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## World War I Diary

H. Crawford

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*Sgt. Crawford*

**ARMY BOOK 136.**

May 1<sup>st</sup> 1918 left Houston, Texas  
 en route to somewhere in the  
 east. Travelled through Texas,  
 Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri,  
 Illinois, Indiana, Michigan.  
 at Detroit we crossed the  
 St. Lawrence river into Canada,  
 through Canada, stopped at  
 Niagara Falls for about two  
 hours. marched out to the  
 falls and saw them about  
 sunset, very beautiful. Then  
 crossed back into the good  
 old U.S.A. and were very glad  
 as the people of Canada seem  
 to have the heart taken out  
 of them by the war. American  
 soldiers passing through could  
 not get a smile out of the  
 most of them. At N.Y. N.Y.  
 we were met at the train  
 by about six red cross nurses  
 who gave us each a packet of



containing candy, gum and  
 cigarettes - We then went  
 through the scenic lake  
 view of Penney Island and  
 out the golf fair and ferry.  
 We arrived at Jersey City about  
 ten o'clock P.M. Sunday and by  
 the time our baggage was  
 transferred from the train to  
 the ferry it was supper  
 time so we ate at a  
 restaurant then  
 crossed the Hudson river  
 to Lower Meriden - We returned  
 there and after a little time  
 saw home top arrived at  
 Larchmont L. J. Camps Depot -  
 Was about 11 P.M. so we  
 marched to our barracks and  
 each man soon found a  
 cot and flopped for the  
 night as we were pretty  
 tired we slept until nearly



noon. Got up and after  
 taking a much needed  
 bath and shave went to  
 our office and as there  
 wasn't anything doing  
 there, asked the Colonel for  
 a pass to go to N.Y. City.  
 As he was in a pretty good  
 frame of mind he granted  
 it. Left camp at 4:45 and  
 arrived at the Pennsylvania  
 station about 7:30. Colonel  
 met me at the station and  
 we found a carriage for us  
 and took to our rooms at the  
 Colburn. Had dinner and  
 in the evening. Got back to  
 camp Wednesday morning  
 about seven P.M. There was  
 no work in the office yet  
 with so rich a harvest  
 morning so the Colonel asked  
 for and got another pass.



got out to Patusso about  
8 P.M. and had another  
wonderful visit, there until  
Sunday-midnight. Got  
back to camp about 8:30 A.M.  
and as there was still nothing  
doing slept the rest of the  
day. Had a pretty authentic  
rumor that we would have  
Wednesday night and as  
I wanted to see Gubruche,  
again called her up and  
she came out to camp with  
me until  
8 P.M. Wed night. At midnight  
we got our orders to pack up  
and by two P.M. we were on  
the train headed for the port of  
embarkation. We boarded the  
ship W. V. Verson (formerly the  
Crown Prince) which is  
Stearns' favorite boat) about  
4 P.M. and at four o'clock



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We sailed down <sup>east</sup> the  
Hudson on our way  
to Berlin (eventually). The  
first night and day out  
were very pleasant, sea  
very calm, 2<sup>d</sup> Day still calm.  
On getting on board ship  
we were each given a tag  
a white one first sitting at  
mess. There were so many <sup>board</sup>  
that they had to have five  
sittings at mess. Flours  
2<sup>nd</sup> red one 3<sup>d</sup> white and  
4<sup>th</sup> yellow 5<sup>th</sup> & was unfortunate  
enough to draw a 5<sup>th</sup> sitting  
and by the time I got there  
there wasn't a whole lot  
left. Anyway I got by.  
3<sup>d</sup> Day the sea was a little  
rough but very far sea  
sight. We were constantly  
on the look out for submarines  
but failed to see one 4<sup>th</sup> day



