

# DRAFT ARMY'S FIRST REVIEW

Whole Division at Camp Meade, 30,000 Strong, Makes a Showing That Elicits Optimism After Washington's Gloomy Whisperings



Times Photo Service

Troops Marching in Review at Maryland Cantonment Before the Secretary of War—There Had Been No Formal Announcement of This Initial Appearance of an Entire National Army Division in Uniform, So the Remarkable Spectacle Attracted Little Attention.

WHEN I feel like suicide, I go to sea to cheer up," wrote Herman Melville in his preface to "Moby Dick." When you get discouraged by the disclosures as to lack of progress in fitting the new American armies for the fighting in Europe, go to camp and see those armies themselves.

The disclosures are bad enough; they are justified by the facts, and nobody denies that they should be made, but they are only a part of the story of America in her first year of war—the part that is told in the overheated committee rooms and corridors of the Capitol at Washington, where fuel is not conserved, where the odor of cooking cabbage and other kitchen smells from the restaurants in the Senate and House wings blend with the rumors and whispers and open charges that fill the building. It is the story that is reluctantly admitted to be true in part and angrily denied in part, in many bureaus of the War Department and in the maze and labyrinth of the somewhat confused and overlapping civilian boards which are endeavoring to help the War Department do what it cannot do alone.

For the reassuring part of the story, and the bigger part, get out in the open. Go where the officers are in the saddle or working within the bare walls of their cantonment quarters instead of struggling to be active in the deep-cushioned chairs under the ornately frescoed ceilings of the War Department; where the soldiers are in the training trenches instead of walking up and down the hot corridors all day long, taking messages from one bureau to another or guiding swarms of civilian callers, who want to get something, to the particular ante-room in which the waiting process of getting must begin.

In short, go from the staff to the line if you are seeking a day off from pessimism and gloom.

In spite of the weak spots in the staff, the line is getting better all the time. There are a million and more active troops in it today, not counting the men who have gone to France. The investigating committees of Congress should adjourn periodically to go to the camps and cantonments, not merely to see for themselves what is lacking in equipment, but to note the great progress that is being made in spite of that lack, progress in morale and discipline and a military at-

mosphere in general; a tremendous increase of interest among the men in the fact that they are participants in the war.

A Corporal of Artillery at Camp Meade sums it up this way: "We are sort of getting madder with the Kaiser every day now, and we didn't give a damn about him one way or the other when we first came here."

Fortunately for Washington, where the gloom about the army gets thickest because Congress and the bureaus are right there, Camp Meade, the cantonment of the 79th Division of the national army, is only two hours away. It is a cheerful place to visit after a Crozier or a Sharpe or some other bureau chief has left the witness stand. It was particu-

larly so the other day, when Brig. Gen. William J. Nicholson, commanding this cantonment in the absence of Major Gen. Kuhn, reviewed his entire division.

The visitors that day saw the first review of a national army division as a whole. But General Nicholson was so sure of what his troops could do that he invited Mr. Baker, the Secretary of War, to come out to see the review. The General had no occasion to regret his apparent recklessness. He is one of the reassuring type of officers of the United States Army who have never grown stiff and slow, mentally and physically, in a staff bureau. He has spent all of his many years of service out in the open with troops. He can tell when military discipline has begun to sink in and transform raw material, when the thing called

morale has become an established fact in the group life and activities of thousands of men only recently summoned from civil life. So he knew his men at Camp Meade had sufficiently large beginnings of both that morale and discipline after three months of hard training. Knowing this, he proceeded to call out his entire command and march it in review before the Secretary of War.

The experiment was a great success. Incidentally, it must have been a grateful relief for Mr. Baker, who had just left the inquiry-charged atmosphere of Washington. In the review he got first-hand evidence that some things about the army were not so bad as they had been painted.

For example, he saw a parade of 30,000 soldiers, every one of whom was in uniform, and every one of whom had on an army overcoat. If there had been time for an inspection of every individual in the division, he also would have discovered that every man in that long line of troops was clothed comfortably in the army's Winter underwear, somewhat belated in its delivery, but on hand before this particular cantonment had any illness due to lack of protection from Winter weather. And, if the Secretary had had time to go through all the long rows of barracks, he would have found every building comfortably heated and every cot equipped with two woolen blankets and a comforter. In this camp, in short, he would have found much to cheer him and the nation.

