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No. 1 Haywood St.

THE MEN WHO CAME FIRST

Americans at French Front, Short On Uplift, But Long on Americanism—Filled With Youth of New Country.

By ARTHUR GLEASON

[For the last week the writer has been with the American army where it is nearest the front. He has eaten mess, watched the gas practice, and generally lived with this section of the army in each one of the villages where it is billeted.]

The men who came first are now here, well up toward the front, doing their bit in learning how to kill. It would be easy to write general talk about these many men of many nationalities from all the states. One would then say that unfatigued youth in their walk, in their eyes, in their speech. They fill the villages with their slang and swine. They boost the prices till dinner in a simple country village costs \$1. A tiny room, two flights up and cover a stable, costs 50 cents. A pair of leather gaiters, worth from \$5 to \$7, costs \$14. But our soldiers "shell out" good naturedly, play baseball, throw hand grenades, sing, "Keep the Home Fires Burning," and eat three good meals a day with delicious white bread on the side.

The trail of white bread left by our army is the outstanding feature of the American invasion. Little Chariot, 12 years old, dressed in the uniform of the French Twenty-fifth, is leader of the peasant children who bring the mess around, and pick up, not the crumbs, but the pieces that fall from the tin of our soldiers. Flaky, billowy white bread, what a comfort to the stomach that has grown sour on the browns of England and France! I believe that this war will be won by American white bread.

The Record of Minnesota Danes. But to come to cases. It is more convincing to tell of individual men I have met in this brave little advance army. I have met the 18-year-old boy, whom we call Bernard Beck, private, a Dane. He comes from Tyler, Minn. This is a village in Lincoln county, in the southwest corner of the state. It has a population of 700, and on the first call for volunteers (long before conscription) it responded with 41 men, of whom 22 are Danes.

You Tyler people are good Americans," I said to Beck. "We had one fellow," he answered, "who talked up for the Germans, but he had to leave town." He pulled from his pocket a list of his friends who had volunteered from the village. There were Joseph Vadheim and Clinton Erikson of Norwegian descent, William Schnell and William Reltz, German; Charles Glynn and George Donovan, Irish; Carl Ollson, Swede; John Ferguson, Scotch; and the rest all Danes. Seventy per cent of the village is of Danish descent so Beck told me, and all good Americans. Then there is Private Daniel Sanders, from Homestead, Penn. His father was a Hungarian.

arm, do you?" he asked, bearing the forearm, bicep and tricep. I did not.

He asked for a wooden plank, and wadding his handkerchief into his fist, and gripping a nail he drove it through the board. Then he drove two at once. When he is feeling it he goes through more than one inch. He has offered to give a "Y" exhibition—"Y" is the army abbreviation for the Y. M. C. A. huts for soldiers—with such specialties as breaking a wagon axle over his neck by letting eight men hang on the axle, bending a gas pipe on his skull, lifting a man in a chair with two fingers, lifting a man and table with his teeth, drawing three motor cars full of people with his teeth, and lifting a man by a steel comb in his hair. He has gone by the name of the "Iron-Jaw King" in local exhibits at home. He is 22 years old and enlisted for the war with Mexico.

Just as Sanders was sitting for France a New York tough saw him in the street and thought he had met a harmless country boy (the one hundred and eighty rounds of fighting munitions are hidden in "civ's clothes").

"It was our last day in the United States," says Sanders, "I was thinking 'I'll never see God's country any more. I was thinking of something else and hit him good. I'm not the strongest man in the world, nothing like that. I'll just do the show for the soldiers, so they can have something new every once in a while. We used to loaf together. Now we're at war together. Well, I'll have to heat it. I'm on water call tonight."

A young marine of the Battalion of the 1st Marine Division is a professional boxer, stripping at 142 1/2 pounds. He is the son of a horse breeding farmer in Missouri, who bred "Early Reaper," 2-09 flat," the boy explained.

"I've come four thousand miles to get a crack at the Germans," he said. "These boys are red faced, young with drive. One meets many boys, 18 and 19 years old, but the average is about 23."

