

GERMANS SHELLED PARIS 19 YEARS AGO; MYSTERY OF BIG BERTHA PENETRATED

PARIS, April 2—With shells and bombs dropping daily into the streets of Madrid, Parisians remember more sharply than ever the day in 1918 when the first Big Bertha shell fell into the streets of Paris, striking terror, and creating a mystery which had been revealed in all its details, 19 years after the first massive shell dropped mysteriously out of the sky.

Parisians observed the anniversary of one of the blackest days of the war. Ceremonies centered in the Saint Gervais Church, where one of the first Big Bertha shells fell, killing 75 women and children and wounding 90 on the afternoon of Good Friday, 1918.

The firing of the Big Bertha on Paris from a distance of 80 miles was one of the greatest military feats of the war, and puzzled the Allied general staff to the end of the conflict. Afterward it was learned that the shells which dropped on Paris at 15-minute intervals on March 23 and for weeks after, had been fired from a forest near the town of Laon, in northern France. But the full details of bringing the giant gun to perfection and of preparing its terrible work have just been revealed by Germans.

Idea Conceived in 1916

First conceived in November, 1916, by the German general staff which sought some method of dramatically demoralizing the French rear guard and thus weakening the strong front lines for a great battle, the work of perfecting the gun took more than a year to carry through. In 1916 the general staff called into consultation Prof. Rausenberger, chief engineering expert at the massive Krupp works at Essen and asked him if its plan were practicable. After a hasty calculation the professor answered, "Yes, possible but difficult."

He was granted full facilities for the work, all of which was done in secret. The problem, that of finding a gun capable of carrying at least 80 miles, was difficult to say the least. A new fact, just discovered on the German heavy artillery testing grounds at Nieppen, aided him. During tests a new German cannon which it was calculated should fire 12 miles, actually went almost 24. How was this curious result achieved?

After intense research the Krupp laboratory specialists found some interesting new phenomena. They found that these heavy shells pierced, in their long, high trajectory, certain layers of the stratosphere, where resistance was much less than that calculated, and the effects of gravity largely changed. A new problem, that of an extremely low temperature, -50 centigrade, also had to be faced in constructing such shells, for the Big Bertha would have to fire shells to a height of 24 miles.

Several Foundries Used

Plans completed, it was decided that the various parts of the new gun should be constructed in various foundries through Germany, to maintain secrecy. In the spring of 1917 the first gun was finished. It was decided to practice off the sea near Heligoland and the North Sea town of Cuxhaven was chosen for the gun emplacement. To prevent possible spies from seeing the gun in action the concrete base was constructed deep in the ground and only the ugly snout of the giant gun could be seen. In May all was ready and a line of

destroyers and airplanes took up their positions along the line of fire to observe the shots. The earth trembled when the gun was fired, but when the column of water arose at the point of landing, it was found to be only about 55 miles distant. The first gun was a failure. In two days all signs of the experiment had disappeared and the specialists were back in their laboratories busy again.

In October, 1917, signs of unusual activity were apparent again at Cuxhaven, the new gun was ready. This time the results were perfect, the gun fired at all ranges up to 75 miles, with an abberation of less than 200 yards from the calculated target. On the fourth day of practice, the gun sank the old ship which served as a target. The gun was scrapped, for its capacity of shots was limited to about 100, and the foundries were busy again hammering out duplicate tubes.

It was decided to place the giant gun in the Crepy forest near Laon, 80 miles north of Paris and at Christmas time, 1917, work on the emplacement was begun. By the beginning of February the concrete base was finished. Two great problems remained. How could the gun be fired without the Allies finding its position? How could the shots be recorded in Paris and the targets for the big gun changed?

To solve the first a massive system of camouflage was constructed in the forest, completely hiding the big gun. In addition, it was decided that every time the great gun fired 32 batteries composed of 128 field pieces would roar forth with it. That would confound sound detectors behind the Allied lines. There would be so much confusion in sound location that the big gun would remain a secret. An intricate system of telephones was installed from the giant pit to co-ordinate all the guns by its activities.

The astute German general staff solved the second problem, too. Eight secret agents were installed in Paris with the sole duty of reporting on the hits of the Big Bertha. News from this unit was to be passed by way of Switzerland, and would arrive at the big gun within three hours. A little practice assured the Germans that they could rely on the speed and accuracy of their eight spies.

