

A. E. F. UNIVERSITY GIVES GRADS DEGREE OF B. A. F.

2000 Bachelors of Art of Fighting Have Been Turned Out of Army's Schools in France

FIVE WEEKS' COURSE IS STIFF ONE TO BUCK

"What We're Here For," Say Students as They Buckle Down to Big Job

By W. S. BALL
Correspondent of the Providence Journal With the American Army in France

America's educational system is expanding, as perhaps you realize. Perhaps, also, you know that it is bulging heavily in this direction. But it is developing more than you might believe. I suspect, along formal and elaborate lines.

I have just returned from a visit to one of our newest and busiest American universities. There are, of course, special training schools of many sorts in all the armies. But this one is a real university, a group of post-graduate schools; so far as I know it was the first of its kind.

And scribbling here by dubious candle light in the office of the village tavern, where French and American uniforms and accents are mingling curiously around the room, I want, while the picture of what I have seen is fresh in mind, to emphasize the fact that it is a splendidly American addition to our chain of educational institutions.

The universities back home have, for the duration of the war, a lively rival here. And yet not merely a rival. It supplements their work as well. Within the day I have talked with Brown graduates and those of other colleges, now studying side by side with men to have seen no schooling since eighth grade days.

This university, whose name is a number and whose address is the familiar alphabetical trilogy "A. E. F.," has for its campus a few thousand acres of mud.

Its lecture halls are squatly shacks about as impressive as those in a typical street-widening scene in downtown Providence. Its dormitories can be distinguished from the lecture halls by the numbers over the doors, and nohow else. Its laboratory apparatus would make the sternest showing of the engineering department of any university back home look like a Behoboth sewing circle.

College Yell Is Untamed

Its college yell exists only in the form of a general shout of glee at grub time. Its favorite song is "Rosie O'Grady," or something equally antique. Whatever old ditty happens to be running in any man's mind at the moment will serve.

Its official bell is a bugle. Its campus gate is a two-by-three sentry box. Every physical phase of it is raw and primitive.

It is equipped to graduate 8,000 super-fighters a year. More than 2,000 of them already cherish its diplomas.

And every man it sends out from any one of its departments is not merely a super-fighter, but the teacher of a company of fighters. For it is a normal school as well.

It was said that Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other made a college. Here, too, it is the instructors and the students, rather than the physical equipment, that make the university. The spirit of the men creates the place.

I mentioned that 2,000 already cherish its diplomas. "Cherish" is right. For a diploma from this school is a tribute to hard-won knowledge—knowledge of how to "get" the Kaiser's cohorts.

The man who passes his exams here has learned much. He has learned the goods—the strange goods that this war demands. He can teach others to deliver them. He can help America put on its "show." (I like that phrase from the British front. It says so much so casually.)

The man who flunks—but not many of them have flunked so far. They take it too earnestly. They are studying to beat the Boche.

They are of all sorts and all degrees of previous education, products of college and high school and store and bank and factory. But they are all men in khaki, which means that they are all men of one sort. They are here for business.

Exams Are Good Stiff Ones

For they are men who have been in France long enough to realize—to feel in their muscles and marrow as well as in their minds—that we are facing a job to test the mettle of the biggest of Republics. This school is here to teach them to do their share. And they are not dawdling.

"We had our first written exam a couple of days ago," one of the students told me. A man, by the way, whose name used to figure in the headlines after certain interlegate news, not many years since. "And believe me, I never ran up against a tougher test in all my four years at —." He named a famous university.

"Did you pass it?"

"You bet your life I passed it. That's what I'm here for."

That's the spirit of the place. It is the spirit not alone of this particular school, but of khaki-America in France. Give the men here a reasonable chance with supplies and all, and "you can bet your life" on them. Which, as a matter of fact, is the gamble you can't dodge in this affair.

The geography of the university in question is difficult to describe without unwieldy precision. The easiest way to get to it is to don Uncle Sam's uniform and make good in your company until Friend Captain asks you to make better by sending you here. If Friend Colonel and Friend General endorse the Captain's guess about you, then welcome to our village.

