

MILITARY SERVICE RECORD-Personal Record-

Name in full: Anton Peterson  
 Date of birth: May 2, 1887  
 Place of birth: Curtiss, Clark County, Wisconsin, U. S. A.  
 Color: White  
 Birthplace of father: Norway; of mother: Norway

Nearest Relatives:  
 Father (Dead)  
 Mother (Dead)  
 Clara M. Peterson--Wife

-Military Record-

Previous military service or training: None  
 Occupation before entry into service: Salesman  
 Employer: B. F. Ashelman, Fargo, North Dakota  
 Residence before entry into service: Hannaford, Griggs County,  
 North Dakota.

Inducted into the service on August 18, 1917 at Fargo, N. D.  
 as a Private in the Infantry section of the National Guard.  
 Identification number 46702. Assigned originally to Company  
 B, First Regiment, 141st Division at Fargo, N. D.

Trained or stationed before going to Europe:  
 Fargo, N. D.-----August 18, 1917 to Sept. 29, 1917.  
 Camp Greene, N. C.-----Oct. 2, 1917 to Nov. 18, 1917.  
 Camp Mills, L. I., N. Y.-----Nov. 21, 1917 to Dec. 14, 1917.

Transferred to:  
 Company D., 18th Regiment, 1st Division, January 9, 1918  
 at Gondrecourt, France.

Promoted from Private to Corporal, April, 1918.

-Discharge-

Discharged from service at Camp Mills, L. I., N. Y., July 25,  
 1919 as a Corporal.

-Overseas Record-

Embarked from Hoboken, N. Y. on Leviathan, December 14, 1917,  
 and arrived at Liverpool, England, December 24, 1917.

Trained or stationed abroad:  
 Hudlecourt, France; from January 4, 1918 to January 15, 1918.

First went into action January 21, 1918 at <sup>(or Ansaerville)</sup> Ansaerville. Participated in the following battles: Cantigny Offensive, May 28, 1918; Aisne-Marne Offensive, July 18, 1918; St. Mihiel Offensive, Sept. 11, 1918; Argonne Offensive, Oct. 4, 1918; Meuse Offensive, November 2, 1918.

Arrived at Hoboken, N. York, July 18, 1919. Resumed former activities in civil life under much the same conditions as before? Yes.  
 Home address: Hannaford, Griggs County, N. D.

#2.

G. H. Q.  
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,

General Orders  
No. 38-A.

France, February 28, 1919.

MY FELLOW SOLDIERS:

Now that your service with the American Expeditionary Forces is about to terminate, I can not let you go without a personal word. At the call to arms, the patriotic young manhood of America eagerly responded and became the formidable army whose decisive victories testify to its efficiency and its valor. With the support of the nation firmly united to defend the cause of liberty, our army has executed the will of the people with resolute purpose. Our democracy has been tested, and the forces of autocracy have been defeated. To the glory of the citizen-soldier, our troops have faithfully fulfilled their trust, and in a succession of brilliant offensives have overcome the menace to our civilization.

As an individual, your part in the worldwar has been an important one in the sum total of our achievements. Whether keeping lonely vigil in the trenches, or gallantly storming the enemy's stronghold; whether enduring monotonous drudgery at the rear, or sustaining the fighting line at the front, each has bravely and efficiently played his part. By willing sacrifice of personal rights; by cheerful endurance of hardship and privation; by vigor, strength and indomitable will, made effective by thorough organization and cordial co-operation, you inspired the war-worn Allies with new life and turned the tide of threatened defeat into overwhelming victory.

With a consecrated devotion to duty and a will to conquer, you have loyally served your country. By your exemplary conduct a standard has been established and maintained never before attained by any army. With mind and body as clean and strong as the decisive blows you delivered against the foe, you are soon to return to the pursuits of peace. In leaving the scenes of your victories, may I ask that you carry home your high ideals and continue to live as you have served--an honor to the principles for which you have fought and to the fallen comrades you leave behind.

It is with pride in our success that I extend to you my sincere thanks for your splendid service to the army and to the nation.

Faithfully,

John J. Pershing  
Commander in Chief.

Official:  
Robert C. Davis  
Adjutant General

Copy furnished to Anton Peterson  
H. H. Ballwin  
Capt. Inf.  
Commanding.

#3.

DIARY OF  
CORPORAL ANTON PETERSON  
18th Inf. Co. D. 1st Div. A. E. F.

I purchased this book on January 28, 1919 at Neured, Prussia, while on a three day pass.

Dec. 9, 1918.

