

The Mount Airy News.

VOL. XLI

MOUNT AIRY, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 1918.

NO. 5

PUBLIC WELCOME TO RETURNING SHIP.

Strange Adventure of Spanish Vessel With German Corsair Is Told by the Crew.

Bilbo, Spain—Some of the ships that come home to Spain in these days have strange stories to tell of their adventures in connection with German submarines and raiders. Rarely, if ever, has the return of a Bilbao vessel been marked by such general jubilation as was expressed on a recent occasion when the long-awaited steamship Igotz Mendi returned to port. When it became known that the vessel belonging to the Compenia Sotay Aznar would steam into harbor between eight and nine in the evening the populace made preparations for the occasion. An immense crowd gathered on the quay, hundreds of rockets were fired and bells were set ringing everywhere. She had been in the hands of the German corsair Wolf, and had had a bad time. There were many big dents in the hull where the Wolf had been banging up against her at the time she took her coal away from her when they were on the high seas.

The story told by the crew is as follows: "We set sail from Valencia on Sept. 23, bound for India. We put in at Las Palmas and Lorenzo Marques. On Nov. 10, when we were proceeding to Colombo to unload some coal there that was meant for the English squadrons, the Wolf suddenly put in an appearance, and a hydroplane, which was sent out from her, came flying toward our ship. Then there came on board two German officers who examined the ship's papers and deposited eight bombs on board, declaring that they were taking charge of the ship and giving orders to the captain that it must come along and follow the Wolf. Eventually on the 15th we arrived at the Parayos Isles in the Indian Ocean, which island, 500 miles from the Mauritius, are deserted. At this stage we were ordered to transport to the Wolf part of the coal and provisions we had on board, and the commander offered to set the crew at liberty—on the desert islands! Afterward they painted the hull of our ship a dark blue, and put on board 21 English prisoners and five others of various nationalities making a total on board of 65 persons. Food was running short. On the 25th we left that place, our ship now being commanded by German officers. We saw that we were making a southerly track and we doubled the Cape of Good Hope, then coming up by the American coast where sometimes the Wolf was lost to view.

"So far the attitude of the Germans toward us had been friendly, but suddenly it changed to one of severity. We duly arrived at Trinidad where we had to transport more coal. Afterward we sailed toward the north, and on Jan. 15 we sighted some English warships, a circumstance which produced a great panic on board the Wolf. However, the British vessels did not see us, or at any rate did not stop us. The Germans, having in mind the possibility of capture, took the precaution of destroying all documents. On the 27th and 28th we ran into awful weather in which we nearly foundered. After that the Wolf went ahead of us, and we soon lost sight of her altogether. After very difficult navigation in equatorial waters we got up into the North Sea and passed through some severe temperatures in the Arctic circle. We went through the boreal regions to the latitude of Iceland where the frosts did us some injury. Then we made a track for the south along the Norwegian coast, and went ashore on the Danish coast. Two days later we hoisted the Spanish flag. When the Germans abandoned the Igotz Mendi they set light to some bombs, which the captain, at the risk of his life, threw into the sea."

The ship was long ago given up for lost. Evidently if it had not run aground in the Skager Rack it would have gone to Germany. The Danish Government interned the Germans who were on board and set the crew free. In due course the ship's injuries were repaired and she set sail for Bilbao where she arrived with the same crew as that with which she had set sail on this most adventurous voyage nine months before, not a man having been lost.

No More Sheepskin Rugs.

London, July 28.—The manufacture of sheepskin rugs has been prohibited by the British army council. This action has been taken because of the requirements of wool and leather for military purposes.

QUICK ACTION CERTAIN IN NEW DRAFT LAW.

Congress Will Yield to Urgent Demand for Haste.

Washington, Aug. 11.—General March's week-end statement to the press is expected here to speed Congress in its consideration of the Manpower bill. The interview of the chief of staff, wherein he declared that the allied successes should mean redoubled American effort instead of talk of an early ending of the war, is so straight from the shoulder that members of Congress cannot expect to delay enactment of the new draft laws.

