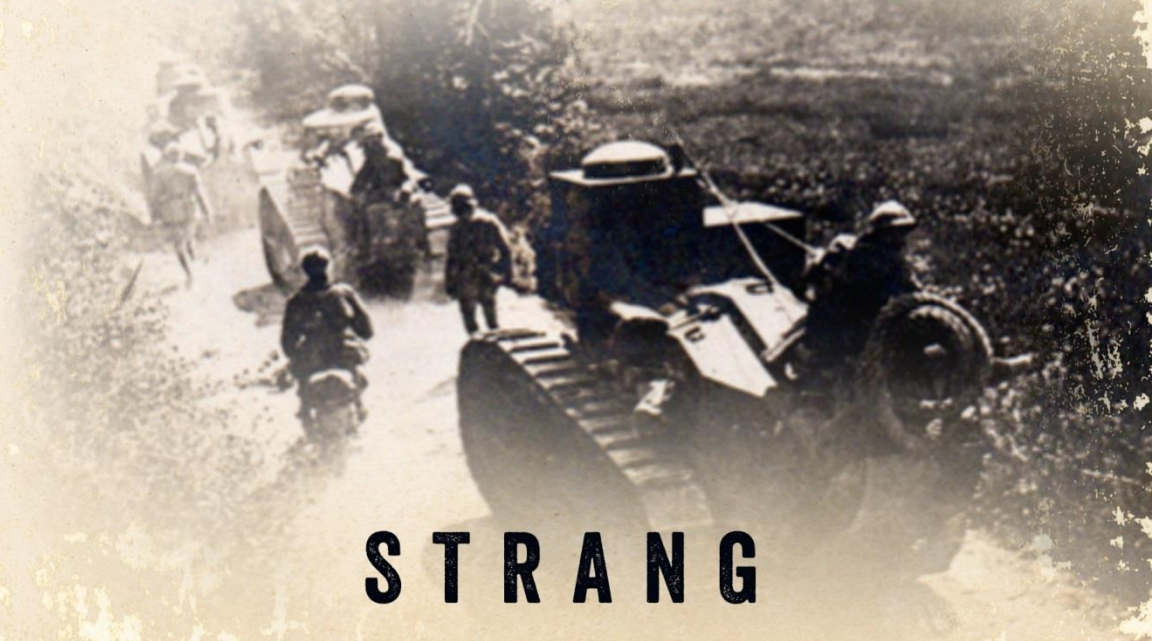




MEMOIRS OF C.B. STRANG

BLACKSMITH AND WWI VETERAN



STRANG

Memoirs of C.B. Strang
Blacksmith & WWI Veteran

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Pages of Importance.

✓ Introduction...	1
✓ Notes...	3
✓ Short Life Story...	5
✓ Memoirs of WWI...	29
✓ Documents...	77

Introduction.

In the 70s...

Ben used to relate some aspects of his life 'back in the day'. When I approached him, about writing his life story and putting his experiences down on paper, he had a big smile on his face, and said, "Ok, yea, sure you want to do that?"

He was a very quiet, humble man. He sat in his recliner looking out the window, thinking of yesteryear, as he talked about his family.

I also asked him about recording his history of being in WWI. This made him very excited. He enjoyed telling about his buddies, his expertise with a gun, and driving the big trucks. He was so proud to sign his name to the documents, even though his hands were very shaky. It was a wonderful time to sit and listen to his stories and glad to help him document this for his family in his memory.

Sincerely,
Marian Strang
daughter-in-law

Notes.

Original interview and typewriting:
Marian C. Strang, daughter in law,
married to C.P. Strang, C.B. Strang's
only son.

Compiled by: J.B. Strang, grandson, and
I.A. Strang, great-grandson, of
C.B. Strang, Jr. J.B. Strang has also
authored several other books.

Memoirs: Largely left in the original
recording, with minor editing, so to
try to capture what it was like to have
been sitting with C.B. Strang and
listening personally.

Comments: Comments and stories have
been inserted from the memory of C.P.
Strang.

Documents: Although there are many more
letters and documents, we included a
few of these at the end of this book.

More info: Please visit us at
www.WorldWarOneMemoirs.com.



Short Life Story.

This is a short story of the life of Charles Benton Strang, Jr. as written by him during his 81st year in January 1979. Originally transcribed by Marian C. Strang: March 6th, 1979.¹

¹ Marian C. Strang, wife to Charles Phillip Strang, son to C.B. Strang

Birth.

On January 16, 1898 the first son and third child was born to Charles B. and Beryl (Jones) Strang. I was born at home in Lindenwood, IL, and delivered by a midwife, Mrs. Albert Hackbert. The doctor who was called was Dr. Harry Davis, Sr. from Monroe Center, IL, who about 14 years later bought a 2-cylinder Reo automobile from my dad with the stipulation that I come to stay with him and drive for him.

I was named Charles Benton after my father. I had two sisters, Grace M. and Amy B. My other brothers and sisters that came along after were Merrill George, Clinton, Clifford, Donald (who died about age 1 yr.), Molly Carol, Eva, Lyle, and Joyce. We were all born right in Lindenwood.

My dad's father came from France. Our name originally was LaStrange but later the 'La' and 'e' were dropped. Dad's



Phil's Memory:

Uncle Clint had come home from his trap-line and he hung his pistol upon the hook in the kitchen. It was winter, so the cook stove was running. Grandpa, Charles B.Sr, was standing with his back to the stove with his hands behind his back, warming himself. I think Eve was a little girl at the time, grabbed Clint's pistol, pointed at random and then shot. Now, it was against grandpa's rules to have a loaded gun of any kind in the house. The bullet went between grandpa's legs and hit the cook stove!! We will just say Clint was in DEEP TROUBLE!

mother came from Alsace-Lorraine (the region between France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland—now French). My dad was born in Byron, IL, in 1864. My mother was born in Rochelle, IL, in 1875. My parents were married about 1894 in Lindenwood by a Justice-of-the-peace, Cassius Perry. (The day he was married Dad shod a carload of Western ponies for \$1 apiece and made \$20 which was great money for a

days' work in that time.)

I went to Lindenwood School from 1904 till 1912 thru the eighth grade. I was helping dad off and on in his blacksmith shop while I was also helping farmers thrash and put up hay.

I went to Rockford, IL to work at the Roseland Can Company at about age 15



for four to five months. I took a horse and buggy to Holcomb, IL, where I caught the C.B. & Q. railroad to Rockford. After this I went back to the blacksmith shop. Dad taught me the basics of blacksmithing, including horseshoeing and striking and learning the signals between himself and the striker. It was my favorite place to spend my summer vacations - with dad in the shop starting when I was about age 6. We made log chains and all kinds of ironwork. By now we were buying our horseshoes already made instead of making all of them, unless it was a special one that needed to be made. I worked with dad until April 1917 at which time I volunteered for military service. I won't go into this now as I have written my memories of World War I

in a separate book.² I was in the service until July 29, 1919.

After the Service.

Early next morning, after getting out of the service, I went to work with my dad. The two of us put on 12 sets of wagon tires(48 in all). Dad had them all fit and ready to go on but needed help to get them on.

I next went to Genoa, IL to work with Mr. Lindgren, the Ford dealer. At this time I met my future wife, Lucy I. Thatcher, from Lanark, Ill. I went with her while I was working at the Ford garage. About six months after I had met her, she decided to go to Dixon, IL to Coppins College to take up printing. She paid her way by working part-time for the Rogers Printing Co. of Dixon and waiting on tables at Breeds Restaurant.

At this time I then went to Dixon myself and got a job hauling gravel on the roads until we quit in the fall for winter. I then took any job I could get, including unloading coal at the Raymond Coal Yards, which I might add was all done by hand. I applied at several different places for a job and finally was called to the Dixon fruit

² Part two of this book.

company by Frank Suiter.

On arriving the first day the boss made the job sound very easy. He called me and said come in at six the next morning. All I had to do was take a small load of fruit and vegetables to Mt. Morris, IL from Dixon. We ran into a snow storm that was so bad it stopped all traffic. We got into a farmer's yard where a busload of people and others were stranded. I had to hire the farmer to put the fruit in his bobsled and take me and the fruit to Mt. Morris, about 3 or 4 miles away. That originally short first day, took two good long days. I worked here almost a year.

First Marriage.

Lucy and I decided to get married, so we took a week off and were married September 24, 1924 by her old minister at Milledgeville, IL. We went to St. Louis, Mo in a 1921 Model T Ford Coupe for our honeymoon.

When we got back, I got a terrific surprise. My hard-boiled boss, Suiter, paid me with a check for that week I was gone which I hadn't expected. I worked here a couple of months and then left.

My next job was at American Body and Cab Co. When I had gone in to apply, there was also a man ahead of me looking for a job. The boss asked him if he ever made any mistakes. He said he didn't, then the boss told him, "Get the hell out of here." He then asked me



what I wanted. I told him I wanted a job and told him I was a blacksmith, but he didn't believe me and said I had to prove it. Well, I did prove it and got the job by showing him I could drill something without breaking the drill bit, as he had had trouble with others doing. I worked here a short time. Since the pay wasn't much, I decided to look for a better job. I took a train to Detroit, MI looking for work, but didn't find anything suitable. Several of the boys from my army company lived in Detroit so I

looked up a few of them. When I got to Carl Carns, he insisted on taking me to a baseball game that afternoon. The Detroit Lions were playing the Washington Senators. There was a

Phil's Memory:

“At a point while living in Rockford, Dad worked driving a doctor's car.

One day another car ran into them. The car that hit them lost a wheel.

Some passer-byers helped the driver to upright his car and he drove away on three wheels. He was not found afterwards.”

special man playing with the Senators that I would like to mention, Pepper Martin.

I worked in Detroit pumping gas for two or three weeks. While I was there, I did spend a night at Roma Park and at Granda Park, amusement parks.

I then took a train for Dixon. This was in 1925. When I got there, I decided to go to Rockford to look for a job. I found a job with the George D. Roper Corporation doing blacksmith work. Hallet Thomas hired me, who was the boss millwright. He told me he had a job he wanted me to try in a certain specified time. The timekeepers had allowed Six hours to do this certain job to make gear guards. If I didn't have one done by that night, he couldn't use me. I told him I could have made all twelve by night. I made

one and took it in to him. He said it fit better than anybody had ever made it for him before. I got so I could make one in about 15 minutes. Needless to say, I got the job. I got .50 cents an hour. I worked here about eleven years.

Who Should I Meet?

Lucy and I moved to Rockford and rented a room. We didn't like it so Lucy went out to look for another place. We moved to 716 North Church Street. It turned out this place belonged to Bill and Lou Long which I had previously delivered fruit and vegetables to when they lived in Sublette, IL.

