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The Livermore Roots Tracer



Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 901, Livermore, California 94551-0901

<http://l-ags.org> & <http://facebook.com/Livermore.Amador.Genealogical.Society/>

Membership Report

December, 2018

Thanks to the generosity of the following L-AGS members:

Patrons

Richard and Jean Lerche, Kay Speaks, Duncan Tanner

Benefactors

Kristina Ahuja, Annette Breingan, Linda Driver and Walt Crawford, Arnold and Nancy Koslow, Tom and Natasha Mathews, Bob and Peggy Weber.

Total L-AGS Members as of December 10, 2018; 121 memberships and 146 Members

Meeting News

General Meetings — are held on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton. Map: <http://www.L-AGS.org/maps/Pls-BethEmek.html>

The L-AGS Writing Group — Meets monthly in Livermore. The encouragement to write your ancestors' stories and your own comes from this enthusiastic group. To join the email list, please send a note to <mailto:changes@L-AGS.org> with "Add me to the Writing Group list" in the subject line.

Let's Talk Genealogy — Meets monthly in Livermore. To join the email list, please send a note to <mailto:changes@L-AGS.org> with "Add me to the Let's Talk Genealogy list" in the subject line.

The Master Genealogist Group — usually meets on the third Saturday of the month, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Location: Contact TV-TMG Chair (Kay Speaks/Duncan Tanner)

tvmtg.chair@L-AGS.org; TV-TMG Forum tvmtg.group@L-AGS.org

Pleasanton Genealogy Center — is jointly supported by L-AGS, the Friends of the Pleasanton Library, and the Pleasanton Public Library. A L-AGS docent is available each Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Avenue Pleasanton, California. Or by appointment, e-mail: docents.chair@L-AGS.org.

Livermore Family History Center — Several L-AGS members, both LDS and non-LDS, volunteer as docents at the Livermore FHC. They are available to assist you in your genealogy research. The FHC has several subscription research sites not readily available elsewhere and is open Mondays 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday evenings 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. and Saturday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. If the parking in front of the building is full, there is a large parking lot in the rear of the building. [Map](#).

L-AGS Leadership for 2019

President	president@L-AGS.org	Julie Liu
VP/Program Chair	program@L-AGS.org	Tom Mathews
VP/Membership Chair	membership@L-AGS.org	Arnie Koslow
Corresponding Secretary		Ken Bredlau
Recording Secretary		Susan Davis
Business Manager	business.manager@L-AGS.org	Duncan Tanner

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President's Message

As I step down from my two terms as President of L-AGS I would like to take a minute to thank everyone whose kindness, generosity and volunteering spirit has made these years a pleasure. I include in this group not only my fellow board members but everyone who helped out in any way, be it helping to produce the Roots Tracer, volunteering your time to help others at Heritage Happenings, providing other members transportation to meetings and even providing the delicious snacks that we enjoy. None of this would have been possible without you. I thank you all sincerely.

If there is one thing I regret, it is the declining membership that I have witnessed in the years since I first joined L-AGS' board as the Membership chairman. This is not just a L-AGS phenomena. Other societies and organizations have witnessed declining participation. While much of the blame for this can be laid at the feet of the digital age and the changes that it has wrought, I do not believe that we should passively lie down and accept it. Many of us are seniors and have learned from experience that most of the benefits we reap require effort. We also know that the need for effort doesn't end once the benefits begin. When we cease to make the effort, the benefits often fade away. I propose that we dedicate ourselves to put effort into making LAGS grow.

When I attended my first L-AGS meeting I was handed a sheet of questions that asked if I would be willing to introduce myself during the meeting. I was also given a list of questions to help me with that introduction. Where does my family come from? What surnames am I researching? How did I get interested in genealogy? After the meeting, several members came up to me and introduced themselves. I particularly recall George Anderson handing me a microphone to speak into because he wanted to hear what I had to say. I am here today because people took the effort to make me feel welcome.

Arnie Koslow has recently volunteered to serve as the new Membership chairman and he has several good ideas on how to maintain our membership but it requires effort from all of us to reach out to visitors and make them want to return.

As we enter the New Year, let us all dedicate ourselves to doing all we can to make every visitor to L-AGS know that we are a warm, inviting group that cares about them. I know it is easier to talk to the friends that we already have but we also need to put in the effort to make new friends. We should all introduce ourselves after meetings and ask them about themselves. Volunteers should be calling visitors to find out if we can help them with their research and to let them know that we would like to see them return. I'm sure many of you have other ideas as to what we can do to make visitors feel welcome. Let us hear them. Let us all act on them. Let's buck the trend and make the effort to make L-AGS grow again.

May the New Year bring you all much joy, many blessings, and may you break down the brick walls that have been plaguing you.

Tom Mathews
Immediate Past President, L-AGS

The Livermore Roots Tracer

The Roots Tracer is the quarterly publication of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. The mission statement of the Roots Tracer is: "**Instruct. Inspire. Inform.**"

We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Material can be e-mailed to: rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org or mailed to L-AGS, P.O. Box 901, Livermore, CA 94551-0901. Want ghostwriting help? Just ask!

The Roots Tracer Staff

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.....Jean Lerche

The back story: Andrew C. Collett (1920-1945)

By Donna Toole

[Editor's Note: Space limitation for the November 2018 Tracer postponed this full article]

This is my uncle, Andrew C. Collett (1920-1945). He married my Aunt Aurel Parks 15 Sep 1942 in McPherson, Kansas. His one-year anniversary love letter follows. Lt. Andrew C. Collett was killed in action on 1 April 1945 in Germany at age 25. My aunt was devastated. She never remarried.

