

**The World War I Diary of Rabb Forest Mobley**

**By Mike Forster**

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## Introduction

In the late 1980s, my wife found a notepad of lined paper on a sidewalk in Menlo Park, California. The notepad was misplaced in our home for a decade, rediscovered in 2001, packed again into a box, and found again in 2017. The notepad appears to be the diary of an American World War I doughboy, from June 28<sup>th</sup> through October 3, 1918.

I had more time available after my retirement, a lifelong interest in history, and enjoyment in researching unusual situations. So, I decided to investigate to determine the author, and to see if I could find a family member that would like to have this memento.

The investigation concluded that the diary's author was a **Private Rabb Forest Mobley**. This diary was not just the story of great battles and heroism. I felt as if I were walking alongside the Private Mobley as he experienced day-to-day life in the army, crossing the Atlantic and in the French theater. Private Mobley includes observation such as:

"Have been passing through some beautiful country – reminds me of California. But everything is so far behind the times. The French people are still using oxen to ploug with and 2 wheel carts are all the go – if they use 2 horses they are always drove in tandem."

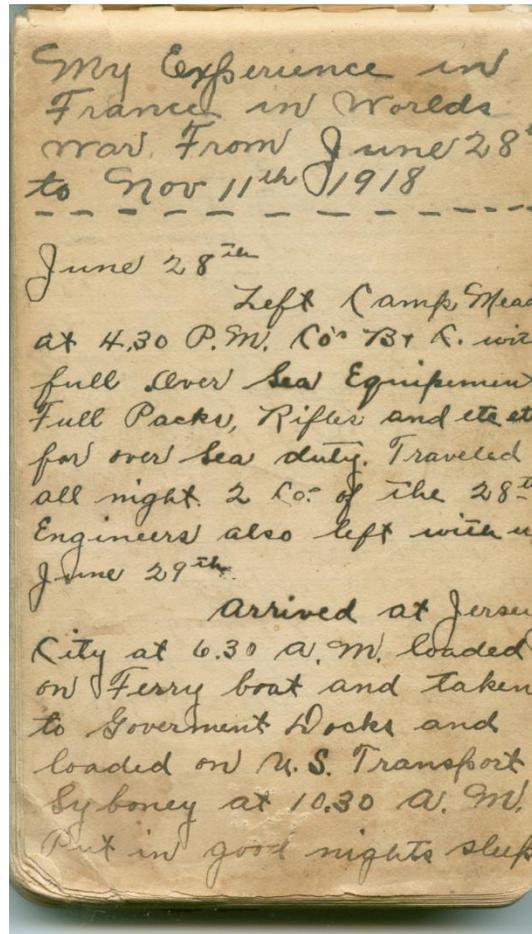
" Had supper with a French family and had a great time showing the French girl to make hot cakes."

But the diary also reminds us that our World War I American Expeditionary Force of front-line troops were heroes. They risked their lives just crossing the Atlantic, with encounters with German submarines that could have sunk them at any moment. They could be killed at any moment by enemy artillery shells hitting their encampments. And despite the risks, they carried through on their missions, such as repairing railroads. These missions might seem mundane compared with front-line fighting, but just as necessary for victory.

The original diary notepad has been given to Rabb Mobley's grandson, Robert Dana Wilson. A scanned copy of the original is available.

## Who Was the Diary's Author? - An Investigation

This account is titled, "My experience in France in Worlds War From June 28<sup>th</sup> to Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 1918". This may indicate that this is a copy of a previous diary, not the original, or that the author left space to enter the end date later. This diary ends on October 3, with no explanation of why. This diary also includes references to dates in 1920 in a list of names at the end of the diary.



**Private Rabb Forest Mobley** is the author of this diary. No one else in the 27th Engineers, Company C, has the connections and coincidences listed here.

Here are key notes and hints indicating Rabb Mobley is the author. Details and references are described in a later section.

- 1 Author was in Company B or C (June 28, July 2).  
Rabb Forest Mobley was in Company C (History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919).
- 2 Author mentions "Wilson" a few times.  
There is a Wilson, Noah W. listed in Company C in the History of the 27th Engineers.

3 Author was likely in Company C.

In addition to Wilson, many men are mentioned at the end of the diary, most of whom were in Company C (History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919). Rabb Forest Mobley was in Company C (History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919).

4 Author mentions missing El Paso and Douglas (Aug. 5).

Rabb Forest Mobley listed El Paso as his residence on his draft registration card. Douglas is a town in Arizona, close to Bisbee and somewhat close to Morenci, Arizona, where Mobley had worked.

5 Author mentions Bisbee (Aug 7).

Bisbee is a town in Arizona, 27 miles from Douglas.

6 Author mentions Captain Greenway, from Bisbee (Aug 7).

Mobley and Greenway were both listed in the Bisbee City Directory in 1917. Both entries mention "C Q", very likely referring to the Copper Queen Hotel, perhaps where they resided or at least where they could be contacted. They likely knew each other from that common meeting place, or perhaps even worked together on a mining project.

7 Author knew Robert Tyler, an infantryman (Sept. 30).

One Robert Tyler, son of Robert Marion Tyler, was a public school student at least until the age of 20 in February 1915 in Webb, Cochise County, Arizona. Webb was a town near Bisbee, Arizona. Robert Tyler was born in 1895, the same year as Rabb Mobley; perhaps these two young men knew each other in the small town of Bisbee.

Robert Marion Tyler, Jr. completed his draft card on June 5, 1917, in Webb precinct, Cochise, Arizona on June 5, 1917 (the same date as Rabb Forest Mobley completed his in Precinct 44, El Paso, Texas).

## Excerpts from the Diary

Included here are a few excerpts from the diary, giving a flavor for what combat was like in late 1918.

(June 28<sup>th</sup> [1918]) Left Camp Meade at 4.30 P.M. Co's B & C with full Over Sea Equipment, Full Packs, Rifles and etc. etc. for over Sea duty.

Traveled all night. 2 Co's of the 28<sup>th</sup> Engineers also left with us.

(June 29<sup>th</sup>) Arrived at Jersey City at 6.30 a.m. loaded on Ferry boat and taken to Government Docks and loaded on U.S. Transport Syboney at 10.30 a.m.

Put in good nights sleep. Neighborhood 4000 troops aboard.

(July 1<sup>st</sup> ) 5 p.m. Had a fine sea. Lots of the boys sick and some feeding the fish, some wants to die and others don't care if the boat sinks or not.

I am enjoying the trip fine. Waves are about 10 to 12 ft. high. There is between 55000 and 60000 troops in convoy. Well guarded with 6 sub chasers, 1 cruiser and 2

Battle Ships. Also 2 HydroPlanes hovering right over us. Have life belts on at all times. This is the largest shipment of troops across the Atlantic in Worlds History – 18 transports, 3 freight boats.

8 pm A German sub came to the surface of the water, right then our gunners got busy firing 4 deep sea charges; also 5 or 6 from 8 in gun. Almost certain the sub was sunk. As the surface of the water was all covered with oil. We were all called to life boats. All the boys quite no excitement.

(July 12) 1.30 P.M. Destroyers were very busy guarding us. Also the sub chasers sighted out first land at 6.30 P.M. It sure looked great. Crossed Mouth of English Channel and arrived at Brest, France at 9.30 P.M.

Every man in high spirits but pretty well wore out. I guess we don't leave the boat till morning.

(July 17) Was up this morning at 3.30 A.M. and made up packs. We then hiked to Depot. Loaded up in stock cars which holds (40 Hommes or 8 Chavieux) or rather 40 men or 8 horses. Nothing but a little straw in bottom of cars. Pretty hard riding.

Left Brest at 9.30 A.M. Have been passing through some beautiful country – reminds me of California. But everything is so far behind the times. The French people are still using oxen to plough with and 2 wheel carts are all the go – if they use 2 horses they are always drove in tandem. Trains are very small and make about 15 miles per hour.

(July 21 ) 2 P.M. Just got up and will try and eat a little breakfast - just as it is corn willie and hard tack but it sure tastes good at that. Shells are bursting all around us but I guess we will have to take her as she comes.

It is reported the Crown Prince's army is retreating; by all signs and indications they are making a quick get away and I don't blame them. Because we sure have them on the run.

(July 23) We left from where we was camped at 7 A.M. Advanced 7 kilos - awful heavy walking and raining pitch forks. Packs all soaked and weight about a ton more or less. My shoulders are nearly raw. (I think Sherman was right.)

Arrived at 26 Division and are attached to them. We are camped in heavy oak woods and are under shell fire and they are sure falling thick and fast. One landed about 3 ft from our tent. But thank the Lord it was a dud or this diary would have come to an end.

