

Trench and Camp

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CHRISTMAS, 1917

No sweet-voiced carol will awaken America on this Christmas morn. Instead the clarion imperative of the bugle will sound a more martial reveille.

For America is at war. No hymn of peace will rise from choir loft. Instead the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

For America is at war. No giving way to yearnings for men that are away will mark family reunions. Instead proud homage will be paid to service flags that symbolize duty in the doing.

For America is at war. No impatient longing for home in trench, in camp or on transport. Instead impatience for the fray.

For America is at war. From pulpit and lyceum on this Christmas morn must go forth this message—the road to peace is through righteousness; and the ideals of righteousness must be upheld, even on the point of the spear.

The thoughts of those at home and those away must meet in a high resolve to make home so safe that nation shall not lift up a sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.

In the solemn words of the President: "It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful nation into war." But also in the solemn words of the President when he announced that war must be the choice, "God helping her she had no other."

Every sacrifice that is demanded must be cheerfully borne. Every purpose must be subordinated to the ultimate objective. The world must be made safe for democracy.

The men that have given up their peaceful pursuits and undertaken to bear the heat of the conflict have a heritage of Americanism to steady them, to inspire them, to lead them to the victory that must be theirs.

The things in life that they counted sweetest are in the balance. They are things worth striving for and those who once enjoyed them are ready to strive, even as those at home are ready to sacrifice.

The things in life that they counted sweetest were ours for the asking. Now our title to them must be proved. The day will come when the clouds of battle have rolled away. On that glad day, with victory achieved, with democracy justified, with righteousness triumphant, the voice of the sweet singer of carols will break upon the Christmas morn; a hymn of peace will rise to the high heavens; service flags will be sanctified and those who weep will not be as those without hope. Home will be a thing achieved!

Until that day—
America is at war.

AMERICAN ARMY CAMPS NOT PLAGUE SPOTS

The same malicious propaganda which President Wilson once characterized as a foe within more to be feared than foes without has been spreading the seeds of anxiety and apprehension among the parents of America's men under arms.

According to the authors of this propaganda every camp is a plague spot. The men in the camps know to the contrary because they see with their own eyes. But great distances separate them from their homes. With each recurrence of the report new anxieties and new apprehensions arise.

In order to reassure the mothers and fathers who have loaned their sons to the cause of freedom, Trench and Camp today prints a few cold facts and figures.

There is nothing speculative about those figures. They are the official returns from the camps consolidated into a report from the Surgeon-General of the Army.

THE FIGURES SHOW, FIRST, THAT A SMALLER NUMBER OF OUR SOLDIERS ARE DYING IN CAMPS AND CANTONMENTS OF DISEASE THAN DURING ANY WAR IN THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY.

Analyzed, the figures, which are taken from a weekly report chosen at haphazard, show:

157 deaths among 801,072 men would mean 5,164 deaths a year
This would be a death rate of 10.18 per thousand per year.

In plain English the returns given in the report indicate that, if the present death rate obtains, 10 soldiers out of every 1,000 in training camps would die from natural causes in the space of a year.

In peace time the death rate among the men of the draft age, who constitute 9.1 per cent of the total population is 7.4 per cent. In a word, more than seven out of every ten men of the draft age would die from natural causes in normal times and in peaceful pursuits.

Therefore the deaths from natural causes in camps and cantonments would be slightly in excess of three more deaths per thousand than in normal times.

Now look at the other side of the picture. In the war between the States the Federal Forces had a total of 2,673,567 enlistments. This represented not less than 2,000,000 men. Of this number 67,058 were killed in action; 43,012 died of wounds and 25,556 died from causes undetermined. But to be added to this number was the huge total of 224,586 who died from diseases. It has been stated that a large percentage of the deaths were among prisoners of war and that the high mortality rate was due to the deaths among their number. But the truth is that only 30,193 of the deaths were among prisoners of war and these represented only 14 per cent of the total.

The fact is, then, that nearly one man of every ten who enlisted in the Federal armies died of disease in Federal hospitals or camps. This was 2.4 per cent a year of the total number enlisted during the war.

The actual mortality among the Federal forces in a given year (1862) was 53.2 per thousand.

Of this number only 8.6 were battle casualties.
IN A WORD, 44.6 WERE VICTIMS OF DISEASE.

All of which leads to the conclusion that the mortality rate from disease today is less than one-fourth the mortality rate from the same cause in the war between the States.

We shall have more to say on this subject in a subsequent issue. It is requested that every man who reads this editorial mail the issue containing it to his parents. Let him also mark the editorial plainly so that it cannot escape attention.

The figures we give are absolutely authentic and are taken from official records. They tell as no amount of descriptive writing would ever tell the story of the elaborate care, with the most modern devices for preventing and fighting disease, that surrounds the American soldier of today.

"SOLEMN LOOKING BLOKES"

A writer in the Century Magazine says "Solemn looking blokes" was the cockney description of the first American troops that marched through London.

The Anazas, the Canadians, the Africans and the Hindoos had caught something of the hysterical joy of the populace. They had responded to the cheers of all these thousands that lined the streets. But the Americans went on with the ceaseless tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet and heads that turned neither to the right nor left. Only when "Old Glory" was waved directly in an officer's face, was there any deviation from the straight line the soldiers trod. The officer came to attention, saluted the stars and stripes, smiled at the one who waved it—evidently a compatriot—and went on his way.

