HOW TO RELIEVE TRENCH TEDIUM —By WALLGREN

STILL MORE SECRETS FROM MR. BASE CENSOR

Read These Horrible Examples and Be Wise—And Give Him Credit for Knowing the Tricks of His Trade

Somebody has said that the base postal censor is like a fat man, in that nobody loves him. We never did believe it. Now we couldn't believe it if we wanted to, for we have just opened a letter beginning:

"Dearest Dimples and Mr. Censor":

Naturally, anything in German makes a censor suspicious at once. But it is especially those endless German addresses that make us nervous, for we have to be always on the alert for codes and Hun tricks. Thus a letter addressed to "Mlle. S.——, Gerechtigkeitsstrasse, Switzerland," gave us a start the other day. Still we were glad to know that there is a "Street of Righteousness" so near the land of the Boche as that.

By this time everyone in the A.E.F. has heard of the black son of Alabama who discovered in a French African soldier "de first nigger dat can't speak his own language." But we still get bits of worth-while stuff from our stevedore regiments. Here's some lines from recent letters (you may have heard them before):

"George, I'm sure gone take out dat whole $10,000 insurance. Why, George, de government ain't gone send no ten thousand dollar niggers to de trenches so long as dey is any of de cheap $5,000 ones left."

"A couple of months back," writes an old-timer in one of the doughboy outfits, "I wrote sister Gertie that I had been made permanent K.P. Now she writes back, 'Well, Henry, congratulations, but don't get all swelled up over your commission. Remember you were once an enlisted man yourself and treat the boys white."

An Old Joke Revived

Then here is a foul tip on one of our oldest and most respected American institutions in Paris—and incidentally a resurrection of one of the oldest jokes in captivity:

"Dearest: I am sending you a French petticoat as a souvenir from France. But the American Express Company is charging so much for packages these war days that I cut the buttons off to save weight. (You will find them in the inside pocket.)"

If you've read George Pattullo's base censoring yarn in the *Saturday Evening Post*, you have already heard of the flagrant violation of the censorship rule forbidding mention of the "effects of hostile fire" which one of our eagle-eyed readers found. It was in a letter by a truck driver and ran:

"Yesterday I passed through ——, almost all the houses of which are in ruins, because the Germans shelled it for a week in 1915."

Or this "mention of casualties," also sternly forbidden by G.O. 13:

"While driving along the road to —— I passed a cemetery where more than 1,000 people were buried."

Glad He Caught This One

The rules about other forbidden things seem to be getting on the nerves of the company as well as the Base Censor. The other day we had a letter turned back by a platoon commander because it constituted a violation of the rule that members of the A.E.F. shall not write for newspapers. It was a subscription to THE STARS AND STRIPES! Another got the gate because it was correspondence with strangers. It was a request to an insurance company in the States to cancel the writer's policy! Still another went into the "correspondence with strangers" basket because it began:

"Dear Mlle.: Of course you will be surprised to hear from me, as you do not know me. I stole your address out of Jim ——'s pocket."

The following, in a recent letter, we refuse to take as a personal insult and and are putting it down to pure ignorance:

"Though you are Spanish and so am I, I am writing you in French because French and English are the only languages the American censor can read."

No, He Isn't Wise

Some writers persist in thinking we are spring green, or extremely young, or that we work only with our feet, or something. "I can't tell you the name of the town we are in, Dad," writes one foxy bird, "because of the censor. But you remember grandma's first name? I always said that it would be prettier spelled with a 'd' instead of a 't' and an 'e' in place of the 'i.' Are you wise, Dad? If not, show this to mother and she will put you wise."

Alas, Dad isn't wise yet; nor is mother. But the foxy letter writer is far wiser than he was the day he wrote that letter—and a lot more expert as a K. P.

Even our generally well-behaved Italian boys try to pull that sort of raw stuff now and then. Here and there they drop in a line such as:

"*Non vosso*"—or, to put it in English, —"I can't tell you where we are, but you remember father's saint day."

It never occurs to them that our Italian expert knows those old Italian customs of each man having his own patron saint just as well as they do.

