

# WRECKAGE-STREWN BATTLEFIELDS LOOK AS IF SWEEPED BY CYCLONE

By C. W. WILLIAMS.

Paris.—With several other representatives of American newspapers I was permitted to pass several days in "the zone of military activity" on credentials obtained at the personal request of Ambassador Herrick, that we might describe the destruction caused by the Germans in unfortified towns. Although I have given a pledge to say nothing concerning the movement of the troops or of certain points visited, I am permitted now to send a report of a part of my experiences.

We crossed the entire battlefield of the Marne, passed directly behind the lines of the battle on the Aisne, accidentally getting under fire for an entire afternoon and lunching in a hotel to the orchestra of bursting shells, one end of the building being blown away during the bombardment.

We witnessed a battle between an armored French monoplane and a German battery, and also had the experience of being accused of being German spies by two men wearing the English uniform, who, on failing to account for their own German accent, were speedily taken away under guard with their "numbers up," as the French commandant expressed what awaited them.

### Likens Battle to Cyclone.

On account of our exceptional credentials we were able to see more actual war than many correspondents, who, when they learned that permits to get to the front were not forthcoming, went anyway, usually falling into the hands of the military authorities. Getting arrested has been the chief business, of the war correspondents in this war, even our accidental view of the fighting being sufficient to cause our speedy return to Paris under parole.

Going over the battlefield of the Marne, we found the battle had followed much the same tactics as a cyclone, in that in some places nothing, not even the haystacks, had been disturbed, while in others everything, the villages, roads and fields, had been utterly devastated by shells.

We talked with the inhabitants of every village and always heard the same story—that during occupation the Germans had offered little trouble to the civilians and had confined their activities to looting and wasting the provisions; also that when retreating they had destroyed all the food they were unable to carry.

### Fire Baptism in Church.

Our baptism of fire appropriately came while we were in a church. At noon of the second day we motored into a deserted village and were stopped by a sentry, who acknowledged our credentials, but warned us if we intended to proceed to beware of bullets. But there was no hostile sound to alarm us.

As we drove carelessly over the brow of a hill where the road dipped down a valley into the town we were in direct line with the German fire, as great holes in the ground and fallen trees testified.

It is a wonder our big motor car was not an immediate mark. On the way we noticed a church steeple shot completely off so, after finding an inn, where the proprietor came from the cellar and offered to guard our car and prepare luncheon, we decided first to examine the church. The inn-keeper explained that we had come during a lull in the bombardment, but the silent, deserted place lulled all sense of danger.

### Shell Hits Sanctuary.

The verger showed us over the church and we were walking through the ruined nave when suddenly we heard a sound like the shrill whistling of the wind.

"It begins again," our conductor said simply.

As the speech ended we heard a loud boom and the sound of falling masonry as the shell struck the far end of the building.

We hurried to the hotel, the shells screaming overhead. We saw the buildings tumbling into ruins, glass falling like fine powder, and remnants of furniture hanging grotesquely from scraps of masonry.

All my life I had wondered what would be the sensation if I ever was under fire—would I be afraid? To my intense relief I suddenly became fatalistic. I was under fire with a vengeance, but instead of being afraid I kept saying to myself:

"Being afraid won't help matters; besides, nothing will happen if we just keep close to the walls and away from the middle of the streets."

### Accusers Taken as Spies.

On the way we met two men in English uniforms, who later denounced us as spies. We halted them and they replied that they had been cut off from their regiment and were now fighting with the French. Just as luncheon was announced eight soldiers filed into the hotel, arrested us and marched us before the commandant, who saw that our papers were all right, but suggested that on account of the dangerous position we leave as soon as possible. We asked permission to finish our luncheon.

It was lucky that we were arrested then—before the accusation that we were spies—for when that question arose there was no doubt in the mind of the commandant concerning us, so our accusers' charge merely reacted upon themselves.

### Part of Hotel Wrecked.

During the episode of arrest there was another lull in the bombardment, which began again as we were seated

at luncheon. All through the meal the shells whistled and screamed overhead, and the dishes rattled constantly on the table.

