

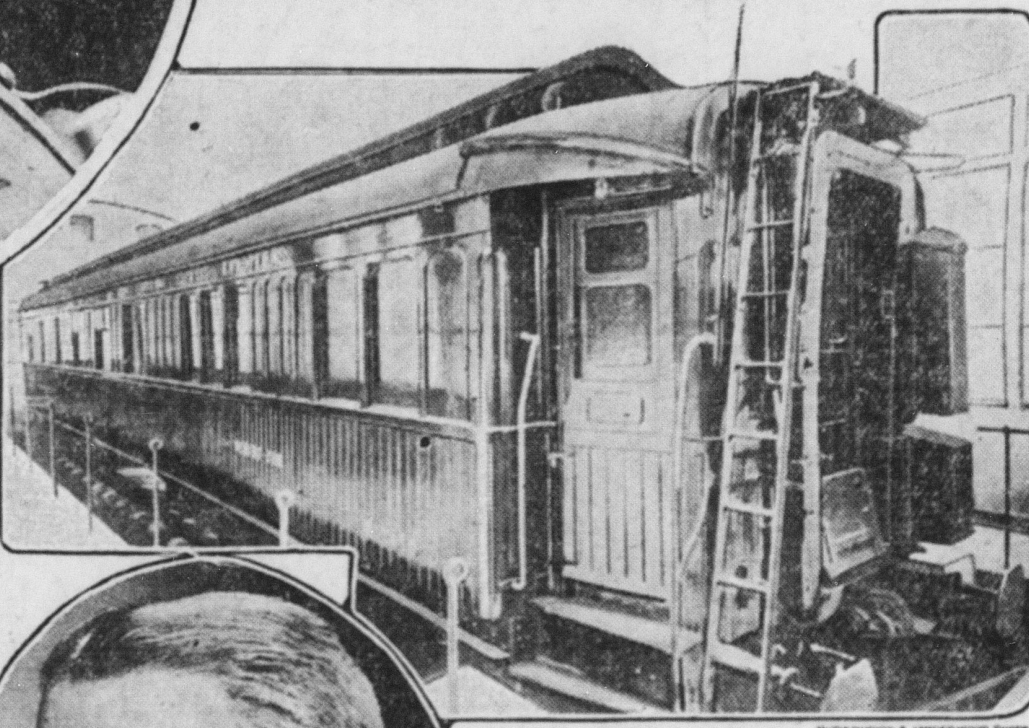
HERE HISTORY WAS MADE November 11, 1918



Marshal Ferdinand Foch



Where the Armistice Car Stood



The Armistice Car



Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss



Mathias Erzberger

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

THIS is the story of a dining car, the most famous dining car perhaps in all history. You will find it enshrined in a memorial building at the little town of Rethondes in Compiègne Forest in France. It does not have a name. It is only Dining Car No. 2419D of the Wagons-Lits company. But here history was made, for in this car on November 11, 1918, the terms of the Armistice, which ended the greatest war in all history, were signed.



Dining Car No. 2419D joined the French army in 1914 to be converted into a railway saloon of a senior French officer. It served throughout the war and in 1918 it was used by General Ferdinand Foch when he became Marshal Foch, commander in chief of the Allied armies. So it was into this car early in the morning of November 8, 1918, that the representatives of the German government came to listen to the terms of an Armistice, for which they had asked, which Foch would be willing to grant them.

Picture now the scene which took place on that morning. In the center of the car is a table. On one side stand French and British officers, the victors. On the other side stand German officers and civilians, the vanquished. General Weygand, Foch's chief of staff, was at his right and at his left were two English admirals, Hope and Wemyss. As they took their seats Mathias Erzberger, the head of the German delegation, was facing Admiral Hope. General Von Winterfeldt, the second German plenipotentiary, was facing Foch. A German marine, Captain Vanselow, was seated beside Von Winterfeldt and the German diplomat, Count Obendorff, sat beside Erzberger. Lieutenant Leperche seated himself at the end of the table and two of Foch's staff officers, Major Riedinger and Captain de Mierry were seated at two small tables at one side. Here is the story of what took place as told by Foch himself:

"When they entered my drawing room in the car, I saw them standing, pale and stiff. One of them, whom I guessed to be Mathias Erzberger, asked in a rather weak voice, permission to make the presentations.

"I simply said, 'Gentlemen, have you any documents? We shall examine their validity.' Then they showed me documents signed by Prince Max of Baden, which I deemed to be satisfactory. Then turning toward Erzberger, I said to him, 'What do you want?' He replied in a still troubled voice, 'We have come to receive the proposal of the Allied Powers in view of an armistice.' I cut in rather sharply (and this was the only time I was sharp), 'I have no proposal whatsoever to make.' The four Germans consulted one another with their eyes. 'Well,' said one of them, Count Obendorff, 'Tell us, Monsieur le Marechal, how you wish us to express ourselves. Our delegation is prepared to ask you the conditions of an armistice.' I insisted, 'Do you ask formally for an armistice?' 'Yes, we do.' 'Then, please sit down and I will read the conditions of the Allies to you.'

