

15-YR.-OLD VETERAN TELLS OF KILLING

"Came Hard, Mother," He
Says, "But It's What I Took
Oath For"

When Huns Are Scared,
Writes Soldier, They Leave
Ammunition Behind

C. Fay Banks, of Mapleton, Pa., 15 years old, writes his mother from the firing lines in France as follows:

"Dear Mother: Just a few lines to let you know that I went through the past five days in safety, but I had one exciting time, for we just come off the front lines.

"You can now put two notches in the old broom handle to remind you that one fellow got rid of two Dutchmen. One I hit and the other one I stuck with my bayonet. It was very hard for me to take human life, but that is what I held up my hand for in Harrisburg when I took the oath of allegiance to the Stars and Stripes.

"Our regiment has made the biggest drive of the whole war. We all of the 39th get some kind of a medal from the French and American Governments.

"I guess I am the only one from Mapleton who has killed any Huns yet, some of the fellows may have killed some, but did not know it.

"One of my friends and I were in a shell hole ready to advance when my friend stuck his head up and a German shot him through the brain—that is the Hun that I shot and I would like to get a dozen more like him; the more I get the sooner I get home.

"Our regiment has 3700 men and took 1700 prisoners, the field was full of dead Germans, our loss was twenty-seven killed and sixty-three wounded. By the time this reaches you I will be through another battle—or through with it all, so I guess I will print my name as you told me, best wishes to all."

Young Banks is on the school registration of Mapleton borough, but the truant officer has decided to wink at the compulsory education act in this case. Private Banks enlisted at Tyrone, Pa., January 12, 1918, when he lacked four months of being fifteen years old and was assigned to the headquarters company, 39th Infantry, 4th Division, and sailed for France May 10, 1918.

Still Driving the Hun

Sergeant William R. Watkins writes his mother, Mrs. E. J. Watkins, of Conshohocken, as follows:

"A few lines to let you know that I am still chasing the Huns. We were relieved from the front line two days ago for a few days' rest, and go back up again some time tonight. We are still driving the Hun back and, believe me, he certainly can run some when scared. We started to make an attack on a village four days ago, but when we got there we found very few men to resist us. They had fled, leaving thousands of pounds of ammunition behind.

"Our division has been doing great work and we have been complimented by General Pershing. You have read of the big drive, well, if we keep going like we have the past few weeks, we will soon be in Germany. I could tell you quiet a bit, but you will have to wait until I get home, as the censor would cut it out. I met Roy Metzger, Lloyd Bembke, George Wood and John Shade. They are all doing fine and are in good health.

"Roy was wild when he saw me, and we sure enjoyed a good chat. I met him on the road, and we did not have long to talk, as we were on our way back for a rest. He is in the artillery, and they work about three miles behind the front lines. They are safe from machine gun and rifle fire, but are always in danger of shell fire, which is almost as bad. Would like to have some home papers."

Warren Fisher, of Conshohocken, a dispatcher bearer at the front, writes his friend, George Williams, an interesting letter, in which he states in part:

"We fellows out here in 'No Man's Land,' thousands of miles from home, are always so glad to receive letters from home. I cannot describe the encouragement it gives us. It lets us know that the home folks are backing us up. You should see the place I am in now, the hay loft of a big barn, our horses in the stable below. Believe me, George, it's right in the range of the German guns, and not very far from the trenches.

"George, ours is a roving life, we dispatch bearers, but its adventure all the way through. We never stay in the one place more than one day at a time. We are always moving, but moving slowly. My work is racing through the dark of the night on horseback, many times in the direct range of the boche's guns, but I would not change places with any of you back in Conshy. A man doesn't feel what it is to be patriotic until he's up against the enemy of our country.

"I guess the war hit your business pretty hard, but cheer up, it can't last much longer, because we are sure giving the Hun H—, and the Kaiser is beginning to realize that the Americans are in the fight with Yankee pep."

Wrote Home, Is Killed

Private William G. Erdwein, Company H, 18th Infantry, was killed in action July 20. A letter from him bearing this same date was received by his father, Gottlieb Erdwein, 4010 North Reese street. Erdwein was in training at Camp Dix. Before entering the service last November, he was a paper hanger.

Private A'den D. Reed, eighteen years old, was wounded in action August 2. Reed, who is a member of Company M, 110th Infantry, enlisted September 12, 1917. After training at Camp Hancock he went over, May 2, 1918. Reed comes from a family of fighters. His father was retired as a lieutenant-colonel in the Civil war. His grandfather and two uncles also saw service in that war. One of the latter was killed in the battle of the Wilderness and the other came home wounded. His great grandfather was General Joseph Reed, who was attached to Washington's staff.

A brother of young Reed, Theodore A. Reed, was a sergeant in the Spanish-American war. Another brother, Richard W. Reed is in training in the Officers' Artillery School at Saumur in France.

Private Martin J. Coogan, twenty-one years old, 1204 Myrtle street, was wounded in action. Coogan enlisted in March, 1917, and was assigned to Company E, 28th Infantry.

Private John M. O'Neil has been missing since July 28. In a letter received by his mother, Mrs. Mary O'Neil, he stated on July 17 they were getting into excitement. O'Neil, who is twenty-one years old, was a member of Company L, 110th Infantry. Before his enlistment in August, 1917, he was employed by the Hutchinson Pie Baking Company.