The Stars and Stripes

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 1918.

The net paid circulation of THE STARS AND STRIPES for the issue of August 9, 1918, was 170,210, an increase of 14,379 over the previous week.

PAYDAY EXPRESS: ON TIME

There has been no better "inside news" for the A.E.F. in a long time than the announcement that the pay book is to be a reality, that the spectacle of casuals, men on detached service and wounded men going unpaid for anywhere from one month to eight is to fade from vision.

To bring about this result, the Army pay system has had to be revolutionized. It is somewhat as if a factory that had been turning out ready-made pajamas suddenly diverted its energies to the production of collar buttons.

But no one need have cause to worry about any accidents to the machinery, any lapse in its regular output. The machinery will run as smoothly as ever, because it has the right spirit behind it—and spirit counts a whole lot more than machinery.

So if you have ever cussed the Quartermaster just because your supply sergeant gave you a pair of No. 10 shoes when you have always worn 8½s, or because one of your collar ornaments fell off, reconsider.

It isn't necessary to stop and give three cheers. The Q.M. is too busy to listen, anyway.

KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT

The offensive launched by the Germans on July 15 was an utter failure. Several factors contributed to that failure. For one thing, we had had a chance to study the new German tactics of assault. For another, the Allied forces had, since spring, received mighty reinforcements.

Above all, the Allied staff knew where, with what force, and on what day—even at what hour—the drive would begin. Since then, Germany has torn her hair and muttered much of spies and betrayal. Her drive had failed. There was no surprise.

The counter-offensive launched by Marshal Foch on July 18 was a brilliant success. It developed that the enemy had not expected that the blow would fall so soon or that it would ever fall with such staggering force. The drive succeeded. There was surprise.

When British and French followed their brief barrage at dawn on August 8, piercing the enemy's line to a depth of six miles in the initial thrust, taking prisoner Germans who were not even awake, let alone dressed, there was surprise.

In the wake of such events as these, you would think a great light must be dawning in the minds of those officers and men who love to air what big stuff they think they have. Love to air it in all places, public places preferred. Yet in restaurants and railway compartments, you can still hear the gaseous ones confiding loudly that—for instance—they have personally seen 78 American divisions massing on the Black Sea for a surprise advance on Finland.

Some day a gaseous one will get hold of something significant—and spill it.

Some day a gaseous one will be tapped on the shoulder, led out to a brick wall and shot.

Then, maybe, there will be a period of comparative silence.

Maybe. We wouldn't gamble on it.

THE STAKE

The part each one of us plays in this great drama of war is so small, however big, that we must be forgiven if we sometimes fail to see the whole of it through the eyes of embattled democracy against embattled Prussianism—or the other way round.

If we are unloading cases of ammunition at a base port, filing personnel data at Tours, classifying the latest shipment of disabilities at Blois, boiling coffee for the line in Lorraine, or clearing Belleau Wood of machine guns, we cannot halt every hour to consider how overwhelmingly tremendous the stakes are.

But, in a free moment, it is well for everyone of us to stand off mentally and look at things as one would look at them, say, from the moon—to look at them and reflect on the ponderous significance of the whole vast turmoil of the world.

For Germany's stake is the world. Ours is the right to live in it as we see fit—not as Germany sees fit to let us.

HETEROGENEOUS

A German communiqué, issued during the recent period when German Headquarters liked better to talk of other things than how the battle was going, referred to the "heterogeneous collection of nations and races" represented in the line against her.

Which suggests the comment that, when a nation sets out to whip the whole world, and a goodly part of the world comes to her threshold in answer to the challenge, that nation must expect to see a heterogeneous—possibly a strange looking—group.

But we will submit that a person would have to do a lot of hunting and combing around the odd corners of the earth to gather a weirder collection of individuals than the German army must consist of—if the prisoners of war who did their "march past" behind the lines during the Second Battle of the Marne are a fair sample.

