

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THE ARROW HEAD: AN EXPLORATION OF THE 36TH DIVISION
AFTER THE ARMISTICE IN WORLD WAR I

AN HONORS THESIS SUBMITTED TO
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3 MAY 2005

ABSTRACT

Newspapers were available to World War I soldiers from the moment they entered the military until the day they left. Newspapers helped relieve tension for the soldiers during their long days of boredom and gave them something to look forward to. The paper allowed the common soldier to stay connected to the men around him, and provided him an outlet for expressing his own feelings and emotions. The focus of this paper is to study one such newspaper, *The Arrow Head*, published directly after the Armistice in France by and for members of the 36th Texas-Oklahoma division. My research reveals the unique, regional identity of the 36th division found within the pages of their personal newspaper, and proves that they perceived themselves differently because their experience on the Western Front was cut short by the Armistice. I owe much thanks to the archivists at the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas for assisting me with their *Arrow Head* publications, and to the operators of the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry for informing me of the Division's rich history.

On May 1, 2004, members of the Texas 49th Armored Division were honored to be renamed the 36th Infantry Division, a division whose battlefield successes, bravery and achievement continued until it became inactive after World War II. The primary purpose for the renaming, said Major Trey Roberson, Force Integration and Readiness Officer for the Texas Army National Guard, “is to bring back the historic lineage of the 36th Infantry Division.”¹ The Texas division had made its state proud, and Texans yearned for its legacy to continue. Lieutenant General Wayne D. Marty, adjutant general of Texas, recalled, “the 36th has a tremendous war record.”² Boasting of their historical connection, dating back to World War I, the Thirty-Sixth Division soldiers today feel honored to carry on their division’s outstanding reputation.

The 36th Division, formed at Camp Bowie outside Fort Worth, was one of several Texas and Oklahoma National Guard units formally federalized on August 5, 1917.³ General Pershing ordered the reorganization of the American Expeditionary Forces of the United States in order to eliminate state and regional identities and form a unified front. Still, like other divisions, the 36th retained regional characteristics even after their reorganization. The men continued to emphasize that Texas and Oklahoma were their home states. And they remained devoted to the very reputation that had made their states so well known to easterners; they were from the “Wild West” complete with frontier bravery, cowboys and Indians. The division portrayed their unique, regional identity through their insignia, clothing, and physical composition.

¹ Gregory Ripps, Tech. Sgt. “49th Armored Division becomes the 36th Infantry Division” (Camp Mabry, Texas, May 4, 2004) [database online]; accessed February 2005, available from <<http://www.kwanah.com/txmilmus/gallery/pa001.htm>>.

² Ibid.

³ Bruce L. Brager, *The Texas 36th Division: A History* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002), 35.

A major component of a division's identity rests in its insignia. The insignia appears on the division's clothes and written materials and directly reflects how the men perceive themselves. The 36th Division's insignia, the "T-Patch," symbolized their regional loyalty. It included an arrowhead shape symbolizing Oklahoma and a large "T" standing for Texas.⁴ The soldiers had been originally called the "Panther" Division, but because of the insignia, they began calling themselves "Arrow Heads." The insignia reflected their connection to both Oklahoma and Texas, and the soldiers' desire to call themselves Arrow Heads represented their preference for state and regional identity.

The Arrow Heads also separated themselves from other divisions through their clothing. One battalion of the 16th Infantry, which was sent over earlier than the others in the 36th, paraded through Paris on July 4, 1917. Onlookers identified the battalion as the only French or American one outfitted with Calvary hats, similar to cowboy hats. Historian Bruce Bragger wrote their attire "seems to have quite fit the French image of Americans."⁵ The Texas and Oklahoma men held on to their regional identity through their choice of attire, wearing Calvary hats to remind those around them of their heritage as men of the "Wild West." They wanted others to see they still held the frontiersmen image, which according to Frederick Jackson Turner was slowly dying in existence. They were from the untamed wilderness, where only the strongest survived.

The 36th Division became known for its "T-Patch" and characteristic frontiersmen image. Nationally they also became known because of their division's ethnic composition and Native American distribution within the ranks. The 36th Division was one of only a few divisions in World War I to boast a large Native American population. Some divisions dispersed Native Americans throughout the entire division because, as commissioner Cato Sells said, it helped

⁴ BG Richard Burrage, and others, "36th Infantry Division: A Brief History," Pamphlet provided by Texas Military Forces Museum (Camp Mabry, Austin, TX: February 2005), 1.

