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I first heard of Joe Lennon during the summer of 1917, in France. With some hundred other disgruntled young men I had been making military history by serving as a stretcher bearer with Base Hospital Unit No. 21 of Washington University, which was operating British Hospital No. 12 on a race track in the suburbs of Rouen. One afternoon in the latter part of July, an overworked nursing staff and an inadequate enlisted personnel were cheered by the announcement that reinforcements for the Unit were being recruited in St. Louis and would be sent overseas as soon as possible.

That evening Holland (Chappy) Chalfant and I found Private John Henry Higgins brooding over a bottle of Dubonnet in a cafe on the Route d'Elbeuf, a highway leading to Rouen. Higgins, sometimes known as 'Ungry Enry Jiggins, had a positive talent for brooding. Scarcely a day passed without leaving him food for somber meditation. He had been known, among other things, to shed bibulous tears over the British losses on the Somme, the piano solos of Toby Dunville, and the mercenary spirit of the mademoiselles in the cafes along the rue Grand Pont. The sight of Higgins, lost in gloomy reverie, had become part of our daily routine, but on this particular evening his dejection was so marked as to arouse our curiosity.

"Why so blue?" inquired Chalfant. "You have almost a full bottle of wine." Higgins sighed, as only Higgins could sigh, and gave us a look of mingled distaste and reproach. "It isn't the contents of the bottle that's worrying me," he replied. "When it's empty I can buy another—my account is still good with madame—which is more than I can say for some people I know."

Ignoring his unkind reflection on our local credit rating, we seated ourselves beside him. Chalfant called for two more glasses, helped himself to a fag from a package of Woodbines, and turned to our newly elected host. "Cheer up, old boy," he urged. "What reason have you to be sad? You are in excellent company—we have a bottle of wine—and as a clerk in the company office you're excused from stretcher bearing duty. What more can you want in a world that's crumbling to bits about our ears?"

Higgins gulped a mouthful of wine, shook his head, and gazed at us with misty eyes. "It's no joke, fellows," he explained. "I've just learned that a young friend of mine—a kid named Joe Lennon—is coming over here with the reinforcements. I advised him against it but he wouldn't listen. And the worst of it is, I'm certain he enlisted just to be with me. If he comes to any harm, I'll always feel that it was partially my fault. He's too young for the army."

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We filled our glasses and solemnly agreed with Private Higgins. A kid like that should stay at home. The United States had plenty of grown men to shoulder the burden of war; it seemed a pity that a mere lad should throw his merry youth away for peasant girls and watered cognac. From Higgins' description of Lennon we pictured a frail, idealistic youngster who had somehow managed to slip past a careless recruiting officer—and, draining the last drop from the bottle, we promised to assist in lending aid and comfort to the boy upon his arrival in Rouen.

However, during the weeks that followed, it was apparent that our pledges of cooperation brought no solace to Private Higgins. The mere mention of Lennon was sufficient to plunge him in gloom. "That poor kid," he would murmur. "Think of him, three thousand miles from home. Just a babe in the woods." My reminder, during one of our talks, that as an enlisted man in General 12, Lennon's greatest danger would be indigestion, resulted in a five minute lecture on my lack of finer feelings.

Summer bade farewell to Normandy; clouds of swirling brown leaves replaced the roses along Route d'Elbeuf, and log fires lent a cheerful glow to our favorite estaminets. Word came that the reinforcements had sailed from New York. A few weeks later, on the morning of November 5, the train officer at Rouen telephoned the long-awaited news; our future comrades had arrived from Le Havre during the night and would start on foot for General 12 within the hour.

Higgins, Chalfant, and I gulped a hasty breakfast and hurried to the hospital entrance. Practically the entire personnel had turned out to greet the newcomers. Scattered among the Americans were British officers and nurses, rosy-cheeked girls of the Volunteer Aid Detachment, convalescent patients in "hospital blues," with a sprinkling of Tommies and kilted Scots—all intent on making the most of the interlude in the dull hospital routine. After what seemed an interminable wait, a raucous cheer arose in the distance and a moment later a plodding column of khaki appeared at the bend of the muddy road leading from Route d'Elbeuf. The reinforcements had reached their destination.

As they marched across the race course, Higgins turned excitedly to Chalfant and me. "Look, fellows! he exclaimed. There's Joe—the number one man in the first squad. Thank heaven, he's arrived safely."

We saw a burly, square-shouldered private stepping through the slush with the jaunty tread of a lightweight boxer. He had flaxen hair, clear blue eyes and a pugnacious chin, softened by a dimple; muscles bulged beneath his khaki uniform. Upon his broad back hung three army packs, his own, and two belonging to comrades who had faltered beneath the load.* As the squad passed a group of officers, the blonde Hercules threw back his head and roared, "When do we eat?"