When the meal was over the proprietor called us to witness what had happened to the far wing of the hotel. It was demolished.

"Alert!" had just been sounded and the soldiers were running through the streets. We ran out in time to see a building fall half a block away, completely filling the street by which we entered the town an hour earlier.

In a few minutes we heard the sharp crackle of infantry about half a mile away and had a sudden desire to get away before the automobile retreat was cut off. Just then we heard the sound of an aero engine overhead. It was flying so low that through a glass we could easily see the whirling propeller.

### Germans Fire at Aviator.

The machine was mounted with a rapid-fire gun, which was trying to locate the German gunners, who immediately abandoned the destruction of the town in an attempt to bring it down.

For ten minutes we saw shells bursting all about it. At times it was lost in smoke, but when the smoke cleared away there was the monoplane still blazing away, always mounting to a higher level and finally disappearing toward the French lines.

There was another lull in the cannonade and we were permitted to pass down the street near a river, where, by peering around a building we could see where the German batteries were secreted in the hills. We were warned not to get into the street which led to the bridge, as the Germans raked that street with their fire if a person appeared. We then took advantage of a lull in the firing and departed to the south at 70 miles an hour, to beat the shells if any were aimed our way as we crossed the rise in the hill.

### Shells Strike 100 Years Apart.

We passed the night at a village where considerable execution had been done by German shells. We saw one curious effect of them. In a historic building near the city hall there was a shell imbedded in the wall with a plate fixed beneath it showing it struck there in the year 1814. Just next to it was an unexploded shell of 100 years after sticking in the wall.

We again struck out toward the battle line, but when we were within sound of the firing the authorities decided we had seen enough of war and detained us for two days as guests of a regimental staff, which was quartered in a courtyard. There we were privileged to see how the French soldiers lived and became such hardened fighters as they were proving themselves to be. We ate with them and slept with them in the straw until orders came to send us to Paris. As we were leaving our cowardly authorities grabbed another group of correspondents, four in number, headed by Richard Harding Davis. They were ordered to accompany us to Paris instead of passing several days in the straw sampling hardtack and army fare.

### Tells of Horrors of War.

London.—The Standard correspondent, F. St. Beaman, writing from a town in France, says:

"The fearful horrors of war can never be grasped by seeing the carefully tended wounded who come back to England and hearing their tales, however gruesome, while there is scarcely a day in any of the French towns near the armies that does not bring with it some live terror from the front. One example will suffice to point out this truth. Four days ago the hospital corps and volunteers were notified that a convoy was expected. Towards midnight it arrived, bringing French and German wounded. The latter were abandoned by the Germans in Senlis when they retreated after setting fire to the town.

"We had had many trains of wounded before, and all necessary arrangements were made as usual, but when this convoy arrived even the most hardened had to summon all fortitude to the task of emptying the carriages. When a man had a broken leg or arm or a bullet through his lungs the skilled ambulance staff soon had him comfortably backed, but here were human vestiges so mangled that it was difficult to find a place to touch them without causing screams and moans. An insufferable charnal house stench pervades the whole night air.

### Laid Out Four Days.

"Most of the wounded had lain for four days and nights where they had fallen before being picked up, and had not yet had their wounds examined, much less dressed. Under the burning sun and myriad of flies and under later rains they had been left to suffer the torture of pain, hunger and thirst until it was a marvel they still breathed.

"The state of their wounds cannot be guessed and does not bear description. It was three o'clock in the morning before they could be disposed of in hospitals. Even 24 hours later all had had first dressing. The Germans were far the worst cases, for the French fire seemed to have been much more destructive, and when it does not kill outright ravages horribly. After four days many died, and we had to shift them again, such of them as could be moved."

