THE STARS AND STRIPES,
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# NIGHT PATROLS ALWAYS ACTIVE IN TOUL SECTOR

## Separate Instructions for Every Man Who Goes Out Between the Lines

## LISTENING IN ON HUN TALK

### Milwaukee Soldier Acts as Interpreter When German Wagon Driver Voices Complaint

### NO SINECURE FOR OFFICERS

### Captain, If He's Lucky, Sometimes Gets a Chance to Sleep Two Hours a Day

[Editorial Note.—Mr. Junius B. Wood, correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News* with the A.E.F., recently spent a week in the sector held by the American Army northwest of Toul. He lived the life of a doughboy, slept a little and saw a lot. He spent his days in and near the front line and some of his nights in No Man's Land. Here is the second and concluding instalment of his story (told by days), depicting life at the front as it actually is. The first instalment was published in last week's issue of THE STARS AND STRIPES.]

By JUNIUS B. WOOD
Correspondent of the "Chicago Daily News" with the A.E.F.

TUESDAY—"I am just waiting for my men to come so we can start out on a patrol to examine Fritz's wire," said a young lieutenant as a captain and I shoved aside the gas proof blanket over the door and edged into a dugout.

"—— sector reports a sniper working tonight—watch out for him," cautioned the captain. "Have all posts been notified of your starting and what time you expect to return?" he asked a moment later.

"Word is being sent along now," said the lieutenant. A solemn faced sergeant sitting on the little bunk beside the lieutenant nodded corroboration. Twelve hours earlier I had seen the same sergeant herding a squad of men into a dugout for sheltered eating.

Starting a patrol is a ticklish, serious proposition. A little group of men slip out and away, not notifying anybody. A messenger whispers to every sentry along the line how many men are going, when they are starting, the spot in the wire picked for their return, and the time of their return. Seeing shadowy forms stealing through No Man's Land in the haze and the light of a harvest moon and not knowing that it is their own patrol is liable to cause half a dozen automatic rifles to turn loose. Instantly, the forbidden strip is as light as day in the glare of rockets, both sides shooting, with disastrous effect to the patrol.

"Through the entire night there is worry and a constant strain until the last patrol has safely returned," said the captain as the party left.

### Joys of a Captain's Life

A captain's life seems to be a constant patrol of the maze of trenches that his company is occupying. At night it is a continuous circuit, talking to lieutenants commanding platoons, cautioning and encouraging the men. By day it is the same tiresome tramp, watching working parties, suggesting changes, strengthening the line. If no extra reports are to be prepared, he is permitted to sleep between two and four in the afternoon.

Such a strain is the chief reason why the same outfit is seldom in the trenches longer than a week before being relieved. There is neither hot nor cold water, a basin of muddy water for shaving being the nearest one usually gets to washing one's face. Undressing usually consists of removing one's rubber boots and steel helmet for the few minutes one is able to sleep. The Sam Browne belt is not worn in the trenches, while most officers further detract from their appearance by clipping their hair close to their heads, making them resemble overgrown English walnuts.

Most dugouts would give hysterics to a sanitary housing expert. It is a phase of warfare which would not lend itself to picture painting. One captain's dugout I visited was so low that only his helmet prevented him from fracturing his skull when he stood up. Rats splashed through three inches of stagnant water under the rough slatted floors. In honor of visitors, two candles were lighted instead of one feeble light.

The room was so narrow that one person only could stand between the shelf-table and the tier of two bunks. When another wanted to pass it was necessary for the first one to perch on one of the bunks. The lower bunk, on this night, was wet, so four of us took turns sleeping in the upper berth.

### Dirt Least of Their Worries

"We pump out the dugout each day and will be able to keep the water below the floor until it rains," said the captain. "We don't bother about dirt or being crowded. Three of us live here all the time."

It was close to six o'clock in the morning and the captain was busy poring over maps when a soldier rapped at the door, crawled through the curtain and came inside. As the faint candle rays struck him, I rubbed my eyes to see whether I was awake, dreaming, or at a minstrel show. The man's face was blackened in the approved style.

"Our party has returned. It is the last one back," reported the soldier.

