

Woodfill: Hero of Heroes



SECRETARY OF WAR WEEKS AND SERGEANT WOODFILL. Photo by International

Here come the Doughboys, with dirt behind their ears. Here come the Doughboys, their pay is in arrears: The Artillery, the Cavalry and the lousy Engineers— They couldn't lick the Doughboys in 100,000 years. —OLD INFANTRY SONG

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

SOME time or other President Harding may perhaps have a chance to affix his signature to an act of congress giving to Sergt. Samuel Woodfill, U. S. A., Fort Thomas, Ky., a captain's permanent commission and retirement at that rank. You see Sergeant Woodfill earned his captaincy on the fighting line in France. Also his 20 years of active service entitle him to retirement. Also the military authorities have practically picked him out as the greatest fighting man of the A. E. F. So it would seem as if America could do no less than this for her "hero of heroes"—a "Regular" of the United States army and a professional soldier.

Anyway, Senator Richard P. Ernst of Kentucky has introduced such a bill in the senate. And Representative Roy O. Woodruff of Michigan has done the same in the house.

Representative John S. Benham of Indiana started the movement in the house. You see, he was proud as a peacock because Sergeant Woodfill enlisted in 1901 from his district—the fourth. Benham had the clerk read a paragraph from General Order No. 16, bearing date of January 22, 1919, and signed by Gen. Peyton C. March, chief of staff—Lieutenant Woodfill's citation accompanying his award of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Benham also put into the Congressional Record Woodfill's army record in full from his enlistment in 1901.

Then Woodruff of Michigan, who was a major of infantry in France and at one time, after the armistice, was Woodfill's commanding officer, was given the floor. As a preliminary to giving notice that he would introduce the bill mentioned in the foregoing, he set forth his first-hand knowledge of Woodfill's efficiency as a lieutenant in the Bordeaux embarkation camp and related how he returned from receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor at Chaumont without opening his mouth about it. "Excellent" behavior, efficiency and modesty bulk large in Woodfill's makeup.

The presentation at Chaumont took place on the quadrangle British G. H. Q. on Sunday at 3:30 before a large crowd of American, British, French, Belgian and Italian officers. Headquarters battalion acted as guard of honor. Woodfill received other awards in addition to the Congressional Medal of Honor. He received the Legion of Honor at the hands of the high admiral of the French navy and Maj. Gen. Hanson E. Ely presented to him the Croix de Guerre (with palm). Later he was awarded the Legion of Honor and the Order of Prince Danilo I (Montenegro). He also wears the Victory Medal with three clasps, the Philippine and Mexican border ribbons and an expert rifleman's medal.

