

NINE DAY VETERANS SAIL RIGHT BACK

Cootieless and Germless, Air Service Men Quit England

A.E.F. HAS NEW BOOM TOWN

It's Camp Knotty Ash of Unsavory Memories, But You Wouldn't Recognize the Old Dump Now

Twenty thousand American soldiers have sailed from England for the United States since the armistice. The exodus began November 22, when 6,700 men boarded the transports at the rate of 3,000 per hour per ship.

Some of these, the first Americans outside of sick, wounded and men on special missions, to give up their membership cards in the A.E.F. had been in England eight months. Some had been in England only nine days. None, with the exception of some flying officers who have seen active service in France and Italy, had ever been in France as members of the American Army.

The first to go were assembled at Camp Knotty Ash, near Liverpool—Knotty Ash, where some thousands of Americans spent their nights on foreign soil and did not like it. It is not the same Knotty Ash now. Its capacity of housing 4,000 men during their two or three days' stay at the camp have been erected, replacing a good share of the dirty white tents that used to keep most of the water out at the top, but let in enough to make up for it underneath. There are streets, and sidewalks, and an adequate drainage system but there is still mud when it rains.

No Flu, No Cooties, Can Leave

Here the 20,000 spent their last lights on English soil as American soldiers; here they underwent the two-day tests that make it certain that a man is free of influenza and typhoid unless it reaches the transport by wireless, that not a single cootie shall enter the port of New York through the risk of concealing himself in the undershirt of some member of the American Air Service.

Knotty Ash, before the war a brewery surrounded by scattered clusters of semi-detached cottages, a development project of the kind that makes western Long Island what it is today, is one of the boom towns of the A.E.F. Just now, Queen's Drive, its main thoroughfare, is one Army truck after another, and every truck is piled high with those blue or O.D. production known as harrises. The drive is lined with the harrise strings are drawn tight over O.D. helmets—issued, but never used.

The drive itself, too, is lined with barrack bags—whole piles of them surrounded by a guarding detail that passes the time in barbershopping the same pieces of victory cloth which the country boys created in a certain hour on a recent November 11: "There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding" or "My Little Girl," with especial emphasis and gusto on that last line, "And I'm coming back to you!"

"They are coming back to her as fast as the debarkation office can get the ships into Liverpool and the men aboard. They are going on at the rate of 25 per minute per gangplank, which means that there is no standing in line—the line is always moving.

Charles Jones, Pvt., A.S., steps up to the little table on the wharf right behind Timothy Johnson.

"Jones" calls the checking officer.

"Charles" answers Private Jones, and precious time is saved.

Almost Got to France

Special details trained several hours beforehand, take care of the homeward bound soldier when he steps on deck and steer him straight to his bunk. The guides are not sailors—they are soldiers picked from the departing squadrons, one of them stands at every turn. If necessary no more than a yard from the guide ahead of him, to see that no one strays from his appointed destination.

BILLET STRATEGY



THE LITTLE INNKEEPER OF DAMPICOURT

The little innkeeper of Dampicourt had no time last week to clean and polish up her tiny tavern, which stands at the fork in the roads where the traffic from France turns up toward Brussels or down toward Luxembourg. The metal on the little bar stand needed shining, but she had to stand out at her door and wave her apron as the Americans went by, wave her apron and cry "Bon jour, Monsieur, every crack and Marine in the endless procession leading to the Rhine.

It was the procession she had promised her downhearted neighbors they should see one day, and she had earned her own right to witness it by her unflinching loyalty and labor for the Allied cause. For, like many another woman in Belgium, the little innkeeper of Dampicourt took up a tireless propaganda to sap the enemy's morale.

She had showed just about as much submissiveness as King Albert and the fortress of Liege. The first day the Germans came she went out to read their proclamation hung at the crossroads, but she turned away muttering when she saw it printed in German.

"You should know how to read German," a young officer snipped at her.

"If you had told us, Monsieur," she snapped back, "when you promised years ago to respect our neutrality that you did not intend to keep your promise, we might have started in then to study your language."

This was war declared between them. For a time she was content to serve at night on that venturesome committee of citizens who clandestinely carried food to the wounded French, some of whom managed to hide for a whole year in the forest, hanging on there in the everlasting hope that the end of the war would release them. Besides, she had the satisfaction of refusing to serve drinks to the Germans.

