

Information Sheet

R Kirkland, Jefferson B.
354 World War One memoir, n.d.
One folder, photocopies.

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This is a memoir of service during World War I by a native of Nicholas, Georgia, and member of Company F, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, 42nd U.S. Infantry Division. Kirkland served in northeastern France, 1917-1918, where he saw action in the Baccarat sector and in the defense of the Champagne front on the Marne River, April-July 1918.

The 42nd Infantry Division was a composite group of units from all parts of the United States. It embarked for France in October 1917, landing at Brest. The unit was posted in northeastern France, first at the Vaucouleurs training area, November-December 1917, and then in the vicinity of Rolampont until mid-February 1918. The division was placed into the lines of the French army near Chaumont for its introduction to trench warfare, and then was moved to the Baccarat sector during April-May 1918. In June the division was redeployed into the Chalons-sur-Marne area, part of the Champagne front along the Marne River. German forces began an offensive against the Champagne on 15 July. The 42nd Division was heavily involved in the defense.

Jefferson B. Kirkland's memoir of service begins with his enlistment in the U.S. Army on 28 June 1917 and continues through 28 July 1918. There is very little detail on training in the United States, the organization of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion, or the ocean voyage to France. Kirkland contracted mumps shortly after his arrival and was hospitalized until 10 January 1918, when he rejoined his unit. The memoir includes more detail after that date, with descriptions of his unit's movement to the front via Rolampont, the introduction to trench warfare near Brouville, service in the Baccarat sector, and the fighting during the Champagne-Marne offensive. The memoir is also useful as a chronology of the 42nd Division's service in northeastern France.

Kirkland identified himself only by as "J. B. Kirkland" and his unit only as the 42nd Infantry Division. The content clearly indicated that he was a gunner in one of the division's machine gun units. Kirkland is said by his family to have been gassed in the Champagne, but his narrative ends without mention of any injury. The identification of Kirkland's first name and unit has been provided from records kept by 2nd Lieutenant Jerry G. Lowe, the supply officer of the 151st, courtesy of Rebecca L. Greene, Lowe's great granddaughter. Furthermore, Lowe's experience in the Champagne included a gas attack on 28 July 1918, the same date as the last entry in the Kirkland diary. For the correspondence and documents regarding Jerry G. Lowe and Jefferson B. Kirkland, see the Information Folder.

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17 January 1984

Frances Kirkland

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Shelf List

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Page Date

1	28 June 1917	Enlisted in U.S. Army.
1	29 August 1917	Left camp at Macon, Georgia.

1	1 September 1917	Arrive Camp Mills, Long Island, New York.
1	29 October 1917	Leave Camp Mills, board transports.
2	12 November 1917	Arrive off Brest, France.
3	17 November 1917	Disembark at Brest.
4	21 November 1917	Transport to Vaucouleurs, march to Uruffe.
5	10 December 1917	Depart Uruffe.
6	18 December 1917	Kirkland hospitalized with mumps until 10 January 1918.
7	11 January 1918	Return to company at Villers sur Seize.
8-9	18 February 1918 -	Leave for front, traveling through Rolampont, then to
	1 March 1918	Gerbeviller, thence to Fontenay and Brouville.
10-17	8 March 1918	Enter trenches near Brouville, in positions next to 167th Infantry, an Alabama unit. Remain until 17 March 1918, when relieved.
18	22 March 1918	March to and occupation of Rambevillers.
19-20	-	Missing pages.
21-24	30 March 1918	Return to trenches.
25	11 April 1918	Relieved and sent to Ste. Pole on reserve. Kirkland visits town of Baccarat.
26	20 April 1918	Posted in lines in Baccarat sector, alternating in trenches and reserve. Relieved 27 April.
28	6 May 1918	Return to trenches until 25 May, relieved until 3 June, then return to trenches until 19 June.
29	19 June 1918	42nd division relieved in Baccarat sector for redeployment in the Chalons area on 4 July.
30-31	14 July 1918	Out of reserve lines to positions along Marne River on the Champagne front. Enemy began attack on night of 14th.
32-33	17 July 1918	Kirkland's unit comes into direct contact with German troops.
34	28 July 1918	Last entry.

r208

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Camp Mills (N.Y.).

Kirkland, Jefferson B.

Marne, 2nd Battle of the, France, 1918

Military bases—New York—Camp Mills

United States. Army. Infantry Division, 42nd.

United States. Army. Machine Gun Battalion, 151st

World War, 1914-1918—Campaigns—France