



Schuylkill County Pennsylvania Military History

The Lone Doughboy Grave of William J. Montalto



**William J. Montalto
2nd Division
9th Infantry Regt.
Killed in Action
July 18, 1918**

By “Stu” Richards

On the upper hill of St. Mary’s cemetery in Arnot’s Addition stands a lone statue of a World War 1 doughboy. This memorial honors a local hero from St. Clair who died while serving his country in World War 1. The statue honors Corporal William J. Montalto, a member

of the 2nd Division, 9th Infantry Regiment, Company E. He was killed in action on July 18th , 1918.

Unlike the more active soldier memorial figures this statue depicts the doughboy in the position of “Order Arms”. A position in the military manual of arms in which the rifle is held vertically next to the right leg with its butt resting on the ground. The statue stands at attention forever marking the heroism of one of Schuylkill County’s fallen.

It is a shame that I can’t find much on Corp. Montalto in our files at the Historical Society. I will continue to research him so that his story can be completed and he can be written back into history properly. What I did find came from the records of the 9th Infantry regiment on the day he was killed.

The derivation of the term doughboy remains

in question. It was first used by the British in the late 18th and early 19th centuries to describe soldiers and sailors. In the United States the nickname was coined during the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), and was widely popularized during World War I (1914–1918) to refer to infantrymen. After the war, in which Americans saw combat in 1917-18, numerous communities commissioned doughboy statues to honor the local war heroes. This is the only statue of a Doughboy I’ve seen that marks the grave of one individual soldier. I think this is the finest monument in all of the Schuylkill County cemeteries that memorializes the common soldier.

Corporal Montalto was killed during the 2nd Battle of The Marne. The Second Battle of the Marne marked the turning of the tide in World War I. It began with the last German offensive of the conflict and was quickly followed by the first allied offensive victory of 1918. The American Expeditionary Force with over 250,000 men fighting under overall French command played key roles both in the initial defense and the later advances. In the Second Battle of Marne with 30,000 killed and wounded, the United States started suffering casualties on the enormous scale usually associated with the battles of the Great War.

On the day Corporal Montalto was killed July 18th , 1918 the 9th Infantry was engaged in the Allied counterattack that involved attacking the entire west face of the Marne salient. This main attack was first to pivot on Chateau-Thierry; later the Allies in the region of Chateau-Thierry were to take up the attack. The Allies were also to attack that part of the German salient south of the Marne and to the southwest of Reims. The plan then really involved attacking the entire Marne salient, the principal blow falling at first on the west face, with the critical point, at which eventual success or failure would be determined, southwest of Soissons. The three divisions

See William J. Montalto on page 2

Schuylkill County Historical Society



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Wednesday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

*Tourists, Historical
Researchers, Scholars
and Genealogists are
welcome*

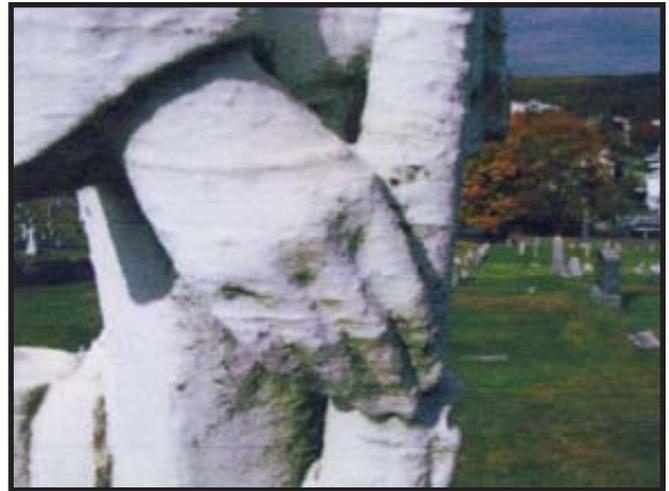
The Purpose of the Schuylkill County Historical Society is to discover, procure, and preserve the records of the history of Schuylkill County and any data or materials which may establish or illustrate that history.

