"SHELLPROOF MACK"

A Gripping Fighting Story by a Fighting Yankee Boy Who Served Seventeen Months in the Trenches, Buried Alive in Mud, Gassed and Wounded Three Times.

A Common Soldier's Recital of Thrilling Adventures in the Terrific Struggle for World Democracy

Open Fighting at Messines Ridge Where Thousands of Men Were Slain

By ARTHUR JAMES M'KAY.

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FOREWORD.

The things that are set down here are written from the standpoint of the plain private soldier—one who went as a volunteer, it is true, but who hated the whole vile business of war as any private soldier must, and who was glad when his work was done.

If this book has any value it is because it is a true telling of the things that are, over there, and because it is without what the British Tommy calls "camouflage."

This book lacks, no doubt, everything that would be put into such a story by a professional writer—the brilliancy of expression and the vividness of narrative; but if it is without those it is because it is the tale of a soldier and not of a war correspondent.

CHAPTER I.

Boyhood.

Once, when I was in training in England, a cockney sergeant came up to me and said:

"Hi sye, took, wot's yer number?"

Mine was a high one and I started to give it to him slow, "one—seven—four—" like that. He evidently thought I was trying to have him on and got very shirty over it.

"Ow," says he, "so yer one o' them blinkin', swankin' Yanks, are yer?"

That riled me and I came back. "That's what I am and I can back it up."

"Can, can yer? Let's see yer," he invited.

With that I poked him on the nose. That was a crime of course and I was on the mat with the company commander the next day. I might have got a lot of wholesome punishment for it and ought to have; but I didn't. The officer was a decent fellow.

"What are you?" he asked. "Irish?"

"Partly," I answered. "But mostly Scotch."

"Ah," he said, "that accounts for it. The Scotch are half argument and half fight. I'm part Scotch myself." And with that he gave me a light punishment.

Of Scotch Descent.

I have thought since that that officer knew what he was talking about. It's the little bit of Scotch in me that has influenced me many a time through life.

I was born in New York and was christened Arthur James McKay. I retained that name until I went into the theatrical profession in 1906, when I took the name of Arthur Mack, the label I wore when I enlisted in the British army. But I am getting ahead of my story.

When I was a small boy my people moved to Northamton, Massachusetts, which was home until I struck out into the world for myself.

My boyhood was pretty much like that of any other American youngster. I was fond of all outdoor sports except swimming and I would drown today in six feet of water—or less.

In spite of my athletic tendencies I was supposed to be not very strong and the fact that I was always small added to the impression. So it happened that my family had it all planned that I was to have a very elaborate education and go into the priesthood.

Right there the Scotch in me asserted itself. Because somebody wanted me to be one thing, I straightway decided that I wanted to be the opposite. I settled it in my own mind that I was going to be a soldier. I fancy that if the folks had wanted me to go to West Point I would have insisted upon a profession.

War College Sprinter.

Anyhow, I flatly refused to study in the high school and left. The year following I did consent to go to Williston academy, where I devoted more time to athletics than to anything else and made a fair reputation as a runner. I ran fast enough to get beaten against such men as Schick, Hubbard, Piper Donovan and Bart Sullivan.

I did fairly well in my studies at Williston and after one year took the examinations for Holy Cross and Norwick university, both of which I passed. I took the exams for Holy Cross to please my parents; but I knew where I was going. Norwich had, and I think still has, the reputation of being one of the finest military schools in the country. I still had soldiering on the brain.

During the summer before entering Norwich I became a professional runner under an assumed name and was a member of the W. A. Bailey hose team which made a world's record for the 300 yards. Hose-team running in those days was a very popular sport in the western part of the state. I competed a good many times on this team that summer and was speedy on my feet.

More than once during the two years I was in France I looked back upon those footracing days and wished that I could run as fast with ninety pounds of equipment on my back.

CHAPTER II.

College Life.

