

Why I am Glad I am Here

By a Private of the 7th

It is easy enough to groan and grumble over this enforced vacation on the Border. It's easy enough to ascribe all kinds of malevolent political reasons behind our detention in Texas and to figure out how certain political cliques expect to benefit by this or that movement of troops. It's easy to call your officers jackasses and to ask with hurt indignation how they expect any man to do the work which they lay out. It's easy enough to do all these things. I know, for I've made the same complaints and called High Heaven to witness in the same manner as you have that I'd never re-enlist in the National Guard. And these same remarks and expressions of wearying regret are the inevitable outcome of three months of inaction. Soldiers are the same the world over.

But did you ever stop to figure out all the real benefits you are deriving from your stay in Texas and your service in the army? I know it sounds futile to reason about when the jobs back home or the family that wait your return are calling for you. But consider the beneficial results. You'll find it a bit harder to do than to think of kick or a knock but if you study it all out you'll find it worth while. I know for I have done it. Will you listen to my personal experience?

A month ago I was doing more complaining than any of my tent-mates. The whole army system seemed wrong and I thought myself the dupe of crafty politicians. I thought that my patriotism had been capitalized by those in authority for their own selfish ends. Because I enlisted for war and there was no war I thought that I had been sadly fooled and contemplated moving heaven and earth if necessary to secure my discharge.

And then I sat down and soberly thought it all out. The first question I asked myself was: "Would you have been better off if you had never joined?" And although I had lost some money and a great deal of time from business, I surprised myself by answering "no." You see, I was being honest with myself for the first time. And it was the experience that I had gained which made me glad, after sober reflection, that I had come to Texas. Somehow or other the trip had added a new interest to life. It had given me a new point of view. It had

lifted me from the commonplace rut in which I had unconsciously sunk for years back. And therefore it was worth every sacrifice I had made.

The more I thought about this phase of the game as it personally applied to me the more interested I became. I knew that when I returned to home and all its comforts I would appreciate them really and truly, for the first time in my life. The daily happenings of an existence that formerly seemed humdrum and commonplace, would assume a zest and an interest that were never before felt.

Deprive the average citizen of the little luxuries of living that he has never missed and for the first time he will begin to realize their value. When I thought of the ordinary, prosaic way in which I had stumbled through life, ignoring the better things and accepting the comforts and conveniences as my just due, I marvelled at myself. How could I have been so blind?

How big the world seemed now and how much greater my capacity for work and play. I began to pity the poor, pale cheeked thousands that stumbled through their daily tasks and never sense the romance and glamor and the sheer joy of living—that I could never again be insensitive to.

I began to live more in twenty-four hours than ever before. I began to enjoy my meals and look upon them as replenishers of strength and vitality and not merely as palate ticklers. Gone were the dainty dishes that formerly tempted a jaded appetite but gone also was the jaded appetite and in its place came healthy hunger that needs solid, substantial, life-giving food. I had found perfect health.

And that's why I decided it was indeed a lucky day for me when I joined the Guard and that's why I am glad I am here and not back in New York. I have forgotten the old complaints for now I accept orders cheerfully, knowing that when I do return I will be a far happier, healthier, and wiser man than when I left. I awake with a grin and turn in with a smile, tired but happy. There is more joy in life. It is good to be alive. I am glad I am a soldier, trained and ready to serve my country. I am proud of myself, my comrades and the U. S. A.

Won't you think it over and ask yourself the same questions?

(Continued from page 1.)

Wild West Events.

Fancy roping contests, roping wild steers, broncho busting, and riding the bucking mule constituted this part of the afternoon's program. Buckskin Red of Pack Train No. 10, performed some exciting stunts as did old Joe Hooker of the 1st Cavalry who displayed remarkable agility in rough and tumbled riding for a man of fifty-eight. The little Mexican from King's Ranch who rode the worst of the bronchos, made a big hit with the audience and many were greatly disappointed that he did not win the saddle which had been offered as a prize in these events. Some clever stunts in steer roping for time were shown the New Yorkers. King's, Young's, Sterling and McAllen Ranches were represented in this part of the program. The members of Pack Train No. 19 made quick time in roping and loading their pack mules and later displayed equal celerity in catching the greased pig for the young frocker had only a few moments of freedom after being released from the bag. The Pack Train mess enjoyed a savory Sunday dinner of roast sucking pig, we opine. With an exhibition rifle drill by Company M of the 12th Infantry, Lieutenant Jeffe, commanding, the afternoon was brought to a close.