Many of the boys are having very close calls. But all are in good spirits considering that we ain't used to this kind of a reception.

Every body wearing gas masks at alert. Capt. Norcross claims our masks are our passports home and I believe it by the looks of some poor fellows that have been gassed by mustard gas. It is a thing to dread.

(August 3) Have had another day of rest - not quite so sore. Had supper with a French family and had a great time showing the French girl to make hot cakes. It is the first I had since I been in France and they sure tasted good. As a rule, they say French women are very good cooks - will see later.

(August 11) Have been working today on Rail road, which is literally torn up. By our shells and believe me it is some wreck. No wonder Fritz's boy had to move the depot. Building is a total wreck as is also the town of Fere-En-Tardonois.

The Huns sent over some gas shells today but we was quick with our masks so there was no-body hurt.

Took 300 Huns Prisoners today and they were sure a hard looking lot. They claim they have been in the war 4 years and they sure looked it. They are crazing about chewing and smoking tobacco. Wanted to trade us anything they have for some. But as we are pretty short ourselves, the Huns are out of luck till they are sent back of the lines.

(August 15) Nine men an my self were sent up to very near no mans land under the cover of darkness to repair a bridge on the Asine River so the dough boys could cross. Pretty risky business. All returned safely but one out of our bunch. He was struck by a piece of high explosive - wounded pretty bad.

Our artillery are sure putting over some shells - about 10 to 1 of the Huns. Germans sure have a strong position behind a hill but if ever we do get Mr. Fritz started we will give them a merry chase as they have about 10 miles of open country to cross and the French cavalry are waiting to help them along.

Raining all day long - I am wet to the skin.

(August 22) I left camp with 7 men to do some blasting for the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineers at a quarrie. We traveled 35 miles in a truck and camped at 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corp. headquarters for the night as it is raining steady all day.

The Officers sure treated us fine. We have eat six times today at different camps on our way. We have a piece of pie at one mess kitchen and it sure tasted fine - the first since we left the good old U.S.A. It seems kind of strange to be out of shell fire. These boys are sure having a good time of it. I am sure glad somebody has it easy.

(August 29) A very bad accident happened today at Chery 1 mile away. The Red Cross building was hit by a shell just as there was a bunch of our boys lining up to get tobacco and etc. The shell killed 9 and wounded 27.

I go on night duty tonight at 9 P.M. on road. I guess she will be a long hard one as it is raining and pitch dark.

I climbed a tree to get some plums today and the limb broke and I hit the ground pretty hard. I am sure sore.

(Sept 2) One or our observation balloons was burned up by an enemy plane today at 4 P.M. The observer escaped with his life after dropping about 800 in his parachute. The basket from the balloon dropped a few hundred feet from where we were standing. The German plane got back to German lines safely.

(Sept 5) Quite a number of German prisoners passed through here today. We were talking to several of them and most of them say the German people are ready to quit and by the looks of them they sure look as though they are glad to be taken prisoners.

We are working on bridges today and am sure tired.

(Sept 10) Left Dormans at 3.30 A.M. Loaded into box cars. Traveled all night. Arrived at the village of Appercourt near Verdun. It is sure sloppy rainy weather. Have not had my clothes dry for a week - sure feel cold. We are sleeping in barns and chicken house. And not a sign of a fire.

(Sept 15) Left the town of Souilly at 4 A.M. Advanced 5 miles to the town of Serrocourt. Billed in barns and chicken houses. The fleas are as big as grasshoppers and bite like bulldogs. We are right behind the observations balloons.

Our Army is taken several German big guns today along this front. Also several machine guns and some prisoners.

(Sept 24) Fritz shelled all around us but did no damage last night outside of tearing up roads. Went back to depot at 7 A.M. and got through at 12.30 P.M. We have the afternoon off for shaving and resting up a bit.

Our officers say we are going to make the biggest drive that was ever known in a day or two. And then we will be ordered right up ahead of the light artillery to connect our narrow gauge road to the German lines if we are successful in our drive.

(Sept 28) We all went to work building a narrow gauge R.R. across no mans land to connect with the German R.R.

The Battling is sure going on in the forest right ahead of us. Machine guns sure talking. I guess our losses will be heavy.

Every effort put on our work as this rail road is badly needed for supplies and ammunitions. Boys are tying in night and day. There is also 2 companys of the 22 Eng working also.

(Oct 2) At least we have traffic going over the road, but having a hard time as the road bed is so soft. Engines and cars sink. So we have to push them by Man Power. We have all so connected up with the German R.R.

It is still raining cats and dogs.

(Oct 4) On this page, instead of an entry for Oct 4, this address is entered: 516 Stanford Ave, Room 9.

## Transcription of the Diary

The full diary transcription follows.

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
	Background	This diary was found on a sidewalk in Menlo Park, California in the late 1980s. It was misplaced for years, and recently rediscovered when repacking some boxes.	This transcription maintains as much of the original spelling and capitalization as possible, adding punctuation and paragraph breaks only where necessary for readability.
	Notebook	This diary consists of a lined notepad with a maroon cloth cover, 5.75 inches by 3.5 inches. Printed is the model number and vendor logo: 2977 Standard.	This transcriber has added annotations.
	Writing	The writing is quite legible and even. The writing is almost entirely in black pen, with some items in pencil.	
C, 2	Locations	On the inside front cover and the second page of the diary are the following location references:  168R20 Ranger station 149R12 Sedona 149R11 Murrels (?) Park 149R30 Beaver Creek	
1	Fares, etc.	On the first page of the diary are some monetary figures and associated text:  Fare to Phoenix 18 <sup>60</sup>  BJ Gilbert Tent 3 <sup>00</sup> 4/26/19  69389	Note that the date is after the war.  The meaning of the number 69389 is yet unknown.  Note the date in 1919.

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
3	Title	My experience in France in Worlds War From June 28 <sup>th</sup> to Nov 11 <sup>th</sup> 1918	Is this the original diary, or did the author rewrite it? How did he (or she) include the armistice date at the beginning?
3	June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Left Camp Meade at 4.30 P.M. Co <sup>'s</sup> B & C with full Over Sea Equipment, Full Packs, Rifles and etc. etc. for over Sea duty.  Traveled all night. 2 Co <sup>'s</sup> of the 28 <sup>th</sup> Engineers also left with us.	Camp Meade was home to the 79 <sup>th</sup> Division, with troops from Southern Pennsylvania, and located at Annapolis Junction, Maryland.
3	June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Arrived at Jersey City at 6.30 a.m. loaded on Ferry boat and taken to Government Docks and loaded on U.S. Transport Syboney at 10.30 a.m.  Put in good nights sleep. Neighborhood 4000 troops aboard.	USS Siboney, WWI transport ship.
4	June 30	Left dock at 12 noon. Sailed passed the Statue of Liberty at 12.30. Very beautiful to look upon. Stopped in N.Y. Harbor to wait for convoy of other Ships.  We steamed out for high seas at 4 p.m. Standing on rail of good ship taking the last look at the little Lady with the torch.	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
4	July 1 <sup>st</sup>	<p>5 p.m. Had a fine sea. Lots of the boys sick and some feeding the fish, some wants to die and others don't care if the boat sinks or not. I am enjoying the trip fine. Waves are about 10 to 12 ft. high. There is between 55000 and 60000 troops in convoy. Well guarded with 6 sub chasers, 1 cruiser and 2 Battle Ships. Also 2 Hydro-Planes hovering right over us. Have life belts on at all times. This is the largest shipment of troops across the Atlantic in Worlds History – 18 transports, 3 freight boats.</p> <p>8 pm A German sub came to the surface of the water, right then our gunners got busy firing 4 deep sea charges; also 5 or 6 from 8 in gun. Almost certain the sub was sunk. As the surface of the water was all covered with oil. We were all called to life boats. All the boys quite no excitement.</p>	How did our diarist soldier know that this was the largest shipment of troops across the Atlantic in history?
6	July 2	<p>Have not seen any more enemy subs. Not so many boys sick today, so probably the fish will miss their feed.</p> <p>Band is playing and it sure sounds great on the water. There is thousands of flying fish and also some shark following the boat.</p> <p>Co's B &amp; C have exclusive use of B deck from 9 to 10 am and from 3 to 4 p.m. due to our Officers.</p>	Hints that our author was in Company B or C.
7	July 3	<p>2 boats had to turn back to port – 1 had a fire in the hold and the other one Engine trouble. The soldiers were transferred to other ships. Great sight to see the boys sliding down the sides of the vessle on knotted ropes.</p> <p>Sea smooth but looks like storm. 2 rainbows in the sky and the reflection from them on the water is very beautiful. We are making about 12 knots an hour.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
8	July 4	<p>Very quiet 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I never thought a year ago I would be on the Atlantic headed for the Mix up.</p> <p>Nothing unusual has happened today. Only the Submarine drill at 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. and you get called out again at 3 a.m. to 4.30 a.m. Some early to get up. The most dangerous time for an attack is just before dark or breaking daylight.</p>	
9	July 5	<p>It has been awfully foggy weather. We are running very slow.</p> <p>3 deaths have occurred since we left port. Poor fellows, their troubles are over.</p> <p>We are to have Phy. Inspection every day that is nice. The grub is simply rotten.</p>	
10	July 6	<p>Torpedo boat Destroyer Calhoun with 12 tubes and 8 guns has been taking on oil since 10 a.m. She is sure some boat and the subs sure fear them. It is quite a sight to see one ship taking oil form an other.</p> <p>We are out on mid ocean and the rest of the convoy is out of sight, tut as we have the fastest transport we will catch up to them in short order.</p> <p>I was lucky to draw guard and have orders to clear the decks of all soldiers and officers and believe me it is some job. The soldiers are all right but some job to clear the officers, but with the help of the Colonel it was done. I don't blame them for not wanting to go inside as it is a sight you don't often see, but it had to be done to give the sailors room to work.</p> <p>The sea is very smooth today.</p>	How did our diarist soldier know that his transport is the fastest?

