

From the Trenches Towards the Skies:

**Transatlantic Hero Steponas Darius and
His Journey in the U.S. Army (1917-1919)**

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From the Trenches Towards the Skies:

Transatlantic Hero Steponas Darius and His Journey in the U.S. Army (1917-1919)

The personal history of Captain (LTU AF) and Private
First-Class (U.S. ARMY) Steponas 'Stephan' Darius

The Flight of the Lituania and its Legacy



Figure 1: Stasys Girėnas (left) and Steponas Darius (right) photographed in the Lituania before their flight in 1933.¹

Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas (Figure 1) are among the most well-known and prominent Lithuanians on either side of the Atlantic Ocean. So much so, that their

¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 2.

fame extends from Lithuania to emigrant communities around the globe.



Figure 2: The flight of the Lituanica over New York City.²

The 37-hour flight taking off from Floyd Bennett Field in New York on July 15, 1933 (Figure 2), became an immortal legend and source of great national pride after the two pilots tragically crashed, in the former Prussian and current Polish territory, near Pszczelnik, Poland

² Jonas Balčiūnas, “Lituanica,” www.vle.lt (Science and Encyclopedia Publishing Centre), accessed April 23, 2025, <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/lituanica/>.

(Figure 3). The two Lithuanian-Americans, in a Bellanca CH-300 Pacemaker airplane, having already flown 6,411 kilometres, were a mere 636 kilometres short of their final destination – Kaunas, Lithuania – when they crashed.³



*Figure 3: The crash site of the Lituanica in modern day Poland
(part of Prussia at the time).⁴*

The deaths of the two young pilots resonated deeply, not only in Lithuania and Lithuanian emigrant communities around the world, but also in the United

³ Jonas Balčiūnas, “Lituanica,” www.vle.lt (Science and Encyclopedia Publishing Centre), accessed April 23, 2025, <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/lituanica/>.

⁴ Ibid.

States, Germany, and Poland. The crash came as a shock to U.S. officials, as both pilots had U.S. passports and U.S. pilot licenses, and the plane had a U.S. registration (NR-688E), yet there was no official order, declaration, nor flight plan.⁵ The crew took off from New York without officially informing the U.S. authorities and it appears as though the fact that the flight was occurring was only known amongst Lithuanians. As the flight was not declared, it was also not tracked, therefore the subsequent crash was a shock to all states involved.

The intended flight path was New York – Newfoundland – Atlantic Ocean – Ireland – London – Amsterdam – Swinemünde (known as Świnoujście today) – Königsberg (known as Kaliningrad today) – Kaunas airport; covering 7,186 kilometres.⁶ Bad weather conditions forced the crew of the *Lituanica* to divert over

⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 212.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

Ireland. They veered off course towards the north and reached Germany via Scotland and the North Sea.⁷

German authorities found the crash site on the morning of July 17th, 1933. Two days later, on July 19th, a German plane carried the remains of the two pilots to their final destination in Lithuania. The people of Kaunas, the capital of Lithuania at the time, welcomed the heroes' return with heartfelt grief. The funeral was a solemn event and was an official moment of national mourning. Condolences were received from several states, including from top German and U.S. officials.

Despite the devastating crash, the flight was still a significant triumph for our fallen heroes, as well as for Lithuania and Lithuanians everywhere. The flight of the Lituania was trailblazing for several reasons. First, it was carrying the very first transatlantic airmail shipment in history.⁸ Second, the distance covered during this flight

⁷ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvos Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 258.

⁸A. Gamziukas, “‘Lituanikos’ Paštas - Lietuvos Aviacijos Istorija 1919 - 1940 M.,” *Plienosparnai.lt* [History of Lithuanian Aviation 1919-1940], accessed May 23, 2025, <https://www.plienosparnai.lt/page.php?21>.

made it the second farthest non-stop flight of its time. Additionally, the duration of the flight ranked it fourth in terms of longest flight duration of its time. Lastly, the flight was one of the most precise in aviation history, despite Darius and Girėnas flying in bad weather conditions and lacking navigational equipment.⁹ People were proud of their fellow countrymen making the flight and both of the pilots sources of national pride.

In the years following, Lithuania commemorated the two men in a vast variety of ways. Streets, schools, and even a stadium were named after them. Large permanent exhibitions were dedicated to them at the Vytautas Great War and Lithuanian Aviation Museums in Kaunas. Exhibitions were also established in their hometowns. Books, monuments, a banknote, and various coins, stamps, and souvenirs were all made to celebrate them. Their legacy spawned a feature-length film, *Skrydis Per Atlantą* [The Flight Across the Atlantic Ocean], and a

⁹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 355.

handful of documentaries such as *Lituanicos Paslaptis* [The Secret of the Lituanica], *Lituanica: Nemari Atminties Šviesoje* [Lituanica: in the Light of Memories], and *Lituanikos' Sparnai* [The Wings of the Lituanica], along with rock music festivals, and a musical production. They even had a large ocean-going fishing vessel, a TV channel, a submarine, a transatlantic rowing boat, and a Lithuanian satellite named after them.

Perhaps the most prominent, during World War II, the U.S. Army Air Forces named a Lockheed Ventura B-34/37 bomber after the Lituanica (Figure 4), while the U.S. Navy named a Liberty-class ship the SS *Stepas Darius*.¹⁰

¹⁰ Pijus Poškus, “Laivas SS Stepas Darius - Lietuvos Aviacijos Istorija 1919 - 1940 M.,” *Plienosparnai.lt* [The Ship SS Stepas Darius – The History of Lithuanian Aviation, 1919–1940] March 2020, <https://www.plienosparnai.lt/page.php?1392>.



Figure 4: U.S. Army Air Forces Bomber Lockheed Ventura B-34/37 Christening, 1943.¹¹

Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas were both featured on a list of the *100 Most Prominent People of Lithuania* compiled by members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Science and Encyclopaedia Publishing as part of the centenary celebration of Lithuanian Independence.¹² Notably, the

¹¹ Balzekas Lithuanian Cultural Museum, Chicago, Illinois, *U.S. Army Air Forces Bomber Lockheed Ventura B-34/37 Christening, 1943*, Photograph, 1943.

¹² Milda Augulytė, “Po Ilgų Ginčų Mokslininkai Išrinko Lietuvai Labiausiai Nusipelnusias Asmenybes,” [After Lengthy Debates, Scientists Selected the Most Distinguished Individuals for Lithuania] *Lrytas.lt*, November 21, 2009, <https://www.lrytas.lt/kultura/istorija/2009/11/21/news/po-ilgu-gincu-mokslininkai-istrinko-lituvai-labiausiai-nusipelnusias-asmenybes-5295853>.

flight of the *Lituanica* across the Atlantic Ocean in 1933 as well as its tragic end are also included in a second celebratory article focused on the top events - Lithuania's Centenary: 100 Key Dates for the Nation, Its People, and the Economy.¹³

¹³ Stasys Gudavičius, "Lietuvos Šimtmetis: 100 Svarbiausių Datų Valstybei, Žmonėms, Ūkiui," [Lithuania's Centenary: 100 Key Dates for the Nation, Its People, and the Economy] vz.lt (Verslo Žinios, February 16, 2018), <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2018/02/16/lietuvos-simtmetis-100-svarbiausiu-datu-valstybei-zmonems-ukiui>.



*Figure 5: Left: Private First-Class Steponas Darius and
Right: Private Stasys Girėnas photographed in their U.S. Army uniforms.¹⁴*

Steponas and Stasys both lived in the United States of America since their childhoods, were united by their Lithuanian heritage, their native Samogitian dialect,

¹⁴ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 31, 146.

the Lithuanian community in Chicago, their common interest in flying, as well their service in the United States Army during World War I.¹⁵ Darius served from June 30th, 1917, to May 10th, 1919.¹⁶ Girėnas served from October 11th, 1917, to April 1st, 1919. Stasys enlisted and went through boot camp at Jefferson Barracks in Lemay, Missouri. He served in the 136th Air Squadron at Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois and attended flight school at Love Field in Dallas Texas.¹⁷ Hopefully a text focusing on Stasys Girėnas' and his entire duty in WWI will be conducted in the near future.

¹⁵ Gražina Sviderskytė, *Lituanica. Nematoma Pusė* [Lituanica. The Invisible Side] (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2019), 15.; *The Courier-News*, (Bridgewater, New Jersey, July 15, 1933), 2

¹⁶ Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia Roster, *First Field Artillery Roster*, (Illinois, 1917), 327. Military Roster, 1917; William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 135

¹⁷ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 146

Background Information on the First World War

In 1914, Europe was in a state of tension – old grievances, revanchist sentiments, and conflicting political and economic interests all seemed to bubble to the surface. The whole of the ‘old continent’ was moving in the direction of war due to the militarism, policies, as well as the existing alliances between empires.¹⁸ In addition to the rapid development and improvement of classical weaponry, there were innovations in 20th century technology for the military such as aviation, submarines, and the machine gun.¹⁹ Europe found itself in a kind of arms race, or in other words, in a powder keg of economic power struggles ready to ignite. The only thing missing was the metaphorical spark.

On June 28th, 1914, the fires of war broke out, engulfing almost the entire European continent in flames

¹⁸ Adrian Gilbert, *Iliustruota Pirmojo Pasaulinio Karo Istorija* [An Illustrated History of the First World War] (Vilnius, Lithuania: Tyrai, 2001), 7.

¹⁹ Machine guns were originally considered to be a useless waste of ammunition, but was quickly established as part of military strategy. See V. Michalovskis, *Pirmasis pasaulinis, Istorijos įdomybės*, [The First World War, Historical Curiosities], (Vilnius, Lithuania: 2020), 15.

with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁰ Soon, the entire continent was divided with the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey on one side, and the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro, as well as Japan on the other.

It was a new and unheard-of form of war, fought on the surface of the Earth and in its depths, on the seas and within them, and even in the sky. Intelligent generals tackled the intricate tasks of war, using millions of men, weapons, and supplies. All battling sides, having suffered huge losses, settled into an endless network of trenches on the frontlines. The trench warfare phase began. Positional warfare was more economically debilitating for the combatants than manoeuvring warfare. The technology that resulted from the first industrial revolution made steam the main source of energy, and steel and iron the material of production. This helped to bring millions of soldiers to the battlefields, making warfare extremely

²⁰ National WWI Museum and Memorial, "Key Dates," The World War (National WWI Museum and Memorial), accessed October 24, 2022, <https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/key-dates#1914>.

persistent and ferocious.²¹ The numbers of troops involved in war and battles were enormous, and the numbers of dead and wounded were correspondingly extraordinary.

The United States of America was horrified by the consequences of the First World War, with President Woodrow Wilson being particularly concerned by German cruelty inflicted on the peaceful inhabitants of invaded lands in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Belgium, and elsewhere. In response to the numerous attacks on passenger and merchant ships as well as Europe's request for support, the U.S. shot down enemy vessels in a naval blockade in an attempt to drive down German U-boat units and declared war on the German Empire in April of 1917.

This was a complicated move for the United States because they had no battle-ready units at the time. American recruitment and intensive training of new soldiers began in earnest. The First World War was expected in Europe, but it was unexpected in the United

²¹ Adrian Gilbert, *Iliustruota Pirmojo Pasaulinio Karo Istorija* [An Illustrated History of the First World War] (Vilnius, Lithuania: Tyrai, 2001), 8.

States. General Pershing of the U.S. Army imposed two conditions on Europe. First, that U.S. troops only come to Europe to assist in achieving victory together. Europe had to organise and guarantee victory under its own capabilities and determination.²²

Second, Europe had to ensure not only the smooth arrival of the U.S. troops, but also to prepare their movement inland, their provision of supplies, camp sites, and access to exercise and training ranges.²³ Starting on June 26th, 1917, over 10,000 U.S. troops arrived in Europe in groups of 2-3 large ships every day.²⁴

In total, over 4 million were trained for the war and by September 1918, some 1.2 million American troops had already crossed the Atlantic to the Old Continent, of whom some 117,000 were killed and 200,000 wounded.²⁵ It is interesting to note that there was

²² Henry Joseph Reilly, *America's Part* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1928), 183.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Chris Kempshall, "American Soldiers Arrive in France," WW1 East Sussex, accessed November 15, 2022, <http://www.eastsussexww1.org.uk/american-soldiers-arrive-france/index.html>

²⁵ Archive.org, "WWI Casualty and Death Tables," Internet Archive Wayback Machine (U.S Department of Justice), accessed November 15, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20161016014336/http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html; John Graham Royde-Smith and Dennis E. Showalter, "World War I - the U.S. Entry into the War," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, November 10,

a shortage of volunteers in the U.S. Army and that some 70% of soldiers were conscripts.²⁶

The terrible news from Lithuania about persecution at the hands of the German gendarmes combined with President Wilson asserting that America sought liberation for German-occupied states strengthened Lithuanians and other nations' hopes of finally regaining political freedom. Our Steponas Darius, a young man with a noble soul, could not detach himself from all that was happening in the world around him – especially as it pertained to his Lithuania. Darius, with a heart filled with love for his homeland as well as his adopted country, a patriotic purpose, hope, and President Wilson's declaration snipped out of a newspaper in hand,

2000, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I/The-U-S-entry-into-the-war>; Antoine Prost, "War Losses," 1914-1918-Online (WWI) Encyclopedia, October 8, 2014, <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war-losses/>; John Graham Royde-Smith and Dennis E. Showalter, "World War I - Killed, Wounded, and Missing," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 9, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I/Killed-wounded-and-missing>; The U.S. World War One Centennial Commission, "The U.S. In WWI - Overview - World War I Centennial," www.worldwar1centennial.org (Doughboy Foundation), accessed October 30, 2022, <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/edu-home/edu-topics/579-overview-general-collections/4989-the-u-s-in-wwi-overview.html>

²⁶ Arlene Balkansky, "The Draft in World War I: America 'Volunteered Its Mass', Headlines and Heroes," June 19, 2018, <https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2018/06/wwi-draft/>.

volunteered to join the U.S. Army, a mere six days after the U.S. Declaration of War.²⁷

Russia lost nearly 2 million soldiers in the war, raising internal tensions and unrest, which led to the February and October revolutions, and eventually resulted in the Bolshevik government signing a peace treaty with the Germans and withdrawing from the war.²⁸

Although Russia has undergone major social changes, the essentially imperialist aims of its foreign opportunistic geopolitics have remained the same. From the Eastern Front, Germany transferred the forces it had freed up to the Western Front. After Germany's several unsuccessful attempts at offence, the Allies launched a large-scale counterattack. Austria and Turkey surrendered. A ceasefire was called and began at 11:00 am

²⁷ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 18.

²⁸ John Graham Royde-Smith and Dennis E. Showalter, "World War I - the U.S. Entry into the War," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, November 10, 2000, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I/The-U-S-entry-into-the-war>; Antoine Prost, "War Losses," 1914-1918-Online (WW1) Encyclopedia, October 8, 2014, <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war-losses/>; V. Michalovskis, *Pirmasis pasaulinis, Istorijos idomybės*, [The First World War, Historical Curiosities], Vilnius, 2020, 305.

on November 11, 1918. On June 28th, 1919, Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles, and the war ended.²⁹ Some 8.5 million soldiers and over 10 million civilians are killed in the war, and some 65 million soldiers are mobilised.³⁰ After the dust of war settled and made way for a new favourable geopolitical landscape, a number of countries declared their independence, and the political map of Europe saw the return of old powers, as well as the emergence of new ones, such as Austria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, and the former Yugoslavia.³¹

John Graham Royde-Smith and Dennis E. Showalter, "World War I - the U.S. Entry into the War," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, November 10, 2000, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I/The-U-S-entry-into-the-war>; Antoine Prost, "War Losses," 1914-1918-Online (WW1) Encyclopedia, October 8, 2014, <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war-losses/> (accessed 2022-11-15).

³⁰ John Graham Royde-Smith and Dennis E. Showalter, "World War I - Killed, Wounded, and Missing," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, January 9, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I/Killed-wounded-and-missing> (accessed 2022-11-15).

³¹ M. Barta, M. Kovar, *Civilisations: collapse and regeneration. Addressing the Nature of Change and Transformation in History*, Praha, 2019, 536.

Diaries and Little Known-Duty Documents of U.S. Army Units

There is no doubt that Steponas Darius' military duty and experiences in World War I made an impact on his mental and culture comprehension in addition to his worldview. He wrote about his life in several personal diaries, which were compiled by Petras Jurgėla into a book *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius ir Girėnas* [Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas] which was published in Chicago in 1935. The dates and events mentioned in these diaries are nearly identical to the text provided by Petras Jurgėla, with the only difference being the style of the language. Darius uses more dialectal, irregular language, while Jurgėla edited and presented the journals in a style popularly used by Lithuanian immigrants in the United States at the time of publishing. It is likely that more of these diaries existed when Petras Jurgėla used them as the basis for his work on Darius' life than do today. The surviving diaries are kept in a family archive maintained by Steponas' great-grandson, Ažuolas Maštaras.

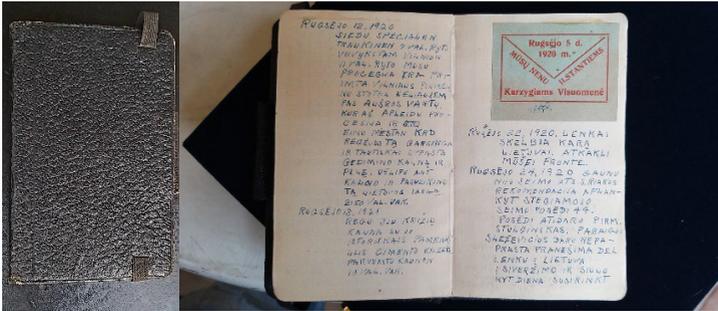


Figure 6: The leather-bound journal of Steponas Darius. Left: a photo of the cover. Right: a photo of the inside of the journal.³²

One of the surviving journals is photographed above (Figure 6). In it are handwritten notes in blue and black ink, beginning on May 10th, 1919, and ending on June 10th, 1921. Although there are 760 days between these two dates, Darius briefly described just over 70. Only 17 pages were used in this specific journal, while the rest remain blank. The text is broken up with various cut-outs such as stamps, coupons for donations, and a ticket for admission to a meeting of the Constituent Assembly

³² Materials are in the Darius' family archive belonging to Mr. Ažuolas Maštaras, the great-grandson of Steponas Darius. Photos were taken by the author with the permission of the family.

as well as said meeting's agenda. When writing in this small booklet, Darius wrote in all capital letters, used the Lithuanian alphabet, and even made a few grammatical mistakes. While preparing for his flight across the Atlantic, he began writing in his last diary on July 10th, 1932, which he completed on July 13th, 1933.³³

Steponas Darius describes his military service in the U.S. Army in detail in his journals. Darius served in the Headquarters Company of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment of the 67th Field Artillery Brigade, 42nd 'Rainbow' Division of the U.S. Expeditionary Force (Figure 7). He is mentioned in its rosters on August 31st, 1917, and at the end-of-October 1917.³⁴ However, in the beginning of his duty, there were times he was assigned to tasks in the 'C' (Charlie) Battery.³⁵

³³ Plieno Sparnai [Iron Wings], "Stepono Dariaus Dienoraštis [Dairy of Steponas Darius]," Plienosparnai.lt (Lietuvos Aviacijos Istorija 1919 - 1940 [History of Lithuanian Aviation 1919-1940], 2025), <https://www.plienosparnai.lt/page.php?604/>.

³⁴ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 24, 36.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 24; Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia Roster, *First Field Artillery Roster*, (Illinois, 1917), 327. Military Roster, 1917; Harold Stanley Johnson, *Roster of the Rainbow Division* (New York: Eaton & Gettinger, Inc., 1917), 110

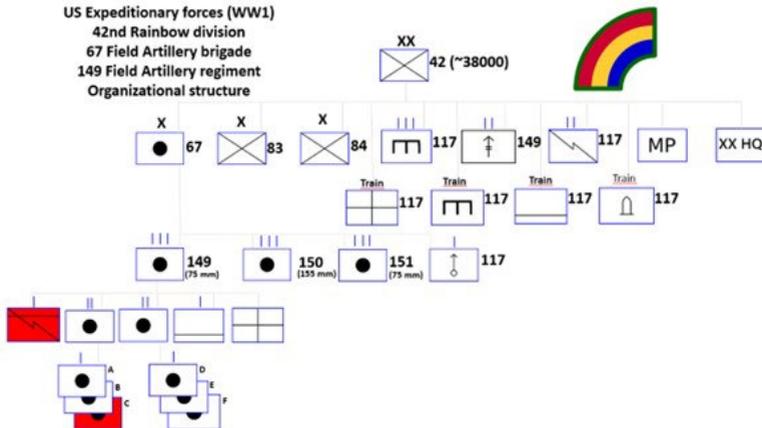


Figure 7: 42nd Rainbow Division Organisational Structure.³⁶

³⁶ Organisational Structure of the 42nd Rainbow Division Diagram made by author.