"To Make Better Than Good"

"To make better than good" is the real motto of the institution. It takes, by a careful system of selection and assignment, the men from different commands in many branches of the service. These are given a vigorous course in the intricacies of the newest arts of modern war, and then return to their commands to pass along what they have learned.

such schools. This is the American plan for economy of administration. It has the added and important advantage of permitting the easy co-ordination of courses that fit into each other.

As now constituted, the schools in this group can care for nearly 11,000 students. Each school takes commissioned and non-commissioned officers alike, and the enrollment is about equally divided between them.

The lengths of the courses differ slightly in the various affiliated schools, but five weeks is the general period of a term. The longest, aerial observation, is six weeks. There's one course which practically all the students of all the schools are required to take, that lasts three days.

"And an equally important course it is, too," declared the President of the university as he outlined for me the work of the institution. One would say so. It is the course in defense against gas attacks.

With terms of five weeks each for the majority students, and a necessary interval of a week between outgoing and incoming classes, the university is prepared to graduate eight classes a year, of a thousand or more men each. It was established last September, definitely expanded about the middle of October, and has been steadily increasing its capacity ever since.

All Branches But Two

There are now ten departments or schools, all but two of which are conducted on the main campus. These two are not far away, and are under the same presidency and general direction.

To pass through all ten, absorbing everything that they have to offer, would be to learn practically everything that is known, up to the latest flick of the watch, of the art of modern warfare in every branch except heavy artillery and flying. These are taught elsewhere.

Here, for example, infantry officers are taught the latest angles of their many-sided jobs, from setting up drills to sniping, from trench routine to liaison with the artillery. For the infantry officer must know an amazingly number of things, and the number is increasing with every day of war experience. He must be the expert of his command in every branch of its work.

He must know the surest way to land a hand grenade in the enemy trenches at a particular quarter-second when it will do the most good. He must know machine guns and automatic rifles as if he had invented them. He must know the meaning of every highlight and every shadow in an aerial photograph of the enemy trenches opposite him. He must know to the ultimate detail how to follow the harraze fire when his men go over the top.

He must know these and a hundred other things, all in addition to the supreme art of commanding men. Of seeing that they have the regulation allowance of socks when they take to the trenches. Of insisting that they grease their feet properly. Of making sure that their rations are well cooked. Of keeping them cheered up when tobacco runs low or when the mailman doesn't come around with letters from home.

"Real Dope" Is Taught Here

Much of the work of the infantry school, of course, is similar to that of Plattsburg and other officer training camps at home. But it gains intensity here, and sees the constant introduction of new tricks fresh from the fighting lines, by the fact of being in the very heart of the war zone.

The instructor who tells the class what to look out for in a trench raid, either ours or theirs, may be a British or a French or an American officer who within the week has been in a trench raid himself. To be in intimate touch like this with the actual fighting from day to day and to work within inspiration of its sound, is one of the privileges of the university.

Most of the instructors are American colonels and majors and captains who have supplemented their previous training by study of their specialties in the English and French training schools, and in their lines as well. But the lecturers include officers from the other armies who have won prominence as authorities in different branches of war.

Each student of the infantry school is expected before he receives his diploma to be a master of the art of withstanding a gas attack. This has a department to itself, but its course fits into the courses of the other schools. Which is one of the advantages of the university system our army has adopted.

In the gas school the men are taught to be on their toes. They are not to be taken by surprise. They are given descriptions of the various types that have been introduced by the kindly Germans, and the ways in which these are most quickly and surely detected. They are told some of the results of gas attacks from the experiences of the English and French, and the permanent effect on individuals who are gassed.

Speed Tests in Gas Mask Work

Next they are given masks and taught to put them on quickly. Speed counts. With certain kinds of gas it counts so much that "do it quick or don't bother to do it at all" is the axiom. Quickness in getting the masks adjusted becomes a point of rivalry among the men, and they tell of the various records that have been made as they might talk of a hundred yard dash.

Then come the gas chambers. These and open-air demonstrations supplement the theory of the class room. For the school is nothing if not practical.

