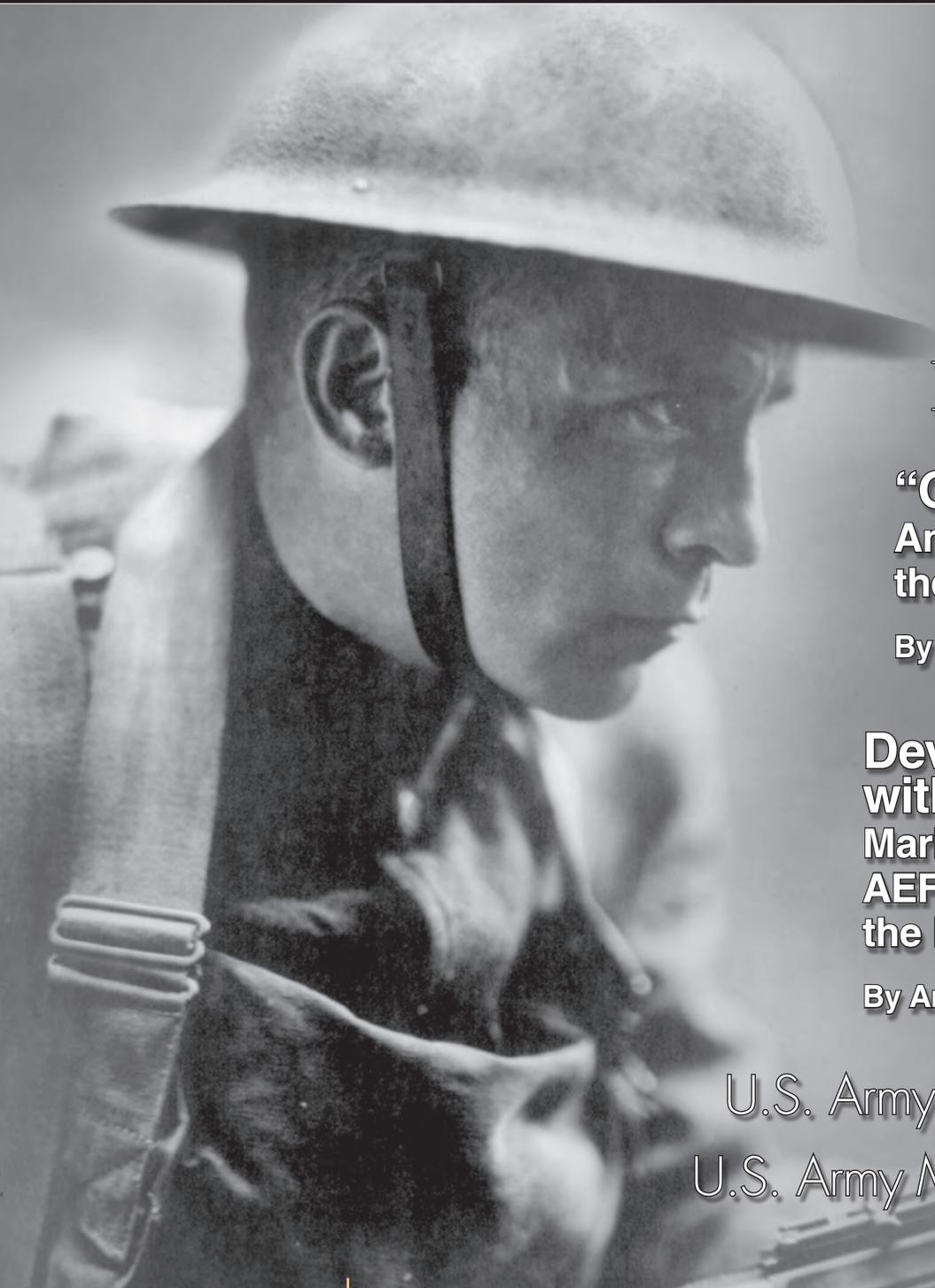


# ARMY HISTORY

Spring 2017

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# ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

## By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

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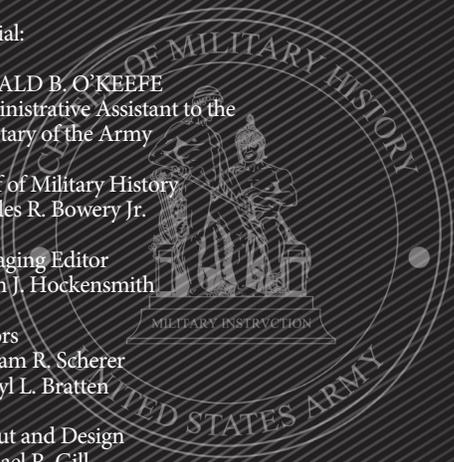
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**Issue Cover:** "Over the top" [close-up of doughboy in full combat dress], photo taken by Spurr Studio, Waterloo, Iowa, c. 1919 /Library of Congress

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

This issue of *Army History*, which will be published shortly before the centennial of America's entry into World War I, focuses almost exclusively on that conflict. We are pleased to present two excellent articles that deal with the First World War from very different points of view—from the trenches below and the skies above. The first article, by eminent historian George C. Herring Jr., tells the story of his father's time as a soldier fighting on the Western Front in 1918 and as part of the Army of Occupation in 1919. Herring's narrative, constructed from his father's letters and diary entries, is a fascinating look at the war through the eyes of a farm boy from Iowa.

The second article, by Annette D. Amerman, the head of the Historical Reference Branch, Marine Corps History Division, shines a light on a little known part of Army and Marine Corps history. During World War I, six marines flew with the Army as part of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service. Amerman has identified five of these individuals and their unique stories of interservice cooperation.

The Artifact Spotlight examines the restoration of an M1916 White Armored Car from the World War I period. The refurbishment, conducted at the National Armor and Cavalry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia, has completely restored this vehicle, which will soon be part of a countrywide traveling exhibit. We also launch a new section in this issue with the U.S. Army Museum Feature, where, periodically, *Army History* will highlight new galleries from the Army's various field museums. This issue showcases the new World War I galleries at the West Point Museum.

In the Chief's Corner, Mr. Charles Bowery discusses the number of upcoming commemorative efforts and encourages the Army historical community to use these events to educate the Army about the importance of its own history. Mr. Jon Hoffman, in his Chief Historian's Footnote, talks about the difficult, but essential, task of hiring and keeping top-quality historians.

I continue to encourage readers to submit articles on the history of the Army and invite constructive comments about this publication.

Bryan J. Hockensmith  
Managing Editor



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By GEORGE C. HERRING JR.



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**DEVIL DOGS  
WITH ARMY  
WINGS**

MARINES WITH THE  
AEF AIR SERVICE IN  
THE FIRST WORLD WAR

By ANNETTE D. AMERMAN





# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.

In my daily interactions with our Army, it is apparent to me that history and heritage matter a great deal to soldiers. Our chief of staff, General Mark A. Milley, brought this point home recently in an address at the 2016 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting. He spoke to the audience about the Army's current priorities and challenges, and on the dais where he stood was a display with an M1 Garand rifle. The rifle was carried by Pvt. Martin Teahan, an 82d Airborne Division paratrooper who jumped into Normandy on 6 June 1944, and was killed in action a few weeks later. A French farmer recently discovered the weapon in his field and notified the local authorities. Last year, General Milley's French counterpart donated the restored rifle to the U.S. Army as a symbol of gratitude, respect, and comradeship. Currently the M1 occupies a proud place in the chief's office and is destined for the National Museum of the United States Army. General Milley told the audience that for him, that rifle is a powerful symbol of the Army's purpose should deterrence falter. No one in attendance that morning could fail to understand the powerful message conveyed through a piece of our shared heritage.

We are entering an exciting period of the commemorations of significant events in Army history. These remembrances will help us build on the sentiments expressed by the chief in his remarks. This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the American entry into World War I, and on 6 April, a variety of events here in Washington and around the country will commemorate America's declaration of war in 1917. At the Pentagon, Army leaders will officially open our program of World War I Centennial activities, and at the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, the National World War I Centennial Commission is preparing for an event involving a number of U.S. Army units. Summer 2017 and 2018 will see key U.S. World War I anniversaries, and planning is under way for events here in the United States and in France. By the time you read this column, Headquarters, Department of the Army, will have issued an execution order covering service commemoration activities, and the Center of Military History's (CMH) new World War I Centennial Web site will be up and running with a link on the CMH homepage at [www.history.army.mil](http://www.history.army.mil).

In late 2017, we will approach the fiftieth anniversary of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, and planning is under way for a number of commemorative events, which will take place in the period stretching from Veteran's Day 2017 through Memorial Day 2018. We are partnering with the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration to honor the service of the Vietnam generation. CMH will publish Erik Villard's book on combat operations in Vietnam in 1967–1968, and we continue to publish our Vietnam War commemorative pamphlets, linked to the wartime events they cover.

These significant anniversaries offer us the opportunity to engage with Army history in three dimensions. In carrying out commemorative activities, we first, remember, and second, honor the service and sacrifice of so many who have worn the Army uniform. Remembrance of our shared past is critical to esprit de corps and acculturation. History and heritage matter to soldiers who serve today, and to veterans as well. But for our continued service to the nation, I submit that the third dimension of engagement with Army history, education, is the most important. It is only by examining our past with a critical eye that we can profit from it, gaining perspective and building individual critical-thinking skills that are so important to service in the complex environments in which the Army is involved today. This, after all, is why the Army Historical Program exists in the first place—to provide a home for our service's institutional memory, a priceless resource for our Army and the nation.

I once heard a highly respected historian tell a group that he constantly met people who wanted their history in the form of "bedtime stories," neat packages of easily resolved conflicts that confirmed their preconceived notions and made them feel better about the world around them. There can be a danger in allowing our official history program to focus solely on commemoration and heritage. If we fail to take that next step and engage thoughtfully with the past, it can become a bedtime story. Let's collectively pledge to do both—remember and honor, but also learn. In doing so, history and historians remain an indispensable Army capability.

Army Historians Educate, Inspire, and Preserve!



# NEWSNOTES

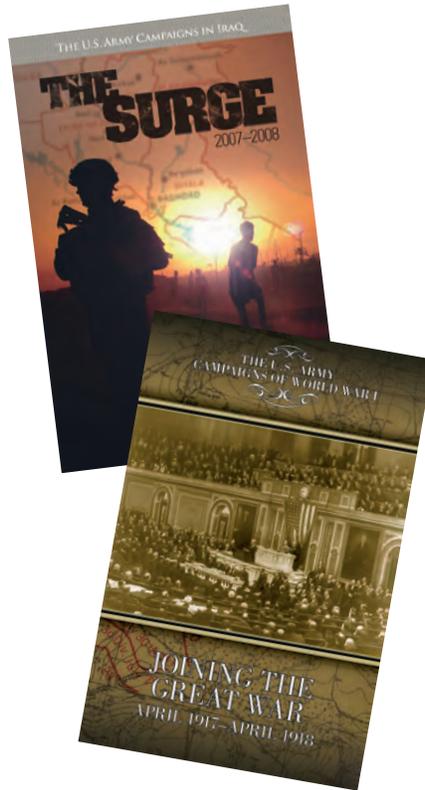
## CMH WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL WEB SITE

The Center of Military History (CMH) has launched a World War I Centennial Web site, which will tell the story of the U.S. Army in World War I. New content will be released periodically between January 2017 and May 2019 and will be organized into four parts containing a total of thirty chapters. The site will also provide a calendar of World War I commemorative events, a historical timeline, and a catalog of resources and related publications. It can be accessed from the CMH home page at [www.history.army.mil](http://www.history.army.mil).

## CMH RELEASES NEW PUBLICATIONS

CMH recently released two new publications. The first, *Joining the Great War: April 1917–April 1918*, by Eric B. Setzekorn, is the second title in CMH's U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I series. It chronicles the first year of the American involvement in World War I and briefly summarizes the prewar U.S. Army, the initial American reaction to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, and the factors that led to the U.S. declaration of war in April 1917. The pamphlet examines how the U.S. Army transformed itself from a small constabulary force into a mass, industrialized army capable of engaging in modern warfare. The author covers stateside mobilization and training, the formation of the American Expeditionary Forces, the slow buildup of American forces in France, and concludes with U.S. soldiers helping to blunt the first phase of the 1918 German Spring Offensive. This pamphlet has been issued as CMH Pub 77–3.

The second publication is titled, *The Surge, 2007–2008*, by Nicholas J. Schlosser. This pamphlet is the first in the new series The U.S. Army Campaigns in Iraq. To set the stage, Schlosser



provides an overview of the region and the situation that led to the increase in insurgent activities as well as the command structure of U.S. forces. He provides a discussion of key operations during the surge, including FARDH AL-QANOON, PHANTOM THUNDER, ARROWHEAD RIPPER, MARNE TORCH, and PHANTOM STRIKE. The booklet concludes with the status-of-forces agreement between the United States and Iraq drafted at the end of 2008. This monograph has been issued as CMH Pub 78–1.

Both publications will be available for purchase by the general public from the Government Publishing Office.

## CMH WELCOMES NEW DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Col. Voris W. McBurnette Sr. has assumed the position of deputy exec-

utive director at CMH where he is responsible for overseeing operations, strategic planning, and assessment efforts on Army matters concerning military history. A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he has been a soldier since he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve in 1988. He has served at all levels of command from an infantry platoon leader to battalion commander and brigade executive officer. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College and the Command and General Staff College and holds multiple degrees including a bachelor's in history, three master's, and a doctorate in education. He has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation and Army Achievement Medals, a Combat Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, and Parachutist Badge, among others. Colonel McBurnette is married and has one son.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr. George C. Herring Jr.** is alumni professor of history emeritus at the University of Kentucky. After service in the U.S. Navy, he earned a Ph.D. in history at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1900–1950* (New York, 1979), now in its fifth edition, and *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York, 2008). He was a visiting professor at the U.S. Military Academy in 1993–1994 and has served on the Army Historical Advisory Committee.

George C. Herring

# “Glad I Was in It”

## AN IOWA DOUGHBOY IN THE GREAT WAR, 1918–1919

BY GEORGE C. HERRING JR.

The letter dated 8 April 1918 did not begin with the word “Greetings” and it was not signed by Uncle Sam. It started, rather, “Dear Sir,” and came from the Union County, Iowa, draft board, and informed 24-year-old George Herring, a native of Creston, Iowa, and student at Iowa State College, that he had been selected for induction into the U.S. Army.<sup>1</sup> For Herring, this letter marked the beginning of a fourteen-month odyssey filled with excitement, enormous danger, and occasional boredom. In addition, there was the thrill of seeing new places in the United States and Europe, accompanied by an unrelenting longing for home and family. Herring’s time in the Great War was in many ways unexceptional. But he survived the costly

and climactic battles at St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne and got through six difficult months in the occupation army in Germany. His experiences, as related in his letters to his parents, siblings, and in a pocket diary, tell us much about the life of an ordinary doughboy in an extraordinary war.

It is impossible to know the young Iowan’s state of mind upon receiving his draft notice. His wartime letters suggest that he had been conflicted about how to deal with the options posed for young men by American entry into the war.<sup>2</sup> The 1917 draft law provided no exemption for college students. Although he qualified, Herring appears not to have sought the exemption for farm workers. He may have contemplated enlisting to fulfill his patriotic duty, but he also undoubtedly wanted to finish college. Perhaps because of his age he escaped the initial 1917 draft calls. But Germany’s defeat of Russia in late 1917 and the frighteningly early success of its end-the-war offensive on the Western Front in March 1918 created huge Allied





National Archives

Drafted men reporting for service at Camp Travis, Texas, c. 1917

Company I of the 358th Infantry. “Everyone in my company is cussing their hard luck that they got in the infantry,” he wrote his parents. The training was intensive and not in ideal conditions. “They drill about 7 or 8 hours a day with guns and pack and under these southern skies that means something,” Herring noted. “I thought I sweat in the hay mow last summer but was on K.P. [kitchen patrol] today working in the kitchen and it is worse.” He found the “eats” distasteful. “They have turned us all into vegetarians,” he complained. “Roasting ears, squash, beans, etc. for dinner all grown around here. If we stay down here long I will look, feel, and talk like a Mexican.” There was lots of work and little time off with drills even on Sunday. “Get drill, physical exercises, rifle exercises, 8 hours per day,” the young soldier wrote. “They keep

us doing something during all the hours we are off, it seems.” As a taste of things to come, they were issued winter clothing at the beginning of the Texas summer in addition to standard military equipment. “Tomorrow we go to the rifle range for a week or 10 days,” he wrote on 28 May 1918. Kelly Field air base was nearby. It “looks a little more serious out here,” Herring commented, with “aeroplanes and war balloons in sight at all times.”<sup>6</sup>

After less than four weeks in Texas, he was in New York awaiting embarkation to Europe. His letters to his parents make clear his excitement at his first trip into the eastern part of the country. At various stops along the way, crowds came out to greet the doughboys and give them coffee, cookies, cigarettes, reading material, and “enough girls’ addresses to keep a fellow writing day and night.” In

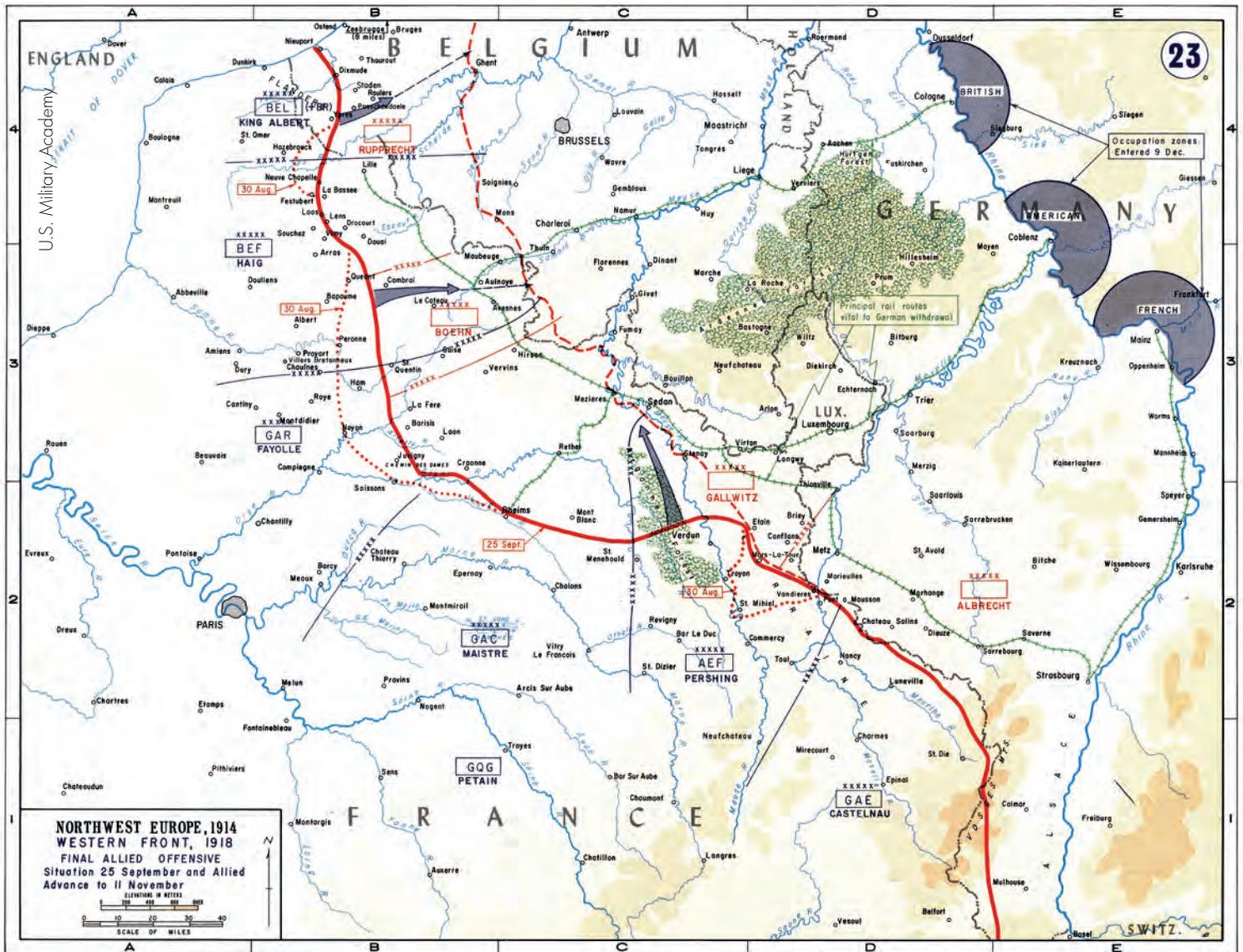
other places, he added, “they acted like they were afraid of soldiers so waved from a distance.” In a small town in Missouri, 500 soldiers swam in a “dirty little lake.” This farm boy pronounced the crops in Oklahoma and Kansas “fine.” Because New York state was so mountainous, he questioned how anyone could make a living there, but he also called it “the most beautiful country I ever saw.” On the Journey to the embarkation point at Camp Mills on Long Island, “we could plainly [see] all the skyscrapers, the Statue of Liberty, and all the other sights connected with New York Harbor which of course was all new to me.”<sup>7</sup>

The “Atlantic ferry,” as it was called, was something soldiers had to endure as the 90th Division sailed in a convoy of ten transports that met up with Royal Navy destroyer



