

WAR

Stories

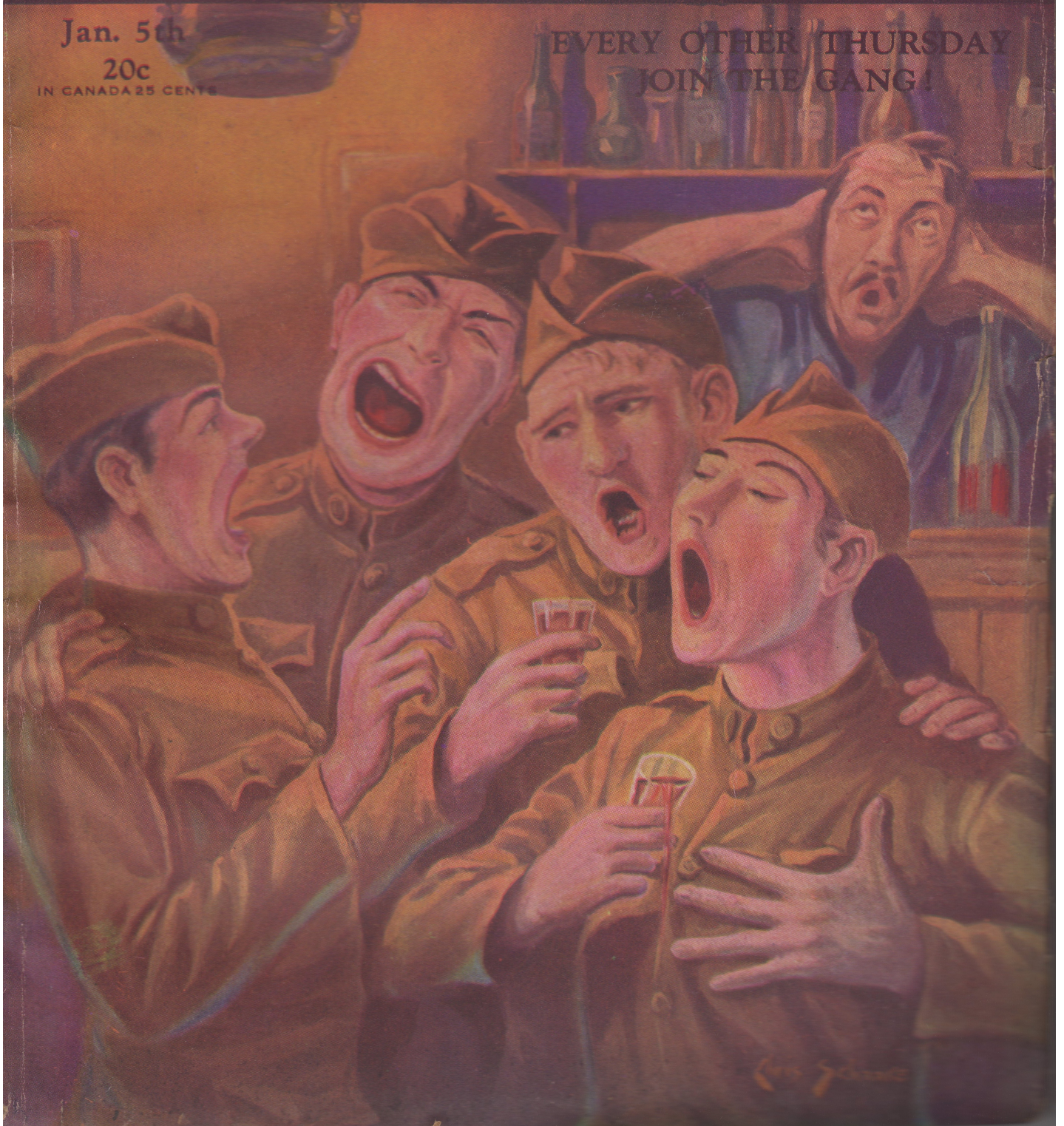
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

Jan. 5th

20c

IN CANADA 25 CENTS

EVERY OTHER THURSDAY
JOIN THE GANG!



