

Chapter 03954 **1917**

LEON SANFORD PEARCE 1888-1975

And

Ruth Adele SIMMONS

Middletown, New York

Henry James Pearce #2, branch #2, generation #6.

Leon is a 3rd great grandson of Henry Pearce #1
Leon the same generation as cousin Albin Pierce.

A nephew was named after Leon.





WW1 SILVER STAR
for gallantry in action.

8/24/2024


Relationship: Henry PEARCE to Leon Sanford PEARCE

Leon Sanford PEARCE is the 3rd great grandson of Henry PEARCE


Self

	Henry PEARCE b: 7/25/1725 England d: 7/8/1788 Fairfield, NJ
	Elizabeth Lucinda SPEAR b: 5/6/1737 England d: 10/16/1814 Fairfield, NJ


Son

	Henry James PEARCE b: 8/28/1771 Fairfield, NJ d: 8/9/1842
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Grandson

	Henry Harrison PEARCE b: 1801 Fairfield, NJ d: 2/18/1859
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Great grandson

	Mark PEARCE b: 1824 d: 4/5/1898
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2nd great grandson

	Theodore Sanford PEARCE b: 4/17/1866 d: 1/13/1925
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3rd great grandson

	Leon Sanford PEARCE b: 8/4/1888 Albany, NY d: 12/26/1975
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Generation #6

Leon Sanford Pearce 8/4/1888—12/26/1975 (87) was the son of Theodore Sanford PEARCE and Leah Walker FORT of Middletown, New York.

Leon had 5 siblings. His sister Vera Pearce was a New York model and actress.

Leon married **Ruth Adele SIMMONS**, date unknown. They lived primarily in Middletown, NY and Ormond Beach, Florida. They had no children. But, in 1930, Leon's brother Ray named a son after Leon.



L-R. Ruth Simmons who married **Leon Pearce**.
Iva Pearce 1894-1991 (97); **Ruby Pearce** 1899-1955 (56).

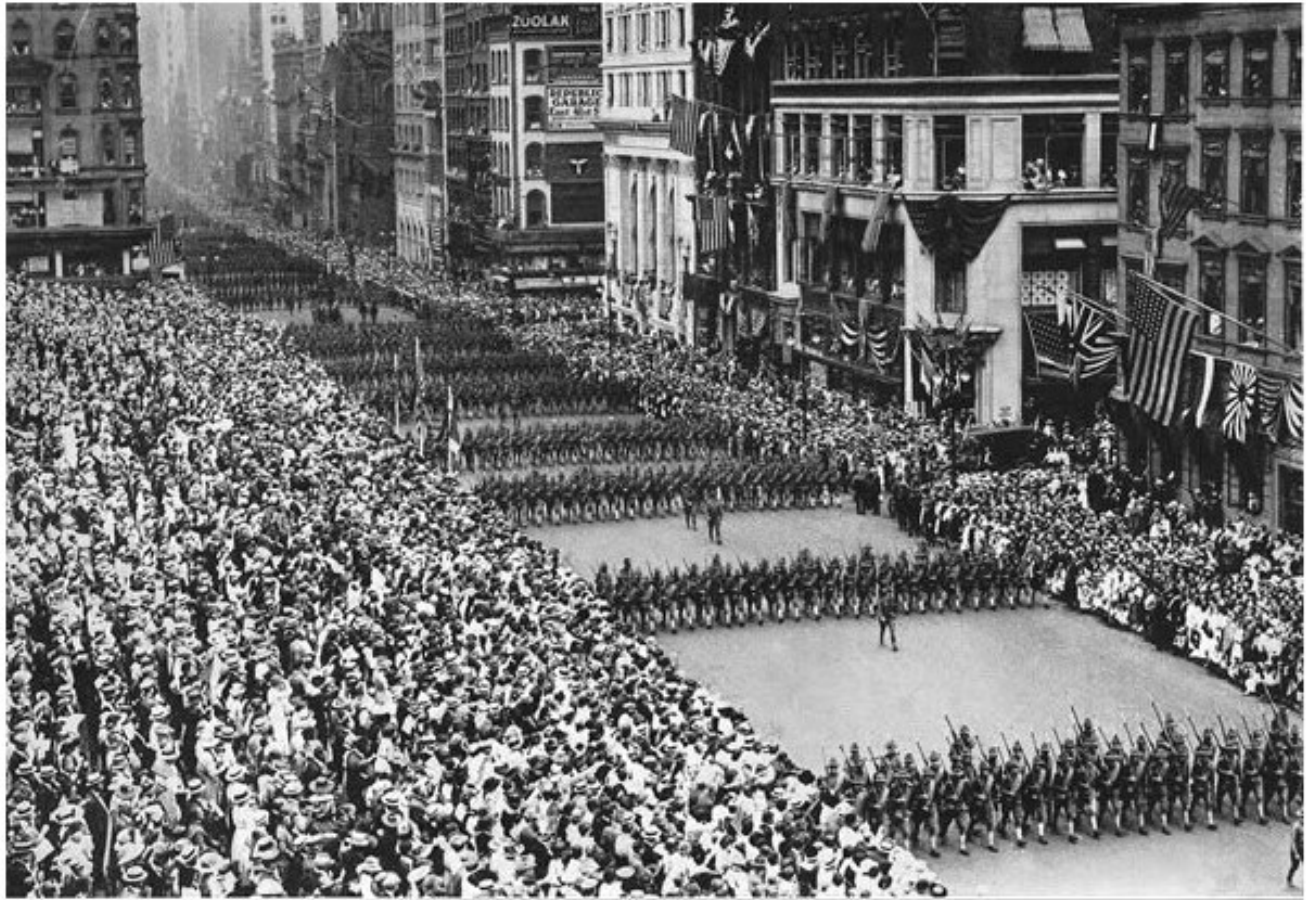
Pictured far right is Iva, Ruby and Leon's mom **Mrs. Leah Pearce** 1863-1957 (93) who married Theodore PEARCE.

Not pictured are Leon; **Blanche PEARCE** 1886-1965 (79);
Vera PEARCE 1890-1949 (58) the actress; **Ray Pearce** 1892-1965 (73).

Before Leah died in 1957, she had lost her husband Theodore and daughters Vera and Ruby.

Blanche and Ray died a month apart in 1965. Iva would be the last in the family.

1917 off to war.



(c) Western Newspaper Union.

1917 "send-off" parade of the 27th Division passing the New York Public Library on the left at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, 8/30/1917.

