

THE JOSEPH M. CONNORS POST #139, AMERICAN LEGION

The history of Legion Post #139 is intertwined with the history of the town for the past half century, the post having celebrated its jubilee year in 1969, along with the National American Legion.

Early in 1919, Edward N. Wilson, expressing the sentiment of the majority of returned WWI servicemen, applied to the Mass. State Secretary of the American Legion, Leo A. Spillane, for permission to form a local Legion post. A formative meeting was held on July 19, 1919 at the Ayer Board of Trade, with 35 men present.

Dr. Bertrand H. Hopkins was elected temporary chairman and Mr. Wilson temporary secretary. It was voted unanimously to form a post and to apply for a charter. The name of the post was decided on after contemplating six names submitted by a committee. It honors Sergeant Joseph M. Connors, Machinegun Company, 26th U.S. Infantry, First Division, who was killed in action.

Sgt. Connors fell in the battle for Exermont, near Very, on the heights of the Aire, on October 4, 1918.

Frank Russell Mason, the then commander of the Post, in his eulogy of Joseph M. Connors, whose body was returned from the American Cemetery in Brioux, France, for interment in St. Mary's cemetery, Ayer, said of the final moments of Sergeant Connors and his Unit: "... So the armistice found them, their record perfect to the last, a division that never retreated, never failed to take an objective. Their pride, a division first in France, first in the lines, first in battle, and first in victory and worthy of its place in the van of the Army that changed the face of the world. And it was in the heights of the Aire, before Exermont near Very, while reconnoitering or consolidating position that Sergeant Joseph M. Connors "kept his rendezvous"; he fell mortally wounded by enemy shell fire, was evacuated to field hospital October 4, where he died. . ."

The fifteen men who signed the application for the charter were: Edward N. Wilson, Dr. Bertrand H. Hopkins, Victor L.F. Fillebrown, George L. Wilson, Homer J. Craft, John H. Hooley, George M. Barrows, Harry E. Fisher, George T. Burns, Rivareaus H. Wright, William H. Gray, Paul K. McGuane, Edward M. McGuane, Paul H. Robbins and Walter J. Carragan.

On Sept. 9, 1919 election of officers was held and the following elected: Commander, Dr. Bertrand H. Hopkins; Vice Commander, Martin S. Donahue; Adjutant, John H. Hooley; Finance Officer, Chester L. Campbell; Historian, George M. Barrows; Chaplain, Waldo E. Winslow, Auditor, George T. Burns; War Risk Officer, John H. Hooley; Employment Officer, George T. Burns.

Men from all walks of life have headed the local Post as Commander through its half century of existence. Following is the list of names and the year(s) they served: Dr. Bertrand H. Hopkins, 1919-20; Frank R. Mason, 1921-22; William J. Barrett, 1923; Edward E. Backus, 1924-25-26; Howard L. Burrill, 1927; John H. Hooley, 1928-29; Henry J. Clancy, 1930; Clarence M. Chase, 1931-32; George L. Wilson, 1933; Frank D. Lyons, 1937-38; Paul P. Durette, 1939-40; Ralph B. Livingston, 1941; Herbert L. Hardy, 1942-43; Leon J. Manion, 1944-45; Cyril F. Sleeper, 1946; Norbert C. Whitmore, 1947; Charles H. Prentiss, 1948; Stanley Salter, 1949; Ralph A. Morse, 1950; Robert H. Hebb, 1951; Donald E. Carleton, 1952; J. Maurice Naparstek 1953; Bertrand E. Cote, 1954; Ralph A. Morse, 1955; Roger A. Porter, 1956; Charles H. Smith, 1957-58; Vernon R. Gardner, 1959-60-61; Alva V. Cole, 1962-63; Joseph Brunnell, 1964; Robert W. Locke, 1965; Chester J. Zak, 1966; Phillip D. Gregoire, 1967; John A. Keese, 1968; Phillip D. Gregoire, 1969; Charles E. Thomas, 1970.

