

WAR LUMBERING IN FRANCE

A DIRECT ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF THE 20TH ENGINEERS (FOREST)

BY LIEUT. R. H. FAULKNER

EDITOR'S NOTE—The following article by Lieut. Faulkner, with the accompanying photographs, will be of unusual interest to foresters and lumbermen as indicating the output and character of the lumbering work done by the men of the lumber regiments under war conditions. It also indicates that the men are in good health and well cared for, a large part of which is due to the timely assistance rendered by the Welfare Fund Committee for Lumbermen and Forestry Soldiers.

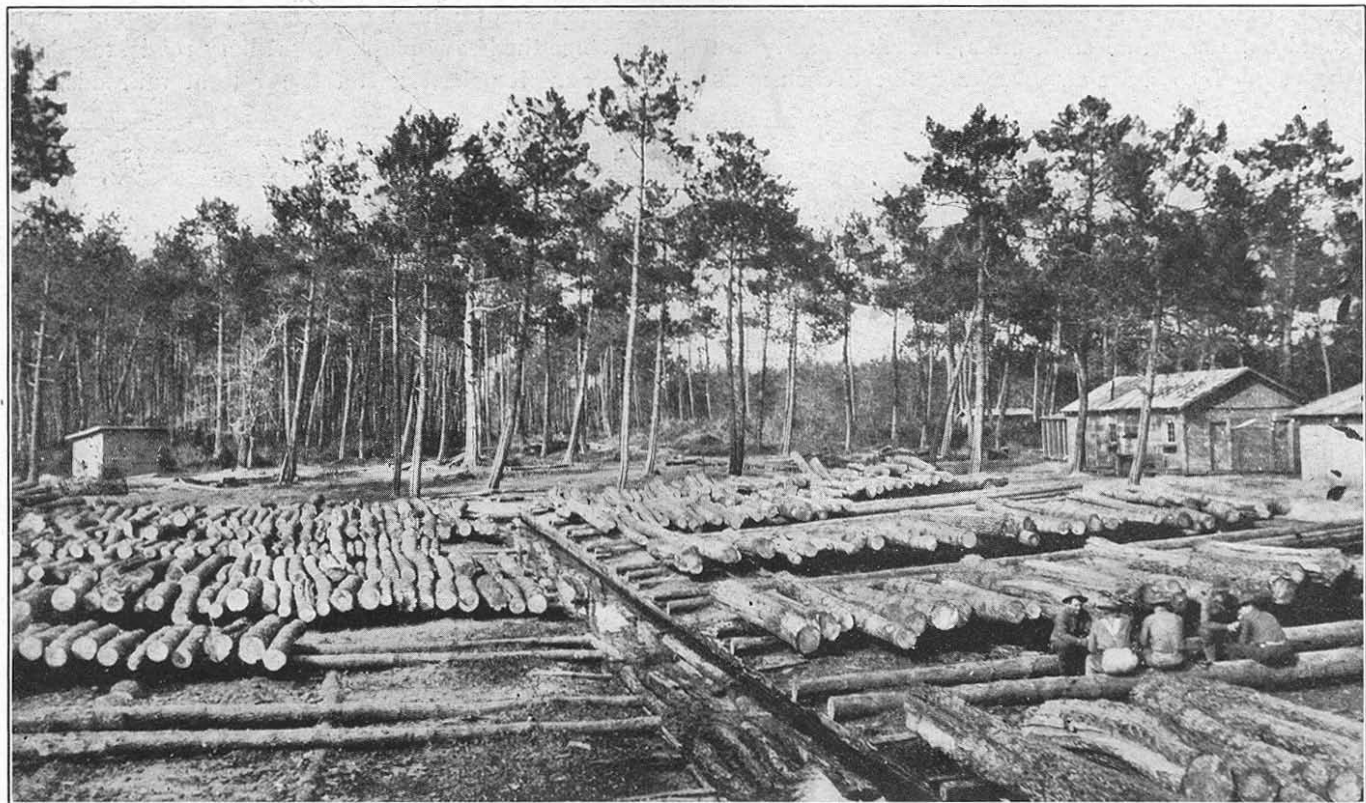
THE larger and earlier fortunes made by lumbermen in America were due chiefly to the acquirement of vast areas of stumpage at a price so ridiculously low that conservation was a thing to be scoffed at, while today the ever increasing price of stumpage makes necessary the most careful and conservative management.

