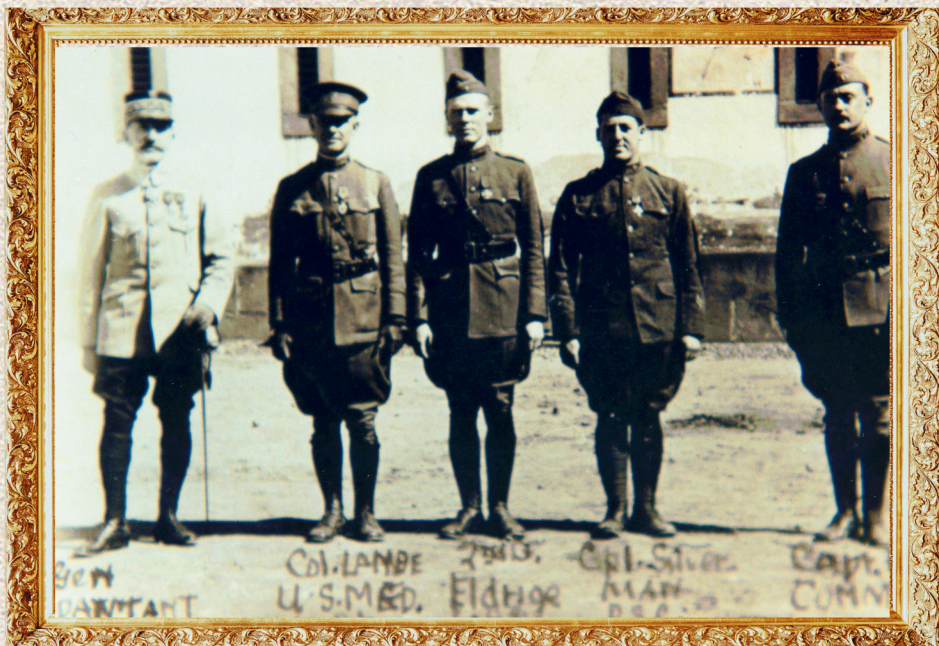


PRIVATE HYMAN SILVERMAN

On October 27, 1918, the German artillery fire ignited an ammunition dump near Verdun. While exploding shells were seriously wounding his comrades, Private Hyman Silverman (fourth from the left in the photo) jumped into action.

He began removing ammunition even as more exploded around him.

He began removing the ammunition even as more exploded around him. Grenade explosions hit Silverman multiple times, but he continued pulling ammunition from the blazing pit until he had removed most of the explosives. Not finished yet, Silverman ignored his wounds to pull his injured comrades away from the explosions. Only after they had reached safety did Silverman accept medical attention for himself.



Distinguished Service Cross

After the battle, the Army declared him a hero. Silverman was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action. Silverman received the medal in May of 1919 at a ceremony at Clermont-Ferrand, France, where he received training for U.S. troops at the school. The French government also awarded him the Croix de Guerre. The 60th Infantry, 5th Division was near Verdun as part of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. It is known as the bloodiest battle of the war, with over 26,000 American lives lost. Silverman reported that his company, Co. E, had 117 casualties, 15 killed and 102 wounded or gassed. It was also one of the most significant victories of the war for the Americans. The American advance played a crucial role in forcing the Armistice two weeks later on November 11.

Son of Russian Immigrants

Less than a year before the battle, Silverman had been a bookkeeper in Chelsea, Massachusetts, and a student at Northeastern University. The son of Russian immigrants, Silverman left high school at age 15 to pursue full-time employment. He had worked a variety of jobs, including at the canteen of the U.S. Naval Hospital in Chelsea. While working there, he took night classes at the YMCA. Silverman was three years through his Northeastern education when drafted into the Army. He entered the service on November 23, 1917.

Chelsea, MA

On September 3, 1919, Silverman was discharged as a corporal at Camp Devens, Massachusetts. In addition to the Meuse-Argonne, he had seen action in the St. Mihiel Offensive and been a part of the Army of Occupation. After the war, Silverman returned to Chelsea to graduate from Northeastern and practice accounting. He and his wife Jennie had three daughters. One, Beatrice, joined the U.S. Navy WAVES in World War II. Later, she was the first wife of author Norman Mailer.