PREMATURE EXPLOSION COSTS LIVES OF BRAVE SOLDIERS

Three men were killed and ten others injured in a premature explosion of the charge in a 12-inch mortar gun at Fort Banks, Winthrop, Mass., Oct. 15.

All the dead and injured were members of the 89th company of coast artillery, commanded by Lieut. Lefort. Of the injured, Private Tomlinson is not expected to live. All the other injured are resting comfortably, and it is said that none is in a serious condition, injuries consisting principally of burns.

Never before in the history of Boston's modern coast defence was such a report heard. There was an ominous explosion, not so loud as that of a well regulated breech-loading rifle discharging its proper shot, but one to thrill the senses of the artillerists who heard it.

Immediately following this, the southwest pit of the mortar battery vomited forth a cloud of smoke and suffocating noxious gases. More than fifty men were thrown gasping in indescribable confusion for the moment beneath that cloud.

Fire call rang out shrilly its penetrating treble.

Instantly the fort was closed to all comers by cordon as impervious as wall of steel. "Litters!" shouter Sergeant Donnan, and the hospital squad ran for the flaming volcano. As the cloud of smoke lifted, even stern discipline could not restrain the emotions from a spectacle so appalling as that which greeted the comrades who hastened to succor.

It was but momentary, however, since Capt. Merrill, officer of the day, and Lieut. Lefort, acting in command of the gun detachments at the bottom of the pit, rallied the men who had been so close to death at gun practice. Within a few feet of the breech of mortar No. 3 lay the headless body of Sergt. George J. Nevins, the acting chief of the gun detachment in the absence of its regular sergeant. Close beside it was the terribly mangled body of Private Edward Higgins, whose duty as No. 1 man at the mortar had been to close and lock the breech and fix the primer for the firing.

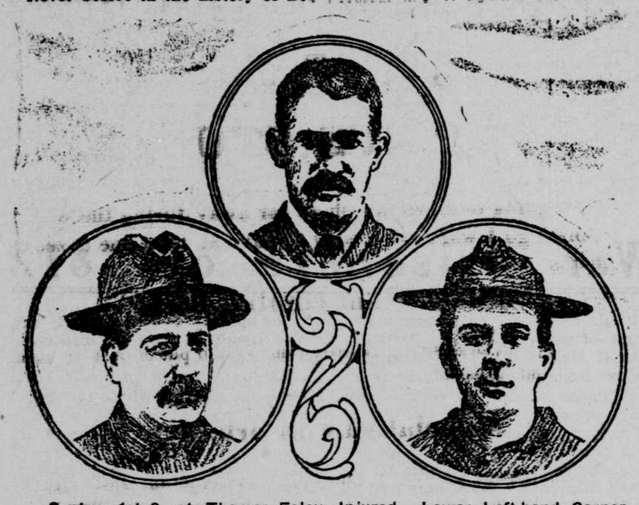
The right side of Higgins' head was blown completely away, the face itself being split almost exactly in two above the chin. His right arm was gone at the elbow and the body was in other ways shockingly lacerated. Yet the unfortunate man was still breathing, but only lived long enough to reach the hospital.

Nearly a dozen yards away, at the base of the solid parapet wall, lay the limp and blackened body of Private James W. Kelley who, as No. 3 on the mortar, was the powder man who placed the charge for the firing of the projectile within the cavity of the breech. Kelley had been blown through the air directly at the southwest parapet wall and struck with fearful impact against the solid concrete. His body and face were badly blackened and the man was evidently killed at once by concussion.

All around No. 3 mortar lay the bodies of the stunned and gasping members of its crew. Their blouses and other clothing were all on fire. Under command of the officers of the company at practice order was quickly restored and discipline at once resumed. Buckets were brought and water thrown upon the burning uniforms, and, as rapidly as possible, the litter bearers removed the injured.

One glance at the breech of the mortar told the story. The entire breech mechanism was gone. Crank, console and breech block were missing. After careful search it was found that the breech block, a solid cylinder of steel, grooved to fit the threads of the breech cavity, had been thrown back by some unexplainable premature explosion, and struck the muzzle of mortar No. 2 some yards in the rear, chipping out a big piece of steel from the rim; thence had rebounded almost at right angles, to be hurled across the space of the pit, striking the concrete wall on the same face that Kelley struck, and thence, deflected back again, in a slightly downward course, from its diminished energy, it tore a big hole out of the "racer," as the mortar platform is termed, and finally dropped almost exactly beneath the muzzle of the mortar to which it belonged.