EVERY OTHER THURSDAY

WAR STORIES

Vol. 7

Jan. 5th, 1928

Whole No. 21

	Page
THE BAND GOES OVER THE TOP! T. Howard Kelly	147
<i>A complete novelette. And Kelly swears it's the real hot-dog story of the only A. E. F. band that actually went over the top. Maybe you heard about this outfit. The "Rabble" was headed for a nice, safe dugout, when this new officer, who was plain bugs, starts to yell: "Strike up the band!"</i>	
TEN SECONDS TO GO. George E. Clough	180
<i>Pete went into action with the little three-inch Stokes gun, and he swore he'd get that Boche "Pineapple" gun that got his brother.</i>	
MAM'SELLE GOAT. Owen Atkinson	188
<i>Did you ever see a whole army looking for one damned goat? That pie-eyed goat got too personal with a certain dispatch.</i>	
AMMUNITION Ernest Mitchell	196
<i>Marvin got in dutch with the detail going back for more shells that night, but in the mud and rain he got an idea.</i>	
BUNG SOIR, CUTIE! Captain C. Pickett	203
<i>Everybody knows that a guy who had a sweetie at home never even looked at a Frog dame. Sweeney was just like that, too. Hell, yes!</i>	
THE SEAT OF WAR. Robert H. Leitfred	209
<i>Here's one of the hottest fights you ever read about. This bunch of polecats was cornered in the blue farm house.</i>	
NOT SO SUNK. Bob Du Soe	224
<i>Everybody had left the boat but Dummy Davis, and so he decided to take things into his own hands. An exciting yarn.</i>	
SMASHED WINGS Ralph Oppenheim	231
<i>Kirby, leading the famous "Three Mosquitoes," was flying an old plane, but a daring mission had to be accomplished.</i>	
THE FROG'S PAJAMAS. H. M. Sutherland	244
<i>Some funny bozo had swiped Little Abe's pants, so what could he do? But the big Frog didn't like A. E. F. pajama parties.</i>	
THE MAJOR'S PRISONER. Will R. Bird	252
<i>The major was a fighting old cuss, and he had to have him a prisoner. Dicky Parsons sure had his hands full!</i>	
CHARLEY BANE FIGHT. James W. Earp	262
<i>It was a great fight, but you can't beat "the old army game."</i>	
GET THAT LUGER! Royce B. Howes	272
<i>If any palooka thinks this pair of big-timers didn't know how to do their war stuff, let him read this knockout yarn.</i>	
THE DUGOUT	279
<i>Where the WAR STORIES gang meets.</i>	
COVER DESIGN Chris Schaare	

Published bi-weekly and copyrighted, 1928, by the Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 97 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. George T. Delacorte, Jr., President and Treasurer. Eugene A. Clancy, Editor. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Published in the U. S. A. Also copyrighted in Great Britain. Yearly subscription \$4.00. Single copies, 20 cents. In Canada, 25 cents. No Canadian subscriptions will be accepted.

EVERY OTHER THURSDAY
NEXT NUMBER ON SALE JANUARY 5TH

The Major's Prisoner

By

WILL R. BIRD

Author of "Heap Bad Medicine," etc.

Back in Canada Dicky Parsons and the major had been friends—old friends. The major was being retired, and he didn't like it. He spoke frankly—and right away Dicky Parsons knew that he had a problem on his hands.

THE sun had just dipped beneath the horizon over toward Avion and the long hot July afternoon was at an end. D company of the Royal Canadian regiment paraded beneath trees that fringed a barnyard pond, a slim spruce officer checked up on gas-masks, and the men moved off in file to a trench beyond a row of shattered poplars. They threaded their way in silence, sneezing now and then as dust clouds arose from patches of rank grass.

At the trench, sixteen platoon was sent back to "report at the dump." They moved along the poplars to a ruined cottage. There they fell out while their officer and a C. E. sergeant stood gazing down a toylike narrow gauge.

In the rear of the party a stocky figure shifted uneasily, watching every movement with an odd alertness. Finally, this uneasy one sideled up to a lanky individual who sat on a pile of brick.

"What are we goin' to do next?" he asked in a low tone.

"It'll be a carryin' party, of course," said the lanky one huskily. "Ain't we waitin' for the train?"

"Ah-h, I see. Thank you," replied the uneasy one.

The lanky man rose to his feet. "You new to this outfit?" he queried.

"Ah-h, yes. I just come up this

afternoon. I've been two weeks at the 'bull rings.'" The uneasy man sighed as he answered.

"They're bad, those bull rings," said the lanky one reflectively, "but old 'Sunshine' is worse."

"Ah-h, who or what is he?" said the new man timidly.

The other glanced apprehensively about him. "He's our R. S. M.," he whispered. "A bloomin' brasso king that has you shinin' before you get out of the trenches and drills the old bat off its feet every time he gets the chance."

"Ah-h!" The newcomer turned and his glance, too, was apprehensive. "I—I thought there wasn't any of that stuff up here," he faltered.

The new man was silent a time and then he turned with a jerky movement and thrust out his hand. "I'm Dicky Parsons," he said with obvious effort, "and I'm from Nova Scotia. Lived up in the hills and fished mostly."

"H-mm," said the lanky man, ignoring the proffered hand, "another herrin' choker! No use makin' acquaintances up here. They get killed off so fast you're just leärnin' new names for nothin'."

Their conversation ended abruptly. With much clanking and creaking the train drew in and sixteen platoons assisted in unloading an assortment of

corrugated iron, pickets, "A" frames, barbed wire, sandbags, etc. Parsons copied his fellows as much as possible and some twenty minutes later found himself going up a trench underneath a tangle of pickets.

In front of him and behind him men cursed and growled as their different loads caught in the turns of the trench or became entangled with each other. Parsons perspired freely and his arms ached, but his attention was taken by the flicker of Very lights far in front, the rush of occasional shells overhead and the appearance, here and there, of yawning black dugout entrances. It seemed miles before they were allowed to deposit their burdens.