The following is excerpted from the LeMars Semi-Weekly Sentinel, P1, LeMars, Iowa 1945 Apr 24.

"Lt. Andrew Collett Killed in Action in Germany April 1

Mrs. Bessie Parks of Remsen has just received word of the death of her son-in-law, Lt. Andrew C. Collett, who was killed in action in Germany on April 1.

Lt. Collett had been stationed at an infantry camp near Macon, Georgia. He requested overseas duty and was sent to join the Fourth Armored Division of General Patton's Third Army. According to his letters his first real fighting was with General Patton when they crossed the Rhine on March 24. Lt. Collett had seen one week of actual fighting at the time of his death.

Mrs. Collett, the former Aurel Parks of Remsen, is living with her husband's parents at McPherson,¹ Kansas. Mrs. Parks left last week to spend a few days with her daughter."

Andy's Obituary:

"Obituary:

1st Lt. Andrew C. Collett
Born March 9, 1920, at Geary, Oklahoma
Inducted in the Army in April, 1942, at Fort Leavenworth Kansas. Was sent to Camp Robinson [Arkansas] for basic training. Left for Fitzsimmons General Hospital in Denver in June for training as a Laboratory Technician in the Medical Corps and graduated in August of 1942. Was sent to Camp Rucker, Alabama, and joined a

Medical Corps unit.

Married to Aurel Parks on September 15, 1942, while on furlough from Camp Rucker. Entered O.C.S. at Camp Hood, Texas, Tank Destroyer School in January of 1943 and was commissioned in March of 1943. Remained at Camp Hood until transferred to the Infantry and sent to Fort Benning, GA, in June of 1944. Sent to Camp Wheeler, GA, in September of 1944. Promoted to 1st Lt. in November. Requested overseas assignment and was placed on overseas orders the last of January, 1945.



Andrew C. Collett
(1920-1945)

Left McPherson February 5, shipped out from Fort Meade, MD, went through England, Scotland, France, Luxembourg and Germany. Went into combat on the 16th of March with

the Fourth Armored Division of Patton's Third Army. Killed in action on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, near Berka², Germany. Interment was in the U. S. Military Cemetery in Stromberg,³ Germany."

1943 Andrew Collett Love Letter [transcription]
September 15, 1943
One Year After
September 15, 1942

One year ago today I got just a little bit of heaven when you said "I do" – or words to that effect. My blood was singing so loud just than [sic] that I don't remember what the words were but I know you said them just the same.

Since that time one year has passed and a lot has happened in that time. That sweet "something" that I got than has increased immeasurable. I

¹McPherson is a city in and the county seat of McPherson County, Kansas

²Bad Berka is a German city, situated in the south of Weimar region in the state of Thuringia. With its almost 8,000 inhabitants Bad Berka is the second biggest city in Weimarer Land district (after Apolda, 23,000).

³Stromberg is a town in the district of Bad Kreuznach, in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany.

hope I have been able to live up to all of your expectations and hopes. You have lived up to mine and than [sic] some.

As I say – a lot has happened. I have gotten my commission and perhaps have a chance to be able to do some of the things I want to. One of the things I am going to ask of you is – along with your prayers – keep pushing me on to the – maybe crazy things – dreams that I talk about at times. I am human enough to like the easy things

but the things I want will not be gotten the easy way – so – though you love me – don't let settle back and relax too much.

I wonder what the next days and months and years – what next year will bring. I look forward to it – with you by my side – with anticipation. May we have many more years together – a nice as this one – is my prayer.

Your Loving Husband, Andrew

DNA disassembles family fables

By Greg Winters

I was raised an only child in San Francisco by my widowed mother believing that my father was a World War II veteran who'd perished in an air crash just before my birth in late 1949. As a youngster I can remember visiting his parents in Redwood City and going to the funeral of his brother who died in an accident on an Army post. I was welcomed and accepted and had no reason to question my lineage.

That all changed when I was fifteen and was exploring an "off limits" cedar chest and found a telegram from the War Department expressing regret that the person who was listed on my 1949-birth certificate, Raymond Washburn Winters, had been killed on October 12, 1944 in Czechoslovakia. When confronted, my mother spun a tale to me of having been assaulted by a Hispanic man in San Francisco and would never elaborate or even discuss the matter again.

Since my discovery, I'd suspected that my biological father may have been someone that my mother kept company with in the early 50's. He had been lost over North Korea in 1953 but I have memories of him and photographs in which we both appear to back them up. After my mother's passing in late 2009, the matter of my paternity and paternal lineage seemed to be insoluble. Her sister suspected the friend from the 50's but that was about all I had to go on. I let the matter lie and went about life.

In the last couple of years I'd gotten curious again and had gone so far as to find a book about

his very squadron of A-26 Invaders in Korea and spoken with its author who been a member of that squadron. I was contemplating contacting family members and was about to do so when last year in the course of a family Thanksgiving celebration, where all the kids and grandkids were corralled at our place, the subject of DNA testing and relatives came up and my interest was piqued to the point that I bought a few kits and sprinkled them among my offspring, including my two children and theirs.

Weeks passed and then the results came back from the vendor, 23andMe. First, I had nothing but an Anglo-Irish and Scandinavian genetic profile- not a hint of Iberia or the New World my mother had claimed. I had acquired some strangely named cousins whom I'd never heard of and whose names bore no resemblance to any of the familial surnames I'd known. We were Walkers and Ralphs and McCormicks and Saywells.

