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COL. JOHNSTON'S "VOLUNTEER" SPEECH

Able Address Delivered by 12th's Popular Leader on Recent Occasion

COLONEL'S RECORD A NOTABLE ONE

(Note:—Although Col. Johnston's talk was delivered several weeks ago we believe it to be such a timely and interesting address that we are printing significant extracts from it below.—Editor).

Before an audience which may conservatively be described as the most enthusiastic ever assembled in this part of Texas, Colonel Gordon Johnston of the Twelfth Infantry delivered an extemporaneous talk on "Volunteers" Tuesday evening, October 3rd, at the Y. M. C. A. Building Number One. In spite of the short notice and of the fact that the only announcement was that made at the Y. M. C. A. building itself, the audience numbered over twelve hundred and represented every organization stationed at McAllen, including a large number of officers in all branches of the service.

To say that the Y. M. C. A. building was crowded would be putting it mildly. It was packed to suffocation, and hundreds stood outside pressed close to the walls, listening through the screened opening which runs all around. And as to the manifestation which greeted the Colonel, "deafening" is a simple statement of fact: One's ears rang for many minutes after it had subsided. The piercing din of the applause, cheering, stamping and whistling, to say nothing of the old "rebel yell" vociferated in deference to the Colonel's origin, not only shook the rafters but shook the stomachs of those not using their lungs. Who, by the way, were few.

Col. Johnston was presented by Mr. H. C. Whiteside, Secretary in charge of Building No. 1, as "a Southern gentleman who has been in our midst since shortly after the New York guardsmen arrived in early July, and whom you all know." This description will have to suffice for this article as an adequate word-picture of the speaker could not be attempted within its scope. Indeed, those who enjoy contact with Gordon Johnston know that printed words could not convey the impression his personality creates.

In the beginning of his address, the Colonel said that he was not used to public speaking, and his delivery bore out that statement, being free from the artifices into which orators inevitably drift with practice. But his own subsequent words, his power of speech, his mastery over his audience, all proclaimed him a born orator—or one made by his training, by his associations at Governor's Island and by his acquaintance with the most famous of modern orators—another Colonel, as the reader will quickly guess.

The subject of Colonel Johnston's talk was "Volunteers" and its text was this significant and direct declaration: "GOD NEVER MADE ANYTHING BETTER THAN A GOOD SOLDIER." Upon this inspiring theme he built and elaborated a speech which was at once an impressive sermon, a delightful causerie and an intensely interesting lecture. At no point did he strive for effect; his manner was calm, and except for an occasional gesture with the right hand to emphasize a point, he stood erect, almost motionless, in the position of "At Ease" described to most of us by Capt. Koehler of West Point when we drilled at our armories during mobilization.

Having himself begun his military career as a volunteer, Colonel Johnston is eminently fitted to talk on the subject. It was in the Second Mississippi Infantry that he began his service, "way back in 1898. That year also saw him a private in the famous 1st U. S. Volunteer Cavalry, Troop M. The following year he received a Volunteer commission, and was mustered out in 1901. All this will come as a surprise to many officers and men of the New York Division who believe him to be a West Pointer. This does not mean that Colonel Johnston has not had the advantages of higher education. He graduated from Princeton University in 1896, and seven years later, as an Army Lieutenant, he took the course at the Infantry and Cavalry School, of which he was an Honor Graduate in 1903. During the following ten years he held a lieutenantancy in the Signal Corps and then in the Cavalry. He was commissioned Captain in the 11th Cavalry on March 27, 1913.

Extracts from Colonel Johnston's address follow:

Colonel Johnston's Speech.
Col. Johnston, in opening, said that he was under obligations to the Y. M. C. A. secretaries for what they had contributed to the comfort and enjoyment of the men of his and other regiments, and therefore, while he was not a professional speaker, he felt that he had to fulfill to the best of his ability any call that they made to him.

Referring to Volunteers, he said that he had entered the service as one, and after sixteen or seventeen years of regular service was again a volunteer, so that he felt himself familiar with their point of view and also was in a favorable position to recognize their merits and demerits. He briefly reviewed the history of the wars of the United States and pointed out that practically all were fought by volunteers.

