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## HOW OUR CASUALTY LISTS ARE PREPARED

Few people realise the minute care and attention that are devoted to the compilation of the casualty lists that appear—alas, with such distressing regularity—in the daily papers. In the following article the writer deals fully and comprehensively with this painfully interesting subject, and also touches upon the courtesy and consideration that are invariably shown by the War Office officials to personal inquirers whose relatives have been killed or disabled in the service of their country.

The compilation of casualty lists, always a trying and delicate operation, has been rendered doubly so by the conditions under which the present war is being waged. It is a gruesome task, too, especially as regards the dead. These have to be identified by a small metal disc, which, in the case of our Army, the soldier is required to wear securely fixed inside his uniform. On this is inscribed his name, regimental number, and the title of his corps; as also his religion, whether Church of England, Roman Catholic, or what not. This latter information, of course, is included in order that, whenever possible, the last rites of burial shall be performed by a chaplain of his own faith.

These little discs constitute the ultimate basis, so to speak, on which all casualty lists rest, more especially so far as the dead are concerned. First, as regards the preliminary operations on the actual field of battle. Here, as may well be imagined, mistakes will occur, and that despite the most painstaking carefulness. The typical Tommy is frequently a careless, happy-go-lucky sort of chap. He loses his identity disc, and he does not trouble to apply for another. Or it may be that in his excitement he forgets to wear it altogether; or, as sometimes happens, he lays hold of one belonging to some other man. Then the wrong man is reported dead.

**Missing Discs**  
The most frequent cause of mistakes in the casualty lists, however, are missing identity discs. In this case recourse is had to the man's clothing, which is marked inside with his regimental number, and to his rifle and accoutrements, which are stamped with another number, reference to which will show to whom they were originally issued.

But even these test fail upon occasions, for men may be bearing another man's rifle picked up in the heat of the conflict, or be wearing another man's boots. So it comes about that no human foresight can guarantee the absolute accuracy of all casualty lists. All that can be done is to exercise the utmost care in their compilation, and this, needless to say, is done.

Thus, the rough lists of names sent in to the regimental orderly rooms by the non-commissioned officers in charge of the bearer parties are "hand printed" on forms specially provided, and on being transcribed on the base lists for transmission to the War Office they are type-written, and afterwards checked one by one, each name being split aloud by one clerk, while another follows with his eyes the typed list letter by letter.

From the headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force in France, these base lists are forwarded each day to the War Office, where they are at once taken in hand, and sorted, classified, and indexed. Four types of casualties are officially recognized—killed, wounded, missing, and invalided—and the names are listed accordingly. As regards the dead, there is, unfortunately, little more to be done. The particularly such as they are, are transcribed, and the relatives, if known, are notified. As regards the other three categories, however, things are different, for in the course of another day or two the hospital lists—"sheets," they are officially termed—begin to arrive, and these contain full particulars regarding the wounded and invalided, the nature of their injuries or complaints, and the hospitals they have been sent to.

**Don't Give up Hope**  
The "missing" are a class apart. The majority of them, of course, are prisoners of war; but a certain proportion, unfortunately, have probably been killed, and left unidentified on the field of battle on ground occupied by the enemy. Or, again, a missing man may be merely a man temporarily separated from his regiment. Anyway, the great thing for the relatives of men officially reported as "missing" to remember is that the term does not necessarily, or even probably, mean that the soldier is either killed or wounded. He is far more likely to be alive and unhurt, a captive in the hands of the enemy.

It takes from ten to fourteen days after the arrival of the first base lists before the completed casualty lists are ready for issue to the public. Meanwhile the relatives have been, so far as possible, notified by letter from the War Office of the nature of each man's casualty; while in the case of death a separate formal letter of regret is enclosed on behalf of the King.

Eventually the completed lists are forwarded to the Central Casualty Carding Room, and which is in direct private telephonic communication with the War Office, in Whitehall. Here they are taken in hand by another set of clerks, each man's name being card-indexed, and stored away for future reference in a series of alphabetically-arranged cabinets. Here, also, are filed particulars of inquiries made by relatives at the War Office proper regarding supposed casualties to men at the front, so that in the event of information coming to hand later on they can be communicated with directly, and with the least possible delay. The net result is that there is here available for reference a complete alphabetical record of every single casualty officially known to have been sustained by our soldiers at the front or elsewhere, plus a partial, and necessarily incomplete, record of presumed casualties not yet officially reported.

