III

During the War...

War clouds hung over us in 1916. Since we were Company A in the Kansas City National Guard Division, we expected momentarily that our country would be involved in war with Germany, and our Division would be on our way to France.

I continued my work with building wireless sets to order, designing and building electrical, medical equipment for doctors, scout work, and functioning as Master Signal Electrician in Company A, Kansas City National Guard. We were a Signal Corps unit and functioned as communications experts for our division with our wireless equipment.

Mindful of the war clouds and the certainty that I would go overseas with Company A, I faced the possibility that I might not return. I had married that year, and yet could not set up a home and get started on any regular family life because of the possibility that I would be on my way to France at any time. Sure enough, this country declared war on Germany. National Guard Divisions were alerted for active duty. I was soon aboard a train with my buddies, en route to New York to embark for England.

We left the train near New York City and set up camp in a corn field to await embarkation orders. The U.S. had seized three German steamships that were in Hoboken Harbor and held their crews and officers (native Germans) in protective custody. The ships had been held for two years, with the complement of officers and men living aboard a part of that time. The ships were food transports, fitted out with enormous refrigeration facilities. The Kron Princess Cecilia, renamed "The President Grant" was the ship on which we were to sail to England. It had been overhauled and fitted with bunks and adequate mess facilities, wireless equipment,

and adequate boats.

I had had my smallpox vaccination on joining the National Guard. I received another when we went to the border in 1916; before boarding The President Grant, I had another.

The President Grant had six thousand troops aboard when we had all boarded. The dangers of submarine warfare were very prevalent. As we steamed out of New York Harbor, we were part of a large convoy sailing east. We found our bunks, unpacked as much as possible, and when we could, explored the ship. I was given permission to visit the wireless room, which was my main interest. Four days went by. A friend and I decided the fourth evening to go up top to the deck, since our quarters were close and quite warm. We took blankets with us and made ourselves comfortable in a lifeboat.

The sky was dark. Thousands of stars twinkled overhead. We could see the lights of the ship just ahead of us and the phosphorus lighting her wake. Finally we realized the ships ahead were gone and our ship had turned around, going back in the direction we came from. We jumped up and ran to the wireless shack, but the operator was very busy and wouldn't talk to us. We finally found someone who told us the ship had boiler troubles and was on her way back to New York.

When the interned German crew was living aboard the Kron Princess Cecilia nee The President Grant, they had amused themselves by boring holes in the cylinder walls of the huge boilers and filling the holes with corks which they painted the color of the cylinder walls. The oiler of the ship's crew had showed me the places where welders had repaired the damage. The German crew had also put small pieces of iron, (screws, nails, etc.) and carborundum in the cylinders. All this sabotage had been discovered and repaired. The ship had performed well on the shake-down cruise to Hampton Roads Navy Yard, but when so much equipment and six thousand troops were aboard, the ship rode lower in the water. It had not been discovered that the Germans had put a solution in the boiler tubes that precipitated scale, and clogged the boiler tubes. The Captain had decided to leave the convoy and return to New York Harbor. With the boilers malfunctioning, the ship could not have kept up with the convoy. She would have been a sitting duck for German submarines.

We limped back up the East River to Fort Totten, New York, and we were there four days. Then we were transported to New York where our battalion and some nurses and other outfits went aboard one of the 35 small ships, in convoy. We took a zig-zag course for England. We landed at Liverpool, and after a few days, went aboard another ship, crossed the English Channel, and were at last in France. We

During the War ...

landed at Le Havre. Accommodations had been arranged for pitching tents by unrolling long rolls of chicken wire in rows. Tents were pitched over the wire rows and we slept in our blankets on the chicken wire. The next day we got on a French train pulled by a small engine. We would ride along for an hour or so on a single track road. The train would back up for what seemed an hour until it got on side tracks to let another train go by. This procedure continued for four days until we arrived at the town of Vocaliers.

There seemed to be something magical about the number four, as applied to our Division. We were aboard The President Grant four days before the ship returned to New York and Fort Totten. We were at Fort Totten four days before we went aboard the transport barges out to an English ship. We were aboard the English ship four days on our way to Halifax, Nova Scotia. We were in Halifax four days before we went aboard one of the ships in the convoy and sailed to England. We were in England four days before we crossed the English Channel.

