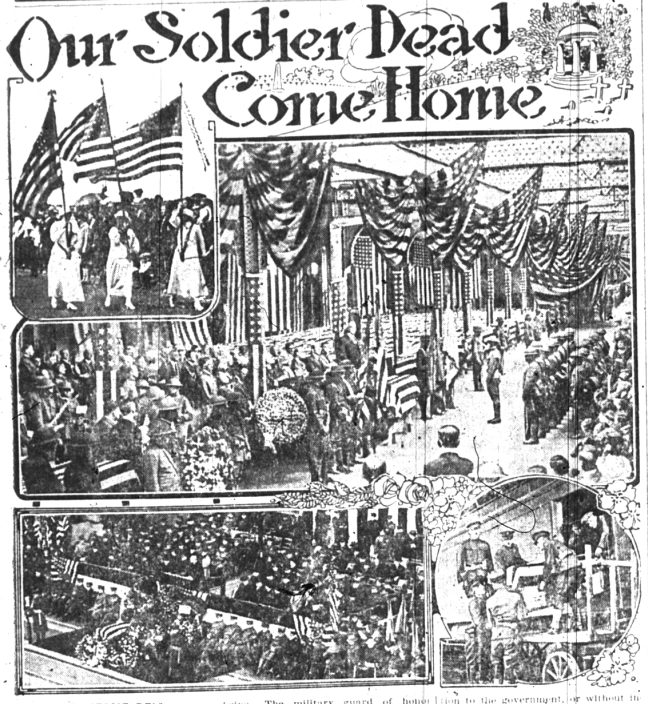
Our Soldier Dead Come Home



By JESSIE DELL
(Historian, Quartermaster Corps, United States Army.)

THE big army transport, with its solemn cargo, slowly and majestically steams up New York harbor, into the historic Hudson, and home is again reached.

It is the Cambrai, bringing home more than a thousand soldier dead.

With her arrival the solemn duty of the quartermaster corps of the United States army of bringing home the soldier dead nears completion. More than 44,000 have been returned for burial in their homeland. About 32,000 will sleep forever overseas, according to the wish of their next of kin.

And this is the way of their coming home of those who are to sleep forever in their homeland.

Paying its tribute of honor to the memory of these heroes who are nearing the end of "the last journey," the Flag flounts half-masted from New York's great buildings; from vessels in the harbor. As the ship moors at the pier in Hoboken, she is met by the military guard of honor, two companies of the famous Thirteenth United States infantry, and by all officers and civilians on duty in the graves registration offices in Hoboken.

Hundreds of selected men under the personal supervision of our officers and soldiers commence the work of removing the bodies from the ship and conveying them by means of electric trucks to the designated places on "The Pier of the Dead." A flag is then draped over each one and stays there until the coffin is lowered into its final grave, when the emblem is removed and given to the relatives.

As soon as the bodies are at rest on "The Pier of the Dead," the name of each is listed. Then a telegram is sent by the quartermaster corps officer in charge at Hoboken, to the nearest of kin, announcing the arrival of the body and requesting a reply confirming the shipping instructions previously given to that office. When this is received at Hoboken, acknowledgment is promptly made by mail.

If, on the other hand, no reply is received to the first telegram, a second one is sent and if within a reasonable time no reply comes, the failure is immediately telegraphed to the cemeterial division at Washington for their help in locating relatives. After all attempts of the cemeterial division are futile, the Hoboken office is directed to have the body sent to Washington for interment in the Arlington National cemetery. Fortunately, but few of such cases have occurred.

The officer in charge at Hoboken, in addition to his other duties, cooperates with the committees representing the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other patriotic organizations, in arranging memorial services to be held for the dead arriving on each transport.

These ceremonies are most impressive. The military guard of honor stands at "attention" as distinguished men eulogize the dead. The President of the United States, the secretary of war and other members of the cabinet, committees of congress, the chief of staff and other general officers, as well as thousands of relatives and friends have attended these memorial ceremonies.

