Sometime 'twixt the twilight and dawning,
Somewhere in night's Stygian stream,
Half way between sleeping and waking,
Half way from a thought to a dream.
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE FRENCH ARMIES OF THE EAST
Order No. 14,735
CROIX DE GUERRE
With the approbation of the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, the Marshal of France, Commander of the French Armies of the East, cites in the Order of the Division, Second Lieutenant Hilton U. Brown, Jr., Battery D, 7th Regiment Artillery. A very brave officer, animated by a high spirit of sacrifice, died gloriously while commanding his battery under concentrated enemy fire.

PETAIN
The Marshal of France.

March 22, 1919.

HILTON U. BROWN, JR.
One of Three Brothers in Artillery

LETTERS AND VERSES
Assembled by
HILTON U. BROWN, SR.
For Private Distribution

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
United Typothetar of America School of Printing
Nineteen Hundred and Twenty
The Apology

Many voices have come from the battle fields and hospitals of France since the guns became silent. We know that those who went across seas in the great war and that did not return, still speak. We shall hear them so long as the soul responds to deeds of heroism, patriotism and self-sacrifice. No apology will be expected, therefore, for this longing to preserve in enduring form a record of the things done and said by an American artilleryman whose prophetic vision of a soldier's destiny carried with it no shadow of fear. He "fought 'gainst gloom" and dying had only the thought that his life might help to "make some other happy." If these lines should fall under the eye of others than those who knew and loved the gentle and valiant spirit whose name becomes the title of this volume, let it at least be understood that affection inspired the pen and that love and grief claim many privileges.

Apology might well be offered to the author for committing to print verses and letters which he had no opportunity to revise, and which were not written with a view to the use that is now made of them. The apology is not for the contents of the volume. These will reveal even to the critic and stranger a style and poetic fancy that have a place in that great body of virile soldier literature that marks a new era in American letters. A few of the things set down here first appeared in The Indianapolis News for which Hilton U. Brown, Jr., so far as military censorship would permit, was correspondent,
both on the Mexican border and in France. But there are also personal letters, poems and fragments written from hospitals, dugouts or shell-holes. Doubtless these might some day have become the texts for ampler efforts. But the opportunity never came, and the material is presented as it has been found, in the mails or in the effects of the departed. Struck down in his youth “on the far advanced battle line of a great drive” in the last days of the war, yet his life was full to the brim, suggestive of what might have been expected from a mind already rich in imagery and radiant of good cheer. His body was buried in the Argonne; but his life expanded a thousand-fold with his death. Had he lingered to old age he might never have found a time when he could exchange his life for so great a service to others. Not in gloom nor dismay is he mourned, but in awe, as of something exalted and heroic that has been sacrificed for us that survive.

Not always after this life do the disclosures of word and deed add to the glory of one’s death; but here, as day by day, rhymes, thoughts, messages and sketches are found and letters from comrades are received, we get the fuller meaning of his life. And now we begin to know him as he was, and to realize that here burned for a few short years the flame of genius, and that here lived one “loved of loftiest stars.” And so comes a great heritage.

Biographical

The Three Brothers, Hilton, Arch and Paul

Brought up on the Battle of Gettysburg and frequently reminded that a test of patriotism comes sharply in some form to every generation, it was to be expected that the three Brown boys, Hilton U., Jr., Archibald A. and Paul V. would go to war against the German. After Belgium was invaded and the Lusitania sunk, long before we emerged from our humiliating neutrality, these boys, sons of Hilton U. Brown, Sr. and Jennie Hannah Brown, together with other spirited youth of Indianapolis, sensed the impending call to arms. Paul, the youngest, then sixteen plus, establishing an army age at variance with the record in the family Bible, enlisted in Battery A, Indiana National Guard in the early months (March) of 1916, when the First Indiana Field Artillery was recruiting for the threatened war with Mexico. Hilton followed when the trouble became imminent and the national government announced that it would take over the Guards and send an expedition to the Mexican border.

This was early in June, 1916. College was just closing and Hilton with many of his classmates felt that grim business was at hand and that if we did not have actual war with Mexico, we would at least acquire some needed experience with arms in preparation for European events that were already casting shadows over the land. And so he, with other college brothers, enlisted in Battery A also, an organization that had been the pride of Butler
College men since Colonel James B. Curtis, Class of '80, had made it the best field battery in the nation's guard.

Some pictures never fade. Fathers repeat and love to tell of a few well remembered scenes and incidents. One will remain forever. Commencement was at hand. June was rare and sweet, but war was in the air. Down the street passed a group of students, Hilton among them. "I have enlisted," he shouted gaily as he hurried by, "and am on my way to camp!" Not as to hardships and death went he forth, but as to high carnival. The light of youth and glory was in his eyes and the smile and radiance of his countenance lifted the heart of the beholder.

