HERMAN CONRAD MEYER, US ARMY, ROCKWELL FIELD, SAN DIEGO, 1918-1919

WW1 MEMORABILIA DONATED BY HERMAN’S DAUGHTER, MARIE BOWEN

- One-page biography, first created for St. Helena High School’s WW1 Institute (Napa County, CA)
- Photocopy of Herman’s Draft Registration Card, 24 Aug 1918
- 3 photos of Herman (2 in uniform; 1 in biplane, Rockwell Field)
- 1 photo of planes over Coronado Island, San Diego, Thanksgiving Day, 28 Nov 1918
- Honorable Discharge, 13 Jun 1919, San Francisco
- Veterans of WW1 cap, Napa Chapter 929, with 2 pins attached
- Letter from friend Earl R. Shope, wagoner, AEF, France, written 15 Sep 1918. Earl died of Spanish Influenza/pneumonia, 17 Oct 1918 in France. Herman received letter 26 Oct 1918. (The sleeve containing Earl’s letter also has two items relating to Earl.)

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707.251.3969
Military service. My father was inducted into the U.S. Army October 23, 1918, at San Francisco, unaware WW1 would shortly end and unaware he would be a Spanish Influenza survivor. While serving as a mechanic at Rockwell Field, San Diego—the first U.S. Army school to provide flying training for military pilots—Herman became ill, along with many others. Due to his on-site care by one of his sisters, he survived, recalling later that he had “watched bodies being carried out of the tent.” He regained his health and was honorably discharged as Private 1st Class, Squadron D, December 17, 1918. He was 49 years old when I, his first child, was born, and, by that time, his only reference to his military service was simply to note that his sister had saved his life.

Childhood and adolescence. Herman was born in Pope Valley, Napa County, July 20, 1897, the youngest of six children. His parents, Swiss immigrants who had originally settled in St. Helena, owned a 32-acre farm a few miles from Henry Haus’ blacksmith shop (a landmark site now owned by the Napa County Historical Society). About 1910, Herman was apprenticed to Henry Haus, from whom he learned what would be his trade for all his adult life: blacksmithing and welding. In 1913, Herman and his parents moved to San Francisco, where he enrolled in mechanic’s classes, possibly at Heald College. Orphaned by 1916, he spent several years living with his brother’s family in Winters, Yolo County.

After the war.. Between 1919 and 1942, Herman worked as blacksmith and welder in his brother’s blacksmith shop in Winters. He served as volunteer fireman and volunteer deputy sheriff, and also played cornet in the Winters Band during his residence in that town. (In 1976, 35 years after leaving Winters, he led the town’s Centennial Parade as Honorary Fire Marshal.) I recall that in later years, he also played a mean harmonica and button accordion and was possibly the smoothest man on any dance floor.

After the next war.. When the U.S. entered WW2, Herman found employment as a mechanic at Mare Island Naval Shipyard. In 1943, he married 30-year-old Napa native and St. Helena resident Laura Delaney, whom he had courted since 1936. In 1946, after the birth of their first child in Napa, the couple relocated to San Francisco where Herman had a successful career at the naval shipyard at Hunter’s Point. A second daughter was born in 1948. In 1959, he retired, and the family returned to Napa.

Although his military service was unexpectedly brief, he remained intensely patriotic; one of his most prized possessions—and, for the past 32 years, mine—was the 50-star flag he purchased in 1959 and displayed often from our home’s front porch. He maintained annual membership, and was an active participant, in Veterans of WW1-Napa Barracks 929 and The American Legion-Napa Post 113 until his death. He also was a lifelong Oddfellow, receiving his 50-year “jewel” in the early 1970’s in Yolo County, and a member of Napa’s First Presbyterian Church.

Herman’s health began to decline in the late 1960’s, and he died February 9, 1977, in Napa. He is buried in St. Helena Public Cemetery. On the “Character” line of his 1918 Honorable Discharge is the word “Excellent,” which may be standard wording on any honorable discharge. However, that word was particularly apt and described his character for the rest of his life. Family and friends over six decades still recall him as one of the nicest persons they ever knew (and “Yolo County’s most talented welder”).

