

AMERICAN TRACTOR FURNISHED IDEA FOR IRRESISTIBLE BRITISH TANK

Inventor of Juggernaut Which Germans Call "Most Wonderful Weapon Which Modern Tactics Have Revealed in Warfare," Tells of Their Origin

Britain has produced two sensations in this war. They are the tanks and the hush-hush ships.

Of the tanks little was known until they began breaking down barbed wire entanglements, crushing in trenches and their occupants and proving that trench warfare was not necessarily a stalemate. Of the hush-hush ships there were many rumors long before they appeared. They have been seen to be leviathans among warships, capable of developing tremendous speed and working great havoc. How great that havoc is will probably remain a mystery until in days of peace there is a recapitulation of the achievements of the war.

But the tanks, which came upon an unsuspecting enemy, are becoming more and better known as the war progresses. In the Liberty Loan parades America saw one of these monsters at close range.

It was under Lieutenant General Sir Julian Byng that the tanks came into their own. Sir Julian was a great believer in their efficiency from the time he first saw them in operation. In his plans for battle they entered well into his reckoning. He pleaded for the mobilization of a large force of them and protested that, if a sufficiently large force were available, he would establish some new precedents in warfare and would shatter some old beliefs.

One day last month, without any preliminary barrage, a battalion of tanks emerged from the rear of Sir Julian's lines. They had been quietly assembled in the night. They had come quietly, so quietly that even the argus-eyed espionage system of the German military was taken unaware. The rest of the story is well known.

Idea Came from U. S. A.

But what are the tanks? Why are they so wonderfully efficient?

Their story was told recently by Colonel E. D. Swinton, C.B., D.S.O., R.E., Assistant Secretary of the British War Cabinet. Colonel Swinton told a correspondent for the New York Herald that the germ of the tank idea came from America, in the Holt tractor. He said: "We had been looking for a new war machine, capable of going over rough ground and being able to fight. We had made no progress until July, 1914, a month before the war began. Then an officer reported to me that he had seen a tractor near Antwerp, which was able to climb over rough ground and which might supply the principle of the machine for which we were searching.

"I went to see the machine and found a farmer at work with it in his field. Without letting him know my identity or the purpose of my questioning, I succeeded in making him demonstrate its working to me. I pretended to be enthusiastic about it and the farmer caught something of my enthusiasm and tried to show it off to the best possible advantage. He climbed over some of the roughest ground he could find. Immediately I saw the possibilities in the tractor.

"When the war started, events moved with such rapid succession that it was October before we were able to give our attention to the development of the tank. I am not an inventor, but I obtained the services of two officers who are inventors and we set about making a war machine along entirely new lines. The development of the machine was slow and it was almost two years before the first tank appeared on the field to terrify the Germans."

In the September number of the Strand Magazine, Colonel Swinton told of the difficulty in finding a name for the new juggernaut. It was necessary that the name should reveal nothing to the Germans. Finally the word "Tank" was chosen because it was so non-committal. Says Colonel Swinton in the Strand: "Aside from being called 'Panzerkraftwagen' and 'Schutzengrabenverrichtung - automobile' by the Germans, the machines were otherwise miscalled."

Big Ones and Little Ones

Colonel Swinton told of the fear of the German intelligence service

That Rookie from the 13th Squad.

By P. L. Crosby.



Courtesy McClure Newspaper Syndicate, New York.

and the innocuous messages that were sent over the wires regarding the tanks, so that any who tapped the telegraph would gain nothing for the trouble. Some of the messages were like this: "Twelve Willies reach you today, or, 'Send us tatts for six females.'" The name "Willie" was suggested, Colonel Swinton says, because of two types of tank that were being experimented with. When these two types were side by side there was such a marked difference in their sizes that they suggested parent and child. Therefore the term Willie came to be applied to the smaller type. The larger type was of two classifications, a male and a female. Of these two types Colonel Swinton says in the Strand: "The male is par excellence the machine gun hunter and destroyer. He carries light, quick-firing guns, capable of firing shell, and is intended to be to the machine gun what the torpedo boat destroyer was intended to be to the torpedo boat. The female, which, in accordance with the law of nature is the man-killer, carries nothing but machine guns for employment against enemy personnel. Her special role is to keep down hostile rifle fire, to beat back counter attacks and rushes of infantry, and to act generally as consort to her lord and master."