Lou invited us to dinner one day and wanted us to meet her parents. When they called us down, who should I meet but Ezra Hale who happens to be the father of the movie star, Barbara Hale.

Lucy's Death.

One morning in 1929 we'd gone to church with some friends from the downstairs apartment. When we were getting out of the car, Lucy bumped her head on the doorjamb. She had had a terrible headache all morning. We called Dr. Julia Kruger, a chiropractor, and she gave her a treatment but told us she

couldn't do her any good.

Lucy had gone to the hospital and had had various tests and brain specialists but no one could tell her anything. Julia suggested that we take her to Niles, MI to see Dr. Bonine. So we went off to Michigan.

It took Dr. Bonine about one minute to tell us that she probably had a brain tumor shown by the pressure on her optic nerve. We went here every four weeks for a couple of years while giving her medication. She lived about 8 years gradually losing her eyesight. She then lived another 3 years totally blind and mostly bed ridden. Her sister came to help with her. She passed away on Mother's Day in 1940.

New Inventions.

In 1936 I quit Roper Corp. and went back to C.B. Strang & Sons blacksmith shop in Lindenwood. We tore down the old shop in 1937 to '38 and built a new one. We mostly repaired farmers equipment, working at least ten hours a day. I had built a new water pump working head. I made a few of these but couldn't compete with the other factory competition in price.



Deep well
pump built by
C.B. Strang
and sons,
Blacksmiths,
Lindenwood,
IL. 1936

One day we had a visitor, E.W. Swenson (Eck), come in who had known dad and Clint (my brother) but did not know me. He had bought one of my pumps and liked it real well. He himself was an inventor and became very interested in our place and frequently stopped in. He was building rock pulverizers (hammer mills). This was about the time we were trying to get over the Depression. The government was starting to help the farmers buy lime to spread on their land.

Eck came up with an idea one day to make a crusher to put on the back of trucks to crush cinders and spread on icy highways. He wanted us to look it over and if we thought the idea was worthwhile, he wanted us to quote him a price on building it commercially in



our shop.
We built
one or two
right away,
and he took
them out
and sold
them. From
then on we
built them
as fast as

Deep well pump
in front of C.B.
Strang and Sons
Blacksmith
Shop.
Lindenwood, IL.
1936

we could (about one
every 3 days), and he would have them
sold. I would sometimes go with him and
install it.

The situation
came that we
had to make
arrangements
to go to
another
building or
quit making
them.



Deep well pump built by Ben Strang. Dick Joslyn's
barn in background. Lindenwood, IL. 1936

Next to our place was an empty cement block building that was built in 1911 as a garage for my dad by Frank Bailey. I told Mr. Swenson that if he would buy the building, I would quit the blacksmith shop and be his superintendent. He told me I had myself a job.

On New Years, in 1947, we took possession of the building. We moved in right away and started building the spreaders. This turned out to take several large buildings to house the business, Swenson Spreader.

1942.

Back to 1942. I joined the Civil Air Patrol at the start of World War II. I worked here mostly Saturday and Sundays on a volunteer basis. Before long, I joined and I was made a second lieutenant in charge of the mechanical condition of the airplanes and security whereby I appointed the guards.

On Saturday nights we changed into our good uniforms and went to Beloit, WI to the Waverly Beach Dance Hall. There I met my present wife, Dorothy L. Doubleday. Dorothy had two daughters, Wilma and Barbara, by her first marriage. I hadn't had any children. Dorothy's first husband had died.

Married Dorothy.



I dated her a few times, and we decided to get married. We were married on February 14, 1943 at Emerald Grove, Wisconsin. We stayed at the Nelson Hotel the first night. The next day we took an

Illinois Central railroad train to Chicago where we stayed at the Hotel Sherman a few days. It was so cold (about 20 below) that it was no pleasure to go out.

The last day we were in Chicago we had gone out sightseeing when someone yelled and asked us where we were going. That someone turned out to be Mr. E.W. Swenson who asked us when we were going to leave. When we told him, he said we could go with him. He took us to his home in Cherry Valley, IL and kept us for dinner that night. After dinner he took us into Rockford to the

Faust Hotel where we stayed overnight.

The next day I went to Lindenwood and rented rooms at the Eaton House and got set to move in. I then went back to Avalon, WI. to get Dorothy's things and rented a truck to move them to Lindenwood. I went back to work with my father in the blacksmith shop until we could get started in our new factory.

Early next summer we bought a house in Lindenwood. I then took over as superintendent at the factory. I kept working here while the factory grew. I worked here until the factory was sold in 1974 at which time I was the purchasing agent and retired at the age of 76 in Oct. 1974.

Expanding Family.



On May 15, 1945 we had our first son, Charles Phillip, born in St. Anthony Hospital in Rockford by Dr. R.E. Tenney. Then March 21, 1950 we had a daughter, Marilyn Rae, born in Rochelle Hospital by Dr. Schaller.



Wilma and Barb holding Charles.

Vacation.

In 1957 we flew from Rockford airport into Midway Airport, Chicago, and flew with Barbara, who was an airline stewardess for American Airlines, to Mexico City and Acapulco and back to Mexico City, where we hired a guide who took us around the city for three days. Then we flew from Mexico City to San Diego, California, and from there to Los Angeles. We visited my brother, Merrill, and went to Disneyland. I also went to visit an old friend, Mrs. Buella Ruckman, who was from Lindenwood and now lived in Los Angeles. We flew

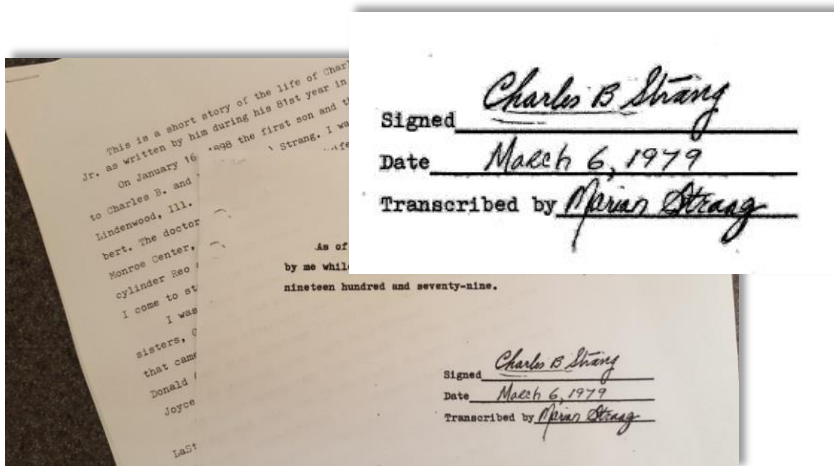
nonstop from Los Angeles to Chicago. We were gone a couple of weeks.

We had other nice trips as the years went by several being to Ohio where Wilma and family live and others to Florida, Virginia, and Wisconsin. On the Virginia trip alone we visited 13 different states.

Health Decline.

Starting about 1973 I've had my ups and downs health wise. I have had two broken hips, a cataract removal, glaucoma, a medication allergy, and seem to have Parkinson's Disease.

As of this time, that is my life story as recollected by me while residing in Rochelle, IL, in the year nineteen hundred, and seventy-nine.



Phil's Memory:

“Charles B. Strang Jr. was my father. The stories about him were told to me by his brothers and his sister Joyce. Dad never talked about himself much. This first story was told to me by my father and later clarified by his sister Joyce. I call this one the Bull.

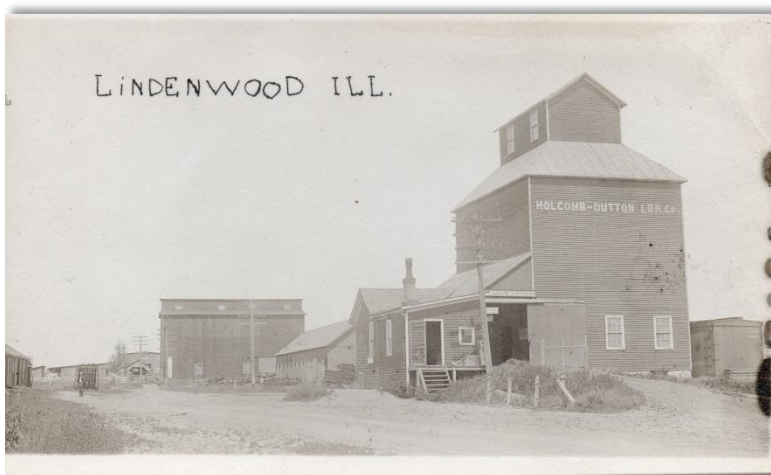
“A relative had a bull in a pen in the Lindenwood area – I don’t know the exact location or the size of the pen. It was large enough that to walk around it took some extra time. Jake the owner of the bull had told everyone not to go through the pen. For whatever reason one day my father cut through the pen. The bull started to chase him. Back in those days my father carried a pistol with him most of the time. According to my father when the bull got close to him, my father pulled his pistol and shot in the ground under the bull’s nose. He said the bull was scared away. End of story.

“Not until years later, when I asked Joyce his sister about the story, there was a much different ending to this story.

“When I told Joyce what I knew, she laughed. Joyce said that my father scared the bull alright – my father shot the bull and killed him. Jake, the bull’s owner, was less than happy. I never was told what sort of punishment my father received.”