So much for the physical welfare and creature comforts of the 30,000 men—the comforts which had been such an important factor in getting them sufficiently drilled and trained to march as a division without any hitch in the program. Now for the question of arms:

As to gun equipment, the showing was not so good, although it was better here than in some of the other cantonments. The review brought a gratifying surprise as to small arms, after the proceedings before the committees of Congress. The lack of equipment was most apparent, of course, in the artillery, for with that branch the lack is almost total. There are two regiments of heavy field artillery at Meade. They should be equipped with thirty-two six-inch guns, all told. They have none whatever. There is one regiment of light artillery, which should have three-inch guns, and it has not enough to train one battery at a time. But these three-inch guns did not appear in the review, so the entire artillery brigade marched without equipment. In the two brigades of infantry the machine-gun battalions were also unarmed, for lack of equipment. But 90 per cent. of the infantrymen in the review did have their rifles. The platoon that went by without arms was exceptional.

But the review would have been an im-



Secretary Baker and Brig. Gen. W. J. Nicholson Reviewing the Division. They Saw All the Men Well Clad and Most of Them Carrying Rifles, Though Machine-Gun Equipment Was Lacking.

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# Draft Army's First Review—30,000 in Line

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pressive, reassuring thing, worth going far to see, even if there had not been a rifle in the entire outfit. There was the man power—controlled, willing, enthusiastic man power. To see 30,000 men manoeuvred with precision and marched up and down hills, through woods and ravines and over streams, is more tangi-

the mellowness of a well-established community in which military life and thought and activity had become matters of course. The reviewing point was at the top of a hill, on the western edge of the plain, and all the afternoon the visitors could look close into the faces of the soldiers illuminated by the level rays of the sun, as regiment after regiment, marching in column of platoons, reached the crest of the hill, facing the west,

At the early rehearsal of the raw material in the woods, the red-headed Sergeant had to play every instrument in turn to show each pupil how not to do it. Then he marched them back and forth in the clearing, running down between his lines of men to grab the stick from the unfortunate bass drummer and show him how to "punch a hole in the damn thing" without losing the rhythm; then jumping at a bugler

mer, who seemed to be afraid of hurting his drum, was handicapped by a pair of gray trousers and a blue jumper, which he had worn from his factory on the day of the draft call.

It was a very different outfit that furnished the march music for the same regiment on the day of the review. The writer was wondering if that nondescript group of September ever had been licked into a military band, when those same level rays of the sun which added so much to the big review were flashed back from the three front gold teeth of a most happy and jaunty drum major as he cocked his baton at the Secretary of War. It was the Sergeant of the September rehearsal. The red hair confirmed the evidence of the gold teeth, and that was the same bass drummer doing his part in "Over There" in a way that made every civilian on the side lines want to catch the step and march with the troops and follow them on beyond the review point where they changed from platoon formation to column of fours and did double time down the hill and up the next slope.

General Nicholson did not attempt to conceal his enthusiasm over the showing that his division had made.

"I knew they could do it," he said, "because of what I had seen of their work in small units. Give us until Spring for training, and we will have in the American cantonments the best army the world has ever seen or has been able to put together for fighting purposes. I have watched all these men in the training trenches. I have seen them digging the trenches, and they do it with the knowledge of men who realize that they have got to learn the lesson here to save their own lives and the lives of their comrades when they get to France. They appreciate the value of a tenth of a second in doing the right thing before the enemy makes it impossible to do it. It is true that we still lack something in equipment, but we are rapidly getting into the men themselves the things without which all the equipment in the world would not make a good army."



One of the Sleeping Quarters at Camp Meade, Maryland.

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ble and convincing than to read of a million men whose names have been written down on the army rosters. Nobody really knows what the term "horse power" means, and "man power" is almost as vague until you see it. This first review of an entire division of America's national army was the first large-scale demonstration of the man power the country set in motion within three months.

There is nothing spectacular or theatrical about General Nicholson, but the greatest stage manager in the world could not have produced a more impressive picture than that of the military groupings and marchings of those 30,000 men, with a Winter landscape for the setting.

The review itself was on a twenty-acre stretch of rolling country surrounded by woods, through which here and there were glimpses of the long rows of wooden barracks, already sufficiently weathered to have lost that raw look of newness and to have taken on some of

wheeled to the left and then marched by the reviewing party.

The command "Eyes right" again brought all those faces into the full sunlight, and no doubt General Nicholson saw in them something that made them forget for a moment the fact that every man did not have a rifle. At any rate, that something was there. Every man seemed to have those other things that are indispensable in the making of a soldier—the morale, the willingness and, to be more specific, the ability to march well and to hold himself well after only a few weeks of drill.

The enthusiasm of the men for the review was one of the big things in the history of the cantonment. The order for it came when everybody was uncertain as to the vital matter of getting Christmas leave, but the pride and interest in being the first national army division to be reviewed as a whole, and by the Secretary of War, were sufficient to offset much of the fear that the holiday furloughs would not be forthcoming.

Fortunately, the doubt about the leave was all settled in favor of the soldiers on the morning of the review, which may have accounted in part for the hilarity of the companies and batteries, regiments and brigades as they fell in beyond the woods, to await their turn to join the long, ever-increasing line that was winding down on to the plain.