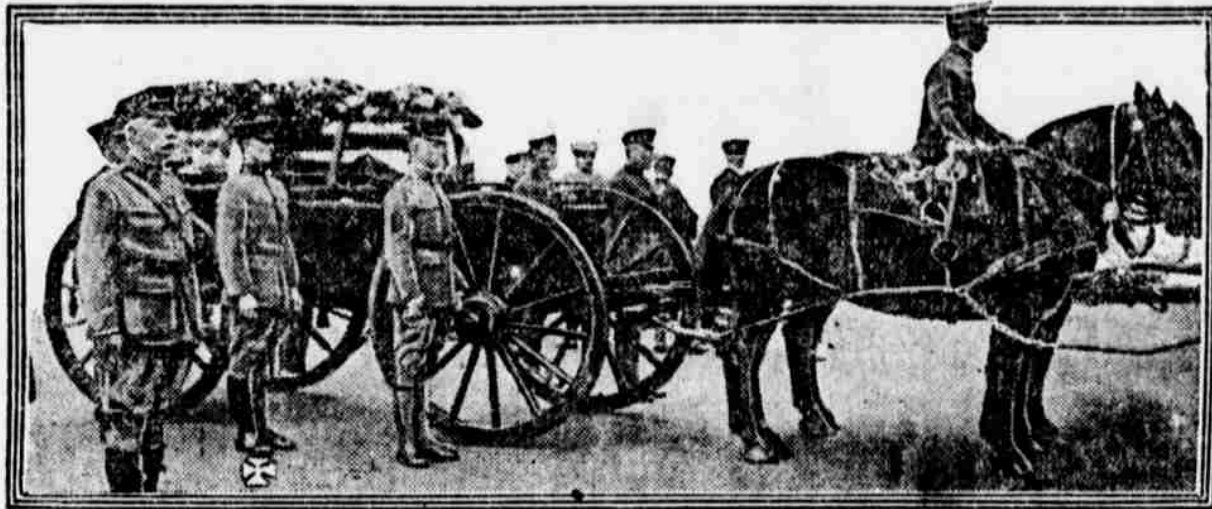
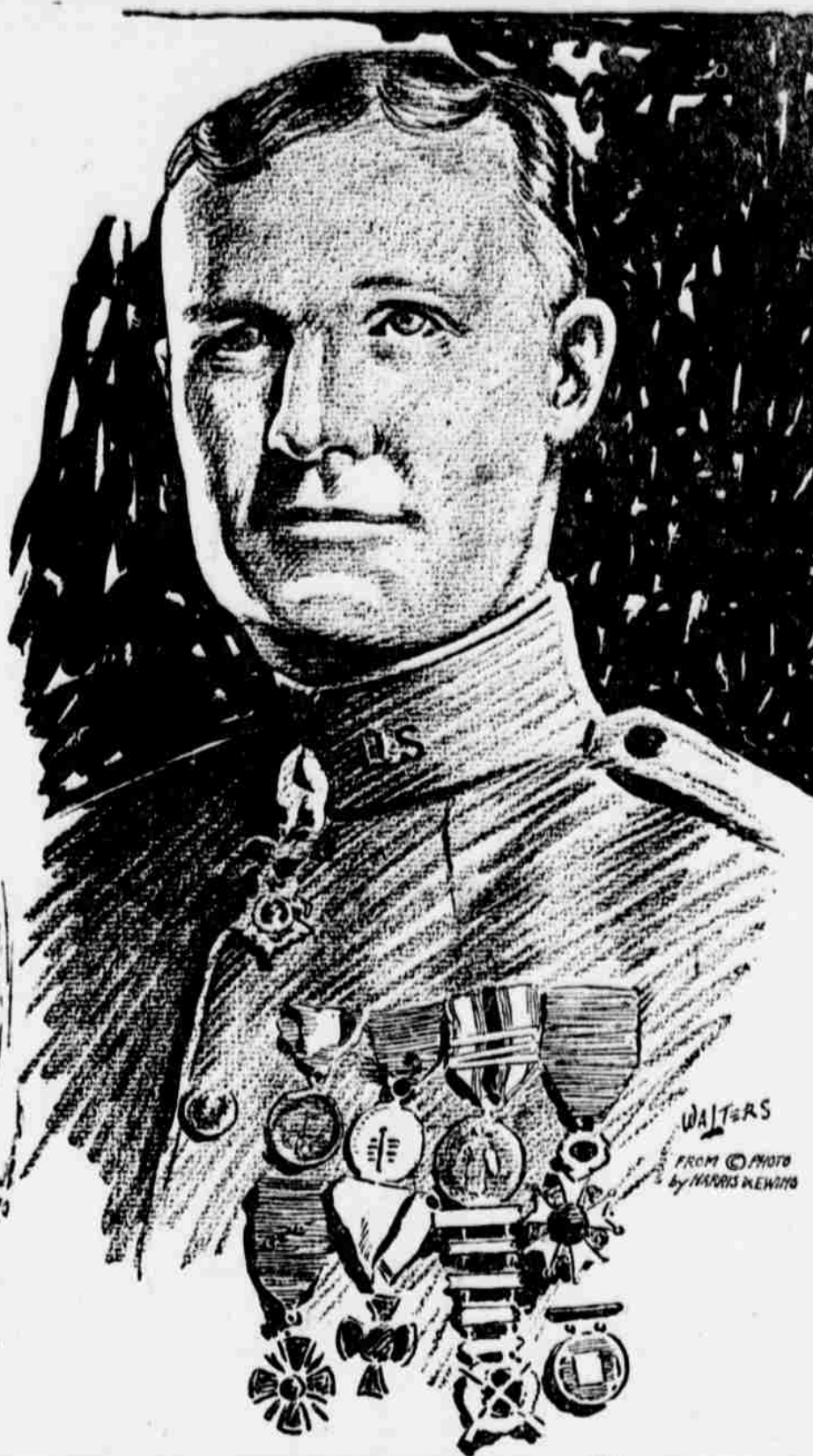
Notwithstanding Woodfill's exploit and his citations he remained undiscovered as the "hero of heroes." And Woodfill certainly didn't help along the discovery. When he went to Louisville with returning troops in the summer of 1919, a real soldier and a real hero at last after all the eventful years that had passed since he enlisted there in 1901, there were thousands hungry for such a tale of the war that Woodfill held in his bosom. But Woodfill didn't tell it. He went quietly about his work and returned to his command. When he was discharged as an officer, he kept to the habit he had followed from his Philippine days. He re-enlisted at about \$84 a month.