The 18 to 45 legislation has a clear track ahead of it. Men effected by the proposed changes may as well make their plans for registration within the next 30 to 60 days. The newspaper headlines telling of continued advances by the American, British and French troops have aroused the enthusiasm of legislators and the national capital generally. It is the greatest argument in favor of what the administration asks for the mobilization of the nation's manpower.

Congress for instance, cannot pause in face of this statement from General March, who speaks as one who has seen service on the battlefields of France as well as at a desk in Washington: "This is the time for greatest effort; keep the engine running. It is no time now to talk about the war being over. It is the time to hit the enemy hard."

Men Who Have Seen.

About the time the manpower bill is reported to a re-assembled Congress a dozen members of the house will return here from the western front.

They stood on a hill overlooking the battle of the Marne and saw the magnificent allied offensive. A shell or so burst in their vicinity, giving them a touch of real warfare.

These men will come back imbued with the American fighting spirit. If they rise to their opportunity, they may do much to electrify Congress and expedite consideration in that body for a manpower bill.

At the psychological moment also a dozen members of the house committee on naval affairs will return to the capital bringing with them thrilling stories of what the American navy is accomplishing in foreign waters. Altogether more than a score of members of the lower house will get back here just in time to bring effective messages from American fighters "over there."

In the face of their first hand stories of America's real participation in the war, and of the statement of the secretary of war, General March and General Crowder, Congress will quickly yield to the demand for haste with the nation's greatest manpower bill and the new draft law is as good as passed today.

Unquestionably there is still opposition in both bodies to lowering the draft age to an 18 year minimum. This opposition, however, is not expected to prevail when met by military opinion and the desire of the administration to strike its heaviest blows while the enemy is on the run.

The Boy in School.

There are still several points to be worked out by the war department in its program for mobilization of the manpower of one of the questions yet to be settled is the statute of an 18 or 19 year old lad who is attending school or college. Will he be permitted to pursue his studies until needed for active service, or will the government want to put him in military training—which latter course would amount practically to universal training?

Indications are that for the present the school boy will proceed with his studies. If he is in college furnishing military instruction, so much the better. The President in the final analysis will say when the boy is to cease to be a student and become a fighter. On this point Secretary Baker, referring to his testimony before the senate committee, says:

"The committee was especially interested on the effect upon college and also whether the young men from 18 up would be drawn indiscriminately in class one or made into a deferred class by age, and drawn later, giving them some added months to come to maturity. No fixed policy has been determined upon by the department, but the purpose was to allow the President to defer in class one the youngest men."

As to Married Men.

Another far-reaching problem yet to be solved is the problem of the mar-

ried men. Secretary Baker intimates that the married state—unless the wife has independent income that supports her—may be made automatically a cause for deferred classification and without the filing of a claim for exemption by the registered man. Some men entitled to exemption on the ground of dependency, the secretary says, may hesitate to go on record as filing a claim for deferred classification.

"What I want to get into the regulations, if possible," says Secretary Baker, "is to have them so that the government does the selecting, rather than putting it up to the individual. That is, where there is a man that ought to be exempted from the point of view of the national interests, I do not want to put that man in the position of having to claim exemption, but have him only answer some questions of fact and let the rules take care of the classification."

I am inclined to think that the marriage relations will in itself constitute deferred classification."

Bombing Device Makes Airplane More Useful.

With the American Army in England, July 21.—Almost every airplane used by the allies soon will carry bombs. Experts in aerial warfare are convinced that the general efficiency of the corps will be increased if a bombing device is added to every plane sent out, even though it be of the type once intended only for reconnaissance work, and Americans now training in England are being as carefully drilled in bombing as in handling a machine gun.

Lessons learned during the resistance offered in the recent offensive have served to increase the already high regard of both British and American officers in the air service for the low flying bomb-carrying craft, and over the camps and countryside where aviators are being trained, planes are in evidence almost every hour, dipping down from high in the air and skimming treetops and houses. It is the newer the nearby country, barely missing lesson they are learning, and observers back from the front where the allied planes did such remarkable work not only in scouting and restricting the enemy but actually in breaking up formations and at points checking the onward movement have urged concentration on that form of training.

