

Scattered French Foreign Legion Celebrates Hallowed Battle

By CHARLES RIDLEY
 United Press International
 Paris (UPI)—The famed French Foreign Legion, a glorious but dying anachronism, celebrates the centenary of its most hallowed battle April 30 scattered asunder from the Algerian desert forts which it called home.

On April 30, 1863, a band of less than 60 legionnaires died almost to a man at a small hacienda in Camerone, Mexico, after fighting off 3,000 Mexicans for 10 hours.

The gallant stand of the famed men in the white kepis and blue great coats during the French attempt to install the Austrian Emperor Maximilian on the Mexican throne became to the legion what the Alamo is to Texans and the Halls of Montezuma to the U. S. Marines.

To this day "faire Camerone" (to do a Camerone) means to the legion to fight to the last man.

Each year the legion marks the anniversary with pageants and celebrations. In its barracks the epic of Camerone is recited and the artificial hand of Capt. Jean Danjou, who died commanding his men at Camerone, is paraded at the legion headquarters.

From 1884 until July 1, 1962—the day of Algerian independence—that headquarters was in the semi-desert town of Sidi-Bel-Abbes, 40 miles south of Oran. Today the legion's headquarters—the famed First Regiment—is at Aubagne, just outside Marseilles on the mainland of France.

Its training regiments are in Corsica. Other units are scattered at Djibouti in French Somaliland, Diego Suarez in Madagascar, ranging the Sahara Desert communication lines, with a few

score still in Algeria at the naval base of Mers-El-Kebir.

For the first time since the French King Louis-Philippe founded the Foreign Legion March 10, 1831, the famed corps of "volunteers to die for a flag not their own" was without a French overseas territory to die in.

Legion Losing
 The legion is still taking recruits, at its depots in Paris, Marseilles and Strasbourg. But with the romance of far-away conflict gone, enlistments are dwindling and the legion seems headed for extinction.

With the end of the old-style legion goes a tradition that has captured the imagination of mavericks among men for 132 years.

Countless thousands of men with broken lives and rebels against society turned to the legion to give new meaning to their existence.

Personal crisis, family trouble, police trouble or political trouble, the legion took them all. "The Army of Lost Souls," one writer called them. Some joined for more banal reasons: hunger, unemployment or weariness with a modern society that crushed the individual.

The legion offered its tough rules and an ideal. It rehabilitated broken men under the uniform of a religion of fidelity and honor.

It has never made any bones about the mission of the legionnaire to die for France. In 1885, during the conquest of Indochina, Gen. De Negrier sent his legionnaires off to the swamps and jungle with the words:

"You, legionnaires, you are soldiers ready to die. I am sending you where men die." The legionnaires died in the

conquest of Indochina and they died fighting barehanded, vastly outnumbered at the battle of Dien-Bien-Phu which marked the fall of Indochina in 1954.

In between and before the Indochina conquest, the legionnaires fought with gallantry in the conquest of all France's overseas possessions and in all its great wars.

In the seven-and-half years war in Algeria, where the legion was fighting for its adopted home, its soldiers bore the worst of every action. It lost 64 officers, 282 non-coms and 1,595 legionnaires.

Yet in Algeria the legion wound up in something approaching disgrace. Its crack First Parachute Regiment backed the generals who organized a last-ditch revolt against President Charles de Gaulle April 22-25, 1961. After the revolt collapsed hundreds of legionnaires deserted to join the clandestine secret army organization (OAS) in the doomed struggle to keep Algeria French.

French men who had never failed to claim the legion's empire-building epics as French turned on the famed foreign corps and said: "What can you expect of a bunch of mercenaries?"

The Foreign Legion in fact is the tail end of a centuries-long French tradition of mercenary soldiers.

In the time of Charles VII, who became King of France in 1422, the king had a mercenary Scottish guard. When he came to the throne, the English held most of France. Then came Joan of Arc and under her banner the Scottish guard helped to drive the English out of everywhere in France except Calais.

