

## MAGIC CITY OF THE VALLEY

McAllen Suddenly Becomes  
An Important "City" With  
Perplexing Problems

### MILITARY HEADQUARTERS DIVISION

By Carl Dickie,

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McAllen, described by her residents  
as "the Wonder City of the Magic  
Valley," has undergone great change  
since a city of soldiers has arisen on  
her borders, making the Texas village  
of 5,000 inhabitants only a suburb.

Along the long central street that be-  
gins in the desert among the mesquite  
shacks and dirty children of a Mexican  
village, then runs through pavements,  
brick-faced bank buildings, hotel  
porches, a line of palm trees, and beau-  
tiful little dwellings, and put into the  
desert again, 10,000 soldiers loiter and  
chaff one another as often as they are  
able to get their one hour and a half or  
three hours away from the teated  
streets of their camp.

McAllen, the "fabled city" of develop-  
ment company brochures that sprang up  
in seven years, has sprung to its  
duty as a hostess city in seven days,  
springing to it with a knowledge of Coney Island methods  
that has made the New York soldiers  
wonder. For "the Magic City" by  
magic in one short week has made pre-  
paration for the visits of hungry and  
thirsty soldiers, soldiers who want baths  
and shaves, too, more preparation than  
she ever made for any threatened bandit  
raid. Along the paved business dis-  
trict that runs only two short blocks,  
or not more than 100 yards, restaurants,  
lunch-rooms, ice cream shops, bottling  
works, shooting galleries, fruit stands,  
and trinket places have sprung up even  
more quickly than did the conicals in  
the camps. Even an undertaker has  
moved in.

The telephone offices have been ex-  
panded; real estate offices have been  
turned into pie counters; squalid little  
side rooms in rickety hotels have been  
raked out, sprinkled with insect powder  
and turned into sleeping rooms; bar-  
bers have been transformed to office  
for a regiment or two of special mag-  
azine writers and newspaper reporters.  
Doctors' offices and drug stores have  
been turned into newstands.

Every place has been made a soft  
drink bar, for every Northerner is  
thirsty, and there is more than one of  
the old swinging doors, sawdust floor  
saloons of the typical West. But Mc-  
Allen's mayor runs a soft drink place,  
and the Council is against allowing any  
stiffer competition on the main plaza.

In the Mexican quarters, where old  
Mexicans, who look as if they had been  
burned to brown crisps in the desert  
furnace, stand in the makeshift doors  
of shacks or look through the cracks  
in the boards, there are one or two of  
the old "buckhorn saloons." They are  
more museums of natural history than  
saloons. Stuffed rattlesnakes poise on  
corner shelves ready to strike, wildcats  
snarl and fight upon the walls, arma-  
dillos, rolled up in balls, defy the at-  
tempts of punas to unroll a dinner,  
coyotes and wolves bare their teeth at  
stuffed deer, parrots and Mexican can-  
aries scream and sing in every corner.  
In the center of all is a picture of Cus-  
ter's last fight for the gallant stand of  
the American soldiers against the Sioux  
on the Little Big Horn seems to be an  
epic throughout the Southwest in Mex-  
ican hearts as well as American.

Near by is a picture of the execution  
of Maximilian, and that, too, seems to  
have a place in Mexican hearts, for, as  
an old Mexican said:

"Viva La Mexicana; all gringos get  
the same."

That was, perhaps, his way of saying  
that the Mexican national spirit flames  
against all foreign empire-seekers.

In all of these places, at least in Gu-  
erra—Guerra is a scientific in wealth  
and a peon in spirit—ragged Mexicans  
drink in the same room, sometimes  
along the same bar, with land-owning  
Mexicans who wear black suits, fluff  
black ties, and enormous black som-  
bros with sometimes a red scarf covering  
the leather belt and the pistol holster.

A string band of guitars and mandol-  
ins, accompanied by a flute or a  
squeaky human voice, plays the nation-  
al airs of two countries—for this is  
the border. The players are all old  
men, and some of them have been sol-  
diers. One has only one leg. He lost  
the other in a battle with the Diaz  
forces many years ago, not by a cannon  
ball, but by gungana, and he himself  
cut the wounded leg off while he was  
in the middle of the desert. There are  
many of these one-legged men in the  
Mexican quarter, some old and some  
young, for Mexican revolutions have  
been many and some have been recent.  
But they do not beg. There are no  
Mexican beggars, at least none in Mc-  
Allen. Some are barbers, some are mu-  
sicians, and some just exist, as it seems  
only Mexicans can exist, on nothing.

A wrinkled old Indian sits immobile  
on a barrel in Guerra's place. Some-  
times he moves only to wipe a glass,  
but never to get out of the way. He is  
the old civilization, looking but seeing  
nothing, thinking but thinking nothing.  
These places are the center of the Mexican  
quarter and its men all gather there  
and celebrate, for the most part silently,  
the coming of the gringo soldier,  
for the "gringo" soldier brings safety.  
They celebrate silently for they fear the  
"gringo."