"There's not a touch of 'blueness' among them," said J. H. Edwards, secretary of the hut at —. "They're just boys, full-grown to be sure, but boys." One man came into a hut and asked for a Spanish-French grammar. It turned out that this is his second enlistment. He first saw service in Porto Rico. You will find, now and again, a company of old timers, men who have been in service 15 to 20 years. Sergeant Murphy, of the 20th Infantry, has served for 26 years—Cuba, the Philippines, all our brushes. These old time sergeants are the key to the army. They are on an equality with the men, but they understand discipline. Speaking for the few thousand men whom I saw in this furthest advanced section of the army, the regulars num-

ber about 25 per cent, and the other three-quarters are volunteers, who came in on the declaration of war. The regulars, with their experience, are well scattered among the newcomers, so as to give a foundation on which to build morale. The police sergeant of —, with three gold teeth in his front upper jaw, which come out in a chilly smile, is another old timer. It is his duty to make the life of prisoners uncomfortable with hard work. Otherwise the boys would break rules and stay out after hours. He was speaking of the lumber shortage and the difficulty of getting any pine boards for the huts.

"I'm between fire and hot water myself," he said.

When the War Came to Texas. A Texas man strolled into the hut where I was spending the night and he began talking about his home and district. He lives thirty miles from Texarkana, and his hands were banded up from his army work as "maul-skinner." He told how the circulation of the local newspapers jumped as soon as war was declared.

"The people thought they might as well know about it as not," he explained.

"The Kaiser won't do," was his summary of Texas public opinion, and he explained why his state felt that way: "It's busting international law made our folks see the war—it was shooting the stars."

I sat near a group of soldiers in the hut at —. They had come in for a cake of chocolate and a smoke. The talk ran on to the new army life of the last six months.

"I'd give 'em a hundred dollars to send me back," said one.

"I don't want to go back till I see something," replied the man across the table.

"It's nicer to be over where you can savvy, where you can be with your own people," put in a third man. "Over here you've got to make all kinds of movements to make them cough up."

"I came into the army to work," asserted a boy; "it makes a man out of you." "It makes a growler out of most," replied an older man. "Well, you've got to take it just as it comes," advised the philosopher of the group. "I'm getting all the money I need. Go back to the States and you'll not be satisfied. I'll take another good taste of the army. I've got a brother, getting on six years in the 13th cavalry, says it's the nicest life he ever lived." The American turn is in their speech all the time—not only the charming southern slur and the New England twang, but the little surprise in the wording itself. I was sitting next to a Louisville, Ky., man, and a camion driver came into the shack. The southerner greeted him: "I'm as glad to see you as I'd be to see my wife. And I haven't got any wife."

A few minutes later a man yelled: "Where's Bob?" A voice from the next shack answered: "Here." "Can't you hear him breathing?" asked the southerner.

The Youth of a New Country. These are all men whom I have met in our new army. I give their exact talk as it fell and the facts about their life history. This is America in the autumn of 1917 in the persons of her young volunteers. These men have come across willingly, even gladly, with a touch of adventure in their impulse and more than a touch of heroism. They want to see great things, to play a part at a moment of history. Few of this advance army will ever see home again, for they will be first and foremost in the trenches. But there is no foretaste of death in their jaunty attitude, their humorous talk, the vitality that survives drill and punishing hikes and turns to nine innings of baseball for recreation. They are Texas, Iowa and Minnesota. They are youth.

The Young Men's Christian association is being challenged to the biggest job of its life out here. Can it catch up this drifting humorous crowd of men in their idle moments and make them feel at home? The old methods and the old men won't go at all. The secretary with the professional glad hand and general smile and watchful eye would last about a week. The Bible classes and prayer groups are all right enough for small selected groups of the men, but the great mass of these brave, lonesome, warm-hearted boys are shy of "up-lift."

The core of the work out here is to give the men one place in each camp of the war zone where they can feel as free as in their own home towns, as free to write letters, play pool, sing songs, see Charley Chaplin on the screen. It is up to the American people to give their army these things—to give money freely to the "Y" huts, and to send expression, men business men, with gleeful voices and good stories, to help in the work. Above all, the hut secretary must have a great human liking in his make-up, liking for all kinds of men. The men feel it in a minute and respond to it, but they steer clear of anything professional.

Wherever the men are the huts are, and as fast as the men advance under the guns the hut and dug-out will go with them. The voluntary helpers already over here, like Dr. Robert Freeman, of the big Presbyterian church of Pasadena, Cal., and Gerald Reynolds, the New York musician, are packing every bit of their skill every evening. But the present year will see the need of hundreds of such leaders. Every officer with whom I have talked, from sergeant to colonel, up and down our line, has expressed his desire for the "Y" huts to be the center of camp activities and to run at full blast all the time. As our fighting men come across, five hundred thousand strong, and then a million, we must give every regiment of them a place where each thousand or twelve hundred of them an evening can drop in for a good time.

The TIMES' subscription campaign means an automobile for four fortunate people. Phone 1951.

