

SERVICE IN PEACE AND WAR

Red Cross Did an Efficient Job for Troops Despite False Rumors, Gen. Marshall Found, Investigating Wartime Gripes of Our GI's

By General George C. Marshall

G.I. COMPLAINTS, during and after the war, frequently reached the office of the chief of staff of the army. As military head of the army in those days, I had frequent so-called "samplings" made of soldiers' reactions in this country and in all overseas theatres. Many adjustments or corrections were made as a result of the information so gathered.

Most of the gripes were directed against phases of army discipline and regulations. Some were concerned with real or fancied grievances against officers. Food was brought in to the picture and kick against officers enjoying privileges which were not generally available to the men.

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As I have said, most of the complaints developed during the period of demobilization. Our forces returned from the war to their homes to find that the domestic front was in a much disturbed state. The post-war economy had not yet been adjusted to take them back to their civilian fold. Schools and colleges were overcrowded. Housing problems were especially acute. Prices were high. Necessities were frequently not available in the shops.

All this spelled disillusionment for the returning serviceman. He was in a mood to complain about any number of things, and he exercised his American right to do so.

It appeared that the complaints against the Red Cross in general followed these three lines:

The Red Cross had charged for its goods and services at home and abroad.

The Red Cross did not give adequate service in such matters as communications home, family problems, requests for emergency leave, and financial assistance.

Red Cross men and women received excessive salaries.

Here are the facts as I ascertained them:

The Red Cross did make below-cost charges for meals and lodging



Infantry soldiers know the source of their last snack on the "safe side" of the channel when they stopped for coffee and doughnuts on the beach of an invasion embarkation port in southern England.



On the beach at Eniwetok atoll, coast guard and marine invaders gave life-saving Red Cross blood plasma to a comrade, shot down in the terrific fighting that eliminated the Japs and planted the American flag firmly in this Marshall Islands stronghold.

in off-post clubs. The Red Cross wanted to make these services free. But on May 20, 1942, Henry L. Stimson, then secretary of war, requested the Red Cross to impose these minimum-charges. Since such charges were imposed on allied soldiers in their clubs and canteens, free service to our troops would have created a morale problem among our allies.

The Red Cross did not charge for such items as cigarettes, chapter-produced garments or comfort articles. On a number of occasions Red Cross supplies were mixed up with army supplies in the hastily organized warehouses or open field dumps and subsequently offered for sale, but not by the Red Cross.

Occasional stories that the Red Cross sold blood or blood plasma are manifestly untrue. The Red Cross did not administer blood; it acted only as the blood collection agency for the army and navy.

It seemed to be a surprise to some ex-servicemen to learn that the Red Cross had no authority to grant leaves. This function is reserved exclusively for the military authorities. The Red Cross does, however, verify home conditions by request whenever it appears that a soldier or sailor is urgently needed at his fireside.

On the matter of loans, I found that the Red Cross disbursed almost 74 million dollars in loans and free grants to servicemen and veterans between 1941 and 1946. These loans, non-interest bearing, and these grants were for emergencies.

The Red Cross couldn't take care of every applicant. It had to limit its lending activities and its financial grants to individuals who could demonstrate both emergency and urgency, and it did so.

It would be absurd to say that the Red Cross did not make mistakes. Some of our personnel in the field misinterpreted official policy. A few may not have lived up to Red Cross regulations and traditions. I found, for example, one case where a Red Cross employee sold the organization's supplies on the black market. He was court-martialed and dismissed from the service.

In brief, it appeared that most of the complaints were based on misrepresentations or rumors, on the scarcity of Red Cross girls and regarding their dates with the officer personnel. Most of the kicks were directed against one kind of service for which the YMCA received, unjustifiably in my opinion, a highly destructive criticism after the first world war, that is, charges for supplies in the canteens or post exchanges.

The Red Cross, working in a different field of activity and close to the front, escaped such criticism in World War I. In this last war, charged with most of the responsibility carried by the YMCA, and other agencies in World War I, they inherited all of this criticism.

As to the young women who worked their hearts out in the mud and the cold and rain, there seems to be no complete solution to the main burden of the G.I. reaction unless it is to have a ratio of one Red Cross girl to every soldier. And that seems to be a bit impractical.

Why the Red Cross?

After General Marshall took over leadership of the American Red Cross, he made a search to discover for himself the aims and purposes of the organization. This is what he discovered: "The Red Cross is unique among national welfare agencies. It derives its authority from the United States congress and is responsible to the congress for its acts. Under federal statute the Red Cross has two inescapable obligations. First, to serve the men and women of the armed forces in peace as well as in war and second, to act promptly and efficiently in times of disaster to ease human suffering and distress."

BROADWAY AND MAIN STREET

Quality of Mercy Was Strained When Mantell Played 'Richard'

By BILLY ROSE

A few years back, I got the nobby notion of reviving "Henry VIII," by one W. Shakespeare, and the day after the first three-line announcement appeared on the drama pages my office was crammed with well known actors who were willing to work for what ordinarily would have been their agents' commissions.