got a little rough  
 but every one seemed  
 to be enjoying the trip. Most  
 every evening we had a band  
 concert and moving picture  
 show. 5<sup>th</sup> day no change.  
 6<sup>th</sup> day, we were told we  
 were getting near the real  
 danger zone so we were all  
 just a little bit worried.  
 6<sup>th</sup> day we got up to find  
 five good old U.S. submarine  
 chasers plying around our  
 boat on the war path. When  
 we saw these we were in hope  
 they would spot a sub - so we  
 could have a little excitement.  
 6<sup>th</sup> day no change. 7<sup>th</sup> day  
 about 8 P.M. we sighted land  
 and about 10 P.M. we pulled  
 into the harbor of Bust. Funa.  
 There were fifteen other large  
 troop ships lying at anchor



in the harbor, waiting to  
 unload their cargo of troops  
 We stayed on board ship  
 until about 8:00 A.M. Saturday  
 morning May 24<sup>th</sup> when we  
 disembarked and set foot  
 upon French soil. We went  
 into a French cafe and had  
 dinner which consisted of  
 eggs, potatoes, bread, butter  
 and white wine. We were lucky  
 enough to have an interpreter  
 along, so we got along very  
 nicely. Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup> 1918  
 We entrained for somewhere in  
 France. The french train's  
 looked very funny to us  
 as the engines were very  
 small, nearly as small as  
 the donkey engines one  
 sees in America around a  
 construction camp. The cars  
 were also small and some



of the fellows were unfortunate enough to draw box or cattle cars. I got a second class car which consisted of small compartments eight to a compartment. We started out and ran for about six miles at the rate of about twenty miles an hour. Then we stopped at a small village for about ten minutes - then on again thru a top. Don't think we went over six miles without a stop - at every village the people at the stations, cried out "Viva le Américain!" and the kids begged for souvenirs. We gave them American pennies which pleased them very much. About last W. Monday night, most of the fellows in our compartment



were asleep, when we were  
 suddenly awakened by the  
 sound of guns and air-  
 planes - We were going  
 through our first air raid  
 As we were - novices and  
 didn't realize our danger  
 we all stuck our heads  
 out the window to see the  
 fun as we called it. We  
 could see five or six shafts  
 of light in the air, from  
 the allied search lights, playing  
 on the Hun planes - There were  
 three of them above our train  
 dropping bombs at us - The  
 concussion of the explosion  
 would rattle the windows  
 and then or there pieces of  
 paper and came whizzing  
 through our car. Finally  
 one bomb hit in front of  
 our train blowing out the



track. My tray is topped  
 and while the anti-air  
 craft guns fought off the  
 planes we sat still and  
 waited for we knew not what.  
 After a while we were  
 ordered to get off on the train  
 that had been blown out in  
 ahead of us. We marched to  
 Abbeville about two miles.  
 There we saw our first horror  
 of war. A bomb had landed  
 in the center of a paved street  
 crushing the buildings on  
 each side of the street for a  
 block and killing about forty  
 women and children. Another  
 iron cross for a German  
 aviator. The station was also  
 badly damaged. We went to  
 a Y.M.C.A. hut and got tea.  
 We then entrained and went to  
 Longwy. about five miles got



off there and waited until  
 about four P.M. Then got  
 on a freight train and rode  
 about ten miles to Osceola.  
 Got off there and from there  
 to Huxley via motorcycle.  
 We were billeted in a large  
 brick barn that was empty.  
 Our office still had very  
 little to do. Went through  
 an old Catholic church and  
 cemetery, some of the dates  
 on the graves and vaults dated  
 back to 1400. We stayed  
 in Huxley about ten days then  
 made a distance of about  
 sixty miles via truck to  
 Cu. Had a dandy store at Cu  
 as it was a pretty good  
 sized place and we could  
 buy a regular meat man  
 and that. Was a fifteen  
 minute car ride to La Teja,



on the coast. Bathing was  
 very good and we fellows  
 that had nothing to do  
 spent most of our time bathing.  
 While at Huppel, we could  
 see Abbeville, about 25 miles  
 away being bombed every night  
 for a week. War quite inter-  
 esting to watch from the  
 distance. We could hear the