Then came the preparations for the burial of the "unknown soldier" at Washington on Armistice day.

The board of army officers, searching the records for the purpose of selecting a soldier from the infantry to act as a body-bearer for the unknown dead, picked Sergeant Woodfill. When the name was sent to Pershing, the commander of the A. E. F., he exclaimed: "Why, I have already picked that man as the greatest single hero in the American forces."

General Pershing's report on the heroes and soldiers in the World War contains this mention of Woodfill's deed, given the place of honor over two cases of distinguished heroism which already have received America's recognition:

"Deeds of valor were too numerous to mention here. Outstanding was the heroism of Lieutenant Samuel Woodfill, Fifth division, in attacking single-handed a series of German machine gun nests near Canel and killing the crews of each in turn until reduced to the necessity of assaulting the last detachment with a pick, dispatching them all. And



ARMISTICE DAY BURIAL OF "UNKNOWN SOLDIER." CROSS SHOWS SERGEANT WOODFILL. Photo © by Underwood in Underwood

of Sergt. Alvin C. York of the Eighty-second division in standing off and capturing 132 Germans after his patrol was literally surrounded and outnumbered ten to one; and Major Charles S. Whittlesey and his men of the Seventy-seventh division, when their battalion was cut off in the Argonne, in refusing to surrender and holding out until finally relieved. Doubtless many died in performing deeds of unknown heroism, as no survivor remained to testify."

Sergeant York, who got early publicity from the war correspondents that made his name a household word, killed 25 Germans in a few minutes with rifle and pistol and captured several machine guns and crews. Marshal Foch says he "did the greatest thing accomplished by any single soldier during the World War." The draft found him a church elder and a conscientious objector in the Tennessee mountains. He has consistently turned down every proposition to make money out of his fame—\$50,000 and royalties estimated at \$150,000 from the moving picture concerns; \$1,500 a week for 100 weeks from vaudeville; huge endowments from several religious denominations. He is working to establish a mountain non-sectarian school; has raised \$12,000 by lecture and has pledged \$20,000 more. When York was discharged the United States government gave him \$60. Bills introduced in the senate and house in his behalf have come to nothing.

Lieutenant Colonel Whittlesey is "gone west," God rest his soul! He "disappeared from the ship in the night" a short time ago, en route from New York to Havana on the Toloa. His going was carefully arranged. Three years after the war ended for others it killed him. He was its victim just as surely as if he had died with those of his "Lost Battalion" who never came back out of the Argonne forest. "Over There" he could say to the enemy's demands for surrender, "Go to H—!" Over here he was forced to surrender to the sorrows of the aftermath. He felt he had to help all the wounded and crippled and dying and jobless who besieged him for help. The "Unknown Dead" funeral at Arlington was the last straw. He broke under the strain.