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
11	July 7 <sup>th</sup>	Awful rough sea all day – waves came up as high as B deck which is 15 or 20 ft. from the water line. Lots of the boys sick again. I am feeling fine and enjoying rough sea but very anxious to see land again. Grub is just rotten – nothing but liver, liver.	
12	July 8	1.30 pm We are now in the same L. + L. where the Titanic met her fate when she struck an ice burg.  This a.m. the Gunners had their regular gun practice, firing 16 shots from 5 inch in one minute – some shooting. I don't think the subs want much truck with us.	L. + L. = Latitude and longitude.  How did our diarist soldier know about the latitude and longitude? Perhaps it was announced throughout the ship?
12	July 9	We entered the danger zone today at 12.30 PM. 2 Subs thought to have been sighted - called to life boats at once. We have to sleep fully dressed, what little sleep we get at all. We are nearly all in for the want of sleep.	
13	July 10	At 6 P.M. 2800 miles on our journey. At 12.30 P.M. very fine sea. Waves are very beautiful and when they hit our boat and recede 10 or 15 ft high they are blue as the bluest sky mixed with the sea foam - make a picture no artist can paint.	How did our diarist soldier know about the distance traveled?
13	July 11	A 3.30 A.M. this morning, we were met by a U.S. Convoy of 16 Destroyers to guard us. Was quite a sight as our Cruiser sighted them as the big search lights lit up the sky. The signals of every ship was grand.	
14	July 12	1.30 P.M. Destroyers were very busy guarding us. Also the sub chasers sighted out first land at 6.30 P.M. It sure looked great. Crossed Mouth of English Channel and arrived at Brest, France at 9.30 P.M.  Every man in high spirits but pretty well wore out. I guess we don't leave the boat till morning.	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
14	July 13	<p>11 A.M. All docks full and were unloaded on to tugs and taken to pier – landed at 6.30 P.M. Made a 4 mile hike from pier to French quarters.</p> <p>French people sure gave us a hearty welcome. French children marching along side of us, poor little tots.</p>	
15	July 14	<p>Arrived at our new quarters. Very busy day cleaning up a bit. Hardships have started from now on.</p> <p>We are now 4 miles from Brest at one of the Napoleon prison camps and the bullet marks are still to be seen on the walls where the prisoners were executed – some historic place.</p>	
15	July 15	<p>3 platoons of our company went down to the docks today and were very busy handling supplies.</p> <p>Everything hustling and U.S. has made a great showing up till this date in men and supplies. It has rained every day since our arrival.</p>	
16	July 16	<p>Nothing of very much importance. Resting up today. Having an awful time trying to learn French money.</p>	
16	July 17	<p>Was up this morning at 3.30 A.M. and made up packs. We then hiked to Depot. Loaded up in stock cars which holds (40 Hommes or 8 Chavaux) or rather 40 men or 8 horses. Nothing but a little straw in bottom of cars. Pretty hard riding.</p> <p>Left Brest at 9.30 A.M. Have been passing through some beautiful country – reminds me of California. But everything is so far behind the times. The French people are still using oxen to ploug with and 2 wheel carts are all the go – if they use 2 horses they are always drove in tandem. Trains are very small and make about 15 miles per hour.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
17	July 18	<p>I could see Paris in the distance and by the looks must be beautiful city. Also could see the Eiffel Tower that I heard so much about.</p> <p>Arrived at Masentula Sassy at 3.30 A.M. in the morning. But could not run in to station on account of German Planes was Bombing the station. They done some damage. This is the first bombs I ever heard and believe me they tear some hole in the earth.</p> <p>We at last pulled in to the station and unloaded and then hiked to Sassy, a distance of 2 miles and camped in stables and chicken houses. But all are feeling pretty good, considering the trip we have had.</p>	<p>Sassy is in Normandy in northwest France. (It is not known what Masentula refers to.)</p> <p>In the History of the 27th Engineers, this is named Saacy-cur-Marne.</p> <p>Aerial bombing was new in the Great War, later known as the First World War or World War I.</p>
19	July 19	<p>Only sixteen mils from front line. We can hear the big guns plain and they are doing some roaring, believe me. The air is also full of planes and you can see an air fight most any time of day.</p> <p>Very warm today. The French people sure treat us fine. They try to let us know just how much they appreciate our coming when we did.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
19	July 20	<p>Spent very busy day at Sassy, getting packs and ammunition. We all got 210 rounds apiece. Looks like we are going into it just about right.</p> <p>We left Sassy for Front line at 11 P.M. We have had 7 hours hard traveling through drenching rain. Packs are sure enough heavy. We are all foot sore and simply wore out but will be all night a few hours rest. Shells are singing over our head pretty thick. But sleep we must have as it has for I don't know how long since we have slept and eating we have forgot what food tastes like.</p> <p>We are pretty well under cover so will try to rest up awhile till we are called to advance. We are now just 3 miles from the front line so tomorrow we expect the big thing to come off. That is if one of those German 77<sup>etes</sup> don't make a direct hit on our place. Then there won't be nothing but insurance to collect.</p>	<p>Shells in flight whistle or "sing".</p> <p>If it sounds familiar, the sentence fragment "... for I don't know how long ..." coincidentally occurs in the 1960s song "Don't Worry Baby" by the Beach Boys.</p>
21	July 21	<p>2 P.M. Just got up and will try and eat a little breakfast - just as it is corn willie and hard tack but it sure tastes good at that. Shells are bursting all around us but I guess we will have to take her as she comes.</p> <p>It is reported the Crown Prince's army is retreating; by all signs and indications they are making a quick get away and I don't blame them. Because we sure have them on the run.</p>	<p>"Corn willie" or "corned willie" is canned corned beef. "Hard tack" is thick cracker made of flour, water, and sometimes salt, popular (or at least frequently used) by armies since before the U.S. Civil War.</p> <p>"Crown Prince" refers to Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany.</p>

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
22	July 22	<p>4 P.M. This is the place (Belleau Woods) where we are attached to the real thing. The Marines are just a few kilos ahead of us and sure cutting their way through. This part of the line has held by the Huns twice and by all signs there is a terrible battle raging. Our machine guns are sure talking. Also the French.</p> <p>One observation balloon of ours met its fate at the hands of an Enemy Plane and talk about a cowardly trick - the German Plan opened fire on the Observer as he was descending in his parachute.</p>	<p>Belleau Wood is northeast of Paris, halfway to Reims. The soldiers traveled 160 miles / 260 km in 7 hours or so.</p> <p>Kilos = kilometers</p> <p>Hun, Fritz, and variations are all references to German soldiers.</p>
23	July 23	<p>We left from where we was camped at 7 A.M. Advanced 7 kilos - awful heavy walking and raining pitch forks. Packs all soaked and weight about a ton more or less. My shoulders are nearly raw. (I think Sherman was right.)</p> <p>Arrived at 26 Division and are attached to them. We are camped in heavy oak woods and are under shell fire and they are sure falling thick and fast. One landed about 3 ft from our tent. But thank the Lord it was a dud or this diary would have come to an end.</p> <p>Many of the boys are having very close calls. But all are in good spirits considering that we ain't used to this kind of a reception.</p> <p>Every body wearing gas masks at alert. Capt. Norcross claims our masks are our passports home and I believe it by the looks of some poor fellows that have been gassed by mustard gas. It is a thing to dread.</p>	<p>Our diarist soldier is probably referring to General William T. Sherman's quote after the Battle of Vicksburg, "War is hell."</p>

