

TRENCH AND CAMP



ATHLETICS BENEFIT MEN MENTALLY AND MORALLY, AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY

A summary of what the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities has accomplished in the last few months in providing athletic recreation for the thousands of men in the thirty-two National Army and Guard camps and a forecast of its plans for further promoting this vast work are contained in a statement issued by Dr. Joseph E. Raycroft, athletic supervisor of the Commission, who has moved his headquarters from Princeton to Washington for the duration of the war.

The keen relationship between actual warfare and the various sports that have been fostered in the cantonments is emphasized in the statement. "The sports included in the camp curriculum, such as boxing, football and soccer," Dr. Raycroft declares, "have been selected not only as means of amusement but to prepare the men for the struggle to come, and the value of the athletic training they have received will be fully realized when they go 'over the top.'"

Uniform Doesn't Make Soldier
"When the Commission first began its work in this direction there was a well-defined belief prevalent that a soldier was made by putting a man in a uniform and teaching him the manual of arms," Dr. Raycroft states. "We have proved the utter fallacy of this theory by showing that athletics increase a man's fighting efficiency as well as providing him with wholesome recreation during his leisure hours."

"Some idea of the scope of the work we are doing can be obtained by visualizing the fact that at one western cantonment 16 baseball diamonds have been laid out in one great field and games have been in simultaneous progress on each, while at another 26 gridirons, with goal-posts and bleachers having a seating capacity of 18,000, were in use last fall."

"With this picture in mind, it can be readily seen that the various sports have been promoted on a scale unparalleled in history. The old order of things has been banished and in its place new rules and regulations have been formulated to govern conditions attendant to the participation of hundreds of men in a single game. For instance, the player limit on football teams in most camps has been raised from 11 to 15, while in soccer games in which 400 men have taken part, with as many as eight to ten balls in use at once, have occurred frequently."

"Nothing like it has ever been attempted before. Experience has taught Allied officers the great help a good athletic training renders a man in battle, but it has remained for the United States to give sports a definite place in the military program and to make it plain that thorough athletic training is a vital adjunct to the equipment of every American soldier."

Soccer Highly Valuable

Dwelling on the part that athletics will play in the conflict, Dr. Raycroft points out that the training they have received in such sports as boxing and soccer will be of inestimable value. "While playing soccer," he explains, "a man must be ready constantly to strike at the ball with either foot. In this way he naturally acquires a short pass and a balance that will serve him in good stead in traversing the churned and turmowed surface of No-Man's land."

"In boxing," Dr. Raycroft continues, "nearly every blow and position has its counterpart in boxing. Where a man now starts a left hook for the head of his opponent in a friendly camp bout, he will soon be using the same movements in sending his bayonet slashing at the throat of an armed antagonist, while a right hook to the jaw will be complicated when he swings the butt of his gun on the jaw of a disarmed foe."

Dr. Raycroft has been greatly elated by the fashion in which the soldiers have taken to soccer. His statement says:

"It is a highly exhilarating game, combining the maximum of exercise and recreation with a training that will be mighty useful to the men when they meet the enemy. Then, too, any number can participate in a game and it can be played in the company streets, as no special equipment or field are needed. These advantages make it an ideal sport for the camps."

"Plans are now being worked out," Dr. Raycroft says, whereby prizes and medals will be given to companies and individuals for athletic proficiency. This, he expects, will excite even greater interest in camp sports.

"There are more men participating in organized athletics today than ever before," Dr. Raycroft concludes, "and not only is this training helping them to fit themselves physically, but it is bettering them morally and mentally. Lastly, it may be the means of saving their lives when they go to grips with the Boche."



American Soldiers Want Best of Reading Matter

More than half a million books have already been sent to American soldiers in France and training camps in this country by the War Service Committee of the American Library Association and the work of supplying reading matter to the boys in khaki is to be kept up on as large a scale as possible.

Reports received by the committee show that the library buildings in each of the training camps have proved a mecca for thousands of soldiers and that on many days the entire supply of books was exhausted. The cost of constructing the library buildings was defrayed from a gift of \$320,000 from the Carnegie Foundation, of which there is still a surplus. In all, the committee received \$1,500,000 in subscriptions with which to keep the soldiers supplied with first-class reading matter.

Great care is necessary in accepting contribution books as German propagandists have been tirelessly active in their efforts to get stories of German glory into the libraries. Reports show that the soldiers prefer the best of reading matter and are particularly anxious to get books dealing with the history and customs of France.

HIS EXEMPTION GROUND

The two young girls watched the knotty young Cuthbert pass along the street.

"Did he appeal for exemption?" said May.

"Yes," said Ray, "you might have known he would."

President Admonishes Army and Navy to Observe Sabbath

THE WHITE HOUSE.

The President, commander in chief of the Army and Navy, following the reverent example of his predecessors, desires and enjoins the orderly observance of the Sabbath by the officers and men in the military and naval service of the United States. The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiment of a Christian people, and a due regard for the Divine Will demand that Sunday labor in the Army and Navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity. Such an observance of Sunday is dictated by the best traditions of our people and by the convictions of all who look to Divine Providence for guidance and protection, and, in repeating in this order the language of President Lincoln, the President is confident that he is speaking alike to the hearts and to the consciences of those under his authority.

WOODROW WILSON.

PRIVATE HONORED

A private in one of the commands in one of the Eastern cantonments was not particularly popular with his tentmates. When he was transferred to another command they hung out a service flag.

MAIL IT TO THE FAMILY

If the stories, poems, jokes and drawings in Trench and Camp Interest Informer interest you, you will be equally enjoyed by the folks back home.

Belgians Defiant as Ever Toward German Invaders

That the spirit of Belgium has not been weakened in the slightest degree by the suffering she has endured since 1914 is plainly shown by the following excerpts from King Albert's reply to the Pope's peace proposal:

"The integrity of Belgium, the territory of the mother country and colonies, political, economic and military independence without condition suffered and the guarantees against a renewal of the aggression of 1914—such remain the indispensable conditions of a just peace. Any settlement that would not recognize them would shake the very foundations of justice."

"If there is a country that has the right to say it took up arms to defend its existence it assuredly is Belgium. She desires passionately that an end be brought to the unheard sufferings of its population, but she would have kept only a peace that would assure her at the same time the equitable reparation and security and guarantees for the future."

A BIRD OF AN IDEA

The War Department is being swamped with suggestions as to how to employ the war and devices to be employed. Many of these suggestions are filed away because of their impracticability. Others have been adopted.

Among those which was not thought to be practicable was the suggestion that homing pigeons be "dressed" with talking parrots, the idea being to release the pigeons to fly over the enemy lines and return with the enemy lines and return and tell what they had seen and heard.