

Kentucky

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Fall 2016

Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc.

humanities



Kentucky in World War I

LINDSEY WILSON COLLEGE
T H E A T R E
2016-17 SEASON SCHEDULE

Fall 2016

The Zoo Story

by Edward Albee
Oct. 26-28: 7 p.m. CT
Oct. 30: 2 p.m. CT

Doubt

by John Patrick Shanley
Nov. 2-4: 7 p.m. CT
Nov. 6: 2 p.m. CT
Phoenix Stage (Blackbox)
Reservation Only

Love/Sick

by John Cariani
Nov. 16-18: 7 p.m. CT
Nov. 20: 2 p.m. CT

Holiday Cabaret

Dec. 1 & 2: 7 p.m. CT

Lindsey Wilson students are taught basic knowledge of the main components of theater arts and an appreciation of the historical and present impact of theater on civilization. Students are given opportunities to experience theater arts through involvement in four to six major productions each semester.

Spring 2017

Educating Rita

by Willy Russell
directed by LWC Senior, Michael Hook
April 6 & 7: 7 p.m. CT
Phoenix Stage (Blackbox)
Reservation Only

Tartuffe

by Moliere
April 19-21: 7 p.m. CT
April 23: 2 p.m. CT
Phoenix Stage (Blackbox)
Reservation Only

A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare
April 26-28: 7 p.m. CT
April 30: 2 p.m. CT

**An Evening of One-Acts
Student-Directed Plays**

March 30 & 31: 7 p.m. CT

Plays Performed at V.P. Henry Auditorium

All times Central

Robert Brock, Artistic Director

Tickets:

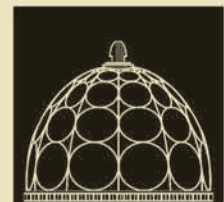
\$5 - General Public

\$3 - LWC Faculty and Staff

Free - LWC Students

To make reservations
or for more information,
email brockr@lindsey.edu
or please call
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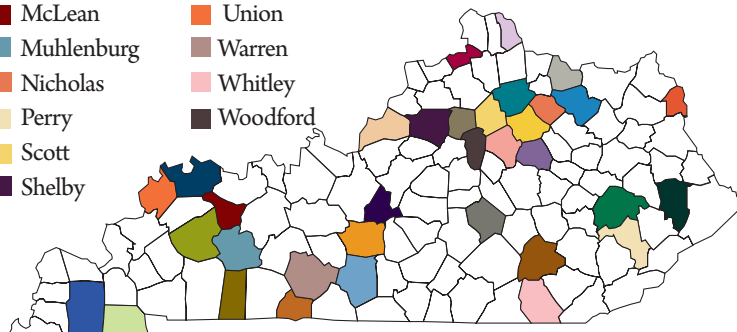
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World War I

In June 1914, Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, were assassinated in Sarajevo. The region had been fraught with tension for years, and this assassination served as the catalyst for the outbreak of World War I — pitting Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire (Central Powers) against Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and Japan (Allied Powers). The United States joined the Allied Powers in what was known as the Great War when Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917.

Four years of war brought unprecedented levels of destruction due to the grueling trench warfare and the introduction of modern weapons including machine guns, tanks, and chemical weapons. By the time World War I ended with the defeat of the Central Powers in November 1918, more than 9 million soldiers were killed. Twenty-one million more were wounded.

The war affected people all across the globe, including those here in Kentucky.

James Bethel Gresham was born in Beech Grove, Kentucky, and enlisted in the Army on April 23, 1914. Following basic training and an assignment in Mexico, Gresham shipped to France in June 1917, as the United States entered World War I. While in battle, Gresham was killed on November 3, along with two of his comrades. They were the first three American casualties in World War I. Read more on page 10.

As the war neared its end, it was disease rather than the German soldiers that inflicted the most damage on Americans. Nancy Baird tells about the “Spanish Lady” and her devastating effects throughout the Commonwealth on page 14.

Winchester native Ruth Coleman Gay received regular correspondence from her brother, Caruthers, an MIT student who went to France in service of his country. Through Coleman's letters (which can be found at the Kentucky Historical Society), Amanda Higgins shares Coleman's life abroad, his relationship with his sister, and his dedication to the U. S. war effort (page 20).

The Great War saw thousands of young men fighting for their country, many making the ultimate sacrifice. Perhaps no soldier was greater than Kentucky's Samuel Woodfill. Ron Elliott tells Woodfill's story on page 23 and makes the case for Woodfill being the Great War's greatest soldier.

Patrick Henry Callahan is an important part of Kentucky's history. During World War I, Callahan's business experience served him well as he worked to develop military camp facilities for Catholic service personnel. William Ellis tells Callahan's war story on page 26.

Graves County's Andrew Carman was drafted in 1917 and joined the storied 369th Infantry, an African American regiment dubbed “The Black Rattlers.” Known for their bravery in battle, the 369th was in combat longer than any other regiment in the war (page 30).

Lastly, Brigadier General USMC Ronald R. Van Stockum tells the story of his father, British Sergeant Reginald George Bareham. Sergeant Bareham was one of the first to answer the call for volunteers by Britain's minister of defense. Initially reported missing in action, Bareham was one of the 57,470 British casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. His story is on page 32.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Kentucky Humanities* and the World War I articles included. This is just a small sampling of Kentucky's World War I stories. We hope to share more World War I stories in our Fall 2017 issue of *Kentucky Humanities*. We want to hear your Kentucky stories as well. If you have one to tell, please contact our editor, Marianne Stoess, Marianne.Stoess@uky.edu.



Kathleen Pool

*Interim Executive Director
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Kathleen Pool

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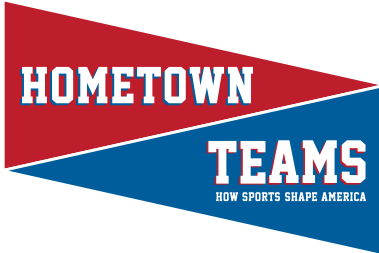
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Hometown Teams comes to Kentucky



Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America captures the stories that unfold on the neighborhood fields and courts, the underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries and gut-wrenching defeats. For more than 100 years, sports have reflected the trials and triumphs of the American experience and helped shape the national

character. Whether it is professional sports or those played on the collegiate or scholastic level, amateur sports or sports played by kids on the local playground, sports are everywhere in America.

This project gives communities an opportunity to share these stories, celebrate local legends and collect memorabilia from the community. With the support and guidance of the Kentucky Humanities Council, selected local towns will develop complementary exhibits, host humanities programs and facilitate educational initiatives about sports and ideals such as team work, fair play, leadership and respect.

Beginning March 2017, the Kentucky Humanities Council will bring the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street traveling exhibit, *Hometown Teams*, to 15 Kentucky communities as part of the Museum on Main Street project — a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. Museum on Main Street is a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the Federation of State Humanities Councils and state humanities councils nationwide. The United States Congress and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet provide support to the Kentucky tour of the Museum on Main Street project.

Hometown Teams Tour of the Commonwealth

Tour Dates	Host Sites
03/18/17 - 04/22/17	Mountain Sports Hall of Fame, Wayland
04/29/17 - 06/03/17	Campbell County Public Library, Newport
06/10/17 - 07/08/17	Laurel County Public Library, London
07/15/17 - 08/19/17	Nicholas County Historical Society, Carlisle
08/26/17 - 09/30/17	Appalachian Arts Alliance, Hazard
10/07/17 - 11/11/17	Todd County Welcome Center, Elkton
11/18/17 - 12/30/17	Corbin County Tourism and Convention Commission, Corbin
01/13/18 - 02/24/18	The Lincoln Museum, Hodgenville
03/03/18 - 04/07/18	Fleming County Public Library, Flemingsburg
04/14/18 - 05/19/18	Highlands Museum and Discovery Center, Ashland
05/26/18 - 07/07/18	Lincoln County Public Library, Stanford
07/14/18 - 08/18/18	American Cave Museum, Horse Cave
08/25/18 - 09/29/18	Muhlenburg County Public Library, Greenville
10/06/18 - 11/10/18	Wrather West Kentucky Museum, Murray
11/17/18 - 12/29/18	Georgetown and Scott County Museum

Ellen Hellard joins KHC Board



Ellen Hellard was elected to the Kentucky Humanities Council board of directors at the April 2016 Board Meeting. She will serve a three-year term, with a second three-year term optional. As a member of the 23-person volunteer board of directors, Hellard will help set council policies, award project grants to community organizations, and participate in fundraising to help the Council meet the growing demand for its programs.

A native of Richmond, Kentucky, and a graduate of Madison Central High School, Hellard attended Berea College, where she earned a B.A. in English and music and went on to the University of Kentucky, where she earned an M.S. in Library Science.

She worked at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives for 28 years before serving as the manager of the Kentucky Book Fair for seven years. She was a founding member of the Kentucky Book Fair Board, where she has served since 1981.

Hellard has been involved with Studio Players and the Woodford Theatre in the production of more than 100 plays.

She was married to Victor Hellard, Jr. and moved to Versailles in 1965.



Pulitzer Prize Centennial

This year marks the 100th awarding of the Pulitzer Prizes. In celebration of 100 Years of Excellence in Journalism and the Arts, the Pulitzer is partnering with individuals and organizations to host events across the country.

The Kentucky Humanities Council received a grant from the Pulitzer Prizes Centennial Campfires Initiative for events to be held in conjunction with the 35th Annual Kentucky Book Fair and those celebrating the centennial.

“Sunday with Joel” on July 17th at Murray State University was a successful collaboration between the Kentucky Humanities Council, MSU’s College of Humanities & Fine Arts, MSU’s Town & Gown program, and MSU’s NPR radio station, WKMS. Held at the Wrather Auditorium on campus, Audience members viewed a traveling art display of Joel Pett, editorial cartoonist at the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, whose work received a Pulitzer Prize in 2000. Following Mr. Pett’s reflections on his career, the impact of the Pulitzer on his life, and the current landscape of editorial cartooning, audience members were encouraged to ask questions and meet Mr. Pett.

The following evening Mr. Pett gave the convocation speech at the Governor’s Scholars Program, also being held at MSU. More than 350 rising seniors from across the Commonwealth participated in the GSP program. In addition to hearing Mr. Pett’s speech, students viewed the traveling art display and talked personally with Mr. Pett.

“UPIKE, Pett, & Pulitzer” was held on September 13th on the University of Pikeville campus at Booth Auditorium. Students, faculty, and administrators listened to Joel Pett reflect on his start in editorial cartooning, the challenges that cartoonists face today as opposed to years ago, and the opportunity he has to voice his opinion in a daily forum that encourages conversation. Before and after his remarks, attendees were encouraged to view the traveling art display of Mr. Pett’s work including a selection of pieces that won him the Pulitzer Prize. The Kentucky Humanities Council, the University of Pikeville and its Office of Public Affairs, Dean and Professor Howard V. Roberts (Chair of the Kentucky Humanities Council board), and the office of UPIKE President, Burton J. Webb, coordinated the event.

See the 2016 Kentucky Book Fair Catalog, inserted in the center of this magazine, for more about the Pulitzer Prize Centennial events taking place at the Kentucky Book Fair.



The Kentucky Humanities Council
presents



Master Class with Pulitzer Prize winner Maria Henson

“Is it Journalism? How do you know?”

- 1992 Pulitzer Prize winner for editorial writing
- Associate Vice President, Wake Forest University
- Editor-at-Large, *Wake Forest Magazine*

Friday, November 4, 2016
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Frankfort Convention Center
Registration is required



In Search of the Humanities

My Uncle Marsh and the Great War

By James Duane Bolin

Since the King of Uruk fought his battles in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the writers of the humanities have tried to make sense of war; and not just writers, but painters and musicians and dancers and artists of all sorts too. After all, practitioners of the humanities try to make sense of the essence of humanity. What does it mean to be human?

All wars call forth this burning question when we as human beings turn on each other with our latest forms of technology to destroy ourselves. We ask ourselves anew if in the destruction of our own generation we are not somehow shielding future generations, if we are not in essence peacemakers in some convoluted sense.

Perhaps no war made us think more deeply about these world-changing questions than World War I or The Great War as it was known before World War II. As Western Kentucky University historian David Lee wrote in his biography of Alvin C. York, the Great War added to a “sense of disorientation” we felt in the United States. “For the first time in history,” Lee said, “American troops were sent to Europe to fight, an action that violated foreign policy precepts stretching back to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.”

