

THE RIO GRANDE RATTLER

Published Weekly at Odd Places in Texas. By the New York Division, United States Army with the authority of Major General John F. O'Ryan...

Letters and news items from the camps along the Border are solicited. Advertising Rates: Furnished on request. Subscription Rates: One year \$2.00, Single Copy .05.

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AMERICAN CHARACTER AND MILITARY SERVICE.

Military service on the Mexican Border has done much more than furnish opportunity to increase the efficiency of regimental and higher organized units. It has done much more than to demonstrate the unpreparedness of our government to promptly and adequately supply its troops.

It has taken time for this point of view to shape itself. The new life here, at first interesting and exciting, then unsatisfactory as the probability of active service faded, became habit. It caused the thinking to think, and to compare one life with the other, the old with the new.

They have learned, these men from all walks of life and all classes of society, that the things that count are not the artificialities of life. They are not the conventionalities, which in some places have come to constitute life itself.

Few men realize the extent to which the human point of view is affected by the stomach and what enters it—and does not enter it.

As we banish the epicurean flesh pots from our diet, we exude useless tissue, we drive away brain fag, selfishness and timorousness. We substitute health, stamina and gallantry.

Not only do our muscular tissues undergo a biological change, but our brain tissues as well are affected by change of diet, habit and environment.

As they become convinced of these things by actual experience and observation, our men will become critical of American character as it is being developed in the average American home. They will question whether the selfish indulgences of undeveloped young men, as they are encouraged in the average American home, constitute true kindness; or whether there is not a day of reckoning in store for the undisciplined.

The truth is we need a full generation of time to prepare to defend our form of government and its institutions, and the biggest work has no relation to guns and ammunition, but rather to the development of natural character.

THE SLACKER.

You have him in every camp. Fortunately his name is not Legion but the disorder he foments and the trouble he stirs up, make him more of a pest than those furry little spiders with the deadly sting in their tails.

We do not refer to the man who possesses a natural, healthy spirit of unrest. Nearly all of us want to go home. But we have no patience with the man who grumbles and complains over every task and who makes those who are forced to share his company, and listen to his groans, uncomfortable and short-tempered.

In the distorted view-point of the slacker all officers are unreasonable tyrants and his comrades who follow out orders faithfully and uncomplainingly are "boobs." The quicker the slacker is effectively silenced by his own tent-mates and convinced of the error of his foolish ways and futile whinings, the better it will be for the service.

But right here we wish to state that we believe in the man who cheerfully asks, "When the deuce are we going home?" For the most part he is a loyal soldier and a necessary member of society.

We are all of us "doing our bit," some with a cheerful smile and some with a complaining frown. But if our presence here has prevented a war that would collect its bloody toll from this beloved land, then all the sacrifices we have made were not made in vain.

We may not want to be soldiers all our lives but we want to be Men—in every true sense of the word.

The longer we stay away the better home will look when we return.

WHEREIN WE TALK ABOUT OURSELVES

When a small committee of three men got together ten weeks ago and suggested that the New York Division start a newspaper, the first ones they talked with said, "Go ahead. When does the first issue appear—next Monday?"

Which shows that some people don't realize how hard journalism on the Border may be. The first issue of The Rattler did not appear that Monday, nor for four Mondays following. But when it did appear, The Rattler was ready to take its place as an enterprising and flourishing little newspaper, with real news and a cartoon on its front page, with real editorials and comic sayings, and real advertisements.

Would you undertake to publish a newspaper here on the Texas border? Consider the problem the editors and business management were up against when The Rattler was started.

We had to reach and represent 18,000 men, located not in one town but in three. To cover the camps in McAllen alone required a circuit of the 7th, 12th, 71st Infantry camps, the 1st and 2nd Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry, Engineers, Signal Corps, Field Hospital, and Ambulance Corps, Field Bakery and Division Headquarters. This too at a time when the roads were muddy, when work of making camp and drilling the troops was at its height and allowed little time for would-be correspondents to handle the work of reporting for the then unborn Rattler.

