

# The **AMERICAN** LEGION *Weekly*

November 11, 1921: p. 9

## When The War Went West

Where Were You?

### A Kiss for Every Yank



**I** WAS in England, in B. H. 37, recovering from wounds received in Belgium with the 30th Division, 119th Infantry. It was eleven a. m. I was waiting in line for my dinner and all of

a sudden the whistles started and the nurses began running outside. In five minutes every soul, wounded or not, was out in the street and the buddies with crutches, about half of the boys, threw their crutches away, and I never saw a happier bunch in my life. I went to London with two of my buddies, Maxwell and Gardner, and I know I never will have such a good time again. The English people were just wild. They were kissing every Yank they saw and parading the streets by the hundred thousand.—**WILLIAM KLABUNDER, 484 Collins st., St. Paul, Minn.**

### Telling the World



**I** WAS an ensign in the Naval Reserve. My commission was new enough so my gold braid shone prettily. My dignity was positively kaiserliche. Having been as-

signed to a new ship, I was granted a five-day furlough, which I spent in Springfield, Mass. Early Monday morning I took a train back to Boston.

As the train slowed down at Worcester, I noted a huge bonfire in the square near the railroad station. A second lieutenant from Camp Devens, with whom I was sharing a seat in the smoker, suggested that Worcester might be lynching some Ayer profiteers.

Just then two sailors boarded the train. They reeled down the aisle, smelling atrociously of alcohol. Opposite my looney friend and me they stopped, peering at us a moment. Then, lifting a hand to make a solemnly derisive gesture, one of them said contemptuously: "Haw, haw for youse guys, de war's over!"—**CHESTER WIL-LARD, Boston, Mass.**

## When the War Went West Across the Line



**W**HAT was I doing on November 11, 1918? How did I learn that the war was over? Did I think it was "just another of those rumors"? What finally convinced

me that the *guerre* was really *fini*? What was the scene photographed on my memory in that instant?

I was lying on my back in Lazaret II Kriegsgefangenenlager, Beyruth, Bayern, Deutschland, and I didn't know the *krieg* was *fertig* until nearly a month later, when I was removed to Rastatt. But I suspected that the show was over mighty soon after the Armistice was signed. The Jerry guards and hospital attendants had suddenly stopped slapping my face as preliminary to carrying me to the hospital operating room for a dressing. I was finally convinced when I got to Rastatt and the other American prisoners of war were ragging their guards and going A. W. O. L.—and coming back politely tight.

The scene photographed on my memory was the sight of a loved comrade who lay on the cot next to mine and who knew he had to go west but wanted to live until he could die on decent soil. He died November 9th.—J. L. S., *Butler, Pa.*

## "Court Is Adjourned"



**I**T seems a long time ago, but I remember quite well. I was in Dijon, France. One night, about a week before, one of the M. P.'s fired at one of the sergeants of B. H. 17, and I

was so close I thought my time had come, and about this time some guy with brass bars on top of his shoulders took my family history and said I'd be called on as a witness. So I was ordered to report at ten a. m., November 11, 1918, which I did, along with several others. The trial was evidently late getting started and I, of course, was wondering if it was possible for the war to end in less than an hour, when all of a sudden I heard a noise that was deafening and I went over to the window and saw the little French school children and men and women racing down the street, yelling "*guerre fini, guerre fini!*" And while this was going on I was thinking of mother, home and everything, when someone said, "This is no time for a court-martial, get out o' here." I got out tootsweet.—H. D. J., *Erwin, Tenn.*

## On the Quarterdeck

**E**IGHT hours out from New York City on November 11, 1918, and the *U. S. S. Virginia*, was making all possible speed to make port before dark. I was a member of the seamen's guard aboard her and being

## When the War Went West

off watch was in our compartment. It was located farthest aft on the port side of the gun deck and as that was near the quarterdeck we sometimes heard the orders passed from the Officer of the Deck to his boatswain's mate on watch.

Several of us heard the order of "All hands lay aft on the quarterdeck." We soon got there and after it was quiet we heard our skipper read an official Alnav (all navy) that the fighting had ceased. I suppose the scenes of home and friends were thought of by more than one. We were doing convoy duty and, as we were assured by our captain that it was true this time, we knew we would not have to take any more transports over there.