“Moreover,” according to Lee, “warfare itself had been reshaped by the Industrial Revolution. World War I began at a time when technology was able to produce simpler weapons of defense but not the more complicated offensive weapons needed to challenge those defenses. Thus the war was dominated by clattering machine guns, each capable

of spewing 450 rounds per minute into advancing assault waves. Such fire power presented awesome tactical problems for would-be attackers and moved Secretary of War Newton Baker to declare, ‘Perhaps no invention has more profoundly modified the art of war than the machine gun.’”

Lee wrote that “the lengthening casualty lists from the Western Front brought to life the enduring specter of the industrial age, machines turning on their creator to dominate or destroy mankind. In short, war had become, to quote Baker, ‘an industrial art conducted like a great modern integrated industry,’ which left the individual soldier an anonymous role comparable to that of an assembly line worker.”

I remember my mother’s and father’s stories about family members who fought in various wars. And I also remember the costs of war on those who stayed behind in diminished homes back in Kentucky and Tennessee. During World War I my great-grandmother, so overcome with grief at the thought of her son — my great uncle Marshall — in the trenches of the Western Front, committed suicide. Uncle Marsh came back home to Tennessee, but just barely.

My mother and father would take my brother and me to visit Uncle Marsh once or twice a year at the Veterans’ Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We drove through the gates of those beautiful, well-kept grounds, and a hospital official would lead us to a bench under the branches of a spreading shade tree. After a few minutes, a nurse would lead our Uncle Marsh slowly out to see us.

He wore clean, freshly pressed khakis, but his eyes were vacant. He sat on that bench, and my brother and I would pat his hand and talk to him and tell him that we loved him. He did not speak and he did not acknowledge us in any way, but we spoke to him nonetheless. And we thanked him for what he did for our country in the trenches on the Western Front. After a while, the nurse would come back and lead Uncle Marsh back to his room and we would drive away, back to our home in Texas or Tennessee or Kentucky.

On the way home, Mom or Dad would tell us again that Uncle Marsh had suffered from mustard gas in the trenches, and that he had come home shell-shocked. Unlike his mother, he had survived the war, but not really. He came back changed, still breathing, but unable to function and unable to work and even unable to communicate.

I remember reading about the Civil War soldier who said that he returned from the war, promptly had a nervous breakdown, and did not work again for eight years. He was fortunate. My Uncle Marsh never worked again, after giving his life for a cause that he probably did not understand completely. There was no Pearl Harbor before World War I. No Adolf Hitler. No Mussolini. In fact, Woodrow Wilson had campaigned for re-election in 1916 on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." He started his second term in 1917, and because of the Germans' unrestricted U-Boat

attacks, President Wilson and Congress determined that war was necessary after all.

The Great War changed the world. Modris Ekstein wrote a history of the war titled, *The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern World*. The Great War changed the world. But World War I also changed my Uncle Marsh and his family and thousands of other individuals and thousands of other families — Americans, French, English, Germans, Russians, and other nationalities around the world.

Although it may be ultimately impossible to make sense of war, although it may be ultimately impossible to answer the deepest questions about the meaning of the costs of war, the humanities give us the ability to ask the right questions. What John McCrae did for us "In Flanders Fields," what Wildred Owen did for us in "Dolce et Decorum Est," or what Ernest Hemingway did for us in *A Farewell To Arms* is unfathomable and incalculable. The humanities help us ask the right questions about war and other burning questions as well.

Duane Bolin teaches in the Department of History at Murray State University and is a former board member of the Kentucky Humanities Council. Contact him at jbolin@murraystate.edu.

The Kentucky Humanities Council
presents



35th Annual Kentucky Book Fair Seeks Volunteers

Volunteers are needed for the
35th Annual Kentucky Book Fair
Thursday, November 3rd - Saturday, November 5th
at the Frankfort Convention Center.

To volunteer or request additional information, visit kyhumanities.org or contact us at kyhumanities@kyhumanities.org.

The Kentucky Book Fair brings authors and readers together to celebrate their mutual interest in reading and writing. More than 175 authors plan to attend this year to meet readers and sign their latest books, which will be for sale.



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James Bethel Gresham

Kentucky-Born Soldier First American Combat Casualty in W.W.I.

By Hugh Ridenour

“**C**orporal Gresham, Private Enright, Private Hay: In the name of France, I thank you. God receive your souls. Farewell!” On November 4, 1917, these words concluded French General Paul E. J. Bordeaux’s gravesite address at the battlefield funeral of James Bethel Gresham and his two comrades, the first three American combat casualties in World War I. The service and burials occurred near Bathelémont-les-Bauzumont, France, only a short distance from the location of their deaths and just one day afterward. Although these three men died nearly simultaneously, the army designated Gresham the first American combat casualty in World War I.¹

James Bethel Gresham was born August 23, 1893, to Green and Alice Bethel Gresham in a one-room log cabin on a farm near the small McLean County, Kentucky, community of Beech Grove. When Gresham was about six or seven years old, his father died, and his mother soon moved the family from Henderson, Kentucky, to Evansville, Indiana, where in 1902 she married William T. Dodd. Young Gresham attended Evansville’s Centennial School and apparently later worked in the nearby west-side factories.²

Gresham enlisted in the army on April 23, 1914, and went to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri, for basic training. In March 1916, he accompanied General John Pershing on an expedition into Mexico to capture the insurgent Pancho Villa. Then in June 1917, as a member of Company F, 16th Infantry, 1st Division, he shipped

to France with General Pershing’s American Expeditionary Force as the United States entered World War I.³

After a ceremonial parade through the streets of Paris on July 4 and three months of training, Gresham and his unit moved into combat position on November 2, 1917, in the Sommerviller sector in the Lorraine region of eastern France. Gresham’s Company F immediately received assignment to a trench codenamed “Artois” along a hill 1,500 meters from the small village of Bures. Although time accounts vary, they generally agree that the Germans unleashed an artillery barrage on the American position between 3 and 3:30 a.m. on November 3, after which a raiding party of Germans from the 7th Bavarian Landwehr Infantry Regiment attacked. During the short 15- to 20-minute hand-to-hand combat engagement, Gresham and two fellow soldiers received mortal wounds, with Gresham shot in the forehead. Sergeant William Hastings, “across whose knees Gresham fell,” stated that when Gresham, who was reportedly “standing in a dugout entrance,” saw the gun pointed at him, he yelled, “‘Don’t shoot. I’m an American,’” believing the soldier to be a comrade. Hastings added that the German soldier, in good English, replied, “‘I’m shooting every damned thing in sight tonight.’” A military inquiry into the event determined that the American troops had received insufficient training and should be removed from front-line duty. As a result, nine days after the incident, “utterly fatigued, grimy, unshaven and covered with mud,” the Americans relinquished their position back to the French.⁴



Photo courtesy of Willard Library Archives

¹ *Indiana World War Records: Gold Star Honor Roll* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1921), 10-11; *Evansville (IN) Courier*, July 10, 1921. Although the three men were the first American Expeditionary Force combat casualties, the first American casualty was 1st Lt. William T. Fitzsimons, a doctor at Number 5 Hospital at the Anglo-American base near Dannes-Camiers, France.

² *Evansville Courier*, July 10, 1921, November 8, 1917, November 12, 1917; “Indiana Marriages, 1780-1992,” database, <http://www.FamilySearch.org>.

³ Heiman Blatt, comp., *Sons of Men: Evansville’s War Record* (Evansville, Indiana: Abe P. Madison, 1920), 76. One account indicates that Private Enright, before being killed, may have fought his captors, refusing to be taken prisoner.

⁴ Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 372; Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Expedition in World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 139-140; *Evansville Courier*, July 15, 1921; Bruce I. Gudmundsson, “Jakobsbrunnen Raid,” (photocopy), Willard Library Archives, Evansville, Indiana; Frank Coffman, “And Then the War Began: A Man Who Was There Tells the Story of First German Raid upon American Trenches in France,” *The American Legion Weekly*, January 13, 1922, 5, <http://www.OldMagazineArticles.com>. Some accounts indicate the German soldier was wearing an American uniform and replied either, “It’s Americans we’re looking for” or “You are the one I’m looking for.”



Originally buried in France, James Gresham's mother requested that his body be returned to Evansville. Almost four years following his death, Gresham's casket lay in state in Evansville's Memorial Coliseum. Nearly 20,000 people paid their respects. On July 16, 1921, a private funeral was held in the family home. Interment followed in Evansville's Locust Hill Cemetery

Gresham's letters home expressed his commitment and resolve and suggested that he valued the camaraderie of military life. He wrote on September 29, 1917, "Well, ma, the last time I wrote to you I was trying to cook for 200 men, but I am back in the company, and I am glad of it, for when I was away from the company I didn't feel right, [*sic*] I want to be with the boys." In a letter that his mother received on November 2, he penned, "I can't tell you anything about this country for I have not seen anything yet to talk about. But it's beginning to get cold and is not anything like El Paso. They say it snows here four feet deep. But even if it does get cold, I'll never get cold feet." Enclosed in the letter to her was a handkerchief, a birthday gift. Finally, Mrs. Dodd received a packet dated November 19 containing her son's personal effects, among which was "a bible [*sic*] found in Gresham's pocket, and endorsed on the fly leaf 'From El Valle, Old Mexico.'"⁵

News of Gresham's death produced a great outpouring of devotion to country in the United States. The November 24, 1917, issue of *Literary Digest* carried a full-page photograph of Gresham's mother partially draped in an American flag, and many newspapers, both foreign and domestic, published photographs of Gresham and his two comrades. Several prominent newspapers contained patriotic cartoons emphasizing the heroism of the three men, and the Red Cross featured their faces on war fund posters. On November 11, 1917, a crowd of nearly 5,000 filled Evansville's newly completed Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum (now Veterans Memorial Coliseum) for a tribute to Gresham. The *Evansville Courier* immediately set up a fund-raising drive to build a home for Gresham's

mother, with many Evansville businesses donating materials and numerous citizens contributing small monetary amounts. Mrs. Dodd and her family moved into the small bungalow-style house, which overlooked the city's Garvin Park, soon after its completion and formal opening on August 18, 1918.⁶

Gresham posthumously received the United States Army's Citation Star (now Silver Star) and the Purple Heart, and France awarded him the Croix de Guerre. Citizens of the Mueche-et-Moselle district erected a stone obelisk monument near Barthélemy-Bauzemont bearing an inscription that includes the names of Gresham, his two fallen comrades, and "Sont morts pour la France" ("They died for France"). The citizens also sent Mrs. Dodd a miniature replica of the monument, which the local American Legion presented to her in a brief ceremony on July 9, 1921. Although the people of France wanted the heroes to remain buried there, Mrs. Dodd requested that her son's body be returned to Evansville. Almost four years after his death, beginning at 9 a.m. on July 15, 1921, a crowd of nearly 20,000 began filing past Gresham's casket as he lay in state in Memorial Coliseum. Then at 7 p.m. a contingent of soldiers escorted the body to the Dodd residence for the remainder of the night. A private funeral service followed the next day at the home and a few minutes later at a local church. Interment ensued in Evansville's Locust Hill Cemetery with the Funkhouser American Legion Post providing full military honors. Approximately three hours after the burial, the Evansville postmaster made a special delivery to Mr. Dodd of the ultimate symbol of honor, "a large laurel wreath with two cards attached by a pink ribbon, containing the names of President Harding and Mrs. Harding."⁷

⁵ *Evansville Courier*, November 6, 1917; Gudmundsson, "Jakobsbrunnen Raid." Apparently Mrs. Dodd's birthday was November 10.

⁶ "First American Mother to Lose Her Son in France Under the Stars and Stripes," *Literary Digest*, November 24, 1917, 10; *Evansville Courier*, November 12, 1917, July 10, 1921, August 19, 1918. The house is now part of the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program and serves as a transition home for veterans.

⁷ Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1963 (photocopy), Willard Library Archives; *Evansville Courier*, July 10, 1921, November 12, 1917, July 15, 1921, July 17, 1921. The current monument in France is a replacement after the occupying German army deliberately destroyed the more imposing original during World War II. Locust Hill Cemetery records, apparently in error, date his burial as July 18. The families of the other two men also returned their bodies to their hometowns for reburial.