"Some men black their faces by rubbing in mud," explained the captain, "so they won't shine in the moonlight when they go raiding."

I was sitting on a little charcoal stove in which the fire was out. Twenty-two hours' tramping through the trenches makes a person drowsy.

"We'll have supper at eight o'clock this morning," was the last thing I heard the captain say as I dozed off.

### A Life-and-Death Weather Vane

WEDNESDAY—The last thing I heard today as I left battalion headquarters and started for my residence in the front line trench was the warning of the surgeon, "have both gas masks ready for instant use."

His little dugout, a field dressing station, equipped as a bomb and gas proof chamber, was constantly ready to receive gas victims and administer antidotes and neutralizing gases.

On the parapet of the front trench before every post command is a weather vane, a whittled, thin board which shows whether the wind is favorable for carrying the stifling mist from the enemy trenches. Each platoon has a gas sentry who hourly, night and day, re-

ports the direction of the wind and patrols the trenches, carrying a klaxon under his arm ready to sound an instant alarm. Men of the post are instructed to look for signs of gas as vigilantly as for enemy snipers.

"Watch for gas. The wind seems changing. It may be favorable for the enemy in an hour," was the last order the lieutenant in command of the platoon gave the sergeant as we climbed out of the trenches for a patrol along the German wire.

We little anticipated then what a vital bearing the things we discovered in the next hour would have on a German surprise gas attack three days later.

On making a patrol, a knitted wool *casque* takes the place of the steel helmet. The latter is liable to rattle against the barbed wire and bring a fusilade of bullets from the automatic rifles of the enemy.

### Instructions for Every Man

Each man in our party had a definite position and definite instructions as to what to do in case of an alarm. Everyone except the lieutenant was armed with an automatic revolver and four grenades. The lieutenant carried a rocket pistol and Very light cartridges, ready to fire a signal calling for a barrage if we were attacked. We were not insured against a failure to return, but it was some satisfaction to know that a bank of batteries was standing on a hill behind us ready to hurl several thousand dollars worth of shells if the Germans shot at any of us.

"Follow one at a time so we won't be outlined against the skyline," said the lieutenant, crawling over the parapet.

We worked our way through our own belt of barbed wire, scraping the backs of our leather jerkins, but the wind drowned the rattle of the loose strands.

"Be careful you don't hit unexploded grenades. There are lots of them out here," said the lieutenant, as we crawled across No Man's Land. The forbidden strip was pitted with shell holes—some of them old ones filled with water with a coating of thin ice, others exposing fresh earth. In the frosty haze, objects stood out ghostlike under a full moon.

"Saw a flash in that direction," whispered a soldier. "It's a stump. There may be a sniper behind it. We found it last night."

We came to a stretch of marsh where the trenches ceased, being replaced by only a waist high camouflaged side and a duckboard path.

"We'll go around through the wood," said the major. Uprooted trees, birch saplings cut as smoothly as by an axe, branches which never would bud again, all cut off by German shells, strewed our path. Sitting in the door of a dugout in the woods were two soldiers, mere boys, cleaning automatic revolvers.

"Shelled our woods about an hour ago and got one of our fellows, I guess, but we'll even it up," said one with a grim smile. It all went to make a quiet day.

At last, daylight, with the boom of the big guns, ceased, and the rat-a-tat of the automatic rifle in the hands of the sniper stalking his human prey under cover of darkness, took its place.

"Swanson says he saw the flash of a sniper's rifle against our wire," the lieutenant informed his first sergeant as we entered a gas sentry's dugout that evening to warm our fingers. Since the lieutenant had left his own dugout a shell had caved in the entrance and it was no longer habitable.

"He's always hearing or seeing something. Next he will be reporting that he heard the Germans manicuring their finger nails in their trenches," declared the sergeant.

### Slow 200-Yard Journey

It seemed an hour. Everybody strained his eyes toward the faint speck in the distance, but there was no other flash, and we resumed our crawling. Our destination, the German wire, was finally reached. It was a slow journey over the 200-yard strip.

