

**Note.** This Questionnaire should be completed so far as possible with such information as can be furnished at once, and returned with photographs and additional notes or letters, if available, to **Department of Historical Records, State Library, Hartford, Conn.**

D. H. R.—Form 1  
State Library



# State of Connecticut

11611

## MILITARY SERVICE RECORD

Compiled by the Department of Historical Records of the Connecticut State Council of Defense, State Library, Hartford, where it will be filed, as a permanent memorial of the deeds of Connecticut soldiers and sailors in the service of the federal, state and allied governments during American participation in the World War.

Name in full Hager Lawrence Thomas  
(family name) (first name) (middle names)

Date of birth March 20<sup>th</sup> 1893  
(month) (day) (year)

Place of birth Danbury Fairfield Conn. U.S.A.  
(town) (county) (state) (country)

Name of father Charles F. Hager Birthplace U.S.A.  
(country)

Maiden name of mother Catherine Schaefer Birthplace U.S.A.  
(country)

Are you White, Colored, Indian or Mongolian? White

Citizen yes Voter no Church Baptist  
(yes or no) (yes or no) (denomination)

Married no 1. at

To (maiden name) Born 1. at

Children (name) Born 1. at

Born 1. at

Born 1. at

Fraternal Orders B.P.O. Elks  
Actors Equity Association

Previous military service or training none

Occupation before entry into the service Actor & Singer  
Musical Comedy and Vaudeville  
; employer

Residence before entry into the service 147 Triangle St Danbury Conn.  
(street number) (town) (county)

Present home address 147 Triangle St Danbury Fairfield Conn.  
(street number) (town) (county) (state)



# WAR RECORD

Inducted into service or enlisted on Mar. 29, 1918, at Danbury Conn.  
(date) (place)

, as a Private  
(rank)

in the Depot Brigade section of  
(infantry, artillery, aviation, etc.)

the National Army  
(regular Army, National Guard, Home Guard, National Army, Navy, Naval Reserve, or Marine Corps)

Identification number 1685716

Assigned originally to \_\_\_\_\_  
(company) (regiment) (division)

(or) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(ship) (place)

Trained or stationed before going to Europe: —

School, camp, station, ship	From (date)	to (date)
Camp Devens	Mar. 30, 1918	Apr. 18, 1918
" Upton	Apr. 17, 1918	" 24, 1918

Transferred to: —

Company	Regiment	Division	Ship	Date	New Location
Co. A.	320 M.G. Bn.	82 <sup>nd</sup>		Apr. 20, 1918	Camp Upton

Promoted: —

From (rank)	to (rank)	Date
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Embarked from New York on S.S. Caronia  
(port) (ship)

Apr. 24, 1918 and arrived at Liverpool, Eng. May 7, 1918  
(date) (foreign port) (date)

Proceeded from Liverpool, Eng. to Romsey, Eng. May 8, 1918  
(date) (date)

From Romsey, Eng. to Le Havre, France May 16, 1918  
(date) (date)

From Le Havre, France to Sallenelle, France May 19, 1918  
(date) (date)

Trained or stationed abroad: —

Country	Place	From (date)	to (date)
France	Sallenelle	May 20, 1918	June 16, 1918
"	Maron	June 18, 1918	July 13, 1918
"	Manonville	July 14, 1918	" 16, 1918

NOTE: — Should form or space in any case prove inadequate for recording the desired information, please state facts on separate sheet of paper and enclose with this record.



# WAR RECORD

First went into action *July 16, 1918* *Toul Sector*  
(date) (place)

Participated in the following engagements *St. Mihiel drive, Baubrey, Charpentry, Fleville, Cheheeny and La Vieille in the Argonne Drive and St. Juvien*

Cited, decorated, or otherwise honored for distinguished services (give circumstantial accounts of exploits, including dates and places where performed, also by whom and in what manner the honors were bestowed):

Killed in action, killed by accident, died of wounds, died of disease, wounded, gassed, shell-shocked, taken prisoner:

Nature of casualty	Place	Date
<i>Sharpshooting wounds</i>	<i>Near Grand Pre (Argonne)</i>	<i>Oct. 15, 1918</i>
<i>Had my forehead and part of chin blown off.</i>		

Under medical care: —

Name of hospital	Location	From (date)	to (date)
<i>Base # 46</i>	<i>Bayvilles-sur-Meuse</i>	<i>Oct 16, 1918</i>	<i>Jan. 7, 1919</i>

Permanently disabled (through loss of limb, eyesight, etc.)

