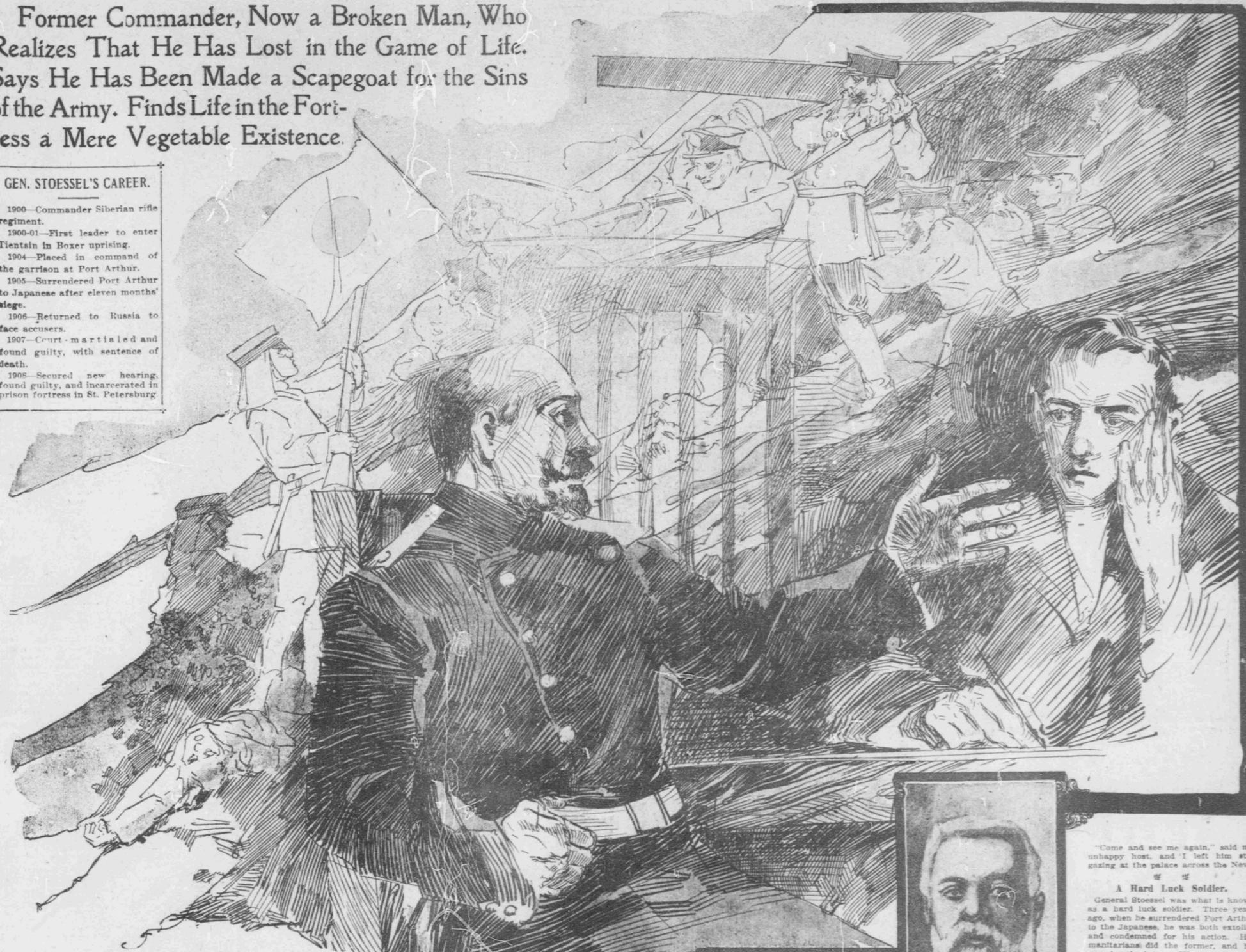


# Hero of Port Arthur, Inter-viewed Behind Prison Bars.

Former Commander, Now a Broken Man, Who Realizes That He Has Lost in the Game of Life. Says He Has Been Made a Scapegoat for the Sins of the Army. Finds Life in the Fortress a Mere Vegetable Existence.