Down the road from the campus, as I drove toward it in the morning, there came a platoon of queer looking individuals walking heavily through the mud. At a distance they might have been the mythical men from Mars that Wells used to write about. As we came closer, the individuals resolved themselves into students out for a practice hike wearing their anti-gas regalia. They were learning to advance through a gas zone, and there was no make-believe about the thoroughness with which they were fitting themselves for the front.

Different types of masks and respirators which experience has shown to be the most useful, methods of "spotting"

AN ODE TO MY WINTERFIELD UNIFORM

By G. M. SERGEANT PERCY WEBB

O Winterfield, my Winterfield, I really must confess, You quite surpass most any class Of uniform or dress!

And yet the shades of coat and pants, Oh, uniform of mine, Are brown and green, while in between, There is a color line!

There's class to your patch pockets; still, I've reason to suppose They call them "patch" because they match Some other fellow's clothes.

And while across my tightened chest I feel your buttons bind, How could I fail to know the tail Is flaring out behind!

And good enough for me, For though your pants were salmon pink, Your coat were emerald green, The man inside could say with pride, "I'm a U. S. MARINE!"

Then when I'm walking through the town, I hear the people say, While giving me the "up and down," "What is he, anyway?"

"Is he one of the flying corps, A home-guard, engineer— A Belgian or a Britisher On furlough over here?"

O Winterfield, my Winterfield! Whatever your merits be, You're good enough for Uncle Sam.

And good enough for me, For though your pants were salmon pink, Your coat were emerald green, The man inside could say with pride, "I'm a U. S. MARINE!"

gas when it first comes over, ways of anticipating attacks and preparations for meeting them—all these are included in the brief but intensive course.

I have dealt at some length with the infantry and gas because these are the schools which are the most technical, and I am not here trying to give even a casual imitation of a military treatise. Our university teaches also engineering in most of its war branches, many forms of camouflage, rifle and pistol and automatic gun fire, grenade throwing, bayonet work, army company commander from the medical expert and company commander point of view, and aerial observation. Every one of them deserves a description to itself as a part of the description but this is a story of the institution as a whole.

Schools Like Mushrooms

Not the least interesting phase of the whole big enterprise has been the way in which it has grown from nothing and tried on its teaching at the same time. Which is typical of much that our army already in France has been through.

We are just at the threshold of our part in the affair. Our officers have been working out the problems, not merely of the untold thousands who are here, but of the untold hundreds of thousands to follow.

Hardly more than three months ago the site of this sprawling establishment was a rural French landscape and nothing more. Fields of grain and vegetables occupied it. A farm building or two, and the village in the distance were the only signs of life. Then it was chosen as the location for the first of our military universities, and America moved in.

Construction work was barely under way when the work of instruction began. Classes were formed almost before there were barracks to house all the students. Artillery ranges and practice trenches were still to be provided. The executive officers and instructors evolved their systems of teaching, while they built roads and planned barracks. And building still goes on as fast as resources at hand will allow.

Today the President of the university, whose real title is Commandant of the schools, took me to the summit of a little hill not far from the administration building and pointed out the various features of the institution.

"There," said he, indicating, "is the—I mean will be—the main building. There will be, I mean is—"

"There is, or will be, or partly is—"

"One really does not know how much per cent of the university is on earth and how much is still on paper till one has consulted the construction records of the previous half-day."

'Tis a Hard Day's Work

But there is enough of it done to furnish plenty of opportunity for work for the thousand students. And, as I have hinted, they take opportunity by the hand and sortie ruggedly through the snow or the mud or over the frozen hummocks.

To tell the truth, there is not much incentive to do anything else, and little desire. The school day's schedule of classes and lectures and drills runs from 8 in the morning to 5:30 in the afternoon. After that hour, in addition to getting supper and attending to personal equipment, the remaining time goes into study for the next day. Of text books there are not many. But there are notes on the lectures, given out in the form of typewritten sheets, and there is plenty of laboratory study of the various weapons and devices.

"Where do you do your studying?" I asked one of the men.

For answer he pointed to the two-story bunks that stretched down the hundred-foot barracks in which we stood.