Relatives from every state in the Union, even from far-away Alaska, have come to Hoboken to meet their boys on "The Pier of the Dead."

As soon as possible after notifying relatives of the return of a body, preparations are made for shipment to its final destination. A telegram goes from the transportation division of the Hoboken office to the nearest of kin advising of the departure of the body from Hoboken, the hour due for arrival, and the railroad by which it is sent. When no relative or authorized friend comes to receive and accompany the body to its destination, it is placed in charge of a military escort who remain as guard until the destination is reached and the body is formally turned over to the family.

Another matter given careful attention is in providing the escort to accompany the body home. One soldier is selected who can speak the language of the family to whom he is taking it. It is the duty of this military escort to obtain the written receipt for the body, and the burial certificate. These records are exceedingly important and are carefully preserved in the cemeterial division, because the war risk bureau calls on the division for certification that the funeral has taken place, and on these records depends the authority for that bureau to reimburse relatives for funeral expenses incurred by them. It is to be noted that the quartermaster corps bears all expenses up to the point of turning over the body to the nearest of kin, as its final destination.

Sometimes many bodies are to be sent to the same city; in these cases a special train is provided for the purpose and a military escort for each car. Again it may be that trains leaving Hoboken carry many bodies whose destinations are in several states. In such cases, bodies are segregated according to state and placed in cars which will convey them to the distribution point for that state.

There are sixteen of these distribution points: Atlanta, Ga.; Arlington, Va.; Cheyenne, Wyo.; Chicago, Ill.; Columbia, S. C.; Columbus, O.; Detroit, Mich.; El Paso, Tex.; Little Rock, Ark.; Louisville, Ky.; Omaha, Neb.; Portland, Ore.; San Antonio, Tex.; San Francisco, Cal.; St. Paul, Minn., and Washington D. C. At the railroad station at each of these points, the cemeterial division has its representative who keeps in close touch with the nearest army post or camp from which a detail of soldiers for escort is provided to receive the trains bearing the dead.

From this point each body has its military escort, and if requested, firing squads are furnished for the funeral, provided it can be arranged without too great cost of transportation to the government, or without interfering with the duties of the men composing the firing squad.

During the past year there have been 2,561 of our overseas dead interred in beautiful Arlington National cemetery.

Telegrams announcing the date on which interments will take place in Arlington are sent to relatives by the chief of the cemeterial division who further advises that should they attend the funeral ceremonies, and should they so desire, all information and assistance concerning hotel accommodation and transportation to Arlington will be given them by the Travelers' Aid society representatives who are on duty in the Union station in Washington.

The splendid, efficient and sympathetic assistance of this society has been a blessing to the relatives of the dead.

The District of Columbia chapter of the Red Cross, at their headquarters on Jackson square, receive all the out-of-town relatives and friends who come to attend these services and on Mondays and Thursdays, special luncheons are served for them. They also provide motorbus transportation to Arlington cemetery and return.

The interest of the Red Cross does not stop there, for it has made special arrangement with the quartermaster general and the cemeterial division to have large canvas tents pitched at or near the places where the burials take place. Several women representing the Red Cross are always in these tents to receive the relatives and friends and to make them comfortable, or to let them rest until the hour arrives for the services which is announced by the measured tread of the military companies detailed for this duty from the command at Fort Myer.

The detail, with its band, its buglers and its firing squad, is always accompanied by at least two chaplains, one Protestant and the other Roman Catholic, and when necessary a Rabbi is there, to conduct the last rites.

Another touching incident connected with these funerals is the dropping of flowers in each grave as the final prayers are said. This loving act is performed by representatives of the War Mothers, who never fail to be present when Arlington is receiving its overseas' dead.

As we hear the sweetly doleful notes of the band, and listen to the soft-spoken words of the chaplain, followed by the military salute, we feel a thrill of solemn pride, a realization that, in hours of need, our country has ever had its full quota of the brave and heroic.