⁵ Bruce L. Brager, *The Texas 36th Division: A History* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002), 33.

them “absorb the English habits and civilization.”⁶ The 36th Division, however, allowed their Native American population to stay intact and work together under the commanding officer of the 142 Infantry.⁷

In combat, the unique composition of the Infantry allowed the Division to utilize the Native American’s native language as communication code. “When the 142nd Infantry was pinned down by German artillery at St. Etienne, its officers used Choctaw speaking infantrymen on the field telephone system.⁸ As a result, the German intelligence was completely baffled allowing the 36th to complete a successful attack; a rare outcome in World War I. Truly the division’s achievement attests to the commanders’ ability to maintain the 36th Division’s independence from other divisions and unique identity. The commanders held fast to their belief that maintaining the Native American culture was important, even when it was publicly unpopular.

After training at Camp Bowie and then in Bar-sur-Aube in France, the 36th joined France’s Second Division at the front, and the two divisions led the French drive into Champagne. Historian Brager acknowledges that initially, the 36th was unsuccessful. The execution of the 36th’s first attack, for example, went poorly.⁹ Yet the 36th established a tactically astute reputation in the execution of their second attack. The Handbook of Texas Online describes their second attack at Forest Farm as “one of the most brilliant operations of the

⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁷ Russell Lawrence Barsh, “American Indians in the Great War,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Summer, 1919) : 282.

⁸ Ibid., 291.

⁹ Bruce L. Brager, *The Texas 36th Division: A History* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002), 66.

war.”¹⁰ Even Brager admits “unlike what was so often the case in World War I, the attack had gone every bit as well as had been intended.”¹¹

After the Armistice

After experiencing failure followed by brilliant success, the 36th Division’s advancement came to an abrupt end. The Armistice forced an end to their forward movement, as the 36th Division was relocated to Tonnorre, in the State of Yonne.¹² Captain Alexander White Spence of Dallas, aide de Camp to major General William R. Smith, wrote in the official history that the soldiers’ “morale was nothing short of superb” during their stay.¹³ However, others sources indicate that living at Tonnorre was far from desirable. The soldiers set up in billets throughout the area, and “owing to continuous rain, and the scanty allowance of wood for heating purposes...the men suffered considerable physical discomfort.”¹⁴ To make matters worse, life in camp quickly became monotonous with drilling and cleaning. The men’s anxiety grew with each day and rumors increased in circulation. As historian Lonnie White stated, “the war was over and the Texans and Oklahomans wanted to go home.”¹⁵

Some historians suggest that compared to other divisions, “troop morale continued relatively high.”¹⁶ The 36th’s commander, Major General William R. Smith certainly deserves some credit for his efforts in helping to make the stay at Tonnorre more endurable for his men.

¹⁰ WILLIAM RUTHVEN SMITH, *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. [database online]; accessed February 8, 2005, available from <<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/ss/fsm74.html>>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹² Lonnie White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War*. (Austin, TX: Presidential Press, 1984), 182.

¹³ W.D. Cope, *Texas National Guard in World War I* [database online] accessed February 2005, available from Texas Military Forces Museum online at <<http://www.kwanah.com/txmilmus/gallery/ww1/cope.htm>>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Lonnie White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War*. (Austin, TX: Presidential Press, 1984), 182.

¹⁶ WILLIAM RUTHVEN SMITH, *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. [database online]; accessed February 8, 2005, available from <<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/ss/fsm74.html>>.

One major development that took place under his leadership was the development of the divisional newspaper, *The Arrow Head*.

Like many other divisions in World War I, Major General Smith realized the importance of maintaining a divisional newspaper. Newspapers gave the men who read them a common bond, a feeling of unity, and an identity critical to wartime hardships. “An American without his newspaper,” stated one writer, “is a lost soul in deed. He is like a Frenchman who has nothing in his canteen but water; like an Englishman without his bathtub.”¹⁷ Even *The New York Herald’s Paris Edition* stated, “No American camp of any size worth noticing would be complete without its own newspaper.”¹⁸

Commander-in-Chief General Pershing recognized that newspapers could act as “a great unifying force [to] materially aid in the development of a esprit de corps.”¹⁹ With that mission in mind, the A.E.F published its first and only official newspaper, *The Stars and Stripes*. The eight-page paper appeared every Friday from February 8, 1919 to June 13, 1919 and served, as General Pershing stated, “to speak the thoughts of the new American Army and the American people from whom the Army has been drawn.”²⁰ It was the soldier’s paper, and the national communication of the A.E.F.

The Stars and Stripes served as one of many papers soldiers had access to during their World War I service. Papers came in a wide variety. Newspapers were published for university and academically motivated soldiers, while others were published to serve as air service, port, and hospital newspapers. There was a newspaper specifically aimed at soldiers who had been

¹⁷ Alfred Emile Cornebise, *Ranks and Columns: Armed Forces Newspapers in American Wars* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), 65.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰ *Stars and Stripes* (Paris, France), 8 February 1919, p. 1.

recently commissioned, entitled *Going Over*, which became the predecessor of another paper entitled *Coming Back*, for those soldiers returning home.

