

Bare –A Thursday Prompt



By S.W.Ohm

France, August 13, 1918.

Been one hell of a week, thought Bert, as he flicked the ashes from his cigarette with his left paw, and twirled the pencil in his right. A group of four Wolf Huns limped past, three carrying a badly wounded fourth to the prison cage behind the lines of the 60th Battery Artillery of the Canadian Army.

Bert continued to write.

Every gun shot together and the thing was off. I never heard anything like it in my life, neither has anyone else, as it was about the biggest show that has ever been staged on the Western Front. Several times I could not hear my own gun fire, and for half the series, I laid and fired the gun myself. After 3 hours, I was practically deaf. We fired our first shot at 4:20 AM at 800 yards and in three hours, the enemy was out of our range (6,500 yds).

The 21 year old Labrador retriever rubbed his nose with the back of his paw. Hell of a thing artillery, the Queen of the battlefield. Soldiers have uniforms, helmets, guns and bunkers, but with all that you are still bare as the day you were whelped to an artillery barrage. In actual fact though, any activity of war you are bare, bare naked and in full view of death at every moment.

About noon, I took a walk up to the front lines of the night before, and it was a terrible sight of dead and wounded. The Red Cross Bernards were then taking them away. Only one enemy plane

came over our lines that day and he didn't get back. I saw a Hun plane brought down yesterday, and I went over to see it. It was smashed into small strands and the airwolf was in a pulp among the pieces.

The past few days brought that fact to the forefront very clear. An American Shepard and a British Pug ambled by dragging a litter of two Australians, heavily wrapped with blood stained bandages about the head and chest, moaning softly. Bert walked over and gave the shepard and the pug his canteen, and a couple cigarettes as they paused for a breather on the long march to the medical tents.

“You look like you could use these, we’re in the pink of condition presently, you not so much.” Bert said.

“You’re a holy angel,” Said the Yank as drew an orgasmic drag.” We’ve been out of smokes for near a month!”

“Then here,” as he gave the rest of his pack, and a fresh one to the Brit.

“Cheers, gunner” Said the pug,” Right decent of you, old boy. Set up in one of Fritz’s old pits have you? Good show that.”

“Yes, I recon you lot pushed him out of this one last week I’d say.”

One of the wounded Australians began to moan again. The American turned a somber look to him and said “Best we get back to it, Thanks for the smokes and water. You keep well, hey?”

“You too!....you too.” Bert said as they got about their grim task. Bert went back to his pit and wrote more.

On the first day, we had one Officer and one man wounded. The second day,one labrador wounded and on the third, we lost our leader, Major Ringwood, while making his reconnaissance for our present position. He's the hound we need at this moment, more than at any other time. He knew his own and every other artillerydog's job perfectly and was never stuck. He was the instructor at Kingstown, Ont. for ten years and has trained over 50% of the Canadian Artillery officers in France. His horse's head was blown off, but he had only one wound, right through the heart. His body was left in a trench over night and the next day, I volunteered with 7 others to bring it in. We looked for hours, before we found it, but finally did so, near the front lines. The Hun was strafing us furiously and several times I thought we would need more than one stretcher. We had to carry him two miles and he weighed 225 pounds! no easy job.

War lays you bare, gods own truth. Oh but how we will appreciate freedom and liberty if we ever get out of this thing.

Write soon, will send the next "Circular" to Murrill.

Lots of Love to the wives and kids and selves, from your affectionate brother,

Bertie

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This story included actual quotes from a letter by Gunner Bertram Howard Cox, of the 59th Battery CFA to his brother on 13 August 1918 after the Battle of Amiens, France. Modified only to conform to the athro narrative.

He survived the war and died in Flint Michigan in 1981.

I would invite the reader to read more of his letters and the other accounts at

www.shiawasseehistory.com/cox.html

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