Marie Meyer Bowen, Napa, California; June 21, 2009
<table>
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<tr>
<th>4-1-23.B</th>
<th>Meyer-Herman Conrad 21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>543 Van Ness Ave., S.F. Cal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>July 20, 1897</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Napa Co., Cal.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Associated Bell Co.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1671 Illinois St., S.F. Cal.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Henry Meyer (Brother)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Knitting, Cal.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>720 Alico</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Regent Building</td>
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**LOCAL EXEMPTION BOARD**
DIVISION NO. 12
CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
238 CITY HALL.
Honorably Discharge from The United States Army

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify, That* Herman C. Meyer,

1883.506 Company B, 5th Armored Division, Russia,

THE UNITED STATES ARMY, as a Testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service, is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States by reason of Expiration of Term of Service, Oct. 9, 1916.

Said Herman C. Meyer was born in Pope Valley, in the State of California.

When enlisted he was 26 years of age and by occupation a Mechanic.

He had Brown eyes, Black hair, Dark complexion, and

5 feet 3 inches in height.

Given under my hand at San Francisco, this 13th day of June, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

By Command of Brig. Gen. W. H. B. Goldsborough

Commanding.

*Insert name, Christian name first; e.g., "John Doe.

†Enlist Army, serial number, rank, company and regiment or arm or corps or department; e.g., "1352769", "2nd Lieut. Company A, 1st Infantry"); "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps"); "Sergeant, First Class, Medical Department.

‡ If discharged prior to expiration of service, give number, date, and some of cause of full description of authority therefore.
Name: Herman C. Meyer

Enlisted, or Inducted, October 23, 1918, at San Francisco, Cal.

Serving in First enlistment period at date of discharge.

Prior service: * None

Noncommissioned officer: Never

Marksmanhip, gunner qualification or rating: * Not qualified

Horsemanship: Not known

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: None

Citation, Wound Badge, Medal of Honor

Knowledge of any vocation: Mechanic

Wounds received in service: None

Physical condition when discharged: Good

Typhoid prophylaxis completed December 5, 1918

Paratyphoid prophylaxis completed December 5, 1918

Married or single: Single

Character: Excellent

Remark: Entitled Travel Pay to San Francisco, Cal.

Signature of soldier: Herman C. Meyer

Presidio of S.F., Cal.

JUN 13, 1919

Paid: $75.00

Per mile: $0.50

By Capt. E. I. Winfield

Capt. 2 M. Corps, U.S. A.

By

* Give company and regiment or corps or department, with inclusive dates of service in each enlistment.

† Give date of qualification or rating and number, date, and source of order announcing same.
RECORDED AT REQUEST OF

[Signature]

June 3, A.D. 1932
11:41 A.M.

AND RECORDED IN VOL. 4 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS PAGE 253.

YOLO COUNTY RECORDS.

[Signature]

RECORER

DEP. RECORDER
Well old Tiber, I suppose you think I am a swell guy. I'd I guess I owe you thousand apologies so how they are. I really have ashamed of myself. I can't explain thing to you. Bumma but if I was which I could tell it would thrill ya.

I finally got on this side with out a mis gid and I am wonderning when I will get back the bay, we come out a long way from Powell & Ellis now. But we will get by somehow or other cause we sure got the divids on the run.

I have just received a letter from the folks at home and
They told me you bad been out to
the farm. Lord Boy, I sure
would like to see you myself.

You are a good man, you
kid! Well I expect my son
will too. I never dreamerd that
I would spend it on this size.

How do you like working
on Penn. The men is one swell
fellow to work with. Any body can
get along with him.

I have just completed 12
months course at a nautical
school. We are using these
big 150 HP $2,000. Deluxe
engines. They are as big and
powerful as a locomotive.

When I get back to the
States I ought to be a pretty
good gas engine man. What
Do you think.

I am surprised that you
are not married by now or thought you were going to marry that girl of yours. But it is better not to know. You are liable to go to war just like mine and come back home all shot to pieces then you and the girl would be in a swell fix. It won't be so bad for a man by himself, but pretty tough on the woman.

I suppose you know Sullivan is over here somewhere. I don't know how near he is to me but someplace about 47 kilometres away. However for that it is.

Well German Show more talk blaming so we have to earn the kind of bread as that is a very important work around here and we have to attend all of them.

