

The Stars and Stripes

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

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1919.

CRYSTALIZING

The plan of a League of Nations, laid this week at the door of the world, is the greatest gift that has been offered to humanity since Cain spilled the first blood outside the fields of Eden.

They were high words which were written on the banners of America's citizen army that sent the khaki legion into battle. No boastful talk of planting a flag on foreign soil, no threat of far-flung frontiers, no promise of booty in new provinces or spoil from the strong-boxes of defeated kings.

Through the dirt and sweat of the endless hikes, the mud, the shell-fire, there was not much talk of policies. It was just, "We're here because we're here."

Then one day in the morning it was over. No more big ones, no more gas, no more top to go over—just waiting. And some of us sat in the billets and began to think. We saw the gaps in the ranks, the battalion that could assemble only a handful, the section that left the echelon full and came back half-a-dozen strong.

"I see everywhere men in the American uniform," said President Wilson last Saturday. "Those men came into this war after we had uttered our purposes. They came as crusaders, not merely to win a war, but to win a cause."

And now we know that it is true, that the high words written on our banners have been copied into the book of the world's conscience—"international co-operation to ensure the fulfillment of accepted obligations," to end forever the hazarding of Right to the blind fortunes of the legions of Might.

But, then, who, this time in 1914, would have thought that, before five years had passed, America would have sent to the battlefields of Europe an army of two million men, the greatest expeditionary force that ever sailed the seas?

Who, that had seen these things come to pass, dares say now that anything is impossible? What man of little faith dares or cares now to belong to that company of men who, with a shrug, say of each new thing, "It can't be done," until someone else has done it?

In this year of hope we have lived to see the League of Nations proposed before the Parliament of Man. Who would have thought it?

It had to come sometime. It might as well be now, and the Army will be glad to know that it has come so quietly, so inconspicuously, so painlessly. It is not yet generally known, perhaps, but this month one (count it, one) American magazine appeared without a soldier on the front cover.

What army did they belong to, anyway, those paper soldiers that for nearly two years have been squads righting all over the newsstands back home? They hardly ever dressed regulation, what with officer's insignia on people who were obviously no better than corporals, misplaced pockets, sport shirt effects, impossible packs and whiskey flask canteens. It was a great get-up, but it was not issue stuff.

One has gone; presumably the rest will follow in short order. And along about the time we get back all of them will have given place to that hardier-than-ever perennial, the Lady of the Cover.

There isn't a soldier who won't kick when the mail orderly passes him up after a big consignment of first-class mail arrives from the States. But how many soldiers ever think how the folks at home feel when every other family in town gets a letter from France or Germany and the postman passes them up?

It's just as hard on the folks, this waiting business, as it is on the A.E.F. In a way it's harder, because they have had to carry through with the same old grind. And the one infallible brightener, the one sure hope-and-joy-restorer, the only gloom-killer worth the name back home, is the soldier's letter.

Practically all the A.E.F. has been graced then ever now in which to write, more things to write about, more latitude in writing. The Army can no longer cuss the censor and the postal service the way it used to. Passing the buck of laziness and negligence will no longer do.

There may not be much inspiration in the scenario of a monthly payroll, or much incentive in a 9th Ind. to a Service Record, but the message conveyed by the following news item ought to be a potent nest egg of thought for the paper work man:

After a half century, Thomas J. Rose, a Civil War veteran, of Pottsville, Pa., has been granted a pension, which was denied him all these years because of a clerical error in Washington. His back pension will amount to thousands of dollars.

late arrivals subsides in the darkness to a final scuffle, and slowly the curtain rises. It is so easy to put on a show.

But to take one off! There's all the difference in the world. The audience has melted away and there are only overturned chairs to show where once an orchestra played so gaily. When some one tries to rally a detail to carry back the seats there are no volunteers, and, as no one enjoys undecorating a hall, the boughs and banners hang for days, dejected remnants of a festivity that was.

There are, however, some who stand by and work harder than ever. There are some made of the stuff that always sees things through. But they are not many. It is not easy to take off a show.