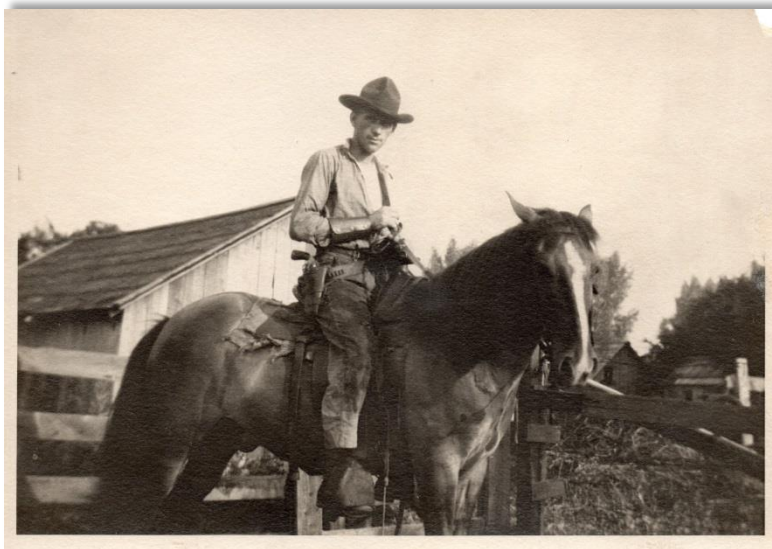
Phil's Memory:

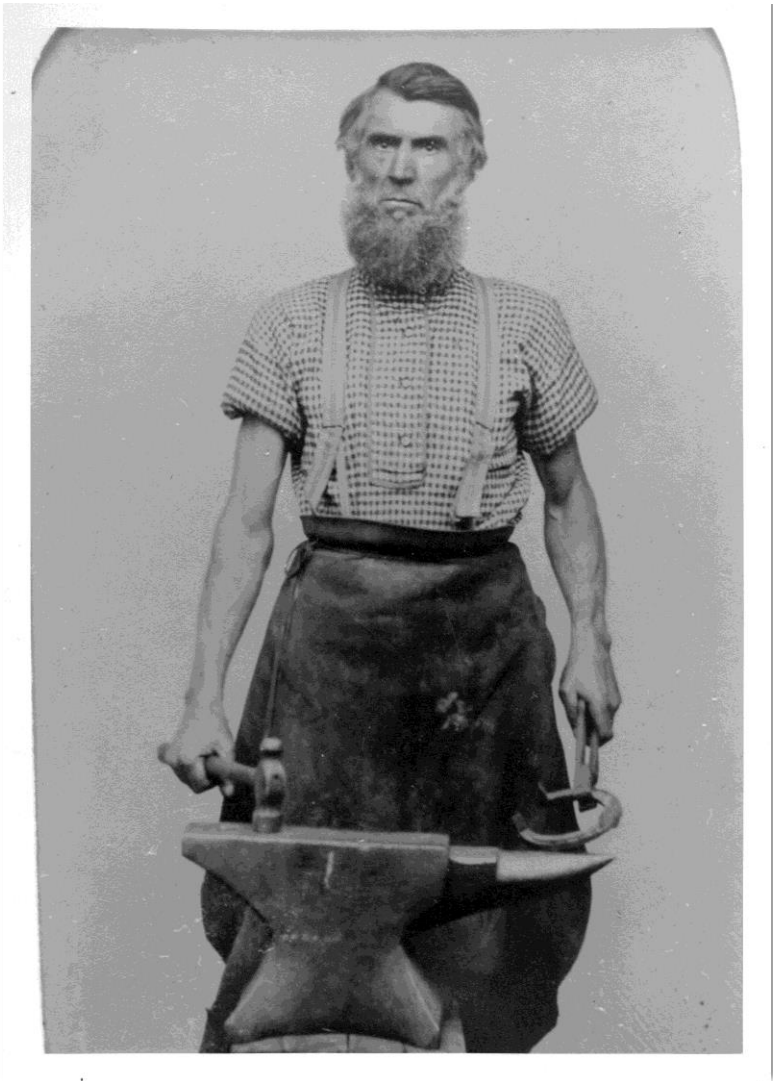
When I was 10-12 years old my uncle Merrill, my dad's brother, came to Lindenwood for a visit. Merrill was a train engineer in California. I had been sent to bed so my father and his brother could share stories of growing up in Lindenwood. I decided to sneak part way down the stairs to listen. One of the stories that came up was on a Halloween night in down town Lindenwood. My father, Merrill and some other boys decided to dismantle the doctor's buggy and reassemble it on top of the store. There were two stores, and I am not sure which one it was, anyway they finished their grand plan. As I sat on the steps and listened I was found out and sent back to bed. The next day when I questioned my father he denied having a part in the deed. I then told him I had heard him and my uncle talking about the buggy. After a while, he claimed he knew about it; finally he admitted to being the lookout for the group. This was the only time I ever saw my uncle Merrill, I was never told about any punishment they may have received.





Above: C.B. in the Blacksmith shop. Lindenwood, IL





“Grandpa Cook” John Cook, believed to be Ben’s mother’s (Beryl’s) grandfather.



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
MY MEMOIRS OF WORLD WAR ONE

APRIL 1917 to JULY 1919
By Charles B. Strang - 1854791
Partially copied and transcribed by Marian C.
Strang: September 1st, 1977

To Go or Not To Go.

On Sunday, April 28, 1917, a number of young men living around Lvnnville Township, Ogle County, Illinois, met at the 100F hall in Lindenwood, IL, to discuss the recently declared war on

Phil's Memory:

"100F hall – This was the International Order of Odd Fellows. Their hall was on the second floor of the O.D. Talbot store in downtown Lindenwood."

Germany. They were to decide if they were going to enlist in the Army or wait for the Draft. Most of them indicated they wanted to go, so they were going the next day to Rockford, IL, to enlist.

When time came to leave, there were four of us going – Willard Bailey, Joe

Wright, Ernest Wright, and, myself. My father, C.B. Strang, and Sam Wright went with us. We arrived at the South Main Street Army recruiting office and took the examination with only three of us passing. When we were thru, the officer told us to go home and be back the next day prepared to go to Chicago for more tests. We went home.

The next day the three of us, and my father, went back to Rockford to board an Illinois Central Train to Chicago.

On arriving, we were given a thorough Army medical examination. We passed o.k.

Meantime, my brother, Merrill, and my sister, Amy, who were living in Chicago, came to the Induction Center to see me off and to take my father home with them. A sergeant rounded up a bunch of us and loaded us on a troop train bound for Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

Off to J.B.

We arrived at Jefferson Barracks (J.B.) early on the morning of May 2, 1917. We were served breakfast, assigned a bunk, and got an Army haircut, but didn't get much more done that day.

The next day, May 3, we went to a big building where we were first stripped and then went to a doctor, the first of about twenty doctors would see. They were posted about ten feet apart around the outside wall. Each doctor wrote his report on our service record. When we were thru with the last doctor, we came to a door which we passed thru. When there were 10 or 12 men in there, we were given the oath and so-called sworn in - May 3, 1917.

After being sworn in, we went into another large room where there were

women secretaries. We had to go to each girl and hand her our papers and wait until she filled in the blanks. This took about half an hour, and don't forget, we were still bare-naked!



We were directed to a door out into a hall in which we had come in before. Just out of the door were two medics which stood on either side of us. They grabbed each arm. The one on our right gave us a shot while the other gave us a vaccination.

We then found our own clothes and got dressed. We were then marched in formation to the Quarter Master Depot.

In all the confusion, my friends and I had gotten separated. I heard Ernest Wright was sent to France, where he was with the Field Artillery. I never knew where, but he told me afterward that he

was on a truck headed for the American docks to a ship home when he saw me in a crowd of soldiers and tried to get me to look, but there was too much cheering and noise so I missed him. I have seen him twice since. To the best of my knowledge, he is living in Oregon state.

Phil's Memory:

"My father took his pillow with him when he went into the Army."

His brother, Joe Wright, was separated from him also, being held in J.B. as a witness to a trial in which his buddy had

committed suicide the second night we were at J.B. Joe was held there until that case was settled. He then shipped out to Panama for the duration of the war. I saw him twice after he was discharged. He has long since passed away.

Now back to the Q.M. Depot. We were issued two complete khaki uniforms, socks, shoes, and campaign hat, which we took to our bunk. We got dressed in uniform, after going back and forth to change sizes. Finally we were fit with uniforms, looking kind-of-like a soldier.

Our Army life had started on this 3rd day of May, 1917. Having lost my two buddies, I had to get acquainted with other guys which I did, but that was 60

years ago. I don't remember the first buddies, because as my story goes on, you will note that I did not stay with them very long.

You couldn't tell much about anything. Jefferson Barracks was a very busy induction center with 1000 to 1500 men coming in, and different to equal amounts leaving every day. Anyway, imagine what the mess hall was like with hundreds of men to feed three times a day. Pause a minute and think. You will begin to realize the enormity of it all.

4 May 1917.

Starting back on May 4, 1917, I found myself up at five A.M. for breakfast and then out to the drill field for some close order drill, we called it - squad right and squad left and etc. Anyway, we spent the next several days eating, drilling, and listening for your name to be called for shipment to wherever they wanted to put you.

At last I happened to be close enough to the man with the megaphone to hear my name, so I reported to him at once. He said, "Where in hell have you been? I've been calling you for days?", and then he proceeded to raise hell. He called me several ungentlemanly names. I had no choice but to take it. When he

was finished, I said, "Just go out there with 10,000 men talking and laughing and try to hear somebody with a small megaphone." He finally gave me my instructions.

We boarded a sixteen passenger car troop train headed for Nogales, Arizona. We were three or four days getting there. We left the train in the hottest weather I've ever seen, a few miles from our home camp to be. When we got off the train, they had tables set up piled high with army blankets. We thought they were nuts, but by the time that night was over, we were sorry we couldn't have had two or three more blankets. Now I'm getting ahead of my story.

Off the Train.

If you remember, we stopped a few miles from what was to be our home camp. The reason for this was that whenever they move a large number of men in with another company or regiment, the newcomers have to spend two weeks in quarantine before they can be put together. If no disease occurs, all is well. Then if disease does occur, fewer men are exposed.

On our arrival at our first destination, we set up squad tents, filled our mattresses with straw, and got our mess hall and head quarter

tents up as soon as possible. For the next two weeks we drilled, hiked, and did K.P. and guard duty all in a military manner for real. We learned from the Latrine Gazette the reason we were here was to join the 35th U.S. Infantry in order to bring each company up to 250 men each (war strength) instead of 150.

Our two weeks soon passed and we moved into the regular 35th Infantry tent camp at Nogales, Arizona. Actually the camp was four miles north of town. I was assigned to Company A 2nd Squad. Moving in with the rest didn't change anything. Regular army life went on the same - rise at 5:00 A.M., make your bed, reveille, roll call, raise the flag, drill for eight hours, or K.P. or guard duty twenty-four hours a day.

Rifle Range.

Then came ten days on the rifle range located about five miles north of our camp. We marched each way every day. Our schedule was firing our 3006 Springfield rifle 300 times a day at different styles of targets at different distances. Our dinner was served from a chuck wagon at noon, had our breakfast at 5:00 A.M., and had supper after our march home from the range. I might say right here, all of our calls were all by bugle, and they

didn't mean maybe!

On thinking back on my story, I find I have skipped an incident well worth putting you all back on the troop train for a while. The train had stopped at Texarkana, Texas, where we all got off for shots in the arm. Then we marched in formation up around the square. There was a large crowd in town and flags everywhere. Word of our coming must have preceded us. Needless to say, we were proud of our uniforms. It was our first public appearance. Wherever we went, we were about the first soldiers around. The train was crowded with girls at the windows, kissing the boys and wishing them good luck. The train then started back on its way. We can leave this and jump back to the infantry.