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
24	July 24	<p>9 P.M. Very heavy bombardment has continued all day and night. Observation balloons by our camp are being attacked by Hun planes. But they have not been successful in destroying any owing to the anti-aircraft guns which keep them up.</p> <p>We had supplies tonight with French troops. But could not draw any wine. A French soldier has to have his wine as a daily ration. They are camped just below us and are real good fellows.</p>	"good fellows" – A common phrase at the time, appearing in 1920s Harold Lloyd movies.
25	July 25	<p>Still camped in the heavy oak timber and taking the Hun shells but sending them over a few with our compliments.</p> <p>11 A.M. One of the Observation Balloons destroyed by enemy plane. Our aviator retaliated by bringing down the enemy plane. There was not much left of Fritz Boy when he struck the ground.</p> <p>Has been raining all day. Had a good bath in a small creek today - kind water the Cooties a little.</p>	"Cooties", from a Polynesian word meaning "lice", were a concern for soldiers who had few opportunities to bathe.
26	July 26	Nothing of importance outside of our regular shell fire. And corn willie and hard tack as a regular diet.	
26	July 27	<p>I went to rifle range today, making a score of 90 out of 100. I call it pretty good for an old stiff.</p> <p>The Huns shelled our camp again today. They certainly have our range and we got our regular dose. But nobody hurt so far. Boys standing it fine.</p> <p>It has been raining every day and they call it sunny France. I don't think we are still at the same camp but expect to move at any time.</p>	What is the age of our diarist soldier, to refer to himself as an "old stiff"?

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
27	July 28	<p>Went to creek and took a wash and washed out some clothes which they badly needed and the cooties needed watering.</p> <p>Roads are busy hauling ammunition and supplies to the Front. Front line is now 5 miles away. There has been heavy cannoning yesterday and last night. The Huns are getting a few pills from our guns with our compliments.</p>	
28	July 29	<p>I go on guard at 1 P.M. and it is a lonesome beat.</p> <p>Very heavy bombardment all last night and the reports coming back from the front line are that the Fritz Boy are still retreating. I guess Mr. Hindenburg is making another strategic retreat. I imagine he will make several before the fracas is over.</p>	Hindenburg refers to Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, who later was elected President of Germany from 1925-1934.
28	July 30	<p>I came off guard at noon today and I feel pretty tired. I had a very lonesome post as it is among the dead Germans. But I guess they are harmless.</p> <p>The live ones are still pretty frisky. Two planes were seen to drop out of the sky after a battle with our planes but they dropped on Hun soil so did not get to see them. Latest reports Huns still retreating.</p>	
29	July 31	<p>2 A.M. Hun planes getting ready to make an air raid on our camp. You can hear their machines buzzing overhead - number of shots fired on our boys from their machine guns. Also a lot of bombs dropped but without effect. Anti-aircraft guns keep them well up. And thanks to our powerful search lights.</p> <p>Not much sleep at night and raining as hard as it can.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
30	August 1	<p>11:30 A.M. Ordered back to Sassy. Left back with heavy packs. We arrived Belleau Woods footsore and weary, and had dinner which consisted of hard tack and monkey meat and rice and it sure tasted good.</p> <p>Then we continued to march to Sassy - arrived at 7:30 P.M. A good 17 mile hike. I had 2 blisters on my feed the size of half dollars.</p> <p>Part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Division came in later for rest and replacements for they lost pretty heavy. Their horses are dropping dead in the streets. Poor boys - they sure look tattered and torn but ready to go right back at the same old game.</p> <p>We are sleeping in barns and old chicken houses and very glad to get this shelter. It beats being out in the rain the shelter halves.</p> <p>News came in today - we are to go to Chateau Thierry and I guess it will be a little warmer than Belleau Woods. But that is to be expected. The sooner the better.</p>	<p>“monkey meat” was a French canned beef and carrot mixture.</p> <p>“shelter halves” are small tents (pup tents).</p>
32	August 2	<p>We are all resting up, quartered in the same old Barn. Just 12 days ago since we left this same place. And we sure had a merry old time - saw some action I guess. Feel pretty good today except feet very sore.</p> <p>More American troops have arrived since we left ... and the Kaiser says we can't get them across. Don't kid yourself Kaiser Bill.</p> <p>It has been raining all day but that is nothing strange. Fritz is getting it just the same to that is some consolation - misery loves company.</p>	<p>“Kaiser” and “Kaiser Bill” refer to Kaiser Wilhelm II, the leader of Germany.</p>

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
32	August 3	Have had another day of rest - not quite so sore. Had supper with a French family and had a great time showing the French girl to make hot cakes. It is the first I had since I been in France and they sure tasted good. As a rule, they say French women are very good cooks - will see later.	
33	August 4	It was reported today to us that the camp we left in Belleau Woods Aug 1 <sup>st</sup> was bombed and blown all to pieces on Aug 2. I guess it was some luck on our part. It was bombed by enemy planes, 7 in number. That is one time Fritz was fooled. But I call it some luck to be away from there.	
34	August 5	We are expecting another move - have everything ready to move in short order. It has rained all day.  Feeling pretty good today - would like to hear from the good old U.S.A. I miss El Paso and Douglas some. Maybe we will get mail before we pull out for front line again. Boys are just uneasy about the folks at home.	El Paso, Texas and Douglas, Arizona are included in addresses listed at the end of the diary.
34	August 6	It is reported today our Armies at the Front are making great gains and the Huns are retreating as fast as they can.  A Division of French soldiers are coming back out of the Front line for a rest and they look as though they surely have earned it. Coming back for replacements also. But all look in high spirits. Fritz gave us a few gas shells today but did no damage.	“Gas shells” contained poison gas, often mustard gas, and could be launched from conventional artillery such as mortars.

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
35	August 7	<p>Orders came in today for extra equipment from Head Quarters. I guess that will mean more stuff for us to pack on our backs. It has been pretty busy day as we are under orders to go to the Front line to rebuild Rail Road at Fere-En-Tardonois.</p> <p>We are all feeling pretty good. No rain today. I don't know what is going to happen that the sun is shining. I seen Capt. Greenway today of Bisbee.</p>	<p>Fere-En-Tardonois is southwest of Belleau Wood, closer to Paris.</p> <p>No person named Greenway is listed in the "History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919".</p>
36	August 8	<p>3 Platoons of us were called up at 4 A.M. this morning. And left camp at 6 A.M. We have hiked 20 miles with heavy packs as far as Chateau Thierry and rode 15 miles more in trucks.</p> <p>But had to come back out of Fere-En-Tardonois as the Huns are sure laying down some shell fire. Several French soldiers have been killed and one shell exploded near to us. But did no damage. Fere-En-Tardonois is some wreck.</p>	
37	August 9	<p>We are camped about 5 miles this side of Fere-En-Tardonois in some heavy woods. There is sure signs of a heavy battle. 400 Huns are buried here. The Huns are sure shelling our artillery but doing no damage.</p> <p>My self and Wilson went up in a 80 ft tower the Huns left standing and we could plainly see the Huns retreating and they we leaving a trail of nothing but ruin.</p> <p>I am feeling about all in - feel pretty tired. I again say Sherman was right.</p>	<p>5 privates with the last name Wilson are listed in the "History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919".</p>

