

THE UNITED STATES MARINES

By Walter A. Dyer

Since that crucial moment of the Great War when the German drive was halted at Château-Thierry, only thirty-five miles from Paris, all the world has heard of the prowess of the United States marines. Hard-hitting, sharp-shooting, steel-hearted fighters they are, who won for themselves and their nation imperishable glory during the bitterest struggles of the last phase of the war. And yet it is doubtful whether the man in the street has any very clear idea of what a marine really is, what his place is in the American military establishment, or whence came this particular group of fighting men that seemed all ready to jump in at the critical moment while the army was still in the making.

As a matter of fact they did not

spring up out of the ground at the call for men. They were ready before that as the rest of the nation was not ready. They have, indeed, been ready always; they have been on the job in every war and every expedition in which the United States has been engaged since the days of John Paul Jones. They are the mobile fighting force of the navy, the foot-soldiers of the fleets, the world policemen of Uncle Sam, and if they have not attracted much attention in the past, it is largely because they have performed their far-flung duties so quietly and efficiently. They have a history and a tradition as old and honorable as that of army or navy, and an *esprit de corps* that cannot be surpassed anywhere in the world.

The marines were with John Paul Jones on the "Ranger" and the "Bon Homme Richard". They took part in the important naval engagements of our Revolutionary War. They were a potent factor in the war against the Barbary corsairs, and it was a marine, Lieutenant O'Bannon, who raised the Stars and Stripes on the fortress of Derne in Tripoli in 1803.

They took an important part in the War of 1812 and the war with Mexico. They distinguished themselves at the storming of Chapultepec on September 13, 1847, and on the following day it was Lieutenant Nicholson of the marines who raised the United States flag on the National Palace in the City of Mexico.

They were with Commodore Perry in Japan in 1853 and at Harper's Ferry in 1859. They took part in most of the naval engagements of the Civil War. In 1898 the marines won distinction at Guantanamo and Cavite, and were left to straighten things out in Cuba and the Philippines after the Spanish War. They helped to quell

the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900. They have brought order out of chaos in Nicaragua, Haiti, and Santo Domingo. Everywhere their fighting has been picturesque and daring and the story of it reads like a romance. In 1914 they played a leading rôle in the occupation of Vera Cruz.

The marine corps has always been small in numbers and mighty in strength. When war was declared on Germany, there were only about 11,000 marines mobilized. The numbers were rapidly increased, however, until over 50,000 were enrolled, and a special overseas training camp was established at Quantico, Virginia. In the winter of 1917-18 two regiments of marines, mostly new men under seasoned officers, were sent to France, forming half of the Second Division, A. E. F. They fought at Belleau Wood, at Villers-Cotterets, at Blanc Mont Ridge, and before Sedan, and now they form a part of the honored army of occupation. No body of American fighting troops has seen more action or won greater honors.

Willis J. Abbot, author of "The Story of Our Army" and "The Story of Our Navy", has told the whole story of the marine corps in a volume of permanent value as a contribution to United States history. And because we are in a mood for reading of the achievements of fighting Americans, the story contains a wealth of dramatic interest. One might wish that Mr. Abbot had devoted more than one sketchy chapter to the deeds of our marines in France, but Brigadier-General A. W. Catlin has done that in "With the Help of God and a Few Marines". The two books are complementary and will be read with intense interest by any who have enjoyed such records of the Americans in France as those of Floyd Gib-

bons and Frederick Palmer. It is such books as these that will increase in value when volumes of transitory soldier impressions, however thrilling they were while the guns were roaring, have been forgotten.

Soldiers of the Sea. The Story of the United States Marine Corps. By Willis J. Abbot. Dodd, Mead and Co.

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