The judges for the mounted events were Captain McCoy, U. S. A., Acting Chief of Staff, Brownsville; Captain Parker, U. S. A., Aide General Parker's Staff; and Captain Booker, 5th Artillery, U. S. A. The committee on the Military Tournament were Sgt. George Matthews, Jr., Squad A, chairman; Sgt. R. T. Battle, 1st F. A.; Sgt. Major Dallas, 1st Cavalry; Sgt. Seggerman, Mch. Gun Troop, and Sgt. Leach, Div. Hdqrs. The committee on Wild West Show were: Sergeant M. A. Hart of Div. Hdqrs., chairman; Sgt. Wm. Balance, 2nd Amb. Corps; Sgt. W. B. Love, 2nd F. A., and Corp. Devereaux, 1st Cavalry.

Evening Program.

The evening's program was well balanced and together with the two scheduled fights which are reported on the Sporting page, closed the most eventful day since our arrival in Texas. The fireworks of the 22nd Engineers was pleasing to watch and together with the excellent music dispensed by the band from the 3rd Tenn. formed a delightful background for the well chosen vaudeville events. The performance opened up with a blues act by those "Dispersers of the Blues," Sgt. Leonard, Private Pettigrew, and Private Tacey of Co. A, 7th Regiment. The specialty was song and in this branch they excelled as the audience testified by their repeated demands for more. M. Farrell and Phillip Murrane of the 6th followed with a drill unique which was all the program said it stand for with his "tur-r-r-right about, stand where ye are!" Farrell caused a laugh to start in the stands that continued as long as he and his partner kept the stage.

The H Troop (Bochester) from the 1st Cavalry furnished their Hawaiian band for the occasion, and their numbers were received with acclaim. The "Hawaiians" were C. Voucher, leader, Wellington, Remington, Summers, Moggie, Taille, Piper, Shantz, Taylor Babcock and Rutherford. Another song number of special note was the quartette from B Troop (Albany), 1st Cavalry, composed of Donald Wood, Reginald Wood, Harry Fries and Andrew Gleason. Frederick C. Schmidt, of K Troop, 1st Cavalry scored a success with his Jewish character monologue and as an amateur will rank with the best of professionals. Sergeants W. B. Love and B. T. Battle of the committee showed excellent taste in selecting the program and aside from a few hitches in the lighting system the performance ran off very smoothly. Sergt. Battle was the announcer extraordinaire.

"Who are the people that belong to the underworld?"
"Those people you see on the road under their automobile, son."

SOLDIER'S MORNING IN CAMP.

He rolls out of his cot in the morning and curses the buglers, the weatherman, the First Sergeant and everyone in reach of his ire. He yawns and grumbles as he ties on his leggings and then drops back on his blanket to have forty winks before reveille. But the perverse bugler blows the call before the weary soldier closes his eyes and as he again collects his scattered faculties there comes the raucous call he has come to hate: "On the line, men!"

And "on the line" it is. As he runs up the street dragging his gun and buckling on his belt he trips over a tent rope and again sends the air with maledictions. He answers to roll call and hopes the top sergeant chokes. During the calisthenics he moans and prays that the 1st Lieutenant might fall on his nose. Every move is a picture of misery and woe. One-two, one-two (gosh, won't he ever get through!) but soon it's all over and he washes up for breakfast, forgetting the spot on the back of his neck.

What have they got for breakfast? Hominy and bacon, and he had gone to all the trouble of bringing his knife up to the mess-shack. He leaves it beaded at dinner and then of course breakfast is of mess sergeants! As our soldier gulps down his coffee, which he subconsciously notes seems to be a bit more so than usual, he assimilates the latest rumor and hopes to Heaven it's true. Well, Funston said the troops would go home in the order they came down and Bill is orderly at Headquarters and besides he saw the General give the Colonel the telegram, didn't he? And there's no denying all that so he whistles cheerfully as he swabs out his canteen-cup in the greasy cold water in which he and his mates are supposed to wash their dishes.

