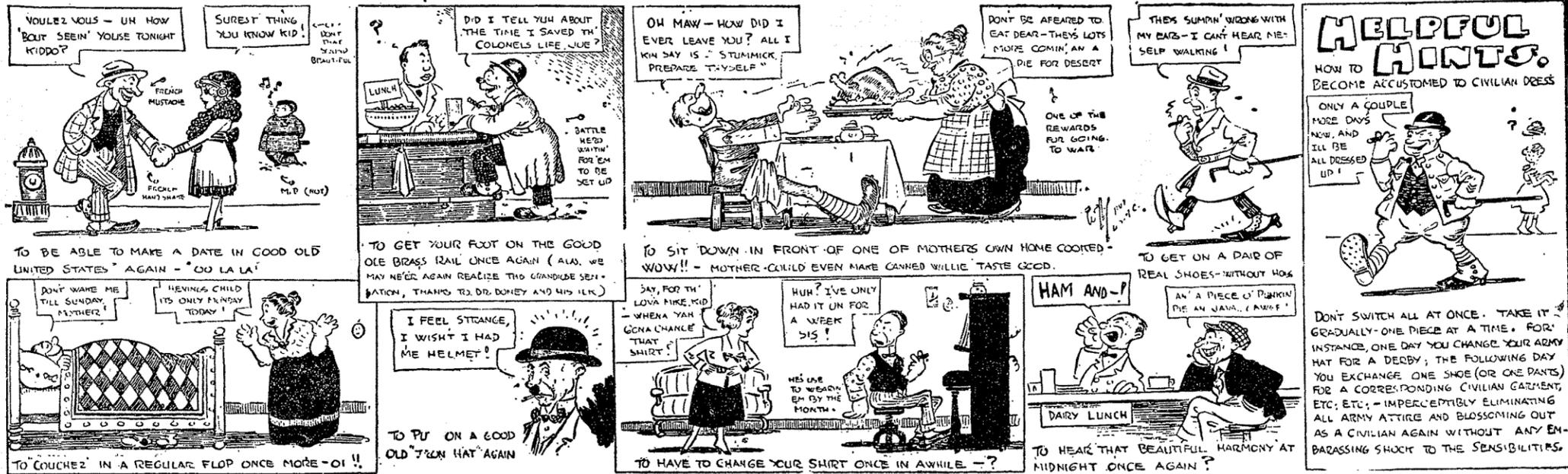


# WON'T IT BE GRAND?

—By WALLGREN



## SICK LOCOMOTIVES CURED IN TEN DAYS

### Repair Shops Near Nevers Treated 45 Cripples in December

## TASKS MAPPED OUT AHEAD

### French and Belgian Engines Also Marked Duty at Completion of Stay in Plant

One of the many satisfactory feats of members of the A.E.F. which still remain to be described as factors in winning the war is the speedy erection and successful operation of the United States Government Locomotive Repair Shops, near Nevers, Nièvre, which incidentally is the only shop of its kind in France operated wholly by Americans.

The history of the building of this shop, of the installation of the machinery—as modern as in any locomotive shop in the States—is but another tribute to the abilities of those soldiers who do the building—the Engineers. Although the men stationed there now have been transferred to other units in the Transportation Corps, and are a part of the 19th Grand Division, Transportation Corps, they nevertheless remain Engineers, if only in their own eyes.

Last July when a battalion of Engineers arrived to reinforce the companies which had been doing business there for a year, the present repair shops were only partially completed, with about one-third of the machinery in place. At that date even the locomotive pits had been unfinished.

The buildings were completed within a few weeks. The installation of machinery was carried out. Cranes, some of them capable of lifting an engine from the tracks, turning it around and placing it in the opposite direction, lathes and innumerable other machines were set up.

**Power Plant Erected**

A permanent power plant, built on the same design and of the same capacity as those in use at the great railroad shops in the States, was erected to replace the temporary one previously erected.

Then started a crusade against broken, crippled, smashed and otherwise disabled locomotives. In the first month 11 locomotives were repaired. In December 45 engines found themselves pushed into the cold of the adjoining yard to begin once more their journeys through France.

The system of mapping out the work at the plant is interesting. When an engine that has been tugging at the front of long trains and making steep grades fags out it is ticketed for leave at Nevers. While waiting for admittance to the main hospital, where 1,300 skilled locomotive surgeons are waiting to begin hammering and cutting, grinding and mending, the locomotive is given the once over by a corporal who can tell whether the engine is malingering.

A diagnosis in the form of a preliminary report, showing the nature of repairs needed, is sent to the office of the general foreman, who before the war used to attend to tickets for one of the shops of the largest railroad in the States.

