

The Army Room, with portraits of General Pershing and Marshal Foch

The Spirit of

By Charles

The facade of Pershing Hall, fronting on the Rue Pierre-Charron, in Paris

"**H**OW young they were, those soldiers." This remark of an ex-service man kept coming back to me as I wandered through Pershing Hall in Paris, just thirteen years after the guns had ceased their fire and the last great sacrifice had been made by the legions of our fighting men who went to France.

To appreciate Pershing Hall and what it stands for, one must sense the spirit of it and the spirit of the men behind it. To do this, you should go to Paris and if, perchance, you should be there on Armistice Day, so much the better.

I had just paid a reverential visit to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, under the Arc de Triomphe, where but the day before the Ritual of Remembrance had been held.

A cold and hazy afternoon; a fitful sunlight softened the outlines of the great arch and the buildings bordering the magnificent vista of the Champs Elysées as you looked toward the Place de la Concorde, a mile away. A beautiful scene—the old Republican Guard in shining helmets and breast plates—like knights of old—the waving battle flags—the minute of silent tribute, as President Doumer, who had given four sons to France, and all the leaders of the nation stood with bowed heads before the flower strewn tomb of him who personified the patriots of the Republic.

Then came the Legionnaires, a mere handful of men. But in their khaki uniforms and service caps, most of them with medals on their breasts, they were fitting representatives of America as they stood and paid our country's tribute to the dead.

And then the bugle call, and all was life

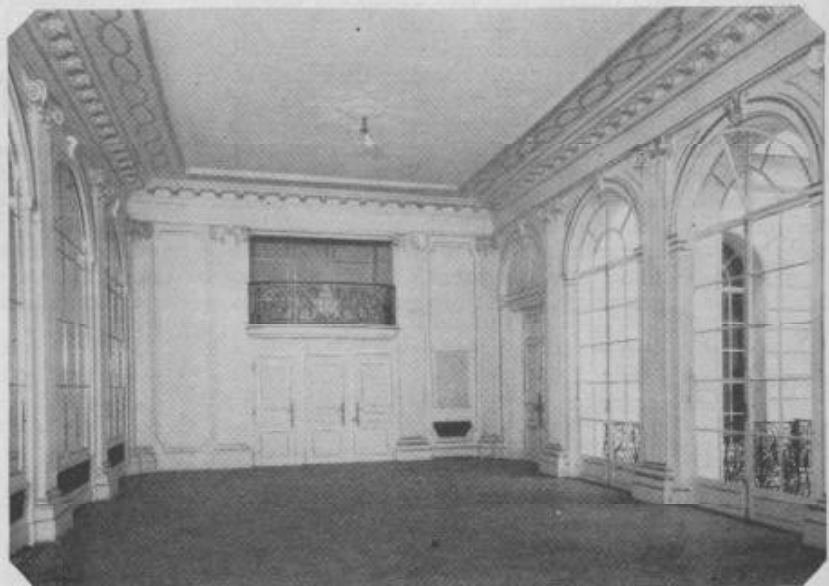
again. How young those soldiers were as with banners flying and drums and trumpets playing, they marched away.

So with just a little of this spirit in my soul, I strolled down the Champs Elysées until I came to Rue Pierre-Charron. Turning right, I walked toward the Seine, crossed Avenue François Premier and then a few steps more found me facing Pershing Hall. Four stories in height and abutting directly on the street like most fine houses in Paris, it gives little indication of its spaciousness. Over the main windows are

the carved heads of a sailor, a doughboy and an aviator. The beautiful grilled gateway of wrought iron and bronze has twin designs of a bronze helmet resting on the hilt of a long sword—the middle of the blade passing through the Legion seal surrounded by the gold stars, indicative of General Pershing's rank.

Directly above the gateway leading into Château-Thierry Courtyard is an American Eagle carved from native stone, its wide spread wings supporting a balcony from which extend two flagstaves, one carrying the Stars and Stripes and the other, the red, white and blue bars of France.

