



Autumn 2018

Vol. 31, No. 3

ON THEIR WAY

Long trains pulled into Camp Lewis in the Autumn of 1917, bearing the men who would soon constitute the 91st Division. Already impatient for battle, they had chalked upon the sides of the railroad cars slogans reflecting their audacity: "Hell, Highwater or Huns Can't Stop We'uns!" "A Palace For The Kaiser, A Kennel for the Kaiser!" "Postprandial Potion for Potentate at Potsdam: A Potpourri of Potassium, Persimmon, and Perdition, administered by Uncle Sam!" "Katydid* Kaiser, Keel-haul 'im, Kerosene 'im!"

Ten months later, remade into strong, husky fighting men, the 91st Division cheered when they left Camp Lewis aboard secret trains, on their way to war at last.

Cocky under shell fire after their arrival in France, they hollered "Raspberry!" every time German artillery missed its target. In the Meuse-Argonne Campaign one hundred years ago, they smashed through the lines of their astonished adversaries, established a brilliant record in battle and turned the tide in one of history's bloodiest conflicts.

** Male katydids have loud, shrill voices, hence the Kaiser's nickname.*



Such was the Kaiser's grisly reputation - C.T. Farlin, Co. 48, 166th Depot Brigade, drew a skull and crossbones on his Iron Cross, a vulture atop his Pickelhaube, blood dripping from his hands, and one of his beloved Dachshunds by his side.

Waiting for “H-hour” in the Meuse-Argonne

As part of his strategy to end World War I, General Pershing planned a secret American attack between the Argonne Forest and the Meuse River in the northeast region of France, close to Luxembourg: a sector of ongoing, ferocious fighting since the war began in 1914. Overnight on September 19-20, 1918, all four regiments of the 91st Division – 361st, 362nd, 363rd and 364th - marched into the center of a twenty mile front and bivouaced in the eastern part of the Argonne, near Verdun.

Hidden there among trees and thick shrubbery, the Americans wrote letters, cleaned their weapons and prepared for the “jump-off”. At night, a growing arsenal surrounded them - as soon as artillery pieces and equipment moved into position, the doughboys quickly masked them under netting entwined with branches, leaves and grasses.

When their food rations ran short, the enterprising cooks of ‘B’ Company, 364th regiment, pilfered bran provided for Supply company’s mules. Combined with a little sawdust, it made a great breakfast for the soldiers. The hungry mules registered their outrage in mournful, hair-raising brays, violating orders to keep quiet and preserve secrecy.

On September 25, 1918, the time for the attack, “H-hour”, was set for 0530 the next morning. After four hours alternately marching and halting over muddy, congested roads, the companies moved into front line trenches that evening. An undercurrent of mounting excitement and jubilant determination gripped the regiments. They blamed the Germans for the whole world war and eagerly welcomed the chance to thrash them.

At 1130 that night, American artillery opened the most dazzling pyrotechnical display in history with 2700 guns and 600,000 tons of ammunition. In the darkness a line of leaping fire ran along the German trenches as 75mm field guns, placed hub to hub and disguised in the bushes, targeted enemy strongholds. Flashes from the gun muzzles stained the whole breadth of the flickering sky a deep, dull red. More than three miles from the front, sound repercussions from a thousand cannon barking together loosened the seams of metal gasoline tanks in U.S. Army Air Service planes.

Heavy guns entered the action together at 0230- 8” howitzers, 155 mm guns and a 14”/50 caliber Mk 4 railway gun. Firing a 1400-pound shell, the railway gun operated as a single battery. Its first shot that morning stunned the men, nearly knocking them to the ground; every five to ten minutes, almost a ton of steel rustled overhead, shredding the air as the earth shook and trembled.

The bombardment continued, increasing in fury. While the men waited, they spoke in low tones to one another, speculating about what would happen to the Germans, discussing the best methods for using bayonets and the latest tactics against machine guns. The talk then drifted to home and America and training at Camp Lewis: they remembered Mt. Rainier arrayed in gorgeous, sunlit colors, the quiet dignity of the evergreen trees and the serene waters of Lake Nisqually. And to the end of their lives, they remembered Camp Lewis as “the most beautiful place on earth.”



“September the 26th” by
Sgt. Herman Struck, 316th
Engineers, 91st Division,
1918.

"They were lying dug in on the hills
East of the Argonne, France,
Some were forever still,
But the rest were taking their chance.

"Four days they had battled the Boche,
These boys from over the sea,
Fighting as only Americans can,
For the cause of Liberty.

"Gesnes was just over the hill,
And full of the dirty Hun,
The kind that holler Kamerad
While working machine guns.

"The order came to advance;
Capture the town we must,
And the Colonel said we'd do it, too,
We'd do it by God or bust.