Could any operator today in the United States of America make a tour of the lumbering operations of the Forestry Regiments, 10th and 20th Engineers, in France, they would see economical operations carried out to the minutest detail. And this is not fanatical conservation, it is not conservation that adds excessively to the cost of production but it is due to an entirely new spirit of lumbering, the spirit of the American forestry troops,

which taboos absolutely the waste of any material which can be of use. And when this is said, in France, it means the utilization of every part of the tree, down to branches only one and one-half inches in diameter.

The American forestry troops are divided into ten districts scattered practically through all timber areas of France and this, by the way, is approximately one-tenth of the total area of the country. These ten districts are divided into about forty operations ranging in size from small pole, piling and tie cutting to the operations of 20 thousand capacity mills, running night and day shifts.

There is a great variety in the species of timber over here, with the consequent variety in operating conditions. There is everything from a spruce forest, with



ONE OF THE AMERICAN LOGGING OPERATIONS IN FRANCE

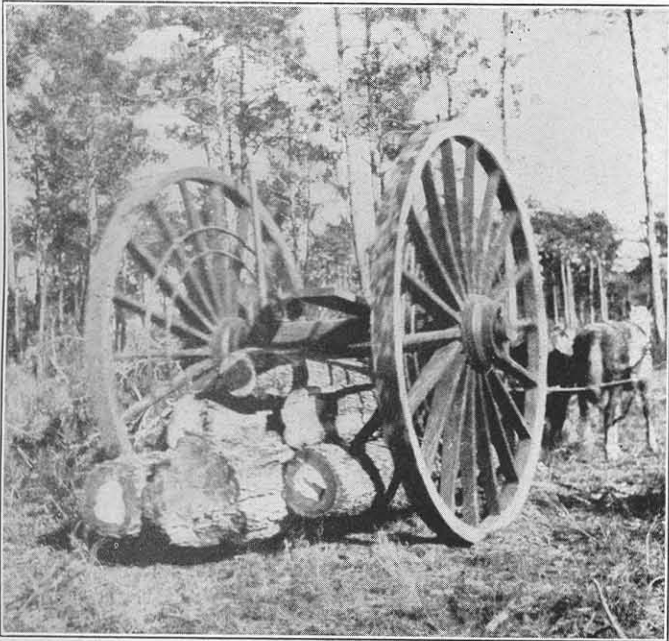
Notice the method of handling the logs, and their size. This is one of the saw mills operated by the Forestry Troops of the American Expeditionary Force, where we find a wonderful example of economical utilization down to the smallest detail.

logging conditions quite similar to those in the Adirondack Mountains—to the maritime forests, almost identical to the pine found in southern Georgia.

The maritime pine forests in France cover approximately 2,500,000 acres and contain about 130,000,000 trees. The stand varies from approximately 6,000 to 15,000 feet, board measure, per acre. While there are some very large blocks of solid timber it is against the custom of the country to allow the cutting of great single areas, particularly for the reason that the peasantry in the maritime pine section are practically dependent upon the resin industry. Consequently, while there is quite a bit of timber available for American exploitation, it is meted out, as a general rule, in small *parcelles*, necessitating the installation of portable ground mills. The American forestry troops in the pine country here, are cutting, besides lumber, a great quantity of round timbers, ties, trench props and wire entanglement stakes. There is absolutely no waste, for all slabs and limbs are cut into fuel wood.