The projectile, weighing nearly 800 pounds, was found remaining in the gun nearly in the position in which it had been placed for firing. Not a vestige remained of the silk bag containing its seventy-five pounds of powder for the charge required for the shot. The broken mechanism of the breech, crank and console were found dropped in the pit directly beneath the mortar.



Center—1st Sergt. Thomas Foley, Injured. Lower Left-hand Corner—Private Edward T. Higgins, Killed. Lower Right-Hand Corner—Corporal Arthur Bannister, Injured.

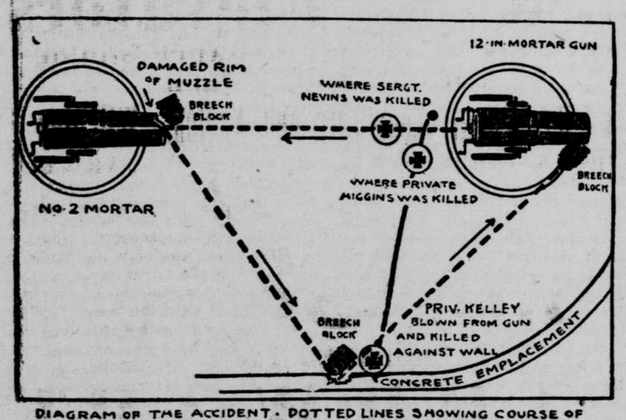


DIAGRAM OF THE ACCIDENT - DOTTED LINES SHOWING COURSE OF - BREECH BLOCK -

President to Hunt in Wyoming.

President Roosevelt will spend a few days hunting big game in Wyoming after the presidential campaign. He will be the guest of "Buffalo Bill". Several Englishmen also will be in the party. Col. Cody is now in England, and has written that he will return to American this month and will leave for the West with President Roosevelt about the middle of November. He says that the English members of the party are friends he has made while abroad, and that some of them are members of the nobility.

Honors Worthily Worn.

Few women have fitted into a new social sphere more easily than Mrs. Samuel Newhouse, wife of one of Colorado's richest men. This charming woman married Mr. Newhouse when he was poor, and she had to do her own cooking and washing. Now she travels in state; with two maids to take care of her wardrobe; but neither she nor her husband makes the slightest effort to conceal their early struggles. Mrs. Newhouse is said to own one of the finest strings of pearls in the world.—Chicago Chronicle.

Emperor Lives Frugally.

The Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria is a man of simple, frugal habits and a hard worker. He is an early riser, and for many years after ascending the throne he was up at 5 o'clock in the morning to begin his day's work after a breakfast of coffee and and bread and butter. The amount of work he is able to get through is amazing. For recreation he goes to one of his shooting boxes for a few days, wearing the Tyrolese costume and devoting himself entirely to the chase.

Works for Christian Homes.

Rev. William Colbert Detling of Cleveland has prepared an interesting service—that of dedicating a Christian home. He reasons that the home might be dedicated to Christian work quite as much as the church, and he has prepared a simple liturgical service with this in view. This Christian home dedicatory service, as he calls it, consists of an appropriate hymn, scripture reading and responsive service, in which the pastor pledges the home to the service of God. A prayer of dedication follows, and then the appropriate song, "Home, Sweet Home."

Should Be Interesting Book.

Edmond Duval, who for nearly half a century has managed the Monte De Piete in Paris, is about to retire from his position. It was as a message boy that he began his connection with this the greatest pawnshop in the world. He is now over 70 years old. While at the head of affairs there he succeeded in reducing the rate of interest from 9 to 7 per cent, his reforms having resulted in saving 19,000,000 francs to the republic. It is said M. Duval will write a book of reminiscences.

Early Excelled in Music.

Prof. Willy Hess, the Boston Symphony orchestra's new concert master, began his musical studies when six years old, and at the age of ten he was touring Holland and was looked upon as an infant prodigy.

Victoria's Seal Still in Use.

