

The Stars and Stripes

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FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1919.

WAR—AS WE KNOW IT

The Flag of Ehrenbreitstein may wear a few more summers, but this summer is the last that the A.E.F., as most of us know it, will sweat through. We've finished And we have the satisfaction of knowing that we did a good job and we're glad to quit.

But can we carry the lesson home? Photographs can't do it. Many will come to Belleau Wood, people who have read all about the Great War. Already worn paths scar that once pathless hell.

And those little villages in the valleys! Their strange, sad windows look out across fresh meadows now like staring blinded eyes. They are so still, so deathly still—not a single wisp of friendly smoke, no human color, only a garish patch perhaps, where some unremembering bush flaunts its green branch across the gray.

This cannot touch the tourist. The home folk can never feel it beside their friendly hearths. Nobody under God's great tranquil skies can tell of the rottenness of war but the men who suffered through it.

Upon them rests a solemn duty. They must go home and choke the coward jingo who masks himself behind his false and blatant patriotism, and the merchant-politician, not content with stuffing his home coffers till they burst—but anxious to barter the blood of his country's young manhood for new places in the sun!

The Prussian Guardsman died hard, fighting for such a place. The men in frock coats who make the laws never had to stand up against him. They never took a machine gun nest or saw a barrage roll down, stop and then uncurtain a wall of shrieking steel.

We know, but we cannot give that knowledge to others. But upon it we can act. We can help build a League of Nations with such sinews of war and such conscience for peace that no one will dare oppose it.

A JOB TO DO

The American Legion is made up of demobilized soldiers—men who know what it means to surrender individual impulse and desire in a common effort, and who will not soon forget, in their returned freedom of choice and action, the days when it was "theirs not to reason why." Whatever of good there is in the American Army system is known to Legion members; whatever there is of bad is also known to them.

It is reasonable to expect that the Legion, aside from being an association of those who contributed to America's effort in the great war, will maintain a genuine interest in those who remain in uniform now that the great war is over, or who shall wear that uniform in the years to come.

The new standing Army of America—if we are to have one—should be something better than the one in which, good as it had always shown itself to be, the American public showed so little interest before the great war.

Regulations under which the A.E.F. chafed and swore—and lied and evaded—were an inheritance from the old Regular Army. True, the old poppycock of addressing officers only in the third person died early in the game under the stress and hurry of actual warfare, but there were many other fetiches, more important and more irksome, that persisted to the end.

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Later the Army of the United States

borrowed many drill forms, many regulations, from the super-efficient Prussian Army, modified to be sure, but still retaining enough of Prussianism about them to make them repugnant to the freemorn American. Now that the Prussian Army has been shown up for all time as not only not super-efficient but also as a mess, it would seem high time that we Americans devised a military system and military regulations that would be entirely American in spirit and method alike.

Of course, all wars are relics of the ancient era; and Armies, with which wars are waged, must, to run true to form, retain many aspects of the mediæval. Even as all wars constitute a subversion of liberty, so must the instruments with which they are conducted demand a certain renunciation of individual liberty on the part of their component members, in the interests of discipline and of united action.

Still, it does seem that an Army of freemen, recruited solely for the defence of a nation that knows neither caste nor aristocracy nor serfdom, could be so constituted that the youth of that nation would be eager and willing to serve in it, with heads held high, and feel no abrogation of their status, their liberty in the serving. That kind of an Army would be an American Army.

THE BUCKS

The man in olive drab perhaps does not realize the prestige of having been a private all through the war. He knows just what he did; Sam Brownes and non-com chevrons have not always made the man in the ranks of the fighters, for the keystone of the Army arch has been and always will be the lowly buck.

But Mrs. Jones is going to lean over the back fence and say to Mrs. Smith, "It's so fine to have Jimmy back with me, and him a corporal." And the mother of Pvt. Tommy Smith will sigh and almost think her son a failure.

But Mrs. Smith has only to refer to the thousand and one things that have been done by the privates—who are and will be privates until the end—to gain all the satisfaction she wants.

A recent letter told of the conferring of a degree by Oxford University on Casual Buck Private Frank Reid, of the A.E.F., a former Rhodes scholar who already had three university degrees.

