Confessions of a German Deserter

(Continued from last week)

were made in the munitions factories I cannot say, I suspect they were, However, I did see many dum-dum bullets made by the soldiers themselves. The points were filed off from German musket shells so that the nickel covering was perforated, baring the lead filling.

The bullet flattened when it struck its object. If, for instance, it entered a man's arm, the explosive charge in it would so shatter the arm as to blow it entirely off and leave it hanging by the akin.

German soldiers were frequently seen supplying themselves with dumdum bullets in the trenches, preparing to inflict terrible wounds.

On January 5, 1915, the Germans attacked on their entire front of the Argonne forest sector and several hundred prisoners were taken. The handto-hand fight continued until six o'clock in the evening.

A fellow pioneer and myself found ourselves in a bit of trench held by eight Frenchmen. It was impossible to retire so we accepted the unequal fight. Fortunately we were well supplied with hand grenndes.

We cut the fuses short so that they would explode as quickly as possible. I threw one among the eight soldiers. Before the men could get out of the way of the first, the second one followed, which exploded in their midst.

We took advantage of the confusion thus created to hurl five more. Out enemies were now reduced to four men, We opened fire with our muskets, closing in on the four. Their bullets whizzed around our heads. One man was shot in the mouth. That left three. They turned and tried to flee.

In such moments as these one is in a great rage and forgets danger entirely.

We were very close to our enemies now, right on their heels when the last man stumbled and fell.

I sprang on top of him. He defended himself with his fists. My comrade went after the other two. Bleeding at the mouth, this man fought on. After I had knocked several of his teeth out he raised his hands and surrendered. I released him from my grip and looked him over carefully. He was about thirty-five years old. He showed me his wedding ring and talked to me. I knew what he wanted, he wanted his life.

He gave me his canteen that I might drink some wine and wept. Perhaps he thought of his wife and wept. Perhaps he thought of his wife and children. I pressed his hand an he showed me his bleeding teeth. I talled him a fool and told him he was ucky to have got-ten away with the loss of only a few molars. I was glad h had not killed him. I took him back myself, in order to protect him against being misused. As I delivered him over to where the prisoners were being assembled, he pressed my hand and smiled.

CHAPTER XVI.

The next day we received orders to march to an unknown destination. We oon arrived at the depot of At nont where we were obliged to wait. The depot had been destroyed. The next station was Chatel. Both of these places are about five kilometers behind the front.

ane chfidren were with their father and they kissed him as he left. He had one child on each arm and his wife carried the third,

days and three nights.

smoke.

joining heights were enveloped in

On the evening of the third day the

enemy bombardment abated somewhat

and we were once more sent into the

pile of debris, which had been torn by

a hundred thousand shells. It was not

yet dusk, and as the French had also

advanced an attack developed. They

came into our lines with strong reserve

units and the wildest kind of a hand-

Sharp daggers flew from head to

New enemies continued to arrive.

We also received re-enforcements,

Each man fought frenziedly, expect-

No life was worth a penny. Each

I stumbled and fell upon the stones

and in less time than is required to re-

late it I saw before me a glant French-

man with a pioneer's spade raised to

strike a blow. With lightninglike speed

I dodged and the spade struck a stone.

In the next moment my adversary

and shoulders. The sharp spade en-

tered his body and buried itself half

way in. I heard the bones crack under

dropped the spade and seized the

We tried to reach each other with

Soon one of us would have to let go.

I saw my opponent fall and my self felt a terrible pain in the right

I ran as quickly as I could to the

rear and after a search of several

hours found a dressing station, where

ing his death blow momentarily.

man fought like a beast.

spade came in handy.

the force of the blow.

head, breast to breast. Men stood on

corpses in order to make new corpses.

For each man who was killed three

thus permitting the slaughter to con-

to-hand encounter ensued.

others appeared.

tinue.

abdomen.

agger.

ight hand.

as I did to him.

explosion nearby.

was bandaged.

inw had been broken.

was unable to strike.

side of my lower jaw.

With the greatest happiness the family walked along between the two armed soldiers. When the moment of parting came all began to cry.

This was the fate of thousands of poor French and Belgian men and women, guartered near their homes yet unable to know who was dead or alive.

While we stood at the depot ten German soldiers arrived with fixed bayonets. Between them were three French citizens in civilian clothing, whom they escorted. All were elderly men. We asked an old Frenchman what this was about and he said:

"We receive our food from the German military officials but it is not sufficient to live on. The people have nothing left. All stock and food had been seized. These three men refused to work any longer for the German military officials because they could not live on what they received.

"They were arrested and are being sent to Germany. No one knows what their fate would be there. The men were being taken away by the Germans and interned in Germany."