In the silent night at that point the sounds of the enemy working carried to our ears. We heard the rattle of tin, as if being unloaded from a wagon, the ring of metal, as if pipe was being moved. Snatches of conversation in German were easily heard. What seemed to be pipes were German *minnenwerfers* which later hurled at us deadly gas projectiles. We then heard the creak of the wagons being driven away, and for a few moments there was silence. Then came the rattle of another wagon approaching heavily loaded and a German driver vigorously complaining.

"He says, 'This horse is no good, the other pulls all the load,'" translated a soldier of our party hailing from Milwaukee.

Further comments of the German transport service were drowned in the rattle of more iron being unloaded. It was evidently the last load, for all was silent after the team with its one slacker-horse creaked away. Dawn was not far away as we started our slow journey back, still protected by the shades of night.

### Sniper Starts Something

THURSDAY—"I saw the flash of a rifle just there in our wires and I have been firing at it," excitedly whispered a soldier crouching on the firing step as a lieutenant and I hurried up at the sound of his automatic rifle.

"Keep after him if he fires again," said the lieutenant.

As if in answer to the order, a bullet struck the corrugated rain shelter over our heads with a resounding whang. Everybody crouched safely below the level of the parapet. No flash showed where the rifle had been fired.

"He must be shooting through a wet blanket to conceal his location," said the lieutenant. "I saw a flash, but I think it was the bullet hitting our wire."

"I believe he's sniping from the Boche trenches," said an automatic rifleman at the next post.

"Keep watching until you get him," was the order of the lieutenant. We then passed along each post of his sector.

It had been what is called a quiet day on the American front. Just what a "quiet day" is may surprise persons unaccustomed to living amid flying man-made engines of death.

### Planes Furnish Diversion

The Germans started shortly after daybreak by shelling our trench mortar batteries near the front trenches for half an hour. An hour later they started again, aiming at battery emplacements farther back. Our guns naturally answered.

As a variation to the shelling, aeroplanes flew over—alone or in groups of three or four—while our guns filled the sky with balls of white smoke. One aviator emptied a clip of his machine gun at our trenches, but they were almost deserted at that hour and we had no one killed or seriously injured.

The soldiers considered this a quiet day, and the officers so reported it. There were only a few more shell craters in the landscape, and only a few spots in the trenches which had been knocked in and which had to be repaired, and, fortunately, no American was killed.

While the lieutenant with whom I live in the little dugout right in the front line slept, I accompanied the major on an inspection of the previous night's progress in strengthening another point.

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### "Don't Get Careless"

"Don't get careless," cautioned the lieutenant. "I'm going out now to inspect the outer belt of our barbed wire. Get two men to accompany us."

A few minutes later we crawled over the top and worked our way through successive mazes of wire entanglements in No Man's Land. Shells daily tear gaps in the wire and constant repairing at night is necessary.

As we went out, the sergeant in the trench stood with a Véry light pistol in his hand, ready to send up a colored rocket calling for a barrage should any action start. As we moved, crouching, along the wire, our silent trenches seemed deserted and harmless. Only by having seen men standing post in those trenches a few minutes before were we able to realize that unseen eyes were watching us, unseen rifles were covering us, ready to engulf in a hail of bullets any unknown prowlers who approached. As we looked across No Man's Land, the enemy's wire could be dimly seen.

"It needs some repairing. We'll do it after we have coffee," said the lieutenant as we came in.

Arrangements for the second trip were the same as for the first except that the party was larger. A sergeant did the wiring, others carried wire and stood guard. Two soldiers, carrying a rattling spindle over shell-pitted No Man's Land, gossiped in whispers.

### How to Get Free Light

"If they threw a nickel firecracker behind Bill he'd tear down the side of the trench getting back," said one, referring to one of the guards.

"The Germans have wires charged with electricity in front of their trenches," said the other.

"Sure, an American officer went over and tapped it and now has electric lights in his dugout," affirmed his companion.

Somebody in the next sector wasted a Véry light, which soared in our direction, showing up our party like a searchlight. There were strong remarks under breath from all. The light sputtered into darkness and the wiring was resumed.

"It's getting daylight now and we'll go back," finally said the lieutenant.

"I'd rather be out here taking a chance than standing around in the trench," was the way one youngster summed up the American soldier's eagerness to get busy as he crawled back into the trenches.