*16 %*

(specify disability)

Arrived at *Newport News* on *U. S. S. Artemis* *Mar 24, 1919* *St. Nazaire*  
(American port) (ship) (date) (from)

Discharged from service at *Camp Upton, N. Y.* *June 3, 1919*  
(place) (date)

as a *Private*  
(rank)

## RETURN TO CIVIL LIFE

Occupation after the war *Actor*

If a change of occupation was occasioned by reason of disability acquired in the service, describe the process of re-education and readjustment, and indicate the agencies or individuals chiefly instrumental in furnishing the new occupations:

NOTE: — Should form or space in any case prove inadequate for recording the desired information, please state facts on separate sheet of paper and enclose with this record.



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What was your attitude toward military service in general and toward your call in particular? *I was rejected twice the first time in Denver, Colo. and in Plattsburg, N.Y. I was anxious to get into the service*

What were the effects of camp experiences in the United States upon yourself — mental and physical?

*Wasn't in camps here long enough to find out.*

What were the effects upon yourself of your overseas experience, either in the army or navy or in camp in France or in England?

*After I got out of the Hospital I toured the leave areas and camps with a show known as the "Whizz Bangs"*

If you took part in the fighting, what impressions were made upon you by this experience?

*Wouldn't want to take a million for my experience, Or go through it again.*

What has been the effect of all these experiences as contrasted with your state of mind before the war?

*I have had lots of trouble with my head and my mind is bad. And I am very nervous.*

Photographs — If possible enclose one taken before entering the service and one taken afterwards in uniform, both signed and dated.

Additional data *Will inclose some Newspaper clippings with photographs*

Signed at *Lawrence T. Hager* on *May 6* 1921  
*Charleston, Ill.*  
(full name) (rank) (branch of service)

The information contained in this record, unless otherwise indicated, was obtained from the following persons or sources:



May thirteenth  
1921

Mr. Lawrence Thomas Hager  
147 Triamble St.  
Danbury, Connecticut

My dear Mr. Hager:

When I received your Questionnaire of the 6th inst. with the accompanying pictures and clippings I cannot tell you the feelings which I had. It is not given to many to have passed through what you went through and still be living and able to contribute to the entertainment and instruction of others. I hope sometime when in Hartford you will call at the State Library and see something of what we have been trying to do in getting together a war collection as well as a Department of War Records.

Your Military Service Certificate will be engrossed and forwarded to you as soon as prepared.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very sincerely,

GSG MCH

State Librarian



**The Convalescent Entertainers**

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# **10 WHIZ BANGS**

Back from the Front

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**An evening's barrage of  
mirth, melody and laughter**

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Val MARCONI  
Johnny BYAM  
Jack BELCO  
Victor ORR

Chas. SPEIDEL  
Jack WAYMAN  
Lawrence HAGER  
Chas. BAUER

**"SUNSHINE" GEORGIE HALL**

AMERICAN

The BEST in  Entertainment



# The "Whiz Bangs" Are Home Again



CONVALESCENT ENTERTAINERS, "THE WHIZ BANGS."

After weeks spent in the mud and noise of the trenches, after the doughboy had once more become a normal American, and after the wounded had lain for weeks suffering from the terrible wounds of battle, the problem of providing suitable amusement, something wholesome with which to divert their minds and sustain the morale so necessary to the army, was one of the gravest which confronted the officers in command of America's best.

The Y. M. C. A. and Knights of Columbus provided cheerful rest huts, but the boys needed something in the line of amusement, something which would take the place of shows and vaudeville performances back home. Therefore when one or two of the convalescent men on their own initiative put on a performance for amusement of the wounded in Base hospital 46 at Bazouilles-en-Meuse, officials immediately took steps to keep the organization together.

Lawrence Hager, a resident of Bridgeport for some time before entering the service, was one of the boys in the company. He had been on the stage with musical comedies, among which were Harry Orr, "There She Goes," and the Lakeside Opera company at Denver, Colo.

