

HIGHLIGHTS OF LEE LAUMANN'S WWI SERVICE

AS READ AT JULY 3, 1991

SERVICE HONORING WWI VETS AT

MOUND CITY, MISSOURI

Lee Laumann served in the US Army during the "Gentlemen's War", World War I. He was called for duty on February 26, 1918 where he traveled to Funston, KS for basic training. At this time he was placed in the Supply Company of the 354th Infantry of the 89th division. Lee's duty during the war was to bring supplies such as ammunition, clothing, food, and medical supplies to the boys on the front lines at sundown. He did this by horse drawn wagon. He traveled through France on a train of boxcars that held either 40 men to a car or 8 horses, hence the origin of the 40 and 8 military organization. The majority of Lee's military career overseas was spent in France at the Meusse-Argonne Front, which he was stationed at the time the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. Upon arrival back to the States, Lee was honorably discharged from the Army on June 3, 1919. Lee spent until 1984 actively farming near the Tarkio/Westboro area. Lee is a 71 year member of the American Legion, in which he is still active, and is also active in the 40 and 8. One of the highlights of Lee's military career was when General John J. Pershing reviewed the 89th division at Trier, Germany on April 23, 1919, along with Secretary of War, Baker. Lee presently resides in Rock

Port, MO, and at the age of 96 is believed to be one of the few remaining World War I veterans in Northwest Missouri.

WORLD WAR I DIARY
OF
ADAM HENRY LEE LAUMANN

SUPPLY COMPANY-89TH DIVISION-US ARMY

(Grandpa asked me to transcribe his diary that he kept of his WWI years. Following the diary are various stories that Grandpa would sit and tell me about his war days. Anything in parenthesis was added later by Grandpa or myself at a later date. Diane-July 31, 1991)

ARMY LIFE

June 5, 1917

Registered (Grandpa was born on December 23, 1894 so was 22 years of age when he registered. He was working on the farm with his parents and brothers.)

August 27, 1917

Called for physical examination

December 20, 1917

Filled out the questionnaire and was placed in Class 1A by both the Local and District Board.

February 26, 1918

Called for duty

February 27, 1918

Entrained for camp from Rock Port (Brother Charlie took him to the train), leaving at 10:00 a.m. (Other boys from Westboro were John Enyard, the barber; Willie Bakeman; and Lee Lorenz from Rock Port. There were others too, but Grandpa couldn't remember just exactly who they were.) Arrived in St. Joseph at about 2:00 p.m. and Kansas City at 6:00 p.m. Here we stayed until about 12:00 midnight.

February 28, 1918

Arrived in Funston, KS at 5:00 a.m. Here we stayed until the afternoon when we were examined. After the examination we were given our uniform and equipment. When this was completed, we were loaded in trucks and taken to Camp Wood, or Detention Camp No. 2. We stayed here until the 26th of March. While at the camp, our time was spent in drilling. Here I was with the 17th Company of the 164th Depot Brigade.

March 26, 1918

We were transferred to the Supply Company, 354th Infantry of the 89th Division at Funston. Here we were hauling with mules.

April 17, 1918

Went to the hospital at Fort Riley with Diphtheria. Stayed about four weeks. Was then sent to Detention Camp No. 1 or Camp Pawnee as a "dip" convalescent. (No family came to visit him at this time.)

May 18, 1918

Returned to Funston. They were busy packing.

May 20, 1918

My brothers (Charlie and Henry) visited me. (Grandpa was the only Laumann brother to serve in the military.)

May 20-25, 1918

Work for oversea duty.

May 26, 1918

Left Funston for oversea duty at 2:00 p.m. We arrived in Kansas City that evening about 6:00 p.m. on the Union Pacific Railroad. After staying here about one hour, we departed for St. Louis on the Burlington. We arrived in St. Louis the next morning. We stayed in St. Louis about an hour and then left for the journey on the Cloverleaf Railroad. We passed through Charleston, IL. Here we stopped and took a hike for about one-half mile and then departed for Toledo. At Toledo we stopped and took another hike. From Toledo we were on the New York Central lines. We passed through Cleveland, OH and Buffalo, NY.