Wishing you all the best in the world in case you start for our own

Best Regards to everybody

Faithful Old Friend

P.S. Send R. Cheve
Oct. 19, 1918 A.P.
American Expeditionary Forces
SOLDIERS' MAIL

Dated: Oct 30, 1918

To: Frank Murphy
754 Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

From: [illegible] 252-34

[illegible] 6th St.

[illegible] 20,

[illegible] 1-6.

[illegible] 132.


[illegible] 1-6.

[illegible] 132.
Funeral In France Re-enacted At Presidio

BY "PRIVATE BOB"

Two years ago, in a rain-soaked cemetery in France, Jos. Voos and Earl Shope, wounded in Battery B, 8th Coast Artillery Corps, and pals since boyhood, were laid to rest in adjoining graves.

Fred. K. Strickland, first sergeant of the battery, had charge of the funeral, conducted by the dead boys' comrades. As the dust fell upon their coffins, bugler Joe Shreves, of the same battery, sounded "Taps" for the departed pals — pals in life, pals together in the Great Adventure.

"At 11 o'clock today, in a rain

Such as poured down constantly in France, Jos. Voos and Earl Shope, still side by side, were buried in the national cemetery at the Presidio.

Fred. K. Strickland, their old bugle sergeant, was again in charge of the ceremonies. Joe Shreves again got out his old bugle, and sounded "Taps" over his departed comrades. The artillery unit which was first thing after maneuvered into federal service, and sent to France.

There were both inside and outside, and were "hunkies" in tents, in billets, and on train ports.

Both合同ed passages in modest France in 1917. Joe Voos died Oct. 16, 1918. Earl Shope died Oct. 17, 1918. Their cars had been fired over their graves when they were laid to rest in the little French town of Le Boursin.

The scene Radio — all San Franciscans — desired that the bodies should be buried side by side.

The close of the war brought about the exhuming of the bodies. They were shipped from France on the same vessel, in sealed caskets. Together, they arrived in San Francisco. Together they were placed in their final resting place today. Jos. Voos is survived by his father and mother, Mr. A. Voos, and a sister, Mrs. Stafford, 11th and Lake Sts. A mother and sister of Shope live at 500 Les Oficinas, Daly City.
Earl R Shope
Birth Aug 1897 in Texas
Death 17 Oct 1918 in Li Bourne, France

Timeline

1897
Birth
Aug
Texas

1900
Residence
Age: 3
Fresno city, Fresno, California

1910
Residence
Age: 13
Township 1, San Mateo, California

1918
Military
Jul
France
Age: 20
Private ("wagoner"), Bat. D, 62nd Art. CAC, 97th Div., American Expeditionary Force (AEF); serial # 823 405. Enlisted in SF's "Market St. Artillery" Jul 1918, sailed on HMS Baltic out of NJ.

1918
Death
17 Oct
Li Bourne, France
Age: 21
Died of Spanish influenza/secondary pneumonia during Meuse-Argonne offensive (as a wagoner, he was not in battle per se); he was one of over 5,000 "doughboys" to perish of Spanish influenza/pneumonia in October 1918. (See attached list of deaths.)

1918
Burial #1
Oct
Li Bourne, Gironde, Aquitaine, France
Age: 21
Buried next to his SF friend and fellow wagoner, Joseph Voss, who died of pneumonia 16 October.

1921
Burial #2
1 Jan
San Francisco National Cemetery, Presidio, San Francisco
Body returned from France to be buried at the Presidio, Section Naws Site 1441-A; also see findagrave.com Memorial # 3541916. Joseph Voss is buried beside him (Joseph's surname is spelled Voos in the article—correction has been requested).

Family Members
Parents
James Watson Shope
1871 - 1955
Sarah "Sallie" Stillwell
1875 -

Spouse & Children
No Spouse

Source Information
1900 United States Federal Census
1 citation provides evidence for Name, Birth, Residence

1910 United States Federal Census
1 citation provides evidence for Residence, Birth, Name

California, World War I Death Announcements, 1918-1921
2 citations provide evidence for Death, Name

California, World War I Death Announcements, 1918-1921
1 citation provides evidence for Custom Event

U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962
1 citation provides evidence for Name, Death

U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca.1775-2006
1 citation provides evidence for Death, Name

Web: California, Find A Grave Index, 1775-2006
1 citation provides evidence for Name, Death