I have decided to begin another diary, having lost the one I started when I left Fargo, N. D., August 18, 1917. I enlisted in the Nat. Guard at Fargo, N. D., 164 Inf. Co. B. 41st Division.

We drilled there until Sept. 29, 1917. On the 29th we had a parade in town and we got almost three thousand dollars for our mess fund. At nine o'clock that night we loaded on a train and left for Charlotte, N. C. It took us four days and nights to reach Charlotte, passing thru some of the most important states in the union.

I failed to talk to sister Laura as they would not let us out of the train at Minneapolis. Our train ran over a blind woman shortly after leaving Minneapolis. We made several stops on the road and went out and took physical exercises. We stopped about two hours in Chicago and went down to the lake and washed our feet.

On the morning of Oct. 2 we landed in Camp Greene, Charlotte, N. C. Here we were put in squad tents. Our squad consisted of 8 good men. Cpl McEnroe, L. D. Johnson, Jack Hurley, Romley Myers, Witich, Bennie Severson, Pickles and myself. I rec'd a package from sister Laura while at Camp Greene. Cpl. McEnroe and I ate the chicken. Our infantry went to the rifle range a distance of 12 miles. I worked at the canteen while at the range, and had all the icecream, candy and smokes while I was there. It took me a long time to get used to army life as the bugle did not agree with me.

November 18, 1917 we got orders to move to Camp Mills, Long Island, N. Y. We got paid on the train and there sure was some heavy poker games during the ride. We landed in Camp Mills November 19. Our supply of chow was very short. Bennie Severson, Witick, and I scouted out and got our supper from Hq. Co. It was wet and cold here. We were again put in squad tents and drilled 8 hours a day.

The people of New York invited our division out for Thanksgiving dinner. Everyone who went out reported a good time and more than they could eat. Camp Mills was a very poor camp--nothing but mud. On Dec. 6 we moved to Camp Merritt, N. J. This was a very good camp--good barracks and waterworks all thru the camp. We did not drill here. We washed our clothes and took a bath every day. The nite we left, Cpl. Hamilton and his squad robbed a canteen and got away with a large booty of cigarettes and tobacco.

On December 4 we got orders to sail for France. This is when the boys first began to think of home and the good times they used to have there. We loaded on the "Waterland" at twelve o'clock that day and sailed at about seven o'clock on

the morning of the 15th. We all yelled goodbye to the Statue of Liberty, and hoped it would not be long before we returned to it.

Our trip across the pond was more of a joy trip than anything else. There was not a soldier on the boat who ever tho't a submarine could ever sink us. During the day we would visit each other and tell stories, during the evening there were boxing and wrestling matches in the dining room. All lights had to be out after dark except in the dining room. I met John Lyle on the boat. We landed in the docks at Liverpool on Dec. 24, '17. We stayed in the boat all day and in the evening we entrained for Winchester, England, Camp Devandaldown was the name of the camp and it sure had a good name; as we were about starved out the second day we were there. Everybody was broke and out of tobacco. We had put our tobacco in our barrack bage before we left the states. We had our Xmas dinner in this camp. It sure was a good dinner---one turkey to fourteen men, and cocked with the feathers on. This camp was a dirty place with nothing to eat, but what can a fellow expect of a bunch of dirty Englishmen. Some of the boys of our company were on M. P. duty here and they sure were glad when night came and could come home and get a cup of would-be coffee and a piece of bread and goat cheese.

On Jan. 1, 1918 we sailed across the English Channel for France. Talk about sick boys! Everybody on the boat was sick, even the old English Sailors. We puked all over the floor and on the walls and everywhere you could think of. We landed in Havre, France about twelve o'clock the next day, and here we were unloaded right away and sent to a camp in the ourskirts of town. We were put in squad tents and got our first meal since leaving England. We got supper about midnight and everybody was good and hungry. It rained all day and that night we waited in the chow line about two hours before we got our chow.

Jan. 3 we entrained for La Courtine, France. We were put in cattle cars, 40 men to a car, and the cars were about half the size of the ones in the U. S. Of course it was not so bad, half of us could sit down and take a rest while the other half stood up and kicked their heels to keep warm. After dark Cpl. Hamilton got out and stole a stove which we rigged up, and it sure helped us to keep warm. Of course, the ones next to the stove got all the heat. Cpl H. also hooked a ten gallon jug of whiskey. Benson and I got a box of chocolate containing 200 bars. We ate candy and drank whiskey until we were hardly able to take care of ourselves.