**Estimate of Time Required**

Here the work is mapped out. Perhaps a cylinder has cracked, perhaps the firebox is broken, perhaps there has been a collision. From the office of the foreman go sheets to each subdivision, consisting of the erecting machine, boiler, wheel, frame, pipe and jacket, and tender shops. On these sheets is stated the number of days it is expected each department will require to finish its respective task on the engine specified. If there is a slip-up or backsliding or any other cause for delay, the general foreman hears about it next morning and wants to know why.

Rather than tell him why, the departments invariably are up to the scratch or ahead of the mark set for their work.

Not only are American engines doctored at Nevers, but giant French and Belgian locomotives also find their way into the shops to worry the soldiers who boast of the simplified construction of the locomotives operating in the A.E.F. The average time an American engine remains in the shops before repairs are completed is ten days; for the French 35 days, due to the added complexity of parts and the inability to obtain them in many instances. The Belgian engines usually remain 20 days.

While the locomotive repair works is the principal feature of the work at Nevers, equally gratifying results have been obtained in the car repair department. Cars smashed through collisions, with flattened wheels, or minus a wheel or two are repaired. Hospital trains that for months have been constantly on the run are being thoroughly overhauled at present. Four hundred men, all of them experienced in the work, are engaged daily in righting and putting the cars into operation.

## HOW THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION SPENDS ITS TIME

When the Third Army has nothing to do it spends on the pleasant prospect of going home from Coblenz by water—all the way. While the Levathan would be hard put to it to drag her ample bulk that far up the Rhine, the Third Army would be willing to compromise to the extent of starting down river on flat boats to some lower river port where an ocean liner could berth without difficulty. From there the journey would be easy with a good pilot aboard.

The beauty of this prospect is that it would save a lot of travel in side deck of many down to the base ports. Unfortunately, the prospect has been officially denied from G.H.Q. As a matter of fact, when it came time for the Third Army to move, the Third Army won't care much how the moving is done, provided it is in a westerly direction.

On the regimental flag of the 30th Infantry, 3rd Division, near Mayen, there hangs today the Croix de Guerre, with palm—tribute of the 38th French Army Corps for the magnificent work of the 30th at Chateau-Thierry the night of July 15.

In addition, Col. E. L. Butts, who commanded the 30th that night in the Bois d'Agremont, was given the Croix de Guerre. Colonel Perry is now in command. Three men also were given the French war cross. Maj. Gen. Joseph E. B. Starnes, former commander of the 3rd Division and now commander of the Third American Army, was present at the ceremony.

The 38th Infantry had been decorated previously, as well as the 7th Machine Gun Battalion, which was the first unit of the 3rd Division to reach the Bois d'Agremont. In the 7th, 29 decorations were awarded, five men being cited at the order of the army.

Of all rare souvenirs now a German lugger is about the rarest; so hear a Signal Corps man tell this: "In the battle of the Argonne I passed so many of the darn things that finally I made up a loop of wire and began to string them together. With me was another fellow, and he began to pile them up in his arms. We must have collected about 50 or 60 when all of a sudden,

slap-bang, we ran right into a German machine-gun nest that hadn't been captured yet. We dropped those luggers and just beat it—and they're probably there yet."

America is likely to find many more opera devotees when the boys come home. There is grand opera in Coblenz, with very good music, and the theater has become popular with both officers and enlisted men. The highest priced seat is five and one-half marks (about 65 cents in real money—opera producers in the States please copy), and from there it grades down to about a dime, or maybe a little more, so that the music is within reach of every soldier.

The men cannot understand, however, the peculiar system of choice places. The Germans consider their balcony seats the best, then the orchestra, then the standing room, and then the gallery.

There may be a food shortage in some parts of Germany, or in all the rest of it, but the little farm towns in the area in which the Americans are quartered are far from the starvation point. Walk into the little inn of these villages and you may get the tenderest of pork or mutton, hare or fowl or beef, with potatoes and real butter.

The bread, of course, is bad, and the landlord will not put it on the table, and the coffee is unspeakable. Eggs are as scarce as good weather, some that were seen miles out in the country being snapped up at a mark apiece.

Had it not been seen with truthful American eyes, it would not be believed, but out beyond Montauban, in the center of the bridgehead, where a long line of rusty German trucks lay along

the roadway, a German officer, a real dyed-in-the-wool German officer, with swell uniform and cap to match, was seen, red-faced and straining, toiling laboriously with his men, trying to bring back to mechanical consciousness the engine of one of the trucks, so that it could be made servicable and handed over to the Americans, in compliance with the terms of the armistice.