I will say, they told us we were the best bunch of shooters they ever had go over the range, but it did no good. For nine days we all made good scores. On the tenth day, which is Record Day, we had a very bad Arizona sand storm and everyone lost their previous records. Everyone was upset because Colonel Fryer would not change the date to another day. There was extra pay for expert rifleman, sharp shooter, and marksman, which couldn't be given.

To the 51st Truck Co.



We were back at camp finished with the rifle range when a call came from the 51st Truck Co. quarter master corps. wanting truck drivers. They were stationed a couple of miles north of our camp. They had orders to get enough drivers to bring the Co. up to war strength. I do not remember how many, but not as many as the Infantry, which was 250. Be that as it may, real truck drivers were scarce. It so happened I had learned truck driving from the boss of the Chicago and Oak Park Supply Co. They were putting a new stone road south of Lindenwood, Illinois in 1916. They were forced to hire local drivers because the boys from Chicago refused to live out in the country. This is all beside the point. The fact is that knowing how to drive got me transferred

from the 35th Infantry to the 51st
Truck Co.

Phil's Memory:

"The only war story I can remember that my father told me was about the engineers. They would be sent out to work on a job, they were unarmed. The German soldiers would sneak up on them and shoot the engineers. This happened several times. The Germans became so brazen that they would walk right up to the engineers and kill them. Winchester Arms developed a shotgun for the engineers to use while they were working. I think it was shorter version of the 1897 pump shotgun and it had a sling. The engineers would carry it under their coats. My father said the first time they were working and the Germans came, the engineers let the Germans get close, then the engineers pulled out their shotguns and killed the Germans. We had a lot less Engineers killed after that incident."

A truck came to get my equipment and me. This had to be late in June 1917. On arrival at their camp, the top Sergeant Elliott met us and said, "So you think you can drive a truck?" I told him, "No, I don't think anything about it. I know I can." He told me to go across the street and start #5106 and give him a ride, which I promptly did. He was pleased with my driving and

gave me a pass to town. He said to just be back by 5:00 A.M.



We were ready to leave on a drive to Fort Huachuca, Arizona with the 10th Cavalry (colored). We had 30-1 1/2 ton Kelly-Springfield trucks, two motorcycles, and one 1917 Dodge roadster. The trip took us over some real rough mountain roads with many miles of driving on a ledge only wide enough for one vehicle, no passing of course. In a military convoy you watch the truck behind you. When he stops, you stop. This keeps the train together.

We had to ford one small stream. The trip took from 5:00 A.M. at Nogales until after dark somewhere around 7:00 P.M. Our Captain ordered us to enter the fort in a military manner - three foot intervals between bumpers. This

was the first time we ever really worked together; besides, some of those new men should have been pushing wheelbarrows instead of trucks. Anyway, we made the trip without any mishap.

We were assigned a brick building to live in while we were there. Our Co. consisted of one captain, one first sergeant, one sergeant mechanic, and three sergeant truck masters with three sections - 31 corporal drivers; eight or ten buck privates called Day Gang who cleaned up, did K.P. and guard duty; one cook; and one mess and property sergeant.

We were "dog tired" and so we got our bunks made up and rolled in as soon as possible. Before I got to sleep, I was told my truck needed some repairs on the brakes so I was chosen to do K.P. That means a long day in the kitchen cleaning, waiting on tables, washing pots and pans, peeling 'spuds' and, well, everything that has to be done in the kitchen.

A Change for the Better.

At about 10:00 A.M. in comes First Sergeant Elliott with one of the new men. The sergeant asked me if I could drive a truck to Garden Canyon and back without burning up the motor. I said "If it can be done, I can do it." "O.K.

your truck is ready so you start driving. The 'dumb so and so' will take your place in the kitchen." At that moment my Army life changed for the better, for I never was on K.P. again, and it kept on, if anything, always improving.

We were hauling cord wood from Garden Canyon which is a Federal Forest Preserve about fifteen miles out of the fort. Trees were being trimmed by laborers from the 10th U.S. Colored Cavalry. The wood was loaded on flat cars and shipped all over the U.S.A. to field kitchens in training camps. This was to be our job for a few weeks. During that time not too much happened.

On Sundays we were assigned two trucks to take anyone who wanted to go over to Box Canyon to dance with the cowgirls. The first truck took the dancers. The second truck was for all the guys who preferred to shoot instead of dance. We had all the guns and ammunition we wanted. It was fun. There were eight or ten cowboys from the 80 Ranch, who always rode their horses along beside our trucks the entire 40 miles. They always beat us there. When we would have about a mile to go, somebody would yell, "Yippee," and hit the horses with their hats. The horses would run away from the trucks. Anyone who doesn't like shooting won't understand why we had the truck for shooters. When in

Arizona away from the city, you can shoot anywhere you want and do no damage because nobody is around. We used owls, buzzards, prairie dogs, and rattlers for targets. After the dance was over, we all got loaded and sailed for the fort.

The Trucks.

I'd like to tell you something about the trucks. They were Kelly Springfield 1 1/2ton. The hood was slanted down like a Mack truck, and the radiator was behind the motor. They were chain driven with solid rubber tires and would only go about 15 M.P.H.

I don't remember the date, but one morning I was waiting for a load and was told I'd have to wait a little while. Since we had to have our trucks greased and ready for morning, I got the bright idea to use up the time I had and get out the old grease can and start filling the grease cups under the truck. For you younger readers, I'll tell you what a grease cup looked like. It was made in two parts - an umbrella shaped bottom with an 1/8" or 1/4" pipe thread, spread out to whatever size needed. It had a male thread for the cup to screw onto. You would fill the cup which forced the grease into the bearing by being screwed down; we had no grease guns or Zerk fittings at this

time. Our method was o.k. except once in a while you lost a cup on the road, but usually not for long since we had to go over our trucks quite often.

Each driver was held responsible for his own truck. This particular morning I was under my truck, when two men walked up. I couldn't see who they were. They could not see me, so one of them 'bellered' out, "Where is the driver to 5106?" "Right here, sir," I hollered back as I was scrambling out from under. Next he asked "What in the hell were you doing under that truck?" Coming to attention and saluting him, I told him what was up (while being scared stiff and trembling like a leaf). He asked me if I was scared of him, and I said "No, sir." He then asked if I would like to go to American Lake, Washington with him. My answer was "Yes sir. I'd go to the end of the earth with you if you wanted me to." He turned to the other man and said "Put that man's name on that list." That captain was our new commanding officer from the cavalry, which is why he talked so loud. His name was Capt. Bailey, about 6'4" and about 300 pounds. The other man was our First Sergeant Elliott.

A few days after this little episode, we were to load all of our trucks, cars, motorcycles, and all other equipment on railroad flat cars ready

to leave Fort Huachuca for American Lake, Washington, at least we thought. We didn't. When we were ready to go the railroad brought in a Pullman car, two express cars, and a good old steam locomotive.

Here, at this stage of the game, is another highlight worth describing, to me anyway. A while back I mentioned the 80 Ranch. Well, when we were about ready to pull out, three horseback riders came up to see us off on our trip. It was the owner of the 80 Ranch and his two daughters. I never did know their names. What pleased me so much was their formation and dress. As they rode up, the father was in between the girls on a big black stallion. He was dressed in black pants, nice figured shirt, new chaps, and on each side he had a big pearl handled 45 Colt which hung on a leather cartridge belt. The girls each rode a Pinto pony, dressed in very nice clothes. They each had two pearl handled Colts which looked like 38 cal. and all wore ten gallon Stetson hats. We had no cameras, but I will never forget that picture. They sat

there like that until our train started to move, then they turned and waved and galloped away toward home.

Train to Ohio.

Our train is made up of one Pullman sleeper; two express cars -one for our mess hall and the other for our packs, barrack bags, rifles and etc.; and about eighteen flat cars for the trucks, car, and etc. There were 17 of us picked to go on this trip. I never knew what happened to the men left behind. I assume they were split up and sent to other camps to form other truck companies, so we will forget them and go along with our trip since we have a long travel ahead.

We heard all sorts of rumors as to where we were headed. Well, it so happened we were ordered to Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio. Now let's see what kind of trip it was.

As I remember, it took us six or seven days. The train did not travel very fast - about 35 m.p.h. and sometimes we were put on the siding to wait for more important trains. At any town of any size we always stopped. I, for one, had a ball. I always did my own shift of guard duty plus anyone else's who would let me have it, because the guards were

armed with Colt 45 and Smith & Wesson 38 specials or 45 cal. When and wherever we stopped, the guard got off and watched to see that no one else got off or on. Then while moving we walked the whole length of the train watching for hobos or any other non-authorized people, whom they told us to shoot first and talk to later. We also were to watch for loose or broken hold-down chairs. We could then get up in the truck seats to ride. Between the tours of duty out in the country, we could shoot at posts and signs and etc.

I do not know what railroad we were on so I'm not sure of our location or which states we crossed. I do know it was somewhat south of here going in a northeastern direction. Late on after noon we pulled in to a small town in Indiana traveling very slow since we were going to stop. The tracks ran close to some factories. One was a button manufacturing company. They must have had lots of female employees. I don't know if anyone who reads this would know how they make pearl buttons. Well, they stamp or cut them out of clam shells and then throw the shells in big piles to be disposed of. I never learned how, but I do know that the girls got busy writing their names, addresses and phone numbers on slips of paper which they rolled up and stuffed in the holes of the shells and threw them on the train. I don't know if

anything came of it. I never got any of them.

We got out of there and rolled on to our destination which was Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio. Here we unloaded our trucks and equipment. We were there just three days, when orders came to load everything back on the same train and proceed to Camp Custer, Battle Creek, Michigan. This was a short trip so we were soon there and set up for business. We were to do all the hauling for both the army needs and the contractors who were building the camp. This took in everything. This was late in July or early in August 1917. I've lost all track of time.

Arrived at Custer.

Anyway, when we arrived at Custer, there were three wooden buildings up. When we left in January 1918, they had built 1600 buildings. We lived in a tent camp several weeks until our barracks and garage were finished. We were very busy the next few months.

Shortly after we were at Custer, our Co. number was changed to 344 Motor Transport and Co. Our old bunch from Arizona were all promoted to first sergeants and plain sergeants. I was made mess and property sergeant of the group I was to stay with. The others

went on to form more motor trains. We all got our extra men from the Depot Brigade. I do not know where they all went, but I was assigned to the old mess and property sergeant, Sergeant Williamson, who was with the old 51st truck co. With two jobs to do, I was his driver and was instructed to keep him out of the speak-easies and away from bootleggers, which was next to impossible. Somehow I managed okay and was pronounced a full-fledged mess and property sergeant and put back to driving until got ready to send out more companies.

My father, Charles B. Strang, and my sister, Amy, came to Camp Custer to visit me for a couple days. We had a real fine time. My old friend, Captain Bailey, let my father ride with me while he was there. After he left, everything went on as usual.