Another reported the speech of a Medical Major at a Victory Loan rally in Alexandria, La., in which that gentleman communicated the startling information that it was the Red Cross which "furnished the men with food, clothing and everything else they needed;" claimed that the Americans had plainly shown in this war that five of them could whip "a hundred men of any other nation," and in telling of his triumphant entry into the French capital, said: "When we reached Paris, we paraded the streets and passed in review before the King of France and other French dignitaries."

It is impossible to consider the American forces in France, and the privates were the bulk of it, as a failure. They were its hewers of wood and its drawers of water. They suffered the most. They gave the most. And there are many who think that, despite stripes and fringes, they got the most out of it.

Once back as a free citizen in a free country, the Buck will soon be able to put to rest all doubts as to whether or not he was a success in the A.E.F. He can let others argue over the Army promotion system, the placing of men, favoritism and the like. There await the great ranks of all of us who work, a future where there are no bars and stripes, and where, in the words of President Wilson, "there is no uniform except the uniform of the heart."

FINI!

THE STARS AND STRIPES is no more, but before its swan song took the breeze it had the satisfaction of achieving the final stamp of authenticity, the last brand of the genuine O.D. article, like slum and reveille, for it was generously included in a long list of Army products and held up to violent arraignment by a discharged soldier whose words were widely quoted in the States.

About the worst thing that our gentle critic could say about the sheet was the fact that all the time that the buck who was the editor was busy answering angry letters from top cutters and other autocrats and trying to get Wally to draw his cartoon a few hours before the deadline, a legend was appearing on the masthead in which "G-2-D" was a part of the postoffice address.

"Ah-ha!" said the corporal, and put down another note in his book. "Some day I'll get back and tell the world that the General Staff ran a propaganda paper."

The facts are these: There was a censorship on THE STARS AND STRIPES. It was made up of some three privates and one fat sergeant. They sat on every article and if they caught the scent of the press agent, the promotion-hunter, or the officer who wanted to explain all about what the enlisted man really thought, they threw the said contribution into the waste basket and Rags, the credulous office bloodhound, swallowed it.

Once in a while this board was fooled. Once in a while news prophecies of beef-steak and ice cream got into the columns but did not come true until long afterward. Once in a while some joyful enthusiast put over some Pollyanna-keep-smiling rubbish, but it wasn't often. You can fool some of the people all of the time but you can't fool every a soldier-editor all of the time.

So let them wield their hammers if they will. THE STARS AND STRIPES is lowered with this, its seventy-first issue, with malice toward none, with charity for all, and apologies to nobody.

The Army's Poets

THE STARS AND STRIPES

I've seen it all the way from Havre And Bordeaux to the Rhine; In trenches in camp, in hospital, In S.O.S. and line; I've seen it where Yanks landed, Where they laughed and loafed and fought, In barracks, billets, dugouts, And holes of every sort; I've seen it stuffed in helmets That wobbled on the head; As inner soles for issue boots— Sometimes I've seen it read, What's this I've seen, in cold and wet, In mud and dust and heat? The Stars and Stripes, the doughboy's "pape," The Yanks' official sheet.

I remember out at Number Two, One day last summer—gee! The way the wounded crowded in Would make you sick to see, The fracture ward was worst of all, And worst of those trussed up In slings and splints and pulleys— A little red-head pup, The other boys knew why the nurse Stood wiping off his head, And asked and watched and listened For news of "Little Red." The thought the kid was going west, Until he sighs and pipes—"Say, nurse," he grins, "you reckon I could get a Stars and Stripes?"

Another time, at St. Benoit, One gorgeous autumn day, The M.G. boys were lying round In shallow holes and hay, Way off, a mile or two in front, Where guns were going "bang." Old Brother Boche's big ones, Could never fret this gang, They lay quiet in the sunshine, A-shag on their back-labs, Or smoking swapping insults, Or shapping up their packs, One lad was sprawled out reading, And dreaming more or less; One hand was holding cooties; One held the S. and S.

