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THE ROUEN POST

Base Hospital 21 — World War I

21st Gen. Hosp. — World War II

A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ROUEN POST No. 242

PEACE

On Earth

*Good Will Towards
Men . . .*

*This is the season of seasons,
this glorious time of inner
warmth, this joyous planning for
other's joys, this glow that grows
from giving, this proof of our
finer selves, this beloved source
of happiness, this magic : this
wonder : this is Christmas . . .*

• YES, today is Christmas . . . a beautiful day in our fair city, St. Louis . . . probably the happiest day for the greatest number in this land of ours . . . in many years . . . as we wandered through the merchandise marts we observed rich and poor, old and young, feeble and strong with eyes aglow and eager hands . . . searching for a gift to bring cheer to a relative or a friend . . . yes, even the less fortunate were better cared for than ever before . . . no, Christmas cannot be explained in terms of habit or business . . . Christmas is something deeper and finer.

Your editor was so impressed with an editorial appearing in today's St. Louis Globe-Democrat that he considered it fitting to spread it into our records . . . because of Christmas many may not have read it . . . and our readers away from St. Louis . . . surely not . . . it is entitled:

CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

In 1644, by act of Parliament, the observance of Christmas was officially forbidden in England. It was not until Charles II ascended the throne that this great feast day of the Christian world was restored. In other lands and other times, many dictators have sought to ban Christmas and the religious faith upon which it rests. Always they have failed. It has been argued that Christianity, too, has failed.

"On earth peace, good will toward men," sang the angels on that night nearly 2000 years ago when Christ was born in Bethlehem. On this Christmas morning there certainly is no peace or good will in the Holy Land. Through the centuries, as today, there have been few times when men have remembered and followed this precept about which our Christmas observance is woven.

Ours is a materialistic, cynical generation. We have lived through two great wars since the turn of the century. Today we are waging a "cold war" against those who seek to prevent this country from fulfilling the precept of peace and good will.

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Why then should we in America, who put our faith into the harsh realities of science, celebrate the birth of an obscure carpenter who lived and died nearly 2000 years ago? Why should we decorate our homes and our stores? Why do we plan parties for the orphans, and spend lavishly for our families and friends? Why the Christmas trees, the holly wreaths, the carols in the streets?

There are those who would explain this miracle of Christmas as habit, tradition, sentiment and good business. Yet we in America are a hardboiled, practical people. We are forever discarding our past. We test our customs and cast them aside. Our institutions are coldly analyzed. Even our heroes are subjected to critical scrutiny.

No, Christmas cannot be explained in terms of habit or business. Christmas is something deeper and finer than tradition or sentiment. It is a time when we turn away from the mundane affairs of the world, from the terrible insecurity of this atomic age, from greed and selfishness. It is a time when, blindly perhaps, the Christian world seeks to follow in His footsteps. We make the children happy in His name. We gather our friends about us and share our bounty with them.

This year, more than on any Christmas we can recall, the holiday is being observed in an atmosphere of doubt. During the depression years there was little happiness for millions. There were bread lines and government relief, which denoted distress and want. But there was always the feeling that sometime, somehow, times would be better in a land blessed by Providence as no country in the world has been blessed.

During the war years there was apprehension. Fathers and sons were on the fighting fronts and even Christmas Day might mark the end of the road for them. The casualty lists were "must" reading in many families; the thing most feared the knock at the door and a message telling of the death of a loved one.

But even those numb with grief had some consolation that out of the carnage and mis-

ery would emerge a better, brighter world. Out of this global destruction would emerge a determination that could never be shaken, that this was the last war, that never again could such a cataclysm overwhelm the civilized world. If this were true, the price paid for it was not too dear.

But today what have we? Millions in Europe and the Far East undergoing greater suffering than they did during the war. Governments still in collapse, as complete as when their people and their homes were bomb attacked. Unrest everywhere. We who want world peace thwarted at every turn by a nation that wants peace nowhere. Another shooting war, some say, just around the corner. Billions being spent to aid stricken peoples, a sacrifice willingly given if belief is strong that it will cure the ailing patients, or assist in their recovery. Did we fight one war and learn nothing from the disastrous experience?