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
38	August 10	<p>Left camp this morning at 7 A.M. and advanced about 7 miles. Went past the town of Fere-En-Tardonois which is all in ruins and fires are still smoldering.</p> <p>The Huns are sure making a hasty retreat. They left an ammunition dump which is valued at \$2,000,000 behind as they did not have time to remove it or blow it up. A few more dumps of this size will sure cripple Kaiser Bill. There is also 8 4-inch guns left behind but they have broken them up so we cannot use them. But we have plenty of our own and more coming up.</p> <p>There is a great air Battle on but we saw 3 Planes drop over on German lines - could not tell if it was our or Hun Planes.</p>	How did our diarist soldier know that the ammunition dump was worth \$2 million dollars?
39	August 11	<p>Have been working today on Rail road, which is literally torn up. By our shells and believe me it is some wreck. No wonder Fritz's boy had to move the depot. Building is a total wreck as is also the town of Fere-En-Tardonois.</p> <p>The Huns sent over some gas shells today but we was quick with our masks so there was nobody hurt.</p> <p>Took 300 Huns Prisoners today and they were sure a hard looking lot. They claim they have been in the war 4 years and they sure looked it. They are crazing about chewing and smoking tobacco. Wanted to trade us anything they have for some. But as we are pretty short ourselves, the Huns are out of luck till they are sent back of the lines.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
40	August 12	<p>We are resting up today and washing out some clothes which they badly need. We are camped in dugouts and trenches which the Germans left a few days ago. The Hun's Big Guns have been shelling us very near all day and some came very close for comfort. They also mixed in a few gas shells but did no damage.</p> <p>Another air Battle on this evening but the German planes are very high - I think they deem it safer. I guess by the looks of it we will get a reception from Huns Planes tonight.</p>	
41	August 13	<p>We left camp today at 7 A.M. and advanced 8 miles to the town of Dole and we are now just 3 miles from the Front line.</p> <p>We are ahead of observation Balloons and camped right among our artillery. And the boys are sure sending some shells over to Fritzie Boy.</p> <p>6 P.M. My self and Wilson are watching an artillery duel between our Big guns and the enemy's and the Hun's shells are sure cutting close to our battery's, but no direct hits so far from the Hun's.</p>	Dole is northeast of Belleau Wood, closer to Reims.
42	August 14	<p>An awful heavy bombardment all last night. A great many shells bursting very near our camp. A great many gas alarms turned in during the night. We got a good sniff of tear and sneezing gas.</p> <p>The Germans are making a very strong stand at this place. They are digging in, but I guess our Big guns will root them out all right.</p> <p>6 P.M. I witnessed a very exciting air Battle. One of our planes being brought down by a Hun plane. Our two aviators kept control of their machine - landed safely but badly wounded, poor fellows.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
43	August 15	<p>Nine men and myself were sent up to very near no mans land under the cover of darkness to repair a bridge on the Asine River so the dough boys could cross. Pretty risky business. All returned safely but one out of our bunch. He was struck by a piece of high explosive - wounded pretty bad.</p> <p>Our artillery are sure putting over some shells - about 10 to 1 of the Huns. Germans sure have a strong position behind a hill but if ever we do get Mr. Fritz started we will give them a merry chase as they have about 10 miles of open country to cross and the French cavalry are waiting to help them along.</p> <p>Raining all day long - I am wet to the skin.</p>	<p>The Aisne River flows near Dole.</p> <p>“No man’s land” was the area between the enemy trenches. Usually about 250 yards, it ranged from 7 yards to 500 yards at various places along the front.</p> <p>Referring to infantry men as “dough boys” probably relates to how soldiers cooked rations of doughy flour and rice, but there are other possibilities.</p>
45	August 16	<p>I went on guard last night at 7 P.M. Guarding Hun prisoners and came off today at 3 P.M., somewhat tired believe me. Every time one of our planes would sail over us the Hun prisoners were all eyes. I guess they know what the (American Pigs can do).</p> <p>It has drawn down to an artillery duel on both sides. The Huns made a direct hit on one of our batteries, killing 4 of our boys and wounding 7.</p> <p>The Germans are heavily entrenched in their new positions and are making a desperate stand.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
46	August 17	<p>We are repairing roads to today as the Huns shelled them pretty bad. Some job, trying to fix a road, ankle deep in mud and raining cats and dogs. Corn willie and hard tack don't stay very well with a fellow when he is soaking wet. Wish I had a piece of pie; would gladly give \$10<sup>00</sup> for it.</p> <p>A very bad disaster happened today about noon, as Capt. Boyce and Lieut. Schuller aviators were sent to the their deaths by German planes. It sure did cool the blood in me to see their bodies after they struck the earth. It was a horrible sight to see. Flesh was scattered for 10 feet around where they struck the earth.</p>	
47	August 18	<p>We are working on roads today right at our camp. I am pretty tired tonight as road work is pretty hard work. But we are all glad to be doing our bit. There was a shell struck mine and my Buddie tent but no body home. Try again Fritzie boy – you may have better luck.</p>	
48	August 19 & 20	<p>Nothing unusual today except a few Hun shells and our regular routine of work. Have 2 miles of new road to build, our Officers say this piece of road is very important to get ammunition and supplies over so we will tie in to it day and night till we finish it, rain or no rain. Would sure like to the see Huns rooted out and get them on the run again.</p> <p>One lone Fritzie boy was taken prisoner to day. Gee, he sure looked lonesome. He was sure hungry.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
49	August 21	<p>We have been heavily shelled all day. One big shell landed about 50 ft from us and I am here to tell you it shook us up some. I call that another close call. Two of our boys were very badly wounded during the shell fire. One of these, Paul Smith, will never recover.</p> <p>Two Hun planes were successful in bringing down one of our observation balloons, but the observer made a safe landing. That makes 4 times he has jumped from his balloon today. I call it some nerve.</p>	
50	August 22	<p>I left camp with 7 men to do some blasting for the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineers at a quarrie. We traveled 35 miles in a truck and camped at 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corp. Head Quarters for the night as it is raining steady all day.</p> <p>The Officers sure treated us fine. We have eat six times today at different camps on our way. We have a piece of pie at one mess kitchen and it sure tasted fine - the first since we left the good old U.S.A. It seems kind of strange to be out of shell fire. These boys are sure having a good time of it. I am sure glad somebody has it easy.</p>	
51	August 23	<p>We went this morning to Fere-En Tardonis after 2 loads of bridge timber for 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corp. Capt. We returned to our camp at Dole this evening.</p> <p>Passed by the beautiful palace of Marie Antoinette – it is simply grand.</p> <p>We are getting our usual shell fire again tonight and raining pretty hard. The Huns are still dug in. But I guess we will get them started pretty soon.</p>	<p>The palace referred to is very likely the Palais de Compiègne, about 33 miles from Dole.</p>

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
51	August 24	<p>We have been building road all day. It was very badly shelled last night.</p> <p>Air planes busy all day. Number of air fights today. 3 Hun fliers met their deaths to today. We lost 1 plane as it fell on German lines, poor fellows.</p> <p>Artillery on both sides very active today. They have been exchanging compliments. But no direct hits today from the enemy.</p>	
52	August 25	<p>I go on guard duty tonight at 7 P.M. Have been having a very busy day today washing clothes and taking a bath. I and my Buddie rustled some dried apples and sugar. Also some elderberries and made some sauce – sure fine.</p>	
53	August 26	<p>We are being shelled all last night and today. Enemy shells falling pretty thick around us. 3 killed and 4 wounded so far out of our bunch. But our artillery returning the compliments only faster. The noise is terrific – hard on ears and nerves.</p>	
53	August 27 & 28	<p>Nothing of great importance today, only our usual shell fire and rain. We are still working on roads and are being fed a great deal better since we got rid of our old mess sargent. The new one seems to know his biz.</p>	
54	August 29	<p>A very bad accident happened today at Chery 1 mile away. The Red Cross building was hit by a shell just as there was a bunch of our boys lining up to get tobacco and etc. The shell killed 9 and wounded 27.</p> <p>I go on night duty tonight at 9 P.M. on road. I guess she will be a long hard one as it is raining and pitch dark.</p> <p>I climbed a tree to get some plums today and the limb broke and I hit the ground pretty hard. I am sure sore.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
55	August 30 & 31	Still working on road and dodging schaprenal and high explosive and a few gas shells. Looks like we are going to move the Huns shortly.	“schaprenal” should be “shrapnel”.
55	Sept 1 <sup>st</sup>	We are still working on road at night and sure doing good work. Artillery and suppliers going forward to front line in good shape.  We had a feed on plums today and they sure tasted fine.  Shells are not coming over as fast as usual. What is the matter Frizie boy.	
56	Sept 2	One of our observation balloons was burned up by an enemy plane today at 4 P.M. The observer escaped with his life after dropping about 800 in his parachute. The basket from the balloon dropped a few hundred feet from where we were standing. The German plane got back to German lines safely.	
56	Sept 3	Very heavy firing last night. Several shells whining over our heads. One of our planes was brought down. And by all seems to have dropped over in no man’s land.  We lost two more balloons today. One of the German planes got the two. But our aviators retaliated by bringing down Mr. Fritz. I never saw a human body worse tore up than the German aviator. His flesh was spattered for 20 feet around the plane where he fell.	
57	Sept 4	At last we have started Mr. Fritzie boy from his strong hold all along this sector. We expect to move forward tonight to put in bridges so the light artillery and Dough boys can get across. I hope they keep them on the run.	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
58	Sept 5	<p>Quite a number of German prisoners passed through here today. We were talking to several of them and most of them say the German people are ready to quit and by the looks of them they sure look as though they are glad to be taken prisoners.</p> <p>We are working on bridges today and am sure tired.</p>	
58	Sept 6	<p>We are still making rapid gains. Germans are making a hasty retreat.</p> <p>Very exciting times at the front line. The Germans gave us an air raid last night, dropping a few bombs and turning their machine guns loose but hurting no one. The sky was all lit up with search lights trying to locate enemy planes. But the planes made their get away.</p>	
59	Sept 7	<p>I have been working in blackshop today, sharpening tools. Enemy is still retreating but giving us a few shells.</p> <p>We are under orders to leave for another front no later than tomorrow evening. Pershing's has asked for a front of his own to be strictly American. I hear we get the Aragonne front. It has to be 87 ½ miles long.</p>	Aragonne should be Argonne.
60	Sept 8	<p>At last we leave this Front after many exciting times we have seen here. We left this Front at 11 A.M. Whole company rode in trucks 8 miles to the village of Charmel. 10 men and myself slept in a shell torn church but put in a dandy night's sleep.</p>	Le Charmel is south of Dole.