For fighting in Italy, King Louis XII used cavalry from the Balkans and Turkey who used to hang their enemies heads on their saddles. King Henri IV used Hungarian Hussars and Swiss Guards.

Francois I and Kings Louis XIV, XV and XVI employed Swiss Guards to defend their throne.

Napoleon Recruits
 The Emperor Napoleon I recruited foreign mercenaries wherever his triumphs took him. He had an Oriental Mameluke Guard and Italian and Polish Regiments. During his "100 Days" comeback from exile on the Mediterranean Island of Elba, eight regiments of foreigners backed him.

Sixteen years after Waterloo the remnants of the Swiss Guard and other mercenaries were used to form the nucleus of the Foreign Legion.

When the Foreign Legion was formed, it was easy for France to get mercenaries to join. The military splendor of the Napoleon era and the freedom principles of the French Revolution had stirred the hearts of Europe.

The legion's success was a surefire in the 19th Century when all European nations were interested in conquering and colonizing Africa and other territories.

The average Frenchman wanted no part of it. He did not want his son killed to set up rubber plantations and suchlike overseas.

Famed Poem
 In a famed poem to his dead legionnaires famed and known by heart through the legion, an Italian captain wrote during the conquest of Indochina: "When will the Frenchmen understand
 "That war is fought tooth

for tooth, eye for eye.
 "And that these foreigners who died,
 "Each time, in dying, spared them mourning?"

It was the tradition of the legion that wherever it fought and conquered, it built roads, houses and consolidated its area. A legion column on the march was fabulous to behold in its array and diversity. As soon as the fighting was over, the legionnaires took their shirts off and started building.

This tradition was carried through right up to the end in

Algeria. Legion specialists taught in Arab schools, tended the sick in outlying regions and helped re-settle the pitiful refugees.

Die to Serve
 All this was done by a motley band who joined, often in hopelessness, and lived and died to serve the legion mottoes "Honor and Fidelity" and "Valor and Discipline."

"Legio Patria Nostra"—the legion is our country—and is etched on the buildings wherever the legion plants its flags.

Accepted without proof of identity, without even a birth certificate, they live to prove themselves in the eyes of their officers and comrades.

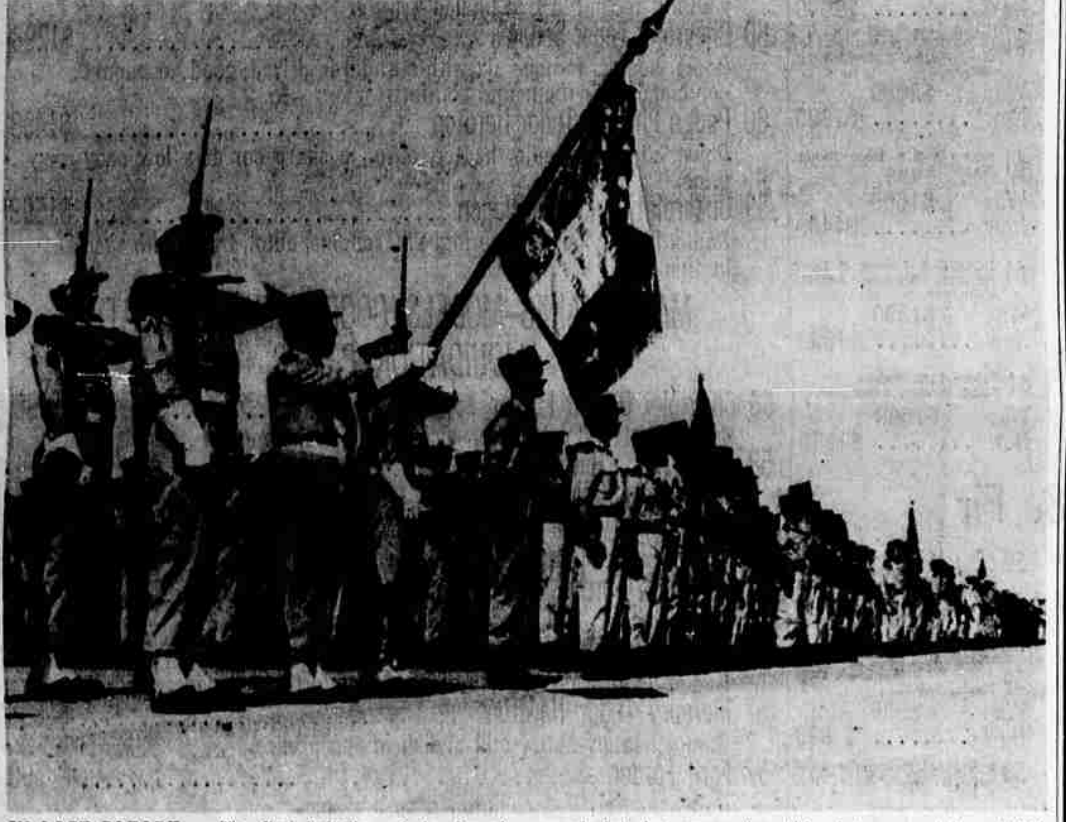
Now it is twilight for the corps.