THE men stood about for a moment, conversing in whispers, and impressed by the situation Parsons stepped up beside a man who stood peering over some sandbags. "Where are we now!" he wheezed in the fellow's ear.

The sentry turned slowly and surveyed him. "We're in the front line, my lad," he said at last.

"Ah-h!" Parsons seemed to shrink in his clothes, and stepped down hastily.

"Nothin' will hurt you," said the sentry carelessly. "Step up and have a look, but no chin music."

Parsons straightened cautiously and looked into No-Man's-Land. Directly in front of him all was dark, but to his right the Hun flares rose and fell describing fleeting parabolas of brilliant light and casting strange shadows over a weird landscape. The gaunt skeleton of a house stood out in inky silhouette against the fitful glare of the star-shells, and bullets buried themselves in it with vicious thuds as a machine gun rattled from some point farther on.

"This is the edge of Lens," said the sentry, "and you guys are comin' in here to-morrow night."

A crisp voice somewhere in the gloom bade sixteen platoon, R. C. R.s, to lead back. Parsons hurried down the first turn he came to and, bewildered by the strangeness of everything, blundered into a sap. Soon his feet found slippery clay instead of duck boards.

"Who the devil are you?" rasped a grim voice.

Parsons jumped back instinctively. "Ah-h, I'm with a carryin' party," he stammered. "Di—did they go this way?"

"No, son, they did not," came the answer from the unseen, "and don't you come here again either. This is a brigade machine-gun post, and we usually shoot first and inquire afterwards."

Parsons floundered back into the proper communication trench and just managed to catch up with his platoon before roll was called as they left the duck-walk. In his blankets some hours later, Parsons lay with eyes wide open and listened to the rats that raced in the walls of the billet. He had had his first glimpse of the "line" he had visualized for eleven long months, and he was still hearing that grim voice in the darkness: "We usually shoot first——"

For fifty-three years Dicky Parsons had lived in a little white-washed house high up in the hills of Nova Scotia, on a ridge known as the Boar's Back. There he had trapped in the winter and acted as guide in the summer and autumn. Tourists often visited the Boar's Back, as the brooks and lakes there were famed for trout, and Parsons was an expert with rod and reel. His existence had been a constant battle for the necessities of life—the little man's heart being too generous for his circumstances—yet he had been happy withal. His one ambition had been to see more of the world, and war had brought him the opportunity.

He found the government willing to clothe and feed him, pay his transportation, and allow him pocket money, after a few enlisting attempts taught him to conceal his age. But, when duly attested, Parsons learned to his sorrow that the way to Europe was paved with unending drill. His would-be instructors were soon equally sorrowful, and presently the mountaineer found himself attached to the cook's domain. Apt and willing, as far as work went, he was soon a favorite at the "kitchen."

In England his battalion was dismembered and he was stranded in a kilted

outfit. He suffered horribly until the pressing need of men in '17 enabled him to squirm into a draft bound for France. The fact that it was going to one of Canada's smartest regiments meant nothing to Parsons. He saw it only as an escape from hollow-backed sergeant-majors.

His first night in the trenches was, to him, a nightmare. An unsympathetic corporal set him to repairing a parapet that had been blown in. The new man was ignorant of such work and was much interested in the Hun flares that dropped intermittently. The N. C. O. came around and tested the rebuilt wall. It collapsed at his touch and Parsons received unmistakable instructions as to its rebuilding. He was also presented with an "A" frame, in place of one rather damaged, but when the corporal departed, a Fritzie machine gun poured a stream of bullets just above the break in the trench and Parsons crouched low. Then clustered red and green lights appeared on his left where a sharp bombardment had opened, and the new man forgot entirely the placing of the "A" frame.

His second attempt at a parapet satisfied his taskmaster, however, and it was not until morning light revealed the frame perched jauntily just outside the rebuilt wall that hurried questions were asked and Parsons was verbally drawn and quartered. Old Fritz took a more than friendly interest in the new piece of trench furniture, and the remarks of D company were sulphuric. The words "Jonah," and "hoodoo," luridly embellished, were painfully frequent.

THE second night was a repetition of the first, but Parsons profited by his experience and made no blunders. The third night he was sent out on listening post duty with "Catty" Fisher, a company scout. This scout delighted in breaking in new men, and his favorite pastime was to dilate on the dangers of No-Man's-Land, at the same time recalling incidents of the past in which new men had been victims of Hun steel and strategy. Parsons listened to the whispered comments and shivered in

spite of himself. The night air was rarely free from the slash of bullets and things seemed to move in the shadows. At length Catty looked at the luminous dial of his wrist watch. "Take hold of the signal wire," he whispered, "and go back to the trench. Ask the sentry what time the patrol's comin' in, and come back and tell me."

Catty had the signal wire attached to his arm. It ran back to the arm of the sentry on duty in the trench, and though the night was dark it was easy to travel with such a guide.