There was a popular idea expressed by lumbermen in America before the departure of the first forestry battalions, that the cost to the Government to produce lumber with the engineer troops in France would be tremendous. Several wiseacres went so far as to predict the approximate cost and the writer heard a very well-known

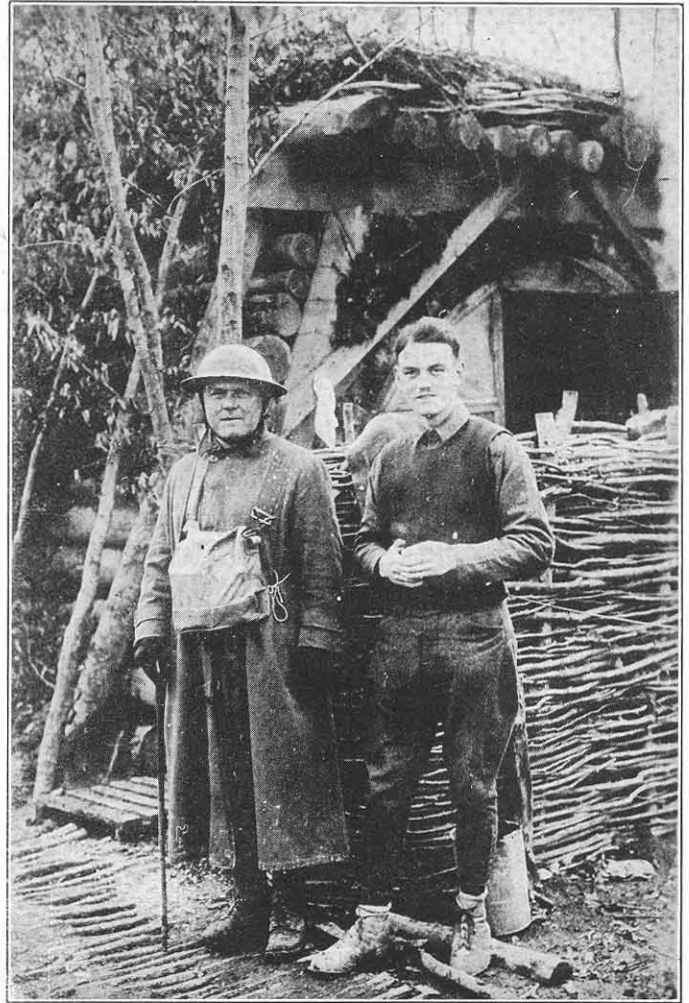
more than satisfactorily realized. When the war is over, there will be returned to the lumber industry of America approximately 20,000 men who are, through their training and experience over here, the last word in logging and lumbering efficiency.



A FAMILIAR SIGHT IN A STRANGE LAND

In use on an operation of the 20th, these "big wheels" look like they might be busy in the piney woods of our own Southland instead of in sunny France.

American lumberman say, last summer, that it would cost the Government \$200 to \$300 per thousand to produce lumber in France. As a matter of cold hard fact it is a well-established point here now, that the forestry units of the United States Government are a remarkably good investment. The primary purpose of rapid production to meet immediate needs in the most economical manner by sending the men to France has been much



Committee on Public Information

AN AMERICAN OFFICER BEFORE HIS DUGOUT

This village in France was under fire at the time the picture was taken.

The condition of the troops are nearly perfect, everything that could be desired. The men are either housed or are quartered in tents floored and walled with lumber. They are well-equipped with proper clothing and effects. Each camp has shower baths. The large size appetite that accumulates in a lumber camp is very satisfactorily treated three times a day with good, substantial, clean and well cooked food.

Then there is the Y. M. C. A. with the attendant convenience and comforts afforded by this institution to counteract the "blues"—the canteen for tobacco and sweets; books, magazines, free stationery, etc. There is always great interest in the athletic contests conducted by the "Y," in baseball, track, tennis, etc.

Besides the music by the various battalion and regimental bands, numerous vocal and instrumental musicians, American, French, English and Italian, some of whom have attained opera fame, appear at regular in-

tervals to share their splendid gifts with "the boys."

Between times, in the different companies, impromptu quartettes chant American favorites, accompanied, perhaps, by a mongrel stringed orchestra. The "local talent" is varied and is always an interesting and important part of any camp.

The men that make up the forestry troops are a strong and hearty type and their patriotism and their attitude toward one another and toward their organization is most admirable. Just to relate a single instance—twenty-

five men of one of the companies went out one evening without orders and on their own free initiative cut one hundred and twenty-five ties. One man can cut twenty-five ties in a day here. The lumberjack, though he represents a non-combatant branch of our great army, has done and is doing his full "bit." His relative importance to our success in this tremendous conflict is real and each man in the United States forestry troops can rightfully feel proud and happy to hold a place in this branch of the service.

