

**Transcript from The American Legion Monthly [Volume 10, No. 1 (January 1931)]**

A glimpse behind the enemy lines is given us by Past Adjutant Ralph Shugart of Kensington Post in Philadelphia, more than twelve years after the fighting ceased. With the picture of the American plane, surrounded with German soldiers, which is reproduced on this page, he sent a request from one of the men in the group, Joe Bender, now a resident of Shugart 's home city.

The request is in the form of a letter from Bender to a man in Kensington Post. With Shugart's permission we reprint it:

"I am sending you the information concerning that war picture. At the time it was taken, I belonged to the German 226<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Observation Group. Our division's headquarters was at Thiauourt and our observation station on top of the Montsec. Our group's rest quarters were at Beney. From that town we witnessed an air battle in the early days of August 1918, between two German planes and one American.

"One German plane crashed down and both officer and pilot were dead. After a while the American plane came down and we started to run up to the plane. He landed on the left side of the road leading from Beney towards the front. When we got to him, he pulled off his brown suit and told us he was an American captain. After reaching Beney, what became of him I don't know.



"In Beney were some French people yet and some of the women threw flowers to the officer and they all got arrested. On the back of this picture, which I had sent to my people, I wrote:

'This is a picture of an American airplane which came down here. The Indian head is the sign of the squadron.'

"This is the story so far as I can remember, because I witnessed so many air battles in my eighteen months at observation stations."

The Indian head insignia identifies the plane as one of the 103d Pursuit Squadron. It was originally the device of the Lafayette Escadrille and was assigned to the 103d American

squadron when the American fliers who had served with the French transferred to our own air forces after we entered the war.

With those facts as a basis, we hope that the captain will identify himself and tell us something of his experiences. Or someone who knows him may be able to supply the information.