

AMERICA IN FRANCE

VIII—The Marne

"The holy land of French arms" is the name which a French historian has aptly bestowed upon the stretch of country forming the valley of the river Marne.

From the days when the Gauls—the Remi of Rheims, the Lugones of Langres, and the Senones of Sens—fought against the Roman legions to the days last July when the German forces were receding before the attack of the Franco-Americans, its soil has been trampled over and over by the feet of marching men.

From the source of the Marne above Langres, where the tribal chief Sabinus surrendered to the Romans in 71 A. D., to its junction with the Seine at Charenton, not two miles southeast of Paris, the history of the river may be said to be the military history of France.

Napoleon held that, once the masses of the Argonne, the Marne and the Argonne were forced to the valley of the Marne was the place for the last defense of Paris. He put his theory to the bitter test there in 1814 when, endeavoring to stem the advance of the Austro-Prussian forces under Schwarzenberg and Marshal Blücher of Waterloo fame, he all but beheaded his enemies by attempting to cut their communications at St. Dizier.

Nearer Munich Than Paris

"I am nearer to Munich than they are to Paris," said the Emperor, menacingly. His enemies, dismayed by his bold stand, gathered at Châlons-sur-Marne preparatory to retreat. There, though, as luck would have it, they intercepted dispatches from Paris which told of the thriving of Royalist plots against Napoleon.

Encouraged by that news, they pushed on. Napoleon, with his fragment of an army—he was outnumbered more than three to one—could but call on General Marmont to defend Paris. The general refused to obey. The Allies of 1814 entered the city on March 29, and on April 4 Napoleon abdicated unconditionally. He was not to take the field at the head of an advancing army until more than a year later, and then only to be subdued by Blücher and Wellington at Waterloo.

Before the return from Elba, the Marne figured in Napoleon's history in a way that the great commander had not anticipated. It was at Chaumont—the "Calvus Mons" or barren hill of the Romans—between the Suize and the Marne that the Austro-Prussians, the Russians and the English held their famous council of 1814, to decide what should be done with France, since its self-made emperor was then only emperor of a little island in the Mediterranean.

Another Historic Council

Tradition has it that many of the troops forming the retinue of the Czar Alexander lived on that locality as roaring and unbridled casuals after the council of Chaumont had moved away and been transferred into the congress of Vienna, and many are the tales told of the goings-on of the Cossacks and mujiks.

Further down the river, at Joinville, was held another council, but of earlier vintage—that which resulted in the signing of a temporary treaty between France and Spain. At Joinville also lived the Sieur de Joinville, close friend and follower of St. Louis (the Ninth), whom he followed on his first crusade. It was long a seat of the famous Gulse family, whose wars against the crown of France occupy many a page of French history of the middle ages.

St. Dizier, where Napoleon made his bold and despairing thrust, was by that time no stranger to wars, for it had suffered a two months' siege at the hands of Charles V of Germany, in 1544. Below it, in the Marne, the next town of importance, Vitry-le-François, has had a similar history. Laid waste in the wars between Charles V and Francis I of France, it was rebuilt by the latter in 1545, and by him given his name.

Defended Against English

Châlons-sur-Marne, the ancient Catalaunum of the Romans—from whence the Catalaunian plains thereafter derive their name—has even more claim to fame than being near the legendary site of the repulse of the Huns of Attila at the hands of Aetius and the Roman-Burgundian-Frank-Visigoth allies in the memorable battle of 451 A. D.

In the course of the Hundred Years War between France and Britain it twice defended itself successfully against the English. In 1314 the Prussians took it, on their way through to Paris; in 1315 the Russians occupied it, after Waterloo; and in 1870 the Prussians took it again.

It may be of interest to Americans to note that the artificial channel of the Marne, started in 1771 to save Châlons from the inundations of the often turbulent river, was completed in the not unknown year of 1776.

To the north of Châlons, at Valmy in 1792, the Alsatian general Kellermann led the untrained troops of the new French Republic to victory over trained Prussian soldiers.

Châlons, too, was the great assembly camp of the French in 1870—in fact, the lands about it have been the scene of the yearly cavalry and artillery maneuvers in times of peace ever since Napoleonic days. To it Marshal MacMahon, defeated at Wörth, repaired with his remaining 50,000, and, collecting 50,000 more troops, marched forth again, but to Sedan. Below it, and beyond to the west, untrained levies of French strove from November 30 to December 2, 1870, to fight a battle of the Marne against the already victorious Prussians, but were repulsed.

Chateau-Thierry and Meaux

Chateau-Thierry, of recent fame as a Marne town, knew warlike preparations as early as 720, and undoubtedly earlier if tribal wars are counted. There Charles Martel built a castle, which was besieged and taken by the English in 1421 and again by Charles V in 1544. Below it, on the Grand Morin, tributary to the Marne, Napoleon, at the head of 100,000, in the boots he had worn while a republican general in the Italian campaign of 1797, won a local success against the Austro-Prussians in 1814.