The Legion on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of

the Armistice dedicated four squares in town in memory of the four men who died while serving in World War I.

The square at Park and Main Streets was named for Joseph M. Connors, the square at Columbia and Main Streets was named for Percy W. Fowler, the square at Main and East Main Streets was named for Robert H. Sanders, the square at East Main Street and Harvard Road was named for Leon F. Briggs.

Commander John H. Hooley was in charge of dedication services and participating in the dedication and parade were many veterans, civic and fraternal organizations from Ayer as well as from neighboring towns.

Organization of Memorial Day observance had been the responsibility locally of the George S. Boutwell Post No. 48 GAR. In 1920 the Joseph M. Connors Post #139 A.L. participated for the first time as a unit in Memorial Day observances with seventy-five members of the Post in the line of march, as well as twenty-one GAR, and many other units.

In the 1922 observance, 1,200 troops from Camp Devens joined the line of march, and a highlight of the event was the lines drawn up by the soldiers to allow the GAR men in blue to pass.

Through the years the Legion Post has been in the forefront in making plans for the observance of Memorial Day and with the cooperation of other veterans and civic organizations has decorated squares, monuments, graves of veterans, attended memorial services and led the annual parade and memorial observance at designated sites at cemeteries and the naval service at the pond. (Several years ago, when the ranks of the Sons of Veterans of the Civil War thinned out so they could no longer attend to decorating the graves of the GAR, the Legion assumed that responsibility at their invitation).

October 25, 1930 saw one of the largest patriotic gatherings held in town, when 400 members of the Middlesex County Council were hosted by the local Post at the Town Hall and presided over by Past Commander John H. Hooley, County Commander. Among the honored guests were Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers, who spoke on sponsored veterans legislation, Captain Harry C. Snyder, Camp Devens Commanding Officer, who outlined the construction work going on at the Camp, and Captain Martin Beardsley, who traced the progress of the construction, culminating in the building of permanent housing and barracks, in keeping with a suggestion made by General John J. Pershing. Commander Alfred H. Knowles of the Loyal Legion and Commander Hiram S. Clark of the George S. Boutwell Post, GAR, 89 and 90 years of age respectively, were seated on the podium as special guests. The meeting adjourned to the vestry of the Unitarian Church for a banquet and entertainment by Teddy Beers and his Ensemble. Chairman John D. Carney of the Ayer Board of Selectmen, and other visiting civic and veteran dignitaries were present.

At the November 13, 1937 installation of the Post and Auxiliary at Eagles' Hall, Commander Hiram S. Clark was again the honored guest and received the plaudits of the assembled; he was the sole survivor of the George S. Boutwell Post, GAR, Ayer's oldest citizen and holder of the Boston Post cane.

In 1942 Installation was a joint affair of Post and Auxiliaries from Littleton, Ayer, Shirley, Groton, Pepperell and Townsend held at the USO building on West Main Street. This type of joint installation was a first in Department history. An unusual and colorful event was the entertainment in charge of Sergeant Arnold L. Woodall by a group of Fort Devens soldiers, all Indians, representing four different tribes and performing dances in full tribal costumes.

On October 27, 1946, the Post dedicated its new home, the former Masonic Service Center on Columbia and Newton

Streets. Following the dedication ceremonies, 27 new Legionnaires, 25 veterans of World War II and two of both World Wars were initiated into the Post.

The American Legion bowling team, a member of the Nashoba League, has been continuously active for more than three decades, largely due to the efforts of Past Commander Clarence M. Chase.

On October 23, 1958 another first occurred in Post history; Charles H. Smith was installed Commander and Mrs. Shirley Watson, Adjutant, the first woman to hold office. She had to change quickly from gown to uniform, having been installed moments earlier President of the Auxiliary. Congressman Edith Nourse Rogers was the honored guests and speaker of the evening. Mrs. Harry S. (Juliet) Allen, for many years Post correspondent was also honored that evening.