It is not easy to take off a war. And by the spirit that is shown through the weary, unexciting months of demobilization, we shall know who's who in the A.E.F. The only zeal that amounts to anything is the zeal that lasts from the first assembly call of 1917 to the last retreat of 1919. Look about you and note whose patriotic enthusiasm is dwindling now like a guttering candle and whose is flaming as brightly as it did when the first call to arms sounded across America. Look among your friends. Look at yourself.

It is not easy to take off a show.

THE YEARLING

This is the 52nd number of THE STARS AND STRIPES. So ends the first volume and the first year. Now that every outfit in the A.E.F. is busy writing its own history, we feel free to file a full report on the operations in our own dizzy sector, which, whatever else it was, was never a quiet one. We have done those things which we ought not to have done and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done. For instance, with the combat divisions running away with all the news, we never had time, until this issue, to get up a women's page, without at least one of which no newspaper really deserves the name. Incidentally, this report, which will be published next week in celebration of our first birthday, will settle once for all the popular and violently-debated question as to who has been getting out the darned paper, anyway—a squad of lieutenant-colonels, or Y.M.C.A. secretaries, or cooks, or who?

THE YEAR OF HOPE

Last week came the first anniversary of that mild January day when, for the first time, the Americans took over a sector of their own in the anxious Allied line. As those young, untried regiments jogged along the battered highway northwest of Toul, who would have thought that, just one year later, the same regiments would be at ease beyond the Rhine? Who would have thought it?

But, then, who, this time in 1914, would have thought that, before five years had passed, America would have sent to the battlefields of Europe an army of two million men, the greatest expeditionary force that ever sailed the seas? And who would have dreamed then, who would have dared to dream, that the month of January, 1919, would see in solemn session at Paris that Congress of which the visionary Tennyson sang one short generation ago—the parliament of man, the federation of the world? Who, that had seen these things come to pass, dares say now that anything is impossible? What man of little faith dares or cares now to belong to that company of men who, with a shrug, say of each new thing, "It can't be done," until someone else has done it?

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THE FINAL CASUALTY

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KEEPING AT IT

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NOT INSPIRING, BUT—

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The Army's Poets

TO A CANTINIERE

A troop train in November, A night of sleepless chill, Raw breezes, broken windows, And heat entirely nil; But with the misty dawning Of dawn came in the view, And, oh, that bowl of coffee I got at Gievres from you!

You weren't so mighty pretty, You Lady Gunga Dhin, But there you stood a-smiling As we came trooping in; And to see the vast arraying And smell the savory brew Of good old Yankee coffee Made an angel out of you.

I've done a little tipping In a mild and Gallic way— I've said in liquid accents: "A même chose, il vous plait"; But nothing in a bottle Of any sort or hue Could match that bowl of coffee I got at Gievres from you.

—LT. JOHN PIERRE ROCHE

THE GOLDBERGER STANDS INSPECTION

There is trouble in the air, Soldiers busy everywhere— I'm wondering what makes them act that way. I think I have a hunch, From the looks of the bunch, There's a show-down inspection due today.

I wish they'd let me rest, I should worry now I'm dressed, These inspections keep a man upon the run. My equipment I must find, If I don't I'll be confined, It's been a week since I have cleaned my gun.

Oh, the worry and the strain, Upon my wearied brain! I wonder where my D. shirt can be? A pair of socks are missing, It sure does keep me guessing, Keeping up with my equipment C.

Hobnails must be well oiled, My uniform unsold, And I've only got an hour to get them clean. It will take all day and night To clean my life right, And I know the C.O.'s eyes are mighty keen.

My mess-kit is a wreck, I will not let it stay in the neck, There is rust upon my knife and fork and spoon. Well, I'll take another chance— They may pass without a glance, I hope the war is over pretty soon.

The Top has called us out, "Inspection Arms" he shouts; And up my back there slowly creeps a chill. The C.O. takes my gun— My confinement has begun, Now I'm serving my enlistment in the Mill.

—Pvt. Hq. Motor Bn., 111th Am. Tr.

FLASHING EYES

Flashing eyes that tempt and taunt me, Are you never tranquil, pray? Think you those gay glances daunt me, Or that I don't take my share of life? To remain in France always? Think you that they'll ever haunt me If I do not stay?

Flashing eyes, could I but try it, I should whisper words that may Turn those cheeks where dimples diet Into fields where roses riot On a summer's day.

