

SHELLPROOF MACK

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

By ARTHUR JAMES M'KAY.
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Arthur James McKay, who won the sobriquet of "Shellproof Mack" when he joined a British regiment after the sinking of the Lusitania and when the United States had not yet declared war, reached the front and was wounded several times and gassed once.

He withdrew an application for discharge, because of being an American citizen, when told of his need by the English. The gallant Mack in connection with the plan to blow up Hill 60. Mack and comrades go over the top when 1,000,000 pounds of ammunition exploded. They reach the enemy trenches through a heavy machine and rifle fire. The British casualties were 20 per cent of those men who went over.

The Germans were passing a large white substance with Red Cross signs painted on their sides, indicating a hospital, when they face a tremendous gunfire. They stamp the treacherous chicanery and capture the German therein concealed. Mack relates the severe discipline of the British army and refers to an instance when a man named Mick was killed because he revealed the identity of comrades who were in getting away to visit his family.

CHAPTER XV.

We sent an officer and two men ahead in the morning to pick the best route to Railway wood, but they never returned, as all three were killed by a shell. We started out at 9 in the evening, without knowing exactly where we were going.

Going up the road we could see shells bursting ahead of us in large numbers, but we hurried, because we wanted it over. And we walked right into it. I was plugging along with the other men, one a mate of mine named Higgins, who had been my pal for nearly two years, and another chap named Bott, that I thought a good deal of—both of whom I have already spoken of—and four stretcher bearers that I didn't know by name.

A shell burst right in the middle of me. I was thrown down and rolled over the ditch and half knocked out. Just as I was getting up—shell-proof still, for I wasn't marked and not badly shaken—another smashed me in the same place. I saw two of the stretcher bearers who were just getting to their feet go down, and I lay low a while longer. Then I got out and looked. Poor old Hig had gone first, smashed to bits. Bott had a leg off, and both legs smashed and seemed to be dead. The four stretcher bearers were all dead. Strangely enough, I afterwards ran across Bott in England. He still had the arm and one leg missing, but he was otherwise splendid. So you see a man takes a lot of killing.

Well, after I had counted what I supposed were the dead I lit out across lots towards where I could see some old tree stumps. I wanted cover and wanted it bad. I was going top speed when I went into an old trench. I turned upside down, spun like a pinwheel, hit the water head first and started to try to swim. I got my feet under after a bit, and my head was still a yard or so from the top and water up to my temples. So I knew it was an old German trench. No Britisher would ever dig so deep. I fished up the side and tried to climb out.

Well! Too slippery. So I started to slither along the trench. I had only gone a little way when I ran into a man who covered me with an automatic and called to me to halt. I said it was my company platoon officer. He didn't say how he came there, but I suppose the same way I did. We got out of the trench and found what was left of the company. The shells were flying over by now, and we glided along without further trouble until we found our place in the line.

That front line! It was a throw-back to the old days of the "Wipers," when the Canadians were living like rats, or even to the days of 1916 at Somme village, when our own battalions were wishing that they were mud turtles. However, there was no kick coming, because there was an excuse for it this time.

During 1917 the British had been pushing on pretty fast and there hadn't been much chance to dig in; but nobody cared. We were on the way to Berlin.

The Boche had discarded trenches in this part of the line, too, but he only did it because he had something better—the pill-boxes. I'll tell about them in just about a minute.

Our line was a narrow trench about four feet deep and two wide, with only a thin parapet of sand bags and no communication trenches. We tumbled in and wedged ourselves down to the bottom of this crack in the earth. We were some surprised when we were told that we were not to occupy this trench, but were to move into some shell holes a few yards in front.

It was still dark when we took over the holes. From four to eight men were assigned to a hole. Our orders were about like this: "There's a hole out there with four men in it. Ten yards out. Take your rifles and run for it at the word. All right now. Carry on."

They ran on we did. The hole I was in had the prescribed four men in it and they left without waiting to see the toss or even for a lull in machine gun fire, which was awfully loud for a few seconds now and then, but on the whole might be called continuous. We had ducked down in one of the quiet spells. The day broke it was easy to see the men we had relieved had as much a hurry as we.

lay in my first shell hole two days and saw only the gray, wet sky overhead, and once during a short lull in the fire I peeped and had a glimpse of a torn and tortured terrain of mud, with here and there black stumps, and over there in the mist the low yellow wafers that we knew were the pill boxes.

