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**Weaver, E. Elizabeth (Emma Elizabeth), 1878-1966.:**

**Journal of E. Elizabeth Weaver, Army Nurse Corps, World War I, 1917-1919.**

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At Chauny the entire village is shelled, just the fragments of a few walls are left standing. Many abandoned tanks are seen. Tergnier is shelled to the ground, the large iron foundry wrecked & burned. The most outrageous thing of all, is to see beautiful young fruit trees of about 8 or 10 yrs growth, chopped down. Whole orchards wantonly destroyed. I don't think anything I saw on that ride aroused my indignation more than the sight of those fine young trees felled to the ground. It looked as though some one walked along & chopped tree after tree, for they all lay in the same direction, all being chopped off about 2ft from the ground. Such useless wanton destruction! It made me think of Father's fine young apple trees at home. Now, wouldn't it be devilish if someone came along & chopped them down.

Really, that ride made me heartsick. Such desolation & waste! It made me feel so sad to think of the thousands of lives that were lost on those battlegrounds.

San Quentin is frightfully shelled, there being fierce fighting thru that sector. I saw the whole top of a church knocked completely off, the Germans always making targets of churches. All the window panes were knocked out by concussion. Veaux is badly shot to pieces, wrecked and ruined. Quévy is on the borderline. Here our baggage was inspected. We had little baggage, for we traveled with musette bags slung across our shoulders. We spend very little time on clothes. Dressing is a simple matter, for we have only one outfit, that is our uniform. We always wear

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the same thing upon all occasions, our dark blue serge suits, tan shoes & hose & tan gloves. I need never say, "What dress shall I wear? It saves a great deal of time & trouble. The uniform looks so military & neat. It certainly will feel queer to dress in civilian clothes again, after spending so much time in Uncle Sam's uniform. Mons is badly ruined. Passed miles & miles of barbed wire fences, & rows upon rows of trenches. I noticed three different kind of trenches;

(Insert Hand-drawn outlines of the three types of trenches)

Trenches are about 3, 4 or 5 ft. deep. Sandbags, wreck & ruin, crater holes where large explosions took place, & whole lines of dug outs running parallel with the rail-road tracks. Bleaching bones, steel-helmets, caps & uniforms strewn about. One place I saw in a lone field a helmet planted on a bayonet stuck in the ground. It was some body's lone grave. Groups of little white crosses on hill sides. We passed concreted dug-outs, dirt dug-outs and dug-outs of every description, while rows and rows of dug-outs lined the

rail road tracks. The old line rail road was completely destroyed. We were traveling over a new road bed. The rail road naturally was an objective point. In some places the dug-outs were nothing but mere holes burrowed in the ground.

Ruin, waste & desolation everywhere. We traveled for miles (5hrs.ride) not a human soul in sight, no buildings, nothing but charred ruins, no villages & towns, just charred walls & heaps of brick and mortar. The ground was torn up with shell holes, trenches etc. No live stock & farming implements, just

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just ruin & waste, a hopeless looking sight. Passed train loads of camouflaged cannon. Saw rail-road artillery i.e. huge guns mounted on Rail Road trucks. These guns were movable, could be turned in any direction & were able to shoot 20 miles. Saw big concrete bases on which were placed the Big Berthas capable of shooting many miles & destroying cities at long range. Arrived at Herbesthal, on the Belgian German frontier about 1 P.M. Baggage inspected again. Waited until 4:30 P.M. for train to Cologne. While waiting for our train I was talking to a Begian (sic) soldier. He told me of some of the atrocities the Germans perpetrated while in possession of Begian (sic) territory. He told me that when the Germans took possession of the little town in which he lived, they took his sister aged 18 prisoner, they were going to take her with them. She refused to be separated from her mother. She clung to her mother then one of the Germans cursed & swore, pulled out a big saber & cut off her head, then & there, in their presence. He said the Germans were billeted in his house, & his mother was obliged to blacken the boots of the German officers. He said in the village of Aerchot (sic) the people of the town were lined up in two rows, & every other one was shot because they refused to make some concession to the Germans. I talked a long time with him. He gave me some side lights on the war. God forbid there shall ever be another war!