hum of the engines, the fire  
 of the anti-aircraft guns and the  
 flash and explosion of the bombs.  
 One evening we saw an enemy  
 plane shot down in flames.  
 The air fights between our  
 planes and the enemy were  
 very interesting. The allied  
 planes were small scout  
 planes mounted with machine  
 guns and as they were much  
 smaller than the heavy German  
 bombing planes they would



soon have the enemy  
 planes turning tail and  
 brating it back to Germany -  
 Back to Eu. We stayed there  
 until June 18<sup>th</sup> when we moved  
 to Moyluis-au-Bois. We were  
 then about eight miles from  
 the front line trenches and  
 could see the observation  
 balloons over our lines, and  
 hear and see the flashes  
 of the big guns sending  
 over their defiance to the huns.  
 Nearly every night we were  
 treated to an air raid by the  
 huns. We dug in - three feet  
 under the ground to protect  
 ourselves from the ~~and~~ air bombs.  
 On June 20<sup>th</sup> 1918 - the huns  
 dropped four or five bombs  
 about 100 yds from our  
 camp (sounded like they were  
 on top of us) Four Tommies



were killed and six or eight  
 wounded. June 26<sup>th</sup> moved  
 to Perrequet - about one mile -  
 July 4<sup>th</sup> visited with some  
 English N.C. or. had tea  
 with them. We then attended  
 a band concert and boxing  
 match given by the 132<sup>nd</sup> Inf.  
 From 10 P.M. until about  
 1 A.M. we had our "4<sup>th</sup>"  
 fireworks and will say that  
 although I have seen some  
 good fireworks displays, never  
 saw any to equal this -  
 We were on a hill, where  
 we could look down  
 upon the front lines for  
 about eight miles - We  
 could see - the flashes of  
 guns of all caliber, the  
 very sights that are sent  
 up to make no man's land  
 as bright as day - then the artillery



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signals which were, a string  
of star shaped lights,  
they would burn in the  
sky for about a minute, they  
were different shapes, colors,  
and sizes to convey various  
messages. Then about two or  
three the four planes started  
coming over. They dropped  
some bombs about 300 yds. from  
us which was plenty close. One  
plane was picked up by three  
different searchlights. The plane  
was so high that it looked  
like a <sup>small</sup> butterfly. The machine  
guns were shooting tracer  
bullets, phosphorus, and you  
could see these bullets flying  
through the darkness. They  
are used to give the anti-air-  
craft guns the location. We  
could see these bullets glancing  
off of various parts of the plane.



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After about a ten minute  
fight one of the anti air-  
craft guns planted a  
direct hit, the plane seemed  
to crumple up, float for a  
few seconds then tumble  
over and over to the earth.

July 6<sup>th</sup> General Pershing  
visited our camp and I saw  
him for the first time - July  
20<sup>th</sup> attended concert at St. Y.  
Clara Jammie was there with  
plenty of pop-music and humor-  
landy wowing - everyone  
enjoyed her very much. On  
Sunday July 22<sup>nd</sup> visited  
Raviolle and Viller-Bretonneux -  
bought a good meal and  
some wine at a French  
cafe - July 30<sup>th</sup> visited Raviolle  
just a small village -  
August 1918 - On August 12<sup>th</sup>  
was sent to a walking



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wounded past at Montigny  
Farm, run by British Field  
Ambulance No. 55. The first  
night & war there we took  
care of eight hundred and  
seventy casualties including about  
two hundred American and fifty  
German prisoners. War there for  
ten days and were very busy  
most of the time. Returned to  
105<sup>th</sup> San. Train August 23<sup>rd</sup> and  
the 24<sup>th</sup> we got orders to move.  
Closed our hospital, butted about  
six miles to Villes Butreaux.  
On our hike we had to fall  
out and take shelter as there  
or four enemy planes were  
over us bombing an air drome.  
They seemed a direct hit as we  
could see one of the hangars  
burst into flames and later  
we learned that this machine  
had been destroyed. The schepard



