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Editorial

Foxholes

We Mennonites are entirely too complacent about our non-resistant belief. Not only complacent. Down deep we tend to see it as an encumbrance, a sacrifice of personal rights. We fail to comprehend the supreme price paid by our forefathers so that this doctrine could be preserved through the ages.

Modern day warfare requires a minimum of soldiers and a maximum of high-tech equipment. Thus, even when the country is at war, there is not a feeling of war in the air. For the Mennonites, war is no longer a trying time. Additionally, in a society permeated with pacifists, to be a conscientious objector can be seen as a plus.

The present generation of Mennonites is a "peace generation." National peace is taken for granted. There is an unshakable belief that the most powerful country in the world is prepared for any eventuality. If power and victory are analogous, there is nothing to fear.

Thomas Jefferson said that "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Even the world today believes that peace and liberty can be had without war. The present generation has forgotten the sacrifices that their fathers and grandfathers made so that they can be free.

World War II was America's last great, decisive war; the last war in which the president was enthusiastically supported by the bulk of the citizenry. The war could not have been won without the industrial mobilization of all segments of society that took place across the nation. America has been involved in four major wars (the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, at home; and the First and Second World Wars on foreign soil). The price paid for liberty in those four wars—especially World War II—is stupendous. Our young people, raised in peace and quietness, in the shadow of olive fronds of non-resistance, have no idea what kind of price was paid for our natural liberty.

The fact that we are non-resistant does NOT mean that we can nonchalantly turn our backs and mutter to ourselves, "That's your problem; we don't believe in going to war."

Good soldiers don't just happen. No one is born a good soldier. Good soldiers are made. They are trained, trained, trained…

E (Easy) Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Division, 101st Airborne, began to exist the summer of 1942. It was made up of 140 men (all 24 years of age or under) and seven officers.

The men of Easy Company were a potpourri of young men from different parts of the country. They ranged from very poor with a basic education, to one from Harvard, another from Yale and several from UCLA. Only a few had any military background or training.

Easy Company's birthplace was Camp Toccoa, Georgia. Possibly the first contributing factor to Easy Company's eventual fame was that all 140 young men and seven officers were there because they chose to be. No one was drafted. It wasn't the pay—50 USD per month for soldiers and 100 USD for officers. What they all had in common was a desire to serve their country in a special way: as paratroopers. Yes, they were perfectly aware that it was one of the most dangerous positions in the Armed Forces, which means they were also aware that not all of them would return home.

Military strategists know the importance of small elite units for special tasks. Contrary to traditional infantry which engages the enemy frontally, airborne troops fly over the front line and into enemy territory, where they jump (often at night) and set up battle stations immediately upon landing. Often their job is to knock out—from behind—gun placements and pill boxes from which enemy soldiers are firing on advancing troops, secure bridges and other strategic positions.

To come down in enemy territory, sometimes ten miles from the proposed landing spot, often separated from buddies, at night (when it is almost impossible to distinguish between fellow soldiers and the enemy), with firearms, ammunition and other equipment, which frequently adds up to more than the soldiers weight, and not lose one's head is no small feat. It took—we've already said—training, training, training…

Within a matter of hours after assembling at Camp Toccoa, these young men that would make up Easy Company became aware of how totally their lives had changed. In ways their training was more severe and exacting than that of a Swat team. Blubber was quickly transformed into solid muscle; tender feet became a mass of blisters and then took on the consistency of vulcanized rubber. These young men who probably at times talked back to dad and mom during their growing up years; soon found it wasn't a paying proposition to talk back to their superiors. They quickly assimilated the profound meaning of the old military adage that in the Army they don't make you do anything, but they sure can make you wish you would have.

Shortly before finishing their basic training at Toccoa, Colonel Sink read in *Readers Digest* that a Japanese Army battalion had established a world endurance record by marching 100 miles in 72 hours. Without batting an eye, he confidently declared, "My men can do better than that!" And he would prove it.