I took another test from Ancestry.com and then a third with FamilyTreeDNA and a fourth with MyHeritage trying to see if I could find a way beyond the family lore to all these strangers. The results did eliminate the likeliest person- the airman lost in Korea- as nothing connected me to him or his family. I even submitted the raw results from the

"off limits"

"then a third and a fourth"

Ancestry test to GEDMatch to seek more matches.

My maternal side was not without its mysteries. I had help there as my second cousin had done extensive work on that part of the family, as had his nephew, and he gave me names and even documents to help in the search. My maternal great-grandfather, John Walker, was a Union Civil War veteran, and like me a veteran of the California National Guard, who'd settled in San Jose and farmed wheat there. But his forebears, and even his birth place, were clouded by different entries on government documents. He was either from Corby, England (of which there are two such towns) or Ireland depending on which document he signed. My cousin's research had failed to substantiate the claim to English birth and the available Irish records led nowhere.

My maternal great-grandmother's Saywell lineage was easier to find and trace back fairly easily to early 19th Century, Dublin, Ireland. Her mother was born at sea on the way to the US and even that event is well-documented.

On the other side of the tree one woman, who'd had her DNA profiled, was matched as a first cousin, bore the Danish maiden name of Christensen and lived in California. More people bearing that name appeared as matches on the Ancestry and 23andMe sites and I started trying to trace relationships using the Ancestry site as I found it the easiest for me to navigate. I reached out to these Christensen cousins in California and Georgia. Some had already created trees and I borrowed from their work. A potential lead in one branch of their family led back to San Francisco, my and my mother's birthplace.

In filling in the Christensen side of the tree; a couple of men who could have fathered me in the early months of 1949, were identified. They were living in the right place and were the right age (neither too old nor too young) to have associated with my mother. I searched out and met with a Christensen cousin who I found happened to live nearby and filled in a little more of that family history. The link to that family was still tenuous but it seemed that there was little more that could be done.

A short time later, however, I started to get emails though various other genealogy sites with DNA matches from Australia and England and, eventually of all places, Oxford, Mississippi all



*Great Grandmother
Emma Bidgood Treloar*

bearing a Cornish surname Treloar. With that new information I queried my Christensen cousins and found a link between the two, one generation back. My soon to be identified aunt, Gladys Treloar, had married into the Christensen family.

Gladys' family included one brother named Daniel Charles Treloar

born in 1924, who lived in San Francisco in the late 40's and who'd had two children. Records research identified both of them and the son, who was born a year before me, lived a mere 40 miles away from me. Yes, I sought out him and his sister; first sending letters to both. Getting no reply and almost on a lark, Andi and I went to his last known address. We didn't find him but found a neighbor who directed us to the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento where he was currently a patient. We bucked up our courage and went to locate him in that sprawling medical complex. Although gaunt from serious illness, he bore a clear resemblance to me. He was shocked, but not surprised that a potential half-sibling existed. He related that there never was much in the way of family closeness and that his dad had been a player. He'd not even seen his sister in decades.

He did consent to do a DNA test and relying on good old Amazon Prime, one from Ancestry arrived at our home the next morning. I managed

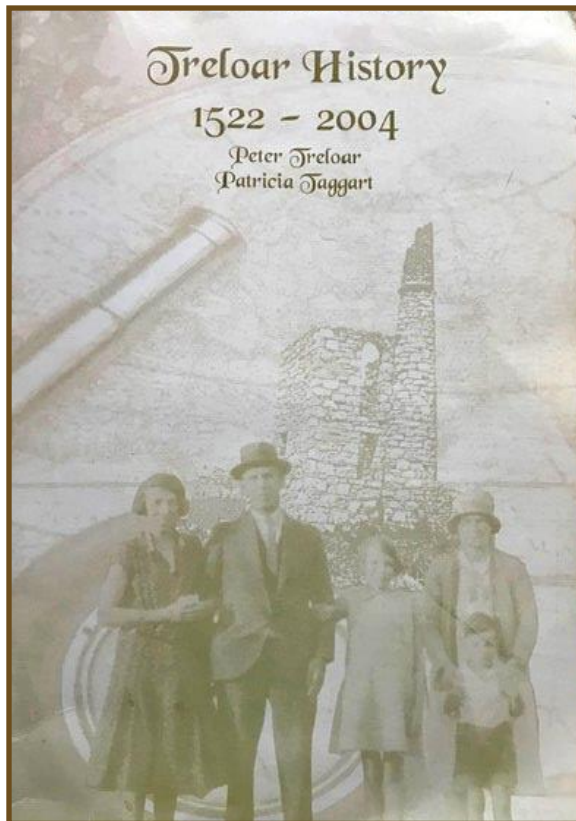


Daniel Treloar

to catch him at the hospital just prior to his release and obtained the sample and mailed it straight away. Within three weeks the mystery was solved as he came back as a half-sibling and I finally had closed the circle on my parentage.

My Australian cousin Peter Treloar¹ has done extensive work and even published a massive and authoritative book on the history of the Treloar family. Of course I obtained a copy and can now place myself on a family tree that dates back to the 14th Century in Cornwall.

Perhaps even more intriguing is a possible connection between my paternal family, Treloar, and the maternal family of my two of granddaughters, Pascoe. The two families intermarried several times over the centuries. The area of Cornwall where my ancestors hailed from produced tin from many mines thereabouts. After Mexico broke free from Spain, the mining industry was in ruins. In 1824, a contingent of Cornish miners and their equipment was dispatched to Mexico. After much travail they established themselves in Mineral del Real² in Hidalgo State and that area is still known as “Piquena Cornwall.” But that’s a story for another day.



