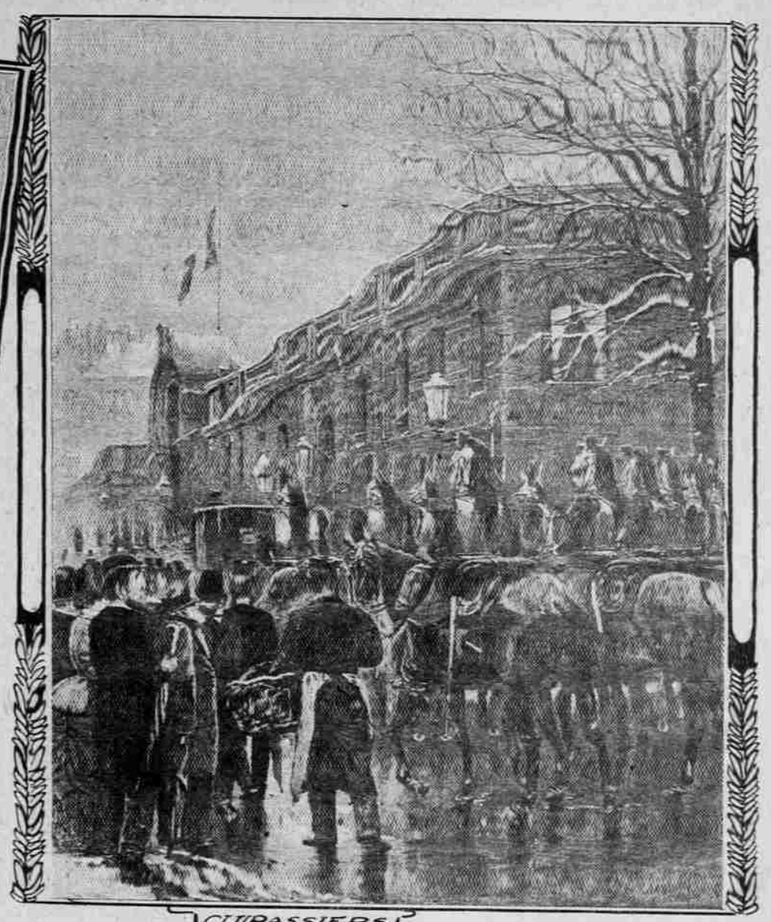
IDOLIZED FRENCH CUIRASSIERS ABOLISHED

After Three Centuries of Glorious Warfare the Armored Soldier on Horseback Is Found Useless Now

THE CUIRASSIERS OF FRANCE LEADS ALL MILITARY PROCESSIONS

CUIRASSIERS IN CAMP



CUIRASSIERS MARCHING THROUGH STREETS OF PARIS

CUIRASSIERS IN UNDRESS UNIFORM

THE glory of the French army—the cuirassier—has fought his last battle.

What the armies of the world could not accomplish in the wars of three centuries is to be achieved in a stroke of the pen by a French military official, and in a few minutes the cuirassier will be only a tradition.

The showy soldier on horseback, wearing his flashing breastplate of steel, with a brass piece in the center, has ever been the idol of the show-loving French nation, and the winner of some of its greatest battles, but modern methods of warfare have put out of commission the equipment that comes down from the Middle Ages.

No cuirass, no matter how craftily wrought, could resist the bullet of today, and so General de Negrier, French Minister of War, has decreed that the 12 regiments of cuirassiers must be mustered out, their horses used for the batteries of field artillery, which the department is rapidly organizing, and the men themselves either turned adrift or given places in other branches of the artillery.

The fact is the cuirass has passed its usefulness. Every recent war has shown that. Fifty years of battle show not a war in which the armored soldier has been successful. In our own Civil War, neither of the contestants made use of armored warriors.

Napoleon III did turn the cuirassiers loose in the Franco-Prussian war, but, though they fought with unequaled bravery at Gravelotte, where they bore the brunt of the most spectacular charge of the struggle, their courage could not make up for their somewhat outworn equipment. Moreover, they were fighting against better men, better guns and better horses.

In the frightful carnage of Gravelotte, the cuirassiers sustained the greater part of the damage, and whole companies were wiped out. At the end of the struggle, when the reorganization of the French army began, some of the experts, who were farsighted, were for abolishing the cuirassiers then, but the sentiment of the nation was so much against it that the project was postponed.

Glorious History.

No wonder France loved its cuirassiers. They had a great history. In every war of the patrie they cut a superb figure, and until they lowered their colors at at Waterloo to the valor of the Scots Grays, the world had come to believe them invincible.

