

AT THE GRAVE OF A DEAD GUNNER.

By His Pilot.

April 17, 1919.

Oh Pard! I've come back to you,
As you lay here beneath the sod.
I can see your features strong and true,
Turned upward toward God.

Thinking of the hours that you and I,
Have spent, as though we were one.
Sailing across the pale blue sky,
'Tween earth and the burning sun.

When we reamed together through the vineyard,
By our billet in the old Chateau,
And felt that growing kindred.
How close that kin did grow!

Since you left me, Pard, I guess I've been
Through near an earthly Hell.
Thro' Pard, you know it was not through sin
That I went to the Prison Cell.

In the evening gloom would go the wall,
in that cell of German Alsace.
And beckoning to me with a call
You would come in to its place.

Wearily the days and weeks went by,
And at last come the end of the war.
No more by the deadly weapons to die,
Were men in battles' horror.

But I stand here, Pard, beside your grave,
With a wound that is bleeding tears.
While you're with the One whose life He gave,
For humanity, through all these years.

But a life I'll live in honor to you,
With the help of God on High.
I'll think of you my whole life through
And join you when I die.

LIEUT. HORACE SHIDLER.

LEUT. HAROLD SAYRE,
From his Pilot at the Front,
Lt. Horace Shidler.

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On the fourteenth morning of September
Just after the clouds rolled off;
On a mission of death they sent us
to bomb a place southwest of Jocef.

We crossed the lines at Verdun
Where the ground was soaked with blood,
The Archie was pounding up at us
And burst with a hollow thud.

Thru a screen of shrapnel we flew,
Led by a man who'd of't been before;
Who had gone thru many of such
and who lived to go thru more.

Over the objective the Squadron sailed
And the signal to bomb was given,
Straight to their mark, like a leaden dart,
Our heavy bombs were driven.

I saw them light in the yards of Conflans,
Saw a train fly to bits by their crash,
It was the troops, artillery and supplies
Of the enemy we had to smash.

Then the guns from the ground ceased firing,
And the shrapnel ceased to burst;
We were alone with the moan of our engines
I knew mine was doing her worst.

Pard and I was flying the position
Of end on the wing to the right;
The easiest machine to attack,
In case of an aerial fight.

Then out of the sun on our left
Dropped thirty German Chasse;
Straight into our flanks they drove at us
Attacking in a mass.

Oh! where was the American Chasse!
To help us against these numbers;
South of our lines, of course
Peacefully resting in slumbers.

The squadron that came against us
All fliers, knew to be bad;
They were the remnants of the old Richthoffen,
The best the Germans had.

The first to fall of our number,
Was one in the left of the flank;
The machine behind gave throttle,
And moved forward to fill the blank.

The next to go was a German,
Who pitched forward into flame;
And it wasn't from the wreck of that machine
That they found its pilot's name.

Then on to us drove three black streaks
In desperate hot pursuit;
The dash was splintered, the fabric split,
My God! how they could shoot!

And here the sadness of it begins,
As I tell this story to you;
And the sadness felt by me,
Is seldom felt by few.

Harold Sayre was a man of men,
Proud was I that he should be;
The man that handled the guns,
That protected the aft of we.

He was shot and fell against the tarrell,
And held by the belt around him;
For aft protection I knew I had gone
and I felt so helpless without him.

Then close up they came,
For they knew I was defenseless;
With throttle open I tried to run
For I know that I was helpless.

I was getting away while around me flew,
The tracers in all directions
They shot the dial, they ripped the wings
Sure they shot me up to perfection!

The belt that held poor Pard was shot,
It broke and let him fall;
On to the controls, I felt them jamb,
And I knew that that was all.

The right wing dropped into a slip
The machine then started to spin;
Three followed us down still shooting,
Just trying to do us in.

With only a little rudder control
And just a little stick;
I got the old bus out of the shot,
And managed to turn the trick.

To try to land upon the ground,
Would be certain death for us both;
I had hopes of Pard still living,
The I saw blood come from his mouth.

A forest then was our only chance
To it we had to make it;
So toward that I worked our way,
And smashed headlong down through it.

The wings stayed high in the tree-tops,
We came to rest three feet from the dirt;
Then I yelled to Pard who was silent,
"Oh Pard! How bad are you hurt".

My belt was quickly unfastened
Over the wreckage I made a leap;
And there in a sickening looking pile
Lay Pard, "lifeless", in a heap.

Then to get him out of the wreck,
Was a thing I had to do;
I lifted and pulled and tugged,
Until I exhausted grew.

But finally I got him out of the wreck,
And by him on the ground I knelt;
There alone with him in those woods,
Only God knows how I felt.

He was the closest friend I ever had,
A model of his kind;
Healthy and strong in his body
Clean and straight in his mind.

A soldier in his "teens" had found us
And his feelings seemed to be deep;
When he saw how close I was,
On the verge of beginning to weep.

A tree stood near Pard's head,
And there I carved in its bark,
His rank, his name, a cross and then,
The date beneath his mark.

I am not a "goodie" fellow
No one likes a "Man" like I;
Some say it is only women
Who pray, and weep, and cry.

But there in that Lonely timber,
In range of the Mighty Gun;
I prayed to the Heavenly Guardian
For the sake of someone's son.

How my own flesh wounds are almost well,
And soon will be no more;
But the wound in my heart will never heal
For it reaches to the very core.

As I sit here now, alone in my cell
My eyes dim till it is hard to see;
Remembering the look on his pitiful face,
When he looked up at me.

Strange things happen in peace or war,
To this we'll all agree;
Oh God! if one of us had to go,
Then Lord why wasn't it me.

But now you have chosen me to stay
In this land of joy and trouble;
Let me live and raise a boy to be,
A "Harold Sayre's" double.

LIEUT. HORACE SHIDLER,
U.S. Air Service,
Returned Prisoner of War.