QUIET REIGNS ON ANNIVERSARY OF VERDUN BATTLE

Scattering Booms from Demolition Units Only Reminders

SOUVENIRS IN ABUNDANCE

Garrison of Douaumont Already Has Own Museum in Tunnels of Famous Fort

Spring will come to France next month, but spring will not come to the field of Verdun. Already the grass is green on the broad stretches of Champagne; in the Vosges the snow patches linger only in the stubborn shelter of rocks that bar the sun; but there is no portent of resurrection in all the stretch of churned gravel marking the line of forts that protect the citadel of the Meuse from the northeast.

Only on the pathless slopes that lead to Douaumont the clay is soft underfoot, and the shell holes are filled with clear water, and between them course new born brooks, sublimating in crystal pools from which no man would dare drink.

Standing on Douaumont, toward sunset of February 21, 1919 — a blustery, squally, though not a particularly cold, day—you could have looked east and west and north through the clear air of the heights of the Meuse and seen, over and beyond Le Mort Homme and Hill 304, the heights of Montfaucon; down into the Voivre and the salient of St. Mihiel; off to the north and the crests of Les Jumelles d'Ornes, the Twins of Ornes, which were inside the German lines when the army of the Crown Prince set out, just three years to the day before, to conquer Verdun, and with Verdun, France, and, with France, the world.

Bones Still Strewn About

Standing there, with desolation at your feet, and with possibilities of more desolation if you tread too firmly on the dud that is sure to lie within a yard of you whichever way you may turn, with bones still strewn roundabout, the white harvest of winter rains, you might have heard, without straining your ears, the dull, resonant boom of an H.E.—yes, even on February 21, 1919—last Friday.

They will tell you in Verdun that those booms are a frequent occurrence; that the ground often shakes with them; that the paper window panes often belly in and out and even break from the concussion. They will tell you that last Saturday the noblest boom of them all set the city quivering and jostled down a few more loose bricks, for an American demolition unit farther up the Meuse on that day set off 50 tons of useless but still potent explosives, establishing thereby a record for post-armistice destruction that will stand until some other demolition outfit zealously goes out and collects 51 tons.

Standing on Douaumont, on that anniversary sunset, you would have thought those booms singularly appropriate. Verdun has never had a quiet anniversary. Cannon boomed on three sides of it for 52 months; a single frustrate shell landed atop Douaumont on November 9, 1918. Next February, perhaps, you will hear nothing from Douaumont, unless a luckless Meuse farmer strikes something hard with the nose of his plow.

Already Place for Pilgrims

Douaumont is already a place of pilgrimage, particularly for Americans. The members of its little garrison, which is not a garrison at all—a score of poilus, superintended by an adjutant—are glad to act as impromptu guides, although their proper duties are the maintenance of the fort and the upkeep of its machinery.

For the first impression that the visitor to Douaumont has is that he is in a vast underground power house. Entering by the southern portal, along the little ravitaillement narrow gauge, he hears the busy hum of giant motors, whose sole apparent function is to keep the rows of incandescent lamps burning in all the maze of tunnels which can shelter, and have sheltered, two whole regiments.

They have installed their own little museum, those 20 or so French soldiers, and they will show you everything from a Boche trench helmet, punctured in half a hundred places by a shrapnel burst directly overhead, to the tips of the 420's which rained on to the bastion four years ago. One of the garrison last Friday was cleaning a very rusty, very battered, but still workable, Luger which he had found only that noon, and he would not sell it.

For Douaumont is a veritable souvenir hunters' paradise. If a French store window is filled with chased shell cases and other trophies labeled "Verdun," the chances are that they are wholly genuine, for it would be easier to pick them up at Verdun than to turn them out on a lathe.

Rifles, bayonets, shell fuses, shell tips, shell fragments, cartridges, cartridge cases, grenades (which only the most rabid collectors will go after, and be sorry for it if they survive), lie about in desperate profusion, rather the worse for weather, but still tangible mementoes of the death of the German idea. You will find them even on the northern slope of Douaumont's twin sister fort of Souville, for it was on that slope that the German idea died—it was Souville that the massed cohorts of the Crown Prince did not pass.

Hardly a Celebration

The occasional activity of American demolition units was the closest approximation to a celebration which Verdun held in honor of the greatest day in all her luminous history—probably for the simple reason that there are not enough people there to provide a spectacle or an audience.

Coming down into the city from Douaumont, Vaux and Souville after sunset on that day, when the Twins of Ornes were blending into the troubled gray sky, you would have seen, on the left bank of the Meuse, the swift, fiery ascent of flares, red and white and green—or perhaps blue—lingering and lighting up the valley with some of their ancient balefulness. They, too, like the duds, were left-overs in the hands of Yanks at play, and, like the duds, it was only an ordinary coincidence that shot them off on February 21—quite likely there will be far more shot off on March 17.