The bugler now steps up to the grave, and as the notes of his trumpet echo amongst the hills and trees, through our thoughts pass the words of "Taps":

Fades the light;
And after
Goeth day,
Cometh night;
And a star
Leadeth all
Spirits all
To their rest.

And thus ends the last journey.

GOOD HIGHWAYS

FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY WORK

Texas Leads With 1,116.4 Miles Completed, and Minnesota Ranks a Close Second.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Measuring the network of federal-aid highways spread over the country during the past five and one-half years, the bureau of public roads, United States Department of Agriculture places their total length, January 1 last, at 28,714.6 miles, and their cost at approximately $580,000,000. The figures represent 12,007 miles of completed roads over which traffic is flowing today and 15,834 miles of roads under construction and on that date estimated to be, as a whole, 70 per cent complete.

In mileage of completed federal-aid roads, Texas leads with a total of 1,116.4 miles. In addition, there were under construction in Texas on January 1 a total of 1,634.9 miles of federal-aid highways whose estimated total cost was nearly $22,000,000. Minnesota ranked second, with 1,096.6 miles, in the amount of completed federal-aid highways, the cost of the system being slightly over $10,000,000. Of that sum the federal government paid $3,878,963. In Minnesota there were under construction the first of the year 791.2 miles of federal-aid highways, whose estimated cost was placed at $10,055,757. Other states with comparatively large mileages of completed federal-aid highways on January 1 were:

Illinois, 759.9 miles, costing $24,608,488, of which $11,221,404 was paid by the federal government; Nebraska, 642.7 miles, costing $4,027,767, of which the federal government paid $1,735,763; Wisconsin, 560.6 miles, costing $6,702,109; Arkansas, 1,038.2 miles, costing $5,148,950; Georgia, 833 miles, costing $11,017,390; Iowa, 422 miles, costing $7,962,984; North Carolina, 410.71 miles, costing $5,641,733; Idaho, 404.1 miles, costing $6,472,555, and Washington, 1,354.9 miles, costing $4,013,235.

Completed federal-aid highway construction in some of the Eastern and Middle Western states where the character of roads was of high type and the cost correspondingly greater per mile was as follows:

Pennsylvania, 390.1 miles, costing $19,002,504; Ohio, 370.2 miles, costing $12,475,569; New Jersey, 78.3 miles, costing $3,412,224; Massachusetts, 120.5 miles, costing $4,320,000, and Maryland, 237.8 miles, costing $3,752,233.

A Stretch of Hard-Surfaced Road.

Projects under construction and the degree of their completion January 1 in other states were as follows:

California, 382.9 miles, 55 per cent complete; Georgia, 462.9 miles, 65 per cent complete; Iowa, 368.7 miles, 86 per cent complete; Kansas, 471.8 miles, 69 per cent complete; Louisiana, 354.5 miles, 82 per cent complete; Minnesota, 791.2 miles, 65 per cent complete; Mississippi, 464.7 miles, 64 per cent complete; Missouri, 535.1 miles, 70 per cent complete; Montana, 412.8 miles, 57 per cent complete; Nebraska, 914.1 miles, 70 per cent complete; New Mexico, 534.9 miles, 54 per cent complete; New York, 347.9 miles, 44 per cent complete; North Carolina, 507 miles, 88 per cent complete; North Dakota, 510.2 miles, 80 per cent complete; Ohio, 282.2 miles, 91 per cent complete; Oklahoma, 508.2 miles, 64 per cent complete; Pennsylvania, 248.6 miles, 94 per cent complete; South Carolina, 410.7 miles, 59 per cent complete; South Dakota, 588.7 miles, 70 per cent complete; Tennessee, 449.1 miles, 80 per cent complete; Texas, 458.9 miles, 59 per cent complete, and Wisconsin, 558.8 miles, 75 per cent complete.

