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The Rouen Post, August 1944

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COMMENDATION

Dear Bill,

Enclosed is a very curious commendation for a medical officer or unit, but it seems to have become very interesting to the Engineers in this area. I heard about it again from an engineer last evening. The so-called "Cady Tar-Paper-Chicken-Wire Sandwich" originated almost as much in jest as in sincerity. We needed a building in Africa. There was too little material except adobe, mud, straw to secure laborious results. We couldn’t wait for that, so I made some facetious remark about using chicken-wire, newspapers, tar-paper, or something of the sort. All we needed, I said, was something to keep the sun, wind and rain out, so what difference did it make about rigidity of walls, or even of the roof? The Engineers and my Quartermaster Officer did the rest of it.

When one has to have a semi-mobile community of around 3000 to 5000 people on his mind, he is more or less the mayor as well as the dog-catcher. More forms of improvisation there-to-fore unimagined by those responsible come out of the magician’s hat somehow.

The juke-box which Colonel Veeder and the Red Cross, and others, were so kind to forward to us we know got over to the 70th General Hospital. I have written to Curt Lohr there that I have him surrounded, and the fact that the crate was not sufficiently stable to ship the box any further was no good reason we shouldn’t have it. Any hospital ship plying between his port and here would be glad to have the use of it enroute and then turn it over to us here. I’ll “sic” my Chow Hounds on ‘em when they go back to Africa.

Inasmuch as our “Chow Hounds” won the championship baseball league of PBS last evening, they may get a chance to play on one of Mussolini’s immense athletic fields to ascertain how much further fame the “Fighting 21st” may gain in its athletic prowess. As a matter of fact, the boys have a good chance to even get an air trip. They are being feted tonight at their mess which is contiguous to the "21 Club", or the "Giraffe Barn". There is a fine bar in it and a lighted-up skyline of NYC with Old Glory and the Statue of Liberty in the background. This club is “private” and is a good place for letting off G.I. gripes and steam. It is as nice as anything the officers have, and it is said, has a better selection of drinks, and even a better bartender. I’ve never yet dared try one of his "Litter Bearers’ Specials."

We have been doing, as usual, a tremendous amount of work; in fact, everybody in the now expanded outfit has been on the ball all the time and making a full-time job of whatever he is supposed to do.

We are following the news in France very carefully, but it rather looks that the war is going to move more rapidly this fall and winter than it did last, so speculation is rife about what they will all be doing in a short while.

I am very glad you reconsidered your resignation and that you are still on the job editing the Post.

Best personal wishes, Lee D. Cady

Italy, August 19
In Reply
Refer to

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN BASE SECTION
UNITED STATES ARMY
Office of The Commanding General

AGD 330.13 BMENG—M
SUBJECT: Commendation.
THRU : Commanding General, SOS NATOUSA, APO 750, U. S. Army.
TO : Commanding Officer, 21st General Hospital, APO 782, U. S. Army.

1. Last summer, during a visit by a representative of this headquarters to your unit, then located at Bou Hanifia, a new type "sandwich" construction was observed on several buildings. The advantages of this new method of siding were obvious and the MBS Engineer Section ran various tests and experimented with the "sandwich" to develop the most effective means of utilizing it. As a result, two standard types of "tar-paper chicken wire sandwich" were developed and applied to construction projects in MBS as early as October, 1943.

2. Since that time the method has been used in the construction of many site-construction buildings in this area. Included are warehouses, mess-halls, kitchens, latrines, recreation halls and shops. Due to its many advantages a directive was published by HQ, SOS NATOUSA to all Base Sections in this theater advocating its use whenever possible. It has been estimated that use of the new construction method instead of standard T/O construction results in an average saving in shipping of 40% by volume or weight.

3. The foregoing results reflect great credit on those members of the unit responsible for the initial utilization of the "sandwich" in their own utilities and construction work. The large scale applications evolved from their small usage have resulted in a great saving of vitally needed shipping space and a conservation of construction materials. It is a pleasure to commend the commanding officer and personnel of the 21st General Hospital for their initiative and ingenuity.

s/ F. F. Koenig,
t/ F. F. KOENIG,
Colonel, Infantry,
Commanding.

