

Marine Sergeant Who Was King Of 12,000 Natives on Voodoo Isle

Yank Was Believed Reincarnation of Faustin I.

By ROBERT H. MYERS
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(Through courtesy of THE LEATHERNECK, the magazine of the U. S. Marines.)

ONE dark, gloomy night in the year 1848, on the tiny tropical voodoo isle of La Gonave, black King Faustin I suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. Years crept by and King Faustin I was never heard from again, but a legend was born that some day a descendant of his name would return to rule this West Indies island.

Some three score and ten years later, in 1920, a creaky sailboat lurched across the choppy waters of the channel from Port au Prince and scraped up on the sands of La Gonave. Bounding out was a strange collection of occupants; chattering black natives, bawling cattle—and Gunnery Sergeant Wirkus of the United States Marines—whose first name was Faustin.

Thus was forged a link in one of the strangest stories that ever came out of this storied, superstition-bound island. For Faustin E. Wirkus, a blue-eyed, square-chinned Yankee from the state of Pennsylvania, who had never heard of King Faustin I or about his mysterious disappearance from La Gonave, and most certainly was no descendant of the ebony emperor, eventually was crowned King Faustin II and reigned virtually singlehanded over the 12,000 natives for nearly five years—between 1921 and 1925.

He's Asked About "Queen."

He became famous as the "White King of La Gonave," and as he goes about more commonplace duties in the marine corps today, he still gets numerous inquiries about his years in Haiti; about the broad and beaming native woman, Queen Ti Memenne, who had chosen him to rule the island.

Queen Ti Memenne, of course, was not really a queen, nor was Wirkus truly a king, because La Gonave was merely a province of Haiti and under the administration of the Haitian republic and its president. But the stormy little country had been the scene of a bloody uprising a few years before, starting in 1915. Marines had been sent in to settle it, and a picked number had remained to train and run the native Gendarmerie.

Gunnery Sergeant Wirkus was one of these men, and by congressional permission, was on detached duty with the Gendarmerie and held the rank of lieutenant in the force. Assigned to La Gonave, he was officially a subdistrict commander.

Today Wirkus is a warrant officer, in charge of the marine aviation detachment at the navy's pre-flight school at Chapel Hill, N. C. But to go back to those years of yesterday—

Soon after enlisting, he landed in Haiti with the first outfits of marines that went down to settle the trouble in that country. His was the old Twenty-second company, led by Capt. Alexander S. Williams, and his battalion commander was a man later destined for world fame, Gen. Smedley Butler.

Five Years of Bushfighting.

Off and on for five years, the marines were busy bushfighting the treacherous "cacoes," knife-wielding natives whose tactics were bloody if

not successful. Wirkus engaged in many scraps—he killed seven cacoes in one bitter engagement—and gradually gained recognition as an efficient and straight-shooting non-com.

Once in Port au Prince he took a handful of native gendarmier and broke up a secret voodoo ceremony and captured the ring-leaders. This he accomplished with not a man injured. Voodoo meetings were often hotbeds of trouble.

During these years Wirkus kept hearing tales about the island of La Gonave, 40 miles north of Port au Prince and about 300 square miles in area. Voodooism was rampant on the island, and fearsome were some of the tales. A white man, so it was whispered, was not safe on La Gonave. No one wanted that outpost duty. Ghosts and spooks, they said, haunted the place.

But Wirkus made one visit to the island and decided he wanted it as a sub-district command. He scoffed at voodoo scare tales—and still does—and figured it would be a good place as a one-man job. Hunting and fishing were good, the climate was no barrier, and Wirkus was ambitious to make a name for himself as the key man in running the subdistrict. It was his responsibility to regulate travel and traffic, prevent smuggling, exercise control over the prison, enforce harbor and docking regulations, sanitation requirements, and see that lands were properly allotted and taxes paid.

Natives Suspicious.

When Wirkus arrived on brooding La Gonave, he found the natives suspicious of all white men, which was hardly surprising. For years they had been exploited and cheated. Their lot was a poor one, to say the least. Wirkus set out to correct these conditions, and behind his success was a genuine affection for the native population. As sequester, or administrator, he not only handled his official duties, but went out of his way to help the people. He showed them better ways to till their lands, for the main industry was agriculture. He repaired their antique equipment and modernized it where possible.

