

## Lieut John Deming Arnett

Birth: June 2, 1888  
New York, USA

Death: April 16, 1918  
France

John was an exemplary student. After Medina High School he went to Buffalo Medical College with the intention of becoming a doctor. For his last years, he attended Albany Medical College, where two of his brothers had proceeded him. He graduated from Albany Medical College of Union University, Albany, 1914. This is his graduation photo. As a licensed physician by NY in 1915, he practiced in several small towns in NY prior to the war. On January 6, 1917, he married Florence Maria Sayers from Albion.



After the declaration of war, he immediately volunteered for service and was admitted August 2nd. He was assigned as a 1st Lieutenant to the Medical Reserve Corps. After a short stay in Washington, D.C., he was sent to Europe on September 18, 1917. John was detailed by the United States military authorities for service with the British Royal Army Medical Corps at Portsmouth, England. There he served in a military hospital for two months before being transferred to the Winchester military hospital. Later, he was again transferred to the fifth general hospital, South Sea, attending wounded as they came from the trenches in France.

On December 28th he wrote, "When the wounded arrive at the hospital, they are first bathed. Then they must stay in bed for 48 hours. The majority of injured are gas victims (mustard gas, chlorine etc.). Evidence is skin burns, infection of the eyes, loss of voice, heavy coughing, chest pains and bronchitis. The gas burns the mouth, throat and lungs. Most of them recover, but the recovery process is long. Those whose lungs are too badly infected don't make it. Shrapnel wounds are also very frequent, but one must try to imagine what the effects of a hot piece of iron can do when it enters the body at high velocity. Bullet wounds are rare because this injury is not considered serious enough to return to England for treatment. A few days ago I saw a man with a bullet entry wound to the left side of his nose, just under his eye with the exit wound just under his right ear. This man was on his way to the front. Other diseases are Trench Fever and Trench Foot . . . . With Trench Foot, the feet swell up to twice or three times their normal size. This is extremely painful and sometimes toes need to be amputated. Shell Shock is also very frequent. The shattering effects of exploding bombs causes changes in the blood circulation, cerebral



function and the spine, which can damage the brain tissue. Symptoms are unconsciousness, splitting headaches and severe trembling of the whole body, lasting for months".

John landed in France on his first wedding anniversary, January 6, 1918, and immediately went to the front line, where he was in charge of a dressing station with the 99th field ambulance. His last letter sent home was written in a German pillbox, which he had transformed into a dressing station, a short distance from the German trenches.

He wrote, "The landscape is covered with shell holes as far as one can see. They are filled with water and above some of them hangs a green smog. The mud is very deep and we have to walk over "Duck-boards". I am in a pillbox we conquered from the Germans. The walls are five feet thick with a small hole as entrance. This pillbox is about ten feet by ten and five feet high. I feel quite safe in it. Each pill box has a name: I saw Cascara farm, Fine Cot and Bigger Bush. During a calm period, I decided to drain some shell holes near the dressing station. I was shocked when, while I was digging, suddenly came across the heads and shoulders of five Australian soldiers. There is no rest for the dead in this country".

First Lieutenant John Arnett was killed April 16, 1918 in the Trappist Monastery at Mount Cats in Northern France. He was taking care of the wounded, assisted by the monks. For an unknown reason, on April 20th his wife received a telegram from John letting her know that he was in good health. The mystery of this message has never been solved. Possibly it was an error made by the authorities. On December 11, 1922, his widow married Alexander L. Strouse. This is probably the reason why his remains were left in Europe. In 1930 when the Gold Star Mother Pilgrimage was organized, his mother came to Flanders Field and visited his grave. Bio by soilsister 2009/ DOB from WWI Reg Card



Note: First Lieutenant, Medical Reserve Corps, U.S. Army. Entered the service from New York.

Burial: [Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial](#)

Waregem

West Flanders (West-Vlaanderen), Belgium

Plot: Plot B, Row 2, Grave 10.

Maintained by: [Linda Davis](#)

Originally Created by: [CWGC/ABMC](#)

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