You can't tell what these historians We say about this scrap; Of men, gas, guns and aeroplanes, With Heine of the map, But I bet if they had been around— Had seen what I have seen— They'd include the Stars and Stripes With them that licked 'em clean, DANIEL T. PIERCE, A.R.C.

WAITING, JULY 25, 1918

Waiting, this idle sail over the sea, Waiting, as we draw slowly up to shore, It's closer now, whatever it may be; That thing we have not seen, but soon will see, Waiting for war.

There's nothing we can do now; we must wait Idle as moon-beams in this sleepy night, While brothers charge against the guns we hate And friends whose lips were quick with love but late Fall in our fight.

The great loom weaves, The tale is being told, Now, while we draw our futile, anxious breath Our long, grim line against their heights is rolled, And fat, straight lads whose smiles we loved of old Go out to death.

We wait here in the outer dark, The fight Is being met or won, The time grows late, They wait for us, We strain out to the light, Of our great day, We come, with all our might, But now, we wait, SANFORD R. GIFFORD, M.C.E.H. 19.

PITY THE POOR OFFICER

Has to salute 'em all, privates and all of 'em, Has to watch out for the consummate gall of 'em, Has to make sure that they give him the high-bump.

Has to be good and behave like the rest of 'em, Never can go on a tear like the rest of 'em, No raising hell just to show off the zest of 'em, Has to be martial from toenail to eyeball.

No chasing around with a skirt like the bunch of 'em, Wouldn't look right, and they might lose the punch of 'em, Has to remember, he sets an example, Has to be dignified, more than the mob of 'em, More rules to follow than any low slob of 'em, Just because he's got the most flashy job of 'em, Has to dress up like a tailor-made sample.

No café parties along with the gang of 'em, Good Lord! Suppose that the bucks got the hang of 'em, Make Army discipline blow up, ker-blooy! No chance to go and shoot craps with the crowd of 'em, Has to be moral so all will be proud of 'em, Only associate with the high ground of 'em, Praise be to Pete I ain't even a looper! TIP BLISS.

FANCY FREE

Above the busy world I go, My wings flash in the sun, And wires whistle in the breeze; My plane and I are one.

We pass a south-bound flock of geese— They swoop to let us by— We laugh to see men toll below My sturdy ship and I.

In all the seasons of the year We frisk about the skyway; While man runs out his meager race Below, on dusty highway.

Above the busy world I'll go, A lofty race I'll run— Until the Reeper calls to me, My plane and I are one. B. C. CLARKE, 1,111th Aero.

IN PARTING

Ah, France, we go, but not soon to forget The verdure of the fields we roomed with you; Some stronger bond beneath your flowers will yet Be holding charms to keep the friendship true.

Some flash of youthful cheek, some sterner tear, Some heartaches that were shared a while with you— These hold the brotherhood you gave us here, More sacred than a soldier's weak adieu.

Ah, France, your verdured fields will always bring A sad vision to rose and violet, The which will lend a subtle charm to things For each of us till neither can forget.

SENTIMENTAL STUFF

In a little French town she is waiting for me, Praying for me, supplicating for me, But I'm off her for life, though I seem stony-hearted.

In a brief time she'll be wiring for me, Cabling for me, inquiring for me, I like her all right, but 'tis well that we parted, I suppose that her heart is fast breaking for me, And that soon overseas she'll be making for me, But I cannot help that; she can come if she'd like to.

If she feels like it, she can keep pining for me, What do care for her whining for me, For she told me one day just what place I could hike to. Oh, it isn't that she's sentimental for me, She's sixty, and too temperamental for me, But you cannot demand that your landress be nifty, For weeks she destroyed all my clothing for me, And—here is poured out she feels loathing for me— When I went away I still owed her four francs fifty. 293.770.

L'ENVOI

The nights we spent where the Boche flares lent, Their red glare to the moonlit sky, Are now forgot and another spot Is left on the map of the world.

"PASS IN REVIEW—"



The sketches here reproduced, the work of Pvt. C. Le Roy Baldridge, Inf., A.E.F., have appeared from time to time in THE STARS AND STRIPES as it chronicled the A.E.F.'s fight for victory and lasting peace. They are reprinted now in the final number as constituting, in a sense, a graphic resume of the Yanks from the days of the old trenches to the days of the watch on the Rhine.

