

WAS TURNING OUT GUNS BY MILLION

United States Producing Arms at High Speed When Fighting Ended.

WORK OF WINNING THE WAR

History of Rifle Production Shows Great Record—Many Tanks Under Construction When Armistice Came—Pistols Efficient.

Washington, D. C.—Machine guns and small arms produced by the millions, ammunition turned out by the billions of rounds and tanks built by thousands when the armistice ended hostilities, furnish the subject of chapters just made public of the war department's history of the "material" side of winning the war.

In regard to machine gun production, which with a hot controversy waged in congress as a result of the failure of the American army to adopt for standard general use the Lewis weapon used successfully abroad, the report says manufacturing facilities for machine guns in this country were much more limited in extent than the public had any notion of when the United States entered the war or today, and that there were at the outbreak of the war only two factories which were actually producing machine guns in any quantity at all.

Scarcity of Aircraft Guns.

The report says there was great scarcity of heavy machine guns for aircraft work, to be synchronized with propellers. The Browning aircraft gun would have met the requirements, but it would be a long time before it could be produced in quantity. In seeking a stop gap weapon until the Browning could be ready, the ordnance department, by "one of those surprising and almost accidental successes" some times encountered, found that a modified Marlin gun which could be quickly produced met all requirements.

The work of the Brownings is declared to have been spectacular as compared with any existing weapons of this character. Up to November 11 the production of Browning rifles was 52,238, a majority of which were in France. In addition 29,000 Chauchat guns had been purchased, so that enough light automatic rifles were on hand to supply 100 divisions, or an army of 3,500,000 men. In the same time 41,804 heavy Brownings and enough Vickers guns had been produced to make, with the Hotchkiss weapons purchased from the French, a total of 54,627 of this type, or enough to equip 200 divisions, or an army of 7,000,000.

Other production struggles described include items varying in size from trench knives to the 45-ton Mark VII tanks of British design, of which 1,500 were being constructed in co-operation with the British and 1,450 additional wholly by American enterprise.

On November 11 64 tanks of the French six-ton type had been delivered and by January 31 of this year 201. Of these six were shipped abroad. Orders for 1,000 Mark I light tanks were canceled as were orders for 15,015 three-ton tanks, 15 of which had been completed on November 11.

The history of the rifle production, including all of the considerations which led to the adoption of the stand-

ard M1918 known as the "Springfield" rifle, also is fully outlined. The department states that it sees no reason to change now that the war is over, the course which was followed. The total rifle production in the United States from the beginning of the war up to November 11, 1918, was 2,500,000, of which a little more than 200,000 were Springfield rifles.

Pistols of U. S. Type Valuable. Considerable attention is devoted to the production of automatic pistols and revolvers for the troops. European countries failed to appreciate the value of a large caliber, hard-hitting weapon of the American type and the chief use of pistols and revolvers in European armies had been as ornaments for officers' uniforms. It is said, rather than for active fighting.

With the standard army automatic it is stated, "any average soldier with average training can hit what he shoots at. In almost the first of trench fighting. Such incidents as that of the single American soldier who dispersed or killed a whole squad of German bayoneters which had surrounded him struck the enemy with fear of Yankee prowess with the pistol."

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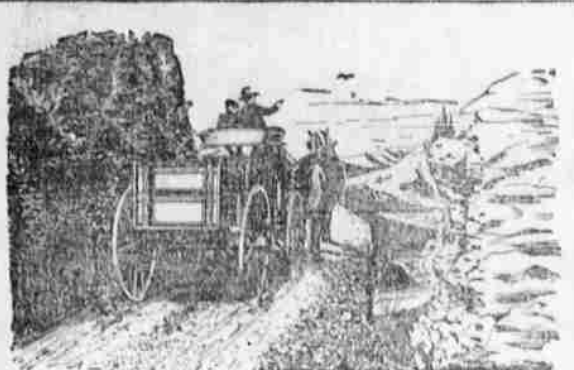
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