At 7 o'clock on December 1, Easy Company, together with three other companies, wearing full combat gear, which included rifle, machine gun, mortar, according to each soldiers specific duties set out.

The route chosen was 118 miles long, of which 100 miles were on unpaved back roads. The weather could have hardly been worse, with freezing rain mixed with snow. The roads were slushy and slippery. As night settled in the rain and snow were replaced by a frigid, biting wind. By 11 o'clock that night the men had covered 40 miles. Their camping spot was a bare hillside with no protection against the driving wind. Since they couldn't get their field stoves started, their evening meal was bread, spread with butter and jam.

Upon awakening at six o'clock the next morning, the men discovered that everything was frozen solid, including their socks and boots. Their weapons and equipment were frozen to the ground. That day another 40 miles were covered. That left 38 miles for the last day—the worst day. By now everyone was dog tired. The last 20 miles on hard asphalt were torture for bruised and battered feet.

Of the 586 men and officers who set out, only 12 failed to finish the course. Easy Company was the only one in which there were no dropouts. Their reward was to lead a parade through the streets of Atlanta.

Next came actual training for jumping at Benning. First they jumped from the doors of dummy fuselages four feet above the ground, then controlled jumps from 30 foot towers, and finally from a height of 250 feet. Next was the real thing: five jumps from a C-47, after which they were qualified for their coveted wings.

Through this whole procedure, the greatest trial to the men was not the strenuous marches, the endless exercises, the tiring drills. It was First Lt. Herbert Sobel, Easy Company's C.O. (Commanding Officer). A man without friends, he would sadistically pounce on the men for real and concocted infractions. A favorite punitive measure, after a full day's training, was to order a soldier who had fallen from his grace to dig a 6 x 6 x 6 foot trench. Upon finishing he would be ordered to fill it in again. His men probably hated him more than the enemy which they eventually faced in battle.

Nearly 50 years after the war, Easy Company survivors were being interviewed. Asked if they became a top company "because of" or "in spite of" Sobel, some of the men answered, "Both." Others outrightly attributed Easy's superiority to Sobel, even though they hated the man.

After the men of Easy Company had won their wings, they were given a 10-day furlough. As can be expected, some were late reporting back for duty. After everyone had showed up, Colonel Sink ordered the men to assemble in their best dress uniforms. They were then marched to a vacant lot. The Colonel called them to attention and then told them to stand "at ease."

What happened next these men will remember until the day of their death. A lieutenant called out a name, "Private John Doe." The drummer at the lieutenant's side began softly beating out a dirge. Two sergeants, armed with submachine guns approached the private and escorted him to the lieutenant, as the drum continued to beat.

Pale and trembling, the private stood at attention and listened as the official read the orders. He was being drummed out of the paratroopers and relegated to the infantry.

Then came the worst part of the ceremony, as told by historian Stephen E. Ambrose: "The lieutenant ripped the 506th patch from the private's arm, the wings from his chest, the parachute patch from his hat, and threw them all on the ground… There was more. A jeep drove up and dumped out private Doe's barrack bags. He had to take off his boots, put on regular shoes, wear his [trousers] like a regular infantryman… He picked up his bags and, followed by the submachine gunners, marched sadly away, the drumming continuing to roll, a picture of bleak loneliness. This was repeated nine times."

After months of grueling training, the day came in which E Company boarded a transport that would take them across the Atlantic to the war in Europe. Five thousand soldiers crammed into a ship with accommodations for one thousand passengers didn't make for a pleasant trip.

E Company was billeted in England, where together with hundreds of thousands of American G.I.s, they began intensive training for the invasion of the European mainland, which eventually took place at Normandy.

The day—or night, rather—of the jump finally came. The planes that took E Company were often flying at 500 feet or less. (One paratrooper claims he was forced to jump at 250 feet and was saved by the blast of an airplane exploding beneath him, which threw him upward and sideways, giving him several extra precious seconds for his chute to open.)

Hundreds of books have been written about what took place as these valiant paratroopers bailed out of their planes and landed in enemy territory in the dead of the night. Some were killed; others injured.