"Shells and shrapnel and bullets and gas---
But only the hit went down.
Forward in thinning lines they went,
To the ridge beyond the town.

"This isn't the song of the light brigade,
But another he-man fight,
And I guess the ravine this side of Gesnes
Was the valley of death, all right!

"Powder River, hook 'em cow!
This was their war-cry yell,
And it means we'll never stop this side
Of the fiery brink of Hell."

Anonymous, 362nd Infantry, 91st Division.

Oscar F. Miller, U.S. Congressional Medal Of Honor, 361st Infantry, 91st Division.

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Gesnes, France, September 28, 1918. After two days of intense physical and mental strain, during which Maj. Miller had led his battalion in the front line of the advance, through the forest of Argonne, the enemy was met in a prepared position south of Gesnes. Though almost exhausted, he energetically reorganized his battalion and ordered an attack. Upon reaching open ground, the advancing line began to waver in the face of machine gun fire from the front and flanks and direct artillery fire. Personally leading his command group forward between his front line companies, Maj. Miller inspired his men by his personal courage, and they again pressed on toward the hostile position. As this officer led the renewed attack he was shot in the right leg, but he nevertheless staggered forward at the head of his command. Soon afterwards he was shot again in the right arm, but he continued the charge, personally cheering his troops on through heavy machine gun fire. Just before the objective was reached he received a wound in the abdomen which forced him to the ground, but he continued to urge his men on, telling them to push on to the next ridge and leave him where he lay. He died of his wounds a few days later. (W.D.G.O. 16, Sec. III, Jan. 22, 1919.)



THE HISTORIC PLANK ROAD TO VERY

"The Historic Plank Road to Very"
by Sgt. Herman Struck, 316th
Engineers, 91st Division, 1918.

General Pershing's Report of the Meuse Argonne Campaign, First Phase

"The American right flank was protected by the Meuse River, while the left embraced the Argonne Forest, whose ravines, hills, and elaborate defense screened by dense thickets had been considered impregnable. The order of battle from right to left was the Third Corps from the Meuse to Malancourt, with the 33rd, 80th and 4th Divisions in line; the 5th Corps from Malancourt to Vauquois, with 79th, 37th and 91st Division in line; and the First Corps from Vauquois to Vienne le Chateau, with 35th, 28th, and 77th Divisions in line.

"On the night of September 25, American troops quietly slipped into position, replacing the French which had long been inactive. In the attack which began on the 26th, Americans drove through the barbed wire entanglements and the sea of shell craters across No Man's Land, mastering all the firstline defense. Continuing on the 27th and 28th, against machine guns and artillery of an increasing number of enemy reserve divisions, Americans penetrated to a depth of from 3 – 7 miles and took the village of Montfaucon and its commanding hill and Exermont, Gercourt, Cuisy, Septsarges, Malancourt, Ivroiry, Epinonville, Charpentry, Very, and other villages.

"East of the Meuse one of our Divisions, which was the Second Colonial French Corps, captured Marcheville and Rieville, giving further protection to the flank of the American main body.

"Americans took 10,000 prisoners, gained their point of forcing the battle into the open and were prepared for the enemy's reaction, which was bound to come as the Germans had good roads and ample railroad facilities for bringing up his artillery and reserves.

"In the chill rain of dark nights, American engineers had to build new roads across spongy, shell-torn areas, repair broken roads beyond No Man's Land, and build bridges.

"American gunners, with no thought of sleep, put their shoulders to wheels and dragropes to bring their guns through the mire in support of the infantry, now under the increasing fire of the enemy's artillery. The American attack had taken the enemy by surprise, but, quickly recovering themselves, the Germans began to fire counter attacks in strong force, supported by heavy bombardments, with large quantities of gas.

"From September 28th until October 4th, Americans maintained the offensive against patches of woods defended by snipers and continuous lines of machine guns, and pushed forward their guns and transport, seizing strategic points in preparation for further attacks."



WHILE I SCRATCHED

Thanks for the glass I received from you;
As a gift it is certainly fine;
Throughout all my leisure
It now gives me the pleasure
To find where the cooties recline.

I had served a subpoena upon them
With notice to pay rent or quit,
In spite of it all
Through the whole of the Fall
They continued to do their small bit.

If they think there's a shirt hunt impending
They hide in some dugout or cave,
And when it is over
They dance under cover
While their victim continues to rave.

For in spite of the new magnifier
I feel that there still is a rub,
A cootie inspector
In this active sector
Needs not only a glass but a club.

Pvt. Lute Hutton, 316th Engineers.

Cartoons by Colie, 316th
Engineers, 91st Division.

Articles by Karolyn Bredberg, Lewis Army Museum volunteer.

