THE CONQUEST OF YELLOW FEVER

by Irwin R. Abraham

During the years 1900 - 1901 volunteers were waging a war against the dread yellow fever. Major Walter Reed and his staff succeeded in the defeat of the disease, making it possible to build the Panama Canal, and most important ridding the world of this menace. The volunteers were honored with gold medals and pensions voted by Congress in 1929.

However, two volunteers of the yellow fever commission were overlooked by the Congress. They were, Gustaf E. Lambert, male Army nurse; and Dr. Roger Post Ames, Mr. Lambert's superior officer. For 27 years, Gust Lambert fought to achieve honor for himself and Dr. Ames, now deceased. Rep. O'Hara, (D., Ill.) fostered the successful legislation after 11 former attempts to honor Mr. Lambert had failed. President Eisenhower signed the bill in July, 1956, entitling Mr. Lambert to the gold medal and the $200 monthly pension for life.

A short time later, a bugle sounded in the Chicago city council chambers signaling the fulfillment of a dream cherished more than 25 years. As the 200 guests looked on, Gust Lambert was saluted by fighting men of World War I and II and also the bloody Korean conflict. He received his gold medal for his courage against an unseen enemy as deadly in its day as any that his countrymen have ever faced. Rep. O'Hara picked up the gleaming 10 ounce gold medal, turned to Mr. Lambert and said, "I present to you, by mandate of the Congress of the United States, and by order of the President of the United States, this medal with your name on it". Looking proudly at his medal, Mr. Lambert said he was happy beyond words, and that he hoped to continue fighting for another medal, this one for Dr. Ames.
In 1952, Mr. Lambert returned to Cuba at the bidding of the Cuban government. He was awarded the "Order of Carlos Finlay" of Cuba and also saw his name inscribed on a monument in honor of the volunteers of the conquest of yellow fever which had been erected at the site of the experiment. Only one other man, beside Mr. Lambert, remains of the suicide squad. Mr. James L. Hanberry of Orangeburg, South Carolina, is the last living human guinea pig of the great conquest of the dread yellow fever. On 12 December 1957, Mr. Hanberry celebrated his 82nd birthday.

The "Order of Carlos Finlay" was founded to honor Dr. Carlos Finlay in 1928. Dr. Finlay experimented with his yellow fever serum for 20 years before Major Reed tried it on human volunteers, and he had never experimented with a human being, but rather, tried it on almost every type of four legged animal. Major Walter Reed then proved Dr. Finlay's theory about his serum and a cure for yellow fever became a reality. In South America and especially in Cuba, Dr. Finlay will long be remembered. On the anniversary of Dr. Finlay's birthday on 3 December, memorial services are held at his grave, the memorial monument, and at the Cuban Health Palace. Many hundreds of people from the countries of South America, the West Indies, and from Mexico come yearly to honor this great man.
SERVIAN WAR MEDAL FOR THE WAR, 1876 - 1878

by Frederic von Allendorfer

In 1875 an uprising against Turkish rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina, over tax gathering roused their neighborly Servians to fighting fury. The dominant political power of Austria held the Servian government in check for awhile but countless Servian “volunteers” crossed the frontier at the Drina river to fight against the Turks. In July, 1876 both Servia and Montenegro declared war against Turkey. After a few minor skirmishes an armistice was effected 1 October 1876 culminating with peace 1 March 1877. On 24 April 1877 Russia with 60,000 Roumanian troops as allies declared war on Turkey.

It was the fall of the Turkish forces at Plevna on 9 December 1877 that gave the necessary impetus to the Servian people to renew the war with Turkey. Prince Milan on 15 December 1877, issued a proclamation of war against Turkey. Servian troops immediately crossed the frontier into the Turkish Empire at Pirot and by 16 December were in striking distance of Kossovo. After eight days of fighting, Ak-Palanka was captured by the Servians, and on the same day Nissa was bombarded by the Servians and fell to them by 11 January 1878. The spoils of war in this capture were, 8,000 Turkish prisoners, 90 pieces of artillery and 12,000 rifles. Later when the Serbs captured Kerehumli they found 2 officers and 24 rank and file impaled.

War finally terminated on 13 July 1878 with the Peace of St. Stefano in which Servia, Roumania, and Montenegro were declared independent.

The medal given to the Servian troops for the various campaigns against the Turks is as follows: