Michael Joseph O'Brien of Bartoose, Ireland and Sackets Harbor, New York:

An Irish Immigrant's Odyssey







by
Stephan P. Clarke

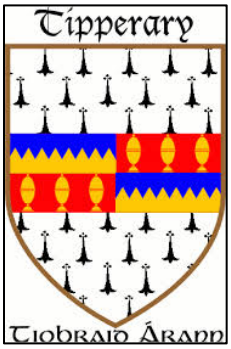
This work is dedicated to the Memory of Michael Joseph O'Brien,
28 Sep 1873, Bartoose, Parish of Emly, Co. Tipperary, Ireland –
16 Nov 1969, Watertown, Jefferson Co., New York,
a dedicated soldier, patriot and loving husband;
and his wife, Edith Mae Carter O'Brien,
supporter, travel companion and loving wife,
7 Dec 1878, Detroit, Wayne Co., Michigan –
28 Dec 1943, Watertown, Jefferson Co., New York.

The two heraldic devices on the cover and title page are for the 9th Infantry Regiment, explained in greater detail in the text, and the emblem of the 28th Infantry Regiment, the "Lions of Cantigny," a nickname given to the unit by French allies during World War I to honor the tenacity with which the Regiment fought during its first engagement in the War, 28-29 May 1918.

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Michael Joseph O'Brien of Bartoose, Ireland and Sackets Harbor, New York: An Irish Immigrant's Odyssey

Michael Joseph O'Brien was born in Bartoose, Parish of Emly, County Tipperary, Ireland on 28 September 1873 and was baptized on 14 October 1873. His parents were James and Honoria Ryan O'Brien. The *International Genealogical Index* (IGI) entries from the *General Register of Births in Ireland from 1864-1955* reports that Mike was born on 14 October, 1873, but a check of the Civil Birth Records makes it clear that the 14 October date may be for either a Christening or a birth. His specific place of birth in County Tipperary is not given in the IGI records, but further research in Irish birth and census records leads to the hamlet of Bartoose, about a mile east of Emly. Bartoose is a hamlet (from maps, more likely a three or four houses at an intersection in the road). James was a tenant gardener and farm laborer whose landlord was James Scully. That Michael should come from this specific part of Tipperary [***See*** county coat of arms, right] is no surprise as it has been a focal point of the O'Brien clan for centuries. Michael's parents are listed in Griffith's Valuation of Ireland (1847-1864) and had five siblings. At some point it was determined that some of the O'Brien sons would emigrate and at least two of them did so: John and Michael. Michael joined John in April 1896 after sailing from Cobh (pronounced as "cove," formerly Queenstown).



An unnamed brother paid for Mike's passage to America and he was going to stay with that brother. John may be the brother who paid Mike's fare, but that is not known with any certainty. Mike's obituary goes on to state that he joined the U. S. Army on 20 October 1896, being sworn in to Company F of the Ninth U. S. Infantry at Albany, Albany Co., NY, and was shortly thereafter assigned to Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, Jefferson Co., NY.



Color SGT Michael J. O'Brien
Sergeant Michael Joseph O'Brien
9th Infantry Regiment (ca. 1909

His obituary and other published sources state that he served during the Spanish-American War of 1898 and was in Cuba for the fighting there and for a period of time with the forces of occupation. He was at the battle of San Juan Hill (he always claimed vehemently that Teddy Roosevelt was never anywhere near the top [***See*** p 17]) and was at the capture of Santiago. He soon saw action during the Philippine Insurrection of 1899 and the Boxer Rebellion of 1900-1901 where he was involved in the battle at Tientsin on 13 July and was wounded in the foot on 6 August 1900 during the battle of Yang Tsun on the march to relieve the 55-day siege of Peking (now Beijing). During that march to relieve the foreign legations there, inadequate communication at the command level led the British and Russian forces to attack the advancing column of their American allies. While the Ninth Infantry had light casualties, the 14th Infantry suffered several killed and wounded during heavy fighting on a blisteringly hot day where temperatures are said to have reached 108° F. Mike's wound was from a bullet, however, not from shrapnel, and the family has the bullet, shown to the left. Of interest is the fact that the family of a Presbyterian missionary from Wyoming County, New York was among the foreigners trapped in Peking. The advancing allied forces were about to rescue, among many others, the Rev. Dr. Devello Zelotas Sheffield, his wife and children. The Sheffield family came from North Gainesville and they are second cousins twice removed to Mary Elizabeth Hawley Clarke, wife of the author who is related by



marriage to Mike O'Brien. Regardless of the weak genealogical link, this connection must certainly qualify for a "small world" notation. It should be further noted that Mary Sheffield Stelle, the daughter of the Rev. Devello Sheffield, was court translator for the wife of the American ambassador, Mrs. Edwin Conger, especially when Mrs. Conger had an audience with the Dowager Empress, Cixi.

After the China expedition, Mike returned to Madison Barracks and is reported as holding the rank of staff sergeant. He married Edith Mae Carter, a talented equestrienne, of Sackets Harbor on 23 December 1903 and they established a home in that village. After their marriage, they moved from post to post, serving at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX, from about 1908-10. From 1910-12, they were stationed in Cebu in the Philippine Islands. From 1912-15 they were at Fort Thomas, KY, where he completed the process to become a naturalized citizen and from 1915-17 he was again stationed in Texas where he was involved with the 1916 border dispute along the Texas-Mexico border and first served under Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing.



Mike left the Ninth Infantry on 31 May 1917 when he was appointed First Lieutenant and was shipped to France to serve on the front lines in France from 1917 to the end of WWI. He was attached to the 1st Infantry Division (known as "The Big Red One" from its shoulder patch shown, left) and assigned to Co. E, 28th Infantry Regiment (later called "The Lions of Cantigny" [***See*** the heraldic patch on the cover]), 2nd Infantry Brigade. Michael was involved in several major engagements during the War including Cantigny (28 - 30 May, 1918, part of the Montdidier-Noyon Campaign) in Picardy where he was involved with the first assault ever launched by the untested American Expeditionary Force; the Aisne-Marne Campaign (18 Jul - 6 Aug 1918, part of the Second Battle of the Marne) and the Battle of Soissons; the St.-Mihiel Offensive of the Meuse-Argonne Campaign (26 Sep - 11 Nov 1918, part of the Allies' final push to end the war) and the occupation of Germany (1918 - 1919).

There is some confusion regarding what sort of unit Mike was assigned to in France as his identification card [***See*** p 35] shows clearly that he was assigned to Mounted Police Co. #2, but later sources refer to his service with the artillery. The confusion was resolved when it was determined that mounted units were disbanded shortly after the Americans arrived in France, the use of such troops being pointless against machine guns. The 28th arrived on 31 Mar 1917, and the mounted units were disbanded between August and October 1917 and the men reassigned, usually to artillery units. Mike's ID card, while undated, was probably issued early in his European deployment.

Mike remained a First Lieutenant until he was discharged in September 1919. The next month, October 1919, he re-enlisted for a term of one year, with his previous rank of first sergeant. A point of confusion is found in a newspaper article from 1919 stating that Mike served in the Army for "more than 30 years," an impossibility given the fact that he arrived in the US in 1896. However, his obituary explains that he was granted the equivalent of 30 years' service because of his extended periods of overseas service. An Act of Congress in 1932 permanently appointed Mike a First Lieutenant in the spring of 1933, some 13 years after he retired. His cemetery marker at Sackets Harbor records his rank of First Lieutenant. Mike earned the Order of the Purple Heart in November 1934 for the wound obtained in China. He also earned the Victory Medal for his service in WWI and for the various earlier campaigns in which he served [***See*** pp 12-13, 23-24 and 37].

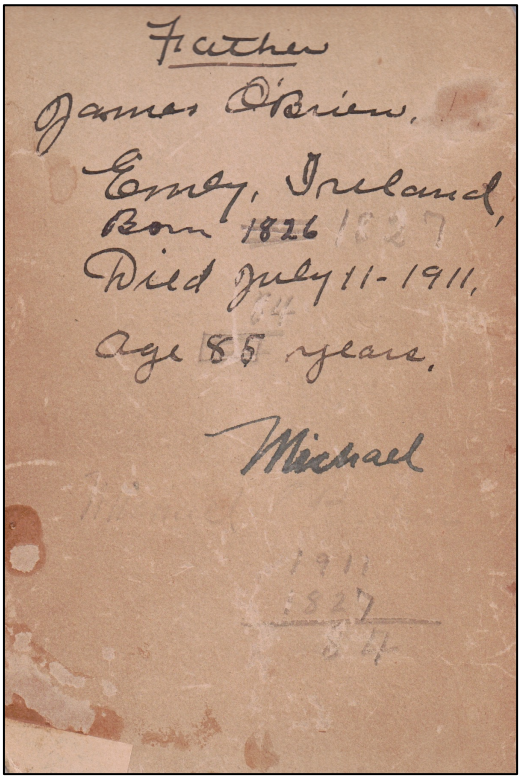
After his time in the Army, the New York Central Railroad employed Mike for 10 years as clerk at the Watertown freight house. He retired from the railroad on 21 May 1930. Mike's niece, Katherine Godkin Grieb, reported that because of the financial depredations of the Great Depression, Mike retired before he intended as he had his military pension and a modest railroad pension and knew some other person needed a job. (Grieb)

According to the 1920 federal census, Mike arrived in the US in 1896 and became a naturalized citizen in 1915. At the time, he and Edith rented quarters on Jay Street in Watertown. Of interest is the fact that Mike and Edith appear in the 1920 census twice. The first record is at their Jay Street home on Saturday, 3 January. The second record is at the home of his in-laws, William and Sadie Godkin, at 236 Flower Avenue East on the 5th or 6th of January. In both cases, Mike is also given here as becoming a naturalized citizen in 1915. The Jay Street data state "none" for occupation, but the Flower Avenue data state that he was a "retired soldier."

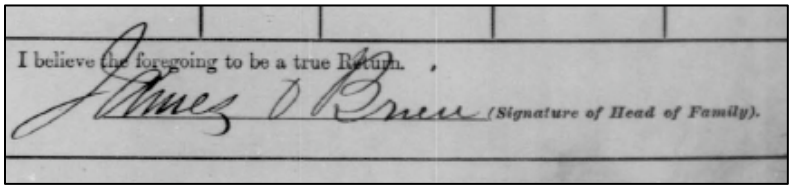
By the time of the 1930 federal census, Mike owned the home at 119 Colorado Ave., Watertown that was valued at $7,000; he and Edith owned a radio. That census also states that he arrived in the US in 1894 and was a naturalized citizen. In 1918 he purchased an upright RCA Victrola gramophone for his wife, Edith, and it is still in the family. He paid $110 for it at the time and that would be about $1750 in 2015 dollars. Mike and Edith were a devoted couple, but never had children. Mike died on 16 Nov 1969 in Watertown, Jefferson Co., NY and is buried next to Edith in the Lakeside Cemetery at Sackets Harbor, not far from Madison Barracks.

Mike was very proud of being a naturalized US citizen and flew the flag from his porch every day. While stationed at Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, Mike was Color SGT for the 9th Infantry Division. As a superb equestrian, he was also in the Mounted Police. A Color Sergeant is one of two non-commissioned officers who, with a Second or First Lieutenant, have the specific duty and honor to guard the Stars and Stripes and the Regimental Colors. Mike held that honor both as a foot soldier and as a mounted policeman. It was an honor he was extremely proud of and that he took very seriously. Mike was a wonderful gentleman and a gentle man who had an infectious sense of humor.