British trainers, detailed to American aviation camps, have been liberal in their praise of the new fliers from overseas, their only criticism being that the Americans are "a bit too keen." Their tendency has been to go in for flying stunts rather too early in training but even this the trainers have admitted is a valuable fault although one not to be encouraged.

It has been pointed out to the Americans that team work as well as individual efficiency is a prime requisite and the Americans have steadied themselves to the routine their trainers have found makes for general advancement if not for individual applause. Fancy flying, the acrobatic work that once found favor and drew heavy gate receipts at aerial exhibitions in the United States, still is taught but the learning of that form of flying also has come to be regarded merely as routine and wholly incident to the steady, low flying desirable for attacking camps and troops in formation.

Accidents have occurred in the camps where the Americans are being trained and a few men have been killed but the records show that the percentage is far less in England than here are inclined to attribute the difference more to luck than to anything else, although there also is pointed out the probability that the average airplane used in England is a better made machine than the average that has been used in the United States.

The bombing devices being attached to virtually every plane is not the contrivance that was used in the early days of the war. That used then was little more than a mechanism that released the projectile, allowing it to fall at a point approximately near the target. The device now being used is one with which the operator may with much practice become almost as proficient in marksmanship as an artilleryman is with his gun. Almost every light plane will carry bombs of at least 25 pounds and from the heavier types there will be hurled the huge containers of high explosive not materially different from those used by the Germans in some of the more recent raids.

MANY SHIPS RAISED BY SALVAGE CORPS.

Description of Some of the Methods of Raising Vessels and Repairing Holes Made by Torpedo or by Collision.

London, England.—The great, camouflaged ships, fine samples of cubist art in blue and greens and whites and blacks, to be seen in the British roadstead; look solid enough, but nearly every one has come in for repairs or is waiting to go into dry-dock. They are all lame ducks on a quiet pond but they will be at sea again in due course, and better, at any rate, to be a marine "walking case" than to be at the bottom of the sea. For at the bottom of the sea they would certainly lie, but for the ingenuity, determination, resource and unremitting toil, hour after hour, day after day, generally in circumstances of a great discomfort, unglorified by any Kipling of Noyes, of the Admiralty Salvaging Department.

Take, for example, that mass of badly run color alongside the quay there. It is unquestionably a ship. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like this. Impossible to say where ship ends and quay begins, and whether the confusion of cranes, derricks, chains, is on the ship or off it. It is an interesting study in blue, white, black and confusion. Staring at it is no good. It only wavers about and mixes itself up with the landscape. You have to gaze innocently the other way—till it isn't looking, as it were—and then turn sharply on it. You see then that there are two ships one behind the other, and both, by all the laws of German calculation should be in Davy Jones' locker. But they are not. One, a Standard Oil tanker, one of the biggest tank steamers in the world, was rammed, on fire for days, and sunk, and all that not so very long ago, but there she is, on the point of returning to America. Her funnels are out of the straight and their corrugation is a study. Her decks have been waved by the heat and rise and fall from stem to stern. Forward a mass of old iron lies twisted in fantastical shapes, but she is seaworthy after repairs, and is returning not as a curiosity, nor even as an example of what the British salvage experts can do, but as a cargo carrying ship, a real and serviceable unit in the fight against Prussian militarism.

