

ALARMING DISCONTENT IN OUR ARMY



Group of raw recruits. United States Army



There are complaints of too much menial work.



Breaking in raw recruits. United States Army

Desertions Have Increased to One Man in Every Thirteen and Conditions are Growing Worse

More Than Half the Desertions Occur in the First Year of Service, and There is Abundant Cause

BY JOHN ELFRETH WATKINS.

THE necessary evil of ours—the Army—has run short of men. A foreboding to this effect has just been uttered by the War Department, whose powers that be will now put their heads together over ways and means for restoring the glimmer of the military life. The growing discontent of our Army must inspire anxiety in all good citizens who down in their hearts believe that the surest preservative of peace is certain preparedness for that relic of barbarism, the war.

This discontent has reduced our enlisted force far below its authorized strength. The fundamental principle of our military organization is that the standing Army must be ever available as the strong first line of defense; that the stronger it is maintained the more time will be gained in mustering our latent fighting force—the volunteers. We are indeed in a plight when we are unable to fill the ranks of this first line—the smallest starting point of our defense.

Thousands of Deserters.

Desertions have increased from 6.8 per cent to 7.4 per cent in two years, and for the decade before that the average was but 4.5 per cent. Last year's list of deserters was no less than 6288 men—a number greater than those which have won some of the great battles of the world. Here would be a pretty list of guests at one of Uncle Sam's free hotels, if all were caught and given the long term of hard labor which the law prescribes; and all would have to be clothed and fed at the Nation's expense. Over three-quarters of these deserters were men serving their first enlistment, and over one-half were serving their first year. Another index to this discontent is that only one out of three men who serve their terms are re-enlisting. Stating this in another way, two out of every three enlistments are by "greenhorns," more than a half of these are deserting before the first of their three years has been served, and it takes the whole of this first year to "break in" a recruit.

Shortage Even of Officers.

But, most ominous of all, officers, too, are not to be had. There are now 36 vacancies in the entrance grade of Second Lieutenants, and only 13 enlisted men have come this month for final examinations to fill these. Even should all of these pass, 23 pairs of shoulder straps must be given to civilians. Army life has indeed lost its old-time glamor when men in the ranks are not even tempted by the chance to enter the gilded aristocracy of officers' row and to do unto others as they have been done by.

But the cause of the soldiers' growing discontent? While the conservative powers that be have been prating about the "heinous crime" of desertion, the necessity for turning the secret service bureau loose on deserters, and the increase of punishment for the offense, the more progressive have gone in for heart-to-heart talks with the man behind the gun, and have sought his grievances. They have found the chief causes of his discontent to be—

Poor pay.
Insufficient rations.
Lack of canteen.
Mild uniforms.
Lack of home surroundings.
Menial duties.
Tyranny of superiors.

Paid Less Than Lowest Labor.

The worst crumb in the bed is his pay. General Fred Funston in his last report says that the United States soldier is the most poorly paid man in any occupation in the country today, and recommends a 50 per cent increase. An enterprising officer of 29 years' experience called lately at Commissioner Neill's bureau of labor and discovered

that the captor of little George Washington Aguilado was correct. He discovered that the lowest paid adult civilian laborer in the United States is the plantation negro of Louisiana cane fields, who averages \$1 a day. The Yankee soldier gets \$11-3 cents a day in flat pay. Add to this his clothing allowance of 18 cents a day and you have 16-3 cents, as compared with the dollar received by the image of His Maker in ebony, who works in the cane fields. But the plantation negro not only has houses, but gardens, thrown in, and needs but little clothing, and he has every Sunday and nearly every Saturday afternoon, whereas the soldier must always be decently attired, even if he has to buy extra clothing out of his own money—as is usual—and he must be on duty every night and day of the week, and is always subject to duty that may cost him his life. Insurance companies, recognizing his greater risk, charge him extra premiums.

True, the Government retires its soldiers on three-fourths pay after 30 years, but the percentage who avail themselves of this and the benefit is so small and so distant that it does not figure, says this enterprising officer. True, too, that the soldier gets free medical attention and a free funeral with a cemetery lot and grave marker thrown in, but our more enterprising industrial corporations are not only giving their employees free medical attention and pensions, but free educational advantages for their children, comfortable living quarters and reduced hours of labor.

The civilian laborer can go on strike and demand a redress of his grievances, but the soldier who strikes necessarily receives a long term in prison for his trouble. The private soldier's present pay of \$12 a month was established nearly 40 years ago, since when the cost of living has nearly doubled. Many skilled mechanics in civilian life now receive as much pay as a Captain in the United States Army, and day laborers are receiving four times as much as the private soldier.