Gresham's grave remained without a headstone for more than three years. The only identifying mark was a glass jar the held a note from his mother. On December 24, 1924, the caretaker of Locust Hill Cemetery placed the official government-issued headstone on James Bethel Gresham's grave.

Notwithstanding the tremendous outpouring of admiration for Gresham following his death, including subsequent suggestions of a conspicuous gravesite in downtown Evansville, his grave remained without a headstone for more than three years. The only marker was a common glass olive jar placed there by his mother with the following ungrammatical note inside:

James Bethel Gresham
Born in McLean Co
Kentucky Aug 23 1893
Killed in France
Nov 3 1917
Gave his life you & me

Finally, on Christmas Eve 1924, the caretaker of Locust Hill Cemetery, alone and without ceremony, quietly placed an official government-issue headstone on the grave. In late 1936, the Evansville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1114 began an initiative to construct an imposing monument and permanent gravesite, possibly at the newly completed Dress Plaza along Evansville's riverfront. However, funding concerns and differing opinions regarding potential locations became obstructive issues. Maybe other events, such as increasing tensions in Europe and the devastating flood that began inundating large portions of Evansville in January 1937, refocused public attention, thereby suspending the memorialization efforts.⁸

Even though Gresham moved to Indiana as a small child, the citizens of Kentucky, particularly those of McLean County, count him as one of their own. They claim his birthplace with pride and honor his memory. On October 20, 1928, a new bridge spanning the Green River between Rumsey and Calhoun on Kentucky Highway 81 received designation as the James Bethel Gresham Memorial Bridge. A reporter for the *Evansville Courier* estimated the crowd at the bridge's dedication to be nearly 10,000, with "practically every county in western Kentucky being represented." In addition, the Kentucky Historical Marker Program placed in Beech Grove a bronze plaque commemorating Gresham, and a bridge across the Green River on Kentucky Highway 56 just west of Beech Grove also bears his name.⁹

Multiple plaques in Evansville and Indianapolis, along with organizational titles and the Garvin Park home, also honor Gresham's memory, but Evansville's grand initiative to erect an impressive monument and gravesite never materialized. Perhaps another major war and additional conflicts producing long lists of casualties and deeds of valor reprioritized sentiments toward the World War I hero and, with the passage of time, diminished Gresham's "first" status, so patriotically acknowledged by his contemporaries. Now, 100 years after his sacrifice, James Bethel Gresham's remains still lie among the rows of other veterans' graves in Locust Hill Cemetery, beneath a regulation military marker with standard inscription — and without reference to the special circumstances of his death.¹⁰

About the Author

Hugh Ridenour, a resident of Hanson, Kentucky, is a 28-year veteran educator in Kentucky's public school system and was the 1999 recipient of Kentucky Historical Society's Richard H. Collins Award. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Western Kentucky University. In 1999, the Kentucky Historical Society selected Ridenour's book, *The Greens of Falls of Rough: A Kentucky Family Biography 1795-1965* as one of the 10 best books published on Kentucky history in the previous four years. He has been published in several history journals, including the Kentucky Historical Society's *Register*, the Filson Historical Society's *Quarterly*, and the Wyoming Historical Society's *Annals of Wyoming*.

⁸ Typed note by Karl Knecht (no date) on back of a photograph of Gresham's grave, Karl Kae Knecht Photograph Collection, Willard Library Archives; *Evansville Press*, December 26, 1924, January 28, 1925; *Evansville Courier*, November 26, 1936.

⁹ *Evansville Courier*, October 21, 1928. In 1999 a new bridge, designated Veterans Memorial Bridge, replaced the 1928 structure. Author's note: The author lived the first eight years of his life in McLean County. Each time the family drove over the bridge between Rumsey and Calhoun, his father would remind him that the bridge was named in honor of Gresham.

¹⁰ Headstone Applications (photocopy). The James Bethel Gresham Chapter 7, Disabled American Veterans placed at the base of a nearby flagpole in the cemetery a small bronze plaque recognizing Gresham as the first American combat casualty in W.W.I.



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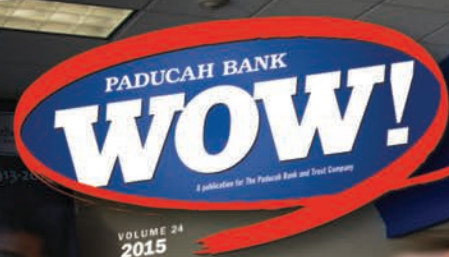
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The “Spanish Lady” in Kentucky

1918-1919

By Nancy Baird

During the final months of World War I, disease rather than the German war machine, posed the greatest threat to America. Spanish influenza hit the United States in the late summer of 1918 and rapidly spread across the nation. During the several months the disease ravaged Kentucky, it restricted social, cultural, economic, and political life, killed 15,000 and weakened 300,000 of the Commonwealth’s residents. Kentucky’s visit from the “Spanish Lady” was perhaps the most terrifying ordeal of the 20th century.

The origin of the 1918 flu epidemic is unknown, but apparently it hit many areas of Europe and Asia simultaneously. Receiving its name during the widely publicized epidemic in Spain, the malady spread with the movement of armies and ships and probably entered the nation with American troops returning from Europe. Crowded conditions on military installations aided its spread.

Kentucky’s first diagnosed case of Spanish influenza appeared in mid-September at Camp Zachary Taylor, near Louisville. Within a few days sick soldiers filled the base hospital and soon 15 barracks were converted into hospital wards. The field director of the American Red Cross issued emergency appeals for bedding, for volunteer drivers and motor vehicles, and recruited members of the YMCA, Knights of Columbus, and students at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to transcribe medical records and write notes to worried families. Several dozen nurses and civilian doctors volunteered their services. The *Courier-Journal* reported that never before in the state’s history had there been such demand for medical and nursing care in a single locality.

A shortage of food also plagued the camp. Area residents donated wagon loads of jelly, fresh garden produce, and “dressed fowls,” and students at Louisville Girls’ High School made gallons of chicken broth. All contributions of food were welcomed; a



Photo courtesy of University of Kentucky Archives

Those attending the sick were instructed to wear masks made from at least five layers of gauze.

group of Simpson County squirrel hunters even sent the fruits of their marksmanship to the camp!

In mid-October the number of new cases at Camp Taylor began to decline, although the war would end before the last flu victims left their hospital beds. Despite the best medical care possible, one-sixth of the camp’s men had been hospitalized with the flu. Fifteen hundred died.

Cases of Spanish Flu also appeared in other areas of the state, and by mid-October the malady ravaged nearly every town, village, and hamlet. Louisville reported 6,415 cases in October, Madisonville officials estimated that 600 were ill with the malady, and Breathitt County’s three doctors tried to attend to 2,000 local patients. The malady struck 90 percent of the citizens of Dekoven in Union County and half of the residents of Lothair in Perry County. The disease also “descended like the plague” on the mining camps of eastern Kentucky. The Red Cross called for male nurses to aid flu victims in Appalachia.

The State Board of Health urged local newspapers to carry daily instructions on the prevention and treatment of the

malady. Kentuckians were warned to keep their feet and clothing dry, avoid crowds, protect the nose and mouth in the presence of a “sneezer,” gargle three times a day with a mild antiseptic or salt water, and attend immediately to early cold or flu symptoms. The board also instructed physicians to follow quarantine procedures (report all cases and quarantine all homes where cases appeared), and reminded the police to enforce anti-spitting regulations.

On October 7, the board ordered that all places of amusement, all schools, and all churches throughout the state be closed until further notice. Kentuckians were urged to remain at home and refrain from traveling, paying social calls, entertaining friends, or attending weddings and funerals. Most of the state’s colleges and universities also cancelled classes and athletic activities. If the state’s youths objected to their forced vacation, their protests remained ignored by the press, except, perhaps, for the comment of a Lexington lad: “What’s the use of a vacation if you can’t do nothin!”

Many businesses also temporarily ceased operation or changed their normal routine. The postmaster at Glasgow locked the post office doors while the mail was being sorted; the owner of a Shelbyville hotel prevented loitering by removing all the chairs from his lobby, and several newspapers ceased operations to protect their employees. Federal courts remained in session, but most state and county courts “recessed” for a few weeks. The closing of theaters, mines, and businesses undoubtedly created financial difficulties for many, for salaries generally were not paid during periods of “layoff.” The cancellation of church meetings also drew loud comments. In lieu of public worship, ministers urged their parishioners to hold private, family services, and

newspapers suggested Bible readings and carried sermons written by the clergy of various faiths.

Seasonal and war-related activities were also curtailed. The draft board announced that until further notice, physical exams for recruits were being discontinued. Harrison County’s health officials “outlawed” Halloween activities, and Louisville cancelled its Columbus Day parade and Italian Relief Ball. The epidemic even stifled the oratory of Kentucky’s politicians, for public speeches and crowd-gathering rallies during the gubernatorial and congressional campaign were cancelled. An unidentified “poet” wrote:

*I am just a little germ that gets into people’s noses,
But I have all the politicians shaking on their toeses.
For until I leave the platform free, and not a second sooner,
The public can’t hear Stanley speak, or listen to Ben Branner.*

Kentucky suffered an acute shortage of nurses and physicians. More than half of the Commonwealth’s doctors were serving in the military, leaving 1,500 practitioners to care for 2,500,000 civilians. The State Board of Health sent 96 doctors and 235 nurses and Sisters of Charity to the most severely stricken areas and urged other medical personnel to volunteer their services. Families who employed trained nurses to care for children or invalids were urged to release them during the epidemic, and the U. S. Public Health Service suggested that everyone learn about home care of flu patients.

Physicians worked day and night to care for their sick patients. Making house calls was a common practice, and practitioners

occasionally provided services beyond their professional training. Bowling Green’s only black doctor spent many hours trying to find volunteers to care for the sick and bury the dead of isolated families; a Harrison County physician practiced his culinary talents and even milked the family cow before completing several of his visits. Transportation difficulties decreased the number of patients a busy doctor could visit, and because few rural practitioners owned automobiles — and roads were almost nonexistent in many areas — a horse or mule was often the only means to reach rural patients. A Warren County doctor later estimated that he wore out a pair of horseshoes each week, visiting his rural patients during the epidemic.

Where possible, the most severe flu patients were hospitalized. The staff at Louisville’s Deaconess Hospital devoted an entire floor to flu sufferers, and other Falls City hospitals opened new contagion wards.



Photo courtesy of University of Kentucky Archives

Wounded soldiers and Kentuckians affected by the influenza were housed at Gymnasium Hospital, at the University of Kentucky during the epidemic in 1918.

Many communities created temporary facilities. The trachoma hospital in Breathitt County opened to flu patients, and the YMCA building in Paris and the Elks Lodge in Ashland became infirmaries, as did high schools in Shelbyville and Winchester.

Advice on flu prevention circulated throughout the epidemic. The State Board of Health recommended that persons attending the ill wear masks made from at least five layers of gauze, cover their clothing with a smock when in the sick room, and wash their hands thoroughly after touching any utensil that had been used by a patient. Ads for tonics, pills, oils, and salves flooded magazines and newspapers from Appalachia to the Jackson Purchase. A Louisville chemical company urged that all homes be disinfected and fumigated with its special preparation. Millinery shops advertised hats made with gauze “flu veils,” a Paducah clothing store suggested “proper dress” as a safeguard, and drug and dry goods stores everywhere enjoyed an increase in the sale of gauze and cheese cloth. The owner of a Mayslick store even suggested that smoking a malodorous pipe, like the one on which he puffed, would keep all germs away. The most popular preventive, however, was a bag of assafoetia worn around the neck. Occasionally an onion was added to the foul smelling gum in hope that “even the flu wouldn’t come near that combination” of odors.

The U. S. Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 for the development of a flu vaccine, and the Surgeon General arranged for all military personal and government employees to be vaccinated. A serum, developed by Dr. William Mayo of Rochester, Minnesota, was administered to numerous folks in Kentucky and elsewhere. Patent medicines, advertised as wondrous preventions for flu (and nearly every other malady that beset mankind) claimed great preventive and therapeutic powers. But nothing was effective against the Spanish femme fatal.

Treatment generally consisted of bed rest, aspirin, and plenty of liquids. A few practitioners prescribed liquor to relieve pain; a Bowling Green physician, who believed that alcohol might make his patients more comfortable, administered his wife’s entire stock of Christmas pudding brandy. In many rural areas a home-made expectorant concocted from honey and the syrup extracted from cherry-tree bark, was hailed as effective in controlling the racking cough associated with Spanish Flu. But nothing cured the disease except time — and luck!