We anchored up the Hudson at about eight bells and three-section liberty was given. As I was among those to go ashore I spent the balance of the night in New York and Philadelphia and it was "One Wonderful Night."—**GEORGE C. FLEMING**, *Oscar M. Hykes Post, Shippensburg, Pa.*

## Twenty-nine to Go



**A**T 10:30 o'clock on the morning of November 11, 1918, I was sitting, resigned to my fate, in a shell-hole on the edge of the Bois Frehaut, just east of the Moselle

river and a short distance north of Pont-à-Mousson. Bois Frehaut was one of the strong outlying defence centers of Metz. We had started penetrating this highly-organized and formidable position at 7 a. m. on the day before, and at the end of three and a half hours had succeeded in establishing our advanced line along its northern border. Counter attacks, flanking movements, heavy and continuous bombardment had failed to dislodge my intrepid colored fighters (I was commanding the Second Battalion, 365th Infantry) and for 24 hours the above mentioned shell-hole had been my P. C. Our ammunition was almost gone, communication with the rear next to impossible, wood saturated with gas, veritable tornado of shells, sides of headquarters blown in. A most discouraging predicament. Death *certain*. . . . Arrived runner: time, 10:31 a. m. I read, "An armistice will be effective at 11 a. m.," etc., etc. I sent out the word, then looked steadily at my watch. Artillery fire increasingly heavy. Hard luck to be knocked off *then*. A most interesting and excruciating half hour.—**WARNER A. ROSS**, *Indiana Post, Lafayette, Ind.*

## Who Stopped the Mill?

**F**ROM the cloudless sky a mellow autumn sun flooded the plain of the Landes. It was three o'clock on November 11th, and I was at my usual duty of measuring stacks of cord-

## When the War Went West

wood in the middle of a large clearing in the endless pine forest where our company was engaged in producing forest products for the A. E. F.

Suddenly from the nearby village the church bell rang out, followed by the boom of a cannon, violent shrieks from the dinky locomotive on our lumber railroad, and the whistle of our sawmill. Surely the armistice was signed, for we were expecting that, but, no, it couldn't be, for the zing of the saw as it devoured log after log continued to sound from the mill.

Our captain, not taking the responsibility of stopping work, telephoned for instructions but, meanwhile, although the war was over, the night shift was to work as usual. However, someone removed the main nut from the saw, stopping the mill. So the whole company put on as large a celebration as the limited resources of the village permitted while the home thoughts of the last fourteen months redoubled in intensity. — CLARENCE HILL BURRAGE, formerly 34th Co. 20th Engrs (Forest), Burley (Ida.) Post.

## “Gott Sei Dank”

**W**HEN the German buglers from the units that held the hills across a brook and swamp from us, began to play their version of “Cease firing” or “Home, Sweet Home,” I was at last assured that there was a good chance to see the Statue of Liberty again. We heard the first strain far to our left, then unit after unit took it up increasing in plainness until our own particular Fritz had taken a blow at it and then the tune went on until it faded out in the distance. I am sure I will never hear music that will sound any better, at least until I get up to hear Gabriel blow his horn.

Then a German officer came over the little foot bridge that crossed the marsh and brook, to make sure from our officers that we really understood. As he started back he turned to a group of men standing near and said “Fini la guerre. Gott sei dank.” We were ready to acquiesce in both his French and his German.

That night we moved a little way back in the woods from the edge of which we had looked across at the Germans in the morning, momentarily expecting the order to attack. There we built campfires and pitched our pup-tents within a hundred yards of the front line. Late into the night we watched the Germans celebrate with all the Very lights and flashes they could still muster.—W. H. BANFILL, formerly 127th Infantry, Billings, Mont.

## 11—11—11

**I** HEARD the news of armistice  
At Barracks Soixante-six,  
Headquarters of the S. O. S.,  
Tours, Indre-et-Loire. Yes,  
I was an American girl  
In France.

I saw  
A khaki snake-dance.

OldMagazineArticles.com

## When the War Went West

A merry-go-round French dance,  
Torches glowing,  
Champagne flowing,  
Flags flying,  
Old women crying,  
Little children laughing,  
And kissing, kissing!  
And joy in sorrow—la belle France.

