

Double Navy's Peace Status, Plea to House Increase of Personnel to 217,000 Necessary for "Most Powerful" Force Are 5,000 Officers Short

Capt. Laning Says Release of Men in Reserve Now Would Prove Handicap

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—Legislation authorizing an increase of the permanent enlisted strength of the navy from 131,000 men to 217,000 was recommended to the House Naval Affairs Committee today by Captain H. Laning, acting chief of the bureau of navigation. This would include 175,000 seamen, 24,000 apprentice seamen and 18,000 in training, 12,000 in trade schools for training and 6,000 in the flying corps.

Plan for Increase

Captain Laning also emphasized the need for more officers in the regular navy and submitted a plan by which they might be obtained. He provided that the regular navy be given to temporarily commissioned officers of the navy and the Naval Reserve force upon their passing examinations and also that the number of men become sufficient when the Naval Reserve Force is demobilized at the end of the "national emergency," as required by present laws, the majority of personnel will be even more inadequate than it was two years ago.

Questions Necessary

The advisability of authorizing big increases in the navy personnel at the present time was questioned by Representative Kelly, of Michigan. "Why not hold steady until the peace conference is ended and we see how things stand?" he asked. "It may be that all navies except one controlled by all the powers will be done away with in that event. Money we spend now would be wasted."

Veterans Jazz As Band Blares Welcome Home

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or so the majority of the men were on their way to Camp Mills for medical inspection. There were only five of Colonel Hayward's famous negro regiment on board, but they were scarred and wounded. "You'll get your Christmas turkey in camp," one of the hundreds on the pier shouted to them.

Just Give Us Chicken

"Never mind the turkey. Just give us chicken," one of them shot back, and five sets of pearly white teeth glistened in approval. Among the men on the Celtic were two American aviators who escaped from German prisons. They are Lieutenant John Donaldson, a Cornell graduate, who lives at 10 East Eighty-sixth Street and is attached to the 22d Aero Squadron, and Lieutenant H. J. White, of Cleveland. Lieutenant Donaldson was wounded and wore a Distinguished Service medal as a token of his skill in shooting down nine German machines before he himself was captured. He made three attempts to escape from the German prison before he succeeded.

Defied Electrified Barrier

The real escape was not without its thrills. He had a hand-to-hand fight with a German sentry on the Dutch border and got safely through an electrically charged barbed wire fence after he killed the guard. He showed an ugly gash in his right arm as a memento of his experience with his antagonist. It was the middle of June when Donaldson finally got into action. It was between then and September 1 that he got the nine German airmen. The decoration came after he was freed the seventh. On September 1 he was behind the German lines on the Verdun front when he was "picked off" by one of the enemy and was taken to the prison camp at Dusseldorf. It was only a few days later that he took advantage of a situation, crawled through a fence, jumped into a German airplane and took to the air.

Pope Not to Leave Vatican

ROME, Dec. 17.—Reports that there has been a settlement of the controversy between the Vatican and the Aquinians and that there is a possibility that Pope Benedict may leave the Vatican are emphatically denied by the "Osservatore Romano," the official organ of the Vatican.

Wounded Soldiers Flirt With Girls In Spite of Guard Khaki 'Chaperons' Nothing in Young Lives of Boys With Casualty Stripes When 'Sisters' Pay Visit

Crawled Twenty Miles
The barbed wire fence was highly charged with electricity and they crawled for twenty miles on their hands and knees searching for an opening. A small creek into which they dived enabled all but Donaldson to get into the territory. He had been left on the German side as a lookout and he was just about to follow his companions when he was ordered to throw up his hands by a soldier. Instead of being sent to the German side, there was a struggle, during which the German's bayonet pierced his right arm, but the German was overpowered and killed, and Donaldson joined his friends, who helped him over the wire.

Escaped in German Plane

Just as interesting was the flight of Lieutenant White. After two unsuccessful attempts to flee the prison camp, he finally reached the American lines in a German airplane, an attempt Donaldson had tried but failed in. It was three days before the armistice was signed when White saw an engine going and was gliding upward when a rain of rifle and machine gun bullets fell about him. They all went down, but he was seen safely in the air.