Mission we found it fairly easy to cover, and the office of the Mission Times has from the first been a haven where inspiration never tires. But Pharr has been, and still remains, a problem which we cannot solve. We have received beautiful news from the 74th, and the later departed 2nd, as well as occasional items from the 23rd and succeeding regiments, but never a column of advertising. But that is another phase of the question.

Five thousand copies of The Rio Grande Rattler bounce off the press some time between midnight and grey dawn and into the waiting tonneau of our big Packard truck. Sometimes the dawn is greyer than usual and the papers don't bounce quite so promptly, for 5,000 copies is a large number for a small town plant to print each week. But we went to the papers, and they look cleaner and more snappy each week. At least, we think so.

One man is now in entire charge of the active circulation work. Cheerfully enough, this circulation man first qualified as a war correspondent for one of the Brooklyn papers, but was thrown out because of the ruling against enlisted men. As assistant circulation manager he puts in a 20 hour day on Wednesday, checking out an allotted number of papers to the various canteen managers, Y. M. C. A.'s, and newsstands in McAllen and Pharr, during the course of which he cries a quantity of them through the various company streets, in true newsboy fashion. Several of the lads of Mission and McAllen have started prosperous bank accounts as a result of traveling on the Rattler truck for a few days and selling the papers, "penny a copy profit."

The search for an editorial staff was for weeks fraught with uncertainties—as the dictionary puts it. Man after man officer and private alike, expressed his willingness to "do anything under the sun for the Rattler, from writing editorials down to reading proof," but the grasping hand of discipline failed to relax enough to let any of these willing workers take up the actual work. Worst of all, one full-fledged New York editor who topped the "masthead" of The Rattler for two weeks, caught the then popular dengue fever and returned to the city on a sick leave.

But The Rattler got started, in spite of losing editors almost before their names got into print. The brunt of the work, however, has fallen on some three or four men. Let some kind historian name them, because here we have only room to tell The Rattler's story impersonally.

Who publishes The Rattler? The Rattler is published unofficially by the New York Division, and bears the personal approval of Major General O'Ryan. It is edited by an active board of half a dozen men, who are supported in their work by a staff of regimental correspondents, representing each detachment in the Division.

Most men in the Division look on The Rattler as a personal news letter, and thousands of copies are mailed each week to the friends back home.

In advertising support The Rattler has been the wonder and amazement of the natives, for from the first it has been self supporting. Week after week it has carried the message of local merchants to the tents of the men who spend daily hundreds if not thousands of dollars in ice cream, groceries, clothing and commissary supplies.

The Rattler has also received advertising from a few national advertisers who were quick to realize the timeliness of reaching 18,000 isolated men at a time when they were spending money, and plenty of it, only on their immediate personal needs.

The Rattler was started without a cent of financial backing and from the first its printing bill of \$300 for the week has been paid out of the receipts of advertising and subscription sales received from that issue. The Rattler is not in business for profit. We hope to keep a balance in the bank, to be sure, because the editors have worries enough to produce this bright little paper every seven days without having to worry about the check. But as for profits, they come later. It is probable that any savings and earnings, if any, will be devoted to National Guard purposes when the paper finally disbands, whenever that may be.

It may interest some of our readers to know that The Rattler was born at a moment when gloom of the deepest kind pervaded and covered the McAllen camp. "Let's start a paper," the manager suggested, "and give the fellows something cheerful to talk about." And forthwith it was done.

The support given The Rattler here on the cactus-fringed Border has given rise to the suggestion that The Rattler be continued indefinitely as a publication of the New York National Guard. Whether this will be done remains to the yet unlighted future. Probably no other paper since the

PERSONALS

Although Major Fred M. Waterbury, Division Ordnance Officer, and Editor of The Rattler, is at Jacksonville, Fla., for the annual rifle match, this newspaper will continue to be published. But we wish the Major were here to write these personals as he knows every officer in the Division by his first name—and also his last year's score at Peckskill.