THE ADOPTED GRAVES

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: We all know the shadow figures of the mothers of the world who, behind the curtain of distance, have spent dream-haunted years waiting for messages that came or did not come. But I saw the spirit of the motherhood of all the world last Friday afternoon in the cemetery of Suresnes, where 7,000 American soldiers heard President Wilson give his Memorial Day address.

I had gone to the grave of one who had been my best friend. I found there—a plainly dressed, old mother of France. And she was weeping. Had she made a mistake, in spite of that little American flag which fluttered under the white cross?

I intruded on her grief. I asked her gently why she cried. She answered me in French, "Monsieur, his grave was given me to keep green," she said. "His grave, and the grave of the other boy over there. The women of the town had been tending the graves—and these two I have taken. My husband works hard, and of money there is not much. But I bought the plants and the flowers and the vines—the green things that should hide the ugly earth. I planted them and they all grew. And as I tended them I prayed for him, for I thought of him as my own Jean who died three years ago and is buried where I do not know. I prayed for his mother, who must be thinking as I have been thinking.

"But, Monsieur, when I came today, the vines were gone, the plants were gone—all that I had planted with my own hands was gone. It meant so much to me that I weep, even though the flags they are beautiful and though the flowers other hands have laid there are beautiful, too—but they are not my flowers, and my vines are gone. Monsieur how old was he, and what did he look like?" He was 22. Her Jean was 23, and she wept some more. And he must have been like Jean—tall, dark-haired and always laughing and making fun of an old woman's fears. Yes, he would always be to her as her own boy buried in an unknown grave.

She did not weep again. The grave, she said, would always be watched. Her husband came, too, sometimes, she said. I have no fear of any misunderstandings arising when those mourning fathers and mothers of America come to France to stand by the graves of their own. I have seen the spirit of motherhood that needs no language to make itself understood. A YANK.

ATTENTION! CONGRESS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: As many of the A.E.F. are interested in obtaining double time computation toward retirement for overseas service, would you kindly note in your paper that existing laws do not cover this class of service?

If those of us who are interested in the enactment of double time legislation would put the matter clearly before our local Congressmen and members of the House Military Committee, it is believed that favorable action would be taken by the present extra session of Congress. Therefore you would be conferring a favor upon thousands of men in the A.E.F. by calling their attention to the necessary procedure to follow towards the amendment of such legislation. RETIRING DISPOSITION.

HEADLINES OF A YEAR AGO

From THE STARS AND STRIPES of June 14, 1918. VERDUN BELLE, MARINE'S PAL, FINDS HER OWN—Trench Broken Master Dog Waits for Master on Battle's Rim. DOCTORS MARVEL AT GRIT OF WOUNDED—Only One Outcry in Busy Week in Four Dressing Rooms. 15,000 TROOPS, SAILED FROM NEW YORK YEAR AGO TODAY AS FIRST FIGHTING CONTINGENT OF A.E.F.—Many Rookies Among Four Regiments of Infantry and One of Marines. MISSING CAPTAIN, MOURNED AS LOST, READY FOR NEXT GO—Officer and Three Privates Spend Night in Bullet-Swept Field. MAKE THEM PAY, NATION'S WORD TO PROFITERS—President's Attitude Toward New Tax Bill Has Country's Backing.

THAT LUMBER CAMP

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: I read with great interest the letter about the lumber camp which appeared in the May 23 issue. Now I must take off my hat to the guy for having a smooth line. As I am an old timber-beast myself, and was well acquainted with Paul Bunyan, I know he was not the original. He was only an acting private to the old gent.

Now to describe the real Old Man Bunyan. He was very tall, to be exact, six axe handles from the ground, free from limbs. I might add that it took five 100-pound sacks of smoking tobacco and three rolls of tar-paper to make a cigarette for the old gentleman. I remember one day the cook was late in blowing the dinner horn. Old Paul comes dashing madly into the cook-shack, jerks the horn from its resting place, sticks the small end of it out of the window, and peals forth one long blast. Just outside of the camp stood as fine an 80 acres of white pine as ever grew. The concussion of the blast was so strong that it uprooted every single tree on the 80 and blew it into the wrong end of the horn, the whole winter cut would have been blown to the saw mills 300 miles distant.