BETTER EXCHANGE SYSTEM NEEDED HERE, IS CLAIMED

Board of Trade Takes Hand in Movement for Improvement

At its next session congress will be asked by boards of trade, chambers of commerce and large exporting concerns to establish a foreign exchange bureau which would afford foreign banking facilities which the American importer does not now possess. The American importer under the present system, it is claimed, receives only about 80 or 90 cents on the dollar when he buys goods in any of the neutral countries, the rest of the dollar going for cost of exchange.

Under the act of congress of June 21, it is claimed, the Federal Reserve Board has power to establish such a foreign exchange bureau which would give American importers the full value of the American dollar for the goods he buys in neutral countries. The board of trade asks those who are interested in making the American dollar full value abroad to write senators and congressmen asking their active efforts in getting the treasury department to establish such a foreign exchange bureau.

SOLDIERS PASS THROUGH ENROUTE TO CAMPS

A party of 30 drafted men from West Jefferson, N. C., passed through Asheville yesterday afternoon en route to Camp Jackson. Division Passen-ger Agent Wood made arrangements here to serve lunch to the men.

TENTH DISTRICT BANKERS WILL MEET WEDNESDAY

Bankers of the tenth district, group A, of the North Carolina Bankers' association, will meet at the Langren hotel Wednesday evening to make plans for a big drive in the Liberty loan campaign. It is felt that the entire district must organize thoroughly to make the sale a success in this section and a campaign with ginger in it will be mapped out at the Langren meeting.

ONE LADY HAS DECIDED TO GET 'THAT MAXWELL'

On account of the many valuable prizes being given away by THE TIMES in its Circulation Campaign, a great deal of interest is being aroused in this section of the state. Candidates are picking out their prizes and are "going after" them.

One lady has written that "that Maxwell car" is the "apple of her eye" and that she has decided to get down to real work and win it. She declares that she will win the Maxwell if it "can be done" and she thinks it can.

Other candidates have decided to go after various prizes offered, the Nash "Six" being the grand capital prize. An Overland and a Chevrolet are also being given away.

The list of the prizes with descriptions and details of how to get them, will be found on another page of today's paper.

MISS JONES HAS CHARGE OF UNSOLD CANNED STUFF

The canned vegetables, left at the community cannery, when that institution closed last week, are in charge of Miss May Jones, chairman for Buncombe county for the National league for Woman's Service and Clerk John H. Cathey has nothing whatever to do with the disposition of the canned stuff. Mr. Cathey was only concerned with the sale of the empty tin cans, which were ordered by the county commissioners to be sold to the householders of Buncombe county at actual cost.

DANVILLE, VA., MAN WAS BURIED HERE YESTERDAY

Funeral services for Edwin Starkey, aged 27, who died at his home at 110, 118 Haywood street Thursday, were held yesterday afternoon at the McKoy-Hare Undertaking establishment on Haywood street. The services were in charge of Rev. J. S. Williams, chaplain of the Mission of the Good Samaritan. Interment was at Riverside cemetery.

The deceased was a native of Danville, Va., and leaves a widow and a small child.

REPORT RECEIVED ON WEST ASHEVILLE PAVING

City Commissioners Are Unable to Aid Salvation Army

Salvation Army representatives appeared at the city commissioners' meeting yesterday afternoon and asked the board to grant that organization a regular financial donation through the winter season. The commissioners, while expressing regret for the action, refused the request, stating that the condition of the city treasury did not warrant this grant of aid.

Mayor Rankin was authorized to issue vouchers to Harkins & Van Winkle and to Zebulon Weaver for the action, refused the request, stating that the condition of the city treasury did not warrant this grant of aid.

A request from Water Superintendent Weaver for additional office space was taken under consideration. City School Superintendent Howell was authorized to appoint Mrs. Montcastle as a teacher at Orange Street school.

A request from E. D. Hopkins for permission to preach on the streets was referred to the commissioner of public safety.

The report of City Engineer Lee on total and pro rata costs to property owners for paving the following streets in West Asheville was received and ordered to be advertised: Haywood road from Beverly road to the concrete bridge; Haywood road from the bridge to west end of Beverly road; Haywood road from end of car line to the bank; Haywood road from Dill place to Sand Hill road; Haywood road from city limits to Dill property; Haywood road from Westwood place to Smith Bridge; Westwood from Haywood road to end of pavement; Craven street from Haywood to the concrete bridge; Brevard road from Bartlett's entrance to Haywood road; Brevard road from Hominy creek to Bartlett's entrance.

A number of semi-monthly bills were read and approved for payment. No building permits were asked for at yesterday's meeting.

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