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The Inter Allied Games of 1919

From June 22 to July 6, 1919, a set of Olympic-like athletic games was held at the specially constructed Pershing Stadium just outside of Paris, France. Fifteen hundred athletes representing eighteen allied forces' countries competed in some twenty-four sports over the 15 days. This paper is a starting point for an analysis of the nature and significance of these Allied Games. Conceived originally by Elwood S. Brown, a YMCA official and director of athletics with the Allied Forces, the Games were designed to "signalize" the advent of a "greater, more powerful peace than the world had yet known." Links to Homeric Games traditions were drawn, American initiative was showcased, and athletic villages (in tents) were constructed – all with military precision down to the smallest detail. It was a post-bellum stage for/to sport; it was America's gift following War; it was the symbol of an entente cordiale with France; and it resulted in the creation of an Allied Forces Sport Council, recently re-named with 120 member nations who boast 20 world championships in military sport each year.