Here and there is a Mexican store  
run by men with long black mustaches  
and corduroy breeches and dirty shirts.  
They sell Mexican drawn work and em-  
broidery made in New Jersey and Mex-  
ican pottery made in Ohio, and the  
Mexicans call them bandits, American  
bandits. Then there are the shacks,  
wooden shacks, and straw shacks, adobe  
shacks, and log shacks, shacks with  
windows and shacks with square holes,  
shacks with doors and shacks with en-  
trances, shacks with narrow cracks,  
shacks with wide cracks, but all

## NEWS SENT IN BY OUR DIVISION UNITS

### SEVENTH INFANTRY

At the end of six weeks in camp, the  
civic improvements of West McAllen  
are near completion. Considering the  
abrupt change in the daily routine from  
the soft side of an office chair to the  
sunny side of a million and one trench  
digging details, the men of the Seventh  
have presented a remarkable example  
of discipline under conditions which are  
a severe test of character. It is the  
small unimportant details of life which  
so often try the patience. Given a  
chance to win distinction by a brilliant  
charge filled with the enthusiasm of  
combat and fired by patriotism most  
men come forth with flying colors. But  
take those same men and hand them  
some work or so of steady digging and  
uninteresting manual labor and they  
become filled with seething feeling of  
revolt, especially if they are forced to  
leave their usual haunts, habitations,  
means of livelihood, families and friends  
for the performance of duties more eas-  
ily and economically performed by la-  
borers and of absolutely no value defen-  
sively. We don't mean to infer that  
this work of ours compares in suffering  
or hardship with actual war conditions  
but we do say that it is an exceedingly  
severe test on the patience of the men.

Trenches have been dug for pipes for  
the water system. Miles of streets have  
been ditched and graded and now pre-  
sent an appearance of utility and neat-  
ness unequalled by many throughout the  
west. Lieut. Frank J. Murphy had  
charge of this work and together with  
his assistants labored untiringly to drain  
a hole in an otherwise perfectly level  
stretch of country. This hole would  
have been a most welcome attribute for  
a county sheriff as it would have effec-  
tually held up any incautious speeders  
who happened upon it unawares, and  
would have kept them in town until  
their appearance was required however  
slow the wheels of justice turned. The  
regiment's Sullivan truck, driven by  
A. L. Mitchell, has been constantly on  
the job and while it was enmired a cou-  
ple of times it was soon extricated and  
performed functions of carting supplies  
and that super-luxury—mail. Also this  
faithful truck participated in the re-  
view tendered to Major Flores com-  
mandant of the garrison at Reynosa  
Mexico, wherein every unit authorized  
by the army was represented by the 7th  
Infantry. The regiment presented a  
fine appearance and if the impression  
conveyed to Major Flores was not as  
profound as was desired it was undoubt-  
edly due to the fact that he appreciated  
the difficulty offered to infantry on  
his side of the Rio Grande.

The name of this paper seems particu-  
larly apt to the writer for during a  
drill some few days ago we came upon  
a rattler dozing in the chaparral some  
distance southwest of camp. It was  
some four and one half feet long and  
had eight rattlers. Pvt. Van Nostrand  
of Co. H, cut off the rattlers and Pvt.  
Schmidt of the same company thrust  
his bayonet through its head.

Perhaps due to the psychology of al-  
most war or perchance to good judg-  
ment five members of this regiment  
have become fathers of daughters. The  
good judgment of course is in having  
daughters rather than sons liable for  
military duty, for the worst misfortune  
that could happen to them would be to  
be wives of soldiers. The happy ones  
are Capt. Kenneth Gardner command-  
ant of the 7th Infantry, and

shacks.

Brown women with wrinkled faces,  
with long, stringy, greasy, black hair  
reaching to the waist, and with perhaps  
a whining "muchacho" or two cling-  
ing to them, leer at the passersby  
through the openings in the wall. Here  
and there a pretty señorita with a scar-  
let mantilla peeps shyly through a crack  
at the passing olive drab, but persist-  
ently refuses to flirt.

Old men with straw sombreros sit  
on the ground near the houses, winding  
horsehair into hat-bands or rawhide into  
riatas. Naked brown children splash  
and paddle in puddles left by the rain,  
eking their heads with mud and giving  
like ducklings. They run out to greet  
the soldiers, thrusting out muddy paws  
General! They whimper if the guards-  
men do not shake hands and do not re-  
ply "Buenos dias, muchacho!" for the  
to shake hands and crying, "Hello,  
militiamen are learning Spanish. Sol-  
diers in olive drab, rangers with wide  
hats and six-shooters, Mexicans with  
isolated whiskers, jostle along the nar-  
row sidewalks of the short business  
street. Here and there a young  
girl in a white dress dodges through  
the pack of men.

Scores of jitney automobiles "for  
hire" stick their noses against the  
curbs and wait for passengers, while  
ranchers in wagons, Mexicans with ox  
teams, automobiles and motor cycles  
from the military headquarters, rangers  
and officers on horseback, stream  
through the muddy streets.