Mothers were astonished but grateful when he came to their aid in bringing up their offspring. They didn't know it, but he bought a book, "The Care and Feeding of Children," to help him with such problems. He surveyed the lands and divided, eliminating bitter disputes, and he reduced taxes for some and boosted it for others, many of whom had enjoyed favoritism from corrupt local representatives of the Haitian government.

It took a full year for Wirkus to gain the trust and friendship of the islanders, and particularly Queen Ti Memenne. The "queen" was the leading figure in a group of matriarchal societies which dominated affairs of business and society on La Gonave. During his early months there, Wirkus had made it a point to humor the fat and friendly queen, and she soon began to accept his advice and help.

Summons From Queen.

One day Wirkus received a summons at his newly built home on the coast. Messengers from the queen delivered it. They were very solemn. The message asked that Wirkus hasten inland and up into the back mountain country to the queen's village of whitewashed mud huts. The queen very urgently wanted to see the young American, who was then not quite 25.

Wondering what it could be about, Wirkus accepted and started off on horseback. The trails up the mountain were crowded with natives, all heading for the queen's village. When he finally reached the village he was ushered, still somewhat mys-

teriously, into a dwelling especially reserved for him. It was late afternoon and the queen's emissaries informed him that his presence would not be wanted before Queen Ti Memenne until late that night. Already drums were slowly beating in the village center. Still wondering what it was all about, he calmly undressed and went to sleep.

Khaki-Clad Monarch.

Later the marine sergeant, dressed in his usual khaki and puttees, entered the queen's house, stepping into a tiny room. Squatting in close array on the floor were members of the inner court. Ti Memenne, barefoot and dressed in a gaily colored robe, sat at the front in regal fashion, her black face shadowed in the sputtering, vague rays of candles. Queen Ti Memenne must have been in her forties or more, and, while a friendly woman, she had a way of commanding and getting respect.

The marine found out why he had been summoned before the queen. He was to be crowned "King Faustin II."

"At first I thought it was just a way they had of telling me they liked me, but later it developed that Ti Memenne and her people were in earnest about the matter. They had discussed the thing for days, and had agreed to name me as their 'white king.'"

The ceremony, weird in many ways, lasted nearly three hours. Outside the drums rolled and pounded, all but drowning out the bleating of a young goat scared to the tip of his tail, which was brought into the royal chamber and offered up as a blood sacrifice.

Wirkus was seated on a small, short-legged chair, and at the queen's command, an attendant came from the next room bearing a heavy, ornate crown.

"I now crown you 'King Faustin II,'" proclaimed Queen Ti Memenne, and she placed the crown—the same crown, so it was said, that once had adorned the head of King Faustin I—on Wirkus!

"Two huge blacks then picked me up and carried me outside. As soon as I appeared the drums beat out the king's salute—four ruffles and three taps. I knew that this was no empty honor they were paying me."

"White King of La Gonave."

Thus was crowned "The White King of La Gonave," a title that was to bring Wirkus, the marine, fame in many countries. William B. Seabrook made him the featured character of his book, "Magical Isle," and later Mr. Wirkus himself wrote a book which he called "The White King of La Gonave."

With the fame, however, also came envy and jealousy from certain quarters. Haiti's president a few years later, Louis Borno, hardly relished the popularity of La Gonave's subdistrict commander, or the thought that a "king," official or unofficial, was in charge of one of his provinces. So eventually Wirkus was transferred to another West Indies station.

Before that happened, though, the adventure-loving leatherneck proved himself a good and kindly administrator. The natives greeted him with "Bon soir, Roi," or "Good evening, King," and he was forever amused at the intense interest the natives took in his everyday affairs. Often they stood around his home, just to watch him dress.

As "King," of course, he had no more authority than he had before. In the eyes of his marine associates in the Gendarmerie, he was still merely subdistrict commander. He received no pay for his kingly title, and his stay on the island was as routine as before. To him, it was just a high compliment.

In 1925 Wirkus was transferred to another station in the West Indies. It was a sad occasion when "The White King of La Gonave" bade his people goodby. The natives lined the shores and cheered as Queen Ti Memenne gravely prophesied: "Some day you will come back and rule the island of La Gonave."