List of 42nd 'Rainbow' Division Organisational Structure
(Bolded text indicates specifics for Steponas Darius)

42nd Rainbow Division

Divisional Command Headquarters

67th Artillery Brigade

149th Field Artillery Regiment

HQ Company

Supply Company

1st Battalion

A Battery

B Battery

C Battery

2nd Battalion

D Battery

E Battery

F Battery

150th Field (Heavy) Artillery Regiment

151st Field Artillery Regiment

117th Battery of Trench Mortars

83rd Infantry Brigade

84th Infantry Brigade

117th Engineer Regiment

149th Machine Gun Battalion

117th Field Signal Battalion

117th Engineer Train

117th Sanitation Train

117th Ammunition Train

117th Supply Train

Military Police Unit

FIRST FIELD ARTILLERY.			
327			
Name and Rank.	Date of Commission or Enlistment.	Date of Muster.	Remarks.
Damery, Willis C.	June 24, 1916	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty July 2, 1917.
Danielson, Harry G.	Apr. 21, 1917	Reported for duty July 4, 1917. Hon. Disch. July 17, 1917 at Ft. Sheridan, Ill. on S.C.D. Character Excellent. Service honest and faithful. No A.W.O.L.
Darius, Stephen W.	Apr. 12, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty June 30, 1917.
Dodge, Philip H.	Apr. 19, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty June 30, 1917.
Doherty, Thomas K.	Apr. 7, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty June 30, 1917.
Eder, Samuel H.	Apr. 20, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty July 2, 1917.
Edwards, Fred L.	Apr. 23, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty June 30, 1917.
Edwards, Jefferson R.	Apr. 7, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty July 1, 1917.
Ellis, Leon T.	May 14, 1917	July 20, 1917	Reported for duty June 30, 1917.
Fargo, Charles H.	May 19, 1917	Absent.	Reported for duty June 30, 1917. On 10 days furlough fr July 4-14, 1917. A.R.106. Furlough extended 20 days to Aug. 3, 1917 to take examination for qualification Aviation Section.

Figure 8: Roster of the Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia.³⁷

Darius himself mentions his position within the command structure hierarchy in his journals, which is supported by the rosters for the C Battery of the First Field Artillery Regiment of the Illinois National Guard (Figure 8). There, it is mentioned that ‘Darius, Stephen W.’ enlisted on April 12th, 1917, signed his service contract and took the oath of enlistment before reporting for duty

³⁷ Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia Roster, *First Field Artillery Roster*, (Illinois, 1917), 327. Military Roster, 1917

on June 30th, 1917, where the C Battery was assembled and mustered into service on July 20th, 1917.³⁸

The 42nd ‘Rainbow’ Division consisted of the 67th Artillery Brigade, the 83rd and 84th Infantry Brigades, and various detached units including: the 117th Engineer Regiment, the 149th Machine Gun Battalion, the 117th Field Signal Battalion, the 117th Engineer Train, the 117th Sanitation Train, the 117th Ammunition Train, the 117th Supply Train, the Military police unit, and the Divisional Command Headquarters.³⁹

The 67th Field Artillery Brigade of the 42nd ‘Rainbow’ Division consisted of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment from Illinois, armed with 75mm guns, formerly the 1st Illinois National Guard Field Artillery Unit; the 150th Field (Heavy) Artillery Regiment from Indiana, armed with 155mm guns, the former 1st Indiana National Guard Field Artillery; the 151st Minnesota Field Artillery

³⁸ Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia Roster, *First Field Artillery Roster*, (Illinois, 1917), 327. Military Roster, 1917.

³⁹ Center of Military History and United States Army, “Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War” 2 (1988), 272 <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1117637.pdf>; Harold Stanley Johnson, *Roster of the Rainbow Division* (New York: Eaton & Gettinger, Inc., 1917), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/65236/65236-h/65236-h.htm>.

Regiment armed with 75mm guns, the former 1st Minnesota National Guard Field Artillery; and the 117th Maryland Battery armed with trench mortars, consisting of the former 3rd and 4th companies of the Maryland Coast Artillery.⁴⁰

Another important aspect of this history that warrants attention is the transformation and reorganisation of National Guard and militia units into active-duty federal forces. In other words, so-called ‘weekend warriors’ – militia enthusiasts and individuals who treated military training more as a hobby during their spare time – were suddenly integrated into a highly organised, large-scale Army structure. All of them were required to undergo basic training – Boot Camp – regardless of any prior experience in the National Guard or militia, which was not recognised.⁴¹ The 149th Field Artillery Regiment of the 67th Field Artillery Brigade of

⁴⁰ Harold Stanley Johnson, *Roster of the Rainbow Division* (New York: Eaton & Gettinger, Inc., 1917), 9 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/65236/65236-h/65236-h.htm>.

⁴¹ National Guard Bureau Historical Services, “The Defining Role of the National Guard in WWI,” www.army.mil, August 7, 2017, https://www.army.mil/article/191849/the_defining_role_of_the_national_guard_in_wi.

the 42nd ‘Rainbow’ Division consisted of a Command, a Headquarters company, a supply company, a medical supply unit, six batteries—three to a battalion with the 1st battalion containing Batteries A, B, C and the 2nd battalion containing Batteries D, E, F.⁴²

The 149th Field Artillery Regiment was commanded by Commander Col. Henry J. Reilly.⁴³ Steponas Darius was commanded by Company Commander Capt. Stewart M. Gilmore.⁴⁴ The company consisted of 14 officers and 153 soldiers; 27 of whom were musicians in the regimental band.⁴⁵ Darius is listed in the alphabetical rosters of both the divisional and separate HQ company histories. The brief entry for him on this divisional list reads as follows: ‘Darius, Stephen W., Pvt., 3305 S. Halsted St., Chicago, Illinois’.⁴⁶ The HQ

⁴² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 39; Harold Stanley Johnson, *Roster of the Rainbow Division* (New York: Eaton & Gettinger, Inc., 1917), 109-136.

⁴³ Harold Stanley Johnson, *Roster of the Rainbow Division* (New York: Eaton & Gettinger, Inc., 1917), 109

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 109-136.

⁴⁵ William E. Gilmore, “History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 24.

⁴⁶ Harold Stanley Johnson, *Roster of the Rainbow Division* (New York: Eaton & Gettinger, Inc., 1917), 110.

company's records simply read Darius, and in fact Darius is mentioned as many as seven times in various contexts throughout the HQ company's historical records.⁴⁷ The task of the HQ company was to ensure the logistical support of the headquarters and the regiment, the functioning of the regimental headquarters, and all 6 of the Batteries' communication systems, which helped to make the use and adjustment of artillery fire more efficient, as well as use the band to raise soldiers' spirits by playing music at various official events and celebrations.

⁴⁷ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 24, 36, 52, 58, 69, 75, 141.



Figure 9: SS *President Lincoln*.⁴⁸

Among the few surviving documents related to Darius' military service in the U.S. Army, are the passenger lists of his Atlantic crossing. The 42nd 'Rainbow' Division sailed to Europe from the ports of Hoboken, New Jersey, New York, Montreal, and Quebec on October 18th, 1917.⁴⁹ The 67th Field Artillery Brigade

⁴⁸ U.S. Naval Institute and P.W. Foote, "Narrative of the 'President Lincoln'," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 48, no. 7 (July 1922), 1072–86, <https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofuni192248712unit/page/n9/mode/2up?view=theter>.

⁴⁹ Center of Military History and United States Army, "Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War" 2 (Washington, D.C., 1988), 275 <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1117637.pdf>

and several other units were transported by the transatlantic liner USS *President Lincoln*, which arrived at St. Nazaire, France on November 1st, 1917 (Figure 9).

UNITED STATES ARMY TRANSPORT SERVICE
 HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 480th ARTILLERY BRIGADE
 ORGANIZATIONS AND CASUALS
 TRANSPORT COMPANY, 480th ARTILLERY BRIGADE

NO.	ORGANIZATION	REG'T	COMP	NAME	RELATIONSHIP	ADDRESS	CITY, STATE
40		480		Mr. A. Boyer	Father	6636 Woodlawn Ave	Chicago, Ill.
41				Mrs. Ellen Brady	Mother		Sarnia, Ont. Can.
42				Harry G. Brown	Brother	5489 Hubbard Ave.	Chicago, Ill.
43				Mrs. Nellie Brown	Mother	121 St. Joseph St.	Waukegan, Ill.
44				Mrs. Leah Cella	Wife	148 N. Dearborn St.	Chicago, Ill.
45				Mr. Joseph Chandler	Brother		Hampton, Ill.
46				John W. Collins	Son	303 S. 10th St.	Chicago, Ill.
47				Frank Cune		2007 - 6250 RR	Streator, Ill.
48				Louis N. Courchane		5428 S. Dearborn St.	Chicago, Ill.
49				Mrs. Emma Deacon	Mother	4400 W. 11th St.	Chicago, Ill.
50				Mrs. Anna Deacon	Mother	3208 S. Halsted St.	Chicago, Ill.
51				Mr. James Deacon	Brother	827 Jackson Ave.	Chicago, Ill.
52				James Deacon	Brother	124 S. Curtis St.	Chicago, Ill.
53				Charlotte E. Dodge	Sister	1000 W. 11th St.	Chicago, Ill.
54				Conn. A. Edwards	Brother	4400 W. 11th St.	Chicago, Ill.
55				Mrs. H. Ford			Chicago, Ill.
56				Edith Varga	Sister	Pt. Sheridan	Illinois
57				Denny G. Fisk	Brother	Franklin	Illinois
58				Christopher	Brother	11116 Lytle Ave.	Harvey, Ill.
59				Mr. T. H. Fouts		299 Paul St.	Chicago, Ill.
60				Edith S. Fitts	Sister	1111 S. 10th St.	Chicago, Ill.
61				T. Q. Stevens		1111 S. 10th St.	Chicago, Ill.
62				Robert G. Gilmore	Brother	1111 S. 10th St.	Chicago, Ill.
63				George E. Ginter		7550 Paul Ave.	Chicago, Ill.
64				Mrs. M. Godfrey	Mother	75 Dearborn St.	Chicago, Ill.
65				Paul Spencer	Brother	111 Lake Side Pl.	Chicago, Ill.
66				Mrs. Grace L. Hamilton	Mother	2300 Jessica St.	Chicago, Ill.
67				Marshall A. Harbourn	Brother	397 Spr. 4 Ave.	Waukegan, Ill.
68				Therese L. Hebert		210 S. Oak St.	Chicago, Ill.
69				Frank Henkens	Brother	4022 Lake Park Av	Chicago, Ill.
70				George W. Hoos	Brother	70 Grand St.	Waukegan, Ill.
71				Robert A. Hopkins		1022 W. 11th St.	Chicago, Ill.
72				Therese Johannsen	Mother	3500 Marquette Av	Chicago, Ill.
73				H. J. John	Brother	Spencer, Wis.	
74				Mrs. Ellen Melick	Mother	Sandovi, Ill.	
75				Mrs. Mary Kennedy	Mother	1811 T. Adams St.	Chicago, Ill.
76				Mrs. Ida Klue		200 S. Paul St.	Danville, Ill.
77				Mrs. Lee Kitchen		413 T. Jackson St.	Danville, Ill.

STATISTICAL
 TUV

(For Summary)
 Title _____
 (Name and Reference only)
 THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE TRANSPORT SERVICE

DECLASSIFIED
 Authority E.O. 12958

Figure 10: U.S. Army Transportation Service Passenger Manifest. ⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Alvydas Tamošiūnas, Karo archyvas XXXIX. Steponas Darius: Tarnyba Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų kariuomenėje [War Archive. Steponas Darius: Service in the United States Army] (1917-1919), 59.

Darius was among the 4,888 servicemen who travelled together on this ship. On the passenger list on the U.S. Army Transportation Service passenger form, sheet 4, line 50, Darius is listed as Private Darius, Stephen W. The entry also lists Darius' mother, Mrs. Augustine Darius, as his emergency contact and his permanent residence as 3305 South Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois (Figure 10).



Figure 11: SS Leviathan.⁵¹

⁵¹ Alvydas Tamošiūnas, *Kardas* Nr. 4 (504), 2024. Stepono Dariaus tarnyba JAV kariuomenėje (1917-1919). [Sword. Steponas Darius's Service in the U.S. Army (1917–1919)], Part I, 8.

After the war, the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division sailed home from Brest, France, on April 18th, 1919, on the U.S. Navy liner *Leviathan* (Figure. 11). They arrived at Port Hoboken, New Jersey, on April 25th.

The second page of the passenger list notes that passenger No. 36, 3rd Class, as 'Darius, Stephen W, Serial No. 143173, Private First Class, Headquarters Company, 149th Field Artillery Regiment' as well as his mother and permanent residence as before.

This marked the end of Steponas Darius's active duty and military career in the U.S. Army and also signalled the beginning of his service in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. As one door closed, another opened wide for Darius. He was an ambitious individual, full of ideas and plans he was determined to realise in his life.

Geography of Steponas Darius' U.S. Army Deployment

Within the timeline listed below, our protagonist Darius met and said goodbye to family in Chicago between August 1st and August 3rd, 1917, while stationed at Fort Sheridan in Illinois before his deployment to the Western front. All photographs in the upcoming Chapter 7 of Steponas Darius with his were taken at the time of this meeting.

The information provided in the tables below comes from William E. Gilmore's 1924, *History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery*.⁵² Please note that the elements indicated in bold are the places where the regiment took part in battles.

⁵² William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 136-138.

Location	Arrived	Departed
SS President Lincoln	1917-10-18	1917-10-31
St. Nazaire, France	1917-10-31	1917-11-17
De Coëtquidan Camp (near Guer, France)	1917-11-17	1918-02-16
March from Guer to Lunéville, France	1918-02-16	1918-02-19
Lunéville, France	1918-02-19	1918-02-22
Bénaménil, France	1918-02-22	1918-03-22
Vathiménil, France	1918-03-22	1918-03-23
Rozelieures, France	1918-03-23	1918-03-30
Fontenoy la Joûte, France	1918-03-30	1918-03-31
Merviller, France	1918-03-31	1918-06-20
Damas-aux-Bois, France	1918-06-21	1918-06-23
March from Charmes to Châlons-sur-Meuse, France	1918-06-23	1918-06-24
Moncetz, France	1918-06-24	1918-06-28
Carrière Camp (near Dampierre, France)	1918-06-29	1918-07-04
Reberpray Camp (near Suippes, France)	1918-07-05	1918-07-14
Bois Longs (near Suippes), France	1918-07-15	1918-07-19

Dampierre, aux Temple, France	1918-07-19	1918-07-20
Vitry-la-Ville, France	1918-07-21	1918-07-21
March from Vitry-la-Ville to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, France	1918-07-21	1918-07-23
Chambardy, France	1918-07-23	1918-07-25
Bois de Breteuil (near Verdilly, France)	1918-07-25	1918-07-29
Beuwardelle Farm (near Beuwardelle, France)	1918-07-29	1918-08-02
Fère-en-Tardenois, France S. Darius is injured	1918-08-01	1918-08-01
Beuwardes, Nanto, France (S. Darius is in hospital)	1918-08-01	1918-09-16
Bordeaux, Carnau, France (S. Darius on medical leave)	1918-09-16	1918-10-12
Camp du Bois de Meuse, (near Apremont, France) (S. Darius Returned to service).	1918-10-18	1918-11-03
Verpel, France	1918-11-04	1918-11-05
Malmaison Farm (near Harricourt, France)	1918-11-05	1918-11-14
Imécourt, France	1918-11-14	1918-11-16
Aincreville, France	1918-11-16	1918-11-17
Bréhéville, France	1918-11-17	1918-11-20
Thonne-les-Près, France	1918-11-20	1918-11-21

Saint-Léger, Belgium	1918-11-21	1918-11-22
Arlon, Belgium	1918-11-22	1918-11-23
Buschdorf, Luxembourg	1918-11-23	1918-12-01
Bourglinster, Luxembourg	1918-12-01	1918-12-02
Osweiler, Luxembourg	1918-12-02	1918-12-03
Alsdorf, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany	1918-12-03	1918-12-04
Dockendorf, Germany	1918-12-04	1918-12-05
Malbergweich, Germany	1918-12-05	1918-12-06
Lissingen, Germany	1918-12-06	1918-12-07
Pelm, Germany	1918-12-07	1918-12-08
Nohn, Germany	1918-12-08	1918-12-09
Wimbach, Germany	1918-12-09	1918-12-15
Dernau, Germany	1918-12-15	1918-12-19
Rech, Germany	1918-12-19	1919-03-02
Bölingen, Germany (lived with Ulrichą Jacobą)	1919-03-02	1919-04-06
Journey towards Brest, France, through Remagen, Koblenz, Metz, Verdun, and Laval, France	1919-04-06	1919-04-17
SS Leviathan	1919-04-18	1919-04-25
Merrit Camp, New Jersey, USA	1919-04-26	1919-05-19

Participation in Battles and Service-Related Injuries

The 149th Field Artillery Regiment and Darius' own participation in various battles is worthy of dedicated attention. The U.S. Government has documented the participation of all U.S. Expeditionary Forces in battles that took place in France, Belgium, and Italy between 1917 and 1918.⁵³ The battles are also described in the American Expeditionary Forces' Divisional Orders, first published in 1931.⁵⁴ The 149th Field Artillery Regiment is listed as having participated in the battles listed below:

⁵³ United States War Department, "*Battle Participation of Organizations of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, Belgium, and Italy 1917-1918*", Internet Archive (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 27 <https://archive.org/details/battleparticipat00unitrich/page/n5/mode/2up>.

⁵⁴ Center of Military History and United States Army, "*Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War*" 2 (1988), 279 <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1117637.pdf>.

Table 2: Participation of the 149th Field Artillery
Regiment in Battle

Campaign	Location	Started	Finished
Lunéville sector	Lorraine, France	02-21- 1918	03-23- 1918
Baccarat sector	Lorraine, France	03-31- 1918	06-21- 1918
Esperance- Souain sector	Champagne, France	07-04- 1918	07-14- 1918
Defence of Champagne	Marne, France	07-15- 1918	07-17- 1918
Attack on Aisne	Marne, France	07-25- 1918	08-06- 1918
Attack on Saint- Mihiel	Muese, France	09-12- 1918	09-16- 1918
Essey and Pannes sector	Woëvre, France	09-17- 1918	09-30- 1918
Meuse-Argonne Offensive	France	10-04- 1918	11-01- 1918
Attack on the Meuse-Argonne	France	11-05- 1918	11-09- 1918

Developing the topic of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment's participation in battles, it should be emphasised that the regiment was not necessarily fully involved in any battle. Individual units may have been withdrawn to the regiment's reserve positions in the rear, thus keeping the regiment at reserve strength.

During his service Darius worked as a telephone operator. The history of the Headquarters Company details that the telephone operators ‘were hard-working plodders - stringers of wire, regardless of weather, shell-fire or hunger, those trouble-chasers - first to work at a new sector and last to leave - those are the men to whom we doff our hats in remembrance of their worthy deeds. Their work proved their mettle and a man who made good at telephone work proved to be a real soldier. A word of praise to the linesmen and operators - to all the telephone men’.⁵⁵ The telephone operators carried out their duties despite intense artillery shelling and aerial bombardment, ensuring that phone lines were uninterrupted. Darius was

⁵⁵ William E. Gilmore, “*History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919,*” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1908-1984) 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 142.

injured in the area he was supervising with colleagues Heath, Chandler, and Maxson.⁵⁶ The lines were broken and rebuilt nine times over ten hours.⁵⁷

Injuries

Steponas Darius was wounded at the Attack on Aisne.⁵⁸ Darius' brother, Stanley Jucius, mentions this in a letter to the National Data Center (NDC) that Steponas was wounded in battle by shrapnel and later contracted tuberculosis (Figure 22).⁵⁹ His daughter, Dr. Nijolė Dariūtė Maštarienė, writes that her father was wounded on the right side, below the seventh rib.⁶⁰ Vytautas Dovydaitis writes in his book that it was on the seventh

⁵⁶ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1908-1984) 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 75.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas Per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 27.

⁵⁹ Stanley Jucius to J.H. Burke and National Data Center (NDC), "Letter Inquiring about His Brother Steponas Darius" October 2, 1975.

⁶⁰ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, *Darius Ir Girėnas* [Darius and Girenas], (Vilnius, 1991), 15.

rib itself.⁶¹ Edmundas Jasiūnas also mentions in his book that Darius was injured on the right side and details that the injury was caused by a fragment from an exploding artillery shell.⁶² In 1933, the U.S. press reported that Darius was wounded in the chest by an explosive fragment during the Second Battle of the Marne.⁶³ At the same time, the Lithuanian language newspaper, *Išėivių Draugas* [The Emigrants' Friend] in England and a newspaper from the Vilnius region stated that a grenade had torn out two of Darius' ribs.⁶⁴ Gražina Sviderskytė, on the other hand, only mentions that Steponas Darius was wounded by shrapnel.⁶⁵

Steponas Darius himself mentions that he was wounded at Fère-en-Tardnois on August 1st, 1918, while

⁶¹ Vytautas Dovydatis, *Vėjai Blaškė, Žaibai Plakė* [Winds Scattered, Lightning Struck] (Kaunas, 1990), 86.

