

The Story of Lieut. Knotts' Thrilling Experience.

The thrilling story of the capture, release and succor of Lieut. Howard C. Knotts, of this city, who is an Ace and one of the real heroes of the world war, is told in a letter from him received by his father, Edward C. Knotts, United States attorney, on Christmas Eve. The daring young aviator was flying low over the German lines and raking the enemy with machine gun "pills" on October 14th last, when he was brought down by



Lieut. Howard C. Knotts.

enemy shots through both the engine and gasoline tank of his plane. By a rare combination of skill and good luck he landed unhurt and made a dash for the allied lines. The Germans pursued and captured him, but not until after he killed one of them in a running fight and had almost reached his goal. His fighting mate, Lieut. Howard Burdick, of Brooklyn, N. Y., who was near by at the beginning of this dramatic occurrence, was driven off by attacking planes and so Lieut. Knotts was left entirely upon his own resources in a most dangerous and harrowing emergency.

Of course prudence would have prompted him to surrender without a struggle at once, but American soldiers and sailors are not built that way, and besides he knew that capture if prolonged, meant at best a lingering, miserable death, or ruined health. His captors said he would have been shot on the spot in retaliation for having killed one of their number in pursuit

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but for their admiration of his desperate courage with the odds so greatly and manifestly against him, and for this act of chivalry the Huns, generally hated though they are, must be given due credit.

Three days after the armistice was signed, being a month to the day from his spectacular capture, during which period he was lodged temporarily in different prison camps and denied both shave and bath, Lieut. Knotts was abandoned in freezing weather in the street of the little farming village of Poucet, Belgium, in rags, half starved, sick and penniless, his body covered with vermin and resulting loathsome sores, and altogether about as hapless in appearance and condition as a human being may well be, and yet hope for relief and recovery.

Those who have his personal acquaintance and therefore know how erect, trim and vigorous in appearance and pleasing in manner he normally is, as does the editor, will readily appreciate what the change in him must have been as the result of a month of German kultur, as applied by those who already are begging America for mercy and food as well. God pity us if we were in their and they in our shoes at this momentous juncture! And American lads like our own gentle but fearless Howard Knotts—thousands of whom fell in death, and many, many more forever maimed—are doubtless what saved this nation and its allies from the humiliation of defeat and a political and economic domination by the greedy, wicked junkers for many long, dark, weary years to come, worse even in effect than the infamous policy of blood and iron of which the haughty Bismarck boasted and for which the deluded German masses have long cheered and now so dearly pay.

When abandoned, Lieut. Knotts was near the home of a Mr. and Mrs. Stanislas Seny, Belgians, and they seeing and understanding his plight took him into their home where he remained still confined to his bed at the date of his letter, November 25th, last, and gave him clean clothes, wholesome food, some money and every kindness of care and attention that his own parents could do. Mr. Seny even went to Maastricht, Holland, in order to send a cablegram in the name of Lieut. Knotts to his father saying he was alive and well, the latter word of course being intended to relieve anxiety rather than state the whole truth.

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