There are not many cuirassiers left in the world's armies. The abolition of the 12 French regiments will leave three countries with this arm of the service—Russia, Germany and Italy.

Germany has 12 regiments and Russia four, but it is altogether possible that the Kaiser and Czar will follow the lead of the French.

Yet only a few hundred years ago the man in the cuirass was the ideal fighter.

Before the deadly quick-firing rifle and machine gun had come to deal out death as swiftly and surely as a barrel organ grinds out a tune, the cuirass was sufficiently effective to turn aside bullets.

Gustavus Adolphus, the greatest warrior of Sweden, first taught the world what a wonderful fighting possibility there could be in a well-drilled company of expert horsemen, able to maneuver with lightning swiftness, so well protected as to be comparatively immune from danger, and having in their pikes, lances or sabers and the irresistible onrush of their mounts, the force to wipe any ordinary antagonist out of the way. Only an equally powerful force of cuirassiers could resist such a force, and the military experts of Europe, profiting by the lessons by Gustavus, directed their attention to perfecting this feature of offensive warfare.

England then had its cuirassiers, though they have long since been abandoned in the service of the British King.

France early took up the subject and under Louis XIII developed several excellent regiments. Louis XIV numbered among his military advisers such eminent tacticians as Luxembourg, Thurenne and Conde, and these pushed the cuirassiers to a still finer point of perfection.

The cuirassier of this period was heavily accoutered, carrying besides saber and pistol, a lance or a pike.

Napoleon's Cuirassiers.

Then came the famous Marshal Saxe to carry along still further the work of preparation that was to give Napoleon the finest cuirassiers in Europe.

It was Marshal Saxe who laid down the code that for many a hard engagement was the law of the cuirassier.

"All evolutions must be made at the greatest speed," ordered Saxe. "Cuirassiers must be as handy and expert on horseback as a hussar, and well exercised in the use of the sword. Every squadron must attack the enemy sword in hand, and no commander shall be allowed to fire, save under penalty of the most infamous chastening."

Until Frederick the Great came there was no cuirassier to rival those of the Marshall Saxe, but the warlike German developed a body that did most remarkable fighting.

Napoleon, with customary sagacity, adopted all that was best of every system, and the finer points of the knowledge of Saxe and Frederick he applied to his own cuirassiers. In 1806 against the Prussians at Jena and Auerstadt, they did matchless work, and were responsible for these successes.

That command of cuirassiers under Kellerman, at Marengo, numbered only 200, but it turned a rout into a victory, and by a rush of matchless valor put the Austrian army to flight after what seemed a certain victory. The 200 cuirassiers were directly responsible for the taking of 2000 prisoners, and the saving of Napoleon from the threat of a serious defeat.

Napoleon violated the law of Saxe, and permitted his cuirassiers to use their firearms when they could be employed to good advantage. They did this at Eylau.

At Austerlitz and Wagram the cuirassiers brought victory to the legions of the Emperor.

The Russian campaign dealt hardly with the cuirassiers, for Napoleon, by one of the few oversights charged against him, failed to provide frost nails for the cavalry and ruined that arm for the time.

But when Waterloo came the Emperor had managed to restore his cuirassiers to their old state of strength and proficiency. He relied on them in the struggle that broke his career, and they did not prove amiss, but the odds against which they pitted were too overwhelming for any bravery.

The crafty Wellington, knowing the prowess of the French cuirassiers, opposed them with the pick of his fighting force, the cavalry under General Ponsonby. This consisted of the Royal Dragoons, Scots Greys and Inniskillen Dragoons.

These latter were early drawn into action, for D'Erlon, after overcoming Ryland, was chased from a strong position by the Greys.

Between 4 and 6 in the afternoon, under the personal direction of Ney, a movement of the French cuirassiers was ordered. The grand old veterans—Kellerman, Milhaud and Guyot—took charge of the men, who Napoleon always awarded the honor of being thrown at the enemy in the crisis of the battle.

Straight at the center of the British line rode the cuirassiers. They were supported by artillery, and did terrible execution among the Britishers. Had they likewise been supported by infantry, Waterloo might have had a different outcome, but the wonderful valor of the Scots Greys, formed in squares to resist the attack, and compelled to support the frightful struggle for hours, finally prevailed, and the cuirassiers, shot to pieces, finally had to retreat to avoid complete extermination. When Napoleon saw them come back he conceded the end.

It is a curious fact that at the same time that the cuirassiers are to pass out of existence there is also talk in England of abolishing the Scots Greys, the heroes who beat them.

The suggestion has been made in England, and enthusiastically received, that, before the two, Cuirassiers and Greys, pass out of existence, it would be a fitting and beautiful sentiment to let them meet in a reunion in Paris.