Through the years the Post has had many homes, rented, granted, or owned. In July 1919 it was the Board of Trade Rooms; February 1920 it was Carley's Block on Main St-

reet; October of that year found them in Dickinson's Block on Washington Street, in January 1922 they were in Page's Hose Building, 1 West Main Street. They met and held affairs at Hardy's Hall on Central Avenue, at the Eagle's Hall on Main Street, and elsewhere.

The building they owned since 1946 on Columbia Street, and for the improvement of which the members expended many days of work, was gutted by fire on the night of May 21, 1959. Commander Smith met with his officers and town officials to plan for the future and it was decided to purchase a lot of land on Sandy Pond Road near the Little Red School House and construct a building of cement blocks.

All through the years the Post has been active in the many facets of Legion services, allowing also time for fun while working. Their aim is to continue these services as long as there are war veterans to qualify for membership and there is need for their services.

THE LITTLETON - WESTFORD LODGE OF ELKS

On May 3, 1953 at the Concord Armory, Concord, Mass., the Littleton-Westford Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks #1861 was instituted by its Mother Lodge, Somerville B.P.O. Elks #917. Irving L. Stackpole District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler and his Grand Suite from the Somerville Lodge conducted the ritual.

Ten members with demits from Somerville Lodge #917 and one member from Lowell Lodge #87, with sixty-two local members, were the charter members initiated by officers from Somerville Lodge #917.

The newly elected officers of the Littleton-Westford Lodge were headed by John H. O'Donnell, its founder and first Exalted Ruler, and installed by officers from Concord Lodge #1479 and Lowell Lodge #87.

In November 1953, at Sunset Crossing, Route 119, Groton the first lodge home was established.

It was at this time the Littleton-Westford Emblem Club #244 was instituted. Its first president was Mrs. June C.

Trepanier of Littleton.

In June 1955, the permanent Littleton-Westford Elks Home, on Coolidge Avenue, Forge Village was established under the administration of Mathew J. Harding, and on Sunday, September 30, 1956, the Formal Dedication of the Littleton-Westford B.P.O. Elks #1891 was officially performed.

From May 3, 1953 to the present, the Littleton-Westford Lodge of Elks has grown from seventy-three charter members to a roster of 252.

The Elk principals of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity, have prevailed in the community, benefiting the neighboring towns with the great principals of the great fraternal order.

It is with a great deal of pride and satisfaction that we extend to our members and residents of our neighboring town of Ayer, congratulations and best wishes for continued prosperity and growth.



St. Mary's Church And Parsonage 1902

TOWN HONORS HER HERO'S MEMORY

Fitting Tribute Rendered To Sgt. Joseph M. Connors, Only Ayer Soldier To Pay Supreme Sacrifice While On Overseas Duty

A fitting tribute to the memory of Ayer's only soldier to give his life while on overseas duty during the World war was rendered yesterday when funeral services for Sgt. Joseph M. Connors were held from St. Mary's church and interment was in St. Mary's cemetery. Full military honors were accorded.

The body which arrived from Hoken Saturday morning, lay in state in the town hall with a vigil and guard of four men from the local post of the American Legion named for the returned dead until services Sunday. The casket was draped with an American flag upon which lay a photograph of the deceased and grouped about were floral tributes from the family, the American Legion the Board of Trade and friends. During Saturday afternoon and evening and until the services Sunday there was a continuation of visitors to the hall to pay their respect to the departed.

All flags on public buildings were half masted, places of business were closed, and church bells were tolled during the exercises.

At 1.30 p. m. the escort was formed in front of the town hall, the band and firing squad from the 36th infantry first in line, followed by the official escort, the members of Joseph M. Connors Post, American Legion, who preceded the caisson upon which rested the flag-draped coffin. The family were followed in line by representatives of the G. A. R., commander Daniel H. Dickinson, Henry Leavitt, Hiram S. Clark, and O. P. Robinson in machines offered by George H. Brown. Next in line was the Board of Trade, and lastly other friends and sympathizers.

