Barring Sex Disease from the American Army

For the First Time in History a Nation Takes Advance Steps to Avert an Evil Worse Than Battle Casualties

The United States Government is undertaking to make our army camps not only safe camps but healthy ones, and is actually safer for the men in them than the surroundings of their ordinary lives back home, as is made possible by a program consciously and systematically carried out by a Government. Officers everywhere have sought and are seeking to check the spread of venereal disease among our troops, which have caused a point making preventive measures imperative; the United States Government and its leaders intend to make such a spread of diseases impossible from the start.

This war is doing one good thing. It is making people speak out loud about a subject that was either ignored or dealt with in whispers—the subject of the prevention of venereal disease. The fewer we are in checking its spread among our soldiers is being taken up so openly and thoroughly that the efforts of the work will be felt long after the war is over. So the fewer we speak, the better for all; it is a lesson I never believed before.

The man who said that William H. Ziegler was the best man in the country for Civilian Co-operation in Combating Venereal Diseases of the Council of National Defense, which has an office at 105 West Forty-fifth Street, New York, and he emphasized his absolute belief in the work of the men who had been appointed behind the front for some time and had seen no actual fighting at all. Will you believe that the latter regiment, the one that had not been in action, had lost the services of more men through venereal disease during its stay behind the line than the one back from the fighting line had lost in the attack?

Now Great Britain and France and Germany are alive to the fumes of this scourge. But much of the harm has already been done. Throughout France you will see placards in cities, towns, and villages appealing to soldiers to serve their country by keeping away from prostitutes. In England an association has been formed, including among its members some of the most prominent men in the country, for the establishment of dispensers in small towns and villages where the outbreak of the war has been greatest. They are making ravages as to make drastic steps to prevent the spread of disease. If you look at almost any English newspaper you will find the most conservative, which before the war were hard on the soldiers or thrust them into the background. You will see the names of these diseases blazoned forth in large type, and you can read discussions of preventive measures, written with a frankness which, three years ago, would have been inconceivable.

"Well, let us be frank about it, too! Let us be frank before we are compelled to be. Let us be frank about the army camps. As the Germans draw through Belgium most of the men of the invaded districts fell back before the advancing troops. As the Germans draw through Belgium most of the men of the invaded districts fell back before the advancing troops. The industries of Belgium were paralyzed, the women were penniless, and their misery became so acute that some of them actually sold themselves to the invaders for half a loaf of bread. After a short period of such conditions you may imagine how disease fastened on Germans and Belgians alike. Women, some of them already execrated by their own people, became just as bad, or worse. One nation, during the first year and a half of war, lost the services of more men through venereal disease than through death or wounds in battle. One regiment which participated in the fighting back in Northern France was sent back of the line to recuperate, and there joined another regiment which had remained behind the front for some time and had seen no actual fighting at all. Will you believe that the latter regiment, the one that had not been in action, had lost the services of more men through venereal disease during its stay behind the line than the one back from the fighting line had lost in the attack?

When a drafted man reaches camp he is subjected to a careful physical examination. If he is found to be suffering from some form of venereal disease he is at once sent to a hospital destined especially for the care of such ailments, in which some of the best specialists in the country are giving their services. Thus, many men who in civil life have been indulging in careless habits and spreading disease are immediately placed under the care of specialists. There is a date set on the road to recovery. If they are suffering from the worst form of venereal disease they cannot go beyond, 600, which greatly lessens the chances of their spreading infection. The result of this prompt and effective combating of disease by specialists among men who before would have neglected themselves entirely or probably have been thrown on the mercy of quacks will be that the patient has recovered. With the presence of the thirty-two camp hospitals now in operation scattered throughout the country it is not by any means a case of curbing the spread of venereal disease may be gathered when you bear in mind that before the war there were only five or six in the entire United States before the creation of these camp hospitals, and that the civilian physicians took the treatment of such diseases.

For the purpose of preventing the contraction of venereal disease during the time of training, a system of prophylaxis has been established. Every man in the army is tested by venereal disease infection by lectures, reading, pictures, and literature designed especially for the purpose of informing the camps through the use of pamphlets and cards. These are distributed to the soldiers, who are instructed in the dangers of venereal infection by lectures, reading, pictures, and literature designed especially for the purpose of informing the camps.

