



*Harry Edward Shenton Jr., Fort Hancock, Georgia  
Spring 1918*

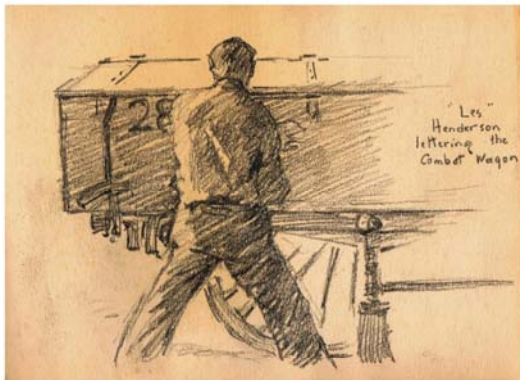
The  
Lost  
*Sketch*BOOKS

**A Young Artist  
in the Great War**

by Rex Passion  
with drawings  
by Edward Shenton



**046** *The Gun Control*



061 *Lettering the Combat Wagon*

In April, 1918 things seemed to be happening. Although they continued to practice throwing hand grenades and putting up barbed wire, some officers were promoted and some left for advanced training with the division. Something was in the air, but the drilling and training continued. The men's suspicion of an upcoming move increased when they were ordered to pack all their tools and letter their combat wagon.

50 *The Lost Sketchbooks*

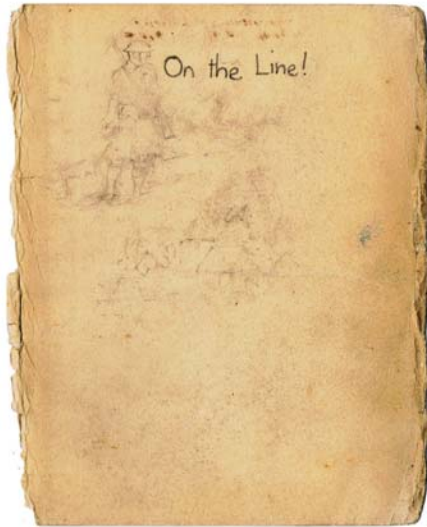
Their training was continued with British officers of the Northumberland Fusiliers. Although their language was the same, the men had problems understanding the accents of their instructors. They were being fed by British cooks who underestimated the appetites of American boys, but all in all the training went well and they received the praise of their English officers.

They were introduced to the new British gas masks and became adept at putting them on in less than ten seconds. There were lectures by an English officer nicknamed Major Lethal extolling the virtues of gas when used by our side and warning of its dangers when used by the enemy.

Both sides used chemical agents of various sorts. They were usually targeted on the trenches, but anyone on the front line, or for some distance to the rear, could be gassed. The masks were effective measures against the poisonous fog and were provided for men, horses, dogs and even carrier pigeons.



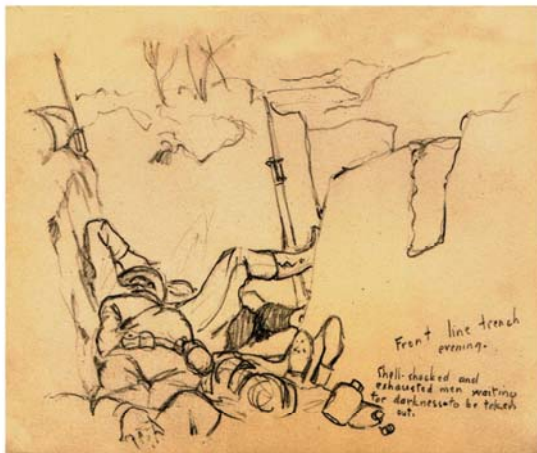
071 *Gas Mask*



## Saint Agnan

On a map far behind the front, a pin was moved and Company B drove through the night to a new destination. At Charly-sur-Marne trenches were needed and the engineers were brought in to build them. Now something else was required somewhere else and the engineers were on the move. Rumors circulated that they were headed for Paris to march in the Bastille Day parade, and with the anticipation of a holiday, they piled into trucks and took off. At Viels-Maisons they turned east instead of west; instead of Paris they were headed to another battle. It would not be the only time their plans were changed at the last minute.

077 *On the Line!*



082 *Front Line Trench, Evening*

During a lull in the shelling, the 109<sup>th</sup> Infantry, now regrouped from their retreat of the day before, charged from the woods, through Company B's trenches and into the wheat field at the base of the hill, all under intense fire, and re-took Saint-Agnan. The casualties were high and several of the wounded soldiers were rescued by engineers. After an hour the shellfire began to increase again and the decision was made to move the men from the shallow trenches back to the cover of Bois de Rougis.

One by one they ran to the woods under fire. They dug individual holes and small trenches and stayed in them for the next two days, all the while under a rain of high explosives, shrapnel and splinters from shattered trees. An ever increasing number of wounded engineers were evacuated back to a hospital dugout in the rear. Despite the nearly constant enemy fire, the cooks were able to provide the men with coffee and one hot meal.

Thanks to the 109<sup>th</sup> Infantry, the French Chasseurs Alpains and the 103<sup>rd</sup> Engineers the farthest advance of the German Army was Saint-Agnan. Company B was holding its part of the line at the enemy's deepest penetration across the Marne. Without any combat experience, the engineers had done their job, this time as fighting soldiers rather than trench builders.



After their first spectacular breakthrough, the Americans bogged down. Fighting from reinforced concrete bunkers the enemy had been able to slow their advance to a crawl and casualties were growing steadily. Once again the engineers were assigned as reserve, this time for the 111<sup>th</sup> Infantry. On October 4 they marched north of Varennes, where they spent the day in trenches without incident, but the real battle was elsewhere and as the sun set, they moved westward toward the fight.

Company B marched through the night and arrived at the foot of Le Chêne Tondu in the dark. The Germans had placed their artillery on the steep ridge and were determined to hold it regardless of their losses, but the 111<sup>th</sup> had a similar determination to drive them out.

The engineers dug in on the reverse slope. Conventional artillery fire went over their heads, but in the middle of the night, mortar bombs began to fall into the shallow trenches. Memories of Bois de Rougis flashed through their minds. Five men were killed and as many wounded, and, like Saint-Agnan, their evacuation was difficult. In the morning they moved to the top of the hill, protected by a sunken road.



116 *Doughboys Bringing Back Wounded*



151 *Soldiers in the Mud*