

Forgotten Heroes of World War I:  
Pfc. Preston W. Rushing and the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion

Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls

Early Life to 1918

Preston Whitfield Rushing was born in Decaturville, Tennessee on October 8, 1887, the son of Greenberry Rushing, a native of Decatur County, Tennessee, and Mary Catherine Hendrix Rushing, a native of Thomasville, Georgia. He was raised in Decaturville and moved to Jackson, Tennessee, on November 1, 1904. He was hired by *The Daily Sun* in the press room and stereotype department; the newspaper was owned and operated by E. S. Trussell of Ohio on Baltimore Street, in downtown Jackson. In May 1907 Rushing was named press foreman and continued to work for the newspaper when it became *The Jackson Sun* in 1912. He was 30 and a half years old when he was called to serve in World War I. He was inducted in Jackson on April 8, 1918 as a Private and assigned to Company B of the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion (FSB).<sup>1</sup> The diary of his wartime service is deceptively small.<sup>2</sup> The slim 4 x 3 inches notebook with dark cardboard cover is short but dramatic and provides a rare glimpse into the work field signal engineers performed at two crucial moments during the Great War. The diary gives details about the transportation, training, and operations of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB, and about “detail work” laying telephone cables and building telephone stations in areas very close to the front. Remarkably void of the usual complaints about weather conditions, British food rations, or daily living conditions, the diary nonetheless conveys raw battlefield emotions experienced by a young man thrown into the torment of war in a foreign country.

In early 1918, as the American Expeditionary Forces prepared to be deployed on the Western front, the Army attached one Field Signal Battalion to each U.S. Division to provide communication systems for all forms of visual signaling (aviation, ground communications, including pigeon couriers, telegraph, telephone, radio, photography, and meteorological services). The telephone service involved installing above ground poles and cables and buried cables (trench wiring) to insure communication between the front line and the Division Headquarters. A Field Signal Battalion consisted of 15 officers and 459 men organized in three companies. Company B was in charge of radio communications and of laying and operating

---

<sup>1</sup> *World War Record of Ex-Soldiers of Madison County State of Tennessee*. War Record of Preston W. Rushing. Jackson Madison County Public Library. Tennessee Room. P. 144.

<sup>2</sup> “Diary of Preston W. Rushing.” Hortense Hearn Rushing Collection. Tennessee Room, Jackson Madison County Public Library. Vertical Files, Folder 1.

telephone cables and stations. It was led by 3 officers and had usually 75 enlisted men. A headquarters, company staff, and two platoons with 2 sections each completed this organization.<sup>3</sup>

Pvt. Rushing was a telephone lineman in the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB that was attached to the 30<sup>th</sup> Division and led by Major S.C. Van Deuse.<sup>4</sup> His platoon and commanding officers are unknown at this time, because the records of individual Field Signal Battalions have rarely been studied, and because Covid prevented their consultation at the time of the present research. In the case of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB, it is useful to correlate its history with that of the unit with which it was the most closely associated, the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division, whose records match every detail noted in Pvt. Rushing's diary.<sup>5</sup> Nicknamed "Old Hickory," the 30<sup>th</sup> Division was a Tennessee National Guard unit formed from Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina National Guardsmen in October 1917 at Camp Sevier, N.C.<sup>6</sup> By 1918, the 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions were the two divisions left in the American II Corps; they were the only U.S. Divisions placed under the command of the British Army for the entire duration of their deployment on the Western front.<sup>7</sup> The men received their baptism of fire at the Ypres-Lys battle in July-August, then helped break the Hindenburg Line in the St. Quentin Canal area in the Somme in September-October, an engagement that was critical in winning the war.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Douglas J. Orsi. "The Effectiveness of the U.S. Army Signal Corps in Support of the American Expeditionary Force Division and Belowmaneuver Units During World War I." MMAS Thesis, 2001. PP. 17 ff.

<sup>4</sup> "105<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion, Major S.C. Van Deuse, commanding, Camp Sevier, S.C., March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918." Photograph. Library of Congress. [https:// www.loc.gov/item/2007664376/](https://www.loc.gov/item/2007664376/). Accessed June 8, 2020. The American Battle Monuments Commission has one page devoted to the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion, 30<sup>th</sup> Division. The five names mentioned did not belong to Company B.

<sup>5</sup> Rebecca Robbins Raines. *Getting the Message Through. A Branch History of the U.S. Army Signal Corps*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015. Max L. Marshall, ed. *The Story of the U.S. Army Signal Corps*. Franklin Watts. 1965. Abraham Lincoln Lavine. *Circuits of Victory*. 2014. The records of the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion located at the NARS have never been fully studied.

<sup>6</sup> "World War I American Expeditionary Forces Table of Organization, 1917-1919." Wikipedia. [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/World\\_War\\_I\\_American\\_Expeditionary\\_Forces\\_Table\\_of\\_Organization,\\_1917-1919](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/World_War_I_American_Expeditionary_Forces_Table_of_Organization,_1917-1919) Accessed September 11, 2019. Also "Brief Histories of Divisions, U.S. Army 1917-1918." Prepared in the Historical Branch, War Plans Division, General Staff. June 1921. <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a438001.pdf> Accessed June 5, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers divisional engineers of the "Old Hickory" (30<sup>th</sup>) Division*. George H. Doran Co., 1919. P. iii. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p15012coll10/id/510/>. Accessed June 20, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> "30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (United States)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/30th\\_Infantry\\_Division\\_\(United\\_States\)#World\\_War\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/30th_Infantry_Division_(United_States)#World_War_I) Accessed September 11, 2019.