When a drafted man reaches camp he is subjected to a careful physical examination. If he is found to be suffering from some form of venereal disease he is at once sent to a hospital destined especially for the care of such ailments, in which some of the best specialists in the country are giving their services. Thus, many men who in civil life have been indulging in careless habits and spreading disease are immediately placed under the care of specialists. There is a date set on the road to recovery. If they are suffering from the worst form of venereal disease they cannot go beyond, 600, which greatly lessens the chances of their spreading infection. The result of this prompt and effective combating of disease by specialists among men who before would have neglected themselves entirely or probably have been thrown on the mercy of quacks will be that the patient has recovered. With the presence of the thirty-two camp hospitals now in operation scattered throughout the country it is not by any means a case of curbing the spread of venereal disease may be gathered when you bear in mind that before the war there were only five or six in the entire United States before the creation of these camp hospitals, and that the civilian physicians took the treatment of such diseases.

For the purpose of preventing the contraction of venereal disease during the time of training, a system of prophylaxis has been established. Every man in the army is tested by venereal disease infection by lectures, reading, pictures, and literature designed especially for the purpose of informing the camps through the use of pamphlets and cards. These are distributed to the soldiers, who are instructed in the dangers of venereal infection by lectures, reading, pictures, and literature designed especially for the purpose of informing the camps.

When a drafted man reaches camp he is subjected to a careful physical examination. If he is found to be suffering from some form of venereal disease he is at once sent to a hospital destined especially for the care of such ailments, in which some of the best specialists in the country are giving their services. Thus, many men who in civil life have been indulging in careless habits and spreading disease are immediately placed under the care of specialists. There is a date set on the road to recovery. If they are suffering from the worst form of venereal disease they cannot go beyond, 600, which greatly lessens the chances of their spreading infection. The result of this prompt and effective combating of disease by specialists among men who before would have neglected themselves entirely or probably have been thrown on the mercy of quacks will be that the patient has recovered. With the presence of the thirty-two camp hospitals now in operation scattered throughout the country it is not by any means a case of curbing the spread of venereal disease may be gathered when you bear in mind that before the war there were only five or six in the entire United States before the creation of these camp hospitals, and that the civilian physicians took the treatment of such diseases.

For the purpose of preventing the contraction of venereal disease during the time of training, a system of prophylaxis has been established. Every man in the army is tested by venereal disease infection by lectures, reading, pictures, and literature designed especially for the purpose of informing the camps through the use of pamphlets and cards. These are distributed to the soldiers, who are instructed in the dangers of venereal infection by lectures, reading, pictures, and literature designed especially for the purpose of informing the camps.
vested work—our special province—which will be clearer with the foregoing description of the work which is being done in the camps and in the policed zone.

In the thirty-two districts within a radius of 40 to 50 miles around the camps lie about 800 towns. What we propose to do is to have every one of these communities cooperate with us in our work of protecting American soldiers and retarding the spread of venereal disease. We are writing to the most prominent residents of these 800 towns.

In all, we shall send out 18,000 letters—we have already sent out several thousand. We are writing to bankers, leading merchants, editors of newspapers, prominent business men—to the representative citizens in every one of these 800 communities. We tell them what we propose to do and ask their aid. The way we put it up to each one, in a nutshell, is this: 'Do you wish to help make the camp near your town as safe for the boys encamped there as you would have a camp sheltering a boy of your own?' We make it clear to the people that we do not want to create a feeling which does not help to protect the soldiers in its midst is sticking a knife into the backs of those soldiers—no, worse than that—for a knife cut is easy to handle, whereas the stab in the back is an operation difficult to detect and to our work are doubly dangerous and criminal.

'We are not going after the authorities in the towns in the zones where we are working. That would be the wrong way. If the best element in the community gets interested in the work—if the newspapers print articles about what we are doing—we believe that cooperation will come from the authorities as a matter of course.'