The smell in these holes was dreadful. There were hundreds of bodies all about, lying unburied in the muggy August warmth. Bluebottle flies by the million settled over everything and bit like Jersey mosquitoes.

When we went into the holes we took up our rations for two days. Each man had two rashers of bacon, about two pounds of cold roast beef and a half loaf of bread. For each of our men there was a tin of jam, a tin of condensed milk, two cans of baked beans, plenty of tea and sugar, and a Tommy's cooker. We had our water bottles filled and took along a petrol can with two gallons of water. The cooker was a spirit lamp affair for making tea and frying bacon.

We had no overcoats, and while the days were warm and sticky and sickening, the nights got awfully cold. Two days were as much as any man could stand in these places. Lying there all day looking up at a gray sky and breathing the foul air, soaking in the filthy mud and unable to move about at all, was enough to put the huskiest Tommy nearly out of business.

When we were relieved, at the end of two days, we went back into the support trenches, about 90 per cent of the men had temperatures of over 100 and were out and out sick. Scores wanted to report sick, but the M. O. was at Railway wood, and it would have been impossible to get back there, so we had to stick it out and go into the holes again a day later.

CHAPTER XVI.

Taking the Pill-Boxes.

This was not a big battle. There were, as I have said, only four battalions engaged on our side. The affair was more or less of an experiment. The pill-boxes were a new German defensive and had never been thoroughly tried out. We were to be given a chance to rake us and see how we stood it.

It had been proved pretty clearly already that the boxes were the most effective defense ever devised. They were simply fortified shell holes.

Now, for some strange reason, shells rarely strike twice in the same place. We had found that out when we were lying in the holes. Shells would burst all about us, but only once in a hundred times would there be a direct hit over an old hole.

It follows that if you fortify an old hole so that it takes two or more hits to dislodge the machine gun that you have placed there, why, your machine is going to be in commission and dangerous ever under an extraordinary heavy and well directed shell fire, and is going to be hard thing to take.

Well, on this attack, our orders were very simple. They were to go over and take those pill-boxes. That was all. The boxes were in a row about 300 yards away. They were in groups of five, about 10 or 15 yards apart, and a gap of perhaps 50 yards with a section of sap or trench.

Our artillery commenced slamming them the night before and kept it up hard and fast up to 7:30 in the morning, when we were to go over. About 7 I took a look through the periscope and studied out the terrain in front. It was level and muddy and pitted with shell holes, and away off there the white steeples of Passchendaele showed dim against the haze.

To the rear and to the left and nearer, the jagged, black ruins of "Wipers" broke the skyline.

In the foreground the low boxes were spitting fire regularly, unharmed after a night of it. Shells burst all around them, tossing off lumpy clouds of gray smoke with daubs of red flame in the middle, and up above airplanes circled ready to chase the Boche fliers if they should come out to take a hand.

This was our first go at the pill-boxes, and in our sick and discouraged condition we fully expected a washout. The four of us, in our hole, had no officer with us, but we arranged our tactics ourselves. Two of us were to bomb the box through the gun slots. And two—I was one of these—were to go around to the rear, where we assumed there would be a door, and prod the outgoing Boche in his tenderest parts.

The fact is we didn't any of us expect to get halfway across. About five minutes before zero—starting time—our artillery laid down a smoke barrage in front of us. When we went over we couldn't see the boxes and they couldn't see us. It worked beautifully. They raked the ground with the machine guns, but they were shooting in the dark. The mud was kicked up all around us for 150 yards, but nobody was hit. We advanced slowly behind the barrage. Halfway across, Jackson, one of the bombers, copped his, a piece of shell that took his head nearly off, and he pitched forward beside me, face down. We didn't stop.

Then the barrage stopped and we found that we were right on top of the boxes. I saw Green throw a bomb, but it didn't go in the gun slots, and bounced off. The third man and I dropped on our bellies to get under the gun fire and crawled rapidly forward. Green threw a couple more bombs which went over. By this time was right under the box and I pulled the pin out of a bomb with my teeth and reached up and dropped it in. It seemed to be the

(Continued on Opposite Page.)