⁶² Edmundas Jasiūnas, *Darius Ir Girėnas (1933-1993), Transatlantinio Skrydžio Šešiasdešimtmečiui* [Darius and Girenas. For the 60th Anniversary of the Transatlantic Flight] (Kaunas-Vilnius, 1993), 36.

⁶³ The Courier-News, Bridgewater, New Jersey, (July 15, 1933), 2.

⁶⁴ Išėivių Draugas, "Darius Gyveno Tiktai Dėl Tėvynės," Išėivių Draugas, [Darius Lived Only for His Homeland, *The Emigrants' Friend*] (1933), 2; Antanas Miltautas, *Didvyrių Keliais*, 7th–8th ed., vol. 91–92 [On the Path of Heroes, Youth's Friend] (Jaunimo Draugas, 1933), 196.

⁶⁵ Gražina Sviderskytė, *Stepono Dariaus Ir Stasio Girėno Byla: Istorinis Vykimas, Traktuotė, Naratyvo Kaita* [The Case of Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas: Historical Process, Interpretation, and Narrative Shift] (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2016), 319.

on a mission, when three shells exploded near him at approximately 22:00 as he was returning to camp and was wounded on his right side. He made his way back to Beuvarde, from where he was transported by ambulance to a field hospital. On August 2nd he underwent surgery, and a fragment of a projectile was removed from his wound. On August 4th, the wound was stitched up and on August 16th he was sent to a hospital in Nantes. The historical documents of the Headquarters Company mention that Darius was seriously wounded by an aerial bomb on the 2nd of August, not on the 1st.

When he returned to the U.S. in 1927 after completing his service in Lithuanian Air Force, Darius would tell his family that the wound had not healed for a long time and was festering.⁶⁶ In addition to the gash, four ribs were broken. His daughter wrote about how well her mother remembered the ten-centimetre-wide scar on Darius' chest. The mention of the scar on the chest should

⁶⁶ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 31, 132.

be regarded as a proofreading error.⁶⁷ In the same book, Nijolė Dariūtė Maštarienė describes how her mother was able to identify Darius' remains as his body was in the process of being embalmed. She recalls: 'At the invitation of Professor J. Žilinskas, S. Darius' body was swollen, his face was unrecognisably mutilated, but on the right side of his back she saw the familiar scar of a wound sustained in the fields of France during the First World War. It was undoubtedly her husband's body'.⁶⁸

In another book by Darius' daughter, published in the same year, it is mentioned that Darius was severely wounded in the back by a fragment of an exploding artillery shell.⁶⁹ Vytautas Dovydaitis writes that Darius was struck and later Valentinas Ramonis, in an interview for the magazine *Plieno Sparnai* [Iron Wings], clarifies that it struck the right side.⁷⁰ Interestingly, during Soviet

⁶⁷ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, *Darius Ir Girėnas* [Darius and Girenas] (Vilnius, 1991), 15.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 119-120.

⁶⁹ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, A. Gamziukas, and G. Ramoška, *Darius Ir Girėnas, Dokumentai* [Darius and Girenas, documents] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991), 10.

⁷⁰ Vytautas Dovydaitis, *Sparnus Jam Davė Lietuva* [Wings Were Given to Him by Lithuania] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1993), 10; Valentinas Ramonis, "Darius Ir Girėno Archyvas Balzeko Lietuvių Kultūros Muziejuje," *Plieno Sparnai*, [Darius and Girėnas Archive at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture] (1995), 18-22.

occupation, periodicals that discussed the *Lituanica* flight also mentioned Steponas Darius' participation in World War I alongside his injuries, although they did so in a vague way or with factual errors. In 1966, Jonas Dovydaitis wrote in the newspaper *Kauno Tiesa* [Kaunas Truth], that Steponas was wounded by a grenade fragment during the war against Kaiser Germany on the European front.⁷¹ In 1968, the same author states in an article for the magazine *Sparnai* [Wings], that Darius was awarded two medals for bravery and in the same sentence mentions that he was wounded twice.⁷² It is likely that they used an article from the 1933 magazine *Trimitas* [Trumpet], where it was stated that Steponas was wounded twice.⁷³

The American newspaper, *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, reported that 10 Chicago natives were killed in the war, 14 sustained various injuries, and 4 were missing, for a total of 28 Chicagoans. The circumstances of several of the deaths were briefly described. Several wounded

⁷¹ Jonas Dovydaitis, "Nemirtingas 'Lituanikos' Skrydis," *Kauno Tiesa*, [The Immortal Flight of 'Lituanica, Kaunas Truth], July 17, 1966.

⁷² *Ibid*, 36.

⁷³ *Garbinga drąsuolių mirtis, Žuvo perskridę Atlanto vandenyną S. Darius ir S. Girėnas*, Trimitas, [Honourable death of the brave: S. Darius and S. Girėnas perished after crossing the Atlantic Ocean, Trumpet.], Kaunas, 1933 liepos 20 d., Nr. 29, 561.

were mentioned, including Private Stephen W. Darius, along with mention of his regiment and home address.⁷⁴ Another page from the same newspaper gives the losses of the entire U.S. Expeditionary Force in the Washington District: killed in battle, 444; died of wounds, 142; died of accidents or sickness, 105; suffered miscellaneous wounds, 606; missing, 214; captured, 7; total, 1,518. Although the full name list is given, Chicagoans are mentioned separately, in larger print. In the list of Chicagoans, Stephen W. Darius is again mentioned under the group of minor injuries.⁷⁵

The narrative surrounding Steponas Darius' poisoning with gas deserves special mention. According to Jurgėla, Steponas Darius was poisoned by a gas attack, but survived at the Defence of Champagne.⁷⁶ While Darius was at the front, both German and Allied armies used chemical weapons in offensive and defensive

⁷⁴ The Chicago Daily Tribune, "Chicago Soldier of Fortune Dies in Service of Country," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 22, 1918, 5. .

⁷⁵ The Chicago Daily Tribune, "Casualties of American Army Overseas," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 22, 1918, 14.

⁷⁶ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 33.

strategies. The Germans used chemical weapons in battle 50 times, the British 150 times, the French 20 times, and the Russians used chemical weapons several times.⁷⁷ Germany used phosgene and tear gas most frequently.⁷⁸ In the commemorative (mourning) issue of the newspaper *Mūsų Rytojus* [Our Tomorrow] in 1933, it is mentioned that Darius was poisoned by the enemy's poisonous gases, and that he got very ill, but did not die.⁷⁹ Petras Jurgėla, to whom Steponas himself told this story, mentions that the incident occurred on July 14th, 1918, describing that he was lightly poisoned by noxious gases at the front.⁸⁰ The case of mild gas poisoning is also mentioned in other a Lithuanian language newspaper from Chicago.⁸¹ The same date of July 14th, 1918 is mentioned in the 1933 commemorative (mourning) issue of the magazine *Karys*

⁷⁷ T. Balkus, “Steponas Darius. Pasaulinio Karo Telefono Linijų Ir Skrydžių per Atlantą Paralelės,” [Steponas Darius: Parallels Between World War Telephone Lines and Transatlantic Flights] *Karys*, (2013), 15.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ A. Bružas, “Steponas Darius,” *Mūsų Rytojus*, July 22, 1933, 5.

⁸⁰ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935).

⁸¹ *Mūsų lakūnų biografijos* [Biographies of Our Aviators], Margutis, Chicago, 1933 liepos 25, 3.

[Warrior].⁸² Darius' daughter writes that he was poisoned, on July 18th; before he was injured.⁸³ Vytautas Dovydaitis mentions in his book that Darius was poisoned on his return to the front after his wound healed.⁸⁴ The same author, in another book, quotes Darius while he was at a veterans' hospital, after his tuberculosis had been diagnosed, that he was not only wounded but also poisoned by mustard gas.⁸⁵ It is possible that the inhalation of the poisonous gas had a lifelong effect.⁸⁶ The Czechoslovakian press wrote about the *Lituanica* flight in 1988. The newspaper, *Prace* [Work], only mentioned Darius' gas poisoning in Champagne, France.⁸⁷ His injury was also mentioned in the U.S. media coverage of the *Lituanica* crash. The fact that Darius and Girėnas were veterans of the First World War was often mentioned, and

⁸² Vladas Adomavičius, *Norime, kad Lietuvos sparnai augtų ir stiprėtų*, Karys, [We want Lithuania's wings to grow and strengthen, Warrior], 1933 liepos 30 d. Nr. 29 (746) 3.

⁸³ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, *Darius Ir Girėnas* [Darius and Girenas] (Vilnius, 1991), 15.

⁸⁴ Vytautas Dovydaitis, *Sparnus Jam Davė Lietuva* [Wings Were Given to Him by Lithuania] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1993)

⁸⁵ Vytautas Dovydaitis, *Vėjai Blaškė, Žaibai Plakė* [Winds Scattered, Lightning Struck] (Kaunas, 1990), 114.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 10-11.

⁸⁷ R. Novotny, *Na trase New York – Kaunas* [On the trail from New York to Kaunas], Prague, July 16, 1988, 1.

the publication showed respect for the injuries Darius sustained, and the courage he showed while in the military.

There is no precise information on Steponas Darius' gas poisoning. Darius himself does not recount the poisoning in any primary documents, and neither does the U.S. military. Instead, it is detailed in news sources at the time on the inter-war diaspora and Lithuania, as well as by Darius' acquaintances and relatives, who were quoted in later published books and memoirs. It can be said with certainty that Steponas Darius was wounded by an explosive fragment, and that it was a 'minor' injury.⁸⁸ Darius' Veterans Affairs Master Index (VAMI) card contains a unique 'R' (rehabilitation) letter on it, followed by the numbers 99552 (Figure 12). This letter indicates what social security benefits, advantages, or services the cardholder may receive as a result of their injury. Servicemen who had sustained serious injuries and became disabled as a result were given the code 'RH'.

⁸⁸ The Chicago Daily Tribune, "Casualties of American Army Overseas," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 22, 1918, 14.

Darius did not have one. However, it must be emphasised that his was not a simple injury, as there were residual effects due to internal injuries, he sustained in the initial trauma. The fact that Darius was entitled to rehabilitation is evidenced by a surviving record of treatment at the U.S. Veterans' Hospital in Bent County, Colorado.

DARIUS STEPHEN WILLIAM		X C 328 782
Pvt 1c Hq Co 149 F A		K 686 566
Chicago Ill		A 4 028 431
Ss 143 173	Dist	T 1 612 664
Born 1/9/97		R 99 552
Enl	Dte 5/19/19	Ct. 3 215 119
		I
U. S. VETERANS BUREAU MAIL AND RECORDS Form 7262--Rev. Sept., 1926		INDEX CARD
		gpo 2-1926

Figure 12: Steponas Darius' Master Index Card.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Alvydas Tamošiūnas, Karo archyvas XXXIX. Steponas Darius: Tarnyba Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų kariuomenėje [War Archive. Steponas Darius: Service in the United States Army] (1917-1919), 83.

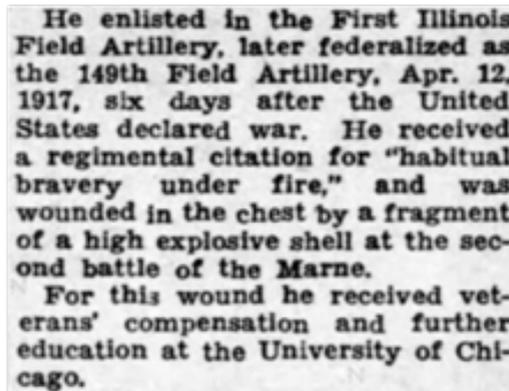
Darius was registered as 33 years of age at the hospital in 1930. His months spent in the hospital in Colorado are also mentioned in a letter by his brother, Stanley Jucius.⁹⁰ In addition, as previously mentioned, Steponas Darius was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart medal by the U.S. Army, an award which is given exclusively for injuries sustained in war or service. The most reliable source for the history of his injuries is his daughter, Dr. Nijolė Dariūtė Maštarienė. Darius' daughter had a medical education and was a lecturer at a medical university. She had the opportunity to listen to her mother's account of identifying Darius' body immediately after the crash on July 23rd, 1933, and to compare it to her own medical knowledge.⁹¹ In addition, on August 11th, 1964, she had the opportunity to examine the bodies of fallen pilots in an autopsy room at the Department of

⁹⁰ Stanley Jucius to J.H Burke and National Data Center (NDC), "Letter Inquiring about His Brother Steponas Darius," October 2, 1975. National Archives. National Personnel Records Center

⁹¹ Jonas Vaičėnonis, *Lituanicos Skrydis* [The Flight of Lituanica] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 2006), 46.

Forensic Medicine at the Kaunas Institute of Medicine during an official medical examination.⁹²

Darius received veteran's compensation for his injury and the opportunity to continue his education at the University of Chicago (Figure 13).⁹³ Such social security benefits were exclusively available to wounded service members.⁹⁴



He enlisted in the First Illinois Field Artillery, later federalized as the 149th Field Artillery, Apr. 12, 1917, six days after the United States declared war. He received a regimental citation for "habitual bravery under fire," and was wounded in the chest by a fragment of a high explosive shell at the second battle of the Marne.

For this wound he received veterans' compensation and further education at the University of Chicago.

Figure 13: Clipping from the Bridgewater Newspaper of Darius' service.⁹⁵

⁹² Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, *Darius Ir Girėnas* [Darius and Girenas] (Vilnius, 1991), 120.

⁹³ *The Courier-News*, Bridgewater, New Jersey, July 15, 1933, 2.

⁹⁴ VA News, "World War I Created Millions of Conscripted Veterans, Improved Benefits," VA News (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, April 6, 2020), <https://news.va.gov/73270/world-war-created-millions-conscripted-veterans-improved-benefits/>.

⁹⁵ *The Courier-News*, *The Courier-News*, July 15, 1933, 2.

Awards



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
U. S. ARMY RESERVE COMPONENTS PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION CENTER
5T LOUIS, MISSOURI 63132

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AGUZ-ED-AW Darius, Stephen W.
143 173

4 FEB 1972

Dr. Nijolė Darius Maštarienė
c/o K. Stulpin
1540 Southeast 12th Street
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

Dear Dr. Maštarienė:

This is in reference to your request concerning your father's awards.

Your father earned the Purple Heart and the World War I Victory Medal with Battle Clasps for the Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Arzonne, and Defensive Sector campaigns.

The above awards will be forwarded to you from the United States Army Support Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101, within the near future.

Sincerely,

LOUIS J. PROST
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

Figure 14: A letter from the U.S. Department of the Army to Darius' daughter Dr. Nijolė Dariūtė Maštarienė.⁹⁶

Soldiers were rewarded for their performance in battle with awards and certificates of commendation. In a letter dated February 4th, 1972, from the U.S. Army Reserve Personnel and Administration Center to Darius'

⁹⁶ Louis J. Prost to Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, "Response to Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė Regarding Her Request for Information about Her Father's Awards," Letter, February 4, 1972.

daughter, Dr. Nijolė Dariūtė Maštarienė, in a response to her inquiry about her father's awards, states that, 'this is in reference to your request concerning your father's awards. Your father earned the Purple Heart and the World War I Victory medals with Battle Clasps for the Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, and for the Defensive Sector campaigns. The above awards will be forwarded to you from the U.S. Support Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101, within the near future' (Figure 14).

In Figure 15, the date of issue for the Purple Heart medal certificate, April 3rd, 1963, should also be noted. The certificate also states that Darius was awarded his Purple Heart for 'wounds received in action' in France on August 1st, 1918. The certificate was signed by Cyrus Vance, who later became U.S. Secretary of State, and Maj. Gen. Joe C. Lambert (Figure 15). The Purple Heart medal is awarded exclusively for injuries sustained in war or

service, and not for exemplary service, as many Lithuanian sources claim (Figure 16).⁹⁷



Figure 15: Steponas Darius' Purple Heart Medal Certificate.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Joshua Williams, "A Guide to the Most Purple Hearts Awarded in Each Conflict," *Medals of America*, November 20, 2018, <https://www.medalsofamerica.com/blog/a-guide-to-the-most-purple-hearts-awarded-in-each-conflict/>.

⁹⁸ Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, *Steponas Darius' Purple Heart Medal Certificate*, April 3, 1963, Certificate, April 3, 1963, Chicago, U.S.



*Figure 16: Steponas Darius' Purple Heart from the family archive.*⁹⁹

It is necessary to note that the Purple Heart medal was established in 1932 as an official government award for United States servicemen. General Douglas MacArthur signed an order allowing the award to be given retrospectively to World War I veterans, specifically, 320,000 wounded soldiers.¹⁰⁰

The second award mentioned in the letter to Dr. Nijolė Dariūtė Maštarienė, is the World War I Victory Medal or simply the 'Victory' medal (Figures 17 and 18).

⁹⁹ Materials are in the Darius' family archive. Photos were taken by the author with the permission of the family.

¹⁰⁰ Joshua Williams, "A Guide to the Most Purple Hearts Awarded in Each Conflict," *Medals of America*, November 20, 2018, <https://www.medalsofamerica.com/blog/a-guide-to-the-most-purple-hearts-awarded-in-each-conflict/>.

It is often misleadingly referred to in Lithuanian literature as the ‘Great War for Civilisation’ or similar.¹⁰¹



Figure 17: Steponas Darius' WWI Victory Medal from the family archive.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Smithsonian Institution, "Medal, World War I Victory Medal | Smithsonian Institution," Smithsonian Institution (Smithsonian Institution, 2025), https://www.si.edu/object/nasm_A20010224000, (accessed 2022-11-06)

¹⁰² Materials are in the Darius' family archive belonging to Mr. Ažuolas Maštaras, the great-grandson of Steponas Darius. Photos were taken by the author with the permission of the family.



Figure 18: Close up of the WWI Victory Medal Clasps indicating the campaigns Steponas Darius participated in. ¹⁰³

The ‘Victory’ Medal was established in 1919, after the war ended. As the medal was not approved by the U.S. Congress, it remained a military-based service level award and was awarded to all soldiers who participated in the war. For example, the crews of the SS *President Lincoln* and the SS *Leviathan*, which carried Darius across the Atlantic, were awarded medals for their transportation services. Unfortunately, this award was not presented personally to the crews of those ships and was

¹⁰³ Materials are in the Darius’ family archive belonging to Mr. Ažuolas Maštaras, the great-grandson of Steponas Darius. Photos were taken by the author with the permission of the family.

instead sent by post from June 1920 onwards – and only after filling out a special form.¹⁰⁴

The fabric ribbon from the World War I Victory medal sent to Darius' family has four metal clasps attached to it (Figures 17 and 18), listing the military campaigns in which he specifically participated in mentioned above in Table 1. As neither the Purple Heart nor the World War I Victory medals were established at the time Darius honourably completed his service, it is logical to believe he was unaware of his awards. This is supported by the fact that he never mentions them in his

¹⁰⁴ Naval History and Heritage Command, "World War I Victory Medal," History.Navy.Mil, November 10, 2016, <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/awards/service-campaign/world-war-i-victory-medal.html>.

journals. Darius, or rather his surviving family members, received these medals after his death.



Figure 19: Steponas Darius' Certificate of Honor from the 149th Field Artillery Regiment.¹⁰⁵

Steponas Darius did, however, receive a Certificate of Honor from the 149th Field Artillery Regiment, signed on April 29th, 1918 (Figure 19). The certificate was awarded for patriotic service. He honourably completed his service in 1919. Essential to note, it is possible, the date of certificate is inaccurate. It

¹⁰⁵ Stephen W. Darius Certificate of Honor, Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, Chicago, Illinois, USA

was common at the time for award and honours to be granted retroactively, and therefore the certificate may have been backdated.

This is conceivable because Darius himself only mentions a letter of commendation in his journals. At the enlistment ceremony for the Lithuanian Armed Forces in Chicago on March 20th, 1920, Steponas Darius briefly describes his experience in his application form, where he mentions, ‘I have a certificate of distinction in the field of war’.¹⁰⁶ V. Dovydaitis, in his historical biography of Darius, quotes Darius saying, ‘the regiment commander, Reilly, in his report, listed me alongside other brave soldiers’.¹⁰⁷ In his short, handwritten autobiography written before his 1933 flight, Darius also mentions the regiment's gratitude, highlighting, ‘I was praised for bravery in the regimental order’.¹⁰⁸ It should be noted that the autobiography is undated, but written on a unique

¹⁰⁶ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 13.

¹⁰⁷ Vytautas Dovydaitis, *Vėjai Blaškė, Žaibai Plakė* [Winds Scattered, Lightning Struck] (Kaunas, 1990), 62.

¹⁰⁸ Darius's autobiography. Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, Chicago, U.S.

commemorative letterhead, which suggests that it was written in either 1932 or 1933. Jurgėla references Regimental General Order No.7, issued April 3rd, 1919, which states ‘the following named men of Headquarters Company have habitually distinguished themselves throughout all actions of this regiment...No. 11 Private Steponas V. Darius’.¹⁰⁹

In 1933, after the crash of the Lituanica, a Lithuanian language newspaper in Chicago wrote a story about the two pilots, stating that after being wounded, Darius was later praised for his bravery.¹¹⁰ There was also a description of a situation in which he showed courage, together with three comrades, repairing telephone lines in the face of intense direct enemy artillery fire, and the same was reported in the American press.¹¹¹ It is also

¹⁰⁹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 33.

