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The New York Times.

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# SAYS HE SAW 12 HANGED IN ONE CAMP

## G. H. Taylor, Witness for W son, So Testifies Before Sen- ate Investigating Committe

### MAJOR ACCUSED OF KILLI

### H. L. Scott Swears That Offi Shot Two Men, a Sergeant and a Courier.

### TALE OF 'LYNCHING PARTIE

### Witness Says One of Two He S Was Under "Hard-Boiled" Smith's Command.

*Special to The New York Times.*

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—Ex-soldi of the American army who have be brought to Washington to corrobor the charges made by Senator Wats of Georgia, that American soldiers we sent to the gallows in France withc trial before courts-martial or other ficial bodies; that officers murder their men in cold blood, and that t records of the War Department, whi show that just eleven men were ex uted, are false, began their sworn tes mony today before the special Sena committee appointed to investigate the assertions.

The room in the Senate Office Buil ing where the investigation is bei made was crowded, a majority of the present being women. Much of the tes mony was of a revolting nature, the w nesses in some instances lowering the voices almost to a whisper, so that on the members of the committee and t official stenographers were able to he their answers.

One witness, a young Philadelphia a Government vocational student at Philadelphia business school, swore th he had seen twelve men hanged in single camp, and that in seven of the cases he was officially present as a enlisted man of the military police o ganization. Another said that he ha seen two men swung from the limbs trees, while still another young man a firmed that a guard at Grièves had to him that twenty-one men were hange at that place on as many days. Sti another witness testified that he ha seen two comrades shot down by one the officers of his command.

It was noted that with one or tw exceptions none of the witnesses coul give the names of the men who the swore had been executed. One instanc cited was the alleged execution of soldier named King from Wilmingto N. C., who, it was testified, was hange without trial in a stockade prison wher the officer who became famous as "Hard Boiled" Smith was one of the senior of ficers. Another case cited was the al leged hanging of a Mexican soldier o the First Division by a few officers an enlisted men of the Sixteenth Infantry

**Says He Saw Twelve Executions.**

The first witness called was Georg H. Taylor, who is a "Government" stu dent at the Banks Business College i Philadelphia. He is a clean-cut, pleas ant-faced young man, who in answer t a question by Senator Brandegee Chairman of the committee, said that h was subject to epileptic seizures due t injuries received in France. He is th witness who swore that he had see twelve executions at Is-sur-Tille. All o these alleged executions, he said, wer carried out between January and June 1919, during which period he was o duty at Is-sur-Tilie as a member of th military police.

"The first man I saw hanged," said Taylor, "was a negro who was executed in April 1919, at Is-sur-Tille. The second man, also a negro, was hanged a week later, and the third man to die by hanging there was a white Sergeant who had been convicted by a French court. I was the guard in charge of that soldier, and at his request I wrote his mother that her son had died of influenza, and somewhere among my papers at home I have her reply to that letter.

"This soldier was not notified of his death sentence until a short time before the march to the gallows. I remember that when we told him that he was to die he exclaimed: 'Why, I have not even been court-martialed!'"

"Were you present when this man was tried by the French court?" asked Senator Watson.

"Yes, and the only American officer present was the Judge Advocate. I do not know his name. I know, though, that the condemned man told me that the woman in the case was of consent age and that she had approached him. He said she even went to the train with him when he left for Is-sur-Tille. I knew the girl myself. She was employed in a café. I understand that she died three weeks after the soldier left the town in which she had lived."

"Did the soldier have counsel?" asked Senator Brandegee.

"No, sir. Once in a while the Judge Advocate would ask him a question. There was an interpreter present."

After this man was executed, the witness said, his heart was cut from his body. He swore that he witnessed this gruesome spectacle.

Another man that Taylor said he saw hanged at Is-sur-Tille was a negro whose crime was murder. He had chopped a white mess sergeant to death with an axe. He said that six other soldiers had been hanged from another gallows "back of the hospital."

"Altogether," added Taylor, "I saw ten negroes and two white men hanged at Is-sur-Tille. Twenty-eight other members of my command also witnessed these hangings, and, if necessary, I can produce them."

"Give us the names of these twenty-eight men, and we will call them all," said Senator Brandegee, and Taylor said he would supply the list.

"Did you know of any instances in which men were hanged who had not been given the safeguard of a court martial?" Senator Brandegee asked. "No, sir, I do not," Taylor replied.

