

The First American Woman Soldier

Remarkable Career of Sergeant Ruth Farnam, Heroine of Serbia's Desperate Stand Against Frightful Odds, Now Again in America.



Sergeant Ruth Farnam in Her Uniform as a Sergeant of Cavalry in the Serbian Army.



THE unique distinction of being the only American woman in the whole allied army is held by Sergeant Ruth Farnam.

Sergeant Farnam is an American woman—in private life known better as Mrs. Charles H. Farnam. Her life history reads like romance from the pages of a novel.

Born in a sleepy little Long Island town she married while still in her teens and with her husband traveled all over the world. She seemed to run into warfare wherever she went, for when she reached South Africa the Boer war was just under way and she stayed there to watch the drama.

The siege of Pekin was in progress when she reached China, and she ran right into the Russo-Japanese war.

While in Japan the Emperor invited her and her husband to lunch, using the conventional invitation of the oriental countries which was as follows:

"The Emperor would be delighted to have as his guest at lunch Mr. Charles H. Farnam and what goes with him."

It was Mrs. Farnam who "went with him." Mrs. Farnam had a beautiful home in England as well as one in America and lived a life of ease and comfort with a retinue of servants. Her every wish seemed to be fulfilled. She lived the life of thousands of wealthy people—that and no more.

And when she, then widowed, went to Belgrade, Serbia, in 1912 at the invitation of a friend, it was to her just another pleasure trip. War was going on with Turkey it is true, but having been on the ground in other wars this meant nothing to her.

Here she learned to admire the Serbs. Like many of us she always had an idea that they were rather a poor sort anyway. Ignorant, dirty, always fighting—these were her impressions with certain popular ideas of the Mexicans.

But she was quite surprised to learn that there was a race of people who through 500 years' thralldom under Turkish rule had kept their strain true—a real democratic nation which lived on the square and fought on the square—an intrepid nation which was fighting for an honorable place in the sun.

They tell a story of how the Sultan of Turkey sent a jar of peas to the Serbian King to signify the size of the Turkish army; in answer the King of the Serbians sent a can of paprika—small, but hot stuff. This signified the Serbian army.

And when in 1913 Bulgaria went to war with Serbia she learned that this was all too true. Mrs. Farnam again went to Belgrade and here for the first time she took a real active part in the war. She saw the tortured Serbian soldiers come back to suffer and to die, she saw what Bulgarian atrocity really meant.

Decorated by the Serbian King. For her services in this war she was decorated by the King.

When in the following year Austria made her attack on poor, weakened, tired Serbia Ruth Farnam knew where her duty lay. She saw that game little nation hurl the Austrian troops back over their own borders twice. Here was her opportunity to get into it and do her bit.

So she went to Serbia and reached there just as that awful typhus epi-

demic broke out. Without thought of danger to herself she worked heroically through those terrible days, seeing hundreds die all around her, many in her arms.

Her work done there, she was decorated a second time and soon thereafter was made a sergeant of the First Cavalry Regiment of the Royal Serbian Army—thus being the only American woman actually to be attached to the army as a soldier.

She took part in the famous battle of Brod, where she gave the signal to the artillery to commence firing. The artillery fire was followed by a bayonet charge which resulted in victory for the allied arms.

In this battle Sergeant Farnam occupied a place that is unique in the whole war. It was probably the only time that the officers of one side occupied a place between the opposing front line trenches—the dread space known as No Man's Land.

It happened that there was a small hill on No Man's Land about midway between the opposing trenches. Here Sergeant Farnam went with the commander-in-chief of the Serbian army, the commander of the famous Morava division, and the Colonel of her regiment—out over the top they went into No Man's Land and went up on the top of the hill which they established as an observation post for the battle that was coming.

A boilder or two screened them from enemy snipers, but not from the shells which were constantly coming around them.

Then when all preparations were made, Sergeant Farnam was asked by the commander-in-chief to order the allied artillery to commence firing. It was a special honor to her womanhood as well as to her services.

This she did in the name of the womanhood of America, and when the first shell hit and blew dozens of the enemy to pieces she shouted, "Vengeance; vengeance for the women and children!"

The shells from both sides were constantly whizzing and screaming over her head—now and then one dropped too close for comfort—during the entire battle.

For valor on the field of battle she was decorated a third time by the King and asked to go to America to tell Americans something of our game little ally, who has so long held the gates of the East against the hordes of the central powers.

So now Sergeant Farnam—this American woman of wealth and refinement—one of the few women soldiers in the whole allied army, is lecturing throughout the United States and telling her story with force and effectiveness. In fact, it has been said more than once that few narrators of the war has approached the natural eloquence and enthusiasm of this American woman—this soldier who faced danger on the front line of battle—who did her bit on the field of honor to protect the womanhood of the world.

"I have not come to America to talk about myself," she says, "but to tell the people what we have to meet in the way of the dangers, the terrors, the humor and the inspiration of it all—to enlist the heart of humanity."