The Stars and Stripes appealed to all American soldiers and unified the American war effort. Thousands of soldiers from different divisions took part in the paper. They not only read it, but also served as its editors. Soldiers submitted articles, cartoons, and poems. One member of the 36th submitted a poem to the newspaper, entitled, "After Wordsworth." The soldier's entry spoke to the universal issue of "cooties." His humorous account addressed his longing to be rid of the "body louse" that continued to irritate him as he lay on his cot at night.²¹ The soldier's entry stands alone as the 36th Division's sole submission to the *Stars and Stripes*. Soldiers of the 36th, however, valued their unique identity, and thus also took advantage of the opportunity to participate in their own, personally customized divisional paper.

In the inaugural edition of *The Arrow Head*, on February 27, 1919, the aims of the newspaper were stated.

It is to sustain the morale of the men, to maintain a division spirit which is the pride of its commanders, to inform the men in the various organizations of the news pertaining to their fellow soldiers, to let the folks at home know what the 36th Division is doing, what it thinks and how it feels, to foster athletics, healthful sports and clean entertainments and to give the enlisted men a medium of expression in the form of something that is their very own... it will be news of the 36th Division exclusively and no attempt will be made to cover the field of daily news outside, with the exception of such information from Texas and Oklahoma as is certain to be of first interest to the men.²²

The paper maintained its purpose throughout its ten weekly editions, until it stopped publication on May 2, 1919.

It took a great amount of effort simply to ensure *The Arrow Head's* publication. The first edition reported that it was being printed in Auxerre, located "more than fifty kilometers from

²¹ *Stars and Stripes* (Paris, France), 2 May 1919, p. 5.

²² *Arrow Head* (Auxerre, France), 27 February 1919, p. 2.

Division headquarters.”²³ The printing process itself was also difficult, oftentimes inhibited by the language differences inherent to “borrowing” a French press. As a result, the newspaper features numerous grammatical errors. Even with such difficulties the paper’s cost was kept affordable for every soldier at 25 centimes, approximately five American cents. The editors and supporters clearly felt the publication of *The Arrow Head* was important to the soldiers stationed at Tonnorre.

The paper began with a small editorial staff, composed of three Privates, and one Sergeant. Private Hugh J. Kent, a former employee of the *Dallas Evening Journal*, served as the only editor-in-chief.²⁴ He enlisted at the age of 22 to Company C 111th Field Signal Battalion in Fort Worth, and served from July 18, 1918 to June 4, 1919.²⁵ Private Jas. G. Carenichan and Sergeant Eugene Dumas served as the newspaper’s only Sports and Art Editors. Private Lovick Pierce served as the initial News Editor. Over time the newspaper’s staff expanded as Private Louis H. Hicks and Private Edwin Seymore, who later served as Circulation Manager, took positions as Regular News Editors. The staff later grew to also encompass a Treasurer position held by Sergeant E. F. Simpson in its final month of circulation.

The increase in the staff of *The Arrow Head* serves as another indication as to the division’s investment into not only creating *The Arrow Head*, but maintaining it as well. A larger staff reflected the paper’s increased popularity and proved its success. The number of publications confirms that. One thousand copies of the first publication were printed, and by the second publication, circulation had increased to 10,000.²⁶ Indeed, *The Arrow Head* not only

²³ *Arrow Head*, 27 February 1919, p. 2.

²⁴ Lonnie White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War*. (Austin, TX: Presidential Press, 1984), 85.

²⁵ Private Hugh J Kent, Enlistment Card. *Texas Military Forces Museum Archives*.

²⁶ *Arrow Head* (Auxerre, France), 6 March 1919, p. 2.

printed local news by soldiers, but the “common” soldier of the 36th division also bought and read it.

The only research on *The Arrow Head* has been connected to the paper’s record of camp activities and life, which may be found in the seventh chapter of Lonnie White’s book, *Panthers to Arrowheads* entitled, “Marking Time at Tonnerre.” White’s research reveals significant information about the division in terms of the soldiers’ relations with the French and sanitation.