Ordinarily the routine is somewhat as follows:—Mrs. Smith, of Poplar, will say, arrive in Whitehall in a state of considerable agitation. She has heard in a roundabout way that something untoward has happened to her husband, William Smith, a private in the Blankshire Buffs, and she is anxiously seeking particulars.

First of all Mrs. Smith is passed along to the Horse Guards-avenue entrance to the War Office, where, in the quadrangle are exhibited daily typed lists of all the more recent casualties. King's messengers, commissionaires, and various officials are in attendance here, ready and anxious to assist Mrs. Smith in seeking for her husband's name on these lists, and, if it is there, she is helped, with advice and kindly sympathies.

Should, however, the name of Private William Smith, of the Blankshires, not be on the lists, Mrs. Smith is passed on to the General Inquiry Room, and inquiries are instituted there over the telephone to the Carding Room in Kingway. Each inquiry takes from one to three minutes to deal with, at the end of which time Mrs. Smith is informed either that the War Office has no news of the particular William Smith she is inquiring for, and that he is, therefore probably alive and well, or, alternately that he is reported "missing," in which case she is kindly and courteously advised to go home, and wait patiently for further news of him which she is assured will be forwarded to her direct by post as soon as received.

Should he prove to be "wounded" or "invalided," however, then Mrs. Smith is conducted to another department where these cases are dealt with. The nature and extent of his injury or complaint is carefully and fully explained to her, also the name of the hospital to which he has been sent is given her, and, if it is any where in England, she is told the best way to get there, how much the fare will be and so forth.

**"CHAMBER OF SORROWS."**  
But suppose the reference to the index shows that Private William Smith has unfortunately been killed in action! In this case the news is temporarily withheld from the new-made widow, and she is conducted to yet another apartment, an inner room tastefully and comfortably furnished with couches, easy chairs, and other similar rest-giving contrivances. In the small inner room are focussed, as nowhere else, all the tragedy and grief of the war. To the War Office people it is known unofficially as the "Chamber of Sorrows," a terribly apt title. No male persons may enter here, nor any of the opposite sex, save only those recently bereaved; widows, who do not as yet know they are widows, engaged young girls whose lovers are lying dead "somewhere in France," sisters whose brothers have been taken from them.

They are received singly and alone by an Army Nursing Sister, whose sad duty it is to break the bad news to the bereaved one, and to comfort and uphold her, as best she can, in the first terrible moments of shock and bewilderment. There are sad scenes enacted daily in this Holy of Holies of the Temple of Sorrows; scenes too sacred and too pitiful for the pen of the journalist to record.

**Making Sure of It.**

Towne—"My wife used to get nervous every time she heard a noise downstairs but I assured her that it couldn't be burglars, because they're always careful not to make any noise."

Brynes—"So you calmed her, eh?"  
Towne—"Not much. Now she gets nervous every time she doesn't hear any noise."

**Wouldn't Do.**  
She—You'll see, women commanders in the navy yet.  
He—I guess not. Warship frequently have to sail under secret orders.

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## Spain's Attitude in the War as Seen By Northcliffe

There is reason to think that the attitude of Spain has excited apprehension in Great Britain and the Allied countries. Ever since the war of 1870 the Germans have plotted for political and commercial control over Spain, and since the world conflict began in 1914 they have greatly increased their numerical strength throughout the Peninsula. Two or three letters in the London Times from Lord Northcliffe, who has just made a visit to Spain, have roused deep and anxious interest. He points out that there are now 80,000 Germans in Spain, and he declares that it is unpleasant to find in countless Spanish newspapers a belief in German victory and German invincibility. The Spaniards, under German inspiration, have doubted the capacity of Great Britain to make war and have looked for an ultimate German triumph. "It is not flattering to the Allies," says Lord Northcliffe, "to find that Germany has the support of a great part of the aristocracy, of practically the whole of the Church, Jesuit and otherwise, with, in addition, a large body of middle-class Spain."

