



THE COLLECTION

Under His Father's Name

A father carried this New Testament into World War I. His son carried it into World War II.

CHRIS VALLETTA

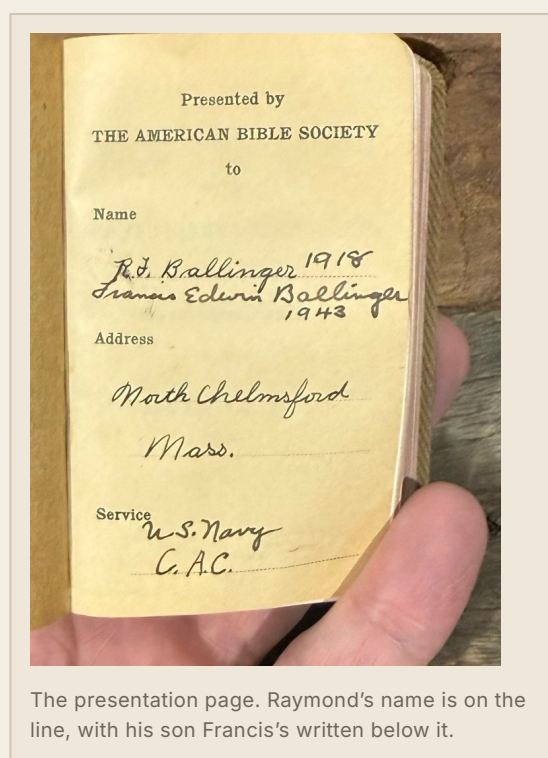
New Testament, American Bible Society
Carried 1918 and 1943

I HAVE FOUND DOZENS OF BIBLES carried by soldiers in World War I. I bought this one at a World War I auction, and it holds something I had never seen.

It is a small New Testament with a khaki cloth cover, printed by the American Bible Society. The triangle on the front is the mark of the YMCA, which handed these out to men going into the service. Inside the cover is a printed form: Name. Address. Service.

On the name line someone wrote “R.F. Ballinger 1918.” Under it, in a different hand: “Francis Edwin Ballinger 1943.”

A father carried it in the first war. His son carried it in the next one.



THE FATHER

The father was Raymond Francis Ballinger, born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, in 1897. His father, William, came from Bradford, England, the wool capital of the world, and the family ended up in the mill town of North Chelmsford, Massachusetts. In the summer of 1918 Raymond lived on Cottage Row and worked for the U.S. Worsted Company at the Silesia Mill. He registered for the draft on August 24. The registrar wrote down medium height, slender, brown eyes, brown hair.

That year was hard on his family. His sister Ethel had died the November before, at 24. On October 15, 1918, his sister Alice died of pneumonia in Bristol, New Hampshire. She was 31. She left three little girls, and the youngest was born that year.

Six days later, Raymond was inducted into the Army.

He went to the 14th Company of the Coast Artillery Corps at Fort McKinley, on an island in Casco Bay guarding Portland, Maine. That is the “C.A.C.” on the service line. On November 6 he was sent to the Coast Artillery School at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Five days later the war ended. He was honorably discharged on December 23, a private.

Sixty-three days. He never saw France. He buried one sister and lost another, and he reported for duty anyway.

He came home, married Edna Biggar in Chelmsford in 1919, and went back to the mills. He kept the book.

THE SON

Their son was born in 1925, and they named him Francis, his father’s middle name. In 1940 three generations lived under one roof in North Chelmsford: Raymond, Edna, their two children, and Raymond’s father, William, who was 78.

In 1943 Francis turned eighteen. The country was at war again. He took his father’s Testament and wrote his own name on the line under his father’s. The service line holds both of them now: “U.S. Navy” for the son, “C.A.C.” for the father.

Francis served as a Carpenter’s Mate Second Class. His name is on Chelmsford’s World War II Honor Roll. When the census taker came in 1950, father and son were living in the same house and both working in wool combing, Raymond as an assistant superintendent and Francis as a comber.

They are buried side by side in Riverside Cemetery in North Chelmsford, under one family stone.

WHAT HE HANDED DOWN

Most of the books in my collection tell me about one man. This one tells me what a father hands down. Raymond did not hand his son a speech about duty. He handed him a book with his own name already in it, and the example of a man who showed up the week it cost him the most.

Leadership is service, and the best of it gets handed down. Your kids will not remember what you said about showing up. They will remember whether you did.

“But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

JOSHUA 24:15 (NLT)

The line on that page was printed for one name. The Ballingers made it hold two.

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CHRIS VALLETTA

Scripture quotation marked NLT taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

SOURCES AND NOTES

1. World War I draft registration card, Raymond Francis Ballinger, registered 24 Aug 1918, Local Board Division 13, Tewksbury, Mass.: home Cottage Row, North Chelmsford; employer U.S. Worsted Co., Silesia Mill; father born Bradford, England. United States, World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 (FamilySearch).
2. Service record, Ballinger, Raymond Francis, serial 2801875: inducted 21 Oct 1918; 14 Co. Portland C.A.C., Fort McKinley, Me., to 6 Nov 1918; C.A. School, Fort Monroe, Va.; Pvt.; honorably discharged 23 Dec 1918. Chelmsford World War I record of service, Chelmsford Historical Society: chelmhist.org/MilitaryFiles/WWI_Veterans_List.pdf
3. Veterans Administration Master Index, 1917-1940, Raymond Francis Ballinger, serial 2 801 875, born 7 Jun 1897 (FamilySearch).
4. Birth, Raymond F. Ballinger, 7 Jun 1897, Woonsocket, R.I., parents Wm. and Mary A. Ballinger: Rhode Island, State Births Index (FamilySearch).
5. Death certificates, New Hampshire, Death Records, 1654-1947 (FamilySearch): Alice E. Smith, Bristol, N.H., 15 Oct 1918, cause pneumonia; Ethel M. Mills, Bristol, N.H., 21 Nov 1917, cause heart failure following acute indigestion.
6. Alice E. Ballinger Smith (26 Dec 1886 - 15 Oct 1918) and her children: Find a Grave memorial 18167540.
7. Marriage, Raymond Francis Ballinger and Edna Isabelle Biggar, Chelmsford, 26 Nov 1919: Massachusetts, State Vital Records (FamilySearch).
8. U.S. Census: 1900 Lowell; 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950 Chelmsford (FamilySearch). 1950: ED 9-156, p. 77.
9. Francis Edwin Ballinger, born 20 Jun 1925, Carmel, Maine, parents Raymond F. Ballinger and Edna Biggar; Social Security application Jan 1943: United States, Social Security Numerical Identification Files (FamilySearch).
10. Grave markers and burials, Riverside Cemetery, North Chelmsford: Raymond Francis Ballinger, "PVT US ARMY WORLD WAR I" (Find a Grave 18166448); Francis Edwin Ballinger, "CM2 US NAVY WORLD WAR II" (Find a Grave 18166445).
11. Chelmsford World War II Honor Roll, Chelmsford Newsweekly, 13 Sep 1946: chelmhist.org/MilitaryFiles/WWII_Honor_Roll.pdf
12. Fort McKinley and the Coast Defenses of Portland: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_McKinley_\(Maine\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_McKinley_(Maine))
13. YMCA khaki New Testament, American Bible Society, c. 1917, Vermont Historical Society: hub.catalogit.app/vermont-historical-society/folder/entry/book-28
14. Joshua 24:15, New Living Translation.

Not yet proven. Francis Ballinger's ship or unit in the Navy, and which hand wrote which words on the service line. The service record and grave markers give the ranks; the Testament itself gives the dates 1918 and 1943.