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le, except for the rats that ran over our faces, smelling of corpses they were eating on. Rats were an awful nuisance. Of course, we were lousy all the time. I could hold up my arm in warm weather, and it would be white underneath--the lice eggs. And it was so cold there, our feet began to rot from gangrene--trench feet. Most of the time we slept in a little hole burrowed into the side of the trench. We had ground sheets with us always, rubber sheets. So we'd put one end of the rubber sheet underneath, to keep off the wet mud, and the other sheet over us, to keep off the drops that were dripping down. And we slept in those conditions. And we did sleep, that's the strange part of it. We did eat, but not very well. The winter of 1917 we had one meal a day, and that was in the line, in the front line. Inch square of cheese and quarter of a loaf of bread • that's all we had for 24 hours. I ate mine every morning at Stand Down, when we got off duty. Nothing more to eat for the rest of the day. Until the French army mutinied over the food situation. And they took--I forget whether it was one or two divisions that mutinied. But anyway, they lined them up. They had them strung between two sandbag walls. And they shot every hundredth man. That ended the mutiny. And after that, the food was quite good. Of course it was, as planned in London at British headquarters. It was that good. But there were many details that had all they wanted to eat. When it got to the men in the line, that's all that was left. As it crossed the Channel, it was adequate. I listened in Montreal, after the war, to an official of my company who had too many drinks. He was bragging--he'd been there in the service corps--he was bragging about selling truckloads of food to the French civilians. That's what happened to our rations. I should have killed him. They started to march up to Vimy--I could almost draw a picture, still. We had a goat for a mascot. The goat was ahead of the column. And when we came around a turn, we could see the front of the column. And there was the colonel on his horse, behind the goat, and the pipe band, and the whole brigade. There was a column of fours that I marched in. And behind us, there was another column. A sergeant in the military police, and two guards in the military police, and a young man from Cape Breton. He had left the front line, went back to see a French girl that he was sweet on, put on civilian clothes to make his stay a little longer, and was picked up by the military police. Now he was under escort, behind me. And when we were up at Vimy for about a week, I was detailed for guard behind the lines. When I got back there, I found that we were guarding him. The old A.P.M., head of the military police, came and read a sentence to him at 9 o'clock at night: "You are to be shot at daylight." And that fellow went to sleep at 10 o'clock, and slept like a carefree child till morning, when we woke him up. They pinned a piece of white paper over his heart, blindfolded him, lashed him to a chair, lashed the chair to a tree--and riddled him with bullets. And here's the joker: the firing squad was picked from his own platoon--men who knew him as well as I know you, or better. Now that wasn't necessary at all. And I only missed the firing squad by getting on the guard. He was in my platoon. Now, he was just reported as died, so if he has any relatives still living, they probably

think that he died in action. Nineteen years old, and he'd been in the line then for two years. So that's war, as the generals run it. (After you were in the hospital, did you go back to the war?) The first time, I did. The last time, I went back, but I was crossing the Channel when the armistice was signed. And they sent us to a place called Valenciennes. All the officers that were with my detachment took a train to Germany because the battalions were already marching into the Rhine. And the N.C.O.s got drunk, most of them. I went A.W.O.L, I got a drive on a lorry, went back to see the old line where my brother was killed, I spent the nights in a ruined church--I slept there--and in the daytime I took off my Canadian badges and lined up with the English troops, to get food, I guess I was there almost a week. And I came back then to Valenciennes. (Why did you do that?) I had a theory that my brother was killed from our own lines, accidentally, either by trench mortar or by machine-gun fire. That something went wrong, that the two officers who went out on patrol were not reported. And anyone that went out without being reported--it was certain death, because they got shot on the way in, thinking they were Germans. So, I wanted to see the ground, see how far away we were from the German line at that point. I found we were about, oh, 300 yards. And I don't believe they ever ventured that far out of No Man's Land. We had the reputation of controlling No Man's Land, as soon as we landed in there. I just had to go and see. (So the end of the war for you wasn't dancing in the streets, chasing French girls, celebrating.) No. We were too solemn for that. Anyone who saw any action was like my friend turning into a red patch on the wall of the trench. All we ever found was a piece of one foot. There may have been more, but they'd be scattered outside, in No Man's Land--both sides--may have been other pieces. But you see little splinters of white bone sticking out of the mud. If I had been one second slower behind, it would have been me. (So the war ended pretty quietly.) Yes, very quiet. (Did you feel like a victor?) No, no. I didn't, anyway. (Did the Germans just go home then?) Yes. (Just everybody left the trenches and went home?) Yes. The Germans went home. We followed closely after. But I missed the march into the Rhine by going A.W.O.L. I got a lot of fun out of it, but I despised the way it was conducted. People with no imagination.