Library of Congress

Camp Travis, Texas, in 1917



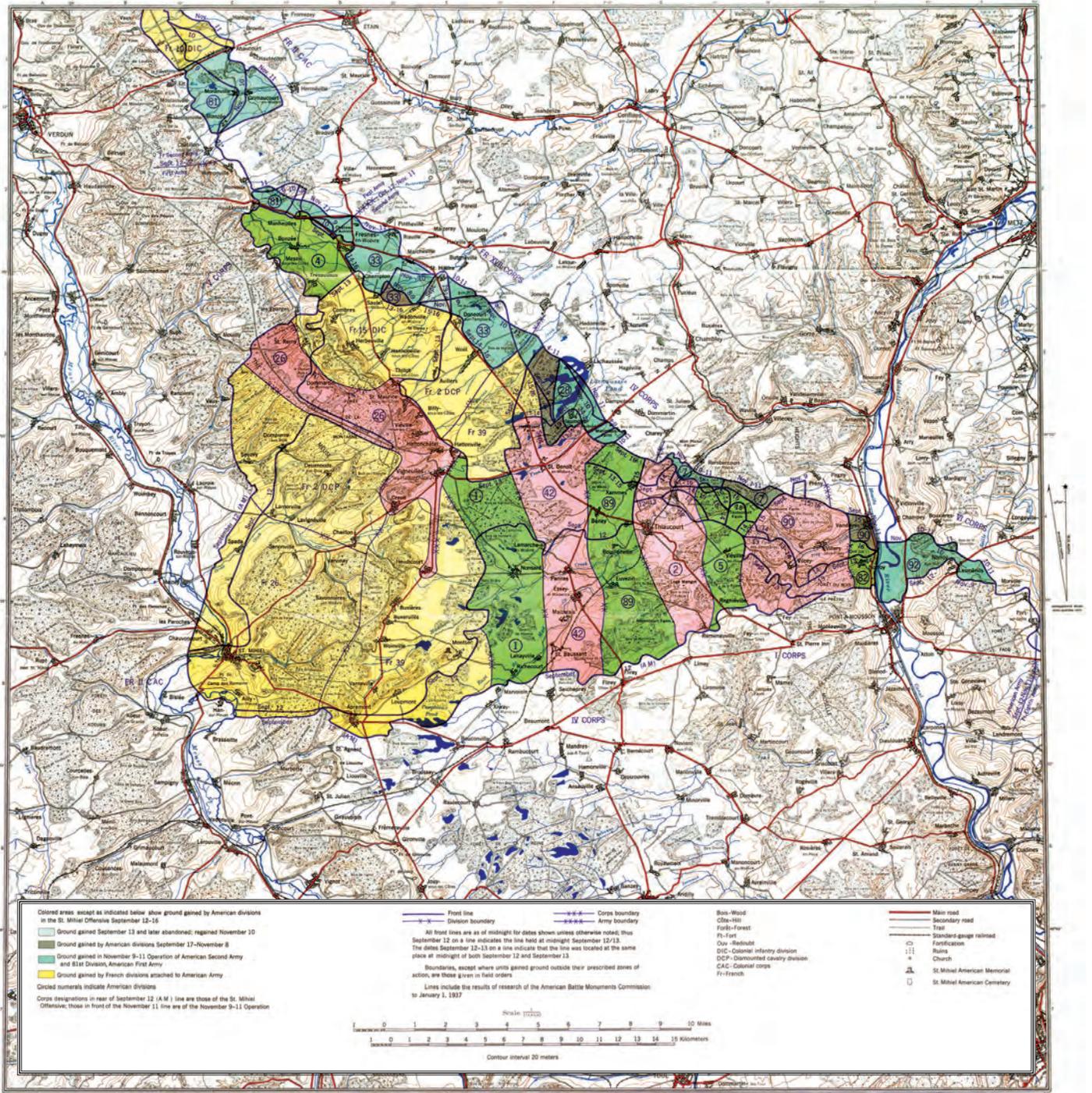
escorts in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Because of the urgent demands for manpower at this desperate time in the war, each ship carried as many troops as could be squeezed aboard and in June 1918 alone, 278,664 men crossed the Atlantic. The soldiers even did shifts sleeping in the bunks and hammocks.<sup>8</sup> The holds were foul smelling from sweat and vomit. Herring spent most of the time sleeping on deck. "A fellow can sleep 25 hours a day," he told his family. A storm midpassage brought seasickness to many of the travelers, Herring included. "The boat rocked endways, sideways and a few other ways," he reported, "in addition to the vibrations of the engines and the wheel house overhead." He remained

on deck for three days with nothing to eat, drink, or smoke. "Land looks good to me," he admitted after arrival. "I don't care to cross the sea more than once more but would like to do it going the other way."<sup>9</sup> The 90th Division docked at Liverpool in early July. Herring's regiment paraded before the lord mayor and enthusiastic British crowds on the Fourth of July and was treated to a banquet that evening.<sup>10</sup>

After a short rest period in Liverpool, the men boarded British "toy trains" for the port of Southampton. There they were "packed like sardines" into sometimes shabby channel boats and sailed to Le Havre, France. The 358th Infantry was then crammed into boxcars and transported to its

training area near the Burgundy town of Minot in northeastern France, a rolling plateau between the Seine and Saone Rivers, a location rich in history going back to Julius Caesar. They were billeted in the local villages, often in barns. There for about a month, with full equipment they underwent intensive, desperately needed training with eight hours a day devoted to such exercises as target and bayonet practice, entrenchment construction, small-unit tactics, drill, and more drill. Short of officers, the 90th Division was assisted by French officers who also served as liaisons with the locals. The men quickly tired of the routine, and the air was filled with rumors of moving to the front. Originally

AMERICAN OPERATIONS IN THE ST. MIHIEL REGION, SEPTEMBER 12-NOVEMBER 11, 1918



scheduled to undergo three more months of training, on 18 August the 90th Division received orders to replace the 1st Division in the front lines.<sup>11</sup> Three days earlier, Herring told his family that “it is so quiet here you would scarcely know there is a war going on” and wondered when he would go into action. He wistfully begged for good news about happenings at home and “about all the good things you have to eat.”<sup>12</sup>

Within a month after having arrived in France, the 90th Division joined the fighting on the Western Front. “Have moved quite a distance since my last letter,” Herring wrote his parents on 2 September from “somewhere in France.” They traveled by “trucks, side-door Pullman [soldiers’ slang for boxcars], and hiking, mostly the latter. We were on the go every day for a week and it seems we moved all over France to get a short distance.”

They traveled mostly at night “so we lost considerable sleep.” Between 19 and 24 August, they relieved the 1st Division in trenches extending from Remenauville to the Moselle River. “Have gotten slightly acquainted with rats, ‘cooties’ [lice], and Fritz [Germans]. None of these have caused any casualties in the company only a little annoyance.” They slept in dugouts, in the open, and sometimes in “dog tents.” They experienced the



The 90th Division headquarters on the St. Mihiel front

unrelenting, mind-numbing, and at times terrifying sound of artillery, as well as mud, grime, and poison gas. During this time, Herring served with his company's headquarters, carrying messages between various units.<sup>13</sup>

From 10 to 17 September, the division played an important role in what historian John Keegan has called the "first all-American offensive of the war," an assault against heavily fortified German positions in the St. Mihiel salient that bulged into French territory near the Moselle River.<sup>14</sup> For three years, this German stronghold had been an embarrassment to the French as well as a grave strategic threat. It also denied the French the

use of a vital railroad line. During the years of occupation, the Germans had built deep dugouts and thick concrete bunkers, some equipped with electricity, and placed "broad belts" of heavy barbed wire in no-man's-land. The Allied plan called for 400,000 American and 48,000 French troops to attack the estimated 75,000 Germans positioned in the St. Mihiel salient. Once the Germans had been pushed out, U.S. troops, within a mere two weeks, would mount follow-up attacks against enemy lines between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest.<sup>15</sup>

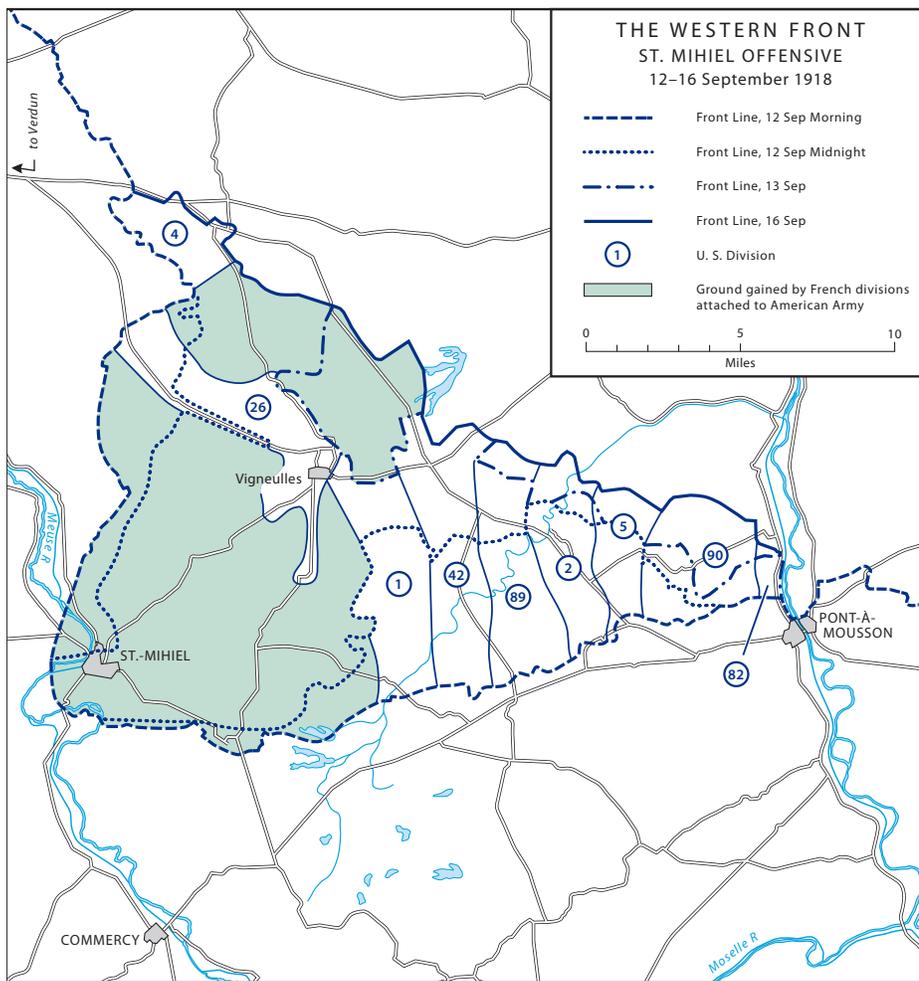
Through good luck and exquisite timing, the St. Mihiel Offensive proved easier than expected. Unknown to the Allies, on 10 September the Germans

had decided to abandon the salient. The withdrawal actually began two days later on the morning of the Allied attacks. After marching in heavy rains for four nights to avoid German detection, the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) troops moved into position for attack. At 0500 on 12 September, after four hours of bombardment of German positions, the troops went over the top. They managed the barbed wire with enormous two-handed wire cutters and rolls of chicken wire used almost like planks to walk across. They encountered only token opposition from the retreating enemy. The battle was all but won on the second day, although the Germans mounted several counterattacks and continued to harass the advancing doughboys with artillery, gas, and machine gun and sniper fire. The Americans suffered 7,000 casualties, not high by World War I standards. The victory provided a huge boost to Allied, especially French, morale. U.S. commanders exulted at their relatively easy success. St. Mihiel made clear to the German high command the decisive edge given the enemy by this infusion of hundreds of thousands of fresh American soldiers.<sup>16</sup>

The 358th attacked in the center, met "murderous fire," and suffered high



Rows of barbed wire on the St. Mihiel front



casualties while achieving its objectives. Over the next three weeks, the 90th Division remained engaged while seeking to stabilize the lines established by the offensive. On 25 September it participated in a demonstration offensive as a preliminary to the coming Meuse-Argonne Campaign. The aim was to deceive the Germans as to the timing and location of the major U.S. thrust. The doughboys endured massive artillery bombardment, attacked well-defended German positions, and even engaged in hand-to-hand combat. They suffered heavy losses while making minimal gains in an engagement of negligible strategic value. The fighting continued for almost two weeks with raids on both sides, localized actions, and artillery and gas. The 358th suffered the most casualties of those U.S. regiments in action.<sup>17</sup>

During St. Mihiel and other offensives, Pvt. George Herring was a runner, responsible for carrying messages from one sector to another,

perhaps the most dangerous job in the Army because it required leaving the relative safety of the trenches or dugouts and being exposed to enemy artillery, machine guns, and even strafing from aircraft. As he reported to his family, "We advanced several

miles took a village went beyond and held our position. Our company took a large number of German prisoners and material. . . . There are any number of interesting, exciting, and pitiful incidents connected with an advance which would probably be disconnected by the time they were censored. About the only thing one knows will get by is that a fellow is well and that is what is the best news, I suppose."<sup>18</sup> His terse but telling diary entries for these weeks of intensive combat make quite clear the constant danger, occasional peril, sheer exhaustion, and pain of losing comrades at arms that marked the first experience in combat for many of the doughboys.

**SEPTEMBER 12:** Drive in St. Mihiel sector began at 5 a.m. after a 4 hr. bombardment. We arrived in trenches just in time to go over the top after walking through the mud all night.

**SEPTEMBER 13:** Spent last night in a deep German dugout after getting lost from my Co. Spent the day in trenches.

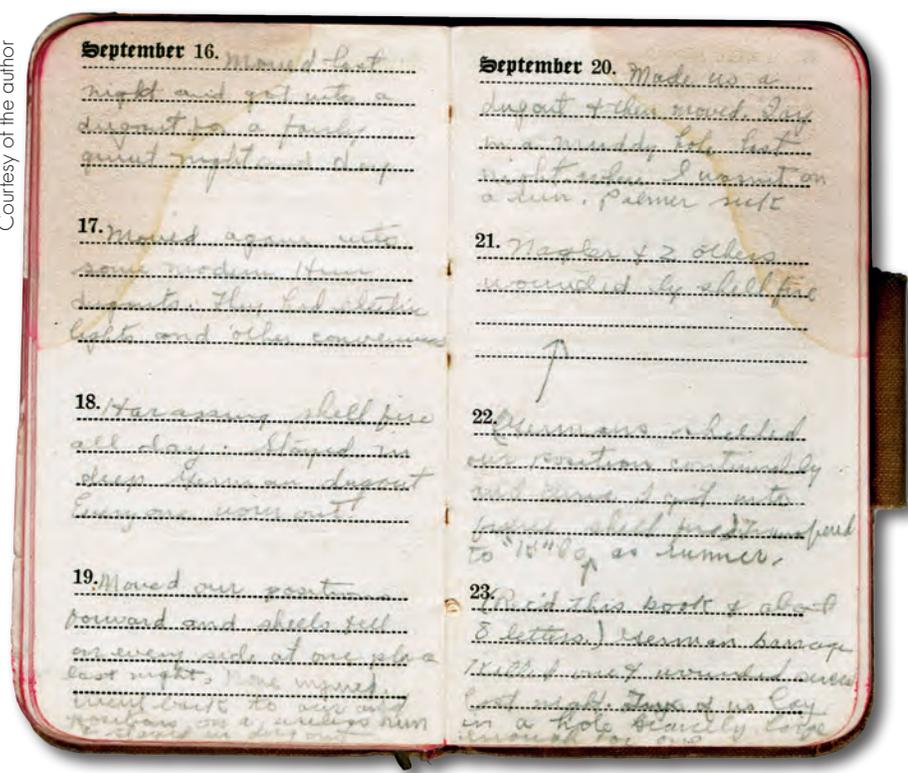
**SEPTEMBER 14:** Spent last night in a shell hole digging in most of the time. Was in a dugout for 2 hrs. which was hit by a shell after we left today.

**SEPTEMBER 15:** Moved our positions last night. Was in the open until artillery fire drove us into the trenches. Gas attack.



A dugout belonging to Major Woods of the 315th Engineers

Courtesy of the author



A German dugout near Pont-à-Mousson on the St. Mihiel front in 1918

**SEPTEMBER 16:** Moved last night and got into a dugout for a fairly quiet night and day.

**SEPTEMBER 17:** Moved again into some modern Hun dugouts. They had electric lights and other conveniences.

**SEPTEMBER 18:** Harassing shell fire all day. Stayed in deep German dugout. Everyone worn out.

**SEPTEMBER 19:** Moved our positions forward and shells fell on every side at one place last night. None injured.

Went back to our positions on a useless run and stayed in a dugout.

**SEPTEMBER 20:** Made us a dugout and then moved. Lay in a muddy hole last night when I wasn't on the run. Palmer sick.

**SEPTEMBER 21:** Nagler and 2 others wounded by shell fire. Germans shelled our positions continually... I got into fierce shell fire.

**SEPTEMBER 22:** Transferred to "K" Co. runner. Rec[eiv]ed this book [diary] and about 8 letters.

**SEPTEMBER 23:** German barrage killed 4 wounded several last night. Two of us lay in a hole barely large enough for one.

**SEPTEMBER 24:** Americans put on a barrage and raided Hun lines. Hun returned shrapnel and gas. Everyone hoping for relief.

**SEPTEMBER 25:** Moved with "K" company to front lines. "I" Company being relieved. Got 3 men wounded. Going out. 60 men left.

**SEPTEMBER 26:** Shelled several times during the night. K Co. moved forward supporting 1st Batt. 5 men killed and the remainder of us gassed with arsenic. We retired to our old position.

**SEPTEMBER 27:** Made 2 runs to "I" Co. ... last night thru a dark tangled wood and plenty shrapnel falling.

**SEPTEMBER 28:** "K" Co. paid in front lines today. Everyone is sick or worn out. Not having [it] very hard myself.

**SEPTEMBER 29:** Have had less shelling last few days. Bellgrado killed by our machine guns. Humphrey wounded.

**SEPTEMBER 30:** Moved out last night with little shelling but in a downpour of rain and knee deep mud. Hike to Griscourt arriving at 5:30 a.m. Worn out, wet, and hungry. Took a bath and got clean clothes the first for 6 wks.<sup>19</sup>

The last day of September, Herring's unit left the front for less than a week's respite. They were billeted in Griscourt in old French buildings, some of which had fireplaces to cut the early fall chill. They continued to drill but also had time to relax, catch up on sleep, and play sports. They enjoyed concerts each night. "We have straw ticks and plenty of blankets so are well provided for now," Herring wrote his parents. "Have satisfied my appetite for sweets for the first time in quite a while and my pockets bulge with cigarettes." Most important, they got stacks of mail from home to elevate their spirits, and rumors of peace began to circulate through the ranks.<sup>20</sup>

Such rumors turned out to be cruelly ironic—and quite premature. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive of



Courtesy of the author

**George Herring (left) and his friends  
Pvts. Zehren (middle) and Palmer  
(right)**



Courtesy of the author

**A concrete machine gun bunker between two houses in Pont-à-Mousson**

October–November 1918 was one of the largest and costliest battles in U.S. military history. The engagement pitted an estimated 1.2 million U.S. troops against approximately 500,000 Germans across a 24-mile front. The Allied command sought to drive the enemy from its heavily fortified defenses between the Argonne Forest and Meuse River, built up over the years of the German occupation of parts of northern France. Combined with British and French offensives in other areas, the Allies aimed to keep maximum pressure on Germany along the entire Western Front to end the war before the onset of winter. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive lasted

virtually until the armistice. In contrast to St. Mihiel, it came at a heavy cost and starkly exposed the weaknesses of the still raw American forces. The doughboys went up against Germans holding the high ground with strongly defended positions. The attack came so soon after the St. Mihiel Offensive that there was little time to prepare, and the proximity of the two battlefields contributed to nightmarish logistical problems. The waterlogged roads were pockmarked with shell holes, and with huge numbers of troops and vehicles crammed into small spaces, supply lines quickly clogged. Trucks stuck in traffic jams could not get food and water to the troops, and field hospitals

could not keep up with the heavy casualties. The attacks took place at night in terrain strewn with barbed wire and other debris. Some parts of the area resembled a moonscape, the effect of intense artillery bombardment from previous engagements. Other sections were heavily forested or had deep ravines. The Germans fought fiercely. Once the attacks got under way, the Americans' inadequate training, sometimes poor leadership, and lack of discipline were on full display. Officers lost control of their men, and straggling became a major problem. In some places, the Americans moved only yards at a time. After a breakthrough on 14 October, the advance again slowed. The commanding officers kept pouring men into what one doughboy called a "living death," and the AEF incurred horrendous losses. The Meuse-Argonne Campaign became the deadliest battle ever fought by U.S. forces in a foreign war, losing more than 26,000 killed and nearly 100,000 wounded. The doughboys courageously endured and adapted and won the battle, helping to speed the end of the war, but their victory came at excessive cost. It was achieved, historian David Kennedy writes, by sheer numbers, and "smothering the enemy with flesh."<sup>21</sup>

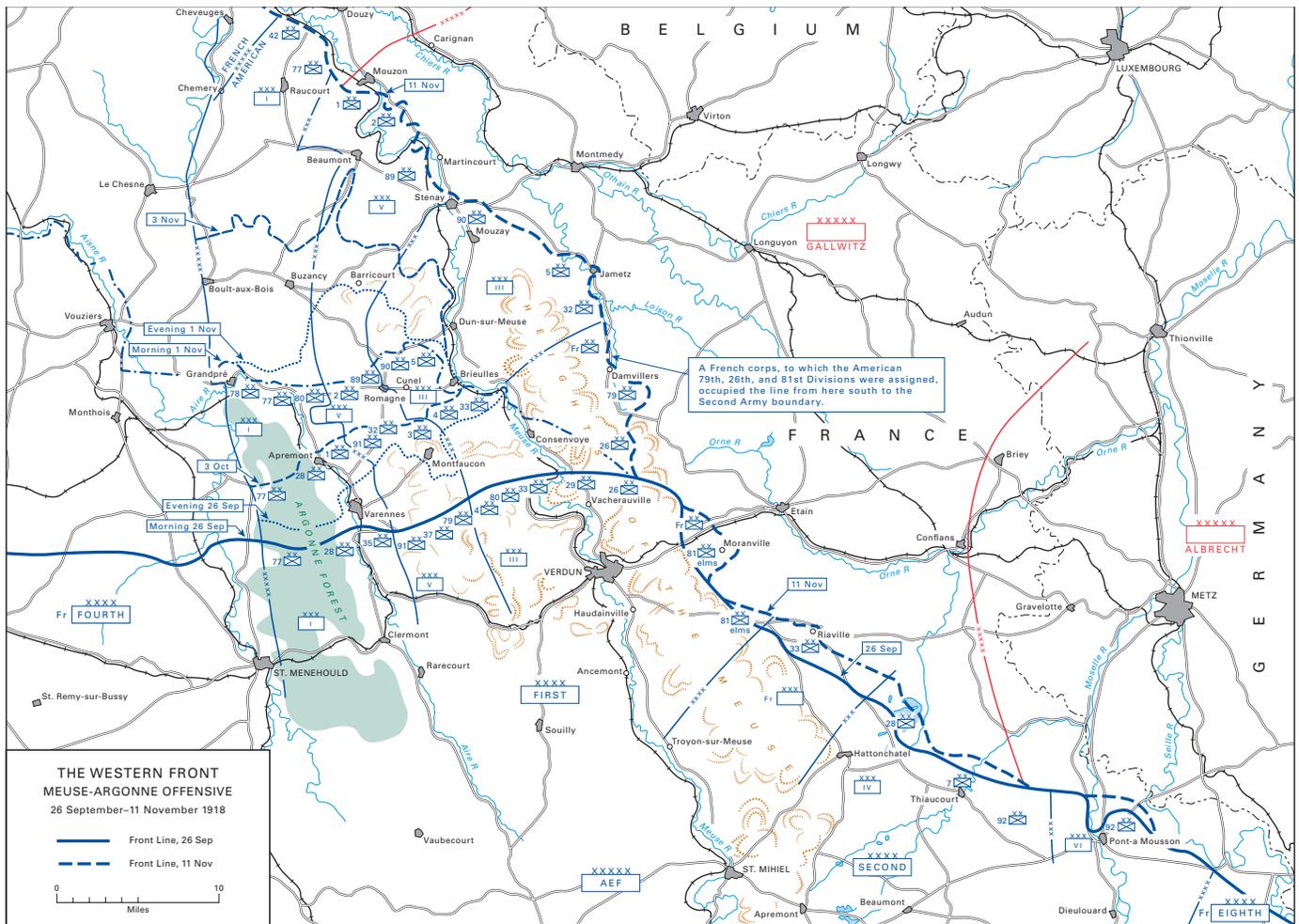
The 90th Division entered the battle on 21 October in its third and final phase. For the next three weeks, it



Courtesy of the author

**A bridge built by the 315th Engineers near Sassey-sur-Meuse**





**OCTOBER 26:** Two bombardments of our position today. 1 shell caved in my dugout another hit the opposite bank injuring Rosen and Pearson another hit our chow.

