

A SPECIAL ISSUE OF NANTESENSE

In Commemoration of the Centenary of the U.S. Entry into WWI

Ralph Emerson Linn

Private, 32nd Division, A.E.F.

Lambert Blink

Private, 85th Division, A.E.F.

**Bailey Lancelot
McCreery**

Private, 7th Battalion, C.E.F.

John W. Hunt

Major, 362nd Field Hospital,
91st Division, A.E.F.

Frank Lyman Rafferty

Sergeant, 13th Engineers
(Railway), A.E.F.

Robert McCreery

Sergeant, 1st Canadian
Divisional Supply Column
(Motor Transport), C.E.F.

**Wilfred Lawrence
McCreery**

Private, No. 1 Canadian
Veterinary Hospital, C.E.F.

Adelbert Waite

Private, Third Field Battalion,
Army Signal Corps, A.E.F.



Major Hunt's unit, 91st Division, 362nd Infantry, starting hike to zone of action

North Americans at War

On April 6, 1917, the United States entered WWI. Europe had been at war for 3 years already. Fighting with Great Britain were its dominions and colonies, including Canada, as well as tens of thousands of American volunteers, many of whom had crossed the border into Canada in order to enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (C.E.F.). An additional 6,000 Americans had volunteered in French units. However, isolationist sentiment had been strong in the United States. President Woodrow Wilson won re-election in 1916 with the slogan "He Kept Us out of War." But by early 1917 the U.S. could no longer remain neutral and the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) set sail for France.

Some volunteered; some were drafted. Some were killed; some wounded. Some saved papers and photographs and went to reunions; others never talked about their experiences.

Here we follow the stories of men serving in the infantry, in field hospitals and veterinary hospitals, and moving supplies, guns, and wounded by train and truck, remembered by family.

LETTERS DEPICT LIFE IN FRANCE

Boys in U. S. Expeditionary Forces
Having Wonderful Experiences.

One Visits Paris and the Other Tells
of French Rural Scenes.

The following letter was recently received by W. H. Rafferty in this city from his son, Sergeant Frank L. Rafferty, who has been serving with the U. S. expeditionary forces in France:

A. E. P. Somewhere in France,
November 29, 1917.

Dear Papa and All:

Have just finished our splendid Thanksgiving dinner, so shall now go at my writing with vim. Returned from Paris yesterday, had a three days' permission there and certainly had some time. Spent many francs but was sure worth it. It was my first leave since we landed, consequently was some treat.

Shall not attempt to write of all wonderful sights as it would take all night. Took in all the sights possible in the short time allowed.

Arrived in Paris at 7 a. m. and after breakfast registered in at headquarters. Every soldier going to Paris must register within twenty-four hours after his leave begins. In case of a failure to register within that time a provost is soon sent looking for you.

The first day, Sunday, was spent in sight-seeing and the sights were something I wouldn't have missed for anything. Have sent you a souvenir book of photographs which will give you some idea of what I saw. They were sights one can hardly explain in a few words.

The next day was spent in shopping and visiting the large department stores. Sent one small package to you from there. Hope you receive it O. K. You should have seen us (fellow by name of Dotty and myself) trying to shop without an interpreter.

The evenings were taken up mingling with crowd on the Boulevard and attending theatres. The Paris people are sure anxious to do any favor possible for Americans. All in all had a grand time.

Left there at noon, arriving at camp at 9 a. m. Expected mail upon return but was disappointed. Mail should be coming in large amounts before long.

Harry has not taken trip as yet, but expects to soon. Wish we could have taken it together but might next time.

Our first American engine arrived last Saturday and six arrived since. They sure are dandies, just like L2 on Milwaukee superheaters, U. S. A. on the tank and painted battleship color. They sure drag the wagons up the hills. I had the eight spot in this trip. Shall write again in a day or two. Beaucoup Aimer,
Frank.