Though King Edward has now been on the throne for three years and eight months, there is as yet no general seal bearing his effigy and titles, the great seal still in use being that of Queen Victoria.

AS THE WORLD REVOLVES

DEATH CALLS EX-GOV. CORNELL.

Former Chief Executive of New York Passes Away at 72.

Alonzo B. Cornell, former governor of New York, died at his home in Ithaca last week of Bright's disease after an illness of several months. He was a son of Ezra Cornell, the founder of Cornell university. Educated at the Ithaca academy, young Cornell at the age of 14 became a telegraph operator, having been influenced to embark in this work by reason of his father's connection with Prof. S. F. B. Morse in the original development of the magnetic telegraph. Beginning at the bottom, he rapidly pushed himself upward, and was promoted from one post of responsibility to another until, after the experience of more than twenty years in the various grades of telegraph service, Mr. Cornell in 1868 was elected a director of the Western Union Telegraph company, a position which he retained until 1899. He was also interested in lake transportation and banking. Upon the organization of the Republican party he became affiliated with it and soon took a prominent place in the party counsels. For many years prior to his election as governor he served as chairman of the New York Republican state committee.

ALONZO B. CORNELL

PASSENGERS GOT OUT PAPER.

Delayed by Flood, They Passed Time in Unique Way.

"The Daily Washout," Volume 1, No. 1, was published at San Marcial, N. M., on Oct. 1, 1904, by the passengers of Santa Fe train No. 22, running between El Paso and Kansas City. The paper will be treasured by passengers delayed by the recent floods in the southwest. It contains a list of the passengers on the train, including persons from points as far south as the City of Mexico, as far north as St. Paul and from San Francisco and New York. One of the personals, which is but a fair sample of the rest, says: "Mr. Dick and Mr. Lester, the 'Gold Dust Twins,' will give a barnstorming show at the opera house this evening." Another one reads: "Somebody who has seen the Primm trunk in the baggage car has started the report that Mr. and Mrs. Primm are 'enjoying' their wedding trip. When approached by our reporter, Mr. Primm coughed and Mrs. Primm said: 'Are we, Jamie, dear?'"

ROCKHILL GOING TO CHINA.

Will Succeed Edwin H. Conger as United States Minister.

William Woodville Rockhill, who will succeed Edwin H. Conger as United States minister to China, has been director of the Bureau of American Republics since 1899. He entered the diplomatic service in 1884, when he was appointed second secretary at Pekin, being promoted to secretary in 1885, and being made charge d'affaires in Korea in 1886. Mr. Rockhill traveled extensively in the East, and upon his return was made minister to Greece, Roumania and Servia, and also has served as first assistant secretary of state. He is 50 years of age.

WILLIAM W. ROCKHILL

English Officer's High Descent.

An English officer is equally descended from King Charles I. and from Oliver Cromwell. By the marriage of Lord Walter Montagu-Douglas-Scott, the Duke of Buccleuh's late brother, with Anna Maria, daughter of the late Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp, his son, Capt. Francis Walter Scott, is so descended. The Cradock Hartopps derive from Mrs. Fleetwood, a daughter of the lord protector. Her daughter married Sir John Hartopp, who represented the county of Leicester in parliament.

Gladstone's Powers of Memory.

Many stories are told of the tenacity of Vernon-Harcourt's memory, but in this power he was excelled by Gladstone, who was always astonished at anybody's inability to recall the time and place of any incident of their lives. Once, appealing to Earl Granville as to how the latter had voted on a certain long-forgotten bill, he was astonished by the reply that the matter had escaped memory. "You have forgotten!" exclaimed Gladstone. "Why, it is only forty years ago!"

THE WEEKLY PANORAMA

NITROGEN FOR THE SOIL.

Discovery Bound to Have Beneficial Effect on Human Life.

Vaccination against smallpox has saved a countless number of lives. Vaccination of the soil bids fair to have an even more beneficial effect on human life by increasing the food supply that can be obtained from impoverished soil. The process is the result of the inventive genius of Dr. George T. Moore of the United States Department of Agriculture, and how it operates is described in the Century Magazine.

The new vaccination is not a method for the prevention of a disease of the soil, but rather for supplying the soil with elements in which it is deficient. It is a process by which the soil can be made to take a big supply of nitrogen from the air at an expense that is almost nothing at all, thus obviating the necessity of using costly fertilizers.