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
60	Sept 9	<p>We left Charmel a 1 P.M. making a hike of 15 miles to Dormans on rail-road station. This town is completely destroyed. This place is one of the points on the Marne which the French held against such heavy odds on which Marshall Foch showed his colors so gallantly. We expect to leave here some time tomorrow.</p> <p>It has just rained all day long. Oh you sunny France.</p>	<p>Dormans is southeast of Le Charmel, halfway between Paris and Verdun.</p> <p>Marshall Foch was the commander of the French army.</p>
61	Sept 10	<p>Left Dormans at 3.30 A.M. Loaded into box cars. Traveled all night. Arrived at the village of Ippercourt near Verdun. It is sure sloppy rainy weather. Have not had my clothes dry for a week – sure feel cold. We are sleeping in barns and chicken house. And not a sign of a fire.</p>	<p>Ippercourt is southwest of Verdun.</p>
62	Sept 11	<p>We are resting up a bit today. I went on guard duty at 9.30 P.M. This town is less destroyed by shell fire than any town we have been in so far. I guess by all accounts there was more hand to hand fighting in this place than any where on the whole line.</p> <p>Went out today and rustled 1 doz eggs which cost me 6 Francs or \$1.20. If me and Wilson only had ham we would have ham and eggs – but no ham.</p>	
63	Sept 12	<p>We are still in the same old barns and chicken houses. Nothing new or exciting. Only we miss our regular shell fire. But I guess we will get it soon enough.</p>	
63	Sept 13	<p>The streets of this town were strewn with dead in 1914. We are pretty close to Verdun where the awful battle was fought in 1914. This front moved today, the first time in 4 years.</p> <p>11000 prisoners taken by American and 15000 Austrians and Prussians taken by the French and English. Not bad for one day's work. Now what do you think of the American pigs, Kaiser Bill?</p>	<p>Verdun is in eastern France, near the borders of Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany.</p>

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
64	Sept 14	We left this camp at 10 P.M. Advanced 4 miles to the town of Souilly. 3000 German and Austrian prisoners taken by U.S. and brought here. They sure look tough. I guess they are sure sick and tired of the game. The tell us they are sick and tired of fighting a losing game and say Germans can't hold out much longer.	Souilly is south of Verdun.
64	Sept 15	Left the town of Souilly at 4 A.M. Advanced 5 miles to the town of Serrocourt. Billeted in barns and chicken houses. The fleas are as big as grasshoppers and bite like bulldogs. We are right behind the observations balloons.  Our Army is taken several German big guns today along this front. Also several machine guns and some prisoners.	Senoncourt-les-Maujouy is northeast of Souilly, closer to Verdun.
65	Sept 16-17	We are held up here waiting for orders. All of us had an honest to goodness bath to-day and got our clothes washed.  Myself and Wilson were luck enough to have an old French lady cook us 2 spring chickens and some potatoes and I'll say they cure tasted fine. Also had 2 cups real coffee. The whole thing cost us 40 Francs or \$8.00 U.S. money but it was worth it.	
66	Sept 18	A very exciting air raid last night at 5.30 P.M. Our planes gave chase to the Hun planes and drove them up in the clouds. And of all the diving and ducking you could sure see it. It finally wound up by bringing down 2 Hun planes and 1 of ours. All were smashed to pieces.	
67	Sept 19	Nothing of importance. We are still waiting for the orders. Witnessed a couple of air battles today. And one of our balloons burned up by Hun plane.	
67	Sept 20	6 P.M. We all have packs ready and feeling fine. Raining as hard as it can but expect to leave tonight sometime.	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
67	Sept 21	<p>Left at 10 P.M. tonight in truck and rode 15 miles to the town of Dombasle-En-Argonne. We have billeted in pretty fair quarters. We had to hustle old bedsteads and other things. Looks as though we may stay here awhile.</p> <p>It sure looks as though something is going to come off pretty quick. The roads are just lined every night with big American 8 inch Naval guns, supplies, and ammunitions.</p>	Dombasle-en-Argonne is northwest of Senoncourt-les-Maujouy.
68	Sept 22	<p>Still at same quarters only it is raining cats and dogs today. An occasional shell whining over head about all to break the monotony.</p> <p>I am setting by the only real fire since I arrived in sunny France and am sure enjoying it.</p>	
69	Sept 23	<p>We laid in quarters all this forenoon on account is raining torrents.</p> <p>The 4 Platoon was ordered to Depot 1½ miles away to unload 10 Dinky Engines. We worked fro 1.30 P.M. till 9.30 P.M. I am sure tired.</p>	
69	Sept 24	<p>Fritz shelled all around us but did no damage last night outside of tearing up roads. Went back to depot at 7 A.M. and got through at 12.30 P.M. We have the afternoon off for shaving and resting up a bit.</p> <p>Our officers say we are going to make the biggest drive that was ever known in a day or two. And then we will be ordered right up ahead of the light artillery to connect our narrow gauge road to the German lines if we are successful in our drive.</p>	
70	Sept 25	<p>Raining heavy. First barrage opened up on the Germans at 11 P.M. and it is some. The first advance today by the Allies in 3 years. The French advanced 2 ½ miles and we advanced 7 miles on a 20 mile front. I call that some going in 1 day.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
71	Sept 26	<p>We left Dombasle at 7 A.M. and arrived at the real front at 12.00 A.M.</p> <p>We are ahead of all the artillery. And the noise is something terrific. My ear drum are about broken every time one of our naval guns goes off. It sure jars you.</p> <p>1 P.M. We are now in the world famed Hindenburg line and it is broken. It only took 9 hours to do it. The Pill boxes are scattered all over. The Yankee fire was to much for the Fritzie boy.</p> <p>4 P.M. The Front line is now 3 miles off and still moving. 1 lone German plane came over at 5 P.M. and got 4 of our balloons. I call that some daring. Everybody shooting at him but he got away.</p> <p>The officers claim if our guns were brought up together they would be hub to hub for 87½ miles in length. One German major told us that was taken prisoner that a rat could not have lived against our fire.</p>	
73	Sept 27	<p>Americans still advancing but losing very heavy. Lots of prisoners coming back. Also lots of our boys and Germans be brought back wounded. Roads just lined with ambulances and trucks bringing back the wounded.</p> <p>Raining all day makes it bad for men and truck to travel to front. But Fritz has it worse because he is on the run.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
74	Sept 28	<p>We all went to work building a narrow gauge R.R. across no mans land to connect with the German R.R.</p> <p>The Battling is sure going on in the forest right ahead of us. Machine guns sure talking. I guess our losses will be heavy.</p> <p>Every effort put on our work as this rail road is badly needed for supplies and ammunitions. Boys are tying in night and day. There is also 2 companies of the 22 Eng working also.</p>	
75	Sept 29	<p>Went to work on R.R. grade between Dombasle and Mount Faucon as we need it bad to get the supplies and ammunition over.</p> <p>This piece of road is where the Germans and French fought over for 4 years. It is nothing but one mass of shell holes, skeletons and barb wire. This is the noted No Mans land. It has been fought over and over till Americans came over. And now we have it. The shell holes are 2 foot apart.</p> <p>The boys are sure working.</p>	
76	Sept 30	<p>Still working on R.R. Grade getting along fine. Pushing right up to Mount Faucon. Has been raining all day.</p> <p>Met quite a surprise this morning. Shook hands with Robert Tyler – was sure glad to see him. Poor little fellow, he looked quite wore out. But was sure glad to see me. He was going in to the thick of it. He was with the 162<sup>nd</sup> Infantry.</p>	<p>Montfaucon-d'Argonne is about 13 miles / 22 km north of Dombasle-en-Argonne.</p>
76	Oct 1 <sup>st</sup>	<p>We are still on R.R., laying steel fast.</p> <p>Quite a lot of air fighting going on today. A few shells came over today and interfered with our Mess Kitchen.</p>	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
77	Oct 2	At least we have traffic going over the road, but having a hard time as the road bed is so soft. Engines and cars sink. So we have to push them by Man Power. We have all so connected up with the German R.R.  It is still raining cats and dogs.	
77	Oct 3	Am working today putting in switches and ballasting road bed. Are getting along nicely.	
78	Oct 4	(no entry; diary ends)	
78	Other Items	On this page, instead of an entry for Oct 4, this address is entered:  516 Stanford Ave Room 9	
Last Pages	Title	On page 3 (counting from the back):  Diary of France  Below this on the same and following pages is a list of about 30 entries, mostly names, some with check marks, some with monetary amounts shown.	
			All of these named persons are in the 27th Engineers, Company C, except as noted.
	Names	Alonzo J. Reinineger 1210 Nolan St San Antonio Texas (checked)	Alonzo Reininger
		Mr. Joe Greenier Springfield ILL 3975 (checked)	Joseph Greener, Taylorville, Ill.
		Charles Conley 7 Montvale Ave Stoneham Mass (checked)	Charles Conley, Bath, Maine