### Enlisting and Training (April 8, 1918 – May 20, 1918)

The first page of the diary is inscribed with Pfc. Rushing's name and address, followed by a list of 58 men's names and address. If Pvt. Rushing's list of the men of Company B is complete, the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB was a bit smaller than other B companies. The men came from as far as Fargo, North Dakota, Plimsee, Michigan, Brooklyn, New York, and Roosevelt, Arizona. Of these 59 men, 29 were from Tennessee, 5 from North Carolina, 3 from South Carolina, and 22 from 14 other states. This list indicates that its writer was a mature, credible witness.<sup>9</sup> Dated entries start on page 14:

Diary of P. W. Rushing in world war. Enlisted in army at Camp Sevier, S. C.  
8<sup>th</sup> of April 1918.

April 9. Sent to isolation camp where I am to spend two weeks

April 23 Released from the isolation camp report to 105<sup>th</sup> field signal Battalion where I begin training.<sup>10</sup>

### Sailing to France and Training with the British (May 20 – July 5, 1918)

On May 20 the men of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB boarded a train for Washington, D.C. They were "permitted to march through the City and to the Capitol" on May 21. The next day, they entrained for Newark, N.J., were taken by boat down the Hudson River "around lower Manhattan" to Hoboken, and entrained "for convoy mills" at noon. Pvt. Rushing does not indicate whether they were allowed to see the sites of New York City like other infantry troops during the next four days.<sup>11</sup> On May 26, Company B was brought back to Hoboken pier to board "the Ermack. A British freighter." Having been told that they were to sail the next day, Company B spent the afternoon "seeing as much of the ship as possible."

On May 27 "We sail Bidding the good old U.S.A. Good Bye. But every Body happy."<sup>12</sup> Company B disembarked at Liverpool at noon on June 7 and transferred to London, "where we are given a great welcome by the English people," then arrived in Dover at 8:30 pm to spend the night there. June 8 must have been a day of rest. In the morning of June 9 Pvt. Rushing

---

<sup>9</sup> "Diary of Preston W. Rushing." Op. Cit., pp. 1-14.

<sup>10</sup> "Diary of Preston W. Rushing." P. 14. The punctuation and spelling have been preserved in transcription.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Birdwell. "Old Hickory and the Hindenburg Line." Op. Cit., p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 15-17. The "Ermack" is possibly the one listed as the 9034 ERMAK 1899-1901 VIA OCL in the World Ocean Circulation Experiment.

[https://www.nodc.noaa.gov/woce/woce\\_v3/wocedata\\_1/help/shipnames\\_by\\_name.htm](https://www.nodc.noaa.gov/woce/woce_v3/wocedata_1/help/shipnames_by_name.htm).

noted that “we can hear the rumbling of the big guns. Realize we are about to get where the big show is being staged.” At 10 am Company B boarded a steamer headed for Calais, France’s northernmost port and a major hub for US troops.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, the other units of the 30<sup>th</sup> were arriving at Calais between May 14 and June 24. The artillery was reassigned, leaving the 30<sup>th</sup> comprised of the 117<sup>th</sup>, 118<sup>th</sup>, 119<sup>th</sup>, and 120<sup>th</sup> infantry regiments, the 113<sup>th</sup>, 114<sup>th</sup>, 115<sup>th</sup> machine-gun battalions, the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers, and the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB. The new 30<sup>th</sup> was attached to the II British Army in support of the 39<sup>th</sup> British Division which had just suffered significant losses in the spring 1918 German offensive near Ypres. From Calais, the soldiers of the 30<sup>th</sup> were transported 19 miles southeast of Calais to be equipped, fed, trained, and armed by the British in the Éperlecques area, at their training camp of Inglinghem.<sup>14</sup>

The men of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB went a separate way. They walked about 1 ½ mile to a rest camp where they were housed 15 men to a tent. Pvt. Rushing noted, “General outlook is somewhat gloomy.” On June 10, a five-mile hike took them to receive British gas masks and steel helmets and gas mask instructions by a British sergeant. On June 13, they hiked through Calais to entrain for a 10 miles ride to the hamlet of Nortquerque. Pfc. Rushing noted, “forty men are assigned to each box car we are expecting a long ride. after riding thirty minutes are ordered to unload. Hike seven miles arrive at nordkirque. where we are to be billeted about half of the company and myself are assigned to a stable for sleeping quarters.”<sup>15</sup>

There are no entries from June 13 to June 22; the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB was training in alternating fair weather and rain. As reported by the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers, 30 days of sea travel and physical inactivity left the men with stiff legs and limbs after their long marches.<sup>16</sup> On June 22, Company B hiked 6 miles to rejoin the 30<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters at the village of Nordausques. The lack of diary entries between June 22 and July 2 indicates more training and more marches. Then on July 2 the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB was ordered to Ypres. The men marched seven miles eastwards on July 2 and spent “another night in dog tents near Watton” (the village of Watten at the Franco-Belgian border). They marched all day on July 3, sleeping in dog tents again, crossed into Belgium, and arrived at Watou on July 4. Having covered 21 miles in three days, they were allowed to rest on Friday, July 5. Eleven days later, on July 16, the infantry units of the 30<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Divisions reached Ypres. The 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers reached Proven on July 18.

---

<sup>13</sup> “Diary of Preston W. Rushing.” Op. Cit., p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> “Brief Histories of Divisions, U.S. Army, 1917-1918.” Prepared in the Historical Branch, War Plans Division, General Staff. June 1921. Manuscript. <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a438001.pdf> . Accessed June 5, 2020. The Battle of Ypres-Lys. [http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/YL\\_Website/](http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/YL_Website/) Accessed June 4, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> “Diary of Preston W. Rushing.” Op. Cit., p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 30.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Division was the first American Division to enter Belgium and officers of the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers officers the first ones to cross the border during their reconnaissance trip to Ypres on June 18.

