

At noon on July 18th we started for the front. We hiked the afternoon and all that nite. We got into position about 4:45 in the morning of July 18th. Fifteen minutes all the guns on our side opened up at the same time. Every gun was set to fire at the same second. Our company commander blew his whistle and made a motion with his hand. 'Forward' and before we knew what had happened we were on the top going towards the German lines. As far as I could see to our right and left were "Sammies" going forward. The first half hour we did not lose a man, but then we met the German barrage. Here we lost quite a few men. I well remember the squad on my right about sixty feet away. A big shell lit between them, and all I saw afterward of the squad was one man on his feet. Well, I got thru that day and all of my squad did the same. We met with very heavy artillery and machine gun fire that day. The Cpl. of our squad was the only officer in our company when our Div. was relieved. The officers and non-coms were all wounded or killed. Ltd. Allen was wounded and Major Hans was killed. On the second day we ran into a real live hornet's nest. We lost quite heavy here. Our major gave us orders to retreat and we did. We fell back about four hundred yards and took up another position. About eleven o'clock we went forward again but in vain. We did not fall back this time, but they held us so that we could not break their lines. Our tanks were all out of commission by this time, so we had to depend on our hand grenades and rifles to do the work. We had advanced so fast that our artillery was of very little good. We flopped in the wheat which was waist high, and took what cover we could find. The squad I was in was still together and not a single one wounded. The seven of us lay down in a squad column about ten feet apart. The balls were dropping all around us, and the Cpl. and four of the other men jumped to their feet and went back a short distance. My gunner yelled, "Let us go with them." I said, "Stay there," so we both tried to make ourselves as small as we could. I put my ammunition bag and helmet in front of my head and lay there directly facing the machine gun that was firing on us. All at once I felt something warm touch my hand. It was a ball which passed between my second and third fingers and went thru my helmet and lodged in my ammunition bag. If I had not put the helmet and ammunition bag in front of me, the ball would have struck me in the top of the head and gone thru me lengthwise. However, some one got close enough to the machine gun nest to throw a few hand grenades into the pit. That soon put a stop to their fun. The bullets soon stopped coming so thick and we went forward again. That night we camped in a ravine and did patrol all that night. We got some chow up from the kitchen that nite, and we got our canteens filled up with water. I stole about two hours sleep that nite. The third morning we went forward again and we sure were a tired bunch of boys. We advanced about three Kilometers that morning and I did not see a single German. But they sure sent a lot of G.I. cans over at us. Several of our boys went west this morning and our company was getting very small. We dug in on the side of the railroad track and waited for the 16th Infantry to advance on our left. The shells were falling very thick and everybody took what shelter they could find. I had a hole dug about four feet deep, and I sure kept my head down. I heard someone yell and looked up to see what he wanted. It was a runner and he wanted to know where the 26th infantry is. I raised up out of



my hole, and while I was talking to him a large shell lit close to him and blew him to a hundred pieces. A little piece of it struck me on the finger. I stayed in my hole about two hours, and when the firing eased up I got up and beat it to the rear. I got to a first aid station and a short time later I was put on a truck and started to the rear to a hospital. The truck was jammed full of wounded men. We stopped at a field hospital and had our wounds dressed, and from there we got on a Red Cross train and went to St. Angon, France. On this train is where I saw and ate my first piece of white bread since I left the States. We lit at the hospital on the 22nd of July. Here we got a bath as soon as we got off the train. All our clothes were taken away from us and we were issued pajamas. I was not sick but was mighty glad to stay in bed for three days. To sleep in a bed seemed so good that I would have given anything in the world if I would not have to return to the lines again. After staying in the hospital for two weeks it began to look as if I was about ready for the lines again. A few days later I was sent to a convalescent camp at Nevers, France. Here I stayed for three weeks and did light duty. I was sent from here to St. Agony, France, a replacement camp. I stayed here one week, got all new equipment and was sent back to my company. I had not got any mail since I left the company so you see I was quite anxious to get back to the company.