828 page Treloar Family History

Lineage: Daniel Treloar to Gregory Warren Winters
Richard Trewloar B. 1379, Cornwall
Daniel Treloar B: 02 Jun 1841 England D: 1925 Connecticut M: Elizabeth Anne Treloar B: 1839 Wendron, Cornwall, England D: 1930's?
Daniel James Treloar B: 27 Oct 1864 England D: 28 Oct. 1934 California M: 11 Feb 1887 California Emma Bidgood B: 20 Jul 1868 Ontario, Canada D: 1940 Connecticut
Daniel James Treloar Jr B: 29 Jun 1889 New Jersey D: 21 May 1973 California M: 2 Jul 1910 New York Charlotte E Bradley Treloar B: 18 September 1888 USA D: 12 Nov 1987 California
Daniel Charles Treloar B: 12 Feb 1924 San Francisco, California D: 2 Nov 1991 Los Angeles M: Gertrude Mary Walker B: 7 Dec 1917 California D: 19 Aug 2009 California
Gregory Warren Winters B. Dec 1949

¹Treloar history, 1522 to 2004 : the history of Wearne Treloar and his descendants : based on Treloar genealogy by Orson Lee Treloar, M.D., published in 1962, by Peter G Treloar; Patricia A Taggart; Orson Lee Treloar

²Mineral del Monte, commonly called Real del Monte or El Real, is a small mining town, and one of the 84 municipalities of Hidalgo, in the State of Hidalgo in east-central Mexico. It is located at an altitude of 2,700 meters (8,900 ft.). As of 2005, the municipality had a total population of 11,944.

Alfred Michael Stokes, served in the US Navy

By Marilyn Glass

My grandfather, Alfred Michael Stokes, served in the US Navy and fought in WWI. Alfred was born 2 August 1893 in Alameda, Alameda, California to Irish parents.¹ His father, Michael Stokes, emigrated from Ireland in 1886. His mother, Annie Clark, was born in San Francisco to Irish immigrants. Annie's mother, Anna Clark, immigrated in 1845 and her father, John Clark, is noted on the 1860 census as birthplace being Ireland.



*Alfred Michael Stokes,
1893 - 1951*

Alfred grew up in Alameda, California² and entered service in the United States Navy on December 11, 1917 in San Francisco, California as fireman 3rd class. Alfred was to report to active duty on February 20, 1918 in San Francisco where he would be transferred to the Naval Reserve Training

Camp in San Pedro, California.

United States Naval Reserve Force enrollment papers describe Alfred as, 24 years 6 months, height, 5' 6 ½", weight was 137 lbs. eyes BL.6 (don't know what that means), Hair black, complexion ruddy and many mentions of scars, slight systolic blow [aka heart murmur], hypertrophied tonsils. In all capitals though, QUALIFIED FOR FULL NAVAL SERVICE. It was fun to have this physical description of my grandfather to go along with my photos of him.

Looking through, and trying to understand the more than 50 pages sent to me by the National Personnel Records Center³ in St. Louis, Missouri has been challenging. I feel like I need an inter-

preter. One form I did find quite interesting and fun was the Meritorious Conduct Worthy of Special Mention. Apparently Alfred was listed as A.O.L. [sic] six and one half hours from midnight 8/13/18 to 6:30 8/14/18. His fine was \$7.24. Then in Brest, France⁴ on 6 Sept 1918 he was carrying intoxicating liquor on to the boat. His fine for that was \$12.07. This showed to me a real side to a young man in the service during war time. In the end, his record was cleared and he received an Honorable Discharge on September 30, 1921 in San Francisco, California and had risen in rank to Fireman 2nd class.

From reading the personnel records of my grandfather and the backs of photos, that I am lucky to have, I have learned that after just one week at the Naval Training Camp in San Pedro, California Alfred was transferred to barracks in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he stayed for less than a month. In December 1917 he went overseas from Hoboken, New Jersey to Brest, France on the SS Leviathan, his destination being Queenstown, Ireland. From Queenstown he boarded the USS Parker Destroyer No. 48.⁵ Alfred spent a year on the USS Parker. During that year the USS Parker patrolled in European waters stopping at an oil pumping station on Kiel Canal⁶, Germany, and used observation balloons to look for subs in the English Channel.

¹1900 Census, Alameda Precinct 4, Alameda, California; Page: 9; Enumeration District: 0312; FHL microfilm: 1240081

²1910; Census Place: Alameda Ward 3, Alameda, California; Roll: T624 69; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0006; FHL microfilm: 1374082

³U.S. Military record of Alfred Michael Stokes, National Personnel Records, National Archives, St. Louis MO

⁴Brest is a city in the Finistère département in Brittany. Located in a sheltered position not far from the western tip of the peninsula, and the western extremity of metropolitan France, Brest is an important harbor and the second French military port after Toulon.

⁵USS Parker (Destroyer No. 48/DD-48) was an Aylwin-class destroyer built for the United States Navy prior to the American entry into World War I. The ship was the first U.S. Navy vessel named in honor of Foxhall A. Parker, Jr., a U.S. Navy officer who served in the American Civil War, and as Superintendent of United States Naval Academy.