One of the most interesting investigations done by White was his account of how well the 36th adjusted to their surroundings. The 36th maintained good relations with the French, as they attended many of the 36th’s sporting events. Yet adjusting to a new people also lead to “253 cases” of reported venereal disease as well. New surroundings meant a new level of cleanliness for the soldiers. White reported that the sick rate decreased from 28.5 to 9.9 per 1,000 in April 1919 due to an emphasis on personal hygiene, demonstrating that with time, the 36th adjusted to living in camp life and the importance of hygiene.²⁷ Hygiene continued to hold utmost importance, as the Division emphasized their preparation for General Pershing’s inspection on Wednesday April 9, 1919 just before their departure home.²⁸

Adjusting to new surroundings also meant adjusting to a new lifestyle in general, and with much free time on their hands, the men of the A.E.F. chose to entertain themselves through sports. According to White and confirmed by *The Arrow Head*, “the most popular sports in the Tonnerre area were football, basketball, and baseball.²⁹ In fact, the 36th Division’s football team had the privilege of being one of the two finalist teams that participated in the First Army

²⁷ Lonnie White, *Panthers to Arrowheads: The 36th (Texas-Oklahoma) Division in World War*. (Austin, TX: Presidential Press, 1984), 195.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

divisional Championship held in Paris.³⁰ It was in Paris that the 36th played the 89th Division in what can be called “the first Superbowl” in history, held Saturday March 29th.³¹ Soldiers also had other forms of entertainment. White mentions theatrical troupes, bands, and dancing, even though women were often in short supply. The 36th Division actively participated in entertainment, most notably sports, and took their competitions very seriously.

The functions and activities at Tonnorre are important features in understanding the full experience of the soldiers of the 36th Division. As Lonnie White’s research made clear, newspapers can reveal much about the daily lives of those who produce and read them. The 36th had difficulty adjusting to their surroundings, proven through their needed adjustment in sanitation and living conditions, yet they maintained good relations with the French and stayed active and mentally healthy through divisional sports. Beyond White’s work, much more can be learned from within the pages of *The Arrow Head*.

The editors and designers of the *Arrow Head* defined what they believed important by dividing the newspaper into sections, each supervised by one of the editorial staff. The three key components were sports, news and art. The Sports section of *The Arrow Head* has already been discussed to some degree, but equally important is a discussion on the news and art sections of the paper. Only through a complete evaluation of the paper is one able to further characterize the men of the 36th Division.

News and *The Arrow Head*

Divisional news provided a means by which the generals of the 36th could distinguish the truth from the numerous circulating rumors regarding the division’s departure for home. The first *Arrow Head* publication, for example, included a detailed explanation of the A.E.F.’s

³⁰ Ibid., 189.

³¹ Ibid., 192.

procedures for departure for home. The 36th would be the third to last to leave France. In the second publication, *The Arrow Head* unmasked another rumor that the 36th was not leaving for Le Mons as some had believed.³² Deflecting rumors quickly prevented potential decreases in morale. “But all who know the 36th Division,” encouraged General Smith in the first publication, “are confident that its members will do their full duty cheerfully and thoroughly to the end.”³³ The newspaper provided an important service, not only because it published the truth but also because it encouraged the men to accept it.

Some announcements in *The Arrow Head* applied to the entire division, but the newspaper also allowed individuals and units to share their news. One announcement stated that “Cook Jones of Headquarters” had a new baby, who would be waiting for him upon return home.³⁴ The 142nd Infantry took the opportunity to recognize their unique contribution to the success of the division as a whole. Six Choctaw Indians received Church War Crosses for taking charge of the Signal Corps telephone stations at the front.³⁵ The article stands as the only one that mentions a particular nationality.

Each infantry unit also had their own column in the paper. The unit numbers served as headings, and each unit’s information followed. By the final publication each unit had developed its own insignia to be placed above its news. The 111th Engineers, who appear to have been the first to develop an insignia, portrayed a cartoon image of a man hammering a stone next to a pile of rocks. The development of such specific elements testifies not only to the division’s communal identity, but the development of a unique identity within each infantry unit.

³² *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 2.

³³ *Arrow Head*, 27 February 1919, p. 4.

³⁴ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 1.

³⁵ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 2.

Within the individual news announcements, units shared critical information with their men, and also boasted of their unit's successes. The spirit of friendly rivalry is evident in each unit's report. The 142nd Company reported it received a pennant from Major General Smith with the distinguished mark "The Very Best" unit within the division.³⁶ The 143rd Company boasted the "Best" mark in inspections in the second publication.³⁷ The Machine Gunners of the 144th infantry also bragged of getting the "best mark" in recent inspections.³⁸

The units also competed over the level of higher education their soldiers attained. The 142nd and 132nd both pointed out the success of their post-secondary schools.³⁹ The 132nd took pride in the fact that their soldiers served as co-instructors for the A.E.F. University.⁴⁰ The 131st announced that some of their members were detached to attend French Universities by "special order no. 56."⁴¹ Another unit announced that Division Athletic Officer Captain Wayne B. Davis had left to study at Oxford along with Lieutenant Colonel Alvin M. Owsley.⁴²

Educational news was not limited to unit news, however, but could also be found in general announcements. The fourth publication's front page announced the opening of a Vocational School.⁴³ On a more humorous note, one member of the 36th wrote an editorial in which he yearned for "knowledge of distilling liquor."⁴⁴ Nevertheless, education was a topic of much conversation, something the men were interested in and something they believed significant enough to boast about.