Those who survived the jump had to go into immediate action. Knowing in advance that it would be nigh impossible to distinguish friend from enemy at that hour, a sign and countersign was worked out. Seeing the form of a soldier, one would call out, "Flash." The countersign was "Thunder." Occasionally a soldier would forget his countersign and be fired upon by one of his own men.

The first objective was to help establish a beachhead by eliminating enemy soldiers firing upon troops landing on the beach and then to begin advancing inland, taking towns and strong points as they went.

Soldiers were trained to dig in whenever enemy resistance kept them from advancing. Depending on circumstances and condition of the soil (frozen, sandy, rocky…), this could mean anything from a shallow indentation to a hole up to six feet deep. It became a second nature to dig in when stopping for the night. (One company was so totally exhausted that the soldiers simply threw themselves on the ground and went to sleep. They were surprised by the enemy and almost totally wiped out.)

When the thermometer dips to freezing and finally to zero and below, no one ever stops to think what it would be like to dig a hole in the backyard and live in it for several weeks or a month. Yet it was in such inhospitable dens that tens of thousands of young men lived for weeks on end. For some these foxholes became a grave.

Ambrose tells us: "Just one night in a foxhole in Belgium in December 1944 was memorable. Ten, twenty, thirty nights was hell. To begin with, night lasted so long in those northern latitudes. Dark began to come on around 1600 (4 p.m.) or 1615 (4:15 p.m.). By 1645 (4:45 p.m.) it was full dark. First light didn't come up for sixteen hours. It was bitterly cold, even for the the GIs from Montana or North Dakota. It was frequently below zero and generally damp, with low clouds blowing in from the North Sea and a fog that penetrated everywhere—when it wasn't snowing. Then the wind blew like a gale, driving the pellets of snow into their faces. It was North Europe's coldest winter in forty years."

The cold was terrible, but thawing weather could be even worse, when soldiers at times had to stand in water over a foot deep. Trench foot was a constant problem. During the winter of 1944-45, approximately 45 thousand soldiers had to leave their posts because of trench foot.

As men spent day after day, night after night, in these foxholes, death became more and more attractive. To live in total misery, stench, eat cold rations, never able to stretch out and actually rest, wore down both mental and physical resistance. The men coveted a serious wound—the loss of a limb—as it meant evacuation to the rear. And home. Such a wound was referred to as a "million dollar wound." In field hospitals, the most cheerful soldiers were the amputees. It was better to return home minus a leg, an arm, or even blind, than to die on the front.

This was not cowardice. Soldiers living in foxholes knew that statistically their chances of surviving the war were minimal. There were companies that suffered up to 400% casualties. Impossible, someone says. One hundred percent casualties is the maximum. Not so in war. As soldiers were killed or wounded, they were replaced by others. Thus, in a company of 120 solders, it was possible to have nearly 500 casualties.

The million dollar wound was serious business. Sgt. John Sabia took five machine-gun bullets in his right thigh. He was asked by his commanding officer if he needed help to get to the aid station. No way! Using a limb as a crutch, he had walked some ten meters, when he stopped, turned and gleefully shouted at his buddies, "Hey, you ____s! Clean sheets! Clean sheets!"

A foxhole provided only limited protection. All it took was to peek out one time, at the wrong time, to be struck by a bullet. Exploding shells and bazooka charges could kill or wound solders crouched at the bottom of their foxholes. In some cases, with the enemy almost within touching distance, any movement or sound could draw fire. Thus when a foxhole was shared by two soldiers, they could often only communicate in whispers. Some nights were totally silent; others—many—were punctuated with artillery and small arms fire. Worst of all were the cries of the wounded, "Medic! Medic!" Often it was impossible to reach these wounded. Then those in the foxholes had to listen to the cries grow fainter and fainter. And finally cease.