## GEN. STOESEL'S CAREER.

1900—Commander Siberian rifle regiment.  
1900-01—First leader to enter Tientsin in Boxer uprising.  
1904—Placed in command of the garrison at Port Arthur.  
1905—Surrendered Port Arthur to Japanese after eleven months' siege.  
1906—Returned to Russia to face accusers.  
1907—Court-martialed and found guilty, with sentence of death.  
1908—Secured new hearing, found guilty, and incarcerated in prison fortress in St. Petersburg.



**T**WO cold blue eyes examined me through a tiny wicket in the door, and a rough voice said: "What do you want?" "I wish to see General Stoessel," I answered. "Have you permission?" said the voice. "Here is my ticket," I said, producing a card on which it was stated that the commander of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul had the honor to accord me leave to see the "nobleman Stoessel."

The gate in the high stone wall was opened and a soldier appeared. He examined the ticket carefully, and then showed the way to the reception room in one of the buildings in the court, beyond. It was deserted, but as we passed an iron grating in a wall I saw that in the adjoining court were a number of gendarmes and jailers.

"That is where the political prisoners are kept," said the soldier, "and," he added, with a malicious gleam in his eye, "they require more care than our lot here."

**T**HE reception room was a small, vaulted apartment, furnished with a table and a few chairs. On the wall hung a copy of the prison rules. Several smartly dressed women had already arrived and General Fock, who recently wounded General Smirnov in a duel, came in a few minutes later with several officers.

We had not to wait long for Stoessel. Punctually at 1 o'clock he came into the room. He was dressed in a black frock coat, his voice was weak and he looked older and more wrinkled than when he was on trial a few months ago. He is now a broken man who realizes that he has lost in the game of life.

"Oh, yes, one can live here, and in sufficient comfort," he replied to our inquiries about his life. "But it is a vegetable existence. More than anything I feel the loss of my uniform. For forty years I have worn the dress of an officer, and now I am not allowed to put on the coat of a common soldier or to use a military cap. The rule here, however, is not severe, the prison food is good though simple, and the governor is most considerate."

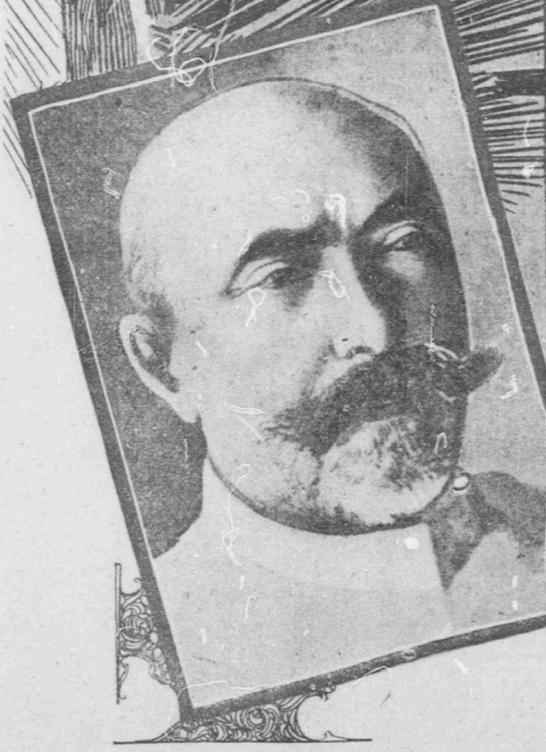
**Four Officers Dine Together.**  
In the fortress Stoessel has got to know his fellow-prisoners, Admiral Zebogatoff, Captain Ushin, and Cap-

tain Gengoreff. They generally dine together and no doubt fight again and win their lost battles.

"How does your excellency spend the day?" I asked. "It begins very early for St. Petersburg," he replied, "at 9 o'clock they bring the samovar and I take tea. The authorities do not provide bread and we have to buy that for ourselves. After a light breakfast I dress and go out for a walk in the little garden. At 1 o'clock I and the other officers imprisoned in the fortress dine together and after the meal I always find my wife waiting to see me. We have only the right to receive friends once a week, but the Czar has accorded me the special privilege to see my dear wife every day. She remains until 2 o'clock, and is not permitted to stay longer. When she is gone I stroll in the garden for a little and then I settle down to work. I am writing my memoirs, and at present am engaged in describing my recollections of childhood and I shall give the lie to my base calumniators."

