From a Box of Memories
to a Published Book
OLLI
September 30, 2015
The Box of Memories
First Steps from Opening the Box

• Motivated by Pete Selleck’s class on World War I to look at the contents of the box
• Decided to write a short summary of Dad’s experience
• Got some research help from Linda Fluharty, whose grandfather served in Dad’s 314th Field Artillery unit
• Wrote a 35 page summary, quoting a number of Dad’s letters
• Linda suggested that we put my summary on the Internet, so she did that!
• Two months later I was contacted by a man from Paris
First Summary of Dad’s story

James M. Miller -
A Forward Artillery Observer: Hazardous Duty
314th Field Artillery, 80th Division, First Army
American Expeditionary Force, World War I

by his son Myron M. Miller

The beginning of the Meuse River-Argonne Forest offensive -
greatest American battle of World War I
Where the 314th Field Artillery distinguished itself
Jacques de Trentinian
Member of the Society of the Cincinnati

Vice President – Europe: Sons of the American Revolution
Jean Yves de Trogoff
Member of the Society of the Cincinnati
Grandson of the family who owned his chateau in 1918
Had learned about the four officers of the 314th who had stayed there in 1918
The Beginning of the Collaboration:
Arrival of the U.S. 314th Field Artillery Regiment in Redon, Brittany June 13, 1918
My Dad
James Milo Miller
Born & raised in little (200 population) town of Hartstown, Pennsylvania
His father – postmaster; harness maker and tanner; barber, etc.
His home town about 1915
Dad’s home & his friends
Dad & roommate while at Carnegie Tech – 1914 photo; worked during the days

Big move from northwestern Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh
Attracted there because his uncle Milo H. Miller was superintendent in a school system
Dad on the right
Dad’s daytime job – until 1918
Auditor – J. M. Matthews & Co.
Rumblings from afar; 
U.S. entry into WWI
After procrastination, Dad is drafted; monthly pay $33, less $6.60 insurance; sent to 314th Field Artillery Regiment- Camp Lee, Va.

| Rank | Classification | Base Pay | Grade Rate | Total Pay | Class B | Class C | Class D | Class E | Class F | Class G | Class H | Class I | Class J | Class K | Class L | Class M | Class N | Class O | Class P | Class Q | Class R | Class S | Class T | Class U | Class V | Class W | Class X | Class Y | Class Z |
|------|----------------|----------|------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1    | Private        | 14.00    | 15.00      | 29.00     | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   | 24.75   |

This book will be carried by the soldier in his personal possession.
314th sent to Redon, France for training
Reason for training in France: the famous French 75
The tone of Dad’s letters to:
His parents, his brother and uncle, sister-in-law and lady cousin

• Letters to parents – everything is fine
• Letters to brother and uncle – the reality of his situation
• Letters to his sister-in-law and lady cousin – the beauty of the country and descriptions of flowers and gardens!
• What he left out in all the letters – letter from his cousin, also in combat in France, to Dad’s parents – Jim must be glad it’s over, since shrapnel took the sand off of Dad’s helmut
Letter from French general to mayor of Redon, alerting him to arrival of troops

Tenth Region
General Staff
Active Section

Rennes, October 25, 1917
General Amade
Commander, Tenth Region

To: Monsieur Mayor of Redon
Ille and Vilaine

Dear Sir;

I have the honor to inform you that it is possible for some troops to be brought back without delay to be stationed in your locality for a time of unknown duration.

The expectations for your commune would include:
  50 officers
  1000 troops
  1000 horses

But these estimates are only given by virtue of indication and can be increased or decreased according to the circumstances.

Accordingly, I ask your willingness to take all necessary dispositions for the occupation of the billets anticipated for these contingents.

Yours sincerely,

L. L. _______
Department Head
Letter from American official to mayor of Redon requesting housing for American soldiers

Headquarters Air Service Lines of Communication
American Expeditionary Forces

From: Wallace B. Phillips
To the Honorable Mayor of Redon
Subject: Locations

Paris, December 1, 1917

Dear Mayor:

We are looking for buildings all ready for occupancy to serve as barracks for some American soldiers, each capable of housing a minimum of 250 soldiers.

We would be very grateful if it would be possible to designate locations in your municipality: old schools, convents, hospital rooms, and so forth.

Thanking you in advance for your readiness to reply to us, we ask you to be assured, dear Mayor, of our sincere best wishes.

W. B. Phillips

Please address your reply to:
Mr. Phillips
American Aviation 457
45 Montaigne Avenue
Paris
The magic performed by the mayor of Redon!
Accommodations for......1,100 horses!!

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<th>Nature du local</th>
<th>Nombre</th>
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Redon, Brittany – Lovely city of 9,500
Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Sauver, built in the 9th Century
Bands entertain the citizens & troops every evening
Relationships developed between soldiers & citizen
Colonel of 314th selects Dad to be a forward artillery observer
Walking in my father’s footsteps in Redon; Carriage house behind Bel Air Chateau where Dad stayed
After two month of training, 314th left Redon, heading for Vannes, where they took train toward front: after 40 miles of hiking...Chateau de Lehelec
Welcome by proprietor of Lehelec:
Marc le Mintier de Lehelec, and Jacques de Trintinian
… kind words
Vannes, embarkation for the front in the East:
Views from Dad’s postcards in 1918 vs. 2012
Vannes: 2012 vs. 1918
Hotel de Ville
Toward the front with Captain Harry Truman, artillery training at Camp Coetquidan during summer of 1918
Massive movement of 600,000 men and material toward the front in the East
Dad’s observations of the opening of the Battle of Argonne Forest – September 26, 1918 (his only discussion with me on November 1952)

• “The ‘gates of hell’ had opened up;”
• “Greater sound and sight that one could ever imagine;”
• “25 miles of cannons all started firing at 5:30 a.m. and didn’t ease up until 9:30 a.m.”
• I later verified that 2,700 cannon went off simultaneously, so that could have been almost 25 miles.
• Captain Harry Truman’s four cannon battery fired for those four hours; cannons almost red hot
The joy of liberation

French peasants Expressing Their Joy at Liberation by the Americans,
November 6, 1918
After serving as forward artillery observer for four weeks, Dad injured, taken to Base Hospital No. 202 in Orleans, France
The “splint” to fix Dad’s arm, and Orleans in 1918
On Jan. 1, 1919, left France to complete recovery at General Hospital No. 9 in Lakewood, New Jersey
Back home to Hartstown & Pittsburgh 1919
Dad’s service following WWI
Speaker at Memorial Day service 1938
Family man
Our home in Pennsylvania, and Dad’s last job
Jean Yves de Trogoff invited me to join him in “Walking in My Father’s Footsteps”
This is where the four officers spent their weekends.
Views of La Giraudaye
Signatures of the officers of the 314th Field Artillery who spent their weekends at La Giraudaye
The museum at Saint Cyr/Coetquidan home to the French Artillery
The Archives in Redon: the treasure chest!!
Photos: Redon in 1918 when the 314th was there for training:
La Musee de las Batellerie de l’Ouest
Luncheon of the Society of the Cincinnati at the home of Jean Yves & Veronique de Trogoff
The Society of Cincinnati luncheon
City Hall, Redon
Location of Celebration of the 314th
The history of the 314th in Redon in 1918:
Jean Yves described Redon’s preparations for the Americans;
I read from Dad’s letters that praised the citizen of Redon
Presentation by Robert Tate, American Consul for Western France & the presentation team
Those who attended the celebration
After the trip to France in April 2012, a book?

• No plan to write a book, but then a spark to do it…
• OLLI Winter Quarter 2014 course by Margo Brewer – Genealogy IV
• Genealogy IV was a blending of genealogy and story telling
• Each of us were to select an ancestor and write a story
• With all the information I had, the choice was easy – focus on the story of my dad and his experience in World War I
• Every member of the class served as a critic as we proceeded with our writing
• With Margo’s leadership, she provided the technology to enabled us to read each other’s work, week by week
• My “critique team” made wonderful contributions
The challenge of getting it published

• Wanted to work with someone, not all online
• Publishers locally, or….
• Visited friend in Phoenix who teaches memoir writing
• Saw examples of the published memoirs…. Pleased
• Got an estimate of publishing 15 copies, soft cover
• Moore Graphics arranged copyright and Library of Congress
• I had to contract for the ISBN numbers
• Reviewed sample copy, then very pleased with the 15
Into the larger domain with Amazon

• “Create Space” is the publishing subsidiary for Amazon
• No cost to work with them
• Moore Graphics sent pdf to Create Space so the book could be published as an Amazon soft cover book and a Kindle version
• Create Space provided a checklist and guidelines to lead even the uninitiated to provide all the necessary info
• I had control of my pricing, and set pricing by global market
• Book is available in U.S., U.K., France, Germany, Italy & Spain
• Kindle available wherever there is an Amazon office
My message to my OLLI friends

• Assemble your “box of memories.” I have mine!
• Save your key “memory documents” in one place
• Take Margo’s course so you will have the needed discipline to write your story
• Our class now meets quarterly to talk about our stories, and our research
• Don’t need to publish your story, but it can open doors you might never imagine
• Everyone’s life and ancestry is interesting, capture it while you can as a gift to your descendants!
Next steps for my book???

• Pleased to have sales now, but time to market will be in 2017 and 2018 at 100th anniversary commemorations

• Preparing French translation; for now interest may be stronger in France

• Sent copies of my book to Jacque and Jean Yves

• With book in hand, Jean Yves has gotten leadership of Redon interested in having a 100 year commemoration of arrival of Americans in 2018

• The latest – Redon has started planning for a major commemoration in July 2018 – and Jean Yves has invited me back!

• This is my reward!!