One Shot Cost \$10,000

Finally, on March 18, the gun was in position and everything was ready and the gun was prepared to spend its \$10,000 a shot. German planes cleared the skies and at dawn a tremendous roar from 129 guns shook the earth on the northern front. Only one of those guns counted, and for hours the general staff waited for word from Paris. For four days they waited, and finally word came that nothing had hit Paris. The giant shell had vanished into air!

Undaunted, it was decided to try another shot. On March 23 in the early morning another roar shook the front. Three and a half minutes later there was a tremendous explosion on a quay in the Seine, two people were killed and many wounded. The spies worked swiftly. Hardly had the police arrived on the scene before another tremendous explosion shook Paris, destroying several apartment houses on the Boulevard Henry IV, 20 minutes later another landed



E. C. WOOD
Whose election to the Board of Directors of the Imperial Tobacco Company of Canada, Limited, has just been announced

Coronation Gives Scope For the Experts on Flags

(From the Manchester Guardian)

There will be a good deal of fun—for some people—about flags before the Coronation has become a thing of the past. There are signs of it already; the experts are now stirring (like the daffodils, they have come before the swallow dares), and are beginning to write letters to the press denouncing in advance the many errors which the simple populace commits when it tries to fly a flag from its roof or to hang one out of its window.

Even if the poor populace should surmount (as is most unlikely) the terrible initial error of describing the Union flag of this country as the Union Jack there will be an extremely prevalent chance of getting it upside down on wrong way round to the pole. That always causes considerable joy to the flag-purists, who immediately write more ostensibly painted letters to the papers in order to point out how horrified they are by that abysmal ignorance on the part of their neighbors. Even to speak of a pole in this connection is enough to send any fully qualified expert right up it, because the best people speak not of a pole but of a mast.

In the same way the royal standard ought to be called the royal banner, and probably even the lowest of the low is aware by this time that it should never be seen except when the Sovereign is present. Nevertheless, it certainly will be seen next May—small versions of it will be rashly flaunted from thoroughly loyal back streets and the unassuming suburbs. Special detachments of Red Cross workers will, perhaps, be sent round to collect the prone and senseless remains of fainted flag-experts.

There is one special emblem or royal banner in Scotland for the unauthorized use of which the special penalty is reported to be, by ancient statute, instant death by decapitation. One also seems to remember that there has to be a different death for each day on which it was improperly displayed. If that flag does not get a good showing in wrong places next May it will only be because the modern Caledonian does not know what it is or where he can get a copy of it.

before the Gare de l'Est, in the midst of departing soldiers.

With the regularity of a terrible hammer every 20 minutes Paris suffered these tremendous shocks. Consternation, but not terror reigned in the French capital. Airplanes rushed into the sky, but there was no trace of a plane. Finally, although it seemed unbelievable, the French army decided that there must be a gun somewhere near the front. But firing almost 80 miles on Paris? The idea was a greater shock than the shells falling on Paris.

Guns Never Found

It was rapidly proved that the shot came from the Crepy forest, but it was impossible to find the gun in the massive cannonade that occurred with nerve-racking regularity. The allies rushed a mass of batteries to the front, hundreds of cannon fired blindly into the Crepy forest, and one shell actually landed so close that it half buried Big Bertha in dirt. But throughout the remaining months of the war, Big Bertha the scourge of Paris, never was discovered.

The Big Bertha gun was a typical achievement of the mentality of the German high command. Its object was to strike terror into the hearts of the defenders of the French capital. Instead of terrorizing, the gun only strengthened the resistance of the French. Since Big Bertha fired on Paris there has been only one other case of heavy artillery firing on a city, the batteries hammering at Madrid.

Again there, a surprising fact has been driven into the minds of military tacticians: Big guns can do tremendous damage, but they only tend to stiffen, rather than destroy the morale of defending troops and civil populations.

CORONATION SPURS ENGLAND

London Expects to Have Most Prosperous Year in History of City

LONDON, April 2—The preparations for the coronation are now in full swing and what with that event and the flipp which rearmament has given to business, London looks like having the most prosperous year in its history.

There is still unemployment in some of the depressed areas, but generally, and especially London, there is something like a famine in the labor market and every prospect of that condition being intensified as the coronation approaches.

