

# The Citizen Veteran

BY HARRY B. CRITCHLOW.

MEN, LIKE so many cattle, had been herded aboard one of the reconstructed freighters that were taking men and munitions to France. They swarmed the decks, perched themselves on every available space that would afford a seat, squatted in groups and clusters over the covered hatches and hung over the railings as they watched the discoloring water of the harbor or gazed around the Hoboken piers at other ships taking on their cargoes of human freight.



**Borge E. Leonard, who has long been active in the affairs of the American Legion in Portland.**

Over the railing far aft hung a young sergeant. There was a peculiar look on his countenance as he gazed into the water. He was thin, with a sharp expression on his face that would give the slightest indication of what was at that time uppermost in his mind.

The British ship's crew was making ready for sailing. Men were awaiting the order to release the ropes and cables that held the craft to the docks.

Out from one of the cabins came an orderly and he walked directly to the sergeant at the rail.

"Here's a ticket for you," he said as he handed the soldier a yellow-colored envelope and quickly walked away.

The sergeant paused for a moment as he held the message in his hands and, as he quietly looked out over the busy harbor, he tore open the envelope.

An agonized expression came over his face as he read the message through. He read it a second time, again gazed out over the harbor, folded the message in his pocket, book and walked below. He started for the orderly room, where his company commander was at work over service records, but he paused at the door and then walked quietly through the passageway that led to his bunk. There he flung himself down amid his blankets and his arms buried his head in his arms.

The message he had received read as follows:

"Your wife and new-born son died here this afternoon."

A nurse had signed the message and had sent it to the husband and father over a distance of more than 2,000 miles. It had reached him too late. There was no way save on an order from Washington that the boat could have been stopped to permit him to land and go back to gaze upon the cold faces of his wife and child. He knew that his company commander had signed the message. His only recourse was to make the best of his lot, bear his sorrow alone and in silence, and journey on with the comrades with whom he had been associated for months. The time that he might be of aid at home had passed.

The case of this sergeant was just one of the thousands of cases that were endured by the men of the army while they were "on the other side of the pond."

Tears never came when messages of sorrow were received. They could avail nothing and, besides, they were not for soldiers. It was those messages that brought a sense that hurt more than any other.

"Your mother is very sick and not expected to live," a letter would read. It might be better, he would say, "your mother is dead" for the days that followed were torments to the man who had received the message. Mail would become uncertain, due to rapid moves from one sector to another, and weeks might pass before the man would again receive a message that might give him some inkling of his mother's condition and during all this time he would be in the agony and the suffering of suspense.

There were other messages that brought sorrow and disappointment to the soldier who found himself in the A. E. F. Before he had left for the army training camp he had been engaged to the "sweetest girl in all the world." They had planned on an early marriage, but along came the war and he was not of the "war-bred" kind, and she decided to postpone the marriage. She pledged her loyalty to him as she bade him good-bye before she sailed overseas and used her fiancé as a brush away the tears and gave a farewell as the train moved speedily away.

One night in France a letter came. He knew there was something wrong when he opened it. The usual endearing terms of the salutation were missing. She was making a confession, she wrote. The engagement ring had been turned over to her mother because she knew the mails were unsafe. She had fallen in love with a flat-footed shipyard worker who was making \$16 a day and they would be married when the letter reached France.

The soldier read the letter for the second time to see if it was really true, then tore it to bits and strode into the orderly room where he found the company "loan shark." There he borrowed 50 francs and beat a hasty retreat for the nearest cafe. Here silently and alone he drank away his thoughts. It was not so much the losing of the girl that bothered him, for she had proven herself unloyal and untrue; it was thoughts of having the dreams of years blasted when he was far removed and consequently defenseless.

Once at the front one came to take death and suffering almost as a part of the day's affair. There was sorrow, there was no time to show it. When you first joined up in the service and joined your company you soon picked your "buddy." You liked him on short notice. He went with you on pass. He shared with you the sweets in the boxes he received from home and you shared yours with him. You stood side by side in ranks and your bunks were together in the barracks in the home camp.

Then when you went overseas he was along and constantly with you. When your pack grew heavy and your back sore he aided you along. You did the same for him when the situation was the reverse.

When you went to the front, you were moving along through the wooded tangles of the Argonne with machine gun bullets raining down around you and snipers' rifles "pottin'" comrades on all sides. Your "buddy" was at your side. Then they got him and he went down without even so much as a goodbye to you. You could not stop to press that hand of his that always would have been ready in your defense. You left the best friend you had out there dead on that battle ground and you did not even grieve. You had no time for that, for your thoughts were only of the enemy that "got" him.