From the hall the body was borne to St. Mary's church. The family were seated in the left front with seats reserved for the various attending organizations. Ushers were of the American Legion. Music was by the choir. Mrs. Charles Lothrop sang the processional and Manuel Perreault the recessional. Prayer and benediction were offered by Rev. George A. Reardon, pastor of the church. Rev. William Reardon, pastor of Sacred Heart church of Groton gave the eulogy and spoke most simply, most directly, with a stirring appeal to militant christianity, to a return to the faith of our fathers, for a rededication of ourselves to the cause for which our comrades gave their all. He ended with exultant faith, proclaiming the triumph of Faith over Doubt, of Life over Death.



SERGT. JOSEPH M. CONNORS

The cortege proceeded out Park street to St. Mary's cemetery, where, with the family in front of the grave, the firing squad and band facing south, the Legion and Board of Trade in crescent opposite and friends grouped encircling them the last rites and honors were paid. Final prayers were said by Rev. Thomas Breanan of St. Mary's church. As earth was returned to earth three volleys rang out and the echoes of taps voiced the soldier's farewell and requiem.

Funeral director Amos Mahony was in charge. Theodore H. Clark, Walter Carrigan, Leon G. Wilson, Frank P. Griffin, Walter E. Wheeler and Martin H. Donahue acted as pall bearers. Transportation was most kindly furnished for military units by George H. Brown, Alfred Yates, Herbert Hardy and Martin H. Donahue. The arrangements were under direction of Commander Frank R. Mason of the American Legion.

A tribute to the memory of Sgt. Connors from the pen of Commander Frank R. Mason of the local post of the American Legion will be printed tomorrow.

APRIL 25, 1921
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VOL. XIV. NO. 130

AYER, MASS., TUESDAY,

TO SERG'T CONNORS

Dulce Et Decora Est Pro Patria Mori

A tribute from Commander Frank R. Mason of the American Legion.

With the funeral of Sgt. Joseph M. Connors, Machine Gun Company, 26th Infantry, Sunday afternoon, with his body present with us, voices reach us,—voices of an era how long past! It is easy to forget, and we, it seems, are fast forgetting that but lately men in thousands were dying, in hundreds of thousands were risking death, mutilation, enduring the agony of battle, creating a new tradition of manhood at our command. One does not talk of the war nowadays. We are tired of the war and of hearing about it,—the most dramatic, stupendous fact in our history! The clustered graves overseas, the path of glory that led to them. A tale that is told! The voices of the guns are stilled. Other voices not less raucous, not less sinister are heard. In the babel of them cynicism finds its chance. A wave of selfishness has swept over the country. Those in authority, even, have told us that "the gleam we followed" was not what it seemed; that we fought for narrow and almost sordid ends.

But after the restlessness of his wanderings, all that remains of Sgt. Joseph M. Connors, transplanted from the soil of France, where the ashes of American dead are held in especial veneration, has returned home to rest in the quiet village cemetery of Ayer.

With the events of those stirring times thus forcibly brought back to us we pose to ourselves the question. If the sacrifice of all these young Americans was not what it seemed, if our present attitude of cynicism and world weariness is correct, how can generous souls accept such sacrifice?

The story of Joseph M. Connors is that of hundreds of others,—from all walks of life, those of sterling character and intelligence, those of aimless purpose, the purposeful, the unlettered, the adventurous, the drifting, the native-born, and the foreign,—Americans all,—met on the common ground of the ranks of the army, especially the service of before the war.