The meaning of British salvage work to the Allies is told in this story of the tanker, 516 feet by 68 feet by 38 feet, which has been sunk and is afloat again. In the dark of an early morning she collided with a United States standard ship, carrying a general cargo including crude oil in her false bottom. The tanker, which was carrying benzine, naphtha, paraffin and petrol, was struck in her benzine tank and in a few minutes was burning furiously. Hardly had the crash occurred before a British destroyer had hurled herself alongside the tanker, the crew and officers of the latter had jumped aboard her without further discussion and the destroyer was off like the wind. And well she might, for soon a quarter of a mile of sea was ablaze with burning oil. On the tanker, only one or two casualties occurred; on the standard ship many men were lost. As she struck the tanker a great tongue of flame leaped from the latter's side and fell like a hand upon the other's deck, from end to end, firing the cargo in the hold. For some time these two vessels blazed in the burning sea, but when the rescue tugs came on the scene, a naval commander with three of the crew of a tug bravely boarded the blazing wreck of the standard ship. The magazine had already exploded and so intense was the heat that it was only possible to board on the quarter. They made fast the hawsers from two tugs and for five hours they towed her toward land. Then a mine exploded and broke one hawser, and next, two mines exploded under her quarter, tearing another hole in her in addition to the damage done by the collision. She was still afloat and burning fiercely that evening and it was decided to sink her so as to put out the flames. Thirty to forty shots were fired at her water line avoiding the engine room, and the vessel began to sink and grounded at the base of certain of those chalk cliffs which run along the southeast and south coasts of England. Similarly the tank had been towed in elsewhere and sunk, being also alight during the tow.

This incident represents the first phases of the work of the salvage ships, the rush to the rescue of a torpedoed, mined, or, in this case, burning ship, the towing her near to the land and the beaching. It is rarely

necessary, of course, to sink vessels by gunfire. Then comes the salvaging of the wreck. Many things have been standardized in this war, but there is no standard method of salvaging a wreck. Every problem has to be considered separately, in the light of such facts as the character of the ship, its position, cargo and so forth. Some times the problem is found unsolvable in so far as the expenditure necessary to raise the vessel would be greater than her value to the nation when salvaged. When, however, a vessel has beached herself, or been beached by the tugs, she is fairly certain to be salvaged.

The general procedure is for the salvage ships to lay themselves alongside or over the beached vessel. Divers are sent down to investigate the affair, and they take accurate measurements of the size of the hole made by the torpedo or mine. Any small hole they plug with wood. Submersible electric pumps are slung overboard and placed by the divers in position in the sunken vessel, or pumping operations may be carried out by the bigger pumps on the salvage ships. The pumping enables the divers to get to work on the cargo, fastening ropes or chains round as much of it as possible so that it may be swung up to the surface. This gives the sunken ship a certain buoyancy, and it becomes possible, perhaps, for tugs to haul it a foot or two at a time, into a better position higher up the beach. A stage is reached when it becomes possible to get pumps to work on the whole ship, and possibly to float her. To achieve this result in the case of a torpedoed or mined vessel, the big hole has to be patched, yes, patched, with a "standard" patch, made of 12-inch-thick wooden beams. The patch is generally in three pieces, and on one ship, for example, which the writer saw, the patch weighed about 20 tons. The middle part weighed about 10 tons, the lower part, following the curve of the ship, weighed about six tons, and the upper part five tons. This patch is slung over the side and bolted in position partly or wholly, by the divers. It is sufficiently larger than the hole to secure it firm support from the ships side, and the enormous pressure of the sea, thousands of pounds to the square inch, which would burst the patch itself for a certainty, is taken up by an elaborate network of wooden beams, 12 inches by 12 inches, supporting the patch on the inside of the ship. These standard patches are used repeatedly, and on the day of the writer's visit, one was on its way down from Newcastle. There is hardly any limit to the size of hole that can be temporarily filled by a standard patch—on the tanker the hole of the starboard side forward was 21 feet 6 inches wide and 41 feet 6 inches long, while on another ship it was 48 feet long and 25 feet wide.

When a vessel has had the holes in her plugged or patched, part of her cargo removed and the water pumped out of her, she proceeds—under her own steam very likely—to the nearest port where she can be permanently repaired. In the present crowded condition of the British ports and dry docks she may have to go some distance, and may have adventures by the way. One ship was torpedoed, but not sunk, and made good with a standard patch. She proceeded on way and was torpedoed again, the hole made exactly opposite the standard patch. This time she was beached, patched up again, taken into the nearest dry dock and permanently repaired. This sort of thing has happened more than once.

War Finance Corporation

Great Aid to the Farmer.

