TEXT-BOOK WAR NOT THEIR WAY OF DOING THINGS

General and Colonel Refuse to Follow Division's Progress on Map

KITCHENS ACT LIKE TANKS

Chief Started It by Going Out on Raid and Taking Boche Officer Prisoner

One of the most honorably battle-scarred and generally irrepressible of all Yankee divisions, which celebrated General Pershing's birthday by romping across from 15 to 18 kilometers of Lorraine, has since been busily engaged, during the bit of breathing spell which followed the St. Mihiel drive, in shaking a reproving finger at (and trying vainly to conceal its amused pride in) two of its higher commanders.

Those two—one a brigadier general and the other a lieutenant colonel—showed once more in that drive that they didn't care ten centimes what all the text-books ever written might say as to their obligation to stay well in the rear. When the rest of the boys were advancing, they were bound to be in the lead.

This spirit is infectious throughout that division. A stranger within its area during an advance gets the notion that every movable man in it from the first brigade commander to the last supply sergeant is straining every nerve to get to the will-o'-the-wisp front line.

Kitchen That Went Over

The very kitchens seem to think themselves tanks. The chief cook of one regimental headquarters is proud of the fact that, in an earlier engagement, he and his hot stew got so far forward that the 800 men who fed from it talked of it as "the kitchen that went over the top."

When the Infantry was slogging ahead on that memorable September 12, an M.P., trying valiantly to untangle the wild skein of traffic, halted this particular kitchen at a cross roads and started to give an interminable converging train of trucks the preference.

The cook glowered, rose, and in a fearful voice proclaimed: "You great big, well-fed stiff, do you realize that if I don't get ahead now, those doggone doughboys won't get anything hot to warm their bellies this night?"

The M.P. melted away. The kitchen made the line before the day was done.

General Started It

It's partly the general's fault. He began it last winter by sneaking off on a raid and coming back with an astonished Boche officer as his personal prisoner. He is the despair of the M.P.'s, because he is always showing up at the front without a helmet or gas mask.

Usually they find him no further back than the third Infantry position. Always they find him afoot. It is unwise to take a horse and impossible to take a car where he goes.

As the sun came up on September 12, he might have been seen by his fellow officers (and he certainly was seen by the Germans) standing, erect, adventurous and oblivious, on a painfully exposed parapet. One hand held his field glasses to his eyes, the other was clenched in excitement as the Infantry just ahead charged through a wood. His adjutant—call him Smith for the purposes of this story—stood at his elbow. Machine gun bullets were hissing and hitting all around. A captain jumped up out of the trench and touched the general on the arm.

"If I might suggest, sir," he said, "your position is dangerous. The machine guns are reaching here."

"Eh, eh, what's that? Oh, yes, quite right, quite right. Thank you, Smith," this with a glare at his adjutant, "get down in that trench at once."

And up went the glasses for a further engrossed study of the operations ahead. More oblivion.

Whoo'h! Go the Maps

When the line finally came to a halt, a chuckle rippled across the entire division as it became known that the general had selected as his P.C. a point two or three kilometers from the regimental P.C.'s of the brigade under his command—two or three kilometers ahead, mind you. One of the sergeants in charge of the maps there was soon telephoning frantically for more.

"What's become of your own supply?" division asked, naturally enough.

"A shell just wiped out my office," said the sergeant sulkily.

Sometimes they remonstrate with the general. They remonstrate with his fellow-heretic, the colonel, a great deal. At the end of September 13's exploits, a captain approached him, respectful but firm.

"Sir," he said, "in this fight I noted that you were usually abreast with the platoon leaders. If you were not my superior officer I should not hesitate to say that you had exposed yourself like a damned fool. As it is, I can say nothing, sir."

The colonel banged on the table till all the candles in the dugout became agitated.

No Need of Runners

"No, captain," he protested, "you're wrong, dead wrong. I ought to have been right where I was. No need of runners or telephones, then, to get to someone in authority. What is more, it helps the line. When they're in a tight place and they see this leaf, they say to themselves, 'Well, if that old devil can stick it I guess I can.' Or, what's better, they think, 'Say, if he's here, we ought to be way on ahead somewhere.' And, captain, during an advance that's a mighty good thing to have them thinking. So they ought, you know. So ought we, all of us—all be way on ahead somewhere."

Perhaps the captain was thinking of an earlier battle, how the colonel's adjutant was killed at his side at a time when both of them were not merely abreast of, but ahead of, the front line. Perhaps he was thinking of any one of a number of incidents in the more recent engagements.