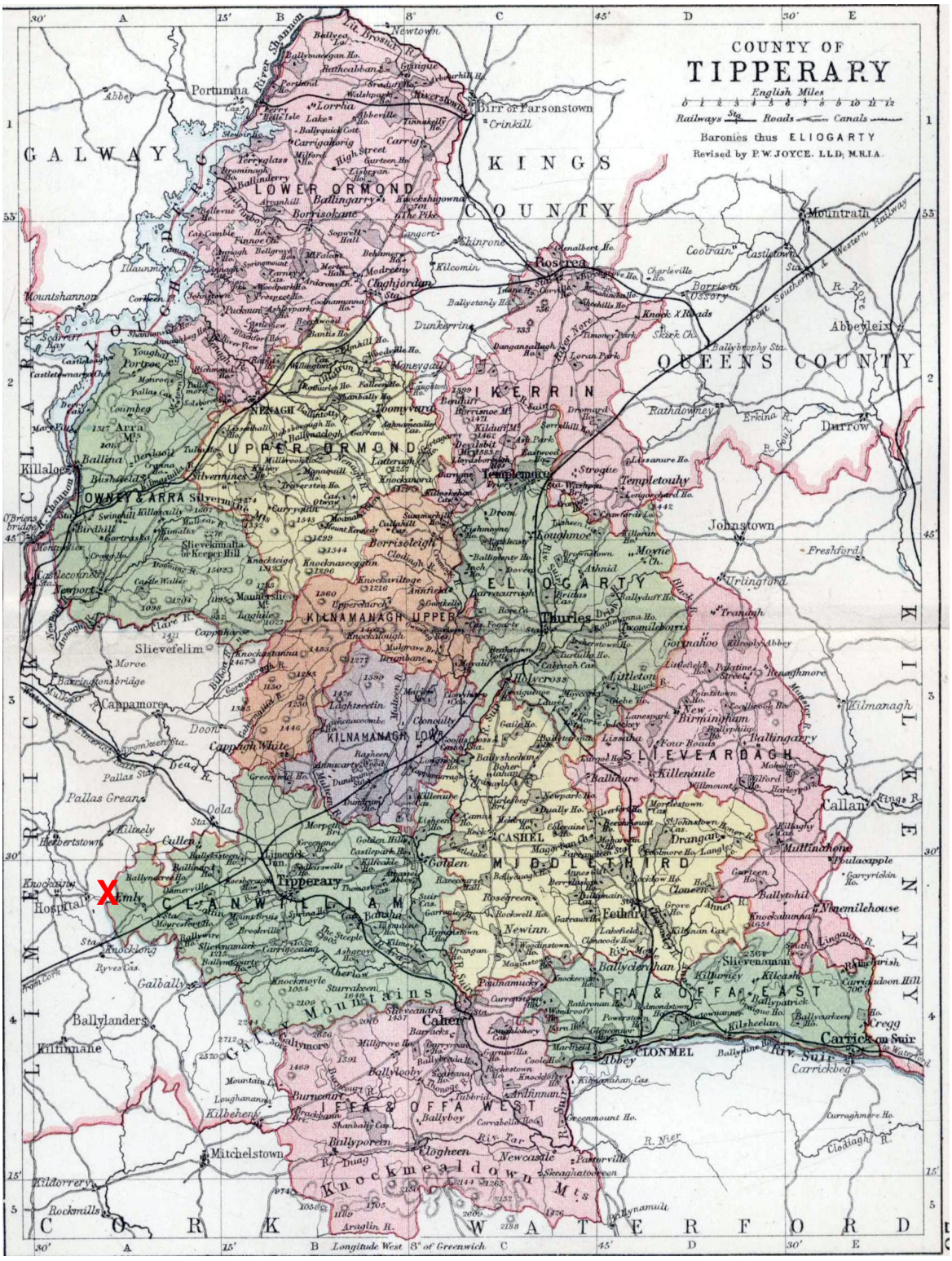




Michael's father, James O'Brien, with whom Michael maintained a life-long correspondence, and Michael's notes on the back of the photo



James O'Brien's signature on the 1891 Irish census



This 1887 map of County Tipperary shows Emly (by red X), where Michael was born, near the border with County Limerick in the western part of the barony of Clan William. A barony is a political unit analogous to a township in a US county. Clan William (Clan Liam in Irish) is one of 12 baronies in County Tipperary; the main town is Tipperary. (Lennonwylie)

O'Brien	Daniel	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Denis	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Eleanor	Gortvunatrime	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Eleanor	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Ellen	Rodus	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Honoria	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	James	Ballyvistea	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	James	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	John	Ballyvistea	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	John	Duncummin	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	John	Emly	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	John	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Kennedy	Ballyhone	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Margaret	Duncummin	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Mary	Clashdrumsmith	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Morgan	Ballynagrana	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Morgan	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Morgan	Rodus	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Owen	Chancellorsland	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Patrick	Clashdrumsmith	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Patrick	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Thomas	Ballyvistea	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Thomas	Clashdrumsmith	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	Timothy	Ballyhone	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	William	Bartoose	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	William	Clashdrumsmith	Emly	Tipperary
O'Brien	William	Moanmore	Emly	Tipperary

Note Honoria and James. *The Morgan O'Brien in Moanmore, Emly, is not likely connected to the family as he is listed as a landlord in other places and Michael's family were tenant farmers.*

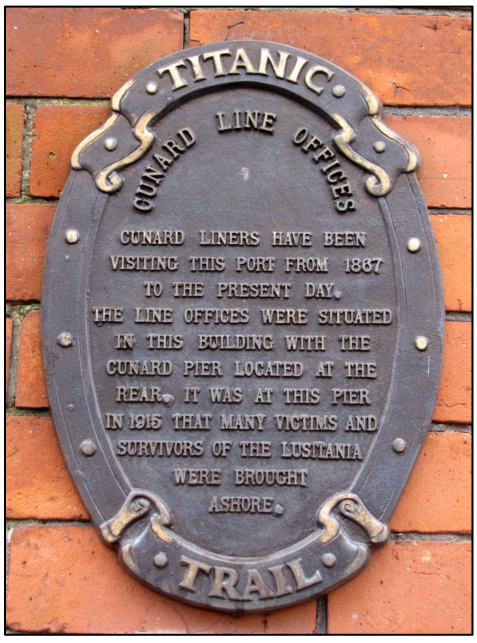
(Online. Available: http://www.failteromhat.com/griffiths/tipperary/emly.htm, 17 July 2010.)



Cobh (pronounced cove), formerly known as Queenstown, harbor, the last bit of Irish soil Michael ever walked on. Photos this page by Stephan Clarke, all rights reserved.



The former Cunard Lines office in Cobh where Michael bought his ticket for the trip to the U. S. The plaque is mounted to the left of the doorway.







The above photo is from an old postcard on the back of which is written "Madison Barracks, 1918." Mike would have known this view very well, but he was in France at the time the photo was taken. To the left is the landmark water tower built in 1892 and replaced by a larger and less architecturally pleasing steel water tower in 1908. Photo (2015) by Stephan Clarke, all rights reserved.





The above postcard is labeled "Gymnasium, Administration Building and Quarters, Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, N. Y." The card is postmarked 24 Jun 1911. Mike would have known these buildings well. The two photos to the left and below are of the former enlisted barracks, left, and below an administration building and the former base movie theatre as they are in 2015. Photos (2015) by Stephan Clarke all rights reserved.





The SS Santiago *#2 at the head of the pier at Tampa, FL, loading for the short trip to Cuba for the Spanish-American War. On the reverse Michael wrote: "9th Inf. went to Cuba on steamship Santiago, #2. Sailed June 14, 1898 from Port Tampa, Florida. Michael"*

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION IDENTITY CARD
SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR VETERAN

CLAIM NO. C- 3 627 381

LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE NAME OF VETERAN

O'BRIEN, Michael

ADDRESS OF VETERAN (*Street, city, State*)

123 Colorado Ave., Watertown, N. Y.

DATE OF BIRTH	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	COLOR EYES
Sept. 28-73	~~5ft.~~ 5 7½	170	Blue

VA REGIONAL OFFICE WHERE EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY IS FILED

SYRACUSE REGIONAL OFFICE

SIGNATURE OF VETERAN (*Not valid unless signed*)

Michael O'Brien

VA FORM 10–2327, Mar 1951 16—63810-1



1. Spanish-American War medal, 1898
("Army Campaign Medals")





2. Military Government of Cuba, Occupation Medal
("Army Campaign Medals")





3. Philippine Insurrection medal, 1899
("Army Campaign Medals")





4. China Relief Expedition Medal, 1900-1901
("Army Campaign Medals")





6. The Mexican Border Service Medal, 1916
("Army Campaign Medals")





The reverse of each medal is as shown here. While Mike's medals are in good shape, the ribbons or drapes are in sad condition. The smaller illustrations accompanying each medal are examples of the medals as issued.



Mike's Sharpshooter badge



Mike's identification disc for much of his career; they have been called "dog tags" from WWII on. He is identified as a Sergeant, Company F, 9th Infantry in the United States Army. Note that the disc is suspended from a string or cord. This explains why there were so many unknown soldiers in WWI: The string broke easily and the discs were lost in the mud of the battlefield. British discs were even harder to find; they were a mud color when issued. Discs of this sort are still being found (2015) in WWI battle areas.





Edith Mae Carter O'Brien, ca. 1909.

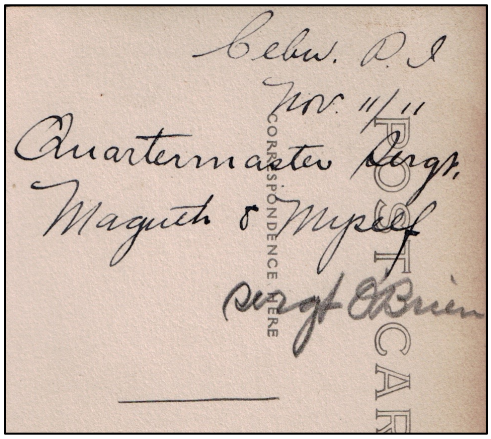


Sarah ("Sadie") Carter (age 21), Edith (age 31) and Mike in San Antonio, 1909. Mike's stripes are those of a color sergeant. Sadie and Edith were sisters.