Doctors Fail

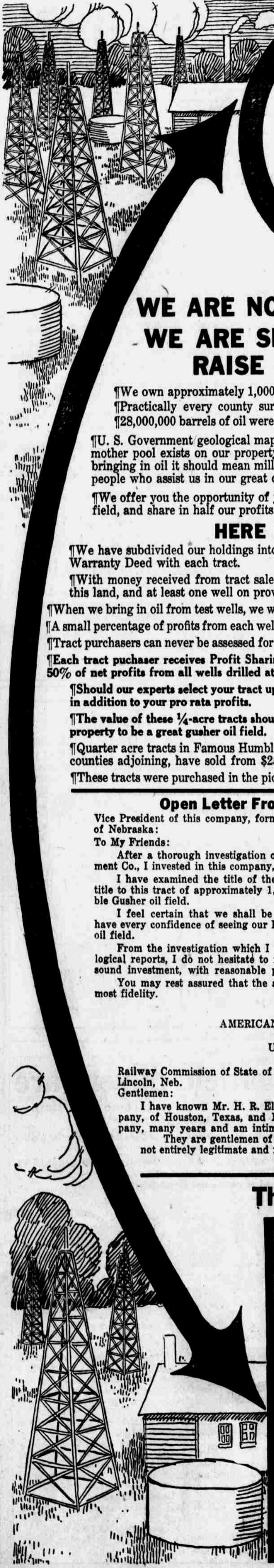
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- ¶ Practically every county surrounding is a big oil field.
- ¶ 28,000,000 barrels of oil were produced in this district in 1917.
- ¶ U. S. Government geological maps and reports on High Island convince us the great mother pool exists on our property, and when we confirm the geologists' reports by bringing in oil it should mean millions to be divided between our company and the people who assist us in our great drilling campaign.
- ¶ We offer you the opportunity of joining us in proving our property to be a great oil field, and share in half our profits.

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- ¶ We have subdivided our holdings into 1/4-acre tracts, which we are offering for \$30 each—Warranty Deed with each tract.
- ¶ With money received from tract sales we guarantee to drill at least one well to prove up this land, and at least one well on proven Humble lease.
- ¶ When we bring in oil from test wells, we would then naturally want to drill hundreds of wells.
- ¶ A small percentage of profits from each well brought in will be used for drilling additional wells.
- ¶ Tract purchasers can never be assessed for any purpose whatsoever.
- ¶ Each tract purchaser receives Profit Sharing Contract, entitling him to share proportionately in 50% of net profits from all wells drilled at High Island, and proven Humble lease.
- ¶ Should our experts select your tract upon which to drill, you will receive a royalty of 1-10 in addition to your pro rata profits.
- ¶ The value of these 1/4-acre tracts should be enormous when we prove this High Island property to be a great gusher oil field.
- ¶ Quarter acre tracts in Famous Humble, Spindletop, Goose Creek and Sour Lake Fields, in counties adjoining, have sold from \$25,000 to \$50,000 each.
- ¶ These tracts were purchased in the pioneer days of these great fields for small sums.

Open Letter From Hon. George D. Melklejohn

Vice President of this company, former Lieutenant Governor and U. S. Congressman, State of Nebraska:

To My Friends:

After a thorough investigation of the officers and property of the Gulf Coast Development Co., I invested in this company, and accepted the position of Vice President.

I have examined the title of the High Island holdings, and find the company owns fee title to this tract of approximately 1,000 acres, and a valuable lease in the heart of the Humble Gusher oil field.

I feel certain that we shall be successful in producing oil on our Humble lease; and I have every confidence of seeing our High Island property developed into a remarkable gusher oil field.

From the investigation which I have made, and from my study of the Government geological reports, I do not hesitate to recommend the proposition of the company as a good, sound investment, with reasonable possibilities of great profits.

You may rest assured that the agreements of the company will be executed with the utmost fidelity.

Yours sincerely,
GEO. D. MEIKLEJOHN.

