IN MEMORIAM FATHER O'FLAHERTY

When the 28th Infantry came out of the line in Argonne to sprawl in well-earned rest, any visitor to the candle-lit billets or to the little October camp-fires was sure, sooner or later, to hear the talk reach the name of their lost friend and priest, Father O'Flaherty—Chaplain C. E. O'Flaherty, killed in action at Very, France, October, 1918.

Then is the time to get at the truth about a man, because after such a battle death seems far too common a thing for any one to have pretty nothings said about him just because he is dead.

One night, when the fog dimmed the light of the full moon, they were talking about Father O'Flaherty—a chance miscellany of officers and men, gathered around a sunken fire, where, on a sizzling griddle, some one was turning the flapjacks made from a supply of recently acquired German flour.

"I was with him when he was killed—or not more than 20 feet away," a young lieutenant said. "All that morning he had been burying German dead. Then at noon, when a shell struck a truck at Very at the crossroads which used to be Very—and when every one scattered to the four winds, Father O'Flaherty hotfooted it to the place to see who was hurt and what could be done about it. The second shell got him—killed him outright."

Thought Cane Was Loaded

"Nervy guy, he was," the cook observed. "The doughboys tell me he went over the top with them at every fight since Soissons."

"Sure he did. I can see him now with that big cane of his—parading along through the mud. I remember how he used to point this way and that with it. Once, when he was trying to show a bunch of German prisoners at St. Mihiel the way to the nearest lock-up for Heinies, he had to do all his talking with the cane. They thought he was going to hit them and yelled 'Kamerad' till he most died laughing."

"He accused me of swearing at him at St. Mihiel," said a captain, grinning reminiscently. "I denied it."

"'Yes, you did, captain,' he says, trying to look solemn, 'and highly improper it was, too. It was just before the zero hour and you barked at me, "Keep that damned nut of yours down or you'll lose it!"'"

"What I used to enjoy," said another, "was watching him suavely toying with all of you, making monkeys of you when you didn't know it. A man of the world he was, and you were all just children in his hands."

There was no denial.

"Do you remember his blessed bedding roll? Lord, it was the biggest and finest in the A.E.F.—size of an eight-room cottage. A gift, I think, from his loving parish out in Mitchell, South Dakota. When he joined us he was too green to know the trenches were not palatial enough to make room for that kind of housekeeping.

"Well, it was brought up on a munition cart, and the driver forgot to push it off at the P.C. as he had been told. Later on, further up, that cart was hit with a shell which blew the darned bedding roll up a tree.

"It mystified Jerry a good deal. Finally, he must have decided it was a sniper's nest, for he potted away at it all the next week. Poor old bedding roll! It was wounded in a thousand places!"

A Mathematical Debate

"I remember once when he first came to France," the K. of C. man said. "He was billeted right near one of those big French naval guns, and while we were waiting for him one rainy day we saw him through the window, pacing up and down the road, talking, talking, talking to a little poilu, the mathematician of the battery, whose job was to calculate the trajectories and all that sort of thing.

"'Well, Father,' we said when he came in at last, 'been showing him how to hit the cathedral at Metz?' 'Not exactly,' he said; 'that little chap's a priest. I've just come from confession.'"

"That new chaplain of ours is no slouch, either," said a man from the Engineers who had dropped in hopefully, smelling the griddlecakes from afar. "Name's Cannon. Don't know where he comes from. Not a Catholic, I imagine. Don't know just what his church is. Nobody does. When they ask him, he just says, 'I'm what you are.' He made a good many friends on Hill 269.

"I guess you know it was the Engineers who took that little old hill for you, and a rotten hard fight it was, for we haven't a lot of machine guns and hand grenades and fancy things like you fellows have. Just rifles and shovels for us. Well, the chaplain, he was in the thick of it every minute. I'll never forget him burying that officer. Dug the grave with one of those dinky little Medical Department axes. Covered him over, dropped on his knees and whistled taps over the grave. That chaplain doesn't know what fear is."

"Same with O'Flaherty," said the cook.

"That was the trouble," said the private, pouring out the last spoonful of batter and, as he did so, unconsciously phrasing for all of them the dead priest's epitaph. "He was too damned brave."

PREMIUM CHANGES FIGURED ON JULY 1

War Risk Regulation Alters Present Computation from Birthday

The monthly premium rate on War Risk insurance policies will hereafter change on July 1 for every policy holder, instead of on his birthday, as previously. This means that no changes will be made in the premium rate for any one in the A.E.F. until July 1, 1919.

Thus, if a soldier took out a policy for $10,000 at the age of 27, his birthday being May 25, and his monthly premium $6.70, he will not begin to pay a monthly premium of $6.80 until July 1, 1919. Under the former ruling he would have to pay $6.80 beginning with the premium deduction from his May, 1919, pay.

In cases where the insurance has become effective since July 1, 1918, the premium change will come into operation July 1, 1920, not July 1, 1919.

RUBBING IT IN

"Get any mail today?"

"Yes, a railroad folder telling me to 'see America first.'"