Major Franklin W. Ward, Asst. Chief of Staff, who has been spending the last few weeks in New York on a thirty day leave of absence, will soon be back at his old desk at Division Headquarters, which is also the main office of The Rattler. The Major, our managing editor, has been doing some long distance editing while away from camp.

Lieut. Gordon Grant, Co. I, 7th Inf., came down to McAllen last week, arriving just in time to undertake a few field sketches for The Rattler. We feel safe in announcing that the next issue of this paper will contain some of Lieut. Grant's pictures which, in civil life, have earned him a national following.

Captain J. J. Daly, E. Co., 22nd Engineers, has been assigned to Division Headquarters as Engineer Officer. The captain is an expert engineer of wide experience and extensive training. His company, back in the 22nd, is known as one of the most efficient in the regiment. During his absence, Lieut. Percy E. Barbour is in command of the company.

Lieut. Samuel J. Fisher of the 12th, Assistant Editor of The Rattler, writes us from New York that the dengue fever has succumbed to Manhattan's cool October breezes and that the aforesaid zephyrs and the sight of crimson and gold foliage over Westchester way, seem to be an infallible cure for whatever seems to be the matter with you.

Before long we hope to print another official report from the Sixth Avenue Division of Jack's for much favorable comment followed the publication of the last dispatch. Headquarters has received many applications for transfer to this corps for "where the danger lies, there the soldier lies."

General Rumor, who has been conversing, will soon return to his official duties at McAllen. The General has found an opportunity to visit Washington and San Antonio and his arrival at camp will be heralded by much excitement and acclaim. A review of the entire Division will then be given for his benefit.

Our old friend, Captain J. Bassett, now retired, writes us that reports from the Border make him feel like jumping into his uniform again and joining the boys at the "front." Captain Bassett served throughout the Crimean and Boer Wars in the British army.

Our old coast artillery friend, Major Charles Wylie, of the 9th Heavy, writes us that: "If The Rattler never appears again, it has published one article that is worth all the effort it took in making it a success. In the September 6th issue is the article referred to and if only it could be published throughout the land, and all young Americans be made to realize what there is in it; it alone would be worth the price of a hundred mobilization camps, and the writer of 'Are You There? (With Guts),' would have done the greatest service of any American, living or dead. 'Ten per cent of all failures is because of bad judgment, and ninety per cent because of lack of guts to pull through a good thing.'"

Major Kenneth Forman Duncan, of the Bombay (India) Light Horse, cables us, "Rattler fine. Good luck and best wishes." The Major need not have paid the one dollar and fifty cents for the last two words for we knew we had them anyway. In a previous letter the Major wrote us that should we deem his presence necessary on the Border he would resign his position in Bombay and be home at once. Major Duncan is a loyal American who believes so fully in preparedness that he is training himself in military tactics way out in India.

Foot ball is making great strides in the east. It's hard to realize that the game is being played with such hot weather here. But cheer up, you might see the Yale-Princeton game—in the movies.

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.

days of Elbert Hubbard has had such an immediate success or such a loyal following. The Rattler is democratic in its tastes and universal in its list of readers. Colonels and cooks alike reach in their kilties for a nickel when our brass-throated boys rush through the company streets. Senators and parents and public libraries have written for copies of New York's Border paper. The daily greeting we receive along McAllen's streets is, "When's the next Rattler coming out?"

For all this we are grateful, and a bit proud as well. We have come into a strange territory and established a new paper, printing in a week more copies than the McAllen "Monitor" and the "Clarion" of Pharr print in a month. We have shown the people of the Magic Valley a little of how a metropolitan paper should be run, and perhaps we've given them a few advertising ideas as well, because we try to scatter the sunshine as we go.

But most of all, of course, we cherish a few letters from the friends back home,—an employer or two, or maybe 'she-who-writes-on-the-lavender-stationery.' These letters will never be published, but they are the very things that make an editor's life worth while.

