

MEHUN NEWS

VOL. 1

ATELIER de MEHUN-SUR-YEVRE, (CHER) FRANCE, FRIDAY, FEB. 14, 1919

NO. 1

CAMP LAUNDRY PROVES SUCCESS

New Enterprise Has All Modern Equipment For Up-to-date Plant.

By D. L. Rittenhouse

Deserted are the washing places on the Canal Du Berry at Camp Mehun. No more is the air livened with the chatter of French Madames, as they do the weekly wash of some "Yanks" soiled winter B. V. D's. Once more the canal waters flow crystal clear, un-sullied by residum from said "wash".

The cause of such desolation of the washing places is the opening of the new Post Laundry at the Ordnance Repair Shops. Equipped with the most modern laundry machinery it represents a total investment of \$7000. Sergeant Stewart of Oklahoma City, U. S. A., is the man who engineered the big job of installing the equipment and getting the first "wash" out on Jan. 17. The "Serg" is an old hand at the laundry game and thinks nothing of running two thousand pieces of "soldiers lingerie" through the machines every eight hours. A crew of twenty men are required to keep the plant running at full speed. In the course of thirty days fifteen hundred pounds of soap are used. The cost of this and other items is covered by a small charge of one franc which is made for each wash of ten pieces.

Sergeant R. S. Bains is the "official pacifier of peeved patrons." For instance, a fretful voice comes in over the wire and wants to know, "why my woolen undershirt came back shrunk up so darned small that I can't even use it for a wrist-band." The Sergeant then "lulls" a lullabye to the fretful one with words to the effect that, "some woolens will shrink in spite of all precautions, cold water baths, etc."

The several operations, as outlined by Sergt. Bains, begin with the checking and marking of each piece when

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4th Battalion Formed

The list of names of the men for the 4th Evacuation Battalion was submitted to the shops by the rating officer Tuesday for marking for "future activities" and "character of service." Eleven hundred cards of the men having the highest percentage were drawn, and after marking by the shops officers, 611 men having the highest totals were chosen for the Battalion. The names will be read to the companies at roll call Saturday noon and the Battalion will be formed Sunday.

WOMEN INCREASE SHOP PRODUCTION

**Small Arms Division Greatly Benefited
By New Form Of Labor.**

By Ralph E. Littler

Production went up with a boom when one hundred French women were put to work in the small arms division last week.

They have been assigned to several kinds of work including tearing down, cleaning, assembling and packing rifles, pistols and machine guns.

Women workers here is a new program in this camp. It has been tried out more or less successfully in other A. E. F. places but with hardly the degree of success with which it has been put into practice here.

The hiring of the corps was negotiated by Captain Tompkins, who had little difficulty in engaging the desired number by causing the word to be passed through the resident district of the town. A larger number asked for work than there were places to fill, so that there is a long waiting list constantly on file and from day to day the strength of the crew may be increased.

It was necessary to get the permission of the mayor of the town, and then only women could be employed who held certificates, or releases from

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FRENCH BOXERS LOSE TO LOCALS

**Mehun Fighters Win Four Out Of Six
Bouts With Clean Knock Outs.**

By Floyd W. Maxwell

Coming back with an indomitable spirit, the Mehun boxing team more than redeemed itself in the eyes of fight fans in the Franco-American bouts held in the Y. M. C. A. here Thursday evening. The French lads proved to be no match for the fierce, aggressive onslaughts of the locals who captured four out of the six main events via the K. O. route.

The program was swift but clean throughout and was thoroughly enjoyed by the large crowd in attendance, proving by far to be the best boxing exhibitions which have been staged here.

French aspirations were dashed when Peters of Bourges knocked out his adversary in 29 seconds, this route being followed with delightful regularity by the local lads throughout the evening. Kenney stretched his man out in the third round, and Thompson secured a clean knock out in the first. In the Dalton-Violet match which was to have been the main event of the evening, the Frenchman hardly got into action, Sparring with a few exchanges in the first round, it was not long before everyone realized that Dalton had things his own way, and in the second round he floored his opponent for the count.