Though the voices of the guns are still being experienced by the officers and men of the Army of Occupation who have occasion to travel by automobile, motorcycle or side car through the bridgehead. The roads, in many instances just wide enough to enable the machines to pass with convenience, wind through the woods and along the edges of heights in curves that would make any self-respecting snake envious. Dry, they are dangerous enough; wet, or covered with snow or ice, there is no word in the English language that can describe them.

The German urchin is disconsolate, for, according to Letter of Instructions No. 7, Headquarters Third Army, Paragraph D, "it is forbidden to allow children belonging to the civil population to enter upon, play with, or handle any American property or to loiter near or enter without proper authority barracks or other places used for billeting American soldiers. Parents will be held responsible for the due observance of this rule."

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## A.E.F. TO MEND ROADS

The A.E.F. will maintain and keep in repair all roads in France in continued use by American forces, and the Department of Construction of Forestry is authorized to organize road maintenance detachments and utilize labor of German prisoners, under G.O. 2, G.H.Q.

Roadmaking detachments will be provided with quarters and attached to organizations for railroads by the commanding officers of districts in which they are distributed.

The same order prohibits the use of chains on wheels of American trucks moving on French highways.

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## The Literary Digest

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## A.E.F. SHOP TALK

Construction of a monster mess hall in 18 hours at Camp Montoir, St. Nazaire, by the 29th Engineers, which can feed 10,000 home-bound soldiers at a time, set another speed record for the A.E.F. The building is 100 x 200 feet in size, has 54 glass windows and contains 60 tables. German prisoners who assisted are credited with a fine spirit which helped make the quick work possible.

Congress has authorized a commission for the settling of claims for injuries sustained by civilian employees in France. All departments having knowledge of such claims are ordered to report them to Commissioner John J. Keegan, 3 Rue de Berr, Paris, by Bulletin 49, H.Q.

Tribute to the troops taking part in the capture of the St. Mihiel salient is paid by the C.-in-C. in G.O. 238, G.H.Q. The name of the country, "the order reads, "I offer our hearty and unmeasured thanks to these splendid Americans of the 1st, 4th, 5th, 28th, 42nd, 82nd, 9th and 30th Divisions which were engaged, and of the 3rd, 35th, 78th, 80th and 91st Divisions which were in reserve."

Hotels for the use of casual officers of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Red Cross visiting Bordeaux has been established, the Red Cross furnishing the rooms. American meals will be served. Six francs a night will be charged for rooms. The President's speech at the Christmas Eve dinner of General Pershing's introduction have been printed as a general order, No. 240, G.H.Q.

The people of Arkansas curtailed the consumption of sugar one million pounds in order that candy for the A.E.F. could be manufactured at the lowest possible cost. Five hundred thousand pounds of this candy had reached France by Christmas Eve to be distributed through issue and through sales commissaries.

There will be no "gun-toting" by enlisted men in the A.E.F., states G.O. 242, G.H.Q. All revolvers and ammunition are to be turned in, and, except when duty requires it, neither will be carried by enlisted men, and then only on temporary issue. Moving pictures have brought many a familiar face across the Atlantic during the last few weeks. The idea of missing the home folks and taking a movie of them for their relatives in France has been carried out by several cities in the States, and the films are now being shown in France under the name, "Miles of Smiles."

Reservations in hotels at fixed prices and the establishment of messes and restaurants for officers passing through large cities, exclusive of Paris, have been arranged with the French authorities. It is stated in Bulletin 108, G.H.Q.

The 18th Company, 20th Engineers, claims the record one day's lumber cut for a 5,000-foot boiler mill. On October 18, it is claimed, the 18th Company cut in ten hours 35,753 board feet of oak and beech ties and boards of one inch or more in thickness.

Excursions for American officers under the auspices of the association of French Homes which will take the officers through the southwestern part of France will begin on February 15. Officers who wish to make the first trip should send their names to French Homes, 24 Rue Mogador, Paris, before February 5, for the first trip. Specific authority must be obtained from G.H.Q. before any officer or soldier of the A.E.F. is given his discharge in Europe, G.O. No. 4, G.H.Q., stipulates.

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I'll tell you what—a man doesn't half appreciate his headgear until he's been wearing a service cap or a steel helmet, with about as much individuality as a piling in a long, long picket fence.

Here's luck, boys—may you soon be romping in and telling the Mallory Man that your head size, before the War, was seven and ONE-eighth. He's still doing business, at the old stand; and he's got YOUR Mallory all ready and waiting up there on the shelf.

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