

Trench and Camp

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THE UNBREAKABLE LINE

One of the higher commanders of the French Army now on duty in America recently prepared a memorandum for the French Institute of the United States, in which he pointed out that Germany would make her supreme effort to win the war before June 1, 1918. Already the German divisions that have been set free on the Russian front have been hurried against the northern borders of Italy, France and England and America are calmly waiting the advent of new divisions for fighting in the Champagne district, in front of Verdun, or anywhere else the Germans may choose along the line of trenches from the mountains of Switzerland to the North Sea.

We speak of trenches and we have in mind one narrow trench three or four feet wide and five feet deep, but how many of us stop to think that behind this trench there is another trench, and then another trench, and then another, and the whole system from where the first front line trenches face each other all the way back to the rear line covers a distance of more than fifty miles? It is this network of trenches; it is this long and carefully prepared system of defense backed by the artillery of France and that of her allies that has made France so sure that Germany would not pass that way.

As the attack on Paris failed in 1914, as the great drive at Verdun has since failed in spite of the hundreds of thousands that the Crown Prince lost, so this new drive against the integrity of France and the success of the Allied cause will also fail.

But one thing this French commander did not emphasize. He spoke of the fact that America would be there to help, and she will; he spoke of the fact that the French artillery and the British artillery were now able to dominate the German gunfire as they had never been able to do before in all their experience, and he commended with evident satisfaction upon the fact that Germany had been forced to go back to the old method of mass formation which, though it gives more courage to the men who are marching, exposes the whole body to a degree of destruction from gunfire that is not possible where men attack in open order.

These are some of the conditions which make the Allies' line seem unbreakable, but there is one fact that surpasses them all. It is the spirit of the American soldier. These men do not have to be herded along like cattle by their second lieutenants; they did not cross the ocean in pursuit of loot or lust; they have not been fed for a generation on hatred, nor is their national industry founded on war. They are come to face death because they wish that life may be preserved for themselves, their fathers, their mothers and their children. They have made war that they might insure peace. They have brought sorrow. They are fired by the highest ideal that animates the heart of man, and that ideal is the unbreakable trench which no German soldier can ever take, and no German shell ever demolish. The Prussian barbarians

have sacked Louvain; they have shot to pieces the great Cathedral of Rheims; they have laid waste the fairest portions of France, but they have not broken the spirit of France, and they will never scale the citadel of the soul of America!

That is the contribution that America will make. All its guns and all its men are only the outward symbol of the spirit which these men exemplify by their lives and by their labors.

The way may be long, but the end is certain; the cost may be great, but the victory is secure. Already in Germany there are those who see the handwriting on the wall. Perhaps the Kaiser has seen it; if not, the time will come when he will look back and know that when America came into the war he met the insurmountable force of the American spirit. And that day the war for Germany was lost!

CARRYING THE BOYS "OVER THERE"

"There is," said Napoleon, "no such thing as certainty in war."

That maxim applies today as surely as it did at Austerlitz, at Jena and at Waterloo. There is no certainty as to the effect of artillery-fire, perfected though it seems to have been. There is no certainty as to the resistance of the enemy, tried though he has been by three years of fighting. There is no certainty as to the future of the submarine, combatted though it is by the most accurate science and the most ceaseless vigilance of the allies.

This was why Assistant Secretary Roosevelt, in announcing the arrival of the first American troops in France, felt it necessary to warn the people that some of our transports would inevitably be lost before all the boys had been landed "O Over There." If nothing else operated, the mere laws of probability and chance would make it almost certain that some of our transports would founder and sink. There is no use concealing the possibility.

But this we can write down with assurance and with pride: Thanks to the efforts of the allied navies, not one of the tens of thousands who have left American ports for foreign service since last April has yet lost his life at sea en route to England or France. Dangers there have been as a matter of course, and close escapes; but of deaths, not one in all the army.

How this record has thus far been attained it is neither prudent nor patriotic to explain in detail. The less the enemy knows about our defensive methods, the less capable he will be of combating them. But the censorship has permitted the publication of a few facts from which readers of Trench and Camp may draw conclusions.

Reports have come, from time to time, of submarines operating 300, 400 and sometimes as much as 500 miles from the shores of France and Ireland, but actual experience has demonstrated that the undersea boats seldom venture more than 200 miles from shore. It is within this distance—the last day's run—that the danger is most acute. Consequently, as our transports approach the edge of this zone, preparations are made for defense, and the size of the convoy is greatly increased. The guns are manned, the boats are swung out on their davits and the men put on lifebelts. Fore and aft, the gun-crews stand ready to fire on an instant's warning, while the officers and the lookout scan the horizon.

Chief reliance, however, is placed upon the destroyers and the submarine chasers. These move around the transports in a cordon and at a speed more than twice that of the transports. If a submarine is sighted, the destroyer is ordered to open fire and run it down, where practicable. If a "chaser" or a destroyer sights the wake of a torpedo, the navigator must, if possible, put his boat between the torpedo and the transport. Dangerous work, that, with the assurance of a certain death if the torpedo strikes the destroyer or the thin sides of the chaser! But the men on those fast-flying craft face it with a cold courage and a quick decision that are an honor to America.

