Million Letters In the Mails Today Bearing Magic Words "With the Colors"

Keynote of the Splendid Work the Y. M. C. A. Does Among Our Men In Uniform Is Keeping Them In Touch With the Folks at Home.

STAMPED WITH STARS AND STRIPES AND RED TRIANGLE

Multifarious Ways in Which the Association Appeals to Your Boy, Your Neighbor's Boy, or Some Boy You Know and Love—Creates a Helpful Environment in Cantonment, on Way Overseas, in Front Line Trench and Beyond—First to Aid as He Comes Tottering Back—Give Your Share of the $35,000,000 Required to Accomplish This "Last Evidence That Somebody Cares."

IT was evening on the broad Hempstead Plain, Long Island, where the Rainbow division was spending its last night before embarking for France. It had been raining hard in the afternoon—a cold, steady autumn downpour—and there was nothing to suggest the rainbow in the outward aspect of the camp. Lines and lines of sodden canvas housed 27,000 men, gathered from 27 different states. The ground was dotted with pools and quagmires. Under the wet canvas it was damp and cold, with a penetrating chill. Lit by flickering candles, the tents were far from cheerful shelter for a man's last night in his native land.

But there were seven big tents where electric lights, numbers and friendliness made the night pleasant.

Music, Games, Good Reading and Correspondence Facilities in Y. M. C. A. Building.

In each of these a soldier was strumming on a piano; others were reading books and magazines; hundreds were writing letters home. Behind the raised counter at one end three or four young men were busy passing out notepaper and envelopes, selling stamps and weighing parcels, which the men were sending home. One of the soldiers said to me as I stood in the tent used chiefly by men from Iowa: "We came all the way here from Des Moines, and we were mighty lonely. Then we found this Y. M. C. A. on the job, and it's been a home and more than a home to us. It gave us what we wanted when we needed it most. We'll never forget it. The boys' best friend is the Y. M. C. A."

Fine, Clean-Cut, Upstanding Fellows.

How close those benches were packed with men, bending over the long tables absorbed in their writing! What an appeal to the sympathies those great groups of soldiers make! Fine, clean-cut, upstanding fellows, some of them mere boys, one thinks immediately of the sacrifice they have made for the rest of us and how precious they are to some one back home. Somewhere, in far off farm or village or city street, there are parents or brothers or wives who would give all they possess for one glimpse of those sunburned faces as you and I see them on their last night before going across. And it was with a throb of the heart that I watched them, bent over their letter paper, in one after another of those seven big tents.

These were the tents of the Y. M. C. A. On that last night in America the association was serving the soldiers in the best of all ways—giving them an opportunity to write home. On previous nights they had enjoyed boxing bouts, movies, concerts, dramatics and a score of healthy entertainments as well as religious meetings. But on this last night home ties were strongest. And perhaps that is the keynote of the splendid work the Y. M. C. A. is doing among our men in uniform—keeping them in touch with home.

Magic Words, "With the Colors."

In these times there are some letters that mean more to us than any we have ever read before. They are written on sheets of paper stamped with the Stars and Stripes and the red triangle of the Y. M. C. A., and they bear the magic words, "With the Colors." There are many more than a million such letters in the mails now while you read this. Perhaps one at least is on its way to you. Each one of our 16 cantonments, where the new national army is being trained, is using more than a million sheets of this paper every month. In the draft army alone that means 16,000,000 filaments of love every month reaching out from the great encampment where the men are being trained into the greatest army this nation has ever dreamed and binding them to the hearts at home. Multiply that by thinking of all the other places where Uncle Sam has men with the flag—in navy yards, on the high seas, in arsenals and officers' training camps and "Over There" in France. In all these places men are writing home. Those unassuming little sheets of notepaper gladden millions of hearts a day. They transfer more love from one part of the world to another than statistics can express. Statistics are pretty poor anyway when it comes to reckoning in terms of love and human tenderness. Let's put it this way: That the Y. M. C. A. is the biggest express company the world has ever seen, and the parcels it is handling are the loves and devotions of human beings.

World's Best Loved Trademark.

This war has made us think hard and fast. Your boy or your neighbor's boy or some boy you know, and love has been called to do his share in the big job of policing the world for democracy and human liberty. Is it any comfort to you to know that wherever his duty may call him your boy will have a friend that will serve him in body, mind and soul? Are you glad to know that this friend will place books and magazines at his disposal, organize classes to teach him whatever he wants to learn, give him a pocket testament and invite him to join religious meetings of the faith that he was brought up in? Did you realize that the association provides athletic equipment for his favorite games, teaches him games if he knows none and holds concerts, lectures, movies, Bible classes, dramatic entertainments and every kind of wholesome amusement to keep him interested? Are you glad to know that this friend will go with him overseas, help to shield him from a score of difficult and dangerous temptations and follow him right up to the front line trench and beyond it? The last contact the soldier has with this life he loves so well is a cup of tea given him by the Y. M. C. A free just before he goes "over the top" to a hand to hand struggle with the enemy. And as he comes tottering back from No Man's Land, wounded, but strong enough and plucky enough to keep on his feet, even before his wounds are dressed the Y. M. C. A. is waiting for him with tea and sweet chocolate, the great comforts of the man in the trenches. Do you wonder that the Red Triangle is called "the best loved trademark in the world?" One soldier in France has called it "the last evidence that anybody cares."