The spirit of the volunteer is admirable, he said, as is his high sense of duty to his country, which led him to offer his services at a tremendous sacrifice both as to life and limb, and as to his business and family relations; but the system itself had been extremely costly in men, in material and in time. From the Revolution to the Spanish War the volunteer was eager and anxious to go, and after a short period or service he was just as eager and anxious to return. Washington's army shrank from 87,000 volunteers in the beginning of the war to about 27,000 at the end of it, although we were fighting for the independence of this country. He never had 20,000 active troops at his disposal, and in many instances

whole regiments left him on the eve of battle, with their arms, ammunition and equipment. In the Civil War it took two years of hard fighting, the loss of many lives and the greatest degree of suffering before the volunteer had seasoned into a professional soldier.

The volunteer is inspired by a spirit of adventure, by the pressure of public opinion and the prospect of a campaign in the field. These incentives hold him to a certain degree of discipline and subordination, as he has the intelligence to realize the necessity of team play and organization if he is to have a chance against his opponents. When these incentives are removed, however, then the volunteer realizes that his business is suffering, that his family or relatives need him, and that the chances of adventure and active service are limited; the main incentives to discipline and subordination are removed and to hold such troops to their duty requires a full appreciation of their situation. He added that all present must realize that no one had forced them to come into the Service. They came of their own free will, signed their names, took the oath and accepted service as soldiers in the United States Army. Having done so, their self-respect and manhood and their sense of good sportsmanship should lead them to play the game to the finish, without whining or quitting.

The military game, said the Colonel, is one of the oldest in the world. Its rules are the result of many hundreds of years of experience and are not devised solely for the discomfort of the volunteer. These rules must be obeyed, they must be respected. Otherwise sickness, disorganization and insubordination are the results, and the organization ceases to be an effective machine. All soldiers are proud to belong to a good organization which commands the respect of good soldiers.

Colonel Johnston declared that the most difficult thing for the volunteer to realize was that war and battles did not come as shown in pictures or described in story books. In twenty-three times under fire in which there were casualties on both sides, he had never seen or known soldiers to go into action feeling fit and fresh and strong and with a real thirst for the fight. On the contrary, in each case they were hungry and thirsty and dirty and tired, and their endurance had been tested to the limit before the time for action came. It is under such circumstances, he pointed out, that the real man shows himself. Only the spirit under which he responded to the call, and disregard of his physical condition or the hardships he has undergone, make a real soldier face danger with coolness, courage, determination and a willingness to go forward and suffer the limit. Those with a yellow streak and those who lack the real spirit of the soldier, fail.

Johnston's Description of a Coward.

"You may think of a coward as throwing away his rifle and running away from the firing line," continued the Colonel. "The facts are rarely so. He invariably must justify himself, and he desires others to support him in his conduct. Generally he complains as follows: 'The officers are lost; they are up in the air; they don't know what they're doing; they have led us into a trap; we are being betrayed through their ignorance. I am willing to do my duty at any time, but I won't be killed like a dog for some fool officer.' Then he beats it."

"Perhaps," the Colonel added significantly, "you have heard some similar remarks on a lesser scale in your own ranks. You can take it from me that when a man shows yellow in his daily life as a soldier, on account of the routine and the hardship and the labor and the monotony, the chances are he will also show yellow when the real pinch of battle comes, under the circumstances which generally prevail at the time of battle."

"The whole country is watching the New York Division as being one of the best that has ever been produced in the National Guard and all of us should be proud of our service when we are mustered out, and therefore it is up to each one of us to look squarely at his duty, accept it as a man and play the game according to the rules."

The Colonel stated that while opinions might vary as to our future in the Service, some believing that we are soon to be mustered out and others that we are to have service in Mexico, yet no one knows what the future holds. He believes that it is the duty of every one to play this game to the very best of his ability and with all the manhood there is in him just as if we were going across the Border, until the muster-out rolls have been actually signed; and that whatever may develop, we should prepare for the most serious situation which we may possibly be called upon to meet—that is war.

Becoming reminiscent, the Colonel said: "Another thing that has remained in my memory was the experience I had when my men fell about me in action. I remember them calling to me to come over to them, and as I would stoop down to hear what they had to say, it was invariably this: 'Tell them at home, sir, that I have tried to do my duty.' Yes, that is what they said to me. Their last anxiety was that it would be known at home by those who loved them and respected them, that they had died doing their duty. 'Tell them back home that I have tried to do my duty.' Why, I have seen soldiers refuse help from any one unless they were assured no matter what happened, that those back home, the father, mother, sister would know that they had done their duty. Why are they fighting so hard in Europe? Why do soldiers after one defeat form again and go into the trenches and face the music day after day, month after month? There is something back of their patriotism, there is something back of the excitement of war and it is, I believe, that inner feeling which makes a man try to live up to the measure of a man, that standard of self-respect he fights to live up to. It is the stuff in you that is going to tell when the danger arises. It is living up to your self-respect. Getting whipped in a fight that you have stuck to is no loss of self-respect; you have gained your own; you did not run away; you stood up to it, and no matter how long the hike, how hard the digging, how strenuous the field exercise, or how hot the sun, you stuck to it. That is being a good sol-