Finally, we spent a miserable four days aboard the French train. We were all hungry, tired and disgusted. The canned goods our cooks were to use to prepare meals for us aboard the train had made the trip from the United States in a damp hold of a ship. In the dampness, all the printed labels had come off the cans, so no one knew what was in the cans. We were always hopeful, but every meal aboard that French train consisted of tomato puree and only tomato puree from those cans with no labels.

In four days' train journey from the Le Havre, we disembarked from the train at the little town of Vocaliers. Our Division set up camp in the City Park, with the soup kitchens in a prominent position. At last all we hungry dough boys, still sick of tomato puree, got some food we could eat.

The town was picturesque, but quite odorous. Most of the houses along the streets were two room houses. Each house had two front doors, one to each room. A French family lived in one room of the house, where they slept, cooked and ate. The other room was the dwelling place of one or more cows, some pigs and chickens. The manure was shoveled out all during the winter and piled high in front of the house, along the street. Every house had a huge pile of manure in front of it. In the spring the family would load the manure in a two-wheeled cart. In several trips the farmer would haul the manure out to his little tract of land, seldom bigger than four or five acres, and spread it on the land. Then he would plant his crop. But we didn't know that.

Our Colonel was quite upset. It was very important to maintain sanitary conditions, so the morning after our camp was pitched, we had orders to take our

wagons and shovels and clean up the town. With several men to each wagon, we were hauling off manure at a fast rate. We hauled it away outside the town and dumped it. Then we heard the bugles blow Recall. We abandoned our manure hauling activities and returned to camp. A lot of angry French farmers were there confronting our officers, along with the mayor and an interpreter. Finally the shouting died away and between the Mayor and the Colonel, a compromise was reached. The American Colonel, being a stranger to French customs and manner of life, was a very ignorant man. He did not know that manure was the wealth of the people of the town. He did not know that when he had his soldiers haul the manure away, he had robbed the people of their wealth. The Colonel apologized to the mayor and the people. He said he would have his soldiers take their manure out to their fields and (at Major Garrett's suggestion) have his soldiers spread the manure on their fields. The people liked that, for it would save them a lot of labor.

It was in December and snow was on the ground. The weather was cold. We were out of fuel for our soup kitchens, so the Colonel ordered some men from each company to take axes and wagons and go to the forest on one side of the town and cut wood and bring back each wagon loaded with wood. Here, because of ignorance, we committed our second faux pas. We found the forest. It was a beautiful forest, with orderly rows of trees, like rows of corn. The trunks of the trees were seven to ten inches through. We cut and split enough wood to keep the stoves in our soup kitchens burning for several days. Thereby, our officers were again involved in an emotional shouting attack by our French hosts. We had again committed an unpardonable crime: We had cut trees in a State Forest without permission. This finally resulted in our having to pay a big fine to the French Government. We were there to help them, and were even prepared to lay down our lives in defense of the French people, but neither their Generals nor the Government made any provisions for our use such as food, wood, or the other accommodations we needed.

After four days in Vocaliers, we were again the victim of political manipulations. It seemed that the regular U.S. Army wanted replacements to fill in the ranks of several Divisions. The officers argued that as National Guard battalions, we were not trained nor had the experience that regular Army battalions boasted, so we of the National Guard could not keep up. Our companies should immediately be broken up and the members scattered around among the regular Army Companies.

We were aghast at the prospect of being forced to leave our officers and buddies. That we should lose our identity was unthinkable. Our officers protested loudly and long, citing our continuous training and our loyalty to our officers and ideals. The result was that we were sent off, in cold December weather with eight inches of snow

on the ground, on a forced foot-march, each man carrying full pack, through unfamiliar mountains.

On the second day, a motorcycle messenger caught up with us. He told us that one of our trucks carrying our wireless equipment was broken down about thirty miles away back down the road. I was sent back to see what the problem was. I rode on the motorcycle hanging on behind the driver. The road was rough and covered with snow that was iced over. The air temperature was well below freezing. We were lucky to find little cafes in homes at intervals along the way. We would alight from the motorcycle and go into the cafe and order hot coffee. The coffee was made from a spoonful of thick black coffee syrup spooned into a big mug and boiling water added to fill the mug. It was thick and hot and of such a strength that I would have bet my last dollar that it would corrode boiler tubes. But to two frozen dough boys, it was veritable anti-freeze and fuel to enable us to go on down the road.