*Frank L. Rafferty, Sgt
13th Engineers(Railway)
(remembered by Cynthia Palmer,
granddaughter)*

Sgt Rafferty was responsible for transporting ammunition and guns by train to the front lines, much of which arrived in France in St. Nazaire, near Nantes. The scene is described by someone in the 132nd Field Hospital: "The docks were improved and enlarged to accommodate the immense influx of supplies, and were a busy place indeed. Great ships lay two abreast, often to the number of twenty or more, in the huge discharging basins with winches singing, with tackle creaking, with huge booms and derricks swinging to and fro, with giant cranes, some of them among the largest in the world, tossing locomotives or 90-ton guns about as if they were bits of lath, with slings descending empty and limp into the holds, to come forth swollen to bursting and momentarily deposit their loads upon the wide quays where ever hungry strings of empty cars were pushed forward and filled and passed on to the engines that stood steaming and ready for the long journey to the front or to the huge yards and warehouses at Montoir, just across the Loire River from St. Nazaire, and this working of cargo went forward night and day, rain or shine, with black men, white men, all sorts of men that could handle a winch or propel a truck or just plain stevedore, sweating together up on the job."



USS Virginian in St Nazaire, 1919, ready to transport Americans home, including John Hunt

Form 1 **284** **REGISTRATION CARD** No. 111

1 Name in full Ralph Emerson Linn Age in yrs 21
(Given name) (Family name)

2 Home address Three Forks Montana
(No.) (Street) (City) (State)

3 Date of birth December 21 1895
(Month) (Day) (Year)

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? natural-born citizen

5 Where were you born? Sumner, Iowa U.S.A.
(Town) (County) (State) (Nation)

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?

7 What is your present occupation, occupation, or office? student 28

8 Where employed? Oregon Agricultural College
Corvallis Ore

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)? no

10 Married or single (which)? single Race (specify which)? Caucasian

11 What military service have you had? Rank _____; branch _____; years _____; Nation or State _____

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

ca Ralph Emerson Linn
(Signature or mark)

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was the largest operation undertaken by the American Expeditionary Force in WWI, and also the deadliest campaign in American history. Ralph Linn and Lambert Blink were fighting in the infantry and John Hunt was operating on the wounded in a field hospital right behind the front lines.

In the fall of 1917 Ralph Emerson Linn, the eldest of seven children, was a student at Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University). He was drafted and was sent to Camp Lewis in Washington. The family was living in Montana by then and was able to see Ralph as his troop train went through Logan, MT. Because he had had ROTC training in college, he was sent overseas quickly in December 1917. His first letter home, dated December 24, 1917, read in part: "We arrived last night after our voyage across the Atlantic. . . . I wasn't sea sick at all. . . . Yesterday, we had a turkey dinner, so we had a taste of Christmas. . . . I can't tell you much information, making it hard to write a letter. Don't worry about me."

Letters home followed over the next nine and a half months. Every letter was censored, and many looked like a fringe. Ralph often mentioned mud, cold, and long days. But he was not injured until the day of his death, October 13, 1918. He was serving as a First Class Private in the 32nd Division, on the front lines of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, near Romagne. He was 22 years old.

As told by Marilyn Severson, niece

25-1-11-A
REGISTRAR'S REPORT

1 Tell, medium, or short (specify which)? tall Stature, medium, or great (which)? medium

2 Color of eyes? blue Color of hair? dark brown Build? no

3 Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? no

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

S. D. Walcott
(Signature of registrar)

Precinct 32

City or County Calhoun

State Montana June 5, 1917
(Date of registration)

