

Matthew Cleary Post 255



American Legion Caledonia, NY



Matthew Thomas Cleary

Matthew Thomas Cleary, Born September 24, 1893, at Lima, NY. He grew up in Caledonia but attended school in Avon, which was closer. Father, James B. Cleary, and Mother, Margaret Hayes Cleary, moved to Avon, NY when Matt was in the military. Siblings included John J. Cleary and Raymond J. Cleary of Caledonia, Marie A. Cleary, Avon.

Citizenship, native, educated at Cathedral School, St. Agnes Grammar School, Avon, NY, Avon High School, June 21, 1910, and Rochester Business Institute, March 16, 1915. Civilian occupation as farmer on James B. Cleary farm on Route 5 in Caledonia.

Previous military experience, saw service on the Mexican border at McAllen, Texas with Troop M, 1st NY Cavalry during 1916 and 1917. Date of entry into the service, February 8, 1916. At the time of death he was Sergeant in company D, 105th Machine Gun Battalion, 27th Division.

Matthew T. Cleary enlisted in Troop M, 1st NY Cavalry, February 6, 1916. The following June his regiment with the entire National Guard was ordered to the Mexican Border owing to the serious border trouble. The 1st NY Cavalry made camp at McAllen, Texas and patrolled the border in the vicinity of that place till March 1917. Matt then mustered out of the Federal Service March 15, 1917 with the rest of Troop M. The 1st NY Cavalry was again Federalized in July 1917 and again responded to the call of his country and was sent to Camp Bliss, near NY City, and later to Spartanburg, SC (Camp Wadsworth) where the 1st Cavalry was dismounted and made into the 104th Machine Gun Battalion, 27th Division, American Expeditionary Forces (A. E. F.) and later turned into the 105th. In May 1918, he was moved to Camp Stewart at Newport News, VA, from which port he sailed to France on the SS Calamares, May 17, 1918. On May 28th there was a fight with several submarines; two were sunk. The Calamares arrived at St Nazaire on May 31, 1918.

Started training at St. Firmin June 7, 1918. Went into front line trenches near famous "Kimmel Hill", July 22, 1918. Severe fighting at Kimmel on September 1st and 2nd, Matt was gassed. Went back into the front lines again September 29-30th, battle of the famous "Hindenberg Line". On October 2nd ordered to Susaine area. Advanced to Burgangny on October 12th. Shelled on the road; October 16th, 105th Machine Gun Battalion fired 24 minute barrage under heavy bombardment; on October 17th battle of LaSalle River, Matt was killed at 5:30 AM at his gun on October 17, 1918. He was buried in American Cemetery at Busigny, Nord, France. On April 16, 1921, his body was brought home and buried in St. Agnes Cemetery, Avon NY

A SOLDIER' S FUNERAL
April 18, 1921
MATTHEW THOMAS CLEARY

AVON and CALEDONIA honor dead Soldier. Business suspended during the Military Funeral of Matthew T. Cleary, Company D 105th Machine Gun Battalion, 27th Division.

April 18th, 1921, the villages of Avon and Caledonia laid aside all business for a few minutes to-day to pay their last tributes to the memory of Sergeant Matthew T. Cleary, who met death at the Battle of LaSalle River, France, on October 16th, 1918 and whose funeral was held from St Agnes's Church in the Village of Avon, this morning at 10 o'clock.

Both the towns of Avon and Caledonia laid claims to "Matty Cleary." At the time that Troop M of the First Cavalry, National Guard was organized in Avon on March 31, 1914, Cleary lived with his parents on the Wadsworth farm, two miles west of the village, in the town of Caledonia. He was educated in the parochial school of St. Agnes Church in Avon, and later was graduated from Avon High School, and passed most of his spare time with his boy friends in this village. During the Mexican trouble his parents moved to Avon village, but his military record giving his address as "Caledonia" was never changed, and accordingly the "American Legion" post at Caledonia was given the privilege of naming their organization after him.

The body arrived from Hoboken on Saturday morning at 10 o'clock and was met at the station by a detail of men from the two posts and immediately taken to the residence of his father where it lay until this morning.

The funeral procession was headed by Captain Perry C. Buchner and a detail of twenty four men, mounted, from Troop M. Then followed the Avon Springs cornet band and about one hundred and twenty uniformed men from all branches of the service, members of Avon, Caledonia and Lima posts of the American Legion and former members

of old Troop M. The body was carried on a caisson, the casket being draped with the American flag. A body guard of sixteen men marched beside it. Members of the family followed the casket, together with a large number of motor cars and the Woman's Relief Corps.

At St. Agnes Church a solemn requiem mass was celebrated. Rev. Edward J. Lyons of Elmira, a relative of the deceased, was celebrant, with Rev. Geo. T. Jones of Geneseo as deacon and Rev. J. J. Ganey of Industry as sub-deacon. Rev. James T. Wood of Craig Colony was master of ceremonies. In the sanctuary were Rev. Father Farrell of Lima, Rev. Father McGillicuddy of Niagara University, Rev. Cornelius Hogan of St. Monica's Church, Rochester, and Rev. Wm. H. Darcy of Avon. Father Jones who was a chaplain of an American regimem in France preached the sermon.