If the Kaiser Got This!

But apparently you can tell the old folks back in Italy a lot of bunk and still get away with it. Here's what one romanticist in a M.G.Bn. writes his father in Rome—after casually telling him for the first time that he has left America and come over to Europe with the American Army:

"We just went over the top in a fine attack. Took 300 prisoners and 3 battleships. I took 17 myself. Pres. Wilson's son and the son of the King of Italy are now in our company, and they were among the first in the attack. The war will be over in a few weeks, for the Germans are out of ammunition. Then I'll run down and see you for a few days before going back to America."

If you are tired of writing to the "only girl" over in the States, because something that parler francais looks better to you over here, try this one:

"Just here a bullet came along and finished my ink bottle and the Top won't lend me this pencil for more than a minute."

The Long, Long String

Some people claim that only a Frenchman, or an Italian, knows how to make love. But we always knew the American soldier would prove the most versatile in the world. The "Blue Envelope" is a big advantage to us in this line, too. It keeps each fellow's love affairs corralled, in the same pasture, so to speak.

Here's one with eight enclosures, from an expert who seems to need only a half hour in any town to make a hit there. At least he has a perfect string of "Dearest Darlings" all the way from the Pacific coast, right through the U.S., England, and across France clear up to the front line. The only reason he hasn't any in Africa is because the captain refused to stop the ship there.

Worst of all, he can write in French—or thinks he can, like many another member of the A.E.F. who ought to know better—and that is just as hard on the Base Censor as if he really could. But let's be fair. Perhaps he means all he says in all the letters. He may be planning to live in Salt Lake City after the war—or in Turkey.

After passing those eight, we can't help feeling sorry for this other poor fellow, who has only one best girl back there in the States, and who writes her 15 pages and then is so excited—or was it the top sergeant's bellow?—that he forgot to put on her address; or even his own so we could send it back to him. Or maybe he really was writing to the Base Censor.

The General Staff has no more brain-wearing problems a day than we have. Here, for instance, is a delicate little question in ethics. When a reader runs across a very ardent letter written by a Pvt. Someone he never heard of, and addressed to his own fair lady in the States, should he or should he not treat as "forbidden information" all the words beginning in D?

To the Same Girl

Or how about the private and his own colonel who both write eight-page letters three times a week to the same girl? You see our responsibilities—and also the necessity for "Blue Envelopes" to avoid company censorship. The bets are about evenly divided between the colonel's coin and eagles and the private's youth and good looks—though we'll have to admit that we have seen some colonels these days who still have the good looks and a lot of youth.

Or, to come back to the responsibility stuff, suppose we get the letters in the wrong envelopes? Don't worry. Rule number one with us is, never have two letters out of their envelopes at the same time.

And last, will you paste the following in your censorship orders, or in your overseas cap:

Cut Out This List

1. The copies of THE STARS AND STRIPES which you mail home are *not* private and personal and family matters, and they must be censor stamped in your company and not sent in "Blue Envelopes" to the Base Censor.

2. If you will reread the orders on censorship, you will find that photographs can *not* be sent to any countries except the United States and Canada.

3. Officers are requested not to guess too unsuccessfully as to the language in which letters are written. When a letter written in Greek comes into us with the word "Chinese" written across the lower left-hand corner of the envelope, we recognize the good intentions of the officer who did the guessing; but it doesn't help the labors of our distributor in the least. Have the man who wrote the letter state on the envelope the language it is written in. He is generally a better guesser.

4. And if any outfit is pining for a baseball game, word is hereby passed that the Base Censor detachment is full up with champion sphere tossers, and is prepared to meet any team in the A.E.F. that can journey to this village on a sunny Sunday afternoon. We can't tell you where the village is, because we are in the Army now, but just ask anyone you meet who doesn't wear a uniform.

"AGONY WARTETTE" MAKES SWEET MOAN

Song for Anything That Comes Along in Their Repertoire

There were four of them—all of the Jawbone Squad, or the "Agony Wartette," as they styled themselves—producing sweet moan in a little hut just behind the lines.