Thus much, and thus much only, did Verdun observe her anniversary.

SILK PAJAMAS FOR CASUALS

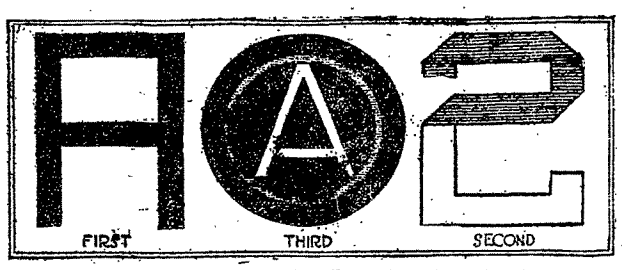
A French count breathlessly pushed his way past a major and presented himself before the desk of a lieutenant of M.P.'s in Le Mans a few days ago, exclaiming: "I'm ruined, Monsieur! I have been robbed of all my valuables, Monsieur! I lock up my house, go away to war; I come back—poof! All gone. Ruined, Monsieur!" He waved his arms in despair.

It was true. The count had been robbed of a lot of finery, almost 20,000 francs' worth. But who had taken it?

The M.P.'s got busy and put all their detectives to work. It was soon discovered that several buck privates who lived near the mansion were cutting tough steaks with pure gold knives and scooping up pommes frites with gold forks. Further investigation also brought to light that a number of casuals sleeping over a livery stable, were in the habit of going to bed attired in silk pajamas fringed with lace.

Several men are now under arrest and awaiting trial. The count's pajamas and underwear will be laundered and returned to him as well as the gold knives and forks. He will suffer no loss, as all missing articles will be paid for by the United States Government. But the men themselves—good-bye silk pajamas, hello brig!

A.E.F. ARMY AND CORPS HISTORIES AND INSIGNIA



Shoulder Markings of the Three American Armies

Herewith are reproduced the official shoulder insignia prescribed for the three Armies comprising the combat forces of the A.E.F. and the nine Army Corps which make up these Armies, together with data on the organization of each.

First Army

The first Army was organized August 10, 1918, and was under the command of General Pershing until October 12, when Lieut. Gen. Hunter Liggett took over the command. Until September 23 the Army held the front from Toul to Ste. Menehould, but on that date it was concentrated in the Argonne sector. The Army is now composed of the First, Fifth and Eighth Corps, with Army Headquarters at Bar-sur-Aube.

Insignia: A block letter "A" of black cloth, four inches high, three inches wide. Special markings for Engineers, Q.M.C., Ordnance. Medical and other departments are prescribed, to be worn under the cross-bar, between the two legs of the "A."

Second Army

The Second Army was formed October 10, 1918, and was put under the command of Lieut. Gen. Robert Lee Bullard on October 12. This Army took over the eastern part of the Toul-Ste. Menehould front from the First Army. Its sector was considered quiet until November 10, when an offensive movement was started. The Sixth and Ninth Corps now compose the Army, whose Headquarters are at Toul.

Insignia: A block figure "2" divided into two equal color bands, red above and white below.

Third Army

The Third Army was organized as the Army of Occupation on November 14, 1918, and is commanded by Maj. Gen. Joseph T. Dickman. It is composed of the Third, Fourth and Seventh Corps, with Headquarters at Coblenz.

Insignia: White letter "A" centered in a red circle "O," the whole on a background of blue. The colors red, white and blue represent the national colors, and the "A" and "O" stand for Army of Occupation.

First Corps

Organized January 20, 1918. Commanders: Lieut. Gen. Hunter Liggett (then Major General), Maj. Gen. J. T. Dickman, Maj. Gen. W. M. Wright. At the opening of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, September 26, 1918, the corps was composed of the 28th, 35th, 77th, 82nd and 92nd Divisions. At various times 17 divisions have been attached to the corps for operations.

Insignia: Brown circle superimposed on larger white circle.

Second Corps

Organized February 22, 1918. Commander: Maj. Gen. George W. Read. The corps, which was composed of the 27th and 30th Divisions during a greater part of the war operated with the Fourth British Army south of Cambria and with the Second British Army around Ypres.

Insignia: An eagle and a lion with a Roman "II" between them, in white on a blue field. The combination of the American eagle and the British lion symbolizes the association of the Second Corps with the British Army.

Third Corps

Organized May 8, 1918. Commanders: Lieut. Gen. R. L. Bullard (then Major General), Maj. Gen. W. M. Wright and Maj. Gen. J. L. Hines. At time of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, September 26, 1918, the corps was composed of the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 33rd and 80th Divisions. Eighteen different divisions operated with the corps at one time and another during this offensive.