Flashing eyes, won't you be quiet? Love may lose the way! S. H. C.

THEY ALSO SERVE

When a man has tried to play the game Of war with a woman's hand, Not for the honor nor nine days' fame That playing well might win him, But just to pay this shyness world, For that it happens to him, In his headless youth, when he mocked and hurled In its face the truths it told him;

When he has come to the call of the drum, Barred out from the fight, set to labor, To worry and work where none may shrink Who give strength to the arm with the saber; When he has drained the strength his strength, Too weak to travel, too meager, To go out to fight at a rifle's length, Though his heart strains hot and eager;

When he's gone the grind, till he's sick and blind To get the supplies up faster— He isn't inclined, after all, to mind A jibe at the Quartermaster.

—BURTON DAVIS, Sgt. 1st Cl., Q.M.C.

RHINELAND—CHRISTMAS, 1918

'Tis Christmas Eve; upon the hills A snowy hand from Heaven stills The wintry trees. All straight and stark They stand as in some baron's park; And where a post-hole shows the hills Against the sky the forest grilles A leafy fall of snowflakes chills The charcoal embers into dark— 'Tis Christmas Eve.

Although no light high Heaven thrills This village in a cup distills, Stars about the walls some magic market As if from catching window spark Are lit a hundred window sills, 'Tis Christmas Eve.

Peace upon earth: A frozen ground Gave back the silver seeds of sound— Scarples in no golden ears, Though nearly two hundred years— Now, only, when the world was drowned In warring waters, and no mound Remained on which a hope to found, Walking upon the snow appears Peace upon earth!

Surely, our world was never crowned With Christmas such as this! Rebouand, Ye smitten hills, from battle biers; Ring out, O bells, like chanticleers, To sing a new-born world around— Peace upon earth!

Good will to men: And will no bell In all this village in a dell Ring out the words, "Alas, a lust Of metal—what was wont to dwell In this church tower was the shell Perchance that once stood upright Through Belgian belfry, and its trust— Good will to men.

Tonight the yesterday of hell Seems long since laid away, as well As Karlovingian Lothair's dust Within this church—before whose rust-Red portals angels still call: Good will to men.

Glory to God: His church within We wait of dawn the coming in, The vaulted dark is bare of light, Save in the aisles, to left and right, That seem to kneel, like watchers twin: The pall that hangs from the chancel spin Great shadows with a blood-red rite— Is pricked, in Christmas altar pine— Glory to God.

And through the moon-lit tourmaline Of upper windows snowflakes win When'er the wind is heard, All right, About me merrily stand upright And still have thought: to us is sin; Glory to God.

'Tis Christmas Day: The hills upon, A splendid plumage of the swan Feathers the branches of the trees In fine-as-thread black traceries O'er all the white chancel spin Ho, those caps of snow the evening zone Was hardly dignified, At ease! 'Tis Christmas Day!

Now is no time for vigils won, Bring out from church the skeleton, If bring you must, all make-or-freeze— A penon, which was denied him all these years because of a clerical error in Washington. His back pension will amount to thousands of dollars.

—Pvt. X, Third Army.

THE LAST OBJECTIVE



Ruins of Old Turret at Molsberg, Eastern Edge of Coblenz Bridgehead

AND STILL THEY COME

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: I have read in the columns of your most excellent paper the famous exploits of Ensign Fred Anderson and J. Gorman Strasler in the art of quantity hot cake baking.

My respects to these gentlemen whose fame no doubt is high in the flapjack world and probably, with but one exception, without a peer. That one exception is a certain mess sergeant in the Army of Occupation, doing duty a while back somewhere between the Argonne Forest and the Rhine. I am sorry that for various reasons his name cannot be mentioned, and it would be a breach of military prudence should I mention the place where this most modest mess sergeant did some real flapjack baking.

A number of fighting divisions were en route to the Rhine when a general order comes flying through the columns of marching troops that a rest of one week would be granted, and a mess sergeant was wanted to erect and direct the consolidation of the many kitchens in the 2nd Division and feed the hungry, tired, footsore soldiers.