GERMAN TOWER SENT TO U. S.

Today Lt. Wandell and Sgt. Duncan left for the United States as the convoyers of a captured German Observation Tower which was taken by the Third Army Corps. This tower is believed to have been used by the German Crown Prince during the Battle of Verdun and will be placed in the U. S. Military Academy Museum at West Point, N. Y.

THE MEHUN NEWS

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE
ORDNANCE TROOPS AT ATELIER
de MEHUN-SUR-YEVRE
A. P. O. 741.

Managing Editor - Pvt. Wm. L. Gantz

You have in this, the initial issue of the Mehun News, something new in the line of post newspapers, and also a further development of this Camp in the interests of the men. Its origin sprang from the desire of both officers and enlisted men to have some means of giving expression to their sentiments as well as being able to send to those at home an interesting account of what we are doing over here.

It is the purpose of this small journal to give you at first hand the little news and notes of interest of our camp as well as the authentic news of all other matters pertaining to the Ordnance Repair Shops in which every man is interested. The staff will be made up of enlisted personnel selected from a broad field of capable Newspaper men and writers from that great and good country of ours across the seas. The field is open to all and we urgently request that you do not give your suggestions as to how we could better our efforts to anyone else, but bring them straight to us. We desire every man to feel that this is his paper as well as ours, and if we can give you a little sunshine and a little valuable thought for study, then we shall consider that we have succeeded; if not, then we have failed in our purpose.

We venture to add that this is the only little journal in the entire A. E. F. which is printed on a Government press from Government type and is distributed free of charge to the men in camp. The work is all voluntary on the part of the staff and printers and it will continue to be an honorary position. It is, therefore, hoped that you will strive for a place on the staff as you would for a place in any undertaking for the common good. Your interest and contributions will make the paper valuable.

Just after mess Saturday noon, there will be a short meeting of the company reporters and men interested in newspaper work. This meeting will be held in the office in the rear of the Officers Club.

CHASING THE CHARMING COOTIE

By Sgt. Albert T. Hoppe,
Ordnance Casual Company No. 21

IN 5 PARTS

Prelude and Part I.

No authority can be found for the "word" in Webster's, nor does a careful research of the victims of Roosevelt's, Wild Animal Exploits, disclose even the extermination of— one—single—cootie. "Wild Animals I Have Met," leaves this zoological research just as barren!

Introduction and Part II.

The "COOTIE" is an animal which before the war dwelt in obscurity and peace among his specie— entirely unaware of his own importance.

With the blooming of the "Big Drama," the cootie, like the rookie and other animals, carrying a name strictly "army in flavor," leaped into sudden fame. Never again will he be able to dwell in obscurity and in peace, and down from this his first recognized generation, into the generations of his father and his fathers fathers—is he destined to live in constant fear of his life, and always to be fleeing. Only when the "COOTIE" FLEES entirely will life become again secure and peaceful.

Elucidating further—being Part III.

The "COOTIE", as many would fondly believe, is not a discriminator of race, person or the social scale! HIS versatility is wonderful! He is just as companionable with the white as with the colored soldier. He seems as much at home with those whose chevrons show they came over with the first 10,000; as with any one of the former social lions, who dot the entire millions of the Khaki Clad.

Even the best families have their skeletons, and industriously try to hide them! The best families have their cootie, and just as industriously try to get rid of HIM?

Discussion—Part IV.

With the signing of the armistice and the sudden cessation of the battle's roar, life at first threatened to become dull and uneventful, to the soldiers, lines of whom began winding themselves thru the "Camp of debarkation—HOMEWARD!

The HUN had been chased and obliterated, and the traditional lull, of course, ensued. To save the day, the edict came forth that the "Charming Cootie" must also be chased, sep-

THE CAMP TATTLER.

"Chuck" O'conner is now looking for the Sergeant in charge of the Laundry. Chuck claims his clothes wouldn't fit a good sized wood pecker. Look up Sergeant Pains, Chuck.

The 40 Waacs who are playing at the "Y" Sunday will eat at the 2nd Company Mess. Sergt. Nuckley intends to be on duty all day.