Warrant Officer Faustin Wirkus as he looks today.

Star Dust

STAGE SCREEN RADIO
 By VIRGINIA VALE
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

IT WAS rumored some time ago that Frank Sinatra didn't like his role in his first picture, "Higher and Higher," and therefore didn't want to do it. For all anybody knows, the lad may have dramatic talents that will bring him success equal to the fame he's won as a singer. The picture "Wake Up and Live," which Ben Bernie and Walter Winchell made some years ago, seems a perfect vehicle. Now that Sinatra has replaced Bing Crosby's horses as the leading topic of most of the radio comedians, it's only fit and proper that Bing and he are arranging to appear on each other's broadcasts.

Phil Baker's "Take It or Leave It" is about to become a motion picture. Twentieth Century-Fox has signed Baker to star in a comedy built around and named for the CBS Sunday night quiz. "Take It or



PHIL BAKER

"Leave It" departs for Hollywood following the February 27 broadcast, to start work on the film—with Brian Foy directing, the picture should be worthy of the air show.

In RKO's "Marine Raiders" (Pat O'Brien, Bob Ryan and Ruth Hussey), eight men of the cast have received honorable discharges after months of action in the South Pacific. All eight have been awarded the Purple Heart.

London whooped it up over the performance of six-year-old Margaret O'Brien in "Lost Angel," when the picture was launched there. The newspapers couldn't praise her highly enough. She made her screen debut in Metro's "Journey for Margaret." She'll play Little Eva in their technicolor production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," with Lena Horne as Eliza and Lewis Stone as St. Clair.

Last year Bette Davis was compelled to decline an honorary degree from her father's alma mater, Bates college, in Maine. This year Rollins college, in Winter Park, Fla., wanted her to drop in on February 25, to accept a Ph.D. but she had to decline again. With "Mr. Skeffington" now being filmed and "The Corn Is Green" coming up, she can't get away for the ceremonies.

The new Horace Heidt show (Monday evenings on the Blue network) is rapidly becoming a "must" on the broadcasting lists of many American homes. Certainly nothing could be more dramatic than this attempt to find just the right job for two honorably discharged service men each week. And the rest of the show holds up as excellent entertainment.

One of the biggest plums that a Hollywood director could get was that of directing "The Robe." It went to Mervyn LeRoy, who did "Madame Curie," "Random Harvest," "Anthony Adverse," and many other successful pictures. It'll keep him busy for some time.

Anne Jeffreys, blonde ex-model, was on her way to an operatic career when films lured her to Hollywood; now she's getting her first important break in a major production, playing the second feminine lead in the new Sinatra picture.

Radio's "Stage Door Canteen," heard over CBS, helps maintain canteens in New York, Hollywood, Washington, Boston and Philadelphia. Not content with that, the "Stage Door Canteeners" have adopted a fleet of the navy's landing craft infantry, and are keeping the entire group entertained via letters and surprise packages. The program is presented by the American Theatre Wing.

ODDS AND ENDS—When "Madame Curie" was in its seventh week at New York's Radio City music hall, it was also playing its seventh week for the troops on the Italian battlefield. . . . Charlie McCarthy turns ventriloquist in "Song of the Open Road," with a replica of himself, called Junior, on his knee. . . . A North African soldier fan of CBS singing star Jeri Sullivan has dubbed her "the girl with the pin-up voice" . . . John Gars, radio's busiest conductor-arranger, has completed composing the original musical score for CBS' "War Tunes," a new dramatic series with a contemporary theme, starring Ralph Bellamy.

TO YOUR Good Health

by DR. JAMES W. BARTON
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

STIFFNESS AND PAIN

There are intelligent men and women who have pain or "aches" in their muscles or around joints who think that, as they approach middle age, they must expect to be a little stiff and continue to have the pains.

Dr. Barton

What is the nature of the pain, stiffness and tiredness in different parts of the body? It is a chronic inflammation of the white fibrous tissue of the body and hence is called fibrositis. White fibrous tissue is found where there is no "stretching" of the tissues, thus being unlike muscle tissue which stretches and relaxes like elastic. This white fibrous tissue forms the tendons which attach muscles to bones, it covers the muscles themselves, it forms ligaments around joints, covers bones, and covers the tissues under the skin keeping them in firm bundles. It could almost be described as a hard covering for the tissues.