Reviewed by Royalty.

Mr. Hager entered service with the 32nd division, Co. A, 320th machine gun battalion on April 24, 1918 and sailed from New York to Liverpool. During his way in London his division paraded before the King and Queen of England, and finally was sent across the channel to France. Here they were placed with British troops in the Toul sector. The division was afterward brigaded with French troops in the Marbache and St. Mihiel sectors, and were active almost continuously. Mr. Hager states that he was in the engagement in which Colonel Pike was killed, and the division was also in engagements at Balleux, Chaperette, Fleville, Chabery, in the Viereux sector, and in the Argonne forest, from September 30 to October 31. On October 15 he received a wound in the forehead at St. Jovin during an advance, and the scar which results will be a token reminder of the many days spent under fire of the German guns.

Making his way to the dressing station, the only one left of his squad, Private Hager received first aid and was later placed on a Red Cross train and arrived at Base hospital 46, where he remained ten weeks.

It was during his convalescence here that he met Val Marconi, well known among theatre goers of the United States. Marconi had thrilled audiences of this country from coast to coast with his superb playing on the accordion, and at the time of entering the army was engaged in playing at the Hippodrome in New York. He had been also one of the best drawing cards at the La Salle theatre in Chicago for a long time.

Connected with an ambulance corps, he spent his spare time in playing for the fun and rounded in Base hospital and finally came to the ward in which Private Hager was recovering from his wound. The reunion was a pleasant one for both who had known each other in the professional world of the states and in the exchange of confidence, it was learned that several more well known entertainers were located in the same town. It was then decided to give a vaudeville show for the entertainment of the sick in Base Hospital 46. Preparations were started at once and permission was obtained from the military authorities.

Among the professionals rounded up to supply the talent were many whose names are familiar to Bridgeporters.

Val Marconi needs no introduction as his execution on the accordion has afforded many Bridgeport theater patrons hours of pleasure.

"Sunshine" George Hall who appeared with Mrs. Vernon Castle in the screen film "Patina" and who was connected with the Mary Bennett screen offerings, before entering the service is also familiar to many local people who secured. His monologue "Back From The Front" was one of the numbers which never failed to please the doughboys.

Victor Orr, whose wonderful voice is better known in the west, was a



LAWRENCE HAGER.

member of the Oregon Opera company, was another whose services were enlisted.

Charles Bauer, another familiar vaudeville entertainer, has also appeared in Bridgeport with a vaudeville team known as Bauer and Saunders. He was a member of the stage trio known as "That Trio," and joined the troop.

Jack Weyman, whose entry in Gus Edwards' presentation "School Days" has given local people many laughs was also rounded up for the entertainment.

Johnny Ryan, a clever dancer who appeared in Chicago and the middle west with a "Jazz" specialty act, offered to appear with the boys, and was a desired addition to the organization.

The name of Charles Spield, another member, is one which needs no introduction. His connection with Remick's music publishing house at New York and his many compositions have been sung in thousands of Bridgeport homes. It was largely due to his efforts that a fine program was arranged, and several of the songs rendered were of his composition.

Jack Balon, formerly with the "September Morn" company was also asked to join.

Charles Bowman, a blacking comedian, completed the organization. Mr. Bowman has appeared in theaters all over the world and was at one time booked in an English music hall with our own Charlie Chaplin.

## The Whiz Bangs.

The organization was called the "Whiz Bangs" and was the original company, and while many "whiz bangs" companies have since come to life among the entertainers of the A. E. F., these were the real original company.

When the first entertainment had

been rehearsed, not only were the convalescent soldiers allowed to attend, but officers and nurses and all hospital attaches witnessed the performance. To say that the voluntary entertainers scored a hit, it putting it very mildly. The pleasure of both the convalescent and the home sick Americans as well as those of other nations at witnessing a real American show was so great, that steps were immediately taken to hold the organization of "Whiz Bangs" together. Permission was finally given the boys to tour the country. They were placed under the direction of the Y. M. C. A., who arranged the bookings, and they were relieved from all military duties although still in the service. When some of them were offered a chance to return to the states, they refused, as they fully appreciated the great pleasure the soldiers took in witnessing a live American show so far from home.