May 29, 1918

We arrived in Hoboken, NJ.

May 30, 1918

The following morning (today) we were loaded on a ferry called the Catskill and crossed the Hudson River and then took the Long Island railroad to Camp Mills.

June 4, 1918

We boarded a train for the river and then took a ferry called the New Hempstead and sailed for Hoboken, NJ. Then we were taken aboard an ocean transport called the Berrima, an English vessel. Laid in the Harbor of New York.

June 6, 1918

Sailed at 6:00 a.m. for the trip across.

June 9, 1918

Arrived in Halifax, Canada and stayed until 5:30 that evening when we sailed for England on the Berrima. We were accompanied for a day or so by submarine chasers and battleships.

June 21, 1918

Arrived in Tillberry Docks, England in the morning. In the afternoon we were loaded on one of their trains and taken to Winchester, England. From there we marched to Camp Winchester.

June 23, 1918

We were marched to the city of Winchester to look at some of the old buildings which had been built ages ago. (Cathedrals)

June 25, 1918

Left Camp Winchester and took a train for South Hampton, where we boarded a vessel and sailed for La Harve, France in the evening.

June 26, 1918

Arrived in La Harve, France at 5:00 a.m. Here we went to a rest camp. Stayed one day and took a train of boxcars that either held 40 men or 8 horses/mules for Ramicourt, France. From there we marched out to Trampot where we drilled until we got some horses.

August 1, 1918

We left our training area for the Lucey Sector, at the St. Mihiel front. While on this front we stayed at Minorville, Noviant. We stayed two days at Corneville until the drive of St. Mihiel.

September 12, 1918

Moved to Boullionville.

September 29, 1918

Went to Euvezin Sector on the Meuse-Argonne Front. While on this front we stayed at Gesnes. Here we were shot at by the German artillery. One morning an airplane came over, followed the "picket line" with machine gun fire. Five were wounded, Lawrence, who died later on October 7, 1918 and Aubrey Steele, gassed on August 9, 1918 at the St. Mihiel sector, came back to company for the Meuse-Argonne drive, went to hospital, died on December 18, 1918.

November 4, 1918

A drive was made by the American forces. This drive lasted til the signing of the armistice on the 11th of November at 11:00 a.m. (11/11 at 11:00 a.m.)

November 5, 1918

We stayed at Remonville.

November 6, 1918

We stayed at Barricourt.

November 7, 1918

We stayed in the woods.

November 11, 1918

We were staying on a farm near Beaufort at which place the supply company was stationed. We stayed here a day or two and then moved to Beauclair for several days. From Beauclair we moved to Cassey where we stayed. (The armistice was signed on this day, and at just a few minutes after 11:00 a.m. the fighting stopped. We were told we were going home until Gen. Pershing decided that the 89th division would be the "Army of Occupation" in Germany. Their duty was to patrol the countryside, do a little of this and a little of that, actually not much of anything according to Grandpa.)

November 27, 1918

We moved through Belgium.

November 28 and 29, 1918

We stayed at Belle Fontaine and spent our Thanksgiving. (Grandpa said for Thanksgiving they had turkey.)

November 30, 1918

We moved on further, stopping at Sivry, staying over Sunday. On Monday, we left Sivry going through Arlon, Belgium, and Luxemburg.

December 6, 1918

Arrived in Germany passing through Echternach, Luxemburg.

December 7, 1918

Passed through Bitburg, arrived at Berdorf that evening staying there until noon on Sunday when we left for Geroldstein.

December 9, 1918

Arrived in Geroldstein.

December 18, 1918

Went to Prum where we stayed three days. From Geroldstein to Prum we rode on a train.

