

Baseball in the U. S. Army

Why the Soldier in Uncle Sam's Fighting Ranks Spends Much of His Limited Spare Time on the Baseball Diamond

By Lieut. LEON CADORE

LEON CADORE has served for several months in the U. S. Army and recently received his Lieutenant's Commission. But he has lost none of his love for baseball and on a recent furlough pitched two very creditable games for his old employer. He won the first game handily while his teammates batted the second contest safely to victory after Cadore stepped aside for a pinch hitter.

MY little trip to Brooklyn is surely a welcome vacation and it seems like old times to be in a baseball uniform once more. Uncle Sam is a good boss, but his work is exacting and you can't count on many vacations in the army. Still, when one does come, you certainly appreciate it and, I believe, are able to go back to the daily grind with all the more vim and pep for the short lay-off.

While I have been in the army now for eight months and have succeeded in gaining my coveted commission, I still feel that I have never really said good-bye to baseball. It's a fine old game, one that a man can feel proud of, and I surely hope to return to the diamond when this war is over.

It would take more skill than I can claim to express the great work baseball has accomplished for the men in the service. I have seen recruits in Camp Gordon who never played the game before, even as kids (and that's a rare case in America), rapping out fungos and trying to field flies with as much enthusiasm as the veteran.



Leon Cadore rooting for the home town from a bleacher seat at Atlanta, Ga.

Athletics has certainly done far more than any other one thing to keep the American Army in trim, and in athletics baseball is easily king. It's the best game in the world, from every angle, for the soldier.

my own personal experience, that such reasoning is far from sound. I have seen a great deal of the recruits, for I was one myself not so long ago, while my present job consists of training rookies for the

LEON CADORE IN MINIATURE

Leon Cadore was born in Chicago but moved at an early age to the Pacific Coast, where he spent some eight years at Spokane, Wash.

Here he studied at the local Jesuit college where he obtained his A.B. degree and thought somewhat of becoming a

mining engineer. But the lure of baseball proved too powerful.

Cadore is of French extraction, his grandfather having hailed from the champagne country.

He is more than six feet tall and weighs two hundred pounds.

COMMENTS FROM CADORE

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service. I will say that the recruits are well meaning, earnest and industrious for the most part, eager to learn, and striving to become trained soldiers at the earliest moment. But the steady grind of military training is one of the most wearing and monotonous things on earth. And a normal human being who is used to some diversion craves that diversion more than ever once he has joined the ranks. For this need is all the more impressive today when everything is being speeded up all along the line and the Army officers are making desperate efforts to whip the recruits into shape in the briefest possible time.

Anything which the Army officials, the Y. M. C. A., and other allied institutions, can give the soldier in the form of diversion is very welcome, but by all odds the most universally popular entertainment in the Army, right now, is baseball.

I would say that fully 60 per cent. of the soldiers play the game, in one form or another, while every one of them is at least a spectator of his regimental team in action. Most of them go, when possible, to professional league games which are held anywhere in the vicinity. And all of them enjoy the game.

Naturally a considerable percentage of the green men, who are unused to hard physical labor, become lame and sore from the rigorous military training, and can't display as much pep and vigor on the diamond as they could if they gave more of their energy to that pursuit. But a surprising number of them play the game, and a good percentage play it well.

I cannot pretend to say how many men in the Army have shown sufficient ability to earn a living as professional ball players. It is hard to size up a man in this respect. Not all of major league ability, by any means, consists of batting and fielding. A good many promising youngsters drift into the big leagues with good nat-

ural ability, but they get stage fright at the big crowds, and the hostile comment of players and public, and can't stand the gaff. No doubt a lot of good players are spoiled by this initial experience, which is pretty tough for all of us at first. So it is difficult for me to estimate the number of men I have seen play ball at camp who had the stuff to make good in the major leagues. But I have seen quite a number who had the mechanical ability all right, and I think it is safe to say that a good percentage of them would make good as professionals if given the chance. In fact I have no doubt that professional baseball will enjoy a big boom after the war, from the number of expert players who have been developed in the many

Army baseball teams, both at home and in France.

I believe the attitude of the American soldier toward sport illustrates the principal difference between the German and the American armies. The American officers encourage sport, particularly baseball, because they feel that it not only gives the men needful and healthful diversion, but maintains the Army morale at a high state of efficiency and develops quick thinking and individual initiative. The American Army is a thinking army, an army composed of men who are intelligent and who have the proper spirit. In Germany everything is one vast scheme of iron discipline. The men act always under orders. The idea is to force the utmost out of the men by sheer discipline. There is no discounting the fact that you can get a lot done by discipline alone, if it is rigorous enough. But on the other hand I believe the opposite plan is much the better one; that is, to have the soldiers trained to act for themselves, encouraged instead of being driven.

So far this year I have engaged in some dozen or fifteen ball games. Fortunately for me I have won them all. (In the second game which he pitched at Brooklyn, Cadore did not get credit for the victory, but Brooklyn ultimately won.) And I have had good luck with the bat. In fact I always prided myself on my ability to hit. This doesn't count for so much in a pitcher, but in my younger years I used to play third base a good deal, and there I had to hit. Even last year I hit for .260, which is counted good for a pitcher. Naturally in the Army you can make a record at the bat easier than you can do so in the big leagues. I remember in a game at Camp Upton I made two home runs in a single inning, which I believe equals the world's record. If I could make two home runs in a season in the majors, I should be pretty well pleased.

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