

Chapter 6. 1917 to 1919: The First World War Years

Summary

John entered the U.S. Army on 3 Oct 1917. He trained at Camp Logan in Houston TX and served as a Private in Company C of the 129th Infantry. He saw combat in France, where he was gassed in the Argonne Forest. He was honorably discharged on 27 May 1919 at Camp Grant in Rockford IL.

John Ullian entered the U.S. Army on 3 Oct 1917. His unit, the 129th Infantry of the 33rd Division of the U.S. Army, originated as the 3rd Illinois National Guard, then became the 3rd Illinois Infantry. After being mustered on 28 Jul 1917 it became the 129th Infantry. Following basic training at Camp Logan in Houston TX the unit left on 2 May 1918 for France and 12 months of overseas duty.

In 1918 his unit took part in the following major European offensives, all in France:

- 27 Jul - 5 Aug: Amiens (Picardy);
- 8 Aug - 20 Aug: Somme;
- 8 Sep - 25 Sep: Verdun-Fromerville (Lorraine);
- 26 Sep - 21 Oct: Meuse-Argonne;
- 26 Oct - 11 Nov: Troyon (Lorraine).

Camp Logan was established on the site of a former National Guard camp just west of Houston that was leased from Houston's prosperous Hogg family. Construction began on 14 Jul 1917, and the camp closed on 20 Mar 1919. The city of Houston purchased the site from the Hoggs in 1925 to develop it into what is today Memorial Park.

To John, Houston became more than a training site for his Army service. At some point, probably between about 1933 and 1936, he would return to Houston to work as a landscaper prior to his permanent return to Illinois.



Private John Ullian in his U.S. Army Uniform

We have four sets of documentation of John's military service: Navy ship passenger lists, documents regarding John's being missing from his unit, medical records at the time of his discharge, and certification that he served and was honorably discharged.

Ship passenger lists from the Navy show John as a passenger to Europe and back during the war. The passenger list of the *S.S. Covington* sailing from Hoboken NJ on 10 May 1918 lists John with his unit, Company C of the 129th Infantry. It shows his emergency contact as his father [actually his brother] Romano Ullian, 1530 Daen St., Ravina Illinois.

| HEADQUARTERS PORT OF EMBARKATION, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|--|----------------|---|
| PASSENGER LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND CASUALS | | | | | | | |
| INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THIS FORM | | | | | | | |
| Separate lists of FIVE COPIES EACH, will be filled out by each company or detachment commander as follows: | | | | | | | |
| 1st List: Officers arranged according to rank; nurses, if any; civilian employees, if any. These names should be numbered consecutively beginning with No. 1. | | | | | | | |
| 2d List: Non-commissioned officers above Grade 17, (Paragraph 9, Army Regulations), arranged according to grade. | | | | | | | |
| 3d List: Enlisted men below Grade 16, (Paragraph 9, Army Regulations), arranged according to the usual formation of the Company, that is, by squads. These names should be numbered consecutively beginning with No. 1. | | | | | | | |
| To be filled in by Organization | Give full name of organization including company and regimental designation. | | Name of Transport or Commercial Steamer | | Date of Sailing | Port | |
| | COMPANY "C" 129TH INFANTRY | | COVINGTON | | MAY 10 1918 | HOBOKEN, N.J. | |
| No. | NAME (Family name followed by Christian names in full.) | Numerical Designation of Enlisted Men | Rank and Corps | Organization | NOTIFY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY. (Give name in full.) | Relation-ship. | ADDRESS. (Number, Street, City and State.) |
| NOTE: Leave double space between names. DO NOT abbreviate names of persons, streets or cities. All typewriting must be in capital letters only. Names of enlisted men must be identical with those on service records. 155 | | | | | | | |
| 123 | MASSIE, WILLIAM W | 2157111 | PVT | CO.C | MRS. JULIA MASSIE | MOTHER | AIRARGO MINN |
| 124 | ULLIAN, JOHN | 1380536 | PVT | CO.C | MR. ROMANO ULLIAN | FATHER | 1530 DAEN ST RAVINA ILLINOIS |
| 125 | MATISON, OSCAR | 2163147 | PVT. | CO.C | MR. LOUIS O ENGLAND | FRIEND | BOX 53 ISANTI MINNESOTA |
| 126 | MORRALL, JOHN | 1380488 | SGT | CO.C | MRS. ELEMORA MORRALL | MOTHER | 715 CATHERINE ST OTTAWA ILLINOIS |
| 127 | DE MOSS, EVERETT G | 1380413 | SGT | CO.C | MRS. GRACE DE MOSS | MOTHER | BLAIRSBURG IOWA |
| 128 | GALLEY, RALPH J | 1380435 | PVT 1ST | CO.C | MRS. ESTHER GALLEY | MOTHER | 533 STATE ST OTTAWA ILLINOIS |

