

Electric Death Traps in Hun's Retreat

By H. WINFIELD SECOR

IF you have any doubt that the Teuton is possess of a cunning mind, then you have but to read the reports that have come back to us every now and then from various reliable sources on the battle-fields of Europe, where the Allied troops have always had to contend with multifarious and indescribable forms of deadly and inhuman offensive schemes, such as liquid fire and gas, which horribly mutilates and disfigures its victims in thousands of cases. The Allies were never sure of what they might expect when they advanced on enemy territory. The Huns resorted to every possible underhand scheme their wily brains could think of in a desperate effort to spread terror among the Allied soldiers, and some of the despicable "traps" they have used, not to mention hundreds of others which we have not the space here to describe, are illustrated herewith.

Fig. 1 shows how the Germans often mined the town pump, or any other pumps on which they could operate, so that when a thirsty Allied soldier endeavored to draw some water, he would be instantly killed by a charge of explosive set off by an electric contact and battery inside the pump, the fuse circuit being closed on the first downward stroke of the pump handle. Of course, hundreds of mechanical traps were used, as well as electrical ones. The electric trap which has been extensively used in these operations is a simple affair, and comprises nothing more than a small dry or other battery, together with a pair of electric contacts arranged to be closed by the movement of some piece of furniture, et cetera, and a piece of fine fuse wire which is placed in the explosive. When the circuit is closed, the fine piece of wire melts, and the heat produced detonates the explosive. Some times the contacts are caused to close a battery circuit thru a spark coil, the secondary circuit of which is connected up with a spark plug, buried in the explosive. There are, of course, numerous other schemes, many of them having been provided with time clocks or switches, for delaying the explosion, as the official reports have frequently indicated.

The open fire place, which is ever a source of welcome to the footsore Doughboys when they have a chance to stop in a captured town, is not always the most healthy place in the world, for as Fig. 2 shows, it may contain a high explosive shell planted within the fire wall, so that when a good fire is kindled on the hearth the shell will be caused to explode, very possibly killing all those within the room.

Fig. 3 illustrates how the retreating Germans often left a trap for the conquering troops of the enemy by placing high explosive mines under the trails of cannon and machine guns, so that as soon as anyone moved the cannon carriage, the spring actuated pin of the mine would spring up and detonate the explosive, thereby possibly killing several men.

One of the cleverest, altho hellish, tricks ever played by the retreating Teutonic hosts probably is that of the "wireless bomb." Fig. 4 shows this trap in action, and the story of its operation is as follows: Before the enemy retreated, he took care to place a number of wirelessly operated bombs in the walls or possibly under the floor of various dwellings and other buildings, so that in the event the victorious troops as they entered the town or locality, might set up a wireless set in proximity to

one of the bombs, the first spark would cause the bomb to explode with death-dealing violence. The bomb in this case is detonated by an electric fuse or spark circuit, actuated by a radio coherer and relay, or other similar radio receptor apparatus.

"Say, Hen," sang out a jolly faced Doughboy to one of his "buddies," as they sat about a table enjoying the mid-day meal of "Boston baked" and canned sardines a la Rhine in an old French chateau, "there's a telephone on the wall, why don't you call up your best girl," and full of Yankee play spirit the Doughboy arose. But something seemed to tell him not to touch the telephone instrument, and it was well that he did not; for one of the party, who had been cautioned by the intelligence officers to be extremely careful of touching anything in the captured territory until it had been carefully examined ascertained that the telephone instrument contained several pounds of explosive which was connected up with an electrical igniter attached to the switch-hook, so that as soon as the receiver was lifted from the hook, the explosive would

In Fig. 7 there is shown the famous German "watch trick." This trick used to be pulled quite often at various points along the battle-line until the Allied troops got so skittish of all such devices that they would not touch anything with their hands, but would poke it with a stick, which invariably caused one of these death-dealing traps to explode harmlessly. In the watch trick, a favorite setting was in a trench or dug-out from which the Teutons had been forced to retire, and when the Allied soldiers had taken the trench, one of them would probably be surprised to see a perfectly good watch hanging on a nail or stick projecting from the trench wall and ticking away merrily. Now who would refuse to take such a watch? But many a brave soldier has undoubtedly lost his life by thinking just that way, and the moment the watch was removed from the nail or other projection from which it hung, this act caused a high explosive trap to detonate.

And the churches—what haven't the Teutonic sons of the mailed fist done to these! One case which happened in Belgium comes to mind where a number of Allied soldiers were endeavoring to hold church in a captured town. The priest had no sooner started to ascend the steps of the altar, when a terrific explosion occurred, which demolished the altar and seriously wounded the preacher. This trap utilized an electric contact spring arranged under the step, the riser of one of the steps being cut away so that when a person's weight rested on the tread, it would force it down a slight distance, closing a contact which detonated the bomb. See Fig. 8.