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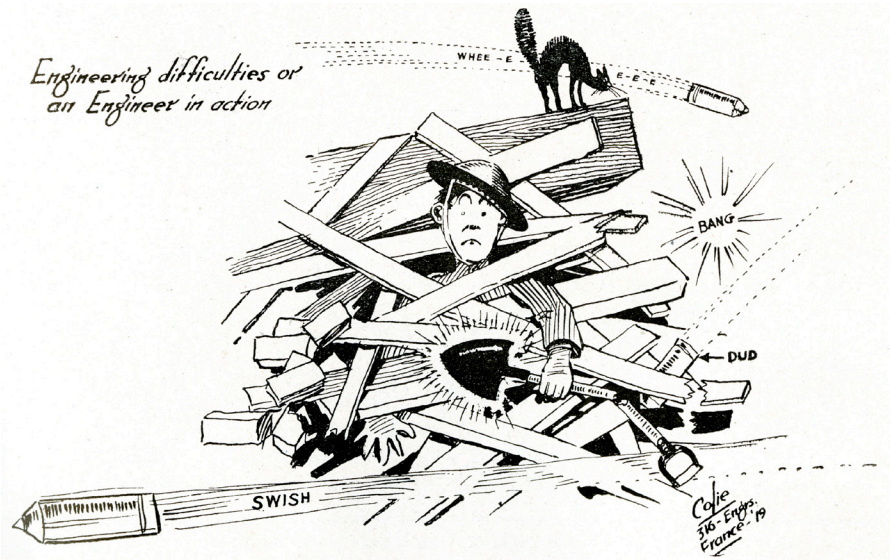
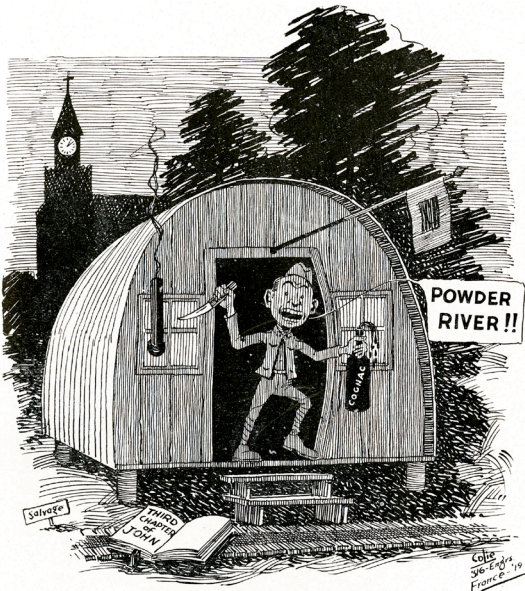
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THERE WAS QUITE A KICK—EVEN IN A FALSE ALARM



DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

We've wrapped up our first full year open to the public since the Camp Lewis Centennial celebrations last summer. During the past twelve months we more than doubled our visitation from 9,600 guests in Fiscal Year 2016 to just over 23,000 in Fiscal Year 2018. As we continue our outreach efforts in Fiscal Year 2019, we are on track to increase our visitation, and overall impact on the community even further.

Our visitation numbers are even more impressive when one considers that for almost the entire past year we've only had our Army in the Pacific Northwest and Lewis galleries open to the public.

On September 15th, we opened the fully-renovated Hall of Valor during a public event that was broadcast on KING TV. The TV piece led to an even greater number of visitors the following day! Later that week, KING TV's "Evening Magazine" did their full broadcast from the museum grounds. The Hall of Valor was featured prominently with an additional subsequent boost to visitation.

Our summer series of public events, including Saturday "Family Days" and Vietnam 50th Commemoration events, were well-attended and proved to be very popular. As a result we are planning more events for next spring and summer including an expanded 2-day Vietnam 50th Anniversary event and a 2-day "Living History Weekend".

As for our day-to-day operations, the museum continues to grow and evolve. Our esteemed and indispensable Curator, Heidi Pierson, was at last given a well-deserved promotion to a higher pay grade. Her promotion will lead to the addition of a third full-time permanent curator position with the museum that we hope to fill within by the first of the year.

As for our wonderful volunteers, Ms. Dawn Dailey has taken over as our Volunteer Coordinator and has been hard at work recruiting and training new volunteers. With all our main galleries fully re-opened, Dawn has been tasked with focusing volunteer recruiting efforts on expanding our cadre of Cannon Shop personnel and Docent/Educators. That is where our mission to educate the public happens and we need your support. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us via our Facebook page or our website (www.LewisArmyMuseum.com).

Thank you all for your continued support as we look forward to a new and exciting chapter in the history of the Lewis Army Museum.

Carry On.

Erik.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings, Friends!

Our board held a strategic planning session in September to ensure that our mission was nested within that of the museum.