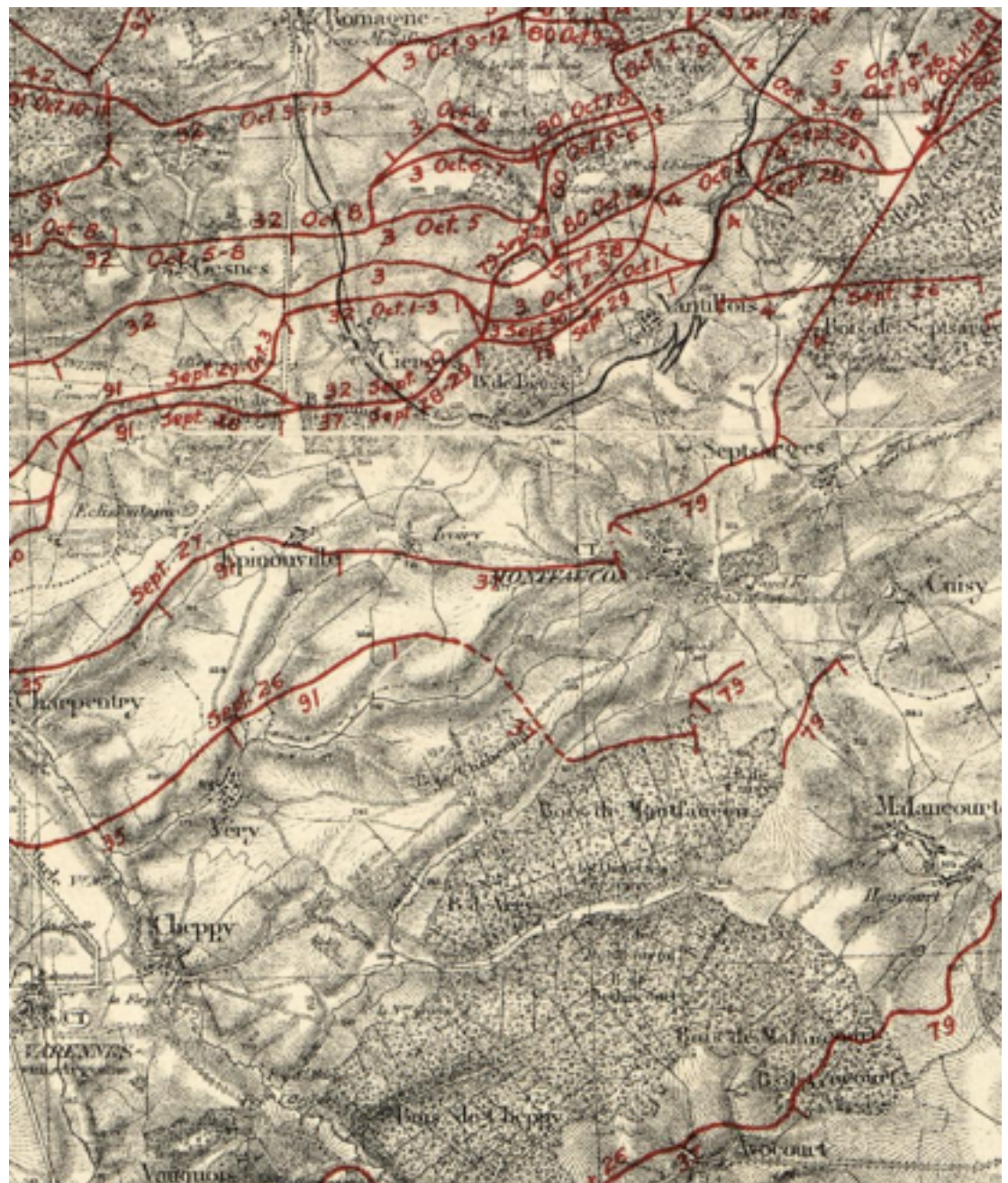
Private Lambert Blink was inducted into the United States Army on May 29, 1918 at Grand Haven, Michigan. He was 31 years old. His parents, Nicholas and Julia Blink, had emigrated from the northern Netherlands, where Blink is still a common name. Nicholas was a cabinet maker. This might explain why they settled in Michigan since at the time Grand Rapids was a well-known center of furniture making in the US. My great uncle Lambert was a grain dealer living in the hamlet of Marne, Michigan, the original name of which was Berlin since most of the people who lived there were of German descent. The name of the town was changed to Marne because the inhabitants were concerned they might be identified as German sympathizers, but the only family of French descent in the town were the DesPrez who were French Canadians.

“Unc” was almost 6’ tall, with dark brown hair, blue eyes and “a ruddy complexion” according to his discharge papers. He was an infantryman who never qualified as a marksman! This is a bit odd since he was an avid deer and small game hunter.

He served in France from July 1918 to January 1919. Until August 1918 he was part of the 337th Infantry Co. L; from then on, he was in the 7th infantry, Co. C. “Unc” fought in the battles of the Argonne Forest and St. Mihiel. He was wounded with shrapnel in his right eye and blinded. Shrapnel also lodged in his back so that he dragged one leg the rest of his life. At the time of his discharge, he was judged to be 40% disabled, and received \$43.32 in outstanding payment for his service. \$43! In his discharge papers, he is described as of excellent character, “honest and faithful, no AWOL.”

My brother and I were often at our grandparents house where “Unc” lived. He let us watch him take out his glass eye which he did every night and soaked in a solution of boric acid.

Told by Lynn Klausenburger,
great-niece



About who his time in the A.E.F., John Hunt wrote "...At the time the impending activities in the A.E.F., the personnel had become thoroughly accustomed to what seemed to be impositions from higher authority and was really more fit and ready for any emergency. This would seem, then, to be the most probable reason why 362nd won out in being selected as the Surgical Hospital unit of the 91st Division.