Subsequently, for reasons that have nothing to do with this piece, I pigeon-holed my plans for doing "Henry," but I sure learned a lot about show folks during the month I was buddies up to the Bard.

To nine out of ten of them, I found, the pentameters of William the Great are the chocolate sauce on the profiterole, and during rehearsals they go about their business as if they were in a temple of worship. On opening night, as far as the cast is concerned, the theater has stained glass windows, and I'm not exaggerating when I say the actors would probably kill anyone who tried to foul up the performance.

If you think I'm using "kill" carelessly, try this one on for sighs . . .

BACK IN 1904, an obscure thespian named Robert Mantell, who had been playing desultory one-nighters in the Midwest, received word that a choice Broadway theater would be available during the Christmas season. He promptly cancelled his road engagement and brought his troupe to New York, but shortly after his arrival he discovered that the "choice" theater he had been offered was the Princess, a small second-story auditorium on Broadway between 27th and 28th streets.

No more daunted than solvent, Mantell announced he would present his production of "Richard



Billy Rose

III" on December 5, and when friends and colleagues warned him that not a hundred people would climb a flight of rickety stairs to see a Shakespearean play during the holidays, he shrugged his threadbare shoulders and posted his rehearsal schedule.

Immediately, however, there was trouble. The stage crew insisted on a scenic rehearsal, and when the impoverished actor refused they decided to get even by lousing up his show on opening night.

On the evening of the 5th, a minute after Mantell began to declaim his way through the initial lines, a stagehand lunged at him from behind a cloth drop and almost knocked him into the pit. And a few moments later the same "accident" happened again.

When the act was over, Mantell quietly told the crew that he would kill the next man who tried to disrupt his performance—and halfway through the second act he darned near did. In the middle of a speech, he saw the outline of a hand behind the curtain trying to locate him and, never faltering in his lines, he drew his dagger and plunged the blade full-force into the drop.

When he went into the wings at the end of the scene, one of the crew grabbed him and said, "You've killed our head carpenter."

"I hope to Heaven I did," said Mantell. But when he examined the stagehand he found the wound was only a gash in the thigh.

The Fiction IRONCLAD EXCUSE Corner

By Richard H. Wilkinson

SHORTLY AFTER his marriage to Lynn Harvey it became evident to Burt Englewood that his wife was a procrastinator of the first order.

This was annoying because Burt was used to order and system and routine and regular schedules. He had definite time for doing things, and he did them as planned. He was never late for an appointment, and never left articles of clothing strewn around. He never set out until tomorrow things that could be done today.

Despite his annoyance, Burt tried to be fair. He realized that there must be certain things about his own habits that proved distracting to Lynn. And so, instead of complaining, he endeavored to discover his own faults and rectify them in the hopes that she would take notice and try to improve her own deficiencies.

But no matter to what ends he went his endeavors and sacrifices made no impression whatever on Lynn. She continued blithely to procrastinate, and the bias innocence with which she accomplished it fairly caused Burt to write. At length he was driven to complaint. The occasion was provoked by a bureau drawer void of socks when Burt was in sore need of these articles of apparel.

"Good heavens, Lynn!" he blurted. "I own two dozen pairs of the things. Certainly there must be one washed and mended."

Lynn's eyes widened. She looked apologetic and contrite. "Darling! I'm so sorry. I intended to finish them up last night, but as you know, the Westlands dropped in and I simply couldn't."

Which was true.

After awhile Burt began to suspect his wife of strategy, of manufacturing excuses for the sole purpose of evading the inconvenience of household duties. He began to suspect her of being lazy. The more he thought about it, the more convinced he became and presently he accused her openly.

Lynn looked at him with a hurt

and angry expression. "Burt Englewood! You think that! Of all things! Why, I can't believe it! And I have been trying to improve, too. Only—I haven't been feeling well lately. I've even thought of going to a doctor."

"Doctor!" Burt scoffed. "You don't need any doctor. What you need is a little backbone and ambition! You're just downright lazy, and I don't mind telling you it's getting on my nerves."

FOR A MONTH THINGS were serene. And then one day Burt came home and found Lynn asleep on the living room couch, and the breakfast dishes still in the sink and dinner not yet started. He woke her roughly.

"Well, what's your iron-clad excuse this time? Have a pain in your foot or something?"

"No," said Lynn, "it's in my side. I don't know what it is, Burt. Besides, I was dreadfully tired. I'm awfully sorry."

"Tired? Lazy, you mean!"

Lynn sighed and started for the kitchen. "All right, Burt. I'm sorry you don't believe me."

