

**Saint Joseph County, World War I Army Photographs,
Dean Wilhelm Collection, 1917–ca. 1919**

Patrick Hanlon and Evan N. Miller

In February 1918, while the stalemate on Europe's Western Front wore on during World War I and British forces in the Middle East pushed back the Ottoman Empire, thousands of American soldiers were training to join the fight with the Allies. One such soldier training at Camp Shelby near Hattiesburg, Mississippi, with the 137th Field Artillery was South Bend, Indiana, native Dean Wilhelm. A musician and a member of the 137th band, Wilhelm never saw much action overseas, but he and the other soldiers of the 137th still went through grueling training and had some adventures of their own. After the war, Wilhelm, a journalist by trade, wrote down his story, titling it "Through the War with the South Bend Boys of the 137th: From Leeper Park to France and Back Again." Wilhelm's story begins with his recruitment in South Bend and the buzz of excitement that enveloped the city and its young men. He then describes his extensive training at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, Indiana, his one year at Camp Shelby, and finally his regiment's voyage to England and France just before the signing of the armistice that ended the war.¹

Today this story is part of the Dean Wilhelm Collection, housed in the William H. Smith Memorial Library at the Indiana Historical Society. Along with Wilhelm's manuscript are four photographs of some of the men who journeyed with him to France and back. One photograph is of Camp Shelby, showing the tents as they are either being set up or taken down. Another is of the Headquarters Company of the 137th at Fort Harrison. Whether this photo is from the beginning or the end of the story is unknown. The third photograph is of the 137th regimental band for which Dean played saxophone, and the fourth is of the entire Headquarters Company at Camp Shelby. The last two photos are doubly interesting because they list the names of the soldiers who appear in them.

On the reverse side of the photo of the 137th band, the inscription lists not only each man's name but also his hometown and the instrument he played. This photograph was taken February 4, 1918, while the 137th was still in Mississippi at the end of a particularly hard winter.² The photograph of the Headquarters Company also lists the names on the back but

provides little other information except occasionally a man's rank or nickname. Transcribed below are all the names listed on the backs of these two photos. Through additional research, further information on some of the men in the Headquarters Company photo is included. Home counties are identified from either the hometowns noted on the band photograph (noted "B") or World War I draft cards (D), in the 1910 census ('10) or 1920 census ('20), or from another source (otherwise noted).

All information, except that from the band photograph, was taken from Ancestry.com. Roughly half the company was confidently identified with Ancestry records. Of these men, about one-third were from Saint Joseph County, Indiana. Text transcribed exactly from the back of the photograph is formatted in bold. Additional information added by the authors appears in brackets. Sometimes the names were challenging to read. In these cases, no home county is provided. Conversely, home counties listed are by no means without doubt, but as most of the enlisted men in the company came from northern Indiana, these are not unreasonable conclusions. Finally, some of the places of residence were further verified by looking at the addresses of the people who the soldiers listed as emergency contacts.³

Notes

1. For more on the story of the Headquarters Company in World War I, see Patrick Hanlon, "'Over There' and Back Again: The World War I Experiences of Dean Wilhelm, a Soldier from South Bend, Indiana," *The Hoosier Genealogist: Connections* 58, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2018), 28–35.
2. Dorothy A. Nicholson, collection guide, Dean Wilhelm Collection, 1917–ca. 1919, SC 1879, August 2007, Indiana Historical Society.
3. Lists of the soldiers' emergency contacts can be found on Ancestry.com: U.S. Army Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910–1939, Outgoing, *Empress of Britain*, 6 October 1918–12 November 1918, 64–76.

137th U.S. Field Artillery Band, Camp Shelby, Mississippi, February 4, 1918



Data below is from back side of photograph.

Top row, left to right

Earl E. Burkle	Ass't Bandmaster	Elkhart, Ind.
Arley L. Meeker	Cornet	Niles, Mich.
Arno D. Cullison	[Cornet]	Plymouth, Ind.
Forest G. Hoy	[Cornet]	South Bend, Ind.
[Ray/Roy] C. Sutton	[Cornet]	South Bend, Ind.
Edward R. Rogers	Alto	South Bend, Ind.
Walter A. Swifort,	[Alto]	Warsaw, Ind.
Fred W. Meeker	[Alto]	Monticello, Ind.
Chas. E. McConnell	Bandmaster	Warsaw, Ind.
Joseph E. Beckerich	Bass Drum	South Bend, Ind.
Herbert Gibson	Alto	Monticello, Ind.
Chester A. Klopfenstein	Clarinet	South Bend, Ind.
Frank W. Darrow	[Clarinet]	Wolcott, Ind.
Lawrence A. [Pepe/Pope]	Oboe	Fort Wayne, Ind.
Dean J. Wilhelm	Soprano Saxophone	South Bend, Ind.
Forest C. Bricker	Alto [Saxophone]	Fort Wayne, Ind.

Bottom row, left to right

Thomas E. Holbrook	Drum Major	Warsaw, Ind.
John Kellenberger	Bass	Monticello, Ind.
Earl L. Houghton	Trombone	Plymouth, Ind.

Thomas E. Robinson	[Trombone]	Rensselaer, Ind.
Cluro E. [Fryar/Frayer]	[Trombone]	South Bend, Ind.
Lawrence F. Anderson	Snare Drum & Xylophone	South Bend, Ind.
Doss A. Gibson	Snare Drum	Monticello, Ind.
Kenneth E. Stowe	Baritone	Niles, Mich.
Sigmund Gail Crain	[Baritone]	Warsaw, Ind.
Russell R. Barclay	Bass	Lakeville, Ind.
Robert L. Kelly	[Bass]	Warsaw, Ind.
Riley C. Nowles	Tenor Saxophone	Mishawaka, Ind.
Fred L. Young	Clarinet	Walkerton, Ind. not in picture

137th U.S. Field Artillery Headquarters Company, Camp Shelby, Mississippi



Text transcribed from back side of photo is in bold. Supplemental information added by the authors appears within brackets. Editors also added commas between names and ranks for clarity.

