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CAKE FOR JABLONSKY

A fifteen-pound cake greeted Charles Jablonsky upon his arrival at the Rouen Post meeting, February 11, at Garavelli’s restaurant. The cake, a deep two-layer mound of pastry, heavily frosted and decorated with candy hearts and Cupids of various sizes, was surmounted by a large chocolate Cupid with sergeant chevrons stamped on its buttocks and the word “Jabby” written in icing across a pumpkin-like abdomen.

Jablonsky was elated over the unexpected gift, but his efforts to learn the identity of the donor proved futile. His fellow members stoutly denied all knowledge of the thoughtful gesture and when the puzzled deputy jury commissioner finally headed for home with the cake he harbored a strong suspicion that its tempting exterior covered an unpleasant surprise.

“I fully expected to find it packed with sawdust or fuller’s earth,” admitted Jabby the following day. “But, believe it or not, it was as fine a cake as I’ve ever tasted. However, the thing that puzzles me is—who sent it—and why.”

Another highlight of the evening was the unexplained appearance of a scrapbook of comic valentines, each mounted, on an embellished page, beneath the name of a Rouen Post member. It represented considerable thought and work on the part of the compiler who preferred to remain anonymous.

Two sound films, produced by the Dodge Motor Car Company, were shown. “The Army On Wheels,” a film of preparedness on parade, showed Dodge trucks transporting an entire army—guns, airplanes, troops—all in action, and included the first official motion picture of the United States mechanized forces in defense maneuvers.

“Wheels Across India” gave the audience a glimpse of life in the jungles of India, and in fast-moving sequences presented devil dancers, giraffe-necked women, monkey temples and the weird Indian ritual of courting and kissing a deadly King Cobra.

Your Editor has just been informed by the Post’s special agents that the cake presented to Jablonsky was baked by Mrs. James Sallee. But the motive prompting such generosity to a former top-sergeant has not been revealed. “I can’t understand anyone going to the trouble of baking a beautiful cake for Jabby when a five-cent sack of ginger snaps would served whatever purpose the donor had in mind,” commented Bill Engel. “Such altruism is a waste of time comparable to introducing Thomas Toby Dunville to the thrill of a flaming sword dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel. He’d probably call for a plate of chili mac.”

FEBRUARY, 1941
The November and December issues of the Rouen Post arrived this morning, for which many thanks. You are doing a better job each succeeding month.

Reading Miss Snyder's wartime recollections reminds me of the night I tried to spot the air raiders with my trusty flashlight. That was shortly after Dr. Proetz and I had held a session with a bottle of green chartreuse and I had filled small flasks for several of the nurses to help them while away the time in their trenches during air raid alert. Retta didn't mention that phase of the nurses' duty, or at least she hasn't as yet. She referred to old Peter snoring by the kitchen fire. I've just gone through a lot of Base Hospital 21 pictures and am enclosing a snapshot of Peter. Thought you might want to run it and find out how many remember the old rascal.*

Sorry I missed the Armistice party at Dr. Ernst's home. I received the notice and a special invitation from Eddie but had accepted an invitation to make an Armistice Day talk at Jonesboro, Ark.

Kindest personal regards to you and all the old gang.

Fayetteville, Ark. Allen Gilbert, M. D.

*The snapshot of Peter was not sharp enough for reproduction.
Miss Lulu Bender leaves for Paris tomorrow, enroute to Washington, D. C. Out of a clear sky came an order from the Government, and she has no idea what she has to do. Miss Bender has done splendid work in the mess and we shall miss her. She is the first to be ordered back so far. ** * * *

I am jotting down a few lines while I freeze my feet in a bowl of cold water to avoid chilblains. Edith Ferguson unpacked her trunk today and we are still roaring over the contents. A tulle party dress, pink silk stockings and sheer nighties. In this climate, where we are clothed in wool inside and out. Believe me we are glad wool exists, or we wouldn't.

We are finally getting our hut in a livable condition though it is still far from finished. We had our burlap curtains up and I had bought a small rug for my cubicle when the order came to take the curtains down as the stoves are in and curtains are dangerous. We are trying to sell the rug and buy a larger one. ** * * *

Olive Meyer is coming back from Sick Sisters' Hospital and I have not done half I had planned. I bought some beautiful material for drapes and I like it far better than the cretonne the girls have been buying. So far I have only my packing-box dressing table draped. Our wash stands have not arrived. I am making overdrapes of the same material for the window, with a valance. On my cot is a knitted cover Harlan Marshall was given to place in a useful spot—and she did. She loaned it to me at first and then gave it to me. It is a beautiful thing, all colors of the rainbow. My crocheted rug is on the floor and when I get through the place will look like a Wallace Nutting picture.