Entertainments were given in hospitals, theatres, rest camps, embarkation camps, in fact anywhere that a tired or homesick soldier was on leave or able to witness a performance. Many boys, tired and jaded after many weary weeks of fighting, whose interest in everything had made him almost a wreck of his former self, was aroused to an active interest in things of the world, and forgot for a time the horrors which can never entirely be obliterated from his memory.

## At Monte Carlo.

One of the most interesting places visited by the Whiz Bangs was Monte Carlo. They staged their show at the world-renowned Casino, and one of the spectators was the Prince of Monaco. Other members of royalty who witnessed their performance were the Queen and Princess of Roumania and the Infanta of Spain.

They also played three dates in Paris, the last one in the famous Champ Elysees theatre on April 17, 18, and 19 of this year.

In one of the rest camps, the audience for three nights in succession was composed of 7000 soldiers on leave. Everything pleased them, and their appreciation of the efforts of the Whiz Bangs was noted by the many entores to which they were called to respond.

The program consisted of a general vaudeville entertainment with the usual songs, dancing and grooves "Jazz" added to give rest. Both sentimental and patriotic songs were rendered and most of them were the compositions of Mr. Spield. One of the numbers sung by Mr. Hager was his own.

Some of the cities at which they appeared were Alsace-Lorraine, a famous health resort, Chamonix, at the foot of Mt. Blanc, Grenoble, which is noted for being the place at which the painting "September Morn" was

# WELCOME HOME

Sure Thing! And a Hearty Welcome, Too

And, When You're Ready, the Old Job Is Waiting for You

BULLARD



## The "Whiz Bangs" Are Home Again



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Some of the cities at which they appeared were Aix-les-Bains, a famous health resort; Chamonix, at the foot of Mt. Blanc; Grenoble, which is noted for being the place at which the painting "September Morn" was

# WELCOME HOME

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Hearty Welcome, Too**

**And, When You're  
Ready, the Old Job  
Is Waiting for You**





## WEARS DEAD MAN'S EYEBROW

### Surgeons Rebuilt Lawrence Hager's Face and Head.

Have you seen the man with the dead man's eyebrow?

The similarity of the man in this case to the hero of Halworthy Hall's novel, "The Man Nobody Knew," is striking and the only difference is that the army surgeons rejuvenated this man's features so he really resembles himself.

The victim in this case is Lawrence Hager, who is appearing at the Colonial Theater with Murphy's Love Hunters.

Mr. Hager is wearing an eyebrow from a dead soldier, grafted over his right eye. His brain is protected in front not only by a sheet of bone, but a silver plate helps the bone to function against the hard knocks of life. In addition to these, Mr. Hager is wearing a silver plate instead of a chinbone. And all this was the result of the explosion of a shell in Mr. Hager's vicinity when he, with thirteen others, was on detail in the drive on Grand Pre to draw the enemy's fire while the infantry flanked the Boches.

Hager served sixteen months overseas. He was in a machine gun corps in the 82nd Division and until Oct. 15, 1918, no bullet had touched him. On detail to draw the enemy fire on Grand Pre, he was struck by shrapnel and thought to be dying when the surgeons took him in hand. Now he closely resembles his photographs taken before entering the service. The other thirteen men in the squad were killed.

After he had partially recovered and was convalescing in a base hospital, a party of entertainers was organized, of which he was a member. The fun-bringers, calling themselves the Whiz-Bang Entertainers, gave a number of entertainments at the Y. M. C. A. huts and were not sent back to the firing line.

Following his return to the United States, Mr. Hager again entered his profession and is now appearing in Pittsburg, wearing another man's eyebrow, a silver plated forehead and a silver chin.





Nîmes, France  
March 15, 1919



CARTE POSTALE

Lawrence Hager  
taken at Times House  
while with the Cornwall-  
cent Entertainers "The Whig  
Bangs."

Mar. 15, 1919

147 Triangle St.  
Danbury







# POST CARD

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▲ ▲ ▲  
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■ STAMP ■  
○ HERE ○  
ADDRESS ▼ ▲ ■ ▼

CORRESPONDENCE

Lawrence T. Hagler  
taken at Denver, Colo.

June 15, 1917

147 Triangle St. Danbury, Ct