The date proposed is July 14, the French national holiday.

As a final reunion of brave men, whose predecessors in the same regiments opposed each other in one of the greatest battlefields of history, this would seem the most appropriate of all last acts in the warlike drama of Cuirassiers and Greys.

Thankfulness.

Atlanta Constitution.

Let's sing a song o' thankfulness for all our blessings past—
Though the morning found the twilight and
the blossoms met the blast;
Let's say that on the way
We were happy for a day
And though we mourned the Winter we knew
the flowers of May.

Let's sing a song o' thankfulness for hearts that truly beat,
Even if we missed the mountain top, the
valley's shades were sweet!
Let's dream that God does best,
Though the thorn be at the breast,
We shall dream his dreams of silence, reap
the roses of his rest!

MUST SCARE THE PUBLIC FOR A LIVING

Parachute Jumpers Ply a Most Hazardous Vocation to Thrill the Silly Crowds

New York Post.

THIRTY years as a parachute jumper is a life more venturesome than falls to the lot of most men. That any one who attempts it should end his days as sound in body and health as when he began is remarkable, and yet one may find many parachute jumpers at the Aero Club's exhibit at the automobile show. They usually gather around the flying machines, where they spin yarns and talk about "next season."

Alexander Wilson, of Bar Harbor, Me., is dean of the fraternity, despite the fact that he has given up an exciting career to settle down to the daily grind of an inventor. Wilson is 60, but supple and strong as when he was leaping from the clouds as a drawing card for county fairs and farmers' picnics.

He took to parachute jumping when an engineer's apprentice, because it offered him more money than he could make pounding rivets. Besides, he wanted funds to help him secure a patent for a flying machine. That was in 1889, and today Wilson has his device perfected, the papers in his pocket and his creation on exhibition among the "heavier than air" machines. It looks like the skeleton of a square dry goods box, with two wings propelled by a motor within the framework.

The popular idea of a parachute jumper is a spectacular sort of person, loud in his talk, dress and manner. Wilson is the opposite. Like many other inventors, he has his eccentricities. He is slow in his speech, careless as to his clothes and has the "down East" drawl. One might easily mistake him for a fisherman.

Wilson can fly. His longest horizontal progress through the air has been 1700 feet. Perpendicularly, he has made several hundred times that, but this he doesn't count, for, according to him, "any one can jump from a balloon."

"I began going aloft in 1869—anyway, it was about that time," he said. "It was the year of the Boston peace jubilee, when they had a captive balloon in that city. I stayed with the balloons until 1873, when I made my first jump, out in Iowa, and after that I stuck to jumping. More money in it. When a town is getting up a show or a fair or a picnic and wants a crowd you contract to deliver the goods. That's all there is to it. You're paid to give the people a scare, and your job is to keep your end of the contract.

"It's easy money. Sometimes the people are unreasonable, and then you have to risk your neck or be called a faker by the local newspapers.

Want Their Money's Worth.

"If it is bad weather or your balloon catches fire or the wind is too high and you think you have a good excuse to stay down, the crowd hollers that you're a coward, the newspapers say you're playing a shell game, and that hurts your business. The next town won't hire you, so after you are advertised there is nothing to do but go up, wind storm, fire or anything else. Give the people their money's worth.

"The most dangerous thing in these situations is fire. All jumpers' balloons are inflated with hot air, and often catch fire. But the jumper mustn't back out. He must cut off and go up with his bag ablaze, taking his chances on jumping before the balloon burns enough to drop.

"At Buffalo once I was billed to jump from a height of 1700 feet, and because I shaved 500 off the first day the management cried fraud and held up the money. Next day there was a mob on the fair grounds and those nearest the balloon jeered me. I made the longest drop of my life that day. After I cast off and went up I hung to the balloon till I lost sight of Buffalo, and then cut loose. The wind carried me beyond Tonawanda. I had my mad up that day, and if there had not been a duty on balloons I would have crossed the lake and dropped in Canada.

"Spectators at a fair who come to see a parachute jump get the impression that the man depends entirely upon his hands to hold to the trapeze. This is a mistake. The jumper could not afford to do this, because he has use for his hands. I always strapped myself to the trapeze bar while going up and then turned my attention to the folds of the parachute. You see, it is necessary that they do not become tangled but are perfectly free to open the minute the jumper's weight stretches them out.

"Then again the jumper has also to mind of his balloon and where it is going to land. His object is to tip the bag over and throw the opening at the bottom upward as he leaps so that the smoke and hot air may escape quickly, allowing the balloon to drop somewhere near himself and the parachute. Otherwise it would sail off for miles and be lost. Balloons cost money and we can't afford to buy very many of them.

