

The Stars and Stripes

The official publication of the American Expeditionary Forces, authorized by the Commander-in-Chief, A.E.F. Written, edited and published every week by and for the soldiers of the A.E.F. All profits to accrue to subscribers' company funds.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 1919

THE BEST DIVISION

Which is the best division in the American Army? The editorial staff of this newspaper, though made up of men of almost incredible bravery, does not care to answer this question.

If you crave an answer, however, put the question to any division and you will get one—a clear, concise answer, given without blushes and with overwhelming conviction.

The prophets had had misgivings. They had foreseen that, with the constant flow of officers going home to instruct, with the steady exodus of the best non-coms to the candidates' schools, with the unending procession from the line to the hospitals, the divisions would be mere shells to contain an ever-changing personnel.

So there are likely to be some violent debates back home on the merits and records of the respective divisions. Indeed, the debates have already begun.

If a division was missing from any great battle line it might be (and probably was) fighting at some distant point shoulder to shoulder with the British or French, and there going through the crisis of its history.

As for the division on the left—well, it was notorious for always lagging behind. A battle line as charted from the conversations overheard in the various divisions comprising it resembled nothing in the world quite so much as a flight of stairs.

LOOKING FORWARD

When the A.E.F. gets home it will find that the old country has changed a good deal; and yet the changes have been comparatively unimportant.

One of those things is wholesome respect for honest industry and for the fruits gained in the pursuit of it.

For the A.E.F. the problem is just this: Its members will return home with everything in their favor, everybody shouting for them, everybody willing to lend them the helping hand.

That being the case, it will hardly avail any man who has been secretly counting on it to play the professional old soldier when he gets back home.

OVER THERE

Such of the A.E.F. as has not been under fire—and probably never will be now—has often mournfully referred to its bomb-proof but none-the-less onerous existence as the Battle of Tours, or Bordeaux, or Issoudun, or whatever spot fate and G.H.Q. chose to set it down in.

It now appears that these unshelled battlegrounds are not located exclusively in France. A considerable war has been raging in the continental United States.

A.E.F. be the only chevroned portion of the United States Army? Does not the man who remained behind, through no fault of his own, often through some special skill of his own that was needed more at home than it was in France, deserve recognition?

HER SERVICE STRIPES

The A.E.F. is still at war. The A.E.F. knows it. Squads east and squads west, outpost duty on a bridgehead, soldiering all over the A.E.F. from Archangel to Bordeaux and from Rome to Southampton, earning more service stripes.

It takes all kinds of men and some kinds of women to make up a real army. Read this girl's letter to a soldier:

Don't worry about me. Of course, I'm tired when I get back from the factory, and it's hard to keep a constant dollar from people in the red Cross booth after supper, but I don't as hard as it was. I've been made a forewoman in the plant now and I don't have the hard work with my hands, though it's pretty tough to keep the girls going sometimes, and I do miss the sun.

And this girl has a soldier husband, too, but that's the only uniform in the family. She doesn't wear one—just clothes, rough clothes, not the pretty ones she used to have, but the kind that will stand unimpaired wear.

There's a great big welcome for you (she writes) and we'll go for a long walk on the Parkway and have a good old-time dinner at Sam's chop house, and you'll tell me about the wonderful things you've seen. And you won't mind the few wrinkles I've got that I didn't have before, will you? They'll be my service stripes. I'm not doing too much, I'm not doing enough, for I've got to be able to look you and every doughboy and every Jackie in the eye when you get back and say, "Huddle, I was backing you up all the time."

No hands, no D.S.C.'s, but a real American girl. And there are lots—God bless 'em—backing the men up over here, and that's why the A.E.F. can stand it.

GERMANY

Many an honest German burgher, many a thrifty German husbandman, must be looking longingly to the west these days—not to America, not to England or Belgium or France, but to the banks of the German Rhine, patrolled and kept at peace by Allied troops.

For the strip of land beyond the three great bridgeheads where the soldiers of neither side may set foot is more than a neutral belt. It is the border line between order and chaos.

No one can foretell what will come out of that chaos. The world knows only that blood is running in the streets of Berlin after a 70-year interval during which people did not walk on the grass in the Tiergarten simply because it was verboten.

THE POULTRY PAGE

The original rule that THE STARS AND STRIPES should be written not only for but by the soldiers of the A.E.F. has been more rigidly obeyed than rules generally are. It is true that once in a great while we have printed contributions from the outside world, when they come from such men as M. Clemenceau or Rudyard Kipling, but for the most part we have regrettably but firmly declined the writings and drawings even of men and women of world-wide reputation.

The American soldiers have written and drawn this weekly of the war. American officers are not exactly barred (just), but the great bulk of the material has come from the enlisted men—witness this editorial. As a matter of fact, the rank most heavily represented among its contributors has been and is the lowly buck—witness the next editorial.