He hasn't half finished the Pail Mail that the Supply Sergeant gave him when first call sounds for morning drill. With the rest of the crowd he breathlessly listens in hopeful anxiety for the welcomed recall but it fails to sound, and so he falls in, hoping against hope that they won't march down the Hidalgo road again.

But down the Hidalgo road it is and he remembers with a start as they turn off toward the cactus field that he had forgotten to fill his canteen. In answer to his painful inquiries he learns that Tom and Harry and George and Ed have the same short memories. Of course his thirst soon assumes raging proportions.

Why, oh why, does the Captain always pick out that same cactus field to skirmish in? He skirts cautiously through the spiky plants that seem to sneak up and jab one in the back of the leg unawares and side-steps when he spots a horned toad and a scorpion in consultation. Just as he dodges the playful dragon fly and brushes the gnats and mosquitoes from the back of his neck the Captain shouts at him to throw himself flat. "The enemy are entrenched in force." Of course a cactus leaps underneath him just as he drops on his face and as he rolls over to pick the spines from his wishbone a Spanish Bayonet jabs him in the ear.

"Hey you, start firing," the corporal shouts, so your obedient guardsman pulls blindly away at the trigger and goes through all the motions of a soldier on the battlefield, firing an empty gun about fifty times a minute at an imaginary enemy.

And so it goes for two hours more. Fall flat, jump up, rush ten feet, fall flat, etc., until he begins to resemble the spiniest cactus that ever grew this side of Hades. He manages to limp back to camp with the rest, "police" the streets and the tent, make up his bunk, unfurl his tent and then hear the Major tell the Captain he's seen many dirty streets, but this one's the limit. So it's get on the job there men, this street's got to be cleaned right before lunch and he's at it again, wondering how one company of men could smoke and throw away so many cigarette stubs.

But mess call ends his morning's labors and he finds they've got tomatoes and rice pudding for dinner so he's happy for a while.

The latest gossip of the camp is discussed over a leisurely meal and after he borrows a dollar from the fellow who won in the little session of penmanship last night he gets his name down on the afternoon's pass for town leave. He plans to have a gay time in the village. He forgets the spiny cactus and the policing and sings a blithesome song as he washes up and prepares for an afternoon off.

(Continued from page 1.)

show. The competition, especially between the First Cavalry and the Squadron will be keen, as both organizations have many thoroughbreds in their ranks. Little is known about the horses from the other camps but their horsemanship is on a par with the best.

Major Vanderbilt has entered his horses in several events and other officers of the Division will enter their own mounts now in the service of the army. Horses that have competed and won their class in the greatest horse shows of the country are entered and never in the history of Texas has such an array of horse flesh been shown. The great Madison Square show will be most attractive this year but the Cavalry horse show will go down in the annals of horse show history as being one of the greatest shows for saddle horses and the greatest novelty on account of the existing conditions.

The horse critics claim that if the entries continue to come in the classes will be so large that it will be more like a three-ring circus than a regulation horse show. Every one is waiting with expectation and a good day is promised for all. The show will be held regardless of the weather.

DAILY TRAIN SERVICE

Trains leaving Pharr for McAllen and Mission: 10:35 a. m., 12:35 p. m., and 6:49 p. m.
Leaving McAllen for Mission: 10:50 a. m., 1:00 p. m., and 6:57 p. m.
Leaving Mission for McAllen: 8:05 a. m., 1:25 p. m., and 4:55 p. m.
Leaving McAllen for Pharr: 8:16 a. m., 1:45 p. m. and 5:10 p. m.