When I reached the disabled truck, the trouble was apparent. I sent the motorcycle driver to the outfit with a request to Major Garrett for a team of mules and a supply wagon. Then we waited for our request to be filled. The motorcycle man came back with some tools. He admitted he hadn't asked for the mules and the wagon. We sent him back again and he never came back to us, nor did we receive the mules or wagon.

We would go into a town nearby to buy food. We scavenged wood and built fires in our attempt to keep warm.

This went on for ten days. On the tenth day, a truck caught up with us and stopped to help. We tried over and over to get the truck running again, but we didn't have the proper parts or the right tools. I had not heard from the Company Commander. I was a Master Signal Electrician, the highest ranking non-commissioned officer in our Company, so I took the responsibility of handling the situation. Under my orders we cannibalized the wireless truck. We first took off all the wireless equipment and loaded it on the other truck. Then we literally took the wireless truck apart (even to hub-caps, wiring, carburetor, tires), everything we could take off. With the load on the other truck, we made it back to the mountain camp just in time to join our Company as they moved out on their way to their assignment. I had to answer a lot of questions, but all in all, the Captain finally agreed that I had done what was best under the circumstances.

I had orders to report to the Second Signal Corps School as a student. I was already several days late. When I arrived I was interviewed by a First Lieutenant. The Lieutenant was duly impressed by the fact that I had my license and a wireless station on the air in 1913. He promptly appointed me Assistant Instructor and set me

to work instructing Signal Corps recruits in the intricacies of building, repairing and using wireless equipment.

By the time we had arrived in the little town where we were to remain for some months, it was just a few days until Christmas. Our pay checks for several months finally caught up with us. We went on a Christmas shopping spree. There wasn't much left in the stores but U.S. money. Packages were dispatched back to loved ones in the "good ol' U.S. of A.," and we had a terrific Christmas dinner.

Some of us who wished to send messages home went to the town wireless station. All the young men of the town were in the French Army. The operator of the wireless was an older man who sent messages very slowly. We realized that very few of us would get our messages out at the rate the operator was sending, so several good operators persuaded the old Frenchman to let them send the messages. They sent their buddies' messages correctly and with speed. The Frenchman looked on in astonishment at the speed and efficiency of "our operators."

I was billeted with a French family, which was large and had many food ration stamps. The father had been on the front with his battalion, but was home on leave. Everyday his wife would walk to a nearby town and purchase food with money and ration coupons. Because they had so many family members, they had many coupons and could get enough food to share with me. I paid enough money for boarding that with what I paid and the father's military pay, they had plenty of money with which to buy food. One day they told me they were going to get "salade." I went with their large family group down to a clear, flowing creek and helped them pull watercress out of the creek with long handled wooded rakes. Some of the cress we had at the next few meals. Some of it was put in crocks in vinegar, to save for winter use.

My next assignment was at Chateau Surseine. My orders were to report to the First Corps Signal School. I couldn't find the First Corps Signal School. I finally found the commanding officer. When I had reported to him, he gave me my orders. I was to find a location for a school and set up a classroom! To say I was astonished is to put it mildly. I recovered from my surprise in record time and set out around the village to find a building suitable for a Signal Corps School. I found an available granary. Another Signal Corps man had arrived. Together we swept and cleaned the granary.

HEADQUARTERS 26th DIVISION AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

France, May 25, 1918.

SPECIAL ORDERS No. 143.

Extract

8. In accordance with paragraph 44, Special Orders No. 142, General Hood-quarters, American Expeditionary Forces, dated May 22nd, 1918, the following-named enlisted men, upon their reporting to these headquarters, will report to the commanding officers of the organizations indicated after their respective names for duty with specialties also indicated for a period of one week's intensive training IN THE FRONT LINE, and upon completion of this duty they will return to their proper stations, as directed by the aforementioned order.