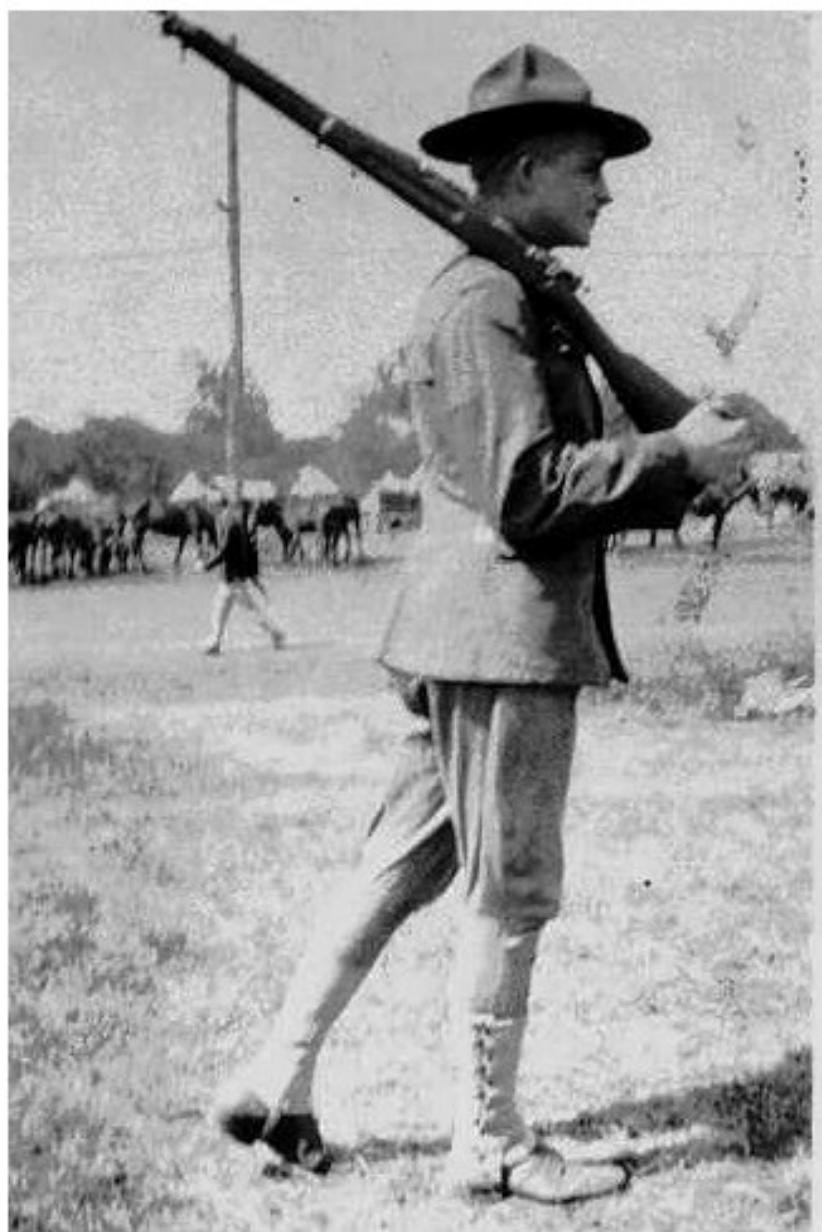
Members of the immediate families of the soldiers occupied the great reviewing stand on the steps of the Library, shown on left of the photograph.

Leon Pearce was in the parade. The men went to training camp for 9 months and left in May 1918 for the war.



8/30/1917 NYC NY 27th Division

Men marching South. NY Library on left.



Leon Sanford Pearce

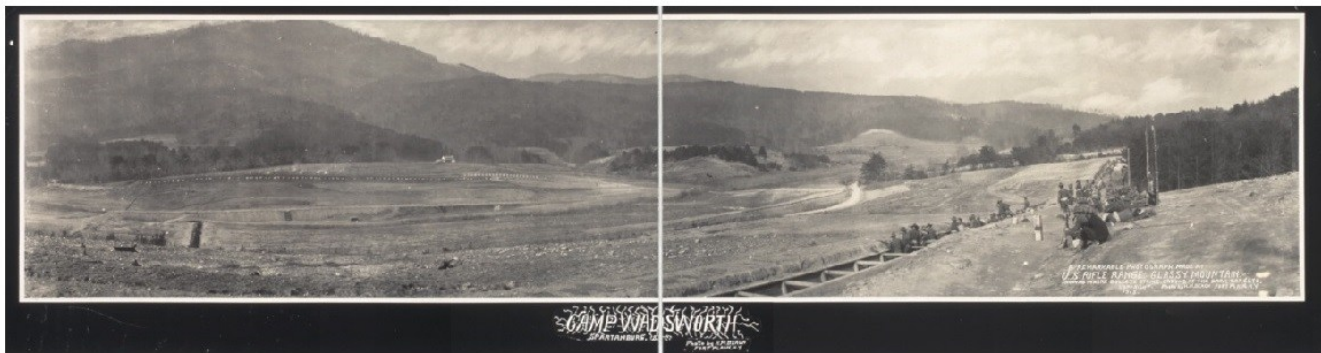
1888 - 1975 (87)