"Shoot first and ask what they want afterward."

There was no special excitement until one day I just felt like taking the day off. I knew I had a small leak in the radiator and pulled in early. Just as I got in front of Capt. Bailey's office, he came running out and hollered "Stop. Why in the hell are you pulling in so early?" I said "There is a leak in the radiator." He asked to see it which he

did and said that it wasn't enough of a leak to stop driving. I told him that I was afraid it would soon get worse. Well, he replied "I've been looking for you anyway. Just leave the truck right here. You go over to your tent and wash, shave, and put on your dress uniform and come back to the office and report to me.", which I did promptly.



After reporting, He looked me over and said "You are okay. Now get that truck rolling to the Michigan Central R.R. depot and find Brigadier General Penn and report for duty. You will know the old goat because he has a goatee." I

soon spotted him and reported for duty. He looked me over and approved, except he wanted to know "Where are your side arms?" I told him it was at camp in my foot locker and that I was not instructed to wear one. He said "Get back to camp, get your sidearm on, and return to me as soon as you can.", which I did.

When I got back I reported to General Penn again. He said "That is better. Is it loaded?" I said "Yes sir. It would do me very little good if I wasn't. I could not throw it far." He asked if I could hit anything and without thinking I said "*Throw up your hat.*" He laughed and said "*By God, I believe you would!*" He then said "*Never let me see you without it on. Your job is hauling the mail. I will give you your schedule and all your orders. You are responsible to no one but me. Never let anyone on the truck. Shoot first and ask what they want afterward. You will sometimes have huge sums of money. You will never know when, so you act like it is with every trip.*"

All went well. I had no trouble except the job got so big I couldn't handle it alone and was told to pick out one of my best buddies to handle the surplus, which I did. I chose Corporal Roy Weston. He was on the job when I volunteered for overseas duty.

Before going into that, I want to say that the people who lived on our route got so friendly that they would give Roy and me invitations to chicken dinners on Sundays. We had many good old country chicken dinners while I was still on the job.

December 1917.

It is now starting into December 1917. The weather was getting bad. There was an opening show at the Liberty Theater one night when it started to snow quite heavily. It stopped all traffic - the railroad, street cars, inter-urbans, and well, everything.

When we got up in the morning, we found several families in our day room. We had no snow plows and neither did the highway department. There were people from Battle Creek, MI, about four miles away, who had no choice but to stay with us until the roads were shoveled out. That was just what happened. Every available man was out shoveling. There were several hundred at a time being released every few minutes, because a person could not stand the cold very long at a time. It was about three days before the first truck got into town.

In the meantime, several of us 'old timers' volunteered for what was to be the light duty transportation train for immediate overseas duty with General Pershing. There were not enough volunteers, so they took enough men from the 344, 27 men, and 25 men from the Depot Brigade to make the company we needed.

20th Birthday.

On January 16, 1918, my 20th birthday we left Camp Custer bound for Fort Myers, Virginia. After forming Engineers Motor Transport service 457 with First Lieut. Frank G. Mallett in command, we left for Camp Lee, Virginia where we had to get 60 days of infantry drill. It was here, the C.O. found in my service record that I had completed all required training, so I took over mess and property sergeant duty. There was a 2nd Lieut. who also had all his training - Lieut. Green. So we worked together feeding approximately 800 enlisted men and 30 comm. officers three times a day, which was better than drilling.

As soon as our training period was over, we were ordered back to Fort Myers, where we arrived March 19, 1918. We awaited orders until May 1st.

Then orders came to proceed to Camp Merritt, New Jersey for embarkation. May 19, 1918 found us on board the U.S.S. Ryndam bound for Brest, France. We sailed out of Pier 86 in New York City at 6:00 P.M. in a very bad thunderstorm, past the Statue of Liberty. Later that night it cleared, and there was a beautiful moon and stars. We could see the lights of New York quite a while. We could also see the night life of Long Island as we sailed past it.

Long Voyage.

Now we start our long voyage. Our ship was an in-turned Dutch boat in our port. When we declared war on Germany, we used it to transport troops across the Atlantic Ocean. It had been used for cattle transport. They had cleaned it up and put in bunks.

There were about 5000 army men and about 800 navy crew on board. We joined our convoy in a couple of days. There were 12 troop ships and one battle wagon all told. All of us had at least four 6 inch guns - some had more and larger guns.

When we had boarded ship, all army sergeants were given a detail. My job was to handle a detail in the

commissary hold to get the 'eats' for each meal brought up and delivered to the kitchen.

Starting early the next morning, I got down in the hold, as I remember it was three holds below water line. Well, I got seasick and had to be carried up to the doctor, only to find out that they had nothing for sea sickness. So they put me in my bunk and for the whole trip I stayed very close to it. My bunk was on the bottom of a tier of bunks five high and so close together there was barely room to get your nose past the one above.

Drill or be shot.

Every day, whenever they felt like it, they called abandon ship drill. Everybody had to get to his bunk and then march in order to your life boat or raft, whichever was assigned you - with no pushing or monkey work. If so, the one causing the trouble would be shot right there, and they weren't fooling.

Target practice.

We spent one whole day at target practice by forming a very large circle with each boat towing a floating target. Each boat fired across the

circle. I never did know how it came out.

Strong winds.

We had three days of very strong winds, and, I mean to say, those waves tossed those big boats around like corks. If you have never been out in the ocean in a bad wind storm, you will never know how bad it can be. Our boat lost their whole dinner two different times by the boat tipping so far. They cook in big deep steam kettles. Anyone on duty outside was chained to something solid or they would be lost.

When we were three days out, the navy sent out what they called the mosquito fleet. They were small fast boats, submarine chasers. They swept back and forth in front of us to clear out any subs or mines in our path, and at that time the battle wagon turned back and left us.

Brest, France.

The balance of the trip was uneventful, until we docked at Brest, France on May 24, 1918. Things began to happen fast, mainly getting all combat troops off the boats and on their way to the front lines. We were told the Germans were just a few kilometers out of Paris. They used trucks, taxi cabs, wagons,

and any other conveyance available. I just happened to belong to non-combatant troop or S.O.S., Service of Supplies. We waited to get off last and were lined up ready for our introduction to the A.E.F., American Expedition Force.

We had to march five miles to a rest camp, Pontanezen Barracks, which was one of Napoleon's old prison camps with about 20 foot stone walls all around. Here we stayed five days and then got orders to report to the Motor Transport office of Base Section #2 at Bordeaux. We boarded a French Flyer (railroad train). We rode three days and finally arrived at Camp Grand Neut, another rest camp, for 24 hours. Then we were sent to New Reception Park for duty.

While my company was assembling new trucks, I had to get the cook and make arrangements for a mess hall and place to store Co. equipment.

On June 5, 1918 we moved into an old stone building which had housed a factory or some canning plant. It was old Reception Park, now known as M.T.C. Service Park 705. Our job was to haul all kinds of supplies between the French docks and American docks and different quarter master warehouses covering a large territory of France. The building we moved into was located

a short ways out of Lormont, France, near Bordeaux on the Gerond River. This river is navigable for large passenger ocean liners.



New Job.

Regular routine work went on for some time. I wanted out of the job I had, so I got Sergeant Hansen to trade jobs, with Cap. Mallett's permission. I then was assistant truck master in charge of the 3rd section with about 14 trucks and drivers to keep on the ball. It was a lot of work, but I got lots of travelling, riding with each driver as often as possible. I liked it much

better than listening to all the
'bitching' about the chow all the time.

There are many different systems between the states and overseas. While in this country you have a cash ration allowance and can buy things to change the menus, but in the A.E.F. you take what they give you. The amount of rations is given according to the number of men you feed. You may have to feed several extra men at any time, but you could not draw extra rations until your turn comes for your next drawing, which in our case was every ten days.

Anyway, that was my reason for wanting Out of the job, but now comes the stickler. Sergeant Hansen has found that he doesn't want the job either so I was given a choice - take it back or be busted and assigned to drive a truck. I took the truck job. It was a 3 1/2 ton Mack. Now all my responsibility was my truck and cargo. I didn't get much pay as a buck private, but it didn't take long before you were promoted to Corporal. It was worth it. I got to see much more of France than I would have sticking around camp.

Phil's Memory:

"At one point, in trying to change jobs, dad heard that they were looking for blacksmiths. When he reported to the man in charge, dad was asked if he was a real blacksmith. Dad said yes. The man in charge then told him not to take the jobs as all they would be doing was shoeing Army mules all day and no real skills were needed – so dad did not take the job. This was before he went driving his Mack truck and busted down in rank."

Trips away.

In February, 1919 an opportunity came for a few of us to take a trip to Eau Bon in southern France. It is located in the Pyrenees Mountains. This was a rest period for a week or two and the Army paid the expenses, which was fine, but they set the amount we could spend for food. If we ate more, we had to pay the balance. Well, we had a real good time. One night we went to a country dance across the border into Spain and stayed all night. I don't remember any other highlights of the trip except on the train coming home.

My very good friend, John R. Register, got the flu very bad. We tried to get him to a hospital on the way back, but the M.P.s would not allow us off the train until we got to Bordeaux. We

phoned ahead for an ambulance to meet the train. It was there and rushed him to the hospital, but he died on February 23, 1919. I must have gotten the flu from him and was taken to the hospital about two days later. For two weeks I had a very hard time, but I recovered and was taken back to camp where I didn't do much but rest until I felt like working again, about two weeks, I think.

Everything was going about as usual when I had a chance to get a 72 hour pass to go to Paris. We had to pay our own expenses, but it seemed like the best time to go. I had to borrow the money and was afraid there would never be another chance like that again. Several of us went, and I'll never be sorry I took the trip.

We took tours of the whole city, when it was too far to walk, and walked to all the close places. We stayed in a very nice hotel right downtown near the underground electric railroad station. We walked and visited the Arch of Triumph and Eiffel Tower. On other trips we saw St. Mary's Cathedral, Grand Opera, many large stores, and, I believe, a large museum. We also saw the 16-sided building which houses (LaPantin De La Gare) the painting of the war, which was painted by many world famous painters. We visited the highest court in France while it was in

session while in Paris.

Also, here is one for the books, the world's largest Ferris wheel was set up in Paris where it was made; and I did ride on it. This wheel was shown at the World Expedition in 1893 in Chicago, Illinois (where my mother had ridden on it).

Seventy-two hours is a very short time to see all of Paris, but we made the most of our time. We were soon back on the train headed to Bordeaux and back to camp, where everything was going on as usual.

The Armistice.