In the fall of 1903 I entered Norwich university. On arrival at Northfield I happened to run onto an old chum, one Biddy Burnett, a sophomore. He put me up to all the hazing dodges that I might expect and as a consequence I got off easy on that score. The hazing at Norwich was as bad in those days as it was at West Point and the first year men sure were disciplined by the upper classmen. I was fortunate in looking very much like the former student named Skinny Eaton who had been extremely popular. I was nicknamed Skinny Eaton No. 2 and afterward became Skinny McKay.

Life at Norwich was one of stiff discipline. We had to wear a uniform all the time. The life was as regular as that in the British army. I took to it like a duck to water. I fancy the principal reason that I liked discipline was that it was so much fun to break the rules without getting caught. I got to be a past master in the art.

I was the smallest man in the college, but my atheletic reputation had preceded me and I was elected manager and coach of the freshman basket ball team. I put out a crackerjack of a team and defeated the varsity so badly that we finished the varsity schedule.

Barred From Athletics.

Along in the spring we had some diphtheria in the college and about fifty men were quarantined on the upper floor of the barracks. The pooor fellows were suffering for beer, or thought they were. They couldn't get out, so they sent for me and told me their troubles from the window. I got a suit-case and went to town, filled it with beer, hired a rig, drove back and tied the load to the end of the fire-escape rope that had been lowered from the barracks.

The celebration led to an investigation and of course I was convicted. I was barred from athletics for a year.

This was a good thing, for I dug in on study and learned a lot that came in handy afterward in the British army. I learned to take care of myself physically, a thing that is essential to a good soldier and that so few soldiers ever do learn thoroughly. Every man had to care for his own room and make his own bed, besides keeping his equipment clean and well polished.

His Military Duties.

On Saturday we had to wash the windows and scrub the floors and paint, for Sunday inspection by the commandant, a United States army officer. At the time I remember that I used to hate the scrubbing and would try every possible way to get out of it; but it was no go. Everybody had to do his bit.

Our military duties consisted of theoretical artillery work, practical infantry and cavalry training and military science I became pretty solidly grounded in discipline and infantry work in general and was on the way to becoming a real soldier. In fact I thought seriously of trying for a West Point appointment.

In my third year in college I was reinstated in athletics and was manager of the base ball team. I got into nothing very serious, and gradually began to get the notion that I was fed up on soldiering. It is a notion that comes to a man in the army often. And it almost always gets a boy in a military school. The difference is that he can't get out of the army when he gets temperamental,—that is, not without deserting and he doesn't want to take any chances of getting shot. He can get out of a military school and he frequently does. I did.

The thing that finally decided me to leave college was this. I had become a member of the Town Dramatic club and liked it. The fact is that about four times on the stage as an amateur made me think I was cut out for another Henry Irving. I was stage-struck for further orders. And so at the end of my third year I let the military life go a-glimmering. I quit cold and came to Boston, where I studied for a while at the Colonial Dramatic school.

CHAPTER III.

On the Stage.

My first professional appearance on the stage was with the old Castle Square company. Howard Hansell and Lillian Kemble were in the leads. Mary Young and John Craig were also in the company and the piece was "Soldiers of Fortune." I finished out the sason there and the next fall was out on the road with a second-rate stock company playing the south. At least we started to play the south.

The show blew up in Norfolk, Virginia. We had known it was coming and a fellow named Bean and myself had been dickering with Charles E. Blaney by mail. The day we closed we had a letter from Blaney with the offer of the necessary job. Bean and I were to join one of the Blaney road companies at Richmond two weeks later.

In the meantime Richmond was a long, long way from Norfolk and we were nearly broke. I had just fifty cents; Bean had an old silver watch and no cash whatever. We talked it over and decided that the only thing to do was to jump a freight.

Hoboing was considerable out of our line but we had heard that it was easy enough. So we shipped the trunks by express and sneaked down to the railroad yards. Along in the evening we stowed on a flat car of lumber and some time along towards morning she pulled out. We traveled on that freight, I suppose, about ten miles. When it got pretty light a hostile brakeman came along and routed us out.

