

The Stars and Stripes

The official publication of the American Expeditionary Forces, authorized by the Commander-in-Chief, A.E.F. Written, edited and published every week by and for the soldiers of the A.E.F.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1919.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Why is it that the matchless cathedrals of France, built hundreds of years ago, still stand to receive the hushed and wondering Yankee pilgrims, shaming by their strength and stately beauty the weaker and more tawdry structures of our own day and generation?

The men who laid the first stones of the shell-torn marvel at Reims, the hilltop cathedral at Bourges, the imperishable Notre Dame at Paris did not live to see those temples completed, knew that it would never be their lot to see them completed.

Now, before the peoples of the world, are laid the architects' plans for a great mansion, and soon work will begin on the foundations. If, indifferent to the needs of future generations, the builders plan it only for the convenience and short-sighted comfort of their own immediate occupancy, that mansion will not be good to look upon, nor will it withstand the tempests of the waiting centuries.

CHATEAU-THIERRY

Already American feet turn toward Chateau-Thierry. Already the battered city on the Marne is become a shrine for pilgrims. It is all smiles these days amid the new prosperity these visitors bring.

It seems probable that Chateau-Thierry will always be the great American shrine in Europe—the Gettysburg of the A.E.F. It is a curious and yet altogether natural thing that this should be so, and the reason lies somewhat deeper than the mere fact that Chateau-Thierry is nearest to Paris of all our memory-towns.

It is true that only a few hundred Americans ever fought in its streets and, though there is associated with it all the fighting that the spring and summer saw between Soissons and Reims, it is true that our greatest effort, our most unshared suffering, our most grievous losses, were spent on quite another and a later battlefield.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

If our old friend Robinson Crusoe had lived and been shipwrecked in this day of wood pulp and public opinion, his chronicler would probably have had an entirely different tale to tell. The first thing Robinson would have done after discovering footprints on his supposedly private island would undoubtedly have been to dash back to his goat-skin domicile and start a newspaper, thus beating Friday to it and providing something to read in his idle time.

Put a few Americans, soldiers or otherwise, most any place in the world and three things are almost certain to result in a reasonably short space of time: a theatrical performance, a wave of popular demand to move elsewhere, and a newspaper.

Camp, trench and billet papers have been appearing in France ever since the first tricklings of O.D. reached this hemisphere. The war was a severe and disheartening handicap to many editors in months bygone, but since the sword has been sheathed the pen is coming into its own.

They can't all be enumerated here. But the Tars and Tripes, the Bars and Tripes and the Cigars and Snipes are, at least flattering. All we have to say to the whole bunch is: Welcome, brothers!

THE ABSENTEES

The lucky Americans were those whose training in civilian life fitted them for service when the war call came. They did not have to face the dismaying and sometimes impossible task of learning all over again. It was their rich privilege to have something besides muscle that the country wanted.

The A.E.F. was still young when the appeal went back across the Atlantic for showfolk to entertain us—an appeal that still stands, for the response to it never met the demand.

The difficulties which beset the fairly willing players were many. Red tape by the mile, passport piddling, enraging delays of months and months—all these things clogged the machinery of good will. That they were not insuperable, however, is evidenced by the fact that more than 700 players are here now.

forts of our existence, many of them are solid for life in the hearts of young America.

It is in honor of these 700 that it is worth recording with what singular unanimity the big stars stayed away. With a few exceptions, the ones who could best have afforded to come, those great favorites of the theater whose names are printed largest and whose pockets are stuffed fullest, failed to answer the call.

Probably all will be forgiven. Or rather forgotten. Probably there will be no great reckoning. And yet—and yet some of us can't help hoping that some fine night, at the first performance of an all-star production on Broadway, the greatest applause, the reception that will fairly stop the show, will be accorded not to one of the advertised stars but to some little soubrette, because there will be some soldiers out front who will remember that once upon a time she was one of them in France.

THE ROUND TRIP

"We expect not only to maintain the present average, but gradually to better it until the middle of spring, when we look for a substantial increase in shipping."

This week comes the specific announcement that the divisions of the A.E.F. will go home in the order of their arrival, and the forecast of sailings for the months to come.

The G.H.Q. statement bears out General Harbord's prophecy that the boost will come about the middle of spring.