## FLOUR RATE CASE REOPENED.

U. G. Powell to Appear Before Interstate Commission.

U. G. Powell, rate expert for the state railway commission, will go to Chicago October 6 to appear before the interstate commerce commission which is to reopen the Nebraska-Kansas flour rate case under section 4 of the application of the railroads. It is a reopening of the fight made by Pacific coast millers to get Nebraska and Kansas wheat to be mixed in the making of flour and to keep Nebraska and Kansas flour out of the coast market. The interstate commerce commission in deciding another rate case called the inter-mountain rate case, held that rates to the coast could not exceed the rates to the intermediate points from Nebraska and Kansas points. The rate to Reno was plus the rate to San Francisco, Mr. Powell fought the original coast rate case and is thoroughly familiar with all phases of the situation. He contends that the spread between flour and wheat rates to the coast was too much and resulted in keeping middle west flour out of the Pacific coast market, but permitted the shipment of middle west wheat to the coast, there to be made into flour and shipped back east in competition with Nebraska and Kansas flour.

At the close of a brief hearing the state railway commission decided not to amend its previous order requiring the Union Pacific Railroad company to give additional train service on the Spalding branch. Chairman Clarke announced that the order would become effective October 11 and if at the end of ninety days the company desires to do so it can file an application for a modification of the order. The company desired the commission to modify the order by making it a trial order for ninety days. Attorney N. H. Loomis for the company was present to make such a plea. J. R. Shields of Fullerton said the earnings on the Spalding branch were higher than on some other branches and justified additional service. The company announced that it would try a motor car and if the traffic justifies, a steam train will be put on. A record of receipts and expenditures will be kept for ninety days.

The state railway commission has closed a hearing of the application of the Nebraska Portland Cement company of Superior for reduced freight rates on cement. The company is prepared to ship the output of a cement mill at Superior, but alleges it cannot compete with companies outside of Nebraska on account of high rates in Nebraska. It proposes a rate of 7 cents from Superior to Omaha and a rate of 8½ cents from Superior to Lincoln.

In reference to the controversy now on between different factions of parents and teachers interested in the methods of instruction of the Omaha School for the Deaf, Chairman Holcomb of the board of control has announced the board decided to give the oral system a thorough trial.

Children who show no aptitude for it will not lack facilities for learning to communicate by the old-fashioned method.

Department Commander O. H. Durand and Assistant Adjutant General A. M. Trimble have issued an order to G. A. R. posts calling their attention to the second Friday in October as patriotic day and asking that it be observed by public meetings. The woman's relief corps, ladies of the grand army, sons and daughters of veterans, and Spanish American veterans have been asked to join in the exercises.