But all rules went by the boards when our friends the poult sent in (without return postage) enough copy to fill the page opposite. They, who have written some of the most beautiful pages in the history of man, can say what they like in our paper. Remembering full well what they did to some of the most dismaying of the German columns, we naturally opened to them those of this newspaper.

HOW ABOUT US?

The A.E.F. has no collective concern with prohibition any more than it has with freight rebates, the market price of sheet steel, or the ad valorem duty on kelp imports into Patagonia.

But when a news dispatch states that one explanation of the prohibition advocates' zeal since the A.E.F. came to France is their desire to put over prohibition before the A.E.F. gets home again, then the A.E.F. has the right to make a collective protest. For if the prohibitionists can get away with it, why cannot everybody else?

The A.E.F. represents a very fat share of the entire electorate of the United States—the electorate that picks governors, senators and presidential electors; that instructs its representatives how it wants them to vote on minimum wage and child labor laws; that helps decide whether the home town shall be wet, dry, bone dry, absolutely dry, or "Stranger, you simply can't get a drop in the whole place." And, in the name of common honesty, is it quite fair for prohibitionists or anybody else to attempt to secure a popular vote on a decision of nation-wide import when the folks who have been fighting for the same nation are calmly, blandly, deliberately left out?

As was earlier remarked, the A.E.F. has no collective concern with prohibition. But it at least ought to have the chance to express its will—it ought at least to be present, if only as a guard of honor, when the water wagon begins its solemn triumphal procession along the Lincoln highway.

The Army's Poets

UP WITH THE RATIONS

Hovering of darkness and coverlids of dawn— 'Tis wild the rain where the boys have gone! Creaking and creaking the ladders rattle on! Up with the rations—but the roads are gone!

"Which is the road to take?" "How many miles to make?" Never a nerve to shake— On with the game!

Shriek of the whirling shell, Bursting with flur of hell, Lightning the road to hell, Thank it the same!

Cooling of airplanes, hovering o'er you— (Mind you, the Infantry made it before you)

"Come, build this bridge again— Cut through the mud and grain— Work and forget the rain— Huddle those men!"

"Here, take this overcoat; Cover that wounded bloke, Pull it around his throat— He's kickin' in!"

How the mud oozes and clings to the ration cart, Clings the rime of the tires till they hold! How the mules fret at the load when the wagons start

Stretching the traces from lashes that coil! "God! What a fierce barrage! There goes a team at large! Where is that transport surge? Finding a hole?"

Never a chance to run for cover, This is the way he puts them over— "Bring on that set of spurs! Pull off them murdered mares! Hitch on two more mules— And fix that pole!"

"Now—on at a crack as I give you the sign, Dig into her ribs and shoot for the line! Or find yourself drivin' a limber in hell And ball up my dope on the drops of the shell!"

Close enough now, for a shot from a gunner's nest To warn you that Fritz is sniping out there— Close enough now, for a whisper to give you rest To last you a while with never a care!

"Sir! Your rations are delivered!" "Oh, it's welcome to the dawn, lad. When the night is long. For here's an empty cart, lad. That sings a lively song!"

Who would be part of the transport on a far flung battle line, With never a thrill of battle, with never a tip to whine?

But, oh, there's a song in a limber That throbs to the drum, my lad, And swinging along with the rations Is never one-half so bad.

For the glare and the gleam of a starshell And a comrade's eye "g'd bless it" Hold enough for the life of a soldier For the blood of a nery chap

And a lad lives close to his God, my lad, And, in his heart, his true, For it takes a person of parts, my lad, To get the rations through!

J. Palmer Cumming, R.S.S., 365th Inf.

THE DOUGHBOYS OF ARGONNE

While "Stuttering Auntie" chattered through the forest of Argonne, and the doughboys of Argonne, And hunger mists fought back the light of day, They joked about the speed of the barrage that fed them on

And wondered if the tanks would find the way. The mortar shells in front of them, the shrapnel burst above, Their comrades sinking quietly to the ground, The thought of duty held them and they felt, nor hate, nor love, But bravely fought, and won and held their ground.

They rested on the hillside as the evening shadows grew, And "Stuttering Auntie" chattered on ahead, And he who'd lost his bunkie, feeling just a little blue, Crawled round on hands and knees to find his dead.

And some will travel homeward to the bright land of their land, and some will sleep upon the ground they won, But, while we cherish freedom in the nations of the earth, We won't forget "The Doughboys of Argonne," P. K.

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Buck (late of the A.E.F.): "That's nothing, I was one myself."

IS THIS CAP YOUR SIZE?

Once upon a time there was a Scandinavian who wrote a play called "The Deluge." It dealt with life on the Mississippi, and in its three acts showed a strange, chance cluster of human beings penned in a basement café by a river flood, whose waters rose ominously higher and higher.

