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BAND AS WAR HEROES

French Musicians Die Cheering Troops with Patriotic Airs

Win Honors at Vauquois

Render the Marseillaise Eight times as German Shells Fall Around Them, But Not a Man Is Killed. Others Sound Charge on Remains of Instruments—Help Bury the Dead.

Paris, May 30 (by mail). Since the beating of the drums that called France to arms, comparatively little martial music has been heard at the rear. Those who have been allowed in the zone of the armies have occasionally met a regimental band with drums and brass instruments slung over their shoulders, plodding along the road toward the first line. Musicians go with the combatants and are subject to all the dangers of the war.

The strains of the "Marseillaise" one day revealed the presence of a regimental band among the ruins of a town still under bombardment and close enough to the German lines to require measures against gas. All the musicians had their masks on, giving them a grotesque appearance but not interfering with their lung power.

British and Italian Coolest.

The Coldstream Guards Band, direct from Arras, and the Royal Italian Carbineers Band, fresh from the Isonzo, brought a little of the atmosphere of the front to the Trocadero recently, and reminded Paris of the martial strains that stirred the city during the first days of the war. They were greeted by big crowds with the same enthusiasm as prevailed on the boulevards in the memorable first week of August, 1914.

The immense auditorium itself was crowded long before the announced hour for the opening.

The bandsman at the front is not a mere musician. After inspiring the troops with martial strains and when the shot and shell have done their work, he drops his instrument, and, with the Red Cross on his sleeve, goes out over the field to pick up the wounded. Sometimes he helps to bury the dead, and in some emergencies he brings up supplies and ammunition.

Play Under Shellfire.

At the assault of Vauquois in February, 1915, the band of a regiment was ordered to execute the "Marseillaise" from shelter, but at the moment of the charge the colonel assigned an uncovered spot to the band, which became a standing target for the enemy, only 300 yards away, but continued none the less ardently its mission. It played the "Marseillaise" eight times during the engagement and not a man was killed.

A few days later the musicians of a regiment acting as stretcher bearers were ordered to sound the charge for a battalion that was about to go into action. The 26 men took their instruments and went to the place where the attack was to be made. The enemy's artillery just then began to enfilade the crossroad where they were sheltered while waiting for the order. The ground was plowed by shells and covered with wounded in a few minutes.

Sound Charge as They Die.

The musicians became again at once stretcher bearers, and when the order finally came to sound the charge, most of the 26 instruments had been dented, crushed or torn to bits by the

shelling. Two or three trumpets were still intact, and with three or four musicians the trumpeters sounded the charge and alternated the "Marseillaise" with it for half an hour.

Other members of the band became separated, and found themselves in another regiment of the brigade where there were trumpets to spare. They seized them and sounded the charge. Of the 26 musicians, four were killed and seven wounded. The leader was decorated with the Legion of Honor.

When the regiment is resting behind the front the musicians are the only ones who work. They give concerts for the civilians in the towns where the regiments are quartered, while the combatants are resting.