We landed in La Courtine on Jan. 4, 1918 after a hard, disagreeable trip. We had good barracks here but the chow was poor. Russian soldiers had been in these barracks before we got there and trouble had arisen among them. They killed almost all of their officers and then the French got their artillery into action, shot up a lot of the buildings and captured all the Russians. We stayed here about five days and then were split up from the outfit. All the Privates were transferred to the First division. It was a sad day we left our old outfit. There were a good many of the old non-coms who cried like school-boys when we shook hands. Our old Colonel cried like a school-boy who had just been spanked by his mother.

Jan. 9 we were loaded on cattle cars and shipped to Huddlecourt, France. We rode for three days and nites. Pvt. Meechem and I stole a stove the first nite, and the second we got a ten gallon jug into our car. Of course we thot we were getting whiskey, but nit! it was syrup. Well, we all filled our canteens and then we gently placed the jug on the side of the track. This was another disagreeable trip. It was too cold to lie down and sleep and too crowded to sit up. What is a fellow going to do in a case of this kind?

Jan. 10, 1918 we landed in Huddlecourt and we were sure a hungry bunch of boys. Shortly after we lit we got dinner and everybody ate until they could hardly walk. We shaved, washed and brushed up. Well, we began to feel better now. The next day we were all ordered to have our hair cut. Some B. S. about the regular army, but of course we were not in the national guards now. The first time we fell in it was, "Snap out of it! Shape it up! You are not in the National Guards now, you are in the regular army." On Jan. 4 we all received our equipment and got our first test in the gas chamber. We all thought that this was going to be a dangerous proposition. However, we all went thru all right and no one was gassed.

On the 15th we started for the trenches. We had 2 blankets, one suit of underwear, our toilet articles, reserve rations, and 100 rounds of ammunition. We had some load. It rained and the roads were sleet. It was hard hiking and some of the boys had to be taken in on the ambulance. I was all in, but the last five kilometers I hiked on my nerve. I borrowed 25 francs from Hegg and went out and bought some steak, took it over to a French woman and had it fried. She made some coffee, and we ate hard tack and our steak. It sure was fine. The next morning I woke up and found ourselves in a haymow. It was very cold, and the boys who took their shoes off were out of luck, as their shoes were frozen stiff. Well, we did not hike the next day, we went into French houses and got our clothes dried, got some hot feeds and on the next day hiked a distance of 8 kilometers. The roads were not so bad this day; it took us about six days to reach Ansinvillie, a town about six kilometers from the front. When we were about ten kilos from Ansinvillies we split up and hiked in groups of platoons, the reason for hiking this way was so the enemy could not estimate the amounts of troops coming in, and another thing if the enemy would locate a number of men of five or six hundred, they would turn their artillery loose on us.

Our company stayed in this town one week. We went up to the lines every nite and worked on the trenches. I saw Mervin Armstrong one day and he had the experience of sticking his head over the parapet and letting a German sniper take a crack at it. The ball went thru his helmet but it did not hurt him.

Our company went into the front lines one nite and it sure was cold, wet, and disagreeable. We had to wade in water knee deep before we reached our position, and I tell you it was no fun to stand on post all nite soaked to the skin. Tobacco was very scarce and the chow was worse. About six o'clock that morning our artillery put over a barrage on the Germans. Pvt. Fascina and I were on an outpost, and we were almost froze stiff, but when the barrage quit I was as warm as if I had been next

to our big heater on a cold winter's day. Leave it to me, there was a good many of the boys who thot the same as I did, and that was the world had come to an end. The heavens were all red from the flares of the guns, and our trenches and the German trenches were only seventy-five yards apart. You can see where the artillery had to throw their shells quite accurate not to let them hit in our trenches. A few of the shells fell in our trenches but no one was killed. The next nite we were relieved by the third batallion and we went back to Ansenvillie, and dug trenches at nite. We did this work for a week and then we went back to the lines again. These trenches were fierce. We stood on post at nite and during the day we would work on the trenches and try and get some water out. Well, one day we got our sector of the trenches in fairly good shape. What I mean with good shape is that the water would not go over the top of your shoes. We were all glad and giving each other compliments on our trench. At six o'clock Fritz threw over a barrage and filled our trenches full so that we could not get thru them at all. When we went to chow that morning, we had to crawl on our hands and knees from one shell hole to another. We got our trench cleaned out again that day so that we could stay down out of sight. This is the way it went all the time we were in trenches. Chow was almost impossible to get to us, altho they would manage to get some hot slum, a little coffee, and enough bread for a grasshopper once a day. This would be brought to us by a detail from each platoon at midnight. It was carried in cans like the creamery milk cans we have back home. Sometimes Fritz would throw over a few shells and spoil all our chow.