In late October the disease began to abate in Kentucky, and on November 7, the Board of Health announced that schools and churches could open in those counties where the disease had nearly disappeared. The opening of amusement centers was left to the discretion of local health officers. To make up for lost time, Louisville’s schools established a six-day week, and an extra hour was added to the daily sessions of Lexington’s schools.

Despite the ban lifting, crowd-gathering sales remained prohibited and merchants were encouraged to eliminate Santa Claus and Christmas tree-lighting festivities. Nevertheless, crowds

gathered, and news of Germany’s surrender on November 11th signaled large public demonstrations of joy. As Kentuckians abandoned their earlier caution, flu cases increased. Fortunately, the number of new cases never equaled the October crest, but to protect the state’s juveniles, most public schools closed again and many remained shut until the following autumn. Persons under 16 were barred from theaters, amusement centers, and other places where people congregated. Everyone was urged to help overcome a situation that “threatens the very life of the nation.”

Reports of new Spanish influenza cases continued throughout the winter and early spring of 1919, but except for a few scattered localities, the disease was not epidemic. The Board of Health repeatedly admonished the public to beware of crowds, but the press carried few comments about the flu. Public interest focused on the returning American doughboys. Peace and the rehabilitation of Europe, prohibition, and the “bolshevik threat” in the United States became the favorite topics of reporters and consumed the interest of newspaper readers.

Throughout the epidemic, the State Board of Health kept records of cases and deaths. The statistics concerning the “lady’s” visit to Kentucky were appalling. The illness hampered war production, almost brought military training to a standstill, temporarily curtailed the education of the state’s (and nation’s) youth and caused untold hardships because of financial losses. About 15,000 Kentuckians — six times as many as gave their lives while serving in the military — died of the disease. In 1918 disease was mankind’s greatest enemy!

About the Author

Dr. Nancy Baird is retired from Western Kentucky University where she served as the special collections librarian and professor in the history department. Baird holds master’s and specialist degree in history from Western Kentucky University. She is the author of five books and numerous articles about Kentucky history.

For Further Reading

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The Garrett Morgan Gas Mask

By William McHugh

In 1914, Garrett Morgan patented his gas mask which he referred to as a “safety hood.” This was a remarkable achievement since Garrett only had an elementary education and his parents were former slaves. He was born March 4, 1877, in Paris, Kentucky, and was the seventh of 11 children in his family. By the time of his death in 1963, he had invented the traffic signal, improved sewing machines, created a hair straightening product, invented a friction drive clutch, and created a respiratory device that proved to be a model for World War I gas masks.

At 14 years of age, Morgan left Kentucky for better employment opportunities in Cincinnati then moved on to Cleveland, Ohio. Before he invented what would become the gas mask, he worked for several sewing machine repair companies. During his employment as a repairman, he invented a belt fastener for the sewing machine. With his patent he was able to open his own repair shop which led to financial security. That allowed him to pursue other interests and inventions like his breathing device.

Morgan observed that firefighters were becoming overwhelmed by smoke as they tried to extinguish fires. He then



set out to create a breathing device or “safety hood” that would provide its wearers with a safer breathing experience in the presence of smoke, gas, and other pollutants. The result was a canvas hood placed over the head with two breathing tubes. The tubes merged in the back where a sponge soaked with water was placed in the open end. The sponge was used to filter out smoke and provide cool incoming air. Morgan obtained a patent for his breathing device on October 13, 1914. Like many new inventions, the breathing device was a hard sell to potential customers. That was until disaster struck tunnel workers in Morgan’s hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.

On July 24, 1916, 200-feet under Lake Erie a tunnel was being constructed by the Cleveland Water Works in search of a fresh water supply. Workers hit a pocket of natural gas causing an explosion which trapped the workers amidst suffocating fumes and dust. Rescue workers were sent in but never returned. Upon hearing of the incident, Garrett rushed to the scene with his safety hood and entered the tunnel. He managed to save two lives and recover four bodies before the rescue efforts were called off. After the rescue, Morgan’s company received requests from fire departments around the country who wished to purchase the new masks.

In the same year that Morgan patented his breathing device Europe had become embroiled in war. World War I was not only remembered for its trench warfare but also as a “chemist’s war.” By the end of 1914 both sides were actively engaged in chemical warfare. Initially the French used tear gas followed by the Germans using chlorine gas which destroyed the respiratory system of the victim and caused death by asphyxiation or suffocation. Initially as a counter measure, wet handkerchiefs and soaked gauze medical pads were used as face masks, but this proved ineffective. This was even more ineffective as the deployed chemicals became more lethal.

Morgan’s breathing device became a prototype and precursor of the gas masks used during World War I which protected soldiers from the toxic gases that were being used. Before American involvement into “the war to end all wars,” the British government tested Morgan’s mask and refined it into a usable product for military personnel and saving thousands of lives. Within two years a refined model of his early gas mask won a gold medal at the International Exposition of Sanitation and Safety and another gold medal from the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

About the Author

William McHugh retired from the United States Army in 2007 after 20 years of service. He earned a master’s in history from American Military University and currently teaches American and Kentucky history at Bluegrass Community Technical College and Ashford University. He has been a member of the Kentucky Humanities Council Speakers Bureau since 2012.





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Dear Family

The Wartime Correspondence of Caruthers A. Coleman

By Amanda L. Higgins

In December 1917, 24-year-old Caruthers Askew Coleman of Como, Mississippi, departed New York City for the trenches of France. Coleman, a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, took the officers placement exam for the Coastal Artillery Corps in April and impatiently waited for his results throughout the late spring and early summer. On June 5, 1917, he registered with the selective service system and wrote on his draft card, “has taken exam for Reg. Army” to make sure the draft board knew of his willingness to fight.¹ He wrote to his sister, Ruth Coleman Gay of Winchester, Kentucky, that it was the duty of men to serve their country and those “Blue Grass Boys” she knew needed to worry more about defending their nation than “growing grass seed.” Caruthers proclaimed patriotism and wrote about his bravery and skills in the “artillery arts,” but his letters home also reveal a young man struggling with his new role.² In fact, Caruthers Askew Coleman was a World War I version of the contemporary much-besmirched millennial.

¹ Caruthers Askew Coleman, U.S., Serial Number 576, Order No. 10, Como, Panola County, Mississippi, *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration), M1509. Also available via Ancestry.com (accessed July 19, 2016).

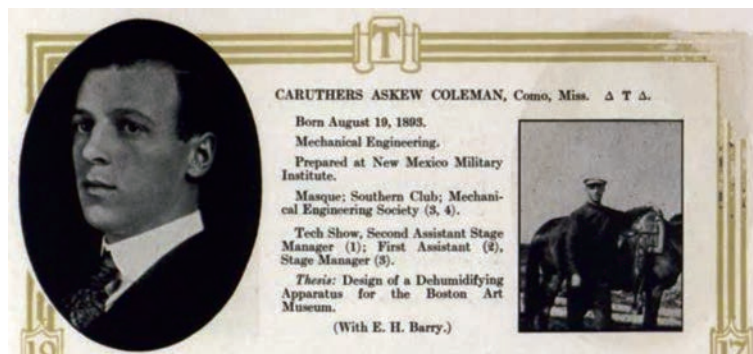
² Caruthers A. Coleman to Mrs. David S. Gay [Ruth Coleman Gay], May 1917, Prewitt, Gay, Coleman Collection, 1777-1993, MSS 207, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Ky. (hereinafter PCG Collection, KHS).

The Prewitt, Coleman, Gay Collection, preserved and made available to researchers at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort, contains thousands of pieces of correspondence, business records, and land transactions of the descendants of Montgomery County settler Robert Prewitt. The Prewitt children and grandchildren established families with other prominent Kentuckians — Spurgins, Colemans, Van Meters, Browns, and Gays — and over the course of two centuries they spread west and south, while remaining deeply connected to central Kentucky.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant (“the 11 or 12th ranking... that is in this branch”) and promoted to first lieutenant during his training at Fort Monroe, Virginia, Coleman knew he was at the top of the officer class and would soon command men against the “vile Huns.” He was uninterested in training, but detailed how the 12-inch artillery gun sounded to his family. Describing the massive new guns as “crouching bulldogs,” Coleman listed the specifics of the ammunition, the commands from leadership, and then the noise. “Well try to imagine the loudest clap of thunder you ever heard — multiple it by 10 — think of the biggest blast furnace you ever saw. Multiply the light flame by 10, and add it to the noise — throw in a good sized whirlwind and a small earthquake and you can approach, somewhat, the effect of the sudden liberation of energy of the power inside,” he explained.³

While the new technology interested his family, Coleman was much more eager to reach Paris where he and his friend, George “Kitt” Kittridge, would meet three or four women they knew and have a “large party as soon as” they arrived.⁴ Kitt and Caruthers were fortunate enough to be sent to France together and spent the first month of their deployment at the Army Heavy Artillery School in the French countryside, outside Paris. Their base was “on ground that the Huns marched over in their attempt to reach Paris,” but the fighting was only noticeable on quiet nights, when the gun noise carried.⁵ Their new base included younger recruits and graduates of the military academies, men Caruthers found insufferable and did not deem worthy of their commissions. The “fresher” officers were out to “steal” his rank and were sure to be less effective leaders than he had thus far proven to be. Yet, Caruthers very rarely wrote about his leadership or training; instead, he focused on the down time he enjoyed with Kitt.

As the two officers awaited their field assignments, they attended classes, explored the French towns near them, and went on shopping expeditions. Throughout January 1918, Caruthers, Kitt, and a few fellow officers spent their time drinking smuggled wine, eating candy and treats sent to them from family members, and buying souvenirs. Caruthers purchased a vase fashioned from a 25-mm shell case fired at the Battle of Verdun and sent his sister, Clara, a French soldier’s hat; Kitt purchased “an Eastman Kodak of the latest type and a complete development outfit” — at a great price! They were tourists, exploring the French countryside via the American Expeditionary Forces. And now



*Prior to joining the war in France, Caruthers Askew Coleman was a 24-year-old student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (Caruthers Askew Coleman, *Technique* [MIT, 1917]: 178)*

that Kitt had a Kodak, they could document their travels with the highest quality film!⁶

In early February, Caruthers and Kitt contracted mumps. They spent three weeks in a hospital convalescing, and joined thousands of other U. S. soldiers at home and in France who suffered from the disease. In fact, only influenza and gonorrhea were more likely to lead to loss of active duty days and hospitalizations.⁷ Caruthers worried his time in the hospital would extend his training and lead to a less desirable field assignment. He worried he could not keep up with his studies, but worked to stay on task; he also hoped his family would make sure the comforts of home were available to him throughout his deployment. He provided detailed instructions on how to pack and ship his specific requests — pralines from New Orleans, vanilla and plain caramels from a shop in Jackson, Mississippi, “proper cigars,” and face soap from a pharmacy in Memphis — so that the inspectors in New York and France would have an easier time and the packages would arrive quickly. He scolded his family for packing candy and sweets in tin cans. The contents were spoiled by the time they arrived in France. Even though in earlier letters Coleman was impressed by the wide variety of goods available to him in France, he required certain comforts to fulfill his martial duties.

After he recovered, buoyed by the treats and gifts from his family, Coleman was finally assigned a regiment — he stayed with his friend Kitt and another MIT classmate, in a “ry” (railway) battalion. Caruthers, ever the lucky man, was the third-in-command of his battery and was ready to take on the “Huns.” He was also sure he would show the other “lieuts” a few tricks he “had up [his] sleeve. A great deal of this stuff is self assurance and aggressiveness,” characteristics Caruthers did not lack.⁸

³Caruthers A. Coleman to Family, Undated, PGC Collection, KHS.

⁴Caruthers A. Coleman to Family, September 1917, PGC Collection, KHS; Coleman to Family, undated, PCG Collection, KHS.

⁵Caruthers A. Coleman to Mrs. David S. Gay [Ruth Coleman Gay], January 5, 1918, PGC Collection, KHS.

⁶Caruthers A. Coleman to Family, January 15, 1918, PGC Collection, KHS.