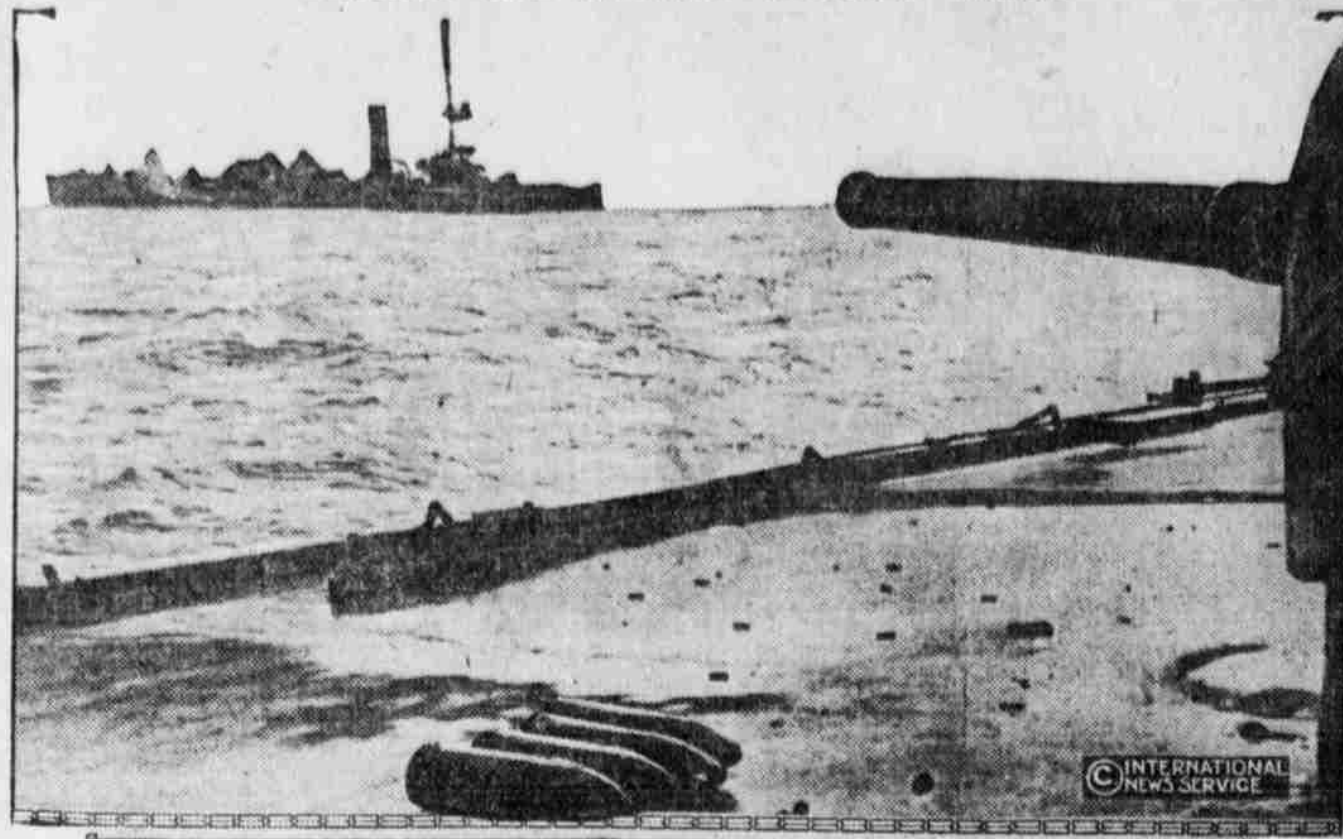
The state railway commission has heard testimony from officers of the Kearney Electric & Water Powers company for permission to issue \$25,000 of bonds. The company desires to issue bonds for the purpose of paying debts and purchase of additional equipment. The commission's accountants who have examined the company's books have reported favorably.

Seven hundred and eighteen new uniforms will soon be on display at the state prison. Following several meetings between the board of control and the warden, it is announced that each of the three hundred and fifty-nine will have a suit for everyday and one for Sunday. The suits will be of wool.

The department of weights and measures connected with the Pure Food commission will begin this week testing scales and weights at the state institutions. The law requires that this test shall be made once a year and for that purpose the work will begin immediately.