I heard  
"Fini la guerre!"  
"Hail, hail, the gang's all here!"  
"Madelon! Madelon! Madelon!"  
"Marchons, marchons!"  
French voices singing,  
Cathedral bells ringing,  
And martial music flinging  
The triumph cry of France,

I saw! I heard! I was there!  
I did not doubt  
The "fini" of "la guerre."

—E. C. W., formerly of Q.M.C.,  
A. E. F.

## How a Mother Felt

**I**N your October number you ask the question, "What was the scene photographed when you realized the war was over?" I heard the bells ringing, the whistles blowing. I



had retired but was not asleep. I jumped up out of my warm bed, ran out onto the frost-covered sidewalk and screamed, "The war is over! My boy is coming home!" Then a kindly neighbor stuck his head out of the window and said, "Mrs. Capron, go in the house and get some clothes on or you won't live until he gets here." I saw my boy's smiling face just as he smiled when he kissed me good-bye, for I knew he was thinking of me, too. Then I ran in, threw myself on my knees and prayed and cried as never before. I had tried to be brave, but now the tension was broken and I went downtown, everyone hugging me and crying, "Willie will come home now. We are so happy for you." All over the land each mother felt the same.—MRS. J. C. CAPRON, 1711 Collins st., Wichita Falls, Tex.

## Just Another Day

**O**N that snappy, frosty morning of November 11, 1918, there were many rumors afloat that at eleven o'clock all fighting would cease, despite the fact that the Germans continued to drop "bursts and duds" in and around the little village of Stenay, and most of the discussion was of the things that would happen if the war really did come to a definite fini. On the appointed hour, however, all became silent.

A band in the village was making preparations to celebrate the occasion shortly afterward, but one of our Regular Army colonels heard of the plan, and immediately called the boys together and informed them that even though the Boche did show signs of

## When the War Went West

weakening, there was to be no swapping of cigarettes with them, and that we were there to fight—not to celebrate. There was no music that day.

So with most of the boys it was "just another day" with a little increased anxiety as to our destination. However, that night as little lights began to appear and the quietness of night settled down upon us, it gave one a feeling of loneliness; the kind of a feeling one has after being used to the hum and bustle of the city and then suddenly finds himself in some secluded little hamlet where all is quiet and still. The lights and the quietness of it all impressed upon our minds more than anything else the fact that the war was really over.—PIERSON P. CARPENTER, *ex-Sgt.*, 89th Division, Kansas City, Mo.

## The News in Flanders

**T**HE scene is laid in Belgium within two kilos of the onetime busy town of Audenarde. An isolated battery of the 108th Field Artillery is preparing to ease a few six-inch favors over into Hunland. Cannoneers are standing to, ammunition and telephone men gazing ahead toward the lines of the retreating enemy. The executive officer glances at his watch—a few minutes past 9 a.m., November 11, 1918.

The front is strangely quiet, silence is broken at lengthy intervals by the rat-tat of maxims or the solitary bark of some distant gun. A fog is slowly rising from the Flemish landscape. The German lines are plainly seen ahead. Several hours pass with no inkling of the impending joy. The rigid censorship of the British high command excluded all rumors. Two divisions of American infantry, the 37th and 91st, together with the 53rd Field Artillery Brigade are utterly unconscious of the grand and glorious news, until the French in the area bubble over with joy and vin rouge and let the dear old cat out.

The still dazed soldats are lined up and the official order is read by a captain whose voice shakes with emotion. "Dismissed!" Not a man moved for just an instant, then, oh, man! Somebody even kissed the top kicker. A major dashes out of his dugout blazing away with two automatics turned skyward. A frenzied Frenchman tries to kick the head of a wine barrel in with his beezzer! Half wild Australians climbed trees and were swinging to and fro at their very tips. Happy Yanks everywhere. Rockets at night, millions of 'em. Oodles of joy and happiness. Belgians devoutly kneeling in the fields giving thanks to Him who had delivered them. Here words fail. Those vivid scenes will live in the memory of the A. E. F. as long as a single member breathes.—JOHN H. GRANT, *ex-Cpl. Btry. E*, 108th F. A., Oil City, Pa.

## "Pick Up Your Cards!"

**R**EMEMBER the old la—uh! that is, the Army rumors of the customary origin. Well, our outfit, Hq. Co., 312th F. A., 79th Division, located at La Courtine, Creuse, at the

OldMagazineArticles.com

## When the War Went West

weakening, there was to be no swapping of cigarettes with them, and that we were there to fight—not to celebrate. There was no music that day.