If every thinking citizen could see with his or her own eyes something of the actual work being done for our men by the association there would be no question of the Y. M. C. A. having to appeal to the public for money. Rather than let this essential work falter for an instant rich men would sell their motorcars, poor men would forego coveted possessions or even necessities. The work must go on because there is no one thing that contributes so much to the spirit and efficiency of the troops. The Y. M. C. A. is working night and day to help the government win this war. And every penny that is given to aid the work is a direct assistance to the health, happiness and strength of your boy and mine.

Snapshots of Kaleidoscopic Work.

In all the big cities in France where our men pass through in large numbers, the Y. M. C. A. is operating hostels, where they can get beds and meals at a minimum cost. In London the American Y. M. C. A. has erected a large building for our soldiers and a clubhouse for American officers.

There are Y. M. C. A. dugouts right behind the front line trenches, where the soldiers can get hot drinks, crackers and other comforts at all hours.

Over 2,000 men who had been rejected on account of physical disability have been able to get into the British army by reason of the physical work of the British Y. M. C. A.

A fleet of motor cars leaves the big Y. M. C. A. headquarters in London at midnight every night to pick up soldiers who are wandering about the streets without any wholesome lodging in which to spend the night. These cars are operated by Englishwomen of position and refinement, who report that they never meet any discourtesy at the hands of the soldiers. The importance of this service can be estimated by the fact that at least 50,000 soldiers are on leave in London every week. Over half of these sleep in Y. M. C. A. beds every night.

Entertainment on Vast Scale.

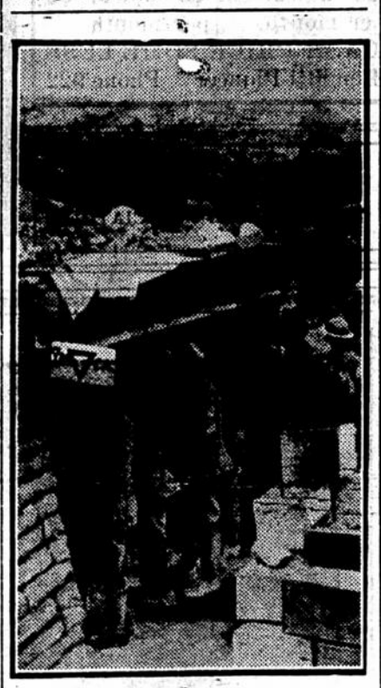
The Y. M. C. A. has erected a big auditorium, seating 3,000, in each of the big draft camps, and huge chautauqua tents, seating 2,500 in the other encampments. The association is running a 22 week entertainment circuit among the camps and is paying 16 companies of entertainers, who are traveling to 30 camps performing before the men.

In each of the draft camps the Y. M. C. A. has ten secretaries engaged in educational work. The association is seeing to it that every man who cannot speak English is taught to do so. In many of the camps the association has a singing director, who is teaching the men to sing the popular and martial airs that do so much to keep up their spirits.

Of 64 Y. M. C. A. men at Camp Dix only three are being paid full salaries. In all the camps the majority of the Y. M. C. A. men have left lucrative positions to do this work simply because its appeal is irresistible to any red blooded man. Harry Lauder, the famous Scotch singer and comedian, now on his farewell concert tour in the United States, is giving all his spare time to the service of the association and is singing to the soldiers at all the camps he can reach.

In one of the draft camps the Y. M. C. A. is supervising athletics on 120 playing fields, providing full athletic equipment. The winners of the interregimental games will play the champions of the other camps.

One of the greatest services rendered by the association is the making



A Red Triangle Dugout in the Trenches.

out of money orders by which the men can send their pay home to their families. In some of the big camps the Y. M. C. A. is providing banking facilities for the men as well.

Do Your Bit With a Tenner.

This month (November) the Y. M. C. A. must raise $35,000,000 to carry on its work among our soldiers and their allies until next July. Of this $35,000,000 about $24,000,000 will be spent on the work with our own troops or about $10 for every man in Uncle Sam's uniform. If everybody who has received letters from soldiers and sailors were to contribute $10 the task would be easy. Are your boy's health and happiness and clean soul worth $10 to you?

Your town mayor, your pastor, your school superintendent will know who is the treasurer of the campaign committee in your county or town. Otherwise send a check or money order to Cleveland H. Dodge, treasurer, 124 East Twenty-eighth street, New York city.

Only sacrificial giving by millions of givers will make possible the continuance of this vast work for American soldiers and for those of our allies.

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