December 21, 1918

We moved to Waxweiler, Germany. Spent my birthday (24th), Christmas and New Years here. (Grandpa said that they had Christmas treats at camp and a Christmas dinner, but the day was pretty routine. On New Years they did the same routine, but that night they went to town to celebrate.)

January 11, 1919

Received our November pay of 270 Marks (German money)

January 20, 1919

Received December pay.

January 21, 1919

Signed January payroll

January 22, 1919

Received my Christmas box. (Grandpa doesn't remember what was in this Christmas box.)

January 24, 1919

General Winn inspected our regiment.

February 1, 1919

Received our January pay.

February 5, 1919

Left Waxweiler for Trier. Stayed the night in Rittensdorf.

February 6, 1919

Arrived in Trier, Germany. On the trip from Waxweiler to Trier we passed through Bitburg. After arriving in Trier we stayed in barracks that were formerly used by the German regular army. At first we stayed at the Jager Kaserne, but a few days later we moved to the New Artillery Kaserne. Before coming to Trier, we had been teamsters for the 3rd Battallion. We went back to the (Supply) Company at Trier.

April 14-16, 1919

Three-day pass to Coblenz, Germany. (Grandpa said they visited sites, walked and rested. He said that they did not take in any "girlie" shows.)

April 23, 1919

General John J. (BlackJack) Pershing and Secretary of War, Baker, reviewed the 89th Division at Trier, Germany. (Grandpa said they were well protected by guards so he was not able to see them clearly.)

April 25, 1919

We started for Sinzig to turn in the wagons and horses. The first night out we stayed about two kilos from Trier.

April 26, 1919

We passed through Bitburg and stopped close to a little village called Birresborn. The next day we moved on farther passing through Prum and stopping a few kilos from there. The next day (April 28) we passed through Geroldstein, camping near Adenau.

April 29, 1919

We passed through Ahrweiler near which place we camped.

April 30, 1919

We came through Neuenahr where we stayed close to the stream.

May 1, 1919

Arrived in Sinzig where we had our horses and wagons turned in by 10:00 a.m. It was raining when we arrived here and stayed all night sleeping in wagons the entire trip.

May 2, 1919

We left Sinzig at 12:45 p.m. passing through Andernach and Coblenz (Germany). Arrived in West Trier that evening at 8:00 p.m. Saturday we cleaned up around some.

May 4, 1919

Sunday, took the rest of our horses and mules to Wengerohr close to Wittlich where the 7th Army corps headquarters were at. We arrived in Trier that evening at 11:00 p.m. on the train.

May 5, 1919

Monday afternoon the Red Cross gave an ice cream social to the regiment. That same evening we had a banquet at the Hotel Romertor.

May 6, 1919

Tuesday afternoon we pack inspection and also rifle inspection.

May 7, 1919

Wednesday morning the company was called out of the barracks to leave at 8:00 a.m. We went Reg. Headquarters to police up. From there we took the street car for the (train) station. Ate our dinner at the station leaving Trier at 12:00 noon for Brest. On our way we passed through Thionville, the edge of Metz, arriving in Verdun that night.

May 8, 1919

Left Verdun (France) early in the morning. Stopped at St. Mihiel where we ate our breakfast. Then on through Commercy, Voit, Sauvay, Sorcy, Gondrecourt, Poisson, Joinville, where we ate our dinner the 8th of May. Gievres, Cravant, where we stayed 17 hours for the (train) wreck to clear away. On Saturday morning we passed through St. Aignay, Ecommoy, passed through LeMans that evening between 6-7 p.m. The next morning we passed through Morlaix, arriving in Brest at 11:00 a.m. on May 11, 1919. After dinner we went to the camp.

May 12, 1919

Took a bath and had physical inspection. That afternoon we had the show down inspection.