Woodfill is the only professional soldier of the three—a "Regular" of the United States army. The meaning of the old "Regular" song quoted is that the infantry is the backbone of the army. York was a natural-born fighting man prepared for a great opportunity by environment. Whittlesey's triumph was of the spirit. Woodfill is a professional soldier trained to deadly efficiency.

Woodfill's father, a veteran of the Mexican and Civil wars, "brought him up to be a soldier," teaching him to use a rifle at the age of seven. His service in detail, as furnished by the War department, shows that he began in 1901 with three-years' service in the Philippines. He then saw eight years' service in Alaska. He served on the Mexican border, won a commission as second lieutenant and was assigned to the Sixtieth Infantry of the Fifth division. His A. E. F. service was from July 12, 1917 to October 31, 1918. His character mark is "excellent" without exception, usually with the addition, "a model soldier." He served as private, corporal, lance corporal, sergeant and lieutenant and was discharged from his A. E. F. service as captain. His total active service at

the time of his last enlistment was 19 years, 4 months and 21 days. This with his "double time" makes him eligible for retirement (30 years' service) at 40 per cent pay.

The citation describing Woodfill's exploit in killing 19 Germans in two hours is rather sketchy. Here's Woodfill's own account of the performance—at least the high points of it:

"We were partly screened by a low fog, but the moment we appeared on the crest the Germans began to pour in shells and machine gun bullets. The enemy was entrenched, and also hidden by heavy green woods, and was hard to locate.

"Quick action was needed. I signaled several men near me to get forward, and I rushed ahead and worked my way across an opening of about 150 yards by crawling from shell hole to shell hole. Then I reached a small knoll, detoured to the left, and worked my way until I got to an unimproved road, from which I could crawl up a muddy ditch about ten yards long. When I did this I could see the gun position.

"I didn't lose any time. I slid my rifle forward and placed the butt against my shoulder without exposing any part of my body, then raised on my elbows enough to see the gun and killed five gunners in the pit. One enemy gunner attempted to retreat, but I killed him with my pistol. I then feared to remain in my position longer, so I dashed to cover of the brush and ran on to an officer, who sprang up to disarm me. I killed him with my automatic. I had only gone a short distance when I located another machine gun. I crawled to a flanking position close up to the gun and sniped five of its crew and silenced the gun.

I located a third machine gun position, and, using the same method of approach as previously applied, I worked my way to a flank position and then killed five of the gunners. There was heavy firing coming from the right front which caused me to take refuge in the enemy's entrenchment, and as I dashed into it I nearly jumped on two Germans who were crouching there. One of them started to level a Lager on me. I fired first. The German doubled up and dropped his weapon. The other one reached for his rifle. I squeezed the trigger on him, but my gun failed to fire. I dropped it and grabbed a pickaxe and hit the man a crushing blow on the head. As I turned I saw the other German had regained his pistol, so I let him have it with the pickaxe, too."

Sergeant Woodfill's wife was Miss Lorena B. Wiltshire, born in Covington, Ky., and a direct descendant of Daniel Boone. He had known Miss Wiltshire for four years before he went overseas, but they had postponed their marriage in order to accumulate enough money to make the first payment on a little home of their own. The wedding took place December 26, 1917. She adds a final decoration—that of "Model Husband."

Woodfill is thirty-eight years old. He stands five feet, eleven inches, weighs 180 pounds and has a 42-inch chest.

Woodfill was made much of by official Washington. It was a severe ordeal for him, but, being under orders, he bore his honors with soldierly fortitude. At the funeral of the "Unknown Soldier" he was perhaps the "observed of all observers."



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DRUG DREAMS CALLED MYTH CATS FOLLOW FISH DEALER

Research Has Shown That Habitual Users of Opiates Can Do No Lasting Good Work.

The gulf between the songs of popples that breathe of sleep, the golden and green dragons, and the ecstatic dreams that mark the "literature" of drug addiction and the dismal side of the vice which the police behold, is brought out in an article by Dr. Carlton Simon, who emphasizes in the Scientific American the fact that opium, hashish, cocaine, heroin, morphine and the rest are far from lyrical.