"The patrol will be comin' in pretty soon," growled the sentry. "I ain't got no time table and they were goin' to try and pick up a Heinie. Tell Catty to come in and don't leave no 'A' frames out there."

D company could not forget the strafing Dicky's carelessness had gained them.

In his hurry Parsons tripped over some debris as he made his return trip, lost his hold on the guide-wire, and tumbled headlong into a saucerlike crater. He was somewhat stunned but scrambled to his feet, climbed out of the crater and felt for the wire. Finding it, he paused to rub his bruises and went on. He halted suddenly and froze in his tracks. The acute instincts life in the open had developed told him that he had traveled beyond the distance necessary to reach Catty. He must have the wrong wire.

He remembered that No-Man's-Land was strewn with old telephone wires and a cold sweat broke over him. He started to go back and found to his horror that the wire circled, and he came upon a dozen craters exactly like the one he had tumbled into. The little man's scalp crawled as he heard the panting of hurrying men. Dropping to one knee he released the safety catch of his rifle. Black blurs in the gloom approached rapidly and his heart seemed to back-fire as a flare soared aloft and outlined the "coal-scuttle" helmet of the foremost man. Parsons did not doubt that he was discovered, and his Lee-Enfield spoke savagely. The German pitched forward like a drunken man

and lay still. Profuse Canadian profanity broke forth into the startled night and too late Parsons saw that the other men were the missing patrol. He had shot their captive.

As the light vanished a venomous machine-gun fire swept the area. The patrol and Parsons escaped by wriggling into ditches but it was nearly an hour before they were able to get back to the trench, where only the presence of the platoon officer saved the newcomer from violent hands. Long and passionate were the maledictions called down on the head of D company's Jonah.

Huddled on the chicken-wire in the semi-darkness of a damp dugout, Parsons was indeed miserable. The little man's faith in human nature was weakening. As strongly as he had longed to explore new pastures, he longed for the Boar's Back and his whitewashed home.

On their first "rest" back of the lines he investigated some old gun emplacements and there discovered a weather-stained skull. Shocked at such a circumstance, he brought it back with him to the billet, intending to procure a spade and bury the awesome relic. But his trophy attracted attention, and the more superstitious ones, led by Catty, demanded that he take it away at once. The bugle blew the cookhouse call at the moment, so Parsons took his find to the garden of his billet and left it beneath some bushes.

Scream upon scream came from that direction the next morning at parade time. Madame had gone to the garden to get vegetables for dinner and, behold, a skull grinned at her from a covert of vines. Parsons was taken before his slim and spruce company commander and sentenced to fourteen days "number one."

Two months passed, and only the tenacity engrained by his primitive life in the mountains kept up his courage. He had found "Sunshine" to be all that his lanky informer had stated, had three different misdemeanors marked in his pay-book, and was now openly styled "the Jonah."

ONE evening after stand-to the second in command of the battalion came into the dugout. Parsons had only seen his officer from a distance, yet had been aware of something vaguely familiar about the man. He ventured into the candle-light for a closer view.

"What's your name?" The major was a red-faced, husky-breathing stalwart, and shot the question with dramatic suddenness.

"Parsons, sir. Dicky Parsons."

"Not from Boar's Back, Nova Scotia?"

"Why—ah-h—yes, I live there."

The major chuckled. "And you don't remember McTaggart?"

Parsons' vision grew misty. Regardless of the others, he sprang forward and wrung the major's hand. He was seeing again long shadowy pools in the hills and a campfire where squatted a very uncouth and red-faced man, counting his day's catch.

"Y—yes, sir, I do." Parsons' voice was high-pitched with feeling. "Them was the best days ever, and I'll never forget the morning you hooked the three-pounder off the Floatin' Island."

"Dicky," said the major gruffly, "you must come to my dugout."

Parsons went gladly. And the joy of meeting this old sportsman he had so often guided—a human who considered him a friend—loosed his tongue and before he caught himself he had told his hatred of France and all therein, as well as his pining for the home in the hills. Then his leathery countenance crimsoned until it rivalled McTaggart's.

"Ah-h, I'm not a quitter, sir," he ended, "and—and I'm sorry I said so much. I'll be O. K."

McTaggart had listened without comment. He filled his pipe. Then he shot questions. "Dicky, how old are you? Don't you dare lie."

Parsons squirmed and evaded, but in vain. "I'm fifty-three," he admitted at last, "but age doesn't hurt me a bit."

The major faced him impressively. "Listen, you old fraud," he said gruffly, "I'm leaving for Canada in a few days."

Over-age, same as you, tired, same as you, and not quite smart enough for this mob, I guess. Too many new-fangled ideas of soldierin'. You'll come back with me as my batman. I'll fix your papers at brigade."

Parsons tried to speak, but his tongue would not function. "Never mind, Dicky," snapped the major, "go back to your dugout. I'll fix everything so's you'll go back whatever happens."

