

Bridgewater State University

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**Robert E. Pellissier Collection,
Bulk 1899-1919
(MSS-029)**

*Finding Aid Compiled by
Orson Kingsley, 2018*

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Volume: .5 linear feet (1 document box)

Acquisition: Most items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by William Vinal in 1957.

Access: Access to this record group is unrestricted.

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Robert E. Pellissier Collection Biographical Sketch

Robert E. Pellissier was born in 1882 in a small town in the Jura Mountains of eastern France. He moved to the United States in 1896 and enrolled at Bridgewater State Normal School in 1899. While going through the four-year program at Bridgewater he was involved in many student activities and organizations, including the early formative years of the Kappa Delta Phi fraternity that originated at Bridgewater in 1900. After graduating in 1903 he would go on to earn advanced degrees, including a Ph.D., from Harvard University.

He was a professor at Stanford University when World War I began in 1914. He left his position to return to his native France, whose citizenship he never renounced, to help in the war effort. Severely wounded in January 1915, he entered the Saint Cyr Military Academy in France and achieved the rank of Sergeant before being killed by German machine gun fire at the Battle of the Somme on August 29, 1916 at the age of 34. He was the first Bridgewater graduate to lose his life in World War I.

Scope and Content Note

The collection is broken down into two series. The first series focuses on Bridgewater State Normal School students and alumni who raised money to purchase an ambulance to send to the French front during WWI in memory of Robert Pellissier. The second series focuses on Pellissier's student days at Bridgewater and his relationships with other students, particularly William Vinal.

Related collections include the Nahum Leonard Scrapbook Collection (Leonard was a friend of Pellissier's at Bridgewater and was the founder of the Kappa Delta Phi fraternity); and books in Special Collections—[*Letters from a Chasseur à Pied: Robert Pellissier*](#), and the expanded edition by a family descendant in 2003, [*A Good Idea of Hell: Letters from a Chasseur à Pied*](#).

Box and Folder List**Series 1: The Robert Pellissier Memorial Ambulance****Box 1****Folder**

1. Solicitation letter for the Robert Pellissier Memorial, 1917
2. Report of the treasurer of the Robert Pellissier Memorial Committee, 1917-1918
3. 4 letters from the American Ambulance Field Service Fund to Sumner W. Cushing, April-June 1917
4. Receipt to Robert Pellissier Memorial Fund for \$200 in Liberty Loan Bonds, Oct. 22, 1917
5. American Field Service in France to Sumner W. Cushing, Nov. 6, 1917
6. John Tempest Walker Jr., ambulance driver in France, to “graduates and undergraduates of Bridgewater,” Feb. 12, 1918
7. Joseph P. Devaney in France to Sumner Cushing, May 20, 1918
8. Nahum Leonard to Arthur C. Boyden, March 1, 1919
9. Letters between Sumner Cushing, M. Davitt Carroll, and Albert C. Boyden about announcing the Pellissier Memorial to the Kappa Delta Phi fraternity, May 1919
10. Photograph of the American Field Service Ambulance in memory of Pellissier (original in photograph collection), c. 1918

Series 2: Correspondence, Student Records, and Publications

11. Copies of photographs of or about Pellissier found in Nahum Leonard scrapbook, c. 1903
12. Robert Pellissier student records (originals in University Archives), 1899-1903
13. Robert Pellissier to William Vinal, July 11, 1907
14. Pellissier in Brooklyn to Vinal, Dec. 23, 1907
15. Pellissier to Vinal, Jan. 1908
16. Pellissier at Stanford to Vinal, c. 1912
17. Pellissier in France to Vinal, April 17, 1915
18. Pellissier in France to Vinal, June 10, 1915
19. Adeline Pellissier to Vinal, Feb. 28, 1917
20. Book-“Letters from a Chasseur à Pied: Robert Pellissier,” donated by William Vinal, contains glued in material and handwritten notes about Pellissier and his friends from Bridgewater, 1917
21. The Williston Bulletin-contains article on Pellissier’s death, Oct. 1916
22. Bridgewater Review-contains article on Pellissier, April 2018
23. Photocopied information pertaining to Pellissier, undated