She and her husband had the little innkeeper they had planned to expect on a new and quite generous inn; they could live on that. To be sure, they had to billet such officers and men as were assigned to them, but when one of them left word to be called at a certain hour she would entrust her musical alarm clock with the task, and at the appointed hour the German would be awakened by the defiant strains of the "Marseillaise."

Later she found plenty to do bucking up the other villagers who gave way to despair when the German soldiers at Dampicourt indulged in a somewhat premature celebration over the fall of Verdun.

"Nach Paris," they would chant as they goose-stepped past her door.

"Yes, you will get to Paris," she would answer—"as prisoners."

Then, as the German rations dwindled and dwindled she used to rub it in. She would walk past the men as they sat by the roadside, grumbling over their black bread with its poor accompaniment of marmalade.

"Is that what the Kaiser eats?" she would ask glibly, and gloat inwardly when they growled among themselves.

There were a hundred and one such tasks to perform and the inn really hasn't had a proper cleaning yet. There was that youngster with a band on his arm marked "M.P." who fainted outside her door and had to be nursed all one day in front of her fire. Then seemed to have an unlimited capacity for what they called "sofs." Then there were the columns upon columns of Infantry, who simply must be hailed with a fluttering apron and a "Bon jour, Monsieur, bon jour."

Pyrene

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HUMAN STANDARD TO GOVERN WAGE SCALE

Jobs Will Not Be Lacking in U.S. When A.E.F. Goes Home

[BY CABLE TO THE STARS AND STRIPES] AMERICA, Nov. 28.—Public opinion is already viewing the matter of labor wages at home after the war with the idea of the human standard. We hear nothing of the old argument that wages must come down in mere accordance with the good old law of supply and demand.

This does not mean that there is no discussion of reducing wages. There is a good deal of it in private discussion and much in public, but it is approached with a spirit vastly different from that of the old days. The view of labor as a commodity appears to have been definitely eliminated even from the minds of the most hidebound conservatives.

So far, there has been no disruption due to the cessation of the war. Though no definite, all-embracing program of reconstruction or adjustment has yet been even initiated, our existing war agencies are functioning very well indeed, letting down our war industries gradually and replacing war orders with peace orders, while simultaneously diverting raw materials into the peace industries. As all the various Government boards remain in power until the actual end of the war, we thus have some months ahead of us for immediate action, so that the human standard shall not suffer. Ex-Secretary of the Treasury Meadlo believes that a considerable readjustment is already smoothly under way, and that we have not nearly so difficult a problem as might be anticipated.

There is not the slightest sign that jobs will be lacking at present, and as to wages, there is the leading thought that any changes in them must be only in harmony with corresponding changes in living costs, so that the human standard shall not suffer. Ex-Secretary of the Treasury Meadlo believes that a considerable readjustment is already smoothly under way, and that we have not nearly so difficult a problem as might be anticipated.

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ISSUE BUNK SPACE NEW A.E.F. WRINKLE

Forty Feet of Floor Wherever Possible for Every Yank, Is Plan

In the general scheme of things a man is entitled to at least 40 square feet of floor space as bunking quarters, and this will be the rule in the A.E.F. whenever practical. Bulletin 94, G. H. Q., adds that under no circumstances will soldiers be billeted with floor space of less than 20 feet per man.

New construction of barracks will be on the 40-foot scale, if material is available, and in no case will be less than 20 square feet. If the square feet cannot be provided in barracks, barge space will be added until each man has the minimum allotment.

Even bunks, under the new order, which is designed to prevent the communication of disease, are to be separated by a partition. Whenever double tier bunks in sets of four are used, a partition two feet high and three feet long, measured from the head toward the foot of the bunks, will be constructed.

The tiers of bunks will be placed 5 feet 4 inches apart, whenever possible, this distance being too great for a germ to jump, and if the 5-foot-4 rule isn't practicable, the distance of separation must not, under any circumstances, be less than 2 feet 8 inches.

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BRITAIN'S DAY IN U.S.A

December 7

According to a press telegram from New York, Saturday, December 7, is to be a great day in America, devoted to your English speaking Ally—Britain.

SUCH a stunt will be as pleasing to you of the American Expeditionary Forces as it is to us, for Britain is as worthy of your nation's honor as America is entitled to ours. Here are two nations naturally bound by a common mother tongue coming to know each other, and the understanding must surely promote a spirit of co-operation that will go far to rebuild the prosperity and harmony of the world.

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