Some time ago German scientists discovered that the nodules on the roots of leguminous plants, such as beans, peas, clover and alfalfa, were really colonies of milions of bacteria, whose activity consisted in taking nitrogen from the air and accumulating. In soils that do not contain such bacteria the legumes will not grow at all, but where the bacteria abound the nodules accumulate very much more nitrogen than the legumes need, with the result that the soil is enriched for a crop of a different kind, such as corn or wheat, the next year. That is the scientific basis of rotation of crops, though nobody knew it before.

Now what Dr. Moore has done is to devise a way to grow these bacteria by the billion and fix them so that they will keep in a dried state for months. He makes little cakes of them which the farmers can use on their bad soil, and the cost to the government is less than a cent an acre. He has patented his process and made a free gift of the patent to the American people.

Experiments show that vaccinated soil will produce from eight to twenty times as heavy crops of legumes as unvaccinated soil will produce. Moreover, the crop of cotton, or corn, or wheat the year after vaccination will be from fifty per cent to three or four hundred per cent larger than it would otherwise have been.

The farmers on the worn-out land of New England have special and immediate reason for thanking Dr. Moore for the work that he has done, and the demand for his bacteria cake is sure to be heavy the coming year.

EX-QUEEN OF SPAIN DEAD.

Sudden Demise of the Sister of the Present King.

The Infanta Maria De Las Mercedes, princess of the Asturias, sister of King Alfonso and wife of Prince Charles of Bourbon, gave birth to a daughter Oct 16 and died next day. The princess of the Asturias was queen of Spain till the birth of her brother, the present king. She was born in 1880 and was married in February, 1901, to Prince Charles of Bourbon. They had two sons, Alfonso, born in November, 1901, and Fernando Maria Alfonso, born in February, 1903.

PRINCESS OF ASTURIAS

LEARNED WHO MORGAN WAS.

Knowledge Somewhat Astonishes Ocean Liner Official.

As the Atlantic liner Cedric was about to sail from New York the other day the ship's steward informed the purser that Mr. Morgan had given orders to be notified five minutes before the gang plank was hauled in. "And who the deuce is Morgan," asked the purser. "Blimed if I know," answered the steward, hurrying away. Just then he saw an official of the line and learned from him who Mr. Morgan is. With a frightened look he dashed back to the purser and whispered: "Oh, I say, Mr. Purser. I've just 'eard 'o his 'ere Mr. Morgan is. Blessed if he ain't the howner of the bloomin' ship—Pierpont Morgan, you know." The purser was careful to give Mr. Morgan the desired information.

Praises American Law Schools.

Prof. James Brice of England, author of "The American Commonwealth," has begun a series of lectures before the Columbia law school. In the first of these lectures he praised the American law schools, saying: "No part of your system of education here in the United States strikes visitors more forcibly than the efficient means provided for the education of lawyers. Your schools are much better than any in England, and that is because the Americans realize that there is a science of law."

Bismarck's Sons Died Young.

Both of Bismarck's sons died while still compartively young men, "Bill" Bismarck having died in 1901. The great chancellor's only surviving child is his daughter, the Countess Von Rantzau. Prince Herbert Birmarck was forced to give up his career in the army when a lieutenant on account of the severe wound he received at the battle of Mars-le-Tour, Aug. 16, 1870. When he died, however, he held the rank of major general on the inactive list.

CHINESE MADE EASY

The hurried bachelor who exchanges a little piece of Manila paper, covered with cabalistic and terrifying blots and strokes, for his shirts and collars in a Chinese laundry, has an inherent conviction that Chinese is the most difficult language to acquire. If he ever does give it a thought, it is more than probable that he has satisfied himself that, given the brief space of 1,000 years and a comfortable residence on a desert island, so that his attention would not be distracted, he might learn to count up to 100 in the language in which is enshrined the analects of Confucius and other masterpieces of Eastern literature. To be told that there is a way by which "Chinese is made easy" is likely to prove too much for his credulity.