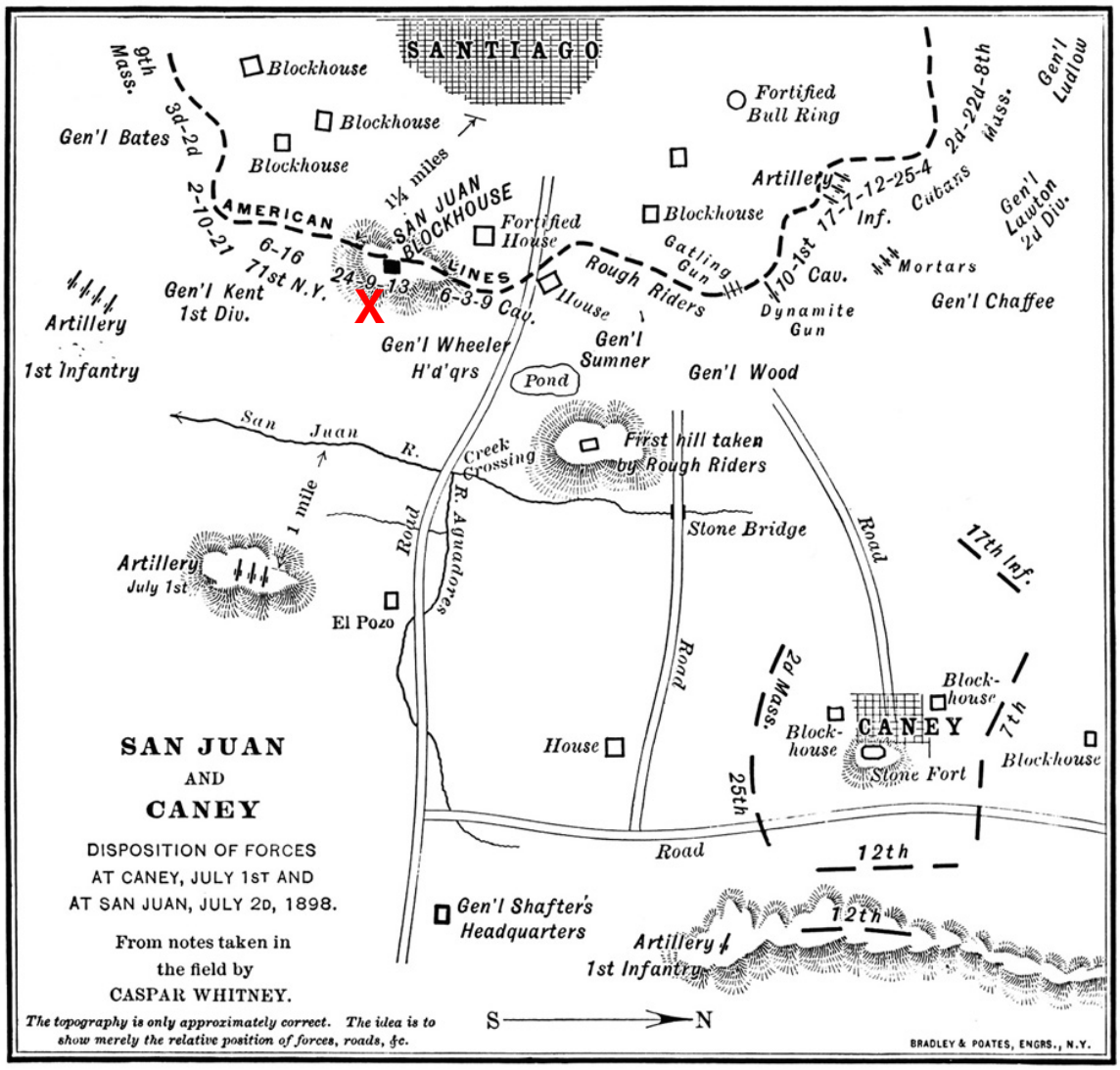
Mike and Edith, 1909





The caption from the reverse of the photo: "Cebu P. I., Nov 11/11 Quartermaster Sergt Maguth & myself Sergt. O'Brien." SGT Maguth is wearing the usual campaign hat of the time and Mike is wearing a British-style pith helmet. Given that he is also wearing riding jodhpurs and is holding a crop, one may assume safely that Mike was probably involved in mounted police exercises. He was an expert equestrian.

San Juan Hill, east of Santiago, Cuba, 1 – 2 July 1898



On 1-2 July 1898, Mike was with the 9th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Brigade under Col. Charles A. Wikoff. The Regiment was assigned to the First Division under Brig. General Jacob Ford Kent. The 9th is at the red X at the bottom of the hill where the "San Juan Blockhouse" is located. The area is known as the San Juan Heights, but US forces named the place San Juan Hill (where Mike fought) and the hill just to the north was named Kettle Hill, the object of Teddy Roosevelt's assault. It is amusing to recall that Mike always claimed Roosevelt and the Rough Riders were never anywhere near the top of San Juan Hill and, given how the hills were named by the troops at the time, that is true. Roosevelt and his volunteers took Kettle Hill, marked on the map as "First hill taken by Rough Riders." He also attempted to involve his troops on San Juan Hill, but it was secured before he could organize an assault. The press did not distinguish between the hills, both were at San Juan, so Kettle Hill became known in the press as San Juan Hill, and it was the more famous of the two because of Roosevelt's presence. The yellow journalists of the day were not concerned with fine distinctions and U. S. history gained another muddled bit by having Roosevelt and his Rough Riders capturing the wrong hill. ("Battle Map")



This hand-embroidered silk souvenir is about 21 inches square and was probably intended originally as the top half of a display pillow. At the top is some age related damage to the silk, but it is otherwise in good shape. The flags arranged around the US seal are with one exception either military or national flags and are, from left to right: Great Britain (the embroiderer mistakenly chose the British merchant flag instead of the white Naval flag with the red cross of St. George and the Union Jack in the canton), Russia, Japan (the Rising Sun war flag), France, Germany, Austria, Italy and the United States.

The March to Relieve Peking, China, August 1900

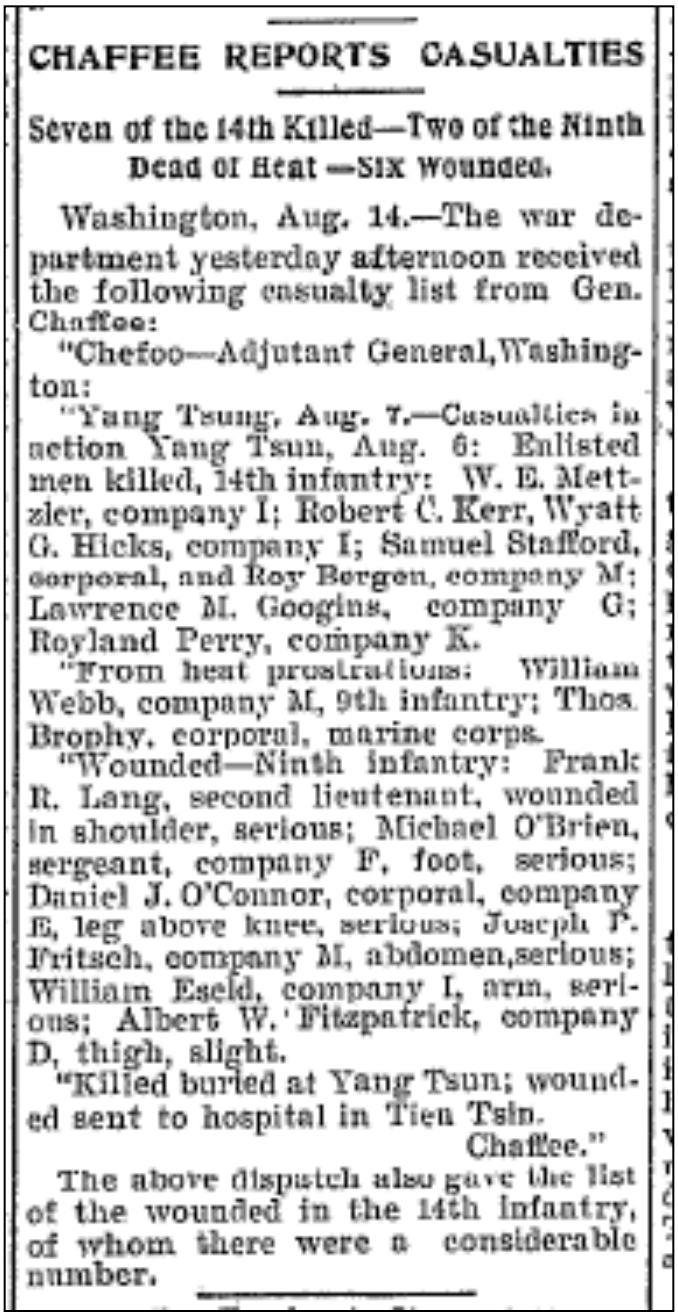


The first attempt to reach Peking tried to use the railway from Tientsin [thin red line], but that failed when the Boxers sabotaged the railroad and forced the multi-national force to march the distance through hostile territory. The north-northwest route from Tientsin to Yang-tsun to Tung Chau and then west into Peking is shown here in a wider, light red line. Mike was wounded on 6 August 1900 during fighting at Yang Tsun (approximate battlefield area marked by the red X) where the railroad and the route of march intersect.

The battle was fought on a dusty and barren plain along the east bank of the Pei-ho River near the railroad embankment where there were approximately 20,000 Allied troops facing about 10,000 Boxers. Of the Allied force, some 2,000 were Americans from the 9th and 14th Infantry Regiments and these two regiments took most of the force of the Boxer's attack; the 14th took more casualties. While Allied battle casualties were comparatively light, they were increased by temperatures up to 108° F that led to a many men being incapacitated by and some dying from the heat. ("March to Beijing")

In Report No. 21 of the Second Battalion, Ninth Infantry, U. S. A., dated "Pekin, China, August 20, 1900," First LT W. K. Naylor, CO, Co. F, wrote: "At about 10:30 o'clock a. m. the troops came in sight of the city and were subjected to a severe shrapnel and small-arms fire. This kept up while the regiment was deploying and moving forward, F Company with its battalion acting as support. During the advance the company suffered but one casualty, namely, Sergt. Michael O'Brien, wounded in the foot. After advancing through the cornfield that lay in front of the enemy's position and making several flank movements, in all of which the company participated, the enemy were dislodged and driven out.

"At about 3 o'clock p. m., the enemy having disappeared, the company assembled with the battalion and marched to a camp near the railroad bridge." (Annual Reports)



CHAFFEE REPORTS CASUALTIES

Seven of the 14th Killed—Two of the Ninth Dead of Heat—Six Wounded.

Washington, Aug. 14.—The war department yesterday afternoon received the following casualty list from Gen. Chaffee:

"Chefoo—Adjutant General, Washington:

"Yang Tsung, Aug. 7.—Casualties in action Yang Tsun, Aug. 6: Enlisted men killed, 14th infantry: W. E. Mettzler, company I; Robert C. Kerr, Wyatt G. Hicks, company I; Samuel Stafford, corporal, and Roy Bergen, company M; Lawrence M. Goggins, company G; Royland Perry, company K.

"From heat prostrations: William Webb, company M, 9th infantry; Thos. Brophy, corporal, marine corps.