NO TALK OF PEACE

American doughboys charge a German machine gun nest across an open field.

Some fall, but the others press forward. They come to their objective at the point of the bayonet, only to find the beaten Hun, with unlifted hands, crying "Kamerad." But with a gun or a knife concealed, ready to violate his plea of surrender.

This is the true Hun spirit, the spirit back of the Kaiser and his court. With the power of the offensive passing from him, he is now merely waiting for another chance to lift his hands with the cry of "Kamerad" or "Peace."

Peace—with part of the loot still in his possession! Peace—with only a thought of German gain or German victory through craft or deceit! Peace—with the hidden knife ready for its sudden and treacherous thrust!

Peace! In the A.E.F. there will be no thought of peace, no whisper of peace, no dream of peace until the Hun is beaten to the dust.

The fighting lines sweeping their way forward through machine gun fire are not talking of peace.

The fighting lines and the workers through the S.O.S. are not thinking of peace. Their single thought and dream is Victory. They see ahead, through the battle smoke, only a savage enemy to humanity whipped until he is ready to quit and take up his share of the work for civilization.

Let the weak-hearted, who are dreaming of a compromise—

Let the pacifists, who are talking of "peace by agreement"—

Let the side-liners, who have "had enough of war"—

Let the secretly inclined pro-Germans, who think "this great tragedy should end without a decision"—

Let them one and all know once and for all that for the A.E.F. there is no such word as peace with the Hun unbeaten. The man who talks peace today, except through victory, is a traitor. He is only fit to face the firing squad.

THE SOURCE OF SPIRIT

Every one hears, with all the justice in the world, of the wonderful spirit shown up front by American contingents that a few months ago knew little of battle.

This spirit under fire is merely the result of the spirit shown from the start by the men back home in training camps, by those stationed for further training back of the lines in France. Here there was mainly grind and detail and drudgery, day piled upon day and week piled upon week of the hardest sort of work, mental and physical, that knew no glory of the moment, no variety, no thrill.

But officers and men alike stuck it out, went to the job with 100 per cent of all they had, and the logical result has been shown up front in more than one stand or one advance.

The man who refuses to become discouraged through the dreary days of training back of the front isn't likely to become discouraged when he gets there. He has already laid the foundation of spirit and discipline that isn't to be shattered or shaken later on.

BACKERS

On the eve of the beginning of the Second Battle of the Marne, the Kaiser arrived at field headquarters in a burst of imperial glory and delivered himself of the following telegram:

"His Majesty informs his troops that he has arrived behind the front of attack and will watch the battle from a tower. His Majesty's good wishes accompany his troops. His Majesty cries to his troops, "With God, for Emperor and for Empire."

Behind the Allied lines, watching that night stood the Spirit of the Free Peoples of the Earth, steeling and gladdening our hearts for the stern duty ahead.

It may have inspired the German troops that night to know that their Emperor was behind them, mounted, probably, in the steeple of some despoiled church with his pompous generals and his boot-lickers. It may have, we say, but we doubt it. It did inspire the troops of the Allies that night to know that the Spirit of Freedom was behind them. It did, we say, for we know it.

At any rate, there can be no doubt which is the greater inspiration. His bemedalled, self decorated, flesh and bones Majesty, the Kaiser, or Her Majesty, Liberty, ever at our side, conveying the deep-souled message of hope from the tens of millions of homes we are defending, which, somehow, cannot be stated in a 42-word night letter.

ITS DOUBLE USE

In an insane asylum a certain patient was observed by one of the guards hammering his own head lustily with a heavy hammer. The patient was evidently suffering considerably at the moment, but there was a look of expectant pleasure upon his face.

"What's the idea?" asked the guard. "Doesn't that hurt you?"

"Yes," replied the patient, "it hurts like the devil now, but think how good it will feel when I quit."

So cheer up over the gas mask. It may bother you a trifle at the time, but it serves a double purpose. It not only saves your life, but think, before you curse it with too much venom, how good it feels when you take it off!

