

# The Diary of Roy O. Perley

Freedom is one of life's most precious gifts. Millions of people like Roy Perley, fought and died for the freedom that we should all cherish, protect, and enjoy. Here is Roy's story of how he served us, in his own words:

Friday, April 26, 1918 - Rochester, NY  
Told to report at City Hall at 9:30 Saturday morning.

Saturday, April 27, 1918  
Reported at City Hall and was informed that I was to report at Rochester Armory on East Main at 4:00 that afternoon Sunday.

Sunday, April 28, 1918  
Reported at the armory and got my sweater and two pair of woolen sox from the Red Cross and told to report at the City Annex Monday morning at 5:45 a.m.

Monday, April 29, 1918  
Got up at 5:30 a.m. and arrived at the City Annex late. Left Rochester at 7:00 a.m. on Erie R.R. Transferred to the Lehigh at Sythe arrived at Camp Dix, NJ at 12 p.m. After roll call went before doctors then went for supper then got our blankets for a \_\_\_\_\_ and went to bed at 4:15 a.m.

Note: Our thanks to Richard House and his family for sharing the material that made the Roy O. Perley story possible, and our thanks to Jan Kowalczyk for transcribing Roy's Diary.

Tuesday, April 30, 1918  
Up at 6:00 a.m. but didn't get breakfast or dinner had a little drill after noon and I had a little headache. Eat supper at 6:30 p.m. went to bed at 8:00 p.m. wrote one letter.

Wednesday, May 1, 1918  
Up at 6:00 a.m. drilling in the forenoon but being 1/2 holiday laid around until 5:45 then ans. Roll call and waited for supper.

Sunday, May 26  
Went on guard taking charge of post 3 guarding no. 1 and 2 store room going on at 8 and one prisoner got away. Relieved at 10, four hrs. off going on again at 2 and off at 4.

Monday, May 27  
Morning, no more guard duty for rest of day, only taking prisoners to latrine or meals.

May 29, 1918  
Went to 303rd eng. for examination and was marked for domestic service.

June 2, 1918  
Left camp early Sunday morning for Brown's Mills and had a feed of strawberries on the road, also we had lunch at B.M. which cost us 200. 2 sandwiches and four drinks 2 ginger ales and 2 milks 100 each. Am sending 2 cards from B.M. one to Grane and one to Sis.

## General Orders for Guarding

1. To take charge of this post and all government property in view.
2. To walk my post in a military manner, keeping always on the alert and observing everything that takes place within sight or hearing.
3. To report all violations of orders I am instructed to enforce.
4. To repeat all calls from posts more distant from the guard house than my own.

5. To quit my post only when properly relieved.
6. To receive, obey, and pass on the sentinel who relieves me all orders from the commanding officer, officer of the day, and officers and non-commissioned officers of the guard only.
7. To talk to no one except in the line of duty.
8. In case of fire or disorder to give the alarm.
9. To allow no one to commit a nuisance on or near my post.
10. In any case not covered by instructions to call the corporal of the guard.
11. To salute all officers and all colors and standards not cased.
12. To be especially watchful at night and during the time for challenging, to challenge all persons on or near my post and to allow no one to pass without proper authority.

#### **June 4, 1918**

6 p.m. - names of those to be transferred, called off, I being among them. I turned in my gun belt, bayonet, and scabbard.

#### **June 5**

Kept in barracks all day and left for train at 7:15. Left Camp Dix at 1:15 a.m.

#### **June 6, 1918**

Nearly all women crossing guards on R.R. We come through Baltimore, Wash D.C., and Richmond. We were given coffee and buns by the Red Cross at Wash D.C. and at Richmond, coffee and cigarettes the ride was a fine one no guards to bother us and a hearty welcome all along the way. Arrived at Richmond about 1:35 and changed crews. Came through Petersburg but were not allowed to leave the train, any, at camp about 4:00. Marched to barracks and washed up for supper after supper were given beds and went back to barracks. And went for examination after that were given rifles we cleaned rifles and to bed about 12 o'clock.

#### **June 7, 1918**

Up at 5:30 and mess at 5:45. Took rifles and went on parade grounds for inspection along with a company of old timers. Afternoon were taken to rifle range and instructed in the different parts of the rifle.

#### **June 8**

Drilled in marching and some of the manual.

#### **9 - Sunday**

Up at 7 o'clock and drilling some of the sick, lame, and lazy were transferred.

#### **10 - Monday**

We went to the range in the morning and staid all day having lunch at the range which was cheese and ham sandwiches with iced tea. After supper we went for gas drill and went through the gas house. I shot 20 times gun shooting low, making 38 at 100 yds/3 bulls eyes, 200 yds/4 bulls eyes, 300 yds/2 bulls eyes. We were also moved from one barracks to another, we got to bed at 11 o'clock and were told we would be up at 1:30 to go to the trenches.

#### **11 - Tuesday**

Up at 1:30 and in the trenches about 3 o'clock. I am acting as hand grenader. 2:20 afternoon and no relief. Off at 3 morning of 12. We all carry gas masks.

#### **15 - Saturday**

I issued more clothing. I was up at four getting mine. 29 years old.

#### **Thursday 13**

Sent my bag home, cost me \$2.25 p. post.

**Thursday, June 20, 1918**

Left Camp Lee, Va. in the afternoon and marched to City Point and took boat to Newport News, Va. arriving on the morning of 21, Fri.

**June 22, 1918**

Went aboard the SS Susquehanna in forenoon. Had berth 3202 2nd deck and 3rd hatch. ASOS mess room.

**22, 1918**

Getting ready to leave.

**23, Sunday**

Left port in morning - fine day. Standing watch.

**24, Monday**

A few more transports joined us guarding by squads.