¹¹⁰ *Mūsų lakūnų biografijos* [Biographies of Our Aviators], Margutis, Chicago, 1933 liepos 25, 3.

¹¹¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 30 ; *The Courier-News*, Bridgewater, New Jersey, July 15, 1933, 2 ; The South Bend Tribune, “Darius and Girenas Killed in Pomerania, 400 Miles from Goal,” *The South Bend Tribune*, July 17, 1933, 2.

mentioned that on that day, enemy artillery fire cut the telephone cables nine times in ten hours, and communication between the regiment command and Battery headquarters had to be continuously restored.¹¹² It is important to know that only by directly checking the telephone cables could the liaison soldier locate the broken cable, which made their task extremely dangerous. When the regiment was in position, communication between Batteries, observation posts, battalions, regimental headquarters, and other units were maintained using a telephone cable network over 18km long. At the end of the war, approximately 40 members the Headquarters Company were awarded for their bravery, of whom only four were awarded the Medal of Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix De Guerre [Cross of War].¹¹³

On July 12th, 1973, a huge and devastating fire broke out at the National Personnel Records Center in

¹¹² William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 75.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 141.

Missouri. Unfortunately, many files were destroyed in the fire, including those about Steponas Darius. On July 22nd, 2022, SGM Daniel Simpson, who served with the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, contacted the Center at the author's request and received a reply that Darius' military service records were not among the documents that had been saved. The official reply was accompanied only by a few correspondences from 1975 between U.S. authorities (three letters) and Stanley Jucius, brother of Steponas Darius (two letters).

On March 8th of 1975, Jucius inquired with the United States Air Force about the possibility of obtaining more detailed information about his brother Steponas' military service and provided information about where he served. Interestingly, he only mentioned an approximation of Steponas' age – that he may have been somewhere between 17-19 years old at the time of his service – and mentioned the honours he had received along with the Purple Heart medal.¹¹⁴ Ten days later, on March 19th, he

¹¹⁴ Stanley Jucius to J.H Burke and National Data Center (NDC), "Letter Inquiring about His Brother Steponas Darius," March 9th, 1975.

received a letter with an addendum stating that the request was being forwarded to the National Personnel Records Center in Missouri, which oversaw the collection of data pertaining to retired and deceased service members.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ S.R. Young to Stanley Jucius, "Response to Stanley Jucius' Letter from October 2nd, 1975," Letter, November 18, 1975. National Archives. National Personnel Records Center.

Oct 2 - 1975
 J. H. Burke
 Hon. J. H. Burke M.C.

Sometime ago when my brother put Steponas Darius of World War I before his death we discussed his heroism in W.W.I. that he was entitled to a high Medal award. He only received a purple heart. He spent many months in a V.A. hospital in South Colorado and he finally got T. B. due to the lung being damaged by shrapnel during a battle, he was in the 42nd Division then known as Col. Reilly's Buck and Rainbow Division. Please Check this out

Respectfully

Stanley Jucius

P.S. I think he is the only American citizen who has a monument of his heroism in the Transatlantic flight which ended in tragedy July 17-1933. in Rannas Lithuania U.S.S.R.

Figure 20: Letter from Stanley Jucius, the brother of Steponas Darius, inquiring about his brother's military records dated October 2nd, 1975.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Stanley Jucius to J.H Burke and National Data Center (NDC), "Letter Inquiring about His Brother Steponas Darius," October 2, 1975. National Archives. National Personnel Records Center.

AGUZ-ED-AW Darius, Stephen
143 173

18 NOV 1975

Honorable J. Herbert Burke
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Burke:

This is in reference to your inquiry in behalf of Mr. Stanley Jucus regarding his brother's entitlement to a military award for heroism.

The official records show that Stephen Darius, along with others in his regiment, was cited in General Order Number 7, Headquarters, 149th Field Artillery, American Expeditionary Forces, Germany, dated 3 April 1919, for distinguished service. A copy of the general order is inclosed.

There is no record to show that Mr. Darius was recommended for or awarded a medal for heroism.

I am sorry a favorable reply is not possible and your interest in this deceased serviceman's family is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Inclosure
as

ROBERT S. YOUNG
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

CF:
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W
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FILE: ED-AW/Allen

*Figure 21: Response to Stanley Jucus' letter from
October 2nd, 1975.¹¹⁷*

¹¹⁷ Brigadier General Robert S. Young to Stanley Jucus, "Response to Stanley Jucus' Letter from October 2nd, 1975," Letter, November 18, 1975. National Archives. National Personnel Records Center.

In another letter dated October 2nd of 1975, Jucius specified that his brother Steponas had, before his death, recounted his heroic deeds during the time of his service, for which he may have received a High Medal award (Figure 20). Jucius also mentions the months Darius spent in the hospital for his injuries. The reply Jucius received on November 18th thanked Darius for his distinguished service but also mentioned that there was no record of Mr. Darius receiving a medal for heroism (Figure 21).¹¹⁸

It should be recognised that Steponas Darius was formally commended three times during his service in the U.S. Army. First, he was mentioned in a written order from the 149th Field Artillery Regiment on April 3rd, 1919, where he was praised for his bravery in the performance of duty-related tasks. Secondly, he received a Certificate of Honor from the 149th Field Artillery Regiment, signed on April 29th, 1918 (Figure 19). Thirdly, he was promoted to a higher military rank, and although the exact date of the promotion is not known, it was shortly before his he

¹¹⁸ Brigadier General Robert S. Young to Stanley Jucius, "Response to Stanley Jucius' Letter from October 2nd, 1975," Letter, November 18, 1975. National Archives. National Personnel Records Center.

honourably completed his service. All other U.S. and most of the Lithuanian awards or honours were posthumous.

Photographs of Darius' U.S. Army Service

Photographs of Steponas Darius in his U.S. Army uniform can be divided into three distinct categories: first, with his family during basic training when he entered the U.S. Army; second, at the front; and third, in reserve. It should be noted that in most photographs, Steponas is wearing the U.S. Army's World War I uniform with no distinguishing patches or insignias, except three that are different.

The first group of photos, taken professionally at a studio, show Steponas Darius with his family. There are at least three photos from the same photoshoot with various family members. The photographs were taken on the 1st or 3rd of August 1917 in Chicago, a little less than 60 km from Darius' military boot camp. Steponas had come to visit his family to say goodbye to them before he left for Europe.



Figure 22: Steponas with his mother.¹¹⁹



Figure 23: Steponas with his sisters, Aurelija and Konstancija.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, A. Gamziukas, and G. Ramoška, *Darius Ir Girėnas, Dokumentai* [Darius and Girenas, documents] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991), 31.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

In the first of the photographs, he poses with his mother, Augustina Vaišvilaitė Jucevičienė (Degutienė from her first marriage) (Figure 22). In the second photo, Steponas was photographed with his sisters Aurelija Jucevičiūtė (Laura Našlienienė – Laura Nalson) and Konstancija Jucevičiūtė Stulpiniene (Katherin Stulpin) (Figure 23). In fact, this well-known photograph is a fragment and mirror image of a larger one, cut off at the shoulders of the sisters. In this third full photograph, we see another family member sitting in a chair: Steponas' stepsister Mikalina Rygiene (Mildred Regis) (Figure 24).



Figure 24: The full photo of Steponas, his sisters, and his step-sister, Mikalina.¹²¹

¹²¹ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, A. Gamziukas, and G. Ramoška, *Darius Ir Girenas, Dokumentai* [Darius and Girenas, documents] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991), 31.



Figure 25: Steponas with his mother, sisters, stepsister, his eldest brother Boleslovas and his younger stepbrother Stanley.¹²²

In the fourth photograph we see his mother, two sisters, stepsister, and on the left is his eldest brother, Boleslovas Jucevičius (William Jucius), and the youngest person in the photo, seated on the ground, is Steponas' stepbrother, Stanley Degutis (Jucius), who later

¹²² Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, A. Gamziukas, and G. Ramoška, *Darius Ir Girenas, Dokumentai* [Darius and Girenas, documents] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991), 321.

corresponded with the U.S. authorities concerning his brother's military service (Figure 25).¹²³

We can assume that Darius has recently completed boot camp at the time of these photos for three reasons: 1) he is wearing a thin cotton jacket, which is worn mostly in the summer and during training; 2) his hair is short and shaved on the sides, known as a 'white walls' haircut, which was typical of new recruits; 3) his collar tabs and buttons are new and black, with no other visible patches or pins. This is most clearly visible in Figure 5 above taken at the same photography session.

¹²³ Jonas Vaičenonis, *Lituanicos Skrydis* [The Flight of Lithuania] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 2006), 6.



*Figure 26: Steponas Darius at the Western Front.*¹²⁴

The second group of photographs consists of three photos taken when Darius was at the front. The first photograph was taken in a field near a telecommunications hub, where he is pictured next to a telephone set—probably a Cavalry Buzzer (Figure 26). The telecommunications hub is located on high ground with an open field in the background. Next to Darius is a higher-ranking commander, an officer, wearing a light-

¹²⁴ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 25.

coloured waterproof trench coat with a dispatch case for maps thrown over his shoulder. Darius' raincoat is dark, slightly longer, and appears to be made of leather (natural brown), which was worn mostly by pilots, tankers, and car/motorcycle drivers. His clothes could explain why his service record indicates his specialty as 'chauffeur', since, in addition to his horse-riding duties; Darius occasionally drove a car or motorcycle.¹²⁵

In Figure 26, Darius is also wearing low-heeled lace-up boots, with shin guards made of wrapped fabric. The commander's leather shoes contain spurs, indicating that horses are nearby, as they were an integral part of the unit of the telephonists' work and were necessary for mobility. Both are wearing U.S. Army M1917 Kelly helmets, which were fashioned after the British Brodie helmets.¹²⁶ Steponas Darius is wearing a cloth belt and a leather holster containing an M1911 Colt pistol hanging

¹²⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvos Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 29.

¹²⁶ Hambling D., The Century-Long Evolution of the U.S. Army Helmet <https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/research/a28088179/army-helmet/> (accessed 2022-11-01).

on his right side (with the pistol visible in it), and holsters for pistol magazines are also visible on the belt at a slightly higher level. A tool like a large pair of tweezers is tucked behind his belt. Neither of the soldiers in the photograph appear to be wearing gas masks, suggesting that there was no present threat of chemical weapons.



*Figure 27: Steponas Darius in Rech, Germany.*¹²⁷

The second photo was taken in a study in the German town of Rech in late 1918 or early 1919 (Figure 27). Darius is wearing a uniform made of thick woollen material. He is also wearing the same fabric belt and attached leather holster for an M1911 Colt pistol hanging

¹²⁷ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 27.

on his right side as well as canvas holsters for pistol magazines pinned on his left side, and a canvas holster for a first aid kit a little further down the back (which also had its own holster on the left side). Only his collar tabs and buttons are visible, with no other pins.



Figure 28: Top row, second from the left, a photograph of Steponas Darius published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* newspaper, November 22, 1918.¹²⁸

The third photograph is a very small photograph published in a Chicago newspaper in 1918.¹²⁹ The photograph is interesting because it shows Darius wearing

¹²⁸ The Chicago Daily Tribune, "Chicago Soldier of Fortune Dies in Service of Country," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 22, 1918, 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

a 'campaign hat' which was later changed to the more practical 'garrison cap', also known as a 'pilot's cap', during the war (Figure 28).

The third group of photographs consists of Darius, already in the Army reserve, but still in uniform. In the first formal photograph, taken professionally at a studio, Darius is standing at attention on the stand, his heels clicked together, arms folded, and with a serious expression (Figure 5).

The visible insignias on Darius' uniform are also quite telling. The circular metal discs on his collar indicate that he was Enlisted, one is placed on the right with the inscription 'U.S.', and the other on the left with an image of crossed cannons, indicating his job as an artilleryman. Usually, this insignia also had the regiment number above the guns (in Darius' case it would be 149) and the letters 'HQ' under the guns.



*Figure 29: Insignia on Darius' Uniform.*¹³⁰

On the right sleeve of the jacket there is a downward-pointing chevron, indicating that the soldier was wounded once in combat or in the line of duty (Fig. 29).¹³¹ The buttons feature an eagle, the symbol of the U.S. As for ranks, Steponas Darius received two military ranks while serving in the U.S. Army. At the beginning of Darius' service, he was a Private. By the end of his service, he was a Private First-Class.

¹³⁰ Alyvydas Tamošiūnas, Karo archyvas XXXIX. Steponas Darius: Tamyba Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų kariuomenėje kariuomenėje [War Archive. Steponas Darius: Service in the United States Army] (1917-1919), 2024, 77.

¹³¹ U.S. Army has used chevrons as rank insignia https://military-historians.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Emerson_LastConfusing_Chevrons.pdf (accessed 2022-10-21).



*Figure 30: Insignia on Darius' Uniform.*¹³²

On the left sleeve of the jacket from top to bottom. The topmost symbol is that of the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division: a tri-coloured (red, yellow, blue) rainbow semicircular badge.¹³³ At the elbow is a military rank

¹³² Alyvdas Tamošiūnas, Karo archyvas XXXIX. Steponas Darius: Tamyba Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų kariuomenėje kariuomenėje [War Archive. Steponas Darius: Service in the United States Army] (1917-1919), 2024, 77.

¹³³ US Army Divisions, "42nd INFANTRY DIVISION - Rainbow," US Army Divisions, 2019, <https://www.armydivs.com/42nd-infantry-division> (assessed 2022-10-21)

mark in the shape of a chevron pointing upwards, in Darius' case a red mark indicating that the soldier has honourably completed his service and has the rank of Private First Class, which means that in the photograph he is already a civilian.¹³⁴ At the bottom of his sleeve there are three downward-pointing oversea service bars, indicating that Darius has been on an international (overseas) operation outside the country for 18 months (a single downward-pointing stripe indicates a period of 6 months) (Figure 30).

¹³⁴ Uniform Reference, "U.S. Army Enlisted Rank Insignia, WW1," Uniform-reference.net, 2021, https://uniform-reference.net/insignia/usarmy/usa_enlisted_ww1.html (accessed 2022-10-21).



Iš Europos karo laukų grįžęs Amerikos kariuomenės grandinis Darius.

*Figure 31. Steponas Darius in reserve, but still in uniform, second of the photos taken in the same photo studio.*¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas Per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 31.

In the second photograph from the same studio, Darius is photographed looking a little more cheerful, standing ‘at ease’, with his feet shoulder-width apart, his hands clasped behind his back, and his face adorned with a smile (Figure 31). This photograph is very narrow in format, suggesting that several people were photographed at the same time and then cropped, thus saving the use of undeveloped photo paper, and making the photo service cheaper. A similar logic applies to the previously mentioned for Figures 23 and 24 of Darius with his sisters and stepsister; it was possible to arrange the people in such a way that they could be cut later.

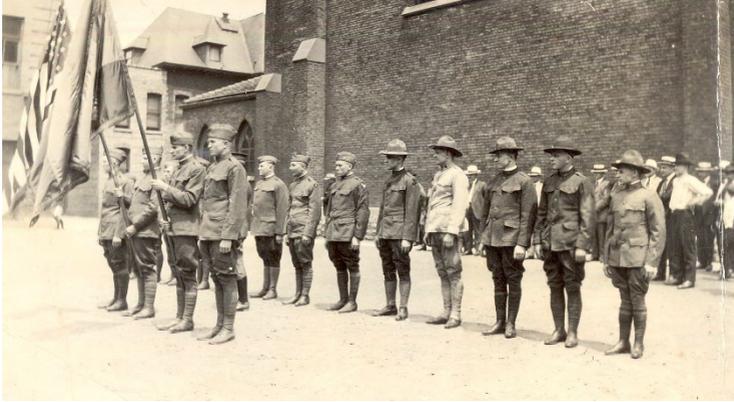


Figure 32. A parade of American Lithuanians who took part in the First World War. Steponas Darius is standing in the front row next to the Lithuanian and US colours.¹³⁶

The final photograph was taken at a parade of Lithuanian - Americans who took part in World War I (Figure 32).¹³⁷ Steponas Darius took part in the ceremony as the left-hand assistant of the flag group.¹³⁸ Note that he is wearing the same uniform with all the same insignia that he was photographed with in the studio as Figure 5, except that his uniform in the parade photo in Figure 32

¹³⁶ Photo archives of Vytautas the Great War Museum.

¹³⁷ Jonas Vaičėnionis, *Lituanicos Skrydis* [The Flight of Lituania] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 2006), 7.

¹³⁸ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, *Darius Ir Girėnas* [Darius and Girenas] (Vilnius, 1991), 32.

does not have the award ribbons on it. None of the veterans present at the ceremony have award ribbons.

The Atlantic Victors Developed their Valor in the U.S. Army. Hoorah! An Epilogue

July 17th, 2023, marked the 90th anniversary of the flight of the *Lituanica*, piloted by Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas, across the Atlantic. Not only was the flight and its' conditions challenging, but so were the preparations leading up to its' take off. There is no doubt that Darius and Girėnas were united by their love for their homeland of Lithuania, but also by their ability to work as a team towards common goals. This meaningful character trait could have been developed primarily during their military service in the U.S. Army. Darius' life and service in the U.S. Army was exceptional and helped him accumulate a wide range of experiences in the art of warfare, military organisation/leadership, tactics, strategy, as well as military/sports cultures. These experiences undoubtedly allowed him to become an integral, innovative, and proactive person, especially when talking about the establishment of the Lithuanian state and the Lithuanian Army.

Thanks to the meticulous attention the United States pays to preserving and recording military history, Darius' name has left quite a visible imprint on their written military memory and history. Darius crossed the Atlantic six times in his short 37-year lifespan: emigrating with his family in 1907, serving in the U.S. military in 1917 and in 1919, coming to Lithuania in 1920 to build a state and an army with Lithuanian-American volunteers, returning to the U.S. in 1927 as a Captain of Lithuanian Air Force Reserve, and along with his crew member, Stasys Girėnas, crossing the Atlantic with the small plane in 1933. Before leaving Lithuania in 1927, at a farewell dinner with his closest colleagues, Darius said 'I have not lived long, yet this will be my fifth time crossing the Atlantic'.¹³⁹ A young man like Steponas Darius, who travelled so many times on transatlantic ships; who had seen the grand infrastructure and industry of cities and seaports; who had seen the stages of steady development and growth in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany as nations; who had travelled some 3,000

¹³⁹ Vytautas Dovydaitis, *Sparnus Jam Davė Lietuva* [Wings Were Given to Him by Lithuania] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1993), 82.

kilometres by foot, train, car, and on horseback (Figure 33); who had visited the most famous places possible during the allied advance; and who had realised the benefits and efficiency of an ‘international culture’, was a true cosmopolitan. These experiences made the world accessible and surmountable in his eyes, which may have pushed him towards the idea of a flight across the Atlantic without much doubt or hesitation.

The legacy of his military service and achievements made Darius multidimensional in warfare as well as a person. He served in the U.S. Army as a telephone operator in an artillery regiment, started his service in the Lithuanian Army as a reconnaissance officer, and became a pilot in the Lithuanian Air Force, and after his death, a U.S. Navy ship was named in his honour.¹⁴⁰ He was on duty in the armies of two countries, taking part not only in a World War, but also in the Klaipėda revolt operation of 1923.¹⁴¹ In Col. Lt.

¹⁴⁰ Pijus Poškus, “Laivas SS Stepas Darius - Lietuvos Aviacijos Istorija 1919 - 1940 M.,” *Plienosparnai.lt* (History of Lithuanian Aviation 1919-1940, March 2020) [The Ship SS Stepas Darius – The History of Lithuanian Aviation, 1919–1940], <https://www.plienosparnai.lt/page.php?1392>.

¹⁴¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas Per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians

Leonardas Peseckas' memoirs, he described Steponas Darius very accurately in saying 'he was an example not only for the younger comrades in arms, but also for the more experienced ones. He always had a smile on his face. He was tall and broad-shouldered, with blond hair. Having grown up in the United States and having served in the First World War in Europe, he had broader horizons than us green country bumpkins'.¹⁴² Darius' military duty in the American and Lithuanian armed forces, as well as his achievements later in life, proved in practice that the Atlantic Ocean—the world's second largest ocean—is not really an obstacle separating the continents of America and Europe along with their cultures and societies. Rather, it is a bridge of water for which to travel (whether by plane or ship), and a tool to link the two continents together as to allow for the successful movement of innovation and thought.

Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 140.

¹⁴² Leonardas Peseckas, *Karo Lakūno Pasakojimai* [Stories of a War Pilot], 3rd ed. (Kaunas, Lithuania: Plieno Sparnai [Iron Wings], 1992), 97-98.

