



Trench Knives and Mustard Gas: With the 42nd Rainbow Division in France (C. A. Brannen Series, No. 6)

Hugh S. Thompson

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Trench Knives and Mustard Gas: With the 42nd Rainbow Division in France is the memoir of a soldier on the front lines of World War I. Hugh Thompson's memoirs of his time in France demonstrate a keen eye for detail and a penchant for philosophy. Thompson combines the fast-paced prose of the jazz age and the passionate observations of an engaged intellectual. Originally serialized in the Chattanooga Times in 1934, this newly edited version allows the author to tell his story to a whole new generation. Thompson takes the reader on an intense journey with the 168th regiment of the 42nd Rainbow Division through the villages, towns, battlefields, and hospitals of France. He points out the sights along the way and has a knack for compressing a complex reflection on life into a single sentence. Severely wounded in his arm and back, Thompson reassesses his situation after visiting comrades who lost arms or legs. "I went back to my tent," he recalls, "almost ashamed of my own lucky wounds." Homesick for the States during his first months overseas, Thompson discovers that his platoon has become his second family. He becomes increasingly estranged from his old one and accustomed to the war's distortion of time and values. Friendships form and disappear in the hour it takes a stranger to die. When he is wounded, Germans serve as his stretcher bearers. And things never happen when they take place, but later when one learns of them from a letter or from a soldier passing through. War does not destroy the physical man. It leads to strange experiences. *Trench Knives and Mustard Gas* brings the front lines of World War I, the Great War, to the hearts and minds of its readers. The book is an indispensable guide into the past, told by a man who was there.

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