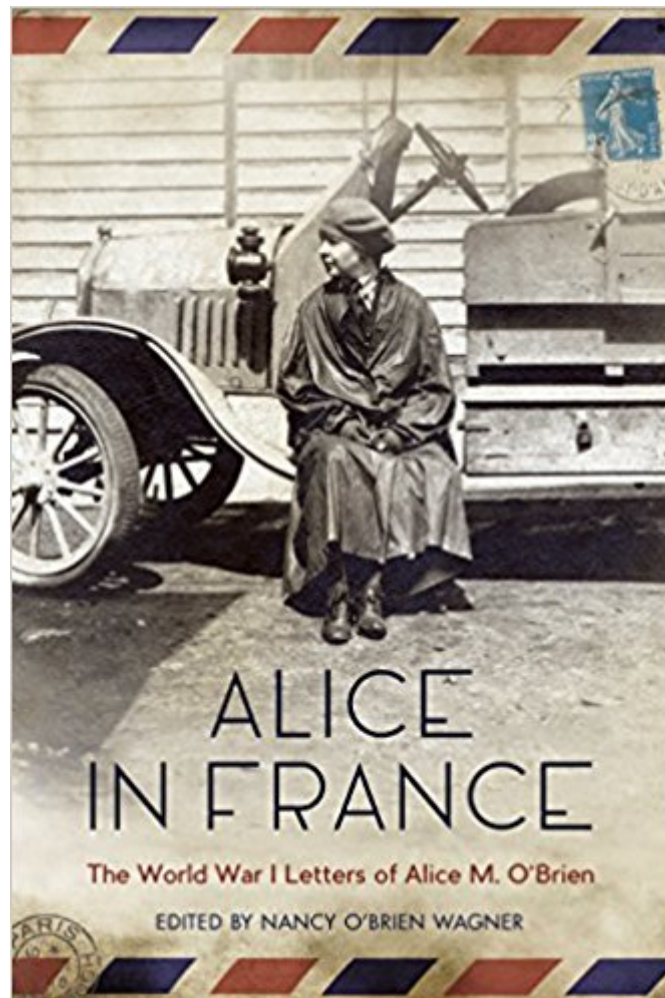


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Alice In France: The World War I Letters Of Alice M. O'Brien



Synopsis

July 19, 1918: The wounded were pouring into the four Hospitals of the town. . . . We have decided to double up for a few days—half of us work at the Canteen and half at the Hospitals, taking turns. It will be hard work for awhile but everyone feels that you can't work hard enough these days. In March 1918, twenty-six-year-old Alice O'Brien and three close friends set off from New York harbor, bound for wartime France. Unlike the soldiers aboard their ship, they were unpaid volunteers. As the daughter of a wealthy family, Alice had no need to work—no need to go to war. But she also drove her own car, was trained as an auto mechanic, spoke French, and had the passion and determination to contribute selflessly to the war effort. Alice and her friends joined hundreds of American women serving as nurses, clerks, drivers, and canteen workers for the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other organizations. Her letters home, full of breezy gossip and telling detail, describe living conditions, attitudes and actions of French soldiers and civilians, and her own remarkable efforts near the front. Alice was brave and funny, proud and jingoistic, privileged and unassuming, and Alice made a difference in France.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“This absorbing collection of World War I letters from France highlights the multiple roles of Alice M. O'Brien—from mechanic and supply truck driver to nurse and canteen worker. One of many unsung U.S. women in the war, the resourceful O'Brien—with her compassion for Allied wounded, capacity for grueling work, and self-deprecating

humor shines through the miseries of war. Elizabeth Foxwell, editor, *In Their Own Words: American Women in World War I* “The American war effort during the World War is full of stories. And if we’re lucky enough, they are eloquently preserved in the writings of those who lived it. Alice O’Brien, through her charming and detailed letters, shares both a volunteer’s and a woman’s perspective. These reveal insights into the internal motivations, recount adventurous experiences, and demonstrate women’s contributions to U.S. victory in an era before American women had the right to vote. A welcome read.” Matthew Naylor, President and CEO, National World War I Museum and Memorial

Nancy O’Brien Wagner is a cofounder of Bluestem Heritage Group, which does research, exhibit development, interpretive planning, and project management for historical organizations.

I ordered this for my grandparents whom were long time residents of Marine on the St. Croix and had the opportunity to know Alice O’Brien. It was fun to hear them tell me about the things they learned about her from the book. They only knew her as a fellow resident and nice elderly woman who liked and treated their kids well. :)

A thoughtful and thorough editing of letters written from France during WW I , this book makes the reader feel he/she were there at the time. I couldn’t put it down.

Fantastic story of women’s participation in WWI. Alice O’Brien volunteered and served on the Western Front with courage and style. A great read!

Come across this by chance at the library and read it in one day. Great story of a fearless adventurer. Thank you for sharing her story.

I loved this book. The things these young women volunteered to do, in France, during WWI were amazing. Alice was the heiress of a lumber fortune, yet she knew how to get down and dirty and do what needed to be done.

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