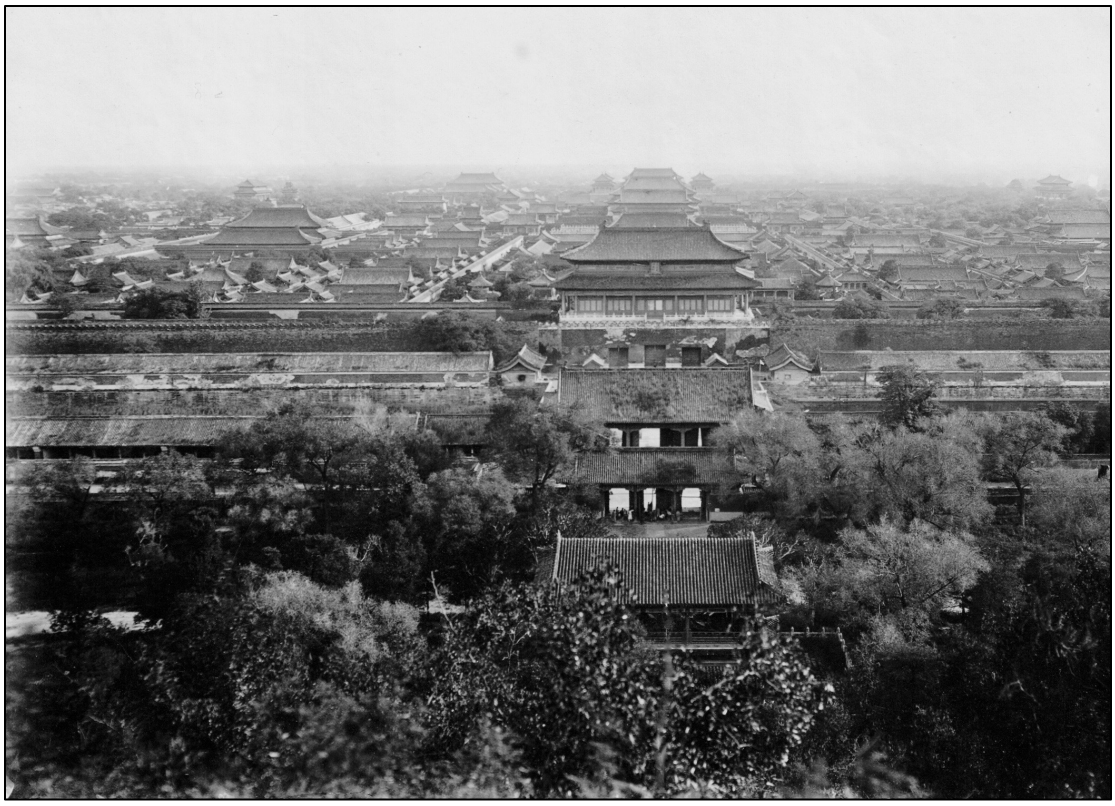
"Wounded—Ninth infantry: Frank R. Lang, second lieutenant, wounded in shoulder, serious; Michael O'Brien, sergeant, company F, foot, serious; Daniel J. O'Connor, corporal, company E, leg above knee, serious; Joseph F. Fritsch, company M, abdomen, serious; William Eseld, company I, arm, serious; Albert W. Fitzpatrick, company D, thigh, slight.

"Killed buried at Yang Tsun; wounded sent to hospital in Tien Tsin.

Chaffee."

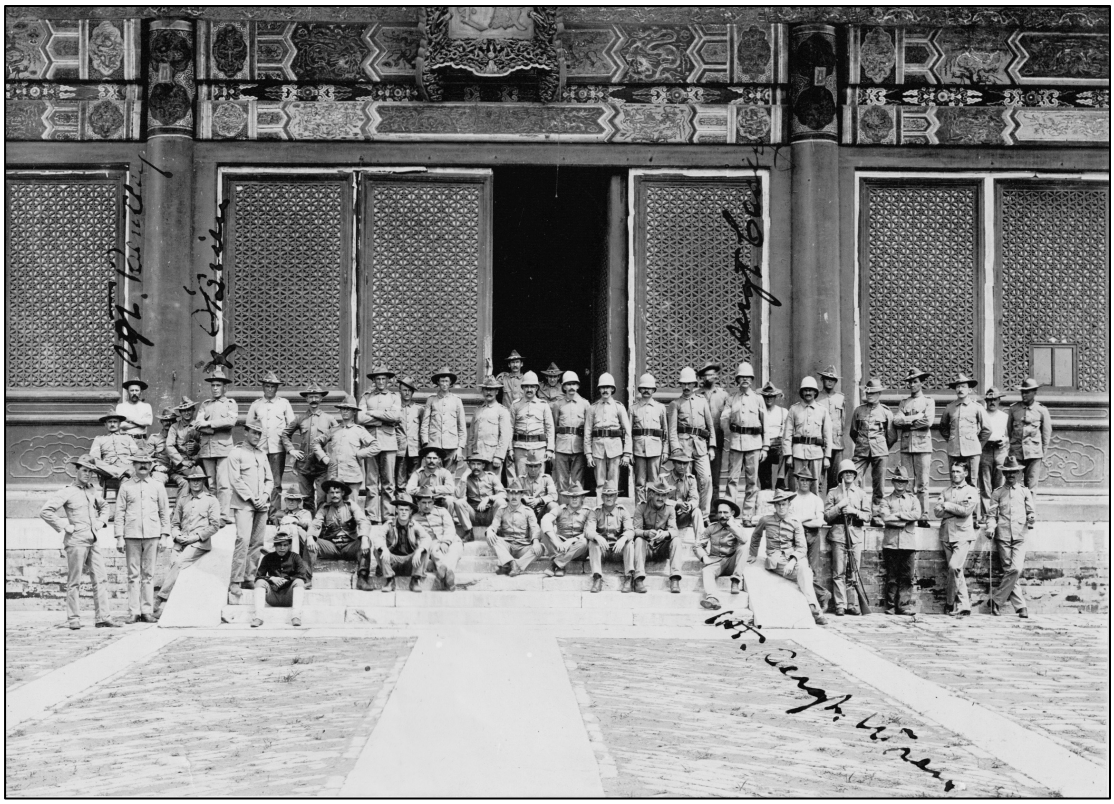
The above dispatch also gave the list of the wounded in the 14th infantry, of whom there were a considerable number.

This is an otherwise unidentified newspaper clipping from Mike's collection of memorabilia. He is mentioned in the fifth paragraph beginning "Wounded—Ninth infantry…." This is the wound for which Mike was later awarded a Purple Heart. Newspapers all over the US reprinted such reports. ("Chaffee Reports Casualties")

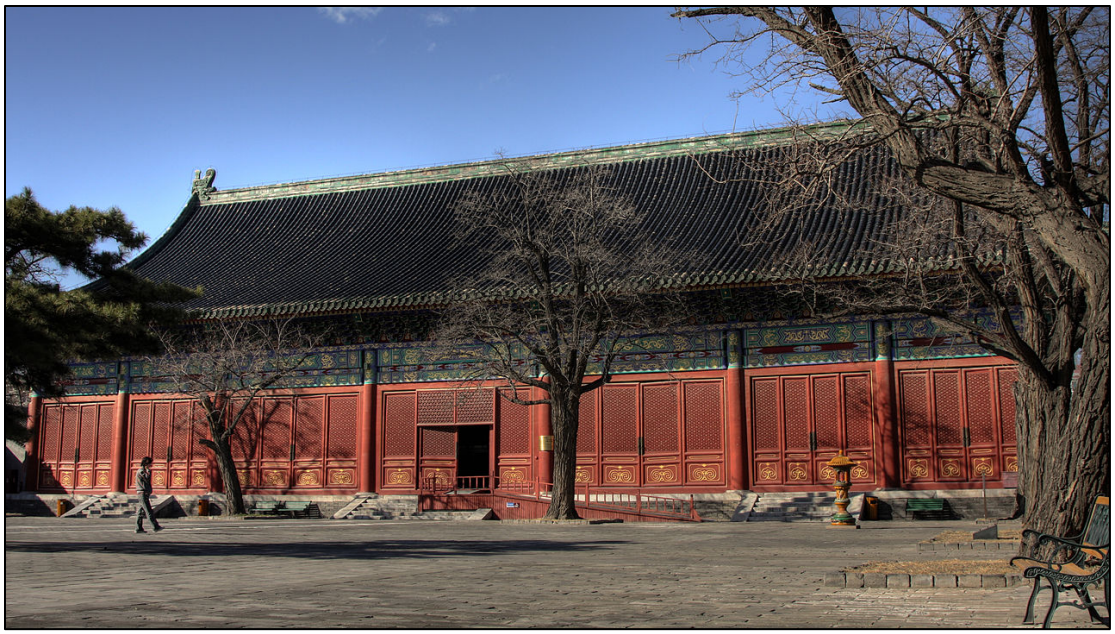




Mike identified the top photo on the reverse as "Peking City, June 1902."
He labeled the bottom photo as "Main St.—Chien-min—Peking, the Broadway of Peking, 1902."
While the precise location is unknown, it appears to be in the vicinity of the Forbidden City.



Mike's note on the reverse of this photo is, "Part of Co. B, 9th Infantry, U. S. Legation Guard, Pekin (sic.), China, June 1901. The building is the Temple of Earth, also known as Temple of Agriculture, and was used as the company's barracks. Mike is on the left in the back row under the X. The Chinese considered using their temples as barracks to be sacrilegious.



The Temple or Altar of Agriculture (Xiannongtan) in 2015

"Temple of Agriculture." Online. Available: Google.com



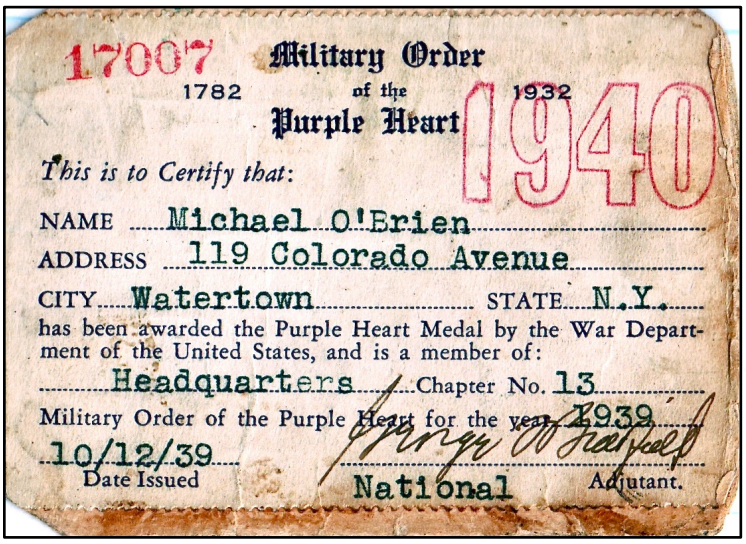
Mike wrote on the reverse of the photo: "Part of Co. B 9th U. S. Infantry in front of Hospital Building erected summer of 1901. Peking, China. Michael." Mike is seated in the front row immediately above the X.







Mike's Purple Heart has seen some wear over the years, but still represents the degree of commitment he had to his adopted country. Gen. George Washington created the Badge of Military Merit, a purple fabric heart to be sewn on a uniform's lapel. After the Revolutionary War it was forgotten until 1932 when the current Purple Heart was instituted to honor Gen. Washington. The first medals were issued to WWI veterans on 28 May 1932 and, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, were reserved for honoring those wounded or killed in action. The Legion of Merit is now issued for meritorious service.


17007 Military Order
1782 of the 1932
Purple Heart 1940
This is to Certify that:
NAME Michael O'Brien
ADDRESS 119 Colorado Avenue
CITY Watertown STATE N.Y.
has been awarded the Purple Heart Medal by the War Department of the United States, and is a member of:
Headquarters Chapter No. 13
Military Order of the Purple Heart for the year 1939
10/12/39
Date Issued
National Adjutant.

THE NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR

Mr. Stephen P. Clarke
148 Greenway Blvd.
Churchville, New York 14428-9210

Re: MICHAEL JOSEPH O'BRIEN

Thank you for sending us information for enrollment on the Roll of Honor at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. We truly appreciate your interest and support in helping us further our mission to collect, preserve and share the records of all Purple Heart recipients.

We are pleased and honored to let you know that the enrollment process is complete. Visitors to the Hall may view the profile at one of our computer kiosks. An abbreviated version of the profile may also be viewed on our website at: www.thepurpleheart.com.

So far, more than 195,000 recipients have been enrolled. While this is a significant number, it is small compared to the estimated 1.8 million Purple Hearts that have been awarded since 1932.

As a New York State facility administered by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, we do not automatically receive documentation about Purple Heart recipients. We rely on friends, family and recipients to share their information with us so that we may honor them on the Roll of Honor. We would be most appreciative of your support and assistance in helping us spread the word about the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor by encouraging recipients and/or their relatives to share their stories with us.

Thank you for helping us to honor all Purple Heart recipients.