William J. Montalto

continued from page 1

selected to break the most sensitive part of the German line were the 2nd American, the 1st Moroccan (French) and the 1st American. If these three divisions could seize and hold the heights south of Soissons the German position in the salient proper became untenable and it's ultimate reduction was assured.

At 4:35a.m., July 18th, after some of the American infantry had double-timed into line and when some of their guns had barely gotten into position, the 1st and 2nd American Divisions and the 1st Moroccan Division jumped off. Notwithstanding their desperate resistance the Germans were driven back and the results upon which ultimate success depended were secured.



Over time the monument has suffered from the effects of acid rain and general weathering.

The 2nd Division attacked on the other side of the Moroccans. It did not have the advantage which the other divisions of the corps possessed in being able to make reconnaissance difficulties and bring the assault troops into position in Division" an orderly way. Only by the most unusual exertion did the front line units manage to arrive in time to participate in the attack. All during the night great confusion reigned among the troops. The traffic congestion compelled the infantry to follow the ditches which paralleled the trails, thus stringing out the columns and causing both the intermingling of units and straggling. Men cursed as they toiled on. Others too weary to march farther, threw themselves upon the ground, from which they were urged to their feet with difficulty. Teamsters cracked their whips and shouted; tanks panted over the greasy routes and crushed their way forward; light and heavy guns stalled in the mud or became entangled in the thickets, sweating teams laboring at the traces. Staff cars, trucks, and motor-cycles innumerable added to the difficulties of the men.

Not withstanding all this, however, the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, relieved the front line battalion of the 48th French Infantry before midnight and attacked in good order at H-hour. The leading element of the 5th Marines on the left, and of First Division" the 23rd Infantry on the right, were deploying as the barrage fell. But the machine-gun battalions and companies, and the 37mm. and Stokes mortar platoons with their transport, were inextricably involved in the traffic congestion in the rear, and failed to arrive in time to accompany the

See William J. Montalto on page 3

Coming in April WWI Exhibit

**OVER THERE:
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
AND THE GREAT WAR
1917-1919**

details to follow...



William J. Montalto

continued from page 2

infantry. The assault was made with the musket and bayonet supported by the artillery.

The troops advanced over ground which rose gently from the line of departure toward the northeast. Wheat-fields stretched as far as the eye could see, with lurking machine gunners carefully concealed in the tall grain. In the center of the sector, a kilometer or more in advance of the first objective, a group of strongly fortified buildings stood as an outpost at Verte Feuille Farm. Beyond this formidable obstacle was the stronger post of Beaufepaire Farm, marking the line of the first objective itself. Here, advancing with a rush, the 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry, reached the objective within fifteen minutes, and the 3rd Battalion of the same regiment followed in close support. The 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry, soon arrived on the right, followed closely by the 3rd Battalion, both of them having been misdirected by the French guides in getting into position.

Along this line is the probable place where Corporal William J. Montalto fell. He was listed as missing in action on this day, and later confirmed that he was Killed in Action.

Thus the 18th of July closed with the Twentieth Corps established throughout its entire length upon the line of its final objective for the day. So far as it was concerned, the first day of the offensive had been a successful one in every respect. The two American divisions advancing ahead of the French divisions on their exterior flanks, and at no time in rear of the Moroccans in the center, had driven a marked salient into the enemy's line, which had been everywhere forced back. The 1st U. S. Division had functioned like clockwork. The 2nd U. S. Division, though laboring from the start under enormous disadvantages and suffering from considerable confusion, had maintained its schedule in the advance. The Moroccans had lived up to their reputation.

The 2nd Division advanced 8 kilometers in the first 26 hours, took about 3,000 prisoners, 2 batteries of 150mm guns, 66 light guns and 15,000 rounds of 77 mm ammunition, besides much other property. This Division suffered some 4,000 casualties and, as it had made exhausting marches to reach the battlefield, and having recently been withdrawn from it's desperate fighting at Chateau-Thierry, the Division was relieved after the second day.

Recent “On Loan Artifacts from Jim Wosochlo” Schuylkill County’s Historic Past



From left Dave Derbes (*Past President of SCHS*), Tom Drogalis (*Executive Director of SCHS*), Jim Wosochlo, and Bill Webber (*Curator at SCHS*).