IT MUST BE LAUGHING GAS

WHEN THE BIG TANKS GO OVER

When the future dissipates the sheen of anonymity which shrouds many incidents of today, the annals of the American Tanks Corps will supply their share of thrillers for the history of this war. Something is known of the exploits of the American small tanks in the crushing of the St. Mihiel salient and the desperate fighting in the Argonne. Less has been heard of the American-manned heavy tanks.

American-manned heavies—of British design and manufacture—are operating, however, and have already won their spurs. They were with the American troops with the British Army in Picardy and have been in action several times in the last month. They forged ahead with the Infantry in the historic assault which broke the Hindenburg line.

As we compute things in this war, they were few in numbers. But, in their debut into European warfare, the Americans worked beside and held their own with veteran British tank men, and won the latters' praise and commendation.

The Bellicourt region was the only stretch of front in Picardy where the Hindenburg line did not have the protection of water frontage. Being the only vulnerable sector to attack by tanks, the Boche had massed anti-tank weapons there without stint. If it had been possible for the Germans to stop tanks, they would have stopped them there.

The British officers didn't make any bones about these facts when they gave the American tank crews their instructions.

"It's going to be a hot fight," the Yanks were told, "but you'll get through."

The prediction was right. The fighting was hot, and the Yanks got through. Their losses were not heavy. In fact, considering the preparations of the Germans and their determination to cling to the Hindenburg line, they were surprisingly light both in tanks and men. The figures are regarded as evidence of the wonderful offensive value of the tank in general and a testimonial to the ability of the Americans that manned them.

One of the most notable feats of the heavies was performed by a tank commanded by a lieutenant which, unattended by Infantry, broke through the Hindenburg line, passed two more support lines important enough to have a name of their own on the Boche war map, crossed a small river and wound up in a village which was then being utilized as a German reserve camp.

On the way the Germans tried every way they could to stop the monster, but it was unharmed when it gained the village and opened up on the reserves with six pounders and all its machine guns. The Germans disappeared in all directions. Then the Boche artillery scored three direct hits on the tank.

A direct hit on the tank is usually not so bad on the occupants as it sounds. Even a big shell rarely causes casualties to more than a few of the crew. In this instance four men escaped from the tank, and two of them, the lieutenant and a sergeant, rejoined their command after being listed as missing two days. They had crawled back through the Boche lines.

The tanks usually line up and start from a tape very much like foot racers at a track meet. The tape is laid by reconnaissance men. It is usually a little distance behind the front line.

On one occasion, so it seemed to the tank men, it wasn't very far behind the front line, however. On the other hand it seemed to be in front of it. The tanks got under way all right, but they had gone only a few yards when they found themselves in the thick of it with German machine gun nests on all sides.

"The man that laid that tape," observed the sergeant, "was the greatest optimist I ever saw."

The noise of the engines drowns the noise of battle in the heavies. The operators are not even annoyed by the sound of their own machine guns or six pounders. Also, odors in a tank from gasoline, engine oil, heated metal, departing six-pound shells, and so forth, are varied. It takes a keen nose to detect the presence of gas.

A tank crew's activity is not necessarily terminated if their ship is put out of commission, as was proved several times.

One sergeant got out of a disabled tank, too command of an Infantry platoon, and fought for two days. The crew of a second tank, when their unnatural means of locomotion went out of commission, detached their machine guns and went forward as an improvised machine gun squad.

On another occasion a British officer, seeing an American tank stalled, asked for two volunteers to replace two British machine gunners who had been wounded. Everybody volunteered, but the British officer would take only two.

A dispute followed which was settled in a military manner. There were two lieutenants in the tank. They issued an order to themselves to go and then instructed all the enlisted men to stand by the tank.

A major went forward in one of the tanks, and evidently something happened to him which ought not to have happened to a major. A lieutenant, following in its wake, was hastening to overtake this same tank when he came upon a doughboy sergeant trudging rearward.

"Did you see a tank passing this way?" asked the lieutenant.

"Yes," said the doughboy, "and I saw something else I never saw before. I saw a major in dungarees, and he had a wrench in his hand and was working."

For the most part the tanks had heavy fighting, but sometimes they didn't.

One tank had been reeling along at its three-mile-an-hour utmost for 40 minutes, and the impatient crew had seen nary a sign of a German. Finally the commander stuck his head out and sought information from an Infantry captain.

"Where the devil are those Boches?" he demanded. "They must be moving out by train."

Although the tank men are proud of their prowess and the crews toss frequent bouquets to each other, they are enthusiastic admirers of the Infantry which battled at their side through many weary miles. Anybody who says anything about an American doughboy has got a tank man to fight.

It is about the same the other way, too. The tank man and the Infantryman are buddies.

There is one Infantry officer of whom the tank operators talk often. During an attack the advance had been held up by a group of Boche machine gun nests particularly well emplaced. The Infantry could not dislodge them. The lieutenant had been painfully wounded trying, but he refused to go to the rear.

Instead, he limped through the woods until he had enlisted the services of five American tanks. He got them together, lined them up and pointed out the Germans. Together the tanks rushed the positions and broke through.

The lieutenant waited until he saw the Boche give way. Then he fainted and was carried off the field.

