

WALKED RIGHT INTO ACTION!.....

September 15th 1918: We were order to move forward to make liaison with "Mein Herr Fritz!" We moved out of town right down a main highway towards the town of Charney. We passed thru a wooded area with a deep ravine along the road on our right. We walked right into a group of German Army---deployed in an open field! I say "group"---Hell, it looked like the whole German Army was in that field! The surprise to both sides was so great we piled into the top of the ravine right at the edge of the road! We had hardly deployed along the road---and ACTION! Not much personal contact---none that I remember. But in a few minutes we were baptised under the heaviest bombardment of heavy artillery from the guns stationed at Metz. that we were ever under! With those conditions you would be surprised how fast you can go underground with just the lid off your mess kit and your bayonet! How anyone survived that day I cannot say other than the fact that Fritz was "overshooting" the road! Most of his shells were landing on the far side of the ravine! In spite of all this one could still bump into a little bit of "horse play"for humor. I was detailed with the 74th Company, 1st Battalion. The captain and I were in holes side by side. He was an artist in handling large chunks of Horse Shoe Tobacco. Of course it would get out of control and drip down his chin. They were really giving us the "business" with those huge shells. The Captain raised up out of his private apartment, looked over at me, spit out a quart, and said--"Jesus Christ, I wish I was back in Milwaukee driving my brewery wagon." This story is told and I do not doubt the truth of it.. A Major Hughes, inspecting his company turned to him and said, "Your men look fine, Captain. You look like Hell!" After all, tobacco juice running down a chin was not regulation in the U.S. Marine Corps.

POLLUTION PERSONIFIED.....

Relieved that night, in the dark of course, one of the fellows walked headlong into a German Latrine! Pollution personified--all the way until we passed a First Aid Station where he salvaged a cast off outfit of clothes! The railroad station at Theiacourt was new red brick. The John, two large steps on which to rest your feet, with a convenient hole in the cement floor at the rear. Does that arrangement shock you? Sorry! That was a typical French Toilette!

OUR FIRST MEAL....

September 16th, 1918: Our first meal! In the small town of Minersville. Rain on the 17th and 18th: camping in woods. On the 19th at Manel La Tours, still in woods, and raining! September 20th left LaTours, with rain on the 21st. Then Lately, rain and rest! September 22nd 1918, rain and cold! One September 25th hiked into Toul, had dinner in cafe! Then left Laty and St.Ramey and hiked to Mon Germain. Loaded on train--40 and 8--rode all night! Next morning unloaded in the rain at Vitry La Villis; hiked to Chepsy, 8 kilo from Chalons.

AUGUST 22nd 1971:

St.Etienne, 3 P.M. I would not say that I "was born again" on this date; but I shall never forget the day! I was with Captain Overton and his 76th Company the day we took this town, October 10th 1918!