HIGHWAYS MORE ATTRACTIVE

Shade Trees Set 50 or More Feet Apart Would Make Roads Pleasanter to Travel Over.

Our highways would be much more attractive if lined with shade trees. These trees could be set 50 or more feet apart and would do little damage either to the adjoining property or the roadway. They would make the road pleasanter to travel over and also to live by.

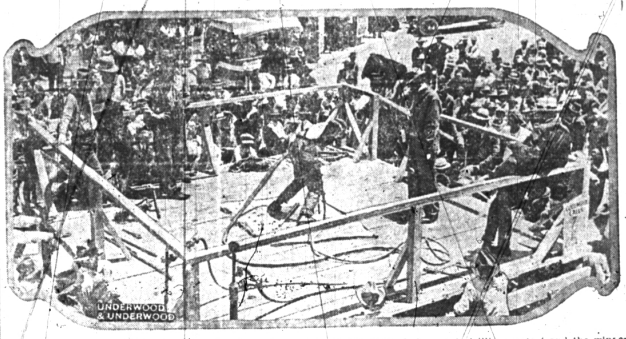
Cost of Lincoln Highway.

The total amount spent on the Lincoln highway last year for new roads and maintenance of sections already completed was $9,472,906. Illinois spent $605,940. There were 22.16 miles of paving finished on the Lincoln highway in Illinois last year and 397.56 on the entire route.

An Aid to Unemployed.

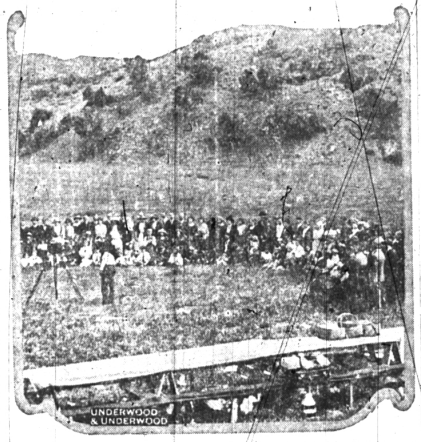
As an aid to unemployed laborers in England, 90,000 men are engaged in making new roads and maintaining old ones.

Miners of Tonopah in Rock Drilling Contest



A sport, all their own, has been developed by miners at Tonopah, Nev. It is a rock drilling contest and the winner is the man who can drill the most holes in a piece of granite in a given length of time. The contest draws as much attention as do baseball games and boxing matches in other parts of the country.

Picnic of World's Largest Family



Claiming to be the world's largest family, Mrs. Mary Harnett and her 164 descendants recently staged a family reunion at Newhall, Cal. In addition to Mrs. Harnett, who is eighty-nine years old, there were present her nine children, 48 grandchildren, 108 great grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren. Such a family picnic has probably never been held elsewhere.

C. P. R. WAR MEMORIAL

Unveiling the War memorial of the Canadian Pacific railways at Vancouver, B. C., in the presence of high officials and army officers. The statue was unveiled by Divisional Superintendent, C. S. Maharg, who lost his only son in the war.

Chicago Jail Riot Is Suppressed

Rebellion of prisoners in the Cook county jail in Chicago the other day was suppressed summarily by Capt. Wesley Westbrook, the jailor. He and his guards gave each of the rioters a good whipping. The illustration shows County Commissioner Mrs. Bemis, Captain Westbrook and a guard looking over the stuff the prisoners threw from their cells; and a portrait of Westbrook.

BIRD HOUSE ARCHITECTS

Two prize winners in the bird house contest held by the American forestry association in Washington were the tallest and shortest boys in the public schools. Mortimer Dare, three feet tall, and William K. Wemsatt, six feet four inches.

Earth Not Solid.