Sincerely,

Enrollment Staff, The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor

P.O. Box 207, Vails Gate, New York 12584-0207 • Phone: 845.561.1765 • Fax: 845.569.0382 • Web Site: www.thepurpleheart.com



No. 416457

To be given to the person Naturalized.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION

Petition, Volume ____, Number ____

Description of holder: Age, 39 years; height, 5 feet, 7 1/2 inches; color, white; complexion, light; color of eyes, light blue; color of hair, dark brown; visible distinguishing marks, none

Name, age and place of residence of wife Edith O'Brien

Names, ages and places of residence of minor children none

ORIGINAL

State of Kentucky } S.S. Michael O'Brien
Campbell County } (Signature of holder.)

Be it remembered, that Michael O'Brien

then residing at number Ft Thomas Ky, Street, City, Town, of Highlands Ft Thomas, State, Territory, District, of Kentucky, who previous to his naturalization was a citizen, subject of George V. King of Great Britain & Irel., having applied to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America pursuant to law, and at a regular term of the Circuit Court of Campbell Co. held at Newport, on the 22nd day of January in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and Fifteen, the court having found that the petitioner had resided continuously within the United States for at least five years, and in this State, Territory, District for at least one year immediately preceding the date of the filing of his petition, and that said petitioner intends to reside permanently in the United States, had in all respects complied with the law in relation thereto, and that he was entitled to be so admitled, it was thereupon ordered by the said court that he be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

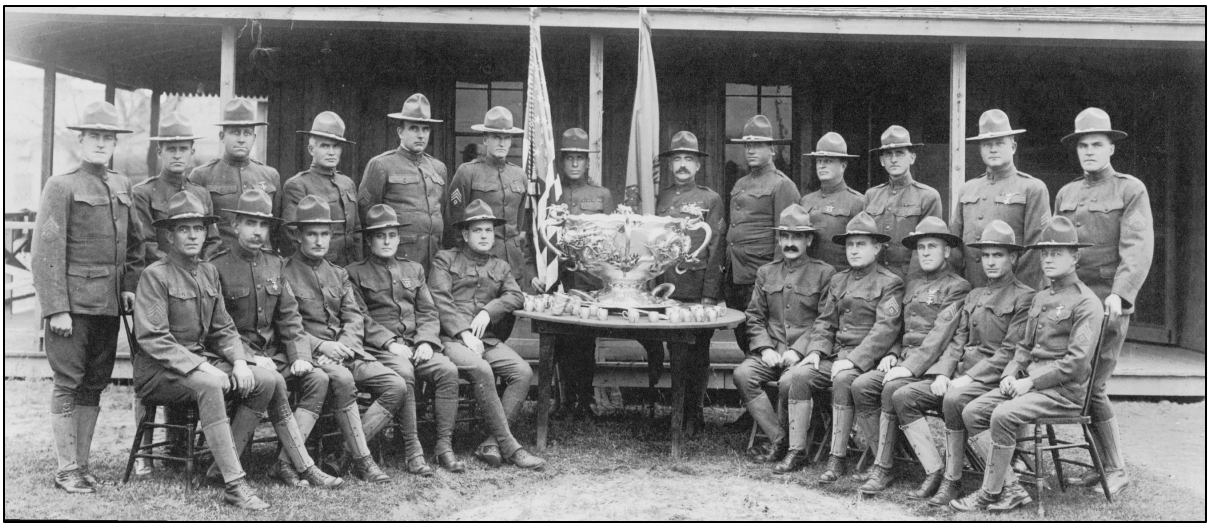
In testimony whereof the seal of said court is hereunto affixed on the 22nd day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and Fifteen, and of our Independence the one hundred and Thirty Eight.

W. H. Newell Clerk
Campbell Circuit Court
(Official character of attestor.)

CAMPBELL CO. CIRCUIT COURT KENTUCKY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Michael became a naturalized citizen of the United States while stationed at Fort Thomas, near Highlands, Campbell Co., KY, on 22 Jan 1915. The ceremony was held at Newport, KY, at a regular session of the Circuit Court of Campbell Co. Curiously, Michael should have been listed as 42 years of age, not 39 as stated on the certificate.



Michael, holding the "Stars and Stripes" behind the enormous punch bowl, identified this photo only as "Non-commissioned staff and 1st sergeants, 9th U. S. Infantry, Laredo, Texas, 1916." However, the photo and the punch bowl are of major importance in the history of the 9th Infantry.



The Liscum Bowl is shown here from a photograph taken in 2013 by Creative Metalworks following their work to restore it. The caption provided for the photo by Creative Metalworks states: "The Liscum Bowl is one of the largest sterling silver objects ever made: 90 pounds, 40" across, 24" high, with a capacity of 14 gallons. It was created in 1900 by Japanese silversmiths from bullion gifted to the Ninth Infantry by Prince Li Hung Chang of China, in recognition for their honesty and appreciation of their help in quelling the Boxer rebellion. It is one of the foremost trophies of any American regiment." It is also recognized as one of the most significant sterling silver objects of the 20th C.

"On July 13, 1900, shortly after arriving on Chinese shores, the regiment was engaged in the conquest of the walled city of Tientsin. With the exception of a battalion of Marines, the 9th Infantry was the only American unit engaged in the struggle [on the left flank of the attack]. In the course of the battle Col. [Emerson H.] Liscum was struck by Chinese fire, and shortly after directing his men to "Keep up the Fire!" on the walls of the city, he died. [Liscum rescued the Colors from the fallen Color Sergeant and continued to direct the assault on the city until he died.]

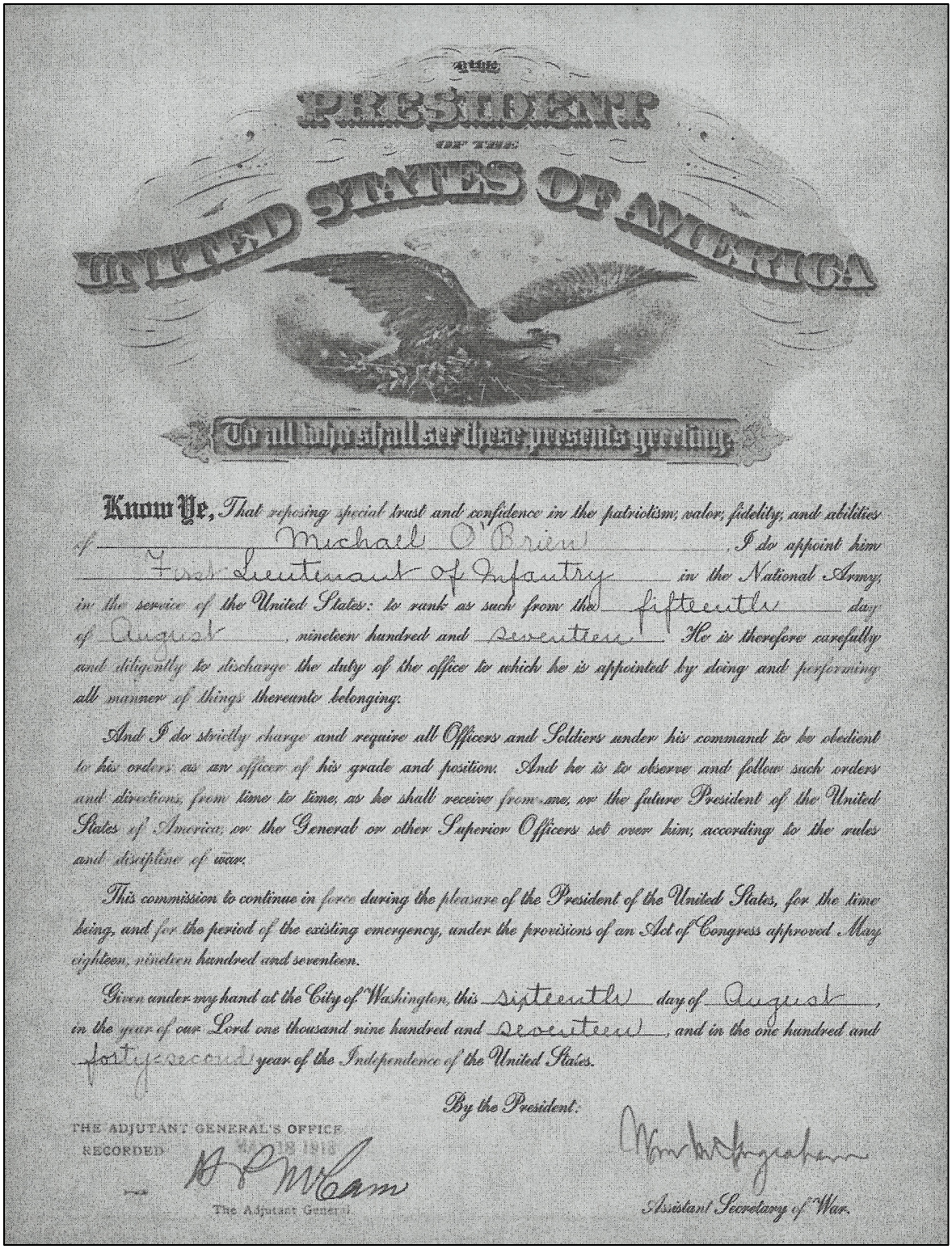
"After Tientsin's fall, the regiment discovered the smoldering ruins of a mint containing a vast storehouse of silver bars and coins, and turned it over to the Chinese Government. As a token of their appreciation, Prince Li Hung Chang presented the Regiment with melted silver from the mint fire.

"In April 1902, after returning to the Philippines, the regiment shipped the fused silver to Yokohama, Japan, where Japanese silversmiths were employed by Arthur & Bond to fabricate the

bowl, tray and ladle in honor of Col. Liscum and his Regiment's sacrifice. The bowl was completed on November 2, 1902, but the Regiment did not receive it until stationed at Madison Barracks, New York in April 1903. A set of 52 sterling cups, completing the collection, were designed and constructed from a portion of the silver by Chinese silversmiths." The bowl is now (2015) part of the collection of the 2nd Infantry Division Museum, Camp Red Cloud, Korea. [***See*** Creative Metalworks' website at <http://www.creativemetalworks.com/ p332.html>; for a history of the 9th Regiment; ***See*** <http://www.manchu.org/linage/ creed.htm> and for the 2nd Inf. Div. Museum; ***See*** <http://www.history.army.mil/html/museums/aom/2009-08.html>.]



The Ninth Regiment's coat of arms showing, from the top, the Indianhead patch linking the Regiment with the 2nd Infantry Division in WWI surrounded by a fourragère *in the blue and red colors of the French Croix de Guerre, also earned during WWI. The shield has a dragon to remember the China Expedition, a sun in splendor to remember service in the Philippines, the white wavy chevron to honor service at the "Bloody Angle on the San Juan River and a teepee to recall service during the Indian Wars. The ribbon carries Colonel Liscum's dying command during the assault of Tientsin, the regiment's motto.*



THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To all who shall see these presents greeting:

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of Michael O'Brien I do appoint him First Lieutenant of Infantry in the National Army, in the service of the United States: to rank as such from the fifteenth day of August, nineteen hundred and Seventeen. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of the office to which he is appointed by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging.

And I do strictly charge and require all Officers and Soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as an officer of his grade and position. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future President of the United States of America, or the General or other Superior Officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of war.

This commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the President of the United States, for the time being, and for the period of the existing emergency, under the provisions of an Act of Congress approved May eighteen, nineteen hundred and seventeen.

Given under my hand at the City of Washington, this sixteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and Seventeen, and in the one hundred and forty-second year of the Independence of the United States.

