

Harold T. Andrews

By Harriet Peabody

Harold Taylor Andrews was born on November 10, 1893 in Portland, Maine. He grew up



to become an engineer and eventually went overseas to serve in

World War I as an engineer for the military. Although it

was not what he had intended, he ended up in battle and

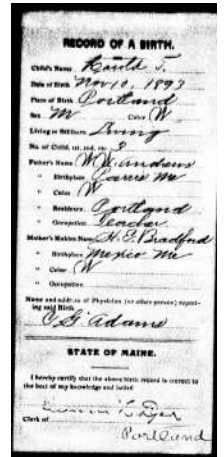
became the first man from Maine to die in the war. I

decided to research Harold Andrews because I discovered

that there was a monument dedicated to him in Portland.

The monument had an inscription that said that he was

the first man from Maine to die in World War One. This



naturally caught my attention, and after researching him I found that he was an engineer and was not even equipped with a gun in the battle he fought in. I wanted to tell his story because it is so unusual. Even though he was not a traditional soldier, he fought bravely for America and the Allied Powers. ¹²

Andrews lived in Portland at 259 Brackett Street with his parents, William and Harriet Andrews, three sisters, and two brothers. Their family also lived with Lois Bradford, Andrews' grandmother, and they had a servant, Hester O'Negan.³ Andrews attended Hebron Academy, at which his father was the principal of the Butler Grammar School. According to the June 1923



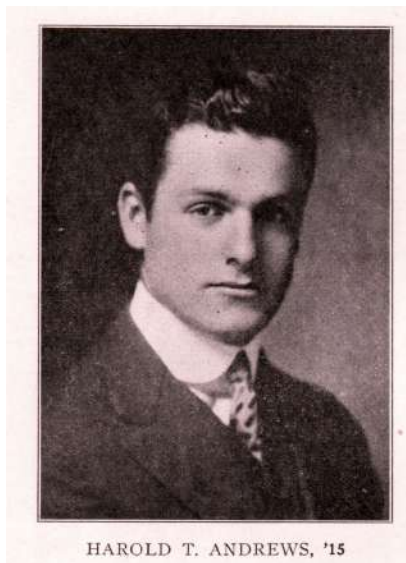
Hebron Academy Alumni Magazine, Andrews played

football, baseball, and track, was on the debating team, and

played the mandolin. Steve Middleton, a history teacher at

Hebron Academy, said that “[Andrews] was an average

student, but where he excelled was in athletics and in the



HAROLD T. ANDREWS, '15

social world... He was also known to have a great sense of humor.”⁴ He graduated Hebron Academy in 1914 and went to the University of Maine at Orono, as is stated in the 1916 city directory in Portland.⁵ At UMO he studied chemical engineering, which prepared him for the work he was going to do in the war. He also joined the fraternity Beta Theta Phi. However, he only stayed at college for two years before leaving to

work for the Standard Oil Company in New Jersey. When the United States joined World War I, Andrews left his job to enlist. He enlisted in Fort Totten, New York and joined the Company B, 11th Regiment engineers. They were sent overseas on the *Carpathia* from New York City on July 14, 1917.^{6 7}

Passenger List
COMPAGNIE DES "CARPATHIA" Les U.S. ARMES (U.S.A.)
CLASH: THIRD (Sheet #11) DATE: July 14, 1917.
FROM: NEW YORK CITY TO: As ordered.

NO.	NAME	AGE	RESIDENCE	AUTHORITY	REMARKS
228	BINGHAM	Merritt C.	Serje.		
229	CAHILL	William	Serje.		
231	LA BAY	Island B.	Supply Sgt.		
232	LA LAMORON	John C.	Serje.		
233	WELSH	John F.	Serje.		
234	WATKINS	William	Serje.		
235	WATKINS	Charles F.	Use Sgt.		
236	WELSH	Charles B.	Serje.		
237	WELSH	William	Serje.		
238	WELSH	August J.	Serje.		
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Andrews' regiment was one of the first to arrive overseas in August of 1917. It was one of 9 engineer regiments, 3 of which were sent to work on railways in northern France. The 11th regiment had 1,400 men, many of whom had worked on railways previous to the war.⁸ They had also been trained for the war in Jersey City. The regiment first arrived in London and was inspected by King George V, but afterwards was promptly deployed to Gouzeaucourt to repair main railways and lines of railway communication under the British Commander, General Byng. They also positioned fleets of tanks in case of a German attack.⁹ They received "shrapnel helmets, box respirators, and P.H. helmets"¹⁰ for their work. Although it was rare for engineer

regiments to receive rifles, these men did because they were so unprotected while working. One example of the dangers these engineers faced occurred on September 5, 1917 when they came under fire by German artillery. Two American men were injured by the shrapnell, Sgt. Matthew Calderwood and Pvt. William Branigan.¹¹ These men were the very first American casualties