About one thousand of us was shipped out of this camp. We got orders to have our packs rolled and be ready to leave camp at six o'clock that evening. We were all on the job, but as usual the train was late and it rained all night. We stood around all nite in the rain. About ten o'clock the next day our train came. Of course we had not had a bit to eat since supper the nite before, and the mud was knee deep. But this was a start of trench life again. This army life is fun, nothing to do but eat, sleep, and smoke cigarettes. But I do hope if war ever breaks out again, and I have to enter the game, somebody will take a good shot at me before I start. However, they got us packed into boxcars, about 35 strong in each car, threw in a box of hard bread and a case of corned beef in each car, and started out. We were on the road five days and nites, before we were unloaded. When we were unloaded that eve we had 15 kilometers to hike to reach battalion headquarters. Here we got some hot coffee and slept wherever we could get a place to flop. The next morning was Sept. 3 I found my company. They were camped in some woods close to Verdun. It was raining and everybody had pitched pup tents. I crawled in with L. D. Johnson and his squad. We stayed there a few days and then we got orders to make another hit on the Huns. The nite of Sept. 11th we started for the lines. We hiked all nite in the rain and mud, and got into position before daybreak the next morning. We thot we were in position but we were not, because everybody was lost.

Our artillery had been working all nite and we had lots of big heavy guns working on Mount Zek. We went over about six o'clock that morning but did not meet very strong resistance. The Huns surrendered easily. We captured lots of artillery pieces, store houses full of small arms, all sorts of clothes and equipment, and lots of beer, but little chow. We drove the Huns back about fifteen kilos on the twelfth, and on the 13th



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the French closed in on our flanks and captured all the Germans in the pocket. The civilians living, who lived here, had been held prisoners for four years, and they came out and gave us a drink of snopps as we passed thru their villages.

On Sept. 14th we were relieved and marched towards the rear. We rested for two days in some German barracks, and then got trucks and started towards another front. We rode one day and nite, and then we were unloaded and camped in some woods for about a week. The company got paid here. But me and a few others who had been in the hospital did not get paid. We left here and put in a good long nite hiking. Several of the boys went A. W. O. L. that nite, and several fell out that nite. We camped in some French barracks for a few days, then we got trucks and started for the front. We rode all day and hiked all nite. The next morning we dug in and were in reserve of the 35th division. We stayed here for four days waiting for the big guns to get placed. On the morning of Oct. 4th we went over the top. We drove the Germans back six kilos that day but our company did not lose so very heavy. K Company lost very heavy. We dug in on a side hill that nite and the Germans fired on us from both sides and the front. We held our ground here for about five days and on the morning of Oct. 9 we got orders to take Hill 240. There was a very heavy fog and we could not see a man twenty-two years ahead of us. Our battalion was formed at the foot of the Hill about fifteen minutes before the barrage started. The Germans got wise to us and they opened up on us with machine gun fire. Our barrage and the Germans' started at about the same time. We made very slow progress as the Dutch had all kinds of machine guns, and our men fell like flies. Pvt. Svaboda and I were in a shell hole about forty yards from the German lines. We stayed here and after the fog blew away did some good sniping.

Here is where I saw the first German fall from a rifle shot. Boys from old Co. B 164 who fell in this battle were L. D. Johnson, John Bannister, Fred May, and Burdell. Co. D lost very heavy. We had thirty-six men answer their names after the battle. The 16th Inf. captured a German colonel, but there was not very many Germans captured. On the 10th we advanced about 4 kilos, lost a few men. Pvt. Albert Wallner from Hunter was wounded here, and four other men and I carried him out to the first aid station that nite, but he died just as we reached there.

We were relieved on the 11th and went back about ten kilos. Here we got some replacements, stayed here one day and one nite. Then we started on a long hike and expected a long rest. We hiked about ten days to Rosness, France. Here we were recruited up and started to drill again. We drilled about ten days; then we started for the front again. We got trucks and rode towards the front lines. We rode one day and nite and then we camped in some woods. We had to stay hid during the day, and at nite all lights had to be put out. The reason being German planes. We stayed in these woods about ten days, and then we got orders to make another push on the Huns.

On the nite of Nov. we started towards the front, a distance of twenty kilos. It rained all nite and we got lost.



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Our Captain was acting major and I was on side of him one time while he pulled out his map to see where we were. We were in some woods and of course it was impossible to find out where we were, because the rain would put out his match and the map got wet. Well, we got orders to take a rest. We unrolled our blankets and slept about an hour, when we got orders to move again. Lots of the men fell out, and when we got there we did not have more than half a company. At five o'clock in the morning we were in position to go over the top. Everybody was all in and hardly able to walk. I did not dare to sit down because if I did, I was afraid I would be so stiff I could not get up and walk. We advanced about eight kilos that day, lost a few men, but we did not meet with strong resistance.