⁷Kathleen M. Galalgher, Stanley A. Plotkin, Samuel L. Katz, and Walter A. Orensten, “Measles, Mumps, and Rubella,” in Andrew W. Artesntein, ed., *Vaccines: A Biography* (New York, 2010), 229.

⁸Caruthers A. Coleman to Family, February 19, 1918, PGC Collection, KHS.



Let me know if you had to pay postage on this of your
 out. A. E. F. Jan 5 '18

Dear Ruth -

I appreciate more and more what you did for me in fixing up my outfit to get deeper and deeper into France. I have had many occasions to use the things that already and the camp forks and spawders. The fellows send all sorts of thanks for the cake and cake.

We smuggled two halves of cake into our quarters today and cut the cake with a great deal of ceremony, for it saved the danger of the subs and the

French transportation system. Of the two, the latter I believe was the worst.

We are on ground that the Germans marched over in their attempt to reach Paris. The whole country is dotted with graves of its dead and one does not have to walk for 75 miles to see the effect of the artillery fire. I am told that on quiet nights one can hear the guns at the front.

There are four branches one may be sent to. By artillery, heavy field, tanks and aircraft and French motor. I do

not know yet where I go. If you had mentioned them in order of preference.

You do not say too much for the American Navy in getting us safely to France, for they had in looking after the men here, and for the French navy in their patient and best effort to keep us get along and learn the language.

I found here that the waiting for me and it sure helped to shorten the distance between us to get them. You were from home. The package you all

sent has not arrived. I was probably delayed in the time. But all that in boxes (wood) that can be opened for inspection and sent out the outside the center of the package for it would save time in inspection.

It is cold as can be here and food very scarce.

I am writing under the assumption that you send the rest of the family exchange my letters for there is so much to tell. I could not possibly tell back to you all.

Love Caruthers

While at MIT, and later while in France, Caruthers Coleman often wrote letters to his sister, Ruth Gay, who was back home in Kentucky. (Caruthers A. Coleman to Ruth Coleman Gay, Box 7, Folder 3, Prewitt, Gay, Coleman Collection, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Ky.)

Coleman's letters home reveal a charming, enterprising young man who went to war because he felt it his duty, but who was not quite able to project the independent masculinity so often attributed to soldiers. He was charismatic, a flirt, and proud to tell his family about the experiences he thought they'd appreciate and those that may have worked to assuage some of their fears. At home, the family wanted to publish excerpts of his letters in Jackson, Memphis, and Lexington newspapers, but he told them not to do such a thing. In fact, publishing his correspondence, especially in Memphis, was a very bad idea. He insisted the letters were meant for the family and not for consumption by a curious public. While he enjoyed his family's pride in his service, he felt it was important to maintain a sense of distance between the war and the home front.

Viewed only through the prism of a few months of Caruthers Coleman's letters home, his time as a World War I soldier was less about defeating German authoritarians and much more about travelling around France as a pampered, privileged American. But, as Coleman gained new assignments and experienced the traumas of war, did his outlook change? Did Caruthers Askew Coleman return from his deployment a more mature young man or was he, truly, a millennial of the 19-teens? The Prewitt, Gay, Coleman Collection at the Kentucky Historical Society holds the evidence — stop in and see for yourself!

About the Author

Amanda L. Higgins, Ph.D. is associate editor of the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* and coordinator of the research fellowship program.

Great War's Greatest Soldier?

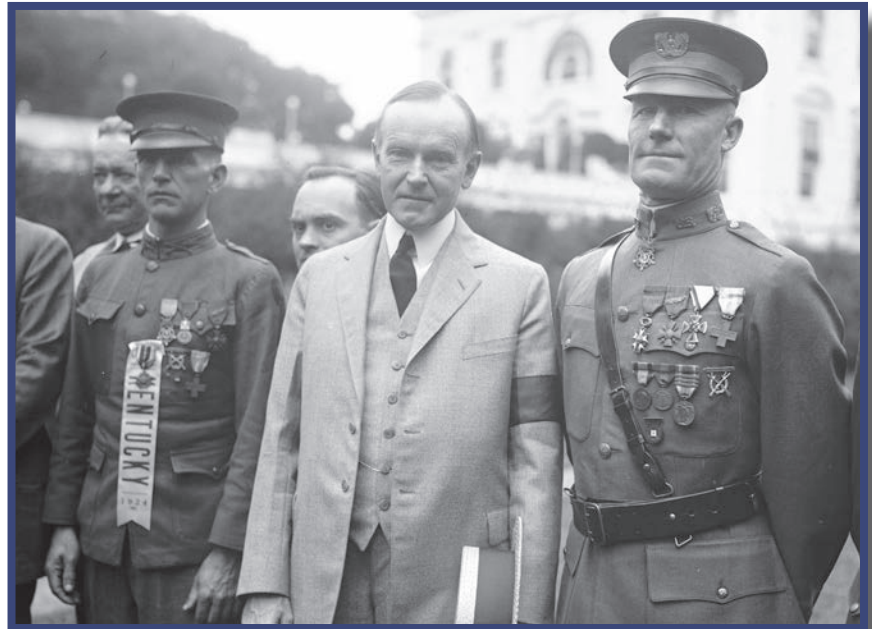
Kentucky's Samuel Woodfill

By Ron Elliott

Ask anybody who was the most decorated American soldier of World War II and you'll probably get an immediate "Audie Murphy." Ask the same question concerning World War I and you'll probably get a blank stare and perhaps a tentative "Sergeant York?" While Alvin York is better known (thanks to Congressman Cordell Hull and movie star Gary Cooper,) no less an authority than American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Commander-in-Chief General John J. Pershing declared that the best soldier in the AEF was Kentucky's Samuel Woodfill.

Sam Woodfill was born January 6, 1883, along Indian Kentuck Creek just on the Indiana side of the Ohio River near where the Belterra Resort now stands opposite Warsaw, Kentucky. As Woodfill's father, John, was a veteran of both the Mexican and Civil Wars, there were always guns around the house and hunting was a way to provide food for the dinner table. At a young age, Sam was prowling the woods sporting his father's muzzle loader, despite the fact that he was so small that he had to stand on a log to ram a ball down the rifle's barrel. By age 10, young Sam had demonstrated a natural affinity for guns, proved to be an excellent marksman, and was bringing home a steady supply of rabbits and squirrels.

Although, at age 15, he knew he was underage, Sam was disappointed when he was refused enlistment in the Army at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898. By 1901, the



U.S. President Calvin Coolidge (center) flanked by Samuel Woodfill (right) and Kentucky's other World War I Medal of Honor recipient, Willie Sandlin (left).

"splendid little war" had ended in Cuba, but Woodfill was delighted when Uncle Sam accepted his bid to join the hostilities still raging in the Philippine Islands. Woodfill admitted to being the greenest recruit the Army ever had and said that just to hear the drill sergeant cuss at him was "worth the price of admission." During his first hitch, he found that, having grown up alone, he was lacking in social skills and, unlike many of his comrades, had no exposure to alcohol. A single encounter with the native "vino," a concoction of "alcohol, rat poison, and tobacco juice" caused Woodfill to respect his limits. Engaging in a number of skirmishes with the "insurrectos," Sam discovered that he possessed the soldier's most valuable attribute: he was cool under fire. Discharged early in 1904, Woodfill found life pretty boring along Indian Kentuck Creek. He loved the military life, so he began thinking of making the Army his career. When he chanced to see an article in a local paper saying that the Ohio-based Third Infantry was moving to Alaska to guard the telegraph lines connecting that booming territory to the mainland and provide some oversight to the unruly prospectors, he signed up for another hitch.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Alaska of that day was a hunter's paradise, with bear, moose, caribou, the elusive mountain sheep, and other species abounding. Every soldier at Fort Egbert, the Army's northernmost outpost, was expected to serve a term as a hunter detailed to provide a meat supplement to the mess tables. Woodfill's skill as a hunter was evident; soon after his arrival, prowling the countryside for game became his permanent assignment. The Army considered the Alaska duty so arduous that units were rotated every two years and each soldier earned three years service credit for the stint. Woodfill loved being in the North Country so much that as each unit's time expired, he would resign only to reenlist in the outfit being rotated in. In this way, Samuel Woodfill moved through the enlisted ranks and became a seasoned veteran.

By the summer of 1912, the gold rush was over, so the Army moved out of Alaska. Soon after he was rotated to Kentucky's Fort Thomas and promoted to sergeant, Sam met Lorena Wiltshire, a local girl who would become his bride. Two years later, Woodfill's company was assigned to the Texas border where trouble was brewing with Mexico. Under the command of General John J. Pershing, the Army's presence there was sufficient to quell the cross-border excursions. While Woodfill did enjoy chasing after Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa, his main activity in South Texas was "guerrilla warfare against rattlesnakes." Early in 1917, the unit returned to Fort Thomas.

When Congress declared war in April 1917, the United States Army was ill equipped to join in the Great War. Due to the lack of trained officers, Woodfill, a sergeant at the time, was breveted to Second Lieutenant and assigned to train raw recruits. The day after Christmas, 1917, Lieutenant Woodfill, drawing an officer's pay, married Miss Wiltshire while on leave. Shortly after, the couple purchased a farm near the town of Fort Thomas. With a deployment to Europe's war zone pending, Woodfill was promoted to First Lieutenant in March 1918. The next month, Woodfill's 60th Infantry Regiment boarded transports and headed "over there" to become part of the AEF. On the ship, Sam heard a lot of talk about what they were going to do to the German Army and the mademoiselle from Armentieres but he kept his own counsel. Although he'd seen no actual combat, Woodfill played his part as the unit's "old hand," steadying the green doughboys. Late August found him an "acting captain" with orders to move up to join the mass of American troops along the Meuse River east of the Argonne Forest.

On an early October patrol, Woodfill's party made the mistake of trying to cross an open field. Halfway across, fire from a German machine gun forced the Americans to take cover. Woodfill dove into a trench so shallow that his back pack stood out "as plain as a wart on your nose." With bullets zipping through his pack and plowing the surrounding ground, Sam thought this was *finis de la guerre* for him. He pulled a picture of his wife from his uniform pocket and scribbled a note to her on the back. As suddenly as the fusillade began, it inexplicably stopped. "I went to all that trouble for nothin'," Sam told a buddy as he sheepishly replaced the picture in his pocket.

Following a cold rain on the morning of October 12, 1918, the thick fog settling in over the Argonne Forest near Cunel France was a welcome sight to the AEF's 60th Infantry as they fixed bayonets and climbed "over the top" at 0600 hours. Only 100 yards into no man's land, the American advance was halted by a combination of German machine gun and artillery fire, accurate despite the fog. Knowing that to order his men ahead would wipe out the entire company, Lieutenant Woodfill decided to locate the machine gun nest. Shedding his pack, he made a dash through a hail of bullets to dive in the nearest shell hole. From this vantage point, he observed three German positions: one to his right in an abandoned stable; another somewhere directly ahead; and the third in a church steeple 300 yards to his left. Although he couldn't see the gunner, Woodfill fired a clip from his rifle into the little window at the top of the steeple. Fire from that position stopped. Turning his attention to the stable, he fired into an opening created by a board having been removed. Again, he could not see the result of his action, but fire from the stable ceased, leaving only the nest ahead in action.

Woodfill dashed to the next shell hole in that direction, dodging the fusillade directed at him. Pausing to gather his wits, he noticed that his eyes were stinging and his nose and throat felt raw. Mustard gas! As his gas mask would inhibit his vision, he opted to get out of that hole quickly. Leaping forward, he found a small heap of gravel, the only cover available. When the bullets chasing him stopped, he spotted a gun barrel sticking out of a clump of bushes. His eyes still burning, Woodfill struggled to see the man behind the muzzle. A glint of light revealed a dim face below a coal-scuttle helmet. Woodfill fired and the face disappeared only to be replaced by another. A second shot produced the same result. This scenario was repeated two more times, causing Woodfill to admire the enemy's courage as the last two had to know what was going to happen as they stepped behind the gun.

Woodfill shot the next man as he tried to escape. His rifle clip now empty, he drew his pistol as another man ran away. A single shot dropped him, wiping out the entire machine gun nest. Shoving another clip into his rifle, Woodfill waved his men forward and moved ahead. Realizing that the German positions would be laid out in a mutually protective pattern, he dashed diagonally to the next available cover. The gun was in a shallow dugout leaving the gunner's head in plain sight. Woodfill killed all five gunners as each one replaced the one he'd just shot. As he fired a round to disable the gun, three German soldiers almost collided with him. Although his rifle was empty, as he raised it, the Germans threw up their hands crying, "Kamerad!" After making sure they were disarmed, he ordered the prisoners to the rear and pressed on.

