

CW Class: **HISTORICAL; DESCRIPTIVE; TRUE LIFE**

FINAL COPY by R. Shryock@R (0548)

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## **THE APPARITION**

He was born an Ohioan in 1898 of English/American Indian (Wyandotte ancestry)!

A large man, standing 6'2" and extremely muscular at over 230 lbs.! Friendly; well liked; proud!

A man of Nature and of the Earth!

He was A Farmer! A Hunter!

A patriotic man, he believed in America and was one of the legions of young men who volunteered to join Gen. "Black Jack" Pershing's AEF (American Expeditionary Forces) in 1917 and was subsequently shipped off to France to fight in WWI ! (The War To End All Wars)!

One of the many faceless American "Doughboys" quickly hurled into battle! There to face the countless and well trained German Huns at the vicious and historically significant, 20 DAY BATTLE OF BELLEAU WOOD in that far away place called ...France!

Originally, having been given a chance to surrender prior to the battle by the Germans, and thereby avoiding the carnage and bloodshed of that upcoming battle, an American 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Captain bravely replied, **"Surrender? Hell, we just got here (and have yet begun to fight)"!**

And fight they did! They took the offensive position six separate times! Bitter fighting ensued! Often face to face and hand to hand! Bayonets, knives, empty rifles and 45 cal. pistols were used as clubs, and finally they used their bare fists!

Anything and everything that could be used to maim or kill the enemy was sought out and utilized by both sides!

Twenty days of carnage and bone breaking, flesh tearing, lung bursting, bloody combat and **the most extensive use of MUSTARD GAS** utilized during WWI ! Again, might I remind you, this was to be remembered by all mankind as “The War To End All Wars”!

Within those 20 horrendous days of hellish warfare, the American forces suffered: **9,777** young men **wounded/hospitalized and 1,811 Doughboys (the pride of American youth) killed!**

And “**YES**”, this specific, young American Private **also died** during that major American victory known as “The Battle Of Belleau Wood” in 1918, in that miserable cesspool, in a far away place called France!

He was a proud, young English/American Indian from Ohio, and he was only 19 years old when he fell in that dark, muddy hell hole! A young boy, (“NO” a man), fighting for his country and what he believed was right!

¶His mother was notified by messenger of the death of her only son! It had said he had fallen on a faraway, muddy battlefield in France! Of course, she experienced the overwhelming grief and pain that only a loving mother could feel! A mother who had just lost her lovely boy! Her only son! **She collapsed!**

Then, while still grieving, she had been forced to bury an American flag draped empty box! The somber notes of Taps silently echoing throughout the granite stoned park of eternal rest and the sharp crack of a three gun shot volley was fired out of respect for this oh, so young warrior!

¶Over the next few years, his younger sisters assumed the role of dirt farmers, and the lives of this fatherless, botherless family once again was able to return to some semblance of their former normalcy!

¶¶***He was born on a dark and stormy Ohio night in 1926! He was large, but quite frail for his size!*** Doctors even questioned his ability to survive!

¶¶¶ Suddenly, above the din of the pounding rain, an unstable knock on the farm house door was heard!

An elderly lady looks out the window! A sudden bolt of lightning illuminates the dark, eerie, early morning sky! ***She screams! She faints! And once again collapses on the farm house floor!***

***Was it a Ghost that had just appeared in front of her? Omg, had she just seen an Apparition of her long dead, handsome, young son? It couldn't be! This young man was wearing a military style hat and a trench coat to ward off the strong wind and pelting rain!***

**“NO”** - it couldn't be! She had buried his “token remains” years ago! It just had to be an **Apparitions!** Her mind must be playing games with her!

A few soft, stuttering words were uttered, **“Hi Mom”**, before she once **again lost consciousness!**

**“NO”, it was not a Ghost!**

**“NO”, it was not an Apparition!**

**“YES”, it was her “long dead” young son, somehow risen from the dead! He was gaunt and extremely emaciated, but he was ALIVE and he was standing there in front of her!**

He had the look of a “Walking Dead Man” about him and was a mere 135 pound skeleton of his former muscular self!

But he was **ALIVE!** He was **HOME!** He **HAD ARISEN FROM THE GRAVE!** He had spent all of these tortuous years in a French hospital with amnesia! A residual victim of a criminally negligent mustard gas attack and left for dead amongst all his other fallen comrades! Their shattered, dead remains left scattered on that ungodly battlefield!

One day, in a still yet unexplained medical mystery, he had suddenly awakened from that seven year nightmare! That hellish coma, where he was no-one except a lump of humanity slowly wasting away! An unknown entity, from an unknown place, with an unknown family!

On that final day he seemed to remember some form of mild dizziness and bells ringing in his ears! Then it was like he could see himself! He was walking out of a fog and suddenly felt a refreshing mist bathe his face!

Finally, the sun appeared to be trying to penetrate his eyelids! His eyes snapped open and his mind unexplainably cleared up! ***He did remember his name! He remembered where he was from! And he remembered his mother!***

**“YES”**, he was born on a dark and rainy, wind-swept Ohio night! A almost orchestrated bright flash of light, followed by a loud crescendo of thunder, unceremoniously ***ANNOUNCED HIS ARRIVAL! HIS REBIRTH!***

***HE WAS BORN IN 1926 !***

***BUT HE WAS NOW 27 YEARS OLD!***

***AND***

***HE WAS HOME !!!***

Rex R Shryock

Based upon the true life story of:

Final Copy 02/25/22

Pvt. Jim Roberts Massillon, Oh. US Army

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