

Forward Observation Post

By CALE K. BERGENS.

The third national convention of the American legion is now history; and, judging the same from its physical proportions, its spiritual manifestations and its far reaching accomplishments surely this Kansas City convention will constitute a brilliant page in the history of Americanism, Patriotism and universal comradeship. North Carolina played a prominent role on this occasion and I shall let the words of our delegate tell the story of the Kansas City trip of the Tar Heel delegation.

First we will hear from W. B. Rouse, commander of the Donnerson-Hawkins post at New Bern, who was one of the official delegates from North Carolina. Mr. Rouse writes: "That was a great trip we had out to the Kansas City convention. What a pity it is that every ex-serviceman, North Carolina, who has not been there! The business that was transacted, the standards that were set, the inspirations that were given, were sufficient to put the fighting spirit in the hearts of the legionnaires in the world. If the ex-servicemen in North Carolina could catch the spirit of that convention the department of this state would enlist 25,000 members before the first day of February. The trip was like a moonlight sail on the Hudson or a picnic down in Alabama. Everybody carried a smile on their face from Comrade Hock Private down to Comrade 'Black Jack' Pershing. It was the city of smiles, matrimony and joy. But the Kansas City convention was not a place of play for all. Many of the delegates were assigned to committees and were required to work day and night. In these committee meetings, the great program of the legion was moulded. This program is based upon our great country and our disabled comrades, whereas the cause for the existence of the American Legion."

In hitting the most striking feature of the Kansas City trip, State Commander Tom Bird, of Asheville, writes as follows: "I think that the most remarkable thing is the calm, deliberate way in which these young legionnaires went about the serious problems with which they were confronted. One would imagine that ex-service men coming together, most of them under 30 years of age, would go about things in a sort of 'don't give a damn' fashion; yet such was not the case. Each delegate in the convention seemed to feel the responsibility that had been delegated to him and went about his work conscious of the importance and the highness of his task. This controlling sense of conservatism and high responsibility was typified in the consideration of the Harvey resolution; the first resolution concerning Ambassador Harvey was defeated because of its extreme wording, while immediately the convention adopted unanimously

a resolution condemning Ambassador Harvey's Pilgrim dinner speech in terms equally as firm and terse yet evidencing the dignity of the aims and purposes of the American legion. And this same conservative yet militant far-sightedness prevailed throughout the deliberations of the convention. The fact that the national constitution of the legion was not changed and the fight to preserve the fundamentals of the legion, by keeping it in every way from partisan politics, by maintaining the 100 per cent Americanism throughout the nation and by standing squarely beside the disabled ex-service men, show conclusively that the ex-service men will never forsake the cause for which they fought or their comrades who fought with them during the war. In my estimation, this guarantees that the American legion as a patriotic organization will never die."

Among the Tar Heels who journeyed to Kansas City in the special Pullman cars, there were certain personalities that typify our state and that made all with whom we came in contact to express a desire to visit North Carolina and, in the words of National Judge Advocate Robert Adams, of Indianapolis, "Go where people can really have a good time." Ranking first among the big business interests is the big business interest, which the legion is concerned. Our experience with the "chemical" resolution shows not only that the great influence of the American legion is recognized by the big business interests but that this influence cannot be corrupted. While the convention proper was very interesting and helpful, I would feel amply repaid for the time spent and expense incurred, if I had to show for it nothing more than the friendship of the delegates whom I met. The good-fellowship which grew among us while on this trip will live as long as we do, and I will always look back upon it as one of the greatest events of my life. Mark me down now for the New Orleans trip in 1922."

George T. Skinner, commander of the Joseph Bountree post at Winston was another official delegate to the Kansas City convention and he speaks as follows: "The most enjoyable part of the whole occasion was the trip there and back. The spirit of comradeship was splendid and the songs and stories entertained and drew closer together the three score Tar Heels who made this trip. Traveling through a country for two days and nights that was not only beautiful but new to many, we possessed a great educational value."

"One of the lasting impressions of the convention itself will be the recollection of the great war leaders such as Foch, Pershing, Beatty, Diaz and Jacques. As a member of the committee on military affairs I was particularly impressed by a statement made by an officer of the regular army, who was a member of the committee himself and who said among other things that if the Camp Benny training school for officers was to get the appropriation necessary to carry on its work, the same could only be secured from Congress through the support of the American legion. Such a statement from such a person evidences the high regard in which the army considers the American legion and its desires to have the counsel and support of the legion."

