

**A FORESTER
AT WAR—**
*Excerpts From The
Diaries of*
Colonel William B. Greeley
1917-1919¹

Edited by
GEORGE T. MORGAN, JR.



Colonel William B. Greeley receives the British Distinguished Service Order from General Sir D. Henderson. Colonel Greeley was also awarded the French Chevalier Legion of Honor and the American Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his outstanding wartime service.

In July, 1919, an American army officer aboard the homeward-bound troop ship, *S. S. Kaiserin Auguste Victoria*, noted in the final pages of his diary, "I regard the A. E. F. [American Expeditionary Force] as a baseball team which has weak spots, makes plenty of errors, loses games frequently, but ends the season with a high average."

The diarist was Lieutenant Colonel William B. Greeley. As Chief of the Forestry Section, Twentieth Engineers,² he had spent nearly two years in France and had played a prominent role in waging a war which a warrior of the old school lamented was "a hell of a complicated proposition."³

The United States had been actively engaged in World War I for only a short time when General John J. Pershing cabled an appeal for the formation of a forestry regiment which could provide the A. E. F. with urgently needed lumber for docks, barracks, warehouses, railroad ties, barbed wire entanglement stakes, fuel wood, and other forest products.⁴ In his memoirs, General Pershing comments: "As the details of our mission abroad developed, it soon became evident that in all that pertained to the maintenance and supply of our armies . . . men with expert knowledge . . . would be necessary. . . . From the start I decided to obtain the best talent available and was fortunate . . . to find able men who were anxious to do their part. The earliest application of the principle came in connection with timber and lumber procurement."⁵

The Forest Service was the logical agency to organize a regiment, or regiments, for this specialized task and General Pershing requested the appointment of Chief Forester Henry S. Graves to take charge of lumber operations.⁶ Graves and the Service responded with alacrity and full recognition of the job before them: "We have the task not only of efficient timber operations to help those on the firing line, but we must also practice forestry."⁷ In order to perform this dual function every effort was made to fill key positions with experienced foresters and lumbermen and both groups were liberally represented in the overseas contingents.

Greeley was at the time Assistant Chief Forester and upon Graves' request was appointed to organize the Tenth Engineers (Forestry). He was commissioned Major, Engineer Officer Reserve Corps, on June 21, 1917, and began organizing a forestry force for immediate embarkation to France.⁸

For the next few weeks his days were filled with the multitude of details arising from recruiting and equipping a forestry regiment. Then, on July 5, 1917, a cablegram arrived from General Pershing requesting that Greeley lead an advance party to France composed of an experienced lumberman, two logging engineers, six forest assistants, a technical forest examiner, a forest negotiator, and an organization expert.⁹

On August 7, 1917, Greeley and his group of experts were billeted aboard the transport, *Finland*, and on the same day heaved anchor for France:

August 20, 1917: An eventful day. . . . About 9:00 A.M. land appeared to southward—bare yellow cliffs. Very soon after our transport gave the signal for a submarine attack and began firing. The fleet scattered out like a covey of quail. Probably 160 shots were fired all told during the next 60 or 80 minutes and the destroyers dropped several bombs. One of the soldiers said he saw a torpedo pass our boat a hundred feet astern. . . . After a time the fleet assembled again, turned sharply to the north and made away at all speed. We seem to have struck the French coast some distance northwest of Saint Nazaire and to be skirting it to the east within a line of shoals. French patrol boats are about us and two French air machines are constantly about. There are many little steam trawlers and innumerable little fishing boats—many of them with red or blue or green sails. . . . About 4:00 P.M. we turned up the broad channel of the Loire River. Every available point crowded with people cheering and waving to the troops. The piers along St. Nazaire locks were thronged with cheering Frenchmen and Frenchwomen. . . . Many in the crowds threw oranges and pears to the soldiers.

August 21: . . . We saw quite a bit of Saint Nazaire. . . . The town itself contains mostly small, dingy stone houses—with very narrow streets. The river front—along the Loire, however, is very well improved and attractive. The town habitants seemed on the whole rather a dingy, runty lot—sailors, long-shoremen, fishermen, and bourgeois. Very few young, vigorous men. Number of women wearing black is pathetic.

August 22: Paris at 8:06 A.M. . . . Located Major Graves' office . . . and went over there in military auto. Found HSG [Henry S. Graves] and Barry [Barrington] Moore.¹⁰ They went right down to [the] station with me. We commandeered two buses and took ourselves and our baggage to Hotel McMahon near the Arc de Triomphe. After locating in palatial rooms . . . we went down to Major Graves' office and he gave the men a general talk regarding the situation here and the work cut out for us. . . .

August 23: Spent practically whole day with HSG. We went over many matters—especially . . . general situation in negotiations with French govt. This astonished me. There seem to be many political undercurrents with more or less begrudging cooperation with the American forces and a somewhat mercenary spirit in bargaining over details. There is evidently more of this in Parliament than in the executive departments. There is a serious shortage of lumber, railroad ties and fuel for both civil and military use. . . .

August 24: Made up outline of points to be covered in reports on field examination of operating areas. . . . Maj. Graves and I discussed it with the whole crowd of logging engineers and forest examiners, and made assignments of the men to examine four state forests, two working together in each instance. . . .

August 25: In A.M. attended conference with Gen. Lord Lovat—head of English lumbering operations and Gen. Taylor of American Engineers.¹¹ Gen. Lovat very approachable and cordial and seems very keen. . . . He agreed to Americans retaining entire first forest rgt. [regiment] for their own needs—Gen. Taylor agreeing that one battalion from second rgt. and probably one from the third rgt. would be turned over to the British to aid their work in Landes. Lord Lovat also advised centralizing all purchases of wood by Americans—under Army Commander in War Zone and under the joint British-Franco Committee elsewhere. . . .

August 27: Our organization is becoming quite complicated and the red tape danger is looming. I had no idea that so many colonels and majors and captains could be employed on Staff and Supply work for a comparatively small army. We are spread out all over Paris and spend lots of time chasing around to one another's offices in Army autos and motorcycles. . . .

August 30: A third conference . . . on lumber requirements and specifications for railroad and dock construction. Decided on general program, which, if forests can be obtained, will concentrate our rgt. on production of barrack lumber in softwood forests of eastern France (together with some large timbers required for railroads and docks), and another rgt. on production of ry. [railway] ties in the Landes. . . .

August 31: At 9:30 attended our first meeting *Comité Franco Britannique de Bois*—Sébastien and Commandant Chaplain representing French and Col. Sutherland the English.¹² . . . Col. Sutherland . . . reported on several offers of private timber tracts, all purchases of which are handled by this committee. HSG then stated our case. Chaplain agreed to take up immediately with the *Service des Eaux et Forêts* our obtaining a state forest in the Vosges. . . .

September 1: Much parleying about getting forests in Vosges, Savoie, vicinity of Châtillon. Nothing definite yet. I feel like a squirrel in a cage—tired out every night, but with little progress to show for it. The changes and shifts and red tape in our army organization are discouraging. The French seem to be meeting us in a bargaining, shrewd spirit rather than one of earnest cooperation in an emergency. They give no inkling of regarding their national situation as serious. This is far from the state of things which I pictured when in America. I have not gotten my bearings yet.

September 2: . . . Advised HSG to ascertain operating possibilities of state forest of Levier immediately. We must select first mill sites immediately. He agreed that I should go down with Gallaher to do it. . . .