One of the most heinous and criminal death-dealing devices ever planted by the retreating Huns was recently witnessed in actual operation by a New York soldier who came home not many months ago. To start with, the soldier who related this tale was a member of a Company which had been marching for several days, and one night when they prepared to rest and get some sleep they discovered a large cave. See Fig. 9. Naturally, unless the weather is quite warm, anyone would rather sleep in a cave than out in the open, for obvious reasons. And so they went to sleep, but long before morning several of the men awoke and were surprised to smell gas fumes, and, what was more astonishing, a large number of the men who were sleeping in the cave were found to be "gast." Those who had awakened, and who were not totally overcome by the gas, at once removed the gast men from the cave and started to investigate, as no fumes of gas had been noticed whatsoever on the previous evening when they had found the cave. "Dirty work, sure enough," said the Sergeant, as he and two of his men started back in the cave to find out what kind of a new trap the crafty Huns had concocted; before long they discovered it, planted several feet below the earth in the rear of the cave, and with a small gas tube leading up to the surface of the ground. They dug up the infernal machine, and were astounded to find that not only did the box contain a small gas generator with a time-clock arrangement rigged up to a valve on it, so that gas would be generated and sent into the cave at a certain pre-arranged hour, but that also there was a sufficiently large quantity of high explosive in the container

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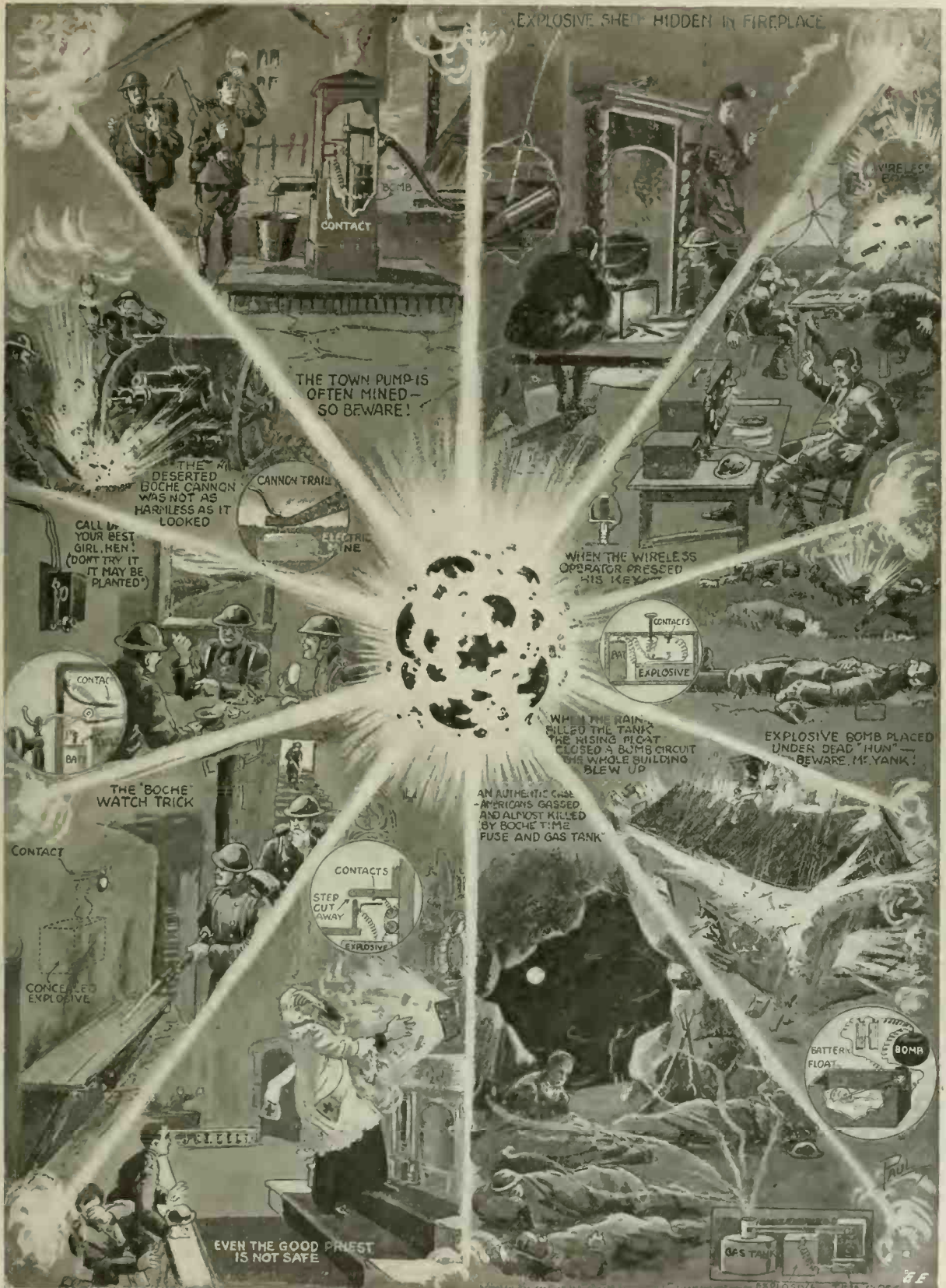
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be detonated, and so the story rolls on—backed by the facts. See Fig. 5.