I have just remembered a very important date and celebration so with your permission, I'll back up my story. It was November 11, 1918 and at 11:00 that morning that very important document was signed ending World War One. It was called Armistice Day. I would like to describe the happenings of my day.

Not having heard any of this news, I had dressed to go to town since it was my day off. It was a beautiful sunny day, and I felt good and had decided to walk into Bordeaux. It was only about ten

kilometers - just a nice brisk walk.

It must have been about 11:00 A.M. when I was half way across the Gerond River Bridge when all at once a machine gun fired from one of the boats docked there. Another one fired and then the big guns started. I was scared and tried to hide behind the iron bridge rail. I thought what a hell of a place to get caught and without a side arm. Well, there was no choice but to go ahead so I did. Some French people came along and told me what had happened.

The balance of the day, and half the night, was almost indescribable, all transportation stopped. All drivers and operators just left their vehicles and started running wild. All store clerks ran out and left everything open. You could have walked in any place of business and helped yourself because nobody was there. The girls would form circles around the French and American soldiers and wouldn't let them out until they kissed each girl.

Everyone drank and danced and, in general, raised hell. It was quite late in the night when I got back, and I didn't walk. This is the

best I can recall of the celebration. You would have had to be there to believe it.

Back to the story.

Now, back to business, which was the same old thing. Winter is now behind us, and some of the troops have been sent home while others were sent to the army of occupation in Germany. We drew the task of cleaning up and other details in getting ready to come home. There was a detachment from our company sent to Polliac, which was Navy Air Base operated, and we furnished trucks and drivers. I was sent with this detail but happened to be a reserve driver.

Rain-in-the-face.

One day I was just sitting around waiting for something to do when the camp commander, Lieutenant West, came in, walked up to me, and said, "*Hi there 'Rain-in-the-face': Can you drive a 16 cylinder Cadillac?*" I answered "*Lieutenant, I can drive anything with a motor and wheels on it.*" He said "*Good because I'm sick of old Grandma Williamson, and you are my new driver.*"

As far as he was concerned, my name became 'Rain-in-the-Face', and I was to drive him wherever he wanted to go. I

was responsible to keep the car in good shape at all times, including oil, gas, tires and keeping it washed. Anytime he didn't need it, I was free to use it.

I remember one Saturday night, I had his permission to go to a party at the beach in Lockinew. Before I was to leave, my own commander, Lieut. Radams A. Casals, drove in and asked to trade cars for the night. He wanted the Cadillac so we made an agreement that whoever got back first would wait for the other and no questions asked. Well, you might know, he got back first and had to wait. This is where our acting top sergeant, Al Corham, got his nose in our business and got balled out but good and ordered to bed. He was told it was between Lieut. Casals and Strang.

I don't remember how long we were at Polliac, but I drove for Lieut. West as long as we were there. Our old captain came to officially close the camp. We were sent back to our Co. headquarters where we were soon to turn in our equipment and proceed to Basteed to await orders to ship out for home.

Awaiting to go home.

We were then ready to go to Bassends to go thru the delouser, but there was a fire and the place burned to the ground. We waited about two weeks for a

new delouser to be built. Finally we got thru it and were waiting for sailing orders.

I remember well, I spent the 4th of July, 1919, sitting at a desk with a phone waiting for the final order, which did not come for a few days. At last we received our orders to board the U.S.S. Black Arrow for the 'good old' U.S.A. I don't know the exact date we sailed.

Let me tell you something about the ship. It was small and steam powered with three small boilers. One boiler was out of order when we started, and one blew up enroute but with no resulting damage. We then came home using one boiler. As for size, it would only carry 12 to 1500 passengers and only made 10 to 15 knots per hour.

As for me, I was not seasick but only a couple of times, I don't remember any highlights worth mentioning on the way home. Also, the number of days the trip took has escaped me. We were all so very happy just to be on our way home. We landed at Newark, New Jersey, on about July 23, 1919. We had to stay a few days for more inspections and examinations.

Camp Grant.

I was shipped out to Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois, where on July 29, 1919, I received my Honorable Discharge, I went into Rockford to look up Ernest Wright, who was working at E. & W Clothing. You will remember he was one of the three of us who enlisted together two years and two months ago.

At about 4:30 P.M. that afternoon, I took a C.B. & Q, train to Holcomb, Illinois, where I was met by my mother, sister Grace, and Uncle Frank Strang who took me home to Lindenwood, IL. A few friends stopped in, including Jim Gibson and his mother from Rochelle.

Other Highlights.

Since this writing, I have thought of a few more highlights that I think worth adding on.

100 salutes.

I had not been at the 35th infantry camp but a week or two and had not learned who were officers and who weren't. Anyway, I was walking into town (Nogales, Arizona) when I saw an automobile (Overland) stopped in the road. A man in uniform was trying to start the motor, which he couldn't seem to do, I walked out and offered to help

him, He said, "Do you know who you are talking to?" I said without saluting, "No sir, I do not." He said "You are talking to a Lieutenant U.S. Army. Stand at attention and salute me 100 times," which I did, not knowing he was supposed to return each salute, so thru my ignorance, he got away with it.

After I was done saluting, I started on into town, He then asked me to help him start his car. I just went on my way and left him stalled. I never expected to see him again but about a week later, we were on the rifle range, Who do you think came up to me and asked me to drive his car? He wanted me to drive into camp to pick up some papers he needed, I told him no, and that I didn't know anything about that car. He couldn't order me to go but went to my captain. I soon found out the captain could order me to go, which I did; we both learned a lesson from that deal.

Thanksgiving in Battle Creek.

This next incident occurred while we were stationed at Camp Custer, Battle Creek, Michigan, on Thanksgiving morning, 1917.

No one was working, but one important job came up. One truck had to make one trip into town and return. I don't recall how I was chosen for the job. I

didn't mind so I went on my merry way. I just got out of camp when I saw a first lieutenant hiking to town, so I stopped and asked him if he wanted a ride. He climbed in and was glad to ride.

All went well until we got to the corner where the road turned north for about half a mile to a narrow bridge over Battle Creek, then about ten rods across the bridge and turned east into town. Please keep this in mind because it is important.

Now, as I drove onto the bridge, a Reo speed wagon came around the corner and onto the other end of the bridge. It was so narrow we both had to stop. The man in the Reo said he was on an emergency call to camp to get the electric plant going and demanded me to back up and let him thru. We had orders that stated in cases like this the army truck had the right-of-way and to never let anyone get you stuck or in the ditch. So in this case, I stayed there until he got out of my way, which he did. He was very angry and said, "*I'll get your hide for this.*" I told him thanks for letting me thru and went on.

Meantime the lieutenant wrote down his name and address, gave it to me, and said, "*If you need me, I'll be your witness at the trial.*" I thanked him and kept the paper. The rest of the day

went okay.

A couple of days later, I was walking past the office when Captain Bailey called me in, handed me a letter, and said *"Read this."* I read it, and in most cases it would have gotten me hung by the neck, but he made the mistake of saying, and I quote from the letter

"When I turned the corner, there was nothing in sight. But before I could cross the bridge, here comes this army truck driving on the bridge," unquote.

Captain Bailey asked what I had to say for myself. I said, *"Captain, do you know that road?"*, he said he did, and I said *"Then please tell me how a 15 mile an hour truck can travel half a mile and get on the bridge ahead of a 50 mile an hour truck to go ten rods."* I told him also that he was not near the bridge when I pulled on it, and that I had the name and address of a lieutenant riding with me at the time who would be a witness if necessary. I said *"I refused to back off the bridge in accordance with the orders on the bulletin board. That is all I can tell you."* He instructed me to be at Major General Joseph T. Dickman's office at 1:00 P.M.

I was at the office but the general was not. I stood at attention in front of a major for 30 minutes. Then Captain

Bailey walked in and asked me, "*What the hell are you doing here?*", I told him I was waiting for the general. He jumped all over the major and was angry with him for keeping me at attention. The captain told me to "*get the hell out*" and get the truck rolling and return the next day, which I did.

I returned promptly at 1:00 P.M. the next day. The major was very nice and told me to walk right in, that the general was waiting for me. I walked straight up to the desk, came to attention, and saluted. He said, "*Good morning son. Have a chair.*" He gave me a copy of the letter which I had seen at Captain Bailey's office and asked if I'd seen it. I told him I had seen it. He asked what I had to say about it. I pointed out the same things I had told the captain. He looked at the letter again and said that he hadn't thought of it that way and that it would have been impossible to have done what he said. I also mentioned the lieutenant as a witness. He said, "*You won't need him because in sight of the order on your bulletin board, you did the right thing. But before you go out again, you better look at the bulletin board. I'm sure it will be different*". He thanked me for coming and dismissed me.

It has been my observation that the higher the rank, the easier to get along with officers. I had heard the

drivers say that after they delivered coal to the general's house, they were always invited in for pie and coffee.

While we were still at Camp Custer, we attended Dedication ceremonies for General Custer. He was the Indian fighter who was killed at the battle of the Little Big Horn, I believe. His widow was there for the dedication. I don't remember the date, sometime in 1917.

Unexpected Vacation.

Still at Camp Custer I recall another highlight. I'm very sure none will believe it, but it is true.

One morning about a dozen trucks were sent to a small office where we were to get our orders for the day. We arrived in a line. Out came a first lieutenant with a hand full of papers with our orders on. He handed each driver his orders. I was number three in line. When he got to me, he said, "*I have your load here in the office so just wait here until I give the rest of the drivers their orders.*" When he was finished and all the trucks had left, he came back to me and told me to go to the office for my load. I went in and found nothing but an empty suitcase. I guess I must have looked funny because he just laughed and said "*Yes, that is*

your load. Throw it on and let's get the hell out of here." I tossed it in and he said, "*Battle Creek,*" so we headed to town.

When we arrived, he told me to drive into an empty warehouse and shut off the engine. He locked the doors. I finally asked him what was going on. He told me it was a few days' vacation. We played pool, ate dinner in a restaurant, went to a show in the afternoon, and then went back to camp about 5:00 P.M. He paid all the expenses. This went for a week, and no one ever found out about it. At the end of the week, he told me he wouldn't need me next week and that he may never see me again so we told each other what we wanted to do. I told him I wanted to go overseas and help get the war over. He wanted to be made captain and go overseas. We shook hands and wished each other luck and said good bye.

Several months later, we had been in France for quite some time. One morning Captain Frank G. Mallett yelled at me to put on my side arm and bring the truck up to the office. We were going to Bordeaux to pick up the payroll. I went to my room, strapped on my Colt 45 automatic pistol, and went out to the truck park. I got a truck to the office, picked up Captain Mallett, and started to Bordeaux. We had hardly gotten started when I spotted a captain

walking into town. I thought he looked familiar so I stopped to ask if he wanted a ride. When he turned around, it was my old friend from Camp Custer.