MRS. ERMA PERHAM PROETZ

Mrs. Erma Perham Proetz, executive vice-president of the Gardner Advertising Company, died August 7 at her home in St. Louis after a long illness. She was 53 years of age.

Three times winner, in 1924, 1925, and 1927, of the Harvard Advertising Award for the advertising of the Pet Milk Company, Mrs. Proetz was designated by Fortune Magazine in 1937 as one of "16 of America's most representative business women occupying executive chairs in the industrial field largely occupied by women," and the magazine described her as "one of the best feminine advertising counsel in the country."

She is survived by her husband, Dr. Arthur W. Proetz, a nationally known laryngologist. Dr. Proetz served with Base Hospital Unit 21 during World War I.

Funeral services were private.

MARINER CROISSANT

My trip across was quite an experience. We left the States at dusk and, after a complicated zig-zag course through mine fields, found ourselves in that vast expanse of water known as the Pacific. I shared a cabin with the gunnery officer and together we trained the merchant crew on anti-air protection. They proved apt pupils and quickly learned to take apart and assemble the 50 calibre machine guns.

Our boat was a cargo vessel on her maiden voyage; a speedy craft with all modern equipment, she proved to be a true lady of her class. As she sailed Southward we encountered no boats or planes and the crew settled down to the routine of an uneventful crossing. A hot main engine bearing caused a bit of trouble but was soon repaired; however the refrigerator became a constant worry to the steward in charge. A faulty expansion valve made it difficult to control the temperature and as the box contained valuable serums and medicines it required constant attention to keep the contents from spoiling.

We eventually went "down under" and having been a "pollywog" for years—since my Navy service—I was made a shellback and gathered into the fold of Neptune Rex with all the usual razzing.

Two days later we ran into a storm. The wind was terrific, spray drenched the decks, and we were forced to go from rail to ropes, stretched along deck, to keep our feet. Our
watches grew harder to stand and the serving of meals became increasingly difficult. A plane case forward was bashed in by the "green" rushing over the bow. Boards and tar paper, ripped from the lashed-down deck cargo, sailed through the air and hit the deck housing with a bang. The boat really took a beating but came through in true sailor fashion.

This lasted for several hours then the wind died away, the sea calmed down and we drifted back to our old routine. Card games at night in the wardroom, a game of chess with the captain, and cheese and coffee before retiring. At times, when I grew restless, I would share a watch with one of the junior officers. Now and then a bright star or a flash of lightning would be mistaken for a ship and a piece of debris in the wake of the boat was a source of concern to the gun crews until identified. Our guns were manned with amazing speed. The young and agile gun crews were usually on the "alert" by the time the whistle stopped sounding the general alarm.

Aside from being diverted from our course on one occasion in the Tasmania Sea the rest of the voyage proved uneventful and we reached port with our cargo intact. This is quite a distinction as some ships come through in an awful mess and as I was under orders and had charge of my outfit's supplies I naturally felt rather proud of their safe arrival.

I am enjoying good health and will soon enter my second year in the 330th organization. Our outfit was organized for special service—a Dwight Davis outfit but when the Japs took the Aleutians the plans were changed and we were assigned to general service.

Thanks for the Rouen Post issues and best regards to all the veterans of Unit 21.

Lieut. Melvin L. Croissant

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"RABBI" FOX COMES TO LIFE

West Palm Beach
July 24, 1944

Chef de Gare,
Voiture No. 38,
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Chef:

On page 13 in the May issue of the Forty and Eighter I found a picture showing three P. Gs whom you were supposed to have wrecked at Moolah Temple in March. Unless my eyes deceive me one of the candidates is Bill (Red Neck) Stack, known as the "Great Auk" and I find it hard to understand how he could have fooled the gang in 38 into admitting him to membership. In the old days I never knew him to have enough energy to do anything but successfully avoid work.

Would certainly appreciate learning what he has done to merit the honor of joining your Voiture. Can't seem to pick out any one else in the picture that looks familiar. If you don't happen to know me no doubt some of your Voyageurs will. I belonged to Fred Stockam Post No. 245 while in St. Louis. I am now a member of Voiture 290 and Palm Beach Post No. 12 in West Palm Beach. Would enjoy hearing from you and the gang.

Sincerely, Charles Fox

The foregoing letter was read at a meeting of Voiture 38 and a copy mailed to me. In self-defense I sent the following reply to Chef Metzger who read it at a meeting on August 7.