On the front, in foxholes, life and death became inseparable. Pvt. Ken Webster, of the 101st Airborne, wrote his mother: "I am living on borrowed time… If I don't come back, try not to take it too hard. I wish I could persuade you to regard death as casually as we do over here. In the heat of battle you expect casualties, you expect

somebody to be killed and you are not surprised when a friend is machine-gunned in the face. You have to keep going. It's not like civilian life, where sudden death is so unexpected."

Sgt. Ed Stewart, of the 84th Division makes it plain that there were NO unwounded foxhole veterans. He says he never knew "a combat soldier who did not show a residue of war." His mother laments that her son "left Europe but never arrived home".

Many years after the war ended, Sgt. George Thompson put it this way: "When I'm home by myself, at nighttime, it all comes back. I'll hear the noise, the shells exploding. I stay awake thinking about it. I guess it comes from being in a foxhole—the long hours of night time."

General Sherman, speaking to cadets at their graduation, added, almost as an afterthought, "You don't know the horrible aspects of war. I've been through two wars and I know. I've seen cities and homes in ashes. I've seen thousands of men lying on the ground, their dead faces looking up at the skies. I tell you, war is hell!"

That is natural warfare, in which natural lives, natural property, natural liberty and natural objectives are at stake. Ours is a spiritual warfare, in which "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Here, our eternal salvation is at stake.

What we have written is intended to give us a glimpse of the price of natural peace, and thus help us place a higher value on the exemption from military service which our governments have so graciously given us.

The foremost objective of these words, however, are to encourage us to compare our spiritual zeal and courage with that of the infantrymen who lived and died in foxholes to obtain an earthly crown.

If worldly men can train for hours and days; if they can march 118 miles in three days, in rain and sleet; if they can jump into enemy territory in the darkness of night; if they can live in foxholes for weeks in subzero weather, where does that leave us? Must we drop our heads in shame and admit that our zeal for the battle of the Kingdom is less than that of soldiers battling for a temporal kingdom?

When we compare ourselves with the apostle Paul, who was abundant in labours, who received stripes above measure, who was frequently in prison and often faced death, who of the Jews five times received forty stripes save one, who was thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day was in the deep; who spent much time in journeyings, who was in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, where does it leave us?

The *Martyrs Mirror* tells the stories of thousands of brothers and sisters in the faith who had to flee for their lives, at times in the dead of winter, who were shut up in prisons and dungeons, who were inhumanely tortured, separated from family members and friends, who lost all their temporal goods.

Figuratively these brothers and sisters lived in foxholes. Paul puts it like this: "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

Decidedly, those brethren were stationed on the front line.

Times have changed, we say. Today, in the opening chapter of the 21st century, that is an understatement. We are seeing a detachment from the past. No longer are standards of the past seen as a challenge, but rather as museum pieces; something today's world beholds and comments, "My, weren't those people strange back there." There is no feeling that "maybe we have lost something."

As we—or maybe, *if* we—visit the spiritual museum of past heroes of faith, what are our comments? Do we see that not only have times changed, but that times have also changed us?

The men of E Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Division, 101st Airborne became an elite company by training, training, training. Yet how many times do we have to drag ourselves to church? We get there late, or not at all. It's also possible that our body never misses a service, but our spirit is elsewhere. Like a Catholic going to mass, we go home satisfied that we have done our duty.

The men of E Company, 506th Partachute Infantry Division, 101st Airborne flew over enemy territory in the dead of night, already taking flak in the low-flying airplane, they jumped amidst a barrage of bullets, their parachutes barely snapped open when they hit the earth with a jarring thud, and there, often alone, they had to face and overcome the enemy. Yes, some were killed, others injured, but they won the war. When year after year the same concerns must be lifted in Annual Meetings and other meetings, the question rises: Are we courageously meeting the enemy head-on? Are we on the offensive? Or do we fight our spiritual warfare on the defensive? Losing a little ground here, losing a little there?