Not forgetting that most gas casualties are caused by two forms of carelessness—by nor putting on the mask quickly and properly, and by taking it off too soon.

The Army's Poets

OUR CHANCE

Gray sea, gray sky, and ships of mottled hue;
Gray sky, gray seas, yet cloud-rift bits of blue.
Gray mists, gray rain—beyond, the coasts of France.
Across the silent danger zone where we must take our chance.
We take our chance—a thousand eyes on each ship scan the sea,
Watching, waiting, watching for the crest of the Valkyrie:
The crest of the Teuton goddess, the chooser of the slain,
Whose lone eye peers from the top of the sea
Where her victims' bones are lain.
We take our chance, clear-eyed, hearts high,
Sons of the Newer Day,
To drive the spawn of the Elder Gods back to their holes of clay.
We take our chance for the love of Christ,
Fighting the heathen horde:
We take our chance, for the same high cause that
The blood of our grandsires poured.
Gray seas, gray sky and the gathering dark before:
Gray sky, gray seas but beyond—the Gallic Shore!
Beneath the flag of Liberty, thank God, we take our chance.
On, on swift ships, on, on, brave men—
Beyond's the coast of France!

J. P. H., Hq., — Division.

THAT MONTH AT HOME

We boys were all excited
When the story came around
That a leave at home was possible—
How good it sure did sound!
We have searched through general orders,
We have raked them with a comb,
To see, if after eighteen months,
We'd get a month at home.

The story sure did cheer us,
Although it wasn't true,
And the boys all got together,
Each telling what he'd do.
One said he'd buy a brewery
And wallow in the foam,
If he should, after eighteen months,
Obtain a month at home.

Another youthful private
Said he'd get in bed and stay,
Instead of standing reveille
Before the break of day.
They'd all eat pies and go to shows,
And with their girlies roam,
If after eighteen months in France,
They'd get a month at home.

So I hope the men who run things
Will get wise to our hope,
And get together and decide
That this is the real dope:
A man with a good record
Should be given every chance
To have a month's furlough at home
For eighteen months in France.

P. W. B.

AUX POILUS

Oh, the wind blows sweet o'er the hills of France.
And quiet shadows call
The tired poilus where the poppies dance
And the fairy whispers fall.

Long has the wind blown sweet and fain
For the tired poilu's return:
He has come—but to kiss and begone again
To where the star-shells burn.

But the whispering winds from our own fair hills
Have called to us sweet and low,
"By the dream of home that your long night fills,
Stand and destroy the foe!

"Let the pledge of Youth from the western shores,
Given to France in her woe,
Be the bolt and the bar of Freedom's doors,
That all of the world may know."

So we shall stand as do France's own,
Though time without count we pay,
That Pierre may dream by his hearthstone
Though ours may be far away.

Face to the Dawn, through the fiery night
We shall stand by the line to the end:
For the worst that the gods can do is to write,
"He gave his all—for a friend."

"WE KILL OR WE ARE KILLED"

Though shells be bursting all around,
Though myriad corpses heap the ground,
Though Hell itself fling back the sound,
Americans don't give!

Staunch in the strength of conscious Might,
Calm in the mail of radiant Right,
Piercing the shroud of cheerless night
They die, but never give!

A PROPOSITION

Looka here, Hun,
Let's take and thresh this business through,
Same as we'd oughta done
Before it ever was begun.

It seems a shame—some years ago a fellow killed a prince,
And here this war's been spreading ever since.
We'll dope it all out, just us two,
Because, you know, the rest of them
Might sometimes let their feelings get the best of them.
The English may be uppish, the French a bit intense,
But you have lots of science and Kultur—
Sure—
And I've got good horse sense.
Besides, I want to get back home.
I've got my business there, and all my folks.
So you won't have to coax
If all you want's to send me where I'm from.

