



UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

from the archives of Museums on the Green

From Heaven to Hell via Hoboken, conclusion

After the hell which had been popping for the biggest part of five months, the stillness was enough to drive a person insane. The intense quiet was almost as bad as the intense shelling we had been used to.

Hot chow came up at about three o'clock and then we started back for Mouzay. A sadder looking lot of men I had never seen. They had long hair, beards, were caked with dirt, their clothes were torn and filthy, they were all very thin and looked about half starved. I imagine I looked as bad as the rest of them.

My first thought was to write a note home, as it had been well over a month since my last note had gone. I wrote a short note on a scrap of paper I had found and then with the mail from some of the other boys, I hiked it back to headquarters to mail it. On Nov. 13th we moved back to Dun-sur-Dolcon. They weighed each man and took our measurements. I had dropped from over 140 to 107 lbs. in the Meuse-Argonne drive.

While in Dun, I went out with a burying party. We picked up all the dead we could find on the field, both American and German. The chaplain erected a small cross over each one and gave the same service for all. On Nov. 23rd we started hiking for Luxemburg. By Dec. 17th we reached Differdange, where we were to spend several months.

On the 24th I received a ten day furlough and boarded a train. At Is-sur-Tille we were given a lunch by the Red Cross and a Christmas box by the YMCA. At le Mont Dore we were put up in the various hotels.



Top: Poster in Museums' collection.

Bottom: On Armistice Day, Falmouth town leaders quickly organized a parade on Main St. Anyone who owned an automobile was invited to take part. Twenty-five car owners participated. Judge Charles H. Robb may have been one of them, although this picture was taken at Quissett on July 4, 1919.

On my birthday, I felt very much at home—a good soft bunk, good chow, no inspections or formations, and best of all no officers.

This town was one of the famous winter resorts of France. There was a large Y in what had formerly been the third largest gambling casino in France. We spent some time on hikes and at the shows at the Y, most of them being termed “the AEF doughboy shows.”

On the 13th I went to Kayl to attend a one week course at the Signal school. Didn't do much of anything except take life easy while there, but was returned to the outfit with the grade of instructor. This gave me a good job as instructor of the signal platoon.

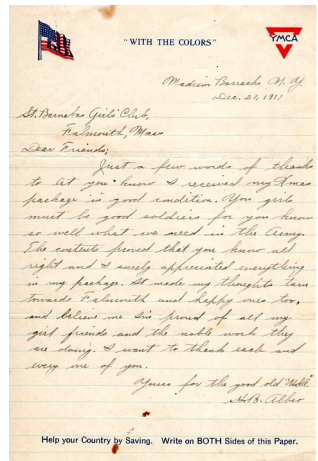
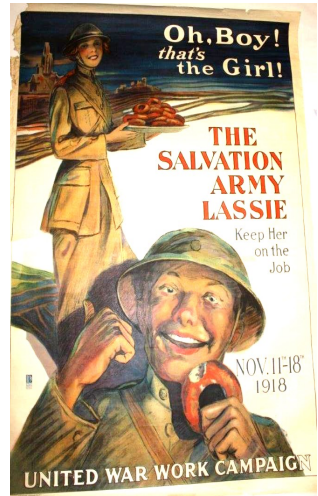
Met Gus Crocker at Esch on Feb. 10th, when the 9th and 10th Brigade had a football game. Gus was a school mate from Falmouth, so we had quite a time.

On March 13th, I was slated to go to Kayl again, this time to the Radio school. When I arrived I found that Lt. Smith had me billed as an instructor of Elementary Electricity, a subject I had never even heard of. But tackled the job, and consequently had it pretty soft.

Things just rolled along at Kayl. I had applied for a pass to Paris and it was granted on June 15th. I telegraphed to Dad, who was located with the Y in Geives, telling him when to meet me in Paris. It is one grand town, and it is no wonder that all tourists make it their headquarters while in Europe.

Bell and I went to the Eiffel tower and climbed to the top. It was a hot day and we were nearly done for when we finally got to the top of the affair. The sight was wonderful. You could see for miles around and on a clear day could see the battlefields, over twenty-six miles away. We started to come down by elevator, but were dared to make the trip down by foot, by a couple of Army Nurses, who were out seeing the city. We did it, but never again. I was lame for a week.

Left Paris on the 20th on a troop train and arrived in Differdange on the 24th. On July 4th, we made it a



Top: Poster in Museums' collection.

Bottom: Letter, in Museums' collection, written by H.B. Albro to the St. Barnabas Girls Club. Albro thanked “all my girl friends” for the care package they sent him at Christmas. “It made my thoughts turn towards Falmouth and happy ones too.” He signed off with a cheery “Yours for the good old U.S.A.”

day of real celebration, and everyone proceeded to take a few last drinks before they started for the Great American desert, as the boys called it, for the United States had gone dry by this time.

On the 5th, we left Differdange. We boarded the box cars and travelled through the war torn country, where city after city and town after town were leveled to the ground. On July 13th we left Brest harbor on the transport *Aquitania* bound for Homeland. We had two bands with us and held a dance every night, having as partners the 300 YMCA girls and about 100 nurses, who came home with us.

We landed in New York harbor on the night of July 19th and went to different camps, from which we would be discharged. On arrival at Devens, I took a pass and started for Falmouth, arriving on the afternoon train without being announced. The welcome I received when I walked in the back door was worth the trip I had taken, and it surely seemed good to get back. Received my discharge and final pay on July 28th, 1919, and I was through with the Army.

I had gained a lot of good experiences, seen a lot of country, had been through a lot of hardships and had had some mighty good times. I had gained physically, and was none the worse for my hitch with Uncle Sam, and as they all said, “While they could never find enough money to pay me for going again, I’m not sorry that I was in it.”

J. Robert Kershaw
(1894-1959)

Learn more:

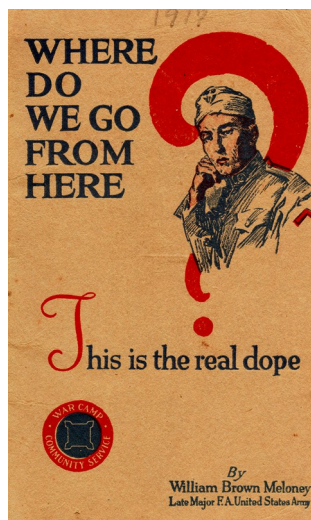
Visit our exhibit “The Doughboys Go to War”

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[Listen to “How Ya Gonna Keep ‘em Down on the Farm”](#)

[Read a summary of Kershaw’s life in his Enterprise obituary](#)

[Read the unabridged version of Kershaw’s memoir](#)



Top: Handbook, 1919, in Museums' collection. It offers advice to service members on how to re-enter civilian life.

Bottom: Doughboy near the Eiffel tower, 1919. Photo by Lewis Hine at Library of Congress.