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was singing around us  
and I think I most of us had  
our noses buried in the ground  
After it was over we "carried  
on" with our march and arrived  
at our rail head about 12 P.M.  
The Y.M.C.A. gave each of us a  
a cup of hot tea, biscuits and  
cigarettes - We entertained and  
pulled out about four A.M.  
We were in box cars, about thirty  
men to a car. Some of us could  
lie down while the rest stood.  
We were travelling through a  
much better part of France than  
we had been in before - About  
three P.M. Sunday August 25th  
we passed through the out-  
skirts of Paris. Although we  
didn't see much of the city what  
we did see looked mighty good  
and reminded me of Chicago -  
We arrived at Tonville, Southern



France. Pitched our camp in a valley, on a small river. a very pretty place. Did hardly anything except go to town and buy a glass of pretty good beer now and then, as usual. Sunday. ~~Aug~~ Sept 1st got a pass and went to ~~D~~ Baile Luc - a pretty large town - the largest I have been in in France - Bought a good meal, at a hotel for five francs - went to a movie and then back to camp.

We are only about thirty miles from the German border here, and most of the population speak German, better than they do French - We are so far from the line that we wouldn't know there was a war going on, or we nor hear a cannon and hear



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only seen three air planes  
since we arrived here -

On Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> We moved  
via truck to a large hill,  
in the woods, near the  
liver. We started moving on  
a beautiful day and we had  
a great trip when suddenly  
it started raining. We  
can rain in Troid - We  
reached camp and put up  
wooden buildings. The buildings  
were all right but they were  
pretty well populated with cats.  
Without exaggerating some of  
them were as large as full  
grown cats - I for one was  
glad when orders came to  
move again, as we were  
certain they would. We  
moved this time via  
trucks and every town we  
passed through, about six

A. P. M. M. M.



as told, showed the effects  
 of the Hun advance as  
 there were no civilians  
 living in them. The few  
 scraps of buildings was all  
 that was left of them.  
 We arrived at Sura Sabud  
 about eight o'clock from  
 the line and it was about  
 as badly shot up as the town  
 we had just passed through.  
 We located enough buildings  
 to set up our office and  
 Tallett set up none of them  
 were whole as they had been  
 struck by a shell or shells.  
 There wasn't much in the  
 office for me to do and as  
 they were badly in need of  
 a motorcycle dispatch rider  
 I volunteered for the job. I did  
 not very much as I got nearly  
 the lines and was out



seeing the country every day  
 about the fifth day and  
 went to Kum-mo-oh  
 with a message and while  
 there got into a mud hole.  
 The motorcycle began to  
 slip and to stop. It began  
 pulling over & put out my  
 left foot - she turned a flop  
 then and pinned me down  
 scarring my whole body.  
 Haven't ridden since -

The tenth of Sept. I was  
 sent to the Gray Laboratory.  
 For duty with St. Harris -  
 the next day we moved  
 to Padmerylle, set up our  
 Gray machine, got ready  
 for business then we  
 moved to Glencaux -

Glencaux is two miles  
 from Oudon. I have been  
 quite a French hospital.



There are eight frame  
wards about forty by one  
hundred feet, three brick  
ones about the same size  
and numerous small ones -  
Three of us are billeted in a  
nice room, sleep on beds with  
springs, plenty of blankets and  
sheets - all the rooms have  
electric lights and we have  
a wash room with running  
water just two doors from  
us. There is a large cemetery  
here, mostly filled with fallen  
heroes of France, a few American  
and some but not enough  
German - As we are so  
near Verdun decided to  
see the city while I have a  
chance - As you approach  
one of the many gates to  
the city you see a moat  
about thirty feet wide and



twenty to forty feet deep -  
 Then you come to the  
 walls which are of stone  
 about four feet thick and  
 fifteen feet high - The gates  
 are huge, iron ones that  
 look from the inside.  
 I should judge Verdun to  
 be a city of fifty thousand  
 people before the buildings  
 were of stone. One can see  
 that an awful bombardment  
 has taken place with all  
 the walls as I don't think  
 I saw a single building big  
 or small that had not been  
 hit. Some of the buildings, a  
 very few could be repaired but  
 most of them will have to  
 be torn down - soon I came  
 to the Cathedral. The French  
 soldier, a cripple, told me  
 that it was built about 600 AD