"Hit the grit, you 'boes," says he. "Hit the grit and be quick about it."

"Wait until we make the next stop," I suggested.

And So We Jumped.

"Stop me eye," said he. "Hit the grit and do it now." He had a coupling-pin in his hand and looked like using it, so we jumped. I didn't get the cinders out of my hide for a month.

After that we walked a while and then took to the road. A farmer came along and gave us a ride and we told him our story. He was a good fellow and when we hit a little town he took us around to a little packing-box hotel and introduced us to the proprietor, who was a friend of his.

The hotel man gave us a feed and let us sleep in the stable that night. Next morning he brought around the local station agent and he heard our tale of woe, too. I fancy they must have wanted to get us out of town, because the agent took us down that night and walked out to a water-tank about a mile down the line and helped to get us aboard an empty box-car. We made Richmond all right but we were frightfully empty. Bean pawned his watch and we ate. Then we hunted jobs.

It would be two weeks before the Blaney company showed up and in the meantime we had to eat. It is a habit that grows on one, I notice, and both Bean and myself looked forward to a fortnight of emptiness with scant pleasure. It was one thing to hunt for a job in Richmond and another to find one.

There seemed to be no market for a pair of actors on the bum. So when the watch money was gone we joined the Salvation army. For the next ten nights we pounded the big bass drum and sung hymns and incidentally acquired a large respect for the army. They pulled us through. We ate and we slept. And when the Blaney company showed up we deserted from the army!

Actors On the Bum.

I was with Blaney for two seasons after that, playing with Fiske O'Hara and afterwards with Lottie Williams in "The Tomboy Girl." About this time the moving pictures were crowding things pretty hard and so many companies were going to the wall and so many houses dark that I jumped into vaudeville.

I opened an office as a producer in New York and succeeded for a while but eventually went broke. After that I went back on the stage again and stayed there until I decided to go over to France.

At the time the Lusitania was sunk I was playing in stock in New Bedford. I was talking with the manager when I heard the news and said to him: "Well here's my chance to be a soldier again. We can't get out of declaring war on Germany."

He laughed at me and said I was crazy and that we never would get into the war. After a few days I began to think he was right. I read the papers eagerly—read of the German cruelties and the atrocities in Belgium and of the endless call for men in England. Eventually I saw there was no chance of the United States getting in. So I made a quick decision for myself, quit the stage then and there and declared war on Germany. I was going over and I was going quick. The memories of the military life at Norwich came back and I wanted to get into uniform as soon as possible. So I jumped the train for Boston and the next day was hunting transportation to England.

CHAPTER IV.

Training.

When I started hunting a way to get across I was, of course, broke as per usual. So I decided to work the horse boats as so many others had done. I shipped without any trouble on the Cambrian and sailed June 24, 1915, arriving in London on July 7 after a mildy exciting voyage.

I had shipped for the round trip and was given five dollars cash and board and room at the Sailors' home on Lemon Street. I batted around a bit and spent the five dollars and then hit the trail for the nearest recruiting office. I had had enough of horses, and anyhow I had come over to enlist so I wanted to get in as soon as possible.

London at the time was full of recruiting stations and there were red arrows all over the shop pointing the way to the chance to give up life and liberty for king and country or for the fun of it as the case might be. I followed the arrows to Shoreditch Town hall and went through the formalities and the examinations. They refused me flatly on account of poor eyesight My right eye was all right but the left was no good at all. I had always supposed that both of them were good.

I tackled another officer in Whitechapel and went through the same thing. Next day I went to an office at 32 St. Paul's churchward and told my troubles to the sergeant there. I said I was going to get into the army if I had to use a jimmy and that it was going to take a lot of refusing to keep me out. We went in to the officer and he heard the story without any reservations. He was a good chap, that officer. He put me through the examinations up to the eye test and said I was right enough except that I was light, weighing just under a hundred pounds.

Passed the Tests.

When it came to the eyes he said, "Now, my lad, on this test of the left eye you cover up your right eye with your hand instead of a card."