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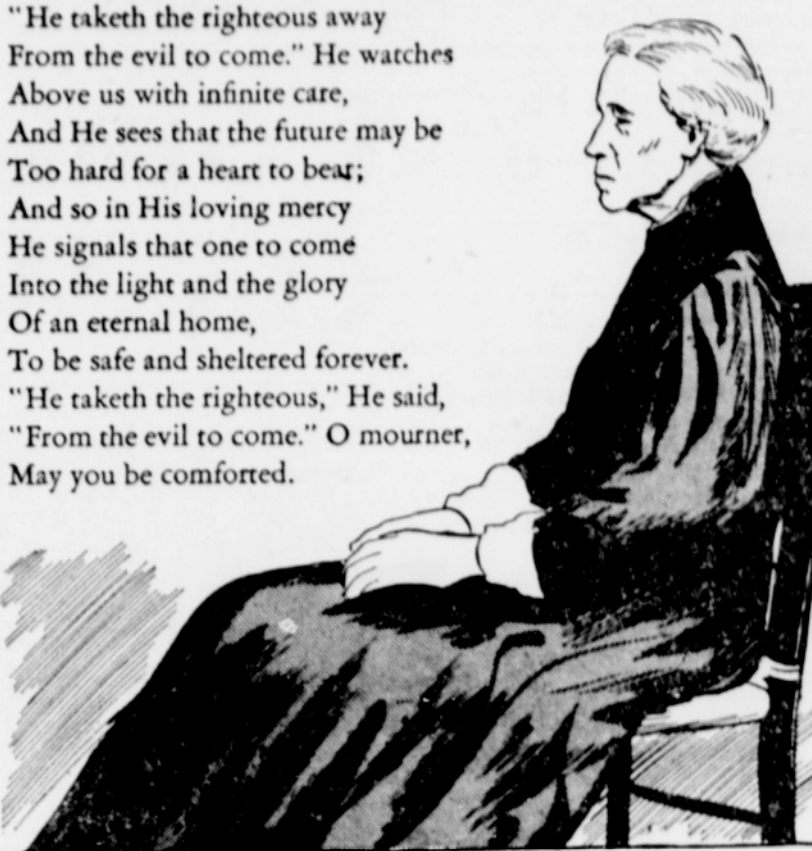
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THE RIGHTEOUS BY GRACE NOLL CROWELL

FRIEND, do you mourn the passing Of some loved one today?

Try to remember that often

"He taketh the righteous away From the evil to come." He watches Above us with infinite care, And He sees that the future may be Too hard for a heart to bear; And so in His loving mercy He signals that one to come Into the light and the glory Of an eternal home, To be safe and sheltered forever. "He taketh the righteous," He said, "From the evil to come." O mourner, May you be comforted.



TO MAKE SURE no one would misunderstand how he felt, the actor went up to his dressing room and came down wearing the iron-studded glove that was part of his costume in the last act. "Any more trouble," he said, "and I shall brain each and every one of you."

The stagehands looked at Mantell, at the mailed glove, and at the bleeding man on the floor. And from then until the final curtain, the crew was as quiet as a Scottish

meeting house after a call for contributions.

Next day, the critics hailed Mantell's performance as "the greatest 'Richard' since the days of Booth," and before the week was out he had been signed by the late William A. Brady, under whose management he went on to achieve recognition as one of America's leading classic actors.

Recently, Theresa Helburn of the Theatre Guild offered to let me buy a small piece of "As You Like It," starring Katharine Hepburn. "In all fairness," she said, "I think I ought to tell you that Katy's contract is only until June."

"I'm not going to brood about that," I said. "The play is by Shakespeare, and if it gets over, I doubt whether Hollywood will see her again until both she and the scenery fall apart."

MONA FREEMAN, pretty, hazel-eyed, blonde, is 24; in "Dear Wife" she plays a 16-year-old girl, in "Copper Canyon" she is a young widow. She prefers adult roles, but teen-age ones haunt her, because she looks the part in real life. Probably her favorite role, however, is

that of mother. Her daughter, Mona, who must be enchanting, is three. One of the year's most pleasant interviews was the recent one with Miss Freeman and her husband, in New York for "Dear Wife," which was barely mentioned, because the stories they told about their little girl were so completely delightful.

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Jack Buetel got into the movies with no trouble at all. Three weeks after he reached Hollywood and began trying for a screen career, Howard Hughes picked him to portray Billy the Kid in "The Outlaw."

Jean Hersholt (renewed as "Dr. Christian" for five years) really needed a doctor when he finished signing 2,500 copies of his translation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales for the Heritage Club. Incidentally, the awards in the 19th annual Dr. Christian radio script contest will be announced May 17. Prizes so far awarded total \$110,000.

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ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. Name a popular novel in which the heroine's name was never mentioned.
2. Where are the Great Smoky Mountains located?
3. With what newspaper do you associate the name of Horace Greeley?

4. Name the two famous men who lost their lives when the "Winnie Mae" crashed in 1935.

The Answers

1. "Rebecca," by Daphne Du Maurier.
2. North Carolina and Tennessee.
3. The New York Tribune.
4. Wiley Post and Will Rogers.

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JOLLY POP CORN

FRESH

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For Your COUGH

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