US Army WW1

New York



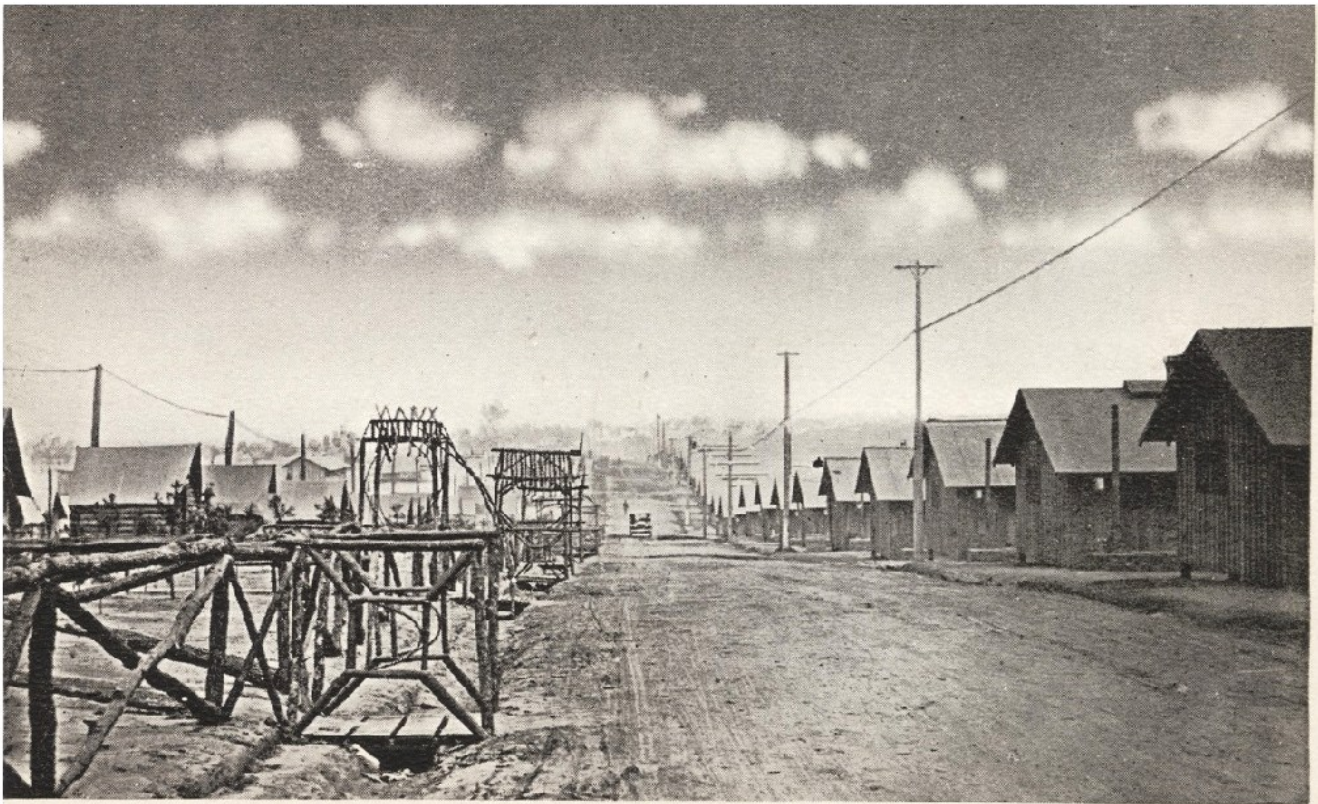
1917 Leon Pearce



Camp Wadsworth Army WW1 training camp near Spartanburg South Carolina.
Leon Pearce was there approximately Sept 1917 to early May 1918.

Shooting range.





A REGIMENTAL STREET AT CAMP WADSWORTH, SPARTANBURG, S. C.



COPY, I. F. & INC. N. Y.

ON THE MARCH AT CAMP WADSWORTH, SPARTANBURG, S. C.



Spartenburg South Carolina camp.

Leon Pearce would have seen this sign many times.

This is the 1917-1918 version of 'You've Got Mail'.



The camp
post office.



Winter 1917-1918 Camp Wadsworth.

Camp Wadsworth was a World War I-era training facility for the United States Army. Located near Spartanburg, South Carolina,

1918

On May 4th Division Headquarters, less the

Advance Party, the 104th Machine Gun Battalion, the 102d Trains and Military Police, the 53d Infantry Brigade Headquarters, the 105th Machine Gun Battalion and the remainder of the 105th Infantry left Camp Wadsworth. All these units arrived at Newport News, Virginia, the day following their departure.

In 2 weeks, their ship USS Calamares will take **Leon** to France to fight WW1. 59% of the men will be harmed.



**Leon Sanford
Pearce at training
camp during
World War I,
serving with the
105th Machine
Gun Battalion.**



5/4/1918 Arriving at Newport News, Virginia from Spartensburg SC. Next is the ship Calamares that will take Leon Pearce to the front lines in France and Belgium.



3/18/1919 the New York 27th division forming a logo.

Leon Pearce is somewhere in this photo.

Finally going to war.

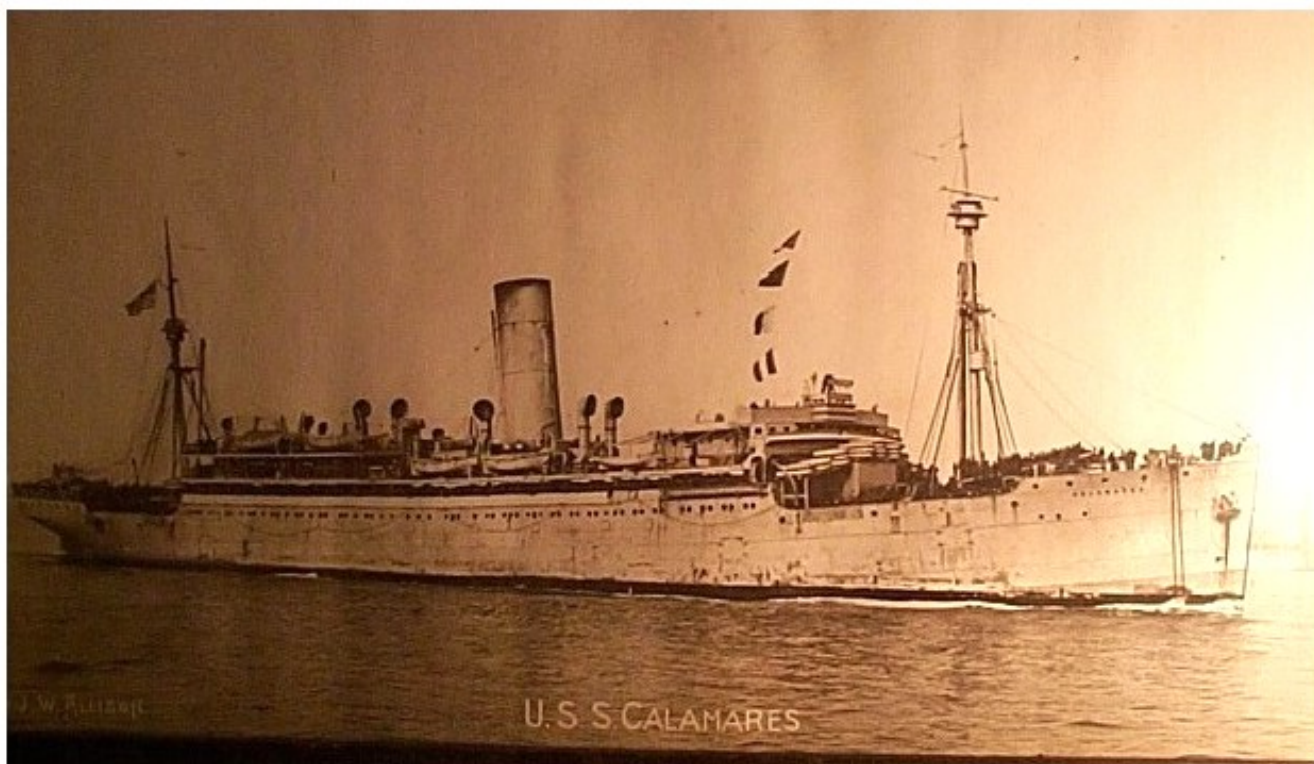
Photo # NH 536 USS Calamares at New York Navy Yard, 28 June 1918



Photo # NH 911 USS Calamares at New York Navy Yard, 28 June 1918



Glen: I was at this NY Navy Yard about 1953 when Billy Slater left the Navy. My Dad Albert Pierce picked him up.



USS Calamares carried **Leon Pearce** to WW1 on 5/18/1918 to France and Belgium.

Out to sea.



Arrived safe from German U-Boat submarines.

