

February 25, 2000

RANDY,

Attached please find copies of your article on Ole Stenoien with some editions and additions.

I am somewhat reluctant to make any changes in the original. Fiction is a lot more interesting sometimes than reality. But if it is going to be history then we shouldn't stray too far afield.

In the third paragraph on page three you suggest that dad may have accompanied Bestefar on his sojourn in Dakota. My personal feeling is that this did not happen, for several reasons. First of all, Dad never said he did. Second, Dad took us one time to Writing Rock where, amongst all the writings were the initials OS. Dad speculated that maybe Bestefar had carved them there. If dad had been there with Bestefar he wouldn't have had to guess. Third, someone had to stay home and take care of the farm. There were always eight or ten cows to milk besides numerous other chores. I think that dad was left to help keep the home fires burning.

In the fourth paragraph, same page, I question whether dad just walked away and left his motorcycle. He wasn't that fond of walking and he had devoted a lot of loving care to that machine. My guess is that when finances permitted he either sold it or traded it in on a car, the next step up in the economic ladder.

In the fifth paragraph on page four, I don't recall saying that dad "experienced life in the trenches". Actually, he never did say much about the active warfare, other than his company suffered a substantial attrition, whether due to casualties or, as you suggested, due to transfers, I couldn't say. He did say that the Captain of the unit was replaced by a different officer just before they were returned to the states; which leads me to believe that he stayed with the same unit all of the time. He told me that he drove a tank. This makes sense, because he served in the Light Field Artillery unit. In prior wars, horses were used to move the small cannon, etc. WWI marked the first use of mechanized warfare, and small tanks probably were used in lieu of horses, to move the artillery. I don't know if he was classified as an infantryman or an artilleryman; the record should show it. I know that he was issued a rifle, because he said several times that he wished he had kept it, instead of turning it in when he was mustered out.

You will note that I have done some cutting and pasting, in order to put the information in chronological order. In some instances, rewriting certain paragraphs to present a more accurate picture.

I would like to point out that dad was not a "rough houser". If anything, he was reserved. He used intelligent language; did not tolerate filthy language. Was not wont to making snide or cutting remarks as some of us find ourselves doing. On more than one occasion he would bring some incapacitated person home to our small house in order to keep that individual from freezing to death. All in all, he was respected and looked up to by those who knew him.

Thank you for letting me look over what you have written so far. If you have more questions, don't hesitate to ask. As time permits, I will attempt to answer them. You can leave my name out of this account as much as possible. When I am able I will write down more of the history of our family; not for the internet, but for family members who might have an interest in knowing. So much for now. J.S.