September 3: Meeting of joint committee on timber purchases in A.M. It is now *Comité Interallié de Bois*

de Guerre. We completed arrangements for American representatives to join in examination of desirable forest areas near Vosges. Also secured assent to our making small purchases of timber products in open market without consulting committee. . . .

September 5: Took [train] . . . for Besancon with Gallaher at 7:45. Arrived at 5:00 P.M. . . . Went first to office of *Conservateur de Service des Eaux et Forêts*. Then hunted up . . . an inspector in the Waters and Forests Service, now commandant in the French *Génie*. He was very cordial—gave us much information about Levier and arranged for Lieutenant Comfort, *Centre de Bois* for French *Génie* at Besancon, to go with us to see the forest. . . .

September 6: Saw much of Levier State Forest; examined water sources and mill sites near towns of Levier and Arc; talked over ry. situation with local *chef de gare*. . . . Levier is a wonderful forest of pure fir. . . . Its operation appears practicable as to snow, logging conditions, and water supply. Transportation by rail over one-horse narrow gauge line uncertain. . . .

September 7: Drove to Mouthe . . . [and] met Berry and Kittridge. . . . Looked over state forests of Risol and Mouthe (Noirémont). . . . Risol is nearly pure spruce—high and rugged—much like White Mts. of New Hampshire. . . . Noirémont, also largely spruce, is lower and less rugged. Decided to abandon Risol project altogether for present. . . . We can operate Noirémont next summer—but should insist to French on taking it alone.

September 8: . . . Drove to Andelot—junction point of Levier narrow gauge. Looked over loading and siding facilities. Considerable additional siding necessary. . . . Wrote up report to Maj. Graves on Risol, Noirémont, and Levier propositions. Main point is not to tackle more than one heavy snow operation this winter—Levier is the best of the three. Returned to Paris by train. . . . A rough night. . . .

September 9: Talked over whole Risol and Levier situation with Maj. Graves. He has made no progress with Paris authorities in getting a forest in Vosges. . . . Dunston and Gibbons back from Meyriat Forest near Nantua. Another high, snowy proposition (pure fir) depending upon a narrow gauge ry. . . . It looks as though the French Forest Service were trying to unload their most difficult and inaccessible logging jobs on us. . . .

September 10: More squirrel cage activities. . . . There seems to be a bad cordwood situation at many American camps and posts, with no adequate provision and Quartermasters in ignorance of what to do. Suggested to HSG that some man be assigned to specific job of rounding up and directing whole cordwood supply. . . .

September 11: Drafted tentative statement of wood requirements of American forces for *Comité Inter-*

lié, with general plan of operations under it. . . . HSG and I took [it] up with Col. Sutherland of English Forestry Office at 11:30. He offered no objection to the general program. Practically agreed that English and Canadians should keep out of American zone of operations from the sea to Vosges, also that we should get the large hardwood forest of Der for part of our requirements. . . .

September 12: Attended conference with Col. Sutherland and Sébastien on our operations in Landes. . . . Two large forests tentatively offered us at St. Eulalie and Dax. Got tip that French govt. plans to requisition a large quantity of privately owned ry. ties in Landes and that we might purchase or borrow some of them. Went at once to American Ry. Office . . . and put matter before them. They told us to go hard after all the ties we could get. . . .

September 14: Went over general mill . . . plans with Maj. Graves. It looks like small mills at Camors, Châtillon, and Gien, with large mills at Levier and Gérardmer. . . .

September 15: Drafted report for Maj. Graves on whole fuel situation with A. E. F. including latest estimates of cordwood requirements. Also long letter to Peck outlining plan for procuring fuelwood and putting him in charge of this work in the Army Zone. . . .¹³ Genl. Taylor came in from Chaumont. He is very insistent that we obtain some French sawmills where labor of our troops can be used to increase present output. . . .

September 17: Drove out into state forest of Châtillon—looked over copse of Scotch pine and hardwood coppice designated for our cutting by French Forest Service, also haulage conditions from the various camps to Vanvey. Saw one camp of German prisoners cutting forest products for French Army, also very interesting French charcoal burning. . . . Interviewed *chef de gare* and mayor of the commune. Also located camp site on communal land on edge of town. In P.M. drove to Dijon via Châtillon. Found Moore and Bruce there with instructions to me to report to Paris immediately. Maj. Graves is using every man available to search out French sawmills which we might take hold of. . . .

September 18: Returned to Paris by train in early morning. Found HSG under high tension. Pershing, McKinstry, and Taylor are all pounding to have us take over French sawmills and increase their output. . . .¹⁴ Urged HSG to get out on field work for a few days and get freshened up. . . .

September 20: Maj. Graves went to Besancon—leaving me in charge. He needs the change badly. More squirrel cage activities. Succeeded, however, in course of day and evening, in completing draft of detailed instructions and specifications governing utili-

zation of timber and products to be manufactured by our troops. . . . Had a long talk with Woolsey about our purchases of lumber in open market. We are chasing many will o' the wisps and in other cases are blocked by French authorities who obviously want to do all the market trading themselves.

September 28: We were greatly stirred up over apparent double-dealing of French Ministry of Munitions concerning our earlier requisitions for lumber for urgent needs—before arrival of forestry troops. These were—1,000,000 feet for docks and warehouses at Nantes, Bassens, and St. Nazaire, 1,000,000 feet for base camp at Is-sur-Tille, and smaller quantities for Gondrecourt. First two were not only promised but assurances given that shipments had started. Today were informed that requisitions had never been approved and letter was produced from Gen'l. Pétain objecting to supplies going to Americans on account of great needs of French Army and insisting that all requisitions be approved by himself. Everyone in office from Gen'l. Patrick down hopping mad and pounding their desks.¹⁵

September 29: Hell was popping in office this morning over misinformation on lumber shipments given us by French and the attitude of Gen'l. Pétain toward refusal of all American requisitions. Translations and

memoranda flying thick and fast—and HSG's black eyes snapping more sparks every minute. Late in morning HSG tackled the French officers whom we hold responsible—Commandant Herbillon and Lieut. Sébastien. Herbillon fled at first encounter and refused all day to see any American officers. Sébastien palavered and explained and promised to do his best. HSG told him it would not only be put up to Gen'l. Pershing but would become an international "incident." The fear of God must have sunk in deep for in late P.M. Sébastien telephoned that he had secured telephonic release of the requisitions for Gondrecourt, the three ports which Americans are improving, and Is-sur-Tille, and that instructions had been wired to rush all these shipments.

September 30: . . . French have turned down our request for 2,500,000 ties—except as to possible small doles out of their military supplies from month to month. Discussed with Maj. Graves possible means of forcing things to a show-down with them—either to permit us to purchase products in open market or to requisition the stuff themselves and turn it over to us.

October 2: . . . French have failed us again in furnishing lumber for port improvements at Bassens, Nantes, and St. Nazaire. General Patrick ordered me to go after it hard.