"Ah-h—happens?" Parsons' voice came back.

The look in McTaggart's eyes stilled him. For a moment there was silence, then the major used grim dogged tones that Parsons had not heard before.

"They think I'm a has-been," he said slowly, "and they laugh when I mention South Africa, but I'm goin' to push the laugh down their necks. Brigade wants a prisoner, been asking for a week, but without losses. I'm going over to the 'Verboten' trench, Dicky, and bring back a Heinie."

He scratched a match and lit his pipe. "So long, old man" he rumbled. "Get out, and keep everything under your hat."

Parsons knew it was useless to argue. He trudged back to the trench as if he were suddenly aged. He had glimpsed paradise. During his "turn" on duty and the rest of the night he racked his brain for some scheme to save the situation, some plan whereby he could frustrate the major's mad intentions. After stand-to he could not sleep. The drip of water down the chalk walls of the dugout, the snoring of the men and the rustle of rats unnerved him. He went up to the sunlight.

The front line skirted the mining town of Lens, and the Hun had honey-combed the place with gun emplacements, trenches and tunnels while it had been in his possession. Many broken-down passages opened into the trench that the Candians had wrested from him, but minor accidents from falling bricks and timbers had necessitated orders that only engineers on duty go in such places. Parsons, anxious for solitude, forgot such orders and dodged into a tunnel near their dugout,

where he leaned against a barricade of refuse just inside.

FOR an hour he studied his problem from every angle, and could not think of a way to balk McTaggart and still retain his friendship. A timber on which he leaned gave suddenly and slid away, leaving quite an opening. In a trice Parsons had moved others. Lighting a candle he held it high and peered. He saw that beyond the barricade a man could move quite easily, and without more ado he wriggled through to a damp, evil-smelling passageway. A pair of mouldy boots and a shovel with a broken handle were his first finds. Then he came to a recess in the tunnel that held a few German helmets of the "coal-scuttle" type, belts, overcoats and a tunic. Though moulded, the clothing was practically new.

Parsons pushed on a bit and found the way drier. He stumbled over a mess tin and far ahead in the gloom a low moan sounded. An icy hand seemed to traverse his spine. In a twinkling he had extinguished his candle and was making frantic retreat. After bruising himself considerably in the utter blackness, he stopped to listen. There were no sounds of pursuit, so he moved with more caution, but dared not light his candle.

When at last he emerged at the trench entrance he had calmed himself and the sunshine gave him courage for his decision, a decision that lifted the clouds from his war-wearied brain. His mind, attuned to outwitting game or wary fish, was now, in lightning flashes, reaching toward a solution of his difficulties. In his kit he had a German automatic that he had purchased cheaply from a beer-thirsty machine gunner, and armed with it and his flashlight he meant to re-enter the tunnel and find out what or who had groaned. He did not believe in ghosts and the possibilities of a prisoner for McTaggart gave him unusual courage.

He heard the moaning again as he saw the battered mess tin. It was certainly a human in distress, and Parsons advanced steadily, his trigger finger

taut. Around a turn he saw his man, a German soldier, pinned under crossed beams and rubbish. The dirty-gray uniform and the "square head" could not be mistaken.

The trapped man blinked his eyes in the light and began to whine. Dicky could not understand a word but by much tugging and lifting he got the fellow clear. The German was too weak to rise, but made his rescuer understand that he wanted water. Parsons saw that the piled wreckage beyond prevented escape in that direction and that the fellow would not follow him into the Canadian trench. He searched his man for weapons and to his surprise found none. Then, after trying to make the Hun understand that he would return promptly, he left. The fellow lay with his eyes closed and the only intelligible word he muttered was "Kamerad!"

Parsons gained his dugout unnoticed, got his water bottle filled and his pockets full of rations. One of the sleeping men owned a pair of high trench boots, and the little man removed the laces from them with the stealth of a burglar. Another venture and he was back in the passage. He found that the German had crawled some distance during his absence. After a long pull at the water bottle the fellow sat up and wolfed down bread and cheese like one famished. By sign language he indicated that he had been imprisoned for three days. Occasionally he put his hands up anxiously and reiterated "Kamerad! Kamerad!"

Parsons observed the bull-dog jowls of the fellow, the glint in his piglike eyes, and these observances nerved him for his task of lashing his prisoner's wrists and ankles. It was noon when he crept into his blanket again, but he slept soundly.

At night it was drizzly and the star shells gleamed and fell in silver trajectory, but nothing could dampen Parsons' cheerfulness. He went to McTaggart's dugout at dawn and the grizzled officer greeted him good-naturedly. "Hope you kept all I told you under your hat," grunted the major.

3—W. S.—1.5

"I have," said Parsons promptly. "Ah-h, when do you go after your prisoner?"

McTaggart raised on one elbow. "Dicky," he said solemnly, "I know the very workings of your mind. You go back to your blankets. When I go for a Hun I'm goin' alone. Dismiss."

"Ah-h, but I know where you can get one easily—after dark. They're in a tunnel and you could go in alone."