Insignia: Three pointed star, the center triangle, formed from the base lines, being in white, the points in blue.

Fourth Corps

Organized June 20, 1918. Commanders: Maj. Gen. J. I. Dickman and Maj. Gen. Charles H. Muir. At the time of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, September 26, 1918, the corps was composed of the 2nd, 5th, 42nd, 78th, 89th and 90th Divisions. Twenty-five divisions were used in the corps' operations at different times.

Insignia: A circle divided into four segments by diameters crossed at an angle of 90 degrees, the up and down opposed angles being in white, the opposed angles at the sides being in blue.

Fifth Corps

Organized July 10, 1918. Commanders: Maj. Gen. W. M. Wright, Maj. Gen. George H. Cameron, Maj. Gen. C. P. Summerall. At the time of the Meuse-Argonne offensive the corps was composed of the 29th, 32nd, 37th, 79th and 91st Divisions. At various times 18 divisions operated with the corps.

Insignia: Five triangles with a common focus forming a regular pentagon. General officers wear gold triangles and piping on white background. Corps staff officers have all triangles blue on white background, with gold piping. Officers of corps troops have lower base triangle in varied colors to denote arm of service, other triangles blue on white background, with piping in varied colors to show arm of service. Enlisted men wear same insignia as officers, but without piping.

Sixth Corps

Organized August 1, 1918. Commanders: Maj. Gen. Omar Bundy, Maj. Gen. Charles C. Ballou (commanding 92nd Division, the only division in the Corps before the armistice), and Maj. Gen. Adelbert Cronkhite. The corps is now composed of the 92nd, 88th, 7th, 28th, 5th and 33rd Divisions. (These divisions operated with other corps before being attached to the Sixth Corps.) The last two days of combat, the corps started activity in the Vosges.

Insignia: White figure "6" in a blue circle two inches in diameter.

Seventh Corps

Organized August 20, 1918. Commanders: Maj. Gen. W. M. Wright, Maj. Gen. Omar Bundy and Maj. Gen. William G. Haan. Composed of the 6th, 81st and 88th Divisions in the Vosges sector September 26, 1918.

Insignia: Figure "7" in white on a blue shield.

Eighth Corps

Organized November 29, 1918. Now commanded by Maj. Gen. Henry T. Allen. Composed of the 6th, 77th and 81st Divisions. The corps was organized after the armistice.

Insignia: Figure "8" in white on octagonal background of blue.

Ninth Corps

Organized November 26, 1918. Now commanded by Maj. Gen. Joseph E. Kuhn. Included 33rd, 35th, 88th and 79th Divisions.

Insignia: Monogram design embodying the Roman numeral "IX" set in circle, the design in red on a dark blue circular background.

WAR RISK WRINKLES

War Risk Insurance that has been cancelled stays cancelled. This is the meaning of a ruling made by the Director of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, Washington, republished in G.O. 25, G.H.Q. The ruling was made in answer to an inquiry as to whether insurance that had been cancelled might be renewed within six months.

Cancellation puts an immediate end to the insurance, the published ruling says, but it must have involved an affirmative act by the insured soldier, such as the signing of a statement asking cancellation.

On the other hand lapse of insurance does not necessarily mean that it may not be renewed, for such a lapse, it is explained, means an omission by the soldier to do what is necessary to keep the insurance in force. When such omission has been covered the insurance may be reinstated in accordance with the regulations of the War Risk Insurance Bureau.

RUSSIANS ARE KEEN FOR YANKEE CHOW

Released Prisoners Wander Into A.E.F. Camps in Regular Droves

WILLING TO WORK ON K.P.

Authorities on Location of Salvage Piles But Know Neither English Nor French

Thousands of one-time Russian soldiers, men without an army, a country, or a place to lay their heads, are wandering into the zones lying near the old front now occupied as billeting areas by American divisions.

It is pure hard luck, rather than any inclination of their own, that has converted them into the tramps of war. They are men who had been held by the Germans in some cases from the very start of the war, who had been working behind the enemy lines in the West up to the day of the armistice, and who straying away in the confusion, took the shortest way out.

It led them down through Lorraine and the valley of the Meuse and the Moselle into fresh American battle country. There in the areas just behind the old lines where divisions are now quartered, they have been strolling in unannounced ever since on Yankee outfits who hadn't the slightest idea what to do with them.

Seeking only three squares and a bed, they have been picked up and handed over to guard details, who have the easiest guarding job in the world. For the idea of escape never enters the heads of these innocent Slav prowlers. It would be like expecting a man to escape from a comfortable boarding house after he had paid a month in advance.