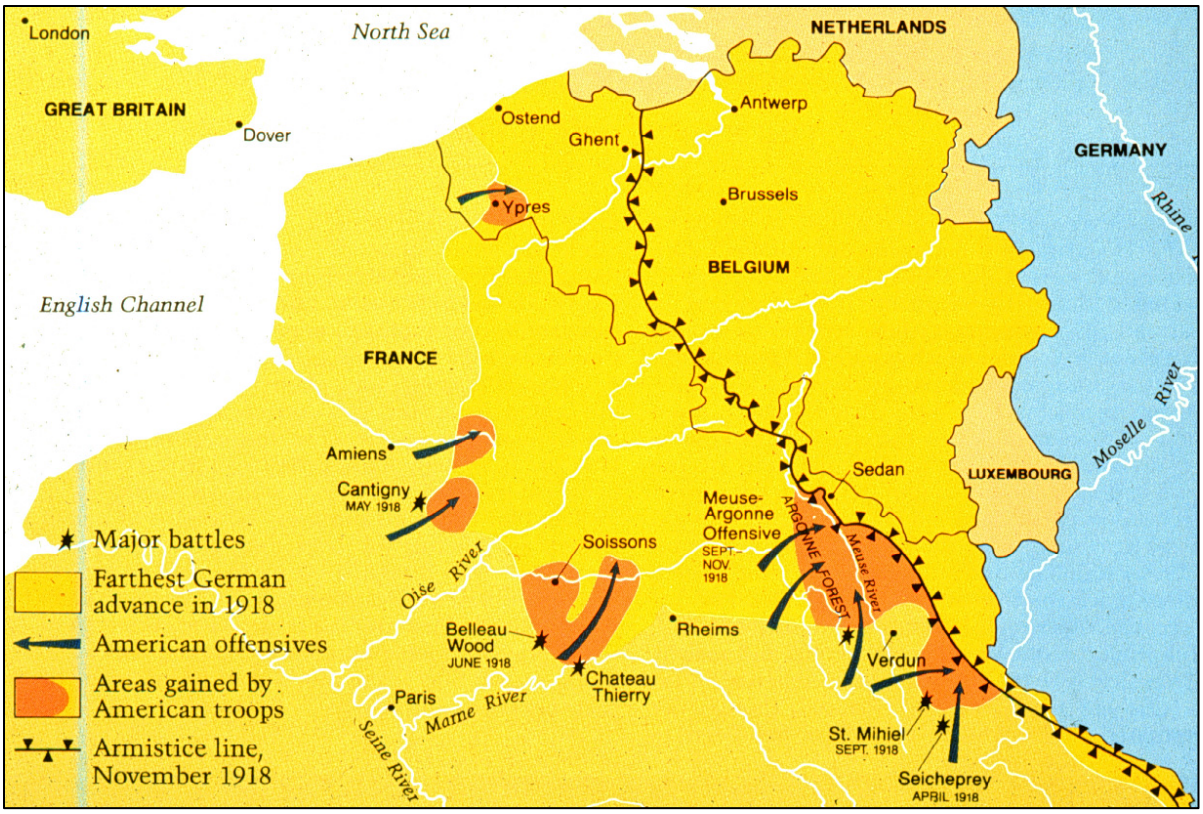
By the President:

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
RECORDED [illegible] 1918

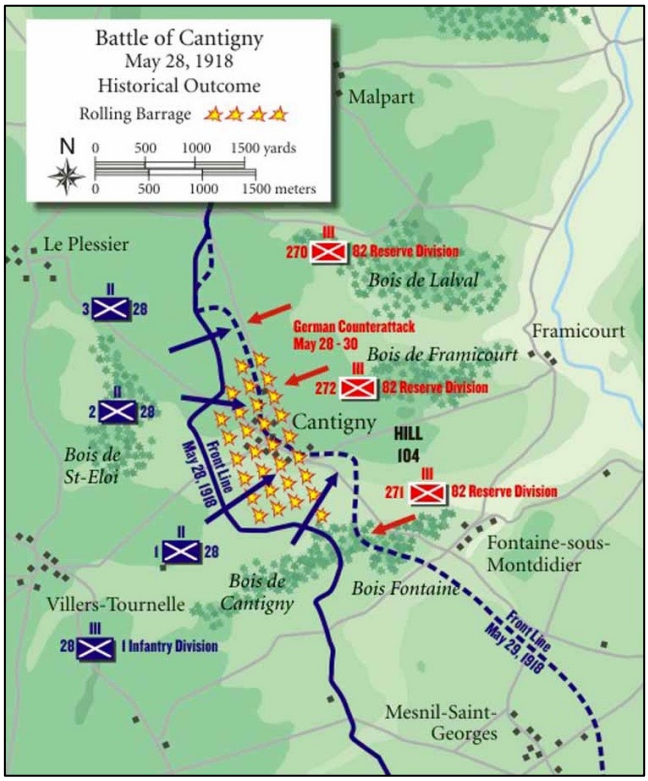
The Adjutant General

Assistant Secretary of War.

Mike's commission as First Lieutenant, dated 16 Aug 1917, but it was only in effect for the duration of WWI. He returned to the enlisted ranks for his last enlistment, but Congress eventually made his officer rank permanent and that fact is recorded on his gravestone.



The Western Front in WWI where Michael fought. Cantigny was the first battle involving US forces. Moving along the front line markings to the south and east are Soissons, St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. After the War, Mike saw occupation duty in Germany. ("Cantigny Battle Map")



Mike was assigned to Co. E, 28th Infantry Regiment of the First Infantry Division ("The Big Red One"), the first unit of the American Expeditionary Force in WWI, and fought along the northern flank of the attack at Cantigny immediately above the area of the rolling barrage. Cantigny, a hamlet about 75 miles north of Paris, was demolished utterly, but the U. S. force captured a vital hill from which they could observe and thus control the area. They also proved to the Allies and the Germans that Americans knew how to fight. Captain George C. Marshall, later a General of the Army, planned the Cantigny assault. ("Map: Cantigny Battlefield")

(FOR OFFICIAL CIRCULATION ONLY.) [G. O. 112.]

G. H. Q.

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,

GENERAL ORDERS, No. 112. FRANCE, *July 9, 1918.*

The Commander in Chief desires to record in the General Orders of the American Expeditionary Forces his appreciation of the splendid courage, service and sacrifice of the officers and men of the First and Second Divisions of these Forces during the recent operations in which these divisions participated and in which the enemy was checked by the resolute defense and counter-offense of the Allied Armies.

These Divisions, submitted fully for the first time to all the drastic tests of modern warfare, bore themselves always with fine valor; their co-operation with their brothers-in-arms of the unified command was prompt and efficient and brought from their Allied comrades many expressions of sincere appreciation. The conduct of these brave men and that of their fallen comrades who made the supreme sacrifice has established a standard of service and prestige which every division of the American Expeditionary Forces will strive to emulate and preserve.

This order will be read to all organizations at the first assembly formation after its receipt.

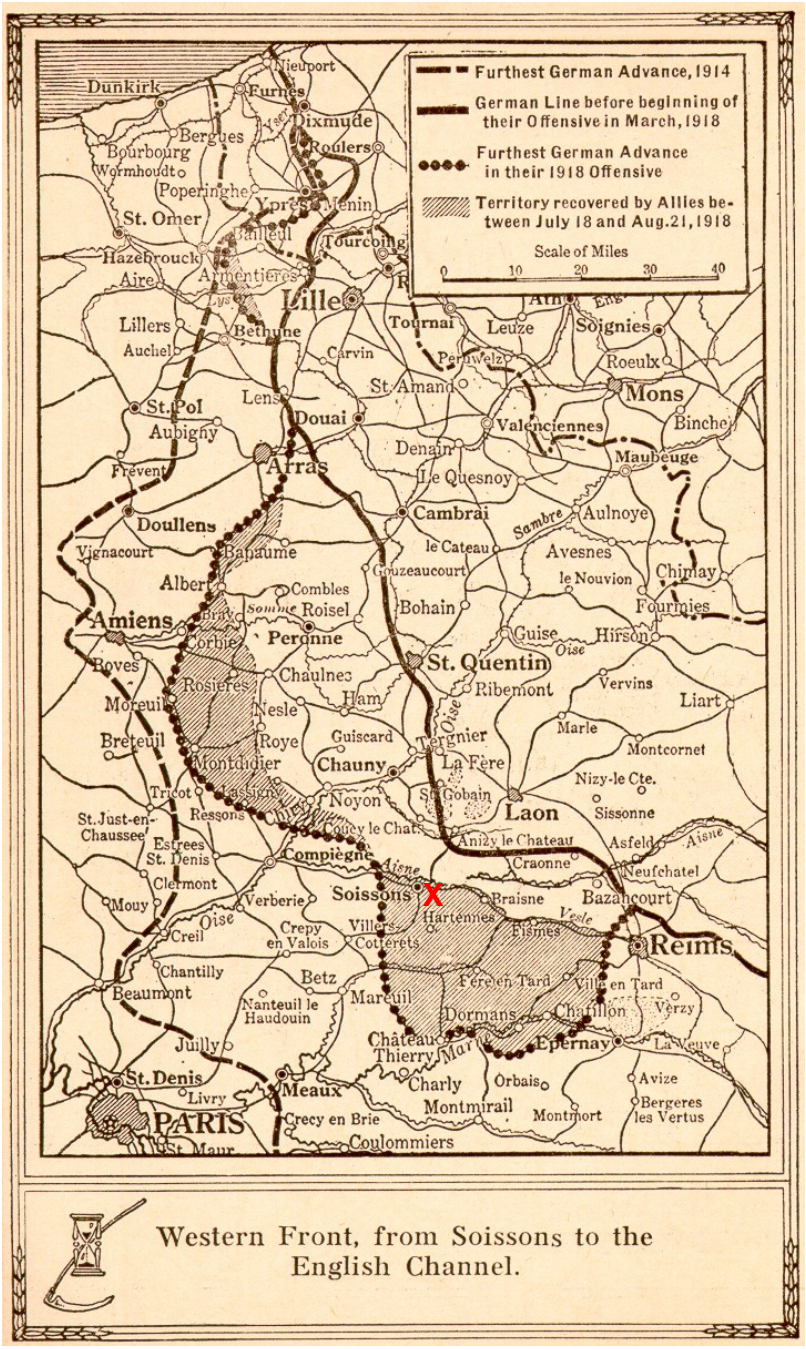
BY COMMAND OF GENERAL PERSHING:

JAMES W. McANDREW,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:
ROBERT C. DAVIS,
Adjutant General.

Refers to Battle of Cantigny

Page 69



The red "X" marks the location of Soissons at the northern point of the Aisne-Marne salient that extended south to Chateau-Thierry and Epernay. ("Map, Soissons") The four-day Allied attack in July 1918 was meant to dislodge the German forces in the salient while disrupting their supply lines and making possible future Allied counterattacks.

The First Division Museum online website has the following summary of the action in the Marne salient between the Aisne and Marne Rivers: "Allied victory in the salient meant a major German loss of land and marked a turning point in World War I. Allied soldiers now had the German army on the defensive and were in a strong position to make a final push to end the war. After its defeat at Soissons and the loss of the Marne salient, German command (including Kaiser Wilhelm) thought the war was over. A seized German 7th army report summed up the fears of the German command in stating that 'the 18th of July constitutes a turning point in the history of the World War.' The A. E. F. and the First Division contributed greatly to the 'turning point' and proved once again that the American fighting force could hold its own on the battlefields of Europe. General Charles Mangin, C. O. of the French Tenth Army, commended American troops for their bravery and skill in an address made on July 30th. 'Your magnificent courage completely routed a surprised enemy,' General Mangin said, 'and your indomitable tenacity checked the counterattacks of his fresh divisions…. I am proud to have commanded you…and to have fought with you for the deliverance of the world.'" (Soissons) Generals Pershing and Summerall echoed the sentiments of Gen. Mangin in the letter that follows.