Sometimes No Pay at All.

The soldier sometimes gets no pay at all because indebted to the United States for extra clothing. The pay-roll at Fort Myer, opposite Washington, discloses that in a recent month 183 men out of a single regiment were in this predicament. The regular clothing appropriation does not appear to meet the actual necessities of the soldier who wishes to be decently dressed.

Canteen a Big Factor.

But of all grudges which the discontented man of the barracks holds against Uncle Sam is the substitution of the rum bottle for the canteen, or what has amounted to the same. The canteen, a regimental institution, subject to regulation by a branch of the commissary, where a soldier could buy a social glass of beer and forget that he was a slave, as one veteran puts it. No liquors were sold there, and the profits of the beer consumed went into the regimental can-

teen fund and were spent in good things to eat. If a soldier drank too much beer in the canteen, a word from his Captain shut off his supply. But once upon a time a powerful society of women ushered up Capitol Hill a truck bearing a "protest petition," which caused the leaders in Congress to break out into goose-flesh, and in sheer fright to pass a law abolishing the canteen. The net result has been that the bibulous soldier, after a few days' conservation of thirst, hikes out for the place of the "bootlegger" convenient to each army post, and spends his nickel on fusel oil and prune juice. He staggers back to the post with a generous bottled supply for the boys in the barracks, and the increase of drunkenness in the army has been annually accelerated ever since the new "reform" was instituted. But this is such a delicate question with the soldier man that polite language cannot do justice to the picturesqueness. Of his argument of the case and for full justice to his eloquence the country must await the "American Klipping" now sought by a popular magazine.

Tyranny of officers, especially of sub-

alterns, is another source of grievance. "The attitude of the Southerner toward the negro seems the only perfect comparison with the officers' attitude toward the soldier," says one man who has done time under the flag. The Inspector-General has also found some grievances laid to the door of the "tyrannical Sergeants." During the long practice march of the First Battalion, Thirteenth Cavalry, from Fort Riley to Fort Sheridan, from July 27 to September 6, many men deserted in resentment of the severe punishment dealt out to them by the troop commander. "I was fined \$50 because I rode on a train when I was supposed to be walking behind the troops. There were five of us,

and now none of us will receive a cent of pay for four months! That is the whole trouble with the Army. They pay a man \$15 a month, and then the officers fine the men until they haven't got a cent coming," complained one veteran of this six weeks' march. "Too much early rising is another complaint frequently heard. 'Why should we all be turned out at 5:30 A. M.? What's the sense, anyhow?' asked one man in the official olive drab. Perhaps Dr. Stiles' "lazy bug" was eating into this chap's vitals, but some psychologist or other, who lately compiled statistics of insanity, found that insanity was greater among farmers than any

other class of citizens, and attributed the cause to too early rising. Even the officers in the recent six weeks' "practice march" from Fort Riley to Fort Sheridan objected strenuously to the early hour at which they were yanked out of slumberland. "In all my experience I never heard of a commanding officer making his men get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, as we have done on this march," said one captain. Another complaint has been made over the rule requiring tired men to report at the final roll call at 10 o'clock each night instead of allowing them to "go to their blankets in peace" as soon as they wish after the duties of a hard day are done.

There are complaints, also, of too much menial work—of too often having to give up the musket for the rake, the spade or the pickaxe. In truth, there are complaints too many for bare mention in the space of this dissertation. And, besides, if the gentle reader hears too much of their tale of woe his sympathy for our khaki boys will be blunted rather than sharpened. And, besides, more than enough will be heard when Congress sits again, for there is to be a "do do" then under the big white dome over the best ways and means of making the soldier's life more attractive.

Washington, D. C., September 27.

SIXTY DAYS WITH AN AUTO

By a Portland Man Who Thinks He Has Average Intelligence, Nerve and Coolness, Together With Tabloid Advice

THIS experience is given for a warning to beginners in handling an auto. In the short time of 60 days I have arrived at a fixed, definite conclusion that the auto is a wonder. It is certainly loaded, and most wonderfully constructed, with double ball bearings, with back and forward action, it can with perfect ease, and without the least effort, turn a back, side or end somersault, with or without grip, slides in or out, sideways, without the least warning or reason given, and in mud can literally plow its way to the bed-rock. No question, the auto is a wonderful, living, breathing, seemingly thinking machine; has a mind and will of its very own. I am in doubt if I will be ever fully able to master one. You see, it takes time for an operator to connect himself up by wiring his desires to his hands and feet all at once. You know what to do, but you cannot boller what or jerk the lines, but you must think fast and act still faster, or you have busted something more than a telegraph pole.