The men of E Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Division, 101st Airborne dug in—literally—when the going became rough. They dug foxholes and kept the enemy from advancing. And not only that; they drove the enemy back. Then they would advance and hop into the enemy's foxholes, from which they would resume fighting until they could again advance. They hung in until the enemy was overcome. For too many of us soldiers of the cross, the resolution and courage to fight until victory has been replaced by shallow willingness to fight until the going gets tough. No foxholes.

One researcher puts American casualties in World War II at 405,399. There were more. This was the price Americans paid for freedom. German casualties were in the millions. And they lost the war.

In the Church of God today, the casualty rate is far too high. In spite of this the war will be won, but for those soldiers who abandon the fight, the war is lost. Eternally.

Our casualty rate is far too high. We can't afford it. ▲

Additional Comments

(*Following are some interesting incidents that took place during WWII.*)

Surrender

On patrol, an American soldier suddenly came face to face with two German soldiers. The American believed the Germans had the drop on him, and the Germans that the American had the drop on them. Thus all three, at the very same instant, dropped their arms and raised their hands in surrender.

This situation would have been ridiculous enough, but the Germans, certain that they would lose the war, took the initiative. They said, "Look, we are two and you are one. We have you outnumbered, which means we can call the shots. *We* are going to surrender and *you* must take us prisoner."

The American obliged.

The Americans were in the process of taking a village in France that was held by German soldiers. Seeing a house that appeared to be held by the enemy, an officer decided to send a newly-arrived replacement private to "take" the house. The normal procedure was to use the protection of other buildings, trees or brushes and approach the front door, kick it in and toss in a grenade or spray the interior with machine gun fire.

Imagine the officer's surprise when the green private boldly marched to the front door, knocked and waited. Soon the window opened and a German official, in an undershirt, stuck his head out and demanded to know what the youth wanted.

"I have come to request that you surrender." "Just a moment."

The minutes passed and the front door opened. The officer, followed by a number of soldiers, came out, announcing they were surrendering. Not only were they surrendering, but he told the American private there were other German soldiers billeted in the village. He would take him to the different houses and obtain their surrender also.

In good faith, the American soldier followed the German officer from house to house, where the officer would explain they were surrendering. After some time, the American soldier returned with a large contingent of German prisoners of war and presented them to his commanding officer.

We will let Stephen Ambrose tell the final war story:

"At the aid station Lieutenants Merryman and Heffner met the crew of a B-24 that had been shot down and successfully crash-landed. The Air Force guys told their story: when they started to dash out of their burning plane, the first man was shot, so the rest came out with hands up. The Germans took them to the cellar of a farmhouse, gave them some cognac, and held them 'while the Germans decided who was winning. A little later the Germans realized they were losing and surrendered their weapons and selves to the bomber crew. The Germans were turned over to the airborne and the bomber crew went to the aid station.' This was perhaps the only time a bomber crew took German infantry prisoner."

▲

This one has nothing to do with war; it is something that happened in the Northeast in Brazil. This is a little story on coincidences.

Manuel Rodrigues da Silva, 74, went to the bank to see if his monthly pension of the equivalent of approximately one hundred US dollars had been deposited. He was shocked to learn that his account was dry, that nothing had been deposited.

The ATM alerted bank officials that someone was trying to access this account. A suspicious bank official came out to see what was going on. Manuel Rodrigues da Silva was told that Manuel Rodrigues da Silva had recently died. Why was he trying to get into a dead man's bank account?

Thus began a drama for Manuel that drug out for six months.

Manuel Rodrigues da Silva was born em João Pessoa, in the northeastern state of Paraíba (where we have a mission) on February 14, 1927, and now lives in São João de Meriti, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. His dad's name was Raimundo Rodrigues da Silva and his mother's name was Maria Amélia da Silva.

So what was the problem? On February 14, 1927, another Manuel Rodrigues da Silva was Born in the neighboring state of Ceará (where we also have a mission). His dad's name was also Raimundo Rodrigues da Silva and his mother's name Maria Amélia da Silva. With the same birth date and dad and mother with the same name, the bank computer had every reason to believe that the living Manuel was an impositor.