Art and *The Arrow Head*

³⁶ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 2.

³⁷ *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 1.

³⁸ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 6.

³⁹ *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 5.

⁴¹ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 5.

⁴² *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 4.

⁴³ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 2.

The Arrow Head's third area of concentration following news and sports was art. Especially in later publications, *The Arrow Head* included a variety of art including cartoons, short quotes, and poetry. Art comprised a particularly unique portion of the paper because it allowed its maker to express himself more vividly and often brought out emotions that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Although the readership of the paper as a whole might have been influenced by those pieces of art that were printed compared to those which weren't, the finished product still yields the most accurate perception of what many soldiers believed and felt.

Each publication of *The Arrow Head* beyond the inaugural issue included at least two pictorial pieces of art, either in the form of a single image, or series of cartoon pictures. The Art Editor, Eugene Dumas, sketched most of the cartoons but a few also came from other soldiers not directly associated with the publication of the paper. The first cartoon picture appeared in the second edition. A soldier gazed from afar at the United States, his homeland, only to find four unwelcoming men behind a small Statue of Liberty.⁴⁵ The soldier's perception of America was quite different from those within American society. He saw Americans with isolationist mentalities, through the four men, all holding signs. One said, "cold tea" a reference to soldier's alcoholic consumption, which would soon no longer be accepted in American society. Likewise, another said, "you must not smoke cigarettes." One man held a sign, "Off with those Gold Service Chevrons," which were indications the men had served in France longer than six months. The fourth sign simply read, "Cost of Living," meaning life would be expensive for the soldier, and he would not receive compensation for his efforts. The rich warmonger had swallowed all the benefits up. Clearly the sketch suggested that not all of society treasured the accomplishments of the soldier, and many did not want him to be honored and privileged upon return.

⁴⁵ *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 2.

Other cartoons were less pessimistic. One highlighted the strength of the 36th football team, stating “Make em all sick.”⁴⁶ The cartoon featured the opponent unable to smoke the strong cigar, which represented the 36th. Another pictured a victorious football game through a series of cartoons.⁴⁷ One cartoon acted as a humorous teaching tool, warning men not to buy expensive things in Paris or to be seduced by the rich ladies.⁴⁸ Others demonstrated kitsch.

Kitsch, defined as something of low or mean content, was created to appeal to the popular crowd, in this case soldiers. It created an ironic humor, often containing a bit of truth, but too rash for a home front audience. In one cartoon, for example, a guard on night duty mistakes a cow for an intruder. The cartoon’s intent was to emphasize the enormous stress and fear experienced by the soldier, an experience that could easily result in nervous stress disorder, all because of a harmless cow. A darker cartoon image depicted a souvenir shop in which a Frenchman made souvenirs from the belongings of dead soldiers just outside the door of the morgue.⁴⁹ The cartoon is certainly dark, even brutally satiric. For the soldier, however, who experienced death every day, it was a laugh, a fact of life, probably because many times he felt he could relate.

In the final issue, a cartoon series tied together a theme of the cycle of life.⁵⁰ Men were excited to return to the United States, but things would not necessarily be better, just different. The soldier on kitchen duty, for example, returned to work as a dishwasher. The mess sergeant became a high-class waiter. And a captain ran for mayor. In many ways, life would remain the same.

⁴⁶ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 1.

⁴⁷ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 7.

⁴⁹ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 6.

⁵⁰ *Arrow Head*, 2 May, 1919, p. 8.

The cartoons within the newspaper also reflect the diversity of the soldiers. Soldiers had different outlooks on life, and each soldier's outlook most likely also varied depending on his mood, and his units' morale. Although diverse, they continued to value honor, even when they believed society back home didn't. The spirit of competition remained strong, as did their desire to express their mixed emotions regarding their difficult circumstances through kitsch.

Another art-based subsection entitled "Ambrose Sez" was reserved for short, often politically charged sayings or catchphrases. The section usually took up about one fourth of a page, and included everything from short quotes and rhymes to advise, and jokes. Many times, the section included a "Soldiers' Dictionary" of often-repeated words and phrases, and their consequential definition from the soldiers' perspective. For example, "Peace Conference" meant "somethin that aint happened yet." "Bugle" signaled "An instrument of torture."⁵¹ The entries were nearly always lighthearted but still revealed soldiers' feelings as they made light of their often-frustrating situation.

