
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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Speech before Mass Meeting of American Legion
held in Tribute to King Albert of Belgium at
Madison Square Garden, New York City, Oct. 4, 1919.

RLJ

From Speech of
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Assistant Secretary of the Navy
before American Legion, Mass. District,
Madison Square Garden, Oct. 4.

It is particularly noteworthy
that the keynote of this great
gathering is its fellowship of
common service. A King-General,
a Prince-Infantryman, Ambassadors,
civilians, officers, ^{privates} and
Sergeants - all assembled in
indication and proof that the
great ideals of civilization
which were threatened by
arms have been saved by
arms. Only a short year
has passed since I was

Privileged to visit the Belgian front and to meet their inspiring General - a man who from the day of taking that great determination on August 1 1914 had clung to the narrow strip of Belgium with a tenacity which gave to all the allies added strength in the great drive of restoration.

It is an interesting fact that during most of the war it was the American Navy and not our Army forces which operated on the Belgian front. My mission in July 1918 was to inspect the American Naval Aviation groups which had been

established near Calais and Dunkirk as a part of the American Northern Bombing Squadron to operate against the German submarine bases in Zeebrugge and Ostend and Bruges; and it was then that the King of the Belgians pointed out to me the difference between the German methods of waging war and ours.

When German planes came over the Belgian lines they proceeded to bombard their bombs over anything that looked like a town or a building. Dunkirk, where one of our sea plane stations was located contained important military objectives.

railroads, yards, warehouses,
 piers, artillery positions. Yet
 these were scarcely touched by
 enemy bombs, while the
 town itself, the houses and
 shops and churches were
 literally wrecked. Over across
 the German lines were their
 submarine bases and big
 gun emplacements. Night after
 night, American and Belgian
 & British planes flew over and
 dropped their bombs: that
 the work was largely success-
 ful is shown by the fact
 that the German Navy had
 practically abandoned sub-
 marine operations out of
 Zeebrugge and Ostend long.

before they were driven out
 in the final advance. Yet
 these cities stand today
 almost intact, showing few
 effects of bombs gone astray.
 I think we can always be
 thankful that the allies did
 not ever intentionally conduct
 war against women and children.

The Navy has been
 the silent service, silent
 from military necessity,
 silent too partly because
 to its lot fell little of the
 spectacular actual fighting
 during the war. But though
 it expanded only to 500,000
 men it took on probably
 more diverse kinds of duties

that ^{has} any other branch of the
 government. ~~It was~~ The
 qualities of imagination and
 progress ~~which~~ made our naval
 success possible. I think I
 am violating no secret in
 saying that the convoy system
 was an American suggestion.
 I retired the increasing submarine
 bases. It was because of
 the insistence of the American
 Navy that the great North Sea
 mine barrier was created. It
 was our initiation which
 developed the listening devices
 of the submarine chasers. In
 the creation of these, in the
 building up of the great
 system of sea plane stations
 on the French, English and Dutch

7

Coasts, in our operations
in the Azores, at Gibraltar
in the Adriatic, in our additions
of dreadnaughts to the British
fleet that we should
that the American job is
an allround handy man
who does what he sets out
to do. It was because
of this progressiveness that
the submarine menace was
almost eliminated; that the
Navy took the Army over
and now has brought them
back. But through it all
there has been a comradeship
between the two services
which has smoothed out
difficulties, entered upon

and brought results. After
all we were after results.

That comradeship
between the services will grow
greater as the years go by.
I like to think that the 5,000,000
youngsters who fought this
war in Army Navy and
Marine Corps will form the
backbone of the Nation in
the years to come. If you
are you will keep on
getting results. The formation
of the American Legion is
the first logical step. I
want to see every doughboy,
every blue jacket, every
officer in this most
democratically republican

and brought results. After
all we were after results.

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officer in this most
democratically republican

of organizations.

We of the service have learned what service means. We know, I hope, that the country needs us in times of peace as well as in times of war. On our part we are ready to give that service.

The King of the Belgians is today typical of what we all are striving for. He has not at the end of all those years of war sat back and sought his rest and quiet.

His work, the task in which he has his heart, to which he has consecrated his life continues without pause.

Belgium is the remade -

remade not on the old basis
merely, but a better Belgium,
a happier Belgium, an even
nobler Belgium.

So we also have our
task. You have been told
that the American Legion is
not political. That is true
of it as an organization.

But I cannot too sincerely
hope that the millions
of individuals who will
make up the Legion will
sell in politics. And
speaking in politics I mean
that I hope every individual
one of you will more than
ever before become an
active participant in

the life and affairs of the
greatest organization on
earth, the only "our big
union" that really matters
to us, the United States of
America. If you men and
women who have helped to
win the war will show that
same fine spirit of service
in the difficult days of
peace, we can all look
forward to a greater
country, better to live in
and work in, more to take
pride in during the years
to come.

TELEGRAPH
ROUGHKEEPER

HYDE PARK
ON THE HUDSON

Keynote - Fellowship of common service
King. General - assembled in great great masses.

1 Short year - Belgium front - King -

Aug. 1 1914 - clung to narrow strips.

Interesting fact - most of war Navy not using.

My mission to inspect.

Then King pointed out D. M.

Dunkirk - submarines after abandoned.

Navy is/ent service.

Though expanded only 10 fold - took on
more diverse duties & activities.

Imagination & ingenuity made
naval success possible

TELEGRAPH
POUGHKEEPSIE

HYDE PARK
ON THE HUDSON

Violating no confidence

Convoy system

North Sea Barrier

Listening Devices.

Seaplane stations

Figures, Sub. Adriatic

Dreadnaughts.

Will show Am. Sub all round handy

Because of this progressiveness
Sub. success.

Treaty being over - Result.

Concurrence R. & N.

Final results - After results.

TELEGRAPH
POUGHKEEPSIE

HYDE PARK
ON THE HUDSON

Comradships will grow -
5,000,000 - Backbone of Nation

Formation of Legion first step
Want to every man in it
Most Dem. Republ. of Orgon.

Know what service means.
Need it in peace as in war

Bring of Belgians Typifiers must service
Work to continue - Build up Belgium.

We too have our task.
Rec. Legion not political
Take part in life a affairs - "our big Union".
If you help.

TELEGRAPHY
POUGHKEEPSIE

HYDE PARK
ON THE HUDSON

Pat. J. Cavanagh
RR1 W. 115.

11 years in service
Discharged Chelsea Hosp
Lm of duty - Disab.

Is he entitled to
Service Pension

+ Federal Vocational
Training pay while
he is taking training

He is now taking it
at Parkland Com. School,