

Getting Tobacco to the American Troops (1917 ~ 1918)

Tobacco has established its claim to a recognized place in the soldier's life. Probably 95 per cent of the soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces used it in one form or another. In May of 1918 it was decided to adopt the practice of the allies, namely, to allow each soldier a certain amount of tobacco per day. This unusual innovation was the official recognition of tobacco as a necessity for men in active service. To men enduring physical hardships, obliged to live without the comforts and often even the necessities of life in times of battle, tobacco fills a need nothing else can satisfy. The daily ration of four-tenths of an ounce was given to every man overseas who desired it. The soldier had the choice of cigarettes, smoking tobacco, or chewing tobacco. If he chose smoking tobacco he received cigarette papers with it. In addition the men could buy at any Army or other canteen the most popular brands of cigars and cigarettes in unlimited quantities.

The Subsistence Division purchased for overseas shipment a monthly average of 20,000,000 cigars and 425,000,000 cigarettes. Abundant supplies of tobacco were on hand in the commissaries overseas, and the soldier could buy it at actual cost. There was no profit or tax added on any tobacco shipped to France, and it was sold at retail to the troops at a cost lower than the price paid by the biggest wholesalers in the United States. The plan for the purchase of cigars and cigarettes was to divide the contracts among the most popular brands in the same proportions as the latter are sold in this country.

America's Munitions 1917-1918

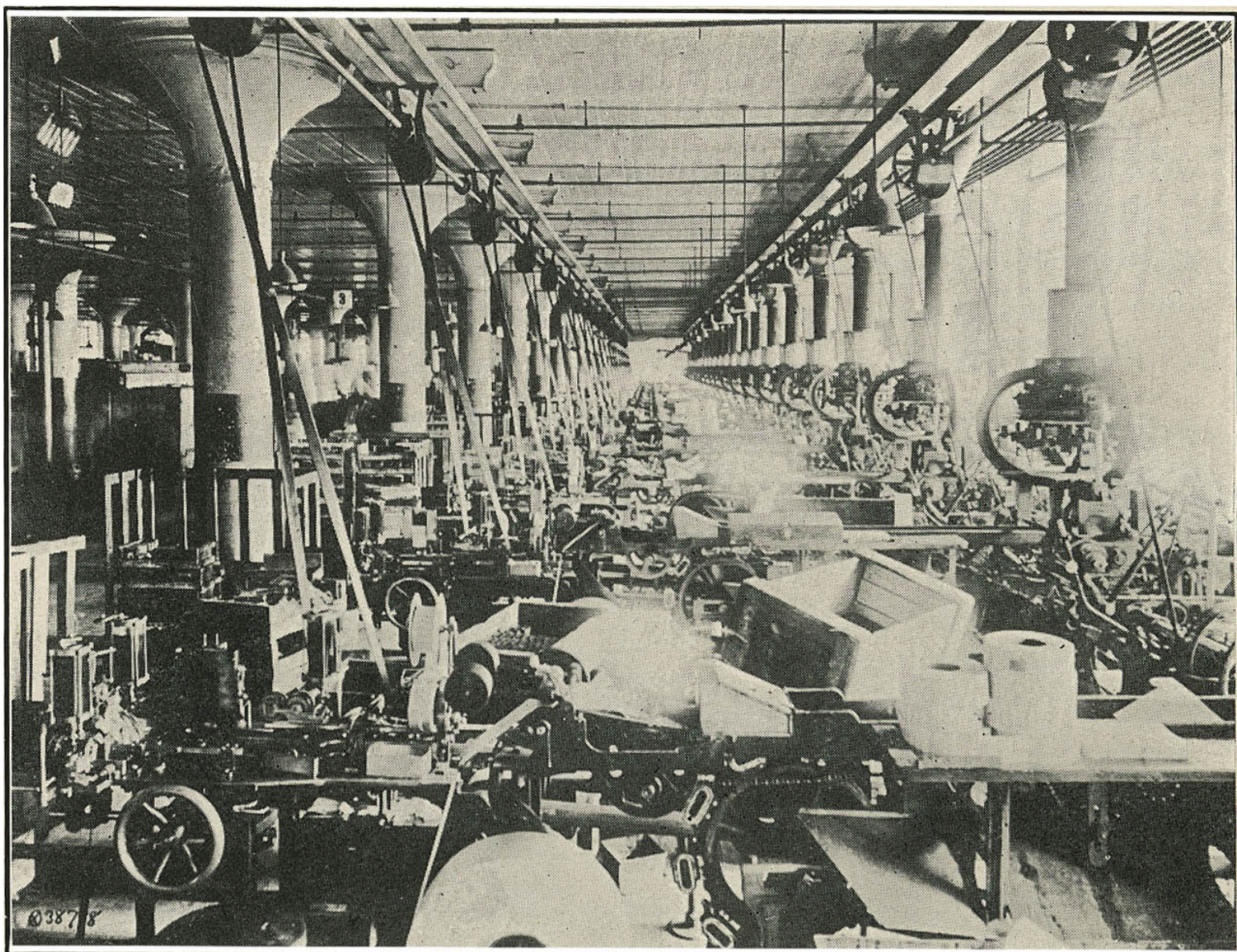
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FURNISHING THE ARMY WITH TOBACCO.

Packing machines in a Winston-Salem, N. C., plant. These machine automatically weigh the tobacco, wrap and seal tins in which this particular brand of tobacco is marketed.



MAKING CIGARETTES FOR THE ARMY.

Leaf tobacco being blended for cigarette-making purposes in a Richmond, Va., tobacco plant.