

M I L I T A R Y ' S M A G

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Stencilled

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Stuff Dept:

Don't tell me. The last issue of this thing stank. There are the usual excuses: lousy stencils, and lousy typewriters. The second excuse is not valid for this machine. The orderly room here at Ft. Lewis has four new standard typers.

For those interested, my stay at Ft. Lewis is only temporary; for the purpose of reclassification and reassignment after graduating from the ASTP. That diploma from Oregon State sure looked good ... even though I had to listen to my own graduation on the radio. It was pretty dull.

Sick Call Dept:

Even through the discomfort of a stay in the hospital, a person interested in the workings of his body can find many phenomena to observe that are of great fascination.

It began one morning in March with a headache, a visit to the college infirmary, a period of blankness, and an awakening in an army hospital, to find subsequently that I had spinal meningitis. The headache was something intense, unceasing, and mind-occupying to the exclusion of all else. They gave me codeine to take care of it.

Then began the dope dreams, or visions. It did not matter whether I was asleep or awake. I had but to close my eyes, and the pictures would instantly appear as though projected on a screen. Their subject and action were unresponsive to volition, being free train of thought and free association in the purest sense of the words.

Several qualities distinguished them from ordinary dreams: their clarity, texture, and motion predominating.

The clarity was almost tangible, and so pronounced that I could recognize people by their faces. There was also an eidetic quality to the pictures. On several occasions I was able to scan the picture, looking for details. This scanning was conscious, although the action of the picture itself was not volitive. This feeling of conscious watching of unconscious pictures prevailed thruout.

Most interesting was the texture. The pictures did not attempt to copy reality, but instead imitated drawings or paintings. At various times there were black and white etchings, pen and ink drawings, water colors, oil paintings, and other techniques not as yet discovered.

THE motion was slow, and consisted mostly of drifting over the landscape. This was without control, and several times I was disturbed by impending collisions with objects until I realized (and my mind held this realization thru subsequent dreams) that I was in bed and could not be hurt.

This sort of thing alleviated the tedium of three days.

Then that period of blankness. I fell asleep in one place and woke up in another place. When I awoke I thought I was still at the college, until I saw the gold bar on the nurse's uniform, and I knew it was Camp Adair now. Unconscious, I thought. For how long? Then later on the details were told to me. It was four hours during which I moved around, talked, answered questions, tho not too intelligently, and otherwise carried on as though conscious. But not remembered. Amnesia? The doctor said probably. And when I read my chart (against the rules) I saw this extremely interesting thing: "Shortly after intravenous feeding was started, the patient fell asleep. When he awoke he looked like an entirely different person, and was quite alert and intelligent." For that was when I really awoke.

A couple hundred years ago they would have said that I'd been possessed by an outside force during those four hours.

Five years ago I'd have been in the hospital for months, if I'd gotten out at all. Progress and sulfa drugs now produces a cure in four or five days. The rest of the time is pure gravy: a GI vacation, conducive to the writing of Milty's Mag.

More stuff Dept:

During that memorable stay in the hospital, there was a time when I was reduced to the pitiful and desperate state of reading a publication known by the title of "Life Story", of the same general nature as "True Confessions." In it was featured a story by one Paul Ernst. Could it be the mighty Paul Ernst of decade-ago "Weird Tales and Astounding Stories?"

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It's fairly certain that I'll be overseas before the year is out. The army says that all men in over a year must go this year. Now I've been in 20 months, and the most strenuous action I've seen has been a 3-day bivouac and a fernal dance at the college.

Raised Eyebrow Dept:

A few weeks ago Fantasy Fiction Field featured a lithographed cover entitled "Intolerance" which purported to be a scene from Atlantis. While looking through a book on the history of the movies, the other day, lo and behold, I found the same scene: Belshazzar's palace, from the D.W. Griffith movie "Intolerance", made in 1916. An enormous scene for any year.

Four-letter word Dept:

Norman Stanley's quote from my letter in the last mailing gives me the excuse to enlarge upon the subject of army slang.

