

Austrian Army -1914

September 26, 1914

Having passed a four-week training, we are leaving Plzeň [Pilsen] for Budějovice [Budweiss], Gmund, and Vienna to the Serb front. We are going to kill people who have done us no wrong. "It is God's will," said the army chaplain in his sermon!

The rest is missing.

April 20

The Americans left, and Dr. Borssitch took over the hospital. There was a massive alarm—the Bulgarians assaulted the Serb corps near Strumtets. They killed many. The inhabitants move out for fear of the Bulgarians. We receive a full train of injured soldiers in terrible condition! All covered with blood, unconscious, dying. We have been bandaging and washing all night and all day. Many of them died the very first night, some are in agony, some are wounded horribly. One was stabbed by a bayonet 16 times. The Bulgarians were like animals.

April 26

Now we are taking care of the wounded only; those with fever are moved to the other hospital. I am well off now. We have an abundance of everything, including milk, tea, and eggs. I seldom receive anything from home. I am still looking forward to this situation ending soon—and, meanwhile, newspapers say Italy has declared war.

April 30

The new Serb *sobar*

„Sobar“ probably meant „Commander“ in that context

started off rough but slackened soon. I discovered his dirty deals, and now he has to be quiet. I met Sergeant Roubík. The first batch of prisoners is leaving to build the railway to Knyezhevats. Then we all will leave.

May 5

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I am leaving Djevdekiya for Nish to build the railway. We got 2 dinars each for the journey. Before we got from the station to the stables in Nish, we got all wet from rain. This is our lodging with a new surprise—fleas. They are as big as flies, and you get hundreds of them within half an hour. Nobody can even think about sleep.

May 7

Each of us got 3 loaves of bread and a piece of smoked meat for the journey. We went through Nish to Knyezhevats. We spent the first night in a forest. I froze to the bone, having no coat and no blanket and sleeping on damp grass. The other night was better—we slept in an abandoned school. The journey is getting harder, going over hills and ravines unlike anything I have ever seen.

May 1

We rested for 2 days in Knyezhevats, where we were accommodated in a café and slept under the tables. Everyone got a pair of sandals, and some were hit with a stick.

We arrived in Banitsa in late afternoon. We bathed there in a thermal well while our uniforms were boiled in cauldrons. When they were so-so dry, we went to sleep in Ragost, where I and several boys slept in a chicken shack.

May 23

We finally arrived, having marched all day in immense danger. We are to live in a large cave where a kitchen is set up. Rocks are all around us, wild Timok is underneath, a bit of blue sky is above, and eagles are our partners. One can't see grass anywhere—it is all bare rocks. A real wasteland. We have to dig our paths—make a bad move and fall down. There are 35 of us, mostly Czechs with Sergeant Roubík. Our commander is Theodor Tcheikovitch from Monte Negro, a first-class bastard. He looks like a fugitive convict. The boys immediately nicknamed him *Babinský* Legendary Czech criminal. It fits him perfectly. With an oak stick, he is always ready to earn recognition through slaps and blows, and he becomes a real nightmare for everyone.

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