We received orders to march to Varennes and left the next morning. As we reached the heights of Varennes about noon we saw the wide country before us and the city nestling in the valley. Farther up on the heights was Vauquois. Nothing could be seen of any houses but through our field glasses we could make out an enormous ash heap. Shells fell there continuously and we were frightened at the pros-



hatred within the German nation was ed Vauquois so that not a square foot not so great toward France and Rusof land could be found which had not via. been torn up by shells. Thousands and

The people quietly accepted the enorthousands of shells, large and small, mous sacrifices which the war demandwere hurled into the town for three ed from them in course of time.

But the government, which even This continued until not a single solthen, foresaw the unfavorable course dier was left in the village, for both the war was taking, conceived the idea French and Germans had to retire of setting England up as the archfrom this fire from both sides, as it enemy which intended to destroy Gerwas absolutely impossible to have surmany entirely. vived this hell. The entire hill and ad-

The German war machine made use of the blockade which England drew around Germany to such an extent, playing upon child murder, so-called, that the people developed an ever-inpreasing hatred toward England.

The French language was no longer spoken anywhere. A large part of the German people formerly used the French word "adieu," as a farewell expression but that was stopped. Care had to be taken in the use of this word to avoid arrest on a charge of high treason.

I thought about these things as neared my temporary destination. I was sufficiently acquainted with the border so that when I arrived in Kaldenkirchen I was able to reach it without asking any questions. The spot which I had selected for crossing lay In a forest. After a march of two hours I arrived near the border. It was soon dark and I decided to emain in the woods over night. The next morning at daylight I ven-

ured on and without being seen by the guards I crossed into Dutch territory. With a sigh of relief I arrived at the next town, Ven in Holland. Everywhere I was received in a

friendly manner. I observed that the Dutch people hated the German people as much as I did.

had a dagger plunged to the kilt in his After passing several months in Holland, where tens of thousands more He went down with a terrible cry German deserters lived. I made up my and crumpled up in agony on the mind to move farther away than that ground. I thrust the dagger into my from Germany for the arms of the Gerboot and seized the spade. There man government are long and its sples were new enemies all around and the are everywhere in most cases conscienceless criminals. I struck an enemy between the head

Some of my Dutch friends made me acquainted with sailors and these consented to smuggle me to America on their ship. When the ship departed I was placed in the coal bunkers and ar-Another adversary was nearby and rived after 14 days in New York, safe and well.

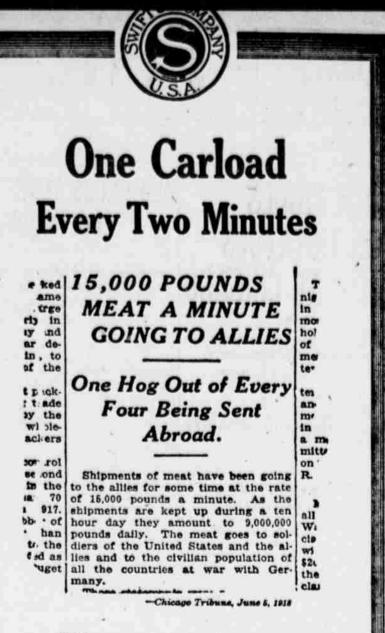
The first thing that struck me on ar-He struck me with his fist and the riving in the United States was the lood ran from my mouth and nose. wide latitude permitted German propa-We clenched. - My dagger was in my ganda.

Most of the German papers pub-Each of us held the other around the lished here were body and soul for the reast. He was not superior to me in kalser and tried dally to justify the strength yet he clung to me as tightly German fight for the German cause.

In this respect the government in Washington certainly went too far unour teeth. I still held the dagger but til it was realized that no concessions could be made to the Prussian government and that concessions made to Washington were nothing but deceitful While I was trying my best to find a way to kill him there was a terrible talk, sustained only by action when it served its interests of imperialism.

The promises which the German government made to Washington concerning the Lusitania case, the U-boat warfare and so forth, were nothing but decelt on the part of the Berlin government.

It was the desire to preserve peace My face was so swollen that the doc | for the American people which imtor could not tell whether or not my pelled President Wilson, again and again, not to declare war and if Amer-I was placed on a train for wounded lea fights today it has only kept faith men, bound for Germany, and was with its democratic principles and as-



These statements were made by a prominent representative of the United States Food Administration.

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The prisoners were assembled in Apremont. Several of them had come

from that town. Their families were still in their homes and many prisoners asked permission to visit them. I had occasion to witness such a visit in Apremont. Two reserves led one of the prisoners to the house, which he had pointed out as his. The prisoner's young wife was in the kitchen with her three children. We followed them into the house,

The woman turned pale as she suddenly saw her husband. They embraced. We went outside for we felt out of place there.

The woman had not had a letter from her husband for five months because the Germans were between her and her husband's army. He had been in the trenches for a month, realizing how nearby his wife and children were, yet unable to reach them and with no way of knowing whether they were alive or dead.