One of the most appreciated and valuable members of the Tar Heel delegation was Dr. L. T. Mann, commander of the Andrew Jackson post at High Point. In speaking of his observations on the Kansas City convention, Dr. Mann says, "My impressions were so many and so varied that I would take a book the size of Frederick O'Brien's 'Mystic Isles of the South Sea' to hold it all. The immensity of the crowd impressed me, because it was the largest convention assembly in American history; and while these thousands of men were in a happy, carefree, and occasionally hilarious mood, rowdiness was conspicuous by its absence; and that fact is something for which the legion should be proud. Also it was impressive to note the fact that Foch, Pershing, Beatty, Diaz and Jacques, the greatest war leaders in the world's history, were talking world peace. Again I was impressed with the unusual democracy of the entire occasion, as on every hand ex-privates from the rear ranks were slapping their ex-officers on the back and addressing them by their first name in that man to man spirit of good-fellowship that prevails nowhere in the world as it does in America. Our trip to and from Kansas City was exceedingly pleasant and I know that a more congenial bunch of good fellows could not have been hand-picked from North Carolina than were those men and women that traveled in our special Pullman cars. In all the air of fun and frolic there was an undercurrent of seriousness for real work to be accomplished that was most commendable; and one only has to read the newspaper reports to see that the legion put across much work that will stand as long as the legion itself, and that it was clear that the dead, the physically disabled, and the financially disabled were not being forgotten. Yet the one thing that impressed me most deeply was the feeling of unselfish expression to what I consider to be the high points in connection with the Kansas City convention. Yet I do wish to relate the story of the election of national commander, North Carolina, that a candidate in person, Dr. Dan S. Hollenga of Hamlet and the prospects for his election appeared to be good. The campaign for national commander was a divided thing in the issue of casting a certain ring element that had developed previously in the national affairs of the legion. In the preliminary work, the south and the west were working together with the understanding that before enter-

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ing the final session of the convention that all strength must be concentrated on some one candidate who would oppose the "ring" candidate, the latter presumed to be either Milton J. Foreman, of Illinois, or General Hoffman, of Oklahoma. The four most prominent candidates that had been presented for consideration for the south and the west were Means, of Colorado, Kendrick, of California, Vernon, of Minnesota, and Hollenga, of North Carolina. The supporters of these four men agreed that in the final caucus on Tuesday night, the candidate evidencing the greatest strength should receive the support of the friends of the other three candidates, so that the south and the west could present a solid front in the convention on Wednesday. About 3 o'clock on Tuesday night the caucuses seemed to favor Hollenga, of North Carolina; but later in the night it developed that the lines had been drawn so firmly between the four candidates that neither of them could secure the complete support of all the friends of the other three candidates. Thereupon Iowa started a boom for Hanford MacNider for national commander; and the splendid record of MacNider as a soldier and as a legionnaire together with the dead-end that had developed previously immediately a landslide in favor of the Iowa man; and MacNider's candidacy grew to such proportions with in the next few hours that neither

Hollenga, Means, Kendrick nor Vernon were nominated on the floor of the convention and the combined strength of the supporters of these four men produced such demonstrations on the convention floor that General Hoffman and his nomination withdrew and MacNider was elected national commander by acclamation."

HENDERSON STAGED A FINE ARMISTICE DAY CELEBRATION

(Special to Daily News.) Henderson, Nov. 12.—The Armistice day celebration in Henderson yesterday surpassed anything of its kind held in Henderson in recent years. A busy program was closely followed and everybody participated in some activity during the day. The day's program was fittingly started by service at each of Henderson's churches incident to Armistice day, at 11 o'clock, followed by a half of all business for two minutes at the noon hour, after which the largest parade since the home coming celebration was held two years ago. A barbecue was given in Swains grove at 1 o'clock. At 2:30 a field meet was enjoyed on the athletic field, followed by a football game between the Henderson and Oxford high schools. At 3:30 p. m. a street dance was given in front of the American legion quarters on Garnett street and a band concert in Liberty park by the American legion band.

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