

Looking Back

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WELL, buddie, you're out of the service now. My but that sounds good; but stop a moment and look back. Think of the days that you spent in the service and of the friends that you made while you were there, and you will agree with me that you have had an experience that you value highly; don't you wish that you could go back there again?

I am sure you remember the chronic army grouch because we all had it. Kick at everything, mess, drill, fatigue duty, company commander, and above all the first sergeant. How we did blame the Old Top for all of the wrongs that befell us. He certainly was the buffer between the enlisted man and the officer and received the censure of both.

You will surely remember the chance meeting with some other soldier when you had a fag and were out of matches and how the conversation drifted in a discussion of this camp or that and you finally agreed that Sheridan was a whole lot better than Monroe because they did set out such a fine mess. The question of eats was just as much the soldier's topic of conversation as the weather is among the "civies" and the quality of each cantonment was finally boiled down to a question of which one had the best mess outfit.

Do you remember the night that you slipped one over on the sergeant, after inspection? How quietly you folded up your bunk and stowed it away under the man next to you and by carefully avoiding the guard you "kept that date."

And you remember the funny "bird" who played the "uke" and you used to get together after supper and sing. Those were the times when you thought of home and perhaps afterward you would go to your bunk and drag out the old battle-scarred suit case and write a long letter home. Then came that first furlough. Home in the uniform and nothing to do but enjoy yourself. When you have been away for awhile you really appreciate what home is.

You will never forget those hikes and most distinct of all in my memory is the one when we started out with heavy packs and marched seventeen miles in the rain. Were we down-hearted? I'll say we were. There may have been worse mud in Flanders, but we would have sworn that America grows the peskiest burdocks and brambles in the world and the mosquitoes that arose after the rain, were as big as bumble-bees. The days we spent on the range too; those were the happy days; shoot, shoot, shoot, nothing to do but shoot, and at every bump the shoulder got sore and then some. How you flinched when you fired from the prone position and the first two went in the dirt, about ten feet ahead of you. Its great sport if you can use your imagination to change the targets into Hienies.

And did you contract that popular disease, known as the "flu?" Sitting around a cot in the hospital recuperating on "poker" and "black jack" with matches selling for a nickel a throw, to the tune of "That's Where My Money Goes."

Days on guard, days on the march, Sunday spent in camp because of a dirty bunk, good days, and bad days we will never forget them. *It's a great life if you don't weaken.*