The Tenth Engineers arrived at Nevers, France on October 9, 1917.¹⁶ The well-laid, if harried preparations by the advance party facilitated the dispersal of the units to their field assignments and by late November production operations were underway. The forestry troops sawed their first log in a French mill on November 25, and two days later the first American mill began operations near Gien on the Loire River.¹⁷

From the outset the resourcefulness and know-how of the American lumberjacks and foresters was sorely tested. Equipment shortages necessitated constant improvisation and the men rose to the challenge. Skidding operations were initiated with horse harnesses fashioned out of ropes and old sacks and crude bridles made of nails and wire. Where horses were not available manpower was substituted. Mills were dismantled, moved several miles, re-set, and operating again within a forty-eight hour period.¹⁸ Stream driving was unheard of in France. The Americans at an installation in the Landes considered it the only means of solving their transportation problem so they experimented, it seemed safe, and then a pile of logs sank to the bottom of the river. The perplexed, but determined Yanks experimented further. The tops were left on the trees to draw out the sap and the logs floated. Thus, the American "river pig," in modified form, was introduced to France.¹⁹

General Pershing's original request for forestry troops called for sufficient numbers to provide 25,000,000 board feet of lumber per month. One year later the estimated needs of the expanding American Expeditionary Force had soared to over 73,000,000 board feet per month.²⁰ The lumberjack soldiers, eventually 18,543 strong, bent to their task with a will. Increasing demands stimulated herculean efforts and production records were compiled far in excess of the wildest expectations. Mills rated at 10,000 board feet in a ten hour period produced upwards of 50,000 feet and a "twenty-thousand" mill won honors with a cut of over 175,000 board feet in less than twenty-four hours as the companies vied for records.²¹ Mills highballed night and day, running double shifts of ten hours in most cases and in a few instances operating three eight hour hitches. When preparations for the St. Mihiel and Argonne drives demanded large quantities of ties, planks, and entanglement stakes the men responded by hewing ties after regular working hours and laboring long hours into the night repairing railroad track and mill break-downs.²²

Through the weary months of toil in driving rain or scorching sun the men hit the ball hard and kept their spirits high with contests, jokes, and of course, an occasional sojourn to the nearest French village for short hours of relaxation.

Greeley was most impressed with the "doughboy's" ability to retain his sense of humor, albeit exaggerated at times, under adverse conditions and recorded a number of the widely circulated stories in his diary. One of his favorites took place in the Canadian operations in the Vosges where the timber was being logged under the very critical eye of a French inspector. One day the Canadians accidentally tipped over a tree the inspector had reserved. They promptly set it straight again and tamped the roots down with snow. Their camouflage efforts were barely finished when the inspector passed by and chose that particular tree to lean against while lighting his pipe. Over went the

tree and the inspector into a snow drift. As he emerged from the drift, brushing snow particles from his hair, eyes, and clothing, he tersely commented to a nearby American officer, "*Ces Canadiens sont mauvais enfants!*"²³ Another tale of wide renown had a "doughboy" earnestly picking the cooties from his shirt. An officer strolled by and solicitously inquired, "Are you picking them out, Son?" "No, Sir," was the quick rejoinder, "I'm taking them just as they come."²⁴

This was the lighter side of war and though Greeley by his own admission believed "if a man does not become a maniac on this work, it is by virtue of preserving his sense of humor," weightier matters pressed heavy on his shoulders:²⁵

October 15: . . . The French officials seem to be muchly at 6's and 7's with one another. . . . We are heartily sick of the delays and obstructions and disagreements we are encountering in trying to get action by them.

October 25: . . . I am very tired of the semi-political, semi-diplomatic *pour parleys* and the unending committee meetings. There is a ton of talk at the *Comité Interallié de Bois de Guerre* for an ounce of action. I have a large job on the straight operating phases of our forestry work and am glad to stick to it. It is surprising to see how, even under the pressure of their great war, the French retain their bargaining instincts and their thrifty way of always providing for the future. . . . The French . . . regard us as wasteful in our use of wood and doubtless think that if they hold us down hard we can get on with much less than we are asking for. Also, they are taking no chances on exhausting their forests and being put to it for an adequate supply of wood after the war.

October 26: . . . Col. Graves told me that the trend of the French letters and *pour parleys* is toward restricting American requisitions or purchases of wood in France . . . to 2,000,000 ft. per month. Even what we produce by running French mills double shift will be charged off against this monthly total. In the last analysis this goes back to Gen. Pétain's insistence on the dire needs of the French army and his demand that the French needs be supplied first. I advised him to put the situation squarely up to Gen. Pershing to settle with Pétain. Nothing will be accomplished by further dickering in Paris. HSG agreed. . . .

October 27: The fur flew today. Col. Jackson had written the French declining to buy our private forests through them and insisting on making the final contract direct with the owner.²⁶ Lieuts. Soule and Detré came to explain and reiterate the French demands to him today.²⁷ Jackson would not budge. . . . Now I suppose it will go to the Generals. . . . We count that day lost which witnesses neither a blowup nor a diplomatic intrigue of some sort.

November 1: . . . More trouble seems to be brewing over the question of the method of buying our forests. Capt. Moore came down today with a wry face, to report that the French would probably block our efforts to make cooperative arrangements with French sawmills—on account of this purchase mix up. . . .

November 5: Capt. Moore and I accompanied Gen. Patrick to conference with Gen. Chevalier. He is a French Major General, formerly Chief of the French Engineers, now head of wood supply under the *Ministre de Armement*. He is rather an old, genial, political type of man. Gen. Chevalier agreed to make no reduction in our allotted 2,000,000 feet of lumber for November. He also agreed in the principle that we should make whatever arrangements we could to obtain lumber by increasing the output of French sawmills. He also agreed—in urgent cases—to give us written authority to begin cutting in private forests as soon as their allotment to the American forces has been approved by the . . . [*Comité Interallié de Bois de Guerre*], leaving prices to be fixed later by the French government. This is a most valuable concession.

November 15: . . . Had long discussion with Col. Graves, Woolsey, and Gibbons on forest of Mirebeau. Decided to purchase or requisition the whole forest, good and bad alike. We are getting less finicky as we realize more fully the difficulty of keeping a large number of forestry troops supplied with timber.

November 17: . . . Dunston back with glowing report on forest of Boisgenceau. By one of the inexplicable turns of the French system of doing things, this timber has been offered, examined, and requisitioned within a week.

December 12: . . . The difficulties and delays in obtaining forests are unabated. Col. Graves is to appear before the Requisition Board in an effort to obtain the forest of Marchenoir. It is badly mixed up with politics. Woolsey advises taking it up with the Premier. The "Old Tiger," Clemenceau, would probably make short work of the politicians on a straight question of vigor in prosecuting the war—like this.

January 2, 1918: . . . Conference this P.M. on tie supply for American railroads in France—prompted by efforts of Hdqtrs. to cut down on wood shipments from U. S. on account of shortage of tonnage. Estimated needs until July 1 are 2,160,000 ties. I estimated possible production of forestry troops at 570,000. . . . I urged strong representation to French to either permit us to purchase in open market at going commercial prices or else requisition much more drastically. This was agreed to and conference requested.

January 7: Drafted letter of instructions to all district and operating officers on scouting for new forests,

making it part of their work but subject to our cooperative agreements with French. Went over it with Woolsey in evening and incorporated instructions on leasing or requisitioning French sawmills. Hope to make this active, local, scouting force an important factor in obtaining the future forests we need.

January 8: . . . In P.M. attended conference at Gen. Chevalier's office on ry. ties. . . . French position was that ties are not to be found. They finally agreed to requisition all we could locate and to put a French officer to work on the job with our representative. I advised Col. Woodruff to assign Barry Moore to this work, which he agreed to do.²⁸ All tie offers were turned over to me . . . and I will start Moore on the job immediately. This will bring things to a show down.

January 12: . . . Woolsey and I arranged lunch for Col. Woodruff to meet Lieut. Sébastien and talk over cooperative wood and forest purchases with the French. Sébastien urged issuance of general order to centralize all purchases of forest products in A. E. F. and do away with present unregulated and more or less competitive buying by various local officers. He also urged handling all our wood requirements in unison with the French as a bloc, requisitioning what we need from them and getting our share of the stocks available. . . . I . . . told Col. W. [Woodruff] frankly . . . that I thought we would get more in the long run by centralized requisitions through the French authorities than by trying to play a lone hand.