Was a masonry structure standing so high on the highest point in the city. The center and highest part was each a hundred and fifty feet tall or high from the inside. The various altars and paintings were beautiful. All the windows were shattered and there were about six shell holes in the building. Next we came to the tunnel. You walk into it from the level of the street and it runs into a hill then out under the city - covers a distance of twelve miles. There is a narrow gauge rail running through it for hauling provisions and is lighted by electricity - After leaving the tunnel crossed the river



Every building that was  
on the river had a landing  
and low to the river.

Left the city by a different  
city, the road of St. Joseph.

This gate had a drawbridge  
in front of it. I judge, the  
intent to close the gate from  
the bridge and defy the  
enemy - Out side of this

gate was a stupa  
monument - to "The Defender  
of Verdun 1890" - two soldiers  
dragging a gun up a hill -

Then the R.R. station, a rather  
what was left of it.

It had been pretty well shot  
up and was yet too close  
to the line to be used as a  
rail head -

We remained at Stoney,  
doing a few minor operations  
and a number of Mayaguez -



until the fourth of Oct  
when we got orders to  
move - We started in  
trucks at two P.M. after  
traveling over very good  
roads until daylight  
we struck the worst  
roads and ground that  
I fear I have seen. Beyond  
about we were in territory  
that has been in German  
possession since 1917 until  
just a few days ago when  
they were driven out by  
the French and American  
troops. The road was very  
rough by shells and we  
would move about one  
hundred yards, stop for  
about an hour then move  
ahead as the engineers built  
the roads - As far as we



could see the country  
was torn and return by  
many a shell and dead  
horses were scattered here  
and there and occasionally a  
dead soldier - About eight  
A.M. we were stalled on  
a hill when we observed  
four German planes approaching  
flying very low. When they  
were about a mile away the  
first air craft gun opened up  
on them bringing one down  
in about two minutes.  
The remaining three flew  
towards us with their  
machine guns blazing on  
the road. It sounded like  
a thousand machine guns  
were going at once or all  
in the vicinity opened up.  
The plane passed over us. It  
came back flying high, one



the two was shot down  
a.s.c. and the other flew  
out of sight. The third  
one flew back at us, flying  
out fifty feet above our  
heads. He was playing his  
machine gun on us and you  
could see the bullets striking  
the dust around us. We  
were much too excited to  
think of our danger. He  
pursued us and everyone  
thought he was getting  
away with a damn sure  
that he - after he had  
gotten about 100 yds  
past us, either a rifle or  
machine gun bullet got  
him as his plane wobbled  
for a moment, then crashed  
to the ground ending  
a very exciting scene.  
We pushed on and



arrived at Bethinesing  
about 3 P.M. pitched  
our horse tent and  
got ready for business.  
We, surely were in a  
hot bed for a horse.  
The dinner line about 3  
tilon in front of us,  
about 100 yards to our front  
was an observation balloon  
just back of us a battery  
of 75's to our right a battery  
of anti-aircraft guns and  
to our left another group.  
The next day being Sunday  
we took life as any day  
we weren't ready to give it  
any planer came over  
with the observation balloon  
and the pilot dived out in  
a parachute five times  
and the balloon was hardly down  
before he came tent. About 3 P.M.



a more daring party  
came over and set the  
balloon on fire before it  
could be hauled down -  
When they were shooting  
at the balloon we were so  
close that one of our  
fellows got a bullet  
in the arm. All day  
long you could hear  
the balloch and some  
of our shells going  
over to us and their way  
to the German lines.  
and also Jerry's shells  
coming back. Some would  
land short especially  
when they shelled the battery  
just back of us there is  
would have to find it  
for our dugouts. And of  
our tents were pummed by  
flying shrapnel one night



...the more work...  
...the five...  
...at this point...  
...might...  
...put on a...  
...from one to three...  
...account of...  
...landing in...  
...valley.



Tom M. Clusky. Band. 362 Inf.