Pvt. John Ullian (Line 2) Listed on the *S. S. Covington*, Departing from Hoboken
[From Ancestry.com]

The passenger list for the *S.S. Plattsburg* sailing from Brest, France, on 7 May 1919 to Hoboken NJ en route to Camp Merritt includes John, with the emergency contact listed as his brother Romano Ullian of Ravina [Ravina] Illinois. This trip he is not with his own unit, the 129th Infantry. The heading at the top of the list reads "ENLISTED MEN AUTHORITY CS SOS AEF WALKING CASES REQUIRING NO DRESSING CLASS 'B'" – i.e., he returned to the U.S. with other soldiers being transported separately for medical reasons.

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PASSENGER LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND CASUALS
RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES

INSTRUCTIONS

Separate lists of TWELVE COPIES EACH will be accomplished by each company or detachment commander as follows:
 1st Class: Officers arranged according to Rank, Nurses, Army Field Clerks, Field Clerks Q, M. C., Civilian Employees. Names to be numbered consecutively beginning with No. 1.
 2nd Class: Non-commissioned Officers down to and including Color Sergeant (See A. R. Par. 9).
 3rd Class: All enlisted men below Color Sergeant (A. R., Par. 9), arranged according to usual formation of the Company, that is, BY SQUADS.

This form when used to list CASUAL military passengers will be accomplished in like manner, but within each class all casualties will be sub-grouped under the following headings with reference to the reason for their return, not more than one such sub-group being listed on the same sheet: (1) Deceased, (2) Sick and Wounded (3) Prisoners, (4) For Duty, (5) On Leave or Furlough, (6) Miscellaneous. The word "Casuals" and the name of the group will be entered in the space provided for name of organization, and the Embarkation Personnel Adjutant will sign his name in the space provided for the signature of organization commander.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| To be filled in by company or detachment commander | Give full name of organization including company and regimental designation | To be filled in by Embarkation Personnel Adjutant, U. S. A. |
| To be filled in by Embarkation Personnel Adjutant, A. E. F. | Name of vessel | Port of Arrival |
| | Port of sailing | Date of Arrival |
| | Date of sailing | |

| No. | NAME AND SERIAL NUMBER <small>Example: HENDERSON HARRIS F V.214567</small> | Rank & Arm or Staff Corps <small>Example: Capt A. G.</small> | Organization (regiment and company or detachment) | NOTIFY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY. <small>(Give name in full, for example; Mrs. Mary A. Smith.)</small> | Relationship <small>Example: Foster-mother</small> | ADDRESS <small>(Number, Street, City and State) Do not abbreviate.</small> |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| <small>Leave double space between entries. All typewriting must be in CAPITAL LETTERS.</small> | | | | | | |
| 1 | SHIFFE RALPH F 2630561 | SGT H 28 INF | MRS DELA SHIFFE | MOTHER | POLE ILLINOIS | |
| 2 | HOSKINS WILLIAM P (COL) 1402687 | PVT F 570 INF | MR SAM BUSH | COUSIN | 6459 VERNON STREET OKLAHA MISSISSIPPI | |
| 3 | ULLIAN JOHN 1508556 | PVT G 129 INF | MR ROMANO ULLIAN | BROTHER | HAVINIA ILLINOIS | |
| 4 | BLACK HARLEY 1461887 | COOK K 140 INF | MR JOHN H BLACK | FATHER | COURTLAND KANSAS | |
| 5 | MAHN GEORGE B 1780770 | SGT G 513 INF | MR JOHN W MAHN | FATHER | 5435 PALM ROAD BALTIMORE MARYLAND | |
| 6 | MAROHY ALBERT 2961577 | CPL 255 INF. | MRS LOUISA MAROHY | MOTHER | 415 FLETCHER STREET TONAWANDA NEW YORK | |
| 7 | BANKS JACKSON (COL) 3491485 | PVT D 314 CB BN | MR BOSIE BANKS | BROTHER | ALBANY GEORGIA | |
| 8 | RICHARDS WILLIAM 1003769 | PVT B 21 HQ BN | MRS WILLIAM RICHARDS | WIFE | 29 FATHER AVENUE NEW YORK NEW YORK | |

Pvt. John Ullian (Line 3) Listed on the *S. S. Plattsburg*, Departing from Brest for Hoboken
 [From Ancestry.com]

Documentation from mid-August 1918 shows that John had been missing from his unit since before July 8 and was "apprehended" by another unit in the north of France, near the Belgian border. The reports indicated that they were having difficulty getting him back to his unit (with a guard to escort him). Locating his unit seemed to be difficult, given that his unit was on the move. [If it was difficult for another Army unit to locate his unit, think of how difficult it would have been for John to find his unit himself if he had become separated from it – whether intentionally or accidentally!] We may speculate as to whether his being separated from his unit was intentional or accidental, but must note that there was no charge of his being AWOL, and he

The third set of documents is from his clinical medical record at the Camp Grant base hospital in Rockford IL. He was admitted there on 23 May 1919, immediately prior to his discharge on 27 May. Evidently the purpose of the visit was to establish his health status at discharge.