January 22: . . . Talked over whole tie situation with Capt. Moore. He reports not over 50,000 available in France outside of contracts made by French govt. Also thinks there are negligible opportunities to obtain increased output under French contracts. Found upon running this down, however, that it is due to unwillingness of French to have us buying ties rather than inability of country to produce them. Started Moore to gathering together data for a proposal to French to have them allot us a fair number of ties per month—we to withdraw from all outside contracting in France. This now seems to me the only way out.

January 26: . . . Attended a tie conference with officers of the T. D. [Transportation Department] in P.M. It centered chiefly around getting the additional forestry troops over here as soon as possible to increase the output of ties. We also persuaded the T. D. officers to take up with French Ry. Dept. the possibility of pooling the common tie and rail resources and thus making more ties available immediately for the A. E. F. The French are reported to have 1,100,000 ties in excess of available steel rails. . . . Cable received that 5th and 6th Bns. of 20th Engineers are

ready to sail as soon as transports are available. This means more frenzied hustling for forests.

January 30: . . . Received an urgent summons from Capt. Moore to attend *C. I. B. G.* meeting tomorrow as French are to attack our policy of acquiring forests well ahead of immediate troop arrivals and also our purchases of cut forest products independently of French authorities.

January 31: . . . A stormy session at *C. I. B. G.* this morning. Lt. Sébastien charged into the A. E. F. on three counts: (1) Acquiring more timber than we needed, with the claim that two or three years would be required to cut out the St. Eulalie group. (2) Independent purchasing of barracks and other lumber products in Landes. (3) Negotiating a barrack purchase in Switzerland pending negotiation of a new agreement covering Swiss lumber exports. I replied on all three. Admitted justice of complaint as to Switzerland and agreed to stop these negotiations immediately. Outlined our operating plans, number of troops and sawmills, and emphasized need for planning these operations well ahead in order to build up organizations and equipment efficiently and get necessary rail connections. Stated that we would work out our forests in ten months to one year, but that it was wrong policy to buy to force operations at a faster rate and crowd several companies together on a small forest. Also outlined our situation as to railroad ties and the French pressure upon us to cut all the ties possible. Urged that Gen. Chevalier should view this whole question in a broad way and cooperate with us, also that French must take our operating plans and efforts to get equipment in good faith. . . . I pointed out that various arms of French govt. are also buying lumber, barracks, etc., independently; that our contracts have had the approval of . . . French *Genie*; and that centralized control of purchases advocated by Chevalier would be ineffective unless the French centralized all of their own purchases and were prepared to requisition the entire output of French mills.

February 4: At the *C. I. B. G.* meeting this morning, Gen Chevalier had instructions announced that further examinations of forests for the A. E. F. would not be made because we had already acquired more than we needed. I got my long letters on the subject ready for Col. Woodruff and made . . . a specific demand that these instructions be changed. Got a wire through to . . . representative in Switzerland . . . to call off all negotiations for Swiss lumber pending conclusion of the new treaty and the arrangement for a centralized purchasing agency with the French. Gen. Patrick telephoned positive orders that everything else must be suspended to cut 200,000 wire entanglement stakes to be rushed to engineers of 1st Division.

On fog-shrouded March 21, 1918, General Erick von Ludendorff threw the German military machine into a final bid for victory. For the next four months the "enemy imposed his will by battle," driving within forty miles of Paris, capturing a quarter million prisoners, and inflicting nearly a million casualties."²⁹

Though the American forces in France were not organized as a separate army until the end of July, 1918, the forestry regiment was hard pressed to provide forest products as the Allies made hurried preparations to thwart the German drive all knew was coming.³⁰ By the end of February, 1918, twenty-one mills were operating (eleven more than in January) and produced during the month: lumber, 2,892 M. B. M.; piling, 720 pieces; standard gauge ties, 22,345 pieces; small ties, 14,856 pieces; round poles, 460,662 pieces; cordwood, 12,433 steres; faggots, 200 bundles; road planks, 1,700 pieces; bridge ties, 200 pieces. One month later thirty-four mills produced: lumber, 6,965 M. B. M.; piling, 857 pieces; standard gauge ties, 80,0099 pieces; small ties, 60,100 pieces; round poles, 270,496 pieces; cordwood, 15,932 steres. During June and July as the German drive reached its height and then turned into retreat, fifty-nine mills produced: lumber, 50,829 M. B. M.; piling, 10,872 pieces; standard gauge ties, 563,314 pieces; small ties, 322,978 pieces; round poles, 418,607; cordwood, 157,987 steres.³¹

The pendulum of battle swung to the Allies with the launching of a counteroffensive against the German lines between Soissons and Château Thierry on July 18, 1918. During August, 1918, American troops, some 550,000 strong were massed on the Meuse for the Saint Mihiel and Argonne offensives in September.³² The forestry regiment's operations were increased to sixty-six mills in August and eighty in September and production approached maximum capacity during those two months: lumber, 60,908 M. B. M.; piling, 5,587 pieces; standard gauge ties, 902,138 pieces; small ties, 270,039 pieces; round poles, 1,020,274 pieces; cordwood, 310,517 steres.³³

Throughout the month of offensives and counteroffensives, Greeley's efforts to secure the necessary forests to meet timber requirements met with varying success as French officials maintained their vacillating and obstructive tactics:

February 5: More complaints from Gen. Chevalier over independent wood purchases by our officers. Told Col. Woodruff that we are riding to a fall, and that either we must work with Gen. Chevalier's organization or else get the higher French authorities to instruct him to leave us alone. Orders are flying thick for the supply of the 1st Division. We are sacrificing everything to get out the 200,000 wire entanglement stakes. Learned that French have a call for a million and English for two million. This looks like a real German drive.

February 8: . . . We are having a merry time over our order for 200,000 barbed wire posts. I thought a month was the best we could do. But DuBois wires that he can cut 135,000 in 10 days, Hartwick, 35,000, R. A. Johnson about 20,000 and so on.³⁴ Probably 40,000 per week is as many as the 1st Division could handle anyway. It has ended by our holding back our plunging D. C.'s to a total of about 80,000 per week and making them keep up high pressure on railroad ties and lumber.

February 15: . . . Had amusing interview with Com. Navaigne—Chief of French Mission at Paris. It seems that our correspondence with Gen. Chévalier over wood purchases in France has gotten to . . . [the] chief of Franco-American Relations directly under Clemenceau. . . . [He] is dissatisfied with Chevalier's attitude and replies and evidently feels that a much more vigorous and comprehensive policy of centralization must be put into effect by the French themselves. So it is up to us to lie low and do nothing. Something is going to land upon Chevalier.

February 19: . . . Got off a strong letter to Gen. Chevalier—urging speedy action to complete acquisition of *Forêt du Chambord* for us, also another letter to him acknowledging his recent reversal of the decision to quit examinations of forests for the A. E. F.

and giving him the facts regarding all of our arrangements for obtaining the use of French sawmills. Also wrote the D. C.'s regarding the procedure in examining forests desired by the *C. I. B. G.* Under this, all offers and proposed areas must be submitted first to the *C. I. B. G.* and their examination authorized. This can then be made by American officers without presence of French officers. A French officer, however, must be present and participate in every project of intensive forest reconnaissance. . . .