Captures Sixty Men Alone

The biggest "little corporal" in the whole American army is Raymond Powell, Company E, 31st Infantry, whose home is in Joliet, Ill.—was a passenger on the Celtic. He wore the Distinguished Service Cross and was credited with capturing a dugout with sixty Germans single-handed. Powell is only twenty-two years old. When he went over he was only twenty, but he had a battle in which he rescued some lost Americans he proved that age had nothing whatever to do with soldiering. He became separated from his company during a German attack on the woods for daybreak he spied a German dugout. He thought it would be a good place to seek shelter, he said, and started toward it. When he found the entrance he threw a hand grenade down the hole, bringing the Germans out one by one until he had sixty captives marching before his lone rifle.

Soldier Wounded by Accident

The wounded on the Celtic suffered much from the three-day storm the Celtic endured. There was one casualty aboard. Lloyd Gilskey, a Pennsylvanian, was shot through the thigh when a revolver fell from the desk of the commanding officer. He was a member of the 1,055th Casual Company, and had been previously wounded in the arm in Flanders.

Name in Today's List

Captain Arthur V. McDermott, who was severely wounded in action September 30, received honorable mention for his work on September 1, 2, 3 and 4, when he led his men on four attacks. His home is 850 St. Mark's Avenue, Brooklyn. He is a graduate of St. Francis College, Columbia University and the New York Law School. He was a member of Troop C, 1st New York Cavalry, and won his commission in a training camp. He went to France as captain of Headquarters Co. of the 106th Infantry. Strangely enough, his name appeared in yesterday's casualty list.

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Position of U. S. Divisions Along Rhine Disclosed

AMERICAN ARMY OF OCCUPATION, Dec. 17 (By The Associated Press).—From left to right the first line American divisions in the Coblenz bridgehead area are the 2d, 32d and 1st. The 2d Division occupies the right bank of the Rhine to Honningern, with its headquarters at Heddorf. The 32d's line runs from Breitscheid east to Hersebach, where the line extends southeast through Alsbach to Sagen, which is the headquarters of the division. The 1st Division is located between the 32d and French headquarters at Montabaur.

German Propagandists Are Active in Spain

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Pershing Designates 1,500 for Early Return

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American Troops Ready to Occupy 'Rhine Gibraltar'

COBLENZ, Dec. 17 (By The Associated Press).—The German fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, often called the Gibraltar of the Rhine, just across the river from Coblenz, is being prepared for occupancy by the American troops. Until December 9, the day after the American advance guard arrived in Coblenz, the fortress was occupied by several regiments of Germans. Since then the fortress has been cleaned throughout by German soldiers, assisted by scores of women. The fortress and the grounds occupy more than one hundred acres on a rocky promontory, which is 400 feet above the river. Each night on the fortress summit the Germans built a great bonfire of the rubbish accumulated by the day's cleaning of the barracks and various other buildings, some of which were erected hundreds of years ago.

United States-Built Cars Cross Rhine

American-built freight cars, loaded with food and supplies for the army of occupation, now are crossing the Rhine daily with German crews. Crowd that doesn't know a soldier but just can't keep away from the gray young veterans who tramp up and down pretending to be unconscious of their gold stripes and canes.

Line Runs to Montabaur

Northeast of Coblenz the American rail line runs as far as Montabaur, about six miles from the boundary of the bridgehead. Montabaur is the railroad for the 1st Division. For the division between the Rhine and the German frontier north of the Moselle the supplies are hauled by rail along the river to different railheads, whence distribution is made to the troops by means of motor trucks. A concert every afternoon by an American army band in the plaza in front of the government building here, which is occupied as headquarters by the 3d Army, now is a feature of the daily life of Coblenz. The plaza where the band plays is part of the Empress Augusta Promenade, along which are the city's finest hotels.

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