That nite we dug in on top of Hill 242, but we had to retreat later on account of artillery fire. That nite I led my squad away from the company about one hundred yards and I told them we were to hide from the rest of the company. We found a good place to dig in, and we did. We dug ourselves in good and deep two men to a hole. While the men were digging I scouted out to see if I could find something to eat. I got up close to our company, and I heard our captain getting his orders from the major. Here is what the major told our captain, "Be at Sedan before daylight in the morning with your company." I heard him say it was about twenty-five kilos. This news sounded good--like hell. We had not had any sleep for two nites except that one hour in the woods the nite before. Well, I went back to where the squad was and I told them to be quiet as the company was about to move and I was not able to make a 25 kilos that nite. After I had been asleep about an hour one of the boys came over and gave me a pull on the leg. He said Sergt. Myers was around yelling for Cpl. Peterson. I told him to go back in his hole and stay there and not to make any noise. Well, it was not more than fifteen minutes before I was sound asleep and when I woke up the sun was shining in my face. I got everybody up and told them to roll their blankets, while two other men and I went out and looked for chow. We were not gone more than one hour when we returned with a large can of coffee, a can of bacon and a box of hardtack. We ate all we could and put the rest of it in our packs. Now we were feeling pretty good and ready for another battle. We started out to find our company. Of course we were not in very much of a hurry and we did not have a commander. We slept in a town that nite. The Huns had left it the day before. We bummed supper from some French people that nite and saved our bacon for breakfast. About eight o'clock the next day we started out to find our company. Two hours later we met them on their return. The company was seven strong, the rest of the men had all fallen out or been sent to the hospital. We camped in a small town that day, got some hot chow, and about four o'clock that day we started for the rear. The French had taken Sedan before our company got there.

We camped in some woods that nite and the 10th of Nov. we started to hike towards the rear. We heard that the guns were to stop at eleven o'clock the next day, but we did not believe it. Everybody thought we were making a flank movement. On the eleventh we started towards the rear again. I purposely got lost from the company that morning because I did not have any tobacco, and if I could get away from the company I knew I could



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get tobacco. I found another boy that was lost that day and we hiked together. Of course, we always knew where our company was. We learned of the Second Division commissary and made for that town. We reached this town about one o'clock and we had not heard a gun fire for a long time. The wounded soldiers were coming in truck loads. The Second Division had gone over the top that morning at five o'clock and there was lots of fight left in Fritz yet. We camped with our company that nite and occasionally there was a gun that would fire. When we would hear a gun fire we would say, "Now do you believe that peace has come?" Our major told us that day that peace had come but we would not believe it. There seemed to be a lot of fight left in those blamed Germans, and they had plenty of ammunition. We could not see any sign of the Germans being weak, the only thing was, whenever we captured any of them, their chow seemed short. But there was plenty of beer.

Our hike had just started now about the 13th of November. We camped in some woods near Verdun and during the nite there was a continual celebration. Most of the boys were too tired to celebrate, but still there is always somebody that you cannot kill. All a fellow could see that nite was sky rockets being sent into the air, and all kinds of them. Of course, this was stuff that had been captured from the Germans. Now we were allowed to smoke and build a fire after dark, the first time since we came over here--that is, when we were near the lines. It sure looked funny to see fires on every hill, and all over.

We learned that we were going to march into Germany and form our lines there, stay there a short time, and then sail for United States. You can imagine how the boys of the 1st Div. felt to hear this news, because they had been the first over and wanted to be the first back. I do not remember very many towns we went thru, but I will try and outline the route we took. Our hike was a hard drag all the way on account of the country being so hilly. We would make about 15 kilometers a day. The roads were muddy and everybody was weak from being in the lines for such a long stretch. There was lots of the boys who fell out the first week, but everybody stayed by it as long as they could, on account of them telling us that we were going home soon and by way of Belgium.

