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operator handling the U.P. wire typed the message for me on the regular tape used for Press telegrams. The tape was then pasted to a regular cable blank.

The only change in my message from the wording of the official message received by Admiral Wilson was the dropping out of the word "this," which occurred two or three times in the original dispatch. In condensed form the message read:

UNIPRESS
NEW YORK
URGENT ARMISTICE ALLIES GER-
MANY SIGNED ELEVEN SMORNING
HOSTILITIES CEASED TWO SAFER-
NOON SEDAN TAKEN SMORNING
BY AMERICANS

HOWARD
SIMMS

"Unipress" was the cable address of the United Press. The signature "Simms," that of William Philip Simms, manager of the United Press in France, was followed by the number of his official Press card, both of which—signature and card number—were necessary on collect messages filed to the United Press.

The Impossible Happened

When Sellards and I reached the cable office with the retyped message, the censor room was deserted, the entire personnel having poured into the streets to join in the mass celebration which was on in the Place du President Wilson. Suggesting that I remain in the censor's office, Sellards alone went directly to the operating room at the cable head. Due to his being known by all the operators as Admiral Wilson's confidential secretary, he was able to expedite the sending of my dispatch and remained alongside the operator until the brief bulletin with its momentous potentialities had cleared into New York.

Though I did not know it at the time, I learned afterwards that no French censor ever passed on the message. The impossible had happened. A fantastic set of circumstances which could not have been conceived of in advance combined unintentionally and unwittingly to circumvent an airtight military censorship which no amount of strategy and planning had ever beaten.

The surprising result was produced by a combination of extraordinary elements. The censors were, to a man, in the street celebrating, with the rest of the populace, what they too believed to be the official announcement of the end of the war. The dispatch, not by design but by the purest accident of my being unable to use a French typewriter, resembled in all its physical appearance an ordinary United Press bulletin passed by the American Press censor in Paris, and relayed via the United Press-Depeche leased wire to Brest. Furthermore, its authenticity was vouched for by the highest American naval commander in French waters, through the medium of his own personal and confidential aide, Ensign Sellards. The combination was more perfect than if it had been planned, and it resulted in the enactment of one of the most dramatic events of the entire war.

The hour was approximately 4.20 p.m. in Brest, and approximately 11.20 a.m. New York time.

Mad Enthusiasm

Leaving the cable office, Sellards and I recrossed the Place du President Wilson, delaying a few moments to watch the mad celebration which was taking

place on all sides. French shopkeepers and wine merchants, infected by the spirit of the occasion, were bringing great baskets of *vin ordinaire* to the sidewalks and passing the bottles about freely among all who cared to partake. This in itself was to the American doughboys, with their high appreciation of French thrift, an act almost as sensational as the Armistice itself. Doughboys, gobs, poilus, and hundreds of French girls and women who seemed to have sprung from the earth marched and danced, arms entwined, as they sung lustily the popular wartime songs. Motor lorries, their engines backfiring like machine-guns, contributed to the uproar.

By dinnertime the streets were a solid mass of cheering, singing, good-natured humanity, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we were able to make our way through the crowd to La Brasserie de la Marine, Brest's liveliest restaurant. The scene inside would have



ROY W. HOWARD
The man who sent the message

put to shame the jazziest Broadway restaurant at one o'clock on New Year's morning. We had not yet ordered our dinner—not even the drinks which were to precede it—when a naval orderly, who had missed us at the Continental and had been told he could find us at the restaurant, made his way through the crowd to our table. He had a message for me from Admiral Wilson, in which the latter stated that a second message, which he had received via his direct signal corps wire to Paris, had stated that the first dispatch was "unconfirmable." The Admiral expressed his regret at not having been able to get in touch with me personally, as he had to leave the city for the evening.

Accompanied by Lieutenant Hornblow, I went immediately to the office of *La Depeche*, where I wrote another dispatch, stating that Admiral Wilson's first bulletin had been followed by a second stating that the original statement was now held to be unconfirmable.

This dispatch was filed at Brest approximately two hours after the first one. Had it been delivered with the same dispatch as the first, the correction would have been in the United Press office in New York some time after one p.m. However, for reasons which have to this day never been satisfactorily explained, this second bulletin, which would have enabled the United Press to correct the original error within two hours, was not delivered to the United Press in New York until shortly before noon on the following day, Friday, November 8.

Immediately upon learning on the morning of November 8 that my second message was being held up by the Navy Department, Hawkins, our vice-president and general manager in New York, got the Washington Bureau of the United Press busy, but it was not until late in the forenoon, after the matter had been put before President Wilson himself, that the correction was released, upon instructions from the President. During the intervening time, between the receipt of the original dispatch, a little before noon on November 7, and the delayed delivery to the United Press of the correction on the forenoon of November 8, Hawkins had stood absolutely pat on the original message for reasons obvious to any practical newspaperman.

He knew that the original dispatch was of a sort that no sane newspaperman would attempt to fake. It was either all right or it was all wrong. It was not the sort on which any reporter could expect to obtain any edge or any advantage, except through some possible chance accident of transmission. Hawkins knew that I, as president, and as one of the principal stockholders in the United Press, could not possibly have sent the message if there had been reason to suspect the existence of any element of chance.

The Admiral's Explanation

It was not until late on the evening of the seventh that the United Press-Depeche wire opened between Paris and Brest. Meantime, it was impossible for censorship reasons for me to communicate with the Paris office, or for them to get in touch with me. Upon the opening of the wire I learned for the first time of the celebration under way in America, but even then did not know that my correcting message had not gotten through.

I was at Admiral Wilson's office when he arrived around ten o'clock on the morning of the eighth. I explained the situation to him and he communicated to me such additional information as he had received from Paris. But it was still wartime. The information was meagre and explanations were not to be had. The Admiral asked me what he could do to set matters right. I requested a statement for publication, giving his version of what had occurred.

The dispatch read:

"The statement of the United Press relative to the signing of the Armistice was made public from my office on the basis of what appeared to be official and authoritative information. I am in a position to know that the United Press and its representative acted in perfect good faith, and the premature announcement was the result of an error, for which the agency was in no wise responsible."
HENRY B. WILSON."

On the tenth of November I sailed on the troopship s.s. Great Northern from Brest.

What Happened in America

Meantime, what was happening in the United States was another story. In New York and the east, the first extras carrying the bulletin announcement of the signing of the Armistice reached the street during the lunch hour. In the Middle West the extras were out before noon and on the Pacific Coast in the early forenoon. Newspaper presses rolled as never before, and new records were established for newspaper sales. It is

(continued on next page)

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