There are at least two or three that dont go on sick call in Barracks number seventeen.

Gene Byrnes of the 5th Co. was referee and time keeper in the many boxing bouts where Ray Dalton was the feature. Some Mess!

The Hon. James Cross of the 5th company is responsible for this:

A man walked into a restaurant and said, "Waiter, bring me some noodle soup, a veal cutlet with tomato sauce, a cream puff, a cup of black coffee, and two doughnuts."

The waiter who had been at the Front yelled, "A bowl of submarines, camouflage the calf, a custard grenade, one in the dark, and two rubber tires."

Camp Mysteries: The Guard.

Tired Man's Friend: The Sick Book.

Hard Training:

A trip over the corduroy road to the shops and back to camp.

Sunshine:

Major McAleer's smile when he is about to give you a stiff call.

Day Dreams:

Hearing the first call and then turning over for another snooze. And along came Ruth.

New K. C. Hut

A hut is being erected in the Evacuation Camp by the Knights of Columbus for the benefit of men in quarantine there, who after being "decootied" are not permitted to mingle with the rest of the men in camp. Sec. Coyne, of the Mehun K. C. is installing a stock of cigarettes, and preparing to serve hot cocoa. Reading and writing material will also be furnished to the men.

arated from the society of the returning soldier—forever, and it is so! Stories have frequently filtered their way back to us of a soldier or an officer stowing himself away and thus returning to the good old U. S. A., but an official report has yet to come back thru, of a SINGLE COOTIE, ever "making the grade."

GLEANINGS FROM THE PRESS

Thirty-nine billion cigarettes were produced in the United States last year.

It is estimated that over 9,000,000 persons in the world have died from Influenza in the present epidemic.

70 percent of the Toluol used by the U. S. Government for TNT came from New York City gas plants.

An amendment to the Army Appropriation Bill, unanimously agreed on by the committee, abolishes all war service chevrons.

More than 3,000 soldiers have recently signed cards at the camps in the U. S. stating that they wished to enter the merchant marine.

More than 700 stores in New York have agreed not to sell German-made goods and are displaying "No German-made Goods Sold Here" signs.

SOCIETY NOTES

Sergt Harry L. Swartz will as usual spend the week end at Madam Petite's. We don't know whether it is Josephine or the egg on Madam's neck.

It has been rumored, that Sergeant Bartelme was again seen at Suzanne's Hotel de Swell last night. Watch your step Overmeyer, he's a mud runner.

Pvt. Richard Basterrechea, the Mexican Mess Hound and King of the Orderlies will spend Saturday and Sunday with the Bull Gang. Nice crowd you travel with Richard old boy.

Sgt. Walter W. Duncan will work as usual Saturday afternoon and Sunday. Get a position Walter or join the Bull Gang your friend Richard will be with you.

New Bath House Pleases All

"Hi! Bill, have you had your February 'bauth' yet? Well come on then 'toot sweeter' and take a chance." Such and similar conversations were heard shortly after the opening of the new Camp Bath House. Equipped with one hundred showers, supplied by a large boiler with "beaucoup" water, it has separate accomodations for enlisted men, white and colored, and also a bath reserved for the officers of the camp. In fact it is all that is to be desired in the way of a bath house. With a new laundry opened recently an epidemic of cleanliness is due to break out in this camp.

TOURS BOXERS WIN DECISIONS

Slightly battered to all outward appearances but just as confident in spirits, the local boxing team returned the first of the week from Tours where they met defeat at the hands of their opponents in the inter-city bouts staged in that city last Friday evening.

Out of six snappy bouts Thompson was the only one able to bring home the honors with a clear decision; this he secured over Sullivan of Tours after three red hot rounds. The Tours lads showed the result of much hard and excellent training and in this point our team displayed its weakness.

Some dissatisfaction is expressed by witnesses over the Dalton-Hamilton exhibition in which Hamilton was awarded the decision after an extra round of fighting. Dalton proved himself the aggressor throughout the entire battle and carried the fight to Hamilton at all times. After the third round the judges were unable to decide and an extra round was fought in which the Tours lad was awarded the honors. Dalton has many strong supporters who are anxious to match the two fighters again, and Tours has consented to send Hamilton here for the return bout.