⁶The Kiel Canal, in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, is the world's busiest man-made water-way navigable by seagoing ships. It is used by a similar number of ships as on the Panama and Suez Canals together. The direct route between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

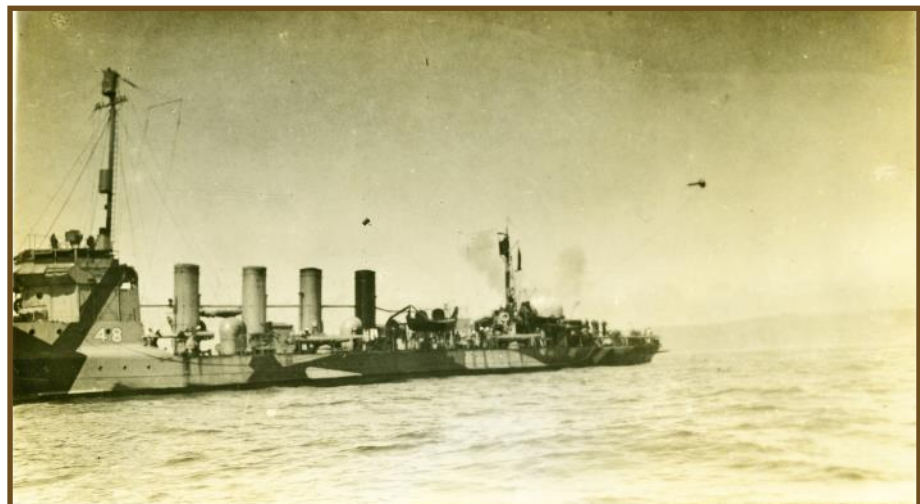
Service in European Waters beginning May 2, 1918 ending 4/24/19

An observation balloon was used as an aerial platform for intelligence gathering and artillery spotting. Near the end of WWI observation balloons began to be used at sea for anti-submarine purposes. Alfred was transported home to Mare Island on the USS Kamesit in 1919.

Two personal issues my grandfather had to deal with during the war were:

On 15 November 1918 almost a year after Alfred's enlistment his mother died. I did not read anywhere in his personnel file that he was able to come home for her burial.

Alfred's younger brother, Edward Leo Stokes, enlisted in the US Navy two months after Alfred on 22 February 1917 at the age of twenty. He was discharged 11 April 1919. His discharge is noted for "physical disability." Edward's personnel file contains a letter written by his brother, Alfred, to the Bu-



USS Parker with balloons

reau of Navigation, Washington, DC, dated May 2, 1923 stating that Edward had recently been sent to the Napa State Hospital of California and they were requesting his discharge papers. Edward spent the rest of his life (61 years) in the Veterans Administration Hospital. According to my mother she always heard that Leo (her brother-in-law) was in the hospital because of being shell shocked.

One exciting piece of information I came across in Alfred's Personnel file was the name of his mother. I had been trying to find out more information on Annie Jane Clark Stokes and was not having much luck when I came across the beneficiary or next of kin line on his enrollment application and her name was listed as Annie Cochran. I discovered that Annie was widowed and remarried. With that information I was able to find more information on my great-grandmother.

I can only imagine how my grandfather, Alfred Michael Stokes, felt, 23 years after his discharge from the US Navy in WWI, when his only child, my father, George Donald Stokes, is enlisted in the US Army 25 April 1946.

Alfred died 16 November 1951, four months before I was born, and is buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, California

A Memorable Experience on November 11, 1918

By Jean M. Lerche

Over one hundred years ago my uncle, Cpl. Alvin C. Spencer, was in the U.S. Army Field Signal Battalion¹, stationed in France. Following is his written account of an important event he experienced November 11, 1918. I have left the text as



Cpl. Spencer on duty, radio press station, Neuweid, Germany

Alvin wrote it, unedited.

On a cold and misty night, November 10, 1918, the 3rd Army Corps Signal Officer assigned me as operator of the Corps Radio station located on the bank of the Meuse River near Dun-sur-Meuse. Before leaving me he said to expect some unusual messages and should they be received to take them to the Commanding General in person.

Just as the first rays of light were creeping thru the early morning fog the messages started to arrive, first in French and the second in English. They were easy to recognize as the expected messages for they told that the war was over and all hostilities would cease as of 11:00 o'clock (French o'clock), signed Marshall Foch.

My first reaction was to open the door of our mobile unit and shout the good news to some tired and bedraggled infantry troops on their way to

the front lines. Their replies were varied. Some believing and some disbelieving, we had all heard rumors before. I then made a neat copy of the messages, adding the originals to my collection of souvenirs, and hurried to the 3rd Army Headquarters.

A tall Sergeant-Major met me and asked my business. With some difficulty I convinced the sergeant that I was to deliver the messages to the General in person, so he said "Follow me, but the general won't like this."

On entering a dark dugout in the rear of headquarters we found the General asleep on an army cot. On being awakened he stood, returned my salute and said "What the G . . . Dam Hell do you want." I quickly delivered my message and retreated.

Many years later I was attending an American Legion Convention in San Francisco, and the Department Adjutant and I were reminiscing in the hotel bar. All of a sudden Jim Fiske told me he was feeling sentimental and when he felt that way he liked to visit an old sweetheart of his. He asked me to join him.

We called a cab and drove a short distance to a large and well cared for apartment building. We entered the elevator, went up a few floors and rang a door bell. An attractive gray haired lady meet us and I was then introduced to Mrs. Liggett, the widow of General Hunter Liggett. After the usual pleasantries, and a little getting acquainted, I told Mrs. Liggett the story of the Armistice message, ending it by saying that the General arose from his sleep and said "What the devil do you want." Mrs. Liggett looked me straight in the eye and said, "The General didn't say that, he said what the G . . . D . . . Hell do you want."

Mrs. Liggett's living room was completely papered with small portraits of the General in every conceivable mood. I'm sure she understood his every

¹The entry of the United States into World War I in April 1917 found the U.S. Army and Signal Corps totally unprepared for operations on the Western Front. The U.S. Army Signal Corps provided relatively dynamic signal support at division level by the time the Armistice ended hostilities on 11 November 1918.

mood and thought well enough to anticipate his every words.