Entering the door on the right which leads through a passageway to the office of the building, I found two fine looking Americans discussing prices with a French tradesman. A typical argument—one which started, I believe, when the first



The beautiful Elks Memorial Hall, built with funds donated by the Order



American Legion representatives at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier



Pershing Hall

S. Hart

Mayor Latour of Paris; President Doumer of France; U. S. Ambassador Edge and Colonel Drake on the Château-Thierry balcony at the dedication ceremonies

doughboy landed on the dock at Brest, and has continued ever since. After some amicable arrangement had been reached and the Frenchman had departed with the usual air of having been "done in," I introduced myself to the two moving spirits of Pershing Hall—Colonel Francis Drake and Don MacAfee.

Colonel Drake, a tall and distinguished looking gentleman, has lived in Paris for many years. He was Chief of Staff for General Charles G. Dawes during the war and prior to that he was head of the Westinghouse interests in Europe. Colonel Drake is a Commander of the Legion of Honor and holds a Distinguished Service Medal from the United States Government. He is also First Commander of the Department of France of the American Legion.

Colonel Drake told me of the problems

Of the founding of Post Number One of the American Legion under difficulties; of Mr. Harjes of J. P. Morgan, Harjes & Company its first commander; of their desire to make it representative of the finest spirit and character of the entire Legion for France and all the world to see.

He counted his proudest moments when the Legion had come to Paris and by its conduct solidified our friendship with the French people. He spoke of the splendid help, encouragement and inspiration that had been given him to "carry on" by such

that had confronted them and still confront them in their splendid enterprise.

men as Past Grand Exalted Rulers Joseph T. Fanning, Ray Benjamin and Murray Hulbert, when they visited Paris during the inception and early stages of Pershing Hall, and of how the decision on the part of the Order of Elks to give \$30,000 toward the cause had been influential in helping them secure the cooperation of other affiliated war organizations.

He spoke of the constant encouragement of General Pershing, of former Ambassador Herrick, who named the building the "American Embassy of Good Will," and of Lawrence Benet, one of the best organized brains in Europe, the inventor of the Hotchkiss machine gun, who has given of his brilliant talents and of his valuable time from many enterprises to make Pershing Hall the American social center of Paris for every real American who comes to France.

He spoke of Sedley Peck, the leading Elk in Paris, who has just been made a member of the Legion of Honor, the man who took the "Marne Taxi" to Washington and, incidentally, drove it himself. Quite a character, this man Peck; I'm sorry I missed him. He wears a French beret and his long black whiskers out-French the most Mont Martrian Frenchman. Colonel Drake paid a fine tribute to the group of prominent men and women in America who have sponsored the movement and to Captain Philip B. Stapp, the representative in America who has done such splendid work in interesting American organizations in the project.

Don MacAfee, the manager of Pershing Hall, is a decided asset to the institution. A personality that makes you feel at ease the minute you enter the place.

When I had concluded my visit with Colonel Drake, Don took me on a thorough tour of Pershing Hall.

On the lower floor on the part facing Rue Pierre-Charron, is the War Museum. They have already made a splendid beginning

(Continued on page 54)



The Château-Thierry Courtyard and the arched windows of the Elks Memorial Hall

The Spirit of Pershing Hall

(Continued from page 31)

with their collection. The helmet and sword of General Dubail, captured German arms of every description—trench mortars, souvenirs of the Lafayette Escadrille, Sedley Peck's old Bleriot propeller and a fine collection of Benjamin Franklin relics, given through the courtesy of Bascom Slomp, the American Commissioner to the French Colonial Exposition just closed.

We next visited the Army Room, on the second floor, facing the street. This was apparently the former drawing room of the old mansion—high ceiled, beautifully decorated and containing oil portraits of General Pershing and Marshal Foch at one end, and enlarged photographs of the leading American generals on the walls at either side.

The photograph of this room gives a better conception of it than any word picture.

The Navy Room is equally impressive, containing oil paintings of the fleet, navy trophies and portraits of the leading naval commanders.