All right. Look back a year. What was happening in May, 1918? The big boost came in the middle of spring that year, too. The C.-in-C. had told the Allied High Command, "All that we have is yours"; American troops were soon to be rushed to the Marne front and help put Chateau-Thierry on America's war map; the main Allied line of lateral communication in the north was under fire; the German menace hung over Paris. And the transports got into the war as they have never got into it before.

OUTLAWS

Within a week two creatures, in a class with the men who starve little children, kick dogs and fight with brass knuckles—barbaric exponents of the theory that might makes right—shot down innocent, unselfish men. Young Emile Cottin, intelligent, chaste and a professional anarchist, is now awaiting trial for an attempt on the life of Georges Clemenceau.

Both assassins were ardent devotees to a cause. Their political theories were opposite. Their methods were identical—and identically futile.

While the best minds of the age are struggling to bury personal and national prejudice and erect out of the blackened remains of the world's greatest wholesale murder a structure that shall mean eternal justice, a shield for the weak, a curb to the strong, to establish right as might's master—these two outlaws of civilization shoot from behind with plain murder in their diseased minds and home-made haloes ready for adjustment.

Out of the heart-breaking horror of these two stupid deeds comes one ray of satisfaction. Anarchy and Autocracy have two more nails in their coffins.

WHEN WE GO BACK

It seems that a transport-load of returning Yanks, who landed in New York not so long ago, had it all fixed up to cheer the Statue of Liberty the moment that lovely lady appeared to them through the mist. With characteristic American thoroughness, they had appointed a cheer leader, rehearsed their yells, and were all on deck ready to blow Bedloe's Island clear out of the water with the vociferousness of their greeting.

"But," as it is reported in a buck home paper, "when the leader opened his mouth there was something in the way that stopped the sound. There was something in his eyes that misted his view. There was no noise behind him. He looked around, and the trouble was epidemic. Soundless tears, such as thinking men shed, were mastering the cheeks."

It will be that way, more or less, with most of the things that most of our number hope to do when they get home. That trip to the Coast, that three months' loaf, that job at an incredible salary and incredibly short hours, even that girl—all plans for them will undergo some sort of a change. The pleasant pastime of building air castles in France or Germany is not without its uses as an exercise of the imagination; but the transportation of those air castles, like moving Cologne Cathedral to Milwaukee, is something else again.

Of course, some of the dreams, some of the plans will come true. It would be fine if all the good ones should come true. But somewhere between Brest and Boston, Bordeaux and Baltimore, St. Nazaire and St. Paul, the majority of them are pretty sure to "suffer a sea change." And we need not be disappointed if they do, for we shall be back in the United States, the land of opportunity, in which the best and the biggest dreams have been known to come true for those who added the labor of head and hand to the aspiration of the heart.

The Army's Poets

WHEN SAMBO GETS BACK TO DIXIE

Don' you dere, Liza! Jamet! How you all dis vere aufoard'hui! I've been to France 'n' back agin, 'N' you shore'll soon compree Dis vere Frawnsay lingerie. Aw, oui, maw chere-ee, I dun see you sho' compree! Voila, a joli kiss— Jus' lakk dis— Comme saw, mah Dixie lalel! You'all's better'n any Frawnsay mademoiselle!

LIBERATION

I met him on the city street; His brow was sad, his mournful eyes Sorrowed for some longed-for light; Across his face the shadows crept, As if within his soul there slept Celestial dreams, condemned to night.

A SOLDIER'S GARDEN OF VERSES

The world is so full of a number of Huns I'm sure we should all take good care of our guns. Oh, a tent is a wonderful place When the smoke blows all about And the rain comes down in little drops And puts the fire out.

DAYBREAK IN A BILLET

It is a frosty morning, cold and damp; No sound disturbs the calm tranquility. The light that lives is but an ancient lamp. That guides the oxen ere they step on thee— But hark! the mighty bugler is awake, And does with his infernal weapon make A crashing sound like thunder.

BIG-BOY

"Big Boy" for them was good enough. But not for me to call him so. (Not that he didn't have the stuff. I loved him that, I'd have you know). But nor's this—throughout the corps, He was the best, exceptin' me. For 'stood six feet four or more. While he was only six feet three.

THE GAS SHELL ON THE GRAVE

My message was in code Because we had an excellent listening-in system On the boche wires in that part of the line; And when we used the signal phone We acted on the hypothesis That the poor old squarehead had an equally good Electrical eavesdropper on what we said (Though, of course, he hadn't).