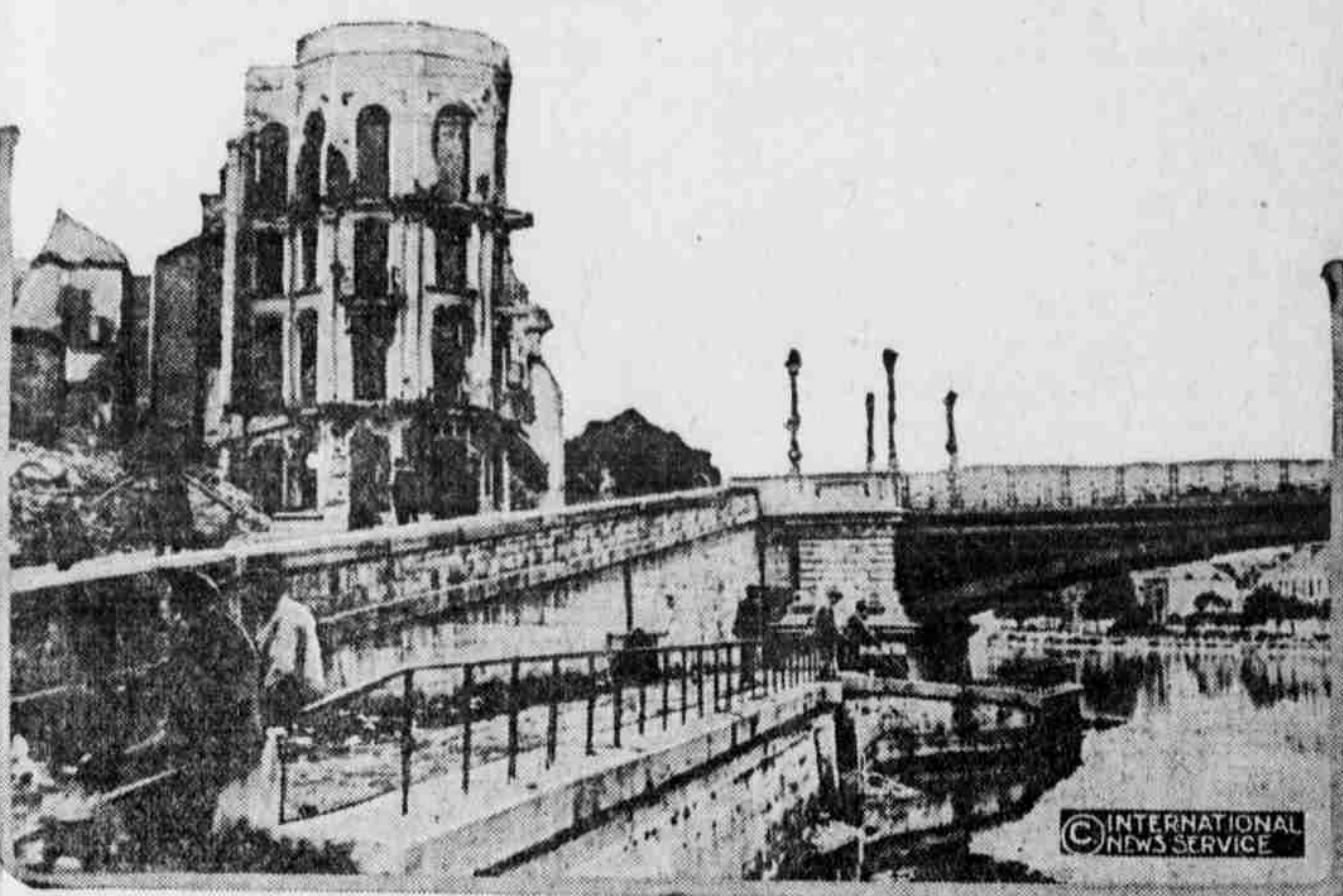
Articles of incorporation filed with the secretary of state say the purpose of the organization is for the organization of the various spiritualist churches and societies of the state of Nebraska, the United States and the world into one general body to facilitate the promulgation of the religion and philosophy of spiritualism, to uphold such principles of ethics and culture as will assist herein and give unto the world such assistance as will bring to it in a pure and simple manner the truth of spiritualism.

## SINKING THE GERMAN CRUISER MAINZ



This photograph, taken from a British cruiser, shows the German cruiser Mainz sinking during the naval engagement of Helgoland. Her two funnels and two of her masts had been shot away.