Fascina and I had an outpost, and there was a dead Frenchman about twenty-five feet from our post, and when the wind blew in the right direction we could hardly stay on our post. One night two Germans came sneaking past our post, about fifty feet from us. They had quite a job getting thru the wires. The wires were so thick a rabbit could not get thru them without getting snared. We did not shoot as we did not want to give our position away. I went back to our trenches and told our Lt. about it and he got the company on the alert. A few nights later about twenty Dutchmen came over, but our men saw them before they got into our lines, and we opened up on them with our automatic rifles and thirty-thirtys. They soon disappeared. The boys said they got a couple of them as a short time later they returned and carried the wounded away.

One night when the third batallion was in the lines the Germans came over with a small raiding party of two hundred men. "I" and "K" Companies lost about half of their men. We were sent into the lines the next day to help clean up the trenches and carry out the wounded. We lost one man that day. He was out picking souvenirs off a dead German. Of course we all thought this was a great battle. The Dutch went back without a single prisoner. They left all their hand grenades and high explosives in our trenches.

One nite when we had been relieved from the trenches, our platoon got lost and our Lt. told us to wait where we were while he and one of the sargents went out to find the way out. We were afraid of running into the German lines. I lay down on the ground and went to sleep. When the Lt. returned they moved

out and left me there. I woke up about an hour later, frozen to the ground and all alone. I started to hunt my way out, but I got into so much barb wire entanglements that I decided that it was best for my health to wait for daylight. I unrolled my blankets and lay down to wait for daylight. After staying there I detected the difference between the report of our batteries and the Germans. So I made up my pack and started out to find some Americans. After crawling thru the wires and walking about a kilometer I was halted and asked for the pass word. I answered and told him the password, and then he took me into their dugout and looked me over. After he was sure I was not a German spy he went out with me and showed me the way home. Just as I reached the wagon road an ammunition wagon came by and gave me a ride. I got into Ansenville before our company did.

We slept in barns and old houses that had been shot to pieces. We always got one day rest after being relieved from the lines. Sometimes we would not get as far back as Ansenville after being relieved. We would have to stop at Scherprey, a small town all shot to pieces. Fritz would always throw over a few gas shells at night in this town so that we could not sleep. While being in this town was the same as being in the third line trenches in support.

One day Colonel Parker came thru our trenches and he stopped and spoke to a young fellow who was all mud and wet. He asked him how he would like to get a new suit of clothes and a good long rest. The young fellow said "Fine." The Col. said, "You will soon get it." You can imagine how the boys felt when they heard this news. We had been in the trenches about two months without having our clothes off. We sure knew what the cooties were by this time. I could reach down in my shirt any time I wanted to and bring out a good, big, fat cootie without looking for them.

On the night of March the seventh we were relieved, went back to Ansenville, stayed there one day and rested, and on the ninth we got trucks and started for the rear. We had a three hour ride that day. We went thru Huddlecourt and the town our company stopped at was Traveray. We got paid a few days after we got here, and eggs were quite plentiful here. L. D. Johnson and I bought two dozen eggs, cheese, butter, bread and jam and went down to the creek and had a good big feed.

The third day after we lit, I was in the Y. M. C. A. and I heard an engine running in the back room. The noise of the engine seemed familiar to me, so I asked the Y. M. man what he had in the rear of the building. He told me it was a Delco Light plant. Well, I went in and looked it over and wished I was back in Fargo. That nite there was a movie show in the Y. and they served hot cocoa and cookies. I felt like a new man that nite, being in a room lit up with Delco light, and one of their movie machines showing us the picture of Charlie Chaplin. We drilled here for about three weeks, had a couple of baths, got rid of a few cooties, and everybody had the pleasure of eating a few eggs.

Well, one day we got orders that we were going to move to another front. Our Lt. came in and said that we were going

to another front and that it was north. That spells action. Of course we all sobered up and that we were going to see the real stuff, as we had been reading in the papers what the Huns had been doing to the French and British. The Allies had got them stopped before we got to the front.

