

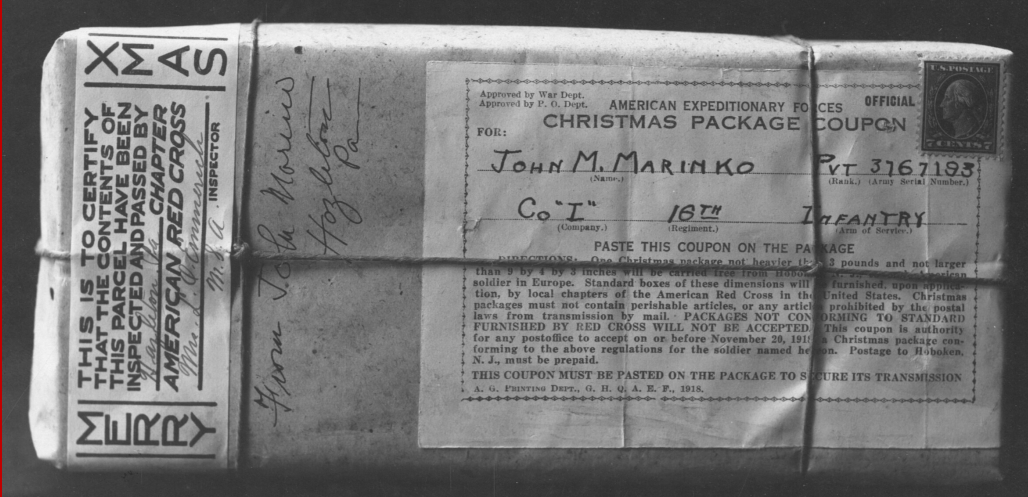


U.S. ARMY



CHRISTMAS 1918: THE AEF'S HOLIDAY OF PEACE AND REMEMBRANCE

As the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) settled into occupation duty following the Armistice of 11 November 1918, Soldiers faced their first Christmas in a world no longer at war.



Each Soldier of the AEF was issued a coupon that could be sent to loved ones in the United States. Families used the coupon to mail one parcel completely free, to their Soldier overseas.



Red Cross Christmas Day Dinner in Paris 1918 (NARA Signal Corps Photo 165-WW-43C-018)

With Christmas packages in hand Soldiers across their billets and mess halls, marked Christmas with improvised decorations, carols, and special meals.

Christmas in 1918 was more than a holiday; it was a symbol of transition. The coupon parcels represented the enduring connection between Soldiers and their families.

In the words of one Army chaplain, "The bells of Christmas ring more sweetly when the cannon are silent." For the Soldiers of the AEF, Christmas 1918 was a season of gratitude, remembrance, and anticipation of homecoming.

Rock Island Arsenal Christmas Menu 1918. Includes a decorative border, a list of menu items like Oyster Cocktail, Roast Turkey, and Pumpkin Pie, and a small illustration of a soldier.

NOVEMBER TRIVIA

- 1. What holiday staple often appeared in Army mess halls at Christmas?
2. What was the most common item sent to U.S. Soldiers in the Christmas packages?
3. What music became more popular in the U.S. following WWI?

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

- 1. When was Thanksgiving made a national holiday?
2. When did the earliest Thanksgiving celebrations take place in the Army?
3. Who issued the first Thanksgiving proclamation?



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