So, like a good patriot, the very modest mess sergeant of whom I write volunteered his services, and by the aid of a Spad was hastened to the head of the column, and at a place selected beforehand set in at once. The Spad made such good time that the sergeant gained the rest camp two days ahead of the first division. His staff of cooks and helpers arrived by the same means soon after. He wired the headquarters of the medical supply department to forward a trainload of field hospital ward tents, which came a few hours later.

Fourteen hundred of these large tents were put end to end in a series of 14 rows, each row consisting of 100 tents, which made a mess hall under canvas 20 feet wide and 6,000 feet long, something over a mile in length, the 14 rows making in all about 13 miles of mess hall space. Twenty-six miles of tables were erected, and in front of the 14 rows 1,750 field kitchens were lined up side by side so close they formed one long range about a mile and a half in length.

Twenty miles of light railway was laid in front and back of this range and through the 14 canvas mess halls, with a five-mile double-track spur running to the ration dump. While this was being done, which took about ten minutes, the Q.M. erected a huge sawmill nearby with a capacity of cutting 1,500 cords of firewood every hour, which would be needed to keep the griddles hot. The Engineers erected a series of 150 steam trip-hammers to mash potatoes. A circular ditch was dug having a circumference of about half a mile, 20 feet wide and about four feet deep, and this was lined on the bottom and each side with steel, and a battery of four tanks was employed to grind the 20 carloads of coffee dumped therein for each meal.

The stevedores in a Pioneer regiment lined up a battery of 500 concrete mixers to stir the batter. The doughboys out of several outfits dug a trench 1,000 feet wide and a mile long in about 15 minutes to dump the eggshells in, which were carried away from the range by a series of 100 endless belts, each 2,000 yards long and traveling at the rate of 270 miles an hour.

Every ten minutes a 30-car trainload of flour was unloaded into the mixers and a very large river a few miles away was literally taken out of its course and run through a giant flume in order to supply a sufficient quantity of water for the mixers and the 3,750 G.I. cans of coffee required each meal. An airplane of the Handley-Page type, traveling at the rate of 360 miles an hour, would make regular half-minute trips over the whole length of the range, dragging a huge perforated drum containing, when full, about 50,000 gallons of grease.

The batter was fed upon the griddles by a battery of 3,000 machine guns of a special type especially suited for this work, and they were operated by the 7,140 cooks and helpers employed in the kitchen. The cakes were turned by a device resembling a hay-turning machine, which was fastened on the rear of a Ford and made to travel up and down the range.

As the cakes were finished they were loaded on flatcars and hauled by 16 light steam locomotives into the 14 great mess tents, where a whole division on K.P. duty served them. Syrup was supplied from a large tank suspended 60 feet in the air in the center of the camp. Pipe lines leading into each of the 1,400 tents from this tank, which held, when full, about 150,000 gallons of pure maple

THE MARINES

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: We have read with interest letters published in your issue of January 10 under the heading, "It Depends." There seem to be still some fools in the world. We regret that some are represented by Cpl. Fred Sedberry, Co. M, 13th Regt., U.S.M.C.

The undersigned are now candidates at the Infantry Candidates' School at La Vaubonne, and all belong to the 5th and 6th Marines of the 2nd Division. We have fought side by side with the 9th and 23rd Infantry, not only in Belleau woods, but in all engagements except when some of our number were evacuated to some hospital. The majority have been in France a year and a half, and we have learned to know our side kicks, the 9th and 23rd Infantry, not only as good fellows, but as comrades in every danger. We are not only willing to share with them the achievements of the 2nd Division, but in these few words we give them the credit that only a fellow soldier can give another.

Cpl. Sedberry, who admits he has never been at the front, has perhaps never known what it means to owe his life to a doughboy or to have the satisfying feeling of doughboys at your side who shared equally the burdens of an active campaign and who were unjustly deprived of the glory at the time by censorship regulations.

The injustice of his claims to sole glory for the Marines is so apparent to one who has been there that we attribute it to sheer ignorance. We rise to apologize to our many doughboy comrades of the 9th and 23rd Infantry for a letter too evidently written by a "boot" (Marine for recruit).

