

AMERICAN LEGION PAGE

Delegates to the Department Convention

KAUAI TO SEND ELEVEN MEN TO THE CONVENTION AT LUKE FIELD

At the last meeting of the local post of the American Legion, eleven men were chosen to attend the third convention of the department of Hawaii. All of these men with one exception, decided to accept the hospitality of the Fox-Cornet Post and get in on some of that \$28.00 that is going to be spent in handling the convention and in entertaining the delegates.

The department headquarters asked to be advised as to what game would be most in demand by the delegates. The local post feels that golf has come in to its own and should Ford Island be without a course they would be content to play the kind that needs only an army blanket.

Most of the men taking this trip to Honolulu look upon it as a vacation. Just now some feel about it after discovering that their wives have been elected to go down and represent the Women's Auxiliary is something I don't know.

Our choice for a delegate to the national convention to be held in New Orleans is Dr. Hagood. He ought to be able to get us what we want because "you all" know he will be right in his element down south.

WHAT LEGIONNAIRES ARE DOING

Comrade H. Christian the well known favorite among the school teachers of this island has recently purchased a new roadster. He says that if the county will fix the road around the Lihue school he will be "setting pretty" for anything that comes along next crop. He was recently made head man for the mauka division of the Lihue section of the Lihue plantation.

ATHLETIC CHAMPIONS

The Kauai post of the American Legion considers itself very fortunate when Wm. H. Balthis became a member. It meant that a Legionnaire was the tennis champion of Kauai. As the world knows, Tuxedo has taken up golf and polo. His most recent achievement is as a hunter. Last week at Kokes he bagged a goat and a pig. He was unsuccessful in snipe hunting which lasted for an hour one night.

Approximately 10,000 acres of land in New Mexico may be taken over by veterans of the world war, according to an announcement by the land office of the United States Department of the Interior. The land was formerly withdrawn under the reclamation act for reservoir sites has been restored and will be subject to entry at the land office at Las Cruces, N. M. The American Legion advises prospective homesteaders to write immediately to the office at Las Cruces for information.

The Bath Tub Case

"Few are there, indeed, who have particular concern."—General Sawyer.

If you have no concern in what the country is doing for the disabled man as Brigadier General Sawyer says you have, you need not read this article for it will not interest you, but if you have concern, read it and it will grip you as few things have.

(By Edward McE. Lewis, Washington Staff Correspondent of the American Legion.)

Recently the writer visited the Fort McHenry Veteran's Bureau hospital at Baltimore, to ascertain the effect of a fire the night before upon the hospital and its patients. Sparks from a conflagration in nearby railroad yards had ignited the flimsy hospital buildings scores of times. Only the most efficient measures by medical officers in charge, the city fire department, the regular army and a providential deluge of rain had prevented the destruction of the wooden buildings.

The conflagration was in the face of a statement by Brig. Gen. C. E. Sawyer, in a letter written July 12, that "it is rare indeed to have a serious hospital fire."

There were housed there at that time more than 400 disabled soldiers (our boys, we called them four years ago) still undergoing treatment in an effort to restore their mutilated bodies, shattered nerves and darkened minds, to a degree where they can again hope to take their places in the outer world.

Crowd of Friends at Gates

The huge gates of the hospital were closed, and outside stormed a crowd of several hundred friends and relatives, frantic to learn of their own knowledge, how their disabled loved ones had suffered from the trying experience of the night.

For many were still helpless, others insane, while all were liable to serious injury from the unusual excitement of being removed from buildings with roofs aflame and carted across town in a downpour of rain, to be housed in a school building for the night. The hospital officials, fearing to increase their patients' nervous condition, wisely denied the throng admission, and did their best to assure the women that their boys were safe and could be visited on the morrow. Meanwhile the crowd refused to leave, continuing to peer thru the iron gates as the rain drifted down.

Because of my profession, and the organization I represented, I was admitted immediately. The excitement had diminished, the boys had dried their clothing and been returned to their wards. Little physical damage to the property was discernable. What damage the nation's precious wards housed there had received remains to be seen, for tuberculosis and surgical cases had suffered exposure, and mental cases experienced the excitement of a fire.