There was a time in the third day before Soissons,—it was related to me nearly a year afterward by a fatherly hack driver in the south of France who had been a territorial in the French army,—as by others

Toward nightfall there was a lull in the storm. Just at dusk you came to the slope leading up the knoll, and everywhere you looked the trampled wheat was dotted by recumbent figures. There was one field of two or three acres, on which it seemed you could not have stood ten feet from some one of those figures. They might have been wearied troops that had thrown themselves down to sleep. They slept indeed the sleep no earthly reveille could disturb. Could you have seen that silent number under the summer twilight—It was not gruesome then, and it was not all tragedy. There lay the best of American manhood not dead or sleeping, but alive so long as we will it to live. For America, if it is anything lasting, means what they showed—free, unswerving loyalty to an ideal. Who shall say that they who died there lacked vision of that ideal even though on their un schooled tongues it never became articulate? They paid to the uttermost for their faith.

Joseph M. Connors was born in Antigonish, N. S., June 4, 1893. When he was two years old, his parents removed to Ayer and here he grew up. Educated in the public schools, for a time he worked as a lineman for the N. E. Tel. & Tel. Co. In 1911 he enlisted and was assigned to M Co., the 26th Infantry. In those days to be a member of the U. S. army was scarcely respectable but how quickly opinion shifts when these professional soldiers stand out as the thin first line of the defence of the nation. The importance of the training the army received on the Mexican border cannot be overestimated. And here, having put on the uniform symbolical of his oath and of his duties, the story of Joseph M. Connors is merged with that of his unit and the cause. He rose through the rank of corporal to that of sergeant. In 1915 he re-enlisted at Texas City, Tex., and was with M Co., 26th Infantry, when, on the President's proclamation of a state of war with Germany, the First Division was formed from the 26th and 28th Infantry (the 2nd Infantry Brigade), the 16th and 18th Infantry (the 1st Infantry Brigade), the 1st P. A. Brigade, the 1st Engineers, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Machine Gun Battalions and the 2nd Field Signal Battalion. Headquarters landed in France in June 1917, and by August

IR NEWS

WEEKLY, APRIL 25, 1921

EPPELLE NEWS, THE DUNSTABLE NEWS AND HOLLIS TIMES

AUGUST 16, 1921

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Their training was perfected in the Toul sector, always in sight of the grim heights of Mount Sec, which nearly a year later they were to turn in the first "All-American" offensive of St. Mihiel.

Can anyone ever forget the early months of 1918, when the Russian resistance in the East had crumbled and had culminated in the peace of Brest-Litovsk, thus releasing the German forces in the East to overwhelm the Allied resistance on the Western front in the heralded and boasted German offensive of March. America had been in the war nearly a year, there had been talk of ideals, of American troops to come, but as yet the monthly arrivals had barely reached the figure of 30,000. And the question everywhere was would these troops fight? The Germans had based their submarine campaign on the prediction that American troops would not arrive, could not be transported in the face of submarine attack, and would not fight if they did arrive. And France, after four years of unbearable taxation, of the loss of her best, of untold sacrifice, saw all her efforts about to be of no avail before the spring drive. Who can forget the suppressed air of despondency everywhere; the placards in the shops against even talk that would further depress those at home; the rumors of the mutiny of two French regiments at Lyons; the treachery of the Russian regiments with the French; the pressing need for our Red Cross among the civil population?

And then came the consolidation of the Allied armies under one command, that of General Foch,—and Pershing's offer of American divisions. The First Division found itself in the French Defensive sector, rushed by train and truck from the Toul sector. There was an insignificant village of not great importance in the line,—Cantigny. But the Germans realized the importance of this first appearance of American troops in an Allied attack. Hadn't they proclaimed loudly that American troops would not fight? Carefully the plans were matured.

The barrage was laid and the infantry advanced, entered the village, and held on. Seven times the Germans concentrated their fire of gas and high explosive and counter attacked with their best guard divisions, only to be repulsed each time. And the joyful news went forth; had an electrical effect. New American troops in a local engagement had taken their objective and held it in the face of repeated counter efforts by the best enemy shock troops. To every unit of the French and British armies was the communique read, and by every town crier in every village in France.