Mrs. W. M. Seward, who has been traveling in the south, and visited Honolulu, has returned to Portland to pass the month of July. She is stopping at the Hotel Benson and will depart in August for a trip through Yellowstone park.

en route to the national convention in Seattle August 15-17. Headquarters have been established in the Chamber of Commerce building and there plans for entertainment will be made. "Keep Oregon on Top" has been made the slogan of the organization and an effort will be made to do that very thing at the Seattle convention.

From 1917 on through until 1919 some 2,000,000 Americans, members of the A. E. F., took 2,000,000 soldiers' cars and never again would they leave their native hearths to travel in a land which marks its box cars with words which mean in number capacity is 40 men or eight horses.

France in those days was unpopular with these 2,000,000. Now in 1922 a fair percentage of them are planning to return for a few weeks to look over the territory that once saw them helmeted and legginged. The American Legion is sponsoring a cruise to France, England, Belgium and other European countries. The legion party, which will contain many wives, mothers, fathers and daughters, former service men, will sail from New York on the President Grant August 5.

Already many ex-soldiers have sent in reservations to the legion tour manager asking that a state-room be reserved for them. Four men out of the five who would be traveling along them at night and light a cigarette without it becoming a target for a German submarine.

The President Grant with its load of former A. E. F.-ers will land at Cherbourg, France, from which place the party will direct to Paris. One of the official receptions which Paris always gives to visitors who let it know they are coming has been arranged for the legionnaires. After Paris the Belgian cities of Ostend and Brussels will be visited with tours over the Flanders battlefield which many a member of the party visited entirely several years ago. An official reception has also been arranged in London. Stops long enough for any member of the group to visit any place he desires have been arranged for in the itinerary.

Any additional information will be supplied by the tour editor of the American Legion Weekly, 627 West Forty-third street, New York City.

Arrangement for the state convention of the American Legion are rapidly being made by Legionnaires at The Dalles, according to C. D. Butler, adjutant of the post, who was in Portland during the last week. He declared that he expected a much larger attendance at The Dalles convention than at any of the various conventions of the legion in the state.

Elgin post of the American Legion will hold a dance the afternoon of July 4. At a recent meeting it was decided to put a hard wood floor in the legion clubrooms so that it will be more suitable for dancing.

Legionnaires of Lane county will assemble at Springfield for their July 4 celebration. This was decided a few nights ago when the members of the post of Eugene were hosts to their comrades from Creswell, Springfield, Junction City and Cottage Grove, at a dance and entertainment.

Klamath Falls post of the American Legion is preparing to build a playground for the children of the city. The movement has the indorsement of the citizens and a special committee has been appointed to go ahead with the work of financing and building. This committee is composed of Marion Nise, Alfred Collier, Edward Geary, Hal Ogilvie and Fred Westerfield.

Members of the American Legion post of Oregon City will turn out in a body July 4 to attend the patriotic services held in Gladstone park under the auspices of the Willamette valley chautauqua. Willard R. Gilbert of Astoria, past state commander of the legion, will be the principal speaker. A military drill by the members of the post will be staged at the ball grounds before the game which is headed by Arthur G. Battie has charge of the arrangements for the services.

Word has been received that Medford post No. 15 will enter actively into the "Prosperity Week Celebration" to be held in that city. Jacksonville Days of '22 will be staged.

Mrs. G. O. Brandenberg entertained the Harmony club Wednesday with a luncheon at her home in Rose City park. Cards were the diversion, honors falling to Mrs. J. Holste, Mrs. R. Tauscher and Mrs. Roy Nichols.

Mrs. Anna Kinzenga entertained the Deem club Thursday evening. The occasion was the birthday of Mrs. Nina Ryerson. An enjoyable evening was spent. Those present were Miss Evelyn Youngs, Mrs. Truda Moffat, Mrs. Lola Mulchay, Mrs. Stella Arnitzage, Mrs. Lottie Chappelle, Miss Elizabeth Bird, Mrs. Anna Kinzenga, Mrs. Gertrude Evans and Miss Blanche Roark.

Mrs. W. H. Boles of Philomath, Or., was entertained by her daughter, Mrs. Ella B. Jones and son B. H. Boles during Rose Festival week. Mrs. Boles celebrated her wedding anniversary in Albany June 10, surrounded by all her family except C. A. Boles of Central Point. Among those present were Mrs. Horace Underhill and family of Albany, Mrs. Grace Thompson, Salem; Mrs. Kate B. Boles, Philomath. A picnic luncheon was served at the chautauqua grounds in Albany.

The "big guns" of the Central Oregon Legionnaires, a publication published in the interests of the American Legion posts in central and eastern Oregon, dropped in at state headquarters yesterday in the person of A. H. Larrabee. Mr. Larrabee has a great coterie of friends throughout central and eastern Oregon.

Cash prizes totaling \$1385 are being offered by national headquarters of the American Legion to men who obtain the greatest number of members between July 1 and August 31. The first prize will be \$500, the

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