Doubt, doubt! We doubt our leaders; we doubt the sincerity of those with whom we associate in the international family; we doubt whether anybody knows any of the answers. There are even those so bold as to doubt the efficacy of Christianity in the present crisis.

It is time, then, for us to renew our faith in Him whose birth we celebrate—and through Him our faith in our fellow men. It is in the simple truths He taught—brotherhood, forgiveness and peace—that we find the real spirit of Christmas. These truths are a reminder today that there can be peace on earth, for men of good will—if we will it so.

Ogden Nash, one of the hardboiled poets of our own generation, writing in the cynicism of the war years, has put into verse a message for this Christmas morning:

"God rest you, Merry Innocents,
While innocence endures.
A sweeter Christmas than we to ours,
May you bequeath to yours."

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MRS. PHILIP CONRATH RECUPERATING

We have a note from Mrs. Philip Conrath, wife of a former member of Base Hospital 21 thanking us for flowers we sent while she was seriously ill. Mrs. Conrath is recovering from a very delicate operation and at the time she wrote was really feeling that the St. Mary's Hospital interlude is about over.

REMEMBER CHRISTMAS 1918

From The Rouen Post, December 1936

"Studying Conditions" and "Cinderella a' la Guerre" two plays written by members of Base Hospital Unit 21 were presented Christmas night, 1918, in the recreation hut on the Champ de Cours, at Rouen. "Studying Conditions," a two-act sketch with post-war Paris as a background, was written by Charles (Chick) Collier. "Cinderella a' la Guerre" a farce in two acts with prologue and an epilogue, written by Katherine Murphy, was based on life in a war-time base hospital. The dancing in this play was directed by Constance Cuppaidge, costumes furnished by the Folies-Bergere and the orchestra, under the direction of Sergeant Thomas Dunville, was composed of Sylvester Horn, Clarence Schlueter, Edward Dakin, Clarence Koch and Arshav Nushan. Charles (Shorty) Wallis and Corporal Tom Ridley were in charge of stage and scenery. Edna Draper, Joseph Meyer, Charles Collier, Jack Dunasky and Tom O'Hanlon were players in "Studying Conditions" and the cast of "Cinderella a la Guerre" was composed of Ann Carson, Ann Westerman, Estelle Claiborne, Mary Ellen Hill, Florence Russell, Myrtle Nash, Mary Stebbins, Joyce Ely, Hazel Flint, Constance Cuppaidge, Katherine Murphy, Edith Ferguson, Estelle Burch, Edith Dangerfield, Julia MacCorkle, Ruth Morton, Celeste Campbell, and John (Red) Graham.

The program announced that a minstrel show would be presented during the holidays under the direction of Graham.

HOLIDAY WISHES

May these days with splendor glow,
Love and laughter, and the tears
Which in sweet remembrance flow
For joys of by-gone years.

May these days so happy be
Every little girl and boy,
When they've grown as old as we,
Will remember them with joy.

May the old contentment find,
By the faith to which they cling,
And be blest with peace of mind
As the bells of the Holidays ring.

Days for love set apart!
May no shadows on them fall.
May there be no troubled heart.
Joyous Holidays, one and all.

Apologies to Edgar A. Guest

THE BULLETIN BOARD

Colonel Cady has sent us cards . . . Announcing a new arrival named Kathleen Adair Buck, December 18, 1947, parents Shelburne (formerly Major Buck) and Edith Buck . . . Holiday greetings and a note from former Captain Frank Moore . . . It has been a long time since I've written but I'll try to give the news in capsule form. I'm with Philco Corporation here in Philadelphia in the auditing department. I enjoy THE ROUEN POST news and learning what others are doing. I look forward to a chance to attend the next reunion. Maybe business will take me that way. Captain Moore was adjutant of the 21st General Hospital in France succeeding Major W. J. Dann, Jr., when he went to "German Occupation." Captain Moore married First Lieutenant Eugenia Slobojian, ANC . . . Greetings from Virginia Grabowski Shannon, 605 North Avenue, Dunellen, New Jersey with a note saying she has acquired a husband and a daughter since last Christmas . . . A card from Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bilz and son with a message. Thank you for Christmas card for your interest in our welfare. As you no doubt know, I never got any farther in physiotherapy other than correspondence. I had hoped to continue in the same capacity as I did for the good old 21st but something