This designation was made on September 2nd in Montigni-le-Roi and the unit came in tentative possession of special equipment. For a time after September 6th, the unit had a hard time in keeping up or maintaining liaison with that special equipment - but finally, by prolonged and hard hiking, managed to get ahead and even closer to the battle line on September 19th, in a wooded area, Bois-de-Parois..... The most exciting and active work was experienced ... in Cheppy Woods from September 29th to October 12th."

John Hunt also wrote letters home to his 7-year-old son, Larry, which were saved by his grandson, John Hunt II.

Dear Larry,

It has been a few days since I wrote to you and I bet you have been looking for a letter from me. Well, I am up at the front, within two miles of the German lines [Bussang, N of Belfort, Vosges]. Came up yesterday and I tell you it was a hard ride - came up in a big truck. For seats we had big boards placed across and sticking out over the sides. Now I don't see why they gave us those boards to ride on, two on a board, unless it was to keep us busy keeping the boards from slipping from one side to the other. Well, we were busy - and it was a 75 mile ride up hill and down, and they went faster than those English or French trains. Last night we slept between two blankets in a Hospital ward - I thought I would freeze before morning.

We have fine meals at a French cafe - and say, I haven't told you about the different kinds of cheese I have had since I have been over here. Tonight I had some fine Limburger - I thought of you when I was eating it. Last night we had Swiss - have had Camembert and about a half dozen other kinds. At dinner in the evening the French, instead of dessert, serve cheese, and I tell you it is the real thing....

Love to all, Daddy

Dear Larry,

Oct 3, 1918

I have not been able to write to you for quite a while, the reason is that I have been with the Hospital right up at the front, and this is the first time I have had a breathing spell. We have been here since Sunday - this is Friday - the 91st Division has been fighting for over a week. I have been operating in a tent day and night - it has been hard work. Have been at the table 14 hours straight the first two days - one night was operating and they gave a gas alarm - there was a shell gas attack only about a kilometer away from me. Then yesterday was operating and there was an aeroplane fight right over the tent - with the anti-aircraft guns popping away and the machine guns on the aeroplanes cracking away. It certainly was a lot of noise - and it was trying on the nerves to be doing amputations of the legs - but we did it anyway and they tell us we did some fine work - we had over 800 patients here at one time... It is no fun, boy and it is mighty hard work - and it doesn't seem human the way the boys come back all shot up - but you can't imagine how brave they are....

Love to all, Daddy

Robert McCreery volunteered immediately at the age of 20 in 1914. He was a sergeant in the motor transport unit of the 1st Canadian Supply Column, driving trucks and field ambulances. He must have been a bit wild because he was constantly getting into trouble - absent from duty and parade, insolent to an officer, and two days Field Punishment No. 1 for speeding in a French town. He came back with a tattoo, a scar near his right eye, and a British war bride.



My grandfather, Paul McCreery, and his twin brother Bailey were the oldest in the family. Granddad was a B2 in the draft - "fit for service abroad in a support capacity" - because he had flat feet, myopia, and a skill important for the home front - he was a teacher. But by 1918, everyone was needed and he was sent to Quebec for training, where he still was when the Armistice was signed.

Wilfred McCreery was drafted in 1916 at the age of 21 and, because of his experience with horses in his father's shipping business, was assigned to the Canadian Veterinary Hospital. He spent the war years in Le Havre, tending to a steady stream of wounded horses.

Bailey McCreery was assigned in 1915 at the age of 23 to the infantry, the 7th Battalion. In April 1916, he had been in France for only 11 days when he took part in the Battle of Vimy Ridge - the battle that some historians say created Canada. Then came Hill 70, Passchendaele, and months and months on the front lines near Arras. On the night of July 25, 1918, he was on guard duty at the junction of Jury Trench and the front line trench, when the Germans decided to do some random shelling, as was common. Bailey was hit in the head with a shell and killed instantly. On the same day Robert was on leave in England getting married. I wonder which piece of news reached my great-grandmother first. She noted both events in the family bible.

Remembered by Susan Kegel, granddaughter and great-niece

REPORT ON BOMBARDMENT

Until about 1:30 in the morning, everything was normal, M.G. and Artillery Fire being as usual.

