P. H. BYRNS DEFENDS VETERANS

In an Armistice Day radio address, P. H. Byrns, executive secretary of the St. Louis Chapter, American Red Cross, scored the sentiment prevalent in many quarters that the world war veteran is a greedy parasite living on the fruits of extravagant public compensation.

"Those who have followed the services of the American Red Cross may think that with all the different benefits given the veterans there would be no excuse for any of them to be leading anything but happy, well-adjusted lives," Byrns said. "I wish that were true, but it isn't. War and its inevitable aftermath of depression and unemployment is something that no social agency, however well equipped and staffed, can counteract, and no one can call the compensation now being given for that suffering anywhere near indulgent."

Byrns cited statistics showing nine out of every ten veterans draw no compensation. For those who do draw compensation, he said, the average amount is less than $40 a month. "And how far is $40 a month going to go toward supporting a family?" he asked.

Byrns said it is a constant source of amazement to the Red Cross staff to see how many veterans hesitate to apply for compensation even though they could readily establish their eligibility.

ROUEN POST INSTALLS OFFICERS

The newly elected officers of Rouen Post, No. 242, American Legion, were installed at a meeting held in the Disabled Veterans' Hall, 3737 West Pine Boulevard, on the evening of October 18. The installation was conducted by Thomas Dowling, past commander of Aubuchon-Dennison Post No. 186. Other visitors were: Edwin Frankmann, commander Aubuchon-Dennison Post; William (Scotty) Kelso, past commander of the same organization; William Kramer, past commander 128th Field Artillery Post; William Pickens, Webster Groves Memorial Post. Dowling is also former chairman of the St. Louis Commander's Conference and past department advocate of Missouri. Pickens, a former sergeant in the British army, served with the 78th Field Artillery in the American Expeditionary Forces in France.

Miss Anna Robinson, a member of Quentin Roosevelt Post No. 1, was the guest of Mrs. Mae Auerbach Gluck. Miss Robinson served in Poland with the American Red Cross prior to America's entrance into the war. She was later one of the original members of Base Hospital Unit 21, but ill health prevented her from accompanying the Unit to France.

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THE ROUEN POST

A NOD FROM BLACKPOOL

The story, "Rare Days in June," which ran in the June issue of the Rouen Post, was reprinted in the Gazette & Herald of Blackpool, England, on October 19. The story was featured in a three column illustrated layout occupying one third of a full page with an explanatory box giving facts about your Editor, the Rouen Post, and Base Hospital Unit 21. A photograph above the article showed members of an American Medical unit amusing themselves with a donkey on the sands in the early summer of 1917.

Enclosed with a copy of the paper sent to us was a printed card of thanks “for a very acceptable contribution,” supplemented by a personal message from the Editor: “Blackpool is carrying on. Good luck to you.”

REV. EDWARDS CARRIES ON

From a letter to Bill Engel.

“You would be proud of Rev. J. R. Edwards if you could see him today—proud that you have known him and worked with him. He is a hero and Mrs. Edwards is equally brave. His district has been badly bombed but he and his wife are sticking to their job like real soldiers. The Edwards home has become a dormitory—a sanctuary where lonely and nervous folk find comfort in just being under its roof. At times the Edwards’ very own bed is given up to those who need it more. Every time I go to London I fear I shall learn that he has become a victim, but it would almost seem that the faith he inspires in others, even if not capable of moving mountains, certainly alters the direction of enemy bombs.

“We laugh in the midst of our ruined homes. It’s all we can do. But don’t think that our hearts aren’t aching. A battalion of the London-Irish regiment has just passed my window with bagpipe band and drums playing a popular song that expresses the sentiment of us all:

"There will always be an England,  
And England shall be free,  
If England means as much to you  
As England means to me."

WILLIAM V. DAWKINGS

ARMISTICE DAY

Another Armistice day has come again, reviving poignant memories of the war to end all wars. In Europe there will be no joyous victory bells on this November 11, “only the monstrous anger of the guns” proclaiming the futility of the World War; the sacrifice of those who died in vain to make the world safe for future generations.

“In No-Man’s Land, I wonder now  
If phantom millions meet at night  
To talk of old-time years at home  
Before they toppled in the fight?  
Of one who waited through the dusk  
When summer winds were on the wing?  
Or are they happy now to know  
The sleep that only graves can bring.”
There are three hospital units under British supervision on the race track at Rouen. The first as you enter is staffed by an Australian unit and cares for British soldiers. The second is operated by an English unit and cares for German prisoners, the third is our own American unit and we take care of the Tommies. We have the choice location as our grounds include the grand-stands and stables which seem to lend an air of stability to our wooden huts and tents. The enlisted men of Unit 21 live somewhere in the stands—underneath or on top. I've not investigated, of course. Later they are to have huts but as yet the latter are only blue-prints. The officers occupy frame one-room efficiencies, in a long right angled building running along the road and across one corner of the yard behind the first grandstand.

