

AMERICAN FIELDS OF HONOR OVERSEAS

Carefully chosen and prepared by the iron general before his armies fell back on the Somme to this thoroughly fortified line of defence. You reach the cemetery today by train from Paris to St. Quentin, and thence by auto, or by bus to Le Catelet which is east of Bony and beyond the old line of enemy defenses. Much may yet be seen of the concrete trenches, the dugouts, the tunnels, the pillboxes, which, with the acres of barbed wire formed what was deemed a terrain utterly impregnable so long as defending forces manned its sheltered strongholds. It was from a line just west of the village of Bony that the 27th (New York) and 30th (Old Hickory) divisions jumped off on the morning of September 29, 1918, to charge these masterpieces of modern defensive military skill. By nightfall the 30th had passed all but three lines of entrenchment and was across the canal tunnel, to the right, or south of Bony, with the village of Bollincourt included in their new won ground. The 27th had reached the canal tunnel at its right wing, but the left and center were held up by machine gun concentrations, largely from the village of Bony. Some troops got well beyond the canal and then out of the ground in their rear came new enemy forces, using hidden tunnels branching out of the canal tunnel. The Australians on their left met a similar opposition, and it was three or four days before the cleaning up of this area was completed, but the Hindenburg line was thoroughly and completely broken and in the hands of the American troops at its strongest point. And the wasted, devastated, war-tortured landscape was dotted with the bodies of American boys, many of whom were buried in the very field near Bony where they remain today, because the permanent cemetery includes a section of the first temporary cemetery chosen by units of the 27th. At Bony, besides the men of the two divisions which fought there, are buried many from the First division, which on May 28, west and south of there, had taken the village of Cantigny in a mad, desperate charge which first demonstrated to our allies and our enemy how American soldiers would fight and could fight. There are soldiers here, too, from the 33rd division and 80th division, which was in line earlier in the year in front of Amiens. The improvements at the Bony cemetery are not complete. Meller, Meigs and Howe, Philadelphia architects, have been commissioned by the American battle monuments commission to design a chapel which will be erected here at a cost of \$90,000. Landscape work is going steadily forward. The coming season will add greatly to the beauty of grass and trees. When the American Legion pilgrimage visits Bony next September the men from the old New York outfits which took the village, and the veterans from Tennessee and the Carolinas who smashed the Hindenburg defenses just south of it, will find some of the old defense works. But they will find a happy shrine at Bony, where those comrades whose sacrifices made possible the victory are at rest for the ages, their graves clustered under the shadow of the flag they served. Flanders Field cemetery, in Belgium, is the smallest American military cemetery in Europe, but one of the richest in historic surroundings. Southern Belgium, from time immemorial, has been a battleground. Waterloo was but one in the world long series of great conflicts fought upon its soil. And in the autumn of 1918, after four years in the hands of the enemy, it saw the little army of its gallant king, aided by troops of his allies, driving the Germans back at last, step by step, toward their own boundaries. To aid in this task the 37th and 91st American divisions, after valiant service in the first line during the opening days of the Argonne battle of late September and early October, were hastily transferred to the north and west, and on October 31 moved into the line of attack on the hills between the river Lys and the river Scheldt with orders to throw the enemy back beyond the latter, and effect a crossing after him. In two days the enemy was across the Scheldt, but there stood desperately defending the crossing, and was only finally dislodged and started backward again on the day before the armistice. Audenarde, the second largest city delivered by American troops in Europe, had been set free, and many miles of the fields of Flanders liberated from the foe. How those Belgian peasants must have marvelled as they came out of their cellars when the wave of battle had passed and found these strange Americans in their midst, a husky lot of good natured fellows who laughed and played with the babies in the town square, and then were off again to the fight, singing and shouting that curious yell about "Powder River." No wonder the reverent people of this whole countryside make pilgrimages to the little cemetery on the edge of Waereghem every year, and there place flowers upon the graves under the white crosses, the graves which circle four sides of an open grassy lawn.