On the 12th of July 2023, the President of Lithuania, Mr. Gitanas Nausėda, delivered a speech in the Grand Courtyard of Vilnius University, underscoring the contribution U.S. President Joesph Biden later gave during the final day of NATO SUMMIT in Vilnius; President Nausėda started his speech highlighting the 90th anniversary of the Lituanica flight by saying '90 years ago pilots Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas performed a feat and tried symbolically to connect New York and Kaunas, United States of America and Lithuanian, New and Old world... It is not coincidental, that American Lithuanians pilots Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas, freedom fighter Adolfas Ramanauskas – Vanagas, basketball player Pranas Lubinas, artists Jonas Mekas and Jurgis Mačiūnas had left a huge footprint in a history of Lithuania. They were and still are creating Lithuanian dream'.¹⁴³ Later that same year, Polish President Andrzej Duda and Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda attended a commemoration ceremony in Pszczelnik, a village in

¹⁴³Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento Gitano Nausėdos kalba JAV Prezidento Joe Biden o vizito Lietuvoje proga [Speech by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, on the Occasion of U.S. President Joe Biden's Visit to Lithuania], <https://lrp.lt/en/media-center/news/40869> (accessed 2025-08-19).

northern Poland. President Duda honoured 'the heroic Lithuanian pilots who were killed here 90 years ago, in the service to their homeland', noting that despite 'the tragic death of Lithuanian heroes, Lithuanian people all over the world' celebrate this day as "a day of Lithuanian unity".¹⁴⁴

President Nausėda in his NATO Summit speech mentioned that 'their goal [was] not so much to break any record, but to inspire Lithuanians around the world. They wanted to show that they were not afraid of any challenges. They wanted to spread the message around the world about a country that had restored its historic statehood and soared into the skies of progress'.¹⁴⁵ The tamed Atlantic became an additional incentive and tool for Darius to realise his monumental dreams. The 1933 Lituanica flight was the fruition of those dreams.

¹⁴⁴ Polskie Radio, "Lithuanian and Polish Presidents Gather to Commemorate Lithuanian Heroes," Radio Gdańsk, July 17, 2023, <https://radiogdansk.pl/english-service/2023/07/17/lithuanian-and-polish-presidents-gather-to-commemorate-lithuanian-heroes-spectators-flock-to-watch-battle-of-grunwald-near-malbork-thousands-of-pilgrims-expected-at-annual-queen-of-kashub/>.

¹⁴⁵ Daniel Tilles, "Poland and Lithuania Mark 90th Anniversary of Crash That Ended Record-Breaking Transatlantic Flight," Notes from Poland, July 17, 2023, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2023/07/17/poland-and-lithuania-mark-90th-anniversary-of-crash-that-ended-record-breaking-transatlantic-flight/>.

Before the flight, Steponas Darius said that his greatest goal in life was to fly the flag of Lithuania on Mount Gediminas.¹⁴⁶ And he did it. He was successful in his greatest goal. The legend created by the flight of Darius and Girėnas soars like a flag in the hearts of the Lithuanian people. His determination in setting and achieving aspiring goals can be accomplished by all service members and set a fine example for officers as well for NCOs. Steponas Darius proved that dreaming is a necessary thing, for it may one day lead to reality. And that, while pursuing the grand desire of conquering the Atlantic, one may have to sacrifice everything.

¹⁴⁶ *Paskutinė didvyrių kelionė, Dariaus ir Girėno laidotuvės* [The Final Journey of the Heroes: The Funeral of Darius and Girėnas], Trimitas, Kaunas, 1933 liepos 27 d., Nr. 30, 586.

Compilation of Diaries

As we already know, PFC Steponas Darius had a lifelong habit of writing diaries in his journals. He documented his memoirs about his military service in the 149th Field Artillery Regiment. He was not alone in leaving written recollections. A former soldier of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment, Private Frederic Richard Kilner, wrote and published a book in 1919 about his military service in the 'E' Battery titled, *Battery E in France*.¹⁴⁷ From Kilner's writings, we learn about the trainings, exercises, deployment on U.S. soil, deployment from the U.S. to Europe and back, strategies, manoeuvres, operations, and battles of Battery E. Kilner's writings also grant us greater insight into the experiences of those who served with the U.S. Army's 149th Field Artillery Regiment, including Private Steponas Darius. Additionally, much of the information repeatedly referenced in the text above originates from William E.

¹⁴⁷ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919).

Gilmore's 1924 publication, *History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery*. This source complements and expands upon the compilation of accounts from two enlisted soldiers and is cited numerous times throughout the text below.

The parallel timelines of Darius' and Kilner's memoirs complement each other, and the same events are able to be seen from slightly different perspectives. There is no doubt that some of the soldiers, be it non-commissioned officers or officers mentioned in Kilner's memoirs, had met Darius. We know that they trained, participated in travel, marches, missions, and battles together because Darius himself, in his journals, mentions how he witnessed the barrage of Battery E in mid-May of 1918. A comparison of these two soldiers allows us to see the soldiers' inner lives within military culture, meals, burials, or celebrations or festivals that we have never seen before, and we learn new details about Darius' service in the U.S. Army.

The compilation of these two diaries, from companions who likely did not know each other but

served alongside each other during their deployment in Europe, allows us to explore their legacy in great detail. This includes perspectives from different individuals based on matching times and geographical locations, capturing many aspects of life, service, and battles in the trenches far from their homeland. Two soldiers, two approaches, but they survived the same war and reached the same goal from the boot camp to the victory.

Where possible, the compiler has maintained a chronology of events, and where there was no clear dating, context has been used. The aim of this text is to juxtapose Steponas Darius' journals with publications and archival material from the U.S.A. and Lithuania, as well as with published periodicals.

April, May 1917.

Darius. ‘On the 12th I enlisted in Battery C, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, Illinois; I was preparing to enlist in aviation. On the 16th, I had my first day with military clothing; got my uniform. From April 16th to July 1st, I had daily drills’.¹⁴⁸

June, July, August 1917.

Darius. ‘On July 1st the regiment was mustered into Federal service; on July 9th, we arrived at Fort Sheridan. (Darius was initially assigned to the National Guard. Every US state has such an army) June 30th, the regiment was assigned to the federal army (i.e., became part of the US Joint Military Command) and was renamed the 149th Field Artillery Regiment. On the 29th we took part in a parade with cannons; we fired 100 empty shells’.¹⁴⁹

Kilner. ‘Governor Lowden ordered the battery into service June 30, 1917, when drill became daily. July 9, the

¹⁴⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 19.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

battery entrained for Fort Sheridan with its 30 horses, guns, caissons and supplies. First Lieutenant Irving Odell was in command, Captain Reilly having become colonel of the regiment, now the 149th U. S. Field Artillery. The regiment was mustered into federal service July 20, as part of the 67th F. A. Brigade and of the 42d Division, already named the Rainbow Division by Secretary of War Baker because of its national composition, comprising units of twenty-six states.

At Camp Geismar, as Colonel Reilly named the regiment's encampment alongside Fort Sheridan, there was daily drill with the American 3-inch pieces. (76.2mm) guns'.¹⁵⁰

Darius. 'During the month of August: various exercises, topographical photos, contractual signs (signals) use. Transferred to Regimental Headquarters for telephonist duty on the 24th'.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 9.

¹⁵¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 19.

Kilner. ‘On July 30 the regiment was reviewed by General Berry, who was inspecting units of the 42d Division. Some of the ‘border veterans’ of the battery had gone to the first Reserve Officers’ Training Camp, and about twenty-five former members of Battery E received commissions’.¹⁵²

Darius. ‘On the 1st I went to Chicago; my brother made a speech against the war. On the 2nd, my brother, sister, and stepfather came to visit me at Fort Sheridan; the American army is stationed in the forts where the barracks are. Fort Sheridan is 35 miles (56 km) from Chicago. On the 3rd we left Fort Sheridan; lunch together in the square in the city of Chicago; at 2 P.M. we left by train’.¹⁵³

September 1917.

Kilner. ‘On September 3, 1917, the regiment left Chicago for Camp Mills’.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 10.

¹⁵³ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 19.

¹⁵⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 10.

Darius. ‘On the morning of the 5th, we arrived in New York and spent the whole day cleaning up the regimental property; I watched a pilot fly. On the 7th, roll-call’.¹⁵⁵

Kilner. ‘September 7, 1917, First Lieutenant Lawrence B. Robbins was transferred from Battery C to the command of Battery E, and shortly afterwards commissioned captain’.¹⁵⁶

Darius. ‘I wrote a letter to my mother:

“Everything is well. I am healthy and satisfied. Yesterday I was in New York, walking on the Brooklyn Bridge, seeing the Woolworth and Zinger skyscrapers. There are 38,000 men in our camp”’.¹⁵⁷

‘On the 8th I went to the Mineola Aviation School to see about the possibility of joining. On the 10-12th was formation drills, telephonist’s training, and preparing the

¹⁵⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 19.

¹⁵⁶ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 10.

¹⁵⁷ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 19.

camp for inspection. On the 13th, the regimental parade was received by the French General; our march of 5 miles (8 km) was inspected; on the 15th, an inspection of the camp. On the 18th was telephonist lessons and gymnastics; sent a letter to my mother'.¹⁵⁸

“Everything is going well. I am going to school, but not to the aviation school which is near us. There are many pilots here. When they fly over us, we have to stop the lesson and wait for them to fly away because they make a lot of noise. We cannot look at them for a long time because our eyes get tired. We are doing a good job as telephone operators. A French general was here; he said that our telephone system was better than theirs”.¹⁵⁹

Kilner. ‘Having no horses or guns, the regiment received plenty of foot drill, relieved by short periods of

¹⁵⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 20.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

setting-up exercises, trigger-squeeze pistol practice and instruction in first aid to the wounded'.¹⁶⁰

Darius. '23rd Division Parade. In the American military a brigade consists of 2-3 regiments, and a division of 3 brigades and parts of other branches of the army (services). Darius served in the distinguished 42nd (Rainbow) Division (38,000 men). The Minister of War, [Newton] Baker, watched the whole division; we were lined up on the big road within the camp in two rows on either side for a mile. We saw regiment after regiment like water pass by us for an hour and a half. After the parade, the Minister chose to see our regiment and the regiments of the State of Ohio. At 1:30 P.M. our duty was done, and we were dismissed from camp. After dressing, I went to New York City and toured the city from a bus. I saw a cruiser. I met a sailor who told me about the lives of sailors onboard the Seattle. Classes on the 24th, inspection of clothing. Classes on the 25th; the men of the Minnesota State Artillery Regiment were our guests; after the

¹⁶⁰ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 10.

formation drill, we shouted out 'Rah' 9 times to our comrades-in-arms, to which they responded with a few 'Rahs' to the men of Illinois. 26th, Lessons; during our gymnastics lesson we had some visitors from the neighboring Indiana W-Be. 27th - Appointed draftsman in the engineering tent'.¹⁶¹

Kilner. 'The batteries of the 149th entertained the corresponding organisations of the 150th and 151st regiments on the evening of September 28, when Colonel Reilly's description of warfare in France furnished interesting instruction, and abundant refreshments caused general content and satisfaction. The following week, the 151st returned the compliment, with equal enjoyment'.¹⁶²

October 1917.

S. Darius. 'On the 2nd of October I wrote a letter to my sister Kastute:

¹⁶¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas Per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 20.

¹⁶² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 10.

“She wants me to write about myself. There are good days and bad days in the military. Sometimes we get a good meal and sometimes a bad one. Now, I am drawing French weapons and plans. Those drawings are needed for a book. You can probably guess that this kind of work is very meticulous, because army books must be very accurate. When I go to France, I shall have more work than I have now. I am unhappy and sorry that I cannot go to the front lines and fight like the rest of our men. If I had known that I would have to draw for the army, I could have stayed at home and done that work there. Well, what can you do? Now I’m tied to that job, but as soon as I get the chance, I will join the aviation service and fly a plane”.¹⁶³

Kilner. ‘October 2, an additional detail of men left for Newport News, where they joined the men who had left Fort Sheridan with the horses, at the remount station. About this time Lieutenant Packard, from the Plattsburg

¹⁶³ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 21.

camp, was attached to Battery E. Constant instruction in making packs and rolls hinted at leaving. Then the making of allotments and the taking out of war risk insurance, the packing of duffle bags, and the boxing of all Q. M. supplies made us ready for departure by the middle of the month, and waiting for orders to France.¹⁶⁴

The mounting flames of a bonfire cast a flickering red light down the battery street. Burning the whole night through, to consume boxes, refuse and abandoned material of various kinds, these ruddy illuminations in the quarters of the 149th Field Artillery, at Camp Mills, Long Island, were omens of unusual, and unpublished, happenings. The men of the regiment felt the nearness of these events, though they had been given no warning of them, and slept, fully clothed, with their packs still rolled as they had been at inspection the afternoon before. Covered only by their overcoats, the boys tossed uneasily on their canvas cots in the chilliness of the night. When one, awakened by the cold, ventured to approach the

¹⁶⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 10.

bonfire to warm himself, the voice of a sentry warned him away: 'No one is allowed around the fire. Orders are for no unusual appearance or noise'. And the chilly one would return to his tent, if not to slumber, muttering, 'Tonight's the night, all right!'.¹⁶⁵

Darius. '3-9th of October. I drew; was ordered to prepare clothing and weapons. It is raining, cold; before going to bed, I made a fire in the tent. On the 10th, I finished arranging things; clothes, military books, and finished the drawing. On the 16th, the regiment watched a baseball game between the New Yorkers and the Chicago Sox, in whose ranks I also played. I wrote to my mother:

“Dear Mother! I've taken out insurance; the government would pay out if I died, or if I became disabled. If I die, this insurance will not be paid all at once, but every month at \$57. I hope that this will be of some help to you, Mother”.

On the 17th, Telephone operating lessons; in the afternoon orders were sent out to be ready to leave at a

¹⁶⁵ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 11.

moment's notice. I slept in a haystack. On the 18th, at dawn, the trumpet sounded at 3:15; we boarded the train at 6:00. We left on a beautiful autumn morning and boarded the *President Lincoln* at 2 P.M. We left New York at 8 P.M. On the 19th I woke up and went on deck, but I could not see the shore and the beautiful harbor of New York; instead, I saw four transport ships to port and astern; we were accompanied by two destroyers and the cruiser *Seattle*. Nice weather, I am not seasick. 20th, Sunny, warm, clear; calm. One soldier fell off the *Grant*; not found. I slept on deck during the night, with the storm raging. I saw bombs exploding in the water near us, on the right side of our ship. 27th, Capt. Smith declared that we had entered a danger zone, and therefore he ordered everyone to sleep dressed and to tie a rope or a belt to a life preserver or float, so that they could tie themselves to a plank or a similarly unsinkable object in the water'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 21.

Kilner. ‘At 3:30 a. m., a whispered summons roused each man. A few, who had scoffed at the omens the previous evening, rolled their packs by feeble candles. All the cots were folded and piled in the shed at the end of the street that had housed the battery kitchen. The cooks performed their last rites there, by serving coffee and sandwiches. The last scraps of paper and other litter in the battery street were ‘policed up’ and added to the now dying bonfire. Then the batteries were formed, and the regiment, at 5 o’clock, October 18, 1917, marched silently out of Camp Mills.

The hike to the railroad station was a short one. There the regiment quickly boarded a waiting train, which pulled out at 6, to make the brief journey to the ferry docks in Brooklyn. Quickly and quietly, the men boarded the ferry. They had been instructed to make no noise, attract no attention, and so shield the troop movement as much as possible from public (and enemy) notice. But a ferry-boat load of khaki-clad youths, when such ferry-boat loads were not so numerous as they later became, could not fail to draw the eyes of the throngs on their way to

business. The journey around the Battery and up the Hudson River was punctuated by cheers and shouts of good-bye from witnesses of our departure. At the docks of the Hamburg-American Line, where the “Vaterland” and other ocean liners had lain since the autumn of 1914, the boys filed onto the wharf and immediately over the side of the “President Lincoln”.

As he was assigned his place in the hold, each man was given two things: a printed sheet of instructions, which was to guide his actions on board, and a life-preserver, which, hanging like two sofa pillows, one on his breast, the other on his back, was to impede all his movements on board. For these must be worn night and day, whether one was eating or drinking, working or playing; and must be within reach when one slept. That last was easy, for they usually served as pillows.

That was one of the precautions against danger from a submarine’s torpedo. Another was the fire-drill, which occurred at unexpected times, either at night, in the midst of sleep, or during the day. Since there were between 5,500 and 6,000 troops on board, exclusive of the

crew of 400, it was important that they should know the quickest and easiest way to escape from the ship in case of accident. The 'President Lincoln', before the war the largest freight vessel afloat, was built for the carrying trade and not at all for passengers. In each hatch were four, and in some five, decks below, and it was a feat to empty all these by the narrow iron stairways in the short space of two minutes. At the entrance to each hatch were stacked rafts, ready to be unlashd and heaved over the side, and every man had a place.

Below, each man had a bunk, a canvas stretcher hung on a frame, three tiers high, that ran the length of the hatch, narrow aisles separating each double row. Electric lights made these good places to lounge and read. But when night fell, every light in the ship was extinguished, save only the dim blue lights at the stairways. Not even a lighted cigarette was allowed on deck or at a porthole, lest it betray the fleet to some hostile submarine, lurking near under cover of darkness. And all day long and the night through, lookouts—an officer and one enlisted man—watched the waves from the mast heads and from sentry

boxes along the side, fore and aft, for the ripple of a periscope'.¹⁶⁷

‘Excessive precaution was not without good cause. This fleet was such as to spur enemy submarines to extraordinary activity for several reasons: The vessels were former Hamburg-American Line ships, making their first voyage under American collars; it was a double blow that these German boats should not only be employed in the service of the United States, but even be used to carry troops and supplies to defeat Germany herself. Again, these seven vessels transported an entire division at once, the first to be sent across the Atlantic as a unit, a division which had received much attention because of its composition, an amalgamation of National Guard organisations from twenty-six states’.¹⁶⁸

November 1917.

Darius. ‘1-2nd of November. Still on board. We heard that the American troops had opened fire on

¹⁶⁷ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 13.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

October 26th and that the first shot fired from an American cannon was at 6 P.M.; the shell case was sent to President Wilson. On the 3rd we began to move off the ship and marched to Saint-Nazaire.¹⁶⁹ On the 25th I wrote to my mother:

“I am already in France and cannot write to you as often as I did in New York. But if you do not hear from me for a few weeks, do not worry about me, for when you do not hear from me it will be a sign that I am well. To tell you the truth, we are not working very hard. But when we go to the training ground and the firing range, that is where the hard work starts. I also started to learn ‘parlez-vous français’ (how to speak French). We are very friendly with the French soldiers, even though we can only really talk to them with our hands. But, even without using words, we seem to understand each other very well”.¹⁷⁰

Kilner. ‘Saturday afternoon, November 3, the regiment marched up through the city and along the

¹⁶⁹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 21.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

Boulevard de l'Océan, St. Nazaire's Riverside Drive. Then we remarked what we later became used to seeing, that the women seemed almost all to wear black, and practically every man was in a uniform.

The following afternoon, leave was given to visit the town. Hotels, restaurants and pastry shops did a rushing business, as did also the old women who kept the stands in the market square, selling postcards, souvenirs and all manner of trinkets. But the time spent ashore was not long, for we were called back to unload the ship that night, and marched out next day, our packs upon our backs, to a camp a short distance from the city.

At that camp we felt first that economical parsimony which the Old World must practice, in contrast to the extravagant abundance of our own land. The scanty wood allowance made the cooks suddenly mindful of the last stray splinters. Wash water was available only at certain specified times, and a squad of men must be gathered for a bath, in order that the water from the showers should not be wasted. No wonder, thought we,

that the Frenchman drinks his eternal “vin rouge”, if water is so scarce.

But our stay at St. Nazaire was not long. There were a few days of diverse details, such as shifting boxes and equipment on the docks, levelling the drill grounds, and excavating for the big reservoir that was later to furnish the water supply for the camp. Saturday night the Second Battalion marched out of camp shortly after midnight and boarded a train for the short ride northward to the town of Guer, in the department of Morbihan. That we were not full-fledged soldiers was evidenced by the fact that we made the trip in third-class passenger coaches and not in the box-cars which were ever afterwards to be our mode of transportation in France. But the stops were as frequent as they were in our later train rides, and it was not until the middle of the afternoon, Sunday, November 11, that we arrived at Guer'.¹⁷¹

‘Drill on the guns commenced the following Monday. At that time the battery had no horses, and all its

¹⁷¹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 16.

schedule was devoted to learning how to handle the French “75”. This gun was in so many ways different from the American 3-inch piece, which the regiment had used at home, that all the men, recruits and veterans of the Mexican border alike, were novices. From 7:30 to 11:30 each morning, and 1 to 4 in the afternoon, the battery drilled on the guns.

For a day or two the non-commissioned officers and two picked gun squads of privates received intensive instruction on the four guns assigned to the battery. A French sergeant conducted the drill at first. Later two corporals from the First Division of the United States Army replaced him. From the simple exercise of taking post, the drill advanced day by day to the simulated firing of the battery according to problems like those of artillery in action. The men not working on gun squads stood back by the limbers and 'took data', their attention to the proceedings being gauged by one of the drill corporals when he pounced on some one for the result of his figures. Interest was quite likely to wander when one was more concerned with shuffling his feet to warm them a bit, or

with searching for a dry spot—comparatively speaking—so that his wet feet would not become wetter.