## SCENE IN DINANT AFTER ITS DESTRUCTION



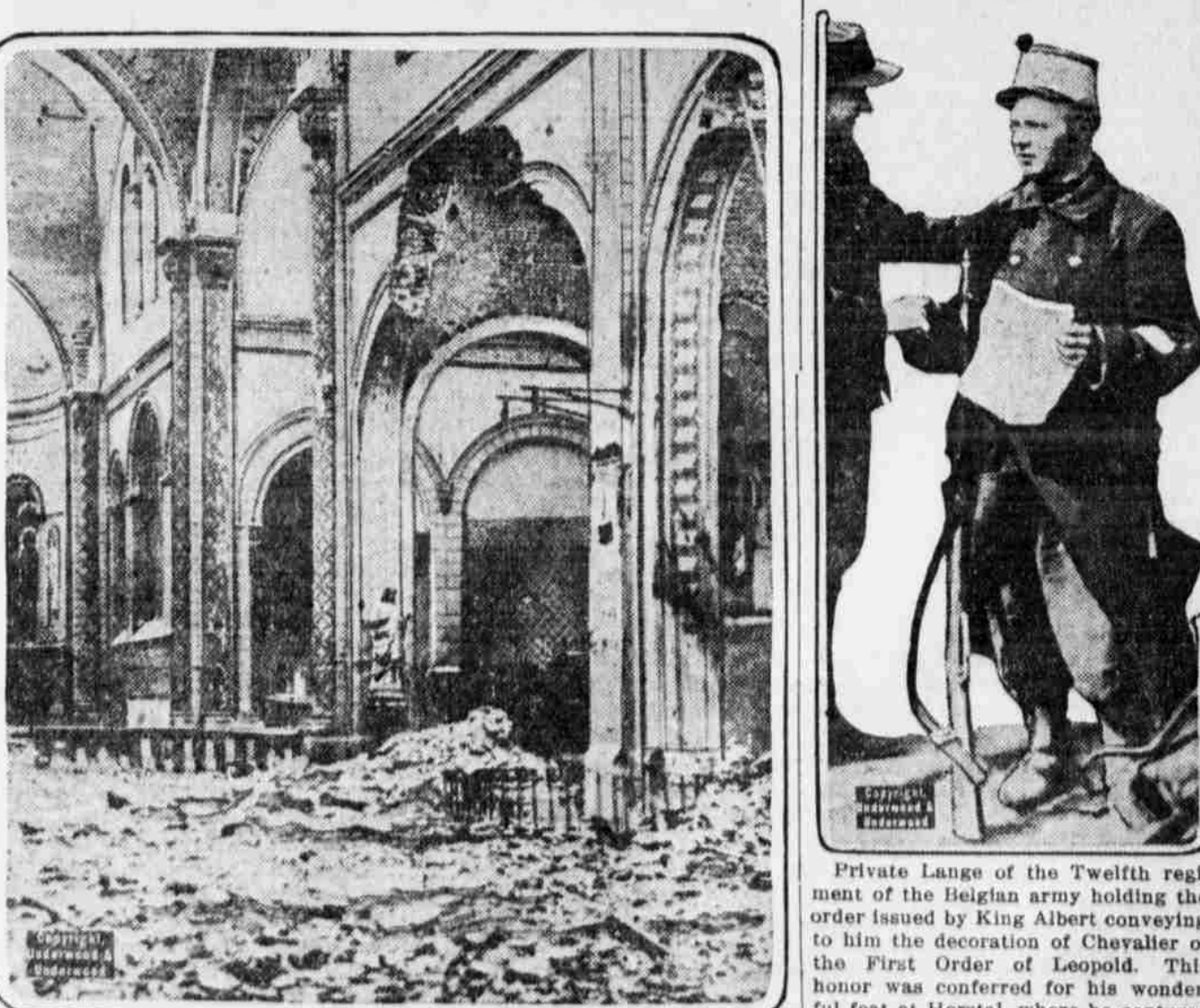
Part of Dinant as it appeared after the Germans had shelled it. The building on the left was a large hotel and like all the other structures in the city, was destroyed. Near the bridge are seen some German soldiers fishing.

## BRITISH HIGHLANDERS ON THE FIRING LINE



Photograph taken during one of the battles in northern France, showing Highlanders on the firing line, the enemy being concealed in the woods.

## CATHEDRAL OF MONS IN RUINS



The interior of the cathedral at Mons after the Germans had shelled and occupied that city.

## PROUD PRIVATE LANGE



Private Lange of the Twelfth regiment of the Belgian army holding the order issued by King Albert conveying to him the decoration of Chevalier of the First Order of Leopold. This honor was conferred for his wonderful feat at Horstal, where he captured the flag of the Ninetieth German infantry, killing a colonel and 14 soldiers in the encounter.