overseas in World War I. Two months later, the 11th regiment

began repairing the main railway line that went North to Cambrai. The engineers were told to wait until the Germans had fallen back, and at first it seemed as though the British were successful in

forcing them back. However, the Germans then broke through British

lines and attacked the engineers in an attempt to regain

their territory. On November 30, just three months after Andrews arrived in

Europe, the Germans began to fire on the 11th Regiment men. Unfortunately, on

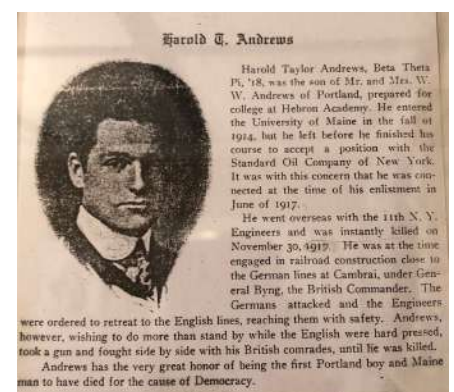
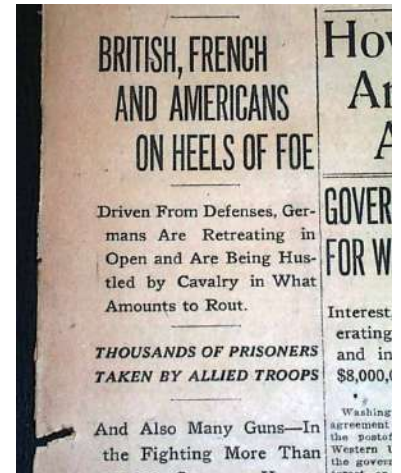
this day the engineers were told not to bring their rifles. As the Germans

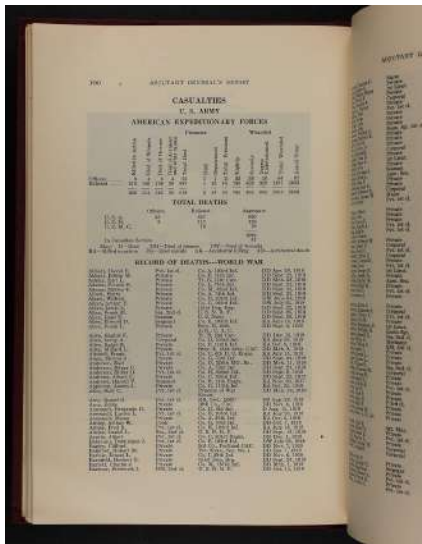
advanced on them, some soldiers were not able to get away from the Germans

who were heavily armed with both guns and flamethrowers, but those who could

retreated to join the British lines. Andrews joined the British in fighting, but this day, November 30, 1917, at the Battle of Cambrai, he lost his life.^{12 13 14}

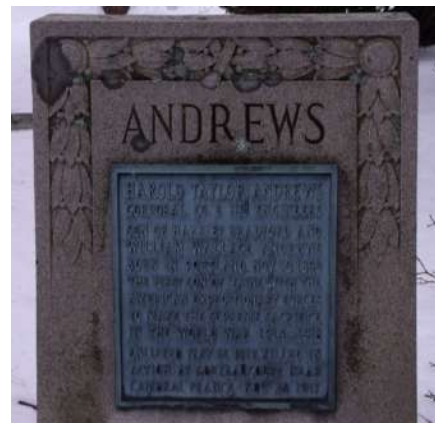
According to his obituary, “Andrews, however, wishing to do more than stand by while the English were hard pressed, took a gun and fought side by side with his British comrades. Having exhausted





all ammunition, Andrews armed himself with a trenching stool (shovel) and fought until he was killed.” Harold T. Andrews was one of six men from the 11th regiment to be killed in action that day. However, as was stated by Herb Adams at a ceremony marking the 100th day since Andrews’ death, “(in front of) Harold Andrews, there was a small circle of the foe that he had taken down with the only tool at hand: his shovel.”¹⁵ Additionally, according to the December 28, 1930 issue of the Portland Sunday Telegram, it was General Pershing that sent news that Andrews was missing after the battle of Cambrai. Andrews was only 23 years old when he died, and with his death he became the first man from Maine to die in World War One. His body was first buried in France, but was eventually sent back to Portland in 1921 and his casket was placed in the

Portland City hall rotunda before being laid in his family plot in Evergreen Cemetery. ¹⁶¹⁷¹⁸¹⁹²⁰



Because Harold Andrews was the first man from Maine to die in World War I and heroically gave his life for America, there are numerous monuments dedicated to him throughout

Portland. The field at Hebron Academy where he attended school is now named after him.

Additionally, the Andrews Square Memorial was erected in 1921. This memorial bears a plaque

reading, “This square was named to honor the memory of

Harold Taylor Andrews the first son of Maine to make the

supreme sacrifice in the Great War of 1914-1918. Corporal

Co. B. 11th Engineers American Expeditionary Forces

enlisted May, 15, 1917. Born in Portland Nov. 10, 1893

killed in Action at Gouzeaucourt near Cambrai, France Nov.