Photo # NH 95001 Navy band plays on the dock of a French port, 1918



A Navy Band plays on the dock of a French port, as a group of Sailors stand in formation upon arrival for World War I overseas service **USS Calamares** (ID # 3662) is in the background.

Leon Pearce - 27th Division, 53rd Brigade, 105th Machine Gun Battalion, Company C.

Wikipedia: WW1 serving with the 105th in the 53rd Brigade was the 106th Infantry Regiment. At the beginning of the war, the 105th had a strength of 2,720 officers and men.[3] The regiment shipped out for France in May 1918, and upon arrival, was sent to the East Poperinghe Line with the rest of the 27th Division. 59% were injured.

On 25 July 1918, the 105th rotated into the frontline to relieve elements of the British 6th Division. German offensives in the spring of 1918 had penetrated deep into the allied lines, and created salients near Amiens and Hazebrouck.[4] On 31 August 1918, the Ypres-Lys Offensive began in order to force the Germans out from the Dickebusch/Scherpenberg area, and thus reduce the Amiens salient.[5] The assault began with the 105th on the left side of the advance (abreast with the 106th Infantry), and fighting continued for a few days until the regiment was relieved by the British 41st Division. The Second Somme Offensive began on 24 September 1918 and concluded on 21 October 1918. Its main objective was piercing the Hindenburg Line, an intricate system of German defenses with an average depth of six to eight kilometers.[6] On 27 September, elements of the 105th moved forward in support of an attack by the 106th Regiment. The two regiments of the 53rd Brigade made moderate gains near Guillemont, but were thrown back by a German counterattack.

On 29 September 1918, the 105th attempted to capture a formidable German strongpoint known as "The Knoll," but the New Yorkers were halted by savage amounts of machine-gun fire that rained down from the elevated German positions.[7] On 1 October, the entire 27th Division was moved to Prémont to serve with the II Corps and helped spearhead an assault against the German defenses on 17 October 1918. The regiment swiftly captured a portion of the enemy line at L'Arbe de Guise, holding it against powerful German counterattacks. The following day, 18 October, the 105th was on the offensive again, advancing on one of the primary north-south German lines before being halted by strong resistance. On 19 October, the regiment again advanced from their forward positions, this time in the face of only slight opposition, and easily took the main German works.[8]

The 105th remained in combat for a few more days before the entire division was relieved on 21 October 1918. By 19 March 1919, the regiment had returned in full to the United States where it was quickly mustered out. During its combat action in the First World War, the 105th Infantry Regiment suffered 1,609 casualties including 1,284 wounded, 253 killed, and 72 who later died of their wounds (325 total died).



O'Ryan's Roughnecks, 105th MG BN, 27th Division, in action with the vickers gun

Could this be our Leon Pearce ?

It was miserable sitting in those foxholes after a rainfall.



Machine gunners.





1977

LEON SANFORD PEARCE

Private in WW1. 27th Division, 105th Machine Gun Battalion, company C.

Enlisted, May 18, 1917, in Headquarters Company, 6th Division (New York) in New York City. Transferred Aug. 28, 1917 to Machine Gun Troop, Squadron A Cavalry. Squadron A reorganized for the World War as the 105th Machine Gun Battalion, 27th Division.

He was assigned to Company C. After training at Camp Wadsworth, SC, the 105th Machine Gun Battalion deployed to Europe, on May 18, 1918, aboard the Calomares.

He saw combat in both Belgium & France, and awarded the **Silver Star** for his actions (S. O. # 86, 27th Division). Returned to the States, March 6, 1919, aboard the Leviathan, docking at Hoboken, NJ. It is believed he became ill on the return trip and transferred to the Medical Authorities. Discharged from the service, April 17, 1919.

S. O. # 86, 27th Division " For meritorious service, courage and devotion to duty in administering aid to wounded in first aid stations and casually clearing station, during the operations of the division in France "

from the Daytona Beach Morning Journal, Dec. 26, 1977 page 12, obituary.

Leon Pearce faced German gas attacks.

Leon Pearce was in the 105th MGB Company C.

Leon faced the German gas attacks. 96,700 German gas shells.

1918

On September 3d, 25 men of the 105th Machine Gun Battalion were gassed. After passing through an area which had been heavily shelled with mustard gas they slept in a closed space. The next day all were gas casualties, probably due to their contaminated clothing.

On September 25th, 24 men from Company E, 105th Infantry, were gas casualties. The Company Commander reported that they were taken by surprise, the shells lighting in or near the trenches. Before the men could adjust their masks, 24 were gassed. All alarms were given and masks were immediately adjusted. Reports from all sources agree that these casualties were unavoidable.

On September 25th, 3 men from the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, were reported gassed and this explanation was offered: "These men were too busy dodging shells to adjust masks." On that same day 3 men from Company B "failed to adjust mask in time and were casualties." Again, on that day, 2 men of Company G were mustard gas casualties "due to failure to recognize gas." Every line company of the 105th Infantry suffered some gas casualties in the first few days of this period. Company H had 31 casualties, Company G 15, Headquarters Company 15, Sanitary Detachment 9, Machine Gun Company 9, and so on down to Company D with 1 casualty.

The gas training of the division has been good, and the number of casualties is not unusual. It is estimated that 96,700 gas shells have been used against this division; this is 1 gas casualty to 70 gas shells.

A. H. HOOKER, JR.,
Second Lieutenant, C. W. S.

LEON SANDFORD PEARCE #1 WW1



WW1 US Army 27th Division, 53rd Infantry Brigade, 105th machine gun Battalion, Company 'C'.



Won a **Silver Star** for "gallantry in action" . Originally, the award was a certificate but in 1932, many WW1 Silver Star Awards were given as a metal.

"For meritorious service, courage and devotion to duty in administering aid to wounded in first aid stations and casualty clearing stations, during the operations of the division in France."



Leon Sanford Pearce

**New York State Military Award -
Conspicuous Service Cross for
WWar I on 3/31/1922**

Manhattan, New York

CONSPICUOUS SERVICE CROSS #1454

PEARCE, LEON S.,
Pvt. 105th M. G.Bn. 27th Div. AEF.

Address: 2525 Grand Concourse,
New York City.

Awarded: Mar. 31, 1922

11/11/1918

The Scioto Gazette.

DAILY EDITION CHILlicothe, OHIO, MONDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 11, 1918 VOL. 27. NO. 35.

WAR IS NOW OVER

Armistice Terms Signed by German Commission at 6 "O'clock French Time" 2:15 a. m. Washington Time This Morning.

(By The Associated Press War Editor)

THE WORLD WAR WILL END THIS MORNING AT SIX O'CLOCK PARIS TIME, ELEVEN O'CLOCK WASHINGTON TIME.

THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED BY THE GERMAN REPRESENTATIVES AT MIDNIGHT. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT AT 2:15 THIS MORNING.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE VERBALLY BY AN OFFICIAL OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, WHO SAID-

"THE ARMISTICE HAS BEEN SIGNED. IT WAS SIGNED AT 5 O'CLOCK A.M. PARIS TIME, AND HOSTILITIES WILL CEASE AT 11 O'CLOCK THIS MORNING PARIS TIME.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 11.—(By Associated Press.)—Armistice terms have been signed by Germany, the State Department announced at 2:05 o'clock this morning.

There was no announcement as to whether hostilities had ceased or the hour at which they would cease. The department's announcement simply read: "The armistice has been signed."



**38 Million
Soldiers were
Killed, Wounded, or
Went Missing in
World War 1**



Heading home to America. Leon had to wait 4 months.



The Hamburg-American Line Piers, Hoboken, N. J.

96-52

Photo # NH 69056 USS Leviathan arriving at New York with 8000 troops returning from France, Dec. 1918

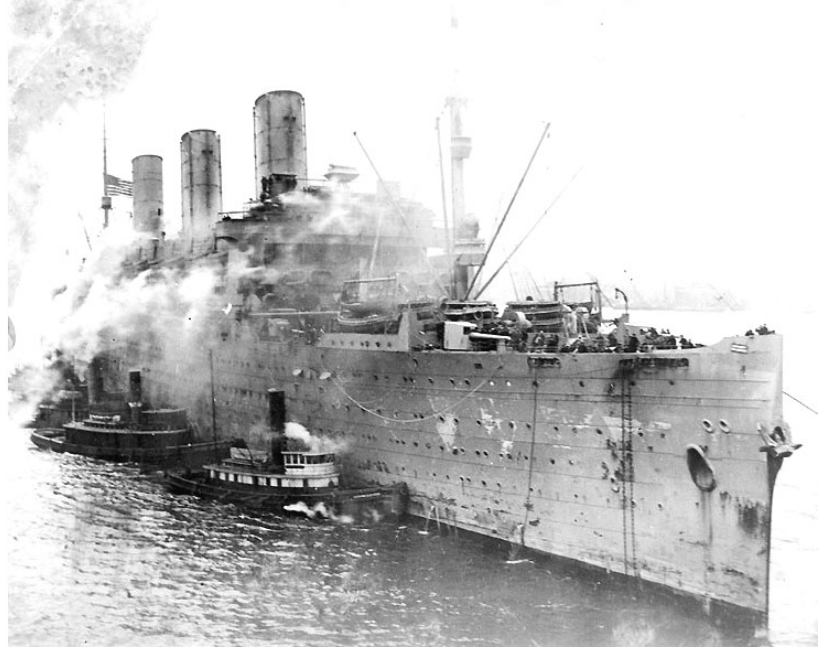
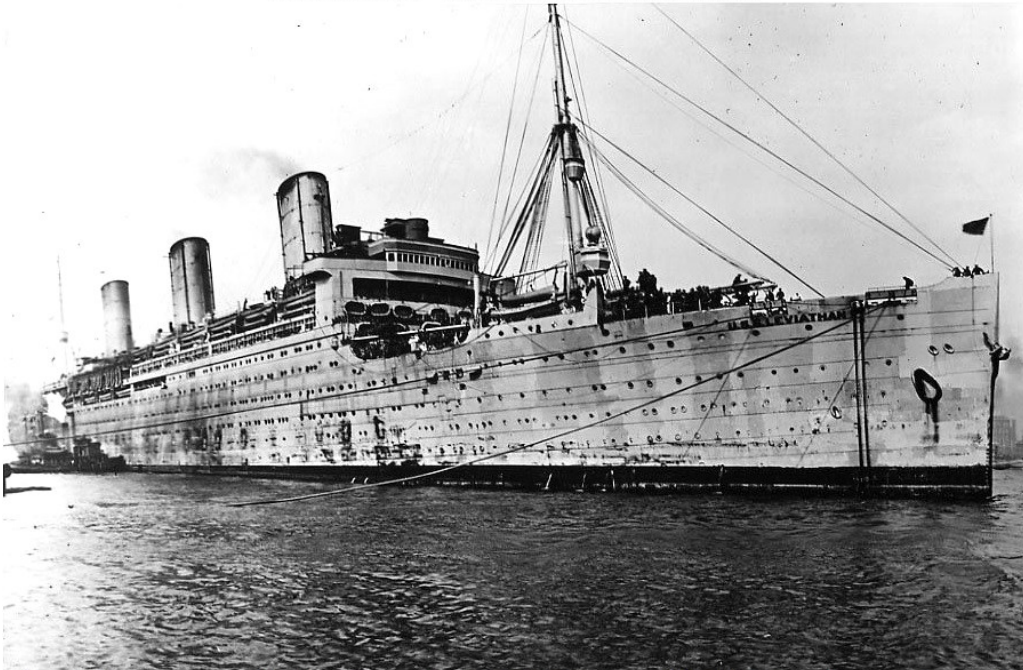


Photo # NH 105774 USS Leviathan in New York Harbor, 1919



Leon Pearce returned to the States, March 6, 1919, aboard the USS Leviathan, docking at Hoboken, NJ.

**The Leviathan could transport 14,000 passengers.
It took 10 days from France to Hoboken NJ.**

Before heading to war, the leader of the 27th Division, O’Ryan, coined the phrase “Heaven, Hell or Hoboken”

After the war, his book details what Leon Pearce would have observed as the ship entered the New York harbor. Leon made it back to Hoboken NJ.

The Story Of The 27th Division. By John F. O’Ryan. Chapter 21.

The *Leviathan*, on account of her size and of the number of troops she carried—about 13,000 officers and men—naturally attracted the most attention. As the *Leviathan* approached the lower bay, Captain Phelps of the navy, who commanded the ship, finally decided to risk permitting the men to remain on the upper decks. It had been found on other voyages that in the excitement of home-coming the men, when permitted to remain on the upper decks, would not remain in the individual places assigned them, but would run from one side of the ship to the other as something of special interest attracted them, which resulted in giving the ship a decided and sometimes dangerous list. Captain Phelps, having observed the rigid discipline of the troops during this trip, accepted the assurance of the Division Commander that the men would remain in their assigned places, and permitted them to take positions on the upper decks where they could see the many boats coming out to greet them. The men made good the representations of the Division Commander, for no men left their places throughout the trip through the bay to the docks. As the ship approached the Narrows, she was met by a large number of steamers, ferry boats and launches, apparently chartered for the occasion. These were crowded with friends of the troops and various committees. Most of the boats bore signs of welcome. Surrounded by a veritable cluster of these vessels, the great *Leviathan* made her way past Governors Island and the Statue of Liberty and up the Hudson to the Hoboken piers amid the waving of flags, the blowing of whistles, the playing of bands and the cheering of men. Among the boats gathered about the *Leviathan* was an official boat of the City of New York, bearing the Mayor of the city and other leading officials, as well as members of the families of some of the senior officers of the division. Upon arrival at the pier, the troops, already prepared for

Leon Pearce is aboard. USS Leviathan circa 6 March 1919

Leon's WW1 is over.