May 13, 1919

Tuesday morning we had pack inspection. Leaving camp at noon for the harbor. Arriving at the harbor we started on the vessel or barge, but had to get off again and spent the night in a shed.

May 14, 1919

We again loaded on a vessel and was taken to the Imperator (a vessel the US military took from the Germans) which sailed the following morning, May 15, at 10:30 a.m. Passed one vessel the next day. Friday the sea was somewhat rough but much smoother on Saturday.

May 22, 1919

We landed in the afternoon. The Leviathan (also a ship taken from the Germans by the US) was just docking when we pulled in. We then went to Camp Upton, NY where we stayed for five days.

May 27, 1919

Left Upton at about 11:00 p.m. for St. Louis. The next morning we passed through Washington D.C. (May 28) and that afternoon we passed through Martinsburg, WV. We were served coffee by the Red Cross at Cumberland, MD that evening. The next morning we stopped at Chillicothe, OH for coffee. Camp Sherman was located here. Then on through Indiana. We passed through Laurenceburg, Osgood, North Vernon, Seymour, Mitchell, Loogootee, and Washington where we again stopped for coffee at Vincennes, Indiana. The next morning at about 5:00 a.m. we were in St. Louis where we paraded for Decoration Day, May 30. We left that evening at about 7:00 p.m. for Kansas City on the Rock Island Railroad. Arrived in Kansas City the next morning at about 7:00 where we were served coffee, apples, and sandwiches by the Red Cross. At about 9:00 we were again on our way to Camp Funston to be

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mustered out of service. We arrived in Topeka at about 11:00 where we were served with bananas by the Red Cross. Our next stop was Manhattan and then to Funston.

May 31, 1919

Arrived in Funston at about 9:00 p.m. We turned in our equipment on June 1, signed our payroll and our discharge papers in the afternoon.

June 2, 1919

Physical examination in the afternoon.

June 3, 1919

1:00 p.m. we were called out for the last time to be marched up to the personnel office to receive our last pay. Immediately after receiving our pay, we went to the station accompanied by military police. Left for Kansas City at about 3:00 p.m. Stayed until the next morning until 7:30 to leave for St. Joseph.

June 5, 1919

I departed for Westboro, MO, my hometown, at 7:35 a.m. Arrived at 11:00 a.m. Here ends my military career. (The train was supposed to let Grandpa off at Tarkio, but he talked them into letting him ride to Westboro. Brother Charlie and Father met him at the train.)

TOOT SWEET ALLEY (French for "Get out") GOODBYE

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STORIES BY GRANDPA

Grandpa's military number was 22-06679 (he remembers this by memory at age 96) When inducted into the Army, they were told never to forget that number in case you got lost. Grandpa remembered one story when a buddy and he were at a place where they could bathe, as you took a bath wherever and whenever facilities were available, which wasn't too often. The buddy took off his "dog tags" and hung them on a peg, forgetting them after the shower. He was with the infantry and they immediately got shipped out to the front lines. He asked Grandpa to go back to see if the "dog tags" were still on the peg, which they were, and bring them to him, which Grandpa did a couple of days later when he was delivering supplies.

Grandpa still has his dog tags issued with his number on them, his military bible, his complete wool uniform issued to him and part of his khaki uniform.

Grandpa's duties during the "Gentlemen's War", WWI was to carry supplies to the troops on the front line. During the day he would be in camp where they experienced shrapnel, shells, etc. He said that he spent most of the day resting and sleeping. In the afternoon he was to load the wagon and at sundown, he was responsible for taking a wagon load of ammunition, while other wagons took food, blankets, clothing, and medical supplies to the boys on the front line, returning to camp after they completed the assignment. Grandpa said that many times he had to abandon the wagon to keep from getting shelled or shot. His quote was, "They didn't have my number". In the evenings there would be a combat wagon, an artillery wagon, a rations wagon, a water wagon and an ammunition wagon, which is the one Grandpa drove. It was supposed to have 4 horses, but they only had 2.