Parsons poured it all out in a mouthful, and his eagerness gained him a hearing.

The major seemed skeptical of the sounds Parsons claimed to have heard. "Why didn't you report them?" he queried.

"Ah-h, I'm afraid they would laugh at me. They call me a 'Jonah,'" said Parsons.

"Well, I'll be there at nine o'clock, Dicky, and I'll go into that place. You can come after me, if you care to."

Parsons' heart warmed anew to the old veteran. "Thank you very much," he managed to say, and was gone.

In the trench above he fairly danced. His plot was perfect.

With more biscuits and cheese, his flash-light and automatic, he went back to his captive. The German was sullen and his eyes searched Parsons'. When the food was eaten the prisoner pointed to the roof and made harsh complaint. Parsons supposed he referred to the danger of further cave-ins, but the appeal did not move him. Of far greater importance was the saving of the major. As well as he could he explained to the Hun that he would be removed that night, pointing to nine on his watch dial. Then, after much threatening with his revolver, he re-tied the thick wrists.

AT stand-to Parsons was nonplussed by the news that filtered from post to post. Catty Fisher was going out on his own to get a prisoner. Brigade had become insistent in its request. At eight-thirty Gatty appeared and to Parsons' surprise, went out at his post near the tunnel. A long half-hour dragged by and the major came.

Parsons heard him coming and dodged

in the tunnel. The German had managed to roll halfway to the entrance, and the light in his eyes showed desperate resolve. Parsons tapped his automatic significantly and again pointed to his watch, then severed his captive's bonds and marched him back to where they had first met. There he thrust him to a seat in the rubbish and went through a pantomime of surrender. The German nodded vigorously and whined his usual "Kamerad." Now certain that all was ready Parsons raced back and met McTaggart fuming at the delay. They entered the mouth of the place and then the officer backed out and swore mightily.

"Ah-h, why—why?" Parsons was bewildered.

"This is the very tunnel the engineers examined a week ago," swore the major. "It's empty."

"It may have been then," said Parsons determinedly, "but I heard voices in there not an hour ago."

That sufficed. A strenuous tugging and pulling and the senior major of the R.C.R.s was on the far side of the first barrier. Confident that the Hun would stay in place, and wishing McTaggart the spice of adventure, Parsons kept well to the rear. His superior lumbered up the passage with as much noise as a battery column, and his faithful ally perspired freely as he pictured the major in No-Man's-Land. McTaggart's headlong methods soon landed him at the last barricade. Parsons' hand had tightened on his automatic at the last moment, but the torch showed that the place was empty!

"Is this as far as we can go?" McTaggart's tones were impatient.

"Ah-h, I think it is," said Parsons weakly. "There must be a mis-mistake."

"Humph! My mistake in coming here. Let's get back. I'll have a Hun before it's light."

Parsons dared not explain, but as they came back to the entrance he saw where timbers had been pulled away enough to hold the missing prisoner. The German had followed him and had hidden by the barricade as they climbed

over. When they were again in the trench the major turned and spoke with emphasis. "You go to company headquarters and stay there till I come. Tell them I sent you, nothing more. Do you understand?"

"Yes," responded Parsons, "but, ah-h——"

"There are no 'buts'," was the reply. Yet the officer's hand caught Parsons' in the dark and the grip was warm and lasting.

Parsons saw the major go down to bomb stores, and for a moment he stood, undecided. Not for a split second did he consider going to headquarters. Then he thought of the German uniforms.

When McTaggart climbed over the parapet near the tunnel's entrance and searched with rasping comment until he found a lane in the wire, a small blur in the darkness of a shell hole remained motionless, but when the officer moved toward Hunland the blur advanced with him. It was Parsons, with a Hun uniform over his own, and a "coal-scuttle" that covered him like a tent.

The thin green streak of a German flare shot up in the darkness, burst into ghostly illumination and dropped with a hissing sound. The major had crouched at the report of the flare pistol, and he remained as steady as the brick end of a ruined stable he faced.

Somewhat to his left crouched Parsons, also rigid. A cellar gaped near the ruined stable and between them was a tangle of wire that forced McTaggart to circle his obstructions. Parsons seized the opportunity and as the major stepped around the brick wall he was met, as if by magic, with a queer-looking figure in field gray. A cry of "Kamerad! Kamerad!" came huskily.

The major fumbled his gun and this alone prevented a bullet cutting short the "Kamerad" appeal. Then the major spoke loudly. "Keep reachin' for stars and hustle. One slip and I'll shoot. Travel." His captive moved with marvelous alacrity.

They had not gone a dozen paces, however, when two dark shapes appeared on their right, two shapes that

resembled the major and his trophy, for the one in the lead wore over-sized gray and held his hands aloft.

McTaggart was equal to the occasion. He swung his prisoner in front of him as a defence and bellowed, "Who the devil are you?"

"Who are you?" came the retort. Followed a few heartbeats of suspense, and then the major's gruff voice sliced the quiet again. "Are you Fisher, the scout?" he asked.