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ARMY DOES NOT WANT TO FIGHT

Secretary of War Baker Says Professional Soldier Sincere Seeker of Peace

TALKS TO ST. LOUIS BUSINESS MEN

An Associated Press dispatch says that Secretary of War Baker, in an address before the Business Men's League at St. Louis said that as secretary of war he had discovered that the army does not desire wars. "As a civilian," he said, "I believed that a standing army was a menace to free institutions, and that the professional soldier desired war. But I want to make a confession to you. I have found as secretary of war that the entire army of the United States from the commanding general to the last enlisted private does not desire war. I know of no body of men who have a more singular devotion to duty than the army, and no body of men who would be more willing to lay down their lives for their country."

"The army will respond and wants to be able to respond efficiently to every demand made upon it. It is a lover and conservator of peace and efficiency."

"For three years the greater part of the American army has been on the Mexican border. The army has been put to the severest tests ever put upon soldiers. It has had a waiting job. It is easy to be a soldier when there is action; difficult when there is inaction. While we have heard criticism and complaints from other sources, I want to say that there never has been a word of complaint relative to condition or service from any member of the regular army. The militia was mobilized on the border a distance of 1800 miles—twice the distance from St. Louis to New York—with great success and efficiency. Notwithstanding the fact that the men came from all walks of life and are doing service in a strange climate, the efficiency is such that the sick report is less than 2 per cent—1 per cent less than that of the regular army."

"The time has come when there must be the power on the part of the government to mobilize all the forces of the country for the common defense."

BUT FOUR CASES OF VENEREAL DISEASES AMONG THE 12,000 MEN OF THE N. Y. DIVISION IN TEXAS.

In an interview with a reporter of The Rattler today, Major General O'Ryan suggested that we publish a statement of the facts affecting the health of the Division. The General said: "I feel that the men of the Division are entitled to know something of the details affecting the record they are making in the matter of conduct and physical fitness. Most men who have done any reading know that venereal diseases have been the plague of armies since armies were originally organized. In the great struggles that made Europe a battle ground for so many centuries, venereal disease was spread by soldiers from one part of Europe to another."

"Medical men who have studied this subject know that many of the ills of existing generations are indirect legacies handed down by the fighting men of early times. Medical men also know that in the present war in Europe, venereal disease has played a most important part. It has been the practice to accept the camp follower and venereal disease as necessary evils. In recent times the problem was attempted to be solved by regulation and medical prophylaxis, but it remained for the N. Y. Division to solve the problem by moral prophylaxis."

The General further said that "the New York Division, 17,800 strong arrived on the Border with but forty-one cases of venereal disease in the entire force. Rigid physical inspection insured the elimination from the organizations to the hospitals of infected men. Continuing his remarks the General stated further:

"These facts are quite remarkable as showing the physical cleanliness of our men. But what will the medical profession say when after three months of service we have but four cases of venereal disease in the Division, only two being new cases. These figures seem incredible but they are authentic."

"I realize that no man is sufficiently powerful to enforce a rigid prohibition against the use of liquor and indulgence in his by-products; it cannot be completely accomplished even when those affected by the rule are confined within prison walls. The men themselves have made this record by their loyalty, understanding of the situation and a well developed spirit of disciplined self-sacrifice. In consequence they are entitled to know what constitutes the measure of their accomplishment. Therefore, I think The Rattler should publish and comment upon the fact that in the entire Division there are but four cases of venereal disease."

"To mature men and women these facts speak volumes."

FILM MEN HOLD MEETING

Last Sunday afternoon the moving picture men on the Border with the New York Division held a meeting at T. R. Logan's Airdome Theatre near the 7th Infantry camp. When noses were counted it was found that there were exactly thirteen men in the group that counted it was "still" right under the Charlie Chaplin poster but this, in the profession, has come to be a lucky omen. All of the thirteen are enlisted in various regiments from New York City and back home play prominent parts in the production of motion pictures.

Among those present were Sgt. Wm. R. Love, 2nd F. A., military director; Corporal Love, the George Kline Company; W. Harford, 12th Infantry, leading man of the Solax Company; Alexander Duane, 7th Infantry, Metro Pictures Corporation; John Donovan, 7th Infantry, Eggert Engraving Company, and Howard Irving Young, 7th Infantry, feature writer of the Metro Company.

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McAllen, Texas

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