The curtain rises on a dismal, stormy night in one of those battles. The scene is the foul, evil-smelling little barn used as headquarters for a major commanding one of the supporting battalions, crouched waiting not far from the crests of Exermont.

It is raining. There has been little else except rain and mist these many days, and the whole tortured Argonne countryside is like one luke of ugly mud. In all the dugouts and shelters the men are trying to sleep. The Boche is keeping up a peevish, desultory fire, and now and again a shell smashes down in their midst. It doesn't bother them much.

Two strays, fugitives from some forestry outfit determined to see the front if they had to desert to get there, grope their way to the nearest glimmer of light and, so groping, blunder into battalion headquarters. They are drenched and hungry and without blankets. They are too weary for discretion, and, after having had with skill and enthusiasm a thousand M.P.'s, they blurt out their real story as they stand there shivering in the spluttering candle light. The major, with an

YET ONE MORE

To the Editor of the STARS AND STRIPES:— Anderson and Brooks opened the hot cake contest with records made in France. As they worked under conditions, at best, were unfavorable, I refrained from making my achievements against theirs. But now that J. Gorman Strasles comes along with a record made over in God's country, my hat is also in the ring.

I worked in the iron mining country of northern Minnesota. We had 2,000 compound locomotives and 100,000 cars at work hauling away the ore to the lake front. Sixty-five thousand steam shovels were on the job, and there were 9,800 miles of railroad track in the pits. A fleet of 22 five-ton trucks carried production reports to the office. The battle of the Marne, if it had taken place in these times, would have created no more disturbance than a canary perched on top of a stone crusher.

As the whole crew at these mines was fed under one roof, the kitchen was, of necessity, the ninth wonder of the world. The pantry consisted of a trashed and warehouse where freight trains were unloading from six tracks day and night. Eleven hundred men worked in the pantry and kitchen proper. The hot cakes were baked in a separate room by special machinery designed and perfected by myself. The griddle consisted of 800 steel plates 15 by 30 feet linked together and run over a series of gas jets on the endless chain principle.

At the beginning of the run grease was automatically applied to the plates from a heavy brush 30 feet wide fed through the back by 60 one-inch pipes. The batter was applied as the plate assumed a level position by 1,800 nozzles geared to the rest of the machinery in such a manner that they automatically opened and emitted just sufficient batter for one cake at just the right time. As 400 plates were in operation at a time, there were constantly 720,000 cakes in various stages of completion. To turn them the chain of plates was carried over special pulleys half

uncasy feeling that he ought to be severe with them, grins and divides with them the store of bread and jam waiting for him. Though it is his first meal that day, he has not felt quite comfortable about that jam, anyway. No one else in the battalion had jam.

Afterward, with the promise that they will have troubles enough when the battalion moves forward, he gives each of them one of his three blankets and tells them to make room for themselves on the floor by the process of shoving the sleeping orderly into the corner. The orderly, thoroughly aroused, rends the air with his disapproval and invites the two strays to divide all outdoors between them. The major interferences.

"Your brother's up in the line, isn't he, Brown?"

"Yes, sir."

"Lying in an open foxhole now, I guess?"

"I guess so, sir."

"Very likely hasn't had anything to eat today?"

"For yesterday, either."

"Guess you'd better shut up, hadn't you, Brown?"

A pause.

"I guess I had, major. Here buddies, here's another blanket. It's full of cooties, but what isn't? Good night."

Soon the fragrant barn is buzzing with the snoring of the strays and of the orderly lying with his head pillowed comfortably on the orderly's stomach.

Six weeks elapse. The scene changes.

Although our friend the major reappears, it cannot be said, however, that the characters remain the same. The setting is now a beautiful German hotel, of which the myriad windows look down on the tranquil Rhine. The same major is now seen furiously pacing the riverside verandah, fuming to himself and here and there voice rises to a crescendo of the billeting officer.

"What do you mean by it?" he bursts out when that much badgered individual arrives breathless at last. "My room has no bath attached to it. The next room, the very next room, has a bath attached. That room—"

and here the voice rises to a crescendo of righteous indignation—"that room has been assigned to a man who is only a captain!"

At the end of the run they automatically unloaded themselves on to a conveyor belt which ran down the entire length of the chow house. The length of this building may be computed from the fact that it took six paper mill whistles to relay the mess call from the kitchen to the farther end, and the curvature of the earth had to be considered in designing the machinery to carry the belt.

Owing to the perfection of the machinery, the only working force in the hot cake room consisted of a crew of 60 armed with gallon cans who kept the bearings oiled, and 100 machine tenders in the power house, the size of which may be estimated from the fact that six weeks were required for the building of the concrete foundations for the engines.