When his voice—or was it his?—halted me! "That last letter was it, D. D. for Danger!" the voice asked.

"No, no," I replied, on the mental qui vive, now. "It's B for Beer—Muenchner beer!" "Ah—yes," came the answer. "Muenchner beer, exactly!" "Pretty scarce in the States, now, eh?" "I was when I left," I said, and then hurried on: "Say, Graham, wouldn't it be funny if you were really a boche artillery officer instead of being Graham?"

Gosh, it would be odd! And pertinent, too. Because you'd be the very man I wanted to talk with—If you were actually a boche artillery officer (Though, of course, you aren't!).

"Let me tell you about it,—er, Graham. While I was up in the line behind 'Flondie's' position— You remember! The place where the boche Shined over a flock of gas shells before the raid— Well, while I was there today, I came upon a poilin's grave.

With a little duckboard fence around it. And a wooden cross with the disc of tricolors and—flowers.

Oh, a riot of colorful flowers! They looked so lovely, so lately, or cared for. But they didn't seem to need care, 'cause they were brave blossoms— As brave as the soil from which that poilin' once sprang.

And in which he now sleeps. But don't let me get gushy, Graham! The strange thing was that a gas shell, one of your— I mean a boche gas shell—had been dumped itself Right down on that grave, none greedily buried in the flowers.

And tall resting on the edge of the little fence. It was the most amazing, determined-looking shell I've ever seen. It had a real, beetle-browed, schreck-heikeit attitude.

Resting at that angle; as if at any minute it intended To go right through to China, and by competition alone. Put the Pekin Gas & Electricity Co. out of business. But like so much Trenchon schreckheikeit stuff, Graham.

It was a dud—it didn't go off! And what I wanted to tell the boche artillery officer That either his register was rotten— Or the shell was nowhere near a trench— Or that his kanonen Fritzies were pretty sorry sports.

Aiming a gas shell at a flower bed, like that! 'Cause you know how gas would have withered those flowers, Graham. And the poilin' being quite dead these many months. Why, in the name of all sportsmanship, Kill the blossoms which a dumb but sensitive France Had made into an aromatic monument!

As that stinking gas shell would have killed them. (Though, of course, it didn't).

"Striking case—very striking," came the voice at last. "But go on with the message, please." And I might have, (Though, of course, I didn't).

Arthur McKeogh, 2nd Lieut. Inf.

THE FIRST TO GO HOME



THE SHOULDER-PADS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

Insignia are blooming on left shoulders of the A.E.F. with the rapidity of dogwood blossoms in the homeland forests or the field anemone of the early spring days. When they first appeared it was explained officially that they were intended to serve a threefold purpose: (1) to prevent men from straying innocently into unknown and dangerous places, or from getting lost from their own outfits; (2) to promote esprit de corps among these organizations of the A.E.F., and (3) to promote discipline.

Today, however, and every day since the cessation of hostilities, there is an apparent change in insignia designs and purposes. Certainly there is an apparent change of feeling on the part of those who are ordered to wear these insignia, and this feeling is one of discontent and dissatisfaction on the part of those who are told to "put them on."

Would it not be another addition to the morale building structure The Stars and Stripes has erected in the A.E.F. if you would toll the thousand officers and men why they must strip off their former mark and replace it with a new and strange-meaning design, when, after the war is ended, they are transferred from their old outfits, with which they served in the line, and assigned to duty in some headquarters of a non-combatant organization—one that never saw service at the front nor did duty outside of a city?

Hundreds of officers and men, wounded and discharged from hospitals, snatched from their old friends and units because they have special qualifications for administrative work elsewhere, or who have by some oversight been assigned to duty outside their divisions, have found themselves assigned to new fields of endeavor. Now, when these men report, they must discard the only symbol they have of old association and days spent at the front with the old crowd and pin on a new and unmeaning, though very beautiful insignia of the new unit. It tears the heart to strip off that old tag. It hurts the pride—vanity, if you choose—to pin on another, and is a particularly disagreeable task when you know the new insignia marks you as a non-combatant or implies that you have never seen service at the front.

We who have been compelled to do this task if any of those commendable uses the insignia was originally intended to serve are being served by this new order of things. I shall always regret the day I was ordered to leave the outfit for special duty with a headquarters in the rear. I bury the day when I was ordered to remove the only vestige left of old friends, of the old company with which I served from the time it was unformed until it fired the last shot in the war, and place in its stead a two-by-two piece of embroidery that meant nothing unless ornamentality.