Poetry submissions encompassed the broadest range of subjects and tones in *The Arrow Head*, and included everything from topics on daily life and cooties to longing for home. Some poems were upbeat. One described a poker player outwitting his opponent.⁵² Other poems pointed out the irony of soldiers experiencing both happiness and depression at the same time. One described the signs of spring, with a particularly upbeat tone, but also pointed out it was the "busiest term of Cooties' Court," a particularly unpleasant realization for the men.⁵³

The most consistent poetry theme reflected soldiers' desire to return home. One writer dreamed of meeting his mother in his poem entitled "Mother."⁵⁴ Another, entitled "Lonesome"

⁵¹ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 4.

⁵² *Arrow Head*, 27 February 1919, p. 2.

⁵³ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 2.

described a soldier's boredom and longing to go home.⁵⁵ Some of the accounts were pessimistic, as was "Silver Threads Among the Black," which stated, "war is hell, but peace is worse."⁵⁶ Others were encouraging, as was "Shake 'em off, Boys, Shake 'em off," by a Sergeant who stated "So what is the use of worry, / or wasting your breath on a sigh. / The order from General Pershing, / Says, we'll all be home bye and bye." Another poem in the same section stated, that even though times were tough, "There is a great time coming Buddy."⁵⁷ The longing for home was evident, and both officers and soldiers recognized its presence by expressing it, either through their personal loss of enthusiasm for their work in Tonnerre, or inadvertently through encouraging others to maintain morale.

Reoccurring Themes

The structure of *The Arrow Head* highlighted three major areas of interest among the soldiers of the 36th Division: sports, news and art. Yet the boundaries created to classify areas of interest do not confine the soldiers' continual expression of emotions. The three areas of interest, then, more specifically served as the medium through which soldiers expressed what was most prevalent on their minds, revealing two reoccurring themes. The soldiers' struggled to satisfy their desire to achieve a masculine, heroic identity while continuing to experience an insatiable yearning for home.

Identity

They had gone to France to fulfill a cause; their mission was to help the allies defeat Germany and end the destruction people had labeled "The Great War." They had long prepared for the action, and to accomplish their task was of utmost importance. After all, it was not

⁵⁵ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

simply a matter of serving God and country, but of their own reputation as men. Historians such as Susan Kingsley Kent assert, masculinity was “re-established by war.”⁵⁸ Kent notes, for example, British soldiers’ portrayal as protectors as they rescued Belgian women from the harassment of Germans, and American soldiers also meant to fulfill a similar expectation.⁵⁹ Men were supported and encouraged to be the protectors, and go fight as heroes against the enemy, and their power as soldiers defined their identity.

The 36th Division entered the conflict in France much later than other Divisions. The 42nd Rainbow Division, which also enlisted a significant number of Texans and Oklahomans, and other units had already been hardened by war by the time the 36th arrived. In fact, the 36th participated in only a few major operations before the Armistice. For the men of the 36th Division, the ceasefire was bittersweet.

The 36th Division’s last engagement had “surpassed a maneuver for perfection, the entire operation proceeding, from start to finish exactly according to field orders.”⁶⁰ They had left the front lines with a good reputation. A salutation by General Wright in the first edition, for example, stated, “You have every reason to be proud.”⁶¹ On March 28th, the front page of *The Arrow Head* honored fifty-nine men of the division for receiving the Croix de Guerre.⁶² The men had a right to be proud, as they honored the men with the front and center *Arrow Head* announcement.

The Arrow Head also encouraged soldiers to remember the significance of their achievements through the Division history. Men were encouraged to buy the official history of

⁵⁸ Kent, Susan Kingsley. *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990*. London: Routledge, 1997, p. 264.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274-275.

⁶⁰ W.D. Cope, *Texas National Guard in World War I* [database online] accessed February 2005, available from Texas Military Forces Museum online at <<http://www.kwanah.com/txmilmus/gallery/ww1/cope.htm>>.

⁶¹ *Arrow Head*, 27 February 1919, p. 1.

⁶² *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 1.

the 36th division, The Fighting 36th written by Captain Alex W. Spence, aide-de-camp, to help them remember their time in France, and perhaps also to confirm the importance of their participation.⁶³ *The Arrow Head* encouraged soldiers to buy extra copies of the newspaper as well and have them shipped home to their families as remembrances. The ad stated, “[your] memory will be flooded with sweet, softened recollections.”⁶⁴ The writers of *The Arrow Head* intended to encourage the men to take pride in courageous accomplishments.

