

June 10, 2020

Connelsville Native's Dispatches Chronicle WWI Experience

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, J. Gleim, Museum Curator)

This scrapbook belonged to Edgar Burke of Uniontown, Fayette County, PA.



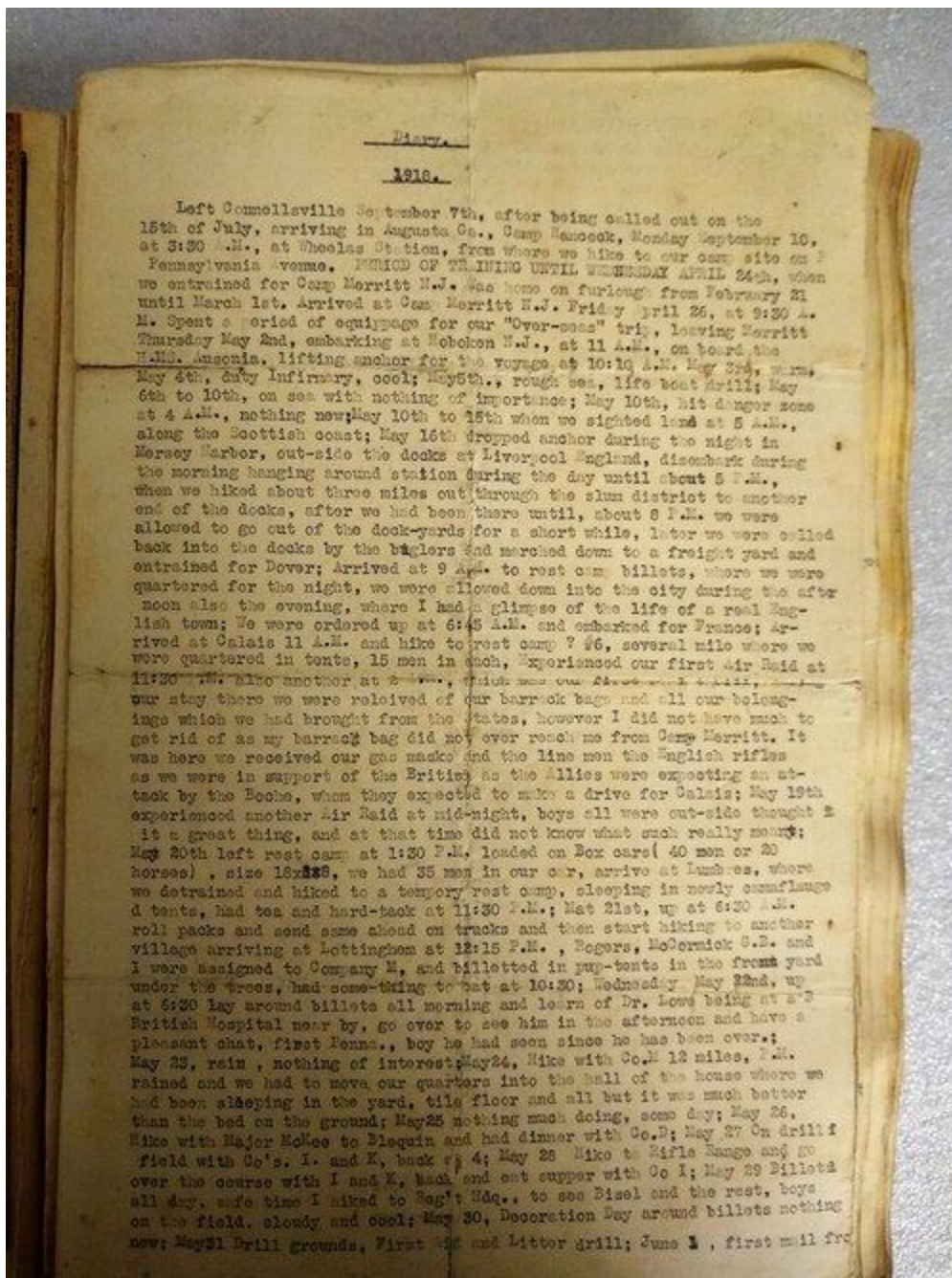
Burke entered the military June 2, 1917 and was attached to the Medical Detachment, 110th Infantry, 28th Division. The division trained at Camp Hancock, Georgia from September 1917 until April 1918. During his time at Camp Hancock, Burke wrote newspaper dispatches for his hometown paper, the Uniontown Morning Herald, in which he described the preparations and training taking place there. These dispatches are pasted into

Burke's scrapbook, created from an illustrated German textbook, and they provide a compelling first-hand account about the conditions of camp life, the training newly-minted soldiers received, and those soldiers' feelings about being separated from their homes and families.



The 110th Infantry departed Camp Hancock, bound for France in April 1918. Sometime shortly after arriving in France, Burke composed a typewritten essay describing his journey from the time his unit left Camp Hancock until just before their first combat engagement. During this time, Burke on getting his first “glimpse of life in a real English town”, experiencing an air raid, and traveling inland from the French coast inside a boxcar. In France, he participated in the 5th German Offensive July 14-27, 1918 and the advance on Ourcq and Vesle during the Second Battle of the Marne. He was injured by mustard gas on September 7, 1918 near Ourcq.





Throughout his time in Europe, Burke continued to send dispatches to his home newspaper describing his wartime experiences. These dispatches, as well as photographs, letters, and other newspaper clippings regarding the 28th Division's service in France are all pasted into Burke's book, creating a detailed and often first-hand account of what American soldiers were experiencing during the Great War. Following the war, Burke continued to add to the scrapbook, pasting in newspaper clippings related to the financial cost of the war, veteran's benefits, and commemorations.

Edgar Burke was active in the American Legion, serving for a time as a Post Commander. He died in 1961 at the age of 71.