So with most of the boys it was "just another day" with a little increased anxiety as to our destination. However, that night as little lights began to appear and the quietness of night settled down upon us, it gave one a feeling of loneliness; the kind of a feeling one has after being used to the hum and bustle of the city and then suddenly finds himself in some secluded little hamlet where all is quiet and still. The lights and the quietness of it all impressed upon our minds more than anything else the fact that the war was really over.—PIERSON P. CARPENTER, *ex-Sgt.*, 89th Division, Kansas City, Mo.

## The News in Flanders

**T**HE scene is laid in Belgium within two kilos of the onetime busy town of Audenarde. An isolated battery of the 108th Field Artillery is preparing to ease a few six-inch favors over into Hunland. Cannoneers are standing to, ammunition and telephone men gazing ahead toward the lines of the retreating enemy. The executive officer glances at his watch—a few minutes past 9 a.m., November 11, 1918.

The front is strangely quiet, silence is broken at lengthy intervals by the rat-tat of maxims or the solitary bark of some distant gun. A fog is slowly rising from the Flemish landscape. The German lines are plainly seen ahead. Several hours pass with no inkling of the impending joy. The rigid censorship of the British high command excluded all rumors. Two divisions of American infantry, the 37th and 91st, together with the 53rd Field Artillery Brigade are utterly unconscious of the grand and glorious news, until the French in the area bubble over with joy and vin rouge and let the dear old cat out.

The still dazed soldats are lined up and the official order is read by a captain whose voice shakes with emotion. "Dismissed!" Not a man moved for just an instant, then, oh, man! Somebody even kissed the top kicker. A major dashes out of his dugout blazing away with two automatics turned skyward. A frenzied Frenchman tries to kick the head of a wine barrel in with his beezzer! Half wild Australians climbed trees and were swinging to and fro at their very tips. Happy Yanks everywhere. Rockets at night, millions of 'em. Oodles of joy and happiness. Belgians devoutly kneeling in the fields giving thanks to Him who had delivered them. Here words fail. Those vivid scenes will live in the memory of the A. E. F. as long as a single member breathes.—JOHN H. GRANT, *ex-Cpl. Btry. E*, 108th F. A., Oil City, Pa.

## "Pick Up Your Cards!"

**R**EMEMBER the old la—uh! that is, the Army rumors of the customary origin. Well, our outfit, Hq. Co., 312th F. A., 79th Division, located at La Courtine, Creuse, at the

**OldMagazineArticles.com**

## When the War Went West

time, had its full share of them—and then some! When, on the fateful night of November 11th, about seven-thirty, we heard a big racket outside, someone asked "What's goin' on?"

"Aw, the war's over again'!!! Pick up your cards!" said the Skeptic and then proceeded to go "up" for a forty-one bid, spades and "double-doubles."—

LLLWOOD J. HOFFMAINE, *Philadelphia.*

## Good Medicine

**D**URING the first two weeks in November our division, the Twenty-eighth, was holding the line in the Thiaucourt Sector. On November 10th we began an attack in the direction of Metz and the next day were advancing. As we were under orders to advance, it was hard to convince us the war was to end that day.

At that time I was detailed to the Division Personnel Office, which was situated in an old German barracks, about six miles behind the lines in the direction of Thiaucourt. The Yale Field Hospital was down the road, and headquarters of the 5th Division Field Artillery was about three miles distant.

The guns ceased firing at eleven o'clock, but still we were unbelievers. That night about eight o'clock, I heard a loud yelling and commotion up the road and then the 5th Artillery Band came into view, followed by about a hundred yelling maniacs, each carrying a lighted candle or torch.