**OCTOBER 27:** More quiet today. Only light shelling. 5 Div. takes [?]. 4 then retreats out of it. 100 killed in retreat.

**OCTOBER 28:** Our relief failed to arrive. Planes drop leaflets wanting to know why we are fighting.

**OCTOBER 29:** Weather has been clear but we almost freeze at night in our holes on the banks of the Meuse.

**OCTOBER 30:** Another fairly quiet day but cold on the creek. Relieved in evening and went back

**OCTOBER 31:** Spent the [?] building a tent. Moved out in evening and our boys set artillery all night. Runners returned at night fall.

**NOVEMBER 1:** Barrage for another drive started at 1:30. 359 and 360 went over the top. We moved out at 3 p.m. and got in holes along the road.

**NOVEMBER 2:** Moved out at 8 p.m. to some recently captured billets and spent the night in comfort until 3 a.m. when we started to move.

**NOVEMBER 3:** Moved at 6 a.m. going over the top in reserve. Moved all day without sight of a German except the dead ones of the preceding days.

**NOVEMBER 4:** Spent night in the open and today living on a few reserve rations as our kitchens could not keep up with us. Had 2 meals in 3 days.

**NOVEMBER 5:** Moved further up last night and dug in. Moved 2 k. forward at 8 a.m. 358 moved about 8 km forward without resistance.

**NOVEMBER 6:** Dug in and spent a fairly quiet day without shelling.

**NOVEMBER 7:** Hoping for divisional relief as we have only about 60



Troops from Company D, 358th Infantry, carry food toward the front lines during the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, 25 October 1918.

men in the platoons. [Allied high commander, French marshal Ferdinand] Foch, meets German officers in France.

**NOVEMBER 8:** Digging in again today. There is more shelling activity in this sector as our artillery is just establishing.

**NOVEMBER 9:** Moved up again about 2 km at 8 p.m. and moved into holes left by 142 B[attalion].

**NOVEMBER 10:** Moved to Villers Francois (Meuse) and took billets. Artillery fire light. Germany given until 11 a.m. tomorrow to accept terms of armistice.

**NOVEMBER 11:** German guns and artillery cease fire at 11 a.m. for the first time in over 4 years. First time we were free from the roar of cannon in 3 mo.

**NOVEMBER 12:** Everyone happy. Fixed up our billet and fixed up a home. Made supper from German food, turnips, spuds, kraut, bread.<sup>23</sup>

The day of the armistice was a high point in Herring's time in France. It "was a great hour for us over here," he told his parents. "We have been under shell fire or near it for almost three months. It certainly is great to have things quiet again." Upon hearing reports that the war had been won "we about tore the billet down. We are all glad it is over as the prospects of laying in holes this winter were not very encouraging."<sup>24</sup>

Although he could not have realized it at the time, Herring's tour of duty in Europe was less than half completed at the signing of the armistice. Fearing instability or even revolution in Germany, and a possible breakdown of the peace talks, the victorious Allies provided in the armistice that their own armies would occupy the Rhineland region of western Germany to the left bank of the Rhine and the major cities of Coblenz, Mainz, and Cologne. Such a move would help ensure order, give them leverage in the peace talks, and, should war resume, offer a strategic edge. To the disgruntlement of U.S. military leaders, the Allies assigned the Americans only the northern part of the Coblenz bridgehead to occupy. The 90th Division was made part of a new Third Army of the U.S. Army of Occupation (AO) in Germany.<sup>25</sup>

Occupation duty was just as challenging, in its own way, as the war. The main enemies were boredom and thoughts of home. The officers sought various methods to keep the troops in line and maintain morale. The soldiers found their own ways to cope. Herring's diary entries and letters written after the armistice are far more numerous and candid than those written in wartime. His writings make clear the unique problems encountered by the AO troops in postwar Germany and how they dealt with them.

The long trek through northeastern France, Belgium, and Luxembourg to the occupation zone in Germany—called "the march" without any hint of affection—began for the 90th Division on 24 November, ended on 21 December, and by Herring's estimate covered some 300 kilometers.<sup>26</sup> The troops were on the road for twenty-nine days, with occasional days off for rest, and averaged between ten and thirty kilometers per day. Already beaten down from weeks in combat, they often marched in foul weather. "Hiked two hours in rain and snow with wet feet and a bad disposition," Herring reported on 18 December.<sup>27</sup> They had limited rations and billeted in barns, schools, houses, kitchens, or whatever was available. Evenings were often spent preparing for inspections. "The boys are crabby and anxious to go home," Herring confided to his diary on 26 November. Thursday, 28 November, was a "dreary Thanksgiving." The doughboys "feasted" on corned beef, beans, and hardtack. A highly anticipated football game was canceled because of bad weather.<sup>28</sup> The only cheering note of the march was the warm greetings received from French, Belgian, and, perhaps surprisingly, German villagers as the Americans passed along the route. "Hospitality of the Germans is remarkable everywhere we go," Herring wrote on 12 December.<sup>29</sup> One of the biggest challenges of the march was getting across the rugged Eifel range between the Rhine and Moselle Rivers, "the worst hills or mountains we have found in Europe," according to the Iowan.<sup>30</sup> Two days after their arrival in Gerolstein, a railroad town in southwestern Germany, and two days before Christmas, virtually all of Herring's company was put on arrest, confined to quarters, and given a week of extra hikes for stealing reserve rations of salmon and hardtack.

Christmas in Gerolstein was a bittersweet affair. It was dark by 1600 "and the rain came in drifts," Herring wrote to his younger sister,



Men of the 2d Battalion, 358th Infantry, passing through Vilcey-sur-Trey, 15 September 1918



Courtesy of the author

A postcard of Gerolstein, Germany, that belonged to George Herring

Bernice. “The billets are chilly, we had little smokin’ or anything to read. I think most of us were thinking of a better land and the folks at home and considering our own gloomy prospects.”<sup>31</sup>

Yet even far from home, the troops found some solace in the holiday. They were comfortably housed in a local hotel with bunks and electric lights, although, according to Herring, they were not warm enough. The town itself was in a summer resort area in a beautiful region of mountains and rivers famous for its wines, with miniature trains winding about the hills, and castles dating to the thirteenth century, a “fairylad,” he called it. The people were parochial and predominantly Roman Catholic. Herring attended Christmas mass in the local church, which was “crowded to the vestibule,” and had beautiful music from the pipe organ and choir. There was a Tannenbaum ceremony and candy and cigarettes were distributed. When the men returned to their quarters they got Christmas boxes and accumulated mail. “We were like kids again,” Herring told Bernice. “We ate and smoked until we had our fill. Twas not the candy or gum that pleased me most, it was the good old home-made fruitcake.” None of this could of course compensate for being away from home on the most

festive of holidays. “There is not the same bright cheery feeling among a strange people in a strange land and it has been hard to realize it was Christmas.”<sup>32</sup>

During the first months of the occupation, the weather remained cold, wet, and bleak, the mood sullen, and billet talk centered on going home. “A fellow here becomes a perpetual crab and there is plenty to crab about . . . a few good square meals might change one or the sight of the Statue of Liberty.” “We hear almost daily that we are going home in the near future and just as often that we will spend most of the winter here,” he penned on another occasion. “Every man in the Division is more than anxious to go back. Everyone appreciates more than ever what it means to live in a good country.” “Topic of conversation discussed everywhere is ‘going home,’” Herring noted in his diary on 13 January. On 4 February, he reported rumors “thick and fast about our leaving here for Russia [where the United States had also sent 7,000 troops as part of an Allied intervention], Coblenz or our embarkation point.” He would believe the latter, he added, only “when the boat enters New York harbor.” Even as he was writing, a fellow soldier came in with the “good” news that the 90th would be one of ten divisions to remain in

Germany. “If I find it is true I think I will jump off a cliff,” Herring wrote his parents. Finally, on 22 February, came the news the doughboys were waiting to hear: “Announced we are to sail in June. 4 months. Whew!” The date may have been later than hoped, but at least there was a date. From this point, Herring seemed to settle into his routine.<sup>33</sup>

To maintain morale and discipline under difficult conditions and to keep the troops ready in case the peace broke down, General John J. Pershing, the AEF commander, ordered a full regimen of military activities regardless of the weather: close order drill, parades, inspections, and ceremonies. Herring’s infantry unit did guard duty by walking the post eight hours out of every forty-eight. They drilled five hours a day. “[To] say the least, we are tired of it,” he complained. They participated in military ceremonies, on one occasion marching twelve kilometers each way and standing in freezing rain to see two senior officers decorated. They even conducted military exercises with live ammunition, “sham battles,” Herring called them, “like we are preparing for another war. I am anxious to get home before the next one starts,” he added. They also constructed new buildings for their own uses, improved existing buildings, repaired roads, and guarded railroads and bridges “so the Dutchmen [Germans] can’t blow them up which is very unlikely if they had a choice,” Herring commented sarcastically. During time off, they slept, wrote letters, and walked the streets of Gerolstein. “Gets pretty tiresome, the same thing every day.”<sup>34</sup>

With the Paris peace talks lagging, the combatants still technically at war, and morale among the doughboys sagging, AEF leaders instituted major changes. Drill and military exercises continued but were conducted less often and less rigorously. Schools were established with classes in such subjects as auto repair, welding, electronics, and agricultural sciences, to keep the soldiers occupied and help



Troops from the 315th Engineers, the 357th Infantry, and the 358th Infantry help build a road near Fey-en-Haye, c. September 1918.

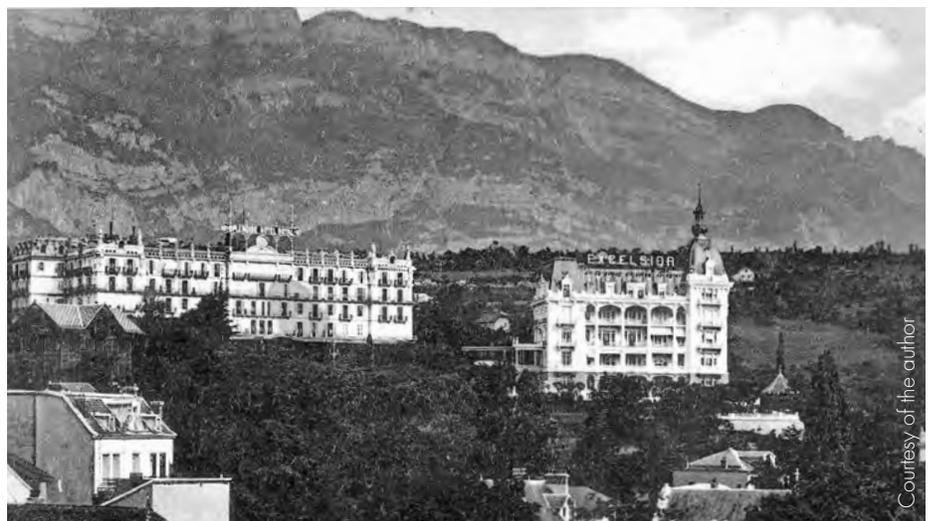
them readjust to civilian life. Leave policies for local travel, and even for travel in France, were liberalized, some of the officers going as far away as the Riviera. Vaudeville-like shows took place almost every night, some of them produced by the soldiers themselves. General Pershing also ordered the establishment of a broad range of athletic programs to keep the soldiers fit and boost morale. Using money and equipment provided by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and other groups, the various companies and regiments competed in football, soccer, basketball, baseball, boxing, and wrestling. The troops themselves laid out fields for football and baseball and converted historic castles, aircraft hangars, and even hotel rooms into indoor arenas. Many teams included college athletes; the competition was often quite intense.<sup>35</sup>

A wrestler at Iowa State College, Herring took full advantage of these programs. In early February, he traveled to the nearby town of Daun for wrestling matches, losing one of them to a soldier he called a "professional." Although only 5 foot 4 inches tall, he also played basketball—sometimes outdoors—and recorded one day practicing "in the snow with bare hands." When spring arrived, of course, it was baseball. Participation in athletics

broke up a generally dull routine by allowing travel to other towns in the U.S. occupation zone and the sharing of interesting experiences. The food was often better elsewhere. One night he slept in a jail—because no other space was available—a great conversation piece. Travel also enabled him to avoid onerous military duties. "I have done so little drilling I have been nicknamed 'gold-bricker' [a slang word coined during World War I to designate a slacker]," he told his sister, "but it takes a good soldier to miss formations and get away with it." "I have put in about three days in

three months of drilling. I have more different ways of getting out of it than anyone in the A.E.F. If drilling did much good I wouldn't mind it. But we expect to be out of it before long so might as well take it easy."<sup>36</sup>

Herring also availed himself of the opportunity for leave by visiting Aix-les-Bains, a posh resort in the French Alps frequented by European royalty and the very wealthy. The long and "tiresome" trip required a train ride back to France, then across the battlefields where he had fought, and through areas where his unit had trained. The trip was well worth the time. "All kinds of things to eat, fine beds to sleep in, no reveille, mess kits, or taps. Free entertainment shows, vaudeville and movies, plenty to smoke and drink," he exclaimed on arrival. "Just to lie in bed, yes a real bed of the American type and to get up when one pleases and get your meals almost when you please are luxuries compared to army life," he told his sister. He described the hotel built for European tourists as "far better than Des Moines has to offer . . . with billiard rooms, dance hall, bar, hot and cold radiators, and everything. We had pretty Frog [French] girls for K.P.s, I mean waitresses, and real French cooking." He took a side trip to the mile-high Mont Revard, from which he could view Mont Blanc and

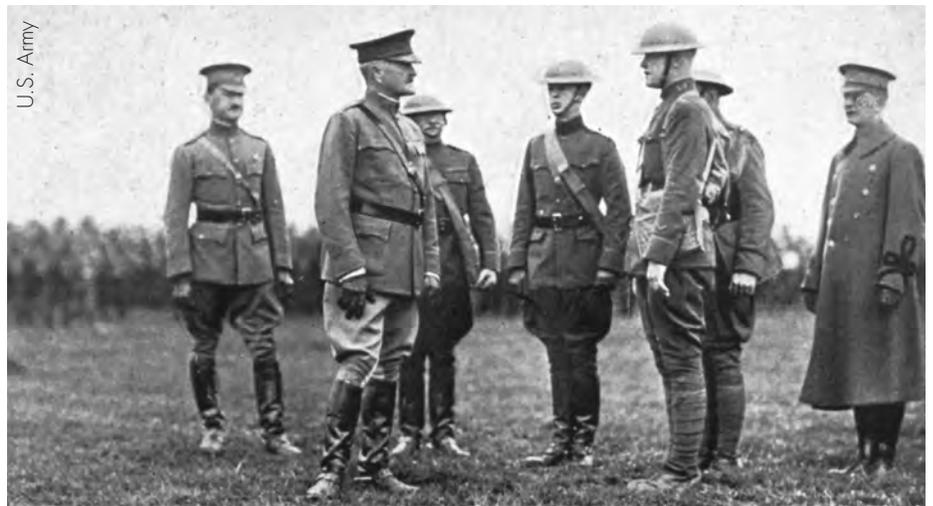


A postcard showing two of the luxurious hotels, the Splendid and the Excelsior, in Aix-les-Bains, France

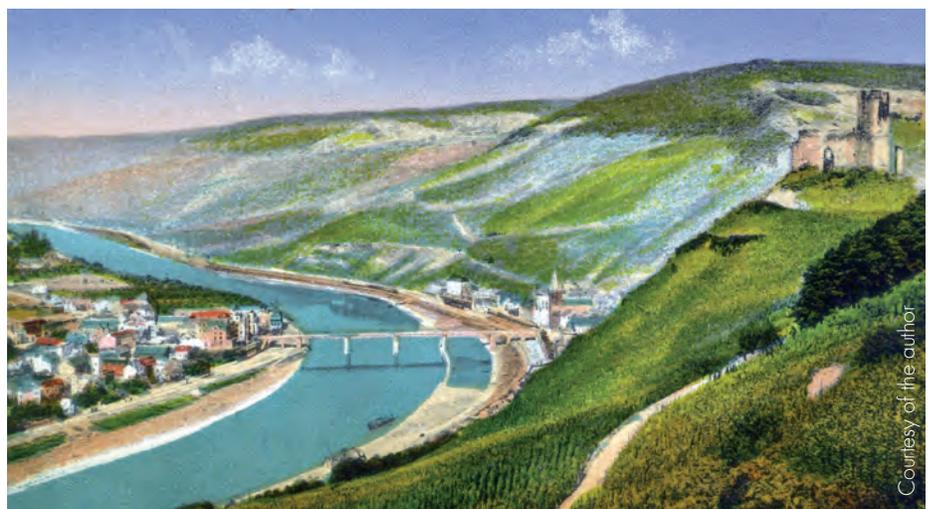
the Great St. Bernard Pass. He spent another afternoon crossing Lake Bourget and visiting Hautecombe Abbey, which was founded by St. Bernard and famous for its statuary and the tombs of saints and Italian rulers. Across the lake, he told his sister, was the pass through which Hannibal crossed from Spain into Italy in 218 BC. "I might have been more interested in school when I studied the Punic Wars in Latin," he added, "if I had known I would see the place where Hannibal and I had such a hard time getting the elephants across." Herring and his companions returned to base "poorer but wiser men" and just in time to take up pick and shovel on a road repair detail in a nearby town. "I feel better and a little more contented after having gotten away awhile," he told his parents. "I have never been very blue or homesick but more disappointed at the orders that come out. Of course we all think of the U.S. long and often and it is the land of our dreams."<sup>37</sup>

Much of the time following Herring's return from leave in early March was spent marking time. Signs of spring lifted spirits among the occupation troops. "I almost enjoy life," Herring admitted later in the month. He continued to thrive on what he called "Dutydodging," mostly through athletics, and a distinctive short-timer's attitude crept into his writing. He contrived to avoid General Pershing's inspection of the 90th Division through a five-day trip to play baseball in Bernkastel, which he called "the most beautiful town I have seen in Germany." "I wouldn't mind seeing him [Pershing] but the accompanying bother is what I don't like."<sup>38</sup>

As the date of departure neared, discipline broke down. "Our captain is a hard-boiled one and is trying to make soldiers out of us but no one is interested in such stuff now," he told his parents. The military had tried to limit drunkenness by restricting the times beer and wine could be purchased, but Herring's diary contains several references to drunken binges, one of which ended in what he called a "glass barrage."