After numerous visits to the INSS (social Security) office, officials became convinced they were facing a strange coincidence, and not a fraud. The case was brought to the attention of Cesar Diuna, head of the INSS office, who determined that Manuel immediately be paid up and continue receiving his payments.

Manuel received the equivalent of 600 US dollars in his account—a fortune. He decided to celebrate. He had a meal of *frango com farofa*—chicken fixed in manioc root that has been grated and toasted.

Blessed are the poor, for they are easily satisfied. ▲

A Story

By Elbert Hubbard

A Message to Garcia (1899)

In all this Cuban business there is one man stands out on the horizon of my memory like Mars at perihelion. When war broke out between Spain & the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain vastness of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail nor telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his cooperation, and quickly. What to do!

Some one said to the President, "There's a fellow by the name of Rowan who will find Garcia for you, if anybody can."

Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How "the fellow by the name of Rowan" took the letter, sealed it up in an oil-skin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, & in three weeks came out on the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia, are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail.

The point I wish to make is this: McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, "Where is he at?" By the Eternal! there is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college of the land. It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies: do the thing- "Carry a message to Garcia!"

General Garcia is dead now, but there are other Garcias.

No man, who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man—the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a thing and do it. Slip-shod assistance, foolish inattention, dowdy indifference, & half-hearted work seem the rule; and no man succeeds, unless by hook or crook, or threat, he forces or bribes other men to assist him; or mayhap, God in His goodness performs a miracle, & sends him an Angel of Light for an assistant. You, reader, put this matter to a test: You are sitting now in your office—six clerks are within call.

Summon any one and make this request: "Please look in the encyclopedia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Correggio".

Will the clerk quietly say, "Yes, sir," and go do the task?

On your life, he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye and ask one or more of the following questions:

Who was he?

Which encyclopedia?

Where is the encyclopedia?

Was I hired for that?

Don't you mean Bismarck?

What's the matter with Charlie doing it?

Is he dead?

Is there any hurry?

Shan't I bring you the book and let you look it up yourself?

What do you want to know for?

And I will lay you ten to one that after you have answered the questions, and explained how to find the information, and why you want it, the clerk will go off and get one of the other clerks to help him try to find Garcia—and then come back and tell you there is no such man. Of course I may lose my bet, but according to the Law of Average, I will not.

Now if you are wise you will not bother to explain to your "assistant" that Correggio is indexed under the C's, not in the K's, but you will smile sweetly and say, "Never mind," and go look it up yourself.

And this incapacity for independent action, this moral stupidity, this infirmity of the will, this unwillingness to cheerfully catch hold and lift, are the things that put pure Socialism so far into the future. If men will not act for themselves, what will they do when the benefit of their effort is for all? A first-mate with knotted club seems necessary; and the dread of getting "the bounce" Saturday night, holds many a worker to his place.

Advertise for a stenographer, and nine out of ten who apply, can neither spell nor punctuate—and do not think it necessary to.

Can such a one write a letter to Garcia?

"You see that bookkeeper," said the foreman to me in a large factory.

"Yes, what about him?"

"Well he's a fine accountant, but if I'd send him up town on an errand, he might accomplish the errand all right, and on the other hand, might stop at four saloons on the way, and when he got to Main Street, would forget what he had been sent for."

Can such a man be entrusted to carry a message to Garcia?

We have recently been hearing much maudlin sympathy expressed for the "downtrodden denizen of the sweat-shop" and the "homeless wanderer searching for honest employment," & with it all often go many hard words for the men in power.

Nothing is said about the employer who grows old before his time in a vain attempt to get frowsy ne'er-do-wells to do intelligent work; and his long patient striving with "help" that does nothing but loaf when his back is turned. In every store and factory there is a constant weeding-out process going on. The employer is constantly sending away "help" that have shown their incapacity to further the interests of the business, and others are being taken on. No matter how good times are, this sorting continues, only if times are hard and work is scarce, the sorting is done finer- but out and forever out, the incompetent and unworthy go.