The legion is down to about 12,000 men and fast dwindling. But those who remain and thousands of the legion's nostalgic veterans are celebrating on Camerone Day Centenary a military tradition which, like old soldiers, cannot die, but may well fade away.

Get the picture?

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IN LAST PARADE — The first battalion of the famed French Foreign Legion presents colors during its last parade late last year, when this picture was taken. (UPI)

The Family Council

Editors note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Martin V. — She wants to blow our whole budget on a rug and a sofa.

Gilda O. — We might as well have two beautiful things among the junk.

Martin V. — We're being married next month and have just signed a lease for an apartment. Our savings, plus a few cash wedding gifts on hand and expected, permit us to shop around for furniture in advance. Our set limit allows us to pay for the essentials — a bedroom set, a sectional for the living room, and a dinette table with a few chairs. But Gilda would rather splurge on two things and get the rest at a Thrift Shop or secondhand from friends.

Gilda O. — Who knows what the future will bring? I say let's grab the gorgeous Oriental and the antique Director's sofa that are within our grasp. Martin is only a salesman now, but even if he rises to be president of his company these pieces will fit into our home. And if we stay poor, at least we'll have had the joy of living with fine things. If we sit on the floor and look at the sofa, or sit on the sofa and look at the floor, we won't mind other things being shabby.

The Council: Writing this for a young couple on a balmy spring day we chime in with Herriek to say, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may" — and add, but not antiques. That lush floor won't look very

4-H Club News

The meeting of the Milk Pail Wranglers 4-H club was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Herzog. There were three new members present. They were given the Hoards Dairy Cow judging contest.

Members discussed old and new business and the next meeting was planned for May 13.

Louise Herzog, Reporter

Beef Club
 The meeting of the Central Point Beef 4-H club was held at the home of Floyd Charley and John Swartsager presided. There were 13 members present and one visitor, Mr. Barnes. Diseases of cattle were discussed.

A committee to plan a rodeo was appointed. The members are Bob Bray, chairman, John Bray, Hugh Charley, Jack Peak and John Swartsager. A demonstration on fitting and showing a steer will be given at the next meeting on May 21.

Refreshments were served by Bob and John Bray.

The club's leader, Floyd Charley, was one of the nominees for the Cow Belles "Father of the Year."

Karen Charley, Reporter

Bussen Duzzen
 Saturday, April 20, the Bussen Duzzen 4-H club held a meeting at the home of Betty Taylor. It was a potluck luncheon. After the luncheon a short business meeting was held and we then worked on our projects.

Thursday, April 18, our

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