In the same month the Battery was called into service. The first camp was at the State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis, where the men were "shot" for typhoid and paratyphoid revaccinated and put through the other horrors to which raw recruits submit without a murmur and with the indifference of stoics, though frequently fainting in the process. Later the men and the guns were transferred to Fort Benjamin Harrison and military discipline was established. Peeling onions and digging trenches became incidents in these young lives that had known chiefly boob and football. But none of the hardening processes of camp life chilled the ardor of lads grown overnight into men.

An early picture shows them shoulder deep in the hard clay, smiling amid the flying dirt as if handling a shovel were one of the larks of life. Gavin L. Payne was their Captain and assumed a fatherly interest in the welfare of his men.

"I told you," he said long afterward, "that I would look after them and bring them back untainted as I found them." And he did. "In fact," he added, "such men as Hilton Brown needed no looking after; rather they helped to look after me, and my lifelong regret will be that I was not permitted to be with them until the end of their military career."

Battery A became a unit at Ft. Harrison of a battalion of Artillery of which Robert Tyndall became the Major. He was destined to a distinguished career in the army and served throughout the war against Germany as Colonel of the One-hundred-fiftieth Field Artillery of the Forty-second Division (Rainbow). Both he and Captain Payne maintained a real interest in the subjects of this sketch.

**ON THE MEXICAN BORDER**

This battalion of Artillery after a period of training went to the Mexican border in July, 1916, and remained there until the early part of the following year. Some of the incidents of that campaign are referred to in letters reproduced in part in this volume. Overshadowed by greater events that followed, the Mexican border war became only an incident in comparison, but those who remained behind and whose farewell was shouted at the roaring train that bore the boys with their long-barrelled three-inch gray guns through the night away to unknown peril, will never forget. Nor will the return of the Batteries soon pass from memory. A committee from the Chamber of Commerce, including many fathers of the Indianapolis boys, went to St. Louis to meet the now seasoned Artillerymen. At daybreak the long train with the border veterans arrived in St. Louis and the eager committee made a mad rush for the troop train, arousing from sleep some of the officers and men and overwhelming all with their welcome. All that day, as the trains made their way to Indianapolis there were feasting and revelry. A great welcome awaited the soldiers at Indianapolis; but they did not disembark until they reached their old camp at Fort Harrison.

Hilton returned a cannoneer and Paul, as the youngest man in the whole battalion, had been taken by the Major to headquarters as scout and orderly. The mother of these youngsters was ill at the time of their return and was disappointed at the report that they could not get
leave of absence to visit her at once. But it was arranged on the following night that they should get passes and slip into the house by the back way. Two young giants, exaggerated as to size by the long, heavy issue overcoats, burst into her room and overwhelmed her. No medicine could have had such tonic effect. Recovery was speedy. Those were the days of happiness, good after a lapse of years, and of great events, to recall, down to incidents most trivial and up to hours of exalted bliss. “The past, at least, is secure.”

Paul, impetuous and unafraid, said that in all the border campaign “Hilton never had a fight, while I was going out to the picket line every day.” Each, according to officers and men, did his duty and sustained himself as a good soldier despite sand, fleas, pestiferous “greasers” and the unaccustomed tropical heat. Hilton found satisfaction in his hours off in exploring the country or reading Kipling, making sketches and writing rhymes. Only a few of these last were preserved as they were not considered of value by him. But such as by chance came into others’ hands are cherished as reflecting a budding genius of no uncertain lustre. Scraps of paper, fly-leaves of books, letters, note books, Battery records, all bore evidence of native skill with pencil or ink and of an irrepressible humor that made him always the center of his group and the source of endless amusement. When the “northers” blew or the hot sun baked there was always fun where “Tuck” Brown was. Everybody was his friend. He was as fearless as he was cheerful and even the camp bully quailed before his calm, level eyes.

Indianapolis proudly welcomed these border soldiers and in due time they went back to civilian life and apparel, returning periodically to khaki for drill or for guard duty on occasion as at the time of the New Castle tornado when Hilton, with others, was sent to that city to help in maintaining order. And again he and others were called to the State-house on report that mischief was brewing and that German spies had been seen prowling about the basement where ammunition and small arms were in storage.

But these alarms were merely incidents that interrupted school life, for Hilton had returned to college, and Paul to Shortridge High School. The United States was still nominally at peace with Germany and no visible preparations were making for an emergency.

