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WHY DO YOU FIGHT?

By LOUIS J. WORTHAM  
Publisher of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram

A little more than a year ago the average young man who is now in the American army had no idea he would ever be a soldier.

He was just starting in life. Some had not yet found their level and had not discovered the line of work to which they would be willing to devote their lives. Others had carefully prepared for a profession and were just embarking upon it. But all had their dreams. All saw visions of the life ahead, and with hopeful gaze looked out upon the world around. There is nothing so big to the average healthy-minded young man as the things connected with his own life. And it is safe to say that the average young American who is now in the army thought mostly of himself and the life he expected to live.

Youthful dreams are the most splendid things in the world. It is sad, perhaps, that so many are destined never to be realized. But even when they are not realized it is better to have had them. The youth of America dreamt such dreams when the stern voice of national duty called to war. The young man was required by the nation to abandon his dreams and to take up a task he never thought would be thrust upon him. Many, perhaps, were bewildered over the sudden change in their lives. Some, no doubt, are still bewildered and look back at their dreams with a sigh.

Why have the young men of the country been asked to give up everything for the present and devote themselves to the nation's cause? Why have they been asked to leave off dreaming and toiling to realize their dreams, and go forth into a foreign land to fight and to yield up their young lives, if need be?

"To make the world safe for democracy," is the ready reply. To be sure. Never was so much truth packed in a phrase as when President Wilson gave that slogan to the allied nations warring against Germany. But, after all, it is a generalization. It does not always "connect up" with the mind of the youth who has been occupied with his own dreams and plans. What is the concrete reason the young men

of the country have been asked to do this thing?

Well, let's look into the matter. Robert W. Service has a poem which depicts the bewilderment of the seasoned soldier when he realizes that some day the war will be over and he will have to go back to his "sissy job" and "the bald-headed boss's call." That is the feeling that will come to the American soldier later. Today, for the most part, he is still wondering how his life as a soldier is going to turn out. But the seasoned soldier is beginning to wonder how it will be when he goes back. "All of us wonder how it will be when we have to go back again," says Service.

One thing is certain: It will make a great deal of difference in how it will be if the Germans win the war. And it will make a difference not only for the young men who went, but also for the young men who stayed at home. There you have a hint to the answer to our question. Most of the young men who are now in the army are coming back to their jobs. They are going to take up their dreams again. But how vain their dreams will be if they are living in a world dominated by the Hun! There is where the answer "connects up" with the young man's dreams and plans.

Let the young soldier think of the things he dreamed of doing and of being before he was called to war. Let him think of the home he expected to establish and the life he expected to live. And then let him know this: It is for the right to labor to bring those fine dreams to realization, without interference from the tyrannical power that seeks to rule the world, that he goes forth to fight. He fights for the flag and for the national ideals which it represents. But he fights also for his own dreams, for those who are near and dear to him, and for the right to live his own life in freedom. His fighting is to be part of the realization of his dreams. And it will be well or ill with him when he comes back home again in accordance with how he conducts himself during this greatest struggle in all history.

THE FIRST MILLION

Soon after the Congress of the United States had enacted the legislation calling for the selective draft, Premier Lloyd George asked the question, "When will America's first million arrive?"

America has answered his question, not by words but in terms of flesh and blood.

The first million has arrived. And there are other millions to be drawn upon, two millions being already in training.

The men that have gone have demonstrated their fitness to take places by the side of the valiant little Belgian army, the brave French and the bulldog Britons.

As was fitting, the Regular Army was first represented. Units of the Regular Army were despatched almost immediately after the declaration of war. There were not many to send—for we were not a militaristic nation. But what we had we sent, as many as we could spare, retaining in this country only a sufficient number to form skeleton units and to train the new troops.

Then units of the National Guard were sent over. These units were gathered from all over the country,

and, coming from so many states, they were picturesquely styled the "Rainbow Division."

In the meantime great camps and cantonments were erected for the training of the skeleton units of the new Regular Army divisions, of the remaining National Guard divisions and of the new draft army.

It was not long before the feats of Americans abroad began to thrill the people of the homeland.

Regulars and National Guardsmen alike distinguished themselves. In due time the new National Army came into being and, as quickly as possible, units of that new army were sent to France. Now they, too, have been heard from.

The record is always the same, whether it concerns Regulars, National Guardsmen or men of the National Army. The intrepidity, the native skill in warfare, the adaptability to new conditions—all these factors in the fighting ability of American troops stamped them no matter what the genesis of their organizations.

Not all of the first million are among the fighting troops. For the maintenance of a transport system in France, for the great problems of the

commissary and ordnance departments, thousands, yes hundreds of thousands of troops, must be kept far from the firing lines.

But even the non-combatant forces have the genius for warfare that characterizes every body of American troops. An instance of this is already cited in official battle records, as in the annals of General Carey's scratch army.

Supplementing the work of the Army of the United States, in all of the three co-ordinate branches, are the American Marines. And what a record they have written!