Social as the Englishman is, he was somewhat upset by the poise of the American soldiers. He cheered and there was no response. He cheered again. But only that steady tramp, "Hump! Solemn looking blokes," he said.

And solemn looking blokes we are. It is no child's play we have undertaken. It is no festival that we face. The cheers, the feestoons, the delirium of joy—all that can wait. There is a job to be done.

That job is the only thing we can see just now. We are consecrated to its accomplishment. As "Old Glory" confronts us we pause for a moment of reconsecration.

But cheers, music—a carnival? Not now, Cousin Tommy. All that can wait.

INTERESTING READING

Nothing the soldiers' mother could read would interest her more than the news about him, his company, his regiment and his camp. Send Trench and Camp home for mother and your other relatives to read.

GOVERNMENT WILL CANCEL SOME LIBERTY LOAN BONDS PURCHASED BY SOLDIERS

In an excess of patriotic enthusiasm many soldiers in the camps and cantonments subscribed to the second Liberty Loan more liberally than they could afford. The result is that today they find themselves embarrassed for lack of funds. With war insurance, compulsory allotments and the customary expenditures incident to army life, some of the men in the ranks have frequently complained that they had less money now than in the days of the \$15 a month base pay.

Major General McCain, the Adjutant General, has sent the following telegram to all concerned, regarding the cancellation of some of the Liberty bonds taken by the soldiers:

"Department commanders, commanding generals of tactical divisions, and commanding officers of independent stations are authorized to discontinue Liberty Bond allotments when a soldier's obligations under War Insurance act do not leave him sufficient balance to pay his bond allotment. Only such number of his bond allotments will be terminated as will permit the soldier to provide for his dependents under War Insurance provisions and take out necessary insurance and leave him not to exceed \$7.50 for his personal uses. These allotments for dependents and insurance premiums must be made before Liberty Bond discontinuances are granted and such Liberty Bond discontinuances are granted will be effective not earlier than October 31. Officers will report promptly to Quartermaster General discontinuances of bond allotments granted by them, stating name of soldier, bank in whose favor such allotments were made and amount of allotments. Amount of pay of soldier deducted for Liberty Bond allotments before their discontinuances will be refunded by Depot Quartermaster, Washington, D. C., where such allotments were made in favor of Federal Reserve Bank, New York, but where made in favor of other banks refundment must be arranged between soldier and such bank. Where discontinuances of Liberty Bond allotment are granted as herein provided remarks may be omitted from November pay rolls and discontinuances Form No. 39 will not be required."

MEANS LONGER WAR

Three or four years will be added to the length of the war if Russia as a fighting force is completely eliminated from the side of the Allies, according to Major Stanley Washburn, war correspondent and a member of the Root Commission to Russia.

CANTONMENT TYPES

THE TOP SERGEANT

HE is as necessary to the army as food. That may be a reason why he is "cussed" so much. Every one considers it an inalienable right to kicking at the grub. But the fellow who accuses him would be floored if asked who would be done without him. The only possible reply would be that the army certainly would be done, without him.

He's the Top Sergeant. And since his rewards here on this troubled earth are so meager, certainly he'll be a Top Harpist when the Great Choir is mustered in where St. Peter keeps the gate.

Revised by those below him, uneasy from the orders of those above, he hangs trembling on his mighty shoulders of humped wire in a shell-wound No Man's Land. He is always Top—whether it's morning or evening, No-Man's land or company mess.

An ancient army adage declares that "the back-bone of the army is the non-com." The T. S. is the top vertebrae link in the important organism. He would be king of non-coms, if an imperial hierarchy existed in the American fighting force.

His contacts are wide. He knows the man power of the company to its last shoestring, and keeps track of words and deeds. He is mighty as a reckoner and judge. His words are weighty and his opinions treasured. He is One Clothed With Authority.

And yet he is a Boy with the Boys when occasion arises. He will sing a song, tell a story or do a dancing fling with the finest grace and gusto. Dignity slips from his mighty shoulders easily, and reveals the essentially human being, which the T. S. really is, in spite of occasional rooklike doubts as to his connection with the Family of Upright, Two-legged Vertebrates. He is a queer compound of the Democrat and the Demagogue, is this Top Sergeant.

SOME MAIL

How highly organized are the departments of the United States Army is best illustrated by a report of one of its best activities in the office of the Adjutant General, Major Henry P. McCain.

On that day, 142,000 separate pieces of mail were received. This is believed to represent the high record of any government office. Within 48 hours only 200 letters of this number remained unanswered.

General McCain says: "Our mail these days is 25 times larger than it was before the United States entered the war. The highest daily mail during the Mexican affair was 3,000 letters. Our force today is only twice that of normal peace times."

STILL SUBJECT TO CALL

Men who have passed their thirty-first birthday are still subject to the call of the selective draft. Provisions of the law make every registered person subject to the call to the colors, unless exempted or discharged.

The law reads as follows: "Provided further, That persons shall be subject to registration as herein provided who shall have attained their twenty-first birthday and who shall not have attained their thirty-first birthday on or before the date set for the registration, and all persons so registered shall be and remain subject to draft into the forces hereby authorized unless exempted or discharged therefrom as in this act provided."