Turned Over to French

The Americans, when they have gathered a sufficient quantity of them, are turning the Russians over to the French, who keep them in the double-wired stockades that until recently housed prisoners of war. Whether the difficulty is the French ration or something else, the Russians regularly get away, wire or no wire, and reappear in some American bailiwick—preferably a different one. Not always, though. One dispossessed Slav has been the guest of 79th Division Headquarters at Souilly, south of Verdun, four time in a row. He is living proof of the adage that you can't keep a good Russian down.

The former subjects of the Czar — Lord knows whose subjects they are now—are almost without exception sturdy, even plump individuals, and do not tend to thin out conspicuously on contact with an American mess. They are dressed in odds and ends of uniform that seem to bespeak a knowledge of the location of salvage piles, although most of them retain their Russian issue caps. Some are in French dress, while occasionally one will blossom out in tolerably complete O.D.

They may wear anything, but they can speak only Russian. The Americans for whom they do K.P., general policing and anything else with zest seem to think, however, that some French ought to be in the intellectual equipment of every gentleman regardless of nationality, and the fact that their charges never understand it worries them not a bit. Besides, if you set a pail of whitewash in front of a man, give him a brush and show him the side of an Adrian barracks, he doesn't have to understand your language to know what you want him to do.

Persistent Mascots

There is, of course, an occasional Russian who speaks English (and always insists on going back to the States with his adopted outfit), and there is an occasional Yank, who migrated from Russian and remembers some of the jaw-breakers, but there is little need for interpreters.

Not all of these grown up war waifs are content with merely eating and sleeping. A few have some wild ideas about making money. To this end they assess their hosts one or two empty tobacco tins and fill them full of hand-made rings of the familiar tin souvenir variety, displaying some ingenuity in fashioning a finger ornament out of, say, a mess knife.

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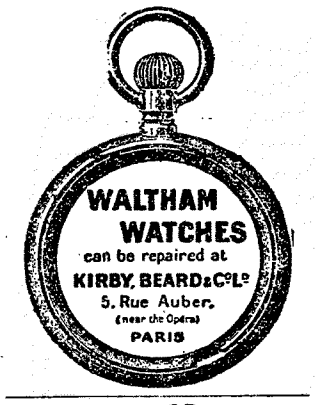
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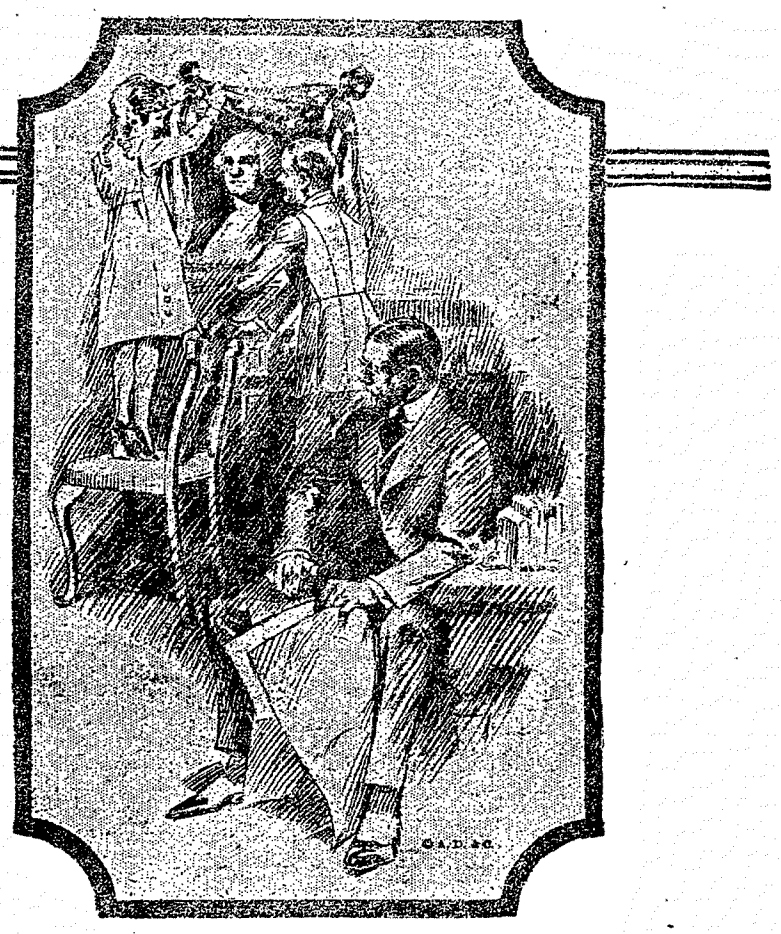
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