

Ve Messe of Sergeants

The Sergeants' Mess of the —th battalion was born in a barn last happy Christmastide and in spite of wind and weather waxeth strong and mighty. The barn it is a high one the outside, as usual in France, old and mean, but everything within that barn, thanks to our energetic and hard working committee, is wondrous neat and clean. Here it is that at certain set periods of the day those who graciously and modestly wear crowns, three stripes, crossed swords and other things upon their arms, assemble together to discuss the why and wherefore of the war, the right and wrong words of command, the vagaries of their platoons, or the ever important leave question. Over Prince's Hash and Bellamy's Meat Balls may be heard earnest debates regarding the various breaches of etiquette committed on the parade ground, the sense (or otherwise) of battalion and company orders, the whimsicalities of our officers and all the trials and tribulations laid down by K. R. and O.

Two braziers do their poor best to emit heat and, if you are lucky enough, or strong and pushful enough, to get near one, you find yourself thawing out towards the world in general and feeling that there are times when the war is not such a bad old war after all. Music provided by Sergeant Slater on the gramophone, the moods of which he alone understands, causes us occasionally to burst into song and dance, while, in their thrilling drama entitled, "Napoleon at Waterloo", tragedy is sometimes provided by C.S.M. Morrison and Sergeant Overland. It is to be regretted that it has been necessary to hold a Court Martial on a certain member connected with the post-office. Ninety-three charges were preferred against him to all of which the hopeless miscreant pleaded guilty. After having been sentenced to a horrible death it was committed to "Drinks All Round", of which the unhappy prisoner, prosecutors, and defenders cheerfully partook, and it is generally voted that a pleasant time was spent by all.

We all combine in wishing the new institution a long and lively life and may its members never grow less.

Seven people can sit in a Ford car —if they're well acquainted.

Found Wanting

He was a candidate for the "A.H. O.B." (Ancient and Honourable Order of Batmen.)

"Character?" queried the officer.

"No entries, sir."

"Service?"

"First contingent, man, sir."

"Qualifications?"

"Stovemaker, carpenter, housemaid, errand-boy, coal miner, cook, boot black, grave digger, (equally good at dug-outs,) wood cutter, tailor, waiter, laundryman, linguist, with five years experience at each. Can also manufacture stove-pipe out of nothing, can find any article of household furniture at a moment's notice irrespective of locality, can rise at any hour, can serve up dinner, with equal readiness for twenty as for two, with nothing but one tin of Libby's best, and a box of matches. Can also stand an unlimited amount of verbal strafing, whether I deserve it or not and my chief aim in life is to discover kindling wood."

"Humph, — er, yes. I almost think you will do. By the way do you drink Scotch?"

A few minutes later the applicant was sadly wending his way to his company's billet.

—R.E.B.

Things We'd Like to Know

Who was the "staff" man who started down the communication trench after the recent thaw and arrived at his destination with his boots in his hand?

Did he want to save the wear and tear on his boots or was the idea simply to air his socks?

Did he really mean all he said about the war?

After a German machine-gunner had run off an exceptionally long "rat-a-tat" which was immediately followed by a "whizz-bang", who was the new draft man who remarked to a comrade "Gawd, he's bust the barrel"?

Old "Windybird", the German Army Chief, has declared that the British Army is defeated on the Western Front. Some Germans gathered in on a recent raid seemed to be quite sore that they had not been officially notified of the fact.

What the Censor Sees

Dear Old Bill,

This sure is a great war. The very first day I arrived in France I had a wonderful experience. It was at Havre. The Germans were shelling the town with their long range guns that morning. To read the papers you would never think that Havre was shelled but I guess the censor guy don't allow everything to get into the papers. Anyway, while the bombardment was going on, I was strolling down the main street and feeling in need of a refresher, I steps up to a cafe. Just as I was opening the door a big shell struck the building and, would you believe it, Bill, I was left standing with nothing but the door knob in my hand. There was nothing left of the building. It sure startled me just for a second. We are going into the trenches tonight and the colonel tells me we have some dirty work to do our first trip in so I guess your humble will be making history before long. I'll have lots to tell you in my next letter.

Your old pal,
Josh.

P.S. I'm sending you the door knob as a souvenir.

Dear Emily,

Your very welcome letter to hand. The weather is rotten but your gift to the Empire, meaning me, is in the pink, as usual. I've been very economical lately and have managed to save two pounds. I'll send the money to you as I'm sure you can be doing with a new hat or something. I'll send it next week. Now, Emily, there ain't much to grouse about so I will close. I hope you are well and the kids behaving.

Love from your loving hubby,
Bill.

P.S. Saving the two pounds has run me rather short. Can you send me a pound to be going on with?

Extract from a private's letter:

"The rats in the trenches are very tame. We get quite friendly with them after a while and, though you have to keep an eye on your rations, they will do anything for you. The other night I was feeling somewhat seedy when it came my turn for sentry and I got one of them to put on my greatcoat and stand up at the parapet, and he even fired my rifle now and then. Nobody was any the wiser."