



Autumn 2014

Vol. 27, No. 4

Thanksgiving Menus of the Ninth Field Artillery

Although the colonists of Plymouth Colony are known to have celebrated a day of Thanksgiving in the Autumn of 1621, the soldiers of the United States Army did not officially celebrate the holiday until the Civil War. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln announced that the last Thursday of November was to be a day of national rejoicing and thanks to God. When the soldiers of Camp Lewis celebrated their first Thanksgiving at the new cantonment in 1917, the holiday was firmly established as a day of feasting, celebration, and thanks for the many blessings bestowed on America.

The Lewis Army Museum has an outstanding collection of Thanksgiving Day Menus, dating back to 1917. However, among the most colorful menus in the collection are those produced for the Ninth Field Artillery Regiment during the 1930s. Not only do these menus capture the spirit of the holiday, but they are true works of art.

In addition to the colorful graphics, the menus also give us the bounty of food, drink and "smokes" enjoyed by the soldiers of the Ninth Field Artillery on Thanksgiving Day.

Although American soldiers continued to enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday, in times of war and peace, the menus of the 1930s have never been surpassed for their visual appeal.

The 1st Battalion of the 9th Field Artillery was activated on Fort Lewis in 1930 and served on Fort Lewis until 1942, when it deployed for service in World War II.



Thanksgiving is the theme of this issue of *The Banner*. Featured are some menus from the Ninth Field Artillery Regiment during the 1930s. These colorful and beautifully crafted menus are interesting to look at, and show the effort that the units put into capturing the spirit of Thanksgiving. The food items also reflect the bounty of food that members of the unit and their families enjoyed on that day. For me, the menus evoke happy memories of past Thanksgiving days that my family and I spent at our unit mess halls, later called dining facilities, enjoying the food and the company of Soldiers and their families.

Thanksgiving is also a time to reflect on things to be thankful for, and the Museum is one of them. We have said many times before that Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) is blessed with a great museum. It is in a historic building that is in itself a treasure. The Museum is manned by a professional staff supported by a group of dedicated volunteers. Judging from the numerous, recurring unsolicited comments that are received, the visiting public agrees that the Museum is doing its job well and is worth a visit.

Thank you to the Museum staff, all the wonderful volunteers, and members of *The Friends*, for continuing to make the Museum the JBLM asset that it is. Have a Happy Thanksgiving and best wishes for the upcoming Holiday Season!

Ian Larson

A SOLDIER'S THOUGHTS

I'm stitting here and thinking of the things I left behind,
And I'd hate to put on paper what is running through my mind.
We've dug a million ditches, and cleaned ten miles of ground,
And a meaner place this side of HELL is waiting to be found.
But there is one consolation; gather closely while I tell,
When we die we'll go to HEAVEN, for we've done our hitch in HELL!
We've built a hundred kitchens for the cooks to stew our beans,
We've stood a million guard-mounts and cleaned the camp's latrines;
We've washed a million mess kits and peeled a million spuds,
We've rolled a million blanket rolls and washed our dirty duds;
The number of parades we've stood is very hard to tell;
We won't have to parade in HEAVEN for we've done our hitch in HELL!
We've killed a million rats and bugs that cried out for our slum,
And we've shaken a million ants from 'mongst our dirty sheets;
We've marched a million miles, and made a million camps,
And we've pulled a million thorns from elastic briches-seats.
BUT when our work on earth is done, our friends behind will tell—
That when dead they went to HEAVEN for they have done their hitch in HELL!

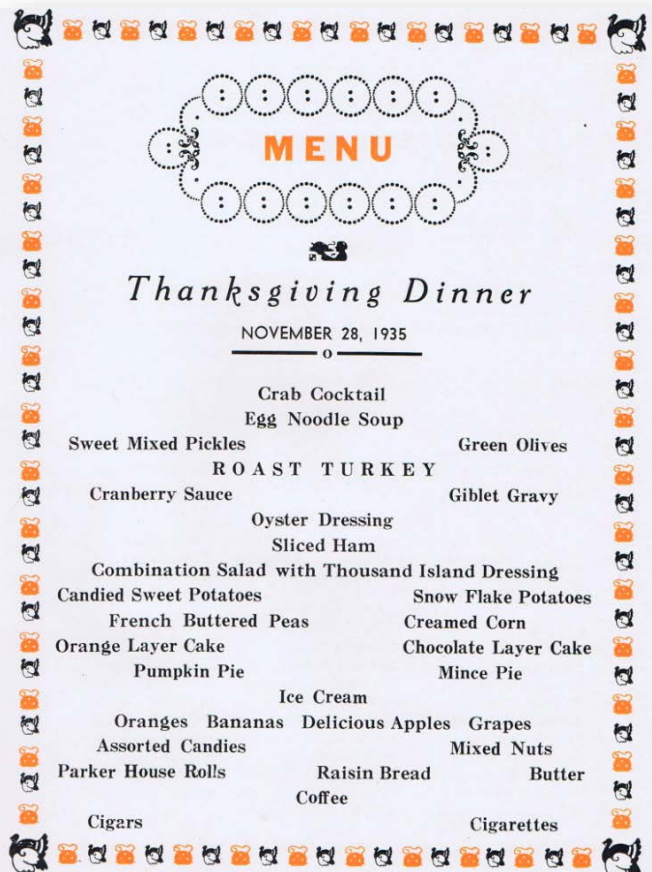
CHORUS

When finally taps is sounded, and we lay aside life's cares,
We will do our last Peerade up those shining GOLDEN STAIRS;
The angels all will welcome us and harps will start to play,
And we'll draw a million BEER checks and spend them in a day.
It is then we'll hear ST. PETER tell us loudly with a yell,
"Take a front seat, SOLDIER, for you've done your hitch in HELL."