The recovery of public enthusiasm for that event from the devastating episode of last autumn is remarkable. It suggests that it is the institution of monarchy that appeals to the popular mind more than the personality of the monarch. The aura has been transferred from the brow of Edward VIII. to that of George VI. without any sensible disturbance to the public feeling in regard to the coming ceremonial, and while the Duke of Windsor fades into legend and the name of Mrs. Simpson has ceased to interest the newspapers, the new King and his family are establishing themselves firmly in the popular affections.

Pleased About Elizabeths

No doubt it is the fact that there is a family that has helped to reconcile the public to the transition, and that the new Queen and the young heir apparent to the throne should both be Elizabeths is gratifying to a people for whom the virgin Queen is still the most illustrious figure in the history of the monarchy.

In one sense, the coronation ceremony will contrast dramatically with those of the past. When George V. and Queen Mary were crowned 26 years ago, they were crowned in the presence of the representatives of the great monarchs that ruled the destinies of Europe and Asia from the Rhine to the Sea of Japan. On this occasion the Hohenzollerns, the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs will be significantly absent. Russia will be represented in the Abbey by Maxim Litvinoff, who at that time was an exile in London scraping a meager living in Fisher Unwin's publishing establishment. Germany is expected to be represented by Gen. Hermann Goering, and whoever comes from the fragment that is left of the Austro-Hungarian Empire will not be a Hapsburg.

43 Representatives Named

Already 43 foreign governments have appointed their representatives at the coronation. Whether Italy will be represented seems at present doubtful. According to the Daily Mail, which is Mussolini's champion in the London press, Il Duce is so outraged at the British Government for sending an invitation to Haile Selassie to be represented that he may give the coronation the cold shoulder altogether. The point is certainly a nice one.

Mussolini has appointed another Emperor of Ethiopia in the person of the King of Italy, but this country has not recognized the act, and so far

HOW TO PRODUCE MODEL SECRETARY

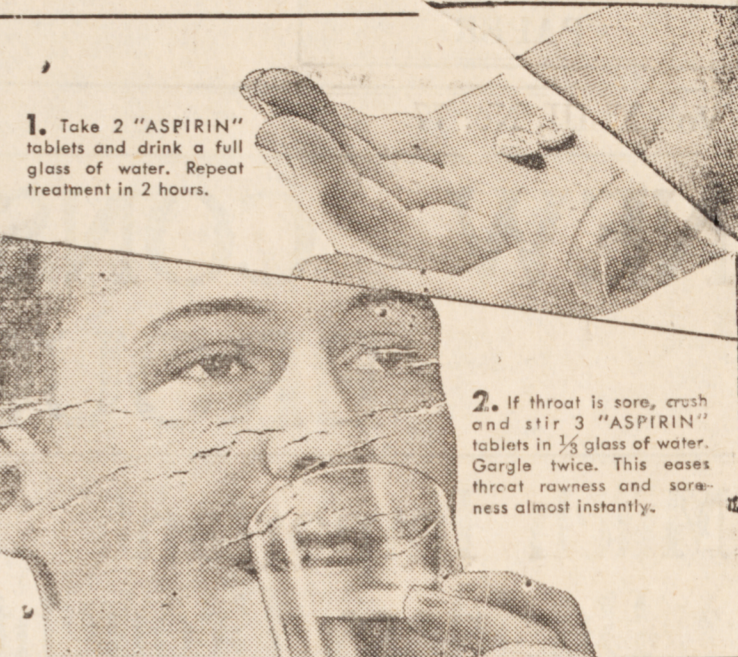
TORONTO, April 2—Production of the perfect secretary should be the aim of commercial schools, Miss Mary McKenzie, Toronto principal, told the commercial section of the Ontario Educational Association here today. She said secretaries should be trained in personality, adaptability, technical knowledge and knowledge of business affairs. First, she said, came the tools of the trade—short-hand, typing, bookkeeping, filing, business letter writing, business organization, library science, money and banking, commercial law and economics. Second was training in meeting and judging people and third was eradication of bad habits and development of habits of hard work.

ITALY WILL SEND NO MORE VOLUNTEERS

(Special to The Daily Mail)
ROME, April 1—The Italian Press is denying the report that Italy is considering any more volunteers to Spain. If other nations are willing to abide by the non-intervention ban they are also willing to do so. They also claim that only a few hundred Italians were in northern Spain and that there was no great defeat to Italian soldiers.

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