TO ONE-POUNDER PLATOON

Sgt. H. A. Prentiss, Company D. 165th Infentry
TO SAPPERS & BCHBLES FLATOON

Sgt. C. C. Hash, Company D. 23rd Infentry
TO HIFLE COMPANY

Sgt. W. H. Thomson, Company E, 103rd Infantry
Sgt. R. J. Jemnings, 51st Company, 5th Marines
Sgt. Allan G. Carson, Company H, 28th Infantry
Sgt. H. L. Frentz, Company G, 166th Infantry
Sgt. H. F. Cullickson, Company G, 104th Infantry
Sgt. Wa. J. Whitmore, Company E, 16th Infantry

Sgt. Was. J. Whitmore, Company E, 16th Infantry

Sgt. H. L. Frentz, Company G, 166th Infantry
Sgt. H. F. Cullickson, Company G, 104th Infantry
Sgt. Wm. J. Whitmore, Company E, 16th Infantry
Sgt. E. J. White, Company K, 103rd Infantry
Sgt. Fred J. Nutter, Company A, 103rd Infantry
Sgt. H. J. Linkey, Company L, 28th Infantry
TO MACHINE GUN COMPANY

Sgt. P. L. Rich, Company C, 102nd M. G. Bn. Sgt. E. Poldeni, Company A, 2nd Brig. M.G.Bn. Sgt. G. O. Darnell, 76th Company, 6th Marines TO SIGNAL COMPANY

H.S.E. Thomas G. Hieronymus, 117th F.B.S.C. Sgt. Alva B. Smith, 101, 5th F.B.S.C. Sgt. Wh. L. Slaney, 101st F.B.S.C.

to 101st Infantry

To 102nd M. G. Bn.

To loist Fld. Bn. S. C.

The Quartermaster Corps will furnish the necessary transport

The journey is necessary for the public service.

By command of Major General EDWARDS:

DUNCAN K. MAJOR, Jr., Chief of Stoff.

OFFICIAL: C. A. STEVENS, Adjutant General, Adjutant.

	PASS
	Doc. 29th. 1918191
	199923 Candidate. (Name, number and rank) .sFrom 9:30 p. m. to S. A. M. Deer No.
	(State object for which issued) 2nd Lientinature of pattern) Company Commander
	(Rank and Organization)
not transforable,	and signed with ink. Is good only on day of date and is
Form 1094 NOT VALID UNTIL ST	TAMPED IN PROVOST MARSHAL'S OFFICE (Over)

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

France, February 1st 1919.

The Commander in Chief.

M.S.E. Thomas Galen Hieronymus, 199923, 12th Service Co. Signal Comps, Through Commandant Army Schools, Langres

To:

Subject: Appointment in the Officers' Reserve Corps.

1. By authority of the Secretary of War contained in War Department Cablegram No. 2345, dated December 23, 1918, and under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved June 3, 1916, you are hereby appointed a

SECOND LIEUTENANT

in the

SIGNAL CORPS

SECTION OF THE OFFICERS' RESERVE CORPS, ARMY

OF THE UNITED STATES, to rank as such from the.... 1919.

- 2. The acceptance of this commission does not entitle you to the pay or emoluments of the grade to which you are appointed unless you are called to active duty by competent authority.
- 3. This letter will serve the purpose of a commission until receipt by you of commission from the WAR DEPARTMENT.

JOHN J. PERSHÎNG,

General, United States Army.

77

HEADQUARTERS ARMY SCHOOLS, MERICAN Z. F., France, bbruary lat, 1919. Special Orders) No. 32) Par. 6. Pursuant to telegraphic instructions from G. H. Q., American E. F., dated January 30th, 1919; of cluss "A" leave us provided in O. 6. \$14, C. s., G. H. Q., American E. F., is granted the following named successfull candidates of the Army Signal School, with permission to visit Mice. to visit Nice, France: Sgt. lat Cl. Duerr, W. A., 167701, 301st F. C. Bn.
M. S. E. Hieronymus, T. G., 199923, 12th Service Co., S. C.
M. S. E. Neble, H. E., 1869555, 306th Field Signal Bn.
M. G. E. Schaefer, H. T., 202111, Racib Section, S. C. #1.
Sgt. let Cl., Jakway, C. H., 2132260, B13th Fid. Sig. Bn.
M. S. E. Rosenberger, C. L., 1724482, B21st Fid. Sig. Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Sabeurin, F. H., 1667859, 301st Fid. Sig. Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Sabeurin, F. M., 222559, 322nd Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. Fraser, R. M., 200075, 117th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. Fraser, R. M., 200075, 117th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. Kennedy, Kaywin, 2544712, 309th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. Let Cl. Gallier, F. W., 1530384, 112th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Gallier, F. W., 1530384, 112th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Gallier, F. W., 1530384, 112th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Waters, T. H. C., 1877010, 318th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Waters, T. H. C., 1877010, 318th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Hamegren, C. B., 2136359, 115th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. let Cl. Hamegren, C. S., 2136359, 115th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Hamegren, C. S., 214659, 117th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Hamegren, C. S., 214659, 117th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. 1st Class Putnam, D. E., 1671565, 117th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. E. Barnum, Albert, 1988106, 509th Field Signal Bn.
Sgt. 1st Class Jackson, H. S., 219302, 714th F. S. bn.
M. S. E. Richardson, Grant, 1869471, 366th Field Signal Bn.
M. S. E. Clarkson, Geo. W., 1641253, 115th Field Signal Bn.
M. S. E. Saith, C. H., 2282301, 487th Telegraph Bn.
M. S. E. Vard, E. L., 705532, 417th Telegraph Bn.
M. S. E. Prebst, L. R., 2282001, 487th Telegraph Bn. PASSED VENEREAL ARRIVED 6r FEV. 1919 N.I.