THE FORESTRY TROOPS IN FRANCE

BY FRANCIS KIEFER, CAPTAIN, ENGINEERS, U. S. R.

WHAT the American Forestry Troops are doing in France is told in a measure by the production report of April 30, which shows the following totals:

Lumber	26,176,000 feet b.m.
Piling	5,214 pieces
Fuelwood	14,360 cords
Standard Gauge ties.....	257,186 pieces
Small ties	196,368 pieces
Miscellaneous round products.....	1,099,368 pieces

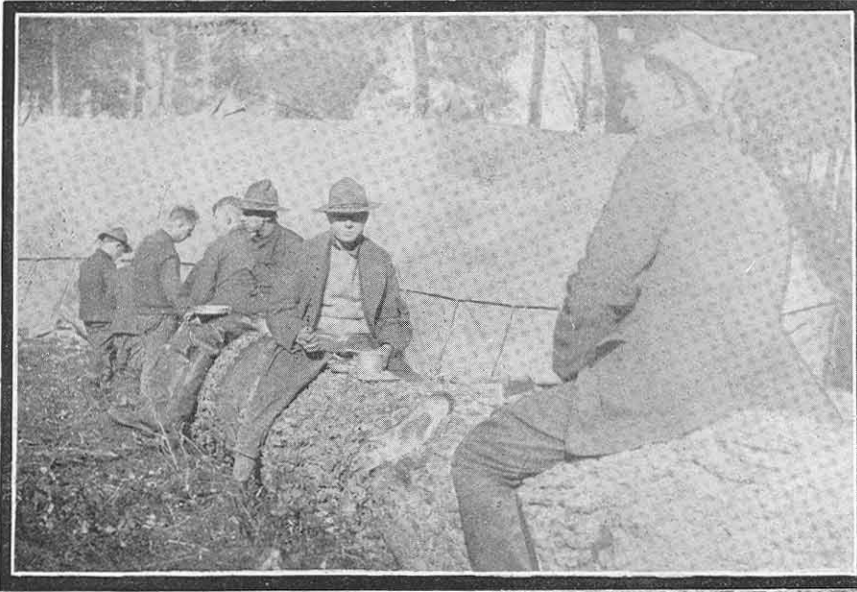
These figures may mean little or much depending upon your view point. By that, I have in mind the conditions under which the material making these figures was produced. Forest exploitation as generally conceived in the States is a pioneer undertaking of the first order, accomplished in wild regions removed from the centers of population, wherein pure sweat and brawn count more for the success of the enterprise than any other factor. This in a large degree is true and the training our men of the woods have had in that respect is one of the

reasons why they are able to boast of this accounting.

As a sample of that, because it comes handy, I mention the performance of the 20th Regiment Engineers. Upon their landing in France, they started in as though the success of the Allies depended entirely upon them. Exactly eleven days after the —th landed, they were actually stacking ties on the railroad right-of-way in well established fashion just as though they had been logging there a year instead of only eleven days. They had mighty little equipment then and carried the ties out by hand. Moreover, thirty-five days after breaking camp at American University and precisely eighty days after the —th was formally authorized, this outfit sawed their first board in France. However, it wasn't a board; it happened to be a 2" x 4" which may be a mere matter of chance, but there is some doubt about that feature of it. The Major is rather suspected of having it purposely cut to that dimension for convenient paper weight size.

At any rate he proudly uses his portion of it for that purpose during the short intervals he is at his desk.