I did that little thing and was able to see fine between my fingers. I enlisted under my stage name, Arthur Mack. Three days later I was at Mill Hill Barracks, a member of the 22d Middlesex regiment, an outfit of bantams. We were a funny-looking crowd. Early in the war the experiment of bantam regiments was well tried out. There wasn't a man in our regiment that was over five feet four and from that down. On the whole, though, the bantams never were a success; it turned out that a small man is a good deal more likely than a big one to have other disqualifying troubles. Eventually all the bantam units were distributed to other regiments.

I had been in uniform only three days when a drill sergeant spotted me as one who had had previous military training. He asked me and I told him all about my three years at Norwich. About six weeks later the sergeant-major sent for me and said:

"Private Mack, I understand that you have had military training before and that you know the duties of a corporal. Do you realize the responsibilities?"

"Yes, sir," I said, "I do."

"Very well," he said, "you are to go up for your stripes."

Now I knew too much about military game to want to be a non-com and I said so. I told the sergeant-major that I didn't think I should like to assume the responsibility of even a low non-com, much less seek promotion. I wished, I told him, to remain a private.

The sergeant got pretty savage over that and made me feel that I had insulted him, the British army and the king. But I knew what I wanted and what I didn't want and was content to remain just a private. I I wouldn't have gone higher and have often been glad that I didn't.

Two weeks later I was recommended to brigade officers' staff and reported there as orderly. I hated to leave the bunch of pals I had come to like so well but the job was the cushiest in the army. It let a man out of all training and gave him better grub and a bed to sleep in.

My regiment was shifted about constantly during the five months I was at headquarters, and I saw Aldershot, Borden, Pirbright and several other places.

Going to France.

Then I heard that my regiment was going to France. I asked for transfer back to active service. I got it. But I found that I had missed a lot of training. A short time after my return the men were all examined by the medical board for overseas and I failed to pass.

That was discouraging as I had by this time fully made up my mind that I was going to see fighting by hook or by crook I was sent to Horwich in a reserve batt. I had been there just one week when the commanding officer asked for men who had passed their medical examinations and their course of firing. He wanted them as volunteers for the London 23d. I promptly hopped out of the ranks and voluteered, though I wasn't up on either of the requirements.

Somebody must have had an eye shut because I got away with it. Next day I was in Winchester and a week later I sailed for France.

Before sailing I had a new equipment which weighed complete ninety pounds. I weighed myself stripped the day I received it and I tipped the beam at just ninety-nine pounds. Some load!

Landed in France at Le Havre, I had nine days more of strenuous drill in specialized lines and then was ready for the front. Incidentally I saw the sights in Le Havre, the red light district and the white lights, too. That is part of the soldier's education over there, you know. If he doesn't learn to keep his head and behave himself on leave he's a poor soldier.

The little more than a week of drill in Le Havre ended too soon. Within a few days after that we were within sound of the rumble of the big guns.

CHAPTER V.

First Night in the Trenches.

We cannot fight,
We cannot die,
Wot bloddy good are we?
And when we get to Berlin,
The Kaiser he will say,
mein Gott, mein Gott,
Wot a very fine lot
To send to Germanee.

I was lying on the floor of a bell tent at the base in Le Havre on a hot day in August. The hoarse voice of the singer floated in on the still air very dismally. He had the tune wrong and he didn't have the words exactly right, and he bore down on the "Wot bloody good are we," as if he relished it.

I got up and peeped through the tent flap. The singer was sitting on an upturned bucket peeling potatoes. His face was about eighteen inches long and he slewed his mouth around, rolled his eyes and shifted off into another song.

Take me over the sea
Where the Allemand can't get me,
Oh, my! I don't wanner die.
I wanner go 'ome.

That finished me, I heard both songs before sung better, but they never got under my vest like that, and I knew there wasn't any answer to the "Wot bloody good are we?", at least as far as I was concerned, and I knew right well that I wanted to go 'ome.