A burst of machine gun fire drove him to the ground. Crawling to the base of a tree, he spotted the German position. Once again, five shots from a fresh clip was all that it took to wipe out the five gunners. As he moved forward to secure that position, another opened up on him from the right. Woodfill nearly landed atop a German soldier as he dove into the trench. The quarters were too close for the rifle,

so both men went for their pistols; Woodfill was quicker. Another German charged around an angle in the trench. Woodfill still had his pistol in hand, but it jammed as he pulled the trigger. Flinging the pistol aside, Sam grabbed an entrenching tool sticking out of the mud. A blow to the soldier's head brought him down. A shot whizzing by his ear brought Woodfill's attention to the fact that the man he'd just shot with the pistol was still alive enough to shoot at him. Another blow with the mattock ended his life.

As Woodfill climbed out of the trench, a noise behind him caused him to whirl, raising his rifle as he spun. "Don't shoot, Lieutenant!" his corporal cried as the rest of the company gathered around. As the adrenaline rush ended, Sam was nearly exhausted when the major approached. "What have you been doing to the Germans?"

"I got a few," Woodfill gasped.

After the war ended in November, Woodfill, now a captain, was ordered to AEF headquarters at Chaumont. When he arrived he learned that he was one of several soldiers who were to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, America's highest military decoration and the zenith of a professional soldier's career. At the banquet, Woodfill was chatting with Pershing, whom he knew from the Texas border days, when he heard a familiar accent. "You from Kentucky, buddy?" It was there that Woodfill met Willie Sandlin, a fellow Kentuckian from Perry County and also a Medal of Honor recipient. In addition to the Medal of Honor, Woodfill was also awarded Croix de Guerre by the French Government, the Montenegrin Cross of Prince Danilo, the French Navy's Legion of Honor, and the Italian Merit di Guerra.

Along with millions of other servicemen, Woodfill was mustered out of the military after the war. With no education and no marketable skills, he could find no vocation, so he re-enlisted to become just another sergeant in the peacetime Army. Sam Woodfill retired in 1923 credited with 30 years service.

Before that, however, he had another moment in the sun when America honored all her war dead by dedicating a tomb to a soldier whose identity is "known but to God" in Arlington National Cemetery. Following an elaborate process to select the remains of an American soldier killed in the Great War, a ceremony was held in Washington, D. C., on Armistice Day, November 11, 1921. Of the eight men to be honored by being pallbearers, the Army was tasked to designate three (Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery) who were decorated for valor. A committee reviewed 3,000 citations to select 100 names which were then submitted to General Pershing. When the General saw Woodfill's name on the list, he exclaimed, "That man was the most outstanding soldier of the AEF."

Following his discharge, Woodfill returned to Fort Thomas and retired to the farm he and Lorena purchased before the war where they struggled to pay their bills on the \$133/month Army pension. He was often invited to speak to various groups until he began refusing all invitations because he "was tired of being a circus pony." In 1924, local Democrats made an effort to run Woodfill for Congress, but he flatly refused.

In 1929, deep in debt, Woodfill took a job as night watchman at a Newport mill where he remained employed until the United States entered World War II. In May 1942, in an effort to boost morale, the Army commissioned Samuel Woodfill (and Alvin York) as a major and sent him on a good-will tour of Army bases. He served in that capacity until, following the death of his beloved Lorena in 1943, he resigned. Finding the



While in Fort Thomas, Samuel Woodfill met and married Lorena Wiltshire.

Kentucky farm lonesome without his wife, he purchased a small tract of land near Vevay, Indiana, where he planted fruit trees and slowly devolved into a recluse. On August 13, 1951, neighbors found Woodfill in his home apparently having been dead for several days. A few years later, a local newspaper upon discovering that Woodfill was buried locally in a poorly marked grave, mounted a campaign to obtain a better marker for his grave. When the news of that effort reached the Pentagon, Army officials declared that Woodfill's remains should be interred in Arlington National Cemetery. Accordingly, his body was reinterred in that hallowed ground on October 18, 1955, where he lies in grave 642A in section 34, a mere 50 feet from the commander who honored him.

Why General Pershing selected Woodfill rather than the better known Tennessee hero, Alvin York, as the best soldier has been the object of much speculation over the years. One school of thought is that Pershing opted for Woodfill as he was a regular army professional soldier while York was a draftee who initially applied for conscientious objector status. York was touted by his Tennessee Congressman (and later Secretary of State,) Cordell Hull and made famous when Gary Cooper portrayed him in the 1941 movie, *Sergeant York*. Whatever the actual case, Samuel Woodfill was, to say the least, one of the Great War's greatest soldiers.

About the Author

Ron Elliott, a native of Lincoln County, is a graduate of EKU and UK with degrees in math and computer science. Elliott's background includes involvement with the historic Apollo missions and a stint on the faculty of Kentucky's Community College system. His story-telling ability, research skills, and writing style produces well-accepted books, including *Assassination at the State House*, *Hilltop to Mountaintop*, *The Silent Brigade*, *Inside the Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire* and *Through the Eyes of Lincoln* as well as numerous magazine articles. Elliott is a popular member of the Kentucky Humanities Council's Speakers Bureau.

Pat Callahan, American Catholicism, & World War I

By William E. Ellis

Patrick Henry Callahan played an important role in not only the history of Kentucky, but also the nation in the early part of the 20th century. Born in 1866 to Irish immigrant parents in Cleveland, Ohio, he studied in Catholic schools and for one year in a business college. Well over six feet tall, he had an ambition to become a professional baseball player but instead went into the bustling business world of the late 19th century. He worked for the Glidden Varnish Company in Cleveland before settling in Louisville. There he helped form the Louisville Varnish Company, soon becoming its president and serving until his death in 1940.

The quintessential handsome hale-fellow-well-met Irish-American, always impeccably dressed, Callahan used his charm and wit to make friends in all walks of life, building his small company into a regional success. He very soon became active in local, state, and national Democratic Party politics and extensively used his honorary title of “Colonel,” given to him by several governors, as an entree into heavily Protestant Kentucky and southern communities. Moreover, owing to his own abuse of alcohol as a young man and the alcoholism of his son, he became an early advocate of national Prohibition, a course typically anathema to his fellow Catholics. Seemingly oblivious to any danger, he fearlessly engaged anti-Catholics, even the Ku Klux Klan, in his quest to prove his and his fellow Catholics devotion to the American way of life.

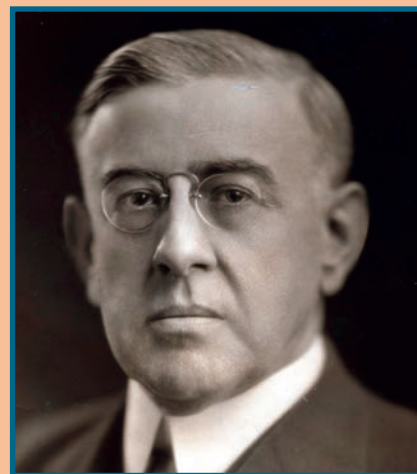
The Louisville industrialist exemplified many of the best traits of “Progressivism” in the early 20th century. Very progressive-minded, in 1912 Callahan and Monsignor John A. Ryan of the Catholic University of America collaborated in designing and implementing the Ryan-Callahan Plan of Partnership, a profit-sharing plan that even weathered the destructive Great Depression.

His open approach in the early 20th century generally won him plaudits from friend and foe alike. However, his independence quite

often ran afoul of his own church officials and particularly the Louisville Catholic organ, the *Kentucky Irish-American*, which often branded him “a traitor in camp” or other vitriolic dispersions on the Colonel’s unwillingness to go along with the Democratic Party machine in Louisville.

With the outbreak of the Great War in Europe in 1914 an upsurge of anti-Catholicism swept America. The Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus, headquartered in New Haven, Connecticut, adopted a resolution presented by Callahan forming a Commission on Religious Prejudices in late 1914 with the Louisvillian as its chair. Callahan used many of his own resources, including his private secretary at LVC, and he himself traveled extensively throughout the United States proclaiming the Americanism of Catholics in speeches and in newspapers, magazines, and journal articles. On a shoestring budget, Callahan produced results, winning the plaudits of many Catholic and Protestant leaders and the attention of the administration of President Woodrow Wilson.

The United States’ declaration of war in April 1917, began a new phase of Callahan’s public career. He used his business experience, his contacts through personal letters and the use of the “Callahan Correspondence,” a series of mimeographed chain letters from correspondents discussing important issues, and increasing ability to be away from LVC because of its smooth-running staff and operation to take on another important task. Recognizing that a third or more of



During World War I, Patrick Callahan was an integral part in providing services to Catholic service personnel.

Courtesy: Journal photograph from the Gammett Archives

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American service personnel would be Catholic, the “hierarchy” of the church, 14 archbishops, created the National Catholic War Council (NCWC), which tasked the Commission on War Activities, Knights of Columbus, with developing military camp facilities for Catholic service personnel. Elected a Supreme Director of the Knights in 1915, Callahan became chairman of the Commission. He immediately moved to Washington and set up offices in the Willard Hotel. Over the next several months he had to balance his own efforts with the roles of the church hierarchy and lay Catholic leaders including other Knights of Columbus officials into the realities of providing services to Catholic service personnel.

Callahan soon grasped the delicate relationship between the Bishops’ War Council and the Knights’ headquarters in New Haven. With a limited budget allocated for the initial phases of the war work, the NCWC carefully scrutinized the funds given for the Knights’ responsibilities. It appears some of the hierarchy wanted to centralize all the work under their aegis, delegating no authority to the Knights. Always looking for ways to increase lay activity, Callahan personally visited three archbishops and won their support for continued independent participation by the Knights.

No sooner had Callahan smoothed relations between the Bishops and the Supreme Council then a conflict developed within the Knights leadership. As a member of the council, the Colonel fought against centralization of all authority in New Haven. He claimed that the “professionals” in the leadership of the Knights sought to control all Knights of Columbus activities throughout the country, rather than merely representing the membership and coordinating national affairs. Callahan wanted more active local chapters filled with energetic laymen while the majority of the Supreme Council appeared to desire concentration of authority at the national level.

Understanding the internal political conflicts evident within the Catholic war activities, Callahan proceeded with his own plans. Working closely with Secretary of War Newton D. Baker and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, he organized Knights of Columbus activities in the training camps. Government red tape did not intimidate the Colonel. When difficulties arose over building sites, he went directly to the War Department construction unit head and got permission to begin work immediately on Knights’ facilities. Callahan called upon outside resources when necessary. Delays in acquiring lumber and other building supplies because of war shortages brought out his resourcefulness. He contacted a wealthy Knights of Columbus member in Chicago, who owned lumber mills throughout the midwest, and secured immediate shipments of supplies. Callahan also involved local Knights in camp activities and pushed for full Catholic representation in the chaplain corps. By late 1917, more than 70 Knights’ facilities had been built in the training camps, providing space for recreation and religious services. The Colonel hired camp secretaries to administer the recreational facilities and paid chaplains for each camp. He kept in close touch with the camp secretaries by sending directives each week from his office in Washington, and also visited many camps, all at his own expense. Within a span of only

six months Callahan engineered an efficient training camp program that fulfilled the primary religious and recreational needs of Catholic servicemen.

In the second phase of the Knights’ war effort, Callahan developed a program for American Catholics on the “Western Front” in Europe. The Commission hired overseas secretaries and paid the expenses of priests to minister to the needs of soldiers and sailors. In the camps and often near the front lines the secretaries distributed hot food and coffee, winning the name “Casey” for their efforts and dependability. However, it was not long before relations between Knights of Columbus officials in Europe developed into another sore spot for Callahan. Walter N. Kernan, Commissioner in Charge of War Activities with Overseas Armies, soon asserted some independence from Callahan’s directives after his arrival in Europe. Trouble developed between the two Knights’ officials over expenditure of funds.

