



# GHOST BAYONETS

By  
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*NO MAN'S LAND—Night and the Boche grimly guarded the dread mystery of Graveyard Corner, death-place of the fighting Yanks . . .*



HERE was a sergeant got lost in there in the dark and he was stepping on graves and dead men. He kicked something like a hard ball and it was a head, and then somebody took hold of his arm, and led him out of there. It was a ghost, a big, tall Frenchman, dressed in a black suit, top hat and all, with his eyes out and his face as white as plaster. He took the sergeant back to the trench and said, 'If you come in here again you're a goner,' or something like that. The other chaps laughed at the sergeant when he told them that, but one night he got mixed again and went in there—and tripped over a wire and broke his neck—"

"Cut that damn tripe." The thin, nervous voice in the dark was cut off by a savage growl. "You got the 'Canary' so scared now that he's shakin'. Cut it out, and no lights or smokin', for we're going' in to

Graveyard Corner right now."

The sergeant of Ten Platoon got up from the bank where they had been resting and stepped down into the black void of a communication trench.

"Where's this we're going?" asked the sixth man in the file behind him. "That chap behind us has been talking about ghosts ever since we started. He's trying to start something."

"Search me, Jimmy," came a soft response from the man in front of him. "This bunch has been lookin' like they're goin' to their own funeral ever since we got word to fall in at billets."

"You bet," said a husky voice in the dark. "You'll wish you was back in the States before we're through this trip. The Corner's a bloody trap of a place, and it's haunted."

"Haunted?" queried Jimmy. "How—"

“Stop that talkin’ when I say to.” The sergeant’s command was as sibilant as a snake’s hiss, and the slow-moving file felt its way up the trench without further parleying.

Presently a wan moon peered through the clouds and gave enough light for the in-going platoon to pick out its surroundings as it spread into the front line. They had marched in from Cité Saint Pierre and were taking over a sector between Lens and Hill 70, a frontal area with a reputation that wrung curses from the old hands and blanched the faces of the superstitious.

Jimmy wondered, as he plodded, what sort of a place the Corner was. All day he had heard the old-timers muttering, cursing and talking among themselves. All the front was bad enough, he gleaned, but the Corner had a category of its own. It was a place where each day was a grim possession, something held precariously. Then he grinned, and tried to get a look at Pete. Probably these old hands had been trying to bluff them, put their wind up before they saw the front, and so help the sergeant to win his bet.

Jimmy Blake and his pal, Pete Conner, had just joined the “Pig Stickers,” one of the best battalions in the Canadian Second Division, an outfit that prided itself on being the best bayonet fighters on the Western Front, and the hardest to frighten. The sergeant of their platoon was an iron-jawed, bull-voiced, thick-skinned giant, who made scornful remarks about all Americans, and especially about Jimmy and Pete, who could not conceal the fact that they were rather young in years.

New men roused little interest, for there were new men after every hard trip, but Jimmy and Pete were Yanks, and that was different.

“What the hell made you kids come and join our mob?” the hardboiled sergeant had asked. “Don’t you know that we’re the Pig Stickers?”

“Yeah, but that don’t sink so deep,” Jimmy had retorted. He was twenty and as big as the average. “Pete and me’s always lookin’ for excitement and so we thought we’d come over and play tag with Fritz until we got acquainted. Then when Pershing comes with his gang, he’ll make us generals on account of us knowin’ so much more’n the rest.”

“Is that so?” the hardboiled one had sneered. “I’ll bet fifty francs you ain’t got spunk enough to stick a man, and that you’ll puke the first time you smell a dead one.”

“Take your fifty,” said Jimmy. “Put up your

money. I never tried my bayonet on a live Fritz and I’ve never been in the trenches, but my cash says that I can go anywhere you do.”

The rest of the platoon had not said anything at the time, but afterward, when they met Jimmy alone, they told him that he had been foolhardy.

“That sarge is a bearcat,” they told him. “He’s not afraid of anything on foot, and he’s been here so long that he knows all there is to know.” Jimmy thought of that now as he moved into the front trench and peered curiously about him.

The platoon they relieved made record time in departing, and their actions spoke louder than words. There was no doubt as to their personal regard of Graveyard Corner.

