

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Jesse Cooley

“Letters Home as published in the Brighton Argus, August 7, 1918”



In 1918, World War I ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Hence, November 11th became “Armistice Day” or as we call it now, “Veterans’ Day”, to honor all that lost their lives supporting freedom. Like all cities across the United States, Brighton sent their “boys” off to fight. The Brighton Argus published “Letters Home” every week from the men in the service. Jesse Cooley was one such man, his letter home to Frances Conley, was published August 7, 1918.

“My own dear mother”

How any times I have thought of you today, and I suppose you are wondering what your boy is doing. Well I am not doing much today for a wonder. Going to a ballgame this afternoon if I can rake up ambition enough. Mother, I can’t say that I was ever very ambitious but I guess I have lost what I had. I feel old now-a-days. Guess I have carried too many packs on my back. Getting so I hate the sight of that pack. If it were not for you dear Mother, I guess I would go mad, but you are all the world to me. I got your letter and it was a good one. In fact I hear from you folks 2 or 3 times a week. You see I have it on the rest of you for I can write as much as I like and it don’t cost me a cent. It is often very difficult, however, to get paper.

How I would like to celebrate in Brighton today but perhaps I can next year. When you write, tell me what is going on around home. Suppose it was some fourth.

I am feeling bum lately. A month in the front lines was too much for me I guess. Seems good not to have shrapnel for breakfast, but I can hear the shells alright from here. It is Fourth of July all the time here. Mother—never fear for your boy Jesse—he is getting 3 squares a day and carries out his orders. You see this war perhaps different than it is. Our company has been very lucky. Hope it will continue, but our time may come yet.

The weather is not so warm here as it is in the states at this time of year. It gets pretty chilly before morning in the trenches. We all have new overcoats.

The 1st day of August, I will have had 6 months service in France. Every 6 months we get a gold stripe on our sleeve. Don’t look for me for a long time Mother, although I would love to see you more than I can tell. My letter is crowding paper, so will say goodbye.

From your loving son

Jesse Cooley 126th Infantry Co. E. APO”

Jesse was killed August 2, one day after receiving his 6 month service gold bar and 5 days before his letter was published in the Argus. Jesse was the first local man to die in service in WWI, he was just 22 years of age. American Legion Post #235 was renamed in honor of Jesse B. Cooley.

(Submitted by Mindy Kinsey from information from the Brighton Argus and Honor Roll of WWI.)