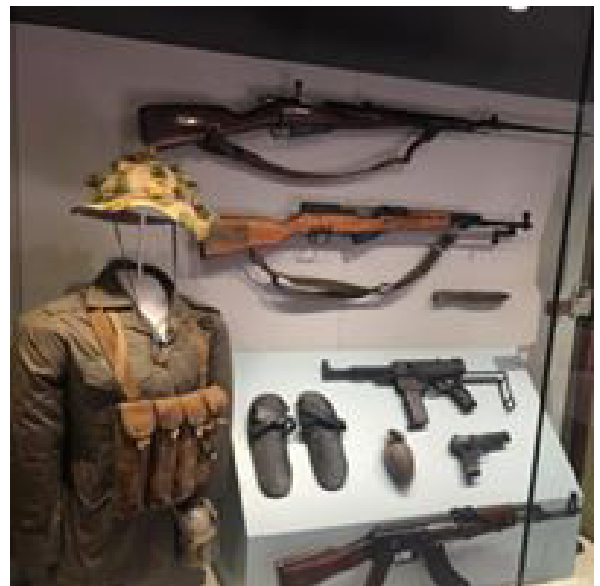
We remain committed to supporting the Lewis Army Museum and its unique collection through outreach, membership, and financial support.

In addition, we want to be more inclusive in our support by recognizing the time and talent of dedicated museum volunteers. Thus, we will grant one-year basic membership to all museum volunteers who log at least 15 hours through the JBLM VMIS account. While this complimentary basic membership does not offer a discount on Cannon Shop purchases, it offers email access to the Banner and other Friends activities.

We also encourage members of the Friends to come to the events hosted by the museum and consider volunteering.

I truly appreciate your support, whether it is via time, money, or talent and I look forward to seeing you at upcoming museum activities.

Marisa Peloquin



FRIENDS OF THE FORT LEWIS MILITARY MUSEUM

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

28 OCTOBER 2018

Place: Patriots Landing, Olympic Dining Room

Time: 1130-1215 Social Hour

1215-1330 Brunch

1330-1415 Program

We are pleased to announce David L. Nicandri as speaker for the quarterly brunch.

David L. Nicandri has been the Director of the Washington State Historical Society and Chief Curator of the Washington State Capitol Museum. He is a graduate of the State University of New York and the University of Idaho, and has received honorary doctorates from Gonzaga and University of Puget Sound. He is the author of numerous books and articles on Northwest history. David is currently working on a book about Captain James Cook's 18th century search for the Northwest Passage and that quest's relevance to present day issues of climate change.

Please return your reservation form and check by Thursday, 26 January 2017.
Last minute reservations may be made by calling Paul Knoop at (253) 279-2598.

Return this form to LTC (Ret) Donald A Simpson, 827 Aloha Street
Edmunds, WA 98020. Make checks payable to "The Friends."
Cost of Brunch for members and guests: \$17.00 each.

Number of Reservations: _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Name of Member: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Names of Guests: _____

Residents of Patriot's Landing do not need to make payment for the meeting,
but are requested to make reservations for seating.

The Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum Board of Directors

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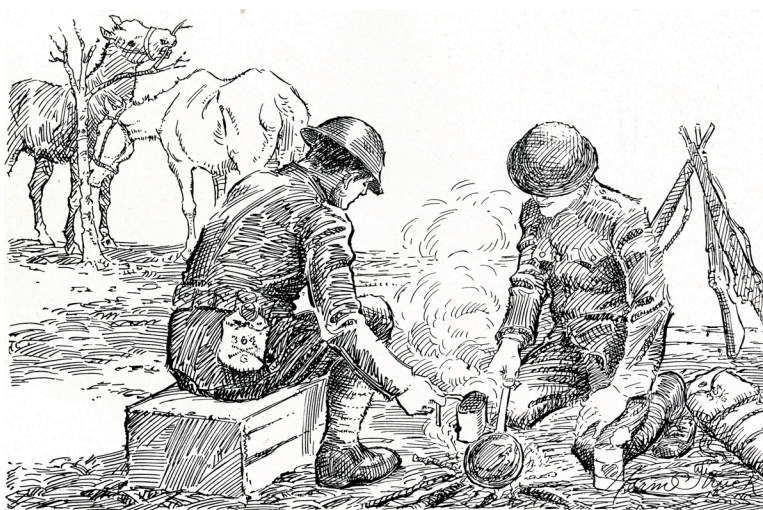
The Banner is printed four times a year and is mailed to all members of The Friends of Fort Lewis Museum. Articles may be submitted to the Editor or left with the Director of the Lewis Army Museum. The Friends assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or other materials submitted for publication. Contents copyrighted by The Friends; contact the Editor for permission to reproduce any portion.

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Visit the Friends web site for more
information and purchases from the Cannon
Shop.

<http://www.fortlewismuseum.com>



"The Argonne" by Sgt. Herman Struck, 316th Engineers.

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