About 1:30 a.m., bombardment commenced suddenly, extending from about H.32.a.9.8 to our right and across CAMBRAI Road on 3rd Brigade front. Bombardment covered Outpost Line, Front Line, BELVES Trench and area around Company Support, about H.31.b.3.7, and extending across towards 3rd Brigade Supports.

In outpost line, "Whizz-bangs" were principally used, with a considerable number of "Pineapples" and apparently L.T.M's were also used. Whole outpost line was not "strafed," attention apparently being paid more to the posts at Junction of TILLOY Trench (outpost line) and JUDGE and JURY ALLEYS.

When bombardment commenced, M.G. fire was also opened by about 5 M.G.'s sweeping whole Company front and Support.

Whole bombardment continued for about 20 minutes, during which period, MAIN FRONT LINE, C.T.'s and COMPANY SUPPORT about both sides of H.31.b.3.7 was under continuous fire from "Whizz-bangs" and on right near CAMBRAI ROAD a few 5.9's were also used.

Artillery fire on whole was very inaccurate, as apart from falling in Company Area, very few hits on trenches were obtained.

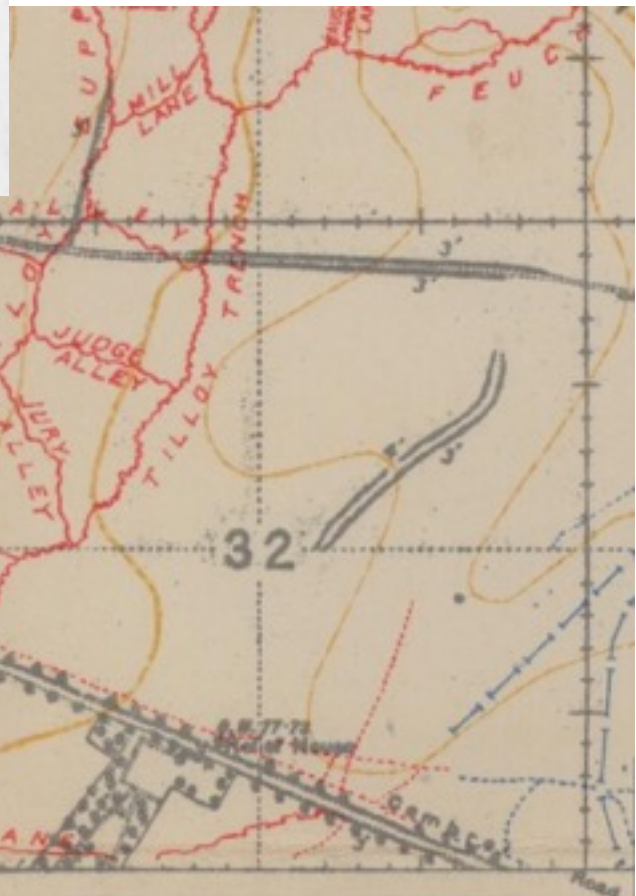
Bombardment died down just before 2 a.m., at which hour, everything was quite.

No enemy Patrols were seen by Advanced post at H.32.b.07.40, and no shells fell within a dangerous distance of this post, which remained out all the time.