The University of Virginia Memorial Room is, at the present time, the only completely furnished and decorated room in the building. Mr. William A. Clark, Jr., to perpetuate the memory of the men of the University of Virginia, who served with the colors, has reproduced the Eighteenth Century Salon in the Carnavalet Museum in Paris. It is completely paneled in hand carved oak, with two beautiful murals—one of Monticello and the other of the University campus. The chairs of tooled leather contain the seals of the United States, of Virginia and of France. This room will be used as a headquarters for National Commanders of the Legion when in Paris.

The Herrick Salon is another beautiful room, as yet unfurnished, containing a fine oil portrait of Ambassador Herrick, with a bronze tablet in his memory, the room's sole decoration at the present time. There is a vacant panel on the opposite wall facing the Herrick picture which should be filled with a painting equal in beauty and dignity to that of the Ambassador's portrait. I suggested to Don MacAfee that

perhaps Colonel Lindbergh might be glad to put something there, if the matter were called to his attention.

Then the D. A. R. room, the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the K. of C., the Masonic, the Jewish Welfare and the Marine Corps rooms. Most of them, as yet, incomplete in furnishings, but all showing sufficient progress to indicate the interest of these organizations in having adequate representation in this national memorial.

It must be remembered that buildings of this character require years for completion. The Elks Memorial Building in Chicago was conceived in 1921 and completed in every detail a decade later. Memorials are not designed to be rushed to completion with a penalty forfeit for speed hanging over the heads of those who build them. Time is not the "essence of the contract," nor haste the main essential. Rather, memorials are like cathedrals. With some, the hands and hearts of three generations have been party to their building.

AND now to the new addition which contains the Elks Memorial Hall. If you will picture in your mind the letter **c** reversed, with the top and bottom very thick and the vertical line of the letter very thin, you will have a ground plan of Pershing Hall. The bottom of the letter is the old mansion fronting Rue Pierre-Charron; the space inside the letter the courtyard; the top of the letter representing the new building, and the vertical line the connecting portion containing the stairs and elevator.

On the top floor of the new wing there is a modern gymnasium, equipped with squash and handball courts, and the finest of gymnasium apparatus. This was sponsored by the Loyal Order of Moose.

Going from here to the second floor, which is really a floor and a half, we enter the Elks Memorial Hall through a beautiful arched doorway leading from the main stairway.

The Hall is designed in classic style—ivory

tinted and trimmed in gold. It is forty-nine feet in length, twenty-four feet wide, with eighteen foot Doric columns supporting the panelled ceiling.

On the left, as you face the far end from the entrance, are large arched French windows opening onto balconies which overlook the courtyard. On the opposite side are mirrored panels of similar design and size. The far end is symmetrically panelled for mural or tablet purposes.

At the end nearest the doorway is a balcony overlooking the hall—with a wrought iron railing containing a design of drums and trumpets in bronze. This balcony, large enough to accommodate a twelve-piece orchestra, is also completely fireproofed for motion picture apparatus. Under the balcony are three doors leading to an ante-room which, in turn, is connected by elevator and stairs with a modern kitchen on the ground floor. The kitchen pantry and serving quarters are equipped to cater to the needs of several hundred people.

This hall is also used by the Elks as their unofficial Lodge room, as well as for lectures, musical recitals and other social affairs.

THIS largest and undoubtedly most beautiful room in Pershing Hall represents the expenditure of thirty thousand dollars which was voted for this purpose by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Nevertheless, in its present state, there is not a single indication of Elk sponsorship in this hall, except in the small panel on the right of the doorway on which there hangs a linen banner inscribed with the usual dedicatory wording. This preliminary architect's sketch is being replaced by a handsome bronze tablet in duplicate of the temporary banner.

The three panels at the far end of the hall should have murals of a character in keeping with the spirit and principles of the Order—similar to the Blasfield paintings in the Elks Memorial Building. Other than this, the only possible place is the panel at the balcony end of the room which matches the panel on which the architect's sketch now hangs. This might fittingly be filled by a bronze tablet of a character similar to the dedicatory tablet treating of General Pershing's long standing membership in the Order of Elks and a quotation from his speech in reference to it.