It is the survival of the fittest. Self-interest prompts every employer to keep the best—those who can carry a message to Garcia.

I know one man of really brilliant parts who has not the ability to manage a business of his own, and yet who is absolutely worthless to any one else, because he carries with him constantly the insane suspicion that his employer is oppressing, or intending to oppress him. He cannot give orders; and he will not receive them. Should a message be given him to take to Garcia, his answer would probably be, "Take it yourself."

Tonight this man walks the streets looking for work, the wind whistling through his threadbare coat. No one who knows him dare employ him, for he is a regular fire-brand of discontent. He is impervious to reason, and the only thing that can impress him is the toe of a thick-soled No. 9 boot.

Of course I know that one so morally deformed is no less to be pitied than a physical cripple; but in our pitying, let us drop a tear, too, for the men who are striving to carry on a great enterprise, whose working hours are not limited by the whistle, and whose hair is fast turning white through the struggle to hold in line dowdy indifference, slip-shod imbecility, and the heartless ingratitude, which, but for their enterprise, would be both hungry & homeless.

Have I put the matter too strongly? Possibly I have; but when all the world has gone a-slumming I wish to speak a word of sympathy for the man who succeeds—the man who, against great odds has directed the efforts of others, and having succeeded, finds there's nothing in it: nothing but bare board and clothes.

I have carried a dinner pail & worked for day's wages, and I have also been an employer of labor, and I know there is something to be said on both sides. There is no excellence, per se, in poverty; rags are no recommendation; & all employers are not rapacious and high-handed, any more than all poor men are virtuous.

My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the "boss" is away, as well as when he is at home. And the man who, when given a letter for Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking any idiotic questions, and with no lurking intention of chucking it into the nearest sewer, or of doing aught else but deliver it, never gets "laid off," nor has to go on a strike for higher wages. Civilization is one long anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks shall be granted; his kind is so rare that no employer can afford to let him go. He is wanted in every city, town and village—in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such: he is needed, & needed badly—the man who can carry a message to Garcia. ▲

This & That

Some of the items in this little column may be more like history than news, but when the editor of BN doesn't get an issue out for three months, that's the kind of stuff that happens. Don't give up on him, by and by things will get better.

Harley & Adriana Penner from the Palmas, Tocantins Cong. had a baby, Dylan Dale, on Aug. 1.

Bira & Francine Bernardes, from the Rio Verdinho Cong., had a girl, Erica DeeAnn, on Aug. 16

The Monte Alegre School began a new school year on Aug. 22. The teachers are: Arlete Arantes, Denise Santos, Fyanna Kramer, Iara Vieira, Joetta Burns, Julia Kramer.

In the Von Den Stein School in Boa Esperança, Mato Grosso, the teachers are Jaqueline Cardoso and Rebecca Kramer.

In the Palmas, Tocantins School, the teacher is Carolyn Dirks.

The Rio Verdinho School began classes on Sept. 5. The teachers are Dáfanne Batista, Doeteke Jager and Flávio Oliveira. Doeteke is from the Netherlands and is a niece to Sipke Hiemster, who now lives in Georgia.

In a recent national referendum, Brazil voted strongly against prohibiting the sale of firearms, other than to law officers and a few restricted groups of citizens. The reasoning for the No vote was that if the government wants to curb criminality, it should take away the weapons from the bandidos and leave the common citizen alone. The American NRA would endorse that idea. Very enthusiastically.

Richard & Twila Mininger were here for a short visit.

Eighteen Colony members have applied for Brazilian citizenship, a process that will probably take from six months to a year. N American citizenship will be kept. Probably the greatest benefit will be psychological; it will clearly signal: We're here to stay. This is home. This little message will be very important to our Brazilian brethren.

A carry-in dinner was held at the Monte Alegre Cong. On Sept. 11 in honor of Paulo & Valéria Rufino and three daughters, from the mission congregation in Patos, Paraíba.