Well, first you want the freedom of the seas.
Queer thing! We're using that word freedom, too:
We think we're just as keen for it as you.
All right, you just sail anywhere you please,
Only, it's got to work the other way.
Hey?
No sneaking up to sink a fellow's boat
Who's got as good a right as you to float!

There's Alsace and Lorraine.
The French would like them back again.
You want a plebiscite?
To go by what the people say?
All right.
But that might not work out your way.
Who are the people of Alsace-Lorraine?
You've scared some out with laws and guns,
And now the place is full of Huns:
No ballot-stuffing! For a vote, let them come back again.

Then Russia—what's to be her lot?
The place where everybody went so crazy
About ideals of being free and lazy.
They let you frame a peace—whose terms you soon forgot.
You'll make it good? What your idea of good?
It don't pan out like other people's would.

And next—hey? The indemnities you've earned?
By what—by all the villages you burned?
Belgium, France, Poland—none of that from you!
Far as that item goes, we're through.
You say you did no wrong but what you had to.
And so that made it right:
But Serbia, Belgium, France—they surely had to fight:
I guess the rest had reason to be mad, too.

Well, we've been chewing here about this row:
We've struck some stumps, and dodged some more:
We may as well get down to business now,
Or we'll be getting sore.
All is, putting down costs to gain and loss,
You'd like to be the universal boss.
Not just the job you thought 'twas going to be
When you made out your schedule to Paree.
Your jaws have chewed up a good deal,
But you've bit off a great deal more:
And I can't help but feel
This world-rule thing won't go—it's all been tried before.

So here's my proposition—it's what you've got to do
Before we're through:
You just crawl off, curl up somewhere and die:
Trust us to patch the world up by and by.

E. G. B.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

Why is it that from yonder tower
The Colonel's lamp is beaming still,
Though it is past the midnight hour
And all's serene o'er vale and hill?
'Tis not the wisdom of the sages,
Nor army lore his mind enchants;
An earthlier task his mind engages;
He's sewing buttons on his pants.

O. H. F.

"THE AMERICANS HAVE ALL BEEN SUNK"

CAMP SHERMAN LIBRARY

FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE REVEILLE

It was the combination of crab and strawberries and cream. (Under no circumstances should a doughboy let the mess sergeant persuade him to eat crab and strawberries and cream after a long hike.) I had no more than crawled into bed, got my hip fitted into the hole in the ground I had dug for it, and scratched my neck a couple of times where the O.D. blanket rubbed, than I flitted right out of the tent.

I was over in the United States for awhile buzzing around just as if there never had been a war in the world. Then I slid off a root, drowned in mid ocean, was run down by a fire engine and finally wound up in a huge room with a tile floor and marble walls.

I am not at all clear on the details of this room. I stood near one end, and the light, although bright enough where I was, did not penetrate more than a few yards. Maybe it was because of the atmosphere, which was heavy and clammy like that of a cellar where daylight never enters. I could barely discern some sombre paintings in gold frames hanging on the walls. At the nearest end I could dimly see a raised platform at the rear of which was a massive mahogany chair—a hard, square, uncomfortable chair, tipped with gold. I knew immediately that this was a throne, but I wasn't astonished, no more than I was to see the man who, seated on the lowermost step leading to the platform, was feverishly polishing a sword held tight between his knees.

The man was in his shirtsleeves. He was gray and peaked and he had a pair of crafty, mean little gray eyes and a long mustache one half of which bristled upward, while the other, as if the starch had come out, drooped ludicrously. But I knew him at once as the Kaiser, even before I saw his blouse, with its dozen dangling medals, which he had thrown beside him on the step.

I stood rolling a cigarette, not at all embarrassed as a sergeant ought to be in the presence of an emperor. After a while, he glanced up at me without exhibiting any particular interest and without missing a stroke in his polishing.

"What's the matter?" I asked, "Going to have inspection tomorrow?"

"Inspection tomorrow!" exclaimed the Kaiser. "It's inspection for me every day."

"Great guns!" said I. "I'd certainly hate to soldier in your army."

