

The Stars and Stripes

January 3, 1919

SAM BROWNE BELT BARRED IN STATES

Trench Coat and Overseas Cap Not for Returned Officers

Sam Browne belts will not be worn in the United States by returned officers of the A.E.F. Neither will trench coats. Neither will overseas caps.

These rulings have not been issued as an A.E.F. order, but are enforced in the States. They always have been enforced, in fact, but they naturally did not greatly interest American officers in France as long as the westward journey was not an immediate prospect.

Now, however, interest in the back home regulations has been greatly quickened, and is crystallizing in more or less general dissatisfaction. One officer offers this complaint:

"I will be obliged to buy a new uniform, as my Sam Browne belt has worn a strip across my shoulder. If we were allowed to wear our belts I could get along with the old uniform until I am mustered out of the service. I have no overcoat. I cannot wear my trench coat, therefore I will have to spend some more of my hard earned money for a coat, which I will throw away or give to the janitor after I am mustered out."

(undated) 1919

SAM BROWNE-

The fact that the Sam Browne cannot be worn in the continental United States is causing considerable comment in the A.E.F. This comment is confined largely to officers, but there is so much of it that a surplus issue could be provided for the entire Army.

It appears that a lot of officers are looking forward to tweeds and serges and derby hats. This fact alone establishes between the officer personnel and the rank and file a great bond of human fellowship that cannot and does not develop in the orderly room and at Saturday inspections.

The main objection to the order can be summarized as follows: "If I cannot wear my Sam Browne when I get home, I shall have to buy another uniform to be at all presentable—another uniform, and just for a few days' wear. When I am shorn of my Sam Browne, a streak of paler O.D. is visible around my shoulder, down my back, and across my chest. It is exactly what happens when, deciding that the lithogravure of The Midnight Fire Alarm will no longer do on the sitting room wall in these cultureful days, you take it down and expose a great rectangle of unfaded wall paper."

This may be. But will not the streak of unfaded O.D. where the Sam Browne used to lie constitute a service stripe, a mark of overseas service, as surely and certainly as do the chevrons on the left sleeve?