"Not to Talk About Myself." The Royal Serbian Army has written a book which is a real big story of the war on the eastern front. It is called "A Nation at Bay." It is a vivid, thrilling book, written by an actual participant in battle—a great, big, whole-hearted story of a game little ally, Serbia, at bay.

"Every Inch a Soldier."

Personally you would say that Sergeant Farnam looks "every inch a soldier." The cloth of her suit is the cloth—with much of a khaki color—provided by the Serbian Army. Her skirt is of the "divided" variety essential to



Sergeant Farnam With the Serbian Commander-in-Chief and Staff Officers in "No Man's Land" at the Battle of Brod.

riding, yet falls quite in the lines of an ordinary skirt as she walks or stands on the platform.

In conversation she adds to a thoroughly American sparkle a crisp military manner that fits well with her interesting experiences—and her hard-

earned title. Her interest in the human side of the Serbian situation, in the human side of the entire war situation, is characteristic of her. She didn't start out to be a soldier or to win decorations. It was humanity's call that drew her and it is human-

ity's call that still is ringing in her ears.

When the history of this war is written the name of Sergeant Ruth Farnam, the first American woman soldier, will, I am sure, find a worthy place.

Germany, whether Americans, French, Russians or English, were fed by the same poison and many have placed themselves in what has now become a dangerous position. No "camouflage" patriotism will be tolerated.

In two weeks the 1917-18 season of grand opera at the Metropolitan will close and again one feels compelled to compliment the direction for having been able to place such a successful season on record after the sudden elimination of so many important and attractive works. Hardships of every sort have beset the pursuance of this patriotic duty from the obligatory release of a number of the German artists to the necessity of having a long list of Americans thrown out of their roles.

However it may be regarded, unusual interest was manifested in every move made by Director Gatti-Casazza, who found refuge in a number of old Italian operas well worthy the revivals for the artists who were able to present them at their best.

Success Fully Assured.

Who, having a Barrientos in the roster, need have feared to bring forward "The Barber of Seville," "Puritani," "Rigoletto," particularly when there was a De Luca to support the coloratura roles? And who could have doubted the tremendous success that was enjoyed by Mme. Matzenauer as Fides,

been able to indicate that violin playing has been placed upon a higher level than ever before.

Just as perfection of detail in the skill of Harold Bauer, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Joseph Hofmann, Leopold Godowsky, Rudolf Ganz and a few others who have dominated the army of pianists have forced a higher degree of perfection all the way down the line, so the violinists have been compelled to measure with Elman, Eddy Brown, Jascha Heifetz, Jacques Tribaud, Zimbalist and others who fill in as they never existed in numbers when Maud Powell, Ysaye, Kreisler and Elman held the field practically alone. These are the standards by which America's violinists must measure.

Heifetz Technical Master.

Heifetz again justified the place he has won by his superb technical mastery and his charm of interpretation. It would be difficult to imagine playing that is smoother, more flawless technically, and his tone is of the rarest beauty. Especially in the smaller numbers and in the encores he aroused his audience to a pitch of feverish excitement and withal his own repose was undisturbed.

This season has been a memorable one in the violin world. This instrument has vied with the voice and has been the greatest rival in the field. The student of musical conditions may have

PERFORMERS SWEEP NEW YORK CONCERT AUDIENCES OFF FEET BY BRILLIANT WORK

Triumphs Made Possible.

One cannot pass by even in this hasty review, which has no claim of being complete, without reverting again to the eagerness with which Gatti-Casazza has lent his kindness and interest toward the American both as interpreter and composer. He has made possible such successes as those of May Peterson, who was heard as Micaela and as Mimì, and Mabel Garrison, who is fast taking her place among the foremost coloratura artists and American singers who are destined for "the top." Of the Cadman opera it may be said that the oftener it is heard the more one is impressed with the lost opportunities in the book. Also the more keenly one realizes what Sophie Braslau's skill from every side has meant to this work. She brought to it a remarkable personality, a beautiful voice and a keen understanding of characterization. It is really an "understanding" or, if it something deeper and more valuable to an artist,

To Properly Treat Obsolete Wrinkles

Particularly where wrinkles are long and deep, the massage devotee is apt to rub too hard and too frequently. This loosens the skin, causes muscles to sag, aggravates the wrinkled condition—just the opposite result from that sought.

Better than massage, or anything else, for the most obstinate wrinkles, as well as the finest lines, is a remarkable formula which you may readily avail yourself of, as you will have no difficulty procuring the constituents from your druggist. It is this: One ounce powdered saxolite, dissolved in one-half pint witch hazel. Bathe face, neck and hands in this. The effect is really marvelous, not only as to wrinkles, but also in cases of baggy cheeks and chin. The application is cooling and soothing, tending to relieve fatigue. Both the witch hazel and the saxolite are, of course, entirely harmless to the skin.—Adv.