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"messed up the detail". At present I am still working as an interior decorator (painter). My wife presented me with a son last Christmas so we shall be celebrating his first birthday this Christmas. Merry Christmas, with fondest remembrances. Frank Bilz . . . The writer has a card from Miss Emma Ammon with a note, "I am staying here for the holidays but they did offer us a seven day pass if we so desired. In my state of disability I thought the crowds and the weather might be too much for me. The weather has been beautiful up here near the Blue Ridge; also this is the beginning of the Shenandoah Valley. I sent some money some time back but have not heard if you received it. No doubt you are too busy to write. (Miss Ammon's contribution was acknowledged in the September issue. Thanks.) I get more money now so am thinking of joining your legion post this coming year" . . . Of course we will be delighted to have Miss Ammon join Rouen Post No. 242 . . . Dr. Allan A. Gilbert, the playful ridge-runner of Fayetteville, Arkansas sent us a very attractive greeting card with a message—Always think of the old gang at Christmas time. Don't think I'll get up to St. Louis during the holidays as I am planning on going to Birmingham for the Arkansas-William and Mary, Dixie Bowl football game January 1. Just returned from a big duck hunting party at a club near De Witt, Arkansas where Sid Ferree Chef de Chemin de Fer of the 40 and 8 1947, Guy M. Land, Chef de Chemin de Fer 1948 and Dr. Allan A. Gilbert, Grand Chef de Gare 1947 and Cheminot National 1948 were guests of honor. I hope to be Sous Chef de Chemin de Fer in a few years, so you see I have been pretty active in Legion work. Best wishes to the Mrs. and family and any of the gang you run in to . . . Allan Gilbert . . . Another one of the first 21st's colorful characters—unpredictable to say the least. For the duration of the reunion your correspondent and Allan shared a suite at the Coronado. Such stalwarts as Stack, Winer, Williams, Spence Allen and countless numbers of the others were among our visitors. Memories of those sleepless days and nights will linger on and on. The ridge-runner was in rare form—always occupying the spotlight. His demonstration, of a ridge-runner in repose, was a picture no artist could paint. Imagine

the fellow seated on a davenport, clad in pajamas with his one foot behind his head—a rare feat, indeed, for even clean, living young men. Stack, a man of considerable physical prowess, was induced to try to duplicate the stunt, but, alas, as agile as even he is, not one foot could be raised above the waistline. During the few hours of sleep we were able to snatch there could be heard intermittently, horrible screaming. Dr. Gilbert was giving imitations of the mating call of "a frustrated female ridge-runner" . . . And the hotel management has invited us to return. This writer has been falsely accused of unduly weaving, Jeanette Parish did a dive at one of our meetings that could be imitated only by Johnny Weismueller but when the citizen soldier from Fayetteville, Arkansas slid under an awaiting taxicab he performed with the grace and agility of a Vernon Castle, Fred Astaire and Sonja Henie all as a synchronized bit of humanity. Yes, there are few characters of stage or screen comparable to the Dr. Allan A. Gilbert . . . Grethe L. Knudsen sent a card, Dear Bill Engel, Best regards to all . . . And that nice little guy of he second 21st, Allen Katz sends Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year . . . Last, and you can fill in the rest of the words of that commonly used phrase, Dr. and Mrs. Lee D. Cady addressed a card to your adjutant which we shall consider personal as well as official for all of the members . . . A final note which we could not let escape, the War Assets Administration last week offered for sale 375,000 pairs of dice . . . Wonder if "Judge" Neely learned of this? . . . In conclusion your editor sends

"GREETINGS"

May there come to you at this
Holiday Time
an abundance of the precious things
of Life,
Health, Happiness and enduring
Friendships.

220 No. 4th Street
St. Louis 2, Mo.

BILL ENGEL