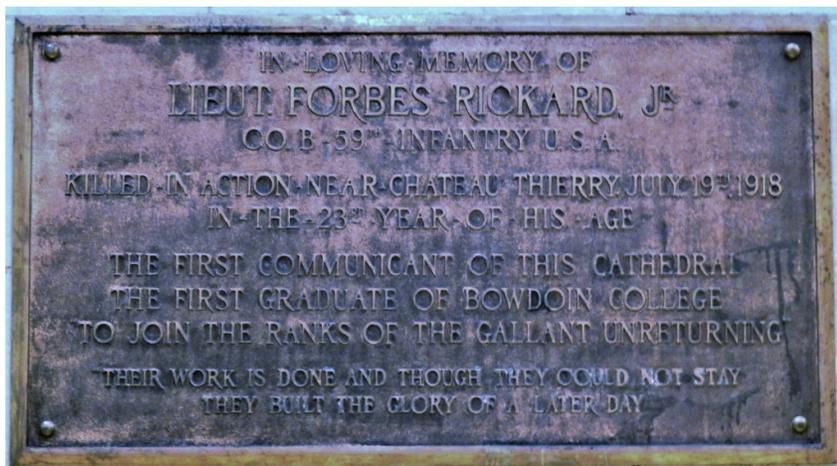


From Arts & Architecture: Forbes Rickard, Jr. Memorial Plaque

As we leave the beautiful Evelyn Denison plaque in the east tower and go around to the east wall of the cathedral nave, we find another memorial plaque, once again very difficult to read, and once again, created in loving memory of a young man. This time we remember one who died, not in Denver, but instead in the faraway fields of France.



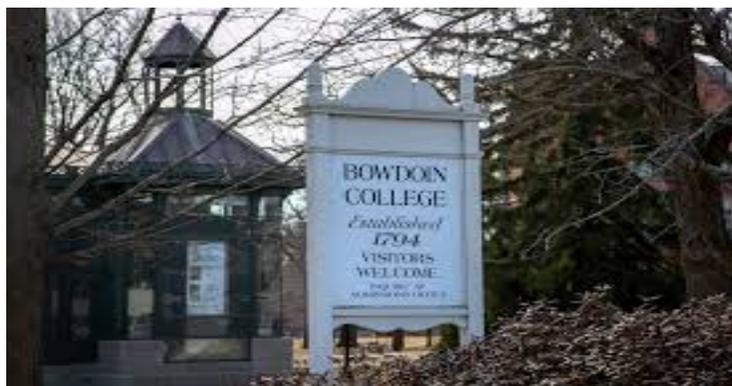
“In loving memory of Lieut. Forbes Rickard, Jr. Co. B. 59th Infantry USA, killed in action near Chateau-Thierry, July 19th 1918.

The first communicant of this Cathedral

The first graduate at Bowdoin College to join the ranks of the gallant unreturning.

Their work is done and though they could not stay they built the glory of a later day.”

Forbes Rickard Jr. was born in Denver in 1896, the son of an English mining engineer. His mother, Annie Mechling, died when he was two and his father married Helen Hazlett, who became a beloved stepmother. He was baptized in our first cathedral, attended public school in Denver until 1911, and then went to Williston Seminary, a preparatory school in East Hampton, Massachusetts.



Forbes entered Bowdoin College in 1913, having been awarded the Richard Woodhull Scholarship, founded in memory of his stepmother’s father, an “honor” man at Bowdoin in 1827.

Forbes filled his college years with both literary and athletic activities. He was on the class and varsity



track teams, became art editor of the Bowdoin year book, and was one of the editors of the Quill, Bowdoin’s monthly literary journal. His passion was writing poetry, and in 1917, his senior year, he became the class poet, and was made a member of Phi Beta Kappa. A memoir from his mother says, “He won also the much coveted Longfellow Fellowship, given by the daughters of the poet.”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a graduate of Bowdoin, and later a professor there. His daughter Alice Longfellow funded scholarships for African American and Native American students, specifically at Hampton University and Tuskegee Institute. Later, according to letters written in 1907, on the 100th anniversary of his birth, his three daughters gave the college \$10,000.00 to establish the Henry Wadsworth

Longfellow Graduate Scholarship Fund. Its purpose was to enable a Bowdoin student “to pursue graduate work in some other college...the work to be done in English or general literature.”



During Forbes’ years at Bowdoin, the reality of war was felt everywhere throughout the college, and like many of his classmates, he joined the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps during his senior year. According to the president of Bowdoin, “We are giving elementary, military instruction to all who can profit by it...The Great War and all that is at stake have been inevitably in the background, aye in the foreground, of all of our activities. We have striven to preach and practice patriotism and to fit our boys to take their part.”

Living and studying in an atmosphere such as this, it is not surprising that Forbes did not take advantage of his Longfellow scholarship, but instead, just a few weeks after graduation, went to a volunteer pre-enlistment training camp in Plattsburgh, New York. In November he became a second lieutenant for Company B of the 59th Infantry and was sent to Camp Greene in Charlotte, North Carolina. On April 29, 1918, after four months of training, Company B sailed for France, arriving in

Calais on May 12.

From France, Forbes wrote frequent letters back home to his family in Denver. Soon after his arrival he writes of “rich green hills, with brooks and valleys—red-tiled roofs looking so cozy and safe—of course, no part of France is absolutely safe now.”

He describes an air-raid--“At night it is a fine scene. The anti-air craft batteries open up, immediately on hearing the peculiar hum of the Boche motor, with shrapnel, which one can see bursting high above. Then searchlights send broad bands of white through the sky.”

Forbes also took his faith with him. “I have read some parts of my little pocket testament, also from your little black leather-covered prayer book too, by way of observing the Sabbath.” And he speaks of a little golden cross that he wears “as a talisman.”

A letter written on July 7 says “We went up and dug trenches in the second line a few days ago—several miles behind the front, and had a number of whiz-bangs land about half a mile from us.” At the end of the letter he writes, “I have no dread of the future—only a big eagerness to help end this thing. And I believe it is a thing a man should be glad to do—no matter the cost.” This was Forbes’ final letter.



Only twelve days later, on July 19, 1918, after a night filled with explosions and poison gas, Company B was ordered to go “over the top”. A massive barrage of German artillery met the men as they advanced. Lieutenant Rickard was struck with a high explosive and mortally wounded. Rushed to a field hospital, he died a few hours later. The violent

attack, part of the Second Battle of the Marne, was the last major German offensive on the Western Front. A little over one hundred days later, on November 11, 1918, the Armistice with Germany was signed.

In a letter to Forbes' mother, a friend and fellow member of Company B reports "Forbes was exceptionally brave and a wonderful leader, loved by every man in his organization. He would not command a man to do anything unless he was willing to do it himself." And from another comrade's letter: "I know, Mrs. Rickard, that there is no comfort for a mother who has lost her son but you can remember with such feelings of consolation as it may bring, that your son met his death bravely and while going forward and doing his full duty as a soldier." Lieutenant Forbes Rickard Jr. lies in a grave in the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial in Belleau, France, resting in peace among the "gallant unreturning".



Songs with tears-Forbes Richard Jr. is a 94-page book published in 1919. It begins with a long biographical preface written by his mother and includes a compilation of poems by and about Forbes, his letters from the front, and letters about his final days, from members of Company B who survived the battle.

A copy of the book will be placed in the Cathedral archives.