GENERAL DYER TO COMMAND HOME UNITS

Brevet Major Gen. Appleton Relieved When Ranking Brigadier Returns

2ND. NEW YORK DIVISION DISBANDED

Brigadier General George R. Dyer has been placed in command of those units of the National Guard which are now within New York State. Those include the regiments that have been ordered home from here as well as the organizations of the State Guard that were never mustered into the federal service.

General Dyer's return from McAllen after being mustered out of the Federal service makes him the senior brigadier general now on active service within the state. While here General Dyer was in command of the Second Brigade which was formerly composed of the 7th Inf., the 12th, and the 71st Inf. The General returned to New York with the 71st Regt. early last month.

During his absence and that of Major General O'Ryan, the Second Division, which remained behind, has been commanded by Brevet Major General Daniel Appleton, formerly Colonel of the 7th regiment. The Second Division is now disbanded.

The new order places Brigadier General Oliver B. Bridgman in command of First Brigade depot units of the reserve list. Colonel William G. Bates is named as his successor.

Brigadier General John G. Eddy, commander of the Second Brigade, is retired.

Colonel John H. Foote of the 14th Infantry which recently returned to New York here succeeds him. Colonel Charles H. Hitchcock of the First Infantry continues in command of the Third Brigade.

Brigadier General Samuel M. Welch, in command of the depot units of the Fourth Brigade, is retired. He is succeeded by Colonel Edgar S. Jennings of the Third Infantry.

The order concludes by disbanding the brigades of depot units, formed after the mobilization. The officers were ordered to report to their former regiments if they are within the state, or to their brigade headquarters in the event that their former commands are on the Border.

The Majestic Roof has closed for the season. Tea dances and dinner dances in the Oriole and Grill Rooms. Special tango orchestra.—Adv.

A CHALLENGE FROM A HORSEMAN OF THE 3RD AMB.

"Frank P. Winston of the 3rd Ambulance Company hereby challenges the winner of the ribbon in Class 6 at the 1st Cavalry Horse Show of Saturday, October 7th to an open competition between the winning horse and the horse ridden by himself at the show, said competition to be judged by three distinguished judges, one to be selected by the rider of the winner, one by Winston and the third by the other two.

"Mr. Winston backs up his challenge by offering a wager of \$100.00 of his own money against \$50.00 of his opponent's."

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS

A day or two ago Maj. Gen. O'Ryan received a letter from a prominent lady in New York City explaining that she was greatly interested in the welfare and future career of a young man, a private in one of the N. Y. regiments. She gave the name and stated she greatly desired to do something for him,—to have a part in his advancement. She apologized for intruding in a field concerning which she knew but little, and closed her letter with the following, "I trust you will pardon my concern for —, but could't he be made a sentinal or something?"

"Holy smoke! Could he!"

"I well remember, after a long and very hard hike which we continued steadily for three days, without food except that which we could forage by the way, where the march was through high cogon grass and where the trail was full of holes made by buffaloes, where the grass was so high that it cut off the breeze from coming to you, and the burning sun blazed down on your head; where the mud under your feet was soggy and had a sickening odor, we at last arrived at a place to camp. The major in command of the battalion desiring to send a message called for a certain sergeant. This sergeant somehow or other got itself cleaned up; the sweat and mud was removed from his face, his shoes had been brushed and he looked almost as clean and neat as if he was ready for inspection. He appeared before the major, stood at attention, gave a smart military salute and awaited what the major had to say.

"He looked straight in the officer's eye and every line of his face and bearing showed determination to understand and execute his orders. The major gave the sergeant a message which the latter listened to intently; and then, having absorbed it, he clicked his heels together, saluted again with military precision, faced about and went on his way with a resolute set to his shoulders and a pace that meant to get somewhere. The major looked after the departing soldier for a moment and they turned to me and said—and it was a remark I shall never forget: 'Lieutenant, God never made anything better than a good soldier.' That remark struck me with a great deal of force then—what a fine thing a good soldier is, and then and there, there grew up in me a desire to merit such a compliment, and after years of experience I have found that there is no severer test of a man in the world than his ability to make a good soldier. I want you to remember that remark: 'God never made anything better than a good soldier.'"