The crossing of the Rup de Mad, for instance. That is the name of a trickling stream which winds past Mazerais, a stream which the rains of early September had swollen to a little river, ten feet wide and from five to six feet deep. At a bridge leading up to the town, where enemy machine guns, covering the bridge, held forth, a brigade came to a halt.

Obviously it would be good if a detachment could approach the town from some point below the bridge. Fifteen doughboys were trying it, but no officer was with them, and they were halted at the edge of the unfordable stream by a steady rain of machine gun bullets. Yet the town was the gate to the bridge, and the bridge the gate to the valley.

The colonel grabbed an Engineer officer, thrust a rifle into his hand, and put him in charge of the 15.

"We've got to get them, boys," he sang out. "Open fire, every man of you, and then swim for it."

At the word, the colonel himself plunged into the river and struck out for the other shore. The doughboys followed with a splash and a whoop. A moment later they were dashing toward the town, wet and ferocious, firing as they ran. Not a shot answered, and in a twinkling the German officer and 40 men, left to hold Mazerais, surrendered peacefully. Three of them had been killed by rifle fire from the 15. The bridge was cleared. Across, at a jog trot, came the whole brigade.

So it went. So went that day and the next, and by sundown of the 13th, that division, with a minimum of casualties, had amassed a maximum of plunder—plunder that ranged all the day from a thousand Boches to at least that many bottles of beer, candy and locomotives, telephones and pancake flour, kitchens and cabbages.

The Colonel's Epitaph

When the excitement was all over, the chaplain (who is worth a chapter all to himself) came chuckling to the colonel.

"Well," he said, "they tell me they've written your epitaph.

"Who have?"

"The boys in your old battalion."

The colonel fidgeted uneasily. He remembered the hikes he had set them, the drill and the drudgery, the ceaseless work.

"Let's have it," he said, resigned to the worst.

The chaplain quoted the epitaph. It read:

"Wild Bill was a son-of-a———, but a game one."

THE REVISED D.S.C.

The design of the revised Distinguished Service Cross is more simple and severe than that of its predecessor. The new cross has four plainly beveled cross-pieces; in the earlier the arms each contained the design of an oak leaf. The eagle, too, is altered slightly. The reverse side of the new cross is plain. The reverse of the old cross bore a wreath and the words "For Valor." The words "E Pluribus Unum," which were in the ribbon held in the eagle's claws in the first cross, are replaced in the new one with the words "For Valor."

SIX HELLO GIRLS HELP FIRST ARMY

Average of 40,000 Words a Day in St. Mihiel Fight Alone

Six women operators of the Signal Corps—six American girls who jumped at the chance to be there—were in at the start of the St. Mihiel push of September 12, at the headquarters of the First American Army.

During the six days that followed the 12th's initial heave they kept on their jobs, handling an average of 40,000 words a day over the eight lines they operated, and working any hours that were asked of them, day or night.

When they finally did move out of there, it was only to move with the First Army's headquarters to another part of the line, where they arrived in time to do similar yeoman service when the September 26 drive opened on the front northwest of Verdun.

To Give Everyone Chance

The lucky half-dozen—Chief Operator Grace D. Banker and Operators Esther V. Fresnel, Helen E. Hill, Berthe M. Hunt, Marie Large, and Suzanne Prevot—were chosen out of a total of 225 girl operators all just dying for the chance to go up forward. It was a hard job to pick out the ones who were to go, so anxious was the whole force to get a crack at the big show at close range.

In fact, the only way that peace could be kept in the Signal Corps family was to promise the girls who weren't picked for the headquarters job on the two big shows that the up-front work would be rotated as often as possible, so that every one might know what it was like to be handling the calls on which the success or failure of the operation might depend.

The six American girls, while up front, rough it with the best of the Army, billetted, to be sure, but subject to all the discomforts and dangers that come with being billetted in the forward area over which the Boche avions fly when they can.

According to their superior officers, both in the Signal Corps and on the General Staff, they have shown remarkable spirit and utter absence of nerves. And, needless to say, they have filled every one of the 500-odd male soldier operators in the A.E.F., toiling away further down the line and answering the calls of the Telephona Sextette, with a green and rankling envy.

OLD SONG, A.E.F. STYLE

There is a tavern in a town, in a town,
And there my true love sits him down,
sits him da-hown,
Till an M.P. yells, "It's nearly 'leven,
Jack!
It's time 'at you was gettin' back!"

(Note—The only trouble with this version is that the M.P. wouldn't be so mild about it.)

HERE AND THERE IN THE S.O.S.

