

Grim Thoughts Coming to Wounded Soldiers Facing Death Told By Omaha Boy Who Was Hit While in Big Argonne Drive

Thrilling Moments When Allies Launch Final Drive

Former Omaha Newspaper Man, Who Was With 75th Company of Marines, Describes Sensations of "Being Wounded," and Escapes That Border on Miraculous.

Pvt. Karl L. Lee, former Omaha newspaper man, who enlisted with Uncle Sam's marines in July, 1917, has returned from overseas, having served with the Seventy-fifth company, Sixth regiment, Second division. Lee spent exactly 13 days with a line outfit, during which time he crossed the Hindenburg line twice, hiked through the Argonne forest, seeing at first hand the various battlelines therein established, and finally being wounded in the Argonne-Meuse offensive, November 1.

By KARL LEE.

Over in France a lot of us game boys did a lot of things we weren't supposed to do. For example, it was against orders to carry a camera. I carried one. It was against orders to keep a diary. I kept one. It was against orders to stick one's nose where it wasn't officially wanted. I stuck my nose frequently, after a fashion. There were bits of unusual happenings. For instance, it may be strange that a perfectly healthy, bloodthirsty marine, for such we like to style ourselves, could "be" on four battlefronts in as few as 13 days; that this same bloodthirsty marine can be wounded, slightly gassed and considerably nerve-rattled, without so much as firing a rifle at the enemy? Such things happen—many times. How does it feel to be wounded? What are the actual thoughts and acts of a soldier on the field of battle, helpless and without resource? What do men who are in the so-called zone of advance say and do when there? What is the actual manner of attack, since we know it differed greatly from that of the Civil and Revolutionary wars? These questions I will attempt to answer.

wounded, lying on the battlefield, exposed to terrible danger, shells falling all about him. God had stricken me once—He might strike me again. Would it not be quite natural according to the Christian doctrine to turn to Him? "But honestly, that was the last thing I thought of. Sometimes as the shells fell quicker, I shivered like a true coward; other times I merely lay back on the field looking up and laughing like a fiend. The whole experience was vague. In me there was an uncontrollable desire to cry out for all I was worth: "Are you satisfied?"



Picture No. 1 Shows Lee and "buddy" with a couple of French girls at Chatillon-sur-Cher in September, 1918. Picture No. 2 shows the Omaha boy and another "buddy" in front of their "pup" tent at Brest, France, in August, 1918. Lee is shown in full marine dress in front of the U. S. naval hospital at Brooklyn, N. Y., February 13, 1919, in picture No. 3.

turned at right angles to a wood in which an American machine gun battalion was spitting white flame into the night, sending over a barrage. Frequently we passed while our commanders straightened out the line. With the coming daylight, we could see mile on mile of rolling plain and there in plain view our battle line stretched for miles to either side.

5th Prussian guard, the kaiser's own, blessed of his hand, made a last stand. The 1st division met and destroyed them. We are here to finish the job. You, the picked shock troops of the American forces, have been picked by General Pershing to lead the assault. There was a cheer. "Some of you will not come back, but you will have fought gloriously in the greatest battle of all history. It is your lot to do this thing which humanity has demanded shall be done. Our object is the railroad between Metz and Sedan, and we will attain it. Let Almighty God be with you as you charge forward and permit you to live to take part in that great rejoicing which will soon be at hand."

entrenched. From them we learned of the fierceness of the fighting, half the division's personnel having fallen going one lonely kilometer. It was to be a battle to death! Prouddest Moment of His Life. It was the proudest moment of my life. That night, we rolled packs and moved up into the advance positions, in the greatest battle of all history, occupying trenches under a grilling shell fire. The 42d division, which had relieved the 1st 22 days earlier, was already

entrenched. From them we learned of the fierceness of the fighting, half the division's personnel having fallen going one lonely kilometer. It was to be a battle to death!