The major's prisoner seemed to sag at the knees.

"I am, sir. Is that Major McTaggart?" Doubt, but considerable respect, tinged the reply.

"Certainly," barked the major. "Come along, man. This is no place to argue."

THE procession had not gone its length when with a "cra-ash! Bang! Cra-ash!" Hun grenades burst all around them, and German machine guns barked like angry dogs. Heinie had missed a sentry and was peeved.

At the first outbreak the quartette leaped to a crater, and by some awkwardness the prisoners were tangled together. After a spasm of shooting the machine guns subsided and only constant flares denoted anything unusual.

"We'll go in separately," growled McTaggart. "Take that bird of yours, Fisher, and move sharp."

The men in gray were identical. One arose with remarkable readiness, almost seeming to thrust the other back, before the major's heavy hand made sure of him. Parsons had anticipated the moment and his heart sang again as he stumbled along in front of Fisher, his hands in the air.

Catty followed closely and his voice was arrogant as he ordered the sentry to help the prisoner down.

"Help him down—he can't bite. You needn't be windy of him now."

They clattered into the bay. "Not that way," snapped Fisher. "Turn him 'round. I'm goin' straight to brigade. Old McTaggart's got a Heinie, too, and I'm goin' to beat him out. Some Heinie must have been walkin' in his sleep when that old buzzard caught him."

Catty's captive stepped lively enough, and had not the scout been so conscious of his prowess he would surely have been suspicious of his Hun's knowledge of the trench.

Parsons' mind flashed at lightning speed. At the tunnel entrance they had to pass, the ground dipped sharply. His feverish mind grasped a possible salvation from his predicament. He purposely stepped high and pitched into the hollow in a twisting fall. Catty scornful of danger, bent over and grasped him by the collar. "Get up," he snapped, and jerked roughly.

The response he got was the butt of a Luger, driven with all of Parsons' energy. It landed fairly on the scout's forehead and Fisher lost interest in everything.

"*Bist Du es, Fritz?*" The sudden hoarse whisper burnt through Parsons like an electric shock. It came from the tunnel mouth and without hesitation he risked his flash-light. Peering at him from the cavity was the big-jowled German with piglike eyes.

Parsons' automatic had gone up with the torch. "Hands up," he hissed, "and push back in there."

The Hun obeyed the pointed pistol but emitted a flow of gutterals with "Kamerads." His captor paid no heed but forced him to drag the scout in the tunnel entrance beside them. The German acted like a caged tiger, but Parsons watched him narrowly as he strove for ideas. In some way he must get the fellow back to Hunland, in order to avoid endless inquiries. Catty groaned and the little man turned his head. In that fraction of time the German struck the light to earth and leaped outside. Before Parsons could dive after him, the man had vanished.

As he stood listening for the fugitive he heard heavy footsteps approaching. Dodging back into the tunnel he saw McTaggart pass, stepping like a two-year old after his undersized prisoner. Dazed by crowding events, Parsons crept out and followed. The next moment a gruff voice ahead struck him like cold water. "Halt! Put them up—you son of the kaiser. By the sad-

eyed herring, if the Huns aren't running loose in our trenches. Back up there, Von Blitzen. March now, you sausage grinders, march!"

Parsons sprang to action. Every second counted. Complications were setting in rapidly and his only hope, he thought, was to get to company headquarters ahead of McTaggart. It would free him of much questioning if he could slip in unobserved. Only one way was open, however, and that was overland.

HE swarmed up the parados and struggled through loose rubbish. Brick ruins held him up and once he fell over a metal bar. He picked it up to use as a staff. A sentry was dozing by the headquarter's dugout, doing duty as gas alarm. He roused to see a horrible looking Hun, armed with a spear, leaping down on him. Dicky, in his hurry, had not chosen his descent. The sentry's yell of fear was smothered by Parsons' bulky garments and the downfall of both carried them over the top step. In a fearsome tangle they rolled, bumped and slid down the dugout stairs.

An officer from brigade, a red-tabbed specialist, and an interpreter, were sitting in conference with the captain of D company. Into their presence tumbled the writhing figures, untangling to display a wild-looking Hun, bare-headed. The specialist's leap for safety was never forgotten. He hurdled a map-littered table and crashed signallers, telephone and all into a cot where slumbered a weary runner. The latter's despairing cry was cut off abruptly. The interpreter blanched to an unhealthy pallor, but the captain proved the hero of the hour. He produced an overgrown revolver of the regulation type and fired—once—twice. The first bullet chipped chalky fragments from the ceiling and ricocheted into the gas blanket. It missed the terrified sentry by an inch. With another howl of fright he bolted up the stairs—to be met by another German with a heavy jowl and piglike eyes!

The second bullet jangled equipment

that hung on one side of the dugout and brought forth another chalky eruption.

"It's me—Dicky Parsons—Dicky Parsons—Dicky Parsons!"

