

THE
Jewish Veteran

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES

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20
YEARS

APRIL



1937



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UNCLE SAM AND THE VETERANS

The Record of the Past Two Decades

SINCE the very beginning of our colonial history, we, as a people, have ever been mindful of those who have suffered in the armed service of our country. In 1624 the Virginia colony had, among its statutes the following: "Those that shall be hurte upon service, to be cured at publique charge; in case any be lamed, to be maintained by the country according to his person and quality." From that early date, more than 300 years ago, down to the present day, the road is long and devious are its windings, but every step of the way is marked with signs of the benevolent interest in, and the generous appreciation on the part of the Federal Government, of those who have followed its colors on the field of battle.

At the time we entered the World War the twentieth anniversary of which event this issue of the Jewish Veteran celebrates, the total disbursements to pensioners of all wars since the date of our Federal organization had reached the stupendous sum of \$5,215, 525,780.94. Broken down into millions of dollars for each war and for the peace time army, it stands; Revolution 70 millions, War of 1812, 46; Indian Wars 14; War with Mexico 51; Civil War 4917; Spanish War, 57; Regular Army 42; Unclassified 16. That the reader may not, however, get the idea that we are becoming more and more penurious as time goes on, I will state at this point—although more fully analyzed later—that our comparable disbursements in behalf of the ex-service man since the World War have been more than seven billion dollars, largely, though not entirely for the veterans of that war and their dependents.

The Congress, upon our entry into the World War, on April 6, 1917, knowing full well from the experience with previous wars that provisions must be made for its aftermath, decided not to base its legislation upon pension laws already in existence, but to blaze a new trail along lines suggested by the various workmen's compensation acts. Social scientists were largely of the opinion that a form of insurance at a rate dependent upon the reduction in earning capacity in civil occupations, was the most equitable means of caring for victims of the war and their dependents. Accordingly, on October 6, 1917, shortly after we had entered the war an enactment known as the War Risk Insurance Act was passed providing: (a) support during the war of the families and dependents, (b) protection in the form of disability and death compensation, (c) insurance at peace time rates against permanence and total disability and death.

And all these features were new in the national military system. Steps were taken to sell the insurance to men in service both here and overseas and approximately 4,500,000 of them took advantage of it. A maximum of \$10,000 was permitted and 80% of the applicants chose that amount. The cost to each person of the average age of those who served was \$6.60 per month, which sum was deducted from his pay. Beginning with

By **GENERAL FRANK T. HINES**
Administrator of the Veterans' Bureau

In this article written especially for the Jewish Veteran, General Hines, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of America's entrance into the World War, reviews the record of Federal aid to World War Veterans.

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the year 1920, this form of insurance (term) began to be converted into more permanent forms of U. S. Government Life Insurance, and although many have allowed this to lapse, at the close of the last fiscal year there were in force 593,213 policies providing their holders insurance of various kinds aggregating \$2,590,921,682.

Another innovation, in so far as our Federal treatment of the aftermath of war is concerned was through a rehabilitation process to fit men, although handicapped through

General Harbord Invites J.W.V. To Back Legion's Convention In New York

A cordial invitation to the Jewish War Veterans of the United States and to the Jewish Veteran to cooperate with the American Legion in their annual convention this September in New York City was conveyed to the J.W.V. by General James G. Harbord, former chief of staff of the American Expeditionary Force, and now chairman of the board of the Radio Corporation of America, in a message greeting the Jewish Veteran in connection with the 20th anniversary of America's entrance into the World War.

The text of General Harbord's invitation, addressed to the editor of the Jewish Veteran, follows:

"It is a pleasure for me to convey through you to the readers of the Jewish Veteran my cordial greetings and warmest regards in connection with your commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of our entrance into the World War.

"As you know, New York City will be host this year to the members of the American Legion when their annual convention occurs in September, and it is not too early to plan for this occasion which will bring war veterans from all over the United States and our insular possessions to New York City. It is probable that the convention this year will be the greatest ever held by this organization from the standpoint of the number of war veterans who can and will attend. Your organization and your publication can be very helpful in cooperating for a real anniversary meeting."

wound or disease for continuing in their former trades or professions, to become skilled in another, and thus continue to be self-supporting and to maintain a degree of social adjustment. The magnitude of this move can be judged from the fact that up to June 30, 1926, the approximate date of its termination, 179,519 ex-service men of the World War had entered training, 128,747 of whom completed courses varying from one to four years at a total cost to the Federal Government of more than \$640,000,000. This plan as conceived was most admirable and its results far reaching though they have never been statistically determined except for a small proportion of its registrants. It involved (a) training in schools maintained for the purpose by the government; (b) in regularly established educational institutions; (c) in shops and manufacturing plants (d) a combination of the three.