It can thus be understood why the pain can be practically anywhere in the body and why it was formerly called muscular rheumatism.

What causes the inflammation of this fibrous covering tissue? Just as other tissues—muscles, nerves, blood vessels—can become infected, so can this fibrous tissue. And it can also be caused by other infections in the body due to injury, rheumatic fever, gout and influenza. The most frequent places affected by the inflammation are in the muscles and the fibrous tissue about a joint.

In the "muscular" type there is lumbago, stiff neck, pleurodynia and pain in the thin muscular layer covering the skull.

In the "joint" type of fibrositis pain is "about" the joint and the patient naturally thinks it is "in" the joint. Morning stiffness is the commonest symptom, as patient is extremely stiff and may require considerable movement before stiffness disappears. There is usually no swelling present.

In the Mayo Clinic's issue of Medical Clinics of North America, Dr. Frank H. Krusen, whose description of fibrositis is mentioned above, states that the best treatment for fibrositis during or after the removal of infection is heavy massage which breaks down hard nodules or lumps of tissue and further treatment is by heat, special friction massage, and stretching.

This is an ailment where a qualified physiotherapist or masseur can obtain excellent results.

Removing Bad Teeth May Cure Arthritis

The first thought in a case of chronic rheumatism or arthritis is to try to find the cause, which so often is infected teeth or tonsils. After the cause is found or thought to be found, the problem arises as to whether the infection should be removed immediately or the patient's condition should be improved before the infected teeth or tonsils are removed.

Dentists and physicians are now agreed that if at all possible, the patient should be placed under observation so that the symptoms can be put under control by rest, diet, and medical treatment.

I have spoken before of a boxer afflicted with rheumatism in joints of lower back whose symptoms were attributed to two "suspicious" teeth. His physician sent him to his own dentist who refused to remove the teeth and suggested that the physician look elsewhere for the cause of the symptoms. The patient went to another dentist, the teeth were removed, the odor from them being unusually bad. As the rheumatic pains became very much worse, it showed that the teeth were the cause of the pain. Fortunately the boxer was in good condition and was able to withstand the shock of the extraction and the increased pain. The severe pain disappeared in two days and all the pain and stiffness within a week or 10 days.

The point then is that as the physician is the one who must take responsibility for results of removal of infected teeth, he must decide whether the patient needs to be built up to withstand shock and poisoning or whether immediate removal is necessary. The patient must therefore trust the physician as to whether teeth should be removed at all, and if so whether treatment for a time should be given.

QUESTION BOX

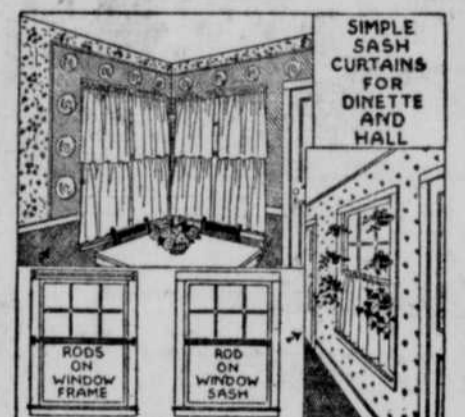
Q.—What would cause veins to break out, not only on my legs but on my face?

A.—Your own physician can give you the necessary advice for this condition. It may be hereditary.

Q.—What is folliculitis?

A.—Folliculitis is an inflammation of the tiny sacs or glands of skin. See a skin specialist as the inflammation of these tiny openings takes different form.

Sash Curtains That Have Long Tradition



WHEN we think of the type of curtains used in Early Colonial cottages, crisp frills and ruffles usually come to mind. It is true that ruffled curtains were used in Colonial times but the curtains of the first homes in the New World were of the casement or sash variety. We must remember that as late as the discovery of America glass windows were rare. They were of the casement type with tiny diamond-shaped pieces held together with lead. Simple straight curtains to keep out the glare and give privacy were the next logical development.