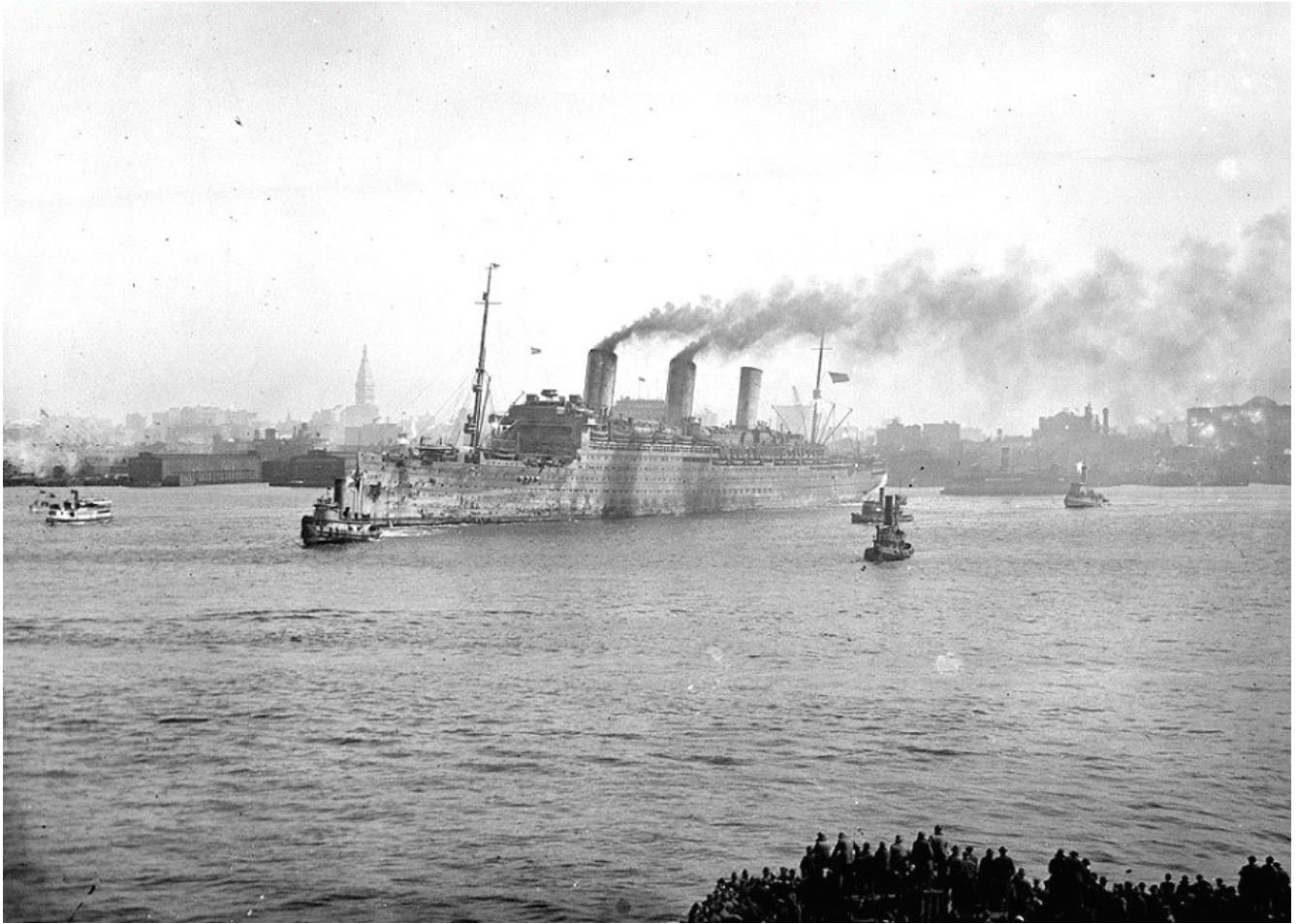
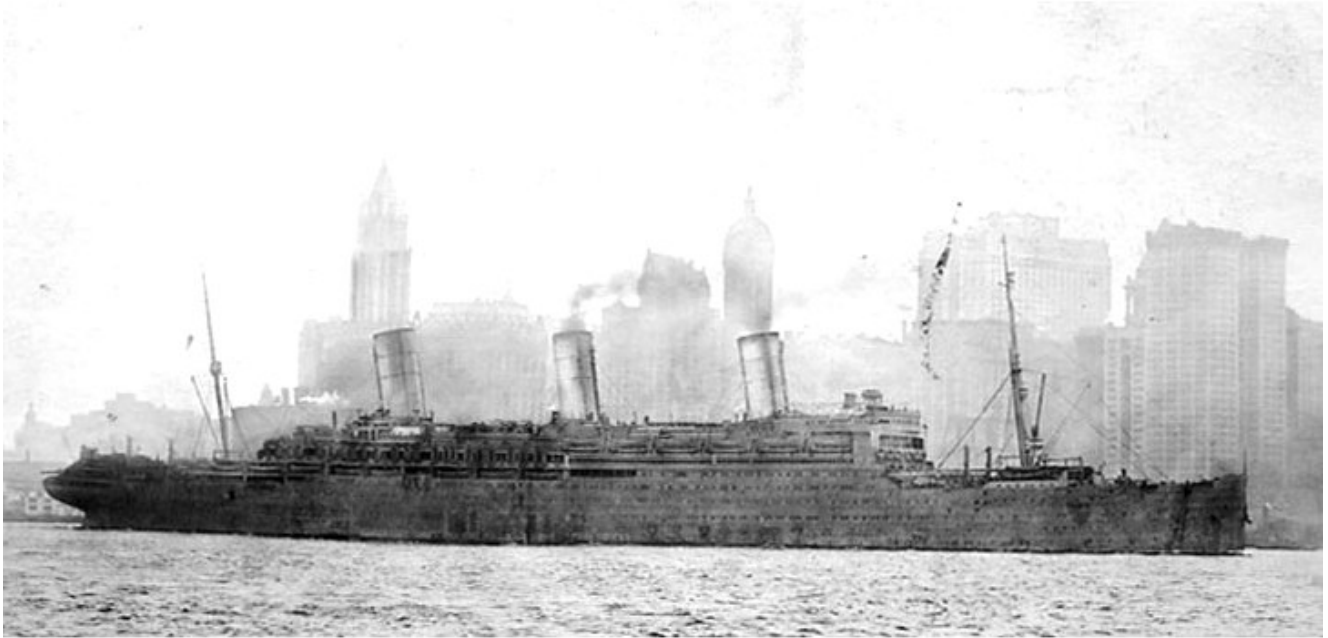