Yankee camouflage artists are getting so blooming clever with their trick foliage and fadeaway effects that they are fooling the animals as well as the Huns. R.R. and C., or the department of Rents, Requisitions and Claims, at S.O.S. headquarters had just received a claim for 2,000 francs from a French woman for the loss of two cows which, she alleges, died from eating camouflaged grass draped around a pillbox which the Yankees had set up in the back meadow lot on her farm behind the British front.

There is a colored labor outfit in the S.O.S. engaged in quarry work near a base port. A few weeks ago, in the course of opening up some new ground, they discovered an old Roman burying ground with many skeletons, coins and relics. The find made quite an impression on the minds of the finders, and there were many speculations as to whether the shades of the departed legionaries still hover around in the vicinity of their last resting place. The general opinion was that a man ought to be on his guard when out late at night.

About that time the sum of 60 francs disappeared from the counter of a nearby Y.M.C.A. hut. The captain of this outfit doesn't know a great deal about classroom psychology, but he has learned a lot about it in the field. He called his outfit together one night in the Y hut and told them of the disappearance of the money. Then he outlined the history and characteristics of the old Romans.

"Boys," he said, "there was one thing a Roman hated worse than anything else, and that was a thief. If the ghosts of those old fellows who were buried up there on the hill should learn that somebody in this outfit had 60 stolen francs in his pocket, I don't know just what would happen. I'm going to put my hat here on the table and turn out the lights. The guilty man will know what to do."

There was quite a shuffling of feet and milling around in the hut, and then all was quiet. When the captain turned on the lights again and looked in the hat he found not only the 60 francs, but 300 more, and a few odd centimes for good measure.

Army correspondence, with its official circumlocutions and endless indorsements, is not always such dry and tedious reading as the letter concerning the loss of "1 knife, carving," which, when it reached its fifty-ninth indorsement, a disgusted officer threw into the waste basket. Occasionally it becomes fairly human, as witness the following indorsement which a major in the S.O.S. tacked on to an application for a commission:

"1. Sergt. Blank isn't much good. He knows more about Army Regulations and General Orders than anybody, which indicates a wasted life. He is a good drill master, which doesn't fit this organization just now. He is inclined to be sober, not appreciating that 'Man, being reasonable, must get drunk. The best of life's but intoxication.' He has spent his youth in pursuits other than railroading, which indicates an illogical intellect. He attends to his business so closely that I am always suspicious of him.

"2. Anybody that knows how can perform his present duties, whether the rank be less, equal to or greater than his.

"3. In addition, Sergeant Blank is anxious to get to the Front (with a capital F), and I recommend him for the Pioneers."

One of the stories that you can pry out of the Signal Corps boys if you're right smart about it, and one which, when forced to, they tell with not a little glee, is how they fixed up the telephone and telegraph connection for General Pershing's private car when the General was on his tour of the S.O.S. along in the summer.

The force at Base No. 7 got the word at 7:30 p.m. one night that the car would pull into the yards the following morning, and that a special telegraph-telephone line was to be connected up to it. They turned out in the dark, and worked like Trojans, but just as they had everything fixed up and were ready to hit the old blankets, conscious of a good job well done and no reveille to worry about as a reward, along came a fire and put the whole arrangement on the kibosh.

Nothing daunted, they set to work all over again, and when the job was completed they checked up and found that it had taken only 45 minutes' extra work to clear away the old tackle and fix the connections up as good as new. Immediately the Generals' car pulled in, the war bulletins were being ticked off and handed to him in a steady stream of tape, and the 'phone central on the car was talking with central at Base No. 7 within exactly three minutes.

There is a scheme on foot to have flashed on the moving picture screen of every Y hut in the S.O.S. that boasts a screen a table of comparative figures about the discharge of freight from the several base ports. These figures will appear on a set night every week, or as near to the set night as possible. They will be in the nature of a "Standing of the Clubs." The husky Stevedore lads will at last have a little contest on which to wager as an antidote to the war-wearying monotony of "Come, big Dick," and "Ah, baby! Pair o' box-cyahs!"

September 22 was a red letter day in the Army lives of the Railroad Engineers stationed around a certain base, for on that date the first All-American trains set out from there for the front.

The word "All-American" is used advisedly, for the trains were made up in our own yards of our own cars, engines and all, and manned throughout by our own crews. They were all American but the rails and scenery.

Incidentally, the Railroad Engineers at Base No. — (the same place the first All-American special started from), by the way would have you know that the dear old base now boasts some 200 miles of track. This, as they will tell you without your asking, makes it one of the biggest, if not the biggest, railroad yard inaugurated anywhere on earth. To the great discomfiture of their brother railroad workers further up the line at X, they point out that X is a mere piker, being unable to count only a measly 90 miles of trackage around the entire project.