February 22: Monthly meeting of full *C. I. B. G.* at 9:30. A very grand affair. . . . We expected war on our policy of aggressively acquiring forests ahead of immediate exploitation and put up a strong case in our formal statement. To my surprise, Gen. Chevalier expressed himself as in full accord therewith. . . . The affair ended in a love feast except for the periodic French complaint against the use of thick circular saws by the Americans and Canadians.

February 26: . . . We are in the thick of the pressure for wood from all services in the Army, and are nearly gray-haired over the effort to keep priorities straight.

March 17: . . . There appears to be little new in our affairs in Paris beyond Gen. Chevalier's opposition to further forest requisitions for the A. E. F. in the Landes. Woolsey—always suspicious—thinks the English are behind this because we are outstripping them in locating forests. . . .

March 27: Lumber for St. Sulpice! We bid fair to bury the place in lumber. Barry Moore has pulled off a keen stroke in Paris—persuading Gen. Chevalier to cede us 10,000 cu. m. additional lumber in the Landes, and Col. Winters of M. T. [Motor Transport] Service to agree to furnish 100 motor trucks to move it. . . .³⁵ We can about quit worrying over St. Sulpice.

March 28: . . . Piling again to the fore! We have

formal notice that two heavy colonels are coming from GHQ—to “receive and review” a complete report on supply of long piling in Europe. Gen. Patrick says to have something for them—so I light a cigar and dispose of the European piling supply in half an hour. The gist of it is that we can get all the sixty foot piles we need from southern and western France, and seventy and eighty foot piles of silver fir from eastern France—but that longer piles must come from the U. S.

April 3: . . . Laid down policy of distributing our operations in southern France so as not to hit the resin industry too hard at any one point and also of working in cooperation with the local *maires*. . . . Gen. Patrick told me to go right ahead with plans to get out 12,000 piles. . . . Another fine little job for the Forestry branch.

April 4: Instructed DuBois, S. O. Johnson, and Chapman to get to work on piling, dividing the order between these three districts.³⁶ First job is to give me specific lists of new tracts to be acquired or timber to be marked on present tracts, which I will put up to French for emergency requisition. Also wired delegate on *C. I. B. G.* and Maj. Peck to get behind special acquisitions for this project.

April 12: . . . At last we seem to be getting a real centralization of American wood demands. The French have also centralized the wood supply for their whole army in Gen. Chevalier's hands. The French Mission, under Com. Varaigne, a very strong man, is solidly behind this plan and we look for good results.

April 28: . . . The main pressure now is for cordwood and bridge timbers for the front line division, piling for the Nevers cut-off, and piling for the big dock projects. A new dock project is now looming up, at LeVerdon, at the mouth of the Gironde River. Col. Woodruff says that opposite our front line sectors the Germans have used 150,000,000 feet in building bridges, and that we must be prepared to duplicate this *when* we advance.

May 2: . . . Woolsey's report on forest acquisition is discouraging. He and Lord Lovat saw . . . [the Minister of Armament] this afternoon—with reference especially to more liberal cessions of state forests and clear cutting of state pine copses—but did not get far.

May 3: . . . Meeting of full *C.I.B.G.* this morning. . . . The English game seems to be to overpower such meetings by a mobilization of high ranking officers. Discussion mostly perfunctory—except for Gen. Chevalier's exposé of . . . [the Minister of Armament's] views on timber acquisitions in the Landes. The Minister proposes to obtain no more timber in the Landes for the A.E.F. because of the congestion of railroad traffic, because he does not approve (!) of the use of Allied ship tonnage for coastwise traffic in lumber from Bordeaux northward, and because of the in-

jury to the resin industry. Strong protests from the American delegates. After the meeting Col. Woodruff and I talked over the acquisition situation with Gen. Lord Lovat. I was for radical measures—to carry the matter right up to the highest authority in France and force these peanut-politicians . . . into a real “win-the-war” policy. Lord Lovat counselled moderation and said that the way to get results from the French was not to start a row—but keep up a steady, consistent pressure.

May 17: . . . Went over the whole acquisition situation with Maj. Woolsey. In central and eastern France, things are moving well. All the copses we asked for in the forest of Amboise have been requisitioned, also the important St. Julien Centre in Cote d'Or and several smaller areas. Col. Joubaire has also secured for us the forest of Val in northern Haute Marne, with probably ten or twelve million feet of tie timber.³⁷ In the Landes, however, things are going very badly. The local advisory commission has not yet been appointed and nothing is being done on our pending requests. Furthermore, . . . [the Minister of Armament] has decreed that no more acquisitions shall be permitted west of the Bordeaux-Bayonne railroad because of the large amounts already obtained in that region. Woolsey and I decided to advise Gen. Langfitt to take this whole question up personally with M. Clemenceau. . . .³⁸

May 23: Learned that Gen. Langfitt was unable to see M. Clemenceau about the Landes acquisitions—but saw . . . [the Minister of Armament] instead. They evidently had a stormy interview and got nowhere. Gen. Langfitt wanted a letter prepared . . . which I did in red-hot language—summarizing our timber needs at Bordeaux, our success in transporting the products of our operations, and the new forests which we must have immediately. . . .

May 27: Got wire from Capt. Berry that Landes Commission on Acquisitions meets in Bordeaux tomorrow. . . . This is first meeting of this com'n. and may have important bearing upon our future acquisitions in the Landes. So I called off my planned trip to Gien and Orleans on tie locations and got together everything bearing upon our needs and prospective acquisitions in the Landes to take to Bordeaux.

May 28: . . . English cases occupied the entire morning session. I entertained Col. de Lapasse—*Conservateur des Eaux et Forêts* and president of the commission, at lunch and had a mighty pleasant chat with him about forestry and the situation in the Landes.³⁹ Tried to impress upon him our desire to recognize the forest interests of the region and do good work technically on the areas we cut. De Lapasse seems very friendly and anxious to back us. Berry and I finally went before the august commission at 3 P.M. Aside from de Lapasse and Col. Buffault, the *Directeur of the Centre du Bois*,⁴⁰ there were representa-

tives from the Chambers of Commerce at Bordeaux and Mont-de-Marsan, two *propriétaires silviculteurs*, a *conseiller générale*, apparently a big gauge lawyer of Bordeaux, a representative of the *Syndicat des Resiniers*, and two others. To my surprise, there appeared to be but one obstructionist in the lot; the rest were keen to help the armies and very broad in their point of view. They put through the acquisition of the timber we asked for at Sabres without reduction and approved the acquisitions requested at Captieux, Bias, and Castets with but slight reductions in quantity or temporary reservations for further data. Thereupon I plunged in regardless and made a speech, (in French) about the effort we are making to get a large army over here rapidly, the need for docks and warehouses and car and boat material, the large demands near Bordeaux itself, and hence the necessity for expanding our operations in the Landes. I hate to think what I did to the French language in the process, but I think I got the main ideas "across." I wanted to give them a broad understanding of the whole situation with reference to our future demands upon the com'n.

May 30: . . . Met Com. Arteuse of . . . [the Minister of Armament's] office and went over my tabulation of the Landes construction projects, timber now acquired, additional timber needed, and schedule of tonnage shipments by operations during June, July, and August. Showed him also a production and shipment statement for May showing that we shipped during the month more lumber and ry. ties than we cut. M. Arteuse said *tres bien* and agreed to recommend . . . the immediate requisition of the four additional forests we are now asking for. . . . Arteuse seems to be of the right sort and evidently has great influence. . . . I am glad to have gotten acquainted with him.