"I began to read the conditions of the armistice slowly. After each paragraph I stopped to permit the interpreter to translate. Then I looked at my interlocutors and followed the impression of their faces during the translation.

Gradually I saw those faces change. Winterfeldt especially was very pale. I even think that he wept. When I had finished reading I simply declared, 'Gentlemen, I leave this text with you, you have seventy-two hours to reply to it. Meanwhile, you may present observations of details to me.'

"Then Erzberger became pathetic. 'For God's sake, Monsieur le Marechal,' he said, 'do not wait for those seventy-two hours. Stop the hostilities this very day. Our armies are a prey to anarchy. Bolshevism threatens them, and that Bolshevism may gain ground over the whole of Germany and threaten France herself.' I replied: 'I do not know in what state your armies are; I only know in what situation mine are. Not only can I not stop the offensive, but I am giving orders to continue it, with redoubled energy.'

"Winterfeldt intervened in his turn: 'Monsieur le Marechal, it will be necessary for our staffs to consult each other and to discuss together the whole of the details of execution. How will they be able to do so if the hostilities be continued? I beg of you, for technical reasons, to stop the hostilities.' Again I retorted: 'The technical discussions can just as well take place in seventy-two hours. Until then the offensive will continue.' This time it was finished. The four plenipotentiaries rose and withdrew."

During the next two days, November 9 and 10, Foch slept but little. He was certain that the Germans would accept his terms but in the meantime wireless messages received by the Eiffel Tower told of the outbreak of a revolution in Berlin so he did not know what government these men represented nor how much power they now had. On the evening of November 10 the German plenipotentiaries came back to request that, on account of the troubled state of affairs in Germany, the army be permitted to retain a greater number of machine guns for the purpose of maintaining order. Foch granted them this and a little after five o'clock on the morning of November 11 they signed the Armistice.

Of the subsequent history of this famous dining car a recent visitor to Compiègne writes in the New York Times as follows:

"What happened to Dining Car 2419D after that eventful night does not seem clear. It appears eventually to have been demobilized but not to have returned to civilian life. A small plate beneath the arms on one side of it announces that it was given by the Wagons-Lits company, May 1, 1921, and it was presumably about that time that it turned up in the Court of Honor at Invalides in Paris where, with all its war medals upon it, it took its place with the other fanfaronade heroes of such a war as the first Napoleon never dreamed of. Its medals are a little difficult to see from the outside, for they are high up at both ends of the main saloon inside, in that strip which in the common herd of dining cars is occupied by advertisements of Scotch whiskeys, Riviera hotels and Atlantic steamship lines. They take the form of two small red plaques adorned with cream-colored flags, laurel wreaths and figures of Wagons-Lits

angels or of Mme. la Republique, it is difficult to say which, for the light is not too good. One plaque bears an inscription which begins, 'In this car there was signed at Francport near Compiègne on November 11, 1918, at five o'clock the Armistice imposed on the Germans by the victories of the Allied Armies, and continues with the names of the allied and German signatories. At the opposite end of the saloon the other plaque bears the names of the battles which the old dining car attended: 'The Marne 1914, the Yser 1915, Verdun 1916, the Somme 1916, the Battle of France 1918.'

"Paris, however, is fifty miles from Compiègne. When the old car took its place with the other immortals in the Invalides, there was nothing at the site in the forest except two boards nailed to trees marking the positions of the two trains. Le Matin of Paris was the first to move for a permanent monument, choosing a spot beside the Compiègne-Francport road 200 yards away, presumably on the assumption that nobody would ever leave the road and enter the forest to reach the actual site. Its monument is a striking piece of work, a golden sword with its point resting on a fallen German eagle, but although it bears the Armistice date there is a stronger flavor of Alsace-Lorraine in its inscription than of the Armistice.

"The next step was taken by Fournier Sarloveze, deputy from the department of the Oise and mayor of Compiègne. This was directed to the raising of a monument at the actual site which, although it is five miles from the town, is just within the municipal boundary. The monument which resulted was dedicated on Armistice day, 1922, in the presence of President Millerand and an impressive assembly of marshals, admirals, ambassadors, troops and townsfolk. It consists of a broad boulevard 200 yards long which has been carried into the forest from the main road, and at the end of which is a clearing 100 yards in diameter with a circular road surrounding the garden circle of the actual site. The railway tracks from Rethondes station have been torn up elsewhere in this end of the forest but in the clearing they remain. Between the rails of each track slabs of granite mark the positions which the two trains occupied.