The soldiers of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division were billeted close to the British lines, perhaps in huts built by the British in protective oak tree groves near Poperinge, halfway between Watou and Ypres. In accordance with British Army regulations, the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers and the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB were billeted in the training area 15 miles from the front. The men slept on the floor in huts that one soldier called “Dirty Bucket.”<sup>17</sup> While distant enough to be safe, Watou and Proven exposed rookie soldiers to the sound of gunfire and to the realities of the war. The Watou municipal website today boasts that the village was generally a quiet resting place behind the lines during the war,<sup>18</sup> which is somewhat misleading since fighting occurred all around the village. Pvt. Rushing noted that it was shelled on at least one occasion, on August 3.

#### Into the Ypres Salient – the Battle of Ypres-Lys (July 6 – August 31, 1918)

Action on the Ypres front was stagnant during the summer of 1918 in part, the British complained, because the bulk of the Allied forces was concentrated in the Somme area. High hopes were thus placed on the American II Corps which was to relieve the British 98<sup>th</sup> Brigade and break through the German defense lines. The frontline area to the south of Ypres was a nightmarish landscape scarred by barbed wire, abandoned freight cars, and ruined houses. The canal zone contained the Ypres salient that extended from Zillebeke Lake to the southeast of Voormezele; it was a low ground area dotted with bomb craters filled with water. The German positions on neighboring hills (Observatory Ridge, Passchendaele Ridge, Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, and Kemmel Hill) allowed them “a clear field of fire in all directions.”<sup>19</sup>

The 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers and the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB worked closely together. First, the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers began constructing a defense system around Poperinge in the rear of the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> British Divisions, and did “an immense amount of trench and wire construction.”<sup>20</sup> For Pvt. Rushing, drill and wire cart practice started on July 6. On July 9, the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion hiked to what Pvt. Rushing called “a British camp” and “Chateau Louie.” This was actually the De Lovie castle, located on La Lovie Road, 5 miles northeast of Watou and halfway

---

<sup>17</sup> Mitchell A. Yockelson, *Borrowed Soldiers. Americans under British Command, 1918* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: 2008). p. 99. Mitchell Yockelson. “Borrowed Soldiers: The American 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions and the British Army on the Ypres Front, August-September 1918.” Historical Army Foundation. <https://armyhistory.org/borrowed-soldiers-the-american-27th-and-30th-divisions-and-the-british-army-on-the-ypres-front-august-september-1918/> Accessed September 11, 2019. See also Sullivan and Tucker. Op. Cit, p. 22-23.

<sup>18</sup> “Watou.” Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watou>. Accessed October 7, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Mitchell Yockelson. “Borrowed Soldiers: The American 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions.” Op. Cit.

<sup>20</sup> “The History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers. Op. Cit., p. 3.

between Poperinge and Proven. This impressive 19<sup>th</sup> century building whose park was landscaped like an English garden, was the headquarters of French and English army corps.<sup>21</sup> On July 10, Pvt. Rushing built a telephone dugout test station, and on July 12, he constructed his first telephone dugout. These were the telephone stations closest to the front lines. He noted, “Fritz bombing planes very active during night” on July 13. His company returned to Watou on July 16 after having spent one week “with the Tommies”.<sup>22</sup> He was detailed to “corral” for wire cart practice on July 17, returning to Company B on July 24. He noted again on July 25 that enemy bombing planes were “very active” during the night. On July 28, “Jerry shells our camp during night no damage.” On Sunday, July 29, Company B rested, having been exposed to quasi-battle conditions in its first two weeks at the front.<sup>23</sup>

At this very moment, the Battle of Soissons (July 18-22) showed the importance of the field signal battalions. The telephone lines installed by Company B of the 2<sup>nd</sup> FSB along with telephone switchboards at the front were broken by artillery fire and tanks faster than the signal linemen could repair them.<sup>24</sup> Many of the runners who insured communications between the frontline and the rear on the second day of the battle were killed. The decoding process made wire communications cumbersome. Telephone lines were the fastest communication; repairing and extending telephone lines during the battle became a priority. To that effect, the Signal Corps issued new instructions on August 2.<sup>25</sup> Pvt. Rushing’s diary indicates that the telephone cable installators’ training in the Ypres sector was very thorough; he was already aware of the frequent destruction of frontline cable installations by enemy fire in the last week of July.

Company B of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB continued to work closely behind the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers in the area between Proven and Poperinge. In fair to warm weather, Pvt. Rushing built “embankment around hut” on July 30 and an airline telephone at the De Lovie castle. On August 1, he built a telephone line in Proven, working late into the night under enemy bombardment and returning to camp at 11:30 pm. On August 2, he was detailed to Poperinge on salvage work. During the next several days, the routine continued: packing equipment, working with a detachment of 6 Company B men alongside a British telephone cable laying crew, again working late into the night under German artillery shelling. On August 5, spending the night near Poperinge, Pvt. Rushing noted that one Englishman was killed. On August 8, he

---

<sup>21</sup> “De Lovie castle. <https://www.toerismepoperinge.be/en/de-lovie-castle>. Accessed June 4, 2020. See also “Great War Forum. De Lovie Chateau.” <https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/47958-lovie-ch%C3%A2teau/> Accessed December 22, 2020. The castle “was used as headquarters for the army and successively several Corps and Divisions. King George VI stayed there in July 1917 during his visit to the front.”