By April of 1917, however, the signs became ominous and when war was formally declared, April 6, against Germany, the First Indiana Field Artillery was mobilized. Paul went back to Battery A, while Hilton, with his brother Arch, who had been in college, were admitted in May as candidates to the first training camp for officers at Fort Benjamin Harrison. Thus the three brothers became soldiers, and all were to serve in the Field Artillery. Paul was made battalion Sergeant Major. The battalion of Indiana Artillery grew into a regiment, the First Indiana, that afterward came to be the One-hundred-and-fiftieth Field Artillery, referred to above as one of the famous units of the Rainbow (Forty-Second) Division, which served in France from October, 1917, to April, 1919.

Arch’s Harassing Experience

The two elder boys were commissioned Second Lieutenants in August, 1917, but Arch was doomed to disappointment which was forerunner of many harassing experiences in his army life. It was discovered that he was not twenty-one years of age and his commission was withheld on that account.

An appeal was made to the war department and although General Edwin F. Glenn gave him all the backing the rules would allow, the department held that the law, then in effect, that minors could not be commissioned, was inviolable. The case was even presented to the President but with no better results.
Arch then enlisted in the Second Indiana Field Artillery, which Colonel Gavin L. Payne organized. Thorough drilling followed. Arch became a Second Lieutenant in the regiment and in the spring went with the other officers of the regiment on invitation of the Federal Government to the School of Fire at Louisville. This course was completed after six weeks on the firing range and those who had finished the course were recommended for commissions in the U. S. Army by Colonel Carter, commandant, who gave an unqualified endorsement of the good work of the Indiana men. This recommendation was turned down, the War Department which had ruled that no more units of the National Guard could be inducted as such into the service, now holding that no commission should be granted for field service to men who did not pass through the Federal training school channels. Arch had meantime become of age and was eligible, but was required to take again the full Artillery course, which he did, receiving his commission finally late in November, at Camp Zachary Taylor. But the war was ending by the time these formalities were completed and in December 1918, Arch and others of the disappointed group of officers who had been caught in the meshes of the military machine, were discharged into the reserves. As a matter of record, it may be said here that Arch like many other good soldiers who never got across, suffered more in mental anguish from red tape that bound him than did his brothers in the trenches of France. At any rate he made good use of his military training by taking charge of the Butler College Cadets in the spring term of 1918 while he was himself drilling with the Second Indiana.

HILTON IN FRANCE

Receiving his commission as Second Lieutenant in the middle of August, 1917, Hilton, with nine others of his training company, was designated for immediate service in France. He was ordered to New York, whence he sailed September 7, on the Manchuria, by way of Halifax for Liverpool. Arriving there September 22, he proceeded to Southampton and then to La Havre. After three days in a rest camp he was sent by way of Paris to the Saumur Artillery School. He completed the course there late in the year and was assigned to service at the front with the Seventh Field Artillery (Regulars), First Division, which was then occupying the Toul sector on the Lorraine front. Here he experienced a varied warfare during the winter of 1917-18 and became a seasoned soldier accustomed to the life of the trenches under fire and participating in all the many activities of his division.

In the early spring of 1918 the Allies were hard pressed on the Western front and the First Division, always included when Americans were wanted for heavy fighting, was transferred to the point of danger. The British and French had suffered frightful losses from the formidable drive of the Germans in the Soissons and Montdidier drives. Moroccan troops and the First Division were among the relieving units. Here Lieutenant Brown, who had been in many skirmishes and bombardments, participated in a major engagement. On May 12 (Mothers' Day) his horse was killed under him by an exploding shell which seriously wounded the rider, inflicting many wounds, including one that kept him in hospitals for three months.

Letters written during this period set out his experiences, grave and gay, depict his impatience over enforced idleness and the final glad release for active duty, made particularly welcome by reassignment to his old unit in the First Division.

Then came hard and continuous service for three months. The St. Mihel drive was the first culmination of plans already under way when he returned to his regiment. Rain, cold and mud were the accompaniments of this campaign now beginning—the final drive through the Argonne which broke the backbone of the German
resistance and brought the enemy to his knees. These were days of incessant and terrible fighting. For twenty-three days Hilton served as liaison officer with the Infantry, going over the top day after day. Gas and the influenza nearly got him down but he "carried on." Again he served as executive of his Battery, captured German guns and maintained advanced positions under the most trying and desperate circumstances. His men have told how he cared for them and, to insure their safety, assumed personal risks that he would not permit them to take.