The handy man possessed a very inventive mind. One of the tasks assigned to him was to grease the hot cake griddle. This was a very large one. He got five men, equipped them with roller skates, tied a ham to each of their ankles and made them skate around over the surface of the griddle. Result! A nice, greasy griddle for the rest of the winter. As it has been so long ago since we logged on the Little Onion, I can't remember what the color of the snow was. I do remember, however, that it was so cold that winter on the Little Onion that your 400 below weather would have looked like the climate of the tropics beside it. It was so cold that words froze right in the air. All winter long the weather remained that way. If one said "Hello" he could see it hanging in the air. If a teamster swore at his team, the sound of his voice would freeze also. That spring when the thaw came you could see all of those oaths thaw out the same day. Never in all history since the beginning of man was a more terrible profane barrage thrown over than that that was spring on the Little Onion.

I hauled black pepper there that winter. It kept 14 four-horse teams, making four trips per day to supply the camp with pepper. I mention it this just so the size of our ration transportation job can be imagined. All this happened in the State of Wisconsin, the winter before the winter of the blue snow, in the year of the big zero, with a small zero in the center, on the Round and Little Onion Rivers. I might add here that Round River was round. Its course ran in a circle. In other words it had no mouth nor outlet. All good, swift, white, foaming water, too. FARO JESSEMY, Sgt., Co. B, 1st Fld. Sig. Bn.

OUT OF LUCK

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: I notice that many of the papers in the States and one or two of the American editions over here are quoting General March as saying that the entire A.E.F. will sail for home by June 12, with the exception of the Army of Occupation.

Now, I know—and so do many others—that less than one-third of the S.O.S. will leave France by that date. The fact that veterans will be held over here until they are cured has been given wide publication both here and at home, and when the time comes for our sailing as announced and we do not show up at home, it is going to be hard to convince them of the misunderstanding. I hope to see a definite announcement in regard to this before we have to say goodbye to THE STARS AND STRIPES. I am sure such an article will be preserved for self-defense by a large number of the gang who are out of luck. C. C. C., Sup. Co. 320, Q.M.C.

FOR THE STAYERS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: I understand that those of us who are getting discharged here for the purpose of settling in France (and for avoiding the unpleasantness attendant on living in the States after July 1), are not going to be allowed to retain our old uniforms and things but must go down to St. Aignan all equipped with civvies. All right! ALL RIGHT! I'm no more averse to getting into civvies again than the next man; but, I ask you, what am I going to do for a uniform when the Societe des Anciens Combattants Americans takes it into its collective head to march down the Champs Elysees on the Fourth of July?

How am I going to look turning up for the annual Thanksgiving dinner of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Unreconstructed American Drinkers of Paris in an ordinary civilian soup-and-fish? And what in the name of time am I going to say to Little Babette when she snuggles up in my lap and inquires, "Papa, qu'est-ce que t'avais fait dans la grande guerre?" without no gas mask nor no helmet nor do nothing to prove that I once was a real, hard-gutted Yank?

If it's only French law that stands in the way of the wearing of the O.D. by the demobilized I should worry, because it seems to me I dimly remember a French law against the selling of cognac to persons in uniform. But if it's an Army, or a U.S. regulation that I can't keep some old O.D. rags for reunions and parades and impressing the family and such—well, I'll be demobilized by the time you print this (if you do)—I dare to say right out that I think 'taint fair. And 'taint; you tell 'em, buddy! Yours till the Y quits advertising itself, AN EXPATRIATED NEAR-EX-YANK.

THE ARMY POETRY

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: Of all the people interested in reading your paper, I rank most of them when it comes to interest. I look for it each day I come from school and several selections from the Poet's Corner have found a way into my scrap book of war poems and some of them have found their way into my heart. (MISS) ROSEMARY O'CONNELL, Chicopee, Mass.