One Couldn't be Moved

After examining buildings and reports, and discussing the situation with the medical officers, I learned

the boys were at mess, so was about to depart when I asked the officer in charge, "Doctor, weren't some of the worst surgical cases left in the buildings? Haven't you any in such shape that it was dangerous to move them?"

"Well, we had to take a lot of them out in stretchers and ambulances, of course," he replied, "but there was only one we didn't move. It probably would have killed him if we'd taken him out. That was Lieutenant Mackall, the 'bath tub case.' He's in a ward all by himself, and we were prepared to move him too, but luckily his building did not catch fire. He was as game as a pebble about it.

I asked to be taken to Mackall's ward. On the way over the medical officer told me his story.

A member of a prominent Maryland family, Mackall was 25 years old, making good in business and engaged to be married when the war broke out. But the call to the colors was imperative, Mackall enlisted in the national guard and went overseas in the 115th Infantry of the 29th Division.

Pursuing the Germans with his division October 16, 1918, Mackall was shot in the back by a German sniper while crossing "No Man's Land." The bullet partly severed his spinal cord. For six months he remained in French hospitals receiving treatment from the allied specialists. They finally declared his case hopeless, and still suffering intensely, he was brought to America in June 1919, and placed in the converted Fort McHenry hospital, there to receive the consideration of the most prominent surgeons in the country.

Sleeps in Tub Three Years

Mackall sleeps little. Forced by the nature of his injury to lie continually upon his face and suffering intensely, the front of his body finally became so tender that new methods had to be devised to care for him. So three years ago the doctors evolved the plan of putting him in a bath tub for the night, where the buoyancy of the water would relieve the pressure against his tender flesh, and allow him nightly forgetfulness in sleep such as he had not known for nearly a year.

I had heard of the famous "bath tub case." It was without parallel in the medical history of the world. But I, like others, had thought of it in the abstract terms of a case, and never in terms of personal intimate contact with a suffering human being, doomed for life to be lifted from bed to bath tub—from bath tub to bed, to lie in one position continually, day in and day out, month after month, and year after year. To be young and full of the promise of life, and to know that only death could bring relief from constant pain, ever present, ever watchful, only to be escaped with blessed sleep, immersed in a bath tub.

The officer and I became strangely quiet as we approached the small vine-covered wooden cottage which

housed the "case" which had baffled the best medical skill of two continents.

The doctor opened the door and I entered, hat in hand. My attention was distracted a fleeting second, but reverted instantly to the bed upon which Mackall lay. Although I had been told what to expect, actual contact with it brought me up with a shock. Mackall was lying face down upon his bed, his head supported by a pillow and one arm. His face was partly turned toward the door, and as I entered it lighted with a crooked smile at the sight of a visitor.

One Sinister Object

The room was spacious, attractively fitted up, and would have had a home-like appearance but for one object which dominated the entire scene and gave it a sinister air. This object forced immediate attention much as the rack and thumb-screw must have riveted the victim's attention upon entering the torture chambers of old.

I now realized what had made me hesitate as I entered. It was the famous bath tub, huge in proportion, and unusual in design, already filled with water, and occupying the center of the room.

Although it was still early afternoon, Mackall was apparently tired and the tub was being prepared to receive him once more, as it had every night thru three terrible years. There immersed in the tepid water, and lying upon floats and other cunningly arranged devices, he could find sleep—and only there.

I turned with an involuntary shudder from the tub, and sat down rather suddenly in a chair beside his bed. Mackall was unbelievably thin from the operations and constant suffering he had suffered during the four years which had dragged by since his hopes were blasted on No-Man's Land, but he extended a hand, and asked me if I smoked.

For some reason this question added to my discomfort, and I nervously fumbled for a cigarette. Although that terrible tub was behind me, it continued to distract my attention as if it had a personality. I came to almost with a start, and attempted to awaken my reporter's instinct by sizing up Mackall's appearance, as he lay before me, face down on the bed. I saw a face thin and lined with suffering, and serious blue eyes, which must have been merry once, set off by a shock of bright red hair. He spoke scarcely above a whisper.

His Place Not Afire

"Well, how about the fire; did you get burned any?" I asked.

"Why, no," he said slowly, as if giving the question mature consideration. "Why, no. There was a lot of bunk printed in the papers this morning about what happened to me during the fire, but there's nothing to it. My place didn't catch fire." The papers had told how when all had been removed to safety except Mackall, that instead of showing concern, he had joked with his at-

tendants as the flames crept nearer.

