Joseph Milton Joyce

Joseph Milton Joyce was born 3 September 1896 in Milan, Chippewa County, Minnesota. He was the son of Thomas F. Joyce (1865-1922) and Adelaide M. Utley (1870-1946). Other children besides Joseph were Thomas Hugh (ca 1890-), John Wendell (1892-1967), Alfred Martin (1894-1977), Guy Stephen (1899-1984) and Gladys (1899-1936). Three of the boys served during WWI: Joseph "Milton," Alfred and Guy. Their father, Thomas, was a butcher and a provision dealer in Kragero, Chippewa County in 1900, and was a livestock commission man when he lived in South St. Paul. Thomas died in 1922 in South St. Paul, Dakota County, Minnesota.

At age 21, Joseph registered for the draft on 9 June 1917 while he was living in South St. Paul. He stated that he was an applicant for the U.S. Marine Corps. He enlisted on 7 June 1917. In September 1917 he qualified as marksman. In October 1917, he was promoted to corporal. He served with the American Expeditionary Forces in France and Germany between December 1917 and May 23, 1919. A machine gunner, he was at Verdun sector from 1 April to May 12, 1918; Chateau-Thierry sector from 1 June to 11 June 1918; St. Mihiel sector from 12 September to 17 September 1918; and Meuse-Argonne sector from 1 November to 11 November 1918. He participated in the march of the Allies through Belgium and Luxembourg to the Rhine from 17 November to 13 December 1918, and served in the Army of Occupation from 14 December 1918 to 7 May 1919. According to his military record in possession of a family member, Joseph was shell shocked during fighting at on 11 June 1918 in the Chateau-Thierry sector. He wrote about his experiences in a colorful letter to his parents, printed in July 1918 in the *South St. Paul Daily Reporter*. "… It was fierce and hot fighting for the whole time, day and night, but it was worth it. I was in the thick of every Marine attack as I'm a machine gunner. We licked the Dutch out of their boots and took almost as many in the twelve days I was on the line as there are Marines in France…"

Another article in that paper in May 1919 said that "Milton" had been in the hospital in France for several months, "suffering from wounds. He was also gassed in one of the drives which the Marines made toward the end of the big war. He was engaged in some of the biggest battles at the front and formed part of the army which beat back the Huns from Paris." Joseph was discharged from service on 14 August 1919. In October 1923, Joseph M. Joyce was awarded a Silver Star Citation for his actions during the War:

"By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved July 9, 1918 (Bul. No. 43, W.D., 1918), Private Joseph M. Joyce (MCSN: 92080), United States Marine Corps, is cited by the Commanding General, SECOND Division, American Expeditionary Forces, for gallantry in action and a silver star may be placed upon the ribbon of the Victory Medals awarded him. Private Joyce distinguished himself while serving with the 77th Company, 6th Machine-Gun Battalion, 2d Division, American Expeditionary Forces during the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, France, 30 September to 11 November 1918."

After the War, Joseph returned to live with his family in South St. Paul on Thompson Avenue. His father died in 1922 and Joseph must have taken over his father's livestock commission business, as in 1923 Joseph was living at 1421 Thompson Avenue in South St. Paul and the city directory listed his occupation as president of the Joyce Commission Company.

In 1930, Joseph was married to Eva (age 32, born in North Dakota) in St. Paul, Ramsey County, and he was an auto salesman for a retail auto garage. They owned a house at 1663 Bayard.

By the time of the 1940 census, Joseph was living in Lakeland, Washington County, Minnesota with his mother, Addie. He was working as a postal clerk at the St. Paul Post Office.

Joseph married Blanche Docia Clarke (1902-1996) in Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa on 15 June 1946. Blanche worked as a schoolteacher in St. Paul for thirty years and died in Inver Grove Heights. It appears that they had no children.

Joseph Milton Joyce died on 20 January 1980 in Hennepin County, Minnesota. He is buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis.