HUNTING THE HUN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649609529

Hunting the Hun by James Belton & E. G. Odell

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JAMES BELTON & E. G. ODELL

HUNTING THE HUN



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Roadside Scene on the British Section of the Western Front

HUNTING THE HUN

BY

CAPTAIN JAMES BELTON

AND

LIEUTENANT E. G. ODELL



ILLUSTRATED



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY NEW YORK LONDON

1918

FOREWORD

Captain Belton and Lieutenant Odell's book of the war will be read with deep and sustained interest by everyone who wants to understand "the real thing." For myself I confess to being thrilled by the simple, direct, conversational style of the chapters describing the preparations for the attack on and ultimate capture of Vimy Ridge. The complete absence of any attempt at word-painting, the little touches of actuality, such as the pattern of white tapes on the practice ground which showed the conformation of the German trenches, and the method of signalling to the contact aeroplane during an advance—these features are at once novel and arresting. The story is told with the terseness of a despatch. You see the battalion gathering for its deadly work after the training is done; you plod with it in Indian file along the · Aux Reitz communication trench; you sprawl with the officers and men in the "jumping-off" trench; you wonder whether the missing jar of rum will turn up in time, and, finally, you go "over the top" with what amounts to a sigh of relief that the ghastly period of waiting has ended and that the "Zero Hour" will mark either the end or the beginning of a strangely

FOREWORD

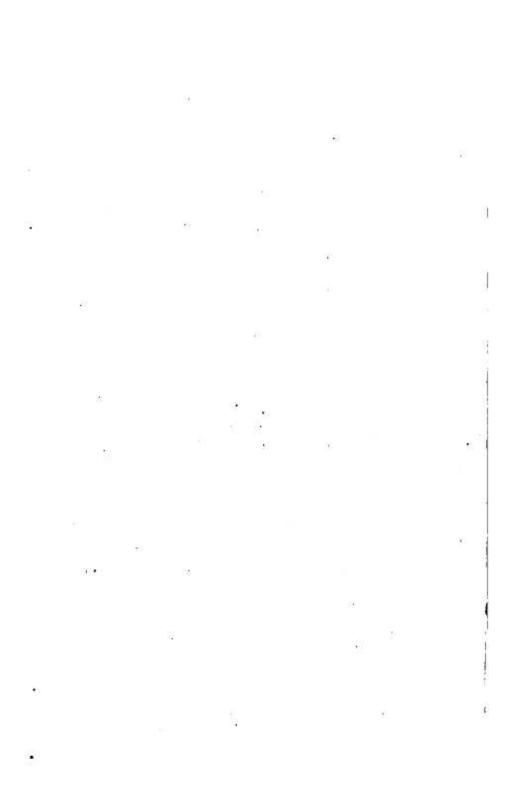
heroic experience. It is quite remarkable that a plain soldier should be able to give such life to his story. The achievement is a tribute to realism. Here is the truth, and nothing but the truth, so you accept every word for what it is worth, and are even glad to be spared the fine touches of the skilled literary hand.

I am sure Captain Belton and Lieutenant Odell's book will be appreciated by a wide circle of readers in this country. A Canadian battalion and an American battalion must be close akin whether on the parade ground or in the battlefield. As these boys from Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg have done in France so will the boys do who hail from New York, Chicago, and the Far West. For that reason, and for many others quite as obvious, the appearance of this personal record of scenes and events in the Great War is peculiarly timely just now. I read the proofs at a sitting, and that, I know, is a certain test of the value of any book, be it grim fact or enticing fiction.

LOUIS TRACY.

CONTENTS

CHAPTE	MIL Military Service (1999)					PAGE
I.	How WE PREPARE FOR A	n Ai	TACE			13
II.	THE ATTACK	Xi :			17.0	31
III.	THE CALL OF THE MOTE	LERLA	ND	¥17	•	72
IV.	WE MOVE FORWARD	•	*5			86
V.	HUNTING THE HUN	¥.	•		·	101
VI.	TRENCH ROUTINE .			(0)63	11 . 68	127
VII.	BEHIND THE LINES .	28				157
VIII.	THE BULL RING .	*:	• 30	0.00	10.00	171
IX.	THE RED CROSS AND TH	EY.	M. C	. A.		190
X.	Some Trench Songs		•	< . •2	8708	204
XI.	BITS OF WAR	¥0	¥.3	2.00		214
XII.	TOWARDS A BOMB-PROOF	Јов	200	:: : ::::		247
XIII	TIPS FOR RECEIPTS	207	F	1040	71200	263



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Roadside scene on Western front .	the	Britis	h s	0.45			PAGE
					tispie	sce	
Bringing up wire for	8	night 1	work	ing p	arty	•	39
Going his last round	at :	night.	All	is wel	l in t	he	
support line .			35	18		•	65
A dog used to carry i	mes	sages i	n th	e tren	ches	¥3	121
A tank in action .			65				143
Bayonet exercise at	a	trainin	1g g	round	Son	10-	
where in France	86	38	٠. ٠			*	181
Releasing a pigeon v	vith	a mes	sage	for 1	ıelp		243
How the tanks are p	ark	ed in t	he t	ankdr	omes		255