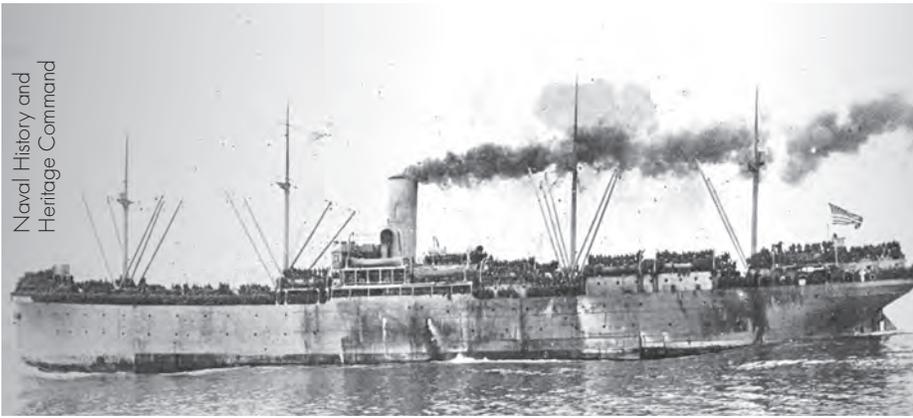
General Pershing reviewing the 90th Division at Wengerohr, Germany, 24 April 1919



A postcard belonging to George Herring showing Bernkastel, Germany



Bernkastel, Germany, where the 90th Division had its headquarters



The USS *Edgar F. Luckenbach*, its decks crowded with troops, returning to the United States from Europe in 1919

More ominous was apparently what would now be called a “fragging” incident in which grenades were thrown at an officer and shots fired. All of the troops at Gerolstein were punished for the actions of a few by an eighteen-kilometer hike with packs.<sup>39</sup>

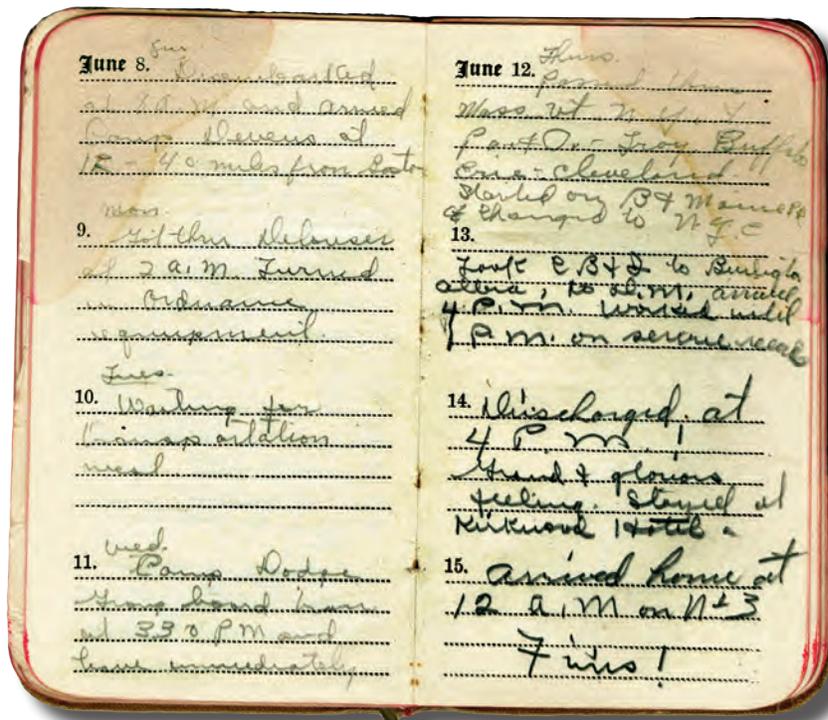
Perhaps mercifully, the 90th Division’s departure from Europe came ahead of schedule. The men loaded onto trains on 18 May, pulled out early the next morning, retraced by rail “the march” of December 1918 and its French battlefields, and arrived at the coastal city of St. Nazaire on the evening of 21 May. They remained in the port city for seven days, where, Herring observed, “All we do is play ball and go to shows and sleep.” The next day he was put on K.P. duty where 10,000 meals were served, but he did manage to get “my best feed in A.E.F.”<sup>40</sup> Herring’s regiment boarded the troopship USS *Edgar F. Luckenbach* at 1100 on 28 May and set sail four hours later. There was the usual seasickness, but as the ship approached Boston the excitement mounted. “Voyage is calm,” Herring reported. “Everyone is happy.” The ship arrived in port at 1800 on 7 June to a celebratory welcome.<sup>41</sup> On 9 June, after delousing and turning in equipment, Herring boarded a train for Camp Dodge where the adventure had all begun. He was discharged at 1600 on 14 June, a “Grand and glorious feeling,” and arrived in Creston at midnight on

15 June. The last entry in his diary read simply: “Finis!”<sup>42</sup>

Herring’s letters offer only hints at his feeling about his time in combat. He once spoke of the “pitiful” things he had seen on the field of battle. Several times he candidly acknowledged the dangers he faced. He advised his younger brother, Tim, that if he wanted to join the Army “take my advice and join the Salvation Army. The other kind is too dangerous. It isn’t hard to count the men who were with the company

every day thru it all.” Of the tall tales he would tell upon his return—the war stories—he quickly added that “it would be hard to exaggerate the war we have been thru.” “Sometimes I can almost see my serial number on the shells,” he told his mother shortly before his return home. As he passed the old battlefields en route to Aix-les-Bains in March 1919 he expressed gratitude that he was “still able to navigate” and his good fortune that “it is over instead of bearing a wooden cross on some bleak hillside or lying in muddy trenches with shells beating a tattoo on the earth.” Looking forward to celebrating the Fourth of July at home, he admitted that the sound of firecrackers might unsettle him. “If I hear them you can’t get me out of the cellar all day.” Yet on several occasions he also admitted that, despite the hardships, he was “glad I was in it.” He noted that he felt this way only after the war was over. “I would never have been satisfied,” he wrote, had he not participated.<sup>43</sup>

The wartime experiences of George Herring are not exceptional in any way. He went in the Army as a private



The last pages from George Herring’s diary

Courtesy of the author

and came out a private first class. He won no medals or decorations. Yet like hundreds of thousands of other young American men, he did his duty and was honorably discharged. In combat, he performed a difficult, important, and highly dangerous assignment. He experienced the terror of being lost in no-man's-land while battle raged around him. He endured hardships that most cannot begin to imagine and witnessed unspeakable horrors with courage and stoicism. Much like Pvt. Charles Post of Spanish-American War fame, who quipped, "I . . . survived," so too had George Herring. He had fought in the "War to End All Wars" and had survived.<sup>44</sup>



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

George C. Herring Sr., the subject of this article, earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture at Iowa State College after the war. He joined the faculty at what was then Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech), where, for a time, he also coached wrestling. He retired in 1963 as associate director of the Virginia Agricultural Extension Service.

Additionally, the author would like to thank his former colleague and good friend, Dr. John M. Carland, for his encouragement with this article and for his close, critical, and most helpful review of the manuscript.

## NOTES

1. Ltr, Union County Draft Board to George C. Herring, 8 Apr 1918, George C. Herring Papers (GCHP), University of Kentucky Library.
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3. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 28 Apr 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
4. *Ibid.*
5. For the formation of the 90th Division and Camp Travis, see Lonnie J. White, *The 90th Division in World War I* (Manhattan,

Kans.: Sunflower University Press, 1996), pp. 1–73, and George Wythe, *A History of the 90th Division* (reprint: Lavergne, Tenn.: Kessinger Publishing, 2010), pp. 1–10.

6. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 24 May 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
7. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 14 Jun 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
8. Gary Mead, *The Doughboys: America and the First World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 143–46.
9. Ltr, Herring to Mother, July 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
10. White, *90th Division*, p. 76; Wythe, *History*, p. 13.
11. Wythe, *History*, pp. 13–17.
12. Ltr, Herring to Mother, 15 Aug 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
13. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 2 Sep 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
14. John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2000), p. 411.
15. For an incisive account of the St. Mihiel Offensive, see David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 192–94; for the doughboy experience, see Mead, *Doughboys*, pp. 292–306.
16. Keegan, *First World War*, pp. 411–12.
17. White, *90th Division*, pp. 96–115; Wythe, *History*, pp. 38–76; Edward G. Lengel, *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2008), pp. 369–70.
18. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 1 Oct 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
19. Herring Diary, 12–30 Sep 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
20. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 1 Oct 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
21. Kennedy, *Over Here*, p. 204. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive is analyzed in Kennedy, *Over Here*, pp. 195–205, Mead, *Doughboys*, pp. 299–330, and Lengel, *To Conquer Hell*, especially pp. 150, 412–20.
22. White, *90th Division*, pp. 116–56; Wythe, *History*, pp. 77–131.
23. Herring Diary, 18 Oct–12 Nov 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
24. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 13 Nov 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
25. Alexander F. Barnes, "'Representatives of a Victorious People': The Doughboy Watch on the Rhine," *Army History* (Fall 2010) p. 7. The standard account is Keith L. Nelson, *Victors Divided: America and the Allies in Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).
26. Wythe, *History*, pp. 182–84; White, *90th Division*, pp. 169–73.
27. Herring Diary, 18 Dec 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
28. Herring Diary, 26 Nov 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
29. Herring Diary, 12 Dec 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
30. Herring Diary, 11 Dec 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
31. Ltr, Herring to Bernice Herring, 25 Dec 1918, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 1 Jan 1919; Herring Diary, 13 Jan 1919; Ltr, Herring to Folks, 4 Feb 1919; Herring Diary, 23 Feb 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
34. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 26 Jan 1919; Herring Diary, 6 Jan 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
35. These programs are covered in White, *90th Division*, pp. 178–79; Wythe, *History*, pp. 192–95; and Barnes, "Representatives," p. 15.
36. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 4 Feb 1919; Ltr, Herring to Gertrude Herring, 9 Feb 1919; Herring Diary, 3, 8, 10, 21 Feb 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
37. Herring Diary, 28 Feb, 1–9 Mar 1919; Ltr, Herring to Gertrude, 9 Mar 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
38. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 23 Mar 1919, 20 Apr 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
39. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 28 Mar 1919; Herring Diary, 16 Mar 1919, 3 May 1919, 4 May 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
40. Herring Diary, 24–25 May 1919, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
41. Herring Diary, 6 Jun 1919; 7–15 Jun 1919.
42. Ltr, Herring to Gertrude, 9 Mar 1919; Ltr, Herring to Tim Herring, 12 Feb 1919; Ltr, Herring to Mother, 11 May 1919; Ltr, Herring to Tim, undated, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
43. Ltr, Herring to Folks, 1 Oct 1918; Ltr, Herring to Tim, undated; Ltr, Herring to Gertrude, 9 Feb 1919; Ltr, Herring to Mother, 11 May 1919; Ltr, Herring to Gertrude, 9 Mar 1919; Ltr, Herring to Mother, 11 May 1919; Ltr, Herring to Gertrude, 26 Apr 1919; Ltr, Herring to Tim, undated, GCHP, University of Kentucky Library.
44. Charles Johnson Post, *The Little War of Private Post* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), p. 340.

# U.S. ARMY ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

## RESTORATION OF THE M1916 WHITE ARMORED CAR NO. 2

BY DIETER STENGER

During World War I, the U.S. Army saw the formation of the modern division, the advent of armored forces, the establishment of the Army Air Service, the creation of the Army's present-day branches, much of its current staff structure, and many of its contemporary installations.

The U.S. Army first experimented with armored vehicles during the Mexican Expedition from March 1916 to February 1917, led by Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing. Lt. George S. Patton, who participated in the hunt to capture Francisco "Pancho" Villa during the expedition, converted three Dodge Model 30 touring cars into armored vehicles by attaching steel plates to their sides. Patton employed the armored cars at San Miguelito, where he surprised and killed Julio Cardenas, a lieutenant of Pancho Villa. The White Motor Company, based in Cleveland, Ohio, tested several armored car prototypes, alongside many trucks used by General Pershing, to shuttle supplies the 200 miles from Camp Columbus, New Mexico, to a field base at Colonia Dublan, Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially a 4-wheeled, 2-wheel-drive civilian car chassis with an armored superstructure and turret, the vehicle was powered by a 4-cylinder, 36-horsepower White truck engine and carried a turret-mounted Hotchkiss M1909 .30-caliber Benet-Mercie light machine gun. The vehicle had a top speed of twenty-one miles per hour, a range of one hundred miles, and was operated by a crew of three.<sup>2</sup>

The White Armored Car No. 2 served both French and American troops during the war but with noticeable limitations directly associated with repurposing a civilian vehicle for military use.

In preparation for the World War I Centennial, which runs from April 2017 to November 2018, an M1916 White Armored Car No. 2 was restored for display. Len Dyer, director of the National Armor and Cavalry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia, oversaw the refurbishment of the vehicle at the museum's restoration facility. The rebuilding effort focused on fabricating many parts that were missing, making the turret fully functional, replacing corroded plate metal and all the solid rubber tires, and repainting the vehicle. The M1916 White Armored Car No. 2 will accompany a six-ton Renault M1917 tank, an M1897 field gun with caisson, and an M1906 Studebaker escort wagon on a traveling macro-artifact exhibit that will tour the country during the World War I Centennial period.

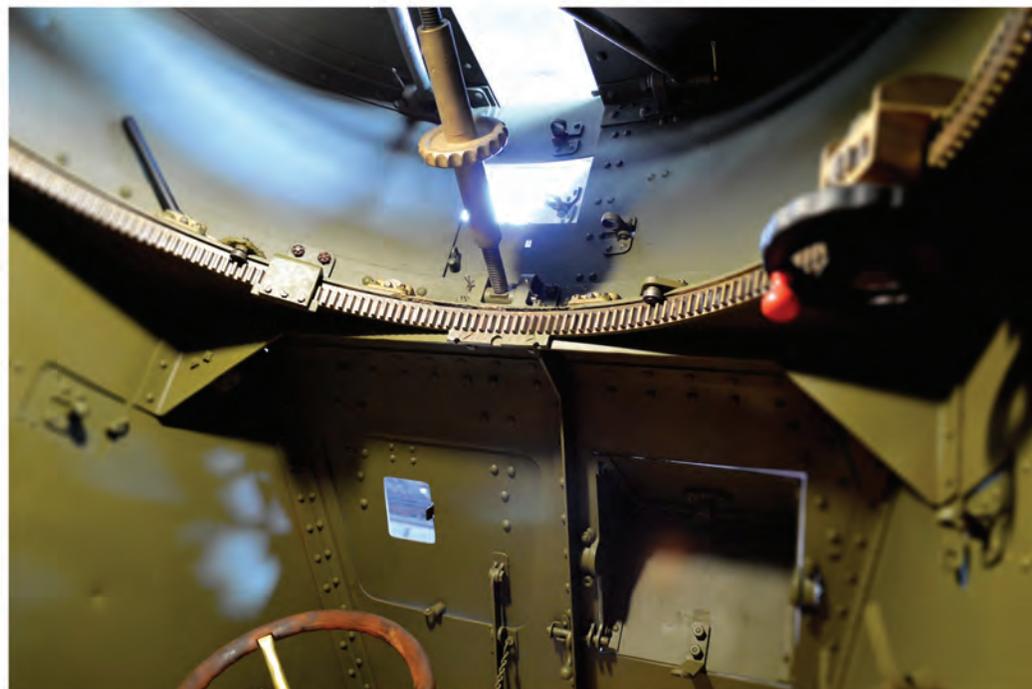
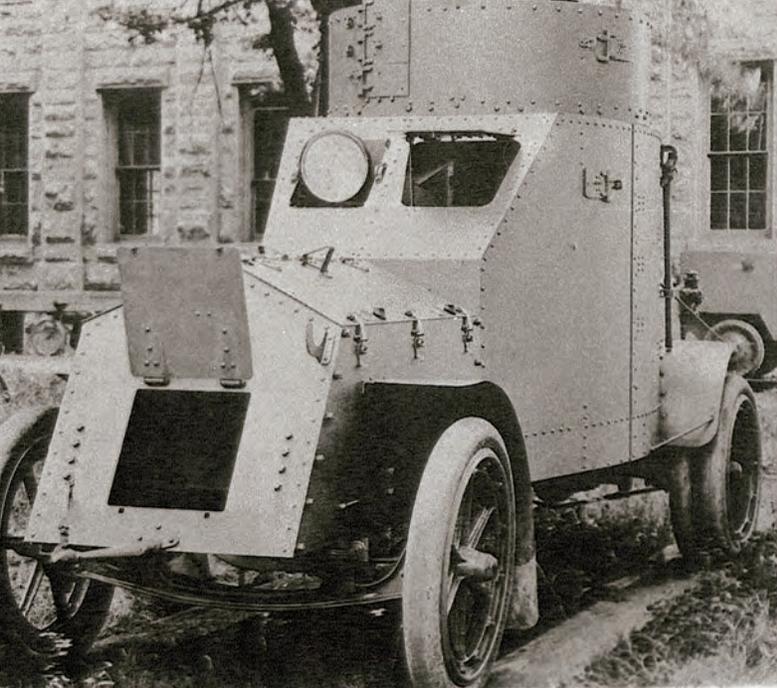


Dieter Stenger serves at the Museum Support Center as the curator of firearms and edged weapons.

### NOTES

1. Albert Mroz, *American Military Vehicles of World War I: An Illustrated History of Armored Cars, Staff Cars, Motorcycles, Ambulances, Trucks, Tractors, and Tanks* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2009), pp. 66–73.

2. "White Armored Car Infantry Support Vehicle (1915)," Military Factory, [http://www.militaryfactory.com/armor/detail.asp?armor\\_id=816](http://www.militaryfactory.com/armor/detail.asp?armor_id=816), accessed 17 Jan 2017.



# U.S. ARMY MUSEUM FEATURE

## THE WEST POINT MUSEUM FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION EXHIBITS

BY DAVID M. REEL

The West Point Museum has developed several new exhibitions to mark the centennial of World War I. Encompassing space within four galleries, the upgraded exhibits enhance the outstanding collection of artifacts on display within the nation's oldest military museum.

The gallery "Championing a Nation: The Committee on Public Information and World War I" focuses on the educational and informative use of American artists to develop graphic art and fine art that inspired and aroused a nation (*Image D*). Featured is artwork by Lester Hornby, William Norman Ritchie, and Joseph Pennell. In the "American Wars" gallery, highlights include the overcoat and presentation sword of General of the Armies John J. Pershing, who graduated from West Point in 1886 (*Image E*).

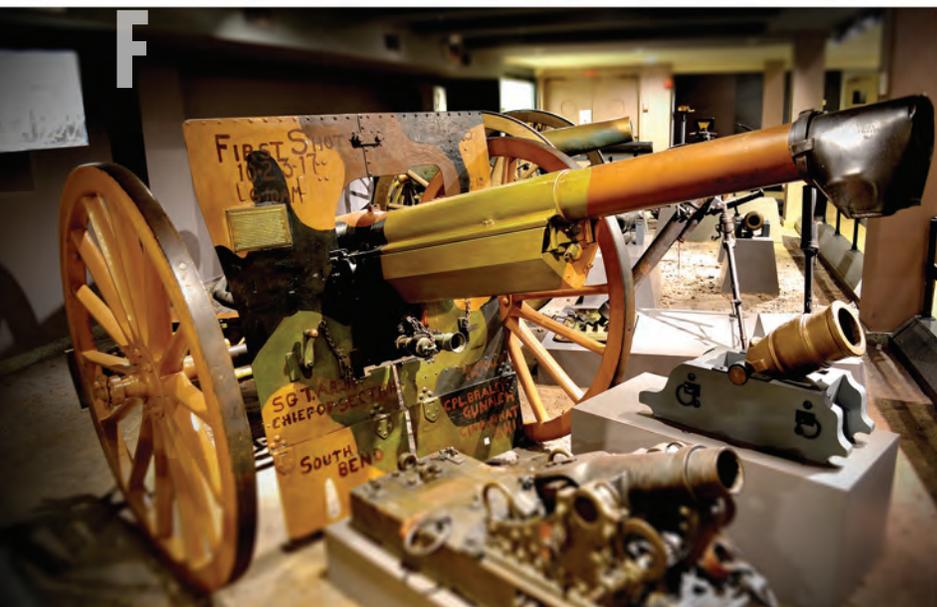
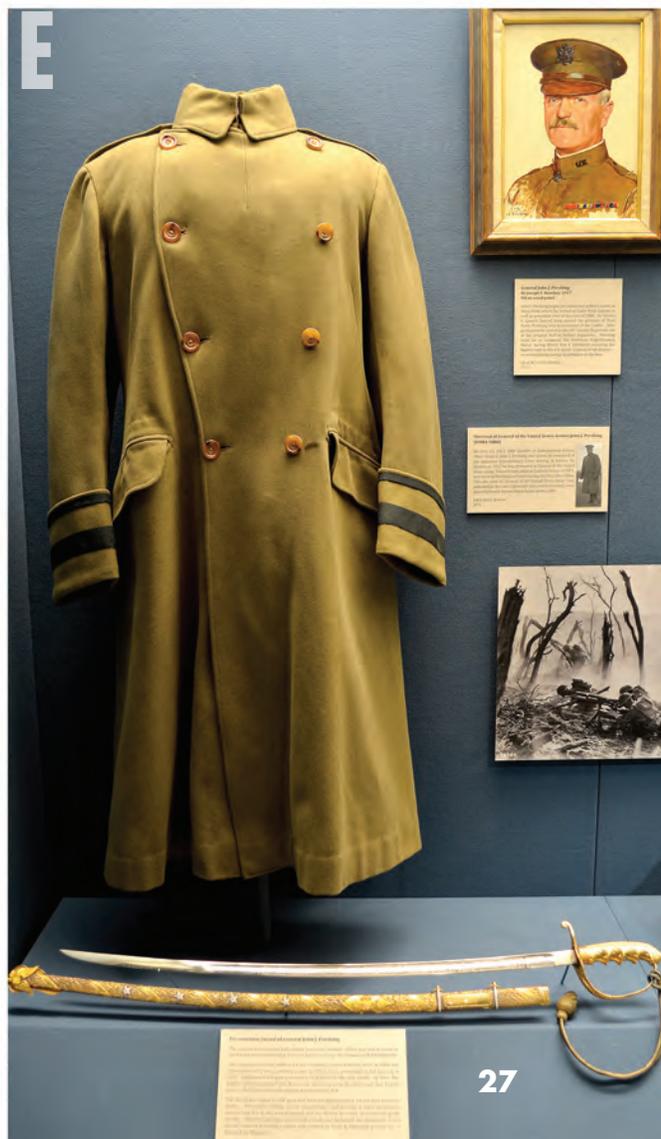
As part of the West Point Museum's exhibits tied directly to the training and education of the United States Corps of Cadets, the "History of Warfare" gallery contains seven displays that detail the progression of the Allied and Central Powers with special focus on technological and weapons advancements (*Image A*). Examples of chemical weapons, communication devices, body armor, and uniform dress portray the creativity and resourcefulness used by all sides. One highlight is a display of period uniforms from 1916 in which the battle dress reflects the drab colors that had replaced the colorful dress uniforms of the pre-1914 era (*Image C*).

Not to be missed in the "Large Weapons" gallery is the French 75-mm. field gun, which fired the first American shot against German troops. Its shield bears the names of the gun crew who participated in the historic event on 23 October 1917 (*Image F*). The gun was shipped by General Pershing to his alma mater in June 1918. Adjacent to the field gun is a U.S. Model 1917 Six-Ton Special Tractor (Tank) of the type used by American forces (*Image B*).

The West Point Museum is open daily 1030–1615 (Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day) and is located at 2110 New South Post Road, West Point, New York 10996. Admission to the museum is free.

David M. Reel is the director of the West Point Museum at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Annette D. Amerman** has worked with the Marine Corps History Division since 1995 and became the head of the Historical Reference Branch in 2015. She holds degrees from Shenandoah University and George Mason University, and is nearing completion of her doctorate at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. In addition to her daily work, she is coordinating the Marine Corps' World War I centennial commemorative publications.



# DEVIL DOGS WITH ARMY WINGS



## MARINES WITH THE AEF AIR SERVICE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

By ANNETTE D. AMERMAN

### INTRODUCTION

On 30 July 1918, the first elements of the Marine Corps' 1st Marine Aviation Force disembarked at Brest, France, and were assigned to the Navy's Northern Bombing Group. Due to the lack of functional American aircraft, the aviators found themselves instead flying British aircraft in combat over the Western Front the very next month. Shortly before the end of the war, with enough operational aircraft of their own, the Marines formed the Day Wing of the Northern Bombing Group and conducted fourteen raids over the German lines. This historical narrative has remained unchanged regarding the date that the first Marine aviators arrived in France and conducted their initial aerial combat operations over the Western Front during the First World War. For nearly one hundred years, this widely accepted account did not provide a full and accurate portrayal of Marines

and aviation in the war. Six individual marines arrived in France as early as 1917, were trained by the Army, received Army wings, fought with Army squadrons, and, in some cases, died with the Army. Identifying these unique marines and determining how they came to fly for the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Air Service is the goal of this piece.