It's amazing the way a few abbreviations allow you to say in public things which actually are the height of unprintable language. The Saturday Evening Post and Forrie Ackerman toss around SNAFU, TAKFU, and FUBAR without turning a hair. The meanings they give are: "Situation normal, all fouled up," "Things are really fouled up", "Fouled up beyond all recognition." Obviously, the original sayings use the 4-letter Anglo-saxon in the obvious places, but nobody seems to care.

TS is an expression that carries an entire philosophy behind it. It means "Tough situation," only there again the second word should have but four letters, and mean something that Juffus objects to.

You use it like this: When your long awaited furlough is cancelled, it's TS. When you get busted to go to the ASTP, and then flunk out, it's TS. When you have a heavy date for Saturday, and you have to go on guard duty, it's TS. When you get a sheet that's two feet wide and fifteen feet long, it's TS.

So you go to the Chaplain and get from him a TS card which, when punched by your comrades, entitles you to several hours of sympathy.

So when you reach the chow line just as they run out of pork chops and start handing out hot dogs, the cook says to you, "TS old man, let me punch your card."

Therein lies a philosophy. Everytime you say TS, you are cushioning one of the many big and little psychological socks on the jaw a person has to take in the army. You take plenty of them in civilian life, but in the army they come thick and fast. The TS philosophy is another of those mental armors Sgt. Bridges and I have been discussing which the GI uses to keep from becoming unhappy.

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The language boys in the crowd will be overjoyed to learn of the creation of a new verb: "to brown-nose", or simply, "to brown." It's used more often in the noun form: "Brown-nosing," or "browning." One who brown-noses is a brown-noser. I haven't yet figured out how to explain its derivation in a family publication.

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I could tell you about our song "I'm a GFU from the ASTU," but I won't.

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Ah — to what depths have I sunk..... Am I low enough for you, brother Laney?

Space ship Dept:

Every once in a while I start writing a paper on the mathematics of rocket flight, but I never finish it because I know darn well that Smisher or Ley or a half dozen other people know a lot more about it than I do and could write a more complete paper. (Why the hell don't they? There isn't a word on the subject in English, except in unobtainable Astronautics.)

Anyway, I get curious about the length of a time a trip to the moon would take, and having lots of time recently, started calculating. It didn't take me long to find out that I couldn't solve the differential equation that appeared, so I applied a series of approximations, assuming straight-line flight, which shouldn't make more than 50% error.

I started with the time-honored axiom that the rocket must reach the speed of 7 miles per second, the velocity of escape, in order to negotiate a successful voyage. I assumed a physiological acceleration of 100 feet per second per second. (Physiological acceleration is the acceleration actually felt. It is the mechanical acceleration plus the pull of gravity.) It took ten minutes to reach a velocity of 8 miles per second, at a height of 1600 miles. This took into account the varying gravity of the earth. Propulsion was then stopped, and at 40,000 miles, velocity had dropped to 6 miles per second, remained fairly constant from then on, and the rocket reached the moon in about 10 hours.

Ten hours is a short time. If you lowered your maximum velocity to six miles per second, you'd hit the moon at two or three miles per second (I didn't calculate that far) and it would take you about 20 hours, which is still quite a reasonable time. You would save fuel accelerating, and you'd have less velocity to get rid of at the end of the trip, meaning another fuel saving.

What has happened to the velocity of escape? The point which nobody has mentioned, to my knowledge, is the fact that the seven miles per second figure refers to a projectile starting at the surface of the earth with that velocity. The rocket doesn't attain its maximum velocity until it has risen to a height where gravity is cut in half. Its velocity of escape is less than seven miles per second.

Trouble is, if you are going to the other planets, you want to go faster than that if you are going to get there in any reasonable time. So we still need atomic energy.

Page four stencilled three A.M. April 23, 1944, while sitting in the orderly room as corporal of the guard. Hope I remain at this camp long enough to finish Will Durant's "Mansions of Philosophy," which I got from the post library. Very interesting so far. .. But there's no doubt that I'll be elsewhere soon. Perhaps within the week. Certainly by the time the mailing comes out.

Auf Wiedersehen