

**A GERMAN
DESERTER'S
WAR EXPERIENCE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760578831

A German deserter's war experience by Anonumus

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ANONUMUS

**A GERMAN
DESERTER'S
WAR EXPERIENCE**

**A GERMAN DESERTER'S
WAR EXPERIENCE**

HMod.
G3732

**A GERMAN DESERTER'S
WAR EXPERIENCE**

**LONDON
GRANT RICHARDS LTD.
ST. MARTIN'S STREET
1917**

151066
1-6-19

PREFACE

THE author of this book, who escaped from Germany and military service after fourteen months of fighting in France, is an intelligent young miner. He does not wish to have his name made public, fearing that those who will be offended by his frankness might vent their wrath on his relatives. Since his arrival in America his friends and acquaintances have come to know him as an upright and truthful man whose word can be relied upon.

The vivid description of the life of a common German soldier in the present war aroused great interest when the story presented in these pages to the English-speaking reader was published in serial form. For here was an historian of the war who had been through the horrors of the carnage as one of the "Huns," one of the "Boches"; a soldier who had not abdicated his reason; a warrior against his will, who nevertheless had to conform to the etiquette of war; a hater of militarism for whom there was no romance in war, but only butchery and brutality, grime and vermin, inhuman toil and degradation. Moreover, he was found to be no mean observer of men and things. His

technical training at a school of mining enabled him to obtain a much clearer understanding of the war of position than the average soldier possesses.

Most soldiers who have been in the war and have written down their experiences have done so in the customary way, never questioning for a moment the moral justification of war. Not so our author. He could not persuade his conscience to make a distinction between private and public morality, and the angle from which he views the events he describes is therefore entirely different from that of other actual observers of and participators in war. His story also contains the first German description of the retreat of the Teutonic armies after the battle of the Marne. The chief value of this soldier's narrative lies, however, in his destructive, annihilating criticism of the romance and fabled virtues of war. If some of the incidents related in this book appear to be treated too curtly it is solely due to the author's limited literary powers. If, for instance, he does not dwell upon his inner experiences during his terrible voyage to America in the coal bunker of a Dutch ship it is because he is not a literary artist, but a simple workman.

The translator hopes that he has succeeded in reproducing faithfully the substance and the spirit of the story, and that this little book will contribute

PREFACE

7

in combating one of the forces that make for war—popular ignorance of war's realities. Let each individual fully grasp and understand the misery, degradation, and destruction that await him in war, and the barbarous ordeal by carnage will quickly become the most unpopular institution on earth.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. MARCHING INTO BELGIUM	11
II. FIGHTING IN BELGIUM	20
III. SHOOTING CIVILIANS IN BELGIUM	39
IV. GERMAN SOLDIERS AND BELGIAN CIVILIANS	51
V. THE HORRORS OF STREET FIGHTING	58
VI. CROSSING THE MEUSE	67
VII. IN PURSUIT	72
VIII. NEARLY BURIED ALIVE ON THE BATTLE- FIELD	84
IX. SOLDIERS SHOOTING THEIR OWN OFFICERS	93
X. SACKING SUIPPES	104
XI. MARCHING TO THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE: INTO THE TRAP	116
XII. AT THE MARNE: IN THE MAW OF DEATH	125
XIII. THE ROUT OF THE MARNE	138
XIV. THE FLIGHT FROM THE MARNE	149
XV. AT THE END OF THE FLIGHT	164
XVI. THE BEGINNING OF TRENCH WARFARE	176
XVII. FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE ENEMY	192
XVIII. FIGHTING IN THE ARGONNE	197
XIX. CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES	207
XX. THE "ITCH"—A SAVIOUR	217
XXI. IN THE HELL OF VAUQUOIS	227
XXII. SENT ON FURLOUGH	235
XXIII. THE FLIGHT TO HOLLAND	242
XXIV. AMERICA AND SAFETY	249