Revival meetings were held at the Boa Esperança Cong., with Ministers Arlo Hibner, Dean Mininger and Deacon Harold Holdeman; communion on the 13th.

"Seu" Geraldo, from the Rio Verde Congregation passed away on Sept. 16 and his funeral was on the 17th. We met Geraldo shortly after we arrived in Brazil in 1969. By the life he was living, it never once occurred to us he might someday be a brother in the faith. But it happened. In his old age he got converted. His faithfulness was a real encouragement to the Rio Verde Cong.

Arthur Martin & Phyllis Hibner got married on Sept. 18. Arthur is Daniel & Betty's son and Phyllis is Calvin & Donna Hibner's daughter. Both are from the Rio Verdinho Congregation. N American guests at the wedding: Carlin & Yvonne Wiggers, Crystal & Andrea Holdeman, Jamie Boehs.

Lincoln Koehn & Rosanne Yoder, got married on Oct. 2. Lincoln is Donavon & Twila's son, from New Plymouth, Idaho, and Rosanne is Paul & Rachel Yoder's daughter, from the Monte Alegre Cong. North American guests: the groom's family, includin g two brothers and a sister, Brian & Elaine Yoder and son, Marvin Yoder, Lynn & Verda Mae Koehn and Leann Koehn.

Alice Lacerda is doing housework for the missionaries, Sérgio & Katrina Alves, on the Acaraú Mission, so that Katrina can teach their children.

Frances Schultz, who is recuperating from a bad fall, was visited by her children, Paul & Carol Schultz, Daniel & Linda Holdeman and Glenn Schultz.

Daylight saving time began in a number of Brazilian states on Oct. 16. That means when it is midday in the CST zone, it is 4:00 p.m. in Brazil. This can be a real nuisance when telephone calls need to be made at night. Even worse is California, where the difference is six hours.

Publicadora Menonita is Brazil's miniature Gospel Publishers; it's where the Messenger of Truth, Sunday School quarterlies, Chalk Talk, books and other church literature are translated and printed. PM also operates a store that sells books and school supplies. Recently we had three visitors from the US: Daniel Huber, from Lamp & Light Publishers; Seth Bauman, from Mount Zion Literature; and Stanley Baer, a young man intensely interested in the spreading of the Gospel through literature. They met with our Publication Board here in Brazil. We felt the time spent together was very productive. Lamp & Light has a special thrust on Spanish literature, while Mount Zion Literature is directly involved in the distribution and marketing of sound Christian literature.

Menno Simons: "Confession" and The New Birth, is a booklet translated from the original tongue and edited by Irvin B Horst (and sold by Gospel Publishers).

We have translated this work into Portuguese and printed it in a hard cover version, identical to the English. Ready to go to the binder is a 352 page translated version of selected stories out of the Martyrs Mirror. We believe this will be one of our more essential and best selling books on the Brazilian market. We hope to have this book on sale before the end of the year.

Emma Burns is spending some time in the Tocantins settlement with her daughter, Mim, Mrs. Leo Dirks, and her family. She caught a ride with Jair & Connie Costa and managed to make her visit a surprise.

The first baptisms in the Palmas Congregation in Tocantins took place on Oct. 30.

The rainy season has finally begun. As usual, the first rains, as well as the last, often bring bad storms, high winds, lightening and torrential downpours. Farmers everywhere are out planting crops. Since most of the crops are now no-till, any short period of sunlight is used to put a few more seeds into the ground.

The low dollar/real exchange rate is creating a nightmare for farmers. The price of corn and soybeans is very low. The economical law of survival of the most efficient will become especially evident if the exchange rate continues low for another year or two. A poor crop could be the coup de grâce for some farmers. One positive effect of this situation is that it has brought land prices down to more realistic levels. For years they were inflated to where it was almost impossible for a young man to buy land and make payments.

BN no. 163 will have information on the attempt to start a new settlement in the northern state of Roraima, as well as a review of the alcohol fuel program that is helping alleviate the fuel crisis here in Brazil.