Jim Wosochlo points out some interesting artifacts to Dave Derbes, left, and Tom Drogalis

Mr. Jim Wosochlo, noted archaeologist, recently loaned the Schuylkill County Historical Society an extensive collection of artifacts collected from Schuylkill County’s only known ice age site. The collection includes artifacts from nomadic groups

who roamed throughout Schuylkill County thousands of years ago. They were found in a large charcoal fire pit, located on Wosochlo’s property. The pit dates back to 7,000 B.C.

WELCOME



The Schuylkill County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Jim Berezwick
David Buttgerit
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“Think Spring Come visit us!”



Schuylkill Haven's Men of Ideas

Necessity is the mother of invention and 100 years ago, Schuylkill Haven men were taking that quote to heart. At least six residents of town applied for patents on their inventions. In 1888, Joseph Bolt, a blacksmith, received a patent for a safety gate for the railroads. Its basic design worked quite similar to railroad gates today in that the motion of train wheels at a certain distance tripped the dropping of the gates at the next crossing.

In 1891, the "Upright Marion Water Bottle" was being hailed as a, "Joy to the sick room and a relief to the family physician." Schuylkill Haven resident A. A. Hesser developed a new version of the standard hot water bottle. It was noted that people never die so long as they keep their feet warm and moist. Neglecting this precaution was given as a reason that the graveyards everywhere were increasing in population. Mr. Hesser, although not a physician, had given his attention to the work of inventing a method by which the bedridden could get immunity from cold feet and subsequent interrupted circulation. It was constructed in a triangular shape and afforded a perfect foot rest. Local use became common and doctors everywhere sang its praises. He planned to establish a manufacturing plant in Schuylkill Haven. The "Pottsville Republican" stated, "When the superior excellence of the article becomes known there will not be a household in this or any other land that can afford to be without an Upright Marion Water Bottle."

After five years of development, J. B. Losch devised a gasoline engine which made an impulse at twice the rate of the contemporary model, thus reducing friction and starting time for engines. In February of 1900, Philadelphia capitalists visited Losch and his promoters to view the device for possible production. Dougherty's Box Factory in Schuylkill Haven had already installed a version of the engine and Mr. Losch intended to begin manufacturing in town.

Charles Ney was granted a patent for a washing machine in October 1911. The machine promised to be a great improvement over all others

both in results obtained and labor saved. Mr. Ney designed the new version, built himself a model and took it to the Patent Office at Washington. He began the building of a dozen machines at once and soon had orders for a number of machines and all housewives who saw



the machine he made were delighted with it. The new machine was built to rock and was formed with bulging ends, receiving water as it rocked so that an air cushion will be formed in the bulging end. The air in the bulging end of the casing is forced through the clothes by the force of the water. The forcing of the compressed air along with the force of the water through the clothes more thoroughly cleaning them. The slower it rocked the better the results were.

One pair of Schuylkill Haven men developed at least three inventions together in the year 1913. Jere Lautenbacher, a businessman, and Albert Geary, a machinist, invented two devices for early automobiles. The first aided a car in traveling both up and down hills without skidding, seemingly similar to modern day four wheel drive. An improved shock absorber was the second item they devised which prolonged the life of the auto. Prior to those inventions, a non-refillable bottle resulted from their genius. At the time, anyone could refill a liquor or medicine bottle with their own concoction passing it off as the original liquid on the label. This bottle prevented that occurrence. The "Pottsville Republican" called it the invention of the age.

We all know the names of Bell, Edison and Wright, but the ingenuity of unknown men like these in small towns like Schuylkill Haven, also put forth ideas to improve various tasks and machines.

Model kit maker decorates Schuylkill County Historical Society



DAVID MCKEOWN/STAFF PHOTOS

Jack Leary, left, Pottsville, and J. Robert “Jay” Zane, president of the Schuylkill County Historical Society, on Tuesday look over some of Leary’s small-scale model planes that he donated over the years to the historical society at its headquarters in Pottsville.