Their camp was usually very close to the front lines, say within a mile. One evening, Grandpa said, they were delivering supplies and were supposed to go way far out into the front lines, but the lead driver decided to stop. They parked the wagons and sat awhile, eventually deciding to sleep until they could make it to the front lines. Grandpa says that when he awoke the next morning there was shrapnel about 1 foot away from him.

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Another time they took the ammunition out on the combat wagon because it was easier to manipulate, so Grandpa went with this wagon. The Germans were shelling the lines and Grandpa said that they got a lot of dust from the shells on both sides, but "they didn't have their number".

Grandpa and his buddies (not called friends, as they were closer) would climb over the barbed wire fence at night and go to town, which they were not supposed to do at this particular place, fraternize with the locals, and return to camp, via the barbed wire, before morning.

When they went out of camp the soldiers were supposed to wear a red ribbon on their arm. They would always take it off after leaving, but put it back on again before returning.

The soldiers would take their issued rations and share it with the German people as the Germans thought the rations were great. Rations consisted of: Cornwillie (meat), Hardtack (biscuits), beans, and coffee. Grandpa said he never drank coffee until he was in the service, and then it was coffee or nothing.

Grandpa told me several times, "Wouldn't take a million for what I've seen and went through, but wouldn't give a dime to see it again."

On the armistice there were 10 soldiers left out of 16 in his battalion (The 3rd Battalion drivers). Three were killed and three were gassed. At the Meusse-Argonne the Germans used shells with gas cannisters attached to them. The first ones to come over were tear gas so the soldiers would have trouble getting their gas masks on, followed by mustard gas which did the killing. Grandpa remembers a buddy having trouble getting the gas mask on his mule/horse and did not have time to get his own on. This buddy died from gas inhalation. Yes, they also had to put gas masks on the animals too. The whole hillside was covered with "gassed" soldiers. Gas was outlawed after World War I.

At 96, Grandpa still likes to recite the Soldiers Prayer that was found on the front cover of his Military issued Bible. Here it is as he recited it to me:

"O keep me Heavenly Father so straight and pure and true. Protect my dear ones at home, and whatever comes help me to do my duty. In Christ's name."

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Grandpa always used to answer questions with, "It's a Military secret", something that carried over from his Army days.

During World War I, the soldiers weren't supposed to mingle with the ladies, but I did "weed" out of Grandpa that the ladies nicknamed him, "Frenchy". He would not tell me his military nickname, so I do not know if he even had one.

In Germany, the soldiers were not supposed to go to restaurants because they (the German population) could not provide for their own, but they loved to give food to the Americans so the soldiers and the population would swap. Rations, pork, and beef for other food such as eggs, as the soldiers very rarely were treated to fresh meat and eggs, etc.

A couple of the boys in his outfit bought a chicken from the Germans and the boys had chicken for a treat. The soldiers weren't supposed to mingle but the Germans liked money. If the soldiers got extra rations they would trade.

I have always heard from Uncle Donald that Grandpa carried around a picture of a very pretty "Fraulein" he met in World War I. On June 30, 1991 Grandpa told me this story about that picture, although I have never seen the picture. The girl's name was Lizzie Bright. Her father owned a "cafe" that sold beer and wine. At 6:00 p.m. release every evening Grandpa and 4-5 of his buddies would go to Trier. On the way back to camp they would always stop in and see Lizzie and her other girl workers. One evening she gave each soldier a picture of herself.

Mail service from the US to Germany took about 1 week.

Grandpa's helmet has a large dent in it from being hit by shrapnel or a shell. He remembers several close calls, but Grandpa's reply was, "They didn't have my number." which was the joke for all those surviving in his outfit after an attack.

I asked Grandpa if he ever had to "pull" KP duty. He said that the Battle of Meusse-Argonne was coming on and they were asked if anyone had not been on KP (dishing out food) so he and a few others volunteered to do KP to see what it was like.