An enemy machine gun swept the parapet in front of Jimmy and he ducked low as bullets whistled and snapped above him. He was stationed on a firestep beside one of the old hands and had been receiving instructions.

“Don’t move when a flare goes up,” cautioned the veteran. “And rest your eyes now and then when you’re lookin’ over. Stumps and things will look like they’re movin’ if you don’t.”

A corporal came along the trench.

“Keep a sharp lookout,” he ordered. “This here’s the worst place on this front. You can see by watchin’ the flares that we’re in a sort of salient, and the ground’s so flat ahead that we can’t put out patrols. Heinie would just murder them with a crossfire. The only cover there is, and the only chance for patrols, is over on the right, where there’s a dry ditch along a French road that runs into his lines. You look over that way and you’ll see the stubs of the trees alongside it. Of course Heinie’s in as bad a fix about patrols as we are, and he uses that ditch, too.”

SEVERAL machine guns began firing and the Boche began strafing. The skyline was illumined by flickering lights and the air quivered with the passing of shells. They could hear the resulting explosions back near Cité Saint Pierre and Jimmy was conscious of queer tremors as he listened to the strafe. He wished he had not spoken so bombastically to the sergeant.

“Keep lookin’ over,” ordered the corporal, speaking loud above the din. “There’s been three posts cleaned out on this trench inside of a month. Every man was killed or captured, and nobody knew that Fritz was near till afterward.”

Jimmy stared into the gloom. He had been able to distinguish the contours of the shell-torn ground in front of him, and to the right he could see the line of stumps that marked the road. The moon was appearing again and as he looked he saw, nearer at hand, other short stumps that he had not noticed the first time.

"Does the road turn this way, corp?" he asked. "The stumps come right along this wire."

"I told you you'd be seein' things," grunted the veteran sentry. "There's no stumps near the wire." He got up on the firestep. "Where do you see them?" he asked.

Jimmy, crowded over for the moment, got back in his place and pointed, then lowered his hand hastily.

"By gosh, that's got me beat," he said. "I'd have taken my oath I saw stumps out there."

"Just what I thought," rumbled the veteran. "You new guys are all like that."

Jimmy rubbed his eyes and stared again. He was certain that he had seen the stumps, and yet it was an impossibility. Stumps could not move themselves. The corporal brought shovels and told Jimmy and his mate to work at widening the trench as they waited their turn on the firestep! "We want plenty of room at the corners," he said, "so when the alarm's given all the spare men can rush to the spot."

The night seemed endless to Jimmy. The fitful light of the flares cast strange, moving shadows over the flat, shell-scarred area in front and bullets buried themselves with vicious thuds in the tortured sentinel stubs that bordered the old roadway. Behind the front trench a war-shocked cemetery crowned an acre of higher ground and a reflection of the flares was sent back from the shattered tombstones and the debris of a wrecked shrine. Waspy bullets traversed the graveyard continually and the veteran, when he mentioned the place, spoke with awe.

"That there burying ground is haunted," he whispered. "In the daytime you can see dead men sprawled all around it. Fritz had this place once, took it from the Imperials, and they did a lot of killin' among them graves. And it's been shelled so much since then, that the stiff's are pitched around every way and some of the Frenchmen has been knocked out of their coffins. Don't ever go near there, for it's sure bad luck. One outfit had a chap that was scared when it come his turn to do

listenin' post. He slipped back there and hid at a grave. A tall Frenchman in a black rig come to him and led him back and warned him not to come there again. Well, the guy got his wind up again and beat it there. He hid in another corner. They found him there, dead, black in the face, just as if he'd been drowned or choked." The veteran shuddered as he spoke.

Jimmy shivered. He hated this talk about haunted places. Despite his assumed indifference he had a dread of anything concerned with the supernatural.

There was a sudden, nerve-shattering report, a lurid tongue of flame. The sentry pitched backward. Then a bomb burst in the trench and the explosion felled Jimmy and left him half-stunned. Dark figures surged on the trench wall. Another needle of flame stabbed the dark and the corporal sank to the trench floor, clutching at his throat with his hands. His heels drummed on the duck walk.