I am now of the opinion, after 60 days' experience, that I own a bucking Cayuse whose tail and heels are everlastingly over the dashboard, but I don't feel like giving it up, for I see so many just (or I think so) as big a fool as I am, and they are still living, having both eyes, arms and legs securely attached, and some have run autos two and three years. This gives me courage to continue to try to master this truly most wonderful and extraordinary novel mode of riding.

I will now give you a part of my experience of narrow escapes from accidents. This is for the new beginner; old ones know all about it, but won't tell.

First—Accidents: I was crossing Burnside bridge after 10 days' ownership; a delivery wagon stopped on the east approach of the bridge as I attempted to go round his rig. Damage: Mashed both lamps, one worse than the other. Expense: Battered lamp, lights smashed, \$12.50; confidence and some nerve shaken.

Second—Wheels skidded on Second street, nearly knocked out a truck loaded with three tons of freight. Damage: Slight crumpling in wheel fender; expense, more confidence lost.

Third—Plate glass wreckage: Arrived in front of a store, set brake, rammed home the speed lever to make more secure; auto advanced with brake on, sufficient to jam a small buggy, breaking reach; expense \$4. I immediately pulled back speed lever, setting it on back gear; spark

went out. I then cranked machine, which at once started. Auto commenced backing. Attempted to stop backing by using my knee against front wheel, but the auto continued, carrying me backward over curb and sidewalk, and a plate glass window and brick building saved my limb from further damage. At once got the machine off sidewalk; owner not in; told the lady to have window fixed, to get extra quality and thickness of plate glass, as I intended to travel on that street again. Insurance fixed in plate. I now travel only where insurance companies are liable. No question, every plate glass window in city should be insured. None are safe. Insurance companies should do a rushing business. Lightnings rods are not in it.

Fourth—Turning corner, man ran directly in front of auto. Only chance I had in saving the walking idiot was to take the sidewalk, which I did. Ran the machine full length on sidewalk. Scared three years' growth out of a man walking. Stopped some three feet from victim. He asked, in a very excited voice, what in h— I was after him for. I mildly, for I was not the least bit excited, as if it were an every-day occurrence, explained that it was either the fellow on the street or he; was in doubt for a while whom I would mangle or kill, and I took chances on stopping the flying machine before I reached him. You see, my friends, my judgment was correct, you are safe. A bystander complimented me by stating, "Finely done, it was a feat of great merit performed; no one hurt, but death seemed inevitable for a moment for both men."

I felt better after the words of praise, but my nerves and confidence were more than shaken. I immediately pulled the machine off the sidewalk and started for the garage to tell my troubles, and have my auto tightened up; it was running altogether too loose. Traveled six blocks and went dead. I cranked and continued cranking, not a spark or a hope of one. At this critical time, with bends of perspiration standing on my face, an angel appeared in the form of an underdressed chauffeur comfortably seated in his auto. He exclaimed, "Say, sir, see about your tank—gasoline." I did. Not a drop. It was empty. The drugstore supplied two gallons and I moved on to the garage.

Fifth—Crossing Madison-Street Bridge I passed a team going east, bridge wet; all of a sudden my high front wheel struck a rail, hind wheels slid, reversing my auto, facing it west; then, before I realized what was wanted of me, the auto

concluded to take a bath and mounted the bridge rail fender, striking my already damaged lamp against the iron that held up the bridge; spark went out, hence the auto stopped. Damage: Sprained left hand, new lamp, \$12.50, and more confidence lost. I was careful, was going slow, but blamed if I understand slippery roads, or why the infernal auto balked; I was going for business, not pleasure, and for the dumb brute to make such a quick turn was beyond my experience and present knowledge.

A Few Things to Memorize.

1. Forever keep a firm grip on the steering gear.
2. Forever keep one eye on the road. When both are full of gnats or dust, stop.
3. Forever keep your mind centered on the auto; to you certainly ought to do.
4. Don't talk. Never have your best girl on the front seat when the auto is in motion. Temptation too great.

P. S.—I intend to remain in the game.

Fortunes Lost at Cards

Gamblers Who Have Won Thousands at a Single Winning.

