

The Stars and Stripes

FRANCE, FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 1918

THE CAMPAIGN HAT

The man in the S.O.S. sighs for a chance with the death or glory boys up front and, once a week or thereabouts, expresses his regrets in verse. But now he has a mighty consolation. If a soldier is a forester—which, by the law of chances, he probably is not—or if his job is in the Service of Supplies, he may once more sport that finest of headgears, that good old honest-to-God bonnet, the campaign hat.

That much reconquered territory it now holds. The overseas cap still holds the Z. of A. It—or something equally flexible and pocketable—is the only practical cap up front in the land of shrapnel, where the steel helmet is a blessing and a necessity. But there are many of the Z. of A. who are miles away from the German guns and whose daily work and life does not call for a hat in any way different from the one worn in the basest of base ports.

The time honored sombrero may be expensive and it may take up a lot of room. There is no doubt that it gets perversely out of shape the day before inspection. But it keeps the sun and the rain out of a man's eyes, it keeps him from looking like a German prisoner, and it lets him go abroad in the daylight without a feeling that all the good people of France are humming under their breaths that popular ditty of a generation ago: "Where did you get that hat?"

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The Standard Stripes

January 10, 1919

THE CAMPAIGN HAT

It seems, after all, that we can't have it. As announced last week, there aren't enough of the grand old lids to go around. What few there are left the Q.M. declines to hand out, for the simple reason that he doesn't want to play favorites—although any of us would be willing to give him two out of three on a chance of shaking the overseas cap.

But the Q.M., as might be expected, is no gambler, so he won't let us flip for the ones that are left. The only thing we can do is to sleep on our overseases until we flatten them out into some kind of shape, and wear them as far down over our left ears as the law will allow—jauntily, as if to toss them off with an air.

Anyway—and here's where the sour grapes come in—the old campaign hat will never rate up the same now that we have found out that rabbit hair is its main ingredient. It would be hardly decorous for one of the most belligerent bodies of men to go about topped with the fleecy covering of the pacifists' mascot.

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OLD CAMPAIGN HAT WILL NOT COME BACK New Ones Too Few, While Veterans Adorn Other Extremities

The campaign hat will not come back. Hope has been held—some 2,000,000 separate hopes extending from Bordeaux to Ehrenbreitstein, in fact—that it might. That hope is futile. The American crown of victory will continue to be the overseas cap, until such time as it is supplanted by the fedora, the derby or the straw.

The reason for the suppression of the campaign hat is not hardheartedness. There is, first of all, the very excellent reason that there are nowhere near enough of them to go around. Just how many unused or decently salvaged campaign hats there are in his storehouses the Q.M. does not know. He does know that the number is so small that only a fraction of the Army could be supplied them, and he declines to play favorites.

To supply the whole A.E.F. with campaign hats would mean the diversion of some shipping to South America to bring back rabbit hair, from which, the soldier may be surprised to know, the hats are made. Further, it is a question whether there is enough rabbit hair available.

The fate of the campaign hats that were turned in by the tens of thousands when the overseas cap (first issue) came into brief being is soon told. They went into salvage, and thence into a machine that flattened them, cut them and converted them into felt slippers for hospital patients. Salvage experts demur at trying to make the slippers back into hats again.

The overseas cap, second issue, has been seen back in America on the heads of soldiers whose foreign service began and ended at Newport News.