

On the trail of Anne Morgan

Blérancourt, Vic-sur-Aisne, Soissons,
Anizy-le-Château, Coucy-le-Château

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Trail-discover

CARD* at the service of the devastated region of Aisne

* American Committee for Devastated France

My dear friends,

In your last letter you asked me what our CARD centers are like. I've made a souvenir album to give you an idea of our day-to-day life!

Miss Morgan established the centers close to the local populations so we could identify their needs and provide them with assistance. Our centers, which are housed in barracks, consist of offices, housing for the volunteers, a garage, a library and a hall where the locals can gather.

Thanks to our Ford trucks we can travel all over the region providing relief and assistance to the local people. I hope you will soon be able to come. The villages are being rebuilt and we will soon be moving out of our barracks into houses. You will be amazed to see how well the work is progressing!

Bessie

Members of the American Committee under Blérancourt arch, 1921 © RMN-GP/J.-G. Berizzi



Miss Anne Morgan in uniform, circa 1917 © RMN-GP/R.-G. Ojéda



A CARD driver repairing her Ford © RMN-GP/J.-G. Berizzi

BLÉRANCOURT, The CARD'S original HQ



Anne Murray Dike © RMN-GP/ G. Blot

I was honoured to meet Anne Murray Dike, the CARD president at the Blérancourt HQ. We took stock of the measures that need to be taken in the area: everything needs rebuilding, especially people's enjoyment in life! There is a great deal of work to be done and it will take years!

Bessie

Anne Murray Dike commemorative stone

Franco-American museum of the Château of Blérancourt

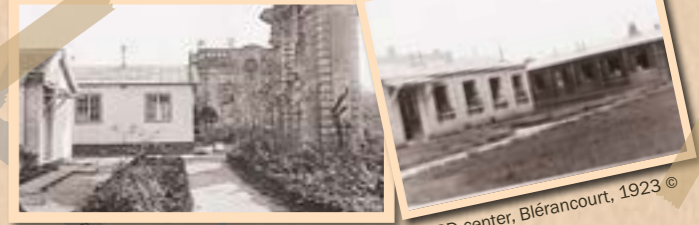
Tourist Office and barracks

Anne Murray Dike's grave

« Our plan is to establish in these various districts a veritable community center, to which will gather information about needs of that community, and from which we can spread out the means of meeting these needs—in such a personal and constructive way that it will be an incentive to re-building and re-creating of a new life and spirit in the French people.»
(Anne Murray Dike, letter, summer 1917)



Blérancourt town hall during the war, 1917 © RMN-GP/ J.-G. Berizzi



Barracks of CARD, Blérancourt, 1920 © RMN GP/G. Blot

CARD center, Blérancourt, 1923 © RMN-GP/ R.-G. Ojéda

VIC-SUR-AISNE

VIC-SUR-AISNE



Agnès Doran
© RMN-GP/ H. Lewandowski

«Vic is a quaint town, as picturesque and quaint as a town could be and heartbreaking in its ruins. The tower of the old château in the center goes back to Charlemagne and somehow it seems to suit this tower to have had part of it demolished by shells.»
(Mary Breckinridge, letter of 23 february 1919)

«The children need play. I believe we are to have a man to start baseball and football with the older boys, but Miss Alice plays with them already and they are keen on it. We have kindergartens for the little ones.»
(Mary Breckinridge, letter of 8 June 1919)



Miss Doran's physical education class, 1920
© RMN-GP/ H. Lewandowski

If you had seen us today with Mary at the wheel of our Dodge truck, you'd be surprised! How sad to go through all those miles of devastated landscapes, but what a pleasure to help these isolated populations ...

Bessie



Misses Hughes and Wilde in the Committee's garage, 1919 © RMN-GP/ G. Blot



Vic-sur-Aisne garage, 1922
© RMN-GP/ G. Blot

i Information

SOISSONS



Mary Breckinridge
© RMN-GP/ G. Blot

Today Mary is hiring some new nurses to help with the infants. We have just set up a partnership with the Goutte de Lait in Soissons, which was created in 1894, to supply sterilized milk to the youngest infants and to carry out medical check-ups.

Bessie

«We are going to hold well-baby clinics, carrying the scales etc. about in a camion from village to village at regular intervals, and weighing and measuring not only the children under six but also the delicate looking children over six.»
(Mary Breckinridge, letter of 1 May 1919)



Doctor Frazier in the dispensary, 1919
© RMN-GP/ G. Blot



A Committee ambulance, 1920
© RMN-GP/ G. Blot

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ANIZY-LE-CHÂTEAU

ANIZY-LE-CHÂTEAU

COUCY-LE-CHÂTEAU

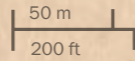


Marian Bartol
© Musée Franco-Américain, Blérancourt

This morning, Marian Bartol offered to show me around the new temporary buildings, the "provisaires", in Anizy: an agricultural school, a church, a dispensary and a permanent store! Up to now, traveling stores had been touring the isolated, devastated villages with provisions, sheets, stoves...

Bessie

Former ANSAM dispensary and centre



« At every crossroads the road had been blown up, so we had to make constant detours. It was complete desolation, barbed wire entanglements, trenches, shell holes, etc. (...) A group of men are living there and slowly reclaiming the land. They start by collecting all of the unexploded shells and detonating them. Then they use massive shovels to fill in the trenches. »
(Marian Bartol, letter of 21 January 1921)

District with temporary dwellings



Distribution of provisions in Blérancourt, 1917 © RMN-GP/R.-G. Ojéda



A family of refugees in front of their house, 1919 © RMN-GP/J.-G. Berizzi

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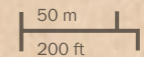
Jessie Carson
© Musée Franco-Américain, Blérancourt

Our dear Jessie Carson has arrived to join the Committee and take charge of the CARD's education projects. Every day she organises the delivery of books via the circulating libraries and hosts "story time" for our young visitors. They enjoy it more than anything!

Bessie

COUCY-LE-CHÂTEAU

UPPER TOWN



« What fun to discover Treasure Island with French children! The French boys find Kipling "un peu bizarre", but Fenimore Cooper "épatant". Anderson and Grimm are as well-known as Pinocchio, the Swiss Family Robinson, Heidi, Little Lord Fauntleroy, Alice in Wonderland and Kim »
(CARD's report of 1921)

Library
Town Council

Tourist Office
Former ANSAM houses

Tower Museum



Coucy-le-Château library, circa 1920 © RMN-GP/H. Lewandowski



Story time in Vic-sur-Aisne, circa 1920 © Musée Franco-Américain, Blérancourt

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