After "Taps"

This being on the border down beside the Rio Grande, Being herded in like horses and shipped southward out-of-hand, Was not anything to kick at; we were heroes for a day, We were cheered and fed and feted every station on the way, And we lived on the excitement-thrived on it—were overfed! We could see ourselves in battle with Old Glory overhead, And our hearts throbbed to a march-time, and our feet beat to a swing; But we've been here—oh, forever!—and we haven't done a thing!

Just the routine stuff, the drilling and the hiking—such as that— Sort of stuff that's calculated to take off our roll of fat; And we tumble out at sunrise and the skies are blue and gold, And the sunset o'er the sandhills is a glory to behold! And between sunrise and sunset we can find enough to do, With so little time for thinking there's no time for feeling blue; But it's after "taps" has sounded out across the chaparral, That the homesick feeling grips you, like a little bit o' hell.

The Incinerator

"Then ho, for the life of a Soldier, a Soldier, a Soldier!" John Redmond says attempt to enforce conscription on Irish people "will be resisted in every village in Ireland." —News Item.

But not a man in the 69th stayed at home when the call came. Swornish attacks and drives hole into launch Nueces in Intercoastal canal. —News Item.

It must have been a German Corp. HIS DIARY. (We are printing below the inscription he wrote on the fly-leaf of his diary while on the train, bound for Texas.—Ed.)

June 28th, 1916. In this little book will I chronicle all the stirring events of the battlefield, the stories of the splendid charges and the brave fight in the last trench. As my comrades lie about the campfire under the Southern stars and talk of the battle on the morrow, I will recount in this little book how I seized the flag from the dying color-bearer and lead the way to glory. Who knows of the honors that await me on the plains of Mexico? And if I return a battle-scarred Colonel with the Congressional medal on my chest—won't Mabel be proud of me. Onward to Victory!

And those same patriotic youths are now warbling with equal fervor, "He's Only a Soldier, With Gun on His Shoulder,"—right on Broadway, too.

Oh, Patriotism, the Crimes that are committed in thy name! Add Fourth of July speeches by Congressmen. We've listened to nine or six during our young life and now warfare holds no terrors for us.

Now that we are having a little reminiscing party, we recall that when we boarded the palatial tourist sleepers at the Penn. station we took ourselves very seriously. To think that we would so soon lay aside the Springfield for the quill. But we're still just as serious as ever.

They showed some movies at the air-dome the other night. It made us feel quite martial to watch them. The goose step would go great on our own parade grounds.

Well, well, here we are down this far and we haven't written anything funny yet. If this were a vaudeville act or a musical "comedy" we'd spring something about William Jennings Bryan or Henry Ford and establish a reputation as a humorist. Bill Brady used to "pull" that and it always "knocked 'em off their seats." We wonder if it would work at a Cabinet meeting or a session of the International Peace Commission.

And we're not getting any funnier. But how jolly we'll be at Christmas Dinner—if the Mess Sergeant will expand his menu with the joyousness of the season.

"We're going home, Tiny Tim." "Do your Christmas hoping early."

Still it's considered very fashionable to spend one's winter in the South.

"There's much to be said on both sides," prophesied the wise man when the two Candidates invested all their spare change in mileage books and started out on the Grand Tours.

It's ten chances to one that the employer who ordered his entire office force to march on Preparedness Day, saw the folly of paying salaries to absent guardsmen about the middle of July.

Printed in the Hope Some Rookie Laughs.

H. I. Y. Sir: As we were approaching the rifle pits at La Gloria Bill moped his forehead and said, "gosh, it's getting warm." Then, with lightning like presence of wit, I answered (but with an attempt at nonchalance): "Oh, we're getting nearer the Range." HANK.

Nineteen year-old Italian girl claimed to have led bandits who slew their employer and wounded three other persons, near Hammond, N. J. —News Item.

And yet they sent us down to Texas.

WOMEN WRANGLE AND MR. WILSON IS EMBARRASSED. —Headline, Houston Chronicle. Just like any other married man!

Are you interested in astronomy beyond the constellation of Orion? Have you seriously studied the stars?

Then consider the Southern Double Cross. H. I. Y.