Down swooped an aeroplane — a friendly one. As they heard the hum of the motor the four broke into:

Swing lo—ow, sweet cha—ree—o—hut!
Comin' fo' to carry me ho—me!
Swi—hing low, sweet cha—ree—o—hut——
Comin' fo' to carry me ho—o—o—ome!

Bango! went a shell not so very far away. Straight off the quartette just busted into:

Dar'll be razors a-flyin' through the air!
OH, Mah, YES!
Get away f'om dat window,
Mah love an' mah dove,
Get away f'om dat window, now Ah say!
Oh, come some odder night, fo' dey's gwine ter be a fight.

Dar'll be razors a-flyin' through the air!

All was still again. The quartette paused to smoke up a bit. Far off, on a slope down below, a solitary bugler (regardless of orders) was whining out the first sad notes of Tattoo.

That was too much for the frolicsome four. Letting their cigarettes go out as they got into it, they let ding with:

Gab'iel, Gab'iel, Gab'iel, Gab'iel,
Gab'iel, blow you' trump—trump—trump—trump!

A nearby machine gun platoon decided that its pieces had been still long enough, and rattled off several clipfuls. Mockingly, gleefully, the quartette sang, in mincing kindergartenese:

Patter, patter, patter, patter,
Hear the little drops of rain!

Bango! Another shell. But the gang was tired of being appropriate. They went right on, in defiance of Kultur and the Good Old German God:

De ol' time re—ligion, de ol' fashion' re—ligion,
De good ol' time re—ligion, it's good enough fo' me!

ONE WAY TO GET IT

"How did you get up on your French so well?"

"C'min' over on the boat. Worked like the devil; five hours a day. Just picked out a small vocab'lary, only the stuff I'd really need. And then, when I c'mover here—why, the French just naturally rolled out of my face!"

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RAT SEEMS DOOMED ALONG WITH COOTIE

Prairie Dog Exterminator Gets a Chance at Trench Pet

As you may have heard five or 11 times already, this is a scientific war. Whenever an annoyance or an actual menace to the Army is discovered, scientific steps are taken to annihilate the pest.

Even the cootie is doomed. It is said that the research work is in charge of an officer to be designated as a Cootenant. But this story is about rats.

The rat, figuratively, is about to be trapped. A year or so ago there was a man—a member of the Biological Survey—who had great success in exterminating the prairie dogs out in Kansas and Colorado. When America came into the war, somebody in the War Department suggested that maybe this scientific exterminator of prairie dogs was so good at that job he might be able to solve the rat problem in the trenches. So they ordered him over here to give the rats a critical and microscopic look.

He came over and went up front and studied the rodent. He studied it by and large, hither and yon, here and there and through and through. He found out what it liked for supper, and its favorite flower and How It Cared For Its Young. And he doped out a way to lessen its ravages, if not totally to exterminate it.

He found out, too, that not all the rat trouble is at the front. A large part of it is at the base ports, where the rats get into the big storehouses, and cause damage to the food and clothing waiting to go to the front. Often the rats go right along up with the food and clothing.

The rat specialist made his report and recommended that some men be sent to assist him. It is said that his request has been granted and that a successful barrage against the rat already has been laid down.

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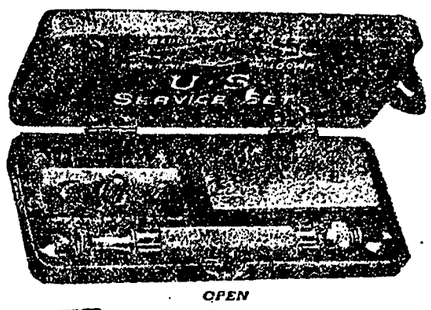
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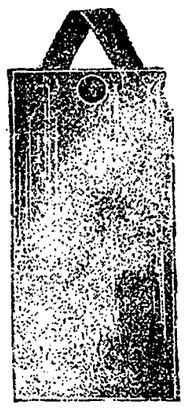
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