Lord Northcliffe believes that Spain has been neglected by Great Britain and the Allies, while agents of Germany have been increasingly and mischievously active. The Germans in Spain, he declares, have constituted themselves into a well-drilled army, obviously acting on definite instructions. He shows how the Catholic clergy are cultivated by German agents and how the newspapers and other agencies of publicity are controlled by German influence. Commenting on Lord Northcliffe's letters, the London Times describes the breadth and strength of the German purposes. It says:

Germany meant to reduce Turkey to a condition of political as well as of economic subjection, and, for the time, she has succeeded. She meant to make the Balkans and Italy her subordinate Allies both in commerce and politics. She meant, and means, to lay the foundations for grandiose schemes in both fields in South America. She rashly hoped to exercise influence, on the politics of the United States, through the organized vote of the "hyphenated" until American patriotism quietly crushed the prospect. She fastened upon "key" industries here and in the Dominions, until the war woke us up to the dependence in which we stood. Who shall say with which of these purposes she has been throwing out her tentacles in Spain? That is a subject for Spaniards to consider in the light of her past history and of her avowed aspirations to hegemony. History, indeed—their own history and ours—should, free them from many of the errors into which the Germans seek to lead them. It should teach them what even a weak and distracted people, as their fathers were a century ago, can accomplish against the strongest of Empires and the mightiest genius, when they are fighting for their all; it should remind them that England can deal crushing blows on land as well as at sea, and it should deliver them from the wild illusion that she will ever seek to make peace through the medium of any arbitrator or on any terms but her own. The existence of such errors at all is a signal proof of the weakness of our "publicity."

There are evidences that Lord Northcliffe's letters have been effective in rousing public opinion in Great Britain to the temper of Spain. It is said also that the Spanish elements favorable to the Allies have been inspired to vigilance and activity. It was not apprehended that Spain would actually enter the war; it does seem to be clear that she has lent moral support to the Kaiser. There is much to undo, but the chances are that for the future the Spanish people will be less amenable to German machinations.—Ex.

**Double Proof.**

A tramp knocked at a farmers door and called for something to eat.  
"Are you a Christian?" asked the good natured countryman.  
"Can't you tell?" answered the man "Look at the holes worn in the knees of my pants. What do they prove?"  
The farmer's wife promptly brought out the food, and the tramp turned to do.  
"Well! well! what made those holes in the back of your pants?" asked the farmer.  
"Backsliding," replied the tramp as he hurried on.

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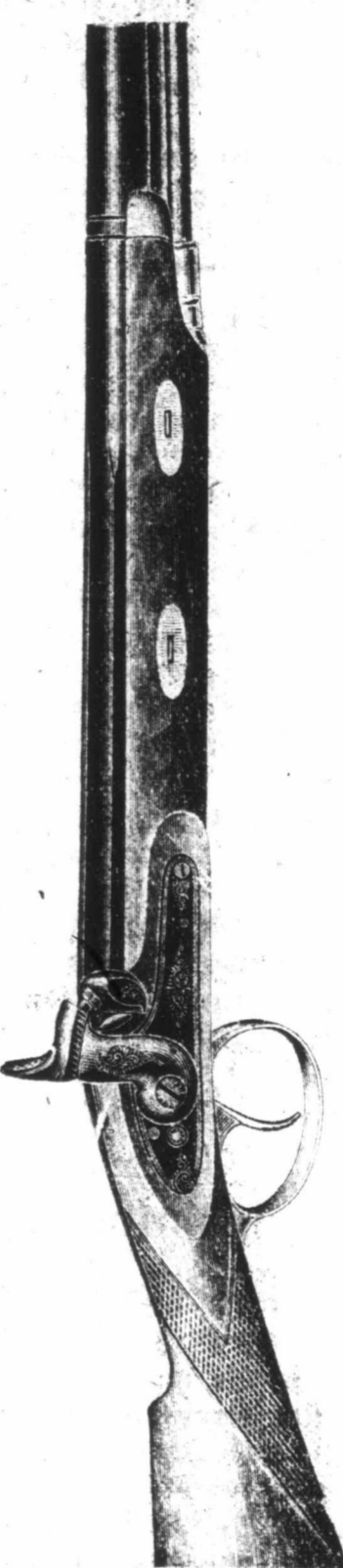
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