The young American millionaire who is reported to have lost \$500,000 at poker within 24 hours may derive what satisfaction he can from the knowledge that, in the history of gambling, few men have ever squandered so much money in so short a time.

Colonel Mellish, one of the greatest plunders of last century, is perhaps his nearest rival; for he is said that he was known to have won \$100,000 at a single sitting and to have lost it all at the next; while the climax of his gambling madness was reached when he staked \$24,000 upon a single throw of the dice, and lost.

Colonel Mellish, whose boast it was that he never opened his mouth in the betting ring under \$500, inherited during his minority one of the largest fortunes in England; but so prodigal and reckless was he that within a few years he had nothing left out of his vast estates but one small farm, Hodsack Priory, to which he retired, and on which he died, a broken man, at the early age of 27. At his ancestral seat of Blythe is still preserved a card table at which he lost \$24,000 at one sitting to the Prince Regent.

For more than 50 years George Payne spent more nights at a card table than any man who ever cut a pack. During one almost continuous sitting of 36 hours he lost \$28,000, and within a week he had won every penny of it back. On another occasion he and Lord Albert Denison sat up all night at Lincolns' Hotel, and only separated in the morning when Lord Albert, who had lost \$20,000, and was due at

the altar of St. George's, Hanover Square, where his bride was awaiting him; while, it is said, the same pair once set out together in a coach to the New Forest and played cards all day and far into the night with \$100 staked on each game.

Those were indeed days of high play when at Almack's, as Walpole says, "the young men of the age lost \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$20,000 in an evening." The play at this famous club was only for rouleaux of \$50 each, and generally there was at least \$10,000 on the table. "The gamblers," to quote C. W. Hoekethorn, "began by pulling off their embroidered clothes, and put on frize garments, or turned their coats inside out for luck. They put on pieces of leather to save their lace ruffles, and to guard their eyes from the light, and to prevent tumbling their hair wore high-crowned hats with broad brims, and sometimes masks to conceal their emotions."

Walpole tells a remarkable story of Mr. O'Brien, an Irish gambler, who had won \$100,000 from a young Mr. Harvey, of Crigwell, who had just come into a large estate on his elder brother's death. "You can never pay me," O'Brien said. "I can," said the youth; "my estate will sell for the debt." "No," said O'Brien, "I will win \$10,000; you shall throw for the odd \$90,000." They threw, and Harvey won.

At White's General Scott, a cautious player, won \$100,000 at cards, and out of his winnings was able to dowry his daughter Joanna with \$100,000 when she married George Canning. Such an inveterate gambler, too, was Lord Sand-

wich that when he went once or twice a week to hunt with the Duke of Cumberland he carried a box of dice in his pocket; and so they threw a main whenever the hounds were at fault, upon every green hill and under every green tree.

Lord Granville, who died 60 years ago, was one of the four noblemen who lost \$100,000 in card playing at once for Paris. When the carriage came round however, he was deep in a game of whist and ordered the carriage to wait for an hour or two. Six hours passed, then another six, and another, the horses being changed at the end of each; and only after he had sat continuously for 24 hours did the Ambassador leave the city. His journey \$100,000 poorer for his delay.

And as for back as the records of card playing go, the story is always the same. In 1668 Poppy wrote of a man who lost \$100,000 at cards in one night at Godwood, and \$10,000 in 10 minutes at Chertsey-de-for.

Of the gambling Lord Granville it is told that one afternoon he ordered his carriage at Graham's, intending to start at once for Paris. When the carriage came round however, he was deep in a game of whist and ordered the carriage to wait for an hour or two. Six hours passed, then another six, and another, the horses being changed at the end of each; and only after he had sat continuously for 24 hours did the Ambassador leave the city. His journey \$100,000 poorer for his delay.

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Never. Milwaukee Sentinel. I have sailed the seas from north to south; And I've shivered my tarry lights; And I've reeled the lowly light when the wind I have scaped the runnels all clean and bright. (A job that I didn't like). But blow me if ever I've seen a man Laid low with a marlinpike. I've been in the "nest" when the night was pitch. And the devil was in the seas. And I thanked my stars to think that I was safe from the falling trees. I have seen the air turn a liquid blue When a sailor was slow to hike. But blow me if ever I've seen a man Laid low with a marlinpike. I have boxed the capstan and scrubbed the screw. And I know how to tell the time By the starboard watch—I'm a stoker, too. And I stoke in a way sublime. I can "blast my timbers" and give a hitch, In storm or in calm alike. But blow me if ever I've seen a man Laid low with a marlinpike.