While undeniably there would be a fascination in being able to know what those strange combinations of strokes on a Chinese laundry ticket mean, yet no one is likely to take up the study of a language to gratify a satisfaction so unfruitful. That there is a genuine value in a knowledge of the Chinese language is vouched for by Dr. Walter Brooks Brouner, of Columbia university, and Fung Yuet Mow, Chinese missionary in New York City, in their volume, just published by the Macmillan company, entitled "Chinese Made Easy."

In explanation of the comparative ease with which spoken Chinese may be acquired, for it must be understood that there is a difference between the spoken and the written languages, take, for example, the word hand. In German we must remember whether the word hand be of masculine, feminine or neuter gender; in French, Spanish or Italian we must recall whether the word be of masculine or feminine gender; whereas in Chinese, as in English, all we need burden our memory with is the word hand, which, in Cantonese Chinese, is sow. Once learned, the word sow is irrevocably fixed in our memory. The simplicity of such a language is at once self-evident when we are told that words have neither gender nor declension; that verbs have no conjugation (and may be either active, transitive, neuter, or even casual); that the language is composed mainly of monosyllabic words, which are really root ideas; and that a word may be used either as a noun, verb, adverb or conjunction, depending simply on the context or as the exigencies of the surrounding words demand.

The Chinese have never constructed a grammar for their language as we understand a grammar, but the language does adhere to certain forms in the use of speech, which are necessary to speak and write the language correctly. The Chinese language is without an alphabet, but for the purposes of grading, the number of strokes in a sign, which is a word, to some extent fix its place in the lessons, which begin with "yot," which means "one," and the sign for which is a single horizontal stroke. When it is considered that some English words contain a large number of letters, there are few Chinese word signs with over twenty strokes, although the word-sign "Jarn," meaning "to praise," contains twenty-six, but if it is used as seldom by the Chinese as it is by the English-speaking peoples it is no hardship to write it.

To express the seasons and years it will be found the Chinese are poetical. Next year is "bright year;" New Year's day is very properly, if not elegantly, "Begin day;" the four seasons, "see-see," is Four Times; last month is "up month," and in this word will be found what is known as a "classifier." The sounds for up month are "say-ung ko yut;" the "ko" is a classifier, which is used in a manner similar to our "a length of rope," a "piece of business," etc., and has also its phonetic value.

For the word "not" there are several variations—"ung-high" equals not is; "ung" equals not; "mo" equals not and "but" equals not. The word "high" is used according to the context for either "is," "it is" or "are." The word "have" is sometimes inferred in a sentence and not expressed, as "I not wine cup," meaning "I have no wine glass;" but to express "I have wine" or "I have" anything else, the word "yow," meaning "have," is used. If "I have not" anything the "have" is omitted.

"I," "me" and "my" are all represented by one word, "ugaw;" to say "mine" the possessive "kay" is added to the "ugaw," and it becomes "ugaw-kay." The word "very" is awkwardly expressed by "sup-fun" or ten part, although there is the equivalent "jo-e." Men are "male persons," the plural is shown by the number of men and not by any addition excepting the classifier. Women are "female person." The tenses are represented by a sign, "He has gone away" being rendered "He go" and sign of past tense; thus "ko-e hoo-e he-oo (past tense signu) lar." The query is represented by several different signs, "may" and "nay" being the most common ones.

A birthday in Chinese is a "live day," or sarn yot. When the name of a foreigner is to be expressed, it is done so phonetically. Thus Washington, whose name is more familiar to Chinese than is generally credited, is expressed by the sounds whar sun dun, which is fairly close. The characters used to write these sounds mean beauty prosper and the verb dun, which means to bow the head. Washington's birthday becomes in Chinese literally "Beauty prosper to bow the head live day," which does not sound very impressive, but the Chinese appreciate the real meaning.

The word this is always expressed as now in Chinese. For instance, this morning is "now morning," or, in Chinese, "kum chee-oo." Once thoroughly grasped the use of the Chinese verb is not nearly so difficult as is the verb in other languages. The Chinese verbs express the idea only and undergo no change of inflection on account of tense or mood. Consequently, there is nothing like a conjugation to be remembered. To express the time of action other words are added to the verb, which by their presence give an indication of the exact mood or tense. There are the verbs ending in the sign equivalent to "gee," which means to dwell, to live in, to rest or to stop. Thus to sit in a carriage is "chow gee mar chay," meaning "sit to rest horse car," the in being understood.