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
		Ira E. Sherman P.O. Box 2155 Kingman Ariz (checked)	Ira Sherman, Kingman., Ariz.
		L. P. Weld c/o G. W. Chesbrough 797 Smith St Rochester N.Y.	Lawrence P. Weld, S. Dakota
		E. A. Tierney Lewiston Montana (checked)	Eugene A. Tierney, Lewis Town, Mont.
		A. M. Grimm 301 Merritt Bldg. Los Angeles Cal. (checked)	Alexander M. Grimm, Los Angeles, Calif.
		H. L. Schoonover Little Hocking Ohio (checked)	Harry L. Schoonover, Reno, Nev.
		Ira C. Marker 1114 Hiawatha Place Seattle Wash. (checked)	Ira C. Marker, Seattle, Wash.
		Alfred M. Larrabee Wilmer B.C. Canada	Alfred M. Larrabee, Wilmar, B. C., Canada
		Dave Sturdy Charleston Ark.	David Sturdy, Charlestown, Ark.
		Lola Stockton Box 784 Calexico (checked)	Female; not listed in 27th Engineers
		Thos D. Fegan 604 E. Forest St. Victoria Texas (checked)	Thomas D. Fegan, Victoria, Tex.
		Oscar C. Rheinheimer 405 S. Florence El Paso Texas (checked)	Oscar C. Reinheimer, El Paso, Tex.
		617 Texas St. W. (no name)	

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
		Mrs. French 722 East San Antonio St. El Paso Texas	Female; not listed in 27th Engineers; no connection to Mobley found (so far)
		Lee Estes Light Ariz (checked) \$17.75 sent M Cerdu Apr 23-19	Lee Estes, Phoenix, Ariz. Appears in US City Directories, 1822-1995, Phoenix (with no address); Mobley does not appear.
		Frank R. Dugan 28 So. Clarkson St. Denver Colo (checked)	Frank R. Dugan, Delta, Utah; Regimental Headquarters; one of the last 8 men of the Regiment, discharged 11 April 1919, ending the 27th Engineers.
		F. S. Ferraris Angels Camp Calif. (checked)	Frank S. Ferraris, Angels Camp, Calif.
		Mrs. F. L. Stacks c/o Mr Geo Falks Box 30 Douglas Ariz (checked)	Neither Stacks nor Falks appears in the 27th Engineers; perhaps operated a rooming house; 1920 US Federal Census for George Falk in Douglas lists 49 all male household members; none of the 6 most likely candidates listed below are included, including Mobley

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
		The A Brown Co. June 15 Merchandise \$11.50 (checked)	
		Ed. E. McNeil c/o Virginia Hotel Calexico Cal	No reference found (yet)
		Shaffer tim Kuper So Western Yard Ar McKay foreman	
		(this entry is crossed out) San Pedro Cal. June 5 1920 My dear wife Tillie	No reference found (yet)
		Wm B Williams (or Jack L Brant) 18 <sup>th</sup> Infantry 6 <sup>th</sup> Field Artillery J? M Douglas	
		(no name) Edgar Hotel Taylor and T?	
		Mr. S (crossed out) c/o A. S. Howell 102 S. Spring St. Los Angeles California	Arthur S Howell; no Mobley connection (yet)
		Lindsay 13 <sup>th</sup> St 660 Telepone no 990	
		Kenneth Williams 757 14 <sup>th</sup> St Douglas Ariz	1920 US Federal Census - no Mobley household member
		H J Bland Box 943 Needles Calif. (in different handwriting)	1920 US Federal Census - no Mobley household member
		W. H. Weed	US City Directories, Los Angeles, 1924; no connection found (yet)
		Carl Garner 4877 Huntington Drive	No connection found yet

Pg #	Date or Other	Text	Annotation or Question
	Dated Entries	June 25, 1920 Left saw mill at 1.30 P.M. Arrived at Kernville at 4.30. Stayed all night. Left June 2.	
		16 <sup>th</sup> March ½	
	Financial Entries	McSwain notices 50c	
		Spiller notices (ditto) 50c	
		Spiller (ditto) paint 75	
		McSwain Truck 4.00	
		Reilly Truck (ditto) 4.00	
Cover	Arithmetic	On the inside rear cover and first 2 rear pages are about 9 arithmetic calculations – additions, multiplications, divisions.	

## References

Most likely possible authors, associated with El Paso, TX or Douglas, AZ are derived from this document: History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919 (see [books.google.com](https://books.google.com)). **Private Rabb Forest Mobley** is the author of this diary, as evidenced in the earlier investigation summary chapter.

History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919, Page 73.  
Private, First Class, Company C  
Mobley, Rabb F., 1315 California St., El Paso, Tex.  
In Company "C" with Wilson, Noah W., 39 Cor. Kentucky St, Vallejo, Calif.

From other sources, in chronological order; diary date references in [].

1909 - Post Office established in Webb, Cochise County, Arizona, by Robert M. Tyler, named after his father-in-law, J. D. Webb. Located 24 miles west of Douglas, Arizona, near Bisbee, Arizona.

<http://arizonahosttowntrails.com/webb.html>

1910 US Federal Census: Greenway, Fred G, Bisbee, Ariz.; age 27.

Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955  
Fred G. Greenway, age 27, Cochise, Arizona; registration date 5 Aug 1910.

US City Directories, 1822-1995; Author refers to Bisbee [August 7].  
Mobley R F, Bisbee, Arizona, 1917, mucker C Q  
A mucker is a "person who removes dirt and waste, especially from mines or stables" (Oxford Dictionaries)  
Bisbee is 27 miles from Douglas, AZ [August 5].  
"C Q" might refer to the Copper Queen Hotel, Bisbee.

US City Directories, 1822-1995  
Greenway Fred G, Arizona, Bisbee, Arizona, 1917, shift boss C Q r Mrs. Emma Mathews  
Diary refers to Captain Greenway of Bisbee [August 7].  
"C Q" likely refers to the Copper Queen Hotel, Bisbee.

Draft registration card, 5 Jun 1917, Precinct 18, El Paso, Texas.  
Rabb Forest Mobley, 1315 California St., El Paso, Tex.  
Born 11 Nov 1895, Austin, TX.  
Employed by Arizona Copper Co, Morenci, Arizona.  
Morenci is 150 miles from Douglas, AZ [Aug 5] and 173 miles from Bisbee [Aug 7].

Draft registration card, 5 Jun 1917, Webb, Cochise, Arizona.  
Robert Marion Tyler, Jr., Webb, AZ  
Born 12 December 1895, Nutrioso, AZ  
Employed as "Farmer" "by Father" at "his farm".

Draft registration card, 12 Sep 1918  
Fred George Greenway, Cananea, Mexico  
Born 12 Apr 1883,  
Mine Foreman, Cananea Consolidated Copper Co., Cananea, Mexico.  
Cananea is about 50 miles southwest of Bisbee.