He jumped up on the running board and grabbed me. I cannot write down the words and name-calling between us here, but anyone who was in the service will know what I mean. My own captain yelled at me but good for talking like that to an officer. I introduced them and got all squared away. He rode into town with us, and I never saw him again. I wish I had remembered his name, but I don't have it in any of my papers, and there isn't any way it could ever be looked up.

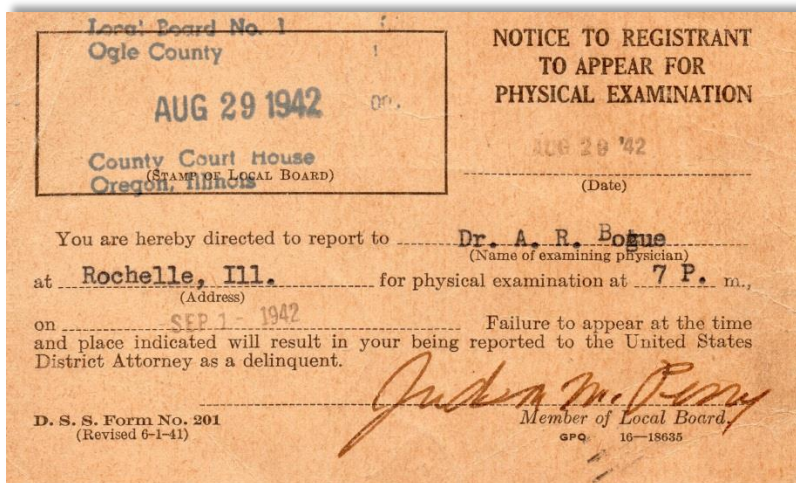
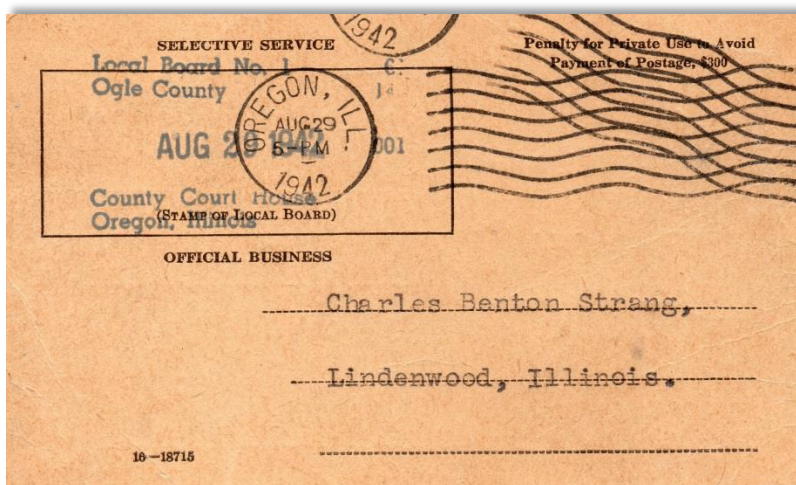
These experiences have been written to the best of my recollection of 60 years past. I hope they have been of interest for it was so memorable to me.

This is the story of my tour of duty in the United States Army during World War I, from Lindenwood, Illinois April 29, 1917. until back to Lindenwood on July 29, 1919.

Sincerely,
Charles B. Strang

Documents.

Below are attached random documents, memorabilia, and letters. These represent only a few, yet we thought it important to show a few of these artifacts.

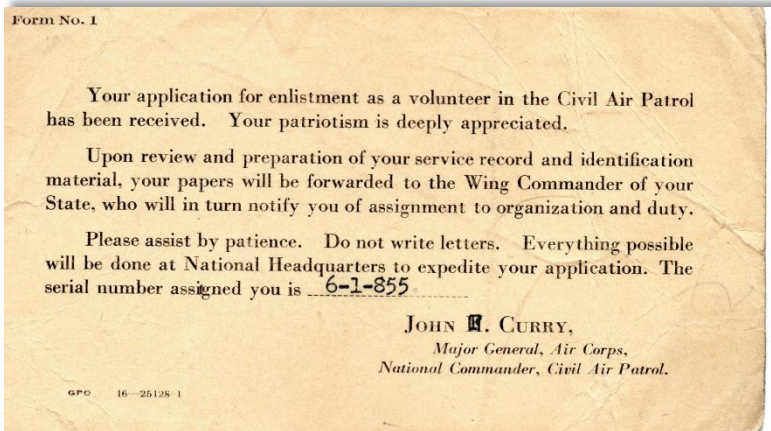
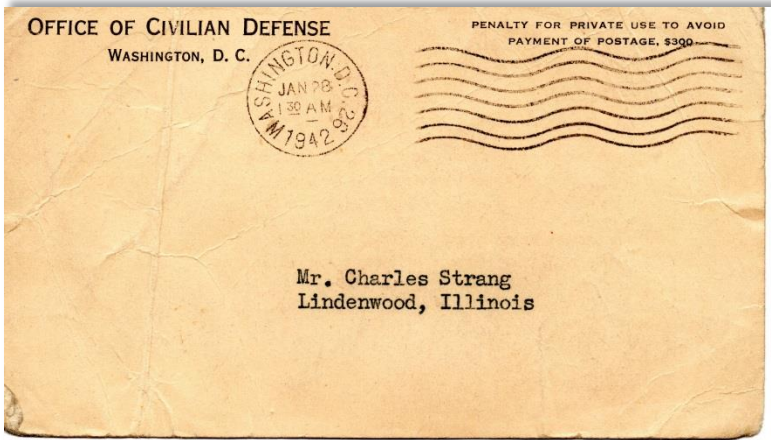


Memoirs of C.B. Strang: Blacksmith & WWI Veteran



CAMPUS MARTIUS is a Public Square, located in the center of the Business Section of Detroit. It was named by Judge Woodward in 1886, the word meaning Military Camp.







20,000 FOLIOES NO. 28108

What The U. S. Has Accomplished in First Six Months of the War.

Armed forces of the country increased to upward of 1,500,000 men.

Army raised from 120,000 regulars on April 6 to approximately 1,300,000.

Appointed two American generals and increased number of army officers from 12,000 to nearly 60,000, including national guard and reserve officers.

Naval force raised to 250,000 men. Only 64,680 regulars on April 6.

Marine corps increased to 32,000 from 13,266.

Medical department increased from 6,600 to 70,000.

Quartermaster corps raised from 5,000 to 50,000. Plans completed for further increase to 130,000.

Has sent thousands of soldiers abroad, first detachment arriving less than three months after United States entered War.

Part of United States fleet in foreign waters co-operating with allies.

Number of ships tripled with hundreds more under construction:

Spending \$100,000,000 for erecting twenty naval training stations, enlarging navy yards and constructing dry docks.

Appropriated \$1,000,000 for naval aircraft factory.

Registered under selective draft law 10,000,000 men between ages of 21 and 30.

First drafted army of 687,000 sent to training camps.

Thirty-two permanent cantonments erected, sixteen for national army and sixteen for national guard. Also many temporary camps.

Congress has already appropriated \$21,000,000,000 for war expenses, an amount equal to the expenses of Great Britain for three years.

Close to three billion loaned to allies in six months.

First Liberty Loan of \$2,000,000,000 far oversubscribed. Second Liberty Loan campaign for \$3,000,000,000 with a maximum of \$5,000,000,000, largely oversubscribed for the maximum amount.

Appointed Council of National Defense to put country in state of preparedness.

Appointed board to control food supply of country—to insure abundant supplies for ourselves, allies and dependent neutrals and to keep prices from becoming exorbitant.

Fuel administrator selected to fix price of coal.

Railroads of country co-ordinated into single continental system to aid in transportation for war purposes.

Created Exports Council to prevent Germany from securing any United States foodstuffs.

Acquired Danish West Indies at cost of \$25,000,000 to better insure safety of Panama Canal.

Appropriated \$640,000,000 for airplanes; contract let for 20,000 machines.

Took possession of automobile factories for manufacture of standard engines for airplanes.

Combats submarine problem by wholesale patrol of seas, vigilant convoying of trans-Atlantic carriers and accurate gunfire.

Secret service made startling revelations of German duplicity, proving of inestimable value in rousing the nation to its peril.

Names shipping board to stimulate shipbuilding and handle problem of providing necessary ships to carry supplies to allies.

Sent mission to Russia to assure deep sympathy, to guarantee financial aid and industrial assistance and to aid Russia in resuming her place as a belligerent in war against autocracy.

Received missions from allies to discuss best war policy for the United States.

Developed American Red Cross with fund of \$100,000,000 for relief work.

Rejected pope's peace proposal.

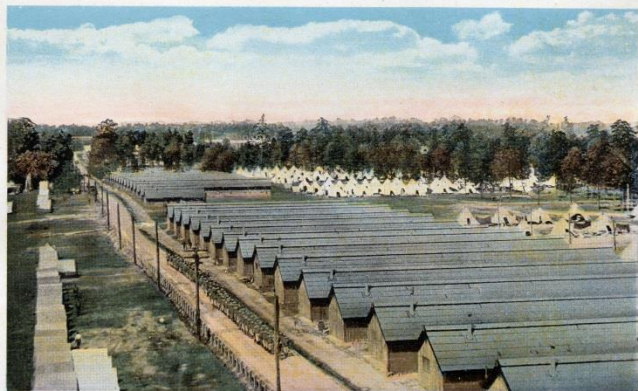
Established voluntary censorship of press.

Appointed commission on camp activities to provide for amusement of men in camp. This body works in conjunction with Y. M. C. A., Knights of Columbus and other organizations.

President Wilson appointed war trade board to take over control of entire American commerce, both exports and imports, and made drastic regulations that are expected to cut off last vestige of hope of German agents to get aid to their nations.



INFANTRY REVIEW.



VIEW FROM WATER TANK NO. 1, SHOWING MESS HALLS AND TENTS.