The Kaiser kept right on polishing, his elbow going like the driving rod of a locomotive. It wasn't until then that I noticed the sword much. It was a big, long, heavy affair with rust splotches on both sides. And as I looked, with the Kaiser rubbing diligently on a spot near the hilt, I saw another appear lower down. It was very minute when I first saw it, but it grew right before my eyes until it covered the whole width of the blade. The Kaiser saw it, too, and a look of despair came over his face. He faltered a moment.

"*Ach, mein Gott!*" he exclaimed. "Will they never stop coming? Will I ever catch up?"

Then he fell to his polishing again harder than ever.

"You'd never get by at inspection with that in my outfit—not with our captain on the job," I said. "It looks like my first bayonet after four months in the line. Why don't you turn it in and make 'em issue a new one?"

"Turn it in!" he almost shouted. "Turn it in! Say, this is the only sword of its kind in the world. This is the Great Shining Sword of the German Empire."

"Hell," I exclaimed. "Why doesn't it shine, then?"

The Kaiser stopped work abruptly, laid the sword across his knees and heaved a tremendous sigh.

"Sit down," he said," "and give me the makin's." I did.

He rolled a cigarette and took a deep drag.

"Listen," he said. "I'm having a terrible time with this sword. I'm about up against it. I'm afraid the thing will be the death of me. Three or four years ago I didn't have any trouble with it. Every once in awhile I used to put a few drops of oil on the blade, wipe it with a soft rag and it would shine like a diamond. Why, it used to dazzle my people just to look at it.

"Then I began having some difficulty. First, it used to rust in the queerest manner, and from no apparent cause, and I would have to spend four or five hours every week polishing it. A few months after that a big rust spot appeared suddenly one day, and it took me a whole evening to polish it off. But I couldn't keep the rust away. It kept getting worse and worse. I tried everything I knew, but the more I polished the worse it got.

"By the way," he asked, with a sudden hopefulness, reaching out and touching my knee, "do you know anything that will take rust off a sword?"

"Ever try ashes?" I asked.

"Years ago."

"Sandpaper or emery cloth?"

"Oh, sure, and gave them up."

"All sandpaper does is to make it rust more, anyhow," I commented.

"That may have had something to do with it. I used to use sandpaper all the time. I used it so much that I had to quit for fear of wearing the sword through. You can see it's pretty thin in places. Since then I've tried everything. I've had my best chemists on the job, but they can't do anything. I have used millions of remedies and they have all failed.

"Pretty tough," said I. "I remember, before I got my stripes—"

"And the rust is only half the story," interrupted the Kaiser. "The Shining Sword is all nicked up, too. Look at that," he said, drawing the weapon over closer to me and pointing to a spot on the blade where I saw a piece had been broken out and placed back in again.

"Got that at Verdun in 1916. And that," he said, pointing to another nick. "Got that on the Somme. There were five or six nicks like that, but I saved the pieces and pasted them in again with kitchen cement."

The Kaiser shook his head slowly.

"The point is gone, too," he said sadly. "Look at that," said he, placing his finger on a crack clear across the sword a few inches from the end.

"Broke right square off. That happened on the Marne just a week ago. I cemented it on again, too."

"And the handle is loose," he continued, and held the sword out so that I could see it wobble at the hilt. "That happened at Montdidier this summer. It's all I can do to hold the sword steady now."

"I'll tell you one thing," said I. "You would never get by an inspection in my outfit. Our Captain would spot it a mile off."

"Well, I've got it on you in one thing," said the Kaiser. "I don't have that rigid an inspection. Nobody actually takes ahold of the sword and examines it, you see. All I do is go out and wave it around before the people and, as long as it looks all right, they're satisfied.

"I don't let 'em get too close any more though," added the Kaiser, "since it got all these nicks and things. But I'm afraid some of them are getting wise. It's a terrible situation to be in."