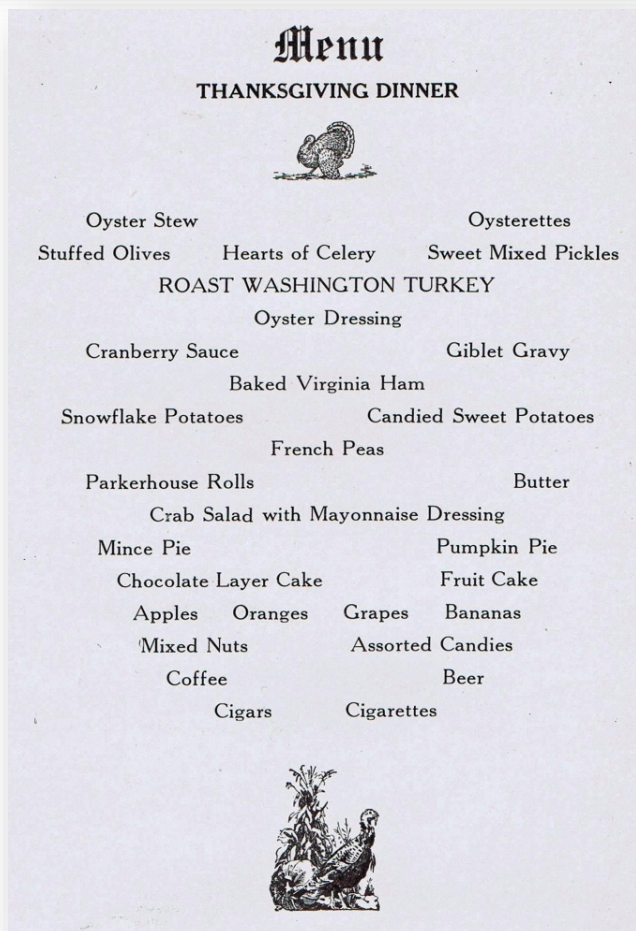
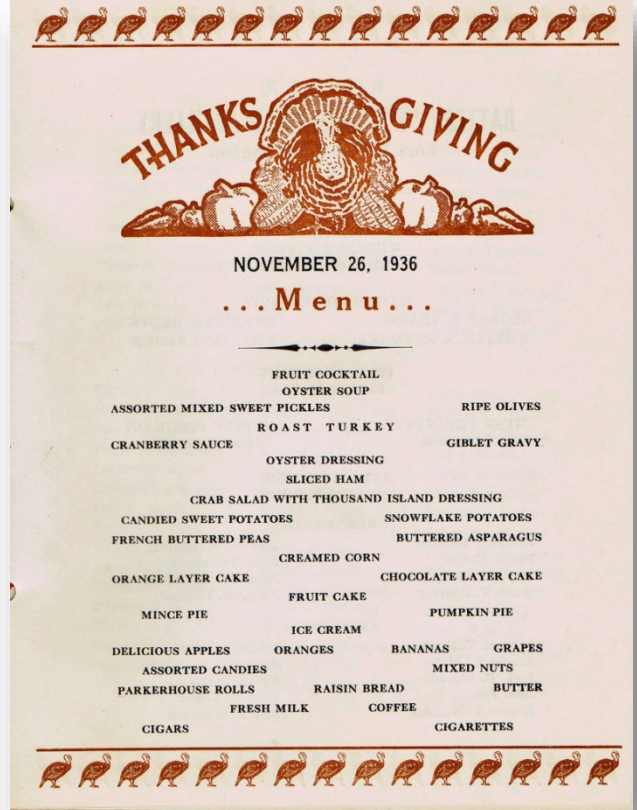


This issue of "The Banner" is unique in that it is focused on Thanksgiving instead of Christmas as the theme of the Autumn edition. We have much to be Thankful for at the museum. The Friends have been tremendous, well, friends, and supporters of our museum. The facility looks great and is appreciated by all who visit. Our wonderful museum is the result of the hard work and dedication of the museum staff, Soldiers assigned to the museum and the museum volunteers. The Joint Base, I Corps and 7th Infantry Division leadership have also been great advocates for our museum and we are thankful for their support as well. We are presently at work, developing artifact and image lists to support the upcoming Center of Military History (CMH) sponsored gallery re-design efforts, and we are working cooperatively with the CMH assigned project manager for this project, Mr. Ephriam Dickson. I will provide a more detailed update on the museum renovation project in the next issue of "The Banner." Again, thanks to all who have made our museum the beacon it is today. Happy Thanksgiving.

Myles Grant



A poem/song from the 1935 Ninth FA Menu




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<http://www.fortlewismuseum.com>

Thanksgiving Dinner

1938



Battery "B", Ninth Field Artillery



Fort Lewis, Washington