

**MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY  
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

*Proudly Honors*



**MAURICE J. PORTMAN**  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
PRIVATE (E-1)  
JUNE 1, 1917 – APRIL 24, 1919  
WOUNDED IN ACTION SEPTEMBER 29, 1918

as

**PURPLE HEART PATRIOT**

**MAY 2025**

*Cheryl Farris, Honoring her Grandfather's Service and Sacrifice*  
*Sponsored by: Little Blue River Chapter, NSDAR*



My grandfather, Maurice J. Portman, was born March 26, 1899, in Laredo, Grundy County, Missouri, to John and Emma (Kissling) Portman. John immigrated from Switzerland to the United States in 1848 and Emma arrived from Switzerland in 1892. I was only 10 years old when my grandfather died and never thought to ask him about his service. What I have here is a compilation of the history of his regiment and division with insertion of his service dates. I do not know how he was wounded on September 29, 1918, but I think he was gassed during the Meuse Argonne Offensive.

Maurice was inducted into the Missouri National Guard at Chillicothe, Livingston County, Missouri on June 1, 1917. His first assignment was with Company I, 4th Infantry Regiment, Missouri National Guard with training at Camp Crowder, Nevada, Missouri. The first 139th Infantry Regiment was originally formed for service in World War I from Kansas and Missouri troops, the 3rd Kansas and 4th Missouri Infantry Regiments. The 4th Missouri Regiment was drafted into Federal service on August 5, 1917, at Nevada, Missouri. On October 1, 1917, the 3rd Kansas Infantry and 4th Missouri Infantry were consolidated to create the 139th Infantry Regiment, assigned to the 35th "Santa Fe" Division. The regiment arrived in England on May 7, 1918, and first began training and transit for combat in France. The regiment made its first combat action on September 26, 1918, in the Sommedieue sector. As part of the 70th Brigade, it attacked alongside the 140th Infantry Regiment. After taking their objective here, the regiment advanced to the Argonne Sector and assaulted the German positions. By October 1, the 139th was

relieved by elements of the 1st Infantry Division and they had suffered 65% casualties. The regiment was demobilized between May 9-11, 1919, at Fort Riley but was not reconstituted in the postwar reorganization of the National Guard.

Grandpa served overseas from April 25, 1918, to April 24, 1919, and returned to Alpha, Missouri, where he married my grandmother, Naomi Meeker, in October 1919. They had two sons, Vernon, my Dad, and Richard. Grandpa was a brakeman for the Milwaukee Railroad. He and my grandmother moved from Laredo, Missouri, to the Old Northeast neighborhood of Kansas City, Missouri, during World War II. He died of bladder cancer at the Kansas City Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital on November 22, 1958.

My grandfather was a loving husband, father, and grandfather, and a marvelous entertaining storyteller. Unfortunately, he never told us stories of his wartime service. His father had brothers and their families in England and Grandpa did say that if he had known about them, he would have looked for them when he was training in England.