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THE STARS AND STRIPES.

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YANK INDIAN WAS HEAP BIG HELP IN WINNING THE WAR

American Redskin Knew No Equal in Patrol Work and Scouting

PUT FEAR OF GOD IN BOCHE

Never Got Lost, Even in Unfamiliar Country, and Many of His Kind Won Decorations

There are other places than Fifth Avenue and the great streets of American cities where the people are fêting the return of the A.E.F. Out on the wide, sweeping plains, 60 American Indian tribes, whose stalwart sons contributed to the success of 20 Yankee fighting divisions, are waiting to welcome, with all their art of dance and song, the red-skinned warriors of the American Army.

Today there are returning to the base ports and thence to their homes several thousand of these strong-limbed, nimble-minded members of the A.E.F., returning as silently and impassively as they came into the service. Some of them have decorations. None of them, as far as is known, has run to the newspapers to declaim what he did to win the war. Most of them, indeed, will take up their routine duties on the reservation again, as quietly as a turtle's head sinks below the surface of a mill pond.

The American Indian, to the American people, as he has been to the American doughboy, is the greatest mystery of the war. Only a select few who have come into close contact with him, who have seen him in training camp and in battle, are aware of his feelings and characteristics; and by these are his services properly appraised and valued.

Those fighting men who had occasion to see service around St. Etienne last October know what a tangle of copse and thicket, swamp and woods it was; and they will also recall, doubtless, the huge labyrinthian mass of wire entanglements, cables, telegraph and telephone wires which netted that entire terrain. It was an ideal switchboard for the Boche listeners-in, and right merrily did they take advantage of it. But the Americans, after some little delay, continued to use their telephone lines, and the discomfited Boche on the other end of

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YANK INDIANS

a tapped wire listened in vain, scratched his thick, square poll in amazement, and swore to his good old German God that either the "verdammter" Americans were drunker than fiddlers or else the code they were using was a gift from Herr Gott Himself.

Choctaw Code Fooled Boche

The code was nothing more than Choctaw—plain, simple, old-fashioned, ordinary, catch-as-catch-can, everyday Choctaw. There was a Choctaw Indian at the P.C. who listened to the order given him by an American officer, and then repeated it, in Choctaw, to a fellow-tribesman at the other end of the wire, at the front; and this Indian translated it for the American officer who stood beside him. Shades of Prince Bismarck! Everything else had the Kaiser taken into consideration when he sprinted into the late unpleasantness, but he had failed to teach his soldiers or officers Choctaw.

As a scout the Indian has surpassed all rivals, even the French black troops, even the British Indians being considered his inferiors in the art of night raids, of patrols, of feeling the way forward without in the slightest losing sense of direction. It was in work of this kind that the American Indian was used to the greatest advantage, and there is now a recommendation in the mill advising that special units be formed of Indian scouts to be utilized as auxiliaries in connection with platoons and platoon sections.

Questionnaires were sent to all divisions asking whether the Indian could stand up under nervous strain, whether he was a natural leader, what were the nature of his associations with white men, what fitness he had for any particular fighting arm, and what his qualities were for scouting. A symposium of replies showed that he stood up well under mental strain; that though he was not a natural leader, he associated well with white soldiers; that they regarded him, on the whole, as a good man; that he had showed a special aptitude for automatics; and that his capacity for scouting was boundless.

In two elements, ability to utilize mechanical methods, such as maps, buzzers, 'phones, etc., and in his ability to report verbal messages accurately, the symposium of replies showed that the Indian was slightly below the average, but it was taken for granted that he could easily be educated to become proficient in these, as well.

Uncanny Sense of Direction

Above all, he had the sense of direction developed to an unbelievable extent. The Indians always assert that they are never at a loss when it comes to orientating themselves, and ascribe this faculty to their habitual observation of wind, sun, moon, stars, landmarks, memory of country traversed, and the knowledge of woodcraft. Tested with white soldiers in which every man was blindfolded in an open woods, the Indians were the only scouts who were able to reach previously indicated objectives 100 feet ahead. They ac-

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