**25, Tuesday**

On guard 2 hrs.

**June 26, 1918 - Wed.**

Just off guard 2:30 p.m. Weather muggy and looks some like rain. Took bath after coming off guard.

**27 - Thursday**

Same old round guard at 12:30 and ten hrs. off - took bath. All of the boys took a salt water bath.

**28 - Fri.**

We have been on ship one wk. This forenoon. Changing cloths from overalls to Ods getting ready to stand guard watch. A strong wind from head portside. After coming off guard at 2:30 p.m. I went into mess hall and seen the movies. After movies came out on deck and heard the band.

**29 June - Sat.**

Boat railing some going to have rifle inspection this afternoon.

**June 30 - Sunday**

Went on guard at 12:30 and attended services in afternoon. Stormy.

**July 1 - Monday**

Wind blowing hard from head, sea rough, wrote a letter to Geane in afternoon, also took in moving pictures.

**July 2, 1918**

Still stormy and cloudy.

**July 3, 1918**

12:30 midnight hard wind blowing from head and raining by spells.

**July 4, 1918**

Took bath and washed underwear after coming off guard. It gets daylight about 3 o'clock. Expect to strike port tomorrow afternoon.

Writing letter to Geane

Writing to Sis

Writing to Ed Magson

2 letters Magson & Marie Johnson

**Aug. 2**

Wrote letter to Marie Johnson

**Aug. 11, 1918**

Coin. moved to front lines, I stand guard for new co. 48 hrs.

**Aug. 12**

Morning shrapnel fell all around us.

**Aug. 13, 1918**

Flock of German plans and two Americans fighting at noon. Three Germans downed, one machine dropped in pieces, aviator dropped, others landed and captures. Staid at front line trenches until Aug. 22 - 3 others and myself are staying 72 hrs. as. Days are hot and nights are cold. Signed payroll for July.

**Aug. 28, 1918**

Got my hair cut.

**Sept. 12**

Clear day, the first in four days. I had my hair trimmed again.

**Sept. 13, 1918**

Left Pettonville and laid over in Moyon.

**Oct. 25, 1918**

So weak can hardly write. We landed in Belgium about the 22 and it was sure a barren looking country. Where the Germans first used gas only stumps of trees left, the ground all shell holes and full of water. More like a swamp. The roads were made of crushed rock and would give when the wagons and troops walked over similar to rubber ice. We see all kinds of concrete dugouts, but mostly all blown to pieces. We have been moving so fast haven't had time to eat. I fell out three times on our last hike. I just came back from a little town, but was unable to buy anything. Nothing there but Belgium soldiers. Lord, hungry and all most barefooted.

**Note:** This was the last time Roy's family heard anything about Roy until . . .

They received a Western Union Telegram at 7:00 p.m. on January 4, 1919

**To Mrs. Pheobe Perley, RFD #1, Dodge Center, MN. . . Deeply regret to inform you that it is officially reported that Private Roy O. Perley infantry died of wounds received in action, November second.**

**Harris the Adgt General**

A letter on YMCA stationery titled "On Active Service with the American Expeditionary Force" dated July 14, 1918

Dear Father and Mother;

I will try and drop you a few lines to let you know I am feeling fine but there is no place like the USA and I will sure be glad when I get back again. We came across on one of Germany's ships and had fine weather for crossing and have been moving ever since we landed so have had a chance to try the slide door Vans and would rather ride in a side door. About the cheapest thing I have run up against here it tobacco and that is half price to soldiers but candy and every thing else is way up in the air. Wooden shoes are a common sight here. The house and barn are all in one so the winter doesn't bother the farmer any. I take this country to be the same as Mont. We have cold nights and I haven't seen any corn to amount to anything. They have a town crier here to take the place of a newspaper. We are allowed wine and light beer but the wine is not up to

much and I haven't had any beer yet. Well I will close and hope this finds you all OK I remain your son.

Private Roy O. Perley  
1489 Inf. Co. F  
Am. PO763  
O.A.S.

Same YMCA stationary letterhead except written in France, September 5, 1918

Dear Sis and All,

Your ever welcome letter of Aug. 10th received on Sept. 9 and will try and scratch a few lines in ans. I have been looking for a letter as letters for sometime and when they did come got four Mother and two from Rochester, N.Y. We are sure having some swell days, but the nights are sure cold and mostly foggy. All the crops around here look fine and you ought to see the gardens no weeds they sure know how to work but on a small scale. The women wash along beside the rivers and use a scrub brush also a paddle and every one in a while they will roll the clothes in a ball and pound them all cold water work. They only want about 20 Franc for washing a shirt. We had a pay day last week. I drew over 200 Franc. But all we can buy is tobacco and sometimes cookies and cakes which cost a Franc for about twelve. The only thing that is cheap over here is tobacco and Lucky strike for 7 cents per pack 20 cigarettes and all other brands the same way about 1/2 price. It took about as long to come here as to go to England but we didn't take a direct rout. After I have seen a few ruins and saw one fall this morning. We have just came back from lines and are having a little rest. Old Fritz is hanging around over head the past few days. I guess he smells a mice. I have made an allotment to you for \$20. per Mo. So if you don't get it sometime this Mo. Let me know. It starts from Aug. first so it might not reach you until Oct. In one of my letters I asked Ernest to pay my Moose dues for 6 mo. \$5.00. I could send them from here but it will cost me more and again it will reach Rochester quickly. From there as I would half to go through the M.C.A. Loyal Order of Moose, Lodge 113, Rochester, N.Y. Well, I will close and hope to hear from you soon. I remain your Bro

Pvt. Roy O. Perley  
Co. F 148 Inf.  
APO 763  
Am. E.F.