This account was a two page typewritten paper that had 2/12/70 penciled at the top. The story was among Alvin’s personal papers, which came my way after both he and his wife died.

Alvin enlisted in the Army April 22, 1917 at Peoria, Illinois and reported for active duty on August 13, 1917. He received training in Sherman, Ohio. In June of 1918 he traveled by ship to England and then on to France. He served the U.S. Army with Company A, 308th Field Signal Battalion. His duties in the Signal Corps were to establish communications between divisions and their headquarters. Alvin saw action in four major engagements.

Of note is that Alvin’s interest in short wave radio began in his teenage years. At the age of sixteen, after passing an examination, he was licensed as a Radio Operator: Amateur, First Grade. His first call letters were 9LJ². This active participation in amateur radio surely led to being in the U.S. Army Field Signal Battalion.

Following the Armistice, like many fellow soldiers, Alvin would have liked to return to the United States. However, he was assigned to occupation duty in Germany. Alvin had enlisted for four years but was honorably discharged for reason of demobilization on August 8, 1919, since his services were no longer needed. Alvin held the rank of Sargent at the time of his discharge.

Born in Magnolia, Illinois, on July 7, 1898, Alvin was the son of Richard William and Cecilia (Bobbitt) Spencer. He married my mother’s sister, Beatrice Elizabeth Ferrell on June 17, 1925 in Chicago, Illinois. In early 1927 Alvin and Beatrice headed west eventually settling in Riverside, California where they lived for a number of years before moving to Corona del Mar, California. When Alvin sold his print shop and retired at about age 70, they moved to Mesa, Arizona.

Lineage Richard William Spencer to Jean M. (née Smith) Lerche		
Richard William Spencer b. 1868, Magnolia, Putnam, Illinois d. 1944, Riverside, Riverside, California m. Cecilia W. Bobbitt b. 1872, Magnolia, Putnam, Illinois d. 1949, Riverside, Riverside, California	William Delos Ferrell b. 1879, Tomah, Monroe, Wisconsin d. 1938, Chicago, Cook, Illinois m. Harriet Mary Ferrell – 8 Nov 1901, Chicago, Cook, Illinois b. 1883, Chicago, Cook, Illinois d. 1955, Newport Beach, Orange, California	
Alvin Cheshire Spencer b. 1898, Magnolia, Putnam, Illinois d. 1988, Mesa, Maricopa, Arizona m. Beatrice Elizabeth Ferrell, 1925, Chicago, Cook, Illinois	Beatrice Elizabeth Ferrell b. 1902, Chicago, Cook, Illinois d. 1997, Abilene, Taylor, Texas m. Alvin Cheshire Spencer, 1925, Chicago, Cook, Illinois	Janet Louise Ferrell b. 1918, Chicago, Cook, Illinois; d. 2004, Normal, McLean, Illinois m. Ellis Edwin Smith, 1937, Chicago, Cook, Illinois b. 1913, Chicago, Cook, Illinois d. 1958, Lombard, DuPage, Illinois
		Jean M. (née Smith) Lerche

Death came upon Alvin in Mesa on September 13, 1988 at the age of 90. He was cremated and his ashes were scattered “at sea” off the coast of Southern California.

After Alvin’s World War I experience, when asked about future wars, he replied: “Perpetual peace between nations cannot be expected until individuals of the same nation learn to set a better example.”

²Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Radio Service. Radio Stations of the United States: Edition July 1, 1916 (Washington Government Printing Office, 1916) p. 165

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My Uncle, Major Peter Norman Borges

By Cindy McKenna

My Uncle and my mother's only brother, Major Peter Norman Borges, was a fighter-bomber pilot and served during World War II in the American Theater of Operations (ATO) and the European Theater of Operations (ETO) in Northern France and Normandy, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign (EAMECM) Rhineland, Ardennes and the Korean War.



*Major Peter Norman Borges
1921 - 1962*

41 with 21 years of service in the Air Forces.

He was sent all over. 87th Sq, 79th fighter group in Austria, after the move from Army Air Force 27 Sep 1947 to Air Force he was with Hq, 1st Fighter Wing, the 14th Air Base Group, 67th Recon Wing at March Air Force Base about 1949, Koran War in 1951 He was with the 5th Air Force, 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing, Fighter-bomber group.

He received the Belgium Croix de Guerre in 1947. He flew many different airplanes and toward the end of his career he was an instructor for F-86 Sabres, sometimes called

the Sabrejet.



Buried 3 Aug 1962 at Golden Gate National Cemetery, San Bruno, San Mateo, California.

Born 6 Mar 1921 in Newman, Stanislaus, California to Antonio Borges and Josephine Frates, he always loved flying so upon graduation from high school he learned how to weld so he could pay for flying lessons.

Peter decided to forgo his plans to attend college and instead enlisted in the Army Air Force. 20 Dec 1941. He served until his death on 25 Jul 1962 of a heart attack at Clinton Air Force Base in Oklahoma at the age of



Peter Borges in a Sabrejet

A Veterans Day memorial for my father, 1895-1965

By Patrick M. Lofft

My father, Bernard Thomas Lofft, was inducted in U. S. Army, AEF France as a Private on 28 SEP 1917 at Buffalo, Erie Co. New York. He was discharged as Sergeant on 3 JUN 1919 at Camp Upton, Suffolk Co., New York from Headquarters Company, 328th Infantry Regiment, 82nd Division.