Then there is the record of our naval accomplishments. When the report of the first year of naval activity was written it was proudly stated, and gratefully heard, that on the eastward voyage not a single American life had been lost due to enemy operations. It was a tremendous task that the Navy undertook and it was a tremendous

accomplishment that the Navy achieved.

The record would not be complete if a word were not spoken in behalf of those great civilian agencies that have contributed so largely to the success of America's army overseas.

The American army is high-spirited. Ministering to its morale is the American Red Cross, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Salvation Army and other agencies too numerous to mention. The judgment of historians will give to these agencies a large share of the credit, which it is impossible to appraise at this time.

As the first million takes its place overseas, the one regret is that the American navy has not yet had an opportunity to demonstrate that its capital ships are the equal of any in the world and are manned by some of the finest sea fighters of all time.

Confessions Of A Conscript

(This is the seventh of a series of diary entries written by a young man called from his civilian pursuits by the operation of the selective draft. It is a frank, outspoken record of his own feelings, thoughts and emotions, which, perhaps, have been shared by other American men now overseas or in training. These diary entries are commended to the soldiers of the National Army as a truthful portrayal of the process of converting civilians into soldiers of "the finest army ever called to the colors by any nation." The writer is Ted Wallace, a luxury-loving young man, who, at the outset has no settled convictions, except selfish ones, and who is transformed by the purging process of war into a red-blooded patriot.)

Sept. 8.

There is something tremendously fascinating about this camp. Its hugeness overwhelms you at first. But since the first two days we have had little opportunity to think of anything but the tasks at hand.

We get up at an unearthly hour—half-past five—and from then until after the flag ceremony, of which I have written, it is a case of work all the time.

At first my muscles were sore and I was very tired. But tonight I did not mind it so much.

The soldier's day is a long and dif-

hall. "Policing" means cleaning up. It is quite interesting in the early morning as the grounds are "policed." The men cover every inch of the ground and leave it scrupulously clean.

We went at the "policing" of the mess hall today with a new spirit. It is quite wonderful that the Captain's little talk did. I noticed men picking up cigarette stumps without being ordered to do it.

The company is full now and we have been told that non-commissioned officers will be named from among us. There are some men with military experience and I suppose they will get all the places.

The army organization becomes a little more plain to me, even after this short time. The saluting, which at first seems so unnecessary, has taken on a new meaning. One of the young Lieutenants was explaining it today. He said it had come to the modern army from the knights of old. They wore helmets that covered their faces completely. A junior knight passing a senior—the Lieutenant didn't put it quite that way, but that is what he meant—would raise the visor of his helmet and speak a word of greeting. That salutation is the origin of the salute. The Lieutenant explained that so much stress is placed upon it because it was now considered more than a mere exchange of greeting; in fact, is an oath of allegiance of a soldier to his country and his commander. I like that idea. The army is different from any other kind of an organization. I can see that. The officers have power to send us to certain death—what a tremendous responsibility—and it is important that we view them differently from mere employers.

I feel already that I have imbibed



We did some gardening as well as drilling today.

fruit one. Of that I am convinced. A young Lieutenant told us today that we were being "eased in" to real work.

We did some gardening as well as drilling today, for the Captain said he wanted our barracks and the ground nearby to look better than any other in camp. When we had finished our landscape gardening mess call sounded. It was very welcome. The Captain said he wanted a word with the men, so we were all assembled.

"Let me tell you something," he began. "I'm not asking you to do this gardening because I am particularly fond of flowers or because I am a particular lover of landscape beauty, but I am concerned in company pride. You men don't know what that means yet. Those of you that have been to high school or college know something of what I am driving at. You wanted your athletic teams to beat anything going. You were proud of your school, proud of its traditions."

"This company of which you all are members has no traditions yet. Neither has any other company on this reservation. The record is absolutely blank and there are no handicaps. Therefore, the thing to do is to get off to a good start and to make fine traditions. I want this company to be the best in camp."

It was just like a school day. We were all boys again. You could not have checked the cheers. The Captain looked very pleased. But he held up his hand and said: "I told you a minute ago that I wanted this company to be the finest in the camp. But I think you might just as well know that every other Captain is telling his company the same thing."

The humor of the situation dawned upon all of us. There was a loud laugh, which probably wasn't very military. But the captain did not care. He told us to get in line for mess and to keep the company tradition in mind as we "policed" the mess



I noticed men picking up cigarette stumps without being ordered to do it. Many of the army ideas. I suppose I shall soon become an enthusiast. Certainly I am beginning to lose my resentment.

It does not seem possible that so few hours could work such great changes. Yet there are men here today who are upright in bearing and proud, men who, when they came only a day or two ago, were slouchy and listless.

It seems as if the atmosphere is electrified. Officers are constantly speaking of it. They call it a miracle and are predicting a great future for the National Army.

As I write there is the first note of "Taps." What a beautiful call it is! But it means something, and I as a soldier must obey.