By Stephen J. Pytak / Originally Published in the Republican Herald: February 6, 2017

For years, Jack Leary has been building and painting small-scale model ships, sailboats and planes. He’s been donating them to the Schuylkill County Historical Society in Pottsville.

On Jan. 19, he brought in three more.

“Over the years, he’s donated at least two dozen model kits to the society,” Thomas B. Drogalis, the society’s executive director, said that day. “What’s the big battleship that’s in the gallery?”

Drogalis was referring to the Schuylkill County Gallery on the first floor of the society’s headquarters at 305 N. Centre St.

“The Bismarck,” Leary, 82, of Pottsville, said. It was a World War II-era battleship built by Germany.

People who visit the society can find Leary’s models on the first and second floors of the society’s headquarters.

“It’s the Leary Collection. It’s unique and it adds something, something three-dimensional rather than just a photograph,” J. Robert “Jay” Zane, the

society’s president, said Tuesday.

One of the more impressive displays is in the second-floor hallway. Dangling above cases filled with World War I and World War II memorabilia are model airplanes representing those eras.

Among them is a replica of the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, a four-engine heavy bomber aircraft built in the 1930s for the Army Air Corps.

That’s the first one he donated to the society.

“I remember, probably 20 years ago, I was making this B-17, a great big B-17. I think I paid \$100 just for that model. It’s a great big one. And Kris Miller-Siple was on the board here. And she was at my house when I was working on that. She saw me and said, ‘Oh, the historical society would love that,’” Leary said Tuesday.

“I saw his models and thought that they would be a terrific addition to the society,” Miller-Siple said.

Leary also built a small-scale version of a steam shovel. On the side is a small sign, “Jack Leary Construction Co.” It’s on the first floor of the society in the Genealogy and Research room.

“I just made that out of my head. There’s no plans or nothing. I just had some leftover pieces and decided I was going to make that,” Leary said.

On Tuesday, Leary was at the dining room table in his home in the 600 block of Pierce Street talking about his latest project, a 1/120th scale plastic model kit of the USS Constitution with sails.

The actual USS Constitution was launched in October 1797. It was in the War of 1812. From 2007 to 2010, restoration efforts made the ship resemble its appearance in 1812, according to the website for the museum dedicated to it, www.usconstitutionmuseum.org.

He said he plans to donate his small-scale replica of “Old Ironsides” to the society.

Leary was born in Saint Clair on May 28, 1935.

“I’ve been building models since I was 9 or 10

See **Model Maker** on page 7



Sightings from the 2017 Schuylkill County Coalition of Historical Societies and Museums
“Meeting with old friends and new!”



Model Maker continued from page 6

years old. I was born in the Depression era and at that time you could buy a model for 10 cents. I used to build airplanes and ships,” Leary said.

Leary graduated from Saint Clair High School in 1953.

He served in the Air Force, and was discharged in 1957 with the rank of sergeant.

“Since I was 16 I worked. I had a job,” Leary said.

He said he retired “20 years ago” after working as a machine operator at Allied Chemical, Norwegian Township.

With his spare time, he pursued his interest in building small-scale models of cars, ships and planes.

“It gives me something to do. When I was younger, my hands were more flexible than they are now. And I’ll keep adding to the collection, as long as my fingers hold out,” Leary said.



Leary holds his current model project, a 1/120th scale of the USS Constitution, at his home in Pottsville. Leary plans to donate this model to the historical society.

Thank You!

One and All for your support of the Schuylkill County Historical Society's Annual Appeal



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Robert Ehrhart	John Kalbfleisch	Karen Byrnes Noon	
	John Kantner		
	Karen Kenderdine		

See **Appeal Names**
on page 9

Thanks **Recent Acquisitions**

- Photo of Frank "Ted" Nazar, U.S. Army WWII. Eye witness to attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, donated by Ted Thorn, St. Clair, PA
- Lithographic Print: "Coal Region Composition" donated by Robert Strickloon, Pottsville, PA
- Two photo albums of the Clements Family from the late 19th century, donated by Steve Gimber, West Chester, PA
- Framed oil painting of St. Joseph Church painted by Hazel Ackalusky. Donated by Eleanor Pfeiffenberger and Romana Choen from Hummelstown, PA
- Book: "Lives Everlasting Amen" by John R. Kemple. Donated by John R. Kemple, Summerfield, FL
- Ashland State Hospital student nurses winter cloak/coat. Donated by James B. Martin from Pottsville, PA
- 1950's Scrapbook of the Pottsville Mission. Donated by Barbara Conage, Schuylkill Haven, PA
- Theater tickets from the Ritz Theater in St. Clair, PA, (4) four small cinema signs. Donated by David Meyer, Pottsville, PA
- Framed article of 1985 house fire in Pottsville.

