PART IV: OUR BOYS
Letters home

A devoted, worried mother, Ellen Fallowell of Waterbury kept a scrapbook when her son went off to war. A century later, her carefully clipped memories, now in the collection of the Mattatuck Museum, tell the story of how one family and its community served and suffered through The Great War.

Waterbury native Charles Fallowell poses in his U.S. Army uniform before being sent overseas to serve as a runner on the front lines in France in World War I.

BY MICHAEL DEGIROLAMO JR.
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Inside the scrapbook’s marbled cover, attached to large pages crisp with age, are documents, newspaper clippings, telegrams, photographs and a collection of letters dated between March 1917 and August 1923.

They tell the story of Charles Walter Arthur Fallowell, a typical Waterbury boy who grew up at 29 Catherine Ave. Born June 24, 1895, he was the older of his family’s two children, with just a year and a half between him and his brother Bill. They were the sons of William Fallowell, an English immigrant who worked as a machinist in Waterbury, and his wife, Ellen.

Charles Fallowell attended St. Mary’s Parochial School. By 1916 he was a brass roller at the Benedict & Burnham branch of The American Brass Co. and Bill was a draftsman at Scovill Manufacturing Co. Within a year, Charles Fallowell would go from crafting brass to dodging shrapnel in the trenches in France.

See SCRAPBOOK, Page 12A

These letters from home to Waterbury native Charles Fallowell were among those returned to sender after Fallowell was killed in action in France in World War I.
American troops parade in St. Nazaire, France, on June 26, 1917, after arriving in the country to join Allied forces in World War I. Charles Fallowell of Waterbury was among the U.S. troops sent to France, assigned to Company H, 307th Infantry, 77th Division of the U.S. Army. He died in the line of duty on Sept. 11, 1918, during the Oise-Aisne campaign.

**SCRAPBOOK:** Paper trail to a hero’s grave

Continued from Page One

**IN THE SPRING OF 1917,** America was on the brink of uniting to defend their homeland from the enemy. The nation — less than two years before — was a world apart from where it stood. The last large-scale war had ended in 1917, and the nation was perceived as a fishing village into a dear hometown friend, the National Guard. The two men had a spritement in Washington, D.C. The officers sent to Mrs. Fallowell. Charles Fallowell's letters were sent to his mother as part of the scrapbook at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury.

**FALLOWELL ARI**

From France April 9, 1918, 9:30 a.m.

Charles Fallowell was one of the first to receive news that the scrapbook preserves his draft registration certificate and notice of call to service. The notice was issued from the state, signed by Gov. Marcus Holcomb, acknowledging that the individual named therein had been called to appear for the draft on the date and time specified. The notice certifies that the individual had been notified by mail of the time and place of the physical examination and the call to service.

Glad to see the same page in his military service. 

He was stationed in France during World War I. Above the clippings in the scrapbook was a telegram addressed to Charles Fallowell, now widowed, was one of those men. The scrapbook contains a telegram addressed to Fallowell after Fallowell was killed in action in France in World War I. Charles Fallowell of Waterbury was among the U.S. troops sent to France, assigned to Company H, 307th Infantry, 77th Division of the U.S. Army. He died in the line of duty on Sept. 11, 1918, during the Oise-Aisne campaign.

**THAT CALL CAME**

With the turn of the year, and in January 1914 his mother resumed collecting memorabilia. Saved in the scrapbook is Fallowell's second notice to appear for physical examination. Soon afterward he was approved to serve.

He arrived back at Camp Devens for training in February, but was then only two weeks. Telegrams to his mother updated her on his progress.

He was transferred to Camp Laramie in Wyoming, where he would stay for another two weeks. After arriving in a new state, Fallowell was among the first to receive the draft registration certificate and notice of call to service.

He was approved to serve in the army.

He died in that year. But two weeks later, he again wrote to his mother about his progress.

He received his physical examination on March 17, 1919, at Alencon, France. The examination was conducted by the Medical Examination Service. The doctor noted in the record that Fallowell was in good health and that he had no known physical or mental defects.

**THE NEXT**

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**IF YOU GO**

The Mattatuck Museum of History and Art is on display through April 22 during regular museum hours, Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday noon to 5 p.m.

In addition to the Charles Fallowell scrapbook, the exhibit also has 20 rare World War I posters from the museum's collection and an authentic World War I uniform worn by Waterbury's Fred Greer W. Cheese.

The exhibit is included with the regular admission. Admission is free for Waterbury residents. The exhibit is open until 2019 thanks to a donation from Macmillan Performance Solutions.

**CHRISTOPHER MASSA, Republican-American**

The grenadier of Waterbury native Charles Fallowell, whose final resting place is in St. Mary's Cemetery in Norwich, was killed in World War I and was first buried in France.

Greens Registration Service. Charlie's body had been recovered and buried at the American Cemetery in St. Mere Eglise, France.

On March 17, 1919, a letter from the War Department presented her with a difficult choice. Her remains could stay where they were, they could be moved to another cemetery of an allied nation or to a local cemetery near the battlefield where he had been killed, or they could be brought back to Waterbury to be interred in a local cemetery or to a national cemetery.

Ellen Fallowell chose to bring her son's remains to be interred in her family plot in St. Mary's Cemetery in Norwich, which took place on June 8, 1922. Repatriation of many World War I veterans was part of the process. Ellen Fallowell was among the last items preserved in the scrapbook.

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**NEW LIBRARIAN, MALCOLM DEGRADAMO, JR. can be reached by email at mdgradamom@optcom.com.**
‘I have no fear of you ... but mothers like I must advise’

The collection of letters saved by Charles Fallowell’s family provides personal insights into the thoughts of a family separated by war. Here are four samples.

From Charles Fallowell, May 24, 1918, shortly after arriving in France: “I was put through the course of a runner. I’ve seen the runner has a big job in the line, under fire, delivering notes from one officer to another. Sometimes I won’t get a note, but will be told something to tell another officer. If I make a mistake in only one word it may bring a slaughter to the men but I know I can do it and well do it.”

From Charles Fallowell, Sept. 1, 1918: “I’ve been in the front line twice and mother the first time I had some experience; it was about 5 o’clock on Fourth of July morning, but this time I had to fill of it till I get me some more paper.” That was written days before he was killed on Sept. 11, but at time correspondence being what it was, the family would not learn of his death until a month later. Meanwhile, his mother Ellen Fallowell and brother Bill continued their news and advice.

From Ellen Fallowell, Sept. 23, 1918: “I don’t want you to feel pleased at me saying that I do hope you will not get any intoxicating drink. I have no fear of you, but mothers like I must advise.”

From Bill Fallowell, Oct. 1, 1918: “Next month we have the continued drive for the Knights of Columbus, Y.M.C.A, etc. for the boys in the service so you lads just remember we are all backing you up to the limit. We have loads of men and money & all else that we need for a Big Victory.”

Charles Fallowell, killed in action, never got to enjoy that intoxicating drink or see the Big Victory. The envelopes, now in the scrapbook, were eventually sent back stamped “RETURN TO WRITER.”

A scrapbook on display at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury contains this letter Waterbury native Charles Fallowell wrote home to his mother while he was stationed in France during World War I. Above are letters from home to Fallowell that were returned to sender after Fallowell was killed in action in France in World War I.

The family scrapbook now on display at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury contains this posthumous certificate from the state, signed by Gov. Marcus Holcomb, acknowledging Waterbury native Charles Fallowell’s military service and sacrifice during World War I.