From Arizona Archives Online:

The Arizona Copper Company was a mining company of Edinburgh, Scotland, operating in the Clifton-Morenci area of Arizona from 1882-1921. The company was sold to Phelps Dodge Corporation in 1921.

From El Paso Herald, El Paso, TX, 21 July 1917, page 4 (OCR)

<https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/81020626/>

EL Pasoans called in the first draft:

Column 3: 3,396 - Rabb Forest Mobley

US, Army Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910-1939

Rabb Forest Mobley: 7 Mar 1919 St Nazaire, France; 20 Mar 1919 Hoboken, New Jersey; residence El Paso Texas

California, County Birth, Marriage, and Death Records, 1849-1980

California Marriage Records, Various Counties (marriage license)

Rabb F Mabley (Mobley), parents John R. Mobley, Laura L. Mobley

Marriage 7 Jul 1924, Los Angeles, California (License 2 July 1924)

Spouse Irma J Smith, parents Harley J. Smith, Abbie Scott

California Voter Registrations,

Rabb F or Rabb Forest Mobley, Los Angeles (county?) between 1924 to 1962.

1924 454 S Figueroa St, LA, Ry Clrk

1926 1212 1/2 N Gower, LA, inspctr

1930 1321 N Beechwood Dr, LA, inspctr

1932 1108 N Wilton Pl, LA

1936 5449 Sierra Vista, LA, Supervisor; lived with Mrs. Laura J. Mobley, retired

1938 5449 Sierra Vista, LA, Supervisor

1942 5449 Sierra Vista, LA, Supervisor

1944 5449 Sierra Vista, LA, Supervisor, DS

1946 5449 Sierra Vista, LA

1948 571 S Coronado St, LA

1950 571 S Coronado St, LA

1958 746 S Normandie Ave, LA

1960 1560 Laurel Ave, LA

1962 1560 N Laurel Ave, LA

From Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles, CA, 29 April 1935, page 23 (OCR)

<https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/159505625/>

Celebration, column 4:

Honoring the birthdays of Dr. Carman A. Newcomb and J. Leslie Swope, Miss Alta F. Phillips entertained with an elaborate dinner party at the Del Mar Club. Also present were Mrs. C. A. Newcomb, Mrs. J. Leslie Swope, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Nix and Rabb F. Mobley.

1940 US Federal Census

Robb F Mobley, est birth year 1896, divorced, 5449 Sierra Vista, Los Angeles.

Resided in same house in 1935.

Occupation: Supervisor

Class of worker: Wage or salary worker in Government work

Completed: High School, 4th year

Household members: Willis L. Quebedeux age 47, Mary L. Quebedeux age 20.

Draft registration card, 27 Apr 1942

Rabb Forest Mobley, 5449 Sierra Vista

Birthdate 11 Nov 1895, birthplace Austin, Tex.

Name of person who will always know your address:

A. L. Peterson, LA City Health Dept, 116 Temple St, Los Angeles

Note: 5449 Sierra Vista Ave is near Santa Monica Blvd. and Hwy 101.

Mobley, Rabb

US City Directories, 1822-1995

1964 9641 Sunset Bl, Apt 15, Beverly Hills, CA

Rabb F Mobley

California, Death Index, 1940-1997

[https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=5180&h=5068260&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=NSs119&\\_phstart=successSource](https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=5180&h=5068260&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=NSs119&_phstart=successSource)

29 December 1968, Los Angeles, mother's maiden name Haws

Daughter (only known child) and descendants:

California Birth Index, 1905-1995

Barbara Helene Mobley

Born 27 May 1925, Los Angeles, CA

Mother's Maiden Name - Smith

1930 United States Census

Barbara Mobley (Barbara Molley)

Birth Year - about 1926 / 1925

1321 Beachwood Drive, Los Angeles, CA

Father's, Mother's Birthplaces - Texas, California

Household - R Forest Mobley 31, Irma Mobley 22, Barbara Mobley 4 11/12, Laura Mobley 66

1940 United States Census

Barbara H Mobley, birth 1925, age 15, living separately from Rabb and Irma

But on same street as Rabb per 1940 Census - 5449 Sierra Vista (see above)

AKA Barbara Oliver; perhaps adopted?

Living with William A Oliver, Margaret S Oliver (ages 64, 55)

916 Sierra Vista, Los Angeles, CA

1940 United States Census

Irma J Mobley (digitized as Irma J Mohler, but clearly Mobley on census page)

Birth about 1908, age 32

Divorced

283 Marathon St, Los Angeles, CA

US, Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007

Jun 1941 Barbara Helene Mobley

Jun 1944 Barbara Helene Wilson

(no date) Barbara Wilson

18 July 1997 Barbara H Wilson

Father, Mother - Rabb F Mobley, Irma J Smith

California, Death Index, 1940-1997

Barbara Helene Wilson / Barbara Helene Mobley

Birth 27 May 1925, Death 27 Jun 1997, Los Angeles, CA

Mother's Maiden Name - Smith

Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014

Barbara H. Wilson

Last residence: 90660 Pico Rivera, Los Angeles, California

Birth, death 27 May 1925, 27 Jun 1997

Ancestry.com - Wilson Family Tree

[https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/35522500/person/18819112418/facts?\\_phsrc=NSs264&\\_phstart=success](https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/35522500/person/18819112418/facts?_phsrc=NSs264&_phstart=success)  
[Source](#)

Barbara H. Mobley

Birth 27 May 1925, Hollywood, CA; death 27 Jun 1997, Los Angeles, CA

Spouse: Robert Dean Wilson, birth Sep 1925, Herington, KS; death 1991, Playa Del Rey, CA

Children:

Babette Dea Wilson, birth 19 Oct 1943, death 18 Sep 2004, Whittier, Los Angeles, Calif.

Spouse: Thomas Kendall, 1933-

Spouse: Andy Obico Arnuco

(3 other children of Barbara Mobley and Robert Wilson, 1 daughter, 2 sons - likely still living - private in ancestry.com)

All California Birth Index, 1905-1995 - grandchildren of Rabb Mobley

Mother maiden name Mobley

Babette Dea Wilson, 19 Oct 1943

Robert Dana Wilson, 13 May 1949, Los Angeles County

Donna Marie Wilson, 26 Sep 1950, Los Angeles

James Richard Wilson, 17 Dec 1951 Los Angeles

Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007

Babette Dea Wilson - Aug 1958

Babette Dea Kendall - 17 Jan 1980

Babette Kendall Arnuco - 01 May 1986

Babette K Arnuco - 6 Oct 2004

California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968

Los Angeles County 1958 Roll 133

Los Angeles Precinct 4189 Nov 4, 1958

Wilson, Mrs Babette, 7219 Alabama Ave, Republican

Connections between Robert Dean Wilson, Rabb Mobley's son-in-law, and Robert Dana Wilson, Rabb's grandson:

Simply Haiku / A Son's Tribute: Robert Dean Wilson (1925-1991), by Robert Wilson, April, 2004

[http://simplyhaiku.com/SHv2n2/features/RD\\_Wilson.html](http://simplyhaiku.com/SHv2n2/features/RD_Wilson.html)

Blogging Along Tobacco Road / Robert D. Wilson - Three Questions, October 24, 2010

<http://tobaccoroadpoet.blogspot.com/2010/10/robert-d-wilson-three-questions.html>

Other possible but much less likely candidates as author of this Diary,  
from the History of the 27th Engineers, U.S.A., 1917-1919:

Page 78

Supply Sergeant, Company E

Thomas, John L., 1300 Green St., Douglas, Ariz.

Unlikely - our author seems like an Engineering Private, not a supply sergeant

Page 79

Private, First Class, Company E

Branagh, James, 934 16th St., Douglas, Ariz.

Not Company B or C.

Page 85

Private, Company F

Cooper, William R., 307 Montana St, El Paso, Tex.

Not in Company C

1920 census, El Paso, East Montana St - born abt 1898, PA

Father Walter M. Cooper, born PA, age 42

Mother Carrie S. Cooper, born PA, age 40

Household member Kathleen V. Cooper, age 19

1920 city directory, El Paso, 802 Montana - student

1930 census, Douglas - engineer - born 1898, PA

Page 64

Private, Company A

Filligim, Kenneth M., 3918 Westminster St., El Paso, Tex.

Not in Company B or C.

Page 80

Private, First Class, Company E

Rheinheimer, Oscar C, 405 South Florence St., El Paso, Tex.

Not in Company B or C.

Page 72 - Only one of ten men listed as from Bisbee, Ariz. that was in Company C:  
\*Smith, Paul B. The \* indicates Smith was a casualty; if fatal, could not have added  
entries after 2018.