"Every parachutte is fastened to the side of the balloon with the trapeze bar tied close to the seat of the operator. There is also a cord by which it may be detached, and when the jumper is ready to let go he sees that everything is clear and then swings to one side so that he will pull the top of the balloon over.

If Parachute Opens Too Quickly.

"Here is where his hands come into play. As the balloon turns he pulls the cord that frees him and the parachute and both shoot downward. The parachute should open in 100 or 150 feet, but I've known jumpers to drop twice that distance before the canopy inflates and checks the descent. This check at times is sudden and often the force rends the parachute in twain. Nothing can save the jumper then. To guard against such accidents I always had a round hole sewed in the top of my parachutes to serve as a safety valve. This hole, I think, also helped to straighten out the canvas more quickly.

"With the parachute open the weight of your body shoots you through the air at a rate of from eight to ten miles an hour. That is fast enough to jar you when you hit the earth, and, besides, jumpers have to let go their parachutes and fall 20 feet with nothing to aid them—this is to prevent them from being smothered by the folds of the canvas. I have often hit a house or a barn or a tree and tumbled 30 or 40 feet, but fortune was always with me. Parachute jumpers control their course by tipping up the edge of their canopy and making a plane down which they slide at a longer angle and also much faster.

When Six-Shooters Are Popping.

"I could always get down some way. There isn't any doubt about your hitting the earth in some shape or other. That never worried me. I didn't mind barns or houses or trees half so much as I did curious people, and particularly the people in the Southwest. Excitement always brings out the wildness in a man, and down there the spectators get worked up to a great pitch over a parachute jumper.

"Their pent-up feeling has its effect on the jumper, too, and tends to rattle him. Jumping isn't the pleasantest occupation in the world, and it is a large sight more unpleasant to hear bullets singing past you, either coming down or going up. A balloon ascension in my early days out West wouldn't have been natural without the popping of six-shooters. It was all done in play, of course, but when a man gets red liquor in his system and a gun in his hand it's no place for a balloon. The old saying, 'You can't hit a balloon,' is all bosh. I know better. I've spent a good many hours sewing up bullet holes in my apparatus.

"Another disconcerting thing was to look down as you fell and see a string of mounted men come riding 'cross lots at full jump, shooting as they rode and yelling like Indians to see who would be first to get under you as you neared the ground. Usually these citizens would have a small bet up on the result of the race. Add this little personal interest to the excitement of the jump and the result was enough to make you want to keep on going right through the earth and never stop on top.

"The wild look of excitement in some of those eyes I'll remember to my grave. As many as could would get their hands on me the moment they came up. They would slap me on the back, punch me, pinch me, offer me tobacco, whisky, guns, everything they had, uttering yipping yells in shrill staccato to let their exuberance of spirits escape.

"But my jumping days are all over. I'm spending all my time now and money, too, trying to fly. Parachute jumping, besides bringing in money, helped me with ideas for my machine. Sometimes when I was jumping the fair management would give me dollar bills to throw down as I went up and the zigzag movement of those banknotes as they fluttered down gave me one idea. The movement of a clam shell when thrown into the water is the same as it sinks. It is a gliding, shifting movement, and the wings on my machine have identically the same movement reversed.

"There is also a tail and a head on it which largely control its flight. I got the idea from watching pigeons. They use the balance of their heads and the movement of their tails to guide their course and to alight. The longer the neck and the larger the head the faster the flight. No bird can touch the swan or the goose for long and strong flights. If you are going to learn to fly you must study nature!"

A Boy's Choice.

Houston Post.

I'd rather be a kid today
In cotton overalls,
A-mockin' of the roundelay
And of the wild bird's call,
A-wadin' in the branch ag'in,
A-splashin' up an' down,
Than to be old an' livin' in
Th' finest house in town.

I'd rather be a ragged kid
With freckles on my nose,
A-mockin' of th' katydid,
Than wearing Buster clothes
And bein' always spick an' span,
An' always clean an' neat,
Afraid of sun, afraid of tan,
With new shoes on my feet.
I'd rather be th' little boy
That goes an' gits th' cows,
A-whistlin' soul brimful of joy
When all th' world's a-drowse
So early in th' mornin', oh,
The country life for me,
And pastures where the cattle low
And clover blossoms be.
Out where the sunset glimmers red
In day's departin' light,
An' the dark trees reach overhead
An' cottage lamps are bright,
I'd gladly be a boy ag'in,
I'd like to rise an' go
Across the fields I rambled in
Where clover blossoms blow
I'd like to holler to the cows
The sweet old-fashioned calls,
When all the world is half a-drowse,
An' wear blue overalls.