Bernard Thomas LOFFT was born on 6 JUNE 1895 in the Community of Bellevue, Cheektowaga, Erie, New York. At age 14, he witnessed

the death his of father, age 48, on 17 AUGUST 1909

Seven years later at age 21, Bernard Thomas LOFFT filled out a draft card on 5 JUNE 1917 Draft Board 10, Buffalo, Erie Co., New York. He was employed as a clerk by the Lackawanna Steel Company.

In my father's lengthy [4,500 word] letter, dated

Dec. 1, 1918, from Argillieres, France (in the region of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté in eastern France) he wrote: "The last night we were in Dover, I noticed that my jaws were swelling and I asked a Medical Sgt. what was wrong with them, and he said "Mumps." I didn't want to stay in England, so I waited until we arrived in CALAIS, France, the next morning, before I told a Medical Officer about it. We crossed the English Channel from Dover, Eng., to Calais, France, by boat, in one hour and a half. All the time I was on the boat I kept my coat collar about my face, so that no one would notice the swelling. The British Officers (Medical) raised hell with me for



*Bernard Thomas Lofft,
1895-1965*

coming to France with the mumps. They thought that I should have stayed in England. I was only in France an hour before they put me in a hospital. I was in the hospital 17 days. 14 out of the 17 nights I was in the hospital, the town of Calais and the surroundings were bombed by German areoplanes. The first night I was in the hospital it was bombed. My, how many chills the sound of a bomb, whistling thru the air and exploding, does send up my back. I will never say I wasn't scared, because airplane raids ALWAYS scared me, and one which happened while I was in DIEULOUARD [north-eastern France] scared me the most."

The above letter was typed by his sister, my Aunt Genevieve, and is the only one of his letters that survived.

A Brief Salute to Each of My Four Favorite WWI Veterans

By Mary Caroline Chunn

A Brief Salute to Each of My Four Favorite WWI Veterans

By Mary Caroline Chunn

There's a letter in the archives of St. Albert's Priory in Oakland¹ that was written by my distant cousin, Father Frederick Bertrand Clyne, on December 27, 1918 when he was a chaplain in Trier, Germany. Several years ago I made a copy of this treasure so I could take my time transcribing his neat, but nonetheless barely legible, penmanship. It was well worth the struggle. All the ingredients of a screenplay are there. The excitement begins when he says, "I made my first trip over the top...and it was awful. It was the first time any of us were under fire and when the first shells came over us and landed among us, the men and horses went in every direction till they got over their fright, and then they were al-



*Father Frederick Bertrand Clyne,
O.P. with his WWI Croix de Guerre*

right."

A few pages later he describes the experience that is one of the best-known stories about him, and has been told and retold for a century.

"One morning there were some prisoners to be taken back to the rear and as I was going back to the dressing to see the wounded that I had missed at the front, the Capt.

¹Scrapbook and letters of Father Frederick Bertrand Clyne are held at the Western Dominican Province Archives at St. Albert's Priory in Oakland, California. The scrapbook includes many newspaper clippings without provenance. The archivist, Brother Raymond Bertheaux (since deceased), was extremely kind and helpful.

²Trier lies in the west of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, near the border with Luxembourg and within the important Moselle wine region.

told me to take the Germans back with me and gave me a gun so away I went with the [prisoners] ahead of me and when I got to the pen where they were kept, I gave my gun to the guard and when he went to take the shells out he found the gun empty. So there was a standing joke for a while how I took the Germans in with an empty gun. I had many converts...”

Father Fred was born in 1877 in Benicia, Solano, California and died before his 87th birthday in 1964 in Kentfield, Marin, California. He had six siblings. His parents, James Clyne and Mary Donlon, were immigrants from Cashel Parish, County Longford³. (Mary was the half-sister of Tom Donlon who is buried in the Dublin Pioneer Cemetery.) In one of Father Fred’s obituaries it says, “...he made thousands of friends...in both the church and the armed services.” Plus, he maintained close family ties. I have often found his name among the celebrants of requiem masses for our relatives in Livermore and Oxnard. He was greatly admired and well-loved. France awarded him the Croix de Guerre⁴, and his brother gave him a Stutz Bearcat.

My first cousin twice-removed, Marguerite “Rita” Mahony, was one of 223 telephone operators who joined the U.S. Army Signal Corps in 1918. They were known as “Hello Girls.”⁵ Rita had a first cousin, Margaret Mara Gill (their mothers were Mary Gilligan Mahony and Catherine Gilligan Mara from Creagh Parish, County Roscommon), who gave at least one of Rita’s letters to her local newspaper, the Oxnard [California] Daily Courier⁶. It was published over a period of four days beginning with September 28, 1918⁷. It’s a long letter, and almost entirely devoted to colorful details regarding her journey by land and sea. Her destination seems to have been Saint Nazaire, France⁸. After arrival, she makes it clear that her powers of resiliency will be tested: “The sanitary conditions are bad—no sewerage, etc., but the people here don’t seem any worse for it. We get absolutely no news here; we might as well be in Milpitas.”