While the cakes were baking, I sat on a high platform, my eye constantly on a huge board before me which carried 76 indicators on which I read at all times the exact operation of every part of the machinery. This was rather an automatic way of baking hot cakes, but as no hand touched them from the time the batter was prepared in the heater room till the completed product was spread from the conveyor belt in the mess hall, I consider myself as being the one who did the baking, and wish to enter the contest.

I am not particular about conditions, but would suggest the following: No remarks from the gallery; no coaching from the side lines; winner take the gate receipts and loser eat the hot cakes.

Guino J. Freund, Q.M.C.

BONSOIR, MONSIEUR

To the Editor of the STARS AND STRIPES:— Would be grateful if you would publish the following in your paper:

There are several men in the A.E.F. with the same name as mine. I would appreciate any communication received from any one of them.

1st Sgt. AUSTIN P. GOODNIGHT, B Co., 5th Bn., Con. Camp, A.P.O. 788.

A LETTER TO DAD

To the Editor of the STARS AND STRIPES:— Your Father's Day no doubt brought out some interesting matter in the form of letters to Dad. I am enclosing herewith a letter from a boy of German parentage to his Dad. It reads good, I believe, and thinking some other readers of THE STARS AND STRIPES might enjoy it, I secured permission to send it on to you. You may use it for publication if you so desire.

Yours,
CHARLES H. GRASSER, 2nd Lt., S.C.

France, November 23 1918.

Dear Dad: This is the first letter that I have written to you in years. Seems that I always have only enough time for one letter, and it was sort of right to send it to Mother. However, this is Father's Day in the A.E.F. and we all promised to write a letter to Dad. So here goes.

Do you know, I think the Old Gads back home instigated the whole affair for the purpose of receiving at least one letter from the boys over here. Guess it was rather tough to have to depend on the ladies to drop a few lines of the news such as they felt willing to hand out. A kind of crawling to pick up the crumbs dropped by the chosen few. Of course we never thought of it in that light, so don't blame you a bit for starting a little propaganda in your own favor.

Things have been going just fine with me. Lots of interesting work, too. It seems the joke is on the folks back home. Understand that you celebrated the armistice several days before it was signed. To give you the dope straight, it is I believe the morning of November 11. Of course I didn't hand the Kaiser the pen or anything like that. But you can bank on this being the straight dope. I didn't fire the last shot, either. But it was fired at 10:59 the same morning.

Dad, our friends sure did spoil this country several days before it was signed. You can't imagine just what it is like unless you could see and smell it. There are two of holes in the ground and a sign with the name of the village is about all there is left of the place. Our friends didn't play the game square, Dad, and I sort of feel ashamed of them. You know, just like you would feel if your friend were caught cheating at pool on the side of a hill. I used to try to find excuses to offer myself for him, but I'm through with him, Dad. He's a real fellow, this Fritz. Not at all like he used to be some 35 years ago. Guess all the good ones came to America in 1860, and that's why Germany went on the bum. No good fellows left to run her.

I never told you, Dad, but I sure felt proud of you back in '17 when I came home after being in the Army six months without your knowing it. But you sure were just how you would take it. But you sure were a good fellow. I was surprised to see me back in the United States. Guess you were sort of afraid that I and the crew would sort of leave you in the lurch as the Dutch father of a bunch of bum Americans. Guess now we didn't take the wind out of the sails of some of those birds who thought they were Yankee and called us Dutchies. It sure made me laugh to see some of those fellows and the shipyards when the draft came around.

Well, Dad, in guerre est finie, and we are all coming back home too sweet French for us (so bad wie möglich). We'll have a good old fashioned blow-out when we all get together, and I sure you will see it that we don't have to link ice water, either.

Give my love to Mummy and all the neighbors.

Yours,
CHARLES H. GRASSER, 2nd Lt., S.C.

France, November 23 1918.

To the Editor of the STARS AND STRIPES:— Being a member of the S.O.S., I have keenly enjoyed the running comments and quips made at the expense of that branch of the service. I have listened to the funniest laughter the loudest, from the fact that the folks who brayed the loudest were combatant officers who never saw front line service.

Recently I was entertained by a group of aviators, dressed in regulation swank, who kept their division in the line. The 3rd Pull Down Your Service Flag, Your Son's in the S.O.S." This was sung in a public place.

After inquiring as to how long they had been in France, I received the reply that they had arrived in October, and had not made any flights at the front.

The reason this is entertainment for me is that, until October 20, I had been a member of the 3rd Division and had seen front line service until being commissioned in the Q.M.C. I have seen Q.M. officers work day and night, while under severe fire, in order to keep their division in the line. The 3rd Division, Q.M., for instance, kept a ration dump just outside of Montfaucon, directly in the rear of the Infantry reserve trenches, and had casualties every day.

The one and only branch of the service that has any right to swank for enduring the most hardships is the doughboys—and they don't say anything.

Yours,
Q.M. OFFICER.