It had all happened in one split second and Jimmy was just jumping to his feet as the first Boche jumped into the trench. Sock! Jimmy lunged desperately with his bayonet, drove it instinctively—in—out—on guard. The instructor at the base had told him how it was done, and, his pulses pounding, he made the thrusts as if on practice, but as he felt live flesh run over the steel, he was filled with an odd exhilaration.

Bombs burst to the left and right. Pistol shots! Bullets snapped about his ears. Dark forms all about him, rushing back and forth in search of opponents who were not there. Jimmy, trapped on both sides, fought like a madman, discarding every caution, insane with one desire—to fight his way clear.

He leaped, dodged, slashed, stabbed, struck and butt-ended, until he slipped as he finally drove his bayonet into a second body, and a blow on the head stretched him senseless. He roused a moment later as men from the next post came rushing in. Four Germans, the corporal, and the veteran sentry lay dead. The rest of the invaders had vanished as mysteriously as they had appeared.

The platoon officer appeared, and he asked countless questions. Jimmy explained that he had been knocked down by the first bomb, and how he had met the first of the raiders while he was still too dizzy to duck back from him.

"You're lucky," said the lieutenant. "That's what saved your life. They expected you were dead

when you fell, and you staying right with them and using your bayonet upset their plans so that they beat it. But how in the devil did they get so close without somebody seeing them?"

No one answered him. It seemed impossible, and all knew that the veteran sentry was a good man. A double sentry watch was kept. Jimmy's head ached and he was feverish with excitement. He had had contact with the enemy; he had used his bayonet. How he wished he could see Pete.

At last it lightened and the sun appeared like a gigantic orange ball glinting through the white ground mist. Stand-down was given and Jimmy hurried to the dugout and joined Pete, who had been out most of the night on a carrying party. He told him of the surprise attack and how all the others had been killed, and how he had used his bayonet.

"Gee," said Pete. "I wish they'd put me on a post." He was a tall youth, almost as big as the hardboiled sergeant. "We've got that nervous guy they call the Canary with us, and he's enough to set a man crazy. He's scared to death of the Graveyard and we have to go by it every trip. He bellyaches about it all the time and that lousy three-striper has threatened to break his neck. I wish I was with you."

They talked a while longer before Pete slept. Jimmy lay awake a long time. He could not help wondering about the stumps he had seen, and how the Germans had appeared so suddenly.



IT WAS stand-to again and the night was very dark. Jimmy hurried to his post, fearing that he was a little late. He had gone with Pete to have a look at the haunted Graveyard. It was a more weird scene of wreckage than he had imagined. Dead bodies were flung in all positions, grotesque, unreal, horribly fantastic. From one shell crater a headless body protruded. Three grinning skulls were rolled together, upside down. A black foot and leg, stripped naked, was thrust through a pile of rotting equipment. "How's that for a nest of ghosts?" asked Pete, who seemed impervious to any spectacle. "Heinie sprays the place all the time with his machine guns so that there's no chance to bury them stiffs, and you can't get any souvenirs without you crawl in there on your knees. I was out there and I heard a noise like whisperin'. My hair went up till my tin hat nearly tipped off, then a

bunch of rats run out of a hole. It's a grand feeding place for them and I'll bet they're the ghosts that the Imperials tell about."

Jimmy had drawn back then. He hated the idea of rats among the dead.

"Don't go up there again, Pete," he begged. "I hate the place. It gets me creepy."

The sergeant and the platoon officer were at Jimmy's post when he reached it.

"Say, you," said the sergeant. "Where was it you thought you seen them stumps?"

Jimmy rose up and pointed, then stared. It was not quite dark and he could see the wire. A lane had been cut through it!

"But—was them Heinies that I saw?" he stammered.

"They was," said the sergeant grimly, "and they was cuttin' the wire when you spotted them."

"But how—why couldn't we see them before that, or afterwards?"

"That," said the officer, "is the mystery, and this Corner is full of them. However, you showed good nerve last night, so you come out with me now. We'll crawl out and have a look along the wire and over at the ditch."