In November this routine was broken by two events, one a day of sorrow, when Corporal Stevens died, the other a day of rejoicing, Thanksgiving. Following a severe attack of pleural pneumonia. Corporal Stanley S. Stevens died in the hospital at Camp Coetquidan on the evening of November 21. Having been in the battery since September 1915, he was very well known in the regiment and had many friends in the organisation. Even those who had not been intimate with him, were saddened by the loss of so fine a comrade and so excellent a soldier—the first loss of the regiment on the soil of France. The funeral is as beautiful a memory to the members of the battery as one could hope to have. At noon, November 23, the coffin was carried from the hospital, placed upon a caisson, and draped with a large American flag. The band led the procession, followed by an honorary firing squad of twenty-one French soldiers. Next came the fourteen members of Battery E who formed the firing squad. Behind the caisson were General Summeral, commanding

the 67th Artillery Brigade, Colonel Reilly and officers of the 149th Field Artillery. Next marched Battery E, and behind it, the other batteries of the regiment. The long column moved slowly down the road, to the music of Chopin's 'Funeral March', through the green pine woods, to a knoll that commanded a beautiful view of the valley below. The service, by Chaplain McCallum, was followed by as perfect a 'Taps', and three rifle volleys as perfectly fired, as the battery has ever heard. Some weeks later was erected a headstone on this spot, where several other members of the regiment found a resting-place before we quitted Camp Coetquidan.

Cloaking his sorrow in an effort to create joy for the members of the regiment, Corporal Steven's brother, who was the Y. M. C. A. representative with the regiment, promoted a day of games for Thanksgiving, which fell on November 29. There were races and contests of various kinds, which Battery E won with 26 points. In the football game between the First and Second Battalions, the Second won, 7 to 0, and on the team were seven players from Battery E, Weisman, Vinnedge, Pond, George, Monroe,

Vavrinek and O'Meara. The dinner, at 3 o'clock, was, in the matter of food, all one could have asked at home, and no one fell in for 'seconds'. The menu comprised turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, gravy, cranberries, apple cobbler, cocoa and nuts'.¹⁷²

Darius. 'December was occupied by lessons—putting telephone wires on the poles: I wrote to Kastute:

"I was glad to receive your letter: now I'm sure that you know where I am. Tell your mother not to worry about me like she used to when I was playing football. The Germans can't do anything to me. You know that they are already beaten, especially after the Americans came to give Kaiserism its final blow. After all of this I will have to go back to America. I have not been ill, and I have not even caught a cough, which is a sign of improvement in my health, because at home I could sometimes picture my mother's grief for me. I should like to thank my mother and Laura for the gloves and socks".¹⁷³

¹⁷² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 19.

¹⁷³ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius

December 1917.

Kilner. ‘Several days later, December 4, the battery had its first experience in actual firing. Four guns had been hauled out to the range, one from each of two batteries of the battalion and two from the other battery. These the batteries took turns in firing, drilling on the pieces left in the gun-park on the other days of the week. Battery E had its turn Tuesday.’¹⁷⁴

Upon returning from a day at the range December 19, the battery was greeted with the news that the regiment was under quarantine and confined to camp on account of a few cases of spinal meningitis discovered that day. That ended the passes to Rennes, and the evening and Sunday visits to Guer, St. Malo and other neighbouring villages’.¹⁷⁵

‘But the visits to these places of refreshment which the quarantine ended were not greatly missed. For

and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 22.

¹⁷⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 19.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

the Christmas packages had begun to arrive. There were not so many soldiers in France then that restrictions need be placed upon soldiers' mail. Consequently the packages from home were many, and contained all manner of good things. They commenced to flow in a week or two before the holiday, and continued to arrive long afterwards. Best of all, however, on Christmas day, were the letters from home telling that our first letters from France had been received and read.

Christmas morning we heard, instead of the usual reveille march, a special Christmas selection of the band, 'Adeste, Fideles'. After breakfast—bacon, beans, doughnuts, bread and coffee—the battery gathered about the Christmas tree in the mess shack. Holly and mistletoe, from the neighboring woods, decorated the walls. At one side was a brilliant imitation of a hearth. Santa Claus (alias Corporal Pond) handed out the packages which the men of the battery had contributed to his pack the evening before and also a package of cigarettes to each man, the gift of Captain Robbins. Later in the day were distributed boxes of candy, a pound box for each man, which were

the gift of Major and Mrs. Judah. During the morning Major Redden passed through the barracks, and his greetings for the day were returned heartily and vociferously.

At 3:30 was served dinner, an array of turkey, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, apple pie and cocoa that more than extinguished a man's appetite. In the evening the band played. The infectious rhythm of 'Allah's Holiday' and similar pieces drew the men from their letters, card-games, magazines, etc., and soon the street was filled with a singing, dancing throng of soldiers. Soon all, soldiers and band, paraded to the officers' quarters. Nothing would satisfy them but Major Redden's appearance and a speech from him. This he gave, to the delight of all the men. Then he passed out cigars till they were gone, and ended with regrets that there were not more and a hope that another Christmas would see all of them home in the midst of all comfort.

The New Year was introduced in true military fashion. The band played the old year out. At one minute before midnight, 'Taps' was blown. Then, immediately,

'First Call' announced the new year, and 'Reveille' ushered in 1918'.¹⁷⁶

January 1918.

Kilner. 'With the new year began our preparations for service at the front. At 8:30 New Year's day, the regiment was inspected by Colonel Reilly in its field equipment of steel helmets, woollen helmets, packs, side-arms and rubber boots. Our 'tin derbies' had been issued the evening before, and were just beginning to furnish the unending fascination of revealing their long list of varied uses: candle-stick, camp-stool, market-basket, cymbals, wash basin, etc'.¹⁷⁷

Darius. 'January 2nd, I was in the telephone center instead of the shooting range. I wrote to mother:

"Last week the three of us won first place in the telephoning competition: we were the fastest in the whole brigade. Let me know if all my letters are received. I send you 2-3 letters every week. Thank you very much for your

¹⁷⁶ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 23.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

parcel. The parcels from beloved households give great joy to a soldier. The weather has cooled down a little, but it does not harm the men of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment in the least”.¹⁷⁸

‘3-7 of January. Lessons, networking, cannon exercises. I wrote to my sister:

“Dearest Kastute! I received your letter, which gave me the pleasure of learning more about the soldiers I know at home. You see, I have travelled thousands of miles, and no misfortune has befallen me. But the soldiers who escaped, because of their 'yellowness' (cowardice), were greeted with misfortune near their homes. Tell my 'big' brother Stasys that I will buy and send him a nice French soldier's cap. We have already passed the telephoning course; we do not know what the next steps of the program will be—we will probably have to go into the firing line. I am a telephonist: it is my duty to set up the

¹⁷⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 22.

telephone exchange, to send orders from the superiors and to receive messages”.¹⁷⁹

Kilner. ‘Rain had caused postponement on the first day set, Monday, January 7. Two days later snow made the attempt abortive, blowing in the windows all night and lying on the ground several inches deep when we arose, at 4 a. m. At 6 the battalion was harnessed and hitched, ready to start. The ground was so slippery and the winter morning was still so dark that the drivers did not mount, but led their horses’.¹⁸⁰

Darius. ‘January 8th: horse riding, checking phones; I was hit by a horse while pooping. On the 9th, appointed to work as the regimental telephonist; the same afternoon I was operating the observation post telephone. After some tracking (in the woods, on the roof, etc.), the artillery officer finds evidence of used gunfire and reports

¹⁷⁹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 22.

¹⁸⁰ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 24.

them to his own artillery. 10-11th of January. Riding, watering horses, feeding. I wrote to my mother:

“I have completed my telephoning training and have been appointed third telephonist in the regimental telephone exchange. Now we have started horse riding and doing various riding exercises. The snow sometimes prevents us from walking and doing our duties. We have a lot of laughs, although we do not have any theater or other entertainment. In the evenings, when our day's work is over, some of us play games, practice, recount various adventures, and write letters”.¹⁸¹

‘12th – 15th. telephone exercises, riding, horse cleaning, watering. On the 16th it was announced that on the 17th the regiment would hold maneuvers in preparation for front-line service. At the end of the maneuvers of our Brigade, Col. Reilly praised us for our good work. At 3 P.M. we started to take down the telephone wires, finishing at 10 A.M. the next day. 20th - 22nd. Telephone

¹⁸¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 22.

work in the fields, repairing telephone carts, work in the stables. 23rd, we worked at the shooting range until 11 P.M.; I slept on the hillside with only a blanket to cover me. On the 24th I woke up at 7 A.M. with a pain in my side and a chill; at 10 A.M. all devices were put into operation. The firing continued until Gen. Mac-Instry, the new commander of the 67th Artillery Brigade, ordered the firing to cease; I accepted the order and passed it on to Col. Reilly. We returned at 22:00 hours. 25-30th. Exercises at the firing range. On the 31st I participated in regimental maneuvers'.¹⁸²

Kilner. 'A Late in January we were issued gas masks, both British and French. Sergeant Bolte and Corporal Holton were appointed Gas NCOs for the battery'.¹⁸³

February 1918.

¹⁸² Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmašis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 23.

¹⁸³ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 24.

Darius. ‘1-2nd of February. I was at the firing range, where I operated the brigade telephone; then I went to the regimental headquarters, where I accepted a number of important orders. 3rd: at the shooting range.¹⁸⁴ I wrote to my mother:

“We telephonists have a lot of work to do. We lay 12-15 miles (24km) of telephone wires every day. There will be many important messages on the telephone, and their reception requires great diligence and precision. We are given considerable amounts of exercises during regimental maneuvers to train our attention and to get us trained to be more successful. Some of the soldiers will be put on leave for 7 days; so, if I am so fortunate, I shall visit London with a friend of mine who has many relatives there. I have also gotten to continue horseback riding; I enjoy that very much”.¹⁸⁵

Darius. ‘4-5th of February. We cleaned and repaired the carriages; I got soaked in the rain. On the

¹⁸⁴ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 23.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

whole of the 6th day, we practiced using gas masks and working with them; we even went through a death chamber'.¹⁸⁶

Kilner. 'On February 6 the men tested their masks in an abri filled with chlorine gas, some coming out just in time to give an exhibition gas-mask drill before our new brigade and divisional commanders, Brigadier-General McKenstrie and Major-General Menoher. An officer from the British army gave us a more vivid acquaintance with the effects of gas in warfare in some lectures at the Y. M. C. A.'.¹⁸⁷

Darius. '7-12th of February. Work in the shooting range, laying and wrapping wires on spikes, exercises with gas masks, shooting from revolvers'.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 23.

¹⁸⁷ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 25.

¹⁸⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 23.

Kilner. ‘Saturday, February 9, following a mounted inspection, in which the regiment was equipped as for the field, we considered ourselves on our way to war’.¹⁸⁹

Darius. ‘On the 13th, I oversaw wrapping the wires on their spindles. On the 14th, my record for revolver shooting (15 steps) was 38 points; the next record in succession after me was 28 points. On the 16th we packed up and boarded the train; on my ‘pullman’—a sleeping car of a train with various amenities—was marked: ‘Hommes 36-40, Chevaux 8 - French signature’ 36-40 men, 8 horses’.¹⁹⁰

Kilner. ‘Saturday, February 16, the regiment began to leave Camp Coetquidan, Headquarters Company and Battery A going that morning, while the band played American airs. The following afternoon Battery E hiked to Guer. There was a long wait while Battery D pulled out.

¹⁸⁹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 25.

¹⁹⁰ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 23.

Then guns, caissons, wagons and horses were packed on flat cars in short order. The men were first distributed thirty men to a box-car of the type made famous by the label, 'Chevaux 8, Hommes 40', about half the size of an American box-car. In the cars was an intricate contrivance in the shape of benches which took up so much space that, with their bulky packs in every nook and corner, the men had little space more than to sit down. Sleep was impossible, so cold was the first night, except for those who, tired to exhaustion, dozed off, to wake up later feeling half frozen.

Next day the presence of a few empty box-cars at the tail of the train was discovered. By using these, the number of men in a car was reduced one-half. When the benches were taken out, also, the quarters were roomy enough for some comfort. At the occasional stops the men had an opportunity to get out to stretch themselves. Sometimes a couple of French Territorials (men too old or otherwise unfit for service) were on hand with hot black coffee in which there was just enough touch of rum to make one feel its presence. Many, many times

subsequently was such a cup of hot coffee cause for great thankfulness. Indeed, it was on that trip, for the cold rations—hard tack, corned beef, canned tomatoes, canned pork and beans, and jam—left one thirsty and cold’.

Darius. ‘On the 17th we drove through Paris, very beautiful surroundings. On the 18th, we arrived at Lunéville and moved into the French barracks, which was within range of (German) heavy artillery shells that we had to clean up. On the 19th, we woke up at 2 A.M. and unloaded the Battery from the train, then worked in the barracks. On the afternoon of the 20th, I rode on horseback with Lieutenants Parker and Galord’.¹⁹¹

Kilner. ‘Our train had pulled out of the station at Guer about dusk Sunday evening. Tuesday we seemed headed for Paris, but, after a glimpse of Versailles, we skirted it to the south. Resuming our eastward course, we

¹⁹¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 23.

turned south in Lorraine, reaching Gerberviller about midnight Wednesday, February 20.¹⁹²

Unloading at Gerberviller was far different from the easy job of loading at Guer. The night was black. On account of the proximity of the front, no lights could be used. Not a match's flare, not a cigarette's glow, was allowed, lest it serve as a target for some bombing aeroplane.

There was no loading platform, and the carriages and wagons which had been rolled across ramps directly onto the flat cars had to be coaxed and guided down planks steeply inclined from the car's side to the ground. Handling the horses packed closely in box-cars was a difficult task in utter darkness.

Dawn was just breaking when the battery pulled out. A grey light showed us the ruins of the town of Gerberviller as we passed through. The houses stood like spectres, stripped of the life and semblance of home which they had held before the German wave had swept this far

¹⁹² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 26.

in August, 1914, and then, after a few days, had receded, leaving them ruins. Four walls, perhaps not so many, were all that remained of building after building; windows were gone, roofs fallen, and inside were piles of brick and stone, in which, here and there, grass had found root.

At the village of Moyen the battery stopped long enough to water the horses. At 10:30 we arrived in Vathimenil, where the battery halted till 1 o'clock, and mess was served. In the afternoon in the dust and heat of a sunshiny day such as Lorraine can produce after a cold spring night, the battery hiked through St. Clermont to Lunéville, the cannoneers following the carriages on foot.

There we were quartered in an old barrack of French lancers, whose former stables housed our horses. Big, clean rooms, on the third floor, were assigned to Battery E. With bed ticks filled with straw, we made this a comfortable home.¹⁹³

A practice review the following morning and another, the real thing, in the afternoon, before a French

¹⁹³ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 27.

general and his staff, formally introduced us to Lorraine. In our free hours during the day and in the evening, we added to this acquaintance by pretty thorough familiarity with the city of Lunéville.

Though its nearness to the battle front restricted trade and industry a great deal, yet its shops, restaurants and cafes proved a paradise for the men who remained there at the horse-line, as the battery's song, 'When We Were Down in Lunéville', attests. Though the streets were absolutely dark, behind the shuttered windows and the darkened doors business was brisk enough. At 8 o'clock, however, all shops were closed, and soldiers must be off the streets by 8:30'.¹⁹⁴

Darius. '21-22nd of February. Work in the barracks; bought postcards and a map. On the 24th, received an order to go to the front; at noon our company got assembled and the company commander was informed that the whole company was in sight. All the men were divided into small groups (5 men each), which

¹⁹⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 28.

marched at 75 paces apart; ours (the telephonists) were two groups and three carts filled with telephone wire strings. At 12:30 we set off on foot for the front. In the evening, we arrived at Banememil, stopped for the night in an old barn and I was assigned to guard duty. 25th - the first day in the active army²⁰⁷; in the morning we started to lay telephone lines to the 1st and 2nd artillery groups (Batteries). While working on the phone lines to the second artillery group point, Captain Smith reported that 10 shells were falling every minute on the road we were to take. After we left, the rain forced the Germans to rather slow down the artillery firing. Upon returning around midnight, I worked at the regimental headquarters'.¹⁹⁵

Kilner. 'February 25 they marched out of the city with their packs on their backs, up near Marainviller. There were between forty and fifty men altogether, including the four gun crews and the engineers' detail. When we marched along a road screened from the enemy

¹⁹⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

by a mat of boughs stretched by wires between high poles along one side of the way, we knew we were not far from the front. The big thrill came, however, when, turning off the high road, we went forward one squad at a time at intervals of about 200 yards. The chief object was to avoid attracting the notice of some chance enemy aeroplane by the movement of a considerable body of men. To our minds the precaution seemed for the purpose of limiting casualties, in case a shell burst on the road, to the men of only one squad'.¹⁹⁶

‘The next four days were spent in preparations for building a battery position ... Two of the days the gunners, No. 1 and No. 2 men of each section spent at a French battery nearby, to gain experience in actual firing’.¹⁹⁷

Darius. ‘26-27th of February. Worked at the regimental headquarters for 8 hours with breaks; at the

¹⁹⁶Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 28.

¹⁹⁷Ibid, 29.

telephone for 4 hours straight. 28th, 17:15. 149th Regiment fired its first shot at the Germans at Domjevin'.¹⁹⁸

Gilmore. 'In a building near the church, the telephone detail set up its place of business. Hebert drew the job of 'lingo agent', taking charge of all calls between the French and our men. This proved to be a twenty-four-hour-a-day job, with snatches of sleep between calls. Faust, with his electrical ingenuity, rigged up a first-class switchboard, making it worth double its former value. The lieutenants in charge here were Royer and Parker, while the enlisted men were: Sergeant Warner, chief of station, Corporal Shibley, in charge -5 vol. 17 This content downloaded from'.¹⁹⁹

March 1918.

Kilner. 'Orders came to cease work on this position, and none too soon. For when the men were

¹⁹⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

¹⁹⁹ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 52.

returning from work there for the last time, about 5 p. m., March 2, the woods in the vicinity were deluged with gas shells'.²⁰⁰

Darius. '1-5th of March at the regimental headquarters; on the 5th, at 22:00 hours, I heard the Germans firing at our positions, then our guns began to fire a dense fire (a violent cannonading, like the sounds of a bombing) and the Germans rushed out of their trenches. On the 7th, I visited our gun positions; I narrowly escaped death. On the 8th, at the center, I learned about the progress of the fighting'.²⁰¹

Kilner. 'At 9:50 a. m., March 8, Battery E fired its first shot at the front, the Third Section piece having the honor. The gun crew was composed of Sergeant Newell, Corporal Monroe, and Privates Sexauer, Ekberg, Farrell and Kilner. The crew working on the Fourth Section piece, which registered the same morning, included Sergeant

²⁰⁰ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 29.

²⁰¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

Suter, Corporal Holton, and Privates O'Reilly, O'Brien, Ladd, Colvin and Kulicek'.²⁰²

Darius. 'On the 9th, I was at the center at 8 o'clock; just in time to get away from the telephone to watch the fighting, which lasted until midnight, and which allowed only a few men to sleep. 10th. At the center, one of our men was killed – the first casualty of our regiment. On the 12th, I passed through the Madonoiller fort with another soldier; the Germans saw us clearly and fired a few shells here and there. We narrowly escaped disaster on our return. On the 17th, the Germans opened fire on the 1st group of our regiment, after 35 minutes their firing slackened; I handed reports and orders to Col. Reilly'.²⁰³

Kilner. 'March 17, 1918, was remarkable not because it was Sunday or St. Patrick's day so much as because on that day Battery E's camouflage burnt. In the course of a 10-round reprisal fire, about 4 p. m., the flame

²⁰² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 30.

²⁰³ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

from the muzzle of the Second Section gun set ablaze the grass woven in the wire netting overhead. In a second the covering was in flames. The dry grass burnt like tinder. The men beat the blaze with sand bags, but could check it but little in the face of the intense heat and thick smoke. By tearing off several strips of netting, they succeeded in preventing the fire's spreading to the other end of the position. Within a short space of time the first platoon's camouflage was changed from yellow grass to black ashes. The work of seven or eight days was undone in as many minutes'.²⁰⁴

Darius. 'On the 20th, at the center; the Germans opened fire, we responded, and the firing began without cease on both sides'.²⁰⁵

Kilner. 'On March 20 the battery was engaged in tearing down enemy barbed wire, firing 216 rounds per gun during the day, in preparation for an attack that night.

²⁰⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 32.

²⁰⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

At 7:40 p. m. commenced the actual bombardment. A few minutes before that time 75's began to bark from the woods to our left and in the rear of us. The reports gradually grew in number. At the appointed moment, our guns began to bang away. For the next two hours and forty-five minutes, the noise was deafening. Batteries of whose existence we had not the slightest suspicion were firing near us. Every hillock and clump of trees seemed to blaze with gun flashes. Joined with the constant bark and bang of the 75's near by was the deep thunderous roar of heavier cannon in the distance.