30, 1917.”²¹ Harold T. Andrews is also the first name listed on the World War I Honor Roll at

City Hall in Portland. The American Legion Harold T. Andrews Post 17 was created in honor of

him as well. According to a newspaper article about the death of Andrews’ father, he was “one

of the charter members of the Advisory Council of Harold T. Andrews

Post American Legion. In 1924, a chair was placed permanently beside

the commander’s chair for Mr. Andrews.”²² Until her death, Harold

Andrews’ mother attended every Armistice Day and

Memorial Day ceremony at which wreaths were

placed on plaques for Harold in the Butler School and

in City Hall Plaza. The many plaques and memorials

dedicated to Harold T. Andrews are a reminder of the

sacrifice he made for his country and prevent him from being forgotten among

the people of his hometown. Harold T. Andrews excelled as a team member on athletic teams

and the debate team at Hebron Academy. When he joined in a battle with the British army, it



became clear that he took this teamwork oriented mindset with him overseas. He bravely fought alongside a country of which he was not a citizen and continued fighting even when his only weapon was a shovel. He gave his life for the Allied Powers and is justly remembered as a war hero. ^{23 24 25}

Endnotes

1. *Harold T. Andrews*, Harold T. Andrews Post 17, Portland, ME.
2. "Harold T Andrews in the Maine, Birth Records, 1715-1922," *Ancestry.com*, 2018, , accessed June 10, 2018
3. "Harold F Andrews in the 1910 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry.com*, 2018, , accessed June 10, 2018.
4. Leslie H. Dixon, "Harold T. Andrews, of Hebron Academy, First Maine Casualty in WWI," *The Advertiser Democrat*, May 25, 2017, , accessed June 11, 2018, <http://advertiserdemocrat.com/harold-t-andrews-hebron-academy-first-maine-casualty-wwi/>.
5. "Harold T Andrews in the U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," *Ancestry.com*, 2018, , accessed June 10, 2018.
6. *Harold T. Andrews*, '15, 1915, University of Maine, Orono.
7. "Carpathia Passenger List," *Ancestry.com*, 2018, , accessed June 10, 2018.
8. Jessie Kratz, "The First to Fight: The 11th Engineers in the Battle of Cambrai," National Archives and Records Administration, December 5, 2017, , accessed June 11, 2018, <https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2017/12/05/the-first-to-fight-the-11th-engineers-in-the-battle-of-cambrai/>.
9. Ibid.
10. Leslie H. Dixon, "Harold T. Andrews, of Hebron Academy, First Maine Casualty in WWI"
11. Jessie Kratz, "The First to Fight: The 11th Engineers in the Battle of Cambrai"
12. *The First American Engineers on the British Front. Arras and Cambrai Area*, October 7, 1923, British Photographs of World War I, 1914 - 1918, National Archives Catalog, Cambrai.
13. "German Armies in Full Flight on Cambrai-St. Quentin Front," *The Atlanta Constitution*, October 10, 1918, , accessed June 10, 2018, <http://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/567774?imagelist=1>.
14. *Harold T. Andrews Soldier*, American Legion Harold T. Andrews Post 17, Portland, ME.
15. Troy R. Bennett, "Soldier Who Fought German Flamethrowers with His Shovel in WWI Honored in Portland," *Bangor Daily News*, December 01, 2017, , accessed June 11, 2018, <https://bangordailynews.com/2017/12/01/news/portland/soldier-who-fought-german-flamethrowers-with-his-shovel-in-wwi-honored-in-portland/>.
16. "Western Union Telegram," McCain to Frank Bradford, January 15, 1918, Washington DC.
17. "Harold T. Andrews Obituary," 1918, , accessed June 10, 2018.
18. "Harold T Andrews in the U.S., Adjutant General Military Records, 1631-1976," *Ancestry.com*, 2018, , accessed June 10, 2018.
19. "Corp Harold Taylor Andrews," *Find A Grave*, , accessed June 10, 2018.
20. Ibid.
21. "Portland, Maine: Andrews Square Memorial" (2015). Cumberland. 2. <http://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/cumberland/2>
22. "William W. Andrews, 73, 42 Years Principal Of Butler School, Is Dead," October 6, 1931, , accessed June 10, 2018.
23. "Portland, Maine: Andrews Square Memorial"
24. "Mother of First Local Man Killed in World War I Dies," May 31, 1945, , accessed June 10, 2018.
25. *Harold Taylor Andrews*, American Legion Harold T. Andrews Post 17, Portland, ME.

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- Bennett, Troy R. "Soldier Who Fought German Flamethrowers with His Shovel in WWI Honored in Portland." *Bangor Daily News*. December 01, 2017. Accessed June 11, 2018.
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