Jimmy was tongue-tied. He wanted to object, to tell them that he had not had training in scout work, but his dread of appearing cowardly before the sergeant held him dumb, and before he realized it, he was crawling over the parapet after the lieutenant, equipped with a revolver and a quartet of bombs. The officer dragged a white tape after him and they left it strung out through the sally gap as a guide for them when they returned. In the gloom it looked to Jimmy like a slender pathway for ghosts, and he shivered as he crawled.

A heavy dew had fallen and wet weeds brushed his face like dead fingers, startling him so that he almost sprang up. The officer moved slowly, and they examined the wire where it had been cut. A short investigation was all that was necessary. As they could easily see, the wire had been cut from the inside, judging by the way the ends were turned. It had been made ready for the quick getaway the raiders had made.

At their discovery the officer swore vitriolically, and then they crawled the length of the platoon front, watching for the entrance gap the Germans had used. To their amazement they could not find one, and after an hour of useless crawling the baffled lieutenant announced that they would go up

the ditch.

"Maybe we'll catch one of them squareheads and I'll make him tell how they did it," muttered the officer as he told Jimmy to follow him.

Very lights, with their wavering silent whiteness, held them close to the tree stumps, and then the Boche began to signal. He put up red flares that made a shallow pool beside them shine like a lake of blood; then green lights went up and gave all the area a ghastly, corpse-like sheen. The officer touched Jimmy.

"Keep a sharp lookout," he whispered. Those signals mean that he has a patrol out."

They were another hour getting near enough to distinguish the German lines. Once something rustled through the grass and Jimmy held his breath until he saw that it was only a rat, its eyes gleaming malevolently as it crossed an old plant in front of him, its snaky long tail dragging after it in a manner that made his flesh creep. Nausea stirred his stomach.

Overhead a flare looped high and shed a white glow over everything. Jimmy hugged the earth and stared at the German wire. The darkness was blinding as the flare flickered out and it was a long time before they ventured to move. Then, all at once, somewhere up the cobbled road on the other side of the stump, a boot scraped on the stones. Jimmy felt a tingling sensation, a tightening of his scalp. He could scarcely keep from shaking. When the Germans had jumped down on him in the trench it had happened so quickly that he had not had time to get frightened. He had hardly known what he was doing as he had not recovered from the concussion and everything had been a nightmare. Now, as he waited, listening, his heart pounded and his pulses throbbed; his lips were dry and thickened.

The lieutenant lay his length ahead, perfectly still. They watched the bank and after a time three indistinct blurs appeared. It was a German patrol that had been on the other side of the road, on its way home. Some brigade gunner far back of the first trenches chose that moment to warm his gun and bullets zipped among the stumps. The three crouched blurs shot back for the cover of the ditch and it was pure chance that they dove for the exact spot the officer occupied.

The lieutenant shot the leader so that he tumbled down beside him, and he fired twice at the others before their Lugers barked at him. Jimmy, bathed

in sudden perspiration, pitched one of his bombs at the Germans, but did it so hastily that his throw was short. The grenade burst so close that a piece of metal screamed through the rim of his helmet and a million bells rang in his ears. He was dazed, and choked by acrid fumes. He groped to find his revolver, which he had lost. But there was no need of it. When the smoke cleared, no dark form menaced him. One of the Germans lay so near that he could touch his boots, and he could see the third man some yards away, as if he had tried to escape before he fell. Both lay sprawled, inert—dead.

He turned and crawled to the officer who was moaning softly.

"Are you hit, sir?" he whispered.

There was no answer. The officer made queer, stiff motions with his arms and legs and then lay still. He, too, was dead. For a long minute he looked at him, then took his wrist watch and identification disk and started to crawl back. Crash—crash—crash! Three shells burst in succession on the road bank. Then, three more burst in the ditch not twenty yards from where he lay. He moved back toward the German wire. The shelling continued, a methodical strafing of the road and ditch, and he crawled until he was many yards beyond the dead men and very near the enemy trench.

**H**OUR after hour dragged by, punctuated by the shelling. Jimmy knew that the Germans must have heard the shooting and as their patrol did not return, figured that they had encountered hostile forces. The whole front wakened and machine guns clattered continually. He did not dare move from where he lay. He had seen flares go up from the Pig Stickers' trench, and expected that they were signals meant for the officer, but he knew nothing about them, and had no idea of how long they had been out.

