

HOW SOLDIERS FILL PERIODS IN REST ZONE

These Periods Are Frequent, and Time in Front Line Very Short.

A JOLLY TIME

Concerts, Cinemas, Ball Games, the Canadians' Specialties.

By Stewart Lyon, Correspondent of the Canadian Press with the Canadian Forces.

Canadian Headquarters, France, cable—in some of the comments on conditions here at the front there are to be found statements which indicate a greater lack of knowledge concerning those conditions than one would naturally expect after almost three years of war.

Millions of letters have been written home by young Canadians serving in France and Flanders. The information in many of these letters is negligible. Sometimes there is a disposition to draw the long bow, as in a recent case where a man far from the front, engaged in sorting of salvage, assured his home folk that between shelling and dodging Bosche bombs he was having a lively time, but one got accustomed to it after a while. In still other cases of which I have heard young fellows in daily peril ignored that side of their life altogether out of a chivalrous desire to lessen the strain upon the loving mother to whom their letters were sent.

Notwithstanding these reticences and exaggerations enough exact information should have entered through to correct the false idea that Canadian soldiers, or any others, hold their lines for long periods without rest or relief beyond the range of the enemy's guns. In the earlier stages of the war when Germany's available man-power was much greater on the western front than that of France and Britain it was necessary to keep the infantry in the front line, that is, actually holding the trenches and liable to attack at any moment of the day or night, for periods of two weeks at a time. In support, still well within field gun range, it was not uncommon to keep battalions for a month or more. There was one period during which all Canadian battalions in the line and in support were subject to all the hazards of war for several months, without any rest periods. Only the urgent necessity of those days justified the subjecting of large bodies of men to such an incessant strain.

As the use of artillery increases and guns of heavier calibre are brought forward to smash trenches and other defence positions the need for more frequent rest periods for the men holding the line increases also. Scarcely now are they kept in the front line trenches for more than eight days. Often an even shorter "tour" is arranged. Sometimes an entire division, after a trying time, is taken back to rest billets for lengthy periods of recuperation.

Rest billets are a sort of terrestrial paradise for the men who are lucky enough to spend a month in them. One is awakened there long before reveille by the horn of the small boy or girl who sells "latest Anglies papers, M'sieur, tuppence each." The voices of women and children are heard again, and all are but a faint rumble in the distance—a noise insufficient to disturb the nerves of the most "jumpy."

It must not be supposed that rest billets are placed where all play and no work makes Jack Canuck lazy. He is kept in condition by physical drill, bayonet instruction musketry exercises, and visits to the rifle ranges or perhaps at the trench mortar or bombing school. He is given opportunity for shower baths, such as can not be provided nearer the front, and, if specially fortunate, may even be able to have a swim in running water, or convenient pond. Whatever their duties the men in reserve or in rest billets have a good deal of leisure, and are built up rapidly by forgetting about the front for the time, and becoming absorbed in sport and amusement. Baseball and the cinema are the supreme delights of our Canadians. They have also adopted the English idea of traveling concert and dramatic companies, which vary the cinema programmes by occasionally putting on original plays or operettas.

CONCERT COMPANIES. Many well-known concert singers and actors are in the ranks and among the holders of commissions. Besides amateurs of distinction, the concert company of one corps will occasionally visit the entertainment centres of those adjacent to it. There is an even more frequent intercourse among divisions. The names of these troupes are delightfully unconventional. Big posters may invite the passer-by to visit the "Tykes," which means that a Yorkshire company holds the boards, or to see the "Very Lights" or "Jars," or listen to the "Whizz-Bangs."

Much talent is devoted to the writing of original sketches for the entertainments, and everybody from the general in command down to the private in his fatigues comes in for a bit of their satire. The girl parts are immensely popular, and always bring wild applause to the young bachelors who take them, aided by the flattery produced by borrowing some across the Channel or from some friend. "Aint he a peach," is the highest compliment which can be paid to a soldier-actor who dons the petticoat. It may interest the girls at home to know that the cinema girls, though a poor substitute for their own

sweet selves, are always welcomed. Long cheers and audible evidences of appreciation such as one occasionally hears coming from the verandah when the moon is at the full and the daughter of the house is entertaining company greet the ladies of the cinema, and while they stop runaway trains, dive from tremendous heights or ride hitherto unbroken horses, the war is a very poor second in the minds of the onlookers.

Sports are also followed with enthusiasm, not only by the troops in the back area, but well up toward the front. Not very long ago I saw a hotly-contested ball game on a bit of land subject to frequent fire and on which the enemy airmen were liable at any moment to drop bombs. Sport has done almost as much as patriotic ardor to steady the nerves of the Empire's sons for the great ordeal of war. The recreation and sport organization services have been of incalculable value in making and keeping the men fit for duty and in lessening the amount of mischief idle hands are prone to do in the field as well as at home.

MUST GIVE UP GOLD.

German People Called on for Jewels, Also.