"In one case a condemned negro," Taylor added, "was kept at work until half an hour before he was executed."

"Do I understand that your testimony is that you yourself saw all twelve of these men hanged?" Colonel

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Bethel of the Judge Advocate General's Department asked.

"Yes, sir, I did, and so did twenty-eight of my comrades."

"Who was your commander?"

"Colonel Ham."

"Colonel S. B. Ham?"

"I do not know his initials."

In answer to other questions the witness said he had been gassed and also injured in the head. He has been under Government supervision for many months.

**Describes Two "Lynching Parties."**

Robert Harrison of Wilmington, N. C., was the next witness. He is a big, strapping man and a boilermaker by trade. He served two years and two months with the Canadians, he said, and when this country declared war was transferred to the American army and was assigned to the Seventh Field Artillery of the First Division.

"Did you witness any executions?" Senator Shields inquired.

"No, sir. I did not attend any hanging parties, but I did see what I call two lynching parties. The first was in the Fall of 1917. I was at that time a mounted courier and was returning to headquarters, when I witnessed the hanging of a man by a party of thirty-five or forty officers and enlisted men. They hung the fellow to the limb of a big ash tree. I witnessed it from a distance of 300 or 400 yards. I had my field glasses on him when they stretched him.

"I do not know what the name of the man was. He was a Mexican—so I was informed. I saw the body afterward, and the marks of the rope were still visible on the neck. According to what I heard, there was a row, and it was a case of the officers getting cashiered or else getting rid of the soldier. He was in the Sixteenth Infantry. I saw the insignia of that regiment on the dead man's coat."

"Did you ascertain the names of any of the men in this hanging expedition?" Senator Shields inquired.

"No, sir. They were infantrymen. As I have stated, I was 300 or 400 yards away. I took no chances of getting 'in Dutch' myself."

"What was the next 'lynching' you witnessed?" asked Senator Shields.

"It was in an American stockade prison near Paris, where 'Hard-Boiled' Smith was in command," replied the witness. "It was after the armistice, along in the early part of December, and about eleven of us were in Paris. We were absent without leave, and were arrested and taken to the stockade. One of the men in our party was Benny King of Wilmington, N. C., a soldier of the Thirtieth Division. King had some money, and when they took it away from him he asked for a receipt, whereupon a guard beat him over the head with the butt of his rifle. Later they ordered King to scrub the floor of the stockade with a toothbrush. Then came the row, and one evening about 7:30—I think it was the 24th of December—they took the boy into the yard and hung him to the limb of a big oak tree."

**Says King Was Hanged Without Trial.**

"Did you see the hanging?" Senator Overman asked. "Yes, sir; I certainly did, and I will state to this committee that King had no trial of any kind. They simply took him out and hung him, and then listed him as 'wounded in action' and among the missing. King's mother has been so notified by the War Department. Several lawyers in Wilmington and the boy's grandfather—the last named a preacher—have been trying for months to clear up the case.

"I recognized 'Hard-Boiled' Smith among those who were present when King was hanged. I was not more than 150 or 200 yards away, and, despite the fact that it was about 7:30 in the evening, I saw clearly everything that happened."

Harrison also testified that soldiers were punished by sending them into the front lines without gas masks, helmets or rifles. He said he had seen men in the front line handcuffed and without protection of any kind from gas shells.

He said that he himself was sent to the Soissons front line as punishment "without mask, helmet or gun," and that while there he was gassed, adding that he was still suffering from the effects of the poison fumes.

Asked what his offense was, Harrison said he had been "called names" by Colonel Holbrook of the Seventh Field Artillery because of his (Harrison's) inability to control a fractious horse. When he replied in kind he was arrested, he added, for showing disrespect to a superior officer and was ordered before a court-martial. He said that he did not have counsel, and that the principal witness against him, Colonel Holbrook, did not appear, but sent a written statement.

"If I ever meet Holbrook again we are going to have this thing out, too," added Harrison.

**Reporter Who "Saw a Gallows."**

Clifford L. Neer, a newspaper reporter, who said he was employed by The Atlanta Constitution, followed Harrison. It developed that he was the man who gave Senator Watson his information about the twenty-one hangings at Gièvres. Neer said he had seen a gallows at Gièvres and had taken a photograph of it. A guard whose name he did not know, he added, had told him about the alleged hangings. It was the photograph taken by Neer that Senator Watson exhibited on the floor of the Senate, asserting at the time that it showed what appeared to be the bodies of men who had been hanged. It now turns out that the men on the gallows were "skylarking soldiers" who, as a joke, had their pictures taken with the gruesome setting.