During the War ...

-- 4 par. 6, 32

St. let Cl. Sabin. E. A., 2314221, 5: Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. let Cl. Dodd, Letter N., 1113262 Sth Fiold Signal Bm.
Sgt. let Cl. Lavender, G.S., 1724538, Let Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. let Cl. Walsh. W. J., 1672142, 4Gt Telegreph Bm.
Sgt. Flowing, W. M., 1113247; 9th Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. Ist Cl. Podx, Neel J., 202464, 12: Field Gervice Bo., S. C.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Bradbury, G. P., 1505362 Lith Field Sagnal Bm.
Private 1st Cl. Yeomans, R. W., 1563467 Col. Poll Signal Bm.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Meroney, P. J., 918034 504th Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Wehnert, Carl, 171647; 2021d Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Clarke, C. M., 166761, Sclet Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. 1st Cl. Hopkins, B. N., 19937, 117th Field Signal Bm.
Sgt. Evans, Chas., 199521, light/ield Signal Bm.

Upon complation of this lawe, those enlisted mon will proceed to Headquarters, let Depot Division, for assignment to duty.

The Quartermeter Corps will furnish the necessary transportations and subsistence.

The travel directed is measury in the military service.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIES CENERAL BANFORD:

OFFICIAL REPORT

×

H. S. DILWORTH,

befout. Colonel Cav., U. S. A.,

Sacretary.

WAR DEPARTMENT THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE WASHINGTON MATCh 24,1919.

MEDER TO AG 201 (Hieronymus Thomas Galen) Off.

MEMORANDUM

for Mrs. T.G. Hieronymus,

3034 Walnut St.,

Kansas City, Mo.

The Reserve Corps commission inclosed herewith is sent to you for safe keeping upon request of the appointee whose name and other particulars appear below. The appointment was made in France by the Commanding General of the American Expeditionary Forces and official acceptance of this commission is on file in this office. In this connection you are advised that Reserve Corps Officers will not be called to active duty during the present emergency under commissions tendered subsequent to November 11, 1918, therefore the present military status of the appointee is not affected by this appointment.

Acknowledgement to this office is not desired.

Name, serial number, present rank and organization.

Hieronymus Thomas Galen, 199923, MSE 12th Service Co. S.C.

Reserve Corps rank and section.

Second Lieutenant, Signal Section.

Date of appointment.

February 1,1919.

P. C. Harris,

l Incl.

The Adjutant General.

CERTIFICATE IN LIEU OF LOST OR DESTROYED

Discharge



Armed Forces of the United States

This is to certify that

THOMAS B HIERONYMUS 199 923 Master Signal Electrician
12th Service Company enlisted 19 June 1916 at Kansas
City Missouri for Missouri National Guard and

was discharged from the

Army of the United States

Honorable Discharge

21 April 1919

Camp Zachary Taylor Kentucky

Given at Washington, D. C., on 20 February 1961 Service Outside U S: 3 November 1917 to 28 March 1919 Age at enlistment and place of birth: 21 years 7 months Valpariso Indiana

Mustered into Federal service 24 June 1916, mustered out of Federal service 15 January 1917 and reported for World War I service 5 August 1917

Subsequent Service:
Commissioned 19 February 1919 (ORC) 0-130 463

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The Adjulant General's A. Recorded: March 24,19	fue:		

PRESIDENT
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The Army of the United States
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Meprevisions of sections 37 and 38 Rational Defense Volas amended and is to emtinue
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Bythe President:
(My) (and)
0-130 463
D., A. G. O. FORM No. 0550 C. OCTOBER 1, 1924

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