9-1-1940

Wesley F. Diedrich First World War Correspondence #72

Wesley F. Diedrich

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Recommended Citation
Diedrich, Wesley F., "Wesley F. Diedrich First World War Correspondence #72" (1940). Wesley F. Diedrich First World War Correspondence Collection. 72.
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Subject Terms
September 1940 United States. Regimental histories U.S.A. 33rd Infantry Division; United States. Regimental histories U.S.A. 144th Field Artillery; Army American Expeditionary Forces; War and society -- History -- 20th century United States; American History 20th century;

Keywords
U.S.A., U.S. Soldiers, infantry, artillery, France, Western Front, military occupation, comradery, soldier slang, Germans, French, patriotism, government, dispatch riders, motorcycles

Identifier
2014.160.wr_Diedrich_worldwarone_1940-09-missing_061

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still extended to veterans of all branches of service to submit their prize pictures—that doesn’t include posed group pictures—with supporting accounts.

The salt-water ex-gob who represents the Navy in this issue is Benjamin Potter, who did his principal hitch as cook 1st class aboard the U. S. Transport Matsonia, whom many of her O.D.-clad passengers will no doubt remember. Comrade Potter belongs to an all-gob Post of the Legion, Old Glory Naval Post of Brooklyn, New York, in which city he lives at 645 Ocean Avenue. Here is his yarn submitting the two pictures which you will see reproduced:

Enclosed you will find two wartime pictures for our Legion magazine, provided you can use them. One of them is a stern view of the Transport Matsonia on which many members of the A. E. F. were passengers, while the other shows the American docks at Bassens, the port established forty-five miles from the mouth of the Gironde River and seven miles above Bordeaux, through which tens of thousands of American troops cleared.

The picture of the Matsonia was taken shortly after the U. S. S. Henderson, another transport, had crashed into her stern. The damage was slight, but some of it may be seen in the picture.

The soldiers in the other picture were about to board the Matsonia and the adopted by the 144th Field Artillery—known as the ‘California Grizzlies’—in which regiment Battery A was commanded by Peter B. Kyne, the writer. The boy had been smuggled aboard the transport under the cover of the big brass drums of the regimental band and showed up after the ship was three days at sea. Captain Kyne agreed to adopt the lad and I have a clipping from the New York Evening World of Saturday, January 4, 1919, showing Captain Kyne and the French lad—the latter in full, though miniature, American uniform. I wonder whatever became of him?

“To get back to my story: I picked up Marcel as he skidded by and he then pointed to something in a French dictionary he was carrying—I don’t recall just what. But anyway, it developed he was lost and was looking for Captain Kyne. I found the captain on the main deck with the two Police dogs he was also taking home with him, and I delivered Marcel to his sponsor. But somehow I kept Marcel’s French dictionary. If we could find Marcel, I’d like to return his book to him.”

Couriers—those motorcycle delivery men—have not been entirely overlooked in these columns, but it has been a number of years since we have heard from any of the ex-speed demons. Now through the good deck. Whatever the scuppers failed to stop, the bake shop got.

“But among the things that went flying by the galley was Marcel Dupuy, a ten-year-old French lad who had been offices of W. S. Clark of 305 North Washington Street, El Dorado, Kansas, who belongs to Captain Edgar Dale Post of the Legion in that city, we meet a gang of men in this particular branch of service. They are pictured in these pages, and following are extracts from a most interesting but too-lengthy (space considered) report that Comrade Clark sent along with the photograph:

“I am sending to you a picture of the personnel of the Message Center, Headquarters Troop, (Continued on page 64)