June 13: . . . Everyone has approved our new cessions in the Landes . . . but they are now held up for estimate and appraisal by the French Expert Com'n. We got hold of Lieut. Sébastien and finally arranged for the estimating to begin immediately and for our troops to begin cutting behind the estimators. . . . Things are pretty tense in Paris. Fresh throngs are leaving the city. The feeling is general that the Boches will not capture Paris, but will get near enough to bombard it heavily with large calibre guns. . . .

June 15: Col. Woodruff told me that eight divisions are being massed in Paris sector for the defense of the capital. This is playing havoc with the system of supply depots previously laid out. Gievres is to become an advance depot—forwarding one supply team daily to each of these eight divisions. The Engrs. are bending every effort to equip Gievres for this function—and our section is rushing ties there from every possible point. Also a new depot must be developed in hot haste . . . for the supply of our northern divisions.

June 17: . . . Got word that Gen. Chevalier has or-

dered our coppice cuttings in St. Julien group of forests be stopped because Expert Commission has not yet estimated it. This timber has been requisitioned more than a month. A clear case of French delay and lack of business push. Wrote the General a strong letter urging that our cutting be allowed to continue and the scale of material cut taken as basis for payment to the owner. Meanwhile the cutting goes on.

June 20: . . . Prepared amendment to "Forestry Instructions" on upkeep and repairing of roads making it incumbent upon every operating commander to keep his roads in good condition and restore them to their original state after hauling is finished. They are enjoined also to confer with local highway officials and make specific agreements where necessary covering the road work which will be done by the forestry troops.

July 2: . . . Found a telegram from British Director of Forestry with reference to our request for the state forests near Rennes. Gen. Lovat is unwilling to approve this cession to us because of the British needs in that region. He claims that their former source of supply in Normandy and Picardy is exhausted. He also referred to the matter now being before Gen. Chevalier for decision, in a way I did not like. I immediately prepared a wire to Gen. Chevalier reasserting our demand for the Rennes state copses and our need for this timber at the American base ports in western France. . . .

July 5: Grand *C.I.B.G.* meeting at 9:30 this morning—about three-fourths perfunctory and grandiose. I made a strong plea for greater speed in the French estimates—offering to furnish as many young foresters from our regiments as could be used and urging the general adoption of the unit of product cut—as determined by scale after falling—instead of the present system of advance estimates. Col. Joubaire—Chief of the *Comité d' Expertises* accepted the first and agreed to the latter as far as concerns coppice cut for fuel. He was unwilling, however, to apply this principle in their purchases of saw and tie timber. . . . We had lunch with Col. Joubaire and . . . discussed the perplexing situation at Ambois where Com. Hirsch, himself a wealthy and influential member of the *C.I.B.G.*, is opposing the requisition of his timber and threatening to fight it out in the courts and to raise hell generally. Joubaire is afraid of his influence and wants to proceed *doucement*. This sort of French selfishness and political weakness raises the American ire. I wanted to fight the thing to a finish—but finally concluded that a policy of proceeding *doucement* would get us more in the end.

July 24: . . . Woolsey telegraphs that Sébastien has reported to the Minister of Armament that the A.E.F. has obtained enough timber to fill its program—with some evident mistakes in the facts; that because of this the permanent wood committee has turned down all our pending requisitions. . . . De-

cided to go to Paris and have it out at the meeting of the *C.I.B.G.* tomorrow morning. . . .

July 25: Met with Executive Committee of *C.I.B.G.* at 9:30. Put our situation before them as clearly as I could. We have acquired to July 24—2,367,795 cubic meters and have cut 541,241. The balance will cover our construction needs for only 5½ months—without a reserve for placing new troops, or giving each mill set an adequate supply, or permitting selection of the class of materials needed at the time for the projects of greatest urgency. I said that we must have 2,600,000 cubic meters of timber continuously ahead of us—to prepare for 3,000,000 American troops by May 1. . . . In P.M. I had a long talk with Sébastien. He professed a keen desire to get for us all the timber needed. He said that the chief difficulty in Gen. Chevalier's mind was shortage of transportation. . . .

August 7: Gen. Jadwin is back from high pow wow . . . on the whole wood supply situation.⁴¹ The French claim to be very short on railroad ties. They have a reserve of 1,200,000, are using 750,000 per month and are cutting 300,000 per month including 50,000 cut by 7th Bn., 20th Engrs. They fear a "tragic" situation if the Allies get the Hun on the run this summer and are unable to follow him up for lack of railroad ties, and begged to have the A.E.F. cut a large quantity of ties for the Allied pool. They offered to give us "any quantity" of lumber if we would increase our output of ties. Gen. Jadwin took them up on this and named me to confer with a French representative on utilization of their stocks of lumber. . . . I started Granger to compiling our unfilled orders for lumber, by dimensions and shipping points, as a basis for getting to brass tacks with the French on the deal proposed by them in Paris. . . .⁴²

August 22: Moore wires that . . . [the Minister of Armament] has accepted the proposal to increase our cut of railroad ties 260,000 pcs. per month in return for 40,000 cu. m. of lumber. He is wiring the location and specifications of the lumber turned over to us as fast as the French give him the data. . . .

August 26: Got telephone message from Woolsey that things are going badly in Paris. No action yet on La Chaise Dieu forests and the Permanent Wood Committee adjourned to end of September. It looks as though we might have to appeal to the Premier again. . . .

September 3: Joined . . . party of Gen. Lovat and started off at 8 o'clock. . . . We went first to . . . two Canadian mills . . . , one now dismantled for lack of timber and the second about to cut out. We went up to the logging operations on a cable car—and then went right down again, the French officials deciding without looking at the uncut copses of fine timber adjoining that they cannot be exploited because of poor regeneration.

September 9: . . . Frantic telephone messages from Bauge hdqtrs. today over failure to obtain . . . [two forests] needed soon for moving the Le Lude and Vibrage detachments. I followed with frantic telegrams to Woolsey. It is another instance of petty French politics clogging the wheels of war.

September 10: . . . More bad forest fires in the Landes. 100,000 tie trees burned near Pontenx, and the French are fairly throwing them at us. The Lord moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform.

September 12: . . . The bad situation as regards small areas in the Bauge district has righted itself suddenly, due to Woolsey's persistence and the diplomatic intervention of Col. Joubaire.

September 21: . . . There appears to be a systematic propaganda in the French newspapers—directed against the "devastation of French forests" by the British and American armies. It appears to be particularly an attack upon Gen. Chevalier for his "senseless requisitions." The Minister of Agriculture has appointed a *Député*, M. Compere Morel, as *Commissaire d'Agriculture de Forêts*—apparently to supervise and regulate the cessions of both state and private forests to the Allied armies. I am much alarmed by this move—but Woolsey's friends in the *Eaux et Forêts* assure him that M. Morel is all right and will help us. . . .

September 22: We had an indignation meeting at the *C.I.B.G.* this morning. Lt. Sébastien said that he was ashamed of his compatriots in the Department of Agriculture. Col. Sutherland and I agreed on demanding through Gen. Chevalier, a meeting . . . to settle if possible the policy of the French govt. upon ceding timber for army needs during the next critical month of the war. . . .