Frills and larger panes of glass came later but sash curtains were also used with these new windows. They are also being used with good effect today for rooms where an informal atmosphere is needed.

NOTE—This is the first of a series of modern adaptations of period curtain fashions. There is another interesting treatment of a sash-curtained window in BOOK 1; and the method of lining casement draw curtains is illustrated in BOOK 3 of the series of 10 booklets on sewing for the home. Price of booklets is 15 cents each. Order direct from:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS
 Bedford Hills, New York
 Drawer 10

Enclose 15 cents for each book desired.
 Name
 Address

Want Colored 'Chutes

Burmese natives have asked the army to use colored fabrics in 'chutes that drop food and supplies to troops on the Burmese frontier. The natives use the discarded cloth for clothing, and they are tired of white.

TRY OVERNIGHT CARE FOR MISERABLE COLDS—the way grandma did. She used mutton suet she medicated herself to relieve colds' coughing and muscle aches. Now mothers just rub on Penetro. Has base containing old reliable mutton suet, with modern scientific medication added. 25c. double supply 35c. Get Penetro.

Two Qualities

There are only two qualities in this world—efficiency and inefficiency; and only two sorts of people—the efficient and the inefficient.—G. B. Shaw.

SNAPPY FACTS ABOUT RUBBER

Normally U. S. motorists need 30 to 35 million new replacement tires a year. In 1942 and 1943 combined, only about 17 million tires will have reached vehicle owners through rationing offices.

Koroseal is "Plasticized polyvinyl chloride," a B. F. Goodrich rubber-like material that before the war was used in more than 300 different products. Koroseal has now gone to war.

Wheel alignment means much to tire mileage these days, with so many old cars in service. Frequent checking of camber and toe-in in front wheels will prove a rubber and mileage saver.

James Shaw

In war or peace
B.F. Goodrich
 FIRST IN RUBBER

Bloodhounds on Trail
 Bloodhounds have been known to follow a trail 30 hours old.

A Few Drops Up Each Nostril Quickly Relieve Head Cold Stiffness

Specialized Medication Works Fast Right Where Trouble Is!

Grand relief from sniffling, sneezy, stuffy distress of head colds comes fast as Va-tro-nol spreads through the nose, reduces swollen membranes—soothes irritation, relieves congestion, helps clear cold-clogged nasal passages. Makes breathing easier—**VATRO-NOL** try it! Follow directions in package.

★ Invest in Liberty: Buy War Bonds



"SORRY, BOSS, BUT I FEEL A HUNDRED TODAY"

SORETONE

soothes fast with COLD HEAT ACTION

- in cases of MUSCULAR LUMBAGO OR BACKACHE due to fatigue or exposure. MUSCULAR PAINS due to colds. SORE MUSCLES due to overwork. MINOR SPRAINS
1. Quickly Soretone acts to enhance local circulation.
 2. Check muscular cramps.
 3. Help reduce local swelling.
 4. Dilate surface capillary blood vessels.

For fastest action, let dry, rub in again. There's only one Soretone—insist on it for Soretone results. 50¢. A big bottle, only \$1.

MONEY BACK—IF SORETONE DOESN'T SATISFY

and McKesson makes it



How a Handful of Devil Dogs, Armed With One Machine Gun, Slew 125 Japanese in a Three-Hour Battle on Guadalcanal

"Warnings were issued that evening that one of our patrols would be coming through the woods after making a reconnaissance in front of the lines. Late in the evening some 50 men approached us.

"We thought it was our own patrol," said Pfc. Jack Sugarman, "but weren't taking any chances. We hollered halt, fired a shot over their heads and no one answered. Then

the attack began."

Japanese troops rushed the barbed wire defenses and attempted to scale them with a bridge made of poles and cloth. For each man that fell it seemed there were two more to take his place. The Japs threw everything at the machine gun positions, including grenades, dynamite, and flame throwers.

"Five times, when the Japs were

attacking," said Sugarman, "our gun jammed and we had to work pretty fast to clear it. Then their mortars found the range. Seven times we had to move our gun position."

The battle lasted three hours, according to Sugarman. He estimated that the machine gun pumped out 4,000 rounds, and 125 dead Japs lay in front of their sector.