"From the standpoint of the police," he writes, "all the romance of the songs and short stories is swept away on the fumes of a drug which brings depression, poverty, despair, and death." It has long been suspected that the drug dream, as a literary motif, was much overrated. By the time the addict is able to write of his visions—if he has them—after a debauch, he is ill and purposeless and ready for another dose. For anybody by a DeQuincey a sniff is inspiration, enough for a drug poem or tale. Go further, and the dreams vanish in a loathsome reality.

Altered His Mind.

"I say," roared the irate citizen, as he bounced into the office of the village weekly, "where's the editor?"

"Want to see him personally?" queried the office boy.

"Of course I do," answered the I. C. "I'm going to thrash him within an inch of his life. See?"

"Oh, all right," answered the boy. "Just take a seat, please. There are three others ahead of you. If you watch you'll see 'em chucked through the window one by one. When the third comes down, you can go up." But the visitor decided to postpone his trip.

His Reply.

Lavinsky—"Which is the biggest diamond in the world?" Skivinsky—"The Cohen-noor, of course."

A man never realizes what a sponge he is until he falls into a puddle of water and mops it all up.

Animals of Sheephead Bay Regularly Take the Trail of the Peddler of Sea Food.

Like the piper, the Sheephead Bay fish dealer has a following of cats as he pushes his cart through the residence section on Friday morning, says the New York Sun. The cats for blocks away hear his shrill cry of "Fresh fish!" or perhaps smell his cargo and come slyly through the streets for a chance at a delectable bit of sea food.

When the fishman gets a customer he cleans and scales the fish on the ground. This is the chance for the neighborhood cats. Their part of the feast consists of the discarded heads and tails of fluke and sea bass.

Obtaining a prized portion, most of the cats break for home to enjoy the repast, while others not so fortunate hang on the peddler's heels and follow him about until he finally makes a sale and permits them to profit on his loss.

Not From the Heart.

He had come home with a breath—one of those breaths that makes a fellow about as popular with his wife as a fly in a candy kitchen. The Missus had company and tried to ease him through the hall to the kitchen, but he was feeling jovial and wished to say cute things. So he paid his wife an unusually high-powered compliment.

"Huh!" she blurted. "That didn't come from the heart. That came from a bottle!"—Indianapolis News.

The Gallery.

Lord Blessus—Yes, we've been fox hunting. Do you like the sport? Mr. Eaglebird—It looked to be like the hounds were doing all the hunting while you fellows were just following to look on.

Out of Place.

"It's no fool job, I tell you." "Then why undertake it?"—Boston Transcript.

Another Viewpoint.

Beginner (after repeated failures)—"Funny game, golf." Caddie—"Tain't meant to be."—Punch.

"Those Who Dance Must Pay The Fiddler"

There's a settlement in profit or loss, for nearly every indulgence.

Sometimes the pay day is long deferred, and in that case the settlement may bear compound interest.

Often a payment in ill health is required for the dance had with tea or coffee during earlier years. Sometimes the collection comes in sleeplessness, sometimes in headaches, sometimes in high blood pressure, or in nervous indigestion—sometimes in all these penalties.

Nerves won't always stand the whipping of tea and coffee's drug, caffeine.

If you've been dancing to tea or coffee's fiddling, why keep on till payment time comes? If you're beginning to pay, now, why not cancel the contract?

There's an easy and pleasant way to avoid tea and coffee's penalties, as thousands have found who have changed to Postum. It is a delight with any meal—rich, comforting and satisfying—and it never harms. Even the little children can have a breakfast cup of Postum, with no fear for what may happen to sensitive nerves.

Instead of paying penalties for your meal-time drink, let it pay benefits to you, by giving natural health a full chance—and begin the new arrangement today. Any grocer will sell you, or any good restaurant will serve you Postum.

Postum comes in two forms: Instant Postum (in tins) made instantly in the cup by the addition of boiling water. Postum Cereal (in packages of larger bulk, for those who prefer to make the drink while the meal is being prepared) made by boiling for 20 minutes.

Postum for Health
"There's a Reason"