The Kaiser paused and sighed sorrowfully again. Then he glanced down and saw another rust spot growing on the blade. It was the size of a pin head, but it grew to the size of a dollar in a minute, it seemed.

"That damned rust is the worst after all," he almost wailed, and fell frantically to polishing again. "It grows and grows and grows and I don't know what to do about it. I sneak into this throne room every evening as soon as I can get alone and start in polishing. Lately, I've been here all night and didn't finish up until away along late in the morning.

"Polishing on this thing 12 and 14 hours every night just to be able to make it shine for a few hours during the day. And it simply gets worse and worse. I don't know what I'm going to do."

I rolled another cigarette and stood up.

"There's one thing, sergeant," he said, and his words came in rhythm timed to the strenuous strokes of his polishing, "don't ever begin using sandpaper on your bayonet."

"Don't worry," said I. "I won't—not with our skipper on the job, anyhow."

Funny dream, wasn't it? But anthing is liable to happen when the mess sergeant feeds you crab and strawberries and cream.

COOTIES IN '61—'65

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

In reading some experiences of the boys over there with cooties, I am very forcibly reminded of our experience during the War between the States, '61 to '65 and especially during the Siege of Petersburg, Va., where the pits and the whole earth seemed alive with what we called "graybacks." We were alive with them also, and the soldier that did not have the opportunity of ridding himself of these pests at least once in every 24 hours would find himself in very bad condition. Just at this time I made a discovery which proved to be of great benefit to thousands. I will relate it here as a suggestion for the boys in the Army and in the trenches.

As we were marching along I saw something bright sticking out of the dry sand in the road and picked it up. It was a piece of wire eight or ten inches long and about 3-16 of an inch in diameter, probably a piece of telegraph wire. It was bright and clean and I kept it, although at that time I had not thought of a use for it, but when the opportunity came for making war on this ever-increasing army, securely encamped under the seams of our pants and all other places of shelter, it struck me that to heat the end of this wire to a good white heat so as not to burn the cloth, and draw it slowly along under the turned-back seams, and all such places, would make it too hot to live for the old ones, and sure death for the nits which defy most everything, even hot water.

The result was so perfect and complete that I jumped up and down with joy and I had cleaned all my clothes (which of course would not require a trunk) in about three minutes. Then others saw it and it was loan, loan so often that I had a hard time finding it for my own use, but as fast as possible every soldier would get one of his own, until one would seldom see a soldier without one. I believe that I am within bounds when I say that hundreds of thousands of these simple little pieces of wire were in use at the close of the war.

If clothes are made about the same, and cooties and "graybacks" are the same, this is the quickest and most complete remedy ever found.

J. Sumner Welch,
Ex-Lieut. 10th and 6th N.Y. Artillery
Houston, Texas.

KENTUCKY SPEAKS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

I see you ask for suggestions as to an expression to be used instead of "Over the Top."

Down in Kentucky I used to hear an expression, "Goin' out among 'em," which seems to me quite appropriate.

E. E. J.

LOTS OF QUESTIONS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Just a little information through the columns of your paper. How are men who have been over here for more than six months fixed for leaves? What length of time must one be on this side before applying for same? What is the best procedure to adopt in the obtaining of leave, and what are the expenses incurred by them? Would be much obliged for information on payment of postage on letters to Allied countries. Information given some time ago declared that letters went free to any Allied country. Has such an order been rescinded?

Leonard C. Jeffries, Sgt.

[Men are entitled to their first leave four months after their arrival in France. Leaves have been suspended several times, but the suspension was lifted several weeks ago and leaves are now on. Leaves are granted by regimental commanders or by the corresponding administrative officer for units not belonging to regiments. The Government pays traveling expenses if the man goes to the designated area in Savoie, provides room and pays $1 a day commutation of rations. If men go elsewhere, they must pay their own lodging bills, but the Government will allow them 60 cents a day for rations. No postage is required on letters sent by soldier's mail to Allied countries.—Editor.]