A new discovery that the so-called solid earth is really a stiff jelly that is caused to tremble by waves beating on the shore has been made by an eminent geologist. Prof. J. W. Evans has reported to the royal institution that he has obtained at West Bromwich, in the English midlands, seismometer records of "wave quakes" produced by Atlantic rollers dashing against the shores of western Ireland, 300 miles away. His co-ordinated recording instruments showed that the tremor travels through the rock strata of the earth's crust at the rate of 180 miles a minute, each tremor being separated from the next by from five to eight seconds.

Last of Famous Company.

The last survivor of the history-making voyage of the steamship California to die was De Witt Clinton Thompson, pioneer banker, who died in Santa Rosa, February 28, 1849, the first steamship passed through the Golden gate. The steamship was the side-wheeler California, carrying from New York 400 gold-hungry argonauts, many of whom left their mark on the history of California. And today not one of the California's passengers is alive.

Profits Sturgeon.

The Russian sturgeon, known as beluga or uhsco, is very large. It has been know to grow to the length of 20 to 25 feet and to weigh 3,000 pounds. At spawning time, a female produces from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 eggs, constituting from one-fifth to one-third of the entire weight of the fish.

Not Till Then.

The motorist's happiest dream will come true when a gallon of gasoline will last a year and every tire is guaranteed for a million miles.

She Is Hatching Messengers

United States navy pigeon hatching. Future message carriers for Uncle Sam's ships of both sea and air.

INTERESTING FACTS

The Suez canal was opened in November, 1869.

Tribal government was the only organization known to the earlier historic periods.

The weekly pay roll of the moving picture plants in Hollywood, Cal., averages $500,000.

Falconry, the art of hunting with trained birds, was known in China about 2000 B. C.

The prehistoric Egyptians operated ostrich farms.

There are about 17,000 people in Ireland who speak and understand no language but Irish.

Statistics show that more than 40 per cent of the clergy live to be septuagenarians.

A rich copper lode has been discovered in the island of Yell in a shaft sunk to a depth of 500 feet.

Permanent Teeth

When your permanent teeth are all in place nature has finished her tooth job. You have your share of teeth and if you don't take care of them you will either have to do without teeth or use artificial ones. Who wants to do without teeth? Certainly you and we don't. Besides it is not very pleasant to have them taken out. Your permanent teeth are a wonderful mechanism. They masticate your food, give shape and expression to your face and distinctness to your voice. The loss of even one tooth is a very serious injury, but the loss of more than one is a calamity. The longer you live the more you need your teeth.—National Dental Association Journal.

Words of R. L. Stevenson.

The following words of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), have been placed on a mural monument erected to his memory in St. Giles' cathedral, Edinburgh, "Give us grace and strength to forbear and persevere. Give us courage and gayety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies, bless us if it may be in all our innocent endeavors, if it may not, give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we may be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving to one another."

WORDS WORTH REMEMBERING

Edward Everett stood deservedly high among intellectual giants, foremost statesmen and most eloquent orators. Once upon a time he gave expression to a thought that ought to be stamped upon every real American mind. "An intelligent people," he said, "can scarcely ever be, as a class, vicious, and never, as a class, indolent. The excited mental activity operates as a counterpoise to the stimulus of sense and appetite."

Evolution of Trousers

Present-day trousers were evolved from the petticoat, and the petticoat was evolved from the shawl. The early cave man wore the hide off his shoulders by carrying home fat, juicy antediluvian tid-bits, and so he threw a skin of an animal about his shoulder for protection from the weather where he had lost fur. This he caught with his hands and held around his arms, making a sort of temporary sleeve. In time he learned that by putting a few thorns in the skin he could fasten it about his arm so as to make a kind of tunic sleeve. From the tunic grew the coat. But at noonday it became so warm that the cave man could slip his shawl down around his waist. He tied the shawl about his waist with a reed and thus was born the first petticoat. Eventually he found that by fastening a thorn in the middle of the petticoat he could walk more conveniently. And thus were evolved trousers.