Signed: MIKE REARDON, Gy. Sgt., 5th Marines; RAY H. WILSON, Cpl., 5th Marines; JON MANNING, Gy. Sgt., 5th Marines; THOMAS D. CLANCY, Gy. Sgt., 5th Marines; PAUL E. POIRIER, Sgt., 5th Marines; EDWARD K. SIMPSON, Sgt., 5th Marines; JOHN J. HICKEY, Sgt., 5th Marines; I. Y. GIDLEY, Sgt., 5th Marines; E. E. ERIKSON, Cpl., 5th Marines; THOMAS D. DALE, Sgt., 5th Marines; JOHN F. WATSON, Sgt., 5th Marines; J. RUSSELL, Jr., Cpl., 5th Marines; A. HEFFRON, Cpl., 5th Marines; A. S. COREY, Sgt., 5th Marines.

IN MEMORIAM

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: Just a few lines to remind you that February 5, 1919, is the first anniversary of the sinking of the S.S. Tuscania off the coast of Ireland by a U-boat. About 150 officers and soldiers of all arms that boarded the ship January 23, 1918, in New York now lie under the sod and dew in the Isle of Islay, in the Irish Sea.

Their sacrifice is not listed with those of the heroes who had a chance to make the Hun pay before they gave their last drop of blood that this nation might not perish from the earth.

The Mobile Laboratory of the 32nd Division, consisting of two officers and four men, were among the last to leave the ship on an English destroyer, as our boat was smashed by the explosion. The senior officer was transferred to a base laboratory soon after our arrival in France. The rest of the smallest unit in the A.E.F. have worked with the 32nd Division since our arrival in France, and are now in Germany.

At this time the organization wishes to thank the civilian and military folk who treated us so kindly in Ireland and the American Red Cross in England.

C. H. READER, 1st Lt., Sanitary Corps.

WHAT WAS ORDERED?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: Relatives of mine wrote and told me some time ago that they intended sending me a Christmas present through a large Eastern metropolitan department store.

I received the package tonight, with the following printed slip: "The exact article ordered being temporarily sold out, the nearest in stock has been substituted, and we trust will meet with your approval."

The substitute was a can of Pure Cane Golden Syrup, Superior Quality. The can is about four inches in height by three in diameter. It is worth about 25 cents, maybe 35, with the war tax.

Does it seem reasonable to suppose that anyone is going to the trouble of paying cable expenses on a 25 cent can of syrup? Don't you think the store must have mistaken Christmas for April Fools' Day?

JACK M. BARNETT, Pvt., Hq. Troop, 7th Div.

SILVER CHEVRONS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: Having seen many silver chevrons similar to our gold chevrons in several stores, my curiosity is aroused. I have been told that they are chevrons awarded for six months' service in the States. I have never seen any order or regulation regarding them, but have heard many rumors. In order to settle an argument, will you please enlighten me?

X., Field Artillery.

POWDER RIVER

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: In your November 29 issue you have an article on the Powder River war cry.

That has been the Montana National Guard war cry for several years back, and the old 2nd Montana Infantry had it in the days of Douglas, Arizona, in 1916. Powder River is a small stream that comes from the south up through Montana and empties into the Yellowstone about 15 miles east of Miles City.

The Powder River valley is a famous ranching country, and the Powder River cowpunchers originated the war cry, which is: "Powder River, a mile wide and an inch deep! Let 'er buck!"

The 2nd Montana Infantry is now the 163rd Infantry, a part of the 41st Division, now the 1st Depot Division, and as our organization was used to replace the First American Army over here last January, we were unable to carry our war cry over the top as we had planned.

FRED L. BREER, 1st Lt., U.S.A., Formerly of 2nd Montana Infantry.

PLAYING THE MARKET

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: We have a man we want to put up against the man who started the hog ranch as the world's champion agriculturist and stockman.

After an injection of "wealthy water," our mess sergeant paid 95 francs for a nice fat sheep for our New Year's dinner. After the butchers had been paraded and inspected, the sheep was found to be two sheep, and while congratulations were being offered the mess sergeant on his rare bargain, another showed up. We can't separate the family, and there are too many for the company. On top of that, we can't get as much for all of them as we paid for the one. If any one can beat this as an example of the shrewd purchasing ability of the American stockman, or as a hard luck story, let us know.

C. A. 111th Am. Tr. P.S.: We have named the twin Alpha and Omega, as it is a cinch that one is the first and we hope that the other is the last sheep to be born in our mess-hall.