"Why, no," he replied with an attempted smile. "Why should I have been afraid?" And then perceiving that I had read the feeling in his heart, he added hastily, "there was no danger for me, you know. This house never even caught fire."

"How are you being treated. Are you getting everything you want?" was my next venture. I was obsessed by the nearness of that awful bath tub.

"I can't complain," he said, "everything is being done for me that can be done, I'm sure. I'm getting good treatment, and I guess I see as many visitors as is good for me. No, I haven't any complaint to make at all."

Strikes Own Match

Mackall was holding an unlighted cigarette between his bony discolored fingers. Rejecting my offer, he wiggled his arms in a position to light a match. He took several puffs with apparent satisfaction and said suddenly: "Look here. Here's something you can do. You represent the Legion. Well, all right. The Legion has done more for us fellows here than anybody else. I don't know what would have happened to some of them if the Legion hadn't fought for them. Now, here's what I want, and all my buddies here want it. Don't let them take this hospital away from Fort McHenry.

"There'll be a lot of people want to do that on account of the fire. Of course the place is not as good as it might be. There's still the fire danger, and other drawbacks, too. But the big point is this: When a man's in hospital year on end, he gets discouraged, and he gets lonesome. The best medicine for him is to have him near his family and friends where they can come to see him and bring him things and cheer him up.

"I've had a lot of time to think during the past few years," he said with an attempt at a smile which was most apologetic, "and naturally I don't think about myself all the time, so I think a lot about my buddies here, specially the NPs. And I'm convinced of one thing. That keeping a man's spirit is one of the biggest factors in getting him well. They called it keeping up the morale during the war. Fellows get cheered up near home and friends. But take them too far away, and they get down-hearted and dejected. Sometimes they get so bad they won't even kick at anything.

"Keep Them Near Home"

"These men at Fort McHenry live near here. And if you want them to get well, keep them near home.

"Now promise that you won't try to get this place moved on account of the fire," he whispered earnestly. I nodded my head for reply. "Not that it would affect me personally," he added hastily, as if fearing that I thought he might be asking something for himself, "they can't move me, you know. They didn't even try it last night when the fire was all

The Legion Will Have M. P.s at New Orleans

YOU MAY HAVE TO USE THE OLD TIME RANK ON 'EM, DOC.

One thousand uniformed members of the American Legion will assist the police in handling the 150,000 visitors expected at the American Legion national convention in New Orleans next October, according to plans announced by Police Superintendent Molony.

The Legionnaires will aid the police in regulating the large crowds thronging the parade route and will serve as provost guards in the business section. A former army officer probably will be placed in charge of the provost guard force.

During a recent trip to Kansas City, Superintendent Molony investigated conditions prevailing in that city during last year's American Legion convention. He discovered that city and police officials of Kansas City had no criticism to make concerning the way in which the 150,000 visiting ex-service men conducted themselves.

As proof that the men did nothing distasteful, Superintendent Molony said Kansas City officials would welcome the opportunity to have the organization choose Kansas City as their convention city. In fact, Kansas City endeavored to have this year's convention held there.

"around here," he continued, but checked himself suddenly. He realized that this didn't quite fit with his former attitude that he hadn't been in any danger.

"Well, anyway, I'd stay here no matter what happened. I have lots of company, but I'm unusual." It was becoming more of an effort for him to talk, and Mackall's mind was racing ahead of his halting whispers. He hesitated, and the slight pause, with accompanying smile, showed me he meant me to understand that he had more visitors than the average, and not that he considered himself or his case "unusual." Modesty, courage and patience showed itself in abundance. But far beyond these showed shone the effort to think of others and forget self—that mutilated, racked above which the spirit of the man could rise, but which the incessant pain would not let him forget.

He took a fresh grip on himself. "I have plenty of company, and they are always doing something for me besides," he said indicating with a backward roll of the eyes the attendants busy at the other end of the room.

Tired by Interview

It was plain that the interview had tired him. I got up and clasped his hand carefully, fearing to crush his slender fingers against the large seal ring which he kept on with difficulty. "Now, listen, buddy," he whispered as his grip tightened, "you've stuck by us, keep it up. Have the American Legion keep on plugging to keep the hospitals near

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