September 27: High meeting of *C.I.B.G.* this morning. . . . The meeting was quite perfunctory. Our statement of the needs of the A.E.F. up to Oct. 1, 1919 (calling for 1,700,000 cubic meters of additional timber) was presented with little comment and apparently accepted by the French representatives. The British and American delegates joined in an earnest demand for more positive action by the French in the matter of prices, urging them to fix maximum stumpage prices on both state and private timber—once and for all—and hold to them for the duration of the war. . . . It is a bad situation, but it is obvious that the French will do nothing about it. . . . I . . . talked to Col. Joubaire, who told me that a bad situation exists in Haute Marne—because of the poor character of some of our cuttings on the forest of Der, large timber having been felled into coppice. This has come to the notice of some of the high French generals and has created an extensive local opposition to our exploitations which may affect future acquisitions. Col. Joubaire urged me to inspect this situation personally as soon as possible, which I agreed to do.

October 6: . . . Peck, Badre and I motored to St. Dizier this afternoon and had dinner with Com. Demorlanie, the French forestry officer in charge of our Haute Marne operations.⁴³ We discussed the work on the forest of Der which Col. Joubaire had complained of. Demorlanie said there was nothing to the complaint, beyond minor points which had been corrected. A mistake was made in the first place in giving the A.E.F. a contract which permitted the removal of all trees down to seventy centimeters in circumference. This resulted in too heavy a cutting which was the cause of all the adverse comments regarding the American operation in Der—but Demorlanie admitted fully that the French were responsible for it. . . . Everyone agog over report of Germany's request for peace—and betting on suspension of hostilities by Christmas.

October 7: Took Com. Demorlanie to Eclaron and went over part of *Forêt du Der* with him. We did some poor work at first when large timber had to be felled into coppice on account of shortage of labor and the necessity for getting out timber of special dimensions for dock and other orders. These copses are now being rapidly cleaned up. In all recent cuttings, the coppice is cut first, then tie trees, then sawlog trees, and lastly limb and top wood. This makes four complete operations. The negro labor troops are doing good work and Demorlanie is well pleased with our later cuttings.

October 8: . . . Gen. Jadwin came up from Tours this morning and at 4 P.M. we met an imposing array of Frenchmen. . . . Gen. Jadwin presented a memorandum showing our additional needs of timber . . . and emphasized necessity for prompt cessions in order to provide for our incoming forestry troops. I pressed for an immediate cession in state forest of Orleans. The French said that a forest census had been ordered as a basis for supplying the demands of the Allies—and assured us “satisfaction” albeit for periods of a few months at a time only. Gen. Jadwin pressed his point, and . . . [was] finally assured . . . without reserve that we would get all of the forests needed. The French then opened up on us on the subject of railroad ties. They claimed that we had not lived up to the agreement of last August under which they had ceded to us 40,000 cu. meters of lumber in return for our increasing our cut of ties 520,000 during two months. While our cut of ties had been increased, the A.E.F. had used part of the increase itself without referring the matter to the Military Board of Allied Supplies. They claimed that their tie reserve had been reduced to 900,000, and also brought up the French advances of 750,000 ties to the A.E.F. which have never been repaid. Gen. Jadwin claimed that the A.E.F. must take care of its own urgent necessities first and that the French were still much better off than we are since they have a reserve of 900,000 against our 262,000. He would not give in a point,

and the meeting broke up rather inharmoniously. After the meeting, I advised Gen. Jadwin to offer to give the French 100,000 ties outright during October and to agree to take up the question of a further repayment on Nov. 1. He finally decided to do this.

October 22: . . . I am still writing letters to M. [Andre] Tardieu about railroad ties and explaining that we cannot give the French . . . 350,000 ties per month but will set aside for them the maximum number of ties possible on the first of each month. And I am still writing letters to Gen. Chevalier explaining that we cannot reserve—wholesale—every high grade oak and ash log in our forests for French artillery and aviation stock, but that we will be glad to take up specific propositions with them. There are times when these Frenchmen drive one frantic with their childishness. . . .

October 26: Plunged into the thick of the *C.I.B.G.* jungle today. . . . Had another long conference with Gen. Chevalier. He has just come back from inspecting the operation on forest of Der. He complained that the lugs on the wheels of our big tractors were tearing up the . . . roads badly—also that the road used by the Canadian decauville line had become impassable on account of our use. I agreed to correct both of these conditions immediately. The General then asked me to let the French reserve from five to seven cu. m. of small trees on the uncut portions of Der. His administration is evidently seriously embarrassed by the criticisms of our heavy cutting. I promised to take this up with Major Spencer and to do what we could. . . .⁴⁴ I also made a plain statement of the position of the A.E.F. as to future forest acquisitions (which are now being held up by *C.I.B.G.*) *to wit:* that we have ordered our additional troops relying upon the promise . . . to provide the timber asked for, and that we would continue to file our requests for individual forests with the *C.I.B.G.* whether the same took any action on them or not. I said that we looked to the *C.I.B.G.* to furnish this timber, under some procedure or other, that they were responsible for meeting the situation. I think the General was scared a bit. He said that until M. Morel took over the allotment of forests on Jan. 1—he was authorized to give us only the equivalent from month to month of what we cut, but that he would construe this authority as liberally as possible. . . .

October 29: Further epistolary fencing with M. Tardieu's office on the subject of railroad ties. We get two letters per week on the subject and every reply says exactly the same thing—that we will set aside for them on the 1st of each month all the ties we can spare.

November 7: . . . All the villagers agog with the news that Germany is sending representatives to treat for an armistice—and everyone hailing it as the end of the war. Much cheering and waving and throwing of kisses along the road. . . .

November 9: The *C.I.B.G.* appears to have gone crazy over the prospect of an armistice with Germany. . . . Wrote Woolsey a long letter to effect . . . our acquisition and cutting program cannot be changed until we know just what will be required of A.E.F. during next six months; meantime he must sit tight. Also asked him to get an immediate statement from the *C.I.B.G.* of what timber, if any, they want the A.E.F. to cut for the French during our period of waiting in France. . . .

The cessation of hostilities meant an immediate reduction of the heavy demand for forest products. It did not mean speedy return of the forestry regiment to the United States, nor an abatement of negotiations with the French. Mill equipment had to be disposed of, roads repaired, cutting operations cleaned-up to the satisfaction of local inspectors, and financial arrangements completed as to the disposal of surplus forest products and the re-sale of state forest lands to the French government.

These matters occupied Greeley's attention for six months after the armistice and were eventually concluded to the satisfaction of both governments.

Greeley preceded the last components of the Twentieth Engineers home by less than a month, arriving in Hoboken on July 18, 1919. Unlike many of his compatriots he had survived two years of battle with neither physical nor mental scars. The constant difficulties over acquiring French forests were exasperating and at times his patience was strained to the breaking point, but he did not leave France a confirmed Francophobe as did many departing veterans. On the contrary, he analyzed the wartime relations between the two countries and in the process reveals a mature understanding of the underlying factors in Franco-American disputes:

July, 1919: It is unfortunate that four-fifths of the A.E.F. officers are returning with strong prejudices against the French. . . . The reasons for this go back to our attitude toward France up to our entrance in the war. We put the French people on a pedestal. Afar, not knowing the French people, ignorant of their human faults, we saw only their heroism and we glorified them. We came to France expecting to find the same universal white heat for winning the war that existed in America. Also we were pretty much on a pedestal ourselves. . . . No people on earth will stay on a pedestal for any length of time. Instead of glorifying the French people from afar, we had to live with them intimately for two years, to eat and drink, buy and sell, give and take with them in all the manifold social, industrial, and military phases of the huge war. Bringing our goddess down to earth was a hard jolt. We found her very human, with the average proportion of human faults in her make-up. Our own faults as a people, too, did not fail to appear. . . .