Top row, left to right

	Nick Name
A. D. Pefferly	
John Bowman [Jasper, '10]	
Riley Johnson [Porter, D]	
Clifford Spate	
Ola Casey [Newton, D]	
John Kellenburger, Sergeant Band [White, B]	Jack
Earl Burkle, Asst Bandmaster [Elkhart, B/ D]	Burky
Arley L Meeker [Niles, MI, B]	Meek
Arno D Cullison [Marshall, '20]	

Forest Hoy [St. Joseph, D]	[Denzel?]
[Ray/[Roy] C Sutton [St. Joseph, D]	Pete
Frank Darrow [White, D]	Sister
Chester Klopfenstein [St. Joseph, B]	Dutch
Fred L. Young, Corporal [St. Joseph, B]	
Lawrence Pope, Sergeant [Allen, D]	
Kenneth Stowe [Niles, MI, B]	
Gail Crain [Kosciusko, D]	Adjutant
Thomas Holbrook, 1st Sergeant [Kosciusko, D]	Top Kick
Chas. McConnell, Bandmaster [Kosciusko, D]	Teacher
Doss Gibson [White, D]	
Joseph Beckerich [St. Joseph, 1900 census]	Uncle Joe
Lawrence Anderson, Corporal [St. Joseph, B]	Andy
Earl Houghton, Corporal [Marshall, D]	Happy
Edward Robinson	Roby
Cluro [Frayer/Fryer?] [St. Joseph, D]	
Herbert Gibson [White, D]	
Fred Meeker [White, '20]	
Walter Swifort [Kosciusko, '20]	[Swic?]
Edward Rogers [St. Joseph, D]	
Russell Barclay [St. Joseph, B]	Big Boy
Robert Kelly [Kosciusko, B]	Bob
Dean Wilhelm, Corporal [St. Joseph]	
Forest Bricker [Allen, B]	Wart Hog
Riley Nowles [St. Joseph, B]	Zeb
Herbert Houghton, Sergeant Bugler [Marshall, D]	
Paul Betcher, Color Sergeant	
Lieut. McNiece	
[Lieutenant] McNulty	
[Lieutenant] Fosler	
[Lieutenant] Matthews	
[Lieutenant] Benbow	
[Earl] Clarke, Commanding Officer [St. Joseph, D]	

Second row, left to right

Cecil Kindig

Otto Hardy [Marshall, D]

Richard Buschatz [St. Joseph, '20]

George Hiatt

Daniel Lighter [St. Joseph, B]

Roy Carlson [Kosciusko, '10]

Lee Ginter [Marshall, D]

Raymond Skiles

Milo Kuntz

William Jenkins [Jasper, '10]

Norman Booth

Frank Hickberg, Mechanic

William Hutchinson [Lake, '20]

Lester [Jarion?], Corporal

William Hatton

Guy Crowder

Elmer Carlson

Mike Howieth

Peter Daniels [St. Joseph, D]

George Jones [Porter, D]

Otto Bihlmire, Corporal [St. Joseph, 1921 directory]

Walter Strong, Corporal

Andrew Wilson

Ernest Beekler

Maurice Barah

Elmer Hardy [St. Joseph, D]

Joseph Allan

Elmer Rhodes

Dusty

Cecil [Charles C.] Kaiser

Everett Kimball

George Bowers, Corporal [Pulaski, D]

Leo Blanchett [Benton, '20]

George Miller [St. Joseph, D]

John Hansel

Richard White [St. Joseph, '10]

Stanley Neizgudski

James Farrage [St. Joseph, 1916 directory]

Robert Minkler, Corporal

William Butterworth, Corporal

Robert Morehouse, Corporal [Marshall, '10]

Arthur Falconberry

Claude Boyne, Corporal

George Goeble [St. Joseph, '10]

Elmer Ewig, Corporal

Gerald Shreve [Marshall, 1912 yearbook]

Charles Duetri[s?], Corporal

Glen Burns [Jasper, '10]

William Zaborowski [Porter, D]

Bottom row, left to right

Henry Sibrel

Roy Stahl [DeKalb, D]

Earl Clarke

Clarence Harmes, Supply Sergeant

Harry Freeman, Corporal

Robert Wiley, Corporal

George Klimes, Sergeant

Floyd Traub, Mechanic [St. Joseph, D]

Harvey Varner, Mechanic [Porter, '10]

“Spider” Campbell Cook

Clyde Zerbe, Chief Cook [St. Joseph, '10]

“Dod” Maxwell, Cook

Dewey Williams, Vetinary [sic] Sergeant

John Deardorf, Mess Sergeant

Paul Benson, Sergeant

Warren Freyermuth, Sergeant

Earl Hodson, Sergeant

Allan Bowser, Bugler [Jasper, '20]

Lloyd Bryan, Bugler

George Howard, Bugler

James Spate, Sergeant

Peter Myers

Harry Wetzel [DeKalb, '10]

Earl Swift

Oscar Hutchinson [Lake, '20]

William Moore

Carl Prell, Corporal

Roy Botts

Peter Miller, Corporal

Gordon Wheatley [Tipton, D]

Glen Wright, Corporal

Diehl Martin, Corporal [St. Joseph, '20]

E[lmer?] Peterson