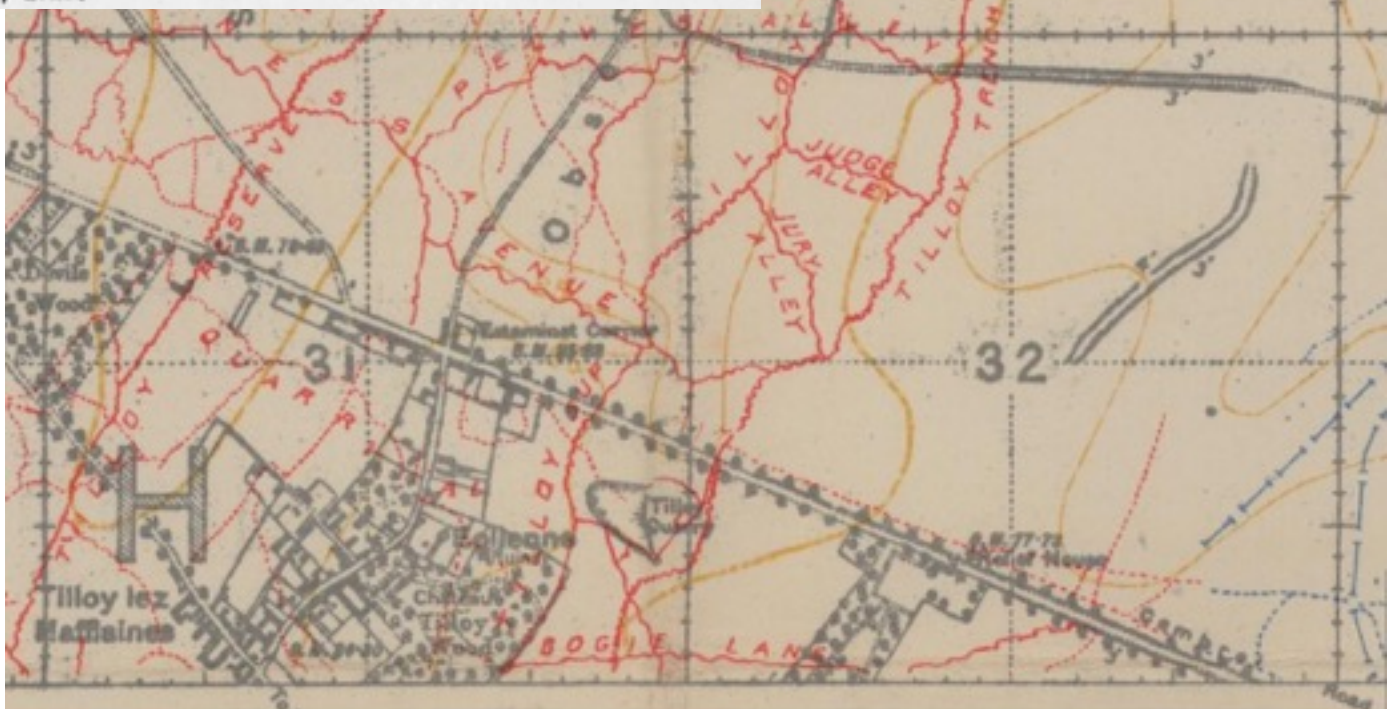
In outpost line, it appears that posts at Junction of TILLOY FRONT TRENCH and JUDGE and JURY ALLEYS were badly "strafed," two men being killed in each post.

July 25th, 1918.

All four men killed that night were buried side by side in the Duisans British Cemetery, just outside of Arras, where the French to this day are keeping their graves and so many others in pristine condition.



Route 939, SE of Arras, near Tilloy-les-Mofflaines, showing junction of Jury and Tilloy trenches



MILITARY SLANG

Barracks	gourbis	goor-bee
—	cagnas	kah-gnah
—	callebasses	kahl-bass
Bayonet	rosalie	ro-zah-lee
Bed	pajot	pah-zho
—	plumard	plu-mar
Beans	faillots	fah-yo
Boast (to)	faire le zouave	fa.r ler zooahv
—	faire le mariolle	fair ler mar-reeol
Bread	bricheton	breesh-tong
Brandy	gniole	gneool
—	erliq	creec
Brave (to be)	avoir du poil	ah-vooar-du-pooahl
Brother	frangin	fraun-zhang
Canned meat	singe	sangzh
Cent	rond	rong
Cheese	fromgl	from-zhee
—	frometon	from-tong
Chum	poteau	po-to
Coffee	jus	zhu
Cook	culstot	kuees-to
Dead	occis	ok-see
—	clamecé	klahm-say
—	zigouillé	zee-goo-yay
Eat (to)	briffer	bree-fay
—	becqueter	baic-tay
Eyes	mirettes	mee-rett
Face	portrait	por-tray
—	gueule	guhl
Feet	ripatons	ree-pah-tong
—	panards	pah-nar
Food	becquetance	baic-tauns
Franc	balle	bahl
5 francs (dollar)	tune	tun
Friend	copain	co-pang
German	boche	bosh
Good fellow	bon zig	bong zeeg
—	bon type	bong teep

MILITARY SLANG (Cont.)