Meaux, last of the important Marne towns, and ancient capital of the province of Brie, is famed for more things than its town. Burned by the Normans in 865, captured by the British in 1422 and retaken by the French in 1429—to say nothing of the sanguinary conflict staged there between the nobles and the Jacquerie in the century previous—it was one of the first towns in France to welcome the fugient ref-ormation, with its train of bloody strife.

Blücher came near it in 1814, but afraid to go on, turned north and entrenched himself on the heights of Laon. In 1914 the descendants of Blücher came through it, passing to the west and south, only to be turned back.

THE FIRST FRENCH LESSON



HENRY'S PAL TO HENRY

PROVING THERE IS METHOD EVEN IN THE MADNESS OF A CASUAL CAMP

France, August 27, 1918.

Mon cher pal Henry: Well Henry I'm a casual. I been one for nearly a week now and I guess if being a casual is any honor I shure got a lot of it to go down on my little old servise record. The wound I got that time by old Hardbroted acting up like he did got worse when I got to the front and one morning the doc says me for the hospital. I didn't want to go none Henry but of course when the doc says you're going on a trip it ain't like going on a vacation or anything where you pick out your route and hotel and every-thing.

Well Henry they kept me only two days and then shipped me to this joint. I had to walk about a mile after I left the train and when I got there it was about 10 p.m. at nite and the first thing I butted into was an old hellion or something that said he was the 1st sergeant.

Where in hell are you from he says to me Henry just as soon as I come in to his office. When I told him Henry he says Oh you're one of them guys that's so hardbroted you can't turn your head without cracking your neck etc. Well he says you want to get all that hardbroted stuff out of your nut while you hang round here or somebody will take it out for you.

Well Henry that was a nice way to open up on a new guy who'd just come in wasn't it. And this guy is about 4 ft. broad and 6 ft. tall which makes all the difference in the world and which gives him a chance to talk to a little guy like me just as though I wasn't nobody.

I asked him where I was going Henry which is the first thing everybody wants to know when they come in and he says to the front of course, where else do you think you're going. Well I says I want to get back to my outfit right away. And then Henry he says Oh you got a nice place picked out for you all ready up in Siberia as a K.P. for a walrus.

Henry I don't know yet where I'm going and I don't even expect to see my own outfit any more since I got in this place. They ain't got enough brains round here to send a man back to where he belongs.

I been here for nearly a week and all I done is drill Henry. It's about 3 miles to the drill ground and we go out at 8 and some in at noon and go out at one and come in at 5. After that we have retreat and have to be in bed at 10 etc. It sure is a rotten place Henry.

France, Aug. 29, 1918.

Dear Henry: Well Henry I bet I'll land up in Afrika or somewhere else when they send me out of here. There's four divisions Henry and there ain't none of them that ever thinks they'll get back to their own outfits.

If you ever get wounded or sick Henry and are sent to one of these casual replacement layouts you can just say aurevoir to your old co. When ever you get to one of these camps there's about 15 different guys who will always tell you where you're going and everyone has a different place. A corporal who is stationed here says a lot of us is going to Italy and a sergeant who is also stationed here says some of us is going to Rumania where ever that is Henry. Every time some guy goes out to the latrine and back he has some new dope about it.

Well Henry this is sure a punk outfit. This morning when we was out drilling they started playing that Ogrady game you know from the time they play after you practise and just because I lowered my hands like the sergeant said do be made me get down on my knees and go through underneath about a dozen guys who all took a whack at me. The sergeant says I ain't supposed to do nothing only what Ogrady says Henry and how you ought to know how to do it when he didn't explain nothing.

After that Henry they had that game they call hotseat where they all got in a ring and the sergeant goes round with a belt and gives it to somebody who is supposed to spank the guy next to him with the belt until he gets around to his place.

Well Henry this top cutter who thinks he's so damned wise was the guy who was giving out the belt and when he got round to the guy next to me he slips it to him. I wasn't paying very much attention Henry and first thing I knowed I thought a he had stung me on the seat of the pants or something and this guy was belting me faster and I could count.

I run as quick as I could Henry but there was no use trying it much for this guy could run faster than a jackrabbit can and about every jump he cracked it home in the seat of the pants with that belt which stung worse than a hornet Henry. I ain't got no good words to say about the way they drill us casuals.

Henry there's a lot of guys here from the hellion div. and some from the jazz div. and you ought to hear them at nite. Over in the barracks where I sleep there is some from both and the ones from the jazz div. try to tell more lies about what they done in this war than the ones from the hellion div. does.

Last nite one guy from the hellion div. said his capt. killed 3 Boche at one shot and the other guy from the jazz div. said that that was nothing. He said that he told some German prisoners that they was in the hands of the jazz div. and that 4 of them dropped dead with heart failure.

Well Henry I don't suppose I'll ever see you no more now since I'm maybe going out of the American Army. A ser-

gent told me just now that they was going to transfer a lot of us to the Jap army in Russia. Well goodbye Henry. S. T. B.

France, Aug. 30, 1918.

Friend Henry: Well Henry I'm leaving this place. But just as I thought Henry we won't go back to our outfit. They are going to send us way over on another front where they don't know what a American looks like. I know where I'm going all right because I heard a lot say that a lot of us was going there. And we are leaving at 2 p.m. Henry.

I asked the captain this morning Henry if he would let me go back to my old co. if I would pay the car fare etc. and he says no for me to hang onto my coin as where I'm going they don't know what money looks like and that maybe I'll need some to tip the savages with etc.

And I guess that's about true here too Henry because nobody ever gets paid. There's one bird here in my billet that ain't had a cent since he was drafted 7 mth. ago.

Just leaved Henry that the 1st sergeant that I spoke of is going along with us as a convoy to see that we all behave and don't get intoxicated or something. I bet I'll enjoy the trip Henry. So long old timer. S. T. B.

France, Sept. 1st, 1918.

Howdy Henry: Well Henry this old army ain't so bad after all. But it does some dam funny things at that.

You can believe me or not Henry but when I got here first thing I saw was our old colonel and next thing I knowed I was back in my old squad and everybody was there and everything. I just got my old pack off when the co. klerk come down and says for me to report to the tops tent and sign the pay roll. You can't beat that for luck can you Henry.

Henry I guess that casual outfit knowed where we was going and everything. But I don't see why they don't tell a guy things like that.

Well Henry I got to go out and see a lot of guys. So long. S. T. B.

P.S. I just seen that old top cutter that brought us up and he was laughing himself sick at me. He says next time you come down to see me just take it easy and don't get excited or maybe I will send you to Siberia or somewhere. He's a good scout at that Henry.

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FLOUR PLUS WATER EQUALS HARDBREAD

Not a Hand Touches the Iron Biscuit—Not Even Mademoiselle's

The girls of France are helping to bake the millions of pieces of iron bread it takes to feed the A.E.F.

Working under the glass roofs of a half dozen buildings of many-aced floors, they are helping tend the automatic machinery that mixes white flour from America into dough, irons the dough into sheets, cuts the sheets into pieces, and runs the pieces on trays over endless belts into ovens, from which they come out scorching hot as hard biscuits.

No hands touch the product from the time it leaves the flour sack to the time it comes out crisp and brown and hot. While the hard bread is still warm, it is packed in the paper cartons in which it finally reaches the men at the front. Incidentally, hard bread is probably the simplest and purest baked product the soldier eats. It has two ingredients—flour and water. There's an art in mixing the flour and water in the proper percentages, and the percentages vary according to the flour.

The Army's hard bread factories also are baking "petits boures" for the Army—the best of those little butter and sugar biscuits that can be bought in France. These are supplied at cost to the commissaries for resale to the soldiers.

GENTLEMANLY AS EVER

Further evidence that Germany is still good for as much frightfulness as she can think up is provided in information, coming from a reliable source, recently published in several Dutch newspapers, which states that commander officers of German submarines have been ordered to make prisoner as many as possible of the crews of enemy merchant ships. The statement continues:

"The German authorities have the intention not of treating them as civilian prisoners of war, but of subjecting them to the most rigorous treatment in ordinary prisons."

2,000,000 LETTERS POORLY ADDRESSED

Figure Represents Third of One Week's Arrivals at Base Port

At one base port last week, in four shipments of mail, there were 4,000 sacks of letters, or 6,000,000 letters, for the A.E.F. One-third of those letters were not properly addressed, consequently George is wondering why Polly hasn't written.

With the proper addressing of mail, the M.P.E.S. plans on delivering all mail from 16 to 20 days from the time it is stamped at the New York post office. An A.E.F. mail train is now running between Paris and Chateau-Thierry, and more trains will be running between Paris and other parts of the Z. of A. in a short while.

It is planned to have a postal express service in working order by September 15. A postal battalion, a separate unit the same as the Q.M.C. or the M.C., is being formed.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Greetings to Our Boys in France:—

OUR Government has requested that we put at the disposal of the War Department our entire output of the "makings"—"BULL" DURHAM tobacco.

And we have complied—fully, gladly. For whatever the Government wants, whatever it needs for you boys at the front, it must have from us fully and with a generous heart.

We have been sending immense quantities of "Bull" to you men at the front, and at the same time trying to supply consumers at home. But now we are asked to give you all our output—36,000,000 sacks, 2,000,000 lbs., 100 carloads of "BULL" DURHAM every month.

This call means more than just huge figures to me and I know it will mean more than figures to the hundreds of thousands of men everywhere at home who "roll their own" and who look upon that little muslin sack of good old "Bull" as a personal, everyday necessity.

It means that the Government has found that our fighting men need the "makings".

But, if "Bull" is a necessity to us at home, in the peaceful pursuit of our daily life, how much greater its necessity to you Americans who have gone to fight for us—to win this war for us.

I know that the men at home will think of you as I do—only of you. I know there will not be a single complaint. I know that they will give up their share of "Bull" however long they have enjoyed it, however close it is to them, as they will give up anything they have if it is made clear to them that you boys over there need it.

That the Government has requested the whole output of "Bull," the night and day output of all our factories, makes this absolute need clear to every man at home who "rolls his own".

And they give it up gladly—but they will not forget the little muslin sack—gone for the present on its mission of hope and inspiration to you boys in the trenches.

You will bring "Bull" back to us with ribbons of honor. We have no fear.

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