Buried toward the end of Maj. Edwin N. McClellan's *The United States Marine Corps in the World War* (published in 1920, reprinted 1968 and 2015) is a small table of statistics regarding Marine Corps aviation in World War I. McClellan's chart accounts for the number of squadrons overseas, officers and enlisted in France, trainees, raids flown with the British, raids by Marine squadrons, and more. Within this chart is the number of "Marine officers serving with Army Air Service, American Expeditionary Forces . . . 6."<sup>1</sup> No further explanation is offered by McClellan, the first director of Marine Corps History.

The earliest Marine aviators such as Alfred A. Cunningham and Roy Stanley Geiger were heralded as innovators, and the members of the Northern Bombing Group were recognized as the forefathers of aerial resupply and close air support.<sup>2</sup> However, the six marines who flew with the U.S. Army have been largely omitted, or more likely, simply forgotten. This gives rise to many questions: Who were these six men? What role did they play? How did they become assigned to the AEF Air Service? Where does their service fit into the larger history of Marine Corps aviation in the First World War?

### RECORDS OF SERVICE IN THE AEF AIR SERVICE

While research to identify the sixth marine continues, a great deal of information has been gathered on the remaining five. Their tenure with the AEF Air Service is unique to the history of marines in the First



San Diego Air & Space Museum Archives

**Alfred A. Cunningham, shown as a first lieutenant, c. 1912**

World War, and it is imperative to understand how they came to fly with the Army, the contributions they made to the war, and their place in the larger history of American military aviation.

### **KENNETH PICKENS CULBERT**

Kenneth Pickens Culbert was born on 22 August 1895 to William H. and Emma L. Culbert in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Culbert entered Harvard University in 1913 but did not graduate. On 5 July 1917, he enrolled in the Marine Corps Reserve as a provisional second lieutenant and reported to Marine Barracks Quantico, Virginia, to begin his instruction at the Officers' Training Camp. The 6th Regiment was formed at Quantico in the late summer of 1917, and Culbert was attached to the 74th Company after completing his officer training. On 16 September 1917, Culbert's unit departed aboard the USS *Henderson* for France.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing in his official record or other documents covering Culbert's life before his enlistment indicated any previous pilot training or other inclination to fly, thus making his transfer to aviation a seemingly odd

one. However, the first indication appeared in Culbert's only fitness report, filed while still on board the *Henderson*. An annotation by his commanding officer stated that he believed "he [Culbert] would be an excellent risk on aviation duty."<sup>4</sup> A memorial biography published by Harvard University after the war stated that Culbert was so interested in aviation that he had secured his own orders to aviation duty. These orders were issued on 16 October 1917, just ten days after Culbert's arrival in France, and directed him to attend aeronautical school.<sup>5</sup>

Culbert completed his training as an aerial observer on 31 March 1918 and transferred to the 1st Aero Squadron the next day.<sup>6</sup> The squadron began active reconnaissance operations over the Western Front on 4 April 1918, and over the next six and a half weeks, Culbert participated in at least three reconnaissance missions as observer and gunner.<sup>7</sup> He was cited for gallantry in action for a mission flown on 15 May 1918:

While on a mission to photograph enemy gas projectors, Lt. Culbert, with his pilot, descended to five hundred meters over the enemy



U.S. Marine Corps

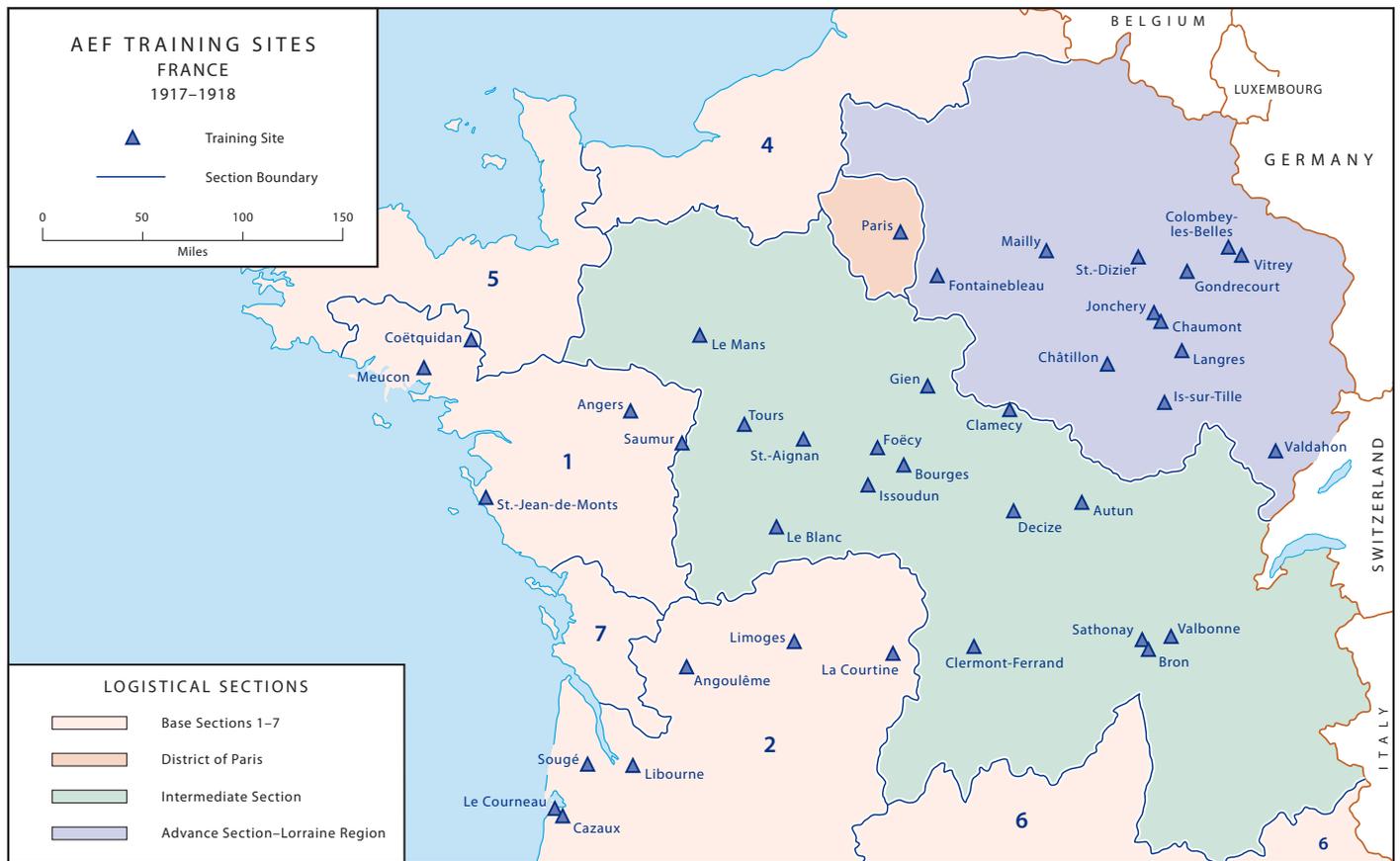
**Roy Stanley Geiger, shown as a lieutenant general, c. 1945**



U.S. Marine Corps

**Kenneth P. Culbert, shown as a second lieutenant, wearing his Army observer wings on his Marine Corps uniform**

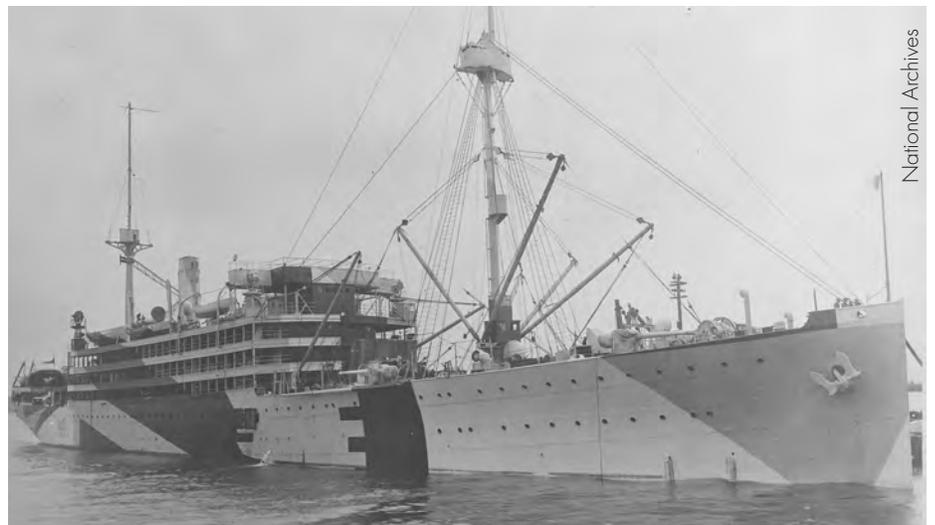
second line trenches and secured the photographs, despite heavy enemy antiaircraft and machine-gun fire. Although their plane was severely damaged by enemy fire they completed their mission and returned with the photographs.<sup>8</sup>



Just one week later, Culbert and pilot Lt. Walter V. Barnaby were assigned another photography mission.

About five o'clock on the afternoon of 22 May, 1918, while flying over the lines near St. Mihiel, the plane, apparently struck by a German anti-aircraft shell, became unmanageable and crashed just behind our lines, the pilot being killed instantaneously and Culbert rendered unconscious. He was taken at once to the American hospital at Sebastopol Farm, just north of Toul, where he died at midnight without having regained consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

The French government posthumously awarded Culbert the Croix de Guerre stating he was a "young officer with a big heart animated with the purest sense of duty, who demonstrated sangfroid courage and determination in the course of several reconnaissances [sic] on the enemy."<sup>10</sup> After the war,

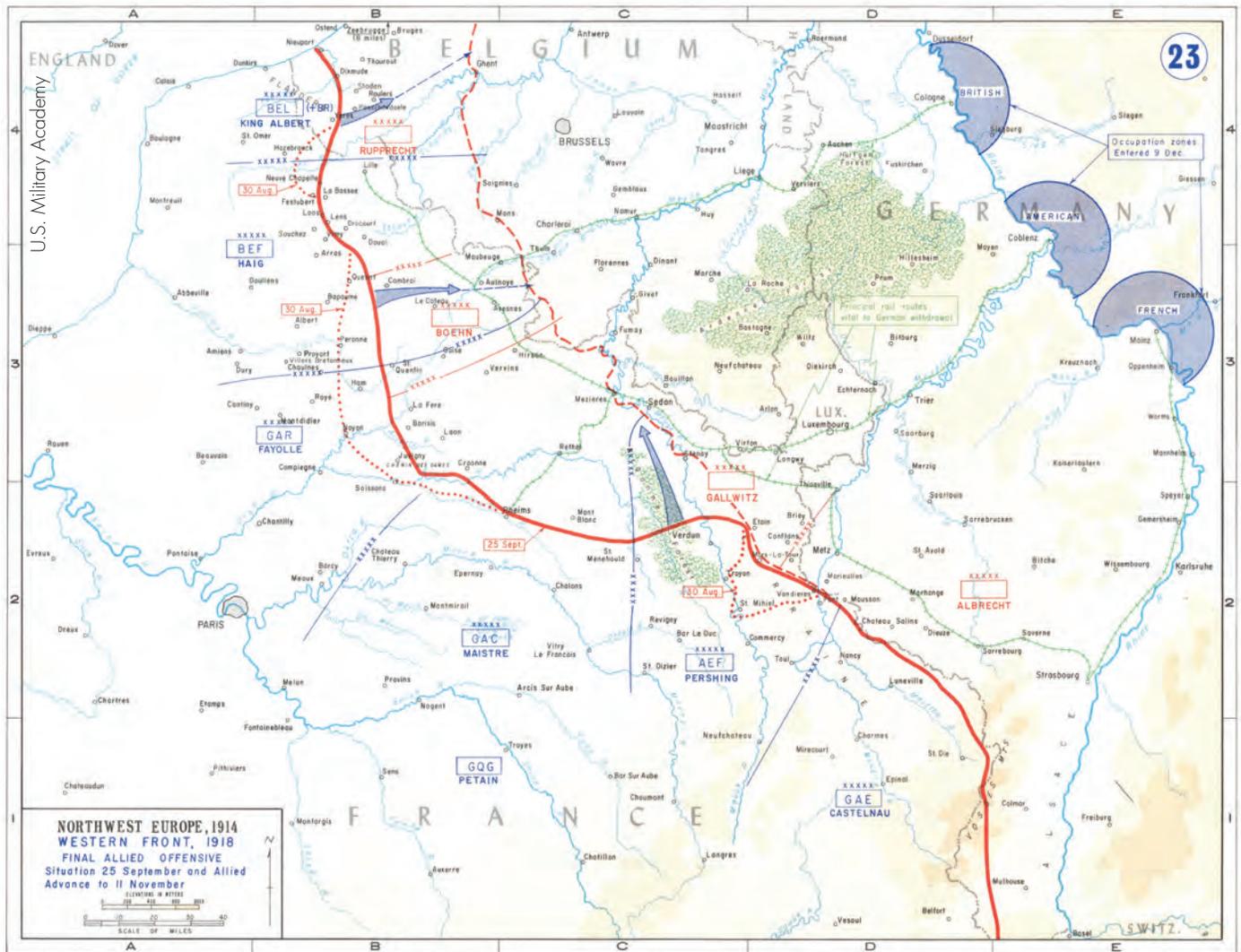


The USS *Henderson*, c. 1918

Culbert's brother, a lieutenant in the Navy, presented a silver cup to the squadron "in appreciation for the squadron's kindness to his brother in life and death."<sup>11</sup>

While there is not a wealth of documentary evidence indicating Culbert's own desire to fly, the available information seems to

indicate that he actively participated in his reassignment to aviation. The lingering question is why Culbert did not fly for the Marine Corps despite his apparent pride regarding his service as a marine. "I counted it a greater honour [sic] to be a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps than a higher officer in the Reserve Army when I



received my commission, at which time both choices were open to me.”<sup>12</sup> Culbert’s awards of the Silver Star and Croix de Guerre make him stand out from his fellow marines because they are possibly the first decorations received by any marine for action in the First World War.

### ALLAN MACROSSIE JR.

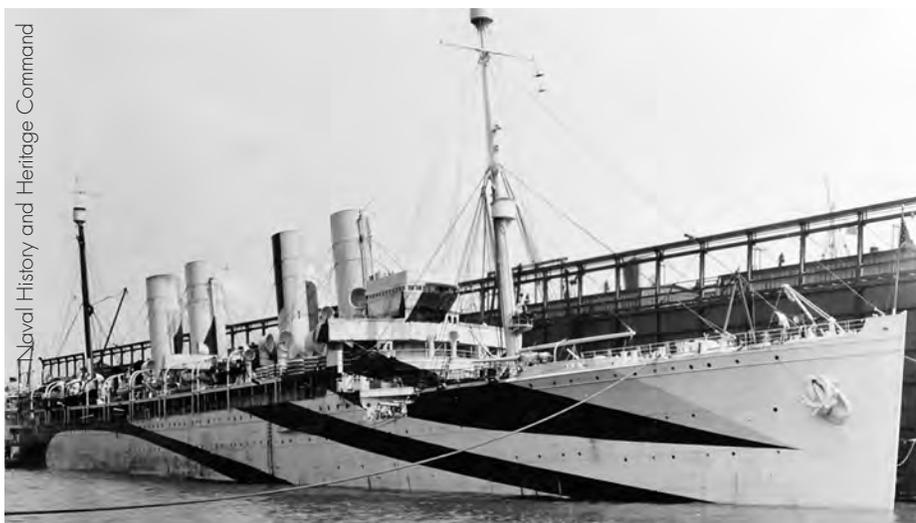
During World War I, many men entering the Marine Corps officer ranks were graduates or former students of some of the most prestigious universities in the country. Allan MacRossie Jr. was born 3 December 1893, in the suburban area of New York City and graduated from Columbia University.<sup>13</sup> On 29 March 1916, he started his military service with the New York National Guard’s 1st Motor Battery, an armored car unit equipped with “rapid-fire guns and a high-speed

motor.”<sup>14</sup> He served for fifteen months as a private before leaving to enroll as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve.<sup>15</sup>

MacRossie reported to the Officers’ Training Camp at Quantico on 28 July 1917, and the following month he and four other second lieutenants were transferred to the 1st Field Artillery Regiment at Quantico.<sup>16</sup> He departed the United States for France aboard the *USS Von Steuben* on 24 October 1917 while attached to the 83d Company, 6th Regiment, and arrived on 19 November. MacRossie’s tenure with the 83d Company was short-lived. On 15 January 1918, he was detached and sent to Aero Observer School at Tours, France, where he completed his initial training in April.<sup>17</sup> MacRossie was transferred to Salm 30, a squadron with the 5th French Army, to participate in on-the-job training with an operational



First Lt. Allan MacRossie Jr., (left), with an unidentified pilot, c. 1918



USS *Von Steuben*, c. 1918



Maj. Gen. George Barnett,  
commandant of the Marine Corps,  
c.1918

squadron.<sup>18</sup> He was described by his French instructors as a cheerful and intelligent officer who learned their methods of observation with ease.<sup>19</sup>

His training with the French complete, MacRossie was reassigned on 15 June 1918 to the Air Service's 99th Aero Squadron (Observation) as an observer.<sup>20</sup> During the next three and a half months, he accumulated nearly ten hours of flight time, mostly participating in reconnaissance flights over the German trenches.<sup>21</sup> In an interesting twist, MacRossie's father

was also in France and was in regular contact with his son. On 5 October 1918, Allan MacRossie Sr. wrote to the commandant of the Marine Corps, Maj. Gen. George Barnett, regarding his son's medical condition stating that "the constant flying at the front which he has been doing for a period of some months has begun to undermine his nerves and strength."<sup>22</sup> Just six days later, on 11 October, his son was sent to Evacuation Hospital #6, diagnosed with influenza, and did not return to his squadron.<sup>23</sup> Because the elder MacRossie's letter had not yet reached the commandant, it is unlikely the correspondence had any effect on his son's removal from the front. MacRossie returned to the United States in March 1919 and served five more months at the Brooklyn Navy Yard before resigning his commission in the Marine Corps, having reached the rank of captain.<sup>24</sup>

instruction. Nearly a month later, on 18 July 1917, Lowe was detached from Winthrop and sent to the Officers' Training Camp.<sup>25</sup>

At Quantico, Lowe was assigned to the 1st Machine Gun Battalion under the command of Maj. Edward B. Cole; later, the unit was redesignated as the 6th Machine Gun Battalion upon arrival in France. Lowe was among 750 other marines and sailors who left for France aboard the USS *DeKalb* on 8 December 1917.<sup>26</sup> Once in Europe, Lowe was assigned to the 5th Regiment and began training for trench warfare; however, on 12 January 1918, his infantry training was cut short when he was ordered to Aero Observer School at Tours.<sup>27</sup>

After completing his initial training in late February, Lowe was sent for additional training in aerial reconnaissance at observation school in Amanty, France. He remained there until 24 April when he received orders to join the French 52d Squadron that was operating at the front near Chalon-sur-Marne. Lowe remained with the unit until 20 June when he was transferred to the American 90th Aero Squadron (Observation), which was based at Ourches and working on the St. Mihiel sector between Apremont and Reminville.<sup>28</sup>

During the summer of 1918, the 90th Aero Squadron participated in numerous photo reconnaissance



Edward B. Cole, shown as a first lieutenant, c. 1914

### WILLIAM OSCAR LOWE

A third marine who wore Army observer wings was William Oscar Lowe. He was born on 23 May 1894 in Athens, Tennessee, and graduated from the University of Tennessee. Lowe enrolled as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve one day after his twenty-third birthday and was assigned to active service at the Marine Corps Rifle Range at Winthrop, Maryland, for duty and

missions across the front lines as it tangled with German fighter aircraft and dodged ground fire. Over the course of three days in September, Lowe and his pilot, 1st Lt. Wilbert E. Kinsley, impressed their commanding officer with their skill and daring over the front lines:

During the offensive operations in the St. Mihiel sector on Sept. 12th, 13th, and 14th, he, with his pilot . . . while flying at an altitude of about one hundred meters, in the course of an infantry contact patrol, had the radiator of his airplane pierced by machine gun fire from the ground, but succeeded in bringing his plane safely back within our own lines, and dropping messages containing valuable information at Corps Headquarters, where he was forced to land. During the operations in the sector north of Verdun he has given constant proof of his zeal in the performance of the missions assigned to him. In the course of one reconnaissance, although persistently attacked by a large formation of Fokkers, he completed his work before leaving the lines, and returned with much valuable information, although his plane was pierced by several bullets.<sup>29</sup>

On 7 October 1918, Lowe and Lieutenant Kinsley were sent on a mission to stake the advance lines of the 80th Division; the ensuing action garnered both men the Army's Distinguished Service Cross. The citation recounts the events:

suddenly attacked by a formation of eight enemy machines, which dived out of a cloud bank. Although greatly outnumbered, Lieutenant Lowe succeeded in shooting down one out of control and disabling a second so that it was forced to land. Later, on the same mission, he was again attacked by a patrol of five enemy scout machines, and in a running fight he drove these off and successfully completed his mission.<sup>30</sup>

Later the same month, the only marine in the squadron was appointed



First Lt. William O. Lowe (right) and 1st Lt. Wilbert E. Kinsley (left), as they appeared after receiving the Distinguished Service Cross in October 1918



Capt. W. G. Schauffler Jr. (left) and Lt. F. A. Tillman (right), c. 1918

the operations officer; he wrote home stating, "I am assistant to the Commanding Officer now so have loads of work to do. Many nights I work until 10 o'clock and sometimes am called out of bed after this to see about some attack that is going to be pulled off."<sup>31</sup>

The 90th Aero Squadron continually flew and reported the progress of the 79th and 90th Divisions as the war drew to an end. After the armistice on 11 November 1918, the squadron remained in France but did very little

flying. Lowe's officer record book detailed his service in his own hand and that of his commanding officer, Capt. W. G. Schauffler Jr.