I ducked out and hoofed it for the C. O., and shoved in an application for discharge from the British army on the grounds that I was an American citizen.

Wounded By Shell.

I was just down from seven weeks in the hospital after being wounded in three places on the same day by shell fragments. I was still shaky and had a silver plate in the top of my head and could feel my brains wobble around, but I had been examined by the medical board the day before and told that I was fit and that I was to sent back to the batt in less than a week.

This was in 1916. In those days you couldn't get a discharge from the British Army for anything less than a leg off; and if you happened to be a good shoemaker or accountant or something you didn't need a leg for, I don't believe they'd let you go at that. It was possible for an American citizen to beg off. I had had a little more than three months in the trenches and was fed up. I had had enough. I wanted, like the fellow in the song, to go home.

I suppose that every rookie goes through the same experience. He strikes a period in his service when he would give anything to get away. He has had enough fighting to be thoroughly scared and not enough to have become a seasoned veteran. It is this period of depression that produces the many songs like the ones quoted above. There was another, of which I can only recall the last three lines. They were a supplication to the war office and went:

Send your father, send your brother,
Send your sister, send your mother,
But for Gawd's sake don't send me.

These songs were all sung in a spirit of josh, but we meant 'em, too. Say what you will, there is a time in the life of any soldier when he wishes he hadn't come.

I am mighty glad to read that the American troops are being broken in and given their baptisms gently, so to speak. Back in the old days of 1915, and half-way through 1916, the British were so short of men that they had to take raw rookies and shove them in to get used to things as best they could. That spoiled a lot of soldiers. It came near spoiling me.

As a fine example of the way the thing should not be done if it can be avoided, it may do no harm to tell about those first three months in the service.

No Chap Forgets.

Probably no chap ever forgets his first night in the trenches. I'll bet a dinner there isn't one man in a thousand that had one like mine. I had been about 10 months in training in England before being sent over to France. That was about twice what most of them were getting at the time. I had been in uniform so long that I'd heard the war talked over from every angle and had head scores of men who had come back tell of their experiences and had got so I thought the big show was more or less of a cinch.

When I finally did go over they had me right up at the front without delay, and the batt landed in a place called Fonquevillers, better known to the Cockney as Funky village. We were dumped down out of a train of toy freight cars five miles behind the lines, late in the afternoon, and marched up to the front. We got into the commnication trenches at dark and around 10 in the evening I war standing on the fire-step in the front line looking over the top. Coming up there had been a booming of guns at a distanse in both directions north and south, bue we hadn't seen a shell burst. A mate of mine named Higgins and I were shown a traverse about 30 feet long and told to stand on the fire-step until relieved, and there we were.

The place was as still as the middle of somebady's melon patch along towards morning. There wasn't a gun of any sort, big or little, going off for miles around. We stood a while on the step and "Hig" whispered to me:

"What do we do next, Mack?"

His whisper sounded like an umpire talking through a megaphone.

"Shut up, you fool," I hissed "They'll hear you."

Rats Began to Come.

That was how little we knew about what to do and how to do it. We stood there without moving until my foot went to sleep and the sweat was rolling down my back.

Then the rats began to come. We had kept so still that I fancy they thought this bly as theirs. Anyhow, as many as a dozen big ones came scuttling along the trench and along the step. We didn't bother them until two of the biggest got in a row over a bit of garbage or something and squealed enough to make your blood run cold.

"Hig" stood up on the step, whispering, "Shoo, shoo," at the rats, but they didn't pay any attention and had it out. I was afraid the Heines would hear and come over to stop the fight. But nothing happened. After the rat row we loosened a little. I got down a sandbag to stand on to look over and stared out into the dark. There were a lot of old stumps out there, and after a while one of them moved. Then it didn't move. Then it looked like a horse, and moved again. My throat got dry and the hair crawled on the back of my neck and I itched in 17 separate places.

"Hig" pussyfooted down next to me and said, in a trembly voice, "See 'em move, mytie? Le's give it to 'em."