In this letter Rita refers to her-

self and her fellow operators as “soldiers”. At the time of recruitment they were assured that they would indeed be soldiers. At every step of the way toward their war stations, and every hour that they were doing their job, they believed that they were soldiers in the Army Signal Corps. However, behind the scenes, the powers-that-be had other plans. When these women came home from Europe they were denied veteran status because of their gender. They did not receive the same recognition and benefits as their male counterparts. There’s a recently published book on this subject titled, *The Hello Girls: America’s First Women Soldiers*. The author is Elizabeth Cobbs. Every chapter is fascinating. I will go ahead and

³Midlands Region of Ireland

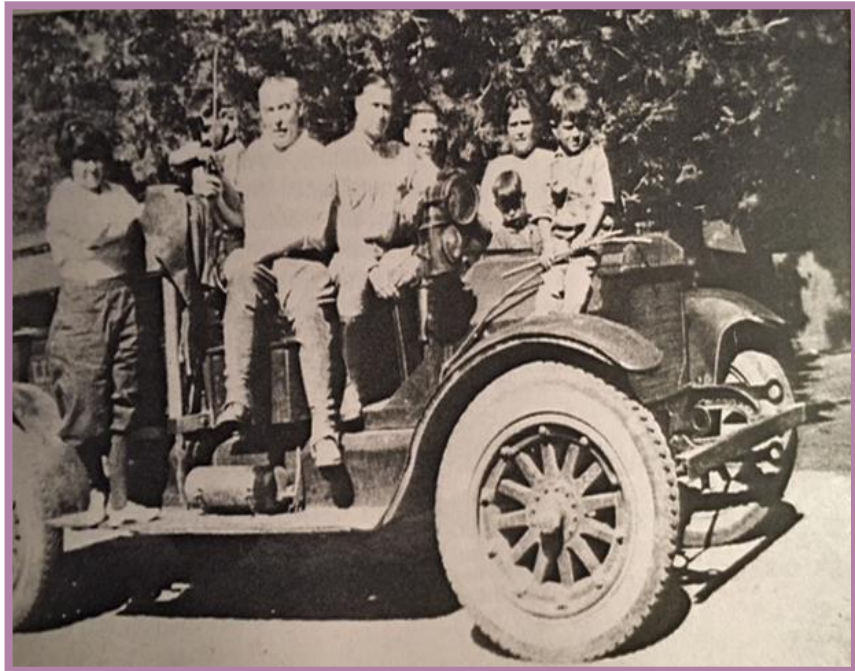
⁴The Croix de Guerre (French: Cross of War) is a military decoration of France. It was first created in 1915 and consists of a square-cross medal on two crossed swords, hanging from a ribbon with various degree pins.

⁵*The Hello Girls: America’s First Women Soldiers* by Elizabeth Cobbs (Harvard University Press, 2017)

⁶The obituary of Catherine Gilligan Mara includes the names of all her siblings, except for a brother who remained in the County Roscommon, Ireland; San Francisco Examiner, January 22, 1917.

⁷Marguerite “Rita” Mahony’s letter to her cousin, Margaret Mara Gill, begins under the headline “News from the Boys With The Colors”, and the byline “Signal Corps Girl Writes From France”.

⁸Saint-Nazaire is a commune in the Loire-Atlantique department in western France, in traditional Brittany.



Rita Mahony in Yosemite, on the running board of a car filled with her Gill cousins.

spoil the ending by saying President Jimmy Carter signed a bill in 1977 that acknowledged the soldier status of the women who quite literally helped the Allies win the war. This was too late for Rita. She died in Redwood City, San Mateo, California in 1969. Her obit says that she was a member of the Telephone Pioneers of America. She would be pleased to know that, as of this writing, there is a bill in the Senate (S. 3136) that will, with luck, become the “Hello Girls’ Congressional

Gold Medal Act of 2018⁹.”



George Flynn in France, February 1919

Rita Mahony and Margaret Mara Gill had a first cousin on their maternal side named George Flynn in Camarillo¹⁰, California. His mother was Nellie Gilligan Flynn. It’s impossible to believe that he didn’t write any letters on his way to France, or after he got there. It’s equally incredible that anyone would throw such letters away. They

must have been lost in the confusion at home. Two of his siblings contracted the deadly flu virus in the autumn of 1918. One of them died. Only five months later he lost his father, Patrick Flynn¹¹, after an operation at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. (Patrick was an immigrant from Taughmaconnell Parish in County Roscommon.) He brought his dad’s body home to California by train.

George Flynn is mentioned in the wartime letters of his pal (my great-uncle), Johnnie Donlon¹², of El Rio (near Oxnard), aka John Donlon, Jr. (John Donlon, Sr. was an immigrant from Cashel Parish, County Longford.) Just like Rita Mahony, Johnnie wrote letters that are picturesque, newsy and funny. I suspect that soldiers were, and still are careful to ease the worries of their parents and sometimes only the happy letters were saved. Actually, there is one that is very unpleasant. Johnnie was angry when he wrote it because he had just heard some men gossiping about his sister, Mollie. These words were written on July 20,

1918 when he was still at Camp Kearny near San Diego: “I have run across several guys from Ventura Co [sic] who I never knew before, but had heard their names. Mollie doesn’t keep good company, also keeping up too late, that I consider is no time for a young lady to be getting home. In short, she is getting to be too much of a flirt.” The word “flirt” is underlined. Less than two years later, Mollie Donlon married George Flynn, and they became my grandparents.

According to the instructions for Standard Form 180 at NARA, the archival records for WWI veterans are accessible to the public, although some sensitive details might be withheld. There’s a fee for photocopies. The amount is determined after the records are found. This is probably the only way I will find out if George Flynn and Johnnie Donlon actually saw combat and how close Rita Mahony got to the front line, and why Father Frederick Bertrand Clyne earned the Croix de Guerre.

⁹Latest Action: Senate - 06/26/2018 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

¹⁰Camarillo (near Oxnard), Ventura County, California

¹¹Obituary of Patrick Flynn: Oxnard Daily Courier, April 23, 1919

¹²Letters of John Donlon, Jr., courtesy of the Donlon family, (John Donlon, Sr. was most likely the first cousin of both of Father Fred’s parents, James Clyne and Mary Donlon. The documentation for this near certainty is still hiding.)



John Donlon Jr. is second from the left in the back row. The names of his companions are unknown.

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