Mentioning "first boards," it should be said that the first board cut in France by the American Expeditionary Force Forestry Troops with a sure-enough American mill came from



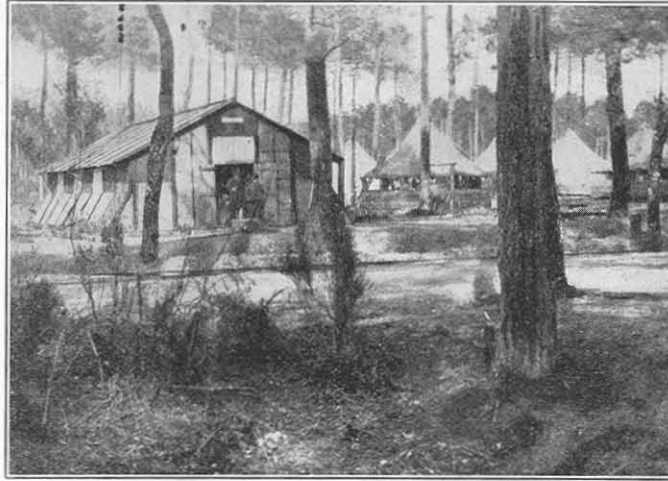
FORESTRY TROOPS IN FRANCE AT MESS

THIS IS WHAT MR. HOOVER DOES WITH SOME OF THE FOOD HE SAVES. AT THE LEFT IS SEEN A LOG RAMP AND FLUME AT THE MILL OF COMPANY C, 10th ENGINEERS (FOREST).



— detachment, Company E, — Engineers. Major —, on the other hand, claims the distinction for the 2nd Battalion, — Engineers, of having sawed the first board with the all mighty twenty thousand-foot daily capacity mill. But that is a touchy point, better left unsaid perhaps, because there isn't a man in the organization that does not possess splinters from the first board and they all come from different mills and different units! It is not my purpose to start a controversy on who sawed the first board, but simply to show the spirit of friendly though lively competition that exists, which illustrates the force that the men are putting into their work. Nevertheless, I have started a controversy: Captain — insists upon the insertion here of a corrected statement to the effect that the honors go to Major —, of the 1st of the 10th Engineers,

regarding the "first" board from the twenty thousand-foot mill. Here it is. It's inserted. At the peril of my life, I have opened the discussion that never will be settled as long as there are Forestry Troops alive to talk about it.



SCENE AT ONE OF THE LUMBER CAMPS

The housing is very substantial, and each camp has its own shower bath. The men that make up the forestry troops are a splendid type and they are kept comfortable and well cared for. Their patriotism and their attitude toward each other and their organization is most admirable.

While sweat and brawn enter into this sort of action, impelled by inspired determination to drive the Kaiser into the last ditch, it also involves a degree of ingenuity, as in the instance of improvising harness with any sort of material that may be at hand. One of the Forestry units, it doesn't matter which one, its merely a sample of what they all have done in one way or another, failed to be supplied with harness promptly. Undaunted, the boys set to making breast straps of grain sacks, tugs and reins of rope, and bits for the makeshift bridles were made from 60D nails. In ordinary times one might have waited for the neces-



TYPICAL ACTIVITIES AT ONE OF THE LOGGING OPERATIONS IN FRANCE

Except for the tents, this scene might be found at many small lumber operations in the States, but it is really a camp of one of the lumber regiments in France where our American boys are working strenuously to produce the wood so badly needed by the allied armies.

sary supplies to come along. But that isn't the present spirit of these lads. Production is what they are working for and production to them means nothing unless presented in the concrete form of ties, lumber, road plank, trench props, cord-wood, fagots, piling, poles, or wire entanglement stakes.

With reference to entanglement stakes, one recalls with serious amusement the "Rush" order that came over the wire from "Up Front" one day for an unlimited number of entanglement stakes. They were needed in a hurry! Our boys started in to thrash the Kaiser with entanglement stakes. They tackled the job with mighty little equipment; wagons, horses and motor vehicles were lacking; but no matter, a standing order was issued that no man should return to "Mess" from the woods without all the entanglement stakes

he could pack on his back. So in less time than it takes to say it, stakes were pouring out of the woods on the backs of men in an endless ant-like stream; stakes were moving forward from every quarter. That the job had been well done in short order is told by the wire that came back, "Stop sending stakes, can't use any more."