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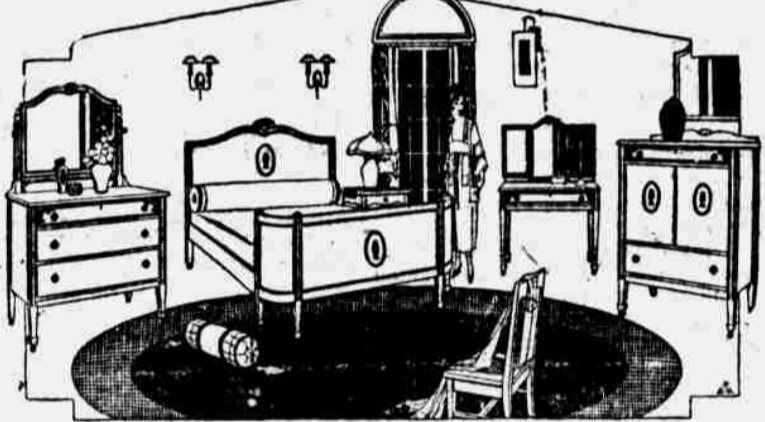
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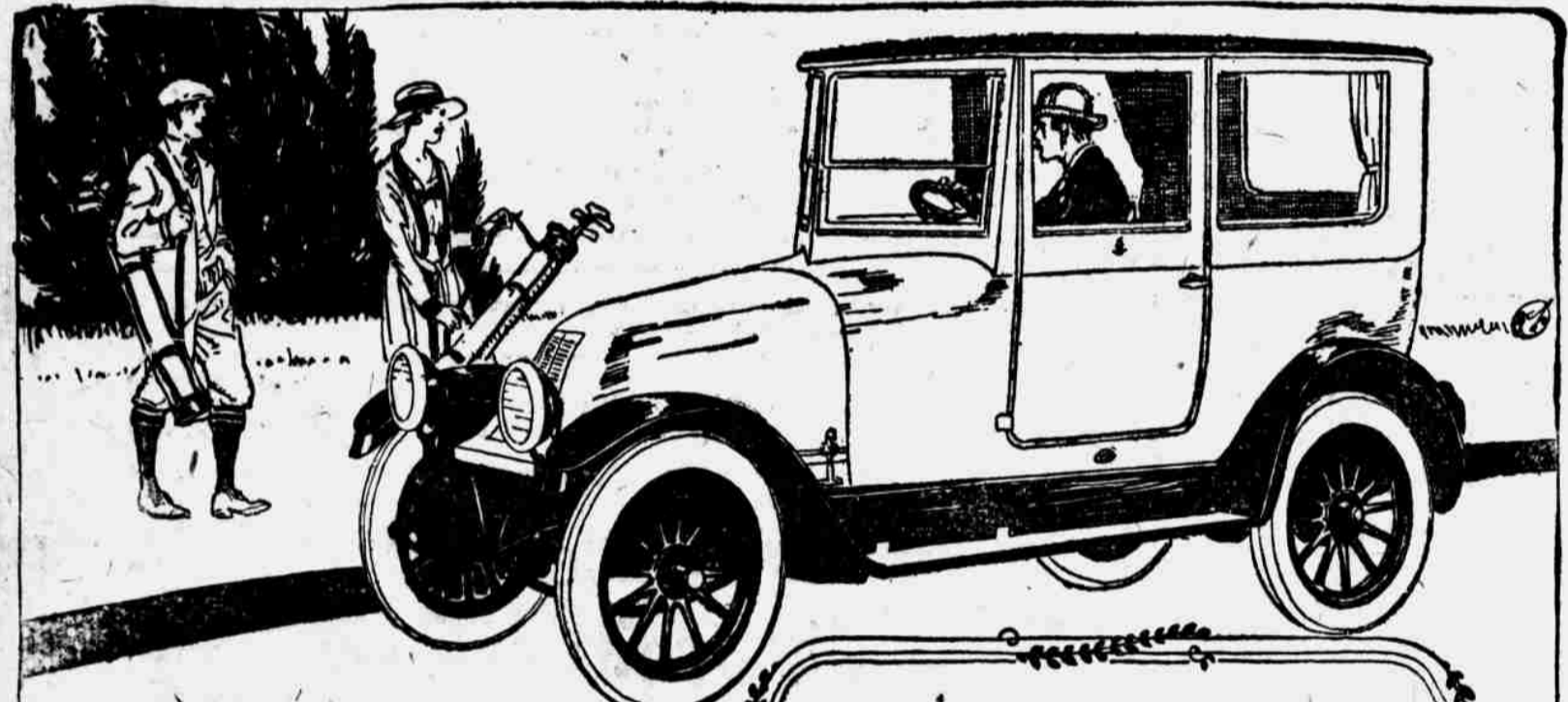


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For a few minutes I cried like a baby. I don't think it too much to say that I cried because I couldn't go on any further. Here, eleven days before the war's end, I was in the one place of all places. The big fun was ahead, and I was slated to go back without so much as firing my rifle at a German. Such is fate. Anyway, when I discovered that my wound was not serious, I deliberately refused a stretcher. I didn't care much whether I got back or not. Later I changed my mind. The next few minutes were spent in cutting my pack away and gathering such personal as I had coveted, in a small bundle. Then I crawled to a shell hole to think things over. The machine gun fire had been and was then sweeping. It seemed suicidal to venture forth yet that was my only way out. So I got up and started back. I was weak, my head ached and the blood shot to it at times in peculiar fashion, almost drowning my senses. After 10 minutes of floundering, I met the regimental doctor, a marine officer, coming towards the line.

"What's the trouble, boy?" he asked. "Guess I'm hit," I answered. "Lies in Shell Hole. "Better get to a shell hole, then," he advised, seeing that the wound had been dressed. I did. For nearly an hour I lay at the bottom of that communicating hole. It was big, deep and comfortable, lending a ray of hope. In all my life I have never experienced a more nerve-racking hour. Though I lay into a dog, my conscious mind blasted on at full speed. Every thought, act or deed of mine rose up before me in its true light. I was guilty of many things not Christian. I tried to pray and couldn't. Then in the end I won. No longer would I fear or disbelieve. And I have not changed since.

Escape Almost Miraculous. How I got away I don't know. For minutes at a time I could walk almost without effort, with an almost superhuman strength; other times I stumbled and fell, crawling weakly, choking back sobs, from shell hole to shell hole. But I got there. A long column of German prisoners was coming over the horizon in charge of marines. The sight brightened me and I grew lighthearted. The next morning I was in Paris. The other "greatest" experience of my life occurred while our division, the Second regulars, were encamped on a "Meuse hilltop," noted as such in my diary, during the week that preceded the great Argonne-Meuse offensive. We had been on the road for eight days, coming from the Champagne front, and had passed through a half-dozen recent battle fronts, experiencing the hardest of hiking. To Rout Enemy. "The time has come," General Sumner began. I stood within an arm's length of him. "Marshal Foch and the allied commanders have come to a decision. Tomorrow morning, on a 200-mile front, the armies of the allies move forward to roll back the enemy and win that victory for which we have so long fought—the complete rout of the crown prince's armies. "On the very ground on which you now stand, eight days ago the

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