BAND LEADER'S RANK BASED ON EXPERIENCE

First or Second Lieutenant According to Length of Service

The commissioned officer who will act as band leader under the new tables of organization outlined in G.O. 183 will be a first lieutenant if he has had five or more years' service in that capacity in the Regular Army, National Army or National Guard. Band leaders who have had less than five years of such service will be commissioned as second lieutenants.

In commissioning band leaders, those now in service will be given preference.

The band of every regiment entitled to one will consist of the following personnel:

One first or second lieutenant band leader; enlisted, one band leader, one assistant band leader, one sergeant bugler, four band sergeants, six band corporals, six musicians, first class, ten musicians, second class, 20 musicians third class; total, 50.

Divisional and corps engineer regiments are entitled, in addition to the above, to two cooks.

The commissioned band leader will be an additional member of the headquarters company, and will be responsible to the company commander for the discipline, instruction and general efficiency of the band members.

The enlisted vacancies in headquarters companies thus created will be filled by transfer as far as possible.

The total instrumentation provided is 47 pieces. In place of bassoons and oboes, which are not suitable for marching, two soprano saxophones and a snare drum are provided. The bassoonist, while on march, will also operate the cymbals. This will bring the actual total number of instruments in the band's care to 51.

The Q.M. has been directed to double the initial allowance for band music for all new bands. It has been $100. The present quarterly allowance for the purchase of music, $15, will be trebled. The necessary band instruments will be bought in France. Music paper and other needed material will be bought in Europe or en route thereto, if in the Q.M.'s opinion it is in the best interests of the government to do so.

THOSE MODEST VICTORS

It was at the conclusion of a charming evening of craps in the billet upstairs over where the he-goats lived.

"Well," acknowledged the party who had made seven straight naturals with 20 franc notes all over the blanket, "I'm just even."

The men who had done most of the heavy fading looked up and, struggling to restrain his sarcasm, inquired:

"Even with who? Carnegie?"

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

"In former days armies used to put a lot of time into the study of musketry."

"Yes?"

"And now they devote most of it to messkitry."

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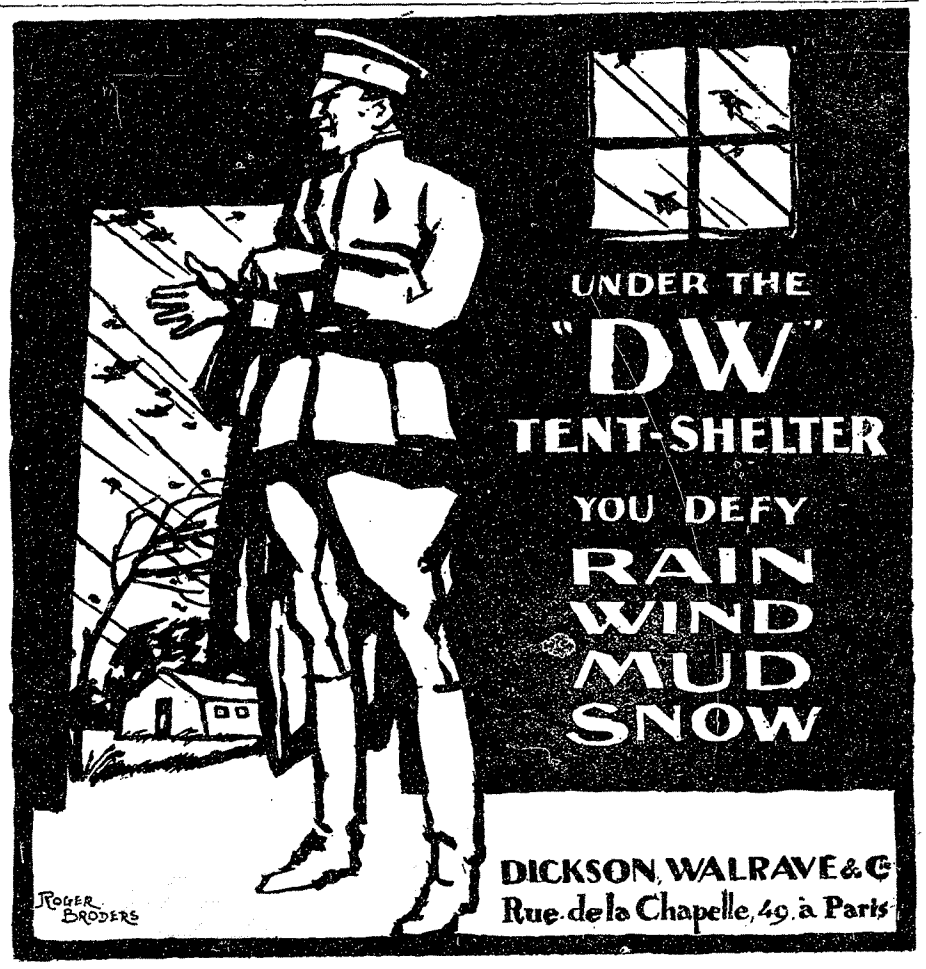
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