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Military pay at that time was \$30.00 per month.
Overseas pay was \$32.50 per month.
Front lines pay was \$37.50 per month.
Out of this pay came \$6.50 each month for your military insurance.

In Germany they slept in the open.

I asked Grandpa if he brought home any "German" souvenirs and he promptly showed me the German Marks and the French Francs that he still carries around in his billfold today.

Grandpa thought Belgium was the prettiest country.

Grandpa still uses the "old world" spelling of Laumann with 2 "n's" while a couple of his brother's and other family members "Americanized it" by spelling it with 1 "n".

After Grandpa came home, he said the hardest part was listening to non-veterans "brag" about what they did while the veterans were gone and how much money they had made. He said that he did not ever remember experiencing "combat stress" of nightmares etc. There were not really many changes that had been made in the Westboro area while he was gone.

He said that in many ways the World War I vets were treated very much like the Vietnam vets. No ticker tape parades, no recognition, etc. Some of the public was very respectful for the job they had done while others couldn't see the reason for being over there. Grandpa did say that he was lucky because up a church they had a reception/dinner for the vets after they returned.

Grandpa went in the service as a Private at 32.50 a month for overseas duty and was promoted to Waggoner at 37.50 for overseas duty, the same pay rate as a Corporal. He was discharged at the rank of Waggoner. At discharge, he received a \$60 bonus. During the time overseas, he sent his money back home to the family where they saved it for him. I asked him if he did anything special with it and he said "no".

Division ABC&D was the 1st batallion
Division EFG&H was the 2nd batallion
Division IKL&M was the 3rd batallion and they would rotate going to the front lines each spending a week or two and then coming in for "rest period" of about a week. The Supply Company, which Grandpa was apart of, did not have a rest period except during the day. They had to go to the front lines every night.

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During the night, the Germans would send over the gas attached to the artillery shells, and during the daytime the fighting would be mostly artillery, canon, and some hand to hand. A patrol of 6-8 men would go out during the daytime looking for the enemy. Grandpa remembered one instance when a patrol from his division came upon a patrol from the Germans, and they decided why are we fighting so they sat down and conversed with each other.

Grandpa said many a times the German airplanes would machine gun down our "picket line" (the soldiers lined up to fight, 8 per squad kneeling out in the open). Grandpa also said he experienced having to take cover during attacks such as this.

Grandpa was dating Grandma before the war, but decided against getting married before being shipped to Germany because they did not know what was going to happen. He also said that at that time he was not ready to settle down. He and Grandma wrote back and forth during the war. Grandma lived with her mother and brothers Grant (older) and August (younger) on the family farm, which is where Aunt Maxine and Uncle Bill live. Grandma Lillie was about 21 years of age and she took care of her brothers and helped around the farm. Because her father had been killed sometime before when the front board of a wagon loaded with corn fell out and he slipped down letting the wagon run over him, her older brother Henry ran the farm. Grandma's siblings from oldest to youngest included: Louise Klute Hanrath, Emma, Henry, Hattie (who married Grandpa's brother Charlie), Grant, Grandma, and August. Grandpa and Grandma go married finally on June 1, 1921

After Grandpa was discharged from the military on June 5, 1919, Bill Stacy, who was farming the family farm, offered to turn it over to Grandpa. Grandpa said no, because Mr. Stacy already had the ground worked up and planted for that crop year. So instead, Grandpa went to St. Edward, Nebraska to vist Aunts and Uncles for a couple of months. They were: Nerman and Lena Niemann, Charles and Mary Kemper, Jacob and Minnie Hersch, and Willie and Eda Kemper. After Mr. Stacy picked the corn that fall, Grandpa took over the family farm as Uncle Charlie had is own land as did Henry and Bertha and John.

Grandpa says of his military career, it was a good trip with lots of sightseeing that those who didn't go didn't get to experience.