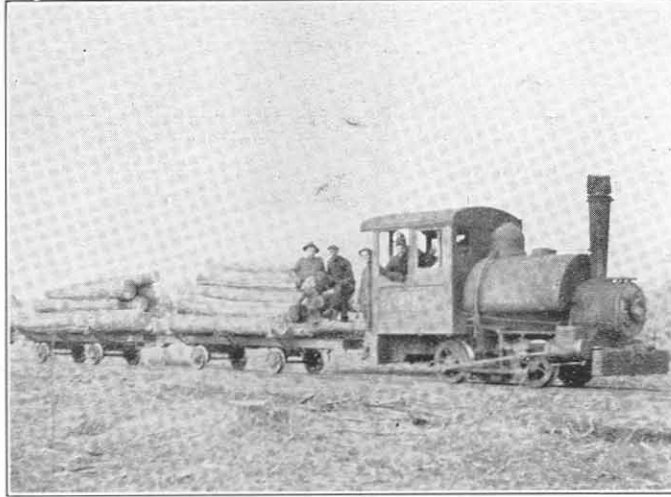
Major —, who has a group of operations made up of detachments from the 10th and 20th Regiments and the 503rd and 507th Service Battalions, received a dispatch at another time to furnish poles, as many as he could as soon as possible. This again was before the rest of the American Expeditionary Forces knew what

we really could do. After about two days of a deluge of poles, just when the Major had things organized in his own inimitable way to win the war with poles, a dispatch flashed in, "Flooded with poles, cancel further shipments."

No end of such tales can be told and one leads to another. Along about the same time, the wire brought in an order for 10,000 ties with which to construct a railroad spur at a hospital that was being put up in a rush. In six days those ties were made without a broad ax in the outfit, ordi-

nary single and double bitted chopping axes did the business.

It is a paradox of pioneering in an old and densely settled region, using the equipment our ships are able to bring us across three thousand miles of sea, and accepting in the meantime the generous assistance of the French.



A FRENCH "DINKEY" IS ENLISTED

Always generous in their assistance, the French, in a time of need, lend the American boys an engine to bring in a big load of logs.



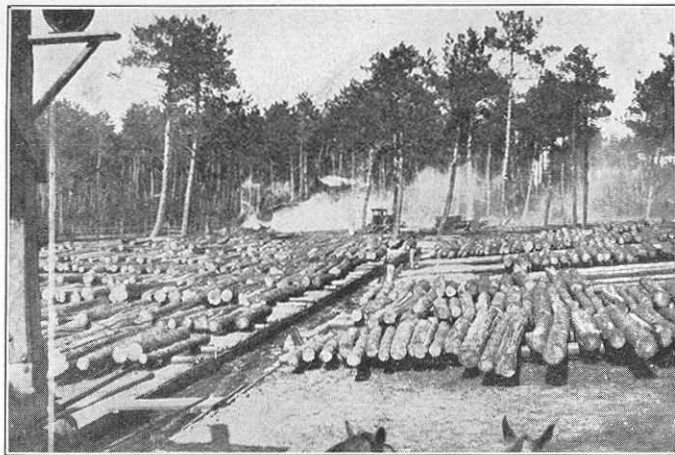
Underwood and Underwood—New Zealand Official Photograph

UTILIZATION IS THE WATCHWORD OF THE LUMBER AND FORESTRY ARMY

And here we see timber which has been salvaged from German dug-outs and cut up in the saw-mills of the New Zealand Tunneling Company to be used in the construction of dug-outs for our troops.

This is the view point from which we regard those production figures over here, which is shared at least by those in the States who selected and are giving their tireless and skillful attention to sending the Forestry Troops their supplies. "When you get over there, you'll be a long way from home and mother, boys." When he said that, Major Long showed that he had a good conception of the forestry task in France.

So a total of 26,000,000 feet of lumber to April 30 - mills buzzing day and night, Uncle Sam soon will be is a figure the troops are justly proud of as far as able to rout the Germans with the lumber he is putting out.



JUST AT TWILIGHT

This shows the skidways at one of the 20,000-foot American mills in France, 1st Battalion, 10th Engineers. Ready for the night run.

they have gone; they are now getting nicely into their stride. There is no telling what they will do when all of the mills get under way. The monthly outputs have been increasing constantly by leaps and bounds; in March the reports showed 6,965,000 feet; in April 14,578,000 feet. The forecast for May is 15,000,000 feet. It is just to be plainly seen now that with the full complement of equipment rapidly coming into play, with the saw-