The first town I remember the name of was the capital of Luxumburg. We paraded thru this town and passed in review for the Queen of Luxumburg. By this time the boys were quite tired, but everybody tried to hike with a smile. Our next town was VillaRue. Here we stayed one nite and two days. We had some clothes issued to us here. Most of the boys got shoes, but they were of English make, and our boys cannot hike in these shoes. The result was that almost every man that had a pair of these shoes got crippled up, and then they would throw the shoes and go barefooted, or get some old shoes which were worn out German shoes or anything they could find, beg, or steal. During this hike we were so close to the Huns that sometimes we had to stop before entering a town and let the Un Huns get out.

Our next stop was Maxthum. It was on the line between Luxumburg and Germany on the Mossele River. We stayed here



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for seven days and then resumed our march. The reason for staying in this town for so long was that we could not enter Germany until a certain date. When we entered Germany we set out points and guards but had no trouble of any kind. The people were all good to us. We stayed in Triers one nite and day. Now we began to strike some real hills "small mountains." The horses that hauled the supplies were so poor and road drilled that they could hardly walk. Now I know that a man can out-hike a horse. The artillery horses were the same way. It takes a mule for a war horse. During this hike we got two meals a day, but the Germans fed us most of the time. Our next stop was at Coblenz. We paraded thru this town and then got billets and stayed here for one day and a nite. Everybody was glad to stop in such a large town as there was lots of girls on the streets. We were allowed down town but we had to go in pairs, and had to be armed with a hundred rounds of ammunition and a rifle. You can imagine me trying to make eyes or flirt with a Dutch girl and a big long rifle on my shoulder. However, I did not make much of a hit in this town.

We continued our hike to Grenzhausen. Here we stayed in a school house, got a bath and some new underwear. We stayed here for about two weeks. We left here on the 27th of December, 1918. We drilled every day, rain or shine. I often wondered if we ever went thru this again, if our officers would benefit by these experiences.

On the 27th we left Grenzhausen and our next town was Naxsain. Now we were within five kilometers of the front lines. A. And B. Companies were in the front lines. Our drill when we first struck this town was eight hours a day.

On Jan. 8th, Goddard, a German boy, and I went out hunting. After a half hour's hunt, the boy drove a deer on me and I got it at the first shot.

Jan. 19.---Goddard and I were out hunting. Goddard shot a deer.

Jan. 20.---Was out hunting but no luck.

Jan. 22.---Cash, Goddard, and I were out hunting. Goddard shot two deer and Cash shot one.

June 27th at 7:30 o'clock Pvt. Thomas Lugar and I got orders to report to the orderly room. The Top said to us, "Are you ready to go home?" and we both replied, "Yes." "Well," he said, "go and get your equipment and turn them in." Well, talk about two happy old stiffs, we sure were. Lugar and I have been in the same squad from the time we were on the hike, and now we have pledged ourselves to one hell-of-a-time the first night that we are turned loose in New York.

June 27, 1919 A. D.

I, Thomas B. Lugar and Anton Peterson, do solemnly swear that we will raise hell and do anything within the law, and that we might break the law, providing we are the only ones that know about it, on the first night we are turned loose in the great city of New York.

Germany

(SEAL)

Anton Peterson

Thomas B. Lugar

Sworn in and signed before me on this date, June 27, 1919

Anton Peterson

Thomas B. Lugar

Justice of the Peace



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June 28. We left Coblenz at 10 o'clock in the morning enroute for Brest. The train cannot go fast enough to please the boys. It is 3:30 P. M. and we are at the capital of Luxumburg.

Our route home:

Lueterod, Montebard, Sheirshalm, Verges, Enger, Coblenz, Cochem, Wittlich, Triers, Konz, Machtum, Luxemburg, Thionville, Als. Lor., Hagondange, Metz, Noveant, Ponta, Mourxan, Luerdun, Eschertul, Digon, Taylon, Laroche, Goigny, Paris. Left Paris at 8 O'clock in the morning on June 30, arrived in Brest at 11 o'clock on July 1st.

We are cleaning up and getting ready to leave for the United States. On July 5th we left Brest at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. We loaded the ship Liberator, a stock boat. About 2500 troops on board. This is our second day out and it has been great sport. First day out we made 251 miles, second day 277, third day 243, fourth day 254, fifth day 291, sixth day 268, seventh day 274, eighth day 245, ninth day 243, tenth day 148, eleventh day 214, twelfth day 239 miles.