Taking all the troop-movements at sea since the outbreak of hostilities, some statistician has computed that the chances of death on a transport are only about 1.5 times what they would be on ocean-liners during times of peace. If the comparative losses on transports during three years of war be reckoned against the losses at sea during the three years immediately preceding the war, the chances of death are even less than 1.5 times what they would be on liners. That is consoling to the fighting-man who wants at least, to die with Mother Earth beneath him. But if those chances were ten times as great as they are, there is scarcely a man in any of the thirty-two regiments that would hesitate a moment. That is the spirit of America and that is the spirit which is to win the war!

CANTONMENT TYPES

THE AUTHORITY

At every mess his voice is heard. It rises from every tent and barrack group, and thunders forth edicts, pronouncements, last-words and final opinions.

The Authority has a grim set of jaw and the light of inside information in his eye. He knows it All—or if not All, Practically Everything of Any Account.

Perhaps that question if before the house which All Men Everywhere discuss: How Long Will the War Last? The Authority doesn't guess when the conflict will end. He knows. He proves by arithmetic, calculus, theology and astronomy that it will be over in three years, five months and fifteen days. His opinion amounts to a Fiat. Let the Powers Head, is the way one feels after The Authority has seen fit to Speak.

His pronouncements on other matters, be they smoking tobacco, rifles, philosophy, religion or army hash, are Final—Five-Star Complete, as the newspaper language has it. If his mates are hanging breathless on the Latest Rumor, The Authority pushes aside the bringer of the alleged tidings and lays before the house contrary information forty seconds later than the latest.

It is impossible to argue with The Authority. Like trying to contravene General Orders with poetry, or put off revile with logic, is any attempt to gainsay him.

Tolerance is the most bitter treatment. Indulgence, such as one accords a mildly insane person, is the best medicine for this chap who is in every camp and cantonment. He can't help it. Perhaps his nurse dropped him on a concrete sidewalk when he was too young to prove authoritative over that substance. Some day he will learn the Great Lesson: That the highest point in knowledge is to know how little is known, or can be. Then, he will be humble, and no longer The Authority.

THE FIRST THIRTY-SIX HOURS ON SHORE "OVER THERE"

By CHAUNCEY P. HULBERT

Somewhere in France

"Heaven help the Germans if they ever get in front of that bunch."

There was good reason for this remark. Across an open field came charging 1,400 khaki-clad men as fast as they could sprint.

"Like a herd of buffaloes," remarked another observer.

At the end of a minute's run the 1,400 men jumped a shallow six-foot trench and went flying back again. If the dust had not been so muddy it would have filled the air.

This took place at one of the great French ports during the first afternoon the men landed from America. It was called an inter-regimental field day and somewhat over 4,000 American soldiers participated in it inside of two hours. The events included a company run of 230 yards, the trench jump and "Company Soccer." Every man took an active part and the winning company was announced amid cheers. This is one example of what the Red Triangle is doing with "Mass Athletics."

During the morning on which the soldiers arrived on the transports three members of the athletic and recreation department of the Y. M. C. A. delivered nine lectures before all the officers and men of the con-

voy on "Social Morality" and "Mass Athletics." The field day of the afternoon was a practical experiment along the latter line, being conducted by six "Y" secretaries without preliminary plan or special equipment. Every man got strenuous exercise and plenty of it and spent the evening writing home about "Some Track Meet."

The next morning the same Red Triangle speakers, Dr. John McCurdy, Dr. John Coulter and Dr. James Nalmsmith, addressed other groups of men drawn up by regiments on similar topics. It is significant that the activities of the arriving troops for their first thirty-six hours ashore were put entirely in the hands of the Y. M. C. A. The favorable comment of both officers and men attested the success of the undertaking.

In the trench jump the men wore their full uniforms and carried their rifles and looked for all the world like they were actually going over the top. Following the trench jump they were marched back to the starting point and a few moments later dashed on the 230 yards in record breaking time. In the company soccer game four balls were used and the officials included four referees, two umpires, four scorers and two time-keepers.

THE RED TRIANGLE

(An appeal in behalf of Y. M. C. A. War Work)

Lift up the Red Triangle
Beside the thundering guns—
A friend, a shield, a solace
To our ten million sons!
Go build a hut or dugout
By billet or by trench—
A shelter from the horror,
The cold, the filth, the stench!
Where boys we love, returning,
From out the gory loam
Can sight the Red Triangle
And find a bit of home!

Lift up the Red Triangle
Against the things that maim
It conquers Boose, the wreckers!
It shuts the house of shame!
Go make a friendly corner,
So lads can take the pen
And get in touch with mother
And God's clean things again!
Where Hell's destroying forces
Are leagued with Potsdam's crew,
Lift up the Red Triangle—
And help our boys "come through"!

DANIEL M. HENDERSON.

SIX NEW MAJOR-GENERALS

The following brigadier-generals have been promoted to be major-generals: George H. Cameron, Andre W. Brewster, Charles C. Ballou, George W. Reed, Charles H. Muir and Charles T. Menohor.

These colonels were made brigadier-generals: Malvern-Hill Barnum, William H. Hay and James McL. Carter.

Col. Alexander L. Dade was made brigadier-general of the Signal Corps.

SOLDIERS SEND GIFTS

It was not a case of all take and no give with the American soldiers in France on Christmas Day. The khaki-clad boys "Over There" sent back more than 10,000 sacks of Christmas presents to their relatives and friends. The gifts included hundreds of foreign novelties and souvenirs of the war and will be most highly treasured by the recipients.