Several other areas of conflict developed over the Knights’ programs. Competition between the YMCA, the Red Cross, and the Knights of Columbus appeared inevitable. They contended for the most convenient locations for their “huts” in the service camps and bickered over other matters. For example, with the slogan, “Everyone Welcome, Everything Free,” the Knights’ served a substantial number of non-Catholics because the YMCA often charged small fees for some of their services. When the YMCA refused to hire Catholic workers, Callahan demanded an equal share of camp facilities. After some delay he finally won the friendship and support of Dr. John R. Mott, director of the YMCA war program, and most of the turmoil ceased.

However, complaints about anti-Catholic literature and activities in the camps blighted the war effort, particularly in the south and midwest. Callahan used the same reasonable tactics that he had employed in the recent campaign against prejudice. The attacks lessened in intensity and frequency. While the Knights of Columbus did not integrate their camp facilities, Callahan insisted that each provide equal treatment for black troops in separate locations.

The strife between Callahan with the Supreme Council and Kernan persisted well into the second year of his administration. Callahan, believing that his authority had been undercut, resigned from his post as the war ended. Discord continued into the post-World War I years with the Louisvillian confronting the centralization of authority under the Supreme Council in New Haven. Soon after the war ended on November 11, 1918, Callahan employed the Louisville Knights’ journal, *Good of the Order*, to voice his opposition to the national organization. Becoming “a driving force among the dissidents” in 1919, Callahan questioned the council’s disbursements policies and “the exaggerated sense of authority” emanating from New Haven. One exasperated member of that body branded the Louisvillian “an extraordinary type of egotistical ass.” Callahan never again had input into national Knights of Columbus affairs, but he continued active participation in the Louisville chapter.

Perhaps the surest sign of the antagonism that developed in 1917-1918 between Callahan and the Supreme Council appeared

in the official Knights of Columbus publication of the war years. The account contained little about Callahan's role although he provided vital leadership in forming the Knights' war work. As usual, the local *Kentucky Irish-American* refused to credit Callahan's efforts, preferring instead to back the "Supremes." In the short run the so-called "reconstruction movement" of insurgents like Callahan failed, though later the Supreme Council became more accessible to the general Knights membership.

After resigning from the Commission on War Activities, Callahan received one more war-related task. Through the influence of some allies in the Catholic hierarchy he became Chairman of the United War Drive, Knights of Columbus Division, in the fall of 1918. The YMCA, American Red Cross, Knights of Columbus, and other agencies cooperated in a fund drive for reconstruction of war-torn Europe. The Colonel succeeded in meeting the Knights' quota, owing to his friendships with many Protestant leaders, including Mott and William Jennings Bryan, and by using his business acumen.

Callahan's participation in the war work of organized agencies represented the first full-fledged share that Catholics took in something on as grand a scale as World War I. The increase of Catholics in the United States due to immigration and population growth meant that they could no longer be ignored in national planning. After the war the National Catholic War Council reorganized as the National Catholic Welfare Council with the specific goal of war rehabilitation and reconstruction. The new Council soon adopted social welfare and Americanization of immigrants as major roles in the early twenties. While the hierarchy dominated this redefinition of the duties of Catholic agencies, laymen such as Callahan also demonstrated a growing awareness of their responsibilities.

Perhaps more than any other Catholic layman of his time, the Colonel championed this new activist role for laity. Because of his independent turn of mind many Catholics did not appreciate his activities, particularly when he cooperated with evangelical Protestants and his adamant stand for Prohibition. However, he



Courier-Journal photograph from the Gammett Archives

Patrick Callahan (right) took an active role in local, state, and national politics. Callahan was joined by Senator Alben Barkley (left) at a dinner for the Democratic Party.

received belated recognition for his efforts on behalf of profit-sharing and his war-related tasks. In 1922, Pope Pius XI inducted Callahan into the prestigious Papal Order of St. Gregory the Great, making him the first Kentuckian to attain such an honor.

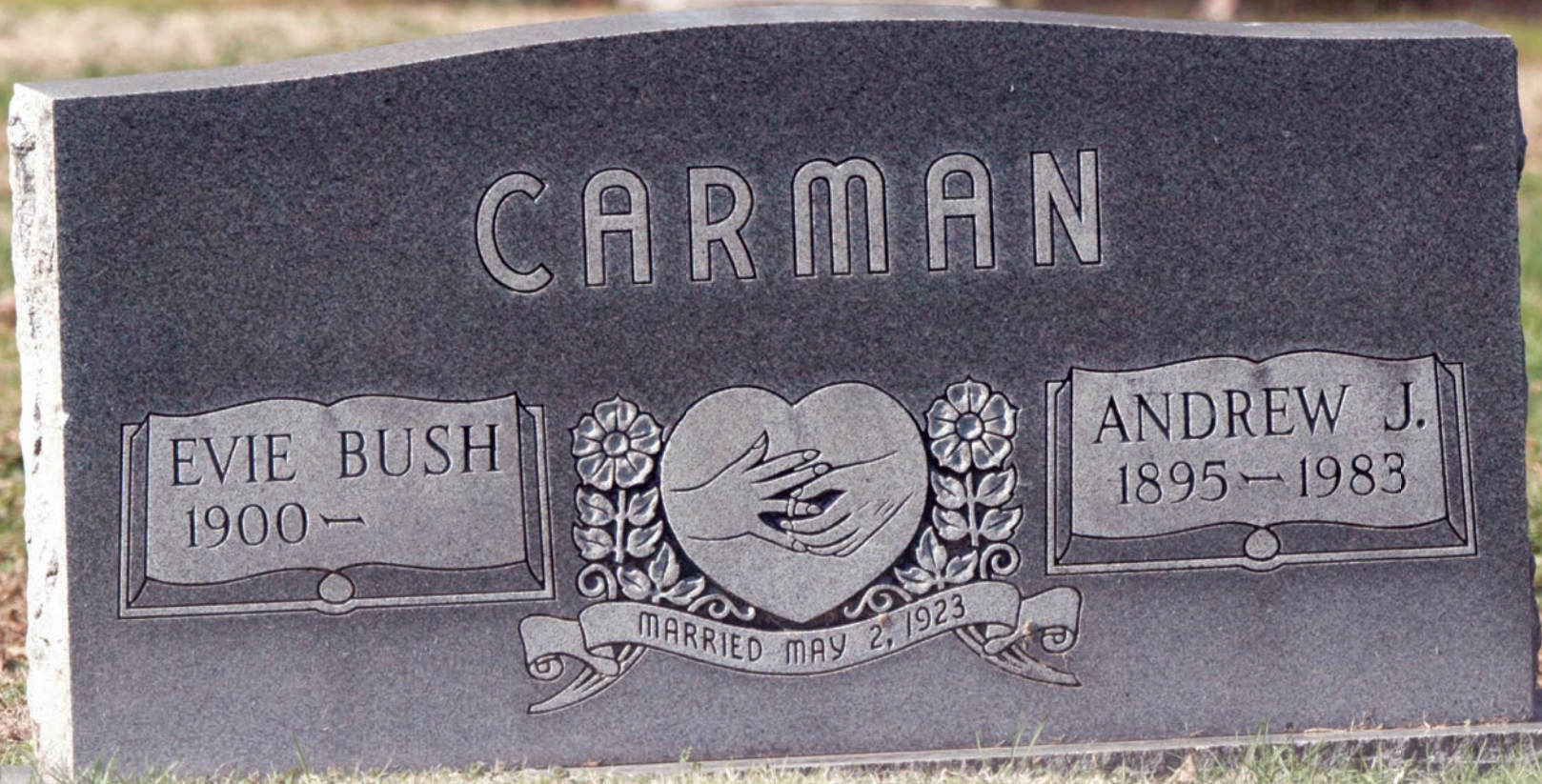
About the Author

A native Kentuckian and graduate of Georgetown College, Eastern Kentucky University, and the University of Kentucky, William Ellis is the author of 35 journal articles and six books, the most recent, *A History of Education in Kentucky*. He taught for 29 years in the Department of History at ECU. Ellis is currently writing a biography of Kentucky's most famous humorist, Irvin S. Cobb of Paducah.

A Note on Sources

This brief article about only one facet of the life of Patrick Henry Callahan comes from William E. Ellis' book, *Patrick Henry Callahan: Progressive Catholic Layman in the American South* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989). Articles about his life were also published in *The Catholic Historical Review* (January 1983), *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (Spring 1980, Spring 1994), and, *The Filson Club History Quarterly* (January 1977, July 1984).

Research included standard secondary sources as well as newspapers, magazines, and journals. Primary sources consulted included Callahan material in collections at The Catholic University of America, The Filson Club Historical Society, Notre Dame University, the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, the H. L. Mencken Papers in the New York Public Library, the Ohio Historical Society, Eastern Kentucky University, the University of Kentucky, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Fifteen oral history interviews were conducted with former employees of the Louisville Varnish Company as well as Barry Bingham, Sr., publisher, and John Herchenroeder, reporter, editor, and ombudsman of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*.



“Like Chasing Rabbits Back Home”

By **Berry Craig**

Andrew Carman of Graves County saw No Man’s Land only once.

“It looked like an old broomsedge field,” remembered Carman, who farmed east of Mayfield, the county seat. “Nothing was growing. The ground was all torn up.

“There was barbed wire coiled up and some lower down to the ground. It looked like an old field somebody had just thrown away.”

It was a killing field in France where Private Carman, 23, almost died charging the German enemy in World War I. “I don’t know how long it was until I got hit by shrapnel,” Carman said. “I went down, and when I came to, I could feel blood all over my face, and my left knee was hurting.”

Carman was entitled to sew a yellow wound stripe on the sleeve of his olive green uniform. But in 1981, he decided he wanted a Purple Heart medal, which the Army revived 50 years before. “When I wrote the army about it, I said I just wanted to wear it a little while before I died,” Carman explained.

Death claimed the old soldier in 1983 at age 88.

The shell that wounded Carman killed two of his buddies in the storied 369th Infantry, an African American regiment mainly recruited from Harlem in New York City. After Carman fell, the

rest of his Third Battalion, about 700 strong, kept pressing the Germans, inflicting and suffering heavy casualties.

Already, the soldiers of the 369th, dubbed “The Black Rattlers,” were known for bravery in battle. Their beleaguered German enemies nicknamed them the “Hell Fighters,” according to *Harlem’s Hell Fighters: The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I*, a book by Stephen L. Harris.

The 369th was “in combat for 191 days, longer than any other American regiment in the war,” he added. But the regiment did not fight in an American army.

Most U. S. generals, all of whom were white, did not want black combat troops. The American Expeditionary Force brass sent them to fight in French armies or used them as laborers.

Spurned by top U. S. commanders, the 369th wound up in the French Fourth Army, whose officers showered the men with praise and with medals. The first two U. S. Doughboys to win the coveted French Croix-de-Guerre with Star and Gold Palm were Sergeant Henry Johnson and Private Needham Roberts of the 369th. “He was a good-sized man and pretty quiet,” said Carman of Johnson, who died in 1929 at age 36. Johnson was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 2003 and the Medal of Honor in 2015.

After the war ended in 1918, Carman traveled to the Rhine River with the 369th. “The French felt these black American troops ought to lead the Allies” to the historic German waterway, Harris wrote. Carman brought home a small brown pebble he picked up from the riverbank.

The son of ex-slaves, Carman grew up in Jim Crow Graves County where segregation and race discrimination were the law and the social order. African Americans were kept separate and unequal.

Violence or the threat of violence against African Americans underpinned the Jim Crow system throughout the South and in border states like Kentucky. Local white mobs lynched at least four Graves County blacks in the 1890s.

Carman was drafted in 1917 and went through basic training at segregated Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville. As they were in the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, black regiments were led by white officers. The color bar remained firm in the military through World War II; President Harry Truman desegregated the armed forces by executive order in 1948.

The army sent Carman “over there” from Newport News, Virginia, in a troopship convoy. Like thousands of other soldiers — white and African American — he was plagued by seasickness. “I was too sick to die,” he said, grinning.

He said he might have perished if not for fellow Graves countian Granual Whittemore. He coaxed Carman to eat to stay alive.

“I’d chew something, swallow it, and it would come right back up. But he forced me to keep trying to eat, and I made it.”

After 14 days at sea, Carman’s ship docked at Brest, France. He was surprised when French soldiers and civilians welcomed him and other African Americans. “Segregation and prejudice, I didn’t see any of that,” he said. “The French treated me like a man. They treated me better than I’d ever been treated in my own country.”