Lieut. Lowe has served under me for the past six months and has proved himself to be one of the most dependable and accurate observers in the organization. He has always been one of the first to volunteer for the most difficult and dangerous missions in any kind of weather. He has flown

constantly in both the St. Mihiel and Argonne-Meuse offensives and has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal for extraordinary heroism and exceptional services.<sup>32</sup>

Lowe returned home with the 90th Squadron in 1919 with more than fifty-five hours flight time over enemy lines, the Distinguished Service Cross, and later the Navy Cross for the same action. He was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on 6 August 1919, a little more than two years after his enrollment.

### MARCUS ALEXANDER JORDAN

Marcus Alexander Jordan, born in Phoenix, Arizona, on 8 July 1894, was raised in the Washington, D.C., area.<sup>33</sup> Jordan was keen to enter the fight overseas, but because the United States remained neutral, he crossed into Canada and entered the Canadian Legion on 22 April 1916. He hoped to fly with the British Royal Flying Corps eventually, but for the moment he was assigned to the 97th Infantry Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, as

a lieutenant.<sup>34</sup> On 15 August 1916, Jordan requested a leave of absence to travel to Great Britain and join the Royal Flying Corps.<sup>35</sup> It is unclear if Jordan was aware of the prerequisites for applying for a commission before he departed for England; the specific requirements included being of “British birth” and in “possession of a ‘Pilot’s Flying Certificate.’”<sup>36</sup> By 25 August, he was in London attempting to enroll, however, this was a short-lived attempt.<sup>37</sup> Jordan decided to resign from the Canadian military in early December upon his return to the United States.<sup>38</sup> He later reported that he resigned because he “was unable to be transferred to the Royal Flying Corps without becoming a naturalized British subject.”<sup>39</sup>

Just four months after resigning his Canadian commission, and two weeks after the United States declaration of war against Germany, Jordan enrolled on 21 April 1917 as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. Jordan’s application for enrollment indicated that he was partially color blind, but based on the recommendation of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, General Barnett waived his disqualification and accepted

him.<sup>40</sup> Despite his defective vision, Jordan reported to Marine Barracks Philadelphia on 18 May where he joined the Aeronautic Company of the Advanced Base Force under the command of Capt. Alfred A. Cunningham, presumably to begin flight training.<sup>41</sup>

Here, once again, Jordan was stymied in his attempts to learn to fly. On 6 June 1917, he underwent an additional medical examination, and this time the doctors of the Aeronautic Company opined “this condition makes it very unsafe for him to engage in aeronautic work, and it is recommended that he be not allowed to engage in this duty.”<sup>42</sup> Cunningham added his negative comments about the need for full-color vision when he forwarded the surgeon’s report requesting that General Barnett make the final decision about Jordan.<sup>43</sup> In the end, the commandant of the Marine Corps concurred with Cunningham and Jordan was dismissed from aviation duty. By the end of the month, Jordan had been transferred to Quantico and the Officers’ Training Camp for all of July.<sup>44</sup>

Jordan joined the Base Detachment, 5th Regiment, on 31 July 1917 as it was embarking on the USS *Henderson*.<sup>45</sup> Hours before the ship departed Philadelphia for France, Jordan met up with a friend, Lt. Edmund G. Chamberlain, who was the duty officer in the Marine aviation section of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The two men exchanged friendly greetings and Chamberlain introduced Jordan to Captain Cunningham’s pet bear, which was kept nearby. After a short conversation, the two went their separate ways. Shortly after Chamberlain departed the post for lunch, Jordan returned, absconded with the bear, and boarded the *Henderson* as it was leaving its moorings.<sup>46</sup>

Cunningham immediately brought Jordan up on charges of theft and requested he be court-martialed; however, Jordan admitted that he had not realized the bear was private property, instead thinking it was the company mascot.<sup>47</sup> Regrettably, the bear did not survive long after the



Marcus A. Jordan, shown in his Canadian uniform before entering the Marine Corps, c. 1916



Maj. Alfred A. Cunningham, c. 1930



Edmund G. Chamberlain, c. 1917



Maj. William Ord Ryan

voyage across the Atlantic. Jordan repaid Cunningham for the loss of the bear and its accoutrements.<sup>48</sup> As Jordan admitted his indiscretion, and provided remittance to Cunningham, the 5th Regiment's commanding officer, Col. Charles A. Doyen, considered the matter concluded and did not proffer charges against the young lieutenant.<sup>49</sup> Jordan's chance of ever flying with the Marine Corps was permanently squashed with this incident, as Cunningham was the

senior Marine aviator, de facto head of Marine aviation, and later led the 1st Marine Aviation Force to France in 1918.

However, it seemed that Jordan was not quite out of flying just yet. It is unclear from the records if he engineered the orders to fly for the Army or if, like MacRossie and Lowe, was chosen by headquarters to report for flight training. On 17 October 1917, Jordan was directed to report to the chief of the Air Service and subsequently

ordered to an aviation school for flight instruction.<sup>50</sup> Just a few days later, Jordan and fifty-four other aviation cadets were transferred to the 8th Aviation Instruction Center in Foggia, Italy.<sup>51</sup> Jordan immediately began pilot training on 31 October 1917. Over the course of six weeks, he took part in nineteen flights as a student, accumulating almost four hours of flight time.<sup>52</sup> He soloed on



8th Aviation Instruction Center in Foggia, Italy, c. 1918



U.S. Army

Col. Thomas DeWitt Milling

7 December 1917 and passed his first military brevet (a series of demanding flight requirements that had to be passed in order to continue) nine days later.

Less than a week later Cunningham contacted the AEF Air Service Training Department, informing them of Jordan's color blindness.<sup>53</sup> By the time Cunningham interjected himself, Jordan had already amassed ninety-nine minutes and fifteen flights as a solo pilot, without incident.<sup>54</sup> The commanding officer of the 8th Aviation Instruction Center, Maj. William Ord Ryan, immediately defended Jordan:

I have investigated the matter of color blindness . . . Jordan is slightly color blind . . . but the defect does not exist to the extent of disqualifying him from aviation service. In my opinion this slight defect in no way detracts from Lieutenant Jordan's flying ability.<sup>55</sup>

Major Ryan continued to support Jordan by writing to Col. Thomas DeWitt Milling of the AEF Air Service Training Department, unofficially trying to explain the situation as he saw it, the situation with the bear, and the court-martial charges.



Map of the 8th Aviation Instruction Center's South Camp

It was thought that the matter would be forgotten, but Lieutenant Jordan tells me that he feels that Captain Cunningham has done other things which he, Jordan, has heard of indirectly, showing that Captain Cunningham is doing all in his power to discredit all that Jordan does. Lieutenant Jordan is a very good officer, in fact one of the best I have here. He has worked hard and being the only officer I have with previous practical military experience he has been almost invaluable.<sup>56</sup>

The matter seemed put to rest after this interjection by Ryan. Jordan returned to flying without further interference from Cunningham.

In February 1918, Jordan completed his course in night flying. Aside from his flying duties he assisted in the instruction of machine gun work and pistol practice.<sup>57</sup> That same month, the first Societ Italiana Aviazione (SIA) 7B biplane arrived at Foggia—one of the eighteen purchased by the United States for training purposes. On 24 March 1918, Jordan and Italian instructor "Lieutenant Freddi" took an SIA-7B

National Archives



An SIA-7B biplane, the type that Jordan flew

aloft over the south camp. The aircraft side-slipped into a dive, but could not recover and crashed. The Italian instructor suffered deep cuts and Jordan suffered a broken arm and leg. Two days later, Jordan's leg was amputated and he was in and out of consciousness.<sup>58</sup> During his lucid moments, and despite excruciating pain, his only concern was for his Italian comrade's well-being. On 27 March 1918, Lieutenant Jordan succumbed to his wounds.<sup>59</sup> Ironically, on the same day as Jordan's death, General Barnett had officially put the Cunningham matter to rest and approved Jordan to remain in aviation.<sup>60</sup>

### CHARLES PATTERSON NASH

How the fifth identifiable marine came to fly with the Army in World War I has not yet been discerned. Charles Patterson Nash was born in Buffalo, West Virginia, on 1 March 1897. After high school he attended the Virginia Military Institute, graduating in 1917. On 11 April 1917, Nash enrolled as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve for a period of four years and was ordered to report to Marine Barracks Port Royal (today's Parris Island), South Carolina, for duty and instruction. He remained at Port Royal until 4 June 1917 when he was sent to Philadelphia to join the 43d Company, 5th Regiment, and make the Atlantic crossing aboard the USS *Hancock*, which arrived in St. Nazaire, France, on 27 June 1917.<sup>61</sup>



Capt. Charles P. Nash, pictured during World War II. He was recalled to active service despite the loss of his left arm.

Nash spent the next three months training at the Automatic Rifle School in Manvoges, then at the First Corps School at Gondrecourt.<sup>62</sup> On 24 November 1917, Nash was detached from the 5th Regiment and assigned to the 2d Aviation Training Detachment at Tours for instruction in flying.<sup>63</sup> The reasoning behind his reassignment is not reflected in his military service record and there are no documents indicating any particular interest in flying. The Army taught Nash to pilot

aircraft and then transferred him to the 3d Aviation Instruction Center, near Issoudun, France, for advanced training in April 1918. In July he attended a course of instruction in aerial gunnery.<sup>64</sup>

It was not until 22 August 1918 that Nash was assigned to an operational squadron, the 93d Aero Squadron, part of the 3d Pursuit Group operating from Vaucouleurs, behind the Toul front.<sup>65</sup> Nash's tenure with the 93d Aero Squadron was short-lived. The St. Mihiel Offensive was launched by the Allies on 12 September 1918, and the 93d was called on to provide air support. The next day, Nash went up in his scout plane in rainy and cloudy weather.

While flying at an altitude of 700 meters over an enemy aerodrome at Marx-la-Tours, France, [I] was struck by explosive bullet in left arm and by incendiary in left shoulder. [I] fainted in air and regained consciousness eighteen hours later. [My] left arm [was] amputated while unconscious.<sup>66</sup>

Nash had crashed behind enemy lines; he was picked up by the Germans and taken to an old schoolhouse turned dressing station where his left arm was removed by a German surgeon.

After several weeks of moving from hospital to hospital, on 19 October, Nash was imprisoned in the Karlsruhe



Troops aboard the USS *Hancock* about to sail for France, c. 1917

Prison Camp.<sup>67</sup> Nash did not stay long at Karlsruhe; on 1 November he was transferred to an American officers' prison camp in Villingen, Germany. Nash was sent back to France via Switzerland on 1 December 1918 and was then shuttled from one base hospital to another until 19 January 1919, when he embarked on the USS *Susquehanna* bound for Newport News, Virginia.<sup>68</sup>

The 93d Aero Squadron had been erroneously informed that Nash was dead. While still in France, he would occasionally run into old squadron-mates who were stunned to see him alive. "I would meet some fellow I knew and his mouth would gape open."<sup>69</sup> It was while in France that Nash learned he had been promoted to captain. Because of his wounds, Nash was incapacitated for active service and medically retired 27 June 1919.<sup>70</sup>

## CONCLUSION

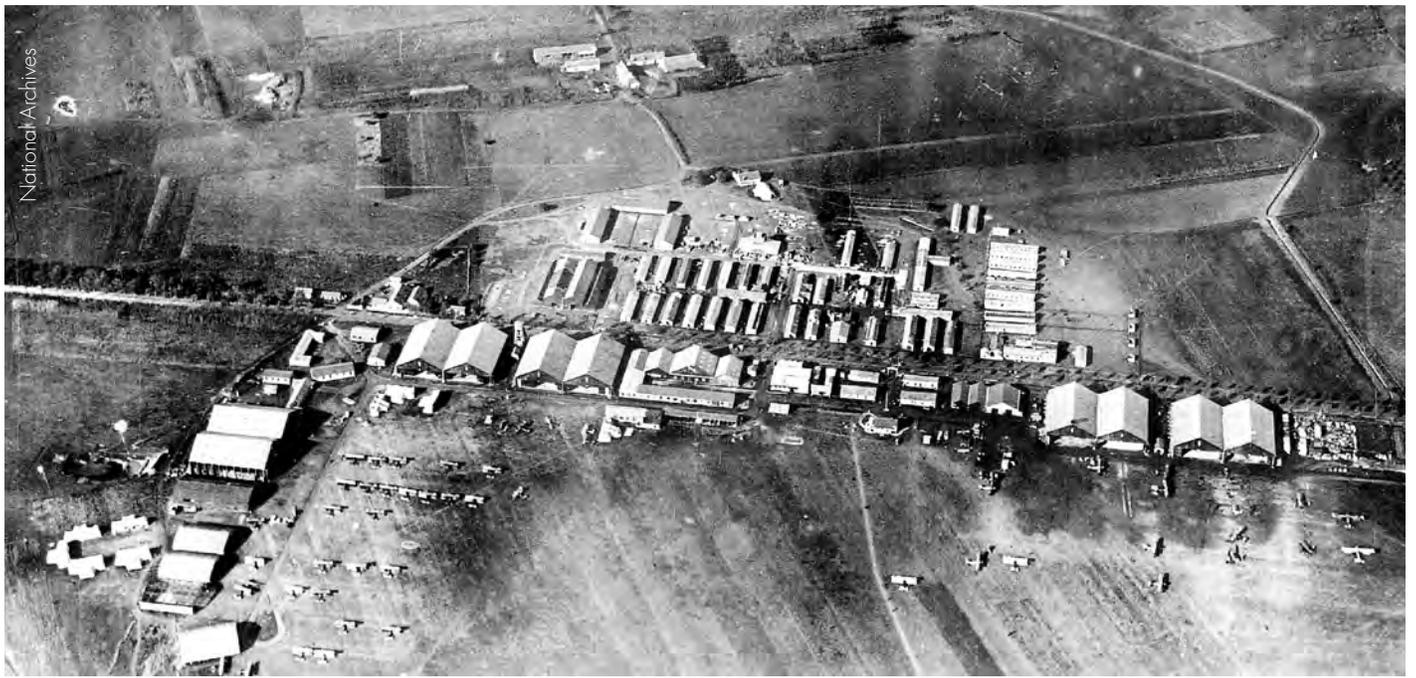
Understanding how these marines ended up in Army squadrons is discernable from the documentary evidence. In June 1918, the AEF

realized that the quantity and quality of trained observers was severely lacking. Despite requests to draw men from the United States, the number received was insufficient.<sup>71</sup> Lowe and MacRossie had originally been assigned to the 5th and 6th Regiments, respectively, and in January 1918, along with two soldiers from the 9th and 23d Infantry (all of the 2d Division), were reassigned to the AEF Air Service's observation units.<sup>72</sup> This appears to confirm that it was a conscious decision by the AEF to assign men from their infantry regiments to observer school, likely to take advantage of their skill and training as foot soldiers, but mostly to fill the growing need in observation.

Culbert's and Jordan's assignments to Army squadrons stemmed from their own personal desire to fight from the air. It appears that Jordan finagled the orders to flight training with the Army knowing that his troubles with Cunningham would preclude any chance at being a naval aviator. Why Culbert chose to fly with the

Army instead of the Marines remains a mystery. However, it may simply have been a case of proximity and availability; Culbert was already in France and Marine aviation was still stateside. The First Marine Aviation Force did not arrive in France until mid-July 1918 and was not fully operational until October 1918. Nash appears to be the odd man out of the five known marines who flew with the Army. There is no indication within his record that he had a desire to fly as Culbert and Jordan did, and unlike MacRossie and Lowe, it does not appear that he was chosen because of skills in infantry that could be utilized in aerial observation. He was a pilot. Without knowing the identity of the sixth marine, it is hard to speculate if a larger pattern appears between Nash and the unknown marine.

From the five men identified, a cumulative award listing includes three Purple Hearts, one Distinguished Service Cross, one Navy Cross, one Silver Star Citation, and one Croix de Guerre with palm. With such a commendable record of achievement, the remaining question is why these



2d Air Instructional Center near Tours, France, c. 1918

marines were omitted from the larger picture of Marine aviation in World War I. The simple conclusion is they were overlooked due to the small numbers involved. The probable truth is that the historian writing the Marine Corps' war story, Major McClellan, did not forget their deeds; he simply did not expand on their actions to the fullest extent possible.

The early days of Marine aviation in the war were filled with combined operations with the Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force, which suggests that the Marine Corps would not have produced a formidable aviation combat element entirely on its own. Cooperation and tenacity were key to getting the Marines "off the ground." The overall service of the

marines who flew with the Army may seem to pale in comparison to that of their counterparts who flew with the Navy, however, it should not be diminished. The Army, under General John J. Pershing's leadership, understood that if the Allies were to win the war, every able-bodied man was needed in the fight—regardless of uniform.



3d Air Instructional Center near Issoudun, France, c. 1918

American military aviation was in its infancy in combat, and it was not in the Air Service's best interest to turn away qualified and capable men simply because they wore the eagle, globe, and anchor on their uniform.



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## ARMYHISTORY

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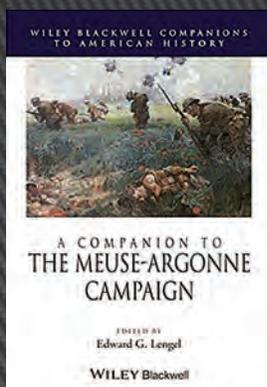
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# BOOKREVIEWS

## *A Companion to the Meuse-Argonne Campaign*



Edited by Edward G. Lengel  
Wiley Blackwell, 2014  
Pp. xii, 537. \$195

### Review by Thomas A. Bruscino

The Meuse-Argonne Campaign does not lend itself to a historical companion, especially a Wiley Blackwell-style volume, which is meant to be a guide to the massive amount of literature that exists on a vast subject. Other titles in the Wiley Blackwell Companions to American History series cover entire wars, eras, biographies of great figures, and American military, cultural, foreign policy, and legal history. The poor forgotten Meuse-Argonne Campaign hardly belongs in such a group—there is almost no literature to review—which is why this book is as welcome as it is odd. The Meuse-Argonne needs histories, whatever the format.

Edward Lengel, the author of the best single book on the campaign, *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918: The Epic Battle That Ended*

*the First World War* (New York, 2008), has put together a solid collection of original histories on the operations. Lengel has divided the essays into sections covering the big picture, combat actions, the French and German perspectives, thematic accounts, and lessons and memory. Lengel and James Lacey open the book with the overall picture of the offensive and its background, a useful primer for those less familiar with the First World War. They are followed by one of the more original and useful contributions, an essay by Brian Neumann, a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, on the staffs, planning, and concentration for the Meuse-Argonne that uses a variety of primary sources to give long overdue credit to the professionals of the American Expeditionary Forces and First Army headquarters who put together the operation.

The combat portion of the volume breaks the campaign into individual battles. The perspectives of the field army and corps get somewhat lost, as most of the authors drop to the divisional level to look at their pieces of the fight. This, however, is not the case with author William Walker, who puts his sights squarely on III Corps commander Maj. Gen. Robert Bullard for the failure to take Montfaucon, a high hill in the middle of the battlefield, on day one of the offensive. Walker's case is somewhat uncharitable to Bullard but is a solid commentary on the controversy. Most of the other chapters in this section deal with high-profile combat actions, including a pair of very good essays on the Lost Battalion and the effort to relieve it and clear the Argonne Forest. The overall narrative of the Meuse-Argonne usually treats mid-October as a period of futile stalemate, but Nathan Jones' fine

account of the ultimately successful efforts to break into the high ground of the Hindenburg Line and set up the final attacks of 1 November belies that myth. Jones sets up Lon Strauss' essay on the breakout, which unfortunately does not cover the whole front, but, to date, is the most fair and thorough account of the tragicomic French and American race to Sedan. The originality and utility of the rest of the chapters in this section varies, but Chad Williams' telling of the much-maligned African American contribution offers thoughtful insights on discrimination and liaison, and James Carl Nelson's review of many of the Medal of Honor recipients is a fine example of combat from the soldier's perspective.

Christopher Shaw's piece on the Battle of Blanc Mont in the French sector really belongs in the next section alongside Elizabeth Greenhalgh's chapter on the actions of the French Fourth Army along the western edge of the Argonne Forest. It might come as a surprise to most, but even European historians have understudied the final offensives of the war, especially the French efforts. Not only was the Meuse-Argonne part of an overall push across the Western Front, but the operation itself was a combined effort with the French. Not all went as planned, but Greenhalgh goes a long way toward bringing the French assaults back into the story of victory in the Champagne-Meuse region. The Germans played a part too, covered in the companion by two Randal Gaulke essays on infantry regiments, and Markus Klauer's account of the German high command's perspective of the fighting. Gaulke's works are interesting but narrowly focused, while Klauer's is broader and makes the interesting point that German

tactical counterattacks throughout only sped up their attrition. Altogether, these chapters indicate that the Germans fought well and felt like they were winning but could never quite grasp how the Americans managed to keep going.

That question is dealt with in the next part of the book on thematic issues, beginning with Shawn Faulkner's chapter on American morale. Faulkner is the leading expert on the issue, and he catalogues the many challenges but astutely concludes that the Americans stayed just successful enough to keep up the fight. The subsequent essays on airpower, armor, artillery, infantry tactics, medical support, logistics, and communications are case studies, with some more enlightening than others. The airpower piece is a bit too concerned solely with air support and loses sight of its place in the overall campaign, and the examination of French armored support in the American sector does not ask too many questions of the French accounts upon which it is based. Those weaknesses are more than made up for by the rest. Justin Prince's account of the myriad difficulties faced and partially overcome by American and French artillery in the campaign is invaluable, as is Jeffrey LaMonica's work on the variety of infantry tactics used throughout the fight. The chapter on communications by William McAvoy also emphasizes the flexibility of the American forces in using old communication systems when radios and telephones broke down. The standout in this section, however, is Sanders Marble's discussion of medical support that is so full of facts, figures, and details on casualties, logistics, the flu, and road networks, all related to the progress of the campaign, as to make it one of the most valuable in the book.