"Of late years the old dining car had been showing the effect of the weather to which its outdoor position at the Invalides has exposed it. Its return to the site in the forest had been contemplated for some time, but the problem of the cost was not solved until A. H. Fleming of Pasadena, after consulting M. Sarloveze at Compiègne, offered 150,000 francs (say \$3,000) for the construction of a suitable building at the site. Accordingly in April, 1923, the old car was moved on temporary rails to the outer court of the Invalides, where it was taken off its trucks and placed on two-wheeled floats to be towed to the Wagons-Lits repair shops for a coat of paint and a general sprucing up before starting on its last voyage. As soon as the builders were ready for it at the site, it was hauled back to Rethondes station and a line of tracks into the forest was especially laid for it. It was pushed carefully into its new home at the edge of the clearing and is now permanently built in. And there, with an ex-pollu who limps when he walks in charge of it, you will find it today, roped off, smelling of fresh paint, and at the first glance looking like—well, looking about like a dining car.

"It is disconcerting to discover that the table on which the Armistice was signed was so unpretentious a table and that the chairs in which the signatories sat, Von Winterfeldt opposite Foch, Erzberger opposite Wemyss, were ordinary Wagons-Lits dining car chairs. It is difficult to fit the play to its banal theater, to connect this culminating episode of the greatest of all wars, one of the supreme moments in history, with the old dining car in which it transpired. Such, however, is the immortality of Dining Car No. 2419D."

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Current Wit and Humor



WASN'T INCLUDED

The bus stopped and a crowd of holiday makers scrambled to enter it. "Will the gentlemen please move up a little to allow more room?" asked the conductor as politely as possible. "No, I won't," growled the snappy individual.

The conductor shrugged his shoulders. "All right, you needn't," he said. "I only asked the gentlemen."

INSURANCE TOO BIG



Jones—"What broke Smith down so and caused his death?" Williams—"The heavy life insurance he carried."

Addendum

It was Mr. Wilson who reported the case of the horse-racing hardware merchant whom he found in his store leaning over a form sheet.

"Have you any calipers?" inquired Mr. Wilson. "No, only trotters," said the hardware man.—Chicago News.

Crusty

"How did you find your uncle, John?"

"In apple pie order."

"How is that?"

"Crusty."—Vancouver Province.

No Encouragement

"Perhaps my paintings will sell for thousands of dollars after I am dead," said the artist.

"Yes," replied the picture dealer; "but you look fearfully healthy."

Worse and Worse

"Why so depressed, old man?"

"The horrible cost of living; constant bills for materials, paint and shingling."

"What for your house?"

"No; for my daughters."

In Reduced Circumstances

"Mummy, daddy is not so rich as we are, is he?"

"Why do you think that?"

"He doesn't wear such nice clothes and has to work when we go motor-ing."

The Reason

Author—Going already? But there are two more acts.

Critic—That is why.—Das Interessante Blatt (Vienna).

Buddies

First Henpeck—Don't tell my wife I let you borrow a dollar.

Second Sap—I won't if you don't tell my wife I had a dollar.

GREAT CULTURE



First Doll—"He's a big brute. You told me he was a man of great culture." Second Doll—"So he is—physical culture, you know."

Mother Knows

Willie—Say, mom, where is the storm center in our part of the country?

Mother—Why, right here in the home—here comes your father now, my son.—New Bedford Standard.

Getting Ready

Daddy—Mildred, has Gordon proposed yet?

Mildred—Not yet, daddy dear, but he has a folder on Niagara falls.—Border Cities Star.

Hard to Tell

Auntie—Say, Willie, sometimes I don't believe you know on which side your bread is buttered.

Willie—Yeah; sometimes I don't when you butter it, auntie.—New Bedford Standard.

Fortune Hunter

Slim—They say people with opposite characteristics make the happiest marriage.

Boob—Yes, that's why I'm looking for a girl with money.



Too Much ACID

MANY people, two hours after eating, suffer indigestion as they call it. It is usually excess acid. Correct it with an alkali. The best way, the quick, harmless and efficient way, is Phillips' Milk of Magnesia. It has remained for 50 years the standard with physicians. One spoonful in water neutralizes many times its volume in stomach acids, and at once. The symptoms disappear in five minutes.

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The ideal dentifrice for clean teeth and healthy gums is Phillips' Dental Magnesia tooth-paste.

Radio's Effect on Language

Radio has aroused new interest in correct speech and pronunciation. No definite steps have been taken in the United States as yet to standardize English speech as used over the radio, but the British Broadcasting company of England has established a single-standard of radio English by organizing an advisory committee to compose a style sheet for radio announcers. According to David Saranoff, radio has added about 5,000 new words to the English language.

Police Shoot at Movies

Police of Berlin are being taught to shoot at running objects by pictures thrown on the screen by a motion picture projector. The scenes show humans and animals racing across a small screen, and to hit them requires skill. The sharpshooters are required to make good scores at this practice work before they can join the regular squad.

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A New Wrinkle

"So you didn't sell that man a car?" inquired the boss peevishly. "How could I?" argued the star salesman. "He wanted a car with a door that slammed shut without making a lot of noise!"

Because there are ugly things in this world, is no reason why we want to hear about them in every chapter. Novelists, take notice.

Your principles are something you have to keep bolstering and bulwarking all the time.



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