They were on their way to serenade the wounded in the hospital but were stopped by a lieutenant who informed them that the noise might be fatal to several of the severely wounded. Just then the lieutenant colonel in charge of the hospital appeared and wanted to know why they did not come on up. They informed him of the lieutenant's orders. "Fatal, my eye. It's the best medicine they can have. Just let them know the war is over," and believe me they did, to the tune of "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here."—W. F. GILLILAND, *former Sgt., Co. D, 112th Inf., James M. Henderson Post, Oil City, Pa.*

*The AMERICAN LEGION Weekly*

November 25, 1921: p.13

## Echoes of "When the War Went West"



**T**HERE were so many different situations in which the stroke of eleven on November 11, 1918, found the present readers of THE AMERICAN LEGION WEEKLY and so many interesting descriptions were received in reply to this magazine's request for letters on "Where the Armistice found me" for the Armistice Day issue that an additional instalment of replies is herewith presented

OldMagazineArticles.com



## When the War Went West

### At the End of the Glass

**W**HAT was my memory of "11-11-11"? I quote from my private log of the *U. S. S. Beale*, Destroyer No. 40.

"November 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Queenstown harbor. Now rumored that U-Boats were called in on 2nd. Armistice signed at 11 a.m., 11th November. Three cheers! Our work ended."

Well, I went above on the bridge, picked up a long glass, turned it westward and, far away at the other end, saw HOME!—T. P. H. BROWN, *Hornet's Nest Post*, Charlotte, N. C.

### With the Canadians

**T**HE last battle tour of my battalion—the 44th Battalion, 10th Brigade, Fourth Division Canadian Infantry—carried me into Valenciennes, Belgium.

About November 8th, word leaked through our Intelligence Department that the Germans were coming through our lines with a flag of truce. We knew then the war was over, and, when they did come, three days later, we were entirely prepared.

At 11 o'clock the morning of November 11, 1918, the inhabitants of Valenciennes and villages that were, formed an army of lifeless automata, hopeless, stunned! Men, women and children, with mask-like faces, would approach me, touch my uniform and sometimes squeeze my arm or silently press my hand and go their way without a word. There was no rejoicing, no outward signs of relief; they just "carried on."

The long toil-filled days and nights, the intense discomforts of winters in mud, the high-pressure tension of attacks, the witnessing of suffering almost unbearable borne with incredible patience, of bodies torn and mangled, of death despised and scorned, and of heroism whose recital will be lost to the ages to come because of its versatility, were all glossed over in the kaleidoscopic pictures which flashed before me. Four years of enthralling, interesting, essential, human work finished, left France and Belgium very much in my thoughts, my memories and my life, and, for a short moment, home meant little beyond rest and recuperation to me.—BERT RUGH, *Commander*, *Hanford Post*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

### In a German Prison Camp

**W**HAT was I doing on November 11, 1918? I'll never forget. I had just finished sixteen days *strengarrest* in the cooler of the German brig at Rastatt, Germany, said sixteen days being given for hitting toward the Swiss border A. W. O. L. from Fritz's rest camp. There had been considerable rumor of an armistice or something for several days, but on the BIG day, some of the buddies rallied around and raised Old Glory, right in front of our German guards.

Then we knew that the war was truly over. Our flag was made of Bull

## When the War Went West

Durham and Lucky Strike sacks sewed onto an old shirt for a field. Believe me, fellows, it gave us all a powerful thrill to see the Stars and Stripes floating again, in the heart of Germany, too.—O. BRANDT, *Ex-5 Co. G, 307th Inf., St. Paul, Minn.*

## “The End of a Perfect Day”

ON November 10th, after having witnessed the fall of a Boche plane due to the accuracy of the anti-aircraft guns at Mount St. Michael, near Toul, I went back to Domgermain, where the Eighty-fifth Division engineer detachment was quartered. All that night the big guns kept up a rumble and roar. The firing was so intense that it seemed as though the artillerymen thought if they had any shells left at eleven a.m. on November 11th they would have to carry them back with them and were taking no chances.

At 10:30 the roar ceased. An atmosphere of peace seemed to hover nigh. At eleven o'clock bells rang and whistles blew. Frogs cried “*Fini la guerre,*” and everyone went wild and proceeded to do their bit in the attempt to turn France dry. At the “Y” hut that night there were “doings.” After a prayer of thanks and a few remarks a girl from our own United States was introduced.

She was none other than our President's daughter—Margaret Wilson. As she lifted her voice in song we sat spellbound, perhaps not so much because we were listening to the President's daughter, but because the song she sang drove home a meaning and sent a chilly tingle up and down the spine. Her song was “*This Is the End of a Perfect Day.*” It was then I realized indeed that the war was over. Surely,  
 “Memory has painted this perfect day  
 With colors that never fade.”

