

Journal #17



U.S. gunners with a 75mm gun in furious action during the fighting in the St. Mihiel salient in 1918.

Explain how Germany “pushed” the United States into finally declaring war?

Letter

Henri Gaudier, letter to Edward Marsh (1st October, 1914)

I have been at the Front for the last fortnight and have seen both latent and active fighting. By latent I mean staying days in trenches under heavy artillery fire, keeping ready for any eventuality such as a raid or an unforeseen forward movement from the enemy - by active, a nice little night attack that we made last Saturday night upon an entrenched position. We crept through a wood as dark as pitch, fixed bayonets and pushed some 500 yards amid fields until we came to a wood. There we opened fire and in a bound we were along the bank of the road where the Prussians stood. We shot at each other some quarter of an hour at a distance of 12-15 yards and the work was deadly. I brought down two great giants who stood against a burning heap of straw - my corporal accounted for four more, and so on all along the line. They had so much luck, unhappily, for out of 12 of my squad that went we found ourselves five after the engagement.

1. How does Henri define latent fighting? What is the dictionary definition of latent?
2. How does Henri define active fighting?
3. Describe the night raid on the German trenches.

Vocabulary

Conchie: Conscientious objector. One who refused military service on the grounds of moral or religious beliefs.

Doughboy: American soldier. Originally an American flour dumpling. The buttons on the American uniforms were said to resemble this "dumpling".

Silent Death: The practice of waiting quietly at night in no man's land for the advent of a German patrol. The patrol was then dispatched hand-to-hand as quickly and silently as possible by the use of trench knives. Much favored by the Canadians.

Yank: American soldier. From *Yankee*.