How he must have felt as the French shells flew over his head on their way to Apremont !

There was no way of knowing whether the glow in the sky caused by the burning of a house was furnished by his home or not. Everything became a torturing uncertainty and all of life was a hell.

Home again for a few hours; then away, a prisoner! At least he would be able to get word to his wife by letter through the field posts.

Finally he said good-by. His wife had nothing to give him, no laundry, no food.

Everything had been lost and she lived on the soldiers' bounty. She gave him her last money and he refused to take it. She accepted the money back.

It consisted of a few 5 and 10 pfennig pieces and some coppers, all she had.

Unable to endure this we took a coltection among ourselves. We made up more than 10 marks, which we gave to the young woman. She refused it at first, then looking at her husband, she took it and tried to kiss our hands.

When we refused to let her do this she ran to a store nearby and returned with cigars, tobacco, matches and sausage, which she gave to her husband.

She smiled perhaps for the first time in a long while.

This Village Had Changed Hands More Than Fifteen Times.

pect of having to go to that spot Scarcely had we crossed the heights when some shells burst behind us. The French artillery even singled out individuals. While Vauquois was in their possession they could co-ordinate the entire neighborhood. We understood land. now why this ash heap'had been contested for so bitterly.

We ran down hill till we came to Varennes. The southern section of the town had been wrecked by shells and fire. Many chimneys were all that was left standing of whole rows of houses. Soldiers everywhere collected scraps of metal which were transported to Germany. The church bells were loaded on wagons and sent away. All the copper, tin, brass and nickel which could be found was gathered.

The next morning we went into the trenches. We had to reach our posttion before daybreak, for with daylight the French kept all the approaches under fire. There was not much of a trench in Vauquois. All that could be seen was a single stone pile. Literally, there was not, in this town, one stone left upon another. The ruins of this village had changed hands more than fifteen times. When we arrived one-half of Vauquois was in German hands. The French were in possession of the highest points from which they could overlook the country for many miles.

In default of a trench we sought cover behind the stones, for it was impossible to dig trenches here, as the artillery leveled everything. The soldiers concealed themselves behind stone walls and fired. Artillery of all callber covered these ruins. Amid all this destruction lay an army of corpses, mostly German.

CHAPTER XVII.

We were of the opinion at first that this was only a temporary condition, but after a few days we saw a slaughter bordering on insanity undertaken again and again. By night and day it was always the same. Using Verdun as their base, the French constantly brought up new masses of troops. They had marshaled their heavy guns from the nearer Verdun forts by the use of field railways.

In the spring of 1915 both sides began an offensive of local, but of an intaken to a hospital in Dusseldorf. I arrived at Dusseldorf August 28 1915. My wound was not dangerous

14 days. Yet it required three weeks. During this time I made up my mine firmly that I would not murder any further the interests of Hohenzollern ism, that this war would mean the end of the Hohenzollerns and of Prussiat militarism. I decided to desert to Hol

CHAPTER XVIII.

I prevailed upon the authorities to grant me an eight-day furlough to visit my home and I took advantage of this to cross the Dutch border. I left my home under a pretence of intending to visit relatives, wearing civilian clothing. I bought a railroad ticket to Kaldenkirchen, a medium-sized town near the Dutch border. During my trip to Kaldenkirchen I had plenty of time to review all that had happened.

How different everything was after the first year of the war! My home town, once a lively country settlement, was now as calm as a graveyard. In this town, which had a population before the war of 3,000 souls, more than 40 had been killed and many others crippled. Food was very high with little to be had.

There was no enthusiasm for the war manifest anywhere. The people were downhearted, stunned.

It was the same in other cities. The longing for peace was universal yet no one talked of peace or expressed the desire for it.

One word spoken, which displeased the autocratic government, merited the severest punishment. That is how it is to be explained that the German people cannot force the Hohenzollerns into peace because the government, with assistance of the military, smothered every expression of peace with blood, even at that early date.

The present Prussian government will slaughter any German citizen to further its own interests in the same way that it attacked the innocent population of Beig.cm without regard. With a clean conscience and clean

bands! "Gott strafe England. Er ist strafe

Going through the streets this was heard right and left as a comment and reply.

To me, fresh from the front, this kind of greeting was unknown. Presently I learned the reason of

sisted the world in defensive war against the autocracy that is a constant menace for the world, which prepared and they expected I would be cured it for this war over several decades. With the entrance of America into the war the backbone of Prussian milltarism will be broken. The Hindenmore people at the order of and tt burgs and the Hohenzollerns are doomed. A victory for the allies will

be a victory for democracy and a vietory of the greatest majority socking the welfare of the human race. (THE END.)





pointed a member of the directing board of the Friends of France, the new international society formed for the promotion of closer rocial and intellectual relations between this country and France.

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