I held up my hand to him and he sneaked back, but before he went I heard him mutter:

Wanted to Hear Noise.

"Cripes, I wish they'd be some noise."

I wished so too, but there wasn't. Not a shot of any kind was fired all night long. I nearly went mad half a dozen times, and when it began to get light I was a nervous wreck.

Just as it was graying a little a couple of men came through lugging a dixie of stew and we filled up the tins. I was so glad to see somebody that I could talk to that I was nearly ready to hug the two of them. They growled and said some tea would be along shortly. The tea never arrived.

Before we had a chance to tackle the stew Fritz began to shell us. We'd been wishing for less silence, and, by heck, we got more noise. Out of a clear sky they gave it to us for 20 minutes,—whizz-bangs mostly, and they hit everywhere but in our traverse. One hit in the next bay and we heard a man yelling in there. We dropped our rifles and crouched under the parapet with our teeth chattering, praying for the end.

When it was all over I found that I'd got my foot in the stew. I didn't care particularly, because I was so sick I couldn't have eaten it, anyway. I didn't get over that nerve-shattering first night and morning for days. It was a poor way to start a rookie in.

The Funky Village sector was supposed to be a holiday part of the line. It was, in a way. Frequently there would be no shelling at all, day or night, for days, except the regular strafing at breakfast. We got used to it and were on the way to becoming veterans.

School of Hardships.

In the matter of the hardships of trench life Funky Village was a fine prep school for anything they could offer us anywhere else. For a so-called trench system it was a disgrace to an army that had been in the field learning for nearly two years. When the trenches had been dug they had been reasonably good, but they had been washed in and there had never been any attempt at repairs. The nature of the ground made the traverses catch all the water there was in that part of the world and hold it. We were up to our knees all the time and up to the middle part of the time. It is a wonder we didn't grow flippers and tails. Hip-boots had not been issued at that time and we just wallowed. We used to cut sand-bags in two and wrap our legs, but all that did was to parboil the skin.

The communication trenches were so deep in water that two men were actually drowned in them. It was impossible to get up hot rations with any pretense of regularity. For the most part we lived on cold stuff with stew and tea when we got it, which was seldom. Water was scarce, except under foot. Drinking water was brought up in petrol tins and would be blue with oil. A good part of the time we drank the stuff out of the trenches, thick as pea soup with little zoos in it. Some humorist stuck up a sign reading:

"Don't Drink the Water you Sleep In."

But most of us did it rather than try to worry down the gasolene mixture. It was a queer thing that the bad water didn't seem to make anyone sick. I fancy that we all got kind of amphibious after a bit, healthy like sea lions, and that we could have lived in an aquarium.

You will understand that this was along towards the fag end of the extremely bad conditions on the British front. From the fall of 1916, things got better, but it did take the English a long time to learn.

I think it may be fairly said that the superiority of trench construction by the Germans from the beginning was the great reason why the Huns had it on the British in net military results in the early days.

From the time they dug in the Germans were thorough and careful in their trench building. They went down deep with their trenches and their dugouts. They were safer all the time than we were. They were dry and comfortable in their sleeping quarters. Their communication trench were good and they were able to feed their men well at all times.

(Continued Next Sunday)

URGES FAIR TREATMENT IN WAR TIMES

SAMUEL UNTERMYER.

Fair treatment for loyal American citizens of German birth was advocated by Samuel Untermyer, noted New York lawyer, in a recent speech at a Liberty loan meeting at Atlantic City. The speech in part follows:

"Un-American treatment is being accorded in certain sections of the country to our loyal American citizens of German birth in the face of the repeated eloquent and statesmanlike warnings and appeals of our president against the folly, weakness and injustice of hate and bitterness. They are made to feel that they are under suspicion; that their loyalty and sympathies are questioned. We cannot afford to harbor such feelings."

CAPACITY OF FORT OMAHA DOUBLED BY ADDITION OF FLORENCE FIELD TO POST

Large Tract Leased by Government for Duration of War; New Mess Halls, Buildings, Sewerage and Water Systems Are Being Constructed.