Neer could give nothing but hearsay evidence. He did not even know the name of the officers under whose command he had served in France.

Henry L. Scott of Akron, Ohio, the next witness, told of the shooting of two soldiers by a Major whose name he gave as "Opley." Both of these soldiers were killed, Scott said. The name of the Major in question was afterward found to be Opie. He will appear as a witness—probably tomorrow.

"We were about fifteen miles from Verdun," said Scott, "when Major Opie shot the first soldier. It was on Oct. 9, 1918, and the command, which was a part of the 116th Infantry of the Twenty-ninth Division, had been ordered to retreat to a position a short distance back. A Sergeant who was running, not from, but toward, the enemy, was shot down by Major Opie and instantly killed. The Major lost his head is the only way I can explain what happened. About 250 men witnessed the killing.

"A few days later a courier who was taking a message from the front to a Major Wallace, was ordered to halt by Major Opie. The Major asked him, 'Where in hell are you going?' And the runner replied that he was taking a message to Major Wallace. Major Opie demanded to see the message, and the soldier replied that he could not show it to him, as it was for Major Wallace, and started on, whereupon Major Opie shot him. I did not think the

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Major realized what he was doing. He used a .45-calibre army pistol."

"Was Major Opie court-martialed?" Senator Willis inquired.

"No, sir; nobody said anything about what happened."

"Do you mean to say," said Senator Shields, "that 250 men saw a comrade shot down, and none of them said anything about it?"

"Yes, sir, that is right. Probably they were afraid to say anything."

"Who was your company commander?"

"Captain A. F. Burnham of Lynchburg, Va. Major Wallace, the battalion commander, was, I think, from Roanoke, Va."

**Two Negroes Hanged for Murder.**

"Where is Major Opie?"

"I do not know."

Lieutenant Cochran Supplee of Chicago testified concerning the hanging of two negroes who were under his command.

"These negroes," he said, "borrowed a pistol from a Sergeant in the 808th Pioneers and went to the place of an old Frenchman to get some liquor. When the Frenchman ordered them out of his place they murdered him, after which they assaulted his daughter. The negroes were identified, court-martialed and sentenced to death. The sentence, of course, a just one, and it was proper that it should be carried out, as was the case. One of the negroes was named Strong, and the other was named Smith."

"You don't mean Smith, do you? You mean his name was Henry?" said Colonel Bethel.

"Yes, I believe you are right; the second one was named Henry," replied Lieutenant Supplee.

Jacob Hauskamp, a cook, who was stationed at Is-sur-Tille, said he knew of two men who were hanged at that camp. The War Department records give the names of two men who were executed there.

The investigation will be resumed at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

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**Denial by Major Opie.**

STAUNTON, Va., Dec. 20.—Major Hiram L. Opie, who commanded the Third Battalion, 116th Infantry, in France, described as "deliberately untrue" testimony today before a Senate committee that a "Major Opley" of that unit had shot two soldiers without trial.

"There was not a single man either shot for failure to do his duty or executed in the whole Twenty-ninth Division," Major Opie said. "There is no sergeant or orderly unaccounted for in the 116th Infantry."

Major Opie was wounded and was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross, the Legion of Honor and the French Croix de Guerre.

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SEATTLE, Dec. 20.—Major John Carroll, who was American Provost Marshal of the Is-Sur-Tille area in France during 1918 and the early part of 1919, denied, in a statement issued tonight, that American soldiers had been hanged in that area between January, 1918, and February, 1919, as charged by George H. Taylor before a Senate committee in Washington.

"I had thirty-four towns in my area," said Major Carroll, "and in all the time I was in Is-sur-Tille there were no convictions for serious crimes whatever and absolutely no executions. Neither were American soldiers tried by French courts-martial nor French soldiers by American courts-martial. Had there been any criminal prosecutions of a serious nature I would have known of them, as they would have gone through my hands.

"After I left that area in 1919 I did hear that a colored soldier, whose trial for murder had been pending, had been hanged. That would have been in March, 1919."

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