In writing Chinese one has first to understand there are 214 radicals, arranged according to the number of strokes required to make them, which is, in a sense, equivalent to being alphabetically arranged in English. There are six styles of Chinese writing. First, the fanciful "sun shu," a form found in bronze tablets, on porcelains, etc.; second, the "die shu," or the plain style. This square form of writing was formerly used for official purposes. Third, the "guy shu," or pattern style, the model of good writing. Fourth, the "harn shu," a stiff "running" hand, used in business. Fifth, the "cho shu," or free running hand, an abbreviation of the "harn shu," or a kind of shorthand, which is not always intelligible to an educated Chinese, and sixth, the "soong shu," the elegant form, the characters used in printing.

Chinese characters are also divided into the hieroglyphic, significative, ideographic, antithetic, metaphorical and phonetic. The names very aptly describe these forms, all being the surscribe of ancient forms which have been modernized, and bear only a slight resemblance to their originals —Philadelphia Ledger.

Artistic Menu Stands.

Artistic menu stands are always acceptable novelties, and some little Japanese ones greatly admired at a luncheon the other day could easily be copied and made at home by clever fingers. These consisted of the ordinary plain cardboard stands surmounted by small Japanese tissue paper covered hoops. These hoops had burst to allow the passage of the head and shoulders of the daintiest little Japanese dolls. A little thin wire had been put inside one sleeve, so that thus stiffened it could project. In some cases the little people held tiny branches of almond blosson, sometimes miniature lanterns on the smallest of sticks, or else little fans were used. All the body below the waist was cut off to avoid a clumsy and top-heavy effect, and the edges of the dress were neatly gummed behind at the back of the stand. They were charming.

Deception in Textiles.

The amount of deception that is practiced in the manufacture of all kinds of textiles is far greater than most people have any conception of. There are very few heavyweight woolen cloths that are free from such substances as shoddy or cotten. They serve there a useful purpose of giving weight and warmth to the garment at a comparatively low cost, without detracting from its outward appearance and possible richness. Shoddy is the article mostly depended on for heavyweight goods, but for the lighter weight goods cotton is the thing, because it can be spun to a finer thread. —London Laundry Record.

Excitement in East Africa.

There is no lack of excitement along the line of the Uganda, East Africa, railway. At Nairobi, one of the principal stations, the postmaster found a lion on his front stoop one morning; several natives and more than one white officer along the road have been eaten by lions; on one occasion an engine could hardly make its way through miles of locusts on the track.

Not That Illustrious.

The editor of a New York magazine was talking the other day about the late Frank Norris, author of "The Pit," and a half dozen other strong novels.

"While Norris was still at Harvard," he said, "he sent me a striking essay on Beaumont and Fletcher. I accepted it, and a litle later Norris came on to New York for a week.

"During that week innumerable changes in his work occurred to him, and three or four times a day he hurried to my office to add a paragraph about Beaumont or to cut out a page about Fletcher from the manuscript. His enthusiasm amused me, but the clerk who had to get his proofs grumbled and growled considerably over the trouble he was causing.

"One day as I was returning from my lunch I saw Norris hurry out of the building. The clerk sat in my office, and I said to him:

"'Anybody been in, John?'

"'Yes,' said the clerk, 'that troublesome chap, Beaumont or Fletcher, whichever his name is.'"

Work of Comedie Francaise.

In the Figaro of last week were published some interesting statistics relating to the dramatic fare presented at the Comedie Francaise since its opening. From 1680 to 1903 the works of Moliere received 20,949 representations. Racine came next with 6,337, and Corneille with 4,757. The returns for Regnard, Voltaire, Marivaux and Beaumarchais during the same period are, respectively, 5,282, 3,950, 2,445 and 1,196. The most popular play in the Moliere repertory is "Le Medecin Malgre Lui." With regard to Racine and Corneille the most frequently staged works were "Phedre" and "Le Cid."—Pall Mall Gazette.

Military Chefs Compete.

A Russian prince, the late Prince Oldenberg, instituted a competition for military chefs. Each regiment sends two cooks, and the successful competitors receive money prizes, watches and other things. At the last competition, which took place at the great military camp of Krasno Selo, there were gathered 40,000 men of the Russian army.