"Biz" In Shops Personnel Section

Orderly: "Lieutenant Boal, sir."

Lieut. Boal: "Yes. What is it—another memorandum from Lieut. Gaudreau?"

Orderly: "No, sir. Captain Ericson says that John Doe assigned to the warehouse is indispensable and he can't get along without him."

Lieut. B.: Find out who assigned him and report to me.

Orderly: (After a lapse of ten minutes) John Doe was assigned to Captain Ericson by the Camp Personnel, sir, and he has been dead for two weeks.

Lieut. B.: Report that to Captain Ericson.

Orderly: (After a lapse of five minutes) Captain Ericson says, sir, that as long as Doe is dead, he'll take a good healthy laborer instead.

2nd and 3rd Battalions Leave

Last Saturday morning more than twelve hundred men who have spent the past two weeks in the evacuation barracks left camp destined for a port. Everyone realizes that the A. E. F. return machinery is now in operation.

BAND ARRIVES.

Harry Lauder sings, "Its nice to get up in the morning, but nicer to lie in bed," but he hasn't heard the Mehun band.

Here's how it happened; many months ago there was a certain company of Ordnance men known officially as Co. C, 2nd Bn. A. O. B. D. F. That old bogy, "Quarantine," was everlastingly hanging over this company, and it was up to them to provide amusement for themselves. Why not a band? The nucleus of the said band consisted of two cornets, (more or less), manipulated by Cook and Rouley, a broom handled by Mincy, a dish-pan, a drum (department store style), and a number of sticks and broken boxes handled by the acrobatic "Haukshaw" and his following. The result of this whirlwind start was a collection from the boys for more instruments, and finally a band. For many months they awaited official recognition but the time for sailing came and they landed in Mehun. Is-sur-Tille wanted a band badly and the boys were sent up there. There they again awaited official recognition, but before that came, fatigue became so popular that they caught the germ and one morning they fell in for the small arms shop. And there they were when our C. O. found them.

TIME OFF FOR SPORTS.

Athletics is a subject in which all men of sound mind and body are interested and we at Mehun are not the ones to overlook that fact. Interest is begining to revive in athletic sports of all kinds and we are getting into the competitive field in a manner which will bring results. For the ring or the tank, the cinder path or the gridiron, we have the material, and material is the foundation for all successful contests. This interest on the part of the men on this all important subject is approved, and heartily sanctioned by the commanding officer of the camp who has even gone so far as to allow the men who signify their intentions of taking up the games, a period of time off from their regular duties at the shops, in order to practice and get into form for their tryouts. There are all sorts of incentives for the participants in the way of trips to various camps in this vicinity to play match games. An elimination contest will be held in some of the events in order to allow those who have the qualifications to have a try in the A. E. F. finals, probably held in Paris.

CAMP BRIEFS

Elimination boxing contests will be held at Bourges Friday and Saturday evenings.

The new band stand in the area south of the Personnel Office is almost completed.

Watches of the officers and enlisted men may now be repaired at the Optical Repair Shop.

A First Aid Station is being built near the road between the Storehouse and the Small Arms Building.

German guns which have been turned over to the U. S. by the terms of the Armistice are now coming into the Shops.

A fully equipped Shoe Repair Shop is being installed in the rear of the building occupied by the Officers' Barber Shop.

Saturday night is the last chance to see "Buck on Leave," now playing at Bourges. It is being given by the Verneuil M. T. C.

A new Power Station is being installed by the Electrical Division which when completed will furnish the power and light for this camp.

Monday, four French women were placed at work in the Post Laundry. They are being used for sorting, marking, and folding clothes.

Two hundred Chinese laborers arrived in camp last Saturday. They are commanded by Lieut. Holland of the Army Service Corps. With him are 16 non-coms and two interpreters. The chinks will be used on road building and similar outside work.