I have excepted the ceiling, which is ornate and beautiful as it is, but which at a later date might be enriched with a mural in keeping with the others.

Leaving the Elks Memorial Hall and descending the stairway to the main floor, we enter the real club room of Pershing Hall. This room lies directly beneath the Elks room and beneath it, in the basement, the billiard and bowling alleys are located. This lounge is

the meeting place of the Legionnaires in Paris, the members of Post Number One, but all American ladies and gentlemen are welcome.

It has the usual grill room equipment and around its walls you may read the pictorial history of our Expeditionary Forces. The presiding genius of this friendly room is "Slim" Garner.

"Slim" is a man about town and probably knows more Americans in Paris than any other individual. There he stands at the head of the American Legion group, at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In another picture, behind the bar and tonight, as I write this, he is seconding Frankie Genaro in his comeback fight for the world's flyweight championship at the Palais des Sports. Tomorrow night, he may be leading a cotillion somewhere—who knows. They will have to go far to find a better figure of a man in cutaway or clawhammer. He is typical of the residential legionnaire in Paris. Friendly, helpful and independent.

Having finished our visit with "Slim," we walk through one of the French doors that open from the grill room into Château-Thierry courtyard.

The cornerstone of the new building, which can be seen from the courtyard, is the identical keystone of the old Château-Thierry bridge which spanned the Marne at the point where the American troops turned the tide of the German advance on Paris. Certainly a fitting cornerstone for Pershing Hall. This courtyard will be beautiful some day—a fountain, perhaps—a bed of poppies here and there, and climbing roses.

And then through the gateway of the naked sword and helmet and Pershing's stars to Rue Pierre-Charon. We've made the rounds of Pershing Hall, but no description of the building will convey the spirit of it.

Princeton University is placing a tablet on its walls in memory of Princeton men who fell in battle. There are Princeton Legionnaires in Paris who foregather in Pershing Hall with other Legionnaires of every school and college. Why not adopt "Auld Lang Syne," or the music of their college hymn to words of Pershing Hall? I'm quite sure that Princeton would not care in that far off land, even if the words were adapted by a legionnaire from Yale.

Tune every heart and every voice,
No matter what befall,
Let all with one accord rejoice,
In praise of Pershing Hall.

And when these walls in dust are laid,
And pass beyond recall,
Another throng shall breathe our song,
In praise of Pershing Hall.

Till then with joy our song we'll bring,
Come join us one and all,
Let Legionnaires unite and sing,
Long life to Pershing Hall!



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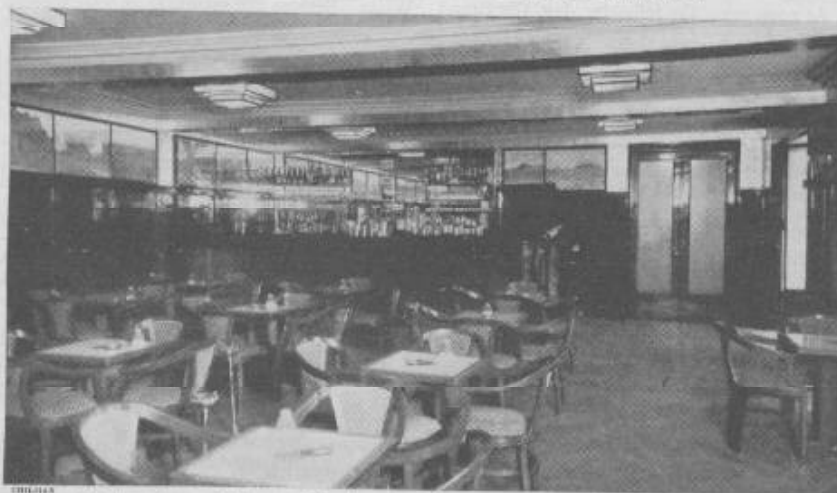
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