The final section deals with lessons, history, and memory of the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, led by Douglas Mastriano's piece on the way that heated personal debates from the mid-1920s ossified the historiography into rigid and increasingly unhelpful schools of thought, especially in regard to either/or positions on who

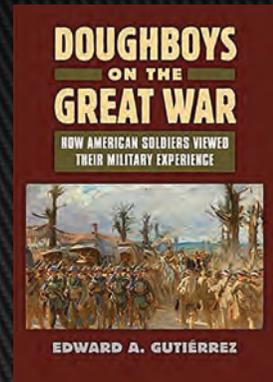
among the Allies deserves credit for winning the war. Michael Neiberg widens the aperture to discuss lessons learned and carried on into the interwar period and World War II, with a special emphasis on the dilemmas of operating in a coalition. The chapters on memory are a mixed bag. Kathy Warnes provides a series of anecdotes without any critical analysis of what those stories mean, but Steven Trout more than fills the gap with his essay on how the Meuse-Argonne has become "the greatest battle ever forgotten" (p. 496). He lays much of the blame on the American Battle Monuments Commission, which tried so hard to federalize the memory of the war in the great cemeteries and monuments in distant Europe that the rank and file could not connect the memorialization with their own experiences. They lost interest in the big story of the campaign, so the narrative lost the energy that would draw interest from the rest of the population, including historians.

Perhaps the centennial of the war will lead to a revival, and this pricey companion can help historians along the way. As a single volume, the work is episodic, but that is not meant as a criticism. It would be impossible to bring so many authors and topics together to tell a coherent story, especially when the grand narrative of the Meuse-Argonne Campaign still has not been adequately told. That is okay; the episodes that comprise this companion should serve as a guide to the literature that is to come, and it is well past time.

**Thomas A. Bruscino** is an associate professor at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies. He is the author of *A Nation Forged in War: How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along* (Knoxville, Tenn., 2010). He is currently working on a history of the Meuse-Argonne Campaign.



*Doughboys on the Great War:  
How American Soldiers Viewed  
Their Military Experience*



By Edward A. Gutierrez  
University Press of Kansas, 2014  
Pp. vii, 308. \$34.95

### Review by Darrin Haas

The popular image of the doughboy as part of a "Lost Generation" has saturated our modern understanding of veterans returning from World War I. Disenchanted, directionless, and embittered, these images of soldiers destroyed by the horrors of trench warfare was encouraged and defined by authors like Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. But author Edward Gutierrez challenges this perception with his new work, *Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Experience*.

Arguing that many soldiers returned from the trenches expressing honor, pride, and value in their experience, Gutierrez questions the traditional view that they were disillusioned with their wartime service. Gutierrez, who holds a Ph.D. from the Ohio State University and is a lecturer at the University of Hartford in Connecticut, meticulously examined more than 30,000 veterans' questionnaires he "found in the military service records of four different states." After the war, many states gave their returning veterans basic surveys to fill out about their combat service. Connecticut, Minnesota, Utah, and Virginia used more comprehensive forms, asking detailed questions during a time when the war was still fresh in the participants' minds.

Gutierrez scrutinized these files, focusing primarily on the experiences of infantrymen who fought on the Western Front, to learn why the doughboys fought and how they perceived combat. He looked at the soldiers' reactions to the war, their state of mind when they volunteered, their life in the trenches, and how they felt about their return. According to the author, he deduced that the soldiers "fought for honor, manhood, comrades, and adventure, but especially for duty" (p. 14).

Gutierrez discovers that many soldiers enlisted and fought in the Great War out of a sense of obligation influenced by the Civil War experiences they read and heard about. The doughboys fought to maintain their honor and do what they thought society expected of them. The author examined these motives by dividing and focusing his book into six main parts that chronologically examine the social and cultural influences and experiences of the soldiers.

He starts by looking at their ethnic, cultural, and religious origins and why they longed to "do their bit" in France. He discusses the similarities between them and their fellow Allied soldiers, particularly the desire for Americans to repay the French for their help during the American Revolution. He then looks at where these men came from and how many veterans felt that combat offered them an opportunity to exhibit their manliness and transform them from boys to men.

Gutierrez explores the reasons these soldiers had for enlisting, examining the Victorian ideals of masculinity that dominated the thinking of the period. The Victorian notions of duty and manhood were very prevalent within the questionnaires. The author then looks at the inadequate military training the soldiers received and how it gave them a false sense of security, because their skills and abilities were mostly propped up by bravado. Few realized their lack of instruction and experience until they were on the Western Front.

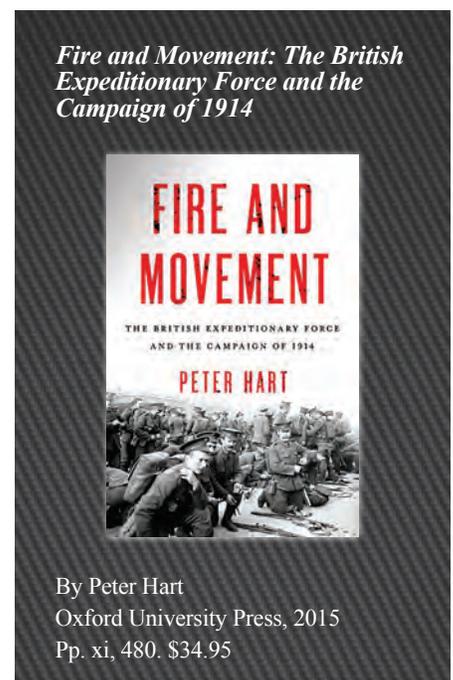
The last third of the book contains the key sections where Gutierrez examines the doughboys' combat experience and what they felt about it upon returning home. He learned that many repatriated soldiers condemned the war and the

horrors they saw but were nevertheless proud to have been a part of it. He also looks at the war's effect on the men, how they reintegrated back into society, and the roles they undertook.

The most interesting aspect of the narrative was Gutierrez's ability to paint a rich picture of these soldiers and why they fought by utilizing first person accounts recorded when the memories were still fresh. His use of primary sources from an untapped collection of questionnaires provides a new and unique understanding of these veterans and how they felt about their service.

Gutierrez delivers a well-told and researched narrative that greatly adds to our understanding of the American experience in World War I. He concludes that "even though the doughboys experienced the horrors of modern warfare, it ennobled them. They were honored to make the sacrifice" (p. 15). With a flood of World War I books currently being released in concert with the war's centennial, this volume will stand above the crowd as an influential work in the field's historiography. Since John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* (London, 1976), the soldier's combat experience and his reasons for fighting have been pivotal topics within military historiography, and this work adds to the scholarship. I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in World War I and what compels soldiers to fight.

**Maj. Darrin Haas** is the historian for the Tennessee National Guard and is a public history Ph.D. student at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) in Murfreesboro. He has a master's degree in U.S. history from MTSU and a bachelor's in history from Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville. He is also a contributing writer for *GX: The Guard Experience* magazine.



## Review by Brian Drohan

In *Fire and Movement: The British Expeditionary Force and the Campaign of 1914*, Peter Hart, oral historian of the Imperial War Museum, presents a history of the British Army's 1914 campaign on the Western Front. Britain was unique among major belligerents in not mobilizing a nationally conscripted army. Instead, when war broke out in August 1914, Britain sent the small, 120,000-man British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to France—a group of volunteer, professional soldiers who proudly called themselves the "Old Contemptibles" in reference to Kaiser Wilhelm II's remark that Britain had "a contemptible little army." In contrast, Germany and France each mobilized well over two million troops. The BEF story has since become the stuff of legends. It is the story of an idealized peaceful Britain, unprepared for war, reliant on a solid core of expert, veteran fighters to defeat the Germans and strengthen the supposedly unreliable French Army. But this narrative, the author explains, is "veiled in layers of self-congratulatory myth" (p. x). Hart sets out to put the British Army's 1914 experience into proper context. He tells this story through the servicemen's

own words and by examining their diaries, oral testimony recorded after the war, and official records. Hart's ability to capture individual warriors' experiences as they vividly described them and connect those stories to the broader campaign narrative is a key strength of *Fire and Movement*.

Hart follows a chronological narrative beginning with the strategic scene leading up to the outbreak of war. British defense policy in Europe centered on the strength of the Royal Navy, whereas the army had received far fewer resources. Even so, detailed general staff planning for a continental commitment began in 1910. In this sense, the British Army lacked the training and equipment of the German Army but was not unprepared for war in a strategic planning sense.

At the tactical level, British doctrine relied on "fire and movement," infantry assaults conducted once fire superiority had been achieved over the enemy. This doctrine came out of the Boer War, when British troops had initially been slaughtered advancing in the open against Boer marksmen firing from behind cover. As a result, the Army valued marksmanship and rapid fire. Machine guns were also very important—in 1914 battalion machine gun sections had two guns each, which was the same as the French and German armies. The Boer War experience extended to artillery tactics and equipment as well. The British Army deployed with light guns capable of accompanying mobile columns and trained to conduct direct fire in close support of infantry assaults—useful skills for the South African veld. British gunners were highly proficient in these tasks, but not in the indirect fire with heavy guns that would soon become the norm on the Western Front.

After assessing the strategic and tactical context, Hart then turns to the campaign narrative to puncture some of the more persistent myths of BEF performance. For example, at the Battle of Mons, the traditional account is that British troops, through expert rifle fire and the effect of two battalion machine guns, were able to defend the Nimy Canal against enormous odds

when wave upon wave of German troops advanced in close order in the open. BEF gunners killed hundreds of the enemy before being forced to withdraw. In fact, Hart argues, "research in the surviving German archives has revealed no sign of such suicidal behaviour at this stage of the war and it bears no resemblance to well-established German infantry tactics" (p. 90). Although the Germans sustained casualties during the attack and faced stiff opposition from the British, German troops were not gunned down en masse. Instead, they merely appeared to have dropped dead when viewed from British lines because the Germans followed their infantry doctrine of advancing in quick rushes. They would stand, move forward several paces under covering fire from comrades, then drop down to take cover before rising again and advancing. Rather than dying from expert British rifle fire, German soldiers were slowly extending their line forward.

According to Hart, coordination between senior commanders at the Battle of Mons proved chaotic. BEF commander Field Marshal Sir John French failed to communicate with his corps commanders, one of whom—Lt. Gen. Douglas Haig—spent most of the day trying to make contact with French while the second corps commander, Lt. Gen. Horace Smith-Dorrien, bore the brunt of the German attack. In "The Great Retreat" which followed, Smith-Dorrien disobeyed French's orders to continue withdrawing and offered battle at Le Cateau. This engagement also became infused with triumphalist mythology. Hart argues that the traditional interpretation—in which British troops gave the Germans "a collective bloody nose" (p. 146) that left them too exhausted to pursue the BEF—is exaggerated. Hart credits Smith-Dorrien with making the decision to stand and fight due to the British cavalry division's inability to continue screening the withdrawal. But the British actually suffered three times as many casualties as the Germans. Nor did the German commander, General Alexander von Kluck, simply back off to rest a "bloody

nose." He pursued the BEF in the direction he thought they would go—southwest—but the BEF actually went south. This error in judgment slowed the German advance long enough for the BEF to safely withdraw.

After the retreat, the BEF played a minor role in the Battle of the Marne, where the vastly larger French Army stopped the German advance. The Germans fell back to Aisne, where the BEF next encountered them. After Allied attacks stalled, the BEF and the Germans began to dig trenches, launching the "race to the sea." In telling the story of this transition from mobility to the stagnation of the trenches, the author's reliance on soldiers' diaries provides a vivid picture of life in the trenches. The final battle of Hart's campaign narrative occurred at Ypres. The Germans targeted the weakened BEF, dug in on low-lying ridges outside the town of Ypres in a battle that raged throughout October 1914. Here the BEF held firm, ultimately buying Britain time to mobilize a mass army that could hold its own with the Germans and provide a significant contribution in support of the French.

Ultimately, by stripping away the myths, Hart breaks down many of the enduring caricatures of the 1914 campaigns. He concludes that British regulars "were skillful soldiers" but "lacked practice in many of the disciplines of modern warfare" (p. xi). For Hart, an assessment of the BEF's performance during the 1914 campaign should account for its mistakes as well as its achievements. Despite their shortcomings, the BEF's Old Contemptibles "bought the British Army the time to transform itself into a continental force capable of exchanging meaningful blows with the German Army on the main battlefield side by side with the French Army" (p. 430). By mid-1915, there were over a million British soldiers in uniform, bolstered by conscription and by deploying colonial forces from across the far-flung empire. The BEF was a small contribution to the land war in terms of numbers. It did not defeat the Germans. But it played an important

role in preventing the Germans from winning the war in 1914.

**Maj. Brian Drohan** holds a Ph.D. in history at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. He has taught European history at the U.S. Military Academy and served three overseas tours in the Middle East and South Asia.



*Somewhere Over There: The Letters, Diary, and Artwork of a World War I Corporal*



By Francis H. Webster  
University of Oklahoma Press, 2016  
Pp. xvi, 277. \$29.95

### Review by Peter L. Belmonte

Francis H. Webster, a 21-year-old Iowa school superintendent and cartoonist, enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in July 1917. Originally a bugler in the 3d Infantry, Iowa National Guard, he became a member of Machine Gun Company, 168th Infantry, which joined the 42d Division when the Iowa unit became federalized. As a civilian, Webster had drawn political cartoons for several Iowa newspapers; he continued his “reporting” for the *Des Moines Capital* while in the Army, sending it cartoons that depicted the life of an Iowa soldier during the war. The newspaper published many of Webster’s cartoons.

After Webster was killed in action, his friends collected his personal effects and sent them to Webster’s family. Included in these was a canvas bag containing many completed but unpublished cartoons and illustrations, along with his art supplies. Webster’s family treasured these items and eventually, in 2005, donated them to the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum in Johnston, Iowa. It was there that editor Darrek D. Orwig found this collection and endeavored to make them available to a wider audience. According to Orwig, “Webster’s artwork, photographs, diary, and letters home provide a narrative that represents the larger story of the AEF [American Expeditionary Forces] as it fought in the United States’ first war on European soil” (p. 5). Orwig equates Webster’s role as an informal combat artist with that of the embedded reporters in this century’s wars.

This book, consisting of Webster’s diary entries, letters, and photographs, and augmented by his cartoons, illustrations, and watercolors, is divided into chronological chapters. Orwig supplies a brief introduction to each chapter, which is followed by an arrangement of Webster’s letters and diary entries. His artwork and photographs are interspersed throughout the text and are accompanied by Orwig’s occasional editorial comments.

In the Army Webster served as a bugler and orderly, a company clerk, and, after his promotion to corporal, a squad leader. His artistic talent was recognized early on and Capt. Edward Fleur, the machine gun company commander, kept him busy drawing maps, first while in training in Iowa, and then later in France. Thus Webster, even while a machine gun squad leader, rotated to duty in the company’s headquarters platoon.

While Webster wrote most of the letters to his parents, a few others are to his brother, Hiram, who enlisted in the Army in June 1918, and his younger sisters, Bessie and Nellie. His correspondence is filled with the typical soldier’s concerns. He described his travels, billets, and rations. He thanked his folks for their letters and packages, kept

them apprised of his pay and mail situation, and issued persistent pleas for his mother to remember to make lemon pies for him upon his return. Webster’s sporadic diary entries, however, are terse, giving basic information relating to his activity each day. Nowhere did he describe such activities as a machine gun squad leader’s duties or methods of laying down indirect fire.

In May 1918, Webster was gassed and evacuated; he spent about one month in hospitals before rejoining his unit. In July, while fighting near the Ourcq River, Webster found himself in charge of a squad as it helped to repulse a German attack against his regiment’s hard-pressed riflemen. In the midst of a mustard gas attack, Webster found it difficult to locate the advancing Germans due to the fogging of his gas mask eyepieces. Accordingly, he folded down a portion of his mask in order to more clearly see and identify targets, and in so doing, exposed his eyes to the gas. This soon resulted in temporary blindness, and once again Webster was evacuated for treatment and recovery. He did not rejoin his unit until just before the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in late September. His unit went back into the front lines in mid-October. Webster, after giving his foxhole to a replacement soldier who did not have adequate shelter during an artillery bombardment, was killed by a small piece of high explosive shell that passed through his body from front to back. The book’s Epilogue discusses the return of Webster’s body to his father, Reverend Frank H. Webster, for internment in the Gold Star Memorial section of Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines.

Orwig’s notes and editorial comments are bolstered by a good selection of primary and secondary sources, including the papers and letters of other men in Webster’s regiment or division. The endnotes helpfully cover such diverse items as rations (slum, bully beef, and hardtack), clothing, equipment, weapons, unit formations, and tactics. These explanations are indispensable for people who are not familiar with

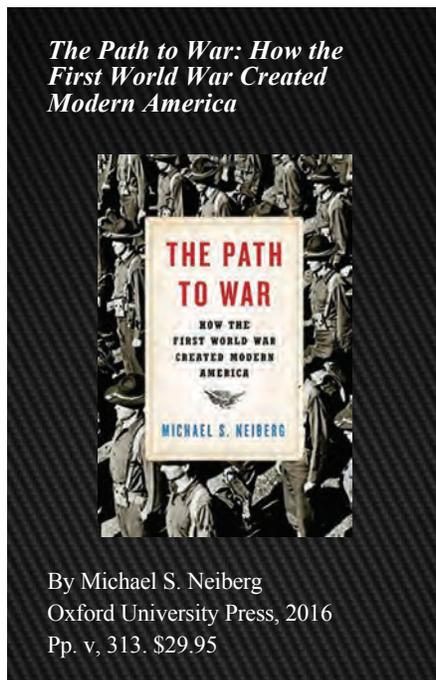
the experiences of the World War I soldier.

Webster's cartoons are typical of those of the day. Nicely drawn to show people back home what their loved ones were doing, they portray smiling doughboys engaging in activities common to soldiers in France. The cartoons depict common occurrences behind the lines (encounters with French civilians, the search for food, and hospital stays) and at the front (shelling and firing machine guns). There are twenty-six full color plates of Webster's watercolors, and these are nicely reproduced.

By the end of the book, this reader was saddened that this young, talented Iowan, whose life bore so much promise for the future, did not make it back home to his loved ones. Yet his story is just one of millions. His life was just one of the multitude of lives ended prematurely, snuffed out in its prime when his family looked forward to his return.

This book will appeal to military historians and others interested in a fresh account by an artist and soldier. It is a fine addition to the robust historiography of the 42d Division.

**Peter L. Belmonte** is a retired U.S. Air Force officer and historian. A veteran of Operation DESERT STORM, he holds a master's degree in history from California State University, Stanislaus. He has published articles, book chapters, reviews, and papers about immigration and military history and has been a college adjunct instructor of history. Belmonte has written two books: *Italian Americans in World War II* (Chicago, Ill., 2001) and *Days of Perfect Hell: The U.S. 26th Infantry Regiment in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October–November, 1918* (Atglen, Pa., 2015). His next book, which he coauthored, is about foreign-born soldiers in the U.S. Army during World War I and is forthcoming in 2017.



### Review by Ethan S. Rafuse

There is little question that the First World War played a major role in what was perhaps the most important development of the first half of the twentieth century; namely, the United States' emergence as a global superpower and its acceptance of Voltaire's admonition that with great power comes great responsibility. In terms of economic and industrial strength, of course, the nation was already among the world's great powers even before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand set in motion the chain of events that plunged Europe into war. Still, the war clearly accelerated the process by which the United States became the world's preeminent economic and military power, and the nation's entry into the war was unquestionably a seminal event in its history. Considering the importance of America's response to the challenges presented by the First World War, there is—not surprisingly—an extensive body of literature on the American experience in the years leading up to the declaration of war in April 1917. Rarely, if ever, has this story been told as well as in Michael S. Neiberg's *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America*.

Neiberg confirms that President Woodrow Wilson reflected the

sentiments of the American people during the war's early years when he resisted the entreaties of former President Theodore Roosevelt, and others, for him to take a more active role in the situation in Europe. At the same time, the author makes clear that the German government and people had good reason to view the United States as a hostile nation, rather than truly a neutral player, on the world scene in the years prior to 1917. Drawing from an impressive range of sources, Neiberg demonstrates that sympathy for the Allied cause and antipathy toward Prussian militarism—but not toward “good Germans,” though Americans found this distinction less and less compelling as the war progressed—were both persistent and widespread in the United States from the war's outset. He also provides effective descriptions of how this shaped the reaction of the American people and government to events in Europe, on the high seas, at home, and along the southern border.

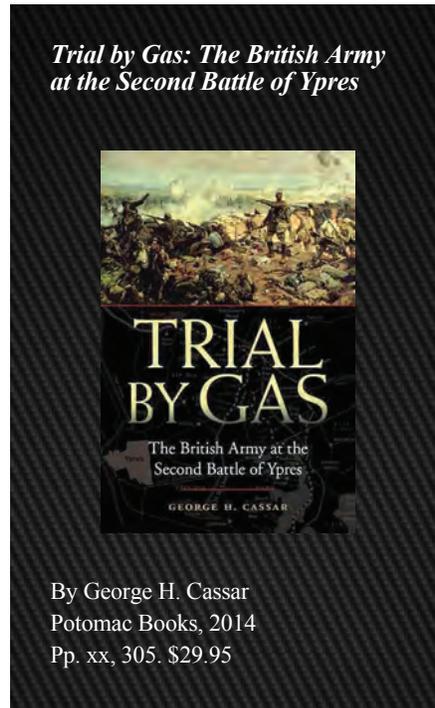
He does all of this in a study that is eminently readable, impressively researched, and remarkably thorough in its treatment of the various issues and challenges Americans wrestled with as they found it increasingly difficult, and then finally impossible, to believe the nation's interests would be best served by remaining out of the war. Whether the topic is the Preparedness and Anti-Hyphenism movements that received a major boost as a consequence of the war; the response to the situation on the Mexican border and its interaction with the discussion over Preparedness; or how particular communities and constituencies responded to events such as the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the debate over the National Defense Act of 1916, and the Easter Uprising, Neiberg provides accounts and analyses of events that are compelling and informative. He deserves particular praise for his skill at weaving the experiences of individuals—such as Nora Bayes and Jacob Dickinson, which he uses as points of departure for discourse on larger developments—with discussion of broader contexts within which events took place. That he is able to do all this and handle the many complex issues the nation wrestled with as it traveled the

path to war so thoroughly in a mere 237 pages of text is truly remarkable.

That being said, students of American military history may finish this book wishing that Neiberg had devoted a bit more attention to the perspectives of the armed forces as war clouds gathered. (It is noteworthy that there is no entry for Army Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Hugh L. Scott or for Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William S. Benson in the book's index.) To be sure, the author does mention Wilson's outraged response in 1915 to public reports that the Army General Staff was preparing war plans in the event the country went to war in Europe. Still, it would have been interesting to see the author also describe and analyze the plans, the men who put them together, the assumptions that shaped them, and the process by which they were developed.