West Palm Beach
July 27, 1944

Ed R. Metzger
Chef de Gare
Voiture 38
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Ed:

Correspondent W. Lee Morgan has brought to my attention a letter from one Charles Fox, of West Palm Beach, which questions my qualifications for membership in Voiture 38. This unwarranted outburst from the Florida swamps is typical of the sniping frequently directed at superior men by thwarted creatures lurking in the woodwork.

Comrade Fox, known as "the Rabbi" owing to his startling resemblance to the typical Jew comic of the old burlesque stage, has long resented my impeccable social and moral standing in St. Louis. During his residence here he made repeated but futile efforts to mingle with the more enlightened element and apparently his failure in that direction still rankles. My last meeting with Fox was during the American Legion Convention in Paris where he was enjoying a free trip as a member of the West Palm Beach Drum and Bugle Corps. Knowing him to be totally devoid of rhythm I wondered why the Corps leader had taken on excess baggage. But after seeing him waddle down the Rue Royale, in a costume that was a cross between the garb of an organ grinder's monkey and the uniform of a Balkan general, his presence with the Drum Corps ceased to be a mystery. It was obvious that the Florida outfit had brought "The Rabbi" along to amuse the French spectators.

I freely admit that Fox has done more work for the good of the Legion than I. For years he has made a
living by selling swamp lots to suckers from the North—a shady fluctuating business that affords him plenty of leisure to pursue other interests. Unfortunately my work occupies not only my days but many evenings as well.

But enough of Fox. Despite his unkind letter I still regard him as an erring comrade whose greatest weakness is a consuming envy of better men. My attitude toward him is comparable to that of a noble mastiff who carries on indifferent to the shrill yappings of an irascible poodle.

P.S. I shall be pleased if you will mail a copy of this letter to my old pal Comrade Fox.

Bill Stack

KIMBREL HEADS ROUEN POST

C. Gordon Kimbrel has been elected commander of Rouen Post, No. 242, American Legion, for 1945. Other officers are: 1st Vice Commander, Jules V. Silberberg; 2nd Vice Commander, Justin J. Jackson; Adjutant, William E. Engel; Finance Officer, Frank Depke; Sergeant-at-Arms, Lewis Garner; Chaplain, Williard G. McQuoid; Historian, William C. Stack; Service Officer, Charles Jablonsky.

The officers were installed during the August 19 outing at Orchard Valley, St. Louis County, on August 19, with P. H. Byrns presiding. Retiring Commander Ritchey Williams made a brief talk, thanking the members for their cooperation during his regime.

Marine P.F.C. Harold Jolley, who was wounded on Saipan in July, has returned to duty. Jolley, 21, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold T. Jolley, 50 Kingsbury Place. He has been in service a year.

Charles Koch, progressive South Side baker, has been elected president of the Associated Retail Bakers of America. Koch has served as vice-president of the national organization from 1940 to 1944.

Arthur Schanuel, former president of the St. Louis Ad Club and member of the Roeder and Schanuel Advertising Agency, has been appointed executive secretary of the Indoor Climate Institute. For the past six years Schanuel has been associated with the national Electric Manufacturers Association as field representative of the National Adequate Wiring Bureau.

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

It is supposed to have happened during the American Legion Convention in Paris. A caravan of eight busses loaded with American sight-seers was chugging through the September haze on an all-day tour of World War I battlefields. In one of the busses were two spinster schoolteachers whose passion for taking snapshots en route had become a source of annoyance to their fellow passengers. Time and again, during the morning, the teachers would succumb to the beauty of some specific patch of landscape and the driver would be requested to stop and wait until the women used up another roll of film.

As a result of these frequent stops the bus fell far behind the others, and it was past noon when the driver pulled up to the appointed hotel for lunch. The two photography addicts, forgetting their hobby for the moment, left the camera lying on the seat and scrambled into the dining room. A group of legionnaires, piqued by the behavior of the self-centered teachers, decided that the opportunity for retaliation was too good to overlook. For a few francs apiece they induced six bus drivers to disrobe behind an adjacent stone wall and pose in the nude while the Americans snapped a picture with the spinsters' camera. Then, turning the film to the next number, they returned the camera to the seat and nonchalantly went in to lunch.