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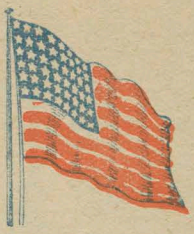
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

WAR ACTIVITIES



Sept. 26, 1918.

Precious Mother,

One year ago yesterday at 5-30 pm we excitedly watched the receding skyline of old New York. What a memorable year! The waiting, the training, the fighting - and how filled with interesting experiences. Even the hardships of last winter's Cadet life seem interesting and I am thankful for it. It had or should have had a certain broadening influence and has its reward in a distinct stimulation of my appreciation for the luxuries, to say nothing of the comforts, of life.

Recently the weather has been very "dud",

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as these R. F. C. trained fellows say, ~~meaning~~ obviously meaning unfit for flitting. They also use "washout" a very great deal, which means eliminate. For example, an engine is "washed out" when it is thrown in the junk heap. A patrol is "washed out" when it called off. Another expression is "conk", meaning stop or quit. "My engine conked on me", is a frequent saying especially with this batch of bum ones which we are now using. I have stopped to explain these terms because I have been contaminated with their use and I want you to gather the fine shades of meaning if I slip and use

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them. "Conked", for instance, means more than merely stopped. it carries with it a feeling of disgust and so on.

The news of the results of the All-American Drive in the St. Mihil sector of Fenow was welcomed in the States. In fact from the looks of the news papers after the Chateau Terry drive too much enthusiasm is displayed in proportion to the consequence of the advance. I'm wondering what there will be left to do when we march into Berlin.

But I left of with the weather being dud recently. One day we went up over the lines with the clouds sufficiently broken to allow a patrol. Jack was

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leading I was first on his left. We were toward the end of the patrol and quite some distance in Hunland at 4500 meters. Nothing exciting had happened a few Huns appeared above us and further back into Hunland but looked harmless. I was S'ing back of Jack having a beautiful time with my motor humming away in fine form. Suddenly it seemed to sneeze a couple of times cough and stop or rather conk with the propeller standing straight up and down. As soon as I recovered from the jolt of the sudden stoppage and the bang with which it

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did it. I glided down under Jack shook my wings a couple of times, to let him know that I had trouble and was out of the formation, and started gliding toward our side of the lines - Now the lines here are not marked as they are in the newspapers with a broad black dotted line but it was very indistinct and very indefinite especially at that point. Now I stretched out that glide - it seemed that several days passed during my decent. As I neared the field I had selected to land in I saw that it was all cut up with trenches and shell holes and wire entanglements were everywhere -

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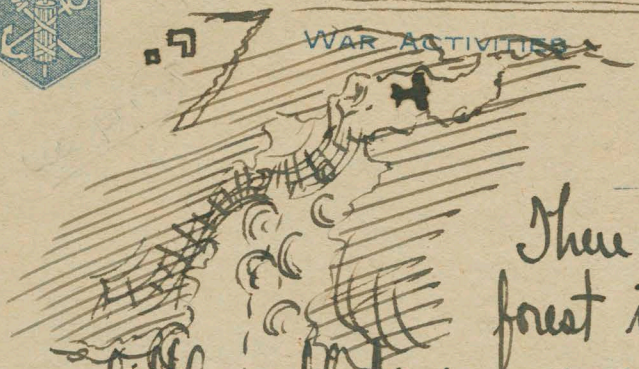

There was a large forest in front with a little flat open space in it and I made for that. As I neared, the forest which from a height looked so soft, it had been shot up considerably and sharp giant splinters seemed to stick up every where. I finally landed in the little open space and fortunately didn't break a thing.

Now the big question was - "Am I in Hunland?" I felt reasonably sure that I was in ~~the~~ recently evacuated teritory but I wasn't at all <u>sure</u>. I had

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glided down noiselessly and evidently no one had seen me. I jumped out of the machine and crept through ~~the~~ coils of barbed wire to a wall. and looking over I saw a couple of Dough Boys ambling along the road. I hailed them and found that they lived in dugouts in the hill right by the machine. I left instructions about guarding the machine, waved Jack on who had come down low to see how I had ~~faired~~ and caught a truck which passed by for the next town.

The town was in the opposite direction from the field but I knew that I could telephone from there

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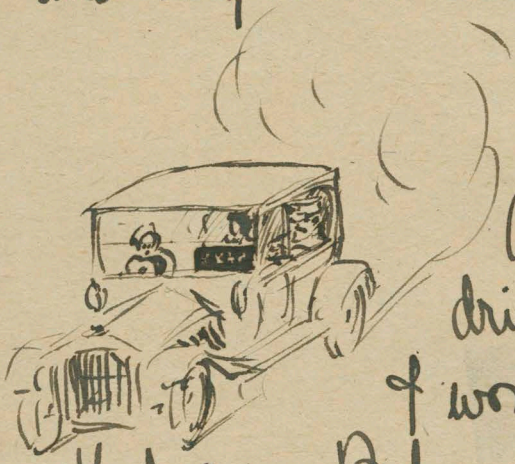
and they would send out for me.