After the tank had been perfected its secrets were guarded with the utmost care. They were painted with large Russian characters on their sides. These, translated, meant, "With Care to Petrograd." It was intended they should be thought to be snow ploughs. It was necessary to transport them long distances by rail and they were always loaded on the trains at night. Even then they were covered with tarpaulins.

Colonel Swinton gives a vivid picture of a scene as some of the tanks were being loaded for their ultimate destination. The siding where the tanks were to be loaded was brilliantly lighted, and says Colonel Swinton: "From out the gloom . . . continually crawled a procession of slug-shaped monsters, purring, painting and emitting flames as they slid over the ground."

Once when tanks were being loaded word was given of the approach of a Zeppelin. Colonel Swinton's narrative says: "At once every light in the loading yard was extinguished and every tank froze to stillness where it stood, darkness and uncanny silence taking the place of glare and

the throbbing bustle of work. After a few minutes of tense expectancy a faint humming noise made itself heard afar off on high. The sound approached, grew louder and gradually changed to a high-pitched purring, which seemed to fill the whole sky as a Zeppelin dived overhead and circled above the stationary machines in the tankodrome, like a night owl quartering a field of corn above a colony of paralyzed field mice.

"Scorpions in Pickle" "No hint was given, however, to betray to the Hun skipper that directly underneath him lay a collection of new and secret weapons for the slaying of his Gebruederel—a nest of scorpions in pickle for his kamraden on terra firma, which even to his mind might have seemed a target worthier of high explosive than sleeping women and children; and after a few minutes the airship sailed away to unload its murderous cargo of bombs at a point some miles distant. Thrice was this visit repeated during the night—whether by the same Zeppelin or by others it is not easy to say. Finally after a respectful interval, up went the lights, the tanks came back to life, and the circus performance proceeded."

The achievements of the tanks in the war, up to General Byng's great victory, had been many. Recently they were summarized by Frederick Palmer, now a Major on General Ferring's staff, but then the American war correspondent with the British forces. Mr. Palmer wrote:

"In the latter stages of the battle of the Somme the intervention of the tanks saved some 20,000 British lives. Where tanks have accompanied the advance and have been able to eat up the enemy machine guns left over by our bombardment, the bodies of our infantry strewn No Man's Land irregularly, here and there. Where tanks have not been used, in some places the bodies can be seen to be lying in front of the enemy machine gun nests and strong points in swaths like cut corn."

Finally comes the German tribute, following torrents of abuse and ridicule. It is from the Berliner Tageblatt and follows:

"These powerful armored cars, which were first used by the British, are undoubtedly the most wonderful weapons which modern tactics have revealed in warfare."

LAWYERS VOLUNTEER TO SAFEGUARD CIVIL RIGHTS OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS

Some time ago the leading medical men of the country decided that those among them who could not go to the front would render a patriotic service. They decided to care for each other's practice and to serve free of charge, in so far as was possible, the families of soldiers.

Now the lawyers have come to the front. Many of the leading members of the bar have proffered their services in behalf of the civil rights of soldiers, and their action has led Provost Marshal General Crowder to issue an appeal to all the members of the legal profession to look upon the civil rights of the soldier as the "highest cause of every lawyer."

General Crowder has pointed out to the lawyers the legal restrictions under which his department operates and has stated that every effort should be made to protect the interests of the men called to the colors.

Several thousand lawyers have volunteered their services to General Crowder's department, that of the Judge Advocate General of the Army. It has been possible to accept only 150 into the service of the government. These men will be charged with administering justice within the military. Meantime there is no legal sanction for accepting into the government service those who would protect the families of the soldier. The work of safeguarding the interests of the families must be undertaken so far as the War Department is concerned.

Says General Crowder in his appeal to the lawyers:

"We cannot follow up a soldier's rights at local law; we cannot help him assert or maintain them there. In many cases this must be done by the bar itself, as a part of its professional obligations. To all such cases lawyers should, and doubtless will, assume that lofty, sympathetic and patriotic attitude which heretofore they have frequently shown that they are able and willing to assume on proper occasions."

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