Amsterdam, Cable.—The daily recurring public notices printed in conspicuous type in German newspapers, entreating citizens to aid the Fatherland by giving it their gold, evidently is insufficient of productive results. The Weser Zeitung, of Bremen, publishes a renewed appeal, complaining especially that the well-to-do public still fails to realize the situation, and that all gold must be handed in.

The newspaper says that competent authorities calculate that three to four hundred million gold coins are being hoarded in Germany, while the value of gold ornaments is estimated at a billion marks. The "Weser Zeitung" says the public often asks whether gold cannot be loaned instead of giving to the German Imperial Bank. The answer is no, because the law demands gold as a cover for paper money, and that it must be in bars or coins. The public is again urged to give jewels of all kinds which realize good prices abroad and is most useful for credit purposes there.

FRENCH REGAIN MORE GROUND

Take Back Lines Won by the Germans.

Mist Hampers British Airmen's Work.

London Cable.—The War Office statement to-night reads:

"Owing to a thick mist there was light activity in the air yesterday. One German machine was brought down in the air fighting. One of ours is missing.

"There is nothing further of special interest to report."

FRENCH REPORT.

Paris Cable.—The official statement issued by the War Office to-night says: "Intense bombardments and heavy fighting at various points on the French front are reported. The French succeeded in regaining some of the ground lost during the night to the Germans."

"Engagements accompanied by an intense bombardment on the Hurtebise plateau and south of Alles continued throughout the day, but with progress. At several points we recaptured the ground gained during the night by the adversary.

"In Champagne enemy attacks were renewed unsuccessfully during the course of the morning, followed in the afternoon by a violent bombardment, which extended on the left from Mouz Blond, and on the right as far as the neighborhood of the Casque. Our artillery replied energetically, which rendered impossible a sortie by the German infantry.

"On both banks of the Meuse the artillery was very active. The day was calm on the rest of the front."

BELGIAN REPORT.

Paris Cable.—Thursday's Belgian War Office report reads: "A surprise attack attempted by the Germans during the night against our trenches north of Dixmude failed completely, the enemy being repulsed by grenades. The usual artillery action took place."

GREECE IN HER PLACE.

Venezelos Words On Eve of Chamber's Meeting. Athens, Cable.—The chamber at Deputy convened yesterday heard Premier Venezelos read the decree of convocation, and then adjourned for a few days for the election of officers.

FALL FAIRS OF ONTARIO

Table listing various locations in Ontario and their respective fair dates from August to October.

BRITAIN TRAINS YOUTH FOR THE ARMY

Thousands of Boys Given Preliminary Work for Soldiering Later.

FUTURE RESERVES

Training is Thorough and Careful, and No Strain is Allowed.

Great Britain has something like 5,000,000 men in its military forces.

Gen. Robertson announced that another half million must be provided by July in order to maintain reserves and keep the fighting units up to full strength. When the 500,000 have been provided in July there will merely be another demand for further augmentations later.

The inexorable demands from the trenches must be met somehow. How they are to be met, how man power is continually to be provided to meet the wastage of war is indicated by the progressive organization of the country's youth for training in anticipation of the time when they shall arrive at military age.

All over the country battalions of boys, none of them beyond the age of 15 years and 8 months, are being systematically trained for the army. Schoolboys, college boys, apprentices—youth of all classes—as soon as they are physically capable of undertaking the work of training are put into the organizations for preparation.

STRAIN CAREFULLY AVOIDED. Careful measures have been adopted to insure that they shall not be over-trained and either physically or mentally injured by the strain. Officers in charge of these organizations of boys are provided with special instructions as to the service that may safely be demanded. A good deal of discretion in this regard is left to commanding officers and drill masters, but after all the purpose is to equip the national youth for soldierly service as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

Much lighter requirements, however, are imposed on the youngest class of prospective soldiers. They are given graduated instruction in various drills for the purpose of hardening their physiques. Games, lectures and educational work are provided in addition to ordinary military training.

There are twelve fortnightly periods in the training course for youth of this class. In the first period of two weeks sixty-four hours of work are required of which twelve hours are given to games and educational work. After the first period fourteen hours are set aside in each fortnightly period for these purposes.

Such games as cricket, football, and boxing are particularly prized for their effect on the physique of the recruit. Participation in these is compulsory and under no circumstances are commanders permitted to organize the best players at a particular game in a crack team which becomes representative of a battalion. This would deprive the great majority of really effective training and the ones needing the training most would have the least chance to get it.

At the outset every young man is inoculated, vaccinated and given a thorough dental overhauling. This limits the possible activities of many of them during the first six weeks of their training. After these preliminary troubles are over, the organization settles into a regular scheme involving 8 1/2 hours work per fortnight, or six hours work daily, including Sunday.

HOW THE WORK IS DIVIDED. At this stage of his training the recruit gets in each fortnightly period ten hours of general physical training, six hours of squad drill, eighteen hours of musketry and range practice, two hours devoted to interior economy, three hours on night work, three hours on guard duty, two hours on anti-gas training, three hours of route marching without packs, two hours for special lectures and fourteen hours for games and education.