I saw an American limosine approaching. And I told the truck driver to slow up that I would ride back in that car. But as it came nearer I saw a red panel on the wind shield with four stars on it from mind you. I told the driver "Just keep on going - I've changed my mind." There was only one man in France that ~~could~~ car could belong to and sure enough there he was sitting on the back seat. I spent the night

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in the little shell eaten town and the next morning returned to camp in the car they had sent for me. We came back through St. Mihel and how interesting this was you can easily imagine.

Last night we received word that the offensive would begin again at 1. We were awaken at four thirty this morning, had a candle light breakfast and shivered up to the airdome. The machines were already out and shadowy mechanics were busying themselves getting the engines tuned up and putting on a last few

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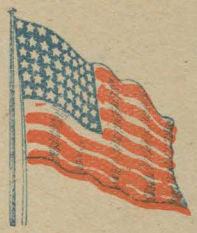

finishing touches. _____ 191__

The Co. held a short meeting in the operations office and we went out to our machines.

The field was lighted by search lights and flairs placed all in a line. Looked like some wierd festival. At 5.45 while a faint glow shown in the East we took off and headed toward V. There we were to rendezvous at a low altitude, and by the time we would reach V. it should be light enough to see each other.

~~The Defen~~ The air was wonderful and off in the misty horizon I could see hundreds of flashes of the

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big guns. Beneath all the valleys were filled with a heavy snow white fog ~~and~~ out of which the hills and the tall trees protruded - And there were great streaks of red across the Eastern sky.

I circled over V. at the appointed altitude for a few minutes and soon picked up the other members of the patrol, form in all with Jack leading. I shall never, as long as I live, forget that sight in the early morning mist. Hundreds of flashes, from woods from shell craters and from beneath the fog - There were white flashes - yellow flashes, blue

ones and columns of smoke rising signal star clusters white archie, black archie, and all going on as in pantomine for not a sound penetrated the whirr of the motor.

As soon as we had all arrived Jack started off in the direction of the fireworks to fullfill our mission of ~~getting~~ strafing enemy observation balloons. We were assigned a small sector in which to oprate - We passed over our balloons and over no-man's-land and once in a while ~~upon~~ my attention was distracted from the wonderful show I was witnessing by

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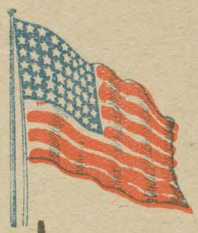

running into the tejectory of a large shell. Something like running over a log in the road in an automobile. Would we never come to that blamed balloon - Oh! There I saw it sticking up above the fog. ~~We lw~~ I thought that probably ~~we had~~ it was on the Eastern Front. it was so far over. We turned and made for it. And the Archie opened up. I could hear them all right regardless of the whir of the motor. The sky was litterally filled with these jet black puffs and they came

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uncomfortably close - Often right between our machines - Then they shoot a thing called a "flaming onion" - I don't know where the term originated - It is more like a sky rigger chaser - It consists of ~~of~~ a white ball of fire which comes scorting up toward you in a zig zag fashion and at a certain altitude shoots off horizontally in most any direction - There is a series of white hot balls sent up in a perfect stream - they are not bad, however, for you can see their direction when they leave the gun and you

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have lots of time to dodge. My how they kept us zig zagging -

Suddenly Jack peaked and I with him firing all the way down but with little hope of bringing the balloon down for we had the usual machine gun ammunition - ~~We were followed by~~ We got all the sensation however if we didn't get the balloon. And I could see our tracers entering the old sack. It was just eating them up and getting fat on them. The machine guns from the ground open up with their rat-ta-tat-tat.

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We had no sooner zoomed after our dive than Robbie, whose machine was equipped with a special large calibre balloon gun, peaked and shot. He zoomed and shot again, and Hurrah! a round bright flame appeared in the top. In no time it was a gigantic flame and we were on our way back. I thought that the Archie was bad going in but it wasn't a circumstance to what they gave us coming back.

When we were almost back to the lines I saw a Hun regalage machine

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painted a reddish brown with a white tail. Jack and I were alone now. He headed toward it and started to peake - I with him - suddenly he pulled off and started toward the lines. I wondred why the Dickens he didnt attack. It look like suck easy meat for the two of us. There must be a reason and looking over my shoulder I saw the reason Seven Fokkers were right up above and behind us, and it would have been wonderful pickings for them if we had gone so low down that

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distance behind the lines - When will I learn to see things in the air. Well it takes lots of practice.

I have rushed through this in order to get it off before the afternoon patrol -

Oh! it's a wonderful life - a thrilling life, and a gentlemans life.

Love - worlds of it precious -

Censored by P/Stout 1st Lt as U.S.A.

Penrose.

My mail hasn't caught up with me yet. I'm starving for news, but won't it be a "grand and glorious feeling" when it does come?

A.P.V. S[illegible]T,
AIR SERVI[illegible]E, U.S.A.
AMER. E.F.

OFFI[illegible]S MAIL.

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