Headquarters First Division,
American Expeditionary Forces,
France, July 25, 1918.

General Order)
)
No. 38)

The Commanding General wishes to express to the officers and soldiers of this Division his high pride in their splendid achievements during the operations of July 18th-23rd. Your magnificient courage and unfaltering fortitude have not only won for you individually the admiration of the allied Armies, but have written a glorious page in the history of that great country which you represent.

For five long days you have maintained a bitter struggle in one of the world's great battles and have pushed ever forward in the face of the enemy's most determined resistance. You would not be denied and you have reached the ultimate objective assigned to you in this battle. You have sustained the conflict longer and you have advanced your line further than any other Division engaged with you in the battle. You have captured for your own share in the fruits of the victory 3,500 prisoners and 68 cannons. No such brillant success can be gained without losses, but the injury you have inflicted upon the enemy is many times greater, and to-day your spirit is unshaken, your ocurage high and you are even now ready to repeat the lesson you have taught our enemy.

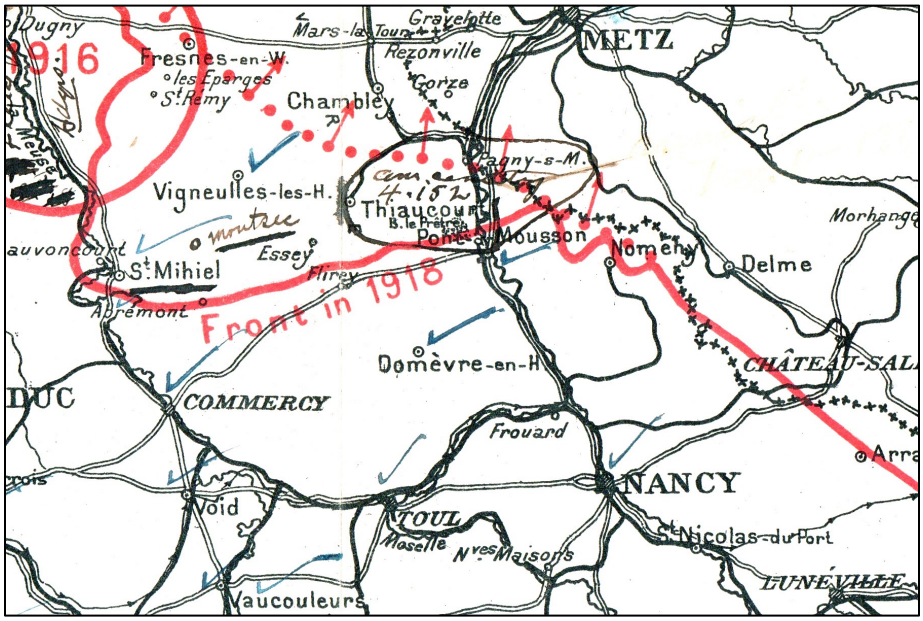
The Commanding General is proud indeed to command such a Division and he expresses to you again the deep gratitude he feels for the splendid soldierly qualities that you have so gloriously proven in the unquestioned crucible of the battlefield.

This order will be read to all organizations at the first assembly formation after its receipt.

By command of Major General Summerall:

CAMPBELL KING,
Chief of Staff.

Refers to Battle of
Soissons, Aisne-Marne Section



A section from Mike's WWI battle map showing major campaigns and the position of the front line at various times with his notes added. This section of the map shows the St.-Mihiel salient in the Meuse Department, near Verdun. The solid red line shows German advance as of 12 Sep 1918 at the start of the attack by the U. S. 1st Army.

Mike was in the 28th Inf. Regiment of the 1st Inf. Division in the IV Corps. General John J., "Black Jack," Pershing was in overall command, General Dickman commanded the IV Corps and General Summerall commanded the 1st Div. S. L. A. Marshall wrote: "When information reaching him [Pershing] indicated that all roads leading out of the salient were clogged with German troops, artillery, and trains in flight, he directed the U. S. IV and V corps to push on through the night (Sep 12-13) in an attempt to block all escape routes. The 102nd Infantry Regiment of the 26th Division moved out immediately, heading for Vigneulles. Converging on it, from the other flank, also striding through enemy country, went the 28th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Division. Both regiments got their orders around 8:00 P. M....the 102nd close[d] on Vignuelles at 2:15 A. M. and later capture[d] Hattonville. The 28th Regiment joined hands with them around Vigneulles about six hours later, with the sun well up. With this meeting of the two regiments, the Saint-Mihiel salient passed into American hands and Allied control. Through the next day the First Army front pushed forward to the line held by the two advance regiments." (Marshall, 430)

The Battle of Saint-Mihiel is known as the first major independent U. S. operation and victory and is further noteworthy for the aggressive tactics of the field commanders—Lieutenant Colonel George S. Patton, later famous for his aggressive leadership in WWII, was one. One student of this battle noted, "If Pershing had been allowed to conduct his offensive as planned [French Marshall Foch had other ideas and forced a compromise with Pershing, ed.], the First American Army probably would have penetrated German lines [further] and altered the strategic situation along the whole Western Front." (Giese) As it was, some 15,000 German troops and 250 large pieces of artillery were captured (Esposito, 120). "The battle was virtually over the day it began, although it was not until September 16 that the Americans could be certain the Germans would not counterattack." (Ferrell, 33)

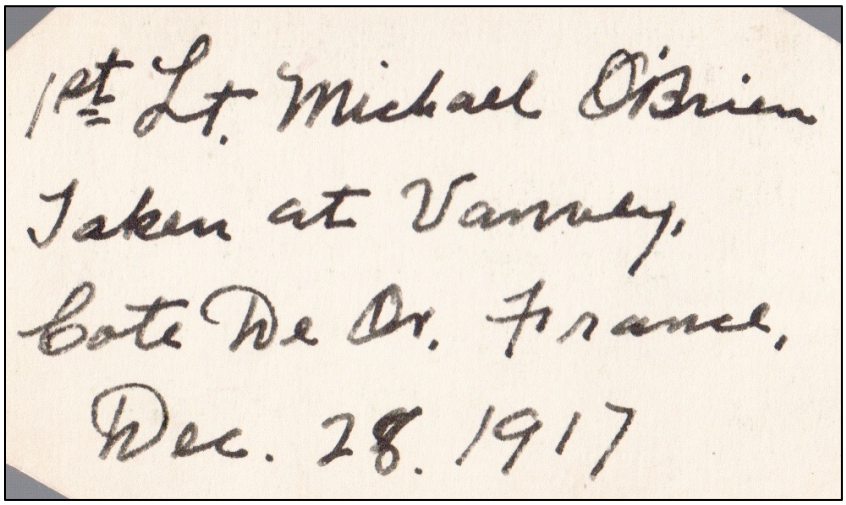
Mike's unit was engaged along the line of assault at a point between Essey and Thiaucourt; the blue arrows Mike added include marks for the advance of his Regiment as part of the IV Corps, moving from near Domèvre in a drive to the north-northwest toward Vigneulles. Pershing's goal was to reach Metz and disrupt key German rail lines, but the forced compromise with Foch prevented that. The battle ended on 15 Sep and the Armistice was declared on 11 Nov.



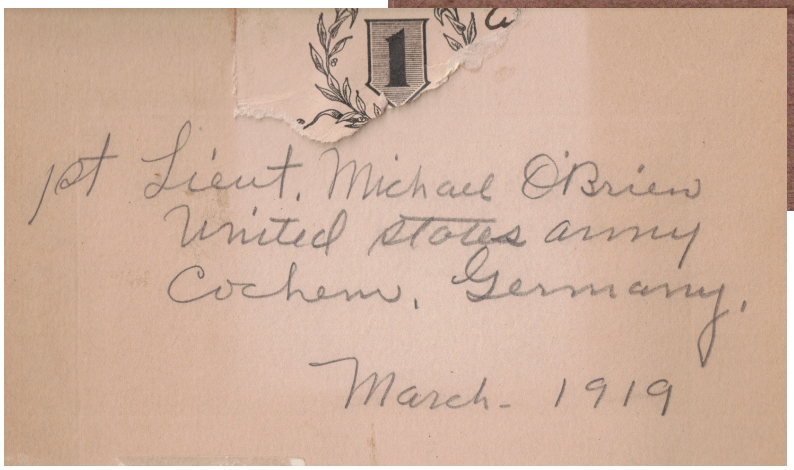
This photo was taken in the Verdun sector where Mike was involved in some of the heaviest fighting of WWI. Vanvey is a small village or commune in the Cote D'Or Department of the Burgundy region of eastern France south of the main fighting area there. It is not far west of Cochem, Germany, where Mike served with the force of occupation in the American sector.



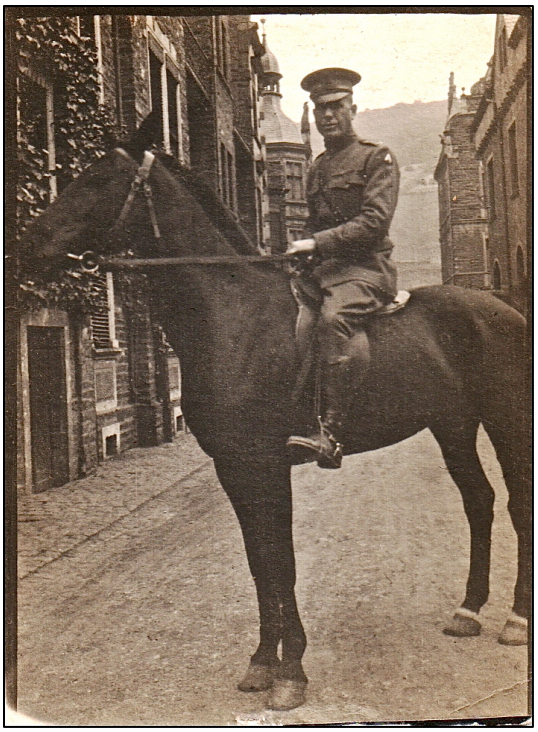
Mike's identity disc used while serving as a commissioned officer. It identifies him as a First Lieutenant, 2nd Co. Mounted Police, U. S. Army.

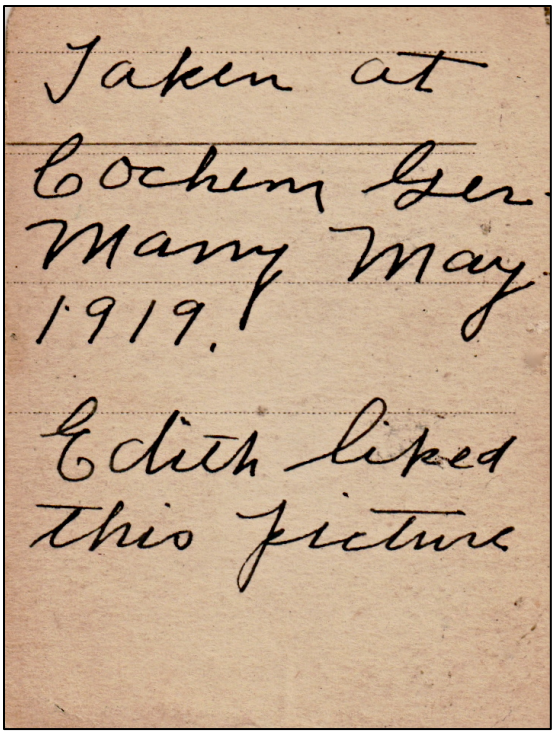






Note the "Big Red One" First Infantry Division emblem on the notepaper Mike used to identify this portrait photo.