Nor were the German dead allowed to rest in peace, for even after life had ceased in their bodies, they must serve the "Fatherland." This is true "Schrecklichkeit" efficiency to the Teutonic mind, if not to ours. So the crafty Teutons, when they were forced to retreat, got into the habit of planting small explosive traps under the dead bodies, with the hope in their hearts that when the on-marching Yankees or Poilus got on this territory and attempted to clear it up by lifting the dead bodies, they would meet with unexpected fatalities. See Fig. 6.



(For Description See Opposite Page)

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as well as the rapid apparent motion of the planet thru the sky due to the revolutions of the satellite itself, would be a troublesome task for an astronomer stationed on one of these far distant worlds. It would be a common sight to see in the sky at one time the huge planet, the sun itself, and one, two or three moons. Seen from the moons of Jupiter the constellations would appear as they do to us on earth for such a slight change in position as five hundred million miles, more or less, is trivial when one is measuring the relative distances of the stars. Observations of the stars from the nearest moon of Jupiter would be attended with difficulties at times, however, since reflected sunlight from a body nearly twenty degrees in diameter would be extremely troublesome, especially were the phases of the planet near that of the full moon. Even from the fourth or most distant of the major satellites the planet would subtend an angle of nearly five degrees. Occultations of the stars would be many and frequent as the huge planet globe glides swiftly thru the heavens. Many a moonlight night would appear almost as day owing to the presence of the enormous brilliantly reflecting ball of light and occasionally two or three moons in addition. Only the brightest stars would be seen under such circumstances. When, however, the small worlds pass into the shadow of the great mother planet and not only the light of the sun but also the reflected light of Jupiter disappears for many minutes the stars shine forth in all their glory there as here. In the sky would appear, possibly, some of the larger moons feebly shining by the reflected light of the far distant sun. Saturn also might be visible, but beautiful Venus and ruddy Mars would fail to appear. Tiny bodies, mere specks of light at this distance, they are lost to view in the glare of the sun.

(The next installment will appear in an early issue.)

ELECTRIC DEATH TRAPS IN HUN'S RETREAT.

(Continued from page 608)

to blow the cave to pieces, and which was connected up with an electric device to the time-clock also. Thus did the Boches not only hope to gas their victims, but to kill them as well, one way or the other.

The daily press had considerable to say in the later months of the war concerning the many devilish and ingenious *delayed time-fuse bombs* which were left behind in many of the towns and cities of northern France as the Hun army was being driven toward the Rhine by General Foch's victorious armies. One of the simple devices of this nature, which was used to blow up buildings, etc., a considerable length of time after the Huns had retreated from a certain locality, is shown in Fig. 10. It comprised nothing more than a float tank similar to those used on all modern plumbing for flushing purposes. As soon as it started to rain, such weather being frequent in northern France, the tank filled up and caused the float to rise. When the float ball reached its uppermost position it closed an electric circuit, connected by wires running inside the building, to a heavy charge of explosive, with results that can be better imagined than described. These cowardly and dastardly tricks sound quite tame and harmless when you read them "Over Here,"—but imagine what havoc and untold death they have spread "Over There," where it often happened that troops had occupied a town for several days before some of these delayed time fuses functioned at unexpected moments!

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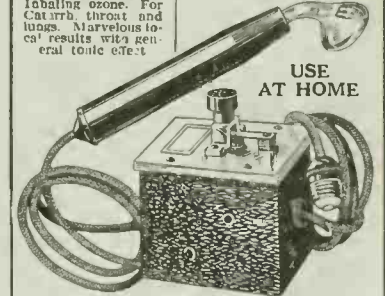
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