In the far corner where the stables stand, live the sisters. The place seems a wilderness of wooden shacks to us now but in time we hope to be able to sort them out and know them for homes and mess hut and recreation hut. We do know the kitchen, however, for that is where our good bully beef is uncanned and where we get hot water to bathe; where Peter snores by the fire and Armentine reigns supreme amidst her pots and pans. That my friends, is the stable.

There is a wide green between the hospital and our quarters and in peace times the ladies and their beaux promenade there. One finds no ladies here now—only troops and husky females. The “originals” live in large huts divided into cubicles by burlap partitions and each hut shelters ten nurses. They have privacy for dressing and bathing, to be sure, but they cannot sneeze without broadcasting the fact. We reinforcements will have small huts, four in each. The nurses aides of the Volunteer Aid Detachment, whom we are to replace, have lived in them and we shall move in as soon as they depart. Olive Meyer, Edith Ferguson, Estelle Burch and I are to be together and we are anxious to get settled. I am not so tired as I was the first few days and my feet seem to have returned to normal.

Each large hut has a big stove that keeps it quite warm and there is room for a few benches and chairs so the sisters can prop up their tired, cold feet and rest. The small huts have small stoves and we yearn for an adjacent woodpile which would enable us to supplement the daily issue of one pail of coal. We are wondering how far one pail will go, but when it goes, no doubt we shall go to bed.

The bathing facilities are not so bad. Recently a bathroom has been added at the end of each two huts. We can have a tub bath two nights a week. It is quite like bathing in the wood shed but at least the tub is a bath tub instead of the old style wash tub.

Kate Murphy and I are just back from a walk in the pine forest where Miss Stimson recommends that we stroll to “rest our souls.” Just now I am more concerned with
my feet—but the forest is really beautiful. The trees are very high, the trunks green at the bottom, old rose near the top, and the foliage green and thick. The trees are planted like Illinois corn, a straight row in every direction. There is a marked absence of undergrowth and deadwood as the peasants use it for firewood. One sees old women carrying twigs and branches on their backs, frequently piled as high as the women are tall.

Last night the St. Luke's nurses in the original unit entertained the St. Luke's nurses of the reinforcements at dinner in Rouen. There were twenty-five women present and all we lacked was a graduating class to give the affair the atmosphere of a commencement banquet. In a way it is a commencement though we are not sure what we are commencing.

(DIXIE HOLIDAY)

Marvin Hamilton, commander of Rouen Post, is still telling patient listeners about his recent motor trip through the South—a leisurely vacation tour, punctuated by reunions with former army friends. Accompanied by Mrs. Hamilton and the latter's aunt, Miss M. Dahman, Hamilton called on Sergeant Rogger Puckett, superintendent of the National Cemetery at Natchez, wandered through the Vieux Carre with Jones Davis in New Orleans, and stopped at West Palm Beach for a breakfast on the pier with Charles Fox.

At Natchez, a filling station attendant, who directed Hamilton to Puckett's residence, remarked that the "Major" still had his old white horse. "What white horse?" inquired Hamilton. "You know," said the attendant, "The white horse he rode in France."

A few minutes later the Hamiltons were exchanging greetings with Mrs. Puckett and Rogger, who hastily donned shoes and a shirt to welcome his unexpected callers. At the first opportunity Hamilton drew Puckett aside. "Major," he grinned, "I understand you still have the horse you rode in France." Puckett sputtered, as of old, and waved his pipe in protest. "That's a lot of nonsense," he snapped. "But the horse was in France—served with the First Division. He was brought back to Washington to march in the Victory Parade in 1918, and I later bought him from the Government. Come on out and meet him."

Hamilton followed his host to a lot in the rear of the house where an elderly horse of Percheron build was munching grass. As the men approached, he stopped grazing and greeted them with a dignified nod. "There he is!" pointed Puckett proudly. "Isn't he a fine horse?" Hamilton observed that the animal was a bit fat around the hips. "Well, what do you expect?" bristled the former sergeant. "After all, he's twenty-eight years old. He used to get some exercise pulling the lawn mower but since we bought an electric grass cutter last year the old boy just takes it easy. Follows me around like a dog."

After a visit to an ante-bellum home, and the disillusioning discovery that the widely advertised Natchez garden clubs feature ancient homes instead of flowers, the Hamiltons and Miss Dahman drove to New Orleans where they spent a few hours with Jones Davis who served with Marvin and Tom Simpson in the pharmacy of General Hospital 12. Davis, local manager for Parke-Davis Drug Company, heads a staff of 33 employees. He told Hamilton of attending a dinner for Parke-Davis managers at Detroit several years ago. At the head table sat a prominent Detroit physician whose face seemed vaguely familiar to Davis. Inquiry revealed that the familiar visage was the property of Dr. Fred T. Murphy, a former commander of Base Hospital 21.