We had a pleasant surprise last week. During our stay in New York, Olive, Edith, Estelle and I became very friendly with four girls in the Buffalo Unit on Ellis Island. Friday there was a telephone message for Miss Russell that Miss Barr, one of the Buffalo girls, would spend Saturday in Rouen. Miss Russell, a close friend of Miss Barr, came over in June. We were elated at the thought of seeing Miss Barr again and hoped that the other girls would accompany her. Miss Russell took the day off and I was excused from duty until 1 p.m. We hurried to Rouen and to our pleased surprise the four girls greeted us. They were on Ellis a month after we left and had just landed in France.

They saw a lot that day. We showed them the Cathedral St. Ouen, with its interesting outside balcony, escorted them through the narrow, winding streets, had chocolate and pastry in a quaint tea room and window-shopped along the Rue Grand Pont. We returned to camp for lunch and I reluctantly went on duty until 4:30. ** * * *

After lunch the visitors were shown over the camp, introduced to the impressive beauty of the nearby forest, and returned for a visit with Miss Stimson. We gathered up a party, twelve in all, and went to the city for dinner at Hotel de la Post. Some of our doctors were at the hotel and while they chatted with the girls, two of us ordered the dinner. Our guests left about eight o'clock and we saw them to the train with great reluctance. They knew where they were bound for. The Detroit Unit is already there.  

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We have had some nipping weather this week. As the British say, “It is a bit sharp.” Sharp! Our water pitchers half full of water are frozen solid overnight. It was much warmer this morning—only about a half inch of ice. My family would be amazed to see me hop out in the morning and start the fires. Rather than get up, the other three inmates of the hut would dress in the cold—but not little Retta. I light both oil stoves and the capsule. If I wake early we get quite a respectable blaze by six-thirty.

WILLIAMS PRESIDES AT FLAG CEREMONY

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has adopted the custom of displaying the American flag in the public lobby of every District and Detached Office in the United States. National flags of appropriate proportions, with poles and floor stands, are provided by the Company. As the flags were received by the Districts in many parts of the field, the raising of the banner was made an occasion for a patriotic ceremony in which all members of the staff participated.

In St. Louis, Ritchey P. Williams, assistant manager, presided at the Mound City District dedication, assisted by his two Boy Scout sons, Edgar and Ritchey. With the staff assembled, Williams read the American Creed and spoke on the history of the flag. Edgar Williams led in the Pledge to the Flag and his brother Ritchey, Jr. recited “The Flag Goes By.”

Williams, who has been in the employ of the Metropolitan Company for the past eighteen years, is finance officer of Rouen Post No. 242, American Legion, an office he has held since the inception of that organization five years ago.

BULLETIN BOARD

We recently came into possession of two weird photographs of Bill Engel and Pat Byrns which were taken for official records at the time of their enlistment in Base Hospital Unit 21. Owing to the mirth-provoking qualities of these pictures we are tempted to run them in some future issue of the Rouen Post—and unless Engel and Byrns make us a prompt offer of a cash settlement—our readers will be presented with as fantastic a pair of pans as have been recorded by a camera.

Retta Snyder, whose wartime recollections have been a recent feature in the Rouen Post, has received her first fan letter. Saidee Housmann, Superintendent of the Rosiclaire (Ill.), Hospital, writes that she is thoroughly enjoying the journey down Memory Lane with Retta.

Harold (Old Folks) Jolley, vice-president at Boatmen’s Bank, has been elected a member of the Board of Directors, St. Louis Chapter, American Red Cross . . . Mrs. Lulu Bender Wimmer, of Cuba, Mo., is still a patient at the Veterans Hospital as the result of injuries suffered in an automobile accident last September. Her condition is critical . . . Charles Koch, South Side baker, was recently elected vice-president of the National Bakers’ Association . . . J. B. Townsend, former incinerator engineer in General Hospital 12, was among the Nebraska rooters at the Rose Bowl game. Townsend resides in Lincoln . . . David Millar, “The King’s Runner” of Rouen interest in traffic safety the toll of dead and maimed is steadily mounting.