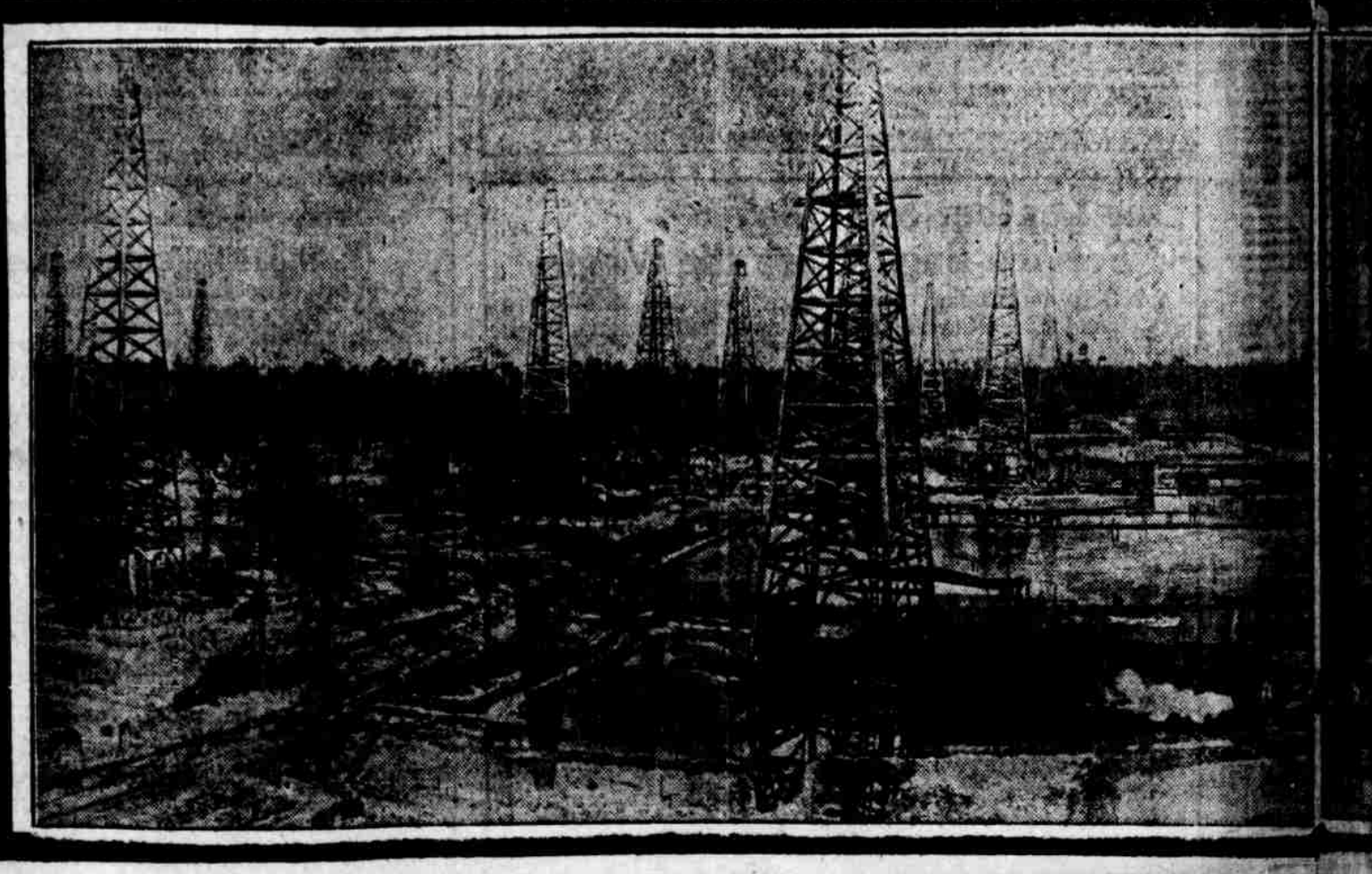
AMERICAN TITLE GUARANTY COMPANY.
Capital \$300,000.00
Union National Bank Bldg.
Houston, Texas, Mar. 13, 1918.

Railway Commission of State of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb. Gentlemen:

I have known Mr. H. R. Ellwood, President of the Gulf Coast Development Company, of Houston, Texas, and Mr. W. E. Langley, Secretary and Treasurer of the Company, many years and am intimately acquainted with Mr. Ellwood.

They are gentlemen of fine business ability, and would engage in no enterprise not entirely legitimate and feasible. Yours respectfully,
GEO. H. BREAKER, Vice president.

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