Still, however, the soldiers continued to view their own accomplishments as unsatisfactory and struggled with their identity and reputation. The first publication of *The Arrow Head* communicated the soldiers’ disappointment in being moved from action to a mere training camp. “The 36th Division men have been sojourning to recover from the shock and mental strain caused by a premature armistice.”⁶⁵ Rather than praising the Allied victory, the newspaper considered it “premature.” For the millions of French and British who had been fighting for years, the Armistice couldn’t have come soon enough. Yet for these green soldiers, the Armistice had come too soon, inhibiting them from maturing as a division, and from achieving their potential identity as masculine heroes, one they had long anticipated. The quote expresses not simply a disappointment among the troops, but a serious case of emotional instability. An extreme degree of emotional disappointment is expressed in the fact they had to take time to psychologically “recover” simply to accept the ceasefire.

Without achieving heroic victory on the battlefield, soldiers of the 36th were left with a feeling of inadequacy, as noted in a poem in the second publication. “Tis a fact I’ve not been commissioned / And no medals adorn my breast; / But I’ve had all the shells, the mud / [and the

⁶³ *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 8.

⁶⁵ *Arrow Head*, 27 February 1919, p. 3.

hell] / Right along with the rest.”⁶⁶ A soldier’s purpose was to fight, win, and receive honor for his valorous efforts. Masculinity in western society was defined by bravery in battle. The author felt the need to justify his division’s contribution to the war effort, knowing other divisions had far exceeded the accomplishments of the 36th. The author defended himself and his identity as a true, masculine soldier. He knew he had not been on the front as long as other soldiers and that those back home would have even more difficulty respecting him and honoring his experience.

For many men of the 36th, the opportunity to participate in The Great War had been cut short, and so had their ability to fulfill their reputation as heroic soldiers. Evidence of a feeling of inadequacy among members of the 36th is limited. Yet it is still a point that deserves attention. *What happens to men who train for war, and are never put into action? How do individuals deal with disappointment? And when those individuals compile a group as large as an entire division, how does the division prevent a decrease in morale?*

Struggling for identity, members of the 36th found ways to build confidence and character off the battlefield. Sporting competition replaced the battlefield, and gave soldiers a sense of honorable, even heroic accomplishment while providing entertainment and exercise. The headline of the fifth publication of *The Arrow Head* stated, “With 600,000-Franc Bet As Expression of Confidence, 36th Sends Its Warriors to Battle Third Army for Greatest of all Athletic Honors.”⁶⁷ The aforementioned cartoon image of the competitor unable to smoke the cigar representing the 36th Division football team also portrayed the 36th as strong and masculine. Sports became a form of identity; it gave the men a unique sense of accomplishment and manhood, one that enhanced their feeling of self worth. To say sports were not as popular in other divisions would be untrue. Still, it must be acknowledged that the 36th clearly saw sporting

⁶⁶ *Arrow Head*, 6 March 1919, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 1.

competitions as a substitute for their lack of service on the battlefield and a way to enhance their masculine identity.

Troops also found identity in France by connecting themselves to the land's history. In the fourth publication an entire page was dedicated to the history of the "ancient civilization" in which the doughboys lived.⁶⁸ The articles emphasized the soldier's participation in a continuing history, one that had begun long before them, and included powerful Roman Caesars, ancient churches, great castles, and cemeteries. Understanding the land's history enhanced the soldiers' appreciation of the present, as they "drill[ed] where Caesar's soldiers did."⁶⁹ As soldiers and society looked for answers, the Great War "triggered an avalanche of the 'unmodern.'"⁷⁰ In doubt and confusion, the soldiers were given a sense of identity because of their location, and a duty to carry on the land's legacy of brave, well-trained soldiers. The 36th appreciated and cherished the structure and nostalgia of the past, one complete with honor, heroism, and purpose.

The Arrow Head reveals that soldiers searched for identity in many different ways. Yet, they never defined themselves by ethnic background or religion. After the recognition of Choctaw Indians in the first publication for their valiant service in battle, ethnicity is never again mentioned. Religion is also rarely mentioned in *The Arrow Head*. One reference to a chaplain was made in a report of the 141st unit, which claimed to have the best chaplain in the division, not because of his religious fervor or dedication. But rather he had become well thought of by the troops because he "furnished each man with a Red Cross bag containing one sweater; one muffler, a toothbrush and paste, nuts, chocolate, an apple, and cigarettes."⁷¹ In a time of intense

⁶⁸ *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Jay Winter. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, p. 54.

⁷¹ *Arrow Head*, 27 February 1919, p. 3.

emotions, areas that could have divided the troops were left unmentioned, evidence that the men of the 36th, while searching for identity, wished to remain unified, supporting one another.