After a second lot of flares went up the Boche redoubled his shellings; winking explosions lined the ditch until the reek of explosives drifted to him and burned his nostrils. He huddled in his meager shelter and wondered if Pete knew that he was out, and what the hardboiled sergeant would do if he were in the same position. Then he started nervously as a rat ran over his legs.

Jimmy did not know when it was dawn. The endless series of explosions, the nearness of the concussions, had beat on his brain until it was

numb. Twice, large bits of iron had hissed into the sod beside him and a small sliver had broke the officer's watch on his wrist. He had dozed, jerking awake at times, until his sense of danger had dulled.

He opened his eyes and saw that sunrise had turned the sky pink and red. He was cramped and chilled and foggy-minded. His back was against the road bank and he had wormed so low in the ditch that he could not be seen from the German trench, though by raising his head ever so little he could see the posts of their wire barricade. He looked back. The officer and two dead Germans were lying fifty yards from him, in the ditch, but the third man had continued his struggle until he was almost abreast of him. Then he had stiffened in a death agony. He had been wounded in the neck and Jimmy could see that his tunic was saturated with black, dried blood. His fingers clutched a stained and sodden-looking bandage.

The sun rose and after a time an aeroplane with the Black Cross on its wings circled over the road and Jimmy wondered whether he had been seen or not. He remained perfectly still, but was conscious of his thirst, and he was also hungry. He tried to imagine what Pete was doing.

All gunfire subsided and the sun gained power. After a time, Jimmy began to sweat. Buzzing flies tortured him and he had to keep turning to relieve his cramped position. A rat, a loathsome, bloated thing, slithered down the road bank and stared at him with an evil, unwinking gaze. He cursed it under his breath. When he turned, he saw the dead German watching him in a dull, listless way that made him want to yell a protest.

Jimmy knew that he would never forget that day. Each hour of it branded deeper in his brain. He thought that the sun would not move. All his thoughts were on his chances of escape, on the inquiries that would be made about the officer's death. He visioned constantly the happenings of the night, the searing flash of the bomb that he had tossed just clear of himself, the twitching of the officer as he died. He fought to make himself think of other things, and pictured the Graveyard and all its grisly horror. His nerves had been badly shaken.

When at last it grew dusk, he was almost delirious. He started to his hands and knees when he heard voices. Then he saw heads outlined near the German wire. The dead Boche had been seen and a party was coming out to get them. Jimmy

pressed close to the bank and looked wildly for cover. On the road, not far from him, a shell-battered tree trunk was lying at an angle that would hide him—but every so often a machine gunner near the Graveyard raked the log with bullets. He hesitated, then jumped for the fallen tree. Better chance the machine gun than accept the certainty of being taken a prisoner or killed.

He was not seen. The Germans grunted and muttered among themselves and worked as fast as they could, keeping a nervous watch on the Canadian lines, and no sooner had they gone from sight that Jimmy was back in the ditch. Then the guns awoke, and this time it was a battery back at Saint Pierre that strafed the road. Then salvos fell into the German front line and Jimmy saw a tangled mass of stakes and wire heaved into the air.

A shell exploded on the road just above him. Another made a geyser of black earth very near him. He was compelled to jump and run for his life. Shells were dropping all along the ditch, He headed straight for the German trench, holding his automatic ready, determined to go out fighting, as he fancied the hardboiled sergeant would do.

But not a man challenged him, nor was there a German in sight. They had taken cover from the shelling. He raced through an opening in their wire, jumped into the trench, glanced around, and scrambled over the bags in the rear. Another few yards and he dropped into a sap, falling headlong. Two more shells whizzed down very near him and he was showered with debris. His fall into the sap had saved his life.

Someone pitched into the short trench, falling right at his feet. It was a German private, with a cloth cap pulled on in a hood fashion that almost hid his features. He quivered slightly and lay still. Jimmy touched him, and saw that he was dead. Under the arms of the gray tunic a broad white band was sewn, and he remembered being told that patrols and raiding parties usually wore such a mark to enable their fellows to distinguish them when in an enemy trench.

