

GLEN ROCK HISTORY

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WINTER 2017/18

WORLD WAR I: LETTERS HOME

The GRHPS is fortunate to have a complete collection of the local newspaper, *The Glen Rocket*, in our archives. *The Glen Rocket* was only published during 1918 - 1919; its main purpose was to keep the local community informed during World War I. Several issues included letters home from the men serving overseas and stateside. Some of those letters will be shared in this issue of our newsletter.

LETTER FROM FRED JENSEN, DATED JULY 1, 1918

Somewhere in France.

Dear Mother: - Just thought I would drop you a line. This is the first chance to write I have had since we arrived.

We are at present about three miles from a little French town. It's nothing like old U. S., though, believe me.

Everything seems and is old-fashioned. The people are dressed different and the line of chatter they give you can make any one dizzy. You must remember that I can't mention any names of towns which I am near or other matters, as this mail is strictly censored going out.

The trip across was made without any mishaps on our part. We had a little company over, too. We are at present trying to get on to the French coins, as that's all we can use now. Whenever we want to buy anything



"Our Son, Fred Jensen", Valleau Cemetery, Ridgewood, NJ. Fred was KIA Sept. 1918.

we just take some coin out of our pocket and let them pick out whatever it comes to.

It does not get dark over here until about 9:30 o'clock. The weather over here is different also. It is much cooler than Ala. was.
[NOTE: Jensen trained at Camp McClellan, Alabama]

The barracks we sleep in look like chicken coops. I don't know whether barracks is the right name for them or not - I don't think so.

The first night we were here I was put on detail unloading a ship; the second night I was on guard, and tonight I am on guard again. This is supposed to be a rest camp. Rest has got an entirely new meaning, especially in the army. I am feeling fine at present and hope this finds you all the same. Will close now.

Send best regards to all. I remain, Your Son, Fred

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EDITORIAL IN MEMORY OF PETER W. EBBERT

Captain Peter W. Ebbert was Glen Rock's first casualty in World War I. Following is the Editorial from *The Glen Rocket*, 11 September 1918 (Volume 1, Number 8).

Upon the sacrificial fields of France, Captain Peter Ebbert has fallen, making his brave stand against the brutal forces that would filch from Humanity the rights for which, in all generations, men like Peter Ebbert have been glad to give their lives.

In Peter Ebbert's fall, Glen Rock makes its first tragic sacrifice to the war, and while we receive the grim news and find our hearts too full for our tongues to utter the thoughts his manly courage and devotion make us yearn to speak, let us here at home - far from the shock of battle - re-dedicate ourselves to the great cause for which he fell.

Just a little while ago, Peter Ebbert moved among us, living our life, knowing our friends, and holding no ambitions more warlike than our own. What peculiar, discriminating obligation rested on Peter Ebbert to go forth at the call to the nation and give his life for right, while we remained at home? Only the obligation to be true to the manhood that was in him!

As we think of the sacrifice of this young man - and may we think of it constantly - what hand can stay its power to work for the well-being of our boys in France; what heart refuse to give its all; what foot dare lag in serving where he served!

To those that Peter Ebbert loved the best, father, mother, sister and his young wife, it is useless now to offer words with hope of consolation. Words have no power to beguile such grief as must be theirs, but when Time had dulled a little the bitter edge of their anguish, let us give them our message of pride in their hero and thanks for their great gift to our country.



In 1921, the WWI Honor Roll Memorial was affixed to the front of The Rock. The plaque was unveiled by Peter W. Ebbert's young daughter, Catherine, seen above on the platform in the white dress.

LETTER FROM DAVID DeFERRARI TO MRS. ADOLPH HUBSCHMITT, DATED SEPTEMBER 30, 1918

Somewhere in France

My Dear Mrs. Hubschmitt:- No doubt you will be surprised to hear from me, but thought I would write you a few lines to let you know how I'm getting along, also to thank the worthy Red Cross Chapter through you for the comfort kit and socks sent to me. I cannot understand how anybody can be a soldier without a comfort kit, since it is so compact, easy to carry about and yet contains every need of a soldier, and the socks. I'm just beginning to realize their value. They are certainly a God-send. Please thank all the Red Cross ladies for me, as I cannot write my thanks to them personally. My regiment participated in the First American Drive and was cited for its efficient work. Our forces liberated 150 miles of French territory held by the Germans, took 15,000 prisoners and 160 guns.

I am situated now in a dug-out 40 ft. underground formerly occupied by the Germans. The only trouble is that they retreated in such a great haste that they left behind their cooties.

I will close with my thanks and best regards to all, also with expectations of seeing you all some time in 1919.

Sincerely, David DeFerrari

[NOTE: David's father, John, ran a stationery store on Rock Road in Glen Rock]

**EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER FROM EDGAR PETER, DATED AUGUST 13, 1918**

Somewhere in France with the American Expeditionary Force

Dear Ma:- I have been in the front line for 10 days now and they are altogether different from any story I have read about them. They are muddy (in some places where there is no duck-walk it's up to the top of our shoes) and it rains nearly every day. But mud comes and mud goes, but the rats go on forever and they go by the hundreds. Every night after we crawl into bed we throw shoes at them until we are tired. They are very tame, in fact they run all over our faces if we forget to cover our heads with our blankets. By this time I am quite used to them. The first night I was here I woke with a start and felt one's tail dragging across my forehead. It sent the shivers running up and down my spine. One rat ate a fellow's gas mask so badly that it looked more like a colander than a mask. It looks more like the Germans have the rats specially trained than anything else.

Our dug-out is great. We have all improvements, electric lights (when they light), a stove (in which we try to burn wet wood until we can cut the smoke with a knife), sea shore climate (very, very damp) and an escalator stairs. You know on an escalator all you have to do is stand on the bottom and the steps move you up as far as you want to go. On our stairs, we stand on the top step and slide to the bottom. That's as far as we can go.

I am writing this in the candle light (the electric light isn't working to-night). Can you imagine trying to write a letter with four fellows talking over good times they had in Palisades Park? I suppose when they get back home they will wish they were in France. That's usually what they do.

Well, Mom, I'll have to close now, as our candle is nearly burned down.

From your loving son, Edgar

[NOTE: Edgar Peter would become the first Commander of Glen Rock's American Legion Post # 145]

G.R.H.P.S.

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The GRHPS Mission Statement:

To heighten the public's awareness of, and
appreciation for, the history, growth and
development of Glen Rock, Bergen County,
New Jersey

Meetings will be held in **2018** on the following dates:
Jan. 18th, Apr. 19th, Sept. 20th & Nov. 15th
at 7:30 p.m., at the Main Line Station

Please support us through the Amazon Smile program
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-3199206>

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE 12/31/2017

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THE ROCK RECORDER
www.GlenRockHistory.org/Blog

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MUSEUM AT THE STATION SCHEDULE

We will be open from 1 - 3 pm on the
following dates:

Nov. 26, 2017
Jan. 28, 2018

Dec. 17, 2017
Feb. 25, 2018