The shouting of his visitor caused the captain to cease fire. "Don't shoot me. The major's comin'," shrilled Parsons. The light of the dugout and the actions of its inmates had crashed home the fact that he still wore Hun clothes. He had lost his "coal-scuttle" at the tunnel.

Then a series of gasps issued forth as two more Germans piled into the dugout, and the specialist moaned feebly. The interpreter weakened suddenly—and sat down on a newly-opened jam tin. Close behind the Huns came a massive figure who wheezed.

"Hullo!" boomed his voice. "What the —?"

Silence, perfect and golden, broken only by a dripping sound from some portion of the equipment on the wall. McTaggart turned and sniffed. The fumes of damp chalky soil recently disturbed, exploded ammunition, and stale cigarettes, were overriden by an odor not to be mistaken. "Hell!" he roared. "There's whiskey wasting somewhere."

The sentry who had summoned courage enough to return, pointed a finger. "It's the captain's water bottle," he said in a shaky voice. There was a stir in the background, and never a sun rose redder than the specialist from behind the runner's cot. Almost as dramatic was the rise of the interpreter. The opened jam tin rose with him, its jagged edges and sticky contents having made it a close companion. Then the major glimpsed the bareheaded German who stood, slumped miserably, with his back towards the entrance.

"I thought Fisher went to brigade," McTaggart snorted. "Where is he?"

"I—I don't know," said the captain. "These must be your prisoners."

"Slimy sea serpents!" shouted the major. "Do you mean to tell me that I brought three down here?"

The captain was getting control. "Why, yes, sir," he said carefully. "They all came down ahead of you."

"Jumping mackerel!" yelled McTaggart. "Do these animals multiply like that? I capture one Heinie—then there's two, twins—I come on and there's—" He was growing delirious when Parsons turned and looked him full in the eye.

The major choked. He pulled off his steel hat and rubbed a shining bald spot, spat,—and reached for the leaky water bottle. Parsons had seen him take slightly more than the usual rum ration just as they entered the tunnel; had seen another generous "pull" at the shell crater. He watched performances eagerly, and once more hope circulated in his breast. McTaggart examined the bullet dent in the bottle. "It can be fixed," he muttered thickly, and removed the stopper.

Three candles fluttered wanly in the tepid air. The different breathings of the onlookers contrasted oddly, but there was music of a sort in the steady gurgling that followed. When it ceased the major replaced the bottle with methodical care, wiped his mouth and turned to Parsons.

"Private Parsons," he said grimly, "if you want to smell salt water again, tell the truth. What are you doing in that uniform?"

Icy and terrible was the portent of those words, but their effect was lost. To Parsons came swift memories of other days, when the disposal of liquids had reached a certain point. An elaborate "Mister Parsons" must be a close relative to this deliberate "Private Parsons." He must tell anything but the truth to avoid disaster. "I was captured by three Germans as I come this way from the tunnel," he said smartly, though fascinated by the changing light in the major's eye. "They dressed me in this rig and took me out in No-Man's-Land, but I give them the slip and was tryin' to get here to give the alarm when I fell into the trench."

An expressive silence followed his recital. The fish-cold blue eyes of the captain were fixed on him. "I believe, major," said that officer, "that this man is an unscrupulous liar."

McTaggart's hat clamped hard on his

head. "You do!" he said, hiccoughing a trifle. "I'm here to tell you he's worth a dozen of—of—of—" His eye lingered over the captain, the specialist, and the interpreter. He straightened with military precision. "Send these beauties to brigade," he thundered, "as Major McTaggart's prisoners. Come with me, Private Parsons. We must be at the railhead at seven."

He turned, but with a sputtered ejaculation the big-jowled German thrust forward and poured forth a deluge of gutterals. The interpreter came suddenly to life and held up his hand. "One minute, major," he said gravely. "This prisoner says that this man"—he pointed to Dicky—"is crazy—insane. This prisoner says he crawled through a tunnel and tried to surrender to the English and was prevented. He says this man felled one of his own comrades and rolled him in a hole."

Very solemnly McTaggart scrutinized the German and then the interpreter. "The major says,"—his speech was getting thicker—"that this man,"—he pointed to the Hun accuser—"is an unscrupulous liar."

IN the chill of dawn a car rolled down the cobbled road that led to St. Pol. The driver paid little attention to the rougher spots in the highway. He had been rudely aroused by this majestic major, who was undeniably drunk, and only his fear of the might of the R. C. R.s had forced him to disregard rules of the brigade staff and take a car without proper orders. The two figures in the back seat were very drowsy. They lolled together, almost affectionately.

At the big station of St. Pol the driver unloaded his charges with difficulty. The major was seated on a truck and his companion, a little man in rumpled clothing, squatted close beside him. The chauffeur's curiosity overcame him. "Say, you,"—he shook the smaller man,— "where are you goin'?"

The rumpled little man opened his eyes, blinked. He snuggled closer to the officer. "Ah-h—we're goin' fishin'," he stammered, and slept.