Every soldier must learn all about taking care of his clothes, kit and equipment and instruction in these departments is referred to as "interior economy." Then it is necessary to give very careful instruction in the importance of discipline as a military factor, hygiene, sanitation, first aid, minor casualties, trench warfare, concealment and co-operation of infantry with artillery and aircraft.

The importance of the educational course must not be underestimated. A good many boys with extremely rudimentary schooling are taken into these organizations. Those who need it are given the most elementary educational opportunity, while the more advanced ones are provided instruction in subjects most likely to be of military utility. It is found that almost invariably the boys take keen interest in these intellectual opportunities.

Their mode of life is thoroughly healthy, and their ambition finds the stimulus that comes from both patriotic interest and competition. During the first four weeks of the course route marching with kits is forbidden lest it impose too heavy a physical strain. After they are properly conditioned they are gradually broken into these heavier phases of duty, and the fourth fortnight's training in running and route marching with kits begins, also bombing practice with dummy bombs. This is followed by the beginning of general musketry practice, studies in field engineering, ceremonial drill, once so tremendously important in the training of the soldier, does not begin until the tenth fortnight.

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WEAKLINGS MOSTLY BENEFITED.

There could be no more impressive illustration of how little ceremony enters into the soldier's routine nowadays than to observe the daily duties of these campaigns. The fine martial effects that were once so much prized get scant consideration indeed. On the other hand the democracy of the new British army is shown by the fact that officers in these boy battalions are directed to take note of the special aptitudes of their recruits for particular kinds of service with the purpose of giving them training for non-commissioned officers, and ultimately for commissions.

Youngsters of poor physique or weak health are especially classified and are given a number of weeks of special light training with the purpose of building them up before they shall undertake the serious work of being turned into soldiers. In this regard alone the benefits accruing to many thousands of young men have been incalculable.

APPEAL TO RUSS TO BACK ALLIES

Executives of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants Act,

To Secure Support for the Government.

Petrograd Cable.—Another proclamation has been issued on behalf of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates and the Peasants' Congress. It is signed by N. C. Tcheidev, president of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, and Socialist member of the Duma, and is addressed to all committees of the army and the fleet, and declares that the revolution is being endangered.

"Lack of discipline and open treachery at the front," says the proclamation, "are facilitating Field Marshal von Hindenburg's new offensive. The serious defects in our army are opening the way to the enemy for increasing the general panic and preparing the soil in which the poisonous seeds of counter-revolution may come into full bloom. Already an attack is being organized by the strong bourgeoisie; already the Jackals and hyenas of the old regime are howling."

Then, outlining the measures adopted and the powers conferred upon the Government to deal with the situation, the proclamation continues:

"We turn to you, our representatives, with a passionate appeal. Support the revolutionary authority; try to secure the submission of working men, soldiers and peasants to all the decisions of democracy's majority. Inspire them; awaken enthusiasm in them. Exert your entire will, your entire energy."

"Rally round our All-Russian centres and we will show the country and the world that the nation which created the greatest revolution in the world cannot and shall not perish."

RHONDDA TO END PROFITEERING

British Food Controller Will Regulate Prices

Of Commodities of Prime Necessity.

London Cable.—Lord Rhondda, the Food Controller, outlining to-day the policy he proposes to follow to regulate food prices and eliminate profiteering, said he intended to fix the prices of commodities of prime necessity over which he could obtain effective control, at all stages, from the producer to the consumer. Every effort would be made to prevent speculation and unnecessary middlemen would be eliminated. Existing agencies would be utilized for the purpose of distribution under license and under the control and supervision of local food controllers to be appointed by the local authorities.

Where profits were made illegally, Lord Rhondda said he would press for imprisonment in all cases of sufficient gravity. He proposed to eliminate profiteering by fixing prices on the basis of pre-war profits. All flour mills would be taken over and worked on the Government account, the flour being sold to bakers at a uniform price, and the bakers being expected to sell loaves over the counter at maximum of 9d retail price and flour at a corresponding rate.

British wheat will be purchased by millers at prices determined by the Government, these prices over the year averaging 72s per quarter. The prices currently to millers would be lower than the cost of the Government, and the difference would be made up by a subsidy from the exchequer. The policy of subsidies was only justifiable because of the impossibility of otherwise reducing the cost of food to the poor.

Maximum prices of cattle would be fixed—74 shillings per hundredweight in September, 72 shillings in October, 67 in November and December, and 60 in January. This would enable the farmers to realize without serious losses and would reduce prices to the consumers.

Dealers and retailers' profits would also be controlled. Butcher prices would be fixed by local committees, and arrangements would be made for equitable distribution. The local authorities would be asked to appoint food control committees, including at least one representative of labor and one woman. These committees to be responsible for carrying out the regulations of the Food Controller.

A new scheme of sugar distribution, said Lord Rhondda, would be put into operation, and another important feature of the economy campaign would be the establishment of communal kitchens.