Applicants were examined by regularly appointed officials of the then Veterans Bureau and only admitted to courses to which they were adapted and which probably would provide a living. During rehabilitation compensation was paid, both for the veteran and his dependents. Courses were maintained in all important trades and in the higher institutions, including Harvard, Yale, and most of the State universities. Registrants were provided instruction in such professions as that of law, medicine and theology. Of the first class of institutions mentioned (a)—Trade schools established by the Federal Government—there were, between the opening of the first on September 24, 1919 and at the completion of the plan, seventy-nine, though not all in operation for the entire period.

Of the second class of schools made use of (b)—regularly established educational institutions,—nearly all in the country were utilized and in January 1922 the number of registrants undergoing instruction in them at Government expense was 68,000. At the same date in the 3d class of establishments (c)—shops and manufacturing plants, the number was 40,000. These latter were for the most part in what was known as placement training; that is, occupied in commercial production under the exact conditions of their selected trades. That they were fitted for them is indicated by the fact that more than 95%, at the completion of training were actually placed in gainful employment. It is interesting, too, to note that based upon a statistical study of a typical sample of some 14,000 of the 128,000 who had completed training, they were better off financially than when they entered the war. Of that number, 20% had earned less than \$750 annually, yet in 1928 when the study was made but 7.5% were in that low compensation group. Those who previous to the war had earned between \$750 and \$1000, comprised 20.06% of the whole number, while after rehabilitation were only 11.69%. As we get into the higher rates of compensation the reverse is shown. In the \$1250 to \$1500

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Twenty Years After

On April 6th it will be just twenty years since the late President Woodrow Wilson called the nation to arms to do battle against the forces that threatened democracy and American ideals of liberty. The answer to that call was overwhelming. From farm and factory, from offices and shops, rich and poor, native-born and adopted sons, black and white, Jews and Gentile, northerner and southerner, easterner and westerner—all answered as one, as Americans. We went overseas to join the Allied powers in stemming autocracy and preserving democracy, to help liberate oppressed minorities and to guarantee the rights of small nations.

That was in 1917. Millions died, millions more were maimed, blinded and robbed of the right to live as normal men, billions of dollars were spent, the map of Europe remade—all in the name of democracy and liberty. Have these sacrifices been worthwhile? Have the objectives for which they were made been realized? We think not.

A whole new generation has been born since 1917, a generation that knows of the war only from hearsay, from books, and from the economic suffering which was the war's heritage to mankind. Another generation that was too young to fight has grown to maturity. We, who were the war generation, are nearing 50. And all three generations look about and see a world racing madly toward another world war. Everywhere alliances are being made in anticipation of war. Armaments are being piled up feverishly. Over half the world that autocracy, which we thought crushed forever on November 11, 1918 has risen again, but under new names and with new leaders mouthing new slogans. Again we hear that democracy is threatened.

Yes, democracy is threatened! The minorities supposedly emancipated by the World War are again writhing under the lash of persecution and discrimination. Fascism is a greater threat to the peace of the world than the Kaiser ever was. Economic rivalries, nationalistic jealousies, the power-mad ambitions of dictators, these are the dangers to world peace today.

The rest of the world seems not to have profited by the bitter lessons of 1914-18, and

the post-graduate course of 1929-1933. But we in America are determined that so far as it lies in our power there shall never again be a 1914-18. We want Peace. As war veterans we know too well the misery, suffering and privation of war. And post-war developments have shown us some of the real reasons why we went to war. We have learned about the workings of the merchants of death, the bankers who sentenced millions of us to die or be crippled for life to guarantee their investments, and the profiteers who piled up fortunes at home while we faced death. The scars of the depression, are still too deep for us to forget that it was an outgrowth of the war.

Europe, which urgently needs our money and credits to wage a successful war, is again seeking help here. In 1914 the Allies came after our raw materials and money first. Then we were sent over to make sure of payment. But today things are different. Neutrality legislation prevents Europe from getting our munitions. The Johnson law forbids the bankers to lend money to nations in default, which means virtually all of Europe. These protections against our being involved in a European war are good, but they should be buttressed by even further guarantees.

And so, twenty years after we entered the war to end all wars, the most vital issue of the day is how to keep out of war. To defend our borders against a foreign invader, we are spending a billion dollars a year for the army and navy, the highest peace-time defense budget in our history. If this vast expenditure serves as a warning to the saber-rattling and power-drunk autocrats of Europe, it will be well spent. A billion dollars as insurance against war is a better investment than ten or twenty billions to finance a war, not to mention the dead, wounded, the misery, suffering, etc.