On November 2, 1918, he fell in with his brother, Paul. They spent a few blessed hours together and parted never to meet again. On the 3rd each went forward with his Battery. The Germans were in retreat and the Americans followed fast on their heels. The enemy knew the ground and, with the advantage of an effective air service, rained shells on the advancing pursuers. A few hundred yards beyond the little town of Nouart, Battery D, Hilton's unit, took a position on the side of a hill. Shells of all calibers were falling thick upon this position. The Captain and Lieutenants Brown and Cameron were standing by the guns directing operations when a shell fell at their feet. The two Lieutenants were instantly killed and several enlisted men and the Captain were wounded. Hilton was buried with his comrade just outside the grave-yard adjoining the town. Late in October, after returning weary to a point of exhaustion from liaison, but still "wearing that wonderful smile," as the "Y" man reported, Hilton found Paul, who had been reported missing, and filed a cable: "Paul and I well. Love." But the cable, like thousands of others, was never delivered.

The last letter received from him was dated October 23. It was not delivered until the middle of November. News of his death did not reach his family until December 4—a month and a day after he had been hit. Paul was across a valley with Battery C and did not know for an hour that his brother had fallen. Such was the fury of the battle that there was no opportunity for Paul to participate in the simple rites of his brother's funeral. Letters written by him were long delayed, as there was no way under the regulations to get them into the post until the Armistice came eight days later. Perhaps no period during the war occasioned such anguish as those thirty days after the Armistice, when thousands of American families were waiting for word from their sons, and fearful of what it might be when it came.

Several months after the hasty burial at Nouart Hilton's body was removed to the concentration cemetery near Beaumont called the American Sedan Cemetery. Here he lies side by side with the comrade who was killed by the same missile. A devoted French soldier's widow, Madame Wiblet, who lives at Beaumont, sees that a fresh American flag is kept waving over his grave.

**PAUL IN FRANCE**

Paul Brown went over with the One-hundred-and-fiftieth on the Lincoln (which was later sunk), leaving New York in October 1917. The regiment was landed at St. Nazaire and later went into quarters at Camp Coetquidan. Paul had in the meantime become regimental Sergeant-Major. After three months in this camp the command was sent to the Luneville-Baccarat sector, on the Lorraine front. After a period under fire Paul was designated in the early summer for the Saumur Artillery School, where his brother had been before him. After three months he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant, about September 1, 1918. His term examinations showed a very satisfactory grade, which led him to fear that he would be sent home for training other units. Following the practice of those who were trying to escape such an assignment he did not take the examination at the end of the term, but stood on his class grade and his mili
tary experience. These secured for him what he most desired—an assignment to active service.

On the eve of the St. Mihiel drive he was assigned to the Seventh F. A., First Division, which he regarded as a coincidence and rare good luck, since this was the command in which his brother was already serving. His Battery was C however, and his brother’s D. He served in the St. Mihiel advance, escaping injury but falling a five-days victim to influenza and gas. These days were spent in a field hospital, and he rejoined his regiment in time for the full Argonne campaign and was at times executive of his Battery, and again on liaison with the Infantry. At Exermont he was cited. Here he was continuously in action for three days and nights. (After he had warned a superior officer that it was swelling and in danger of exploding, one of his guns blew up with frightful loss to the crew.)

Just prior to the Armistice Kermit Roosevelt became Captain of the Battery, and letters quoted elsewhere show the relations that existed between officers and men. The Battery was in the extreme advance when the Armistice was announced, much to the surprise of the men in this Battery, who seemed to have little knowledge that a truce was under serious consideration.

Eight days before the Armistice Hilton was killed, and the agonizing knowledge of his brother’s death added its torture to those incessant hours of battle. On a caisson in the rain and while advancing under fire Paul wrote the story which after many days reached the mail through the efforts of Walter Henry Harlow, a Y. M. C. A. man, who proved himself on many occasions to be the soldiers’ friend.

In the last days of active warfare the regiment made a forced march to Sedan. The roads had been cut to pieces by heavy traffic in continuously rainy, cold weather. After the armistice Paul went with the regiment to Luxembourg, and on to Coblenz early in December. Later the First Division was moved out east of Coblenz to Montabar, Germany. During this winter cumulative effects of high explosive gas and exposure resulted in Paul’s being sent to the hospital at Coblenz, where he underwent a severe operation for his throat. He went thence to Nice to recuperate and on his return, after a short stay with the Battery, was again sent to the hospital (Evacuation Hospital 22). After several months in all in the hospital he returned in the early summer to the Battery, which was laying its plans for a further advance into Germany in the event the Germans failed to sign the peace agreement. After they signed Paul was designated for discharge and placed in charge of Casual Company No. 2237 consisting of 250 men. They returned to New York on the Imperator, sailing from Brest in July. Paul was discharged on Long Island at the age of twenty, after nearly three years in the army, nearly two of which were spent in Europe. He reached home July 22, 1919. His grades at Saumur and his other experiences gave him sufficient standing for admission to the freshman class at Butler College.