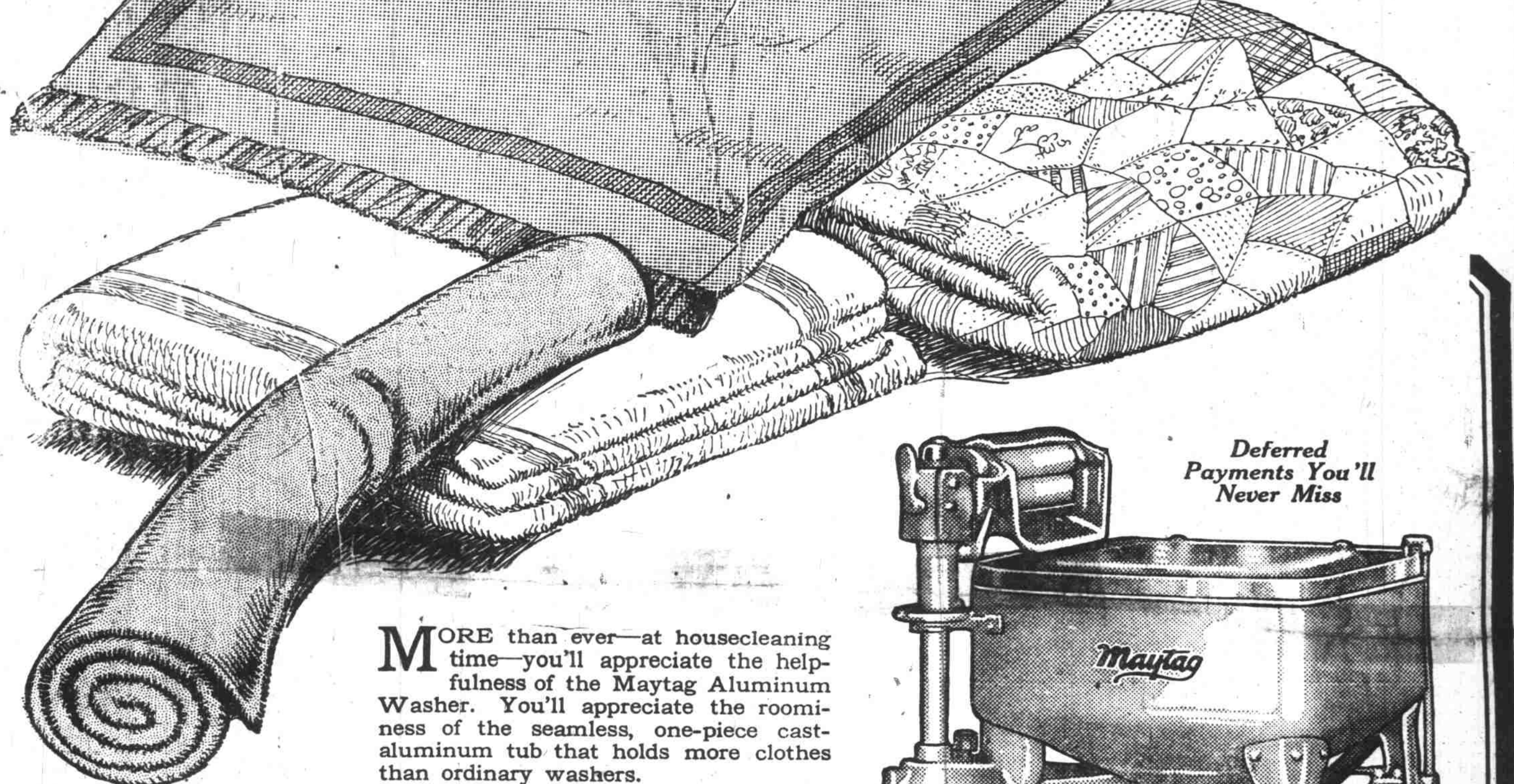
In all the villages east of Courtrai there will be merry making in September, 1917, when after nine years "The Second A. E. F." comes back, not in tin hats and olive drab, but singing the same songs and yelling about the same "Powder River." The American Legion will receive a real welcome. Waereghem lies just where the 81st jumped off on Oct. 31, 1918. The 37th was in line a few miles to the north, with a French division between. Trains from Paris stop at the town, and autos are at hand to take one to the cemetery. It lies in a pretty valley, and in many ways is the most charming spot among all of the American burial grounds overseas. Like the others it is to have a non-sectarian chapel erected under the direction of the battle monuments commission, congress having allotted \$50,000 for the purpose. The dead resting here are mostly from the divisions which on these fields helped bring the war to its victorious end, but there are others, too, chiefly from the 27th and 30th American divisions, which previous to their drive on the Somme had fought with the British south of Ypres, and taken part in the capture of Vierstraet ridge and a section of the Ypres canal. Like the fight at Cantigny, this first American offensive operation, in Flanders has often been treated as a mere accident to the larger sum-total of battle operations, but like Cantigny it was a baptism of fire, a first testing of the mettle of our men, and a first proof of their high courage and effectiveness. After the armistice the American dead from this battle were assembled in the permanent cemetery at Waereghem. The artillery brigade of the 28th division, which supported the 37th and the 91st in Flanders, also has some graves in Flanders field. Waereghem is 160 miles from Paris and 46 miles west of Brussels. Courtrai lies 10 miles farther west, and Ghent 19 miles to the north, where the Lys and the Scheldt come together. Lille is 30 miles to the south and Arras and Amiens beyond that. The whole country round about fairly "rocks with history" as one American put it. The Americans who fought there expected to keep right on to Brussels, and when the armistice put an end to their drive, only the Dendre river stood as a serious obstacle between them and the Belgian capital. They were singing "One More River" as they chased the enemy over the open country, with the Scheldt finally left behind. Only the little cemetery near the Ghent to Courtrai road remains to tell this chapter in the tale of American heroism in Flanders. The battle monuments commission plans also a monument at Audenarde. Together with the Somme cemetery at Bony, this cluster of American crosses speaks for posterity of the gallant sacrifices of American arms in service with our allies in some of the most difficult sections of the long, long line which stretched from the ocean to the Alps. It is no wonder that the American Legion chose to make of its ninth annual convention a pilgrimage to the graves of its comrades who died so nobly nine years ago. The fourth article in this series will appear in a short time in The Statesman.

NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK ANNOUNCED

(Continued on page 1.) to exhibit books on gardening, ask business houses to show pictures of gardens, bird baths, garden sculptures, sun dials, garden tools, watering systems, seeds, etc., establish a flower booth where flowers and vegetables may be left for distribution among the sick, have a bird house exhibit and have a model garden planted by children, secure time on the radio for garde nand outdoor talks and ask motion picture theatres to show films of gardens, trees, birds and flowers.

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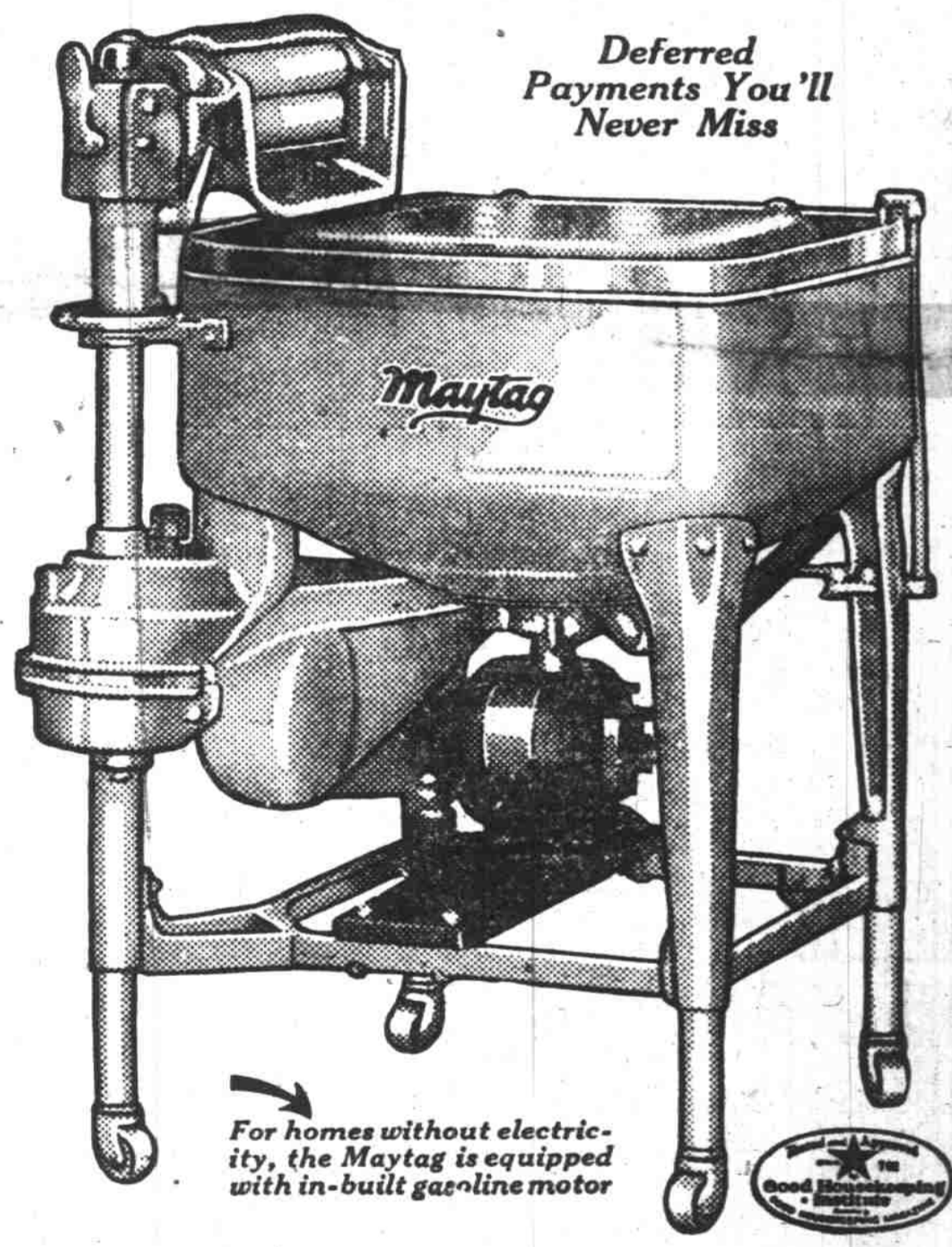
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