Officers and civilians crowd the ho-  
tel porches. A hundred Mexican boys,  
with bootblack boxes on their backs,  
run around barelegged, wearing only a  
pair of trousers and a shirt. Their cries  
of "Shine! Shine!" cover their Eng-  
lish vocabulary, or at least as much  
as they are willing to use. They refuse  
pennies and shiny nickels as payment  
for will they take a dollar bill, because  
they say it is no better than Villa  
paper. Whenever a soldier cries to them  
"Viva Carranza," they shake their  
heads and cry, "No, no!" When they  
hear "Viva Villa" they cry, "Si, si,  
Señor, viva Villa, viva Mexicano, viva  
Americano, viva Señor!"

Just beyond the business section is  
Palm Avenue, the Riverside Drive of  
McAllen. On its left is the park,  
McAllen, with palms, where they have  
weekly band concerts. Nearby is the  
"zoo," where a dozen brush deer that  
would excite envy in "Bill" Snyder,  
run around after the sun goes down.  
Palms almost hide the little cottages  
where the Americans of the town live.  
During the night, when the moon is  
full, and a cool Texas breeze is stirring  
the stiff leaves, these plants look like  
great peacocks' tails fluttering and  
spreading.

This is McAllen, military metropolis  
now, that the residents hope to build  
into a financial metropolis, with a Wall  
Street and Stock Exchanges, with an  
opera in place of the "movies," and all  
the other comforts of home—if the sol-  
diers stay long enough.—N. Y. Times.

ing the Machine Gun Co. Mess Sgt.  
Harold M. Kennard of the Headquar-  
ters Co., Lieut. Arthur Smith, Co. E,  
Sgt. Kenneth Halliday, Co. B, and Pvt.  
Herbert Bense, Co. E.

The Machine Gun Co. has been ex-  
tremely active breaking in mules under  
the supervision of Capt. Gardener and  
Lieuts. McQuard and Van Horne, and  
they had some bad actors to handle.

The Seventh Regiment Gazette, the  
official monthly publication, arrived re-  
cently and was bought up with an avi-  
dity that would gladden the heart of  
any publisher. The sales were neces-  
sarily largely on credit for Uncle Sam  
sort of overlooked paying us, and coin  
of the realm is becoming a curiosity  
to most of us. Glimpsed over the edi-  
torial desk of Metropolitan dailies, the  
National Guard is a kid gloved organi-  
zation of pale faced incompetents, un-  
able to stand the gaff of field service.  
Would that some of those pampered ink  
tossers were here with us doing their  
bit and noting with what spirit the Na-  
tional Guard has accepted conditions  
that the hardened Regular is seldom  
called upon to stand, and maybe they  
would change their tune.

To date the Regimental baseball  
team has played three games. Squad-  
ron A defeated us 4-2. Then with the  
score 3-0 in our favor the second game  
was called in the 7th inning on account  
of rain. The first league game between  
the 7th and 71st Infantry was won by  
the 7th by a score of 7-1.

Last Monday the 7th participated in  
a brigade review tendered to Brigadier  
General Parker, U. S. A. commanding  
the Brownsville District, with the ex-  
ception of the N. Y. Division.

As we go to press every company is  
busily engaged in constructing elabo-  
rately screened mess halls. Of course  
we realize that to organizations which  
have had these so long they are an old  
story this may not seem much news  
but they look good to us, and we shall  
be very glad to be able to eat where  
we are sheltered from flies, sun and  
rain.

### FIRST CAVALRY

The First Cavalry is looking forward  
to moving camp some time in the next  
two weeks. The new camp site report-  
ed to be is just beyond the camp of the  
Engineers and affords ample opportu-  
nity for swimming and watering the  
pets. Permanent and substantial mess-  
shacks and wood floors are being ar-  
ranged for in the new camp.

The only persons not eager to move  
are two privates in Troop "I" of Buf-  
falo, who recently invested two years'  
pay in a public spirited way to provide  
a Mexican boulevard and potted palms  
for their troop. These improvements  
will have to be left behind, since the  
hombres neglected to make them por-  
table. Ain't war hell!

As a relief from grooming horses  
and answering fatigue roll calls, all  
troops made an individual ride to Hi-  
dalgo and vicinity on one day of last  
week. Thirty miles of brush country  
received a thorough once-over. Sergt.  
Greason says they swallowed more  
alkali dust than he ever imagined ex-  
isted before.

Troop "L" has found a way to fool  
the flies. "We don't blow the bugle  
for mess now," they say, "so the flies  
stay down beyond the picket line." Flies  
are pretty thick there, and that's  
no joke.

### CHAPLIN COMING TO MISSION

The Electric Theatre in Mission is  
making a special play to draw out the  
soldier trade, which so far has been un-  
usually responsive. Mr. Humason, the  
manager, who also runs the new Huma-  
son Ice Cream Company, announces that  
he has secured Charlie Chaplin in "Po-  
lice" for Friday August 25th. Next  
week we hope to present the program  
of the handsome Electric Theatre in  
our advertising columns.

It isn't always the mule's disposition  
—sometimes he looks around before he  
kicks!

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