Neiberg closes the book with a thoughtful and insightful consideration of the reasons why—despite the numerous monuments and memorials that appeared on the American landscape in the war's aftermath and its unquestioned importance—there seems to be an “amnesia about World War I” (p. 233) in modern America. To address this, he makes a compelling case for students of history to take “a fresh look at the First World War and the ways it created modern America” (p. 235). If the Civil War sesquicentennial is any guide, it is almost certain that we will see a plethora of studies that take up Neiberg's challenge as we approach the centennial of America's entry into World War I. If enough of these make as impressive a contribution to scholarship as *The Path to War* does, the prospects for Americans developing a better appreciation for the Great War's importance will receive a decidedly salutary boost.

**Dr. Ethan S. Rafuse** earned his Ph.D. at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and since 2004 has been on the faculty at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College as a professor of military history.



### Review by Alan Capps

My maternal grandfather served with the Royal Field Artillery of the British Army throughout World War I. I vividly remember, as a young boy in the 1960s, my grandfather tapping the steel plate in what remained of his left leg with his walking stick, the result of a German artillery shell at Ypres. I also recall his cough, the bubbling sound emanating from his lungs, and the brilliant redness of his face as he hacked. Copious Players cigarettes over the decades had obviously contributed to the severity of the cough. I learned subsequently that what I heard was also the long-term effects of having been exposed to poison gas, in his case, during the Second Battle of Ypres in April–May 1915, the subject of George H. Cassar's excellent new study *Trial by Gas: The British Army at the Second Battle of Ypres*.

A professor of history at Eastern Michigan University, Cassar has written several books on aspects of World War I, including profiles of Lloyd George and Field Marshal Sir John French, analyses of the French and the Dardanelles campaigns, and the British campaign in Italy during 1917–1918. Prior to *Trial by Gas*, with its focus on the British Army, Cassar, whose Ph.D. is from

McGill University, had examined the Canadian Army during the Second Battle of Ypres in *Hell in Flanders Fields* (Toronto, 2010).

*Trial by Gas* essentially comprises two sections. The first two chapters very effectively set the stage for the subsequent six chapters by providing an excellent overview of events leading up to the strategic and tactical situation on the morning of 22 April 1915, the first day of the battle, and the first successful employment of gas by the Germans. The following six chapters concentrate on the second half of the battle, waged from 1 to 25 May with the focus on the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) under the command of Field Marshal French.

This was not the prewar professional BEF that had marched off to war in August 1914, however. That force, as Cassar notes, was all but destroyed during the First Battle of Ypres fought from 20 October to 21 November 1914. And yet, in four short months “the BEF had grown to 350,000 men by the end of the winter of 1915 owing to the constant flow of reinforcements—regular units from overseas, imperial contingents, and territorial divisions” (p. 5).

In its first independent operation of the war conducted against the German front line during 10–13 March 1915, the BEF penetrated “to a depth of 1,200 yards” (p. 6). French subsequently called off the attack as the operation ground to a halt, noting that “they were unable to maintain their momentum because of the breakdown of communications and the resultant delays between front and rear [that] had prevented the second wave of troops from moving into the gap” (p. 6), presaging an all-too-familiar template throughout the war.

The next major test for French's newly constituted BEF was not long in arriving. He had agreed to support a projected French offensive in Artois “as well as to relieve two French corps around Ypres” (p. 7). This resulted in the BEF, along with Canadian units and French colonial troops, by virtue of their position around

Ypres, becoming victims of the first successful employment of gas, initially chlorine gas, as an offensive weapon by the German Army.

Cassar writes that the German supreme commander, General Erich von Falkenhayn, “did not have much faith in chlorine gas as a viable war weapon, not to mention that he considered it repugnant to poison men like rats” (p. 31). But seeking anything that might “overcome the military stalemate . . . he gave his reluctant consent” (p. 31). Falkenhayn, however, was not expecting great results, “at best a local success” (p. 31).

A week before the first use of gas, a German prisoner of war taken by the French had disclosed under interrogation “that a gas attack was impending, gave details on how it was to be delivered, and had in his possession a crude respirator” (p. 31). Additional evidence of the German plans also came from other sources. “The French High Command, however, did not take these warning signs seriously,” nor did the officials “share their intelligence with Second British Army headquarters” (p. 32).

In detailing the deployment of gas on the afternoon of 22 April 1915, Cassar, as he does throughout the book, very deftly combines the historical narrative with firsthand accounts taken from letters, diary entries, and memoirs. The descriptions of the impact of the gas, the resulting sheer terror, and the gruesome manner in which men died defy imagination. The understandable initial panic of not knowing what was being confronted is palpable from the soldiers’ descriptions. And yet, so is the sense of rapid adjustment on the part of those being gassed as they sought ways to survive. The author documents the actions of individuals such as Lt. Col. George Nasmith and Capt. F. A. C. Scrimger, two Canadian officers, who “quickly worked out a simple expedient and contacted men in the trenches, directing them to urinate on a piece of cloth or handkerchief and hold the wet pad over their nose and mouth until the poisonous cloud passed over” (p. 34).

In clear and precise prose combined with an excellent series of maps

detailing the location of units, the ebb and flow of the fighting, and the judicious use of firsthand descriptions and memories drawn from all ranks during the battle, the author provides the reader, over the course of six chapters, with a concise explanation of the fighting from 1 to 25 May. One issue that is conveyed almost incessantly in the troops’ accounts is the sheer weight, explosive power, and destructive force of the German artillery throughout the battle. “Tipping the scales even more in favor of the Germans was their huge preponderance of guns of all caliber, along with an infinite supply of ammunition” (p. 144).

Cassar very effectively weaves into the narration of the battle various vignettes. One focuses on the lack of British artillery and the appropriate ammunition, in this case high-explosive shells, noting “The British High Command was slow to recognize that heavy explosive shells were much more efficient in blasting the enemy’s lines—unlike its Continental counterparts, which had appreciated their value before the war” (p. 108). Another vignette looks at the acrimonious relationship between French and General Horace Smith-Dorrien, one of the better British senior commanders. Smith-Dorrien was a forward-looking and innovative man who commanded the Second Army at the Second Battle of Ypres. French ultimately had Smith-Dorrien removed from command at the end of May on the grounds that he had “failed to get a real grip of the situation” (p. 138). This was a major loss for the British command structure, and as the author points out, “the charges were absurd and easily refuted by historians who have closely examined the evidence” (p. 138).

Along with informative British and Canadian orders of battle contained in an appendix, an extensive set of notes, a bibliography, photographs, and a concise chapter entitled “Retrospect,” this book represents an excellent synopsis of the Second Battle of Ypres. My grandfather would have approved.

Alan Capps is currently working on his doctorate in U.S. history at George Mason University in Virginia. He has two master’s degrees, one from George Washington University and another from George Mason University. He was the Department of Homeland Security historian and also the editor of its publication the *Journal of Homeland Security*. The author of numerous published articles and book reviews, he also served in the British Army before coming to the United States over thirty-five years ago.



### *Verdun: The Longest Battle of the Great War*



By Paul Jankowski  
Oxford University Press, 2013  
Pp. xii, 324. \$34.95

### Review by Dean A. Nowowiejski

Paul Jankowski, the Raymond Ginger Professor of History at Brandeis University, has written what certainly must stand as the most definitive history of the World War I Battle of Verdun with *Verdun: The Longest Battle of the Great War*. In this majestically crafted book, the author exposes many of the myths about the battle that have developed over a century of narrative. He demonstrates an exceptional mastery of sources and method, as

he mined the German as well as the French primary sources, and is equally adept at both traditional military history and the new social history that, until recently, dominated the enterprise. The main idea of this book is that the Battle of Verdun that actually occurred is not the Battle of Verdun we have come to know because the event has become shrouded in carefully constructed legend, beginning even while the fighting was still going on.

In its treatment of traditional military history, *Verdun* covers both leaders and common soldiers equally well. It tells the tale of the battle in terms of gains, losses, and human impact. Jankowski's development is as good for strategic understanding as it is for operational. It is elegantly written, with a forcefully demonstrated command of historical narrative and synthesis of complex issues by an experienced historian.

Jankowski debunks the myth that German General Erich von Falkenhayn intended to bleed the French white by convincingly invalidating Falkenhayn's own postwar reference to a Christmas 1915 memorandum to Kaiser Wilhelm outlining his strategic thinking concerning Verdun. According to the author, Falkenhayn did not intend Verdun to be a central effort in draining the French; it was merely a sideshow in anticipation of more important efforts elsewhere on the Western Front.

For Jankowski, Verdun demonstrated three significant traps: the trap of the offensive, the prestige trap, and the attritional trap. He explains that both sides were shackled by the need to assume the offensive, and that this contributed to needless casualties over multiple months in the cauldron of battle. Refusing to acknowledge the realities of modern warfare, which awarded distinct advantages to the defender, both sides remained committed to a series of offensives that merely brought them back to roughly the same positions from which they had started, albeit with significant losses on both sides.

Jankowski accounts for the commitment of both sides to keep going at Verdun when it seemingly made more sense to break off the offensive by invoking the concept of

“prestige.” Prestige was “the esteem that a visible subject might come to command” (p. 100). The idea that a leader might show irresolution when there was the slightest glimmer of success was unthinkable, and this behavior fitted these adversaries in the context of their times. Both sides were captured by the need for prestige, for generals and for nations, and this was a sufficient justification for such massive cost and bloodletting.

The author explains the concept of attrition warfare and its complexities, including the idea that there were fewer casualties at Verdun than in the Battle of the Marne, a contest of movement. Jankowski also carefully reexamines the record of losses for the French and the Germans and concludes that their casualties (totaling about 350,000 dead, wounded, and missing from February to December 1916) closely tracked over the course of the battle. Accounting in this chapter for the effects of firepower and materiel, he convincingly explains the attritional trap; when both sides failed to achieve their more significant objectives, they fell into the pattern that it was sufficient success for the enemy's losses to be slightly higher than their own.

In terms of military social history, Jankowski adeptly explores what the battle meant to the individual French and German soldiers, a lonely experience that amounted to a nightmare, as captured by autobiographical literature and resurrected here. More importantly, he asserts, over time Verdun became the worst battle of the war through its constant retelling, as great worth was assigned to individual experiences that were not unique to Verdun, but gave it greater meaning in retrospect.

Jankowski explains why desertion at Verdun was surprisingly low, and when it occurred, did so primarily individually and may have had more to do with the weather than actions against the enemy. He also explores how group loyalty and identity suppressed what could have been incidences of mutiny or mass desertion. In the end, both German and French soldiers did their duty. The author determined that duty, mainly devotion to one's

comrades, bound both sides into a charnel house and was the motivation for continued fighting, rather than hatred of the enemy.

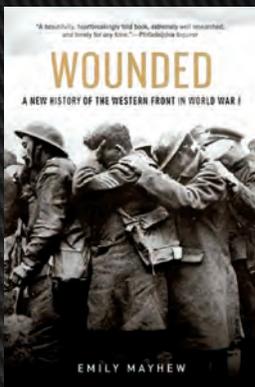
Both sides depended on a narrative of the battle that grew to mythic proportions, whether it was to have been a Thermopylae for France, or *Ausblutung* (bleeding out of the enemy) for Germany. The battle took on different meanings over time, subsequent to the needs of the French or German people, and Jankowski brilliantly explores this through thoroughly mining all the literature of the battle.

He has clearly mastered and synthesized a great volume of primary source material, and this marks his achievement. His accomplishment rests also in establishing a clear explanation of the operations, including an understanding of weapons, logistics, and command, in the larger context, both of soldier experience and political setting. By exploring all the connections between what happened on the battlefield and its impact and legacy, Jankowski compellingly illuminates the complex interaction of myth and reality built up over time concerning the Battle of Verdun.

**Dr. Dean A. Nowowiejski**, a retired U.S. Army colonel, is the Ike Skelton Distinguished Chair for the Art of War at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), directing the Art of War Scholars program. He has taught at both CGSC and in the Department of History at the U.S. Military Academy. His Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton compared the performance of the American military governors of Germany after World War I and II. He is currently working on a book about the American occupation of the Rhineland following World War I.



*Wounded: A New History of the Western Front in World War I*



By Emily Mayhew  
Oxford University Press, 2013  
Pp. v, 275. \$29.95

### Review by Michael G. Knapp

The enduring image of the First World War is a war of attrition fought within the confines of narrow, muddy trenches and across corpse-strewn stretches of no-man's-land. What Emily Mayhew has done in *Wounded: A New History of the Western Front in World War I* is shed light on a little-explored facet of that existence—that of the wounded soldier and those who cared for him on his journey from the front lines to the hospitals in France and England and during all the stops along the way. “The wounded spent a surprising amount of time on the move during their medical treatment, and to many their first journey felt like the longest of all. To survive they had to get off and away from the battlefield. Sometimes they travelled on a stretcher, sometimes on the back of a comrade and sometimes they were on their own, crawling a few feet at a time to find help at the aid post” (p. 3). To generations raised on televised images of medevac helicopters in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan and knowing the importance of the first crucial hour in casualty evacuation, these vignettes read like something from the nineteenth century. More surprising still is that of the 2,272,998

British and Commonwealth forces wounded during the war (which includes multiple wounding of the same individual), only 8 percent, or about 182,000, were discharged for wounds, with a slightly smaller 7 percent dying from their wounds.<sup>1</sup>

As we mark the centennial of the Great War, many of the classics of war literature are being rediscovered and republished, yet even the most detailed of these that concern a soldier's wounding only speak to an individual's experiences, which may or may not cover the entire spectrum of care. Mayhew has delved into both official records and collections of personal papers in public institutions and private hands to locate letters and diaries that tell the story in the participant's own words.

Mayhew uses a linear approach that takes the reader from the initial movement rearward through the regimental aid stations in the second line trenches, then to the casualty clearing stations, the field hospitals and base hospitals, and finally across the Channel to England. The narrative focuses on each stage of the journey as a chapter, using the experiences of one or more individual to describe the process. “[A] Regimental Medical Officer tried to make sure they could survive the next leg of the journey—from aid post to casualty clearing station, here they met the nurses who would resuscitate them and the surgeons who would operate on their wounds. For some this was the end of their journey. Either they went back to their battalion or they took the shorter path to the moribund ward and then to the cemetery, where they would be buried by the chaplain” (p. 3).

Of particular interest are the sections that deal with the stretcher bearers and the nursing sisters on the hospital trains. One often thinks of the stretcher bearers simply as soldiers pressed into service to carry the wounded, but instead we learn that they were chosen for their intelligence and physical strength and that they formed dedicated teams. “Stretcher bearers should be men of intelligence who are

actually interested in their work, and on no account should they be men who have been selected because they are useless or physically incapable of regimental work” (p. 18). Often led by medical officers who taught them advanced first aid, they became the combat lifesavers of their day who worked hand in glove with the overworked medics and doctors during every offensive. These soldiers became specialized in their own right as the war progressed and became an integral part of the casualty care system by war's end.

Almost entirely ignored by history are the elaborate hospital trains employed to bring the more severely wounded from the forward areas to the larger base hospitals and depots, from where they eventually would return to England. “There was a dispensary in one carriage with up-to-date disinfecting apparatus for instruments. If patients could walk, they would be treated in dressing rooms manned by orderlies. [There were] store carriages next to the kitchen. As well as cupboards and shelving, they had huge barrels of water and ice chests” (p. 164). Mayhew points out the many logistical problems that arose from a shortage of trains, the competing needs of supplies and troops going forward on the same tracks used for evacuation, and the effects of the unprecedented and unexpected numbers of casualties in every offensive, all of which often stressed the system to the point of collapse. Again, in their own words, we learn how the nursing sisters and medical orderlies met these challenges while caring for their patients.

Mayhew's research into the role and composition of the casualty clearing stations and field hospitals throughout the course of the war is enlightening. Contrary to the popular images of a monolithic general staff, her research shows that the British military system was able to adapt to the realities of casualty care in the evolving environment of modern warfare.

The narrative of the book ends for us, as it did for the many wounded soldiers returning to Britain, with

the London Ambulance Column transporting the wounded from the train platforms in London to the myriad hospitals across the city. Formed by a philanthropic family, the private organization provided the much-needed ambulances and cadre for this final phase of transport. Staffed by a dedicated corps of volunteers, it operated up to and after the armistice. "In Trafalgar Square on the last day of the war, in the middle of the ecstatic celebrations of peace, Tisdale and her patients covered in the dark of the ambulance, in mute fear, praying the driver would get them through" (p. 211).

This book deals solely with the British experience on the Western Front and as such will be of great interest to the British scholar, but also to anyone seeking to learn more about the experiences of those involved with the wounded of any

nation and their care during the war in this theater. It is to be hoped that she will expand her scholarship to the other theaters of war and their approach to casualty care. Mayhew has included an interesting epilogue to provide a glimpse of the postwar lives of those individuals spotlighted in the book and a useful set of notes and references by chapter, to include poetry and artwork that relate to the topic.

As we mark the war's centennial, anyone with an interest in the First World War would be well advised to consider this book for a fuller understanding of the experience of soldiers wounded on the Western Front.

#### NOTE

1. The Long, Long Trail: The British Army in the Great War: Some British Army statistics of the Great War, <http://www.1914-1918.net/faq.htm>.

**Michael G. Knapp** is the chief of historical services at the American Battle Monuments Commission. He previously served as a historian and curator at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center and the Center of Military History. He is the coauthor of *Organization and Insignia of the American Expeditionary Force, 1917-1923* (Atglen, Pa., 2008). He graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1980 and received a master's degree in European history from George Mason University and a graduate certificate in museum collections management and care from George Washington University.



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# CMH STAFF RIDES

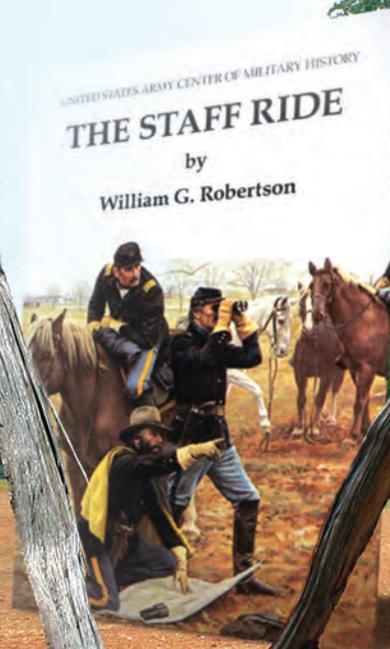
The U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) develops and leads staff rides for U.S. Army groups, with priority going to the Headquarters, Department of the Army, staff. The Center also provides staff rides for other official government agencies and departments, including the Department of Defense, the U.S. Congress, the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps, as well as international visitors and guests of the U.S. government.

Staff rides are available for the following battles:

BALL'S BLUFF	FIRST BULL RUN	SECOND BULL RUN
ANTIETAM	FREDERICKSBURG	CHANCELLORSVILLE
GETTYSBURG	WILDERNESS	SPOTSYLVANIA

To request a staff ride, please contact CMH at [usarmy.mcnaair.cmh.mbx.answers@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.mcnaair.cmh.mbx.answers@mail.mil).

PDF versions of all CMH staff ride guides and briefing books are available for download here, <http://history.army.mil/staffrides>.



# CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

JON T. HOFFMAN



**A**s I write this, National Signing Day for prospective college football athletes approaches. Every year schools compete intensely to obtain elite players, especially those ranked as five-star top performers by the recruiting services. Personnel are the lifeblood of every organization, and bringing in the best new people is an important factor in achieving the mission. The historical profession does not have a comparable independent rating system that tells us how well a job applicant might do, but we are looking at ways to improve the quality of the hiring process at the Center of Military History (CMH) and throughout Career Program 61.

This starts with understanding the guidelines established by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the distinction between qualifying for a position based either on education or on experience. A key aspect of the hiring process is ensuring that civilian personnel offices properly apply the group qualification standards for the professional and scientific field, which includes the history series (0170). The basic requirement to become a federal historian is eighteen hours of undergraduate course work, but that only qualifies one for the GS-5 level. Higher positions require increasing levels of history education, if an applicant wants to qualify by education alone. A prospective GS-11, for example, must have three years of graduate school leading to a Ph.D. Too often in the past personnel offices and hiring officials have overlooked the group qualification standards and deemed applicants qualified even though they only had the minimum undergraduate course work.

Another feature of the group qualification standards is the option to designate jobs as research positions “where the knowledge required to perform the work successfully is acquired typically and primarily through graduate study.”<sup>1</sup> CMH will be recoding many of its historian jobs under this description, which extends higher education standards up through the GS-12 level. Employees who already have career status in the civil service would not necessarily be affected by these educational requirements when applying for a position at the next higher grade, but advanced education is certainly a key discriminator in the recruiting process—worth an extra star, perhaps, to continue our college football analogy. I urge those Army historians (and, for that matter, museum specialists and archivists) who want to advance and do not have a master’s

or doctorate degree to look into obtaining one, especially now that career program funding is available to support such studies.

An additional area of emphasis in future hiring actions will be the specialized experience that a candidate must demonstrate to qualify for any position by experience alone. The hiring authority has considerable control over defining that specialized experience and should make sure it accurately reflects the requirements of the position. A historian hired to write a major official history volume, for example, should already have demonstrated the ability to do so by researching primary sources in archives and writing substantial scholarly narratives. Specialized experience must be in the particular skills needed; simply performing adequately at one grade is not sufficient by itself to groom someone for a different type of job at the next higher level. Those who want to advance should ensure they develop and practice the skills relevant to the positions they hope to fill someday. If your current position does not involve writing major historical works but you aspire to that, then make the time to get your master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation or a scholarly article published. CP 61 will also fund research trips in support of independent scholarly projects! If you have not yet introduced yourself to Ed Clarke, the CP 61 career program manager, definitely do so.

In summary, those responsible for selecting new personnel must ensure the hiring process is set up to provide them with the best possible candidates, so they should become very familiar with the group qualification standards (see the OPM Web site). Job applicants likewise need to prepare themselves to qualify for the type of position they want. No process is always going to put the perfect person in every job. Like football players, historians sometimes fall below or rise above their “recruiting rankings.” But teams that recruit the best overall invariably perform the best too. In that vein, Army history, whether at CMH or out in the field, will strive to maintain itself at the top of the government recruiting competition in the future.

## NOTE

1. United States Code, vol. 2, Title 5—Government Organization and Employees, §9810, p. 441 (2006).