Anniversary Issue

The Editor takes pride in calling attention to this special issue in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the entrance of the United States into the World War. Every effort has been made to make this issue of *The Jewish Veteran* a document worthy of the organization. In the historical articles, the statements by prominent leaders of all veterans groups and other material of special timely interest there is presented a valuable compendium of information which makes this issue one of the finest in the history of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States.

A Nazi Boomerang

Up to March 4th of this year it had been a long, long time since anti-Nazi sentiments had found front page space in the newspapers of the United States. For more than a year the anti-Nazi forces had been unable to dramatize their activities in a way to focus national attention. The boycott movement was mentioned in skimpy reports. The

war against Nazi propaganda got even less attention. And even the more exciting boycott of the Schmeling-Braddock bout and the Schmeling tour found sparse newspaper support.

This is not to say that the American press had become pro-Nazi. Far from it. It was simply a case of more important developments at home and abroad—the Abyssinian war, the Spanish civil war, the presidential election, Mrs. Simpson and the sit-down strikes—stealing the show, so to speak. Unconsciously American public opinion was losing touch with the real situation in Germany and with its echoes here. Taking advantage of this curious condition, Nazi propagandists meanwhile were making headway on all fronts in the United States.

On March 3d Mayor La Guardia of New York made a brief speech at the annual luncheon of the women's division of the American Jewish Congress. In the course of his remarks he endorsed a suggestion by a previous speaker that the World's Fair should have a building dedicated to religious liberty. And then the Mayor suggested that this building ought to have a chamber of horrors in which the principal exhibit would be a figure of the brown-shirted fanatic who is menacing the peace of the world. Now it is a matter of record that La Guardia as well as other prominent American public men have said much worse things about Hitler, even mentioning him by name. But somehow the mental giants who run the Third Reich saw in this remark an unendurable insult to the fuhrer. And acting with accustomed Nazi suavity and tact, they deluged the pages of the controlled Nazi press with the most unprecedented torrent of journalistic garbage and obscenity of modern times. La Guardia bore the brunt of this campaign of newspaper vituperation and vilification but American women, American institutions, high ranking American officials, our State Department, and, by innuendo, even President Roosevelt, were besmirched and insulted in language of unparalleled coarseness, most of which is unprintable in English.

The inevitable result of all this was that Nazism became front page news not only in America but throughout the world. Germany's demand for an apology, the prompt issuance of regrets by our State Department, the counter-demand for an explanation from Germany of the slurs on America, Germany's reply and all the ensuing statements and counter-statements from Nazi and anti-Nazi sources and from members of Congress and columnists broke the silence which had enabled Germany to enjoy for so long a period of comparative freedom from public attention.

In other words, the stupidity of the touted Nazi propaganda ministry converted a single sentence uttered at a comparatively obscure meeting into a full-blown international sensation which is boomeranging against Germany. Direct results of the rumpus created by Germany are already evident in the stiffened attitude of the American press, the determination of public opinion not to permit a German loan, the intensification of the boycott and the renewed effort for a sweeping investigation of Nazi propaganda.

HOW THE LOST BATTALION WAS SAVED

A Jewish Hero Relives the Argonne

AS I look back at it now, it all seems strange. I ran away from Russia and came to America to escape military service. I hated Russia, its government, its people, and particularly its cruel and inhuman treatment of Jews. Such a government I refused to serve.

From the small town of Plozk, now Poland, I landed in 1912 in the New World, with all the hopes and dreams of the average immigrant. I walked the streets of New York City somewhat in a daze, not understanding the language, and my mind awl with the greatness, the hustle, the brightness, the confusion, the things of beauty and the things of ugliness which all go to make up a great city.

Soon the newness wore away, and what was left was a comfortable happy feeling. Here I was conscious of a freedom which I had never known in Russia. I could feel it in everything, and everything was sweet and precious to me. "This is a great land; it is my land," was the thought that beat against my head even as the big Irish cop good-humoredly watched me for the strange figure I must have represented.

I found work as a barber, which brought me into intimate contact with a great variety of people, which all the more intensified and hastened this process of Americanization. By the time of America's entrance in the war in 1917, I was an ardent patriot. I was among the first to be called to service, and this time, unlike my previous experience, I welcomed the chance.

It was with thoughts such as these that I began drilling at Camp Upton: "America has done much for the Jews. It has given us freedom and an equal chance, which is the only thing, and no more, that the Jew has ever wanted or wants. This is a tolerant and a good country." America, my adopted land, was always more precious to me than the land of my birth, in which I considered myself an alien and an outsider.

I made some good chums in the army. The men in the ranks all mixed. There was a feeling of brotherhood and comradeship. Race and color lines were broken as we tried to make life livable and pleasant.