**Voice Full of Anger.**  
Stoessel pronounced the last phrase in a voice full of anger, then he resumed in his ordinary feeble tone:

"When I arrived at the fortress no preparations had been made for my reception and I had to remain an hour in the courtyard waiting for them to take the things out of the room of another officer, who is imprisoned



GENERAL STOESEL, Who Is Now Confined in a Fortress in St. Petersburg.



MME. STOESEL, The Faithful Wife of the Fallen Hero. here, in order to make room for mine. The truth is that so many persons are at present incarcerated in the fortress that the authorities do not know where to put them.

"Perhaps you will allow me to see your room," I said. "I have special permission from the governor to do so." "Certainly," replied Stoessel, "but I warn you it is not very imposing. We crossed the courtyard together,



REAR ADMIRAL NEBOGATOFF.

entered another building, and were soon in a vaulted apartment, furnished with great simplicity. There was a little bed, a square table, a cupboard, and, behind a screen, a washstand, and two comfortable arm-chairs. The lapping of the waters of the Neva could be heard on the stone walls, a monotonous, plaintive sound, half sad and half soothing. Through the barred windows a glorious view could be seen. Far across the broad expanse of the river stood out in the bright sunshine the Winter palace.

### Recollections of the Past.

"I have often been there to see the Emperor; I have dined there, and years ago danced at the court balls. I never expected to see it day by day from a prison window." Stoessel sighed as he looked sadly toward the palace, and then, turning to me, said: "There is only one beautiful thing here, the church. I love to go there and to stand near the tombs of the Czar's while the choir is singing the praises of the Lord and of the Virgin. That rests and comforts me. In my heart I know that I did what I considered best for my country, but a scapegoat had to be found for the sins of the army during the war, and I suffer for many." The heavy door was suddenly thrown open and a harsh voice said: "Your guest must go."

"Come and see me again," said my unhappy host, and I left him still gazing at the palace across the Neva.

### A Hard Luck Soldier.

General Stoessel was what is known as a hard luck soldier. Three years ago, when he surrendered Port Arthur to the Japanese, he was both extolled and condemned for his action. Humanitarians did the former, and his enemies were in the majority, and in St. Petersburg Stoessel's name was coupled with "coward" and "traitor." Determined to refute the charges, the general returned to the Russian capital.

From the day he landed he met with nothing but insults and humiliations. The Czar and the war office ignored him, and his former companions shunned him. After some little time, in which efforts to rehabilitate in the eyes of Russia were an ignominious failure, a court-martial was called to try General Stoessel for the fall of Port Arthur. This, in brief, was a mockery. Stoessel asked for certain witnesses in his defense, and these were refused him.

After a hurried trial the Port Arthur commander was found "guilty of needlessly surrendering the fortress to the Japanese," and he was sentenced to die the death of a traitor. The case was appealed to the highest Russian military tribunal and a rehearing granted. Again he was found guilty, and this time he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in the fortress prison in St. Petersburg.

### Wife and Friends Work for Him.

This sentence was executed about the first of the present year, and now, after four short months, the prisoner is a mere shadow of his former self through humiliation and imprisonment. His friends, of whom he still has a few, and his faithful wife are still striving to have the general's case reopened by the Czar, but the chances of success are very slim.

Stoessel's surrender of Port Arthur was practically the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese war. He had taken command of the city's garrison of 40,000 men early in the struggle, and was soon besieged by the Japanese, until privations, battles, sickness, and death had reduced the fighting force to less than 8,000. General Stoessel concluded that further resistance would mean a great sacrifice of life, with ultimate and inevitable defeat.

He then sent his last message to the Czar, which read: "We shall be obliged to capitulate, but everything is in the hands of God. We have suffered fearful losses."

(Continued on Eighth Page.)