By ROBERT WEIGEL.

When the construction on the new government project at Florence field, recently added to Fort Omaha has been finished, that post will have practically doubled its capacity for both men and work.

A large tract to the northwest of the fort has been leased by the government for the duration of the war. New mess halls and new buildings, equipped with shower baths, are being constructed. A complete sewerage and water system will be laid, and the new field will be modern in every detail.

Florence field is about one mile from Fort Omaha. When the field is completed, men assigned to duties there will remain continuously at the new post, saving much time in coming and going from Fort Omaha.

New roads have been laid out by the post engineers, and are now in process of construction. Forty odd big army trucks are hauling ashes, cinders, dirt and other material to be used in making the roads solid.

Altering Landscape.

A bit of camouflage work is also being done. Mother nature is being altered by Lieutenant Colonel Hersey's men to effectively hide the big observation balloons from possible enemy observation. The hills and dales of which Florence field has an abundance are being cut up, while big holes are being dug, where the gas bags can snuggle down close to the surrounding green grass, leaving only their gray backs, which are very deceptive, to be viewed from the distance.

Balloons are already at work on Florence field, where flying cadets make ascensions every day. At present there are some six bags flying every day—but that is almost telling military secrets, and the censor is going to review this, hence we will change the subject.

As you motor along Thirtieth street past Fort Omaha, have you ever noticed that great high tower which stands as a silent sentinel on the west side of the road, about five blocks upon the crest of the hill? No, it is not a wireless tower. The instruction department of Fort Omaha conceived the idea of erecting the tower to give the new cadets preliminary tests at perspective drawing and observation.

The tower will accommodate 15 men and affords a grand view of the surrounding country. Many are the weird maps of Omaha and vicinity that have been conceived up there, declare Fort Omaha balloon instructors.

After the cadets have had the kinks taken out, and are rounding into full fledged balloon pilots, they are assigned to one of the balloons, where a real taste of loftiness is felt. Contrary to the general belief, it does not cause one to become dizzy when making an ascension—you merely experience the sensation of standing still, while terra firma gradually sinks away, declare balloon experts.

Everybody is Busy.

Only a month ago the tract taken over by Uncle Sam was a mass of waving grass and corn stubbles. It reminds one of a bee hive at present A big force of carpenters work from early to late to hurry the construction of the new buildings. It gives the spectators a feeling of restlessness, as you watch the great hubbub of activity, all for the purpose of screaming defiance to the imperial "kultur" of Germany, and you experience the sensation of wanting to get busy right away to do your "bit" in some way to help Uncle Sam.

Just motor out there some day—the authorities do not care to have you get too inquisitive—and stay a respectable distance away from the projects. Hundreds of Omaha people visit the vicinity of Fort Omaha every Sunday to watch the great gas bags, which are a never-ceasing attraction to Sabbath idlers.

Another hint—don't try to take any pictures if you value your camera and freedom.

The balloon division of the signal corps has the honor of being one of the most efficient of the army. Balloon companies composed of officers and enlisted men trained here at Fort Omaha have been in active service on the battle front in France for several months.

Accidents are Few.

Not a single fatal accident has marred the record of the Fort Omaha school since its inception, soon after the declaration of war against Germany. One balloon caught fire, which burned several men about the face and hands, and a few cadets have been shaken up when they came to earth from parachute drops, but none have been permanently disabled.

Less than a year ago Fort Omaha was a more or less deserted place. Tall grass waved over the untrodden paths, the only signs of habitation being the parade grounds, which were kept up by the few soldiers stationed there, more for use as a base ball field than for anything else. New barracks, new garages and a wide area covered by gray tents, bespeak the new life that leaped out of chaos when the American eagle flapped its wings and snarled forth a warning to aristocracy that the sleeping giant had again been aroused to fight for freedom, to protect the weak, and to make the world safe now and forever after from the dark cloud of militarism which has emitted its cargo of death and disaster upon the unfortunate weak of God's domain.