*The extra packs carried by Lennon belonged to "Violet" Kohn and Jimmy Costen, two gallant sons of Arkansas.
We followed him with unbelieving eyes until his massive figure was lost to view between two rows of tents. There was a silence for a moment; then Chalfant turned to Higgins. "I don't want to make a mistake," he said with ominous softness, "you say that albino brute in khaki is Joe—the tender lad you've been worrying yourself and us about all these months?" Higgins freckled face was diffused with a tender glow. "Yes," he murmured, "That's Joe—young Joe Lennon. If you'll excuse me I must go to him. He's probably lonely."

Perhaps the sudden gleam in Chalfant's eye warned Higgins to duck. Or perhaps overeagerness impaired our judgment of distance. At any rate, we swung at him simultaneously—and missed. Before we could get near him again he vaulted over a nearby hedge and, with a burst of speed worthy of Glenn Cunningham, managed to reach the sanctuary of the First Sergeant's office a few feet ahead of us.

We met him a week later in the same cafe on Route d'Elbeuf. He was slumped in a chair, a bottle of Dubonnet stood on the table, and we knew at a glance that Melancholy had again claimed him for her own. "What is it now?" I inquired. "Won't Junior Lennon take his cod liver oil?" He drained his glass and gave me a sorrowful glance. "It's nothing to joke about," he announced in a sepulchral voice. "I've just heard a rumor that the outfit may be sent to Alexandria with the British." He shook his head with grim foreboding. "I tell you fellows—it's hell to die in Egypt."

LENNON TO RUN FOR CIRCUIT ATTORNEY

According to a recent story in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Joseph A. Lennon, special assistant to the Attorney General, has entered the picture as a possible candidate for the Democratic nomination for Circuit Attorney. Lennon declined to comment publicly but it is known he has been visited by members of the Democratic City Committee and other leaders who have urged him to enter the race.

Lennon is a former assistant Circuit Attorney, having served under Franklin Miller, the incumbent, from January, 1929, to August, 1933, when he resigned to enter private law practice and to become affiliated with the Attorney General's staff. In 1934 Lennon was nominated for Congress from the Thirteenth District, but withdrew following the defeat of Congressman John J. Cochran, for the nomination of United States Senator. Cochran was then placed on the ticket by the Thirteenth Congressional District Committee.

Lennon's career as Assistant Attorney General was marked by a bitter battle with "Piano Sergeant" Toby Dunville, over the latter's refusal to pay a two-cent income tax assessed against him by the State. Reams of stationery and several dollars worth of stamps were used in a lengthy exchange of insulting correspondence which lasted until Dunville admitted defeat.

Mr. Engel:

Attached hereto my check for the Rouen Post, which I want to assure you is gratefully received. It would certainly be a pleasure to drop in on one of your meetings and to chat with the old gang. I get occasional news from Bill of the fellows, but our letters to each other are usually about six months apart.

404 N. Del Mar Ave., San Gabriel, Cal.  Elmer L. Wright
ANOTHER EXPLANATION FROM DUNVILLE

Dear Bill:

Have just read with considerable interest, the January, 1940 issue of the Rouen Post and have arrived at the conclusion that you—like most editors are in arrears as to facts.

My records show that I paid the two cents tax to the State of Missouri on December 9, 1938. While Lennon congratulates himself on the swell job he has done as collector it would be interesting to know how much the State of Missouri spent in collecting the unjust two cent claim imposed upon me.

As to the reason for my promotion to the rank of sergeant [Dunville has been trying to explain his promotion for twenty-two years], may I assure you that while my talent as a musician, undoubtedly caused me to stand out above the lowbrows in Unit 21—my sergeant's stripes were based on merits that ranked me as one of Pershing's best.

Toby Dunville

Dear Mr. Engel:

This is a beautiful place and every one has been very considerate. The surroundings are ideal for one who is unable to work but does not need to be hospitalized. There is nothing to do but rest. My pension has been allowed from September, 1939, when I entered Hospital 92 at Jefferson Barracks, and I am being provided with domiciliary care. Words cannot express my appreciation for what you and Mr. Jablonsky did in my behalf.

Now that I am in a position to do so I would like to join Rouen Post No. 242. I have always enjoyed the paper.

Emma C. Ammon

Mrs. Ella Estes Duncan, former Unit 21 nurse, who has been a patient at Brown Hospital in Dayton, Ohio, for the past eight years, has been seriously ill since Thanksgiving Day.

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed find dues for 1940, or from now until November 13, 1940. I am sorry to have missed the celebration on Armistice Day. However, Dr. Pete Eyermann reported to me that an enjoyable time was had by all.

Dolly Belle Schmidt Proctor

Dear Friends:

Enclosed please find check for my 1940 dues. I enjoy reading the Rouen Post. Keep up the good work. Hope you have a nice time at the Mobile Hospital 4 meeting in January.

Marie Kammeyer Stockhaus

NEXT MEETING—MONDAY, MARCH 11, 1940

GARAVELLI'S RESTAURANT