Two more shells dropped very close, and then there was a rush of heavy feet. Jimmy rose up, ready, but the two men ran by the end of the sap and disappeared. He just had time to see that they, too, wore the queer cap and white band. Then he had a sudden idea. If they were going on patrol he could, perhaps, slip out with them, unnoticed, provided he wore the same distinctive markings. In

one minute he had taken off the dead man's tunic and slipped it on over his own. Then he put the cap on.

He waited for a few minutes and then heard feet again. Rising cautiously, he saw three more banded Germans hurrying along the trench and, his heart beating like a mad thing, his hands trembling, he fell in behind and followed them.



FEW yards on, the way was almost blocked by debris and as the Germans followed by Jimmy scrambled over it and another white-banded soldier joined them. He fell in behind Jimmy, and Jimmy hoped they would not have to enter a lighted place, as his khaki breeches and puttees would give him away. They hurried around a corner and to the steps of an underground place. An officer was there and he snarled at them angrily. Evidently he had been waiting some time and did not think that the shelling should have delayed matters. Jimmy had no chance to turn back and he was sickened with dismay as he was pushed inside and had to go down the stairs.

To his great relief he saw a long passage at the foot of the steps and saw that the only light was furnished by a flashlight the officer carried, and which he flashed ahead of him. They went on, and on, until he was completely baffled. Each instant he had expected to step into a lighted chamber, but they kept on until he judged that they had covered over one hundred yards. He wanted desperately to lag in the rear but there was no way of avoiding the man behind him. Each step, he felt, took him nearer a grim reckoning.

Then he noticed that the tunnel they were in was an old one, mostly through a chalky formation that needed no bracing. Here and there were supports of masonry that had been there many years. He tried to sense their direction, and figured that they had followed the old French road. Suddenly they left the chalk-walled portion and entered a newly-dug passage. It was much smaller and was braced by timbers. They moved more slowly, the soldiers in front of him appearing like gray ghosts in the dim light. All at once Jimmy realized that the Germans probably had a secret exit very near the wire of the Pig Stickers, and by this means had made such successful raids in that sector.

The party halted and the officer turned to flash the light on his men. His back was against the earth

wall and as Jimmy, fearful of being exposed by the searching beams, tried to squeeze back of the man ahead of him, he saw the officer stiffen in an extraordinary manner. Every man exclaimed at once. The flashlight was waved in a circle and dropped. It fell so that it was pointed at the officer's face and chest. His face was distorted, ghastly. But Jimmy gasped as he saw what protruded from the chest of the gray tunic. It was a rusty bayonet point!

The man nearest the officer seemed frozen with horror. Then he leaned forward and touched the lieutenant on the arm. The dead man tumbled forward, collapsing in a huddle, and as he did so dragged with him the rifle to which the bayonet was attached—and the earth wall caved in. Jimmy was knocked backward against the man who had crowded up to him. The party struggled to get away from the awful thing that had slid in with the loose earth, partially blocking the passage. It was a skeleton, a grisly, horrible thing, its skull rolling eerily, its bony fingers still clutching like hooks on the stock of the rifle.

The party surged back its length from the spot where the flashlight's ray played on the grim intruder. More earth rolled in, almost covering the long electric torch, and then the Germans in front doubled back like rabbits, thrusting their comrades out of the way. Jimmy was driven against the wall, was knocked about in the scramble, and for the moment could not see what had happened. Then his knees were suddenly weak and his throat so dry he could not articulate, for the second intruder was far more startling than the skeleton. It was the ghost of Graveyard Corner!

Only one man remained in front of Jimmy, and he had slumped down, shaking with fright. A tall Frenchman peered at them as he stooped and entered the opening. He was dressed in a long black coat and trousers and he wore a tall black hat. His face was a ghastly pallor, horribly unreal.