FROM AMERICA'S MOTHERS

The War Mothers of America, assembled in national convention, have sent the following cablegram to General Pershing:

Evansville, Ind., Sept. 18, 1918.
General John J. Pershing:
Amex Forces, A.E.F.

National Convention War Mothers of America sends following to President Wilson and you: Millions of war mothers of America, represented in National Convention, stand loyally behind you in your determination to make no peace until Germany and her allies surrender unconditionally.

Gertrude Schulz, President.

NOT TO CARRY BUNDLES

Military dispatch motorcycle messengers are authorized in G.O. 159 to carry important official letter mail only. Packages, unless they comprise bundles of important official letters, will not be accepted by messengers save in cases of emergency, and then only upon an order signed by a general officer in person.

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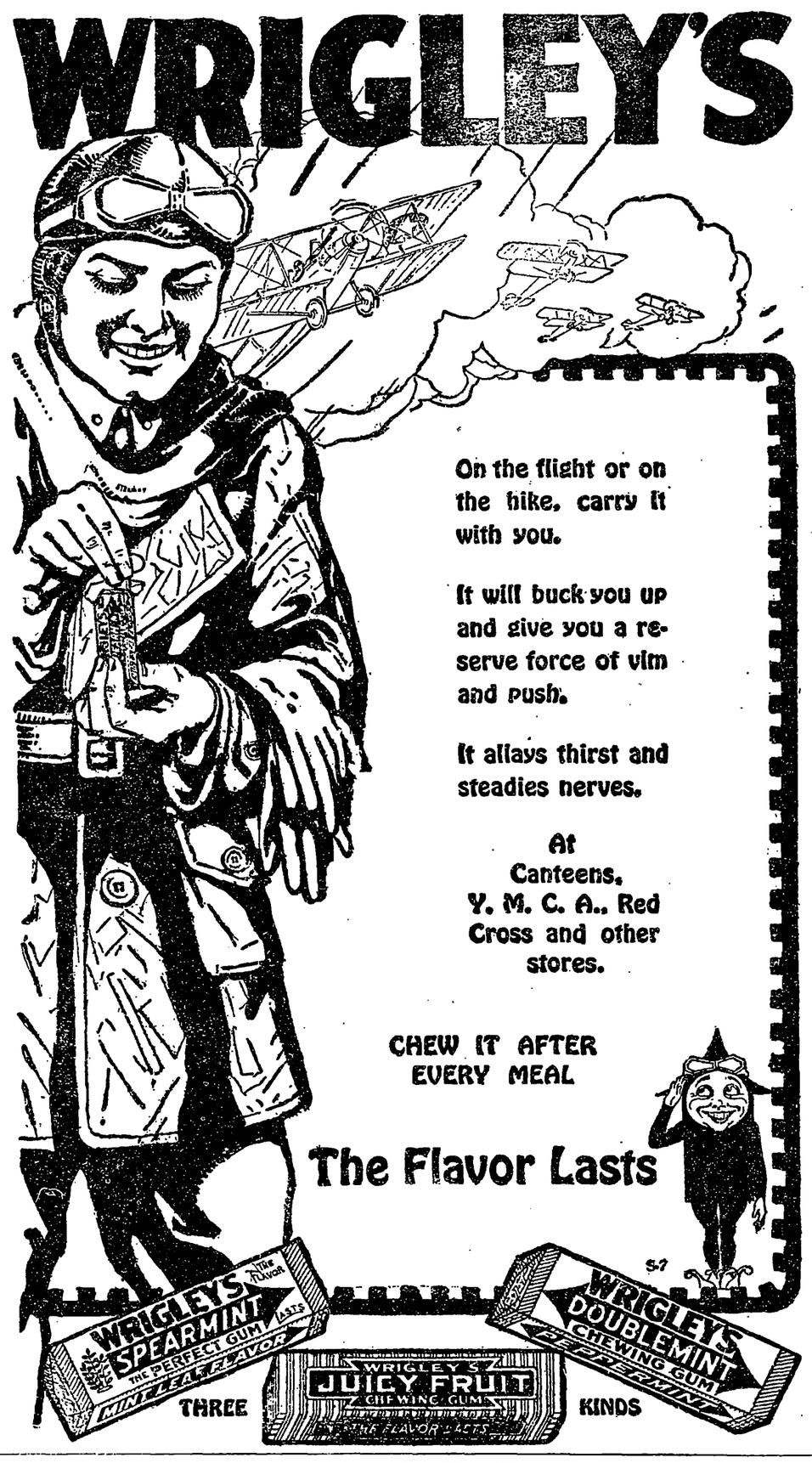

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