Appeal Names continued from page 8

Louis & Joy Shaup	Andrew Ulicny
Kevin Shay	Gretchen Ulmer
Carol Shultz	Alisa Weir
Fred & Carol Shylan	Barbara Welch
Joe Stone	Ray Wildermuth
Bob & Michele Taylor	George Williams
John Telford	Louella Williams
Sue Teter	Ralph Wood
Ann Louise Thompson	Yorkville Drug
John Thornton	Richard Yuengling
Richard Tobin	J. Robert Zane
Richard E. Tomko	Catherine Zimmerman
Towne Drug, Inc	Joann Zogby
Larry Tschopp	Frank Zukas

- Donated by Manuel Alver, Pottsville, PA
- 1917 edition of "Book of Songs of the Soldiers and Sailors", WWII Stamp cards, and WWII Know Your War Planes text, 1943. Donated by Don Geiger, Pottsville, PA
- Post card collection of various subjects throughout Pennsylvania (circa 1930). Donated by William Burk, Chapel Hill, NC
- A purse with the logo from Haggerty Hotel in Tuscarora, PA. Donated by Marie Large, Macomb, MI
- Ice pack from Pottsville Ice Company and an advertisement for Pottsville Wall Paper & Paint Company. Donated by the St. Clair Community Historical Society, St. Clair, PA
- Poem from the Pottsville Republican, "A Face in the Window", donated by Joan Gray, St. Clair, PA
- Silver ink well used by Martha Rideway Bannon, book collection: History of Pottsville, by Joseph H. Zerbey, book, The Schuylkill by J. Bennett Nolan, book: Florida as seen in 1929 by J.H. Zerbey, family photos of J.H. Zerbey III. Donated by Joseph H. Zerbey IV, Bristol, CT
- Robert Stein diploma from Blythe Township School and H.L. Miller ashtray donated by Ann Reed, New Philadelphia, PA
- Framed poster from a Coal Region Opera, "A Pick, A Candle, and a Kiss." Donated by Marilyn Steidle, Pottsville, PA
- WWII Navy uniform worn by Robert Vincent Forney. Donated by Robert D. Forney, Pottsville, PA
- Sheet music to the song: Schuylkill County We're Coming Back to You. Donated by Loretta Faust, Orwigsburg, PA
- A Spanish American War uniform and button collection. Donated by Faith (Krater) Delaney, Mary Beth (Krater) Dinneen and John G. Krater III
- Two binders of New Philadelphia history. Donated by Marie Hicks from Ashland, PA
- Record book of Schuylkill County unseated land, dated 1843-1846. Donated by Ray Miller, Hanover, PA

The Historical Society
Of Schuylkill County
P.O. Box 1356
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LOOK
at what's inside

Sch. Co. Military History	1
WWI Exhibit	3
On Loan Artifacts	4
New Members	4
Men of Ideas	5
Model Maker	6
2017 Sightings	7
Thank You	8
Recent Acquisitions	9

Or current resident

Schuylkill County Historical Society 2017 Annual Appeal Winners



**1st Place winner
Francis & Kathleen Murphy**

Francis & Kathleen Murphy won a hardwood clock handcrafted by David Derbes with a value of \$350.

**2nd Place winner
Dr. William Edmunds**

Dr. Edmunds won 10 Free hours of Family Genealogy Research. This prize has a value of \$300



Genealogy Research

**3rd Place winner
Sylvia Nabholz**

Sylvia Nabholz's prize is a collection of Antique Schuylkill County Greeting and Post Cards and has a value of \$250.



Antique Postcards