At the conclusion of the mass, the procession moved to St. Agnes cemetery where burial was made. The funeral service of the American Legion was read by Captain S. J. Macy. A squad from "Troop M" fired three volleys over the open grave, and a bugler blew "taps."

During the progress of the funeral all business places were closed both in Avon and Caledonia; church bells were tolled, and flags at half staff.

Top article written in 1921 by past Caledonia Historian
Mrs. A. B. Johnson

A SOLDIER' S FUNERAL
(April 18, 1921 local Newspaper article)

Material provided by Caledonia Historian
Eileen J. LaFave

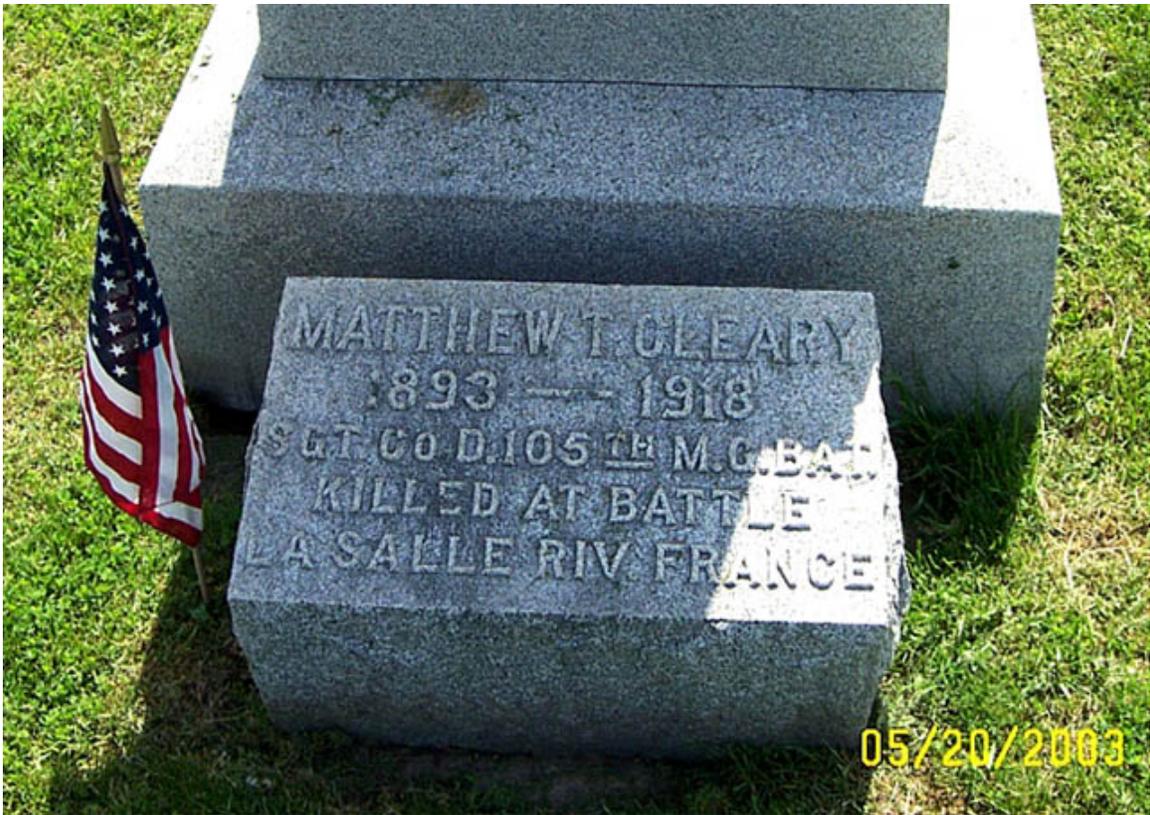
Cemetery photos courtesy of
Jake Davis / May 2003





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IN MEMORY OF
MATTHEW T. CLEARY
KILLED IN ACTION
OCT. 17, 1918
AMERICAN LEGION POST
NO. 255 CALEDONIA, N.Y.



27th DIVISION

American Expeditionary Forces



Insignia

The insignia is an "NY" in monogram and the seven principal stars of the constellation Orion, in compliment to the Division Commander,

Major General J. F. O’Ryan. A unique feature in connection with this insignia is that only soldiers rated by the company commanders "as first-class soldiers" were permitted to wear it.

Nickname

"New York" Division, as originally constituted from the New York National Guard

Background

New York National Guard units called into Federal Service on 15 July 1917, re-designated as the 27th Division on 18 July 1917. Division formed and trained at Camp Wadsworth, SC from 3 August 1917 - 27 April 1918. Movement overseas completed by 12 July 1918.

Primary Units

53d Infantry Brigade:
105th Infantry Regiment
106th Infantry Regiment
105th Machine Gun Battalion

54th Infantry Brigade:
107th Infantry Regiment
108th Infantry Regiment
106th Machine Gun Battalion

52d Field Artillery Brigade:

104th Field Artillery Regiment (75mm)

105th Field Artillery Regiment (75mm)

106th Field Artillery Regiment (155mm)

102d Trench Mortar Battery

Divisional Troops:

104th Machine Gun Battalion

102d Engineer Regiment

102d Field Signal Battalion

102d Train Headquarters and MP

102d Ammunition Train

102d Supply Train

102d Engineer Train

102d Sanitary Train

(Ambulance Companies & Field Hospitals 105, 106, 107, 108)