"Lying in those, with candles for light," he said, "or else we go to the Y.M.C.A. hut. Or else we go to our recreation and lecture hall? We use that for a study room a good deal of the time."

So he led me by narrow board walks stretching across seas of mud to another barracks, outwardly exactly like the one from which we had come. But inside, in place of bunks, it had rude tables and benches, of a sort that would make a country district schoolroom seem palatial by contrast.

Around the sides were guns of the particular type with which this particular department dealt. In front was a black-board covered with diagrams from that day's lecture.

In such a college hall are being learned, day after day and night after night, the lessons that will be carrying our men over the top and on toward the Rhine.

Brisk Beginning Helps

But they start the day by playing tag. Whatever department the student may be in, the first routine of his forenoon schedule, immediately after breakfast, is known as "close order drill." This, primarily, is an infantry drill, designed to teach precision, quick response to command, and discipline. It is varied, however, with games that seem ludicrously incongruous when their relation to the business of war is considered. For the most part they are games after the general pattern of "Fussy wants a corner" and other forms of systematized tag.

This is a feature of our training that has been adopted from the British military schools, where they are enthusiastic

STORIES OF THE LORRAINE LINE

CUSSING TO A GOOD PURPOSE

Someone had just remarked that the American soldier swears.

"But he swears for a d— good cause," said the bayonet instructor. "You start your bayonet practice feeling kind of passive toward the Boches. By the time you've been jabbing and cussing for fifteen minutes you find you've cussed yourself into a hot rage against the dirty murderers."

The bayonet school is in a hollow. There are about thirty dummies dressed like Huns swinging in the breeze in the posture which Sammy thinks would be most appropriate for the Kaiser and the Crown Prince—ropes around their necks and feet clear of the ground. In shell-holes on the ground there are more dummies with a tag stuck on each vital part. Beyond, where the floor of the hollow starts sloping upward, is a line of trenches and still further, midway up the slope, is a row of sticks with jam cans perched on top of them.

Thirty rangy militiamen lined up in the snow at the start of the "track." The instructor signaled and they crouched.

"Go!" he shouted. "Get the —'s. Cut their hearts out."

With fierce yells the men sprang at the swinging rows of Huns. "Bee-so-ow, you dirty —," screamed the quick little bantam on the end as he threw himself at the Hun. His bayonet did its dirty work and he slammed the Boche with his rifle-butt just to make the job a certainty. "Eep-ye, Yaa-hee-hee. I am, am I?" yelled the next man. And his face was a picture of rage. "You lousy, lousy killing —!"

All down the line bayonets were flashing and thirty American boys cursed like madmen. They swept on to the shell-holes, still howling their profane warcry and skewering the prostrate Huns. They dropped into the trench and commenced sniping the jam tins. Every tin dropped.

"Guts and discipline and give 'em a —," said the instructor. "That's our motto."

BOUND HE'D EAT IN COMFORT

"Hey, Lieutenant, better not run on that road. Fritzke can see it plain as day and he's been dropping shells on it all morning."

The warning came from a mud-spattered doughboy, seated on the tumbled bricks of a destroyed farmhouse with his mess-tin full of beans held between his knees. Mud and khaki make a perfect camouflage. You wouldn't have noticed him if he hadn't yelled.

The staff lieutenant on the way back from brigade headquarters stopped his car. The shouted warning was supplemented by the unmistakable "racket" of traveling shells—that invisible express train sound. Two "H.E." shells slammed the surface of the road just ahead and tore holes in the crushed rock, hurling stones and chunks of steel in five directions.

The lieutenant and his driver got out. It was right on the edge of a crushed farm village. A seven-work netting camouflage was supposed to hide the road, but in eighteen months of stationary fighting thereabouts the Boche has obtained accurate registry of the town and road both, despite camouflage.

"Come back in town here, Lieutenant," called the soldier from his rockpile luncheon. "Most of them hit the road or go clean over into the Rue de Victory. It's safe here."

The Boche was starting up again. He tossed ten shells at the road and about thirty more into town.

