain where we were until further orders.

Then we got the complete orders. We were to make no noise but were all to be ready in ten minutes. We put on goggles and respirators. In ten minutes the bombers were to leave the trenches. Three minutes were to explode and then there were to take and hold a certain portion of the enemy trenches not far off. We were all ready to start up the ladders when they moved Nig's section over to our heavy.

If a man was slightly wounded down would come the rifles to order arms, and some police was sent to shoot. "Right this way, one franc!" It was standing close to me that I saw a Swis and he was always playing a joke on somebody or imitating some one of us or making faces.

We were all asleep when this Swiss "went west," as the Linneys say, and

ing clothes or sleeping or cooking or doing a thousand and one things. The men were always in good humor at such times and it seemed to me even more so when the enemy fire was heavy.

Stuck His Head Over the Parapet and Got It Square.

Depew has an exciting experience in a Zeppelin raid, as told in next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

of the Legion charged with rifle and bayonet like their men.

Then—Boom! Stan! Bang!—and the mines went off. "Allies!" and then the parapet was filled with bayonets and men scrambling and crawling and falling and getting up again. The smoke drifted back on us, and then our own machine guns began ahead of us.

Up toward the front the bombers were fishing in their bags and throwing, just like boys after a rat along the docks. The black smoke from the "Jack Johnsons" rolled over us and probably there was gas, too, but you could not tell.

The front lines had taken their trenches and gone on and you could see them, when you stood on a parapet, running about like hounds through the enemy communication trenches, bombing out dugouts, disarming prisoners—very scary-looking in their masks and goggles. The wounded were coming back slowly. Then we got busy with our work in the dugouts and communication trenches and fire boys, with bayonets and bombs, digging the Boches out and sending them west. And every once in a while a Fritz on one side would step out and yell "Kamerad," while, like as not, on the other side, his pal would not put up with a revolver when you started to pick him up, thinking he was wounded. Then we stood aside at the entrance to a dugout and some Boches came out in single file, shouting "Kamerad!"

It was the corporal of our squad that got up about that time, but he was too late, because one of the Boches got to the Swiss with his bayonet. He did not have time to withdraw before the corporal stuck him. The other German made a pass at the corporal, but he was too late. The corporal beat him to it and felled him with a terrific blow from his rifle butt. The Huns were pretty thick around us, but there was another fellow and myself came up. A Boche swung his rifle at the corporal and when he dodged it the Boche almost got me. The swing took him off his feet and then the corporal did as pretty a bit of work as I ever saw. He jumped for the Boche, who had fallen, landed on his face with both feet and gave it to the next one with his bayonet and all at the same time. He was the quickest man I ever saw.

There were a couple of well-known savate men in the next company and I saw one of them get over his bit's butt. He was just a foot and a half, but there was some force in that kick. He must have driven the German's chin clear through the back of his neck.

We thought it was pretty tough luck to lose both the chaplain and the village with in the same charge, along with half of our officers, and then have to give up the trench. Every man got a good look at the hell when we took it.

CHAPTER VII.

Stepping the Huns at Dixmude.

I was standing in a communication trench that connected one of our front-line trenches with a crater caused by the explosion of a mine. All around us, climbing around, digging, hammering, shifting plants, moving sandbags up and down, bringing up new timbers, communicating, machine gun, trench mortars—all the things that make an army look like a general store on legs.

The noise of the guns was just deafening. Our own shells put down enemy heads, but close were the enemy trenches, and the explosions were so near and so violent that when you rested your rifle butt on something solid, like a rock, you could feel it shake and hum every time a shell landed.

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Get Wise.

Vanderhook Herald—If you feel that the whole world is against you, get in line; the world may be right about it.

Ambitious Young Men AND WOMEN

will find our business, Shorthand and Secretarial Training a stepping stone to congenial, well-paid employment and ultimate business success.

It would pay you to investigate the demand and the opportunity for competent office men and women.

We are receiving more requests from business men for stenographers, typists and bookkeepers than it is possible for us to supply. Salaries paid are good. Chances for advancement are excellent.

The Business Institute
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Largest, best equipped business school in Michigan.

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What They Left Behind.

We know of a lot of men who didn't leave much behind them in the way of actual cash accumulated but they did leave families rich in the memories of the happiness they had while they were alive.

Discovers Ice Cream Soda.

The honor of discovering ice-cream soda is generally given to Robert M. Green, who served the delicacy to the semi-annual celebration of Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, in the summer of 1874, and advertised it at that time as something absolutely new.

Would Puzzle Sorcerer.

Were Soem to come among us now he would probably want to know why Mexican poodles have no hair, Manx cats no tails, and peddlers no peace.

That's the Question.

Mr. Oldboy—"Marry me as I could die happy." Miss Bright—"Yes, you could—but would you?"

Women Soldiers in China.

China had women soldiers long before they were known in Russia. During the Yung rebellion, 1850, women as well as men served in the ranks. In Nanjing, in 1853, an army of 500,000 women was recruited. They were divided into brigades of 10,000 each and were commanded by women officers.

Explained.

Willis—"What caused the row between Bump and his wife?" Gill—"They went out to a theater last night. Bump hired a taxi to take them home. When the driver asked him where to, Bump said, 'Home,' and the driver said, 'Which one?'" Judge.

World Puzzle Sorcerer.

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Ornamental Trees.

As ornamental trees the Japanese and Chinese potted trees are entitled to high rank. When the trees are in full leaf they are handsome without other adornment. The trees loaded with orange and orange-red fruits are among the most striking objects in the garden. All thrive in California, and not elsewhere except in some southern states.

The Hardest Palm.

The hardest palm at all climates is California's Trachycarpus exelans, known as the windmill palm. Not alone is it hardy in withstanding low temperatures, but it is tough and will endure rough treatment.

Carbons in Arc Lamps.

A group of European electricians decided, after experimenting, that better results were obtainable by placing the carbons in arc lamps horizontally and one slightly above the other.

Under Many Influences.

Our judgments are so liable to be influenced by many considerations, which almost without our knowing it, are unfair, that it is necessary to keep a guard upon them.—Charles Dickens

Method.

"How did you get the reputation of being so wise?" "I talk with a man till I discover something he doesn't know anything about. Then I pretend to explain it to him."—Washington Star.

Sight Not to Be Forgotten.

When one is fortunate enough to see a line of swans etched upon the sky near sunset, a mile or more high, as has been my luck but twice in my life, one has seen something he will not soon forget.—John Burroughs, in the Atlantic.

Encouraging Fact.

I know of no more encouraging fact than the magnificent ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to plant a particular picture or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful, but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do.—Thornton.