

French Foreign Legion Claims Outstanding Fighting Record

Editor's note: (News bulletins from Algeria are a reminder that the French Foreign Legion, romantic though its legends are, is a tough and vital fighting force. Here is a glimpse of the Legion today, with some recollections of its past.)

Sidi-Bel-Abbes, Algeria — (UPI)—From Mexico to Marrakech, from the deserts to Dienbienphu, the French Foreign Legion has won its share of glory in battle.

It fights well. And it lives well.

When Gen. Charles de Gaulle lunched with the Legion during his Algerian tour, it was a safe bet that the food equalled that of the best restaurant in Paris.

The Legion has a tradition of living well. Its headquarters here, dating back to 1845, are very plush indeed for a military base, especially a French one.

There is a modernistic bar, where it is impossible for an outsider to buy a drink.

There is a leather-upholstered clubhouse for the enlisted men, a 1,000-seat movie theater, a fully-equipped gym and a 150-foot swimming pool. The kitchens are stainless steel. The rest of the French army gets by with coal stoves.

'Legion is Country'

Why all this comfort? Because the Legion motto is, "Legion Patria Nostra," or "The Legion is our country." The motto is literally true.

Soldiers elsewhere in the world can go home on leave and then. But most Legionnaires are political refugees or fugitives from the law. They have no home other than the Legion. They make it as comfortable as they can.

Theoretically, all 20,000 enlisted men in the legion are foreigners. A Frenchman can enlist only if he pretends to be someone else—a Belgian or a Swiss, for example, or an American.

The officer corps, however, is mostly French. Legion commissions usually are snapped up by the top graduates of St. Cyr, the French West Point.

Foreign units have fought under the flag and later the tricolor of France, since the year 1688. But the present Foreign Legion dates back to the royal proclamation:

Paris, March 10, 1831, Louis Philippe, King of the French, to all present and to come, salutations. In view of the law of March 9, 1831, in view of the report of our Minister of State to the War Department, we have ordered and do order the following: There will be formed a legion composed of foreigners. This legion will take the name of the Foreign Legion."

Intramural Feuds

At first, Legion regiments were organized by nationalities. This led to intramural feuds, however, and within five years, nationalities were integrated down to the smallest color-guard unit.

Legionnaires get the same pay as other troops — 5,000 francs, (\$11) a month for recruits. The pay is doubled for service in Algeria.

The glamor and professional tradition of the Legion has drawn kings-to-be (like Prince Pierre of Serbia or Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia), pretenders (like both present pretenders to the French throne, the Count of Paris and Prince Napoleon) and poets like Alan Seeger, the American who wrote, "I have a rendezvous with death" shortly before he was killed on the western front in 1916.

The Legion does not take convicted murderers, narcotics addicts or psychopaths. But it will accept refugees whether from the law or from political upheavals—even Frenchmen who fought for the Germans in World War II.

Fought in Every War

"We're not interested in politics. If we were, we wouldn't have a Legion," explained a Legion officer.

The Legion has fought in every French war since its birth, from the Algerian conquest to the Crimea, the Franco-Prussian war, both World Wars, Indo-China and now back to Algeria.

Legion outfits have won battle honors at such places as Sebastopol, Magenta, Narvik and Dienbienphu.

But the Legion's proudest battle was Cameron, in Mexico. On April 30, 1863, three officers and 62 men of 3rd Co., 2nd Reg., under Captain Danjou, stood off a brigade of 2,500 Mexicans for 11 hours. All but three of the Legionnaires were killed.

April 30 remains a big holiday for the Foreign Legion. The Mexicans gallantly erected a monument on the battlefield with the legend: "These soldiers of France gave up their lives before they gave up their courage."