He stooped to enter the tunnel and pick up the flashlight. Then he gazed at Jimmy, and as he did there shuddered into the passage a fearful, long-drawn moan, a harrowing cry as of some soul sick with horror. It was repeated, more shuddering and appalling than before. Then the only sound was that of the whistling gasps of the Germans cowering in the tunnel behind Jimmy. One long minute, and then the man in front of him, who had been gibbering with fright, got to his feet and dashed to

the rear, bowling Jimmy over again, driving headfirst into one of his mates, and screaming with fear. Then the Frenchman moved. He played the light down the tunnel on the men who remained, rested it an instant on Jimmy, and stepped toward him.

The Germans behind him tumbled over each other, gasping their fear. Jimmy himself was too paralyzed with shock to move. He had, like the Germans, had a full look at their ghostly visitant, and his blood had run cold. Over and beneath and around the eyes of the tall Frenchman ringed a deep crimson, as if the sockets were bursting and letting loose the blood behind, and, to enhance this new horror, the long-drawn moan was repeated.

The Frenchman came and placed a hand on Jimmy's arm, then turned him up the tunnel and pushed him. Jimmy went obediently, though he scarcely knew what he was doing. Everything had happened so rapidly, was so fantastically unreal, that he felt he must be having a horrible nightmare. But twenty paces beyond where the earth had fallen in he saw steps. He mounted them. Was this the exit? A wild plan entered his head. If it were, he would make a desperate plunge for escape.

The steps ended in a low wooden door that was barred. Not a word had been spoken. Only in the passage below, there filtered again that awful screech, that made Jimmy start as he removed the bar. A cold sweat broke over him. He fumbled at the door, jerked at it in a frenzied way, got it open and crawled out the small opening—into a wrecked grave!

A corpse faced him, a hideous, huddled thing, and he leaped by it and sprang upon the bank.

"Wait for me."

It was the Frenchman who spoke, the ghost who had thrust out of the opening.

"It's me, Pete, don't you know me?"

"You—Pete?" faltered Jimmy, hesitating. "Wha—what—where did you get that rig?"

"Half a second and I'll tell you everything and we'll get the gang here." The pseudo Frenchman was ripping off his black coat, revealing a khaki tunic underneath. Then he sat down and tugged at his trousers. When they were removed he jumped up beside Jimmy and led the way.

They were almost to the trench when machine-gun fire caught them. Jimmy had been conquering his shakiness and thrilling to the sight of the flares and distant gun flashes when all at once there was a

distant rat-tat-tat-tat, and he was almost felled by a blow on the leg.

"Beat it," yelled Pete, and they plunged ahead a few jumps and leaped into the trench. There Jimmy's leg buckled under him.

"I'm hit, Pete," he said tremulously. "They got me in the leg. Help me fix it up, will you?"

"Do what I can, Jimmy, old-timer," said Pete. "But I've got a beauty in the arm and there's no time to lose. By the look of things the whole German army was down in that hole, and they're wise to us now because they're puttin' a regular barrage on the Graveyard."

**A** DOZEN Maxims were firing from the Boche lines and bullets zipped and whined and snapped over them. Pete ran down the trench a distance and gave a long shrill whistle. It was answered, and Jimmy was on the verge of being hysterical as he saw a dozen members of his platoon hurrying toward him. His experiences and his long thirst and hunger had weakened him.

The next day at noon, Jimmy was relaxed comfortably at a casualty clearing station, gazing at Pete, who was on the next stretcher.

"Talk about luck," he grinned. "You're one man I wanted to see."

"Yeah," said Pete, with a grin of his own. "I don't mind lookin' at you for a little bit. I had you down as missin', and killed and captured. Never in my born days did I get such a start as when I saw that crooked nose of yours under that Heinie cap you had on in the tunnel. And say, I'm still shakin' yet from the scare I got when that old grave caved in and let me down."

"Shoot it," begged Jimmy. "Don't stop till you tell me everything. I don't know a thing."

"There's not much to tell outside of what happened in that hole," returned Pete. "You've been recommended for a bunch of medals, on account of your exposin' the secret of them raids and so forth. Not a word now, I'm talkin'. It was me told them how you broke out of there and hollered till I come, and you're goin' to tell them the same story. There'll be a bunch of brass hats and all that here to quiz you, and you're to side with me, unless you want to see old Pete sent down to an army clink for duration. If they ever knew I was playin' ghost, when I was supposed to be on a carryin' party, I'd sure be in Dutch."