At 10 o'clock the firing began to die away. Half an hour later only a few shots at long intervals could be heard. Fatigued with their strenuous and racking work, the men eagerly attacked the mess just then brought up to them. Nearly all were a little deaf from their guns' racket. A few, on the gun crews, were totally oblivious to all sound whatsoever, and could comprehend only signs.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 32.

On the 21st, The enemy's reply to us did not come till the next morning. Roused at 4 to stand by the guns, the cannoneers had scarcely occupied their posts when shells began to drop dangerously near. Captain Robbins ordered everyone into the abris till the shelling ceased. Half an hour later we went out to find that a gas shell had made the officers' abri and vicinity untenable, all our telephone wires were cut, and shell fragments had torn up things here and there. How Nickoden fared, who had been out at the rocket post on the hill-top during it all, we learned when he was relieved shortly after. Hearing not a sound, he was aware that shells were falling near only when he saw them plow up the ground within a few hundred feet of him. Corporal Buckley was wounded by a shell fragment and Private McCarthy was badly gassed that morning, in the machine-gun post at the top of the hill.

Private (later Corporal) Mangan was recommended for the D. S. C. by the regimental commander 'for volunteering to and aiding the French in keeping open a telephone line running from a forward observation station across the open to the rear. This on

March 19 and again on March 20, when the telephone line was repeatedly cut by an intense enemy bombardment of heavy caliber shells from both guns and trench mortars'. The French cited Mangan for the Croix de Guerre for his conduct on this occasion also'.²⁰⁷

Darius. 'On the 21st, I was at the central station; in the evening I went to take down the telephone lines; at 7 P.M. I heard a well-known sound which brought with it an omen of death; it was German shells and I laid down; the shells exploded 50 paces from us. All night long we were shelled and gassed. I fell asleep upright'.²⁰⁸

Kilner. '24th of March. Two days later the regiment left Lunéville on a 120-kilometre hike to the divisional area, in the vicinity of Langres, where the division was to spend some time in manoeuvres. But the orders were countermanded before the regiment had gone more than its first day's hike, on account of the Germans'

²⁰⁷ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 33.

²⁰⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

success in their first big offensive of the spring on the northern front.

So the battery remained for a week at Remenoville, in readiness to return to the front upon the receipt of orders. During those seven days of sunshiny weather, in the bright warmth of early spring, the men basked in ease and comfort. Gun drill for the cannoneers and grooming for the drivers occupied the mornings. The afternoons the men had to themselves, for games of horseshoes, writing letters to make up for lost time at the front, baths in the cold brook, and washing clothes in the village fountain. Eggs and potatoes and milk were abundant in the town—until the battery's consumption depleted the supply—and the men ate as often in some French kitchen as in their battery mess line. Some boys 'slipped one over on the army', too, by sleeping between white sheets in soft big beds, renting a room for the munificent sum of one franc a day, instead of rolling up in their blankets in the haymow where they were billeted.

The following Saturday, the battery hiked to Fontenoy-la-Joute, on its way back to the front. Easter

Sunday, March 31, was spent there, the band playing in front of the 'mairie', on the steps of which the chaplain held the church services.²⁰⁹

Since both positions occupied by the platoons were known to the enemy, and our only safety lay in maintaining his belief that they were abandoned, no one was allowed to enter or leave them during the daytime. At first so rigid was this rule that we could not even go to Montigny for meals. Instead, the raw rations were divided among the sections, and the men cooked them as best they could in their mess kits over the little stoves that were in each abri. But cooking could only be done at night, lest the smoke betray us. So seven or eight hungry men, having eaten hard-tack and a little cold food during the day, crowded around the little stove from nightfall till early morning, doing their unskilled best to make something edible out of hard-tack, canned corned beef, canned tomatoes, potatoes, a slab of bacon, coffee, some sugar, and occasionally some beef cut up into small slices

²⁰⁹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 34.

or cubes. The result was that the men got neither much sleep nor much nourishment, and after about ten days of this sort of living, the meals were cooked in the kitchen at Montigny and then carried in heat-containing cans to the positions'.²¹⁰

April 1918.

Darius. '1-10th of April, I was stationed with the 2nd Artillery Group, and I was on the telephone and fixed lines; on April 8th, three Germans broke through our front lines and killed one of our men from the 66th Infantry Regiment. One of those Germans were shot in the heart; his Iron Cross (Eisen Kreisler- the highest German award- an order for distinguished service in war) and his revolver were given to the guard who shot him'.²¹¹ 'I wrote to Kastute:

"For a while I was on the front line myself and I was getting used to dodging German shells. However, the

²¹⁰ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 36.

²¹¹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24

Germans' rain of iron splinters is not beloved. But, when I have to work in the field, it is interesting to hear the explosions of the German shells when they do not explode very close by. One night I had to work outside. A few shells went over our heads. I fell flat on the ground and had a very strange, funny feeling. It was as if I had covered the whole field with my body, and wherever a shell exploded, it was bound to hit me... This is not the first time I've felt this funny feeling. So now, I ignore it completely. Two days ago, I went to the front-line trenches of my own free will. I will write about my various adventures when I have more time. But for the moment, I would like to point out that there is more laughter happening in real life than in the films you see in theaters where they depict men trying to escape from German shells'''.²¹²

'11-14th of April. I was outside repairing phone lines. On the 15th I was changing the 2nd group's central station; I was climbing poles until I almost fell. On the 16-

²¹² Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 24.

17th I changed the lines. We were ready for an attack; the infantry marched into the trenches. On the 18th we gathered the telephone wires, set up a line of rockets. On 19-22nd we worked on the lines. On the 23rd I received orders to return to the telephone section of the regimental headquarters company. On 24-28th I worked on the regimental telephone lines. On the 29th I worked with a group of cleaners which operated in the first line of positions'.²¹³

Here, Darius is talking about salvaging the field after a battle, when the cleaners collect weapons, ammunition, clothing, etc'.

May 1918.

Kilner. 'May 21 the battery moved four kilometres back to a reserve position just in front of Merviller, which had formerly been occupied by Battery B. The latter moved up to relieve us. After the seven weeks of close confinement in damp abris, the change to

²¹³ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 26.

the life at the Merviller position was like a trip to a summer resort. Being so far back of the lines, the men were permitted to move about with perfect freedom. The stream just back of the position invited cool swims on the hot dusty afternoons. Ball games passed the time of waiting for mess. Battery E won a close game and keg of Baccarat beer from Headquarters Company by the score of 12 to 11. Just across the road was stationed a bathhouse and laundry unit, and before long the battery had replaced their uniforms, torn and dirty from digging, with more presentable ones'.²¹⁴

Darius. 'From 1-5th of May, we put back-up phone lines in place. On the 6th, I was in Glonville explaining the war problem. On the 7th I was at the center; at 5 P.M. we went to the front in Merville. On the 8th we took down the old telephone lines and laid down new ones. On the 9th, I oversaw clearing the position; we went to Montigny. On the 10-12th we erected poles, worked on the lines, and laid two underground telephone lines. 13-18th. in the center

²¹⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 38.

and in the fields, I saw the Germans firing on our Battery E. On the 19th instead of my sick horse I was given a healthy fast steed that I bathed. On 20-23rd I worked in the smithy and helped to forge parts for our carriages'.²¹⁵

Darius. '24th day. We were explained current issues in the war while in Baccarat. On the 25th I went up into the long-range observation tower and saw the German forest, which we had destroyed a few weeks before to such an extent that there was not a single healthy tree left; I repaired the telephone in the tower. On the 26th I worked in the forge. On the morning of the 27th I went to the trenches of the 1st line; I heard German machine gun bullets whizzing past my head. On 28-30th I was repairing carts, winding wires on French splices, and looking for obstructions in the telephone line'.²¹⁶

Gilmore. 'The regimental telephone central was established in the second story of one of the "Main Street" buildings in a room spacious enough to bunk all of the

²¹⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 26.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

men. As with the second battalions, the system created here was the best possible, everything being worked out in detail and elaborated upon so as to give the speediest service possible. The switchboard, called E 3, had twenty-nine lines connected to its terminals and calls at times averaged eighty an hour. It has been said that at this front all first-class privates and their nearest relatives could have lines into the regimental board. Test cases were made every hour for trouble from both ends of all lines. Some nights the linesmen were disturbed from slumber and forced to "shoot" trouble but even so, they could return to bunks, which were often unheard of at later fronts. The personnel of this station was: Lieut. Heath, Sergeant Warner, Operators Hebert, Kekich, Foutz and Linesmen Chandler, Darius, Voss, Bloomfield and Tevis'.²¹⁷

June 1918.

Darius. ‘1-4th of June I fixed the lines. On the 5th day I went to the new line and was warmly received by the Germans; I saw our shells exploding on the German

²¹⁷ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 58.

side, and they shelled us for three hours. On the 7th day I was working on the lines; somebody fired a machine gun at us'.²¹⁸

Kilner. 'Sunday, June 30, one year since the regiment had been called out, there was a rigid inspection in the morning, and in the afternoon Colonel Reilly and Major Redden spoke on the work of the regiment in that time, and announced that the 42d was now to go into a new sector as a combat division'.²¹⁹

July 1918.

Darius. 'We were supposed to go to a big battle on July 1st, but it was postponed. The work on the Reims front is livelier than in Luneville'.²²⁰

Kilner. 'The 149th had no fireworks on July 4, 1918. Even the games arranged for the afternoon to

²¹⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 26.

²¹⁹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 40.

²²⁰ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 26.

celebrate the holiday were neglected. There was good reason: one of the biggest batches of mail our battery had ever received. A letter from home was worth many skyrockets or three-legged races to us. But that evening we saw a bigger variety of pyrotechnic displays than we had ever witnessed before, even at “Paine’s Burning of Rome” or some other such spectacle.

After supper we were given the order to pack, and at 10:30 pulled out on the road. Our way was north, through a broad and barren country, marked in the darkness only by chalky white roads and trenches. Overhead were planes whirring and buzzing, invisible, but very audible, in the dark night. Here and there one dropped a sparkling signal light. At our backs were big fingers of whiteness thrust up into the sky; they were the searchlights in front of Chalons, seeking for enemy planes to reveal to the anti-aircraft guns defending the city from bombers. Ahead, and far to the right and left, the front lines disclosed their presence by light rockets or “star-shells” that continually shot up into the sky and perhaps hovered there for long minutes. We were used to rockets

in Lorraine, but never had we seen so many and such a variety as confronted us now. Here was visible evidence that we were engaged in something big'.²²¹

‘At 3:30 a. m., we unlimbered our guns and pointed them across a deep chalk trench in front of us. The ammunition from the caissons was piled beside them. As day broke we pitched the flat-tops. The first platoon was located about 200 meters to the right of the second platoon. An equal distance on either side were located platoons of D and F batteries. Thus were the regiment’s guns lined along the trench for a distance of two kilometres. To the right flowed the Suippes river, on which was situated the nearest town, Jonchery-sur-Suippes. Several kilometres in front, the church steeple of St. Hilary-le-Grand served as a point for calculating the guns’ fire.

The regiment was in a reserve position, just back of a gently sloping crest, on the forward side of which were the strongly fortified entrenchments of the front

²²¹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 41.

lines. One of our earliest fires practiced in gun drill was “firing at will” at imaginary German tanks appearing over this crest. At that time such a possibility was not without its thrills, for the four previous German offensives, on the northern part of the line, had been strikingly successful that spring, and the one which we were to help stop was known to exceed in magnitude any previous attempt. General Gouraud’s exhortation to the French Fourth Army, to which our division was attached, was to “Stand or die!” This his men were ready to do, but how successfully they would withstand the repeated rushes of the German hordes, whose numbers had proved superior in the north, no one could be sure. Two reserve positions were picked, to which the battery might fall back in case the enemy broke through, and Lieutenant Anderson, Sergeant O’Meara and Sergeant Suter spent three days exploring by-roads and paths through the barbed wire for short cuts to be used in case it became necessary to fall back. Fortunately, “falling back” was something the 42d Division never had to do.

Our first work was to dig a gun-pit beneath our flat-top, with a short shelter trench for the gun crew on each side. The pit was dug nearly three feet deep, and the soil piled high in sand-bags on the sides, for additional protection. The gravel and lime, into which our picks and shovels went, seemed as hard as mortar. Under the hot July sun, the men shed all the garments they could, and still the perspiration poured down their bodies.

Ammunition came up at night, and three thousand rounds per gun was stacked in the trench in front, and camouflaged, ready at hand when the attack should come'.²²²

Darius. '8-12th. Worked on the lines. On the 13th we buried the telephone lines at our central station; at 8 P.M. heavy artillery fire started from both sides and our troops crawled to Abris; I stayed in the back with two telephones. On the 14th we finished burying the lines in dirt, our allies started to fire heavy covering artillery fire to stop an oncoming German attack; after 15 minutes the

²²² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 21

Germans returned the attack. T. and I went to repair the lines; we were under artillery fire for 16 hours'.²²³

Kilner. ‘Sunday, July 14, was “Bastille Day,” the French Fourth of July. If the rumor was true that the French army issued a bottle of champagne to each three soldiers in way of celebration, it affected the American troops with it not the least. For the day was as dry and hot as those preceding, and the only variation in drink from the coffee at mess was the water of the Suippes river, where some men went to bathe and swim and wash clothes. If the German high command believed the rumor, and thought by beginning their offensive that night they would catch the French incapacitated from their holiday spree, they found they were sadly mistaken.

At any rate they commenced their greatest and last offensive against the Allies that night, a night the 149th can never forget. Shortly before midnight the order came to make up our rolls and packs, so that if events required,

²²³ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 26.

we could move out quickly. The information came over the wire that two prisoners captured about nine o'clock had revealed the entire plans of the attack to the minute. At midnight the preliminary bombardment was to commence, which was to last four hours. At 4:15 a. m., the enemy's infantry was to start over the top. And so it occurred'.²²⁴

'At twelve o'clock broke loose a thunderous roar, which sounded like a gigantic hailstorm, so many and so rapid were the cannons' reports. Over five thousand cannon, it is estimated, were in action. Our orders were to stand by the guns ready to fire the instant command came. So we stood listening to the tremendous cannonading, the whistle and screech of shells overhead from the long-range guns behind us, and watched the red glow of cannon's belch and shells' burst. Now and then a great red glare filled the sky, when some ammunition dump was set afire. Off to the right appeared a lurid eruption of rockets and signal lights of all kinds, the varied pyrotechnics

²²⁴ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 44.

lasting for ten or fifteen minutes; the infantry's stores of rockets had been hit. Along the crest ahead, where ran the road on which we heard so much traffic at night, shells from the enemy's heavy guns were dropping. In addition to the heavy bombardment of the front lines, there was constant fire on all trenches, roads and other ways of communication'.²²⁵

‘At 4 a. m., the blackness was lightening to grey. The guns were laid, ready to drop a barrier of bursting shells when the enemy's first wave neared our front line. The 'phone rang. There was checking of data and minute directions. At 4:15 came the command, “Fire,” and the guns along the trench began to blaze and bang unceasingly. The men worked like demons, deaf now to all the thunder and roar about them, no eye to the crimson glare that lit up the horizon in front beneath the black piles of smoke like thunder clouds over the front lines, unconscious of the occasional shrapnel that fell near or the fragments from the big shells that burst along the crest and

²²⁵ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 45.

sometimes over towards them. Hour after hour they fed the guns at the same rate of speed. They could see no signs of the enemy themselves, none but the shells from his guns. But they knew that on the other side of the crest their fire was thinning the successive grey waves of Germans that hurled themselves on our infantry. The strength, the lives of our infantry depended on these 75's, and we could not fail them for a second. Fatigue, hunger, thirst were unminded. Coffee was brought to the gun crews at noon. The first food was some beans and hard-tack at midnight, more than thirty hours after mess of the evening before.'²²⁶

‘At 11 a. m. came a lull. The enemy’s first mighty effort was broken. General Gouraud’s plan had succeeded. By drawing back all his forces from the front lines to the intermediate defences, he had caused the bombardment of hundreds of the enemy’s guns to fall harmlessly, and exposed the German infantry waves to the more deadly fire of our cannon and machine-guns while they crossed

²²⁶ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 45.

the vacated trenches. In addition to the three German divisions holding the sector opposite the 21st French Corps—comprising three French divisions and the 42d Division—six first-class divisions of the enemy were hurled against our lines. Yet, says the division's official Summary of Events of July 15, 1918, "In spite of the most vigorous attempt of the enemy, he was able to set foot on the intermediate position only at one point. A counter-attack by two companies of French infantry and two companies of the 167th Infantry drove him from this position in a bloody hand-to-hand combat." Five successive attacks that morning were one after another thrown back with heavy losses.

Not only in our immediate front, but all the way along the line from Chateau Thierry to the Argonne, the Allied line had held. The program by which the enemy expected to reach Suippes at noon July 15, and Chalons at 4 p. m. July 16, was irretrievably defeated. The Second Battle of the Marne, involving greater numbers of men than any previous battle in history, and more cannon than

were engaged in our entire Civil War, was a decisive triumph for the Allies and a fatal crisis for the enemy'.²²⁷

Darius. 'On the 15th, Air battle; both sides lost aircraft. On the 16th, Air battle and heavy artillery fire. On the 17th, while checking the lines with T., I found two listening devices; we reported them to the captain, who went with T. and myself to check for any evidence; we guarded the line and patrolled day and night. On the 19th, we gathered our wires and left the Champagne front. On the 21st we marched through the suburbs of Paris; we saw the Eiffel Tower. Everywhere we were greeted by civilians. We arrived at Maux, got off the train, and marched to a village near the front lines. On the 24th we started to march forward and past the advancing troops, and on the morning of the 29th we met the retreating enemy. We found many dead. We had a good laugh and had fun shooting at the planes with captured enemy machine guns'.²²⁸

²²⁷ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 46.

²²⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius

Kilner. ‘Two days later the machine gunners achieved real distinction, when Donahue and Bowly brought a German aeroplane to earth a few hundred feet from the position. The plane was riddled with bullets and both pilot and observer were badly wounded. In descending the plane crashed into a tree at the edge of the woods, wrecking the machine. This first actual contact with the enemy and visual token of damage done him was not without its thrills. Needless to say, “beaucoup souvenirs” were secured’.²²⁹

Darius. ‘On the 30th I repaired the lines, and on the 31st I straightened the lines in the forward artillery positions and talked with Col. Reilly’.²³⁰

Gilmore. ‘The long hours of trouble-shooting continued for the tele- phone men, until they were well-

and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 26.

²²⁹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 53.

²³⁰ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Ju Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 27.

nigh exhausted. At regimental, Sabo, Machel, Darius, Bloomfield and Tevis did their bit in this line'.²³¹

August 1918.

Darius. 'On August 1st I installed the central line and started a new line towards the front. On my return at around 22:00, three shells fell near us and wounded my right side. I was wounded at Fere-en-Tardnois. I walked to Beuvarde, where I was then taken by ambulance to a hospital. On the 2nd day I underwent an operation, and a shell fragment was removed from my wound. On the 4th, my wound was stitched up and, on the 16th, I was sent to the hospital in Nantes'.²³²

Gilmore. 'Shelling and bombs hampered the work of the telephone men but, on the whole, good service was maintained. On August 2nd Darius received a bad wound from an air bomb and a line maintained by Lt. Heath,

²³¹ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 69.

²³² Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmašis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 27.

Chandler and Maxson was cut by shell fire nine times in ten hours'.²³³

September 1918.

Darius. 'On the 16th of September I left for Bordeaux, arriving in Carnau on the 18th. From 19-30th I occasionally did formation exercises; on the 26th I attended the funeral service of an American pilot'.²³⁴

October 1918.

Kilner. 'The battery pulled out of the horse-lines at 8 p. m., October 1, and hiked without stop till after midnight. After covering thirty kilometres, the battalion pulled in at an old German remount camp, near Ambly, alongside the canal. The following night the distance was shorter, but progress was slow and waits were long—during which the drivers fell asleep on their horses with blankets over their shoulders, and the dismounted men

²³³ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 75.

²³⁴ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 27.

dozed in the grass at the side of the road, mindless of cold and damp. At 6 in the morning came the climb up the hill into the Camp du Bois de Meuse, where the whole 67th Brigade encamped'.²³⁵

Darius. 'On the 12th of October I left the Camp Carnau, on the 17th I travelled along the narrow-gauge railway built by the Americans and arrived in the forward area of the war. On the 18th, when I arrival, I reported my return to my superiors; I saw many American airplanes in the forest of the Argon. On the 26th I laid telegraph lines to the forward positions. On the 27th we moved to a hill south of Grandpré. On the 28th I saw a German plane coming down; among the shells I was looking for obstructions (faults) in the line. On the 29th I saw (above me) an American airplane explode into splinters, diving down as the pilot fell and rolled in the air; 10 minutes later the pilot died. On the 30th I was assigned to go to the rear line; at 1 A.M. I was at the line, with artillery shells exploding all around.