'As matters stand now, there may be graft among officials in some communities—some of them may even be getting a "kick-off" from the proceeds of the disorderly houses in their districts, and may be glad to have as many soldiers as possible frequent those houses—so efforts at cleaning up the communities by appeal to the authorities may strike indifference and worse. But if the work starts at the end where we are starting it, there will be quite another story to tell.'

'Answers are pouring in from leading citizens in towns all over the country to whom we have written asking for aid.' Mr. Zinsser plunged his hand into a whole sheaf of correspondence on the desk before him and selected some dozen letters at random.

"I am with you," said one writer.

"Tell me exactly what I can do to be most helpful to you and I'll do it."

"That's the right sort; we'll get results from him," commented Mr. Zinsser. He turned to another.

"Your letter received," it ran. "I have spoken to our Sheriff. He says there are no disorderly houses in our community, and that he will let me know if anything of interest in the matter develops."

"Wrong sort, that one," remarked Mr. Zinsser. "We'll have to jack that fellow up—that isn't the kind of help we want." Then he turned to another letter, and another, and still another, the writers of which all expressed enthusiastic approval and begged to have their services applied where they would do the most good.

"We are tremendously encouraged by these responses to our appeals," he went on, "especially in the letters in the pile from which he had drawn them. "All over the country the desire to clean up red-light districts and run prostitutes out of town as a measure of protection for our soldiers is daily gaining headway."

"But, sir, the camps in the South, the depopulation everywhere in that State the clean-up movement has progressed with such rapidity and thoroughness that soldiers who want to go to a disorderly house have to go seventy-five miles—why?—because there are fifty miles away and there is no road to it."

"And the men in the camps in the Southern State the clean-up movement has progressed with such rapidity and thoroughness that soldiers who want to go to a disorderly house, only fifty miles away and there is no road to it."

"In a few months' time, the camps in the South will be the clean-up movement that we hear about in the press."

"But, sir, the camps in the Southern State the clean-up movement has progressed with such rapidity and thoroughness that soldiers who want to go to a disorderly house, only fifty miles away and there is no road to it."

Instinctive man was in here yesterday who had been detailed to wander through the streets of a number of Southern towns to get the prevalence of vice in its midst and learn about conditions by looking dapper and getting women's favor. He told me that in the course of a few weeks' tour of towns where, a short time ago, it was said that smooth-tongued young men calling themselves soldiers were nothing out of the ordinary if he had been solicited twenty times, he was told exactly once.

"As a result of the investigation and clean-up activities of the Commission on Training Camps, the authorities are really justified in the view that the curriculum, backed by the full authority of the War Department, New Orleans, one of the greatest military centers in the country, is cleaning up. By Nov. 1 the red-light district there will be suppressed. In one large city on the lower Mississippi a famous row of disorderly houses—regular palaces, as big as seashore hotels—have been closed up, so that soldiers going there will find shutters down and doors bolted instead of prostitutes beckoning to them from brilliantly lighted windows. The same sort of moral wave is sweeping other communities. As concrete examples of what has been accomplished, the red-light districts have been closed in many of the cities within easy reach of military camps, among which may be mentioned Fort Worth, Spartanburg, Louisville, Petersburg, and El Paso."

"A few years ago, if we talked about starting a campaign like the one we are fighting now, people would have called us long-haired visionary reformers. Now we meet co-operation on every side from sensible people, both in the Government and outside it. As for the United States Government, there is no question of where it stands. It has a definite and comprehensive policy which has to be carried out to the letter by the commanders of all military camps.

"We are out to suppress the conditions that bring about venereal disease—get that clearly in your mind—not to segregate prostitution or introduce any other half-way measures. Just get the things worse. It means taking a lot of prostitutes, herding them together in one part of town, and then going out and saying to men: 'You can't find a disorderly house, Sir, on Main Street, but there are plenty on Nineteenth Avenue or K Street.'"

"That's segregation amounts to. As for the contention that segregation combined with medical supervision is an improvement, that, too, is false; there is no way of securing proper medical supervision. The whole thing simply amounts to directing men to a lot of women who are bound to spread infection right and left, despite all efforts to prevent spread of infection.""