"But—how did you know I was there?" asked

Jimmy. He would help Pete on any point, but he was baffled.

“Me—I didn’t. And what’s more I didn’t intend gettin’ down there with you, didn’t want to. It just happened. You see, when you and that officer didn’t get back, these old-timers all begin talkin’ about you bein’ the cause of it. They said you was too new and green and that likely you got scared and let the officer down. Well, I didn’t know what happened, but I knew that you didn’t get cold feet and I got hot thinkin’ about it. That damn sergeant was the worst one, but they was all chewin’ the fat, and when that blasted Canary thought he had a right to sing his song too, I got wild. I figgered I’d stop his mouth anyhow, because I’d seen how scairt he was of the Graveyard. The rest made fun of him, but none of them hung around that place.”

Pete subsided while an orderly brought them cigarettes and helped them light up. Then he grinned and went on.

“I had a look in one of them old houses back near the dump we went to, and I found an old trunk busted open and crammed full of Frog rig-outs. Right then I had a brain wave. I remembered them yarns about the Graveyard ghost and I took the best coat and pants and a top hat back with me. Then I found an old dickey for a shirt front and I was well set. When we went back I took the gear with me and I talked all the way about a guy seein’ the ghost again, right beside the trench. Every one of them brave soldiers was watching the place when we went by.”

Pete looked out of the window beside him. “There’s a car parkin’ now up at the other side of the ambulances,” he said. “That’ll be the captain and a bunch to talk to you. Mind you tell them how you got back there by yourself, at that gate rig they had, and hollered till I come.”

“Yes, sure I will,” promised Jimmy. He almost forgot the pain in his leg as he thought of medals and the talk there would be in billets and dugouts about him solving the secret of the Boche raids. “But hurry and tell me what happened, before they get here.”

“Well, there was no word of you and I was mad enough to take chances, so I slipped away from the party when we started out and cut ahead to where I’d hid the coat and pants and things. I left my tin lid and rifle and gas mask there and put on them things and doctored my face. Then I hustled down

to the Graveyard and waited. I was stood beside the trench where I could look down on them, and just as they come by some darn fool put up a flare close to our posts and the light showed me up. I did the only thing there was to do, because I was afraid some other guys might see me—I jumped down in the trench beside the carryin’ party. You never saw such a bunch in your life. They run for their lives, and two or three of them was yellin’ their heads off. Well, what did one poor tripe do but hop over the side and beat it? He was sort of headed by me, and he went that way. I got scared then for fear he’d get shot in the Graveyard. You know how Heinie kept shootin’ at it all the time with his machine guns, so’s none of us would pry around there and find his tunnel. So I hopped up after the lad and give a yell for him to come back. He just run faster and then he tripped and fell headlong into one of them deep craters where a shell had dug up an old grave. It must have been right on the edge of that tunnel the Heinies had extended from that old passage, for when I jumped down to get him out—he was just crumpled up in there makin’ a whimperin’ noise—the whole blamed thing caved in. There’s a bunch of bones there, an old Frog that the rats had picked clean, and it was him was holdin’ the rifle. I stepped on it when I jumped down and I guess that’s how it drove the bayonet so heavy into that Heinie. There’s another stiff had slipped down, a big ripe one, and it had sort of covered my lad in the corner. Anyhow, he’d sprained his ankle and couldn’t get out in a hurry. He was still there when our bunch rushed the tunnel. They got him out.”

“And it was him made them awful groans?” asked Jimmy, shivering as he thought of them.

“You bet,” said Pete. “I never saw a man so scared in all my life as he was.”

“He must have been,” said Jimmy. “I would have been if I’d been there, but I don’t think I’d a beat it into the Graveyard. But that Canary chap is like a rabbit anyway.”

Pete suddenly chuckled and looked over at his chum as a file of officers entered the ward.

“You guessed wrong,” he whispered. “It wasn’t the Canary that I chased. It was our famous hardboiled sergeant.”

Jimmy started and whistled softly. Then a blissful content stole over him as he watched the captain approach his stretcher.