For the very reason that our former conception of the French was pitched far too high—so now the psychological process of reaction has thrown us far to the other extreme. . . . For many generations the bulk of the French people have only made ends meet by a degree of thrift and economy unknown in America. They win their living by making the most of small things. Bargaining is instinctive with them. The great bulk of French daily trade—even in most stores—is conducted not on fixed prices, but by bargaining. The shop keeper puts a price on an article which he hasn't the slightest idea of your paying. He expects you to name a lower price—and to match his wits against yours in knowing when to say *vendu*. He accepts one-half or two-thirds of his first price without

November 11: Spent much of the day working out a schedule of changes and retrenchments in our operations—in order in which they should probably be made when hostilities cease. Following tip from Col. Woodruff I plan to retrench first in southern France. . . . All Tours, civil and military, turned out tonight to celebrate the signing of the armistice. Bands played, crowds sang and danced. There were torch-light parades and fireworks—all very spontaneous and very much *a la Francais*.

the slightest embarrassment. It is perfectly good business ethics to sell at the first price, although exorbitant, if the customer is foolish enough to pay it. . . . The careless, freely-spending Yank—unfamiliar with the currency or customs of the country or the bargaining ways of its people, and looking at every Frenchman through glasses colored with idealism—walked right into this state of affairs like a fat fly into a spider's web. The two—Frenchman and Yank—failed absolutely to understand each other. The American appeared foolishly careless with his money, paying any price put upon goods without question. Small wonder that the French got the impression . . . that all Americans were rich and cared little what they paid for things. . . .

The same . . . thing occurred in the dealings between A.E.F. officers and officers of the French Army and government, each group influenced by its own national traits—and faults. In the rush of the A.E.F. to get all sorts of enterprises started—necessarily drawing heavily upon French supplies of material—little question was raised about price. . . . The terms were left to the French authorities to fix. . . . Small wonder then that the French government got the idea that we did not care about cost. . . . The Forestry Section was offered some timber in the state forest of Châtillon and sent two men to examine it. The local *conservateur* expected that we would make our own estimate of the wood and then bargain with him *a la marchand du bois*. So he raised his own estimate fourteen per cent deliberately. We were not estimating the timber, but looking into logging conditions only—and we accepted the *conservateur's* figures without question—regarding them as the official and trustworthy estimates of the French Forest Service. Later

our scale showed up the discrepancy and we demanded an adjustment—which the *conservateur* readily granted. . . . He simply played the game at the outset as he was accustomed to play it with Frenchmen. . . .

The *Directeur des Eaux et Forêts* . . . said in open meeting to me and the English representatives that it was the chief duty of the *Eaux et Forêts* to conserve the forests of France and that practically no more could be given us in the Jura District—and this in mid-summer of 1918 while the Germans were still threatening Paris. This national individualism—which resisted wartime coordination . . . was incomprehensible to Americans. It was responsible for much of the difficulty which we encountered. . . . On the other hand, this same individualism has produced the great French leaders and given them their peculiar power. . . . Nearly every American service could point to some individual French officer or two whose personal ability and energy and courage found a way through (usually around) most of their difficulties. It was so with the Forestry Section. Time and again—when we seemed to be beaten in getting an important forest or some other important concession—Col. Joubaire or Col. Mathey would put it through for us—by sheer personal force and magnetism and often by indirect methods—not at all according to the prescribed rules.⁴⁵

As for the rest—the overcharging, the frequent profiteering, the frequent selfishness, we must take the French as they are—plain human folks with weaknesses as well as strong points and not forget these things: (1) The totally different temperament of the French—bred by generations of forced economy. (2) That similar faults are not lacking among many of our own people. Witness the cost of officer's uniforms in the U.S. Witness the experience of the French Expeditionary Force in 1779. (3) That on the other hand there have been countless acts of kindness, generosity, and hospitality toward the Americans by the French. These are too easily forgotten. (4) That France has suffered from the war to a degree which we in America cannot at all appreciate. . . . With . . . five years behind them and the memory of their dead constantly before them, it is not surprising that the French now appear to give America insufficient credit for the part she took in the war. . . . It is puerile to fume about it. The French know in their hearts just what the coming of the American soldiers meant to them in the summer of 1918, as well as the A.E.F. campaigns. They will do us full justice in time. . . .

Footnotes

¹ The Greeley collection in the University of Oregon Library includes four diaries dated May 18, 1917-July 19, 1919. The following excerpts omit a large part of the detailed information contained in the daily entries. Ellipses have been used to indicate such omissions.

² The Tenth Engineers were combined with the Twentieth Engineers on October 18, 1918. See "Organization of 20th Engineers (Forestry)," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1110.

³ Unpublished Diary of William Buckhout Greeley (University of Oregon, Eugene), July 2, 1918.

⁴ Henry S. Graves, "The Forest Engineers," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1109.

⁵ John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War* (New York, 1931), I, 105.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Henry S. Graves to District Foresters, May 23, 1917, Records of the Forest Service; Correspondence of the Office of the Chief (National Archives, Washington). The British and French Missions to the United States had requested the organization of a regiment prior to Pershing's appeal.

⁸ F. A. Silcox to Graves, June 11, 1917, *ibid.*

⁹ Greeley Diary, September 21, 1908. Members of the advance party were: Stanley L. Wolfe, Clarence E. Dunston, Theodore S. Woolsey, Donald Bruce, Swift Berry, R. Clifford Hall, Ralph C. Staebner, Fred B. Agee, William H. Gibbons, Joseph Kittredge, and W. H. Gallaher.

¹⁰ Graves and Moore arrived in France in June, 1917.

¹¹ General Harry Taylor, Chief of Engineers, A.E.F.

¹² Lieutenant Maurice Sébastien and Colonel John Sutherland.

¹³ Lieutenant Colonel Allen S. Peck.

¹⁴ Brigadier General Charles H. McKinstry.

¹⁵ Major General Mason M. Patrick.

¹⁶ "Organization of 20th Engineers (Forestry)," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Percival S. Ridsdale, "How the American Army Got Its Wood," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1141.

¹⁹ Oral History Interview with Inman F. Eldredge by Elwood R. Maunder, February 3, 1959.

²⁰ W. B. Greeley, "The American Lumberjack in France," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1093.

²¹ Ridsdale, "How the American Army Got Its Wood," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1141.

²² Alfred H. Davies and Perez Simmons, eds., *History of the Twentieth Engineers* (Portland, 1920).

²³ Greeley Diary, December 21, 1917.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, July, 1919.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, December 21, 1917.

²⁶ Colonel Thomas H. Jackson.

²⁷ Lieutenant Léon Detré.

²⁸ Colonel J. A. Woodruff, Commanding Officer, 20th Engineers.

²⁹ C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War, 1914-1918* (Oxford, 1934), 503-06.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 556.

³¹ "Organization of 20th Engineers (Forestry)," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1110.

³² Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, 556.

³³ "Organization of 20th Engineers (Forestry)," *American Forests*, XXV (June, 1919), 1110.

³⁴ Major Coert DuBois, Lieutenant Colonel R. A. Johnson, and Major E. E. Hartwick.

³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel William H. Winters.

³⁶ Major S. O. Johnson and Lieutenant Colonel C. S. Chapman.

³⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Armand Joubaire.

³⁸ Major General William C. Langfitt.

³⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Louis de Lapasse.

⁴⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Pierre Buffault.

⁴¹ Brigadier General Edgar Jadwin, Director of Construction and Forestry.

⁴² Major Christopher M. Granger.

⁴³ Commandant Louis Badré.

⁴⁴ Major F. F. Spencer.

⁴⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse Mathey.