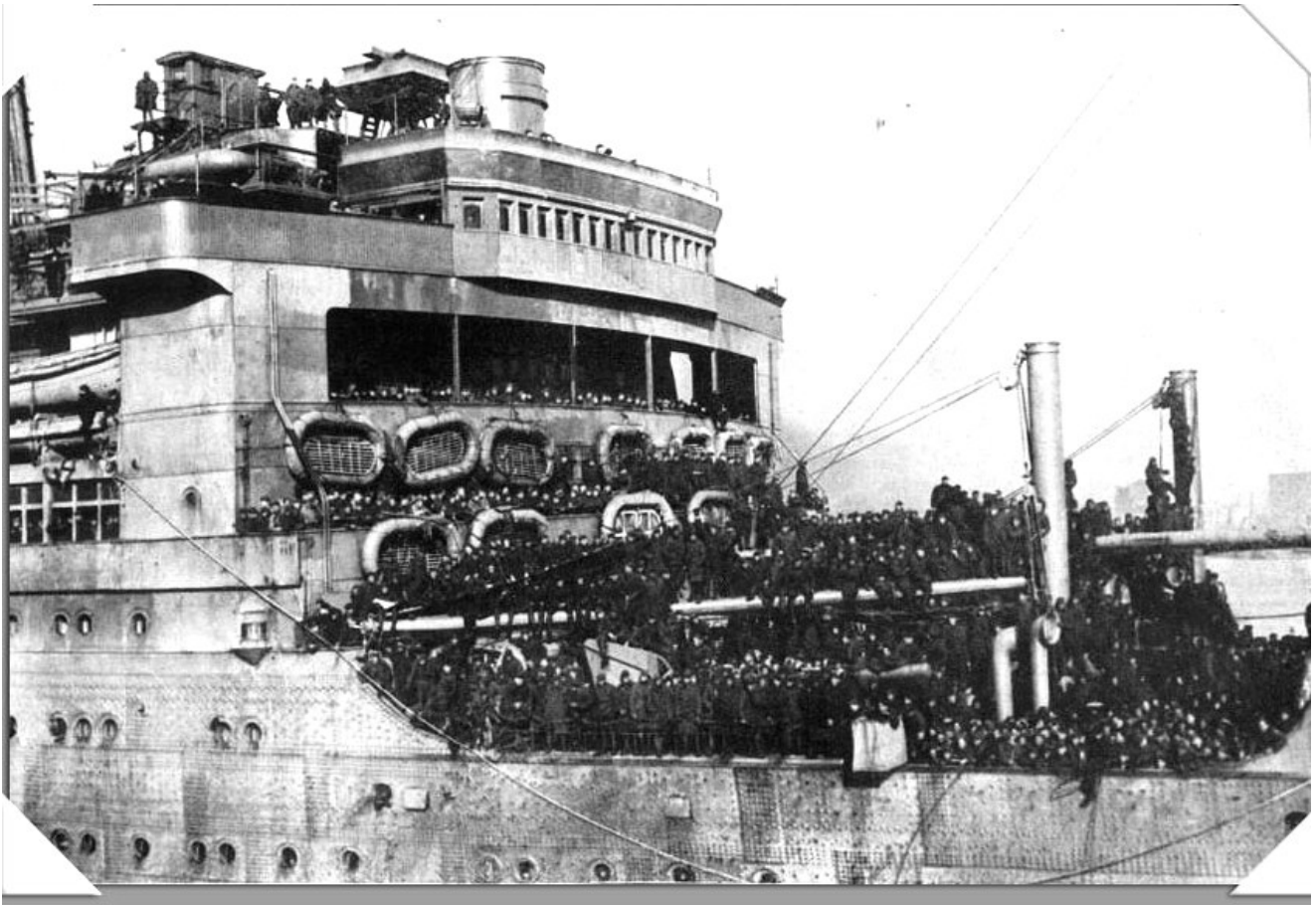
Photo # NH 105176 USS Leviathan off New York City, 1919



3/6/1919 Leon Pearce is aboard the ship, heading for Hoboken NJ.



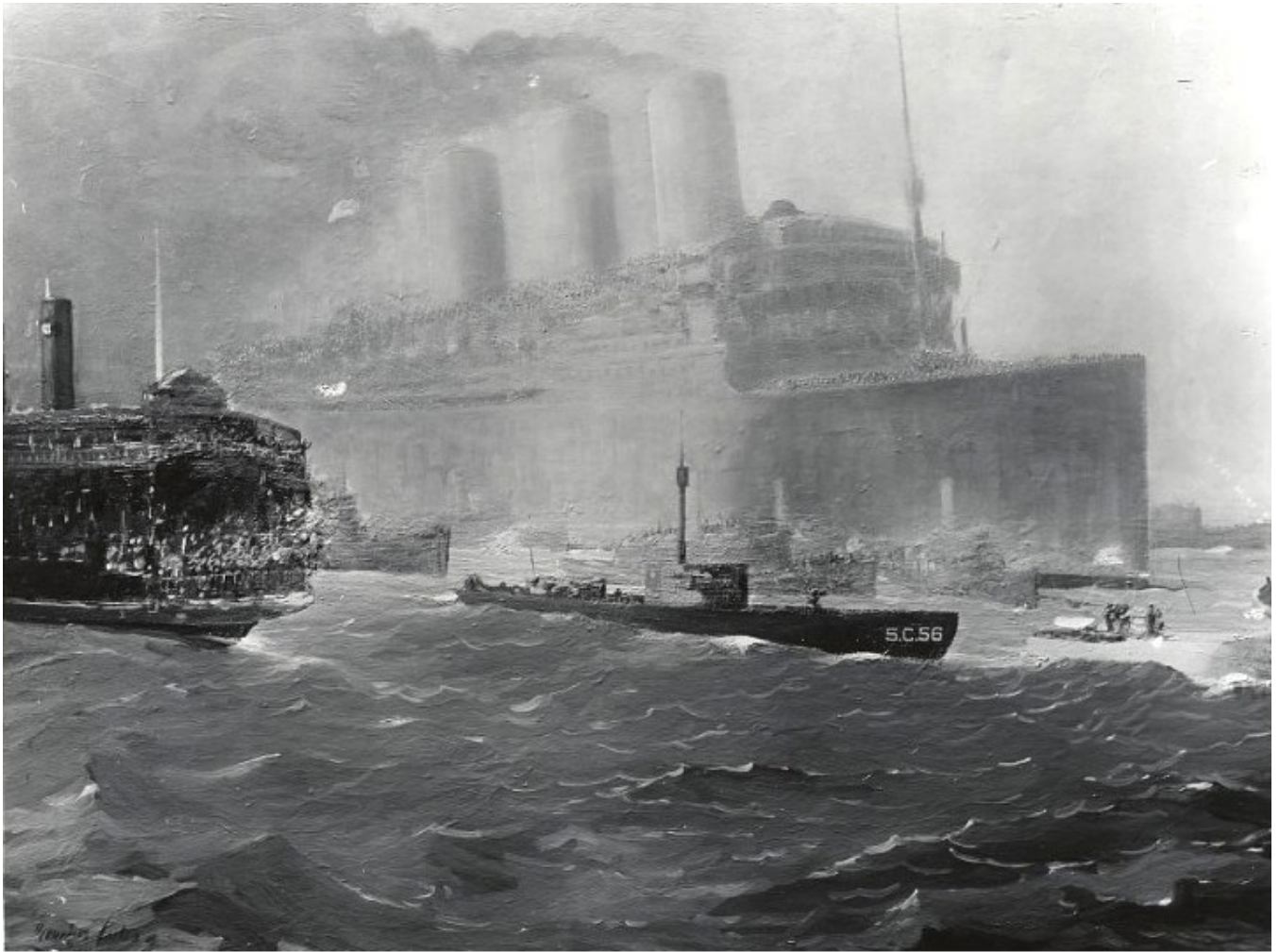
3/6/1919 Leon is aboard. Hoboken NJ.