On the ninth of April we were started for the Picardy front. We loaded on the train and rode for three days and nites, going thru the outskirts of Paris. We saw some beautiful country and scenery on this trip. We unloaded in a small town and then we started on a long march. It was very warm and we carried two blankets, extra pair of shoes, one suit of underwear, two pair sox, reserve rations, toilet articles, overcoat, helmet,--a load of about one hundred and forty pounds. Some load in this hot weather. The third battallion (battalion) killed four men in one day on this hike. M Co. was the unlucky company. We stopped for ten days at Fra Lavillie and drilled. We took up the French drill now, as it was believed that their way of going over the top was better than the American. There was a French captain along with us. We left there and went to Cantigny. On the twenty-sixth day of April we went into the trenches. I well remember what our Lt. told us when he told us it spelled action. The artillery fire and the machine gun fire was fierce. After dark a fellow was darn glad to keep his head under cover. It was almost impossible to get chow to the men in the front lines. It was one continuous round of artillery fire. As soon as it got dark Fritz would put about twice as many guns working as in the day time. Gas was used in some part of our sector every nite, all the while we were in the lines. We went from twenty-four to fifty-eight hours without chow. Water was almost impossible to get to us.

On the sixth of May Fritz put over a six hour heavy gas attack. The casualties were very heavy in our battallion. G Co's casualties were about seventy-five percent. Our company lost the least of any of them. The next day a report came out that we were going to be relieved, as we did not have men enough to hold the lines. However, we were not relieved. We stayed in the lines twenty-one days without being relieved. We could not get enough water to shave with, and I guess if the Germans had come over, we would not have needed to fire a single shot, because we all looked so tough that we would have scared the devil.

We were continually told to be on the watch as Germans are coming over tonite. Well, they did not come over except once in a while they would send over a raiding party. Patrols from both sides were busy every nite, and one time our patrol and the German patrol came together. There was not much of a fight excepting the exchange of a few hand grenades. Well, the nites were very long in these trenches as we were always worrying about the Fritzie's coming over, and then the chow was so poor that we were starving. Tobacco was very short. Sometimes four or five men would have to smoke one cigarette. I received a package from sister Laura while in these trenches, cigars, raisins, chocolate, gun,--and it never in the world could have come at a better time.

When we went after chow it took about thirty men, as we carried chow for the whole battallion. We had to go about four



kilometers after chow, and the only way to get to our chow wagon was to go thru dead-man's valley for a distance of about one kilometer. This was a very bad place to take men because Fritz would shell this valley continuously and there was not a single nite passed but what a bunch of men would be caught there.

Our battalion headquarters were at Villertarnalle. This town was shelled and covered by machine gun fire day and nite. Our company lost about twenty-five men during this hitch in the trenches. Our Lt. Bloom was hit in the face one nite by machine gun fire but he did not die. On the nite of May 16 we were relieved and went back to Rodencourt for a few days' rest. We stayed here for a few days and then returned to the second lines. Here we stayed for four or five days, ducking Fritzie's big shells and taking A/ in a good big breath of his gas now and then. On the nite of May 25 we returned to Rodencourt and were held there in support of the twenty-eighth infantry. We piled rocks and strengthened our dugouts in good shape.

On the morning of May 28th, the 28th Infantry and the second battalion went over the top and captured Cantigny. The Germans made seven counter attacks on them, but in vain. The German guns all opened up and worked continuously for two days and nites. We were not called out as the twenty-eighth held off all counter attacks. June third we went into the trenches at Ecclainvillers. We were in support here and did not worry much about the Germans as we were four kilometers from the front lines.

June 14th we moved to the front lines at Grievennes. This is where a wealthy Frenchman had his park and chateau, but it did not look like a park now. It was all shot to pieces and the ground was all covered with dead Germans and "frogs". It stunk so that lots of the boys went to the hospital with enfluency. In these trenches is where I saw my first German fall, altho from where I was I could not tell how badly he was hit. We stayed here for several days, and on the morning of July 4th our battalion and the Germans tried to see who could put over the most shells. But both sides put over enough to suit me. There was hell on earth this morning and I know it.

July 9th we were relieved by the "Frogs" and we got trucks to Pistula. Here we cleaned up, got clean clothes, cooked ourselves some gooseberries, stole a chicken and cooked up a good feed. Wallner, L. D. Johnson, Daigle, and I had current sauce and a good fat goose for dinner. We went from here to..... where we got paid and the Y. M. C. A. man came to town and we bought chocolate, cigarettes, tobacco and cookies. Well, we did not stay in town but a few days until we got orders to move still farther to the rear. We got trucks one morning and left for the south. We rode all nite and part of the next day. Here we lit in a small town, stayed here two days, when we got orders to move to the front again. We took our back tracks almost all the ways. We unloaded in some big woods and camped here one day and one nite. Our whole ~~battalion~~ division was camped in these woods. This was the last time I spoke to Mervin Armstrong. He came over to my company and we had quite a visit that day. We both had some cookies and chocolate along with us. We ate them and then bid good-bye to each other, and said we were going after the Huns. Well, we did, but there was one less after the battle, so we could not tell our tales to each other.