



UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

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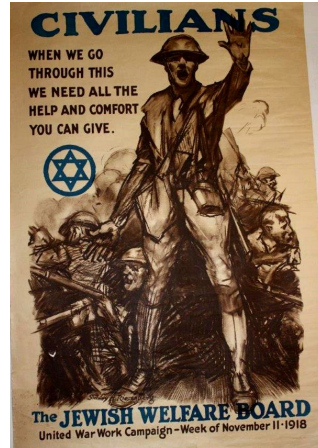
From Heaven to Hell via Hoboken, part 5

After we got replacements, on the 21st, we started driving again. Our losses were not so heavy as before but were heavy enough. On Oct. 24th we moved at night, in front of Aincreville, which was an important RR center and depot of supplies for the German army. We dug “funk” holes and waited for reinforcements. On the evening before we went over, a barrage started at nine and lasted until four in the morning. We were lying in the holes, waiting for orders all this time and having the scare of our lives most of the time as the fireworks were coming thick and fast.

At two o'clock on the afternoon of the 28th we went “over” and into the town of Aincreville. We made 97 prisoners, most of whom were waiting to be captured. We occupied Aincreville until Nov. 2nd, when we were again ordered to advance. Here large numbers of the enemy gave themselves up, rather than stand the heavy artillery any longer.

We advanced a short distance, the afternoon of the 2nd, and again the next morning. On Nov. 5th, we advanced to within a few hundred feet of Clery le Grand. We had a little skirmish with the Huns, who were retreating in fast order, and blowing up the bridges as fast as they went over the river and canal.

Our engineers started work laying pontoons and building temporary bridges for the troops. As we reached the pontoons, the order “no talking” was given and all the way across the marsh, all you could hear was the splashing of water, and from the sound, no one would know that about 400 men were coming across.



Top: Some appeals for aid deliberately targeted groups that were still assimilating into American society: Jews, Catholics, and recent immigrants. Kershaw himself was a naturalized citizen, having been born in England and brought to the U.S. as a child.

Bottom: Pontoon bridge built by U.S. engineers over the Marne river at Lucy, France, 1918. [Photo from Library of Congress.](#)

We finally arrived at the edge of the canal, and started digging in. We had only an hour before daybreak, and it was a case of dig fast. I was dead tired and freezing cold and the constant exposure was beginning to tell on all of us. I lay down along the bank of the canal to wait for daybreak, and slept soundly, covered only with the half blanket I had carried.

In the morning we were welcomed with one of the hottest barrages that I was ever in. Fortunately we were below the cliffs and protected to some extent. At about eight o'clock we spotted several German machine gunners in action along the tops of the cliff and immediately started firing on them with our Springfields. Later when we had crossed the canal we found a number of the enemy, dead at their guns from our rifle fire.

The order was finally given to advance. We made a drive for the top of the cliff and were fortunate enough to arrive at the top without casualties. We captured 57 prisoners, 10 machine guns, and 3 small cannon. At night, I hunted around for a blanket and finally found one in a dead German's pack, and I think this was a life saver for me. I caught a cold however which stayed with me for several months.

The next morning we organized, we had no officers in the battalion and only three in the regiment. Cy McBride was acting Captain of the company; Schneider and I were acting Lieutenants. It surely was a ragged looking outfit.

We advanced again on the 8th, striking the town of Milly. We had been living on a little corned bill and river water for about a week now and on the night of the 9th, after we had captured Mouzay and liberated some 600 civilians, who had waited in the cellars for us, they divided whatever they had in the houses with us, and we had some good hot coffee and black bread, which seemed mighty good in comparison to the feed we had been having.



Priv. Paul D. Sherman, Jr.
Died in Brest, France, April 2, 1919, of Typhoid Pneumonia.
Age 23 years, 5 months



Lieut. William Martin, U. S. N.
Died at Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Va., April 28, 1919.
Age 46 years

Priv. William Savage

Born in the County of Cork, Ireland. Died in France 1918, from wounds received while in action. Age 24 years. One of three brothers, two of whom were in the American and one in the English Army. Was a resident of Falmouth when inducted into service.

Five men from Falmouth gave their lives in World War I. They were Paul Sherman, William Martin, and William Savage (shown above), along with William Wood and Charles DeWillis (mentioned in earlier installments).

An honor roll published in 1919 listed the names of 225 Falmouth men who served in various branches of the military during the conflict.

The day and night of the 10th were spent in the woods and the following morning, we woke up to find a white frost covering everything and believe me, it was some cold. The news came through that the armistice was to go into effect at eleven o'clock, unless we received other orders. At nine we received Pershing's order for the final drive, set for 9:30, which was never carried out, as General Ely in charge of the Division refused to carry it out with the armistice so near. By nine o'clock the firing had diminished but at about 9:30 it started in again with a regular free for all. This lasted for about an hour, when practically everything ceased. At eleven it was as quiet as a graveyard, with the exception of a shot here and there from some guy who was either celebrating the armistice, or who hadn't learned that the war was over.

*J. Robert Kershaw
(1894-1959)*

To be continued . . .

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