

Letter to Family

The story of a Tulsa Boy's participation in the famous engagement of the United States marines around Cantigny in June is told in a letter from Larkin (Bum) Bailey, formerly of The World editorial staff, in a letter to his father, W.S. Bailey.

Young Bailey, a Tulsa high school graduate, enlisted in the marines soon after war was declared, along with Eugene Mitchell, a World printer, Mitchell was wounded by shrapnel and gas and is still in a hospital in France recuperating.

The letter, which is one of the most interesting and descriptive of any yet received home from Tulsa boys who have actually participated in fighting on the western front, follows:

France, June 10, 1918

Dear Father:

This must be a partnership letter tonight; it is after 10 and unless finished immediately I will not have time to get it out before going back to the front where the marines have been doing the fighting. I am in a Y.M.C.A. headquarters storehouse where I'll stay tonight, 40 kilometers from the company. The major and adjutant of our battalion had me detailed to help Mr. Phillips, the Y secretary with us, but Saturday evening he was slightly wounded and had to go the hospital. That leaves me to see that the boys of our battalion are cared for. We all lost our packs, toilet articles and most everything except our nerve just before charging the Dutch Thursday, June 6 at 4:30 p.m. so now I'm in a city buying what the fellows need, so far as possible.

The men at present are in a miserable state. Ten days straight our company has been in shelling range, under shell fire and the big ones haven't all been missing either. Ration trains were shelled trying to get supplies and food to the boys. Some days we received a can of canned beef and some bread. We foraged some, where the French had moved away hurriedly, leaving everything, as chickens, cattle, (fine beefsteaks), potatoes, etc. Their homes were left pretty nice and clean. We had nice beds, rooms and the like. Some of us were lucky.

In Thickest of Fighting

I know you all want to hear about the big doing we have been putting on; here is all you may know: My company has been in the thickest fighting. It was our company commander and 24 company men who took the town mentioned under date of June 7, (morning papers). He is a lieutenant; his name was sent broadcast, so surely I can repeat it – Mr. James F Robertson. He and the men will probably draw distinguished medals of some kind for the act. Our captain, the good old father-type man, was killed in the charge, so Mr. Robinson now commands.

I was within three feet of one man who was shot through the breast by machine gun fire. We were lying flat on the ground at the time, along a hedge fence and the bullets were playing the most weird tune I have ever heard. Shrapnel was bursting within 20 feet frequently, pieces barely missing us. A hole six

inches in the ground to have lain in would have been cheap at \$100 then. That is our way of dodging shells; just dig holes large enough for one's body from two to four feet deep. Then the shell must light right in your dugout to injure or kill you, but they certainly make you sweat blood at times.

Some of our marines were sent forward two and three times and never yet have we stopped short of our objective. Yesterday morning one battalion was sent after a hill where the Germans had been giving much trouble with machine guns and rifles as snipers. At least reports the hill was taken and the battalion was still going.

We have now our first step toward recognition and the bunch certainly is one happy crowd of boys. It was hard, nasty work at the time but since it is over, for a while until we rest, we are all proud of the results.

Well, I can't think of anything just now of interest. Should any of my friends or you want any information in my reach, let me hear and I will do my best. Someday soon I'll get in touch with Mr. Gilmore. Tell Bill hello and good luck

With love and best wishes. "Bum"