A CLASS "A" COMBATANT.

HIS OLD STANDBY

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

Here's something I want to get off my chest! Two years ago this coming June, I abandoned a splendid career as a boche comedian and enlisted in the Army. One of the very first things they gave me was a pack carrier. It's the harness in which a soldier rolls up his blankets, extra underwear, clean towel (1), etc., and drapes on his back when he moves from place to place.

When it's loaded on the inside and your extra shoes, overcoat, rain coat and gas mask, reserve rations, etc., are tied all over the outside, it weighs about 85 pounds and is known as a full pack. It causes more grief, cousin', and sore feet than any other thing in the Army, but after an all-day hike I'm compelled to admit that the old shelter half and blankets come in real handy at night.

Well, I've dragged this darn thing from Camp Kearney, California, across the American continent, over the Atlantic ocean, through England, and all over the battle front of France. It's been with me day and night; in box cars (40 hommes 8 chevaux), and on foot. And any day at the end of an eight or ten-hour hike I'd freely bet my last franc that it weighed a ton. I've scrubbed it for inspections until it's nearly white, it's been my one constant companion, and I've sort of grown fond of the thing.

When we are mustered out, I understand they are going to take it away from us, and that is where I ask your help. I want it, the whole works, complete, and also a good, new uniform, to have and to keep as personal stuff. If the government will not make me a present of it, please try and fix it so that I will be able to buy it.

ALFRED E. MCGARTHY, Sgt., Co. A, 115th Engrs.

HEADLINES OF A YEAR AGO

From THE STARS AND STRIPES OF March 1, 1918

"THE SOLDIERS' PROVE METTLE IN FIRST RAIDS—Night Forays on Chemin des Dames Give Men Long-Sought Chance—Croix de Guerre for Two—Wild Irish Exceed Objective and Romp Through German Trenches 750 Meters—Live Souvenirs for Colonel—Surprise Visit Across Line Without Preparatory Barrage Nets 15 Boche Prisoners."

YANKS LEARN BIG GAME HUNT IN LIVE SECTION—Famous French Battalion Welcomes Troops to the Chemin des Dames."

BOCHE GUNNERS LEAD ZEST TO HOLIDAY NIGHT—Star Shells Light Way for Washington's Birthday Party Gunners—Gunners Race Into Lines—Journey Through Modern Pompeii Leads Surely Across Hill's Eye for Hun Targets—Four Nations Drink Toast—Frenchman, Italian and Briton Join in Honoring Memory of Republic's Father."

RUSSIAN PEACE PUTS NO DAMPER ON HOME SPIRIT—Attitude is One of Earnest Sympathy for a Blindly Struggling People."

REMEMBERED AT HOME

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

On Memorial Day, May 30, 1918, the McLaughlin W.R.C. No. 26, G.A.R., of Mansfield, Ohio, held services for the American boys who sleep on foreign soil, and in the cemetery where the G.A.R. graves are decorated they assembled a mound of roses. At each corner was the Stars and Stripes and at the head was a cross marked: "Our Boys Over There."

Every Memorial Day in the future this spot will mark the love and remembrance of the American mothers for those boys who sleep on foreign soil.

Our only son, Sgt. John D. Gray, 146th Infantry, is now in the hospital, wounded and gassed in the Argonne in September. His father was one of Sheridan's boys in '61, and is still living.

MRS. ANEVA GRAY.

YET HOW ACCURATE!

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

To settle an argument on what the meaning of the word "casual" was, I looked it up in "The Concise Oxford Dictionary." It read: "Casual: Accidental, irregular, undesigned, unmethodical, careless; laborer who works when the chance comes; poor who sometimes meet poor relief; ward for relief in workhouse."

Now, isn't that a fine pedigree for a self-respecting doughboy to have looked to his name? I suggest a change, "toot sweet."

W. C. SIMON, Casual Emb. Camp No. 1, St. Nazaire, France.

THE GANG

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

Inasmuch as most of us men will soon be returning to civil life the idea came to me that the men of each company or battalion would like very much to have a list of the names and home addresses of the men in their organizations. I collected the names and addresses of the men in my company (with the help of my buddies) and had a booklet printed.