MOTOR TRANSPORT SERVICE

On Feb. 13th, the Ordnance Repair Shop established a Motor Transport Division which controls, operates and repairs all motor transportation for the post, in which is included, 10 and 5 ton tractors, Dodge light delivery trucks, 1 1-2 ton G. M. C. and light aviation trucks, 3 ton heavy aviation trucks, side cars, reconnaissance and observation cars.

VAUDEVILLE NEXT WEEK

Beginning Monday, Feb. 17th, "The Ordnance Revue" a vaudeville show of eight acts, will appear for a week's engagement at the Y. M. C. A. A complete orchestra and cast composed of five women, four Commissioned Officers, and twenty-five enlisted men feature the bill.

Women Increase Shop Production

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the French government, showing that they were not employed on some work connected with their own government.

Means of housing the women was one of the greatest difficulties to overcome, for in other camps of France such workers were provided separate barracks guarded by an enclosure, but the need of all this was overcome by the use of motor trucks to haul the women to and from work. As the majority of the workers are either permanent or temporary residents of the city of Mehun, thru this arrangement they are permitted to live at home and yet work in the shops. Each provides herself with a noon lunch and eats it in a comfortable lunch and rest room.

During the working day and while on the post, they are subject to practically the same regulations as the soldiers, being required to do the same number of hours work and must obey the department and post rules, and in turn they have one of their own number who acts as timekeeper and looks after their general welfare. It is possible that a limited number may be taken into other departments, as they become adapted to the work. Already four have been assigned to the camp laundry, where their work is showing good results.

Their wages are based on prices commonly paid to women employed in the different industries of the region, and are fixed by the French authorities. The present wage is six francs for a ten hour day with a possible increase after the first month.

In speaking of their work here and their connection with the small arms department Captain Tompkins spoke enthusiastically of the matter. "They seem to go about their work with a snap," said he; and added "it does not seem to make any difference whether they are assembling or packing arms, they get along equally well." They will likely be kept in this department for some months.

COMMISSARY NOTES

The recently opened Sales Commissary is doing "big business." At present the candy and cakes are finite, but some are expected soon. The commissary is opened from 9 a. m. until noon on Sundays. A fresh stock of jam and fruits is on hand.

Camp Laundry Proves Success

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first received. Each "customer" receives a serial mark which he retains as long as he is in camp. White goods are then separated from the colored, which are washed separately. After washing and rinsing, clothes go to the Extractor, in which a large per cent of the water is removed by centrifugal force. Remaining moisture is removed by thirty minutes in the Dryer, where the "wash" is kept moving in a revolving drum heated to a temperature of 240 degrees by steam coils. The next move is to the folding tables where each item is rechecked against the original tag and the bundles are tied up ready to be delivered to an expectant soldier who is wondering if he is going to get that pass to Bourges.

The position of General Manager is filled by Lieut. D. D. Hathorn, ex-lawyer and machine gun expert. Beaucoup francs pass through his hands. He says, "all the torn franc notes that the 'Y' and 'Marguerites' refuse are given to the laundry." In addition the Lieut. said, "tell the boys that, if they will mark their bundles plainly and tie them securely they will have less lost clothing and also earn the eternal gratitude of the laundry personnel."

Any soldier who has done his "wash" in a gallon syrup can will gladly tell you all the advantages of a first class laundry. The men of Camp Mehun are fortunate in having the only laundry in the A. E. F. equipped entirely with the latest machinery and run solely for the needs of the soldier, and from the way the bundles pile up they are making the most of their opportunity.

Y. M. C. A. NEWS

Friday evening: Vaudeville show by 7th Co., O. R. S. D.

The Battle of Bourges which was to be given Sunday has been postponed until Sunday, Feb. 23rd on account of sickness.

"Goldfish and Willie" is the title of a musical revue, depicting the soldier's life at Mehun, that will be shown at the "Y" soon. This show is being written and directed by Corporal H. L. Miller aided by a cast of men from the O. R. S. D., and some original songs "Right off the Griddle" of "Tin Pan Alley" are included.

Classes in beginner's French meet each Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:30 P. M.