Then came Soissons, July 18, 1918—their real test. For five days, almost without sleep, with food supply almost shut off they took their part in Mangin's counter offensive which with the efforts of their French comrades, and that of the 2nd Division at Belleau Woods, at Bourresches, and at Chateau Thierry, first halted and then started in retreat the Germans.

At St. Mihiel, Sept. 12, 1918, the first offensive by an American army under American direction, they acquired the confidence in themselves and the perfection of open warfare necessary for the ordeal of the Meuse Argonne.

Two weeks after St. Mihiel the division faced a new front. The initial payment of the Marne was bearing fruit. Since the morning of July 18 the Allied pressure had not ceased. From the North Sea to the Argonne the enemy was recoiling, recoiling under the blows of the British, French and American armies in turn. The Hindenburg line had been broken and now from the west bank of the Argonne massif to the River Meuse a great American army—nearly all the fighting divisions—had been assembled for the attack.

A terrible terrain, the most difficult naturally on all the Western front:

High hills, narrow defiles, and thick forests fortified through four years, by every means the German craft could devise, square miles of intricate wire entanglements, ambuscades of hidden machine gun nests, masses of guns of all calibres, a maze of death traps. During those first two weeks the First had earned the name of the Gypsy Division. By day they lived in the woods, bivouaced on the ground, out of sight of the enemy planes. Every night they moved, sometimes by trucks, at other times by long wearisome hikes along slippery, hilly roads to some other woods.

And then something went wrong. One of the attacking divisions found itself unable to take the heights of Exermont, a key to positions in the center of the German lines. On the night of Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 the First took over the sector.

(Continued on Page Three)

SERGT. JOSEPH M. CONNORS

(Continued from Page One)

There was no fluttering of flags, no playing of bands to announce that a fresh division was going in; only a silent, stealthy approach over shrapnel-swept slopes through gas-filled valleys. But news has a way of getting out even in the army, and it is told all along the hard-driven line; the next morning went a thrill of new confidence as the word passed: "The old First is in before Exermont."

For three days they held the line and that in itself was a costly business. On the 4th they went over the top. "Over the top," a common phrase nowadays. But do we quite get the picture? You lie at dusk on some bleak, shell-torn hillside clinging to the scanty shelter of your fox hole. Down the line the word passes "In the morning we go over." There is nothing to do; you are ready. You try to sleep; you cannot, there is the long night for that. A faint glimmer of light shows. A supreme moment. Never did life seem so sweet. Suddenly the air above is filled with invisible shrieking demons. Before you a wall of bursting shells—your barrage. You see your captain stand, his arm sweep forward. You rise and follow him out from cover. And then to the thunder before you is added another sound—the enemy's shells are bursting overhead. Fragments whistle about you, strike before you. To your left a man falls, to your right another. Your file leader goes down. You step forward into his place. And then still another sound is caught, the sinister pup, pup, pup of the machine guns, rising until it dominates even the roar of the shells. The world seems alive with hissing, crackling things. Men go down in groups. You feel terribly alone, but you walk steadily ahead. The idea is simple; to keep going in the hope that when the objective is reached enough men will be left to take and hold it. If there are that is victory; if there are not—well, you will not know it.

You come at last to a band of wire only partially destroyed by your guns. You push your way carefully through and then as your barrage sweeps over what was a tree clump, you sight just ahead a black swaying tube—perhaps glaring down it a face. A sudden red fury,—hatred of the thing trying to take your life comes upon you. You grip your rifle, fix your eyes on a point just under his chin and plunge forward.