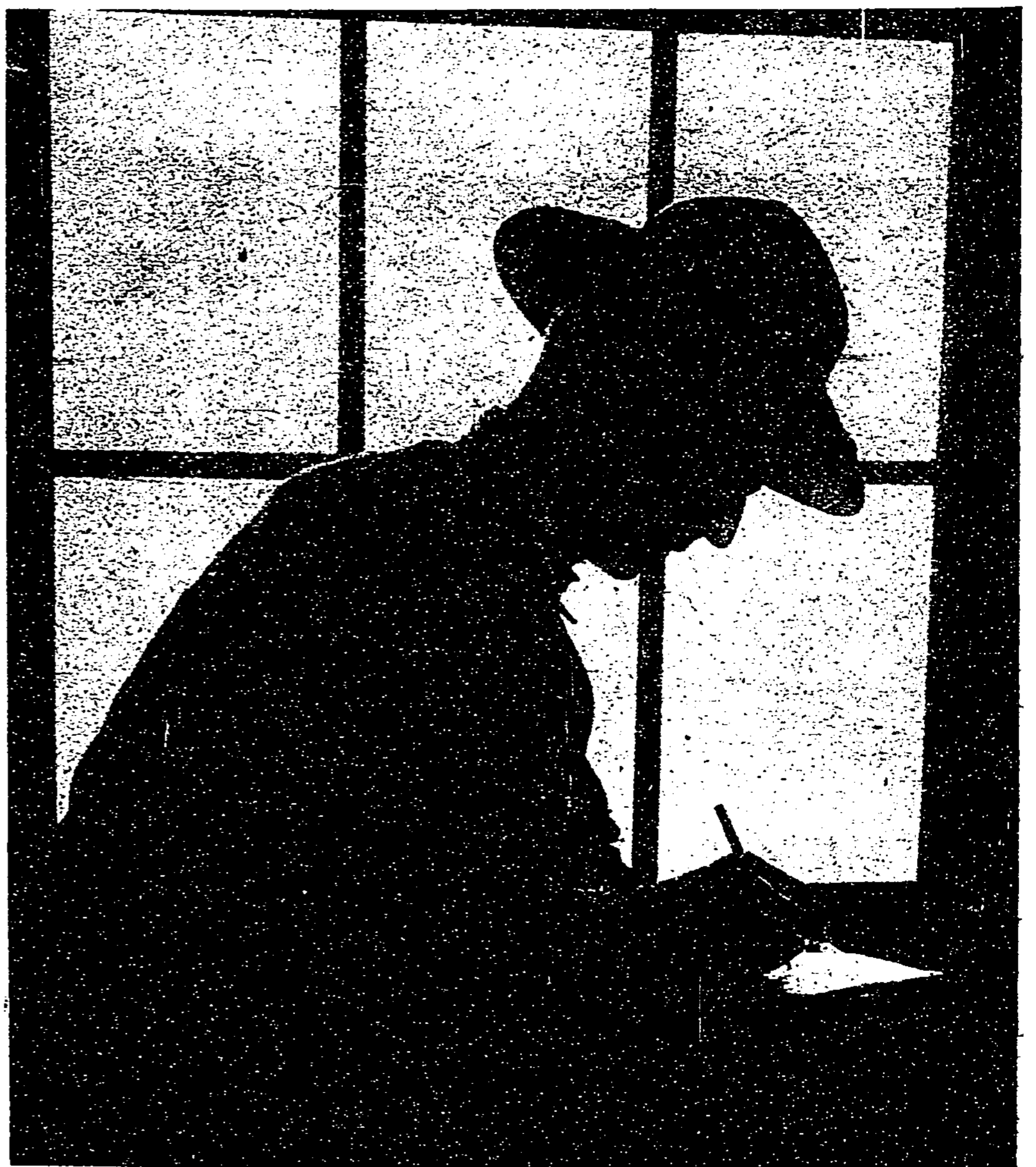
Nearly every regiment had its own band, which in itself was one of the many demonstrations of the fact that remarkable progress had been made since these draft men were called from civil life early in the Fall. The writer who saw this review was at Camp Meade last September. One of the things he saw then was a hard-working, red-headed drum Sergeant with three gold teeth in front, way off in a corner of the woods trying to make a military band out of such draft men as had told him that they could play something. Some of them could, most of them couldn't; but they were the best that particular regiment could produce in the way of musicians.

to show him how not to miss the pick-up note at the go-off and "throw" the whole blamed army out of step. This beginning of an army band in the corner of the woods had only fragments of uniforms. The unfortunate bass drum-



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The Five-Minute Shave at a National Army Cantonment.



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Writing to Dad—a Picture from Camp.