Every man was delighted to buy one, and the lot was sold in ten or fifteen minutes. The result of our trial made us think that every company should print one, so I suggest that our paper give some of the other outfits the tip.

DAVID H. MIXER, Opt. Engrs. Knotty Ash, Liverpool.

SPURS OR SPUDS?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

Will you kindly inform me through your esteemed paper whether or not Congress has ever passed a bill authorizing cooks to wear spurs? As I approached the rear door of a kitchen at Limey to buy a dinner I saw a cook wearing a pair of bright, nickel spurs. In answer to my "Where do you get that way?" he said he had to have them, to ride the R.E.F.s. I can find nothing in the I.D.R. in regard to this.

ANXIOUS ANNABELLE.

[If you have searched in the I.D.R., it would be an act of supererogation for us to look any further on our own account. But have you tried "One Thousand Simple Recipes"? It might be in that.—Editor.]

A 2ND LOOEY SPEAKS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

Now, a word for the most picked-on, kidded, tanked-over and helpless victim of buck-passing in the A.E.F.—the second lieutenant.

Their harsh words, I'll admit, but even if they don't rhyme there may be a little truth in prose as well as in poetry. The writer is stationed in a port in which, the papers say, the Y.M.C.A. conducts over 80 entertainments—mairades, vanderlille, etc.—daily, and when he has had the opportunity to attend an occasional entertainment he has invariably had the exquisite pleasure of hearing at every one of these some threadbare joke pulled off at the expense of the helpless "second looey," as we are familiarly called. And the tendency although seasoned with a goodly portion of well meaning, is to hold this particular member of the commissioned personnel of the American Army in a position of ridicule, reflecting considerable disrespect upon his status as an officer.

I speak as a soldier who has seen service in the Army all the way from a buck to a second lieutenant, and who, during this military evolution, has worn three branch colors of lat cords before being commissioned. And with everybody in the A.E.F., including top sergeants and hon fatters, continuously trying to explode all the regulations and traditions of the service by using our status and rank as a joke before the screen of ridicule, I sometimes wonder why we were ever required, in the old school, to respect our superior officers. Certainly, the pride, glory and honor of being called a "shave" is another incentive to the enlisted man to become famous. First sergeants (except mine) are getting away with that of late, and I am in dread of the day when the S.P. on the corner halls me with a "Moroin', shave!"

We don't expect General Pershing to come within a hemisphere of us when he "promotes to fill vacancies in the A.E.F.," but we would request that the poor, hard-working second lieutenant be spared from being the subject of jokes and ridicule and left to bear his crown alone.

ONE OF 'EM.

THE GIRLS AT TRIER

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

We are willing to bet any odds that the greater part of the A.E.F. had forgotten all about Valentine's Day until Baldwin's portrait of an American girl with verse below appeared in The Stars and Stripes.

But there is one spot in the Army of Occupation where the day that girls look forward to was not forgotten, and that was Trier. At the Baldwin there is a Red Cross canteen that is run by girls who give the station an American atmosphere throughout. Forget the German signs and you can easily imagine yourself in Akron, Ohio, or Indianapolis, Ind.

On Friday night the large waiting room that is used for a canteen was decorated with hearts and curled paper lanterns. But the finest treat of all was the delicious, heart-shaped cookies—they just melted in one's mouth.

And if we had to hand out D.S.C.'s or D.S.M.'s, we would give one or both to each of a little group of Red Cross canteen workers who attend regularly the dances for enlisted men every Wednesday evening at the A.R.C. Enlisted Men's Club in Trier.

Usually there are about a dozen heroic girls and nearly a thousand and the entire length of the room about ten feet wide and the entire length of the floor is roped off. To jazz farming girls dance with the lucky fellows, and every two minutes change partners at the signal of a "looley" with a whistle. And so the dance goes merrily on for two hours with hardly a rest for the girls. They come closer to solving the problem of perpetual motion than any we have seen in a long time.

As these girls, serve at the A.R.C. cafeteria, is it any wonder that, on the morning after, an innocent permissionnaire, who probably never saw the dance, gets coffee poured on his oatmeal instead of milk?

J. O.

FRILLS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:—

I have seen many officers wearing miniature divisional insignia on their caps. Is this authorized by the uniform regulations?

STARTLED SOLDIER.

[There is no authority for such frills. The Inspector-General will get them if they don't watch out. He will also get all the trick sergeants who have been wearing miniature chevrons on their overcoats.—Editor.]