Some weeks of training and the Seventy-seventh Division, of which I was a member, was packed into ships and sent off to Europe. Despite the vigorous routine, which included kitchen duty, drilling, and guard duty, the men had enough time to feel miserable and gloomy.

We sailed into Great Britain without mishap, the fear of a submarine sending us under water not having materialized. When we landed, the company's spirits revived. We were entertained, feted and dined. "War is not so bad after all," we were saying.

Shortly after, we were sent to relieve the gallant men of the Forty-second (Rainbow) Division, who were battling near the Lorraine sector. Now we were part of the war. The first night we were in the trenches we saw a gesture made by the Germans we shall never forget. Over their trenches they shot up in leisurely fashion a balloon broadcast-

By ABRAHAM KROTOSHINSKY

The story of one of the most thrilling exploits of the World War, is told in this simple and straightforward narrative by the man who saved the Lost Battalion, Abraham Krotoshinsky, hailed by General Pershing as one of the outstanding heroes of the American Army. This hero has long been a member of the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.

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ing this message: "Good-by, Forty-second! Hello, Seventy-seventh!"

From the Lorraine sector we moved on to the Chateau Thierry front, to take part in the first real drive by an all-American army. The Americans fought courageously and "tigerishly." An idea of the fierceness of combat can be had from the fact that it was necessary for our division to seek replace-

VFW Commander Greet Jewish War Veterans on 20th Anniversary of War

A plea for the maintenance of the traditionally friendly relations between the Jewish War Veterans of the United States and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is contained in a message of greeting sent to the Jewish Veteran by Bernard W. Kearney, national commander-in-chief of the V.F.W., on the 20th anniversary of America's entrance into the World War.

The text of Comrade Kearney's message follows:

"As Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I desire to extend my congratulations to the editor of THE JEWISH VETERAN, particularly when I recall that twenty years ago the United States of America entered the World War against the Central Powers. Many matters of historical importance have transpired since those days of '17 and '18, much misery has made itself felt throughout all sections of the world, but with all there is much for us to be thankful for.

"One of the pleasant recollections down through the years is the relationship between the organization I have the honor to lead for 1936-7 and the Jewish War Veterans of the United States. Please extend to the members of the organization the well wishes of the Comrades of our organization with the hope that the future will continue to see the same spirit of comradeship existing for all time.

Yours in Comradeship,

BERNARD W. KEARNEY.

ments three times. The sights I saw there will be better left untold. But it hurts, no matter how hardened you may be, to see your buddy right next to you bleeding and torn. It hurts to see dead men and dead animals piled up together. As for the strictly military part of the Chateau Thierry drive, which is now history, we accomplished our purpose in that we crushed the morale of the Germans and reached our objective.

But the story you want me to tell, I suppose, is my connection with the Lost Battalion in the Argonne Forest. I have told it time and time again, and yet people want to hear it again. I wonder why? What I did, it seems to me, was nothing heroic, nothing deserving of all this fuss, and a stunt which I carried out because I wanted to, and had the next one been as lucky as I, he too would have been able to do it.

As a matter of record we should begin with the drive of Nov. 2, 1917, when the Americans tried to clear out the Argonne Forest, which was infested with German machine guns. The attack our army made was a concerted and brave one, but it was ably met by the machine gun fire of the Germans. Our battalion, under Colonel Whittlesey, followed behind the main attack, and made sure that all machine gun nests were cleared. All of a sudden firing on the German line stopped. We thought we had the enemy running, and we followed up, our advantage by crossing the German first line trenches and settling ourselves in the second—and, by gosh, if we weren't trapped!

The Germans, by this clever ruse, had led us into their own territory and were now busy surrounding us and opening fire upon us from the front and the back. It should be explained that in all there are three lines of trenches. Further, the Germans had enclosed us with barbed wire, so that we could not fight our way out. Added to this, our communications with headquarters were severed, and, to make matters worse, the Americans, not knowing of our plight, concentrated fire on our trenches as well as upon the German lines.

We were in the analogous situation of being attacked by all armies. Our losses, as you can imagine, were frightful. Of the 700 men in our battalion, only 180 survived. Without food or water, with ammunition greatly reduced, our only hope remained in getting in touch with the main branch of the American division. For five days and nights man after man left the shelter of our bombarded lines and crawled out into the open, only to serve as doomed targets for the deadly fire of German marksmen.

Thirty-six men in all plunged into the open, but all were either killed or captured.

Our situation appeared and was desperate and hopeless. Despite that, we refused to surrender. One of our messengers, captured by the Germans, was blindfolded and given a note to take back to our commander. This note, written by a German captain, named Kaiser, who formerly lived in Milwaukee,

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