First Lieutenant Michael O'Brien serving in Germany with the forces of occupation. Cochem is on the River Mosel in western Germany southwest of Koblenz; it was the center of American occupation. The tack is not typical military issue and the bridle does not seem properly fitted. The hooves are rather long and the unusual white rings just above the hind hooves are sometimes called "coronet rings."



Michael's WWI identity card with a small photo of Edith in the upper right hand corner





To the left is Mike's World War I service medal with campaign bars for Montdidier-Noyon, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and the Defensive Sector. Above is the reverse of the medal. Below is the medal with the ribbon drape in the original rainbow colors. Mike earned the Montdidier-Noyon bar for his service at Cantigny.



("Army Campaign Medals")



Mike wrote on the back of this photo: "Edith Mae Carter O'Brien—she is reaching for Cana flower she is holding in right hand. Picture taken Aug, 1937, in garden 119 Colorado Avenue. Michael."



Mike in the back yard of the Grieb-Clarke house in Carthage, ca 1955.



The 1917 Victrola Mike bought for Edith that is still in the family.

This Is My Story

After the above notes were prepared and transcribed by Stephan P. Clarke, Michael's own notes were discovered among his personal belongings and verify Clarke's:

"Born at a very young age, September 28, 1873 at Bartoose, Emly, County Tipperary, Ireland, the son of James and Honoria Ryan O'Brien.

"I received my formal education at the Emly National School.

"At the age of 22 I emigrated to the United States, Leaving Ireland March 26, 1896 and arriving in New York City the first week of April.

"Enlisted for service in the Regular Army of the United States October 21, 1896 and was assigned to the 9th U. S. Infantry, then stationed at Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, N. Y. I was assigned to Co. F of the Regiment.

"Remained at Madison Barracks until April 19, 1898 and left with the Regiment on that date for Tampa Florida, where the Regiment organized and trained for service in The Spanish-American War.

"We sailed for Port Tampa, Florida, June 14, 1898 and arrived off Morro Castle, Santiago, Cuba June 20, 1898 and went ashore at Siboney, Cuba, June 23, 1898.

"Participated in the Battle and Capture of San Juan Hill July 1, 1898 and was present during the entire Santiago Campaign. Also participated in the raising of the American Flag over the Municipal Building, Santiago, July 17, 1898.

"The 9th Infantry was relieved from service in Cuba August 8th 1898 and boarded the Steamship *St. Louis* at 9:30 P.M. and sailed for Montauk Point arriving August 15.

"The regiment left Montauk Point at 7:30 P.M., September 10, 1898 arriving at Madison Barracks at 6:30 P.M. September 11, 1898.

"We again left Madison Barracks March 17, 1899 for San Francisco. Expedition with the 8th Army Corps to the Philippine Islands leaving San Francisco March 24. Expedition to Morong under General Hall June 2 to 10 1899.

"Engagement and capture of Calulut P. I. August 9, 1899. Battle of Santa Rita, P. I. August 11, 1899. Battle of Mabalacat P. I. November 8, 1899. Battle of Bambam P. I. November 11, 1899. [**NOTE**: The 9th Infantry Regiment was in the Philippines for less than a year before they were shipped to China for the relief of Peking. The various encounters listed here were part of the process of dealing with insurgents on Luzon. Ed.]

"We left the Philippines with the expedition to the Boxer Rebellion of China June 27, 1900. Arrived in China and proceeded up the Pi-Ho [Peiho, ed.] River arriving at Tientsin July 11, 1900. Battle of Tientsin, China July 13, 1900.

"We reorganized forces and advanced on Peking August 4, 1900. Battle of Piet-Sang August 5, 1900. Battle of Uan Tsien [Yang Tsun, ed,], China, August 6, 1900. I was wounded in that battle, receiving a rifle bullet through the instep of the right foot. Rejoined the Regiment in October. Transferred to Co. B 9th Infantry in April 1901 which remained as Legation Guard in Peking. Discharged at Peking, China October 20, 1902. Returned to the United States and Rejoined Co. F, 9th Infantry at Madison Barracks November 1902.

"Married Edith May Carter of Sackets Harbor N.Y. December 24 1903. She passed away December 28, 1943.

"Service in the Philippines from 1905 to 1907 and again from 1910 to 1912.

"Served three years on the Mexican Border with the 9th Infantry, From March 1914 to April 1917.

"Served as private corporal, sergeant, Q.M. [quartermaster] sergeant and 1st sergeant, Companies F and B, 9th Infantry, Regimental Color Sergeant, 9th U.S. Infantry.

"Appointed Second Lieut. Infantry, Mar 31, 1917. Assigned to 28th Inf., 1st Division. Sailed from Hoboken, New Jersey, June 14th 1917. Arrived St. Nazaire, France, June 26th 1917. Went ashore June 27th. Appointed 1st Lieut. Oct. 6th 1917.

"Battles, Engagements, Defensive Sectors:

"Summerville [Somerville] Sector Defensive Oct. 20th 1917 to Nov. 20th 1917. Ansuville [Ansonville, ed.] Sector Defensive north west of Toul (on the Moselle River in northeastern France),

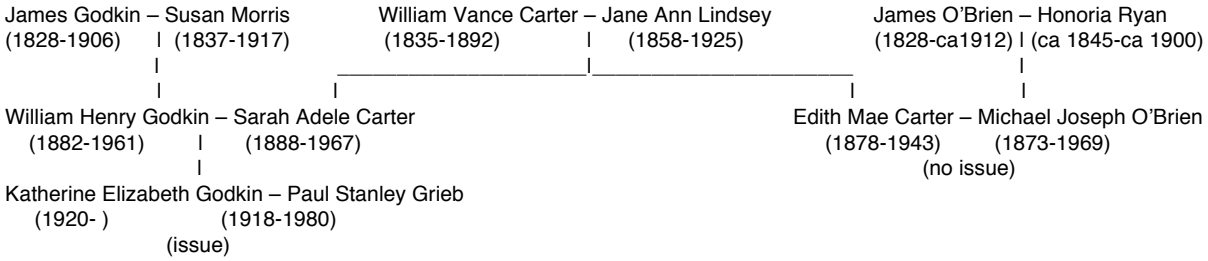
Jan 5th 1918 to April 17th 1918.
"Battle of Cantigny May 27-28-1918.
"Soisson Offensive July 16- to 25th 1918, 10 days hard fighting that was the turning point of the War.
"Saizeras [Saizerais, ed.] Sector Defensive, Aug 4th to 24th, 1918
"Battle of St. Mihiel, Sept 12 to 16th 1918
"Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Sept 26- to Oct 12 - 1918.
"Sedan, Nov. 5 to Nov. 11 - 1918.
"Army of Occupation until July 20, 1919
"Returned to US, August 11, 1919
"Retired from active service, Dec. 6th 1919
"This ends the story
"Michael O'Brien
"1st Lt. United State Regular Army, Ret.
"God Bless America."

Michael J. O'Brien's Enlistments

These records are held by Katherine E. Godkin Grieb, Mike's niece, and are transcribed here:
Joined the U. S. Army in Albany, NY, 21 Oct 1896
Enlistment ended, 20 Oct 1899, Angeles, Philippine Islands
Reenlisted, 21 Oct 1899, Angeles, Philippine Islands
Enlistment ended, 20 October 1902, Peking, China
Reenlisted, 22 Dec 1902, Peking, China
Enlistment ended, 21 Dec, 1905, Manila, Philippine Island
Reenlisted, 22 Dec 1905, Manila, Philippine Islands
Enlistment, ended, 21 Dec 1908
Reenlisted, 22 Dec 1908, Camp Sam Houston, Texas
Enlistment ended, 21 Dec 1911, Cuba [Cebu, ed.], Philippine Islands
Reenlisted, 22 Dec 1911, Ceba [Cebu, ed.], Philippine Islands
Enlistment ended, 21 Dec 1914, Laredo, Texas
Reenlisted, 22 Dec 1914, Laredo, Texas
Enlistment ended, 10 Jun 1917
Reenlisted, 14 Jun 1917, Hoboken, New Jersey
Enlistment ended, 15 Aug 1919, Camp Dix, NJ
Retired 6 Dec 1919

NOTE: Mike completed these notes prior his final enlistment. ("Former Lieutenant")

The O'Brien, Carter, Godkin and Grieb connection:



Steve Clarke, the compiler, is the nephew of Paul and Kay Grieb and he knew "Uncle" Mike for the last 24 years of Mike's life. Steve inherited Mike's RCA Victrola and cared for it until 2014 when it was passed on to Paul and Kay's daughter to keep it in the family.





Mike and Edith are buried in the Lakeside Cemetery, Sackets Harbor, Jefferson Co., NY on the bluff above Lake Ontario not far from Madison Barracks.
Photos this page (2015) by Stephan Clarke, all rights reserved.

***SUGGESTED FURTHER READING*:**

Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900. "Report of the Lieutanant-General Commanding the Army. In Seven Parts, Part 7." Washington, Government Printing Office, 1900. See p 55 for Report No. 21; see pp 43-59 for all of the reports submitted regarding the "Battle of Yangtsun, China, August 6, 1900." Online. Available: https://books.google.com/books?id=F_cRAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA53&lpg=PA53&dq=battle+of+yang-tsun&source=bl&ots=JII0x7VFFO&sig=W6bbMAOTUEyRmaeHMrM45yaRtLw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CDEQ6AEwBGoVChMIjKaAuuiAyAIVhW4-Ch0KfQQ3#v=onepage&q=battle%20of%20yang-tsun&f=false. 18 Sep 2015.

Brennan, Robert E., and Jeannie I. Brennan. *Images of America: Sackets Harbor*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999.

Davenport, Matthew J. *First Over There: The Attack on Cantigny, America's First Battle of World War I*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, 2015.

Dumindin, Arnaldo. *Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*. Online. Available: http://manchuassociation.org/index.html. 9 Jul 2015. This is a comprehensive collection of period primary source documents and photographs.

Ferrell, Robert. *America's Deadliest Battle: Meuse-Argonne, 1918*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007.

"First Division Museum at Cantigny." Online. Available: http://www.firstdivisionmuseum.org. 4 Jul 2015. The museum is in Cantigny Park on South Winfield Road, Wheaton, IL 60189. For an excellent brief overview of the various WWI battles in which 1LT O'Brien participated, click on "About the 1st Division" on the left of the screen and then click on "History of the First Division," specifically the section on WWI.

Linn, Brian McAllister. *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Modern War Series). Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000.

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"Manchu Association." Online. Available: http://manchuassociation.org/index.html.

Marshall, S. L. A. *World War I*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., The American Heritage Library, 1964.

_____. *The American Heritage History of World War I*. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co. 1964. Both of Marshall's books have the same text, but the American Heritage version includes a broad selection of photos, art work and maps.

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Preston, Diana. *The Boxer Rebellion*. New York: Berkeley Books, 2000.

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"The U. S. Army in World War I, 1917-1918." Online. Available: http://www.history.army. mil/books/amh-v2/PDF/Chapter01.pdf. 27 Jun 2015.

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NOTE: Unless otherwise cited, all illustrations are from LT O'Brien's effects that are held by the family.

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