So they went that Oct. 4th, and as the old regulars had fought and died on the bloody heights of Soissons, so on the Aire the veterans and the men of the draft fell and achieved and when they halted for the night the heights of Exermont had been taken. More than 12,000 infantry had gone into the lines; a few over 2000 went back. Since June 15 they had had only three weeks out of the battle lines. They had taken 200 enemy guns and 8861 prisoners. They had advanced 51 kilometers against enemy resistance, much of it the most difficult encountered by any of the Allied armies and they had paid more than 28,332 in killed and wounded, mostly from the infantry. So the armistice found them, their record perfect to the last,—a division that never retreated and never failed to take an objective. Their pride, a division first in France, first in the lines, first in battle and first in victory and worthy of its place in the van of the army that changed the face of the world.

And it was on the heights of the Aire, before Exermont near Vety, while reconnoitering or consolidating position that Sgt. Joseph M. Connors "kept his rendezvous." He fell mortally wounded by enemy shell fire, was evacuated to field hospital Oct. 4 where he died. He was buried in the American cemetery near Brievex (Meuse).

His regiment was decorated by the French and is entitled now to wear the fouragere, comparable to the individual decoration of the Croix de Guerre. His family may well take pride in his citation for gallantry in action and meritorious service.

Headquarters First Division.

The Commander-in-Chief has noted in this division a special pride of service and a high state of morale never broken by hardship nor battle.

G. O. No. 20, G. H. Q.

A. E. F. 10 Nov. 1918.

General Order No. 1, Jan. 1, 1920
Extract No. 5560.

The Division Commander cites the following officers and soldiers for gallantry in action and especially meritorious service.

Sgt. Joseph M. Connors

Machine Gun Co., 26th Infantry, who died Oct. 6, 1918, of wounds received in action in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

By Command of:
Maj. Gen. Summerall
Stephen D. Frequa
Col. G. S. C. of S.

Official:

R. E. Fralle
Lieut. Col. A. G. D.
Div. Adjt.

The war has receded to the dim past. But it is such a day as this that again charges our souls. Have we broken faith? Have we picked up the torch? Have we really dedi-

honest with ourselves. We must know the truth, as we would be free.

The influence of the frontier still moulds us and our destiny. The spirit of adventure is still afloat, and marks our youth as a nation. And who shall say that it was not this spirit of gallant adventure, of eager quest, that led Joseph M. Connors to enlist in the regular army of the United States where so much of romance has been found? We may have confidence that he chose the man's part, 'that he to his pledged word was true', that he bore himself throughout with high courage, that he 'greeted the unseen with a cheer.'

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me;
Here he lies where he longed to be.
Home is the sailor, home from the sea
And the hunter home from the hill."

Indebted to a History of the First Division by Henry Russell Miller for material, etc.

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SIX WEEKLIES COMBINED AS A DAILY

THE AYER NEWS, THE SHIRLEY NEWS, THE GROTON NEWS, THE PEPPERELL NEWS, THE DUNSTABLE NEWS AND HOLLIS TIMES

VOL. XIV. NO. 128

AYER, MASS., SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1921

SGT. CONNORS' BODY ARRIVES

To Lie In State In Town Hall To-
day, And Funeral Will Be
Sunday

The body of Sgt. Joseph M. Connors, son of Michael Connors of Park street, the only Ayer boy to lose his life "Overseas" in the World war, arrived in town this morning from Hoboken on the State of Maine express due to arrive at 3.55 o'clock.



SERGT. JOSEPH M. CONNORS

The body will lie in state in the town hall today from noon until tomorrow at 1.30 when it will be escorted to St. Mary's church where funeral services will take place, following which the interment will be in St. Mary's cemetery.

The ceremonies will be in charge of Joseph M. Connors post, American Legion, Frank R. Mason commander, who will be assisted by a committee of the Ayer Board of Trade, the latter organization as well as the post marching in a body.

All ex-service men are urged to be present.

R N E W S

EX. APRIL 25, 1921

PPERELL NEWS, THE DUNSTABLE NEWS AND HOLLIS TIMES

AGUST 13, 1921

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