—CLAUDE HARDWICK, *Gen. George A. Custer Post, Battle Creek, Mich.*

## Peace in a Base Hospital

ON the morning of November 11, 1918, I lay sick with the mumps in the base hospital at Camp Hancock, Augusta, Ga. About dawn I was awakened by the pealing of bells. Just about the time I was fully awake a Red Cross nurse came into the ward and said, “Why, boys, aren't you cheering? The war's over!”

Then we learned that the bells were those in the city of Augusta. I felt extremely glad but could not help doubting news that seemed almost too good to be true. I was too weak to jump and frolic as many of the other men did, but it was one of the most blissful days of my life. I recall that late in the afternoon a car, beautifully decorated with American flags and filled with men and women, came by our ward and gave us a great greeting.

While I never got across and therefore my experience was small compared with that of the soldier who went over the top I am thankful for the victory and shall never forget the joy of November 11, 1918.—R. L. JAMES, *Russellville, Ala.*

## When the War Went West

### The Subchasers and 11—11—11

**W**E came into port late in the afternoon of November 10th after a five-day pitch-and-toss battle with the briny deep in an effort to search out the Hun. On the morning of the 11th all hands "turned to" to open up the ship and dry her out, when suddenly a yell went across the deck, "There's an All-Chaser pennant up on the Leo!" All eyes instantly are fixed on the bridge of our old stick-in-the-mud mother ship Leonidas. Everybody prepares to read the one bit of semaphore we all could read at top speed, "Call for your mail." Suddenly a human fly appears on the bridge of the Leo waving arms and letting fly the message.

"Too fast for me," say a few of the blackgang. "I can't get it," says the cook and so on down the line go the alibis, when suddenly comes the choppy finish sign and a shriek goes over the deck: "Armistice signed at eleven o'clock." The big French fleet standing by in the harbor dressed ship. We did likewise but tried to make more noise about it—about as much noise as a chaser whistle can make. Of course, that is limited because we had to squeeze our airtanks considerably to remain in the whistling carnival with other ships. When all chaser airtanks ran dry, Captain "Juggy" Nelson called a dozen of the chasers into line for a parade.

We were located at Corfu, Greece, the isle of olive tree fame, surrounded by glittering mountains, sparkling white in the morning and glowing purple in the evening. When the news flew around that eventful morning we likened the mountain peaks to a rugged skyline of Woolworth buildings and towering monuments. Ah! the thoughts of Home, Sweet Home. Everybody's home town was the best and in the meantime the auxiliary engines pumped more air, the chaser whistles tooted on and we sailed down the bay past the big French fleet, and out of the din of booming cannon could be heard the shouts of "Vive la France, Vive America!"—GERARD FERNANDEZ, *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

### The 15-Year Old Sister

**N**OVEMBER 11, 1918. Will we ever forget it? Our brother, a member of the 102nd Field Signal Battalion, Twenty-seventh Division, was in France. We were more than anxious for the war to end and hoped he would come back to us. About four o'clock on the morning of November 11th, while we were all asleep, the bells began to ring.

Mother awoke, sat up in bed, and called, "Girls, peace has come!" My father, who is not easily excited, replied, "Huh! They have been ringing for an hour." My sister rushed to the window and began to cry, at the same time saying, "Oh, why didn't you tell us!"

I hurried to dress, jumped on my bicycle and rode downtown. Every one was much excited and overjoyed but feared it might be a false report like the one a few days before. However,

## When the War Went West

I did my part in making a big noise, a queer way to show gladness.

I might add that I was fifteen years old at the time and my sister seventeen but our age didn't make any difference with our joy. Our brother came back the following April. We were glad he had served his country and thankful his life had been spared.—H. A. P., *Canandaigua, N. Y.*

## The Silence of Eleven

**T**HE following paragraph is copied from my diary, written several days after the Armistice:

“November 11, 1918, ten a.m., near Flix, Argonne-Woevre front. After having enjoyed our first real sleep in several nights and a warm breakfast the morning of the eleventh, we were preparing to return and relieve the infantry regiment, which had relieved us on the night of the 9th. Officers' call sounded about ten a.m. and Lieutenant-Colonel Boadie read the official order that the Armistice had been signed and that firing would cease at eleven o'clock. The war was indeed over! I did not wait for more news, but hurried back to deliver the glad tidings to my men.