<sup>22</sup> “Diary of Pvt. Preston Rushing.” Op. Cit., pp. 23-24.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> The destructiveness of the tanks during battle in the Somme sector during the summer and fall offensives is well documented. See *U.S. Army in the World War 1917-1919. Military Operations of the AEF, Somme Offensive*. Vol. 7. Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Dept. of the Army, 1948, p. 328.

<sup>25</sup> Douglas J. Orsi. “The Effectiveness of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.” Op. Cit. pp. 59-64, 77 ff.

did not return to quarters until 3 am. On Sunday, August 11 the men of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB were allowed to rest. Cable work resumed the next day until August 16,<sup>26</sup> with Company B frequently under enemy fire. During these five days, the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers trained along the frontline and suffered their first casualties on August 16. Historian Mitch Yockelson describes their work:

In advance of infantry and machine gun units were the 102d (27th Division) and 105th (30th Division) Engineers. They had the difficult and dangerous task of repairing pockmarked roads, made nearly impassable after three years of shellfire. Once the troops reached the front, they were quartered in wooden huts built by British engineers. Two squads of eight men, with a corporal in charge, slept in a hut, which one occupant described as spacious. To coordinate liaison between the infantry and the artillery, work details had to lay cable. This meant digging a six-foot trench through the hard Flanders clay that was not unlike the soil of South Carolina.<sup>27</sup>

The last two weeks of August were a time of intense preparation for combat. On August 17, Pvt. Rushing noted in his diary: "Thirtieth Division Relieves british division." Indeed on that day the 30<sup>th</sup> Division took control of the canal sector from the British 33<sup>rd</sup> Division between the southern outskirts of Ypres to Vormezeele and did not leave until the battle.<sup>28</sup> Company B moved to the telephone test station on August 17 as well. Pvt. Rushing worked nights 4 miles from the front from August 16 to 24. But even nighttime work was very dangerous and some hand-to-hand fighting was reported.<sup>29</sup> On August 19, the 30<sup>th</sup> infantrymen experienced sporadic shelling from German gunners in addition to artillery fire and Pvt. Rushing experienced his first gas attack: "Get 'whiff' of gas causing violent sneezing." The *Maskenbrecher* (mask breaker) was a non-lethal gas known to cause sneezing and vomiting; soldiers feeling the urge to remove their masks succumbed to the wave of deadly poison gas that

---

<sup>26</sup> "Diary of Pvt. Preston Rushing." pp. 26-29.

<sup>27</sup> Mitchell Yockelson. "Borrowed Soldiers." "Borrowed Soldiers: The American 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions and the British Army on the Ypres Front, August-September 1918." Historical Army Foundation. <https://armyhistory.org/borrowed-soldiers-the-american-27th-and-30th-divisions-and-the-british-army-on-the-ypres-front-august-september-1918/> Accessed September 11, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> The 30th Division ordered its 60th Infantry Brigade to take over the Canal sector from the British 33d Division, located on the north face of the Lys salient southwest of Ypres.<sup>28</sup> Mitchell Yockelson. "Borrowed Soldiers." OP. Cit.

<sup>29</sup> Michael E. Birdwell. "Old Hickory and the Hindenburg Line." p. 11.

followed.<sup>30</sup> On August 23, an ammunition dump blew up near their dugout from “spontaneous combustion.” On August 24, another German “cloud of gas.” On August 25 “nothing of importance happens.” The terseness of the diary indicates the stress experienced by the men of Company B. On August 26 another terse diary entry, “american forces put over gas attack.”<sup>31</sup>

### The Battle of Ypres-Lys (August 31 – September 3, 1918)

The battle itself was almost anti-climactic. The Allied offensive began at 2:25 am on August 31 with a gas attack that the wind pushed back into the Allied lines, creating chaos.<sup>32</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> Division was nonetheless able to capture key terrain and advance to Vormezeele, fighting until September 2 before Mount Kemmel, four miles to the southwest.<sup>33</sup> The Germans had put booby traps and other obstacles to delay the Allied advance; they made extensive use of mustard gas, which permeated clothing and stayed in low places for a long time.<sup>34</sup> The Germans shot at night patrols dispatched to probe enemy defenses. Telephone cable operators worked for 72 hours under repeated gas attacks and machine gun fire to repair telephone wires. In the words of Yockelson:

Additional parties from the 30th Division held nearby positions at the Voormezele Switch and Lock 8 of the canal. The Germans were still close by in strength, so Lewis ordered his troops to hold tight and await further orders. Relaying messages was difficult because the Germans kept a close eye on the runners and frequently fired on them, so the Americans mostly communicated by telephone. To ensure there was little delay in this method, the 105th Signal Battalion laid 15,000 feet of cable along this position to establish a forward communications post.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Diphenylchlorarsine.” Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diphenylchlorarsine>. Accessed 10 October 2020. A Canadian youth history of World War I also mentions the use of arsine on Canadian troops at the battle of Passchendaele. See Robert Livesey and A. G. Smith. *La Grande Guerre*. Edition des Plaines, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> <sup>31</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 80. This attack, initially planned for the night of August 24-25, had been postponed owing to wind conditions.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>33</sup> “Brief Histories of Divisions, U.S. Army, 1917-1918.” Op. Cit. Also <sup>33</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> American Battle Monument Commission. The Battle of Ypres-Lys. [http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/YL\\_Website/](http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/YL_Website/) Accessed June 4, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Cited in Mitchell Yockelson. “Borrowed Soldiers: The American 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions and the British Army on the Ypres Front, August-September 1918.” Historical Army Foundation.



By the end of September 2, the battle was inconclusive. American forces were withdrawn on September 3, with the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers relieved at 3 pm.<sup>36</sup> Pfc. Rushing left the test station on September 4, traveling back 10-15 miles to the rear in wobbly light rail cars.<sup>37</sup> Pvt. Rushing's diary has no entry for the week of the battle, indicating the amount of stress that he experienced; also, battle conditions may not have allowed him to carry his diary on his person. When conditions returned somewhat to normal, he did not or could not dwell on this, his baptism of fire.