A selection of the more interesting information from the record follows. His home address is Ravina IL. His nearest relative is his brother Romano. Disposition is to the 161st Depot Brigade. *[Note: depot brigades had the dual missions of receiving recruits/draftees and preparing them for the service, and of receiving soldiers returning from war and processing them through their discharge.]* Final diagnosis: No disease found. Recovered. History of present disease: Gassed 28 Sep 1918. (The diagnosis of the ward surgeon in these notes says that he was gassed 22 Sep 1918 to 5 Oct 1918) in Argonne Forest, acute bronchitis followed 13 Dec 1918. Sent to Base 51 Toul, France; then to Base 65, Nantes, France; then to Evac 216, Nantes, France; then to Brest, France; then to Camp Merritt; and finally to Camp Grant. Patient says he does not cough and feels well. No complaints. Family/Personal history: Landscape contractor; abstains from alcohol, father accidental death at 63, mother dead of meningitis at 57; no gunshot wounds or other casualties. 143 pounds, well-nourished.

The finding of “no gunshot wounds or other casualties” is not consistent with John’s telling his grandson David U. Larson that he was bayoneted by a German soldier in combat and showing David an obvious scar on his upper arm. Documentary evidence of the existence of the scar (although not its time or place of origin) exists in John’s registration for the draft on 27 Apr 1942, which said he had a “Scar on left upper arm.”

Another inconsistency in this medical record is that it reported that “M [*mother*] dead age 57” and “F [*father*] dead age 63” but John listed his mother as his nearest relative in Italy when he immigrated. *[We are assuming that the doctor was using the letters M and F for Mother and Father, not Male and Female.]* His mother was born in 1846, his father was born in 1845, John was born in 1890, and John immigrated in 1908. If she had died at age 57, she would have died in 1903, when John was 13 years old, and before he left Italy – thus either she did not die at age 57 or John listed his dead mother as his nearest relative in Italy. We have no other information on when John’s parents died. We believe that the doctor’s report was incorrect. The information on his mother’s age at her death had to have been provided by John to the doctor – perhaps the doctor mis-heard John’s response to the question, or mis-read his writing if the question was asked on paper rather than in person. We are assuming, of course, that John knew how old his mother was when she died – generally a safe assumption, but an assumption still. If the doctor transposed the ages, with John’s mother dying at age 63 and his father dying at age 57, then his mother would have died in 1909, the year after he left Italy, and his father would have died in 1903. This transposition would explain John’s listing his mother on the ship manifest as his nearest relative in Italy.

CLINICAL RECORD

Det. of Patient **BRIEF**

Hospital Base
Register No. 35452 Ward G-10
Name Ullian John 1580536
Rank Pvt Co. C Regt. or 129
Staff Corps Inf
Age (years) 28 Race W Service (years) 1/8/12
Birthplace Italy
Station Camp Grant Ill
Date of admission May 23 1919
Source of admission

Religion Cath
Home address Ravenna Ill

Name and address of nearest relative: Brother on camp

DUTY
Disposition 161st Depot Brigade
Final diagnosis Thyroid
Condition on completion of case

INSTRUCTIONS

H. H. Sheets
Capt. *W. C. ...*
Med. Surgeon

CLINICAL RECORD
FAMILY AND PERSONAL HISTORY

Occupation: Landscape Contractor
Tropical service: None
Habits as to alcohol: Abstainer

Family history: F dead age 63
accidental. M dead age
57 - cause meningitis.
3 - Bari b. & w.

Previous personal history:
Bruce Chitis Dec. 23 - 1918.
Gassid Sept. 28 - 1918.

Gunshot wounds or other casualties:

neg.

Veneral history:

Denial

SURNAMES OF PATIENT

CHRISTIAN NAME

CLINICAL RECORD

HISTORY OF PRESENT DISEASE

(Date and mode of onset; probable cause; evolution and course to admission.)

Gassed Sept 28-1918
on Argonne front.
Bronchitis followed
Dec 13-1918 sent
to Base 51 Toul 7.
to Base 65 - Chantreaux 7.
then to Evac. 216
Nanterre 7. to Base 7.
to Camp Merritt to
Camp Grant.
Patient says he
does not cough
and feels well.

SURNAME OF PATIENT

CHRISTIAN NAME

3-3072

CLINICAL RECORD

SUBJECTIVE SYMPTOMS

Condition on admission:

No complaint.