FINALISTS—These 15 beautiful girls competed in the Miss Universe contest in Long Beach, Calif., July 26. From left to right (top row): Adalgisa Colombo, of Brazil; Raquel Molina, of Chile; Luz Zuloaga, of Colombia, the winner; Evy Norlund, of Denmark; Marlies Behrens, of Germany; Marily Collimopoulou, of Greece; Geri Hoo, of Hawaii; (Center row): Corine Rotschafer, of Holland; Mariam Hadar, of Israel; Beatriz Bolvarte, of Peru; Tomoko Moritake, of Japan; (Bottom row): Alicja Bobrowska, of Poland; Gertrud Gummels, of Surinam; Brigitta Elisabeth Bardman, of Sweden; and Eurlnye Howell, of the U.S.

ALUMINUM ENOUGH

Burlington, Vt. — (UPI)—The school department bought a ton of aluminum from the state for \$25 after it was mistakenly dumped on the grounds of Springfield High school. Supt. William T. Logan Jr. said, "Now we've enough aluminum to last the next 15 years."



Motor in Lake 11 Years Runs Good

Grand Rapids, Mich. — (UPI)—Despite the 11 years Kyrn Goudzwaard's 1936 model outboard motor lay on the bottom of the Muskegon River, it is back in service again this summer.

Goudzwaard, a retired Grand Rapids tool room foreman, lost the 3.6 horsepower motor in 1946 in about 20 feet of water. Last fall when repairs were made on Rogers Dam and the water level had dropped, Goudzwaard walked onto the sandy river bottom and recovered his motor.

The aluminum motor was like new after it was taken apart, cleaned and fitted with new spark plugs and a condenser.

True Owners of Slum Areas Found

Chicago — (UPI)—Chicago has found a way to pin down the so-called "ghost" owners of slum properties and make them fix up the run-down buildings.

A new ordinance has been approved requiring a resident of the city to be responsible for maintaining each building with three or more apartments. This person would have to be available for service of summons and possible court appearance, if building and sanitary code violations are found.

In the past, Chicago as well as other large cities, has had difficulty running down the true owners of its blighted buildings.

Essex Junction, Vt. — (UPI)—Motorists along Route 2-A found themselves literally stuck in traffic when a trailer truck driven by Clarence Barefoot overturned. The truck was loaded with glue.

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BOOK DELUGE

New Britain, Conn. — (UPI)—The New Britain Public Library wasn't prepared for what followed when it announced "Forgiveness Day" and placed a barrel in the lobby to get back some of its overdue books. Nearly 1,000 books were returned, including one borrowed 22 years ago. The barrel had to be emptied 20 times. Most unexpected was a \$10 check from an individual who asked that his card be renewed.

UNARMED

Lockport, N.Y. — (UPI)—Competing in a high school track meet despite being handicapped by having a broken arm in a cast, Bob Luke successfully cleared the high jump bar at 5 feet, 7 inches. Then he tried to clear 5-8, fell hard and broke his other arm. His last good jump earned him a tie for second in the event.

Trucker Vacations In School Bus

St. Louis — (UPI)—Truck drivers Ted Ferris spends his vacations in a school bus—in a matter of speaking.

Ferris bought a surplus school bus. He took out the seats and spent six weeks rebuilding the inside to conform to his idea of a vacation home.

The result was a kitchen complete with standard-sized refrigerator, a four-burner apartment-size stove, full width sink, a utility cabinet, a table and three chairs; a bedroom-sitting room with twin size beds and a storage closet.

All this in an area 18 feet long and eight feet wide.

Ferris put screens on the windows and two butane gas tanks on the left front fender to supply the stove and refrigerator. The floor was covered with linoleum. He painted the kitchen walls black and white and the living room walls pink.

The only incongruous note in his vacation home is the steering wheel midway between the stove and the sink.

Mural Depicts Union Sailors

Ludington, Mich. — (UPI)—Sailors attending meetings at National Maritime Union hall here may gaze at the wall and see themselves depicted in a large mural.

Seaman-artist Donald C. Weir of Ludington, a crewman aboard the Chesapeake & Ohio car ferry Badger, painted the mural, using his spare time for three years to complete the project.

Weir, who had some art training, made the mural frame, mixed his own paints and made the numerous sketches needed for the mural. He used himself and other seamen as models for figures in the mural.

The California Highway Patrol for speeding in 1957, an f-trol arrested 313,919 persons | crease of 14.5 per cent.

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