In compliance with telegraphed instructions from Secretary McAdoo, the War Finance Corporation has wired Federal reserve banks at Dallas, Kansas City, and Minneapolis to notify banks and trust companies in their respective districts, nonmembers as well as members of the Federal Reserve System, of the willingness of the corporation to make advances to those financial institutions which had made loans to farmers and cattlemen.

Droughts in these districts are creating a serious condition for the farmers and this action is taken to relieve the situation.

Secretary McAdoo stated that no industry was more vital to the war than raising wheat, corn, live stock, and other food products, and that the banks should make loans on the notes of farmers, since they are engaged in an industry not only necessary and contributory to the winning of the war but vital to it.

Casualties the Past

Week are Nearly 5,000

Washington, Aug. 11.—Casualties in the army and marine corps overseas, made public today, aggregated 432, bringing the total for the week to 4,916 and the total since American troops landed in France to 20,112. Most of the casualties for the week represented losses in the fighting on the Marne-Aisne front.

Of the total casualties announced today, 345 were soldiers and 87 marines, while of the week's total, which included today's lists, 4,198 were soldiers and 718 marines. The week's aggregate of 4,916 compared with 1,430 the week before.

The 20,112 casualties, total deaths, including 291 lost at sea, men killed in action, dead of wounds, disease accidents and other causes numbered 7,716—soldiers, 6,883; marines, 833. The wounded aggregated 10,874—soldiers, 9,048; marines, 1,826, and the missing, including prisoners, 1,522—soldiers, 1,431; marines 91.

Of the week's increase, deaths from all causes aggregated 1,572, as compared with 651 the week before; the wounded number 2,620 compared with 732 the previous week and the missing and prisoners 734, compared with 74 the week before.

While the proportion of the deaths for the week as compared with the wounded was large attention was called today to the fact that the casualties being reported now by General Pershing represent an accumulation as the result of the fighting which began July 15 and it is not to be assumed that the ratio of killed and wounded will be maintained when the final toll of the Marne-Aisne victory is complete.

Crops of Foodstuffs Expected to be Large.

Washington Aug. 8.—Bumper crops of almost every foodstuff grown on the farm were indicated again today in the department of agriculture's monthly crop report, despite a falling off in the prospective production in practically all crops during July due to conditions, principally hot and dry weather.

In round figures the loss to farmers of this prospective production is roughly estimated at almost three-quarters of a billion dollars—more than \$450,000,000 in the principal grain and food crops and \$250,000,000 in cotton.

Practically every crop is growing on larger acreage this year than that planted last year, indicating that the farmers have been making strenuous efforts to meet the heavy needs of the allies and the increasing demands at home for foodstuffs.

Corn, the country's greatest crop, was the heaviest sufferer from the dry and hot weather of July, losing 171,000,000 bushels in prospective production since the first production forecast was made from June conditions. The monetary loss to corn growers is around \$275,000,000. From most every part of the country there came reports that corn this year is from two to three weeks ahead of its average condition, indicating that practically all of the crop will mature before the dates set for first frost. That condition should assure minimum injury from frost damage.

Wheat, the harvesting of which is nearing completion, suffered a loss of 13,000,000 bushels, yet the crop will be much larger than last year's and also bigger than the average of the five years before that.

Drought and heat made inroads on potatoes, causing a loss of 15,000,000 in the prospective crop, and sweet potatoes production loss was estimated at half that quantity. A notable exception in the forecasts was that of tobacco which showed an increase of 41,000,000 pounds in the prospective crop over the forecast made in July.

German Crown Prince is Blamed for Foe's Disaster

London, Aug. 10.—Reuter's Limited correspondent with the British army in France, sends the following dispatch concerning the German crown prince:

"According to the statements of prisoners, the German crown prince appears to be the most unpopular leader in the German army. He is accused by them of being directly responsible for the Marne disaster. They say that the opinion is widely expressed by German soldiers that the crown prince's amateurish interference with the plans of their experienced generals was the starting points for the present crushing misfortunes of the German armies."