#### Into the Somme Sector (September 4 - 22, 1918)

On September 5, Company B reported to headquarters, packed its equipment in cloudy and cool weather, and entrained on September 6 at 2:30 pm. Travel conditions were far from ideal; the cars were dirty and the progress excruciatingly slow. After two train changes, one of them at 1 am, the men arrived in Boulogne at 8:30 pm on September 7, having covered approximately 75 miles. From Boulogne-sur-Mer, the 30<sup>th</sup> was billeted at the British General Headquarters reserve at Roëllecourt in France, 63 miles southeast of Boulogne, and temporarily placed under the command of the III British Army. Company B remained in Boulogne for additional training. Apart from sorting equipment, having buzzer and wire cart practice, and being on guard, Pfc. Rushing had a quiet week followed by a day of rest on Sunday, September 15.<sup>38</sup> The diary has no words of protest against the rather dismal life conditions: in addition to rain, mud, cold, and fog, British army rations were inferior and many men went without a bath for six weeks.<sup>39</sup>

At this time, the Allies were in the midst of the Hundred Days campaign which had been planned by French General Ferdinand Foch, the Supreme Allied Commander. The plan was to create a broad line of Allied attacks on three salients from Amiens to St. Mihiel to break through the Hindenburg line.<sup>40</sup> One of the goals was to cross the Meuse River and deny the enemy two important resources: the Metz-Lille railway that supplied the German frontlines, and

---

<https://armyhistory.org/borrowed-soldiers-the-american-27th-and-30th-divisions-and-the-british-army-on-the-ypres-front-august-september-1918/> Accessed September 11, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 77.

<sup>37</sup> Mitchell Yockelson. "Borrowed Soldiers: The American 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions and the British Army on the Ypres Front, August-September 1918."

<sup>38</sup> "Diary of Pvt. Preston Rushing." Op. Cit., pp. 29-32.

<sup>39</sup> Michael E. Birdwell. "Old Hickory and the Hindenburg Line." Op. Cit., p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> James L. Stokesbury. *A Short History of World War I* (New York: William Morrow & Cy, 1981) 281.

the Briey iron fields whose output was shipped to the German Krupp armaments factory.<sup>41</sup> By mid-September, the southern sector of the campaign was doing well. Péronne, 15 miles west of Bellicourt, had been taken by the Australians at the beginning of September,<sup>42</sup> creating a new 80-mile front from Arras to Soissons that ran very close to the Hindenburg line. The British had been stuck west of Bellicourt since the Germans evacuated it in October 1916 and had been unable to take the canal area located north of town.<sup>43</sup> Intensive pre-battle preparations were planned to begin on September 23, in order to get Allied troops closer to the Hindenburg line before the main Allied offensive. This is where the American II Corps was headed.

Company B spent September 16-18 packing the telephone lines in preparation for travel. It took four days, September 19 to 22, for the men to travel 93 miles before reaching Varennes-en-Croix, a small village in the Somme Department, at 6 pm on September 20. There, numerous underground tunnels used on and off by British troops provided a safe place for the Americans to rest. On September 22, Company B resumed its final approach to the front, traveling 37 miles through Albert, Bray, and Péronne, their final destination being Tincourt, 10 miles west of the front. The 30<sup>th</sup> Division, headquartered at Bois-de-Buire nearby,<sup>44</sup> was now attached to the IV British Army.

#### The Battle of St. Quentin Canal – Battle of Bellicourt (September 23 – October 20)

The 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions were to relieve the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division on a front line sector during the night of September 23-24 in the most heavily defended sector of the Hindenburg Line, the St. Quentin Canal tunnel which was located north of Bellicourt. Pvt. Rushing was awakened on September 23 by enemy fire: “Jerry shells us about 6 am ~~this t~~ [sic] was entirely too early to be woke up.” Indeed, the Germans greeted the American arrival with heavy gunfire and fierce fighting in the northern sector where the 4<sup>th</sup> British Army was showering them with an extremely heavy artillery barrage and using mustard gas for the first time. The 27<sup>th</sup> was assigned to the northern sector of the canal near the village of Bony; the 30<sup>th</sup> was assigned to the southern canal entrance, with the village of Nauroy a dividing point between them. The 30<sup>th</sup> relieved the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division south of Nauroy; being briefed by

---

<sup>41</sup> *The Story of the Great War*. Vol. VIII. New York: Collier, n.d. P. 391.

<sup>42</sup> Michael J. Lyons. *World War I. A Short History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Prentice-Hall, 2000. P. 282. James L. Stokesbury. *A Short History of World War I*. New York: William Morrow & Cy, 1981. Pp. 284-285. Also see Historial de la Grande Guerre, Péronne, “The Battle of the Mont St. Quentin.” <https://www.historial.fr/en/battlefields-of-the-somme/the-battle-of-mont-saint-quentin/> Accessed September 11, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Mitchell A. Yockelson. *Borrowed Soldiers*. Op. Cit., p. 122.

<sup>44</sup> “Diary of Preston Rushing.” Op. Cit., pp. 32-33. Also Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 4.