Pandemonium broke loose. Never will I forget the scenes that followed. Big, fearless men wept, while others stood in silence, scarcely able to believe. In a short time, however, excitement ran so high that it became necessary to place guards to keep order. Just on the tick of the watch, eleven o'clock, a stillness, oh, so awfully still, settled over the battle-torn hills. As the last shell from our artillery, just on the stroke, sang its doleful tune over No Man's Land and sank “somewhere” in Hunland, my thoughts for the first time in many days turned again home.

I saw a silent figure borne yonder by the first aid men as they slowly disappeared over the hill toward the little cemetery, and oh, how I wished that the news had come a day sooner! Thus the curtain fell in the greatest drama of history, and may its folds forever hide the carnage enacted therein.—CHARLES L. COGGIN, *Samuel C. Hart Post, Salisbury, N. C.*

## When the Guns Ceased

**W**E were eleven—men of the Signal Platoon, Headquarters Company, operating with the Third Battalion, 355th Infantry. On the night of the 10th our battalion somehow left us at Luzy, near Stenay. The next morning, screened from the enemy by a heavy fog, we set out for brigade headquarters to learn the whereabouts of our comrades.

On the way, we met a Yank who said, “Well, boys, it's all over at eleven today.”

“Don't feed us that old line.” Armistice rumors had our patience worn to a point where mention of an armistice would almost provoke murder. But as we slushed along the alleged road, the doubtful news came again and again, and when an artilleryman said that orders were to cease firing at eleven, we grew more interested. At our

## When the War Went West

destination, we, with others, wondered what a world without a war would be like.

Ten o'clock—artillery pounding away. Ten-thirty—still going. Ten-forty-five—"Yes, there'll be an armistice—like hell; listen at them guns!" Ten-fifty-eight—hell popping on both sides. ELEVEN! Ye gods! The awful silence! It seemed something had throttled all life and we were moving in a dead world. But it was only the dawn of the new life.

Historians say and will continue to say that all along the lines there was thunderous cheering. I did not hear a cheer, but some buddy turned to me with a new light in his eyes and almost whispered: "Say, when do you think we'll go home?"—JOHN H. GARRETT, *Newell, So. Dak.*

## Tidings By Airplane

AS a member of the Rainbow Division Signal Battalion I found myself on the memorable day of November 11, 1918, in the town of Buzancy in the Argonne on the front facing Sedan. The week previous we had been stringing lines along the roads and rumors of the war's ending were very busy. We all took it as the same old bunk we were continually fed on.

Well, after arising at six a. m. on November 11th, we washed as usual, hung around the battered drug store—we were billeted at the town square—strung some more lines connecting with the Eightieth Division's headquarters and finished at eight a. m. The atmosphere was getting more and more wild with excitement over "fini la guerre." We were still getting rumors from the French wireless station in town, one of which said all firing would cease at 10:55 a. m.

While strutting across the square to our canteen for some eats I heard the roar of an airplane, which seemed to be flying lower than usual. This was at 10:45. I looked up at the plane, barely missing the house roofs when, all of a sudden, newspapers by the hundreds came flying down from it. Everybody came from all over to get them. I picked one up and this greeted my eyes in letters two inches high: THE WAR IS OVER. And then everybody was hugging everybody else, some crying, some just staring.—A. F. SCHAEEL, *Philadelphia.*

## It Lifted the Quarantine

WHERE was I on November 11, 1918? I was on the inside of the fence like so many other members of the Spruce Production Division who were stationed at Vancouver, Washington, and under quarantine for flu. I was very much a member of the S. P. D., and just a two-for-a-cent corporal of "the web-foot division that drilled in the rain."

Like others of my lot, after having been fooled by the first armistice report, I greatly doubted the truth of the second report. A colonel, a little, white-haired old man, finally broke the real news to us with, "Come on boys, let's go!" We went!

## When the War Went West

The first scene photographed on my memory was the mob, if I may refer to them as such, of officers, men and civilians that had collected, soldiers on one side of the fence, and civilians on the other. The next was a framed painting of a discharge and Home. Just before mess that evening, the quarantine was lifted, and the result was a general break for the gates.—MILO P. ATKINS, *Sullivan, Ind.*

*The AMERICAN LEGION Weekly*

OldMagazineArticles.com