²³⁵ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 36

On the 31st I repaired the telephone lines and worked at the regimental headquarters'.²³⁶

Kilner. 'Gas alarms were frequent at night. The itching in one's throat left no doubt of there being actual danger present. The favorable wind carried away the noxious fumes of several shells that burst at the edge of the flat-tops. The boys dug their bunks deep to escape the fragments. Near the machine gunners, the shells burst thick, and both Donahue and Harry Overstreet were sent to the hospital with bad poison burns. Practically everyone at the position suffered a little from gas, some in one way and some in another, but, since they were afflicted in no violent way, they stuck to their work, disregarding minor discomforts'.²³⁷

November 1918.

²³⁶ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 27.

²³⁷ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 73

Darius. ‘On November 1st, at 2 A.M., the Americans began their attack; I left to look for cuts of lines’.²³⁸

Kilner. ‘Friday morning, November 1, was the big barrage in which Battery E fired its last shot of the war. At 3:30 a. m. began the preliminary fire, at 100 rounds per hour. Then followed the barrage, with first reduced charge shell, then smoke shell and normal charge shell, and finally high velocity shell, reaching a range of nearly 12,000 metres when the firing ceased, at 1:30 p. m. The total for each gun was over 1,000 rounds’.²³⁹

Darius. ‘On the 2nd-9th we walked on day and night; our division took Sedan on the 8th. I was mending the lines, narrowly escaping death; H. was killed while carrying ammunition. On the morning of the 9th, five of our men were killed; it was on our last day at the front. On the 10th we moved to Herikur. On the 11th a truce was

²³⁸ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 28.

²³⁹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 73

declared; everyone was very happy. On the 14th we moved to Imekur; I found a pound of ammunition. On the 15th I worked with a cleaning unit'.²⁴⁰

Kilner. 'On November 15, Battery E began the long hike into Germany, a total of 350 kilometres, the dismounted men covering it all on foot. During the first few days they carried full packs, but later these were put on the carriages, as before the order at Sommerance. The first day's journey was only seven kilometres, through Buzancy, to Imecourt. There the battery received forty men from the 80th Division, as replacements, to bring the organisation up to full strength. They brought with them 116 horses, to replace our old ones, which, such as could work, had been turned over to the First Battalion.

After fitting the harness to these new horses next morning, we made another short hike, to a wide valley near Ancreville, where we spent a cold, windy night in pup tents. These slight shelters, however, the men had

²⁴⁰ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 28.

learned to make very comfortable protection against the elements, by banking soil about the edges and covering the open end with slickers or shelter-halves'.²⁴¹

‘The following morning the second and third pieces were fitted with new tubes, and the caissons were loaded with ammunition before the battery set out again, this time on a march of twenty-two kilometres. Crossing the river on pontoons at Dun-sur-Meuse, and winding our weary way over hills on the opposite side through interminable woods in the descending darkness, we came to the town of Breheville, surrounded by hundreds of lights and bonfires of the brigade camping for the night. Fortunately we had billets in the village, and thereafter always were billeted in towns, though sometimes our sleeping quarters were only barns and hay mows, not remarkable for either comfort or shelter. At Breheville we stayed for two days, receiving some new clothes and cleaning up at the bath house contrived out of the stone

²⁴¹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 76.

structure where ordinarily the housewives of the town do their washing'.²⁴²

'November 20 we made another long journey, to Thonne les Pres, under the fortified heights of Montmedy-Haut, and the next day a still longer one into Belgian territory. At Montmedy we had opportunity to see how far the Germans had carried their occupation of the land they had held for the previous four years. An electric power plant lit the streets and houses of the town, the "mairie" and other buildings had been converted into hospitals, and extensive railroad yards, gun repair shops and factories spoke of important activity here by the enemy.

The first Belgian towns we entered, Lamarteau, Dompartin and the city of Virton, were gaily decorated with arches of greenery, festoons of paper lanterns, and flags of the Allied nations, in welcome of the American troops. We came at night to St. Leger, where Battery E was quartered in the school house'.²⁴³

²⁴² Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 77.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

Darius. ‘We left on the 16th and arrived in Tonle via Brehenville on the 21st; the inhabitants welcomed us. On the 22nd, we arrived at St. Leger; we entered Belgium, where we were greeted as crusaders, and we spent the night in a beautiful house. On the 23rd all the inhabitants of Arlon came out into the streets to greet us; it was like a festival. On the 24th we entered the little country of Luxembourg; we saw the hostility of the inhabitants. On the 28th we began our march’.²⁴⁴

December 1918.

Darius. ‘We entered Germany on December 3rd and arrived in Dernau on December 15th. On the 21st I wrote to Balius:

“On the last day before I was wounded, I was ready to send you a German cap, helmet, and shoulder straps. But when I got hurt, neither my letter nor those things got sent. So, I will send it all soon. Now the war is over. We are in Germany. We are standing in a town on the

²⁴⁴ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 28

river Ahr (it takes 4 hours on foot to reach the river Rhine). The Germans are very friendly and polite. When the armistice was declared, we all had hoped to return home before Christmas. But now, it looks like we won't be able to go home until about March at the earliest''.²⁴⁵

‘22-31st of December. guard duty. On the 25th I had a cake and a light lunch with the German family I was staying with. On the last day of 1918 I cleaned and repaired the electric light installation’.²⁴⁶

January, February 1919.

Darius. ‘On January 2nd we left for Parein, for divisional maneuvers. On the 3rd, maneuvers in Trimbs; we returned to Rech, to our present camp. From 4th to 10th of February, guard duty, repairing and checking lines. On February 11th I took part in an excursion; we travelled to Remagen by motorcar and from there to Cologne by ship Albertus Magnus. We had a nice time. We saw an English

²⁴⁵ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 28.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

plane diving under one of the bridges in Cologne. I walked in the mountains and in the forest. On the 12th I went on holiday to France; I visited Nancy, Lunéville, Baccarat, Merville, Dizon, Lyon, Paris, Coblenz and Vas. On the 26th I returned to Rechan'.²⁴⁷

March 1919.

Darius. 'On March 2nd we moved to Biolingen. Guard service. On the 15th there was a regimental parade, and on the 16th a divisional parade, which was received and addressed by General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American troops in France. There was a lot of laughter, chasing cowards, throwing helmets, etc. On the 21st, there was a parade that was received by General Clement Flagler, who commanded the 42nd Division. On the 23rd we gave up all our horses. I stayed with Ulrich Jacob in Biolingen, in the Arweiler district. Up until April 5th, I had guard duty, formation, and sports games'.²⁴⁸ 'On April 6th we left by train via Remagen and on April 7th we

²⁴⁷Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 28.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

dined in Coblenz. On April 8th we had breakfast in Metz, had lunch in Verdun, and had dinner near Paris, in the district of which we camped the next day. On the 10th we arrived at Brest by way of Laval; after the examination of the ship, we boarded the *Leviathan*. 18-25th of April We crossed the Atlantic; I worked in the clerk's office'.²⁴⁹

April, May 1919.

Kilner. ‘On the morning of April 15, the regiment marched from Camp Pontamezen to the docks, but the high sea prevented loading that day. So the regiment slept in cots in the dock sheds and embarked next day on the “Leviathan.”

Friday, April 18, eighteen months to a day since the regiment had sailed out of New York harbor on the “President Lincoln,” the 149th left Brest harbor, at 5 p. m.,

²⁴⁹ Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 29.

on the “Leviathan” with a load of over 12,000 Rainbow men, homeward bound’.²⁵⁰

‘In comparison with the voyage on the “President Lincoln,” this was a pleasure trip. The greater deck space, the freedom of movement, the sense of security from the dangers that threatened our passage over, the clear weather and the quiet sea, and, above all, the elation at the prospect of seeing home soon, made the week pass in swift happiness. Battery E minded not the two-meals-a-day plan, for we were on commissary detail, working where food was plentiful, and our badges gave us the run of the cooks’ galleys, where we could cook impromptu meals for ourselves.

About noon, Friday, April 25, land came in sight. In an hour or two, welcome boats appeared to greet us, and played about our ship like terriers around a great Dane. Then the Statue of Liberty brought a cheer from the crowded deck, and the “Leviathan” entered the Hudson River with bands playing fore and aft, drowned by the

²⁵⁰ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 85.

whistles that hailed us from boats and from shore. The office buildings of lower Manhattan blossomed with waving handkerchiefs, and passing ferryboats seemed a mass of fluttering humanity. But their welcome was not more heartfelt than the intense, though quiet, satisfaction and joy of the boys at being home once more'.²⁵¹

Darius. 'On April 25th we sailed to New York and arrived at Camp Merit. On the 26th we were well cleaned and fed. On May 6th we left via Canada for Chicago, arriving there on May 8th. The regiment was also present. On the 10th we received our pay and discharge papers'.²⁵²

Gilmore. 'CITED FOR BRAVERY. Recommended for Distinguished Service Cross - Alvin G. Robinson, Cornelius E. Lombardi, Fred T. King, Daniel J. Shouse. Recommended for Croix De Guerre - Alvin G. Robinson, Fred T. King, Daniel J. Shouse. Highly commended by regimental command for gallantry in

²⁵¹ Frederic Richard Kilner, *Battery E in France: 149th Field Artillery, Rainbow (42nd) Division* (Chicago, 1919), 86.

²⁵² Petras Jurgėla, *Sparnuoti Lietuviai Darius Ir Girėnas, Jų Gyvenimas Ir Pirmasis Lietuvių Skridimas per Atlantą Iš Amerikos Lietuvon* [The Winged Lithuanians Darius and Girėnas: Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Flight Across the Atlantic from America to Lithuania] (Chicago, 1935), 29.

action - Walter Maxson, George Stephens, Ray Robinson, Benito Navarro, Robert Taylor, William Hoever, Cyrus Field, Thomas Clemts, Paul Chapman, T. Roberts Kearney, George Webb, Harry Bartholomew, Reddick Martin, Russell Cone, Arnold Olsen, George Sahagin, Walter Tatsch, Joseph Cross, Bugler Oglesby. Men mentioned in regimental order (Fig. 39, 40, 41) for having habitually distinguished themselves throughout all the actions of the regiment - Fred T. King, Beaucie Hebert, John F. Rogers, Walter T. Maxson, Daniel J. Shouse, George Barbour, Alvin G. Robinson, Ernest Bloomfield, Dresden L. Tevis, Carl L. Kling, Stephen W. Darius, Robert Seeley, Lawrence Cagney, George Sabo'.²⁵³

²⁵³ William E. Gilmore, "History of Headquarters Company, One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Field Artillery, from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 17, no. 1/2 (July 1924), 141.

Supplemental Figures

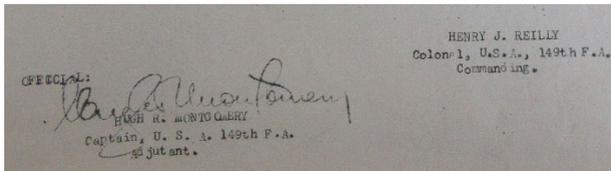
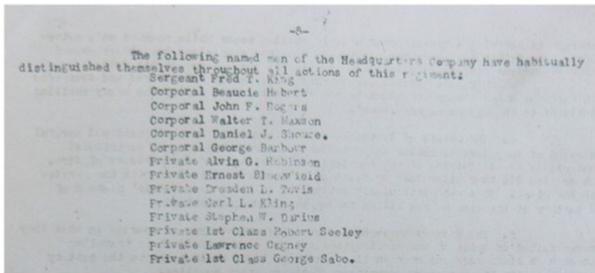
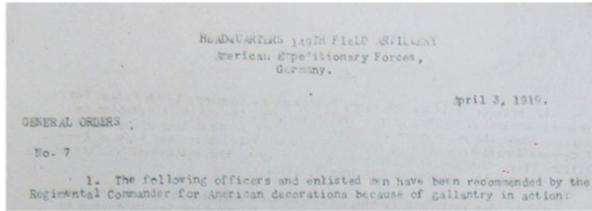


Figure 33: 149th Field Artillery Regiment General Order Recommending Decoration for Gallantry. On the page No 5 on the list's line No 11 from top is Private Stephen W. Darius. Darius is honoured among other 14 comrades – The following named men of Headquarters Company have habitually distinguished themselves throughout all actions of this regiment. Order is signed by COL H. J. Reilly, Commander of 149th FAR. National Archives. National Personnel Records Center.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Fragment from the order No. 7 issued on 1919-04-03 by Colonel Henry J. Reilly, Commander of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment, first, fifth and last pages. Preserved in the holdings of the United States National Archives and Records Administration, ARC ID 301641, Entry NM-91 1241, Box 38.

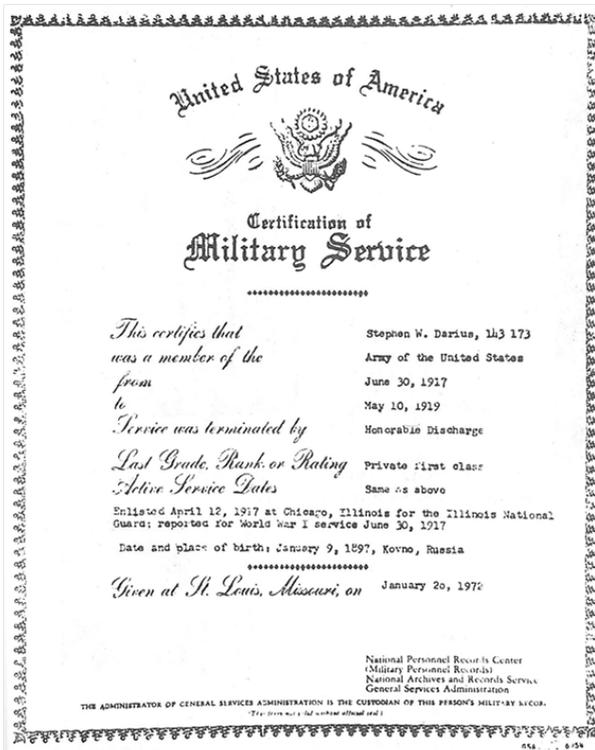


Figure 34: This certificate states that Stephen W. Darius served in the U.S. Army during World War I from June 30, 1917, to May 10, 1919, and was honourably discharged as a Private First Class. He was born in 1897 in Kovno (Kaunas), at a time when Lithuania was under Imperial Russian occupation. The family received this certificate in 1972.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ Nijolė Dariūtė-Maštarienė, A. Gamziukas, and G. Ramoška, *Darius Ir Girenas, Dokumentai* [Darius and Girenas, documents] (Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991), 77.



Figure 35: CSM Alvydas Tamošiūnas with Steponas Darius' original aviator helmet lined with cat fur. The artifact is preserved in the family archive and collections. Author - Holding the pilot's helmet once worn by the legendary aviator Darius was a special feeling. I felt not only a direct connection to a rare artifact, but also the soul and spirit of this person—his aura and energy. I believe the Lituania flight will long remain a remarkable example of Lithuanians striving to connect the shores of the Atlantic, inspiring many generations to come.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Photo of the author taken during the research process.



Figure 36: The grave of Darius and Girėnas in Kaunas, Lithuania. The inscription reads: 'Darius and Girenas, having conquered the Atlantic with their Lituanica flight, died before reaching their homeland on July 17, 1933'. The tombstone sculptor is Vytautas Maciuika. The gravestone monument of S. Darius and S. Girėnas is located in the Kaunas Aukštieji Šančiai Military Cemetery, at Ašmenos Street 1. Come and honor the conquerors of the Atlantic!²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ Photo taken by author during a visit to Kaunas, Lithuania during the research process.

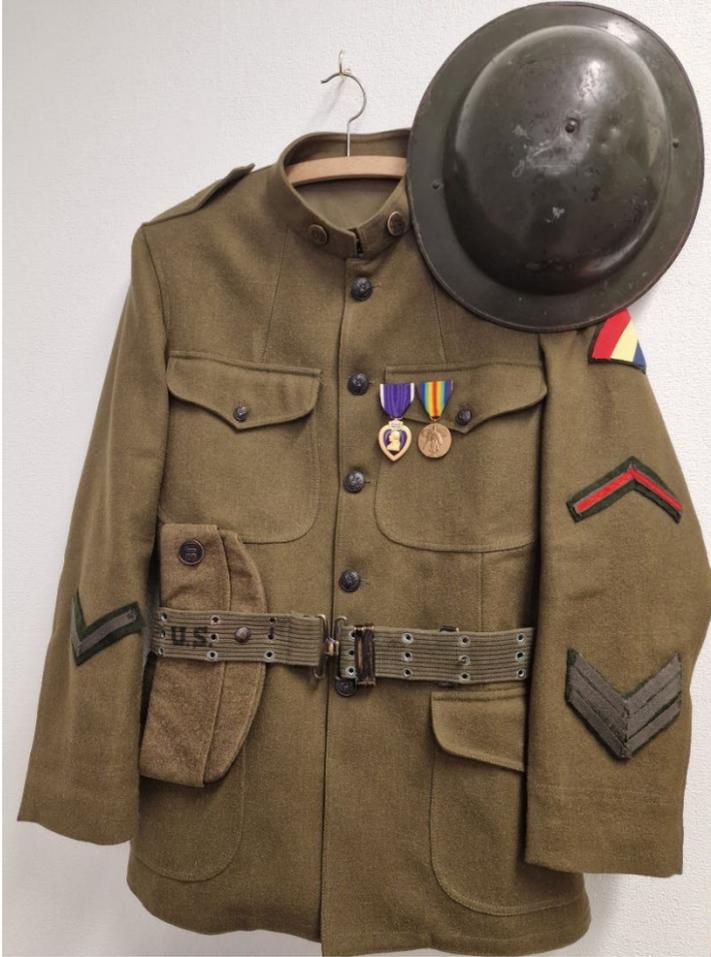


Figure 37: The photo depicts a reconstructed uniform of an enlisted soldier from the U.S. Army 42nd Rainbow Division during World War I, as worn by Private First-Class Steponas Darius. The medals shown—the Purple Heart and the Victory Medal—are applied retrospectively.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Photo taken in coordination with the author and Baltic Defence College.



Figure 38: The uniform is modelled by Major Darius Černiauskas, a member of the BALTDEFCOL Staff from the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The World War I U.S. Army uniform jacket was kindly borrowed from the war history and reenactment club in Grenadierius, Lithuania.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Photo taken in coordination with the author and Baltic Defence College.



Figure 39: The uniform is modelled by Major Darius Černiauskas, a member of the BALTDEFCOL Staff from the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The World War I U.S. Army uniform jacket was kindly borrowed from the war history and reenactment club in Grenadierius, Lithuania.²⁶⁰

As for the last piece of supplemental material of note: the author created a map illustrating Steponas Darius' movements during his deployment in the European theatre of the First World War from 1st of November 1917 to 15th April 1919. You can access the map made with Google Maps here:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/ggYjp8Jw129n8aph9>

²⁶⁰ Photo taken in coordination with the author and Baltic Defence College.

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Pilot, Officer of Lithuanian Armed Forces, Conqueror of the Atlantic Ocean, Steponas Darius is a personality who has received special attention. His biography, individual life episodes, and significant events have been dedicated to monographs, various academic and popular science texts. However, the discovery and analysis of new sources provide an opportunity to revisit what seems to be a well-known story. New information not only allows for a deeper understanding of already explored aspects but also reveals new facts and offers a different perspective on the research subject.

This path of discovery was chosen by Lithuanian Armed forces non-commissioned officer, historian, CSM Alvydas Tamošiūnas. By researching and analysing sources scattered in archives about Steponas Darius, he

examines in detail Darius's service in the U.S. Army, reveals the soldier's environment, and describes the experiences and challenges of World War I. In this publication, S. Darius's awards history, injuries sustained in battles, iconographic sources, and uniform elements are meticulously analysed. Finally, the researcher evaluates the impact that the service experience in the U.S. Army had on Darius's personality traits.

CSM Alvydas Tamošiūnas' work is an excellent example for those who seek answers to new questions and do not stop exploring, learning, and enjoying the discovery process. He contributes not only to deepening the knowledge of history but also to enriching and nurturing memory.

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Steponas Darius represents a chapter in history that can be taught and passed on to future generations. It encompasses several important aspects: human courage, will, and also the ability to achieve something unprecedented, incorporating the most modern innovation. His transatlantic flight with Stasys Girėnas showcased Lithuania's determination to stand out on the global stage and remains a powerful example of perseverance against the odds. Knowing about Darius serves as a reminder that innovation, bravery, and dedication can transcend obstacles and leave a lasting legacy.

The flight with *Litaunica* represents Lithuanian national pride. It was essential for a small state in difficult circumstances to have global attention. The pilots have earned the honour of being national heroes in Lithuania,

and it should also be borne in mind that they are positive role models.

The importance of this topic must certainly be recognized in modern research. Researchers who delve into his life and achievements are the custodians of this vital chapter of history, bringing it to light for future generations. Through a comprehensive study, this writing provides the context and necessary details for understanding Darius's significance while also inspiring others to draw lessons from his perseverance and patriotism. Their work bridges the past with the present, allowing us to honour historical figures while drawing inspiration for the challenges of today.

CSM Alvydas Tamošiūnas has done a great job of researching Steponas Darius' activities in the U.S. service, and hopefully, it will inspire readers in many ways. The prerequisites for conducting such research are close to ideal: he has an Air Force background, and Alvydas is also a historian. Hopefully, the current writing will also inspire other military personnel to research history and write about different historical topics in the future.

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