

they were exhibited in Carl's big display windows on Automobile Row. From there they were taken to Gasoline Alley to be stripped, studied and tested by Speedway mechanics and racers. For months before the great victory celebration, Gasoline Alley probed the mechanism of the Peugeot in an attempt to discover the reason for France's consistent victories over American-made cars.

The war had interrupted the speed contest, but it had not stopped the mechanical growth of Speedway. Men of mechanical genius that had developed in war crowded Gasoline Alley now, Monkey-wrench mechanic, designer, engineer, riding mechanic and racer were tinkering and experimenting and testing cars on Speedway determined to win, this Memorial Day, for America.

This reopening would be the supreme realization of Carl's dream of Speedway as a proving ground where American designers and engineers could test their machines.

There were difficulties—difficulties that to anyone but Carl would have seemed insurmountable obstacles. The thousands who swarmed Speedway never knew of the hardships that preceded the drama of the day itself. Carl advertised the reopening as a "Memorial Day honoring victory." Two days before the race a newspaper editorial charged that Carl Fisher's Speedway Day would be "the rank desecration of a national holiday."

Protests reached the National Guard, and Carl was informed that his famed "Speedway Army" would not be permitted to wear the government uniforms.

Only thirty-six hours remained to Carl. He had a tailor measure every guardsman, and the longest telegram ever to leave Indianapolis, giving each man's measurement, was rushed to an eastern military outfitter. The new uniforms arrived at Speedway twenty minutes before the guards were due to take up their positions around the track.

The evening before the race, Carl drove to the track with George Bumbaugh to check the balloons for the "national balloon race," a mammoth attraction planned to make the day even more spectacular. They discovered that through some oversight

the gas pipes had not been laid from Indianapolis to Speedway! There was no way of inflating the balloons.

Darkness came on before Carl was able to get in touch with the gas company. They could not provide him with enough workmen to lay the pipes. Carl drove through Indianapolis, recruited an army of men willing to dig trenches, and personally bossed the job of laying a fifteen-mile pipe line in a single night.

No vestige of these difficulties was revealed the next morning to the hundred thousand people who were in their Speedway seats an hour ahead of racing time. On the field were massed one hundred bands, each with different gorgeous uniforms, each with a dazzling drum major and with what I have been told were the first high-stepping, short-skirted majorettes.

When George Bumbaugh's brilliant balloons rose from the track, hundreds wept, for the beauty and pageantry seemed more wonderful than ever after the long gray monotone of war. We wept, too, as the war songs were played by those hundred bands marching down the track—"K-K-K-Katie," "Over There" and "There's a Long, Long Trail."

A long trail, yes! I looked back to a German street band playing on a rainy morning; to long, dusty drives with Carl in a roadless America that was to us then a new and enchanted world. Through the trumpeting of the war songs other words came back: "You can ride as far as you like with me, in my merry Oldsmobile."

We had ridden far together, Carl and I. We had everything we wanted—anything two persons could ask of life and one another. I thought this, sitting among my women guests, in my own grandstand, not wise enough to be humble in my gratefulness. Wise enough, however, so that tears fell to the war songs and the blazing bands and the great balloons drifting and vanishing like brightly colored worlds along the sky.

Beth Kline with his many-colored signal flags was on the bridge, and the bombs, Carl's latest innovation as time signals, went up every five seconds before the race began to fill the air with sound and fluttering American flags. I saw Carl hurdle onto the cleared track as starter and pacemaker, in his dazzling white