

DIED A HERO

Marshfield Herald—A story of the heroism and supreme sacrifice of a Marshfield boy comes to us this week from the trenches in France—the story of the death of Sergeant Willard Purdy, who was killed by the accidental explosion of a hand grenade on July 4th.

Details of the accident were received by the Herald Monday in a letter from Sergeant Vernon Kelley, who is with the 107th Supply Train. Sergt. Kelley talked with members of Purdy's company and got the story from them first hand.

During the night of July 3rd, Sergt. Purdy, in charge of a party of raiders, crossed "no man's land" and bombed the German trenches. They were successful in their raid and all returned to their dug-out at the break of dawn. Upon their arrival there they began divesting themselves of the unused hand grenades they carried, joking in the meantime about their night's experience.

As Purdy pulled out one of the grenades from his blouse it slipped from his fingers and fell to the floor of the dug-out. Either from contact with his shirt or from the impact of the fall the pin that holds the device that explodes the grenade set going. In just five seconds after the igniter loosened on a grenade it explodes, throwing its death dealing missiles in every direction.

The explosion meant the death of the entire party in the dug-out. Just one thing would avert that and that was the sacrifice of one life to smother the explosion. And Purdy gave his life to save his pals. With a cry of "look out boys" he threw himself upon the grenade covering it with his body. A second later the explosion came, Purdy's body was torn to shreds but he saved the lives of his comrades.

It was the supreme sacrifice—the one thing that one in a thousand would do and Purdy was that one.

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