Green soldier	bleu	bluh
—	bleusaille	bluh-zeye
Gun	Mamselle Lebel	mahm-zell-ler-bell
Head	poire	pooar
—	trognon	tro-gnong
Headgear	kébrock	kay-brock
Joy	nouba	noo-bah
—	foire	fooar
Letter	babillarde	bah-bee-yard
Legs	quilles	keey
—	pattes	paht
—	compas	cong-pah
—	arpions	ar-peeong
Loaf	boule	bool
Louse	toto	to-to
Meat	bidoche	bee-dosh
Money	pognon	po-gnong
Parents	vieux	vee-uh
Pocketbook	morling	mor-lang
Potato	patate	pah-taht
Shell	marmite	mar-meet
Sheet	sac à viande	sahe ah veeand
Shoes	croquenots	crok-no
—	godilles	go-deey
—	godasses	go-dahs
—	godillots	go-dee-yo
—	ribouls	ree-booe
Sleep (to)	pioneer	peecong-say
—	roupiller	roo-pee-yay
Sister	frangine	fraun-zheen
Stew	rata	rah-tah
Water	flotte	flott
—	lance	launs
Wine	pinard	pee-nar
Work	boulo	boo-lo
Wounded	attigé	ah-tee-zhay
—	amoché	ah-mo-shay

Excerpts from the *Soldier's-Sailor's Diary and English-French Dictionary*, distributed to Marilyn Severson's father, Lestle J. Sparks, when he was drafted into the US army in the summer of 1918. He was still in training in the U.S. when the armistice was signed.

Commendation letter written to Adelbert Waite by his commanding officer on Christmas Day, 1918

COMPANY "C", TENTH FIELD BATTALION, SIGNAL CORPS.

SOMWHERE IN FRANCE, December 25, 1918.

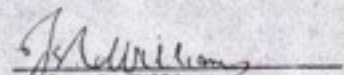
From: Commanding Officer, Company C, Tenth Field Battalion, Sig. Cps.
 To: Private First Class Adelbert Waite
 Subject: Spirit of Service.

1 Your Company Commander takes this opportunity to thank you for the splendid service you have rendered to your country during the late war.

2. It is an especial source of pleasure for me to say that you have shown MET under fire-- and after all, that is the measure of a man and a soldier.

3. You have endured hardships without a murmur, and you have always been first to volunteer for a perilous mission.

4. I know that this Christmas will not be a happy one for you but I wish you both a Merry one and a Happy one AT HOME next year.


 J. L. Williams,
 Captain, Signal Corps.



Adelbert Waite was born on a farm in downstate Illinois in 1899. He was one of a few farm children of that time who went beyond 8th grade, and he graduated from high school. He enlisted in the United States Army on January 7, 1918 at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, Missouri.

He left the US on August 18, 1918, and after ten days on a troop ship, he arrived in France. It is not certain, but his unit is believed to have arrived at Saint Nazaire. His unit was shipped by rail to Toul, France, near Nancy, where they arrived on October 21. "Al" seldom discussed his time during World War I, but along with many other American (and perhaps French?) soldiers, he detested the 40 and 8 boxcars in which they travelled. Forty soldiers shared a boxcar with eight horses, and were forced to share the horses' smell and discharges. The 40 and 8's separated the horses with a fence, but whatever reached the floor was shared.

Al was in Company C of the Third Field Battalion of the Army Signal Corps. He was trained to use Morse Code on the battlefield to report the accuracy of US artillery. From Toul, his unit went to an area west of Pont-à-Mousson,

France, on the highlands west of the Moselle River in Lorraine, looking down on a small valley of the Mad River. He and his unit served on the front lines from the 10th of October until 9 November, 1918. Then for the last two days of the war, his unit advanced against German forces as part of the "Second Army offensive". As part of the American Army Seventh Division, they fought alongside French soldiers.

During his time at the Front, Al was gassed twice, once by mustard gas, once by chlorine. Hearty before he went to war, the damage to his lungs affected him for the remainder of his life. Of life at the Front he said little, noting only that he disliked the cold, the mud, and the rats that were everywhere. He told his son that when they were treated for lice (presumably before and after being at the front) at the delousing centers, their heads were shaved, and naked, they were fumigated in large enclosures to kill the lice.

In early 1919, Al was appointed to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, the equivalent of France's St. Cyr. But with a million US soldiers in France, it took some time to transport them all back to the United States, and Al did not leave France until May 28, 1919. He told his son that he attended the Sorbonne during that time. The US and French governments had started a program of classes in French language and culture for the American soldiers. He had taken some French in high school, and occasionally spoke some French later in his life.

Immediately after World War 1, there was a song popular in America titled, "How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm?" [After They've Seen Parée]" Al experienced the worst and the best of France, and as with many American soldiers who served in the Great War, he never went back on the farm.

Remembered by his son, Thomas Waite.