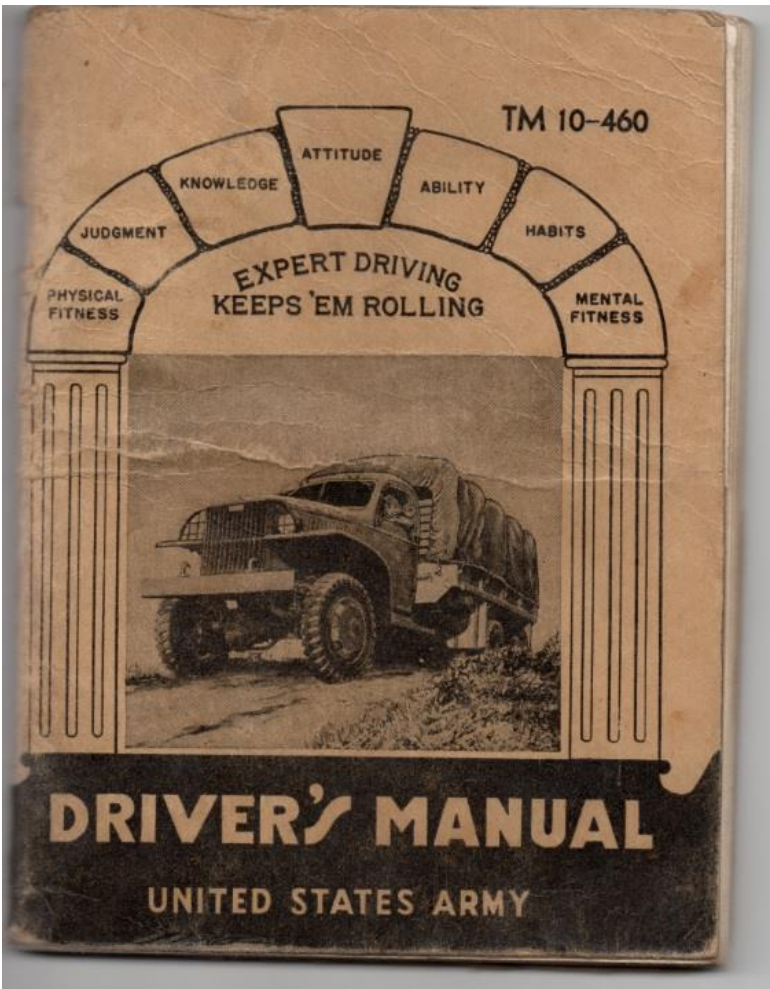




Dear Dad

I am sending
this card to say that I
passed the examination
fine and will be here
about a week but don't
answer to this place
wait until I get to
where I will be sent
I will let you know
from me every day
To good By for to-
day

your son
Ben Strang



World War I Induction Embarrassing To Strang

By KEN WISE
Editor

ROCHELLE — When Charles Strang views the Loyalty Day Parade Sunday he'll remember his induction into World War I.

"It was May 3, 1917 and Strang was 19 years old. After induction we were sent to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri.

"We were first stripped down and sent to the first of about 20 doctors. They were posted about 20 feet apart and each made a report. Then we were sworn in before we went into a room where there were women secretaries.

"We had to go to each girl. We had to hand her our papers and wait until she filled in the blanks. Don't forget, we are still bare naked!" Strang said.

He said this took about one half hour. Outside a medic grabbed each arm. One gave a shot and the other a vaccination. It was then he could get dressed.

Before leaving for France, Strang was stationed at Camp Custer in South Dakota.

"We attended the dedication ceremonies for the General Custer monument. He was the Indian fighter who was killed at the Battle of the Big Horn.

"I believe his widow was there for the dedication. I don't remember the exact date," he said.

Strang, 81, said his first scrape with authority began at induction.

"We spent the days eating, drilling and listening for our name to be called to be shipped out. It was an area where there were a lot of men and noisy.

"At last I happened to be close enough to the man with the megaphone to hear my name. When I did hear my name he said, 'where in the hell have you been? I've been calling you for days!'" he said.

Strang said he proceeded to raise cane.

"He called me several ungentlemanly names. When he finished I told him to go out there with 10,000 men talking and laughing and try to hear somebody with a small megaphone," Strang said.

He said the men were then quarantined for two weeks.

"Whenever a large number of men are to be joined with another company or regiment the newcomers must be kept separate.

"If no disease occurs, all is well," he said.

Strang spent most of his time in the service driving trucks. Not too many knew how to drive trucks so drivers were scarce.

Strang was born and raised in Lindenwood. He was one of 10 children.

"I learned to drive a truck by working for a firm that was building a road south of Lindenwood in 1916.

"They were forced to hire local drivers because the boys from Chicago refused to live out in the country," he said.

His first drive in service was in a convoy to Fort Huachuca, Ariz. They took 30-1½ ton Kelly-Springfield trucks, two motorcycles and one 1917 Dodge roadster.

"Some of those guys should've been pushing wheelbarrows instead of trucks. Anyway we made the trip.

"In a military convoy you watch the truck behind you. When he stops you stop. That keeps the train together. There was three foot intervals between bumpers when we entered the fort.

"That is the only time we ever worked together," Strang said.

One time in Arizona he spotted a man in uniform with an Overland stopped along the highway. Strang stopped to help him.

"I asked if he needed help. He said, 'Do you know who you are talking too?'"

"He said I was talking to a Lieutenant and to stand at attention and salute him 100 times.

"I didn't know he was supposed to salute me back. So through my ignorance he got away with that," Strang said.

"After I was done saluting I started my car for town. He asked me to help start his

car. I just went on my way and left him stalled," he said.

Before being shipped to France, Strang experienced the snow of 1917 in Battlecreek, Mich.

"We had no snowplows and neither did the highway department. Every available man was out shoveling. There were several hundred at a time.

"We had to take shifts because it was so cold. It was three days before the first truck got to town," he said.

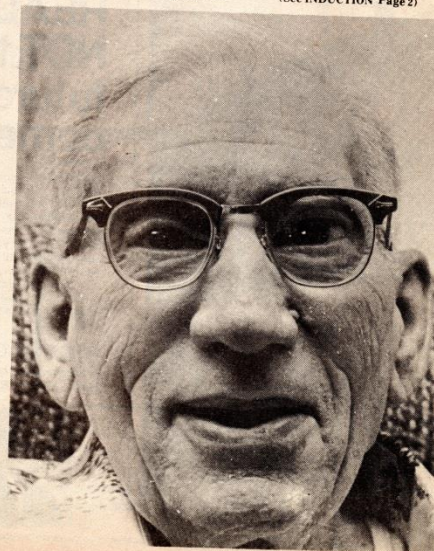
The trip over to France was so rough Strang was seasick most of the way. At that time they had nothing for the condition.

"If you've never been out in the ocean in a bad storm you'll never know how it is. They cooked in large kettles. Those kettles were overturned completely two times because the boat tipped over so far," Strang said.

"The men on deck were chained fast so we didn't lose them."

One car Strang drove was a 16 cylinder Cadillac. In France he drove trucks most

(See INDUCTION Page 2)



81 year old former blacksmith

Linden Wood, Ill.

Feb. 28, 1914.

Dear Sister

What did you mean
about the louse that some-
body gave me, I didn't get any
lice that I ~~know~~ about.

I sold part of my old car
and got \$3.40 I spent the \$3.40
for pool and sent two dollars
and twenty five cents to Rockford
with amy for a shirt with a
stiff collar, a pair of kid gloves
and a vest pocket comb, the other
seventy-five cents I spent for
silk sock and some gold collar
buttons and cuff buttons.

Thursday and Friday I helped

C. D. Talbot put up see and got \$4.00
I paid \$2.00 for the rest of my
High Toped shoes and am
saving the rest to go to Rock-
ford to help my come home.
she is going to come home Saturday
The 28th of this Month,

When I get all of the little
things that I want I will get a
fine ~~suit~~ suit, then maybe I will
come out and see you this summer
when I get to making 1000000 a
dollars day

Yours

Respectfully

C B Strang



"WITH THE COLORS"



Camp Lee
VA.

DEAR SISTER

another letter recieved to day from
you that is the third or fourth in the last 2
or three days what is the trouble havent you
been getting my letters or what is the trouble
I dont write more than one letter a day to you
so you will be getting about 9or 10 all at the
same time I hope ~~xxx~~you will be happy then I dont
meah to ~~xxxx~~ hurt your feelings or say thing lik
that you know that now dont you ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~
I just love to get letters from you for it makes
me happy so I wish you would write evry day thou
I know you cant do it so I wont expect you to
how do you think I am doing on the type writer
for the first time wont I make some book keeper
though you need not worry about the boat that I
am on ~~xxxx~~ ever going down for it is not going
down we are going to show the kiser how the
YANKY BOYS come thru hip hip harraw now what do
you know about that hey whato

HELP YOUR COUNTRY BY SAVING. WRITE ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER



"WITH THE COLORS"



well x I must closes now for there is some one
wating for the machine

SO LONG

SGT. C.B. STRANG
CAMP LEE
PETERSBURG
VA.

E.M.T.S. #457.



"WITH THE COLORS"



Camp LEE.
Petersburg,
VA.

Dear Sis:-

Well Sis I got your letter sunday so I will answer it now oh yes I am doing fine with the type writer of course I cant write as fast as some girls that I have seen but I can beat most of the boobs that hang around the Y.M.C.A. and dont do any thing but use one of the machines but oh well that dont make any difference

well I got the parcel and it was nice but I dont get much time to look at such books as that I have more books of my own to look at than I need let alone scrap books but I will put it in the Y.M.C.A. and let all of the boys look at it I think that will be the way to do here you say that that would not amount to a pinch of snuff well that reminds me of what happened in the mess hall to day one of the fellows refused to pass something and my attention was called to the fact so I stepped up and balled him out and he got up and said if you are going to ball me out I will take a hand in this too then I said to him what you why you would not amount to a pinch of shit in this mess hall for I am running this joint you see he was a justes of piece in cavilian life and he thought that he was some body here but he is in the army now and when he is in ~~in~~ the mess hall he is under my orders so he and evry one else will have to do what I tell them to do and not make a fuss over it yes sis I under stand what you mean by the lecture I know just what it means but still I think that ~~I Violet~~ ~~could get along with Violet just right with out any trou~~ Violet could get along very good with me and I know that could get ~~along with her~~ along with her just fine well I must quite for now for it is geting time that I was going to bed the guards will be stoping me if I dont vacate soon so long

SGT C.B.STRANG.
CAMP LEE.
PETERSBURG.
VA.

E.M.T.S.# 457.

P.S.

Write soon C.B.S.

HELP YOUR COUNTRY BY SAVING. WRITE ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER

For more information:

Please visit

www.WorldWarOneMemoirs.com

MEMOIRS OF C.B. STRANG

BLACKSMITH AND WWI VETERAN

On Sunday, April 28th, 1917, a young 19 year old C.B. Strang, Jr. met with several other young men in Lindenwood, IL to see about entering the war via enlistment or waiting for the draft to come. On May 2nd, 1917, C.B. Strang, along with two of his friends, arrived at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

"When I got back I reported to General Penn again. He said 'That is better. Is it loaded?' I said 'Yes sir. It would do me very little good if I wasn't, I could not throw it far.' He asked if I could hit anything and without thinking I said, 'Throw up your hat.' He laughed and said 'By God, I believe you would!'" - C.B. Strang