Yearning for Home

Soldiers satisfied their need for identity through divisional sports and even history. Still, however, they yearned to fulfill their long-term life ambitions, and that meant going home. *The Arrow Head* demonstrates that home was constantly on the minds of soldiers, and the paper, designed to heighten low morale in a foreign country, logically had to address the common soldier's desire to get back home to family and friends. While some entries warned that readjusting to civilian life would be difficult, many entries described the soldiers' desperation to go home and many remained optimistic, encouraging their comrades that their day was coming soon.

Soldiers recognized that their experience had distanced them from American culture. The large drawing in the second publication of the soldier gazing at the United States from afar, made clear how the soldiers viewed society back home. The soldier had fought and sacrificed his life to preserve freedom and liberty, yet those at home no longer held those virtues important. He could no longer enjoy the simple pleasures of a cigarette and drink, the very essentials that had carried him through the toughest moments on the western front; moments the civilians back home would never understand. His dedication would not be honored, and capitalism would continue to award the rich. American society had not felt the impact of war the way the French and English had. Americans appeared close-minded and selfish, and soldiers found it difficult to return to that world.

Soldiers faced problems upon returning home, and articles in *The Arrow Head* began to address them specifically after the fifth publication. One article, entitled "Rough Road in Society

for Returned Soldiers” expressed the concern of many soldiers; shell shock. “The boys are having a hard time,” the articles stated. “When the traffic cop on the corner blows his whistle more than likely several of them stop absolutely still in spite of the fact they are in danger of being run over by the stream of vehicles. They think it’s the top’s whistle and something is doing.”⁷² Indeed, soldiers back home were experiencing difficulty readjusting to society. Norman Fenton suggested shell shock was viewed with sympathy in America, yet he also stated “it ran on to the weirdest fantasy of insanity. For instance, a veteran arrested for cutting off a girl’s braid was given publicity as a case of shell shock.”⁷³ Numerous articles in the *New York Times* later labeled soldiers “mentally deranged” and “insane.”⁷⁴ Well before those articles, even by 1919, as the 36th Division soldiers recognized, society had difficulty understanding the experience of the soldier and welcoming him home.

Soldiers still yearned to return home nevertheless. As already mentioned, going home was the subject of most rumors circulating throughout the camp. At one point, the newspaper reported that rumors about that eternal “going home” question got so “thick they could be cut with a knife.”⁷⁵ Numerous times commanders utilized *The Arrow Head* to communicate the inaccuracy of those rumors, just as General Smith did in the first publication of the newspaper. Yearning for home was also a central theme for poetry, and even some cartoons. *The Arrow Head* even recorded a semifinal football contest in which one contestant yelled “I want to go home!” in the presence of Belgium royalty.⁷⁶

⁷² *Arrow Head*, 21 March 1919, p. 8.

⁷³ Norman Fenton, *Shell Shock and its Aftermath*. (St. Louis: the C.V. Mosby Co., 1926), 87.

⁷⁴ See for example, *New York Times*, “Insane ex-soldiers put with criminals” 8 January 1921., “Reports on War Disabled: Treasury office says 40% of them are Mentally Deranged” 1 January 1921., “Sick and Insane Soldiers Increase” 16 January., and “70,000 Insane Soldiers Uncared For” 4 April 1921.

⁷⁵ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 1.

⁷⁶ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p.1.

Reflecting soldiers' continued desire to return home, *The Arrow Head* as a whole remained positive on readjustment. One news article, for example, addressed avenues by which soldiers could get help finding jobs upon their return. In a poem another soldier wrote, "I had rather be at home, / Facing high taxation, / Than to be in the army / And risk an other vaxination."⁷⁷ While soldiers knew American society would never appreciate what they had done, that readjustment to daily life would be difficult, that their jobs would probably not be any better, they still desired to go home. Home remained the land of their permanent identity, where their loved ones resided, and where they wished to return.

As seen in the Division's poetry, many soldiers and officers encouraged men to cheer up and wait patiently to return home. General Smith made that clear from the beginning when he first clarified that the 36th would be the third from last to return home. Other articles encouraged the men to enjoy the social events available at Tonnerre and take advantage of the time they had in France until the day would come when they could return home.

The soldier of World War I lived in a world difficult for us today to understand. War devastated the soldier, yet for the men of the 36th so did peace. Psychologically, the Armistice also had a negative effect, and commanders realized efforts had to be made to counteract the deficiency in morale. As a morale encourager, *The Arrow Head* should be labeled a divisional success story. It gave the men an outlet and open discussion through the medium of sports, news, and art. As a result, they developed unified identities, and had the opportunity to recognize they were not alone in yearning to go home. *The Arrow Head* stands as a valuable piece of insight into the lives of men forced to cease their one active purpose, live and endure life in a place they couldn't ever call home, in a season which demanded continual wait and an uncertain future.

⁷⁷ *Arrow Head*, 28 March 1919, p. 2.

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