SS Leviathan troop transport 3/6/1919. The men are packed aboard. Leon Pearce got sick aboard, hopefully not from Influenza.

Photo # NH 103126-B USS Leviathan at Hoboken, N.J., 1919





1918 arrival of the **US 27th Division** on the USS Leviathan painting by



1919 Return & NYC Parade Of U.S. Army 27th Division (full)

3/6/1919 Leon Pearce arrives home. John Pershing is aboard too.



1919 Return & NYC Parade Of U.S. Army 27th Division (full)

Marching North down 5th Avenue past the NYC Library. Notice the Lion statute.



1919 Return & NYC Parade Of U.S. Army 27th Division (full)

The NYC crowd goes wild when Blackjack **John Pershing** salutes when passing the review stand. They also cheered for our Private **Leon Pearce**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq4HX5twtrM>



27th Division WW1 patch

"O'Ryan's Roughnecks" named for World War I commander John F. O'Ryan.



John F. O'Ryan 1874-1961 was a NYC, New York City attorney, politician, government official and military officer.

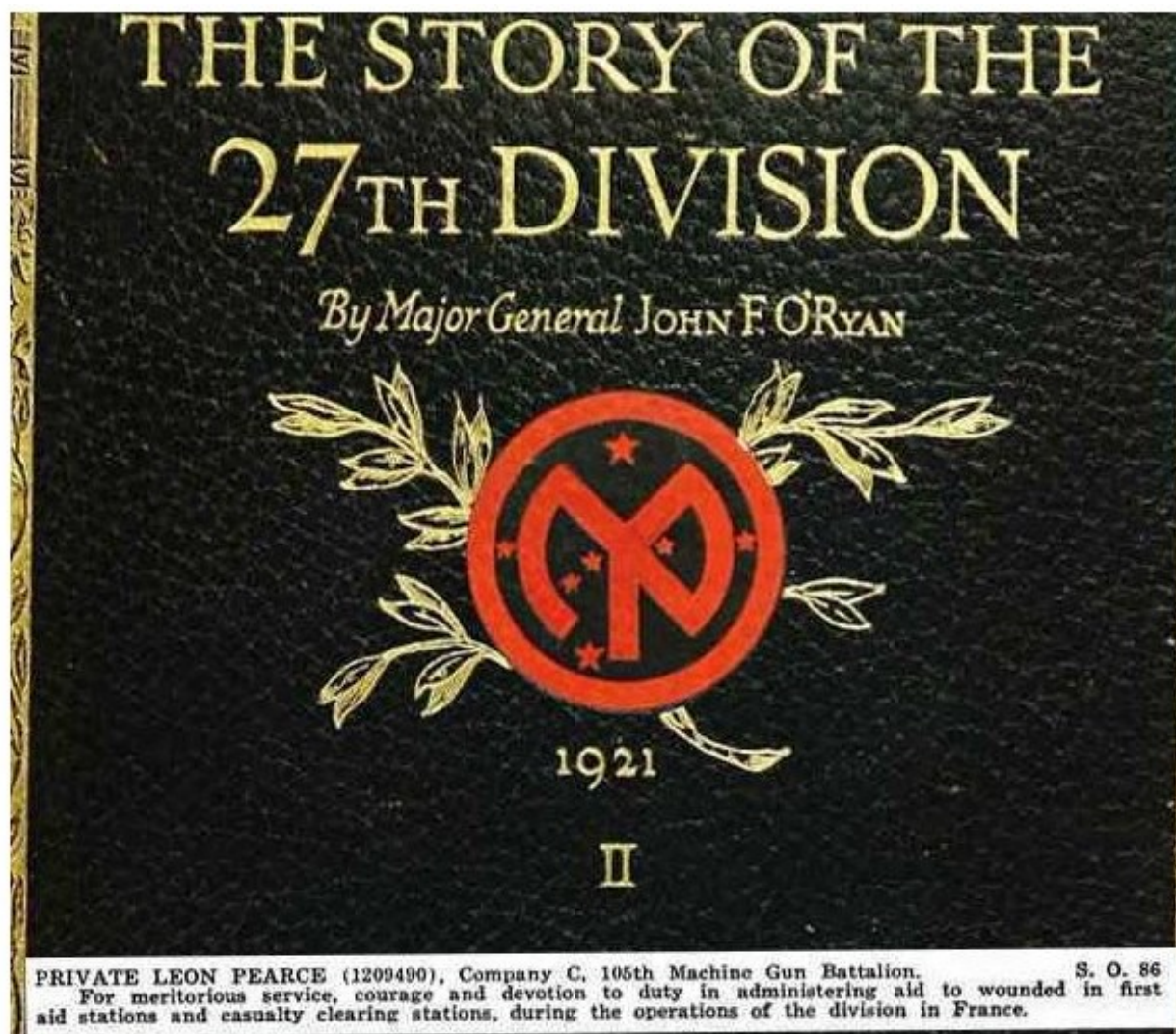
He served as commander of the 27th Division during World War I. He later served as a member of the New York State Transit Commission and as New York City Police Commissioner. During WW2 he was New York State Civil Defense Director.

WW1 engagements: Somme Offensive, Ypres-Lys and Meuse-Argonne.



O'Ryan

Leon's in the book.



Found on Ancestry.com, Helen Herzer.

Leon saw combat in both Belgium & France, and awarded the Silver Star for his actions (**S. O. # 86**, 27th Division). Returned to the States, 3/6/1919, aboard the Leviathan, docking at Hoboken, NJ. It is believed he became ill on the return trip and transferred to the Medical Authorities. Spanish Flu ??

Discharged from the service, 4/17/1919.