With each shell the lieutenant, the driver and the infantryman ducked their heads and after each duck they looked up with sheepish grin at one another. One high-explosive missile went low over their heads and poked another hole in the Swiss-cheese front wall of a destroyed dwelling across the street. It struck square in the middle of the "Chocolate Mommy" sign.

"Bull's-eye," said Sammy, looking up from his hopeless search for a morsel of pork among the beans.

"Say," he demanded, turning to the driver, "what do you guys get to eat? Last night we had slum and I couldn't

find any potatoes in it. Today we get pork and beans—only it's theoretical pork."

The shelling became fairly hot. Several hundred shrapnel and high explosive shells broke over the town, in the ruins and in a row along the road. "Yanks" and "Polius" appeared in twos and three from unobservable nooks in the ruins and hurried to the dugouts down under the masonry.

In these towns you'll notice that all the emergency dugouts have their entrance facing toward interior France, away from the direction of enemy shells. They are placed in the lee of a standing wall whenever there's a wall standing.

"Wonder where that one went," said the driver after one loud burst. He ran through a hole in the wall to investigate a fresh shell-hole at close range.

The lieutenant was under fire for the first time. However he felt about it he maintained an outward calm—almost unconcern—for the benefit of the gallery of enlisted men.

A head poked out of the nearest dugout.

"Hey Fat," yelled the man in the dugout. "Come on in here. You'll get hurt if you stick out there."

"Well, a man's got to eat, hasn't he?" Fat called back. "That dugout stinks so a fellow can't enjoy his chow down there."

The lieutenant called his driver. They climbed back into the machine and began a two mile run parallel to the front, under enemy observation all the way.

"Well, I've done my part—I warned 'em," said Fat, spearing the ultimate bean.

COOKS TO DOLE THE SUGAR

CAMP FUNSTON, KAS.—Food conservation here and in other camps throughout the country has even gone to the bottom of the soldiers' coffee cup. No longer will he please his "sweet tooth" by digging into the sugar bowl and dipping out two, or perhaps three, spoonfuls of sugar to make his black java more palatable. Hereafter the cook will dole it out to him.

EDUCATES THE OFFICERS

Maneuvers, Says Southerner, Serve a Useful Purpose

How eager the soldiers of a certain American unit were to get into action is demonstrated in a story told by a commanding officer who was watching a maneuver just before the troops went to the front.

Six doughboys were resting on the side of a hill after spending a hard day climbing through mud to capture "Hindenburg," a n d "Mackensen" trenches that existed only on maps prepared for that particular problem. They had done the same thing many times before.

"Well, boys," drawled one lanky Southerner, "we're all anxious to quit this playin' and go up. And I suppose we'll get up some day when we get through educating these officers!"

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY UNION IN EUROPE

8 RUE DE RICHELIEU, PARIS

(Royal Palace Hotel)

OBJECTS

The general object of the Union is to meet the needs of American university and college men and their friends who are in Europe for military or other service in the cause of the Allies.

It provides moderate cost a home with the privileges of a simple club for these men when passing through Paris or on leave.

It aids institutions, parents, or friends to secure information about college men, reporting casualties, visiting the sick and wounded, giving advice, and in general serving as means of communication between those at home and their relatives in service.

MEMBERSHIP—The Union is supported by annual fees paid by the colleges and universities of America, all the students and alumni of which, whether graduates or not, are thereby entitled, WITHOUT PAYMENT OF ANY DUES, to the general privileges of the Union, and may call upon the Union in person or by mail to render them any reasonable service.

HEADQUARTERS—On October 20, 1917, the Union took over as its Paris headquarters the Royal Palace Hotel, of which it has the exclusive use. This centrally located hotel is one block from the Louvre and the Palais Royal station of the Metro, from which all parts of the city may be reached quickly and cheaply.

PRIVILEGES—The Union offers at reasonable rates both single and double bed-rooms, with or without bath. There is hot and cold running water in all rooms, which are well heated. Room reservations should be made in advance whenever possible, as only 100 men can be accommodated. The restaurant serves excellent meals both to roomers and to transients. The Lounge Room is supplied with all