Australian intelligence was a great help to the men.<sup>45</sup> As for Pvt. Rushing, having packed the equipment at 11:30 pm that night and left at midnight to relieve Australian communications operators under German bombardment, he had a close call: "Get lost. Jerry is shelling the roads constantly shell falls in the road about a hundred yards in front of us. Killing fifteen australians wounding twenty seven others. Find dug out where we are to relieve australian signalmen at five thirty am."<sup>46</sup>

Preparing for battle, the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers laid jumping-off tape for an attack on the German outpost line that was carried on September 26 and 27 under the protection of Allied artillery. Even though the soldiers had to withdraw on the evening of the 27, the new frontline was now closer to the Hindenburg line.<sup>47</sup> The American troops held their positions on September 28, awaiting reinforcements.<sup>48</sup> Pvt. Rushing's diary gives a gripping account of these three days:

Sept 26 ~ Jerry plane darts from behind clouds swoops down on two observations. Setting them on fire. Men in balloons vacate in parachutes. Boche flyer turns his machine gun on descending men. All during days and nights worlds of supplies are [...] being sent forward From all indications big battle is about to be staged

sept 27 - all during day and night we are kept busy trying to keep telephone lines intact. but most impossible as hundreds of tanks are moving forward and are playing havoc. with the lines.

Sept 28 - move forward comrade and myself are stationed in shallow trench to patrol telephone lines. are told a great battle is to begin the following morning and that it is very necessary that the lines be kept intact. Tanks are still moving forward tareing [sic] our telephone lines to pieces. almost impossible to maintain communication.<sup>49</sup>

On September 29, the 30<sup>th</sup> Division attacked at 5:50 am. Despite bad weather and pea soup fog that caused the 117<sup>th</sup> Regiment to get lost, and despite a smokescreen put up by the British Royal Engineers to mask the troops' approach to the tunnel, the Americans crossed the canal and captured its southern entrance by 11:30 am in a daring assault. For such quick

---

<sup>45</sup> Dale Blair, *The Battle of Bellicourt Tunnel: Tommies, Diggers, and Doughboys on the Hindenburg Line, 1918* (London: Frontline Books, 2011) 9, 16.

<sup>46</sup> "Diary of Preston Rushing." Op. Cit., P. 34.

<sup>47</sup> *The Story of the Great War*. Vol. VIII. New York: Collier, n.d. Pp. 394-396.

<sup>48</sup> Michael E. Birdwell. "Old Hickory and the Hindenburg Line." Op. Cit., p. 13. Mitchell A. Yockelson. *Borrowed Soldiers*. Op. Cit., p. 160, 162-166.

<sup>49</sup>"Diary of Preston Rushing." Op. Cit., pp. 35 - 38.

action, the work of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB was essential, as tanks were constantly breaking the telephone lines that ran on the ground.<sup>50</sup> By noon, the 30<sup>th</sup> Division was in Bellicourt. A few hundred soldiers got through the Hindenburg line north of Bellicourt and were pinned down on the road to Nauroy, one-and-a-half mile southeast.<sup>51</sup> The 117<sup>th</sup> Regiment was doing well enough to be sent after 12:50 pm to Bony to assist the 119<sup>th</sup> Regiment that was already assisting the 27<sup>th</sup> Division against heavy German resistance.<sup>52</sup> On that day, the 30<sup>th</sup> suffered 3,146 casualties, a heavy price for gaining 4200 yards and being the first Allied troops to break the Hindenburg line.<sup>53</sup> It was a very long day for Pvt. Rushing who was unaware that he had helped make history:

Sept 29 - The greatest barrage Ive ever witnessed is set up at dawn our infantry move forward to attack Gas shells fall close to me. Breaking telephone lines we get dose of sneezing gas. No ill results however. About nine a.m. Jerry puts over cloud in smoke screen making it impossible to see any distance Great number of prisoners are being sent to the rear Tanks are still playing "hader" [sic] with our Communication lines. Begin winning about 4 p.m. and continues to rain as darkness comes on. the night is hediously [sic] dark communication is out we strive to repair lines in the darkness but cant make much progress.

There ensued three days of fighting so intense that assault rations and water containers were unable to reach the battlefield, as reported by several units of the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers.<sup>54</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> was relieved by the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division on October 1, as recorded by a grateful Pvt. Rushing: "Oct 1 - the push continues am told St. Quentin has fallen. 2 p.m. receive orders to pack equipment preparatory to moving back to the rest area good news. arrive Herbécourt 19 P.m. Oct 2 - allowed to rest most of the day. We are quartered in the old trench system on the Somme battle field where the British forces made their big attack July the 1<sup>st</sup> 1916."<sup>55</sup>

The village of Herbécourt, west of the Somme River, was a 20 miles from the front. Feelings of safety and camaraderie between U.S. and other Allied troops soldiers explains Pvt.

---

<sup>50</sup> Dale Blair, Op. Cit. p. 52, 59-60.

<sup>51</sup> Dale Blair, Op. Cit., pp. 136, 142.

<sup>52</sup> Dale Blair, Op. cit. pp. 55-56, 58.

<sup>53</sup> Dale Blair, Op. Cit., p. 58. See also American Battle Monuments Commission. 30<sup>th</sup> Division. [http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/YL\\_Website/](http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/YL_Website/) Accessed June 4, 2020. And "History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers." p. 4. Michael E. Birdwell. "Old Hickory and the Hindenburg Line." Op. Cit., pp. 13-16.

<sup>54</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 151.

<sup>55</sup> "Diary of Preston Rushing." Op. Cir., p. 39.

Rushing's awareness of the significance of the 1916 Battle of the Somme.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, he did not mention that he was promoted to Private First Class on October 1<sup>st</sup> for bravery and leadership.