①

SURNAME OF PATIENT

CHRISTIAN NAME

Ed. Mar. 6-18-5,000,000.

02-8073

It may be significant in his life that John received his discharge at Camp Grant in Rockford IL. Rockford later became the home of Linda Ferraro, whom John would marry on 7 Dec 1920 – about 19 months after his discharge, and about 5 weeks after her arrival in the U.S.

On 28 Aug 1951, John requested a copy of his honorable discharge certificate to replace the original which was lost.

DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE

TO: THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C. 20315

DATE: August 28, 1951

DATA ON LOST OR DESTROYED DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL: **ULLIAN, John**

2. ARMY SERIAL NUMBER: **1380536**

3. RACE: **White**

4. DATE LOST OR DESTROYED: **1944**

5. CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING LOSS OR DESTRUCTION OF CERTIFICATE (Any mutilated certificate must be forwarded with this application.)
Discharge was lost while I was in the process of moving household goods.

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

6. ENTERED MILITARY SERVICE AT (City or County, and State): **HIGHLAND PARK, Lake County, Illinois**

7. DATE ENTERED SERVICE: **Sept. 5, 1917**

8. GRADE AT DISCHARGE: **PVT**

9. COMPANY AND REGIMENT: **129th. Inf.**

10. DATE DISCHARGED: **XX May 1919**

11. CAMP AND STATE WHERE DISCHARGED: **Camp Grant, Illinois**

12. IF MORE THAN ONE DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE HAS BEEN LOST OR DESTROYED, GIVE, IN THE FOLLOWING SPACE, GRADE, ORGANIZATION, AND DATE AND PLACE OF ENLISTMENT AND DISCHARGE, FOR THE PERIODS OF SERVICE COVERED BY EACH CERTIFICATE.
Just one discharge was lost

Current

CIL ISSUE: **9-12-51**
ANALYST REV: *pa*

PERSONAL DATA

13. PLACE OF BIRTH (City, County, and State): **Farra, Italy**

14. DATE OF BIRTH: **Sept. 5, 1890**

15. HEIGHT: **5 FT. 6.**

16. COMPLEXION: **Ruddy**

17. COLOR OF EYES: **Grey**

18. COLOR OF HAIR: **Bwn**

19. OCCUPATION BEFORE TIME OF ENLISTMENT: **Landscape Gardner**

FINGERPRINTS TO BE PLACED ON REVERSE SIDE - SEE INSTRUCTIONS

THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION WILL BE MADE ONLY WHEN APPLICATION IS MADE BY SOLDIER HIMSELF

I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: *John Ullian*

ADDRESS (Number, Street, City and State): **214 Anderson Ave., Joliet, Illinois**

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS: *Linda Ferraro*

ADDRESS (Number, Street, City and State): **4 East Clinton St., Joliet, Illinois**

THIS AFFIDAVIT WILL BE FULLY EXECUTED WHEN APPLICATION IS MADE BY THE WIDOW OR WIDOWER OF A FORMER SOLDIER

I WAS MARRIED TO (Name of Soldier): _____ PLACE OF MARRIAGE: _____ DATE OF MARRIAGE: _____

PLACE OF DEATH OF FORMER SOLDIER: _____ DATE OF DEATH: _____

I HAVE SINCE REARRIED
 I HAVE NOT SINCE REARRIED

I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR (or affirm) THAT THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

SIGNATURE OF WIDOW OR WIDOWER: _____ ADDRESS: _____

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME A _____ SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL ADMINISTERING OATH (Seal): _____

WD AGO FORM 214
1 JUL 1945

REPLACES EDITION OF 1 JANUARY 1945 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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We do not have a copy of the discharge certificate he received as a result of his 1951 request, but shown below is a "Certification of Military Service" received by a family member in 1999. It shows that he was a Private in the Army from 3 Oct 1917 until 27 May 1919 and received an Honorable Discharge.

United States of America



Certification of
Military Service

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>This certifies that</i> | John Ullian 1 380 536 |
| <i>was a member of the</i> | National Army |
| <i>from</i> | October 3, 1917 |
| <i>to</i> | May 27, 1919 |
| <i>Service was terminated by</i> | Honorable Discharge |
| <i>Last Grade, Rank, or Rating</i> | Private |
| <i>Active Service Dates</i> | Same as Above |

Given at St. Louis, Missouri, on February 12, 1999

National Personnel Records Center
(Military Personnel Records)
National Archives and Records Administration

THE ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES IS THE PHYSICAL CUSTODIAN OF THIS PERSON'S MILITARY RECORD
(This Certification of Military Service is issued in the absence of a copy of the actual Report of Separation, or its equivalent. This document serves as verification of military service and may be used for any official purpose. Not valid without official seal.)