



October 2023

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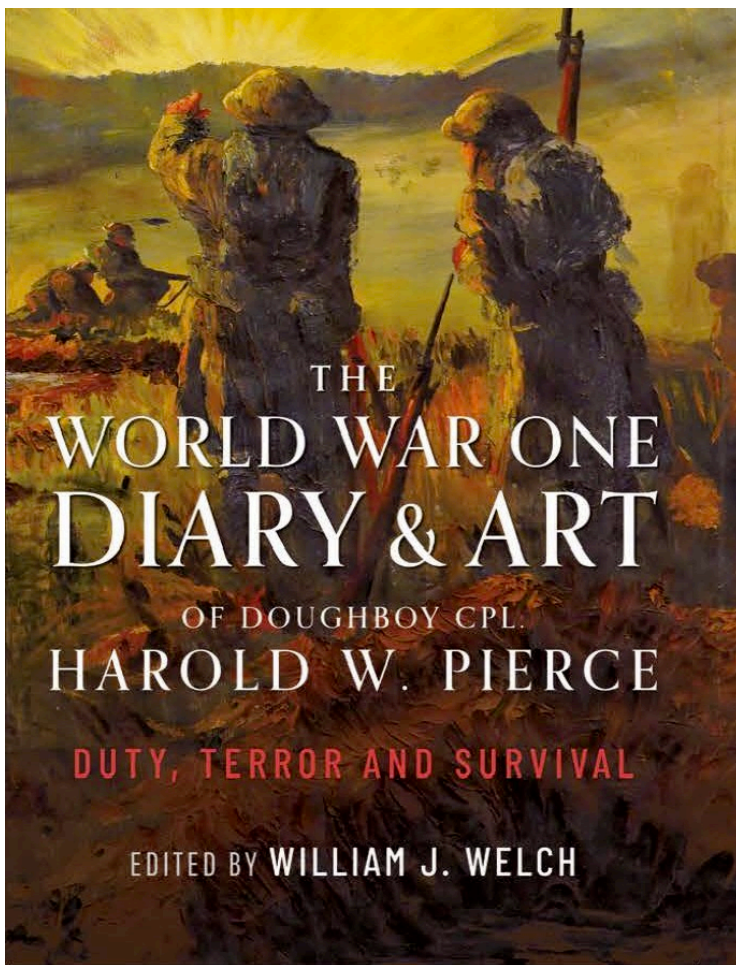
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**Society to Present Historical Talk about a diary of a WWI soldier at the Museum  
October 26 at 7:00pm**

**The talk will be presented by Mr. William**

**Welch** who is a retired instructor of intelligence analysis at Mercyhurst University. Prior to that he had spent 29 years as a newspaper journalist. During his two careers he interviewed dozens of veterans of the world wars and the Korean Conflict. He recently collaborated with four others to produce a book titled *Answering the Call: Erie County, Pennsylvania in World War One*. He currently serves as director of the World War Two Memorial in Erie, Pennsylvania.

**April 1917**, Eighteen year-old Harold W. Pierce leaves school to join the Army, specifically the National Guard infantry company from heavily forested Warren County in northwestern Pennsylvania. He's big for his age and he's determined to serve his country. Thirteen months later, having trained at the steaming hot tent city of Camp Hancock in Georgia, Pierce and the rest of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division's 112<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment is on its way to England and then to France. He's one of the first Battalion's scouts so he'll see the war from a different perspective than the rest of the infantrymen which includes his older brother Hugh.



What Pierce sees, hears and feels will fill the small diary he keeps in his pocket. His descriptions, his fears, and his hopes bring the war to life as a young man experiences it. This young man though, has a keen ability to express and describe that goes beyond his years. The abject terror of being in the middle of a sustained artillery barrage, his fear as he desperately tries to dig in as machinegun bullets fly inches over his head and the relief he feels when an artillery round splits the air where he would have been if he had not - inexplicably - stopped walking.

Pierce has moments when he does not want to answer the runner's call of his name, when all he wants to do is sleep in a safe shelter. But he does answer and he goes on the patrol that all are convinced will be a one-way mission.

Pierce survives it all, becoming a state police trooper in Pennsylvania after the war and later the chief law enforcement instructor for that state's Public Service Institute until his retirement in 1966. In 1979, the diary was printed in serialized form in a small Pennsylvania newspaper. Throughout his life Pierce took to canvas to depict a

variety of scenes from the World War. Included in this book are six of those paintings. Pierce died in 1983.

### **Another Story about a runaway slave being helped in North East**

This story was part of a larger story about William Himrod, an abolitionist, well-known for helping runaways in the section of Erie known as "Jerusalem." It appeared in the Erie Daily Times of October 12, 1906. It is about John Glas(s), a known abolitionist who owned the first foundry in Erie County and which was located along Sixteen Mile Creek.

Old Mr. Glass ran a small furnace at North East, Pa., also kept one of those underground stations, and one afternoon a bright young negro (a run-away) came across from Waterford with his master close on his trail. Mr. Glass hustled the slave into a cask and hended it up. Just as he was in the act of rolling it into a wagon, the southerner appeared in the foundry yard, looking for his slave. Mr. Glass asked him to lend a hand as the cask was heavy, and he helped roll his slave into the wagon. A team of horses was hitched and late that night the run-away arrived at the Himrod depot in Erie, where he had a good rest after his long chase up from Virginia.