By October 5, British and Australian forces had advanced 19 miles eastwards and taken the town of Montbréhain with the help of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division. Their advance completed the first full breach of the Hindenburg line and convinced the German High Command that victory was out of its reach.<sup>57</sup> But much work remained to be done to secure the area. Under the rain, the 30<sup>th</sup> Division was recalled on October 5 to relieve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division near Montbréhain.<sup>58</sup> Pfc. Rushing's unit was posted at "Bakerloo tunnel" near Bellicourt late in the afternoon to assist the Australians in repairing telephone lines. They were "only few miles behind lines" and spent a couple of nights in the tunnel. Pfc. Rushing noted, not without humor, "Jerry is putting a few shells over to remind us he is still in business spend night in tunnel which is absolutely shell proof."<sup>59</sup>

But the respite was short-lived. At 3 am on October 7, the 117<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> Regiments of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division were brought closer to the front line in preparation for a major assault on October 8. Pfc. Rushing was ordered to Nauroy in newly liberated territory, a little over one mile southeast of Bellicourt, in order to repair telephone lines leading to the 117<sup>th</sup> Regiment headquarters near Estrées, 3 miles northeast of Nauroy. There, he felt the fierce resistance of the Germans who were fighting at Montbréhain, four miles to the east:

Oct 7 - Go forward and meet comrade Renkl whom I am to work with. He informs me. That Jerry is simply shelling h--- out of 117<sup>th</sup> H.Q. We try to repair telephone line: but Jerry shells cut it down faster than we can put it together. Head quarters is located in a German concrete Pill Box: Jerry puts a shell Almost in the door of the Pill Box. Killing Sgt. Brody. and destroying Most all communication Communication is restored in about one hour time about mid night Jerry again shells our vicinity, putting several of our lines out of commission two comrades and self go out to repair lines. Get about two hundred hards from pill box where we find lines broken. Repair them and start back to pill box. When Jerry begins shelling again. I get a whif [sic] of gas. I yell

---

<sup>56</sup> In the first day of the battle, July 1, 1916, the British army suffered nearly 60,000 dead, the heaviest casualties in all its history. "Battle of the Somme." Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Somme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme). Accessed October 7, 2019.

<sup>57</sup> "Battle of St. Quentin Canal." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_St\\_Quentin\\_Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_St_Quentin_Canal) Accessed October 7, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., pp. 4, 160. The 105<sup>th</sup> lists in great detail all the localities that were taken by the Americans between October 8-11.

<sup>59</sup> "Diary of Preston Rushing." Op. Cit., pp. 40-41.

gas to comrades. grabbing [sic] for my gas mask the gas proves to be sneezing gas I begin to sneeze making it very difficult to keep gas mask on. We try to get back to the pill box I am in the lead in barb wire entanglements. Holding to the telephone lines as a guide: and manipulating my gas mask mouth piece with other hand. Knowing that Jerry usually follows up his sneezing gas with poisonous gas, and realizing that if I should get any more of the gas it would knock me out. We continue to drag through barb wire entanglement arriving with in fifty feet of pill box. I fall head long into deep shell hole. Containing some dead german bodies. Swear a "bit" crawl out and are soon in pill box. Every body is waering [sic] mask and I am sneezing my head off. Have strong inclination to tare [sic] mask from my face. but better judgment tell me not to.<sup>60</sup>

The entry for that day is by far the longest of the diary. The minute details point to the writer's need to preserve a sense of reality and to process the dangers he faced on this dramatic day. It is also obvious that he was now carrying his diary on his person. The rain and cold wind of the day gave way to a very cold night in a German pillbox. German cannon fire could be heard all night.<sup>61</sup> Pfc. Rushing awoke early on October 8: "Oct 8 3 am. I think of the date and realize it is my birthday. Wonder if I'll get through the day safely? 4 a.m. Jerry knocks one of our lines out again. with shell fire. Comrade and self go out to repair it. Pick line up and follow it about hundred feet"<sup>62</sup>

Having performed this repair, Pfc. Rushing returned to the pillbox and got his diary out. He had little time to write before being interrupted in mid-sentence. This was his last entry. The Allied assault had begun at 5:15 am with an artillery barrage that ran into stiff German opposition. October 8<sup>th</sup> was a day of fierce fighting. By noon the 117<sup>th</sup> was pinned, and later in the day "hunger and thirst forced most of the men to search the packs and canteens of their dead comrades for rations and water."<sup>63</sup> Through Medal of Honor recipients James E. "Buck" Karnes of Knoxville and Morristown native Calvin Ward of the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, we know that many heroic actions were needed and performed on that day.<sup>64</sup>

The Battle of Montbréhain continued until October 11. During these four days of intense fighting, the 30<sup>th</sup> Division encountered units from 14 German Divisions. The uneven

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Pp. 41-47. Unfortunately the diary does not indicate the time when Rushing was sent to Estrées.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Birdwell. p. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. P. 47.

<sup>63</sup> Worth P. Stewart. *The History of Company K 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry in the Great War*, cited in Michael E. Birdwell, "Old Hickory and the Hindenburg Line," Op. Cit., p. 18. Also see Mitchell A. Yockelson. *Borrowed Soldiers*. Op. Cit., pp. 194-195.

<sup>64</sup> Recipients' List. Calvin John Ward. <http://www.mohconvention.com/tn-recipient/19/calvin-john-ward/> Both men received the Medal of Honor for their actions on October 8.

terrain dotted with small woods and villages gave cover to the retreating Germans. The American soldiers showed determination and skill in their use of arms and terrain, forcing the Germans to throw in one of their best sharpshooter divisions in a last effort.<sup>65</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved on October 11-12 by the 27<sup>th</sup> Division but returned to the front on October 16 in the very same location. The fighting intensified from October 17 to 19. Gathering 32 Divisions, the Allies reached the Oise-Somme Canal on October 19.

A contemporary account confirms the importance of the pivotal Battle of St. Quentin Canal, also called the Battle of Bellicourt:

From September 24 to October 19, 1918, the division participated in the Somme Offensive in the 2<sup>nd</sup> American Corps, operating with the 4<sup>th</sup> British Army. The outstanding features of this operation were the breaking of the Hindenburg Line near Bellicourt, and the capture of Bellicourt and Nauroy, September 29 and 30, the attack from Montbrehain, October 6 to 12 in which Brancourt, Frémont, Busigny, Vaux-Andigny, and Saint Souplet were captured, and the Battle of La Salle River, October 17 to 20, 1918.<sup>66</sup>

Did Pfc. Rushing take part in the Battle of La Salle River on October 17-20, which was the last one in which the 30<sup>th</sup> Division took part? Allied troops were advancing so rapidly that it was impossible to salvage guns or supplies. The constant movement to and from the front, the grueling, Sysiphean work of rebuilding and extending the telephone lines at or near the front, possibly made it impossible for him to write in his diary, and when the battle was over, he did not or could not dwell on this, his last battle of the war.

#### The End of the War, Discharge, and Return to Civilian Life (October 21, 1918 - June 7, 1970)

When the 30<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved on October 21, it had served 26 days at the front and lost 11,500 men.<sup>67</sup> The Division was sent to the Heilly training area near Amiens for rehabilitation. Two weeks later, awaiting their orders to return to the front, the men learned that the war was over. On November 21, the Division Headquarters was moved to Ballon near Le Mans, where the American II Corps was transferred to the American Expeditionary Forces on November 24. The 30<sup>th</sup> Division awaited its return to the United States at Le Mans

---

<sup>65</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 6.

<sup>66</sup> "Brief Histories of Divisions, U.S. Army 1917-1918." Op. Cit.

<sup>67</sup> American Battle Monuments Commission. 30<sup>th</sup> Division.

[http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/YL\\_Website/](http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/YL_Website/) Accessed June 4, 2020.

Embarkation Center<sup>68</sup> and shipped back during March 1919, sailing from St. Nazaire in Brittany to Charleston, S.C.<sup>69</sup>

Nothing is known of Pvt. Preston W. Rushing's whereabouts from October 8, 1918 until April 11, 1919. Efforts to secure his DD214 have failed, as his records were destroyed in the National Personnel Records Center fire of 1973. Only his final pay voucher has been preserved, and it does not indicate any indemnization for injury or illness.<sup>70</sup>

Pfc. Rushing was honorably discharged on April 11, 1919 at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.<sup>71</sup> He returned to Jackson and resumed his position as press foreman for *The Jackson Sun* until his retirement on June 1, 1958. During his 51-years career, he helped print an estimated 150 million copies of the newspaper. He was a member of John A. Deaver Post No. 12, American Legion, and the 40 and 8, VFW, Jackson Lodge 192, B.P.O. Elks, and Knights of Pythias. An active member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, he died at age 82 on June 7, 1970, following an extended illness. He was buried in Ridgecrest Cemetery. His body was entombed in the Mausoleum at Highland Memorial Gardens in Jackson in 1976.<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

As of October 31, 1918, the U.S. Signal Corps pole and wire plant had built over 2,100 miles of poles and stretched almost 86,000 miles of wire on the Western front. In addition almost 39,000 miles of buried combat cables were installed.<sup>73</sup> With the speed of Allied advances in the summer of 1918, telephone communication became the favored mode of communication between front line commanders and Division headquarters about pre-battle reconnaissance information and battle maneuvers. Telephone linemen played a critical role in pre-battle preparations and were the last ones to leave the battle. The casualty rate of the U.S. Signal Corps during World War I was second only to the infantry.<sup>74</sup> Their situation was similar to that experienced by communications experts on all fronts, as described by Arnold Zweig, a

---

<sup>68</sup> Willard P. Sullivan with Harry S. Tucker, contributor. *History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers*. Op. Cit., p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> "Brief Histories of Divisions, U.S. Army 1917-1918." Op. Cit. Also see American Battle Monuments Commission. 30<sup>th</sup> Division. [http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/YL\\_Website/](http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/YL_Website/) Accessed June 4, 2020.

<sup>70</sup> April Crossland, Archives Technician, NARS, to Alice-Catherine Carls, September 26, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> *World War Record of Ex-Soldiers of Madison County State of Tennessee*. War Record of Preston W. Rushing. Jackson Madison County Public Library. Tennessee Room. P. 144.

<sup>72</sup> Obituary for Preston W. Rushing. *The Jackson Sun*, August 10, 1970. PP. 12-13.

<sup>73</sup> *U.S. Army in the World War, 1917-1919. Reports of the Commander-in-Chief, Staff Sections and Services*. Vol. 15. Center of Military History, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. 1991. PP. 117-120.

<sup>74</sup> Douglas J. Orsi. "The Effectiveness of the U.S. Army Signal Corps." Op. Cit., p. 62.



German soldier and a veteran of the Battle of Verdun in 1916, in his novel *Education Before Verdun*.<sup>75</sup>

Pfc. Rushing participated in two pivotal battles fought by the 30<sup>th</sup> Division in the summer and fall of 1918. If letters of commendation were written for the men of the 105<sup>th</sup> FSB, they have not been found. Working under intense enemy artillery fire and carrying on with great resilience and courage, Pfc. Rushing served with honor and without complaint. His diary sheds light on heroic deeds that have been all but forgotten. Factual and precise, his diary vividly portrays the dramatic last weeks of the war.

*Dr. Alice Catherine-Carls serves as the Tom Elam Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Tennessee at Martin.*

---

<sup>75</sup> Arnold Zweig. *Education Before Verdun*. 1936. This much forgotten novel contains invaluable information about the services that supported frontline soldiers.