Like other African American troops handed over to the French army, Carman had to exchange his deadly-accurate Springfield rifle for a French Lebel, a much inferior weapon. “We nicknamed them ‘Lilly-Belles,’ ” he said.

Thus rearmed, Carman reached the Western Front on the night of September 25, 1918. He found shelter in a trench dugout just as the French artillery opened fire. “You could look out of the ends of the dugout and see nothing but flame and fire from the big guns,” he said.

The barrage lasted six hours and 25 minutes, according to Harris. “It sounded like the ‘roll of a titanic drum, explosion so thick upon explosion that no separate sound could be distinguished.’ ”

Just before daybreak, the troops were ordered to prepare for battle. Carman waited in the trench for the command to go “over the top” against the vaunted Hindenburg Line. The 369th was part of a massive Allied offensive.

When the command came after daylight, the men swarmed into the open, dashing across No Man’s Land between the French and

German lines “like chasing rabbits back home,” Carman said. But the quarry shot back.

Harris wrote that the barrage “annihilated” the forward German lines. As a result, the enemy offered “little opposition.” But a German shell from somewhere felled Carman.

After the western Kentuckian regained consciousness, he tried to crawl back to his trench for medical aid. A German machine gunner pinned him down.

“Every time I tried to move it was peck, peck, peck, peck. The bullets would hit all around me.”

Finally, the German was killed or chose another target, giving Carman a chance to crawl away. He did.

“I was in the hospital when this captain came around and asked me if I was ready to go back to the front, and I said I was,” Carman recalled. “He asked me how many Huns I’d get him, and I said 24 — 23 privates and an officer. He laughed and said, ‘We need you.’ ”

Carman said when he got back to his “G” Company, he discovered he was the only man left from his squad. “There were eight other men, and I never did know what happened to them — if they were killed or wounded or transferred, or what.”

Despite staggering losses, the 369th continued to attack. By September 30th, Carman’s battalion was down to 137 enlisted men and seven officers, according to Harris.

The army discharged Carman in 1919. “Before I left, they gave me a wound stripe. They said a medal would come later.” Carman said he did not know what kind of medal to expect. “But I was proud to get the Purple Heart.”

He credited the Mayfield Red Cross chapter with helping him receive the decoration, which was pinned to the lapel of his suit in which he was buried.

Before his coffin was closed, his widow, Evie Bush Carman, a retired county school teacher, unfastened the medal and kept it. She was 104 when she died in 2004 and was buried next to her husband in Oak Rest Cemetery in Mayfield.

From April 8 to October 1, 1918, casualties in the 369th “were among the highest of any American regiment in the [Champagne] region,” Harris wrote. Commanded by Col. William Hayward, Carman’s regiment was part of the 93rd Division. It did not officially fight as a division, but the 93rd’s losses were surpassed only by the Second Division. The author added, “Even the storied Rainbow Division, also whites only, suffered fewer casualties Back then, you see, black was not a color of the rainbow.”

The author suggested, “Perhaps Hayward’s men relished the fact that they had never lost a foot of ground or had one of their own ever been taken prisoner.”

About the Author

Berry Craig of Mayfield is a professor emeritus of history at West Kentucky Community College in Paducah and the author of five books on Kentucky history including the critically-acclaimed *Kentucky Confederates: Civil War, Secession, and the Jackson Purchase*.

MY FATHER: BRITISH SERGEANT REGINALD GEORGE BAREHAM AND THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME



Photos courtesy of Ronald R. Van Stockum

By Ronald R. Van Stockum, Brigadier General USMC (retired)

Reginald George Bareham, raised on farms near Cambridge, England, that his father George Bareham had managed, had formed an affinity for farming. He had also been a schoolboy protégé of Oscar Browning (1837-1923), renowned, but unconventional, Cambridge University scholar and historian.

On May 4, 1913, in one of his last letters to Browning, Reg Bareham wrote:

“The farm work is going on as nicely as ever and we have every promise of a successful harvest. I am very often told I ought to get a better job, but I think it is my duty to stick to my people, and what is more I mean to do so, other people can please themselves. I think anyone who keeps steady and try hard can always succeed in life.”

“Success” for Reg Bareham consisted of giving his life on July 1, 1916, along with thousands of British volunteers, for a few hundred yards of captured enemy territory.

In September 1914, shortly after the beginning of the Great War, Reg became one of the first to answer the call for volunteers by Lord Kitchener, Minister of Defense. These volunteers constituted what was then called “Kitchener’s Army.” Often recruited by community or geographic area, they were organized into battalions containing friends and neighbors, who called themselves “Pals.” Reg joined the volunteers training in Cambridge, who subsequently formed “The 11th Suffolks.”

On June 24, 1915, his 21st birthday, Sergeant Reg Bareham, married Florence Freestone, a bright and beautiful young lady from Orwell, a nearby village. At the time of his arrival in France,

Above left: Reginald George Bareham answered the call for volunteers in September 1914. Above right: Sergeant Reginald Bareham married Florence Freestone on June 24, 1915.

probably unknown to him, his wife was carrying his child, to be named Ronald Reginald Bareham (later Van Stockum).

Marshal Joffre, at a conference at Chantilly, France, on December 6, 1915, had made plans with his Allied counterparts to launch an Anglo-French offensive in the summer of 1916. It was to be timed to coincide with attacks from their allies, Russia and Italy.

Sergeant Bareham of the 11th Suffolks battalion, a component of the British 34th Division arrived in Le Havre, France, on January 7, 1916.

However, in February 1916, the Germans launched a massive attack against the French at Verdun. Although stubbornly holding their ground, with the battle cry, "Ils ne passeront pas," [They shall not pass], the French seemed to be on the verge of defeat. Joffre's call for diversionary attacks by the British against the German line was answered.

Thus France, having suffered enormous casualties, was rendered incapable of playing the major role in the Battle of the Somme that had been originally planned. However, it was decided that the planned attack should still take place, but with the main effort being made by the fresh British forces, even though they were not yet fully trained. It was not long after its arrival in France that the 34th Division, including the 11th Suffolks, was ordered into the front line trenches of a "quiet" sector of the Western Front.

Gallant Leading of Night Patrols

On April 20, 1916, Sergeant Reginald Bareham was presented with a "Card of Honour" by Major General Edward Charles Ingouville-Williams, Commander of the 34th Division. The award was for "Gallant leading of night patrols during March and April [1916]."

My mother had torn this card up in grief, a piece of paper in exchange for the life of her husband!

One can imagine Reg, with three or four carefully chosen members of his platoon, under cover of darkness, climbing silently up ladders from their trench and crawling over the parapet. They would then pass through a pre-arranged gap in their own protective barbed wire and creep through "no man's land" toward the German trenches, perhaps only two hundred yards away. While cutting a section of German wire to prove they had reached the enemy lines, Reg and his companions would have realized that the slightest sound would bring down pre-arranged enemy machine gun fire, sited along the wire.

I remember, as a child, holding in my hand a piece of German barbed wire that my father had cut from the enemy's defenses.

Attack on the Somme

The main effort of the attack on the Somme was to be made on a 14-mile front astride the Somme River by the British Fourth Army, under General Sir Henry Rawlinson. The axis of the advance was centered on the historic Roman Road that ran from Albert in the west to Bapaume, 12 miles to the northeast. The 34th Division

including the 11th Suffolks, was to attack astride this road.

They were opposed by the German Second Army of General Fritz von Below.

The objective of Sir Douglas Haig, commander of all British forces in France was to break through the German lines and then send his five cavalry divisions [yes, horse cavalry!] through the gap, thus creating a war of movement, which might even lead to the collapse of the Germans in 1916.

The attack was scheduled to commence on June 29 (Z-Day). It was preceded by a five-day bombardment, the heaviest artillery preparation ever fired. But on June 28, the day before, the attack was postponed by two days on account of wet weather. This necessitated a protraction of the bombardment, thinning it out from five to seven days.

The Lochnagar Mine

At 7:28 a.m. on July 1, 1916, the new Z-Day, the supporting artillery fire ceased. It was so quiet that a soldier on the front lines claimed that he could hear birds singing. Then all hell broke loose with the explosion of mines that had been placed by tunneling under enemy lines. The largest of these was the tremendous Lochnagar Mine, consisting of 60,000 pounds of explosives, not far from the trenches of the 11th Suffolks. Huge chunks of earth blew into the sky and then fell to the ground. It left a crater described as the largest ever made by man in anger, approximately 300 feet in diameter, with a depth of 90 feet.

A Seriously Flawed Plan

It was assumed that the German positions, defended by machine gun emplacements and supported by artillery in the rear, would be utterly destroyed, or at least impaired to the point of ineffectiveness.

Thus the high command had directed that the infantry units all along the line, including the 11th Suffolks, carrying 66-pound packs, would march upright, in four waves, with bayonets fixed, across shell-cratered "no man's land" to the enemy position. They would hold their fire until reaching the German trenches, where they would wreak havoc with the bayonet among the few surviving, cowering enemy defenders. Such was not to be.

Sir Andrew Wright, who had served as a lieutenant with Reg in the 11th Suffolks, in his history of the unit, written after the War, concluded:

"Based on an assumption of success they legislated for a hundred and one contingencies which were never to arise and in detailing particular duties even went so far as to mention a few specialist private soldiers by name and number."

11th Suffolks Attack on the Somme

During seven days, 12,000 tons of shells had passed over their lines to land in the German positions. However, two thirds of the shells fired were shrapnel, capable of destroying personnel in the open and



Reginald and Florence Bareham's son, Ronald Reginald, was born on July 8, 1916. Many weeks later, Florence would learn that her husband had been killed in action on July 1, 1916.

damaging enemy wire but not capable of penetrating deep bunkers.

At 7:30 a.m., zero hour, long ranks of men rose from No Man's Land, where they had been crouching on the ground. The skirl of bagpipes started up nearby, perhaps from the 16th Royal Scots, who wore kilts. Highland units so attired were often called "Ladies from Hell," by the Germans ("Die Damen aus der Holle")

Reg Bareham, along with the flower of England's manhood, went "over the top" at the great Battle of the Somme. His company commander later wrote:

"When I gave the word for No.7 Platoon to go over that morning, he [Bareham] went over with the cheeriest of shouts, and that is the last I saw of him."

Andrew Wright wrote:

"The whole battalion came under fire within 2 minutes of zero hour. Before leading waves could advance a hundred yards, before they could shake out to their correct intervals and gain an entire formation, casualties began."

Wrote the Battalion Medical Officer:

"Our artillery fire died away and a new noise arose, a perfectly hellish hail of machine gun bullets from the Boche [Germans] gradually swelling as fresh guns came into action till it seemed that a handkerchief thrown above the trench would have been riddled. ... [Our men] were falling fast and still they were far from reaching even our own front line."

Artillery fire was lifted to secondary German lines, pursuant to a schedule timed in consonance with the anticipated rate of advance. However, it was easier for the artillery to lift its fire than for the infantrymen, carrying 66 pounds of gear, to maintain the scheduled rate of advance. Thus, a few additional fire-free

moments were provided the defenders, allowing them time to emerge with their machine guns from deep dugouts and place their weapons of destruction in pre-prepared positions.

A Machine Gunner's Dream

Said a German eyewitness, "the English came walking as though they were going to the theater or as though they were on a parade ground."

Wrote Andrew Wright in his history of the 11th Suffolks:

"In spite of casualties the advance continued until the lines of men had been reduced to isolated bands of 3 and 4 which lost their bearing and cohesion and were merged and twisted, section with section, company with company — Suffolks, Lincolns, Royal Scots and Northumberland Fusiliers in vertices of fire close beneath the machine guns."

A Battle Decided in Half an Hour

Wright further records:

"By 8 o'clock [a.m.] the issue of the battle was decided and to the wounded who lay out that day on the battlefield all that can have seemed to remain of their effort was the great mass of prostrate figures which formed as it were a diagram of forward movement, thinning gradually towards the opposing lines and tapered here and there to where some two or three had contrived to reach the fringes of the German wire."

Medical officers and their assistants, while dedicated to saving the lives of their fellow soldiers, were insufficient in numbers for the task they faced and overwhelmed by the horrendous carnage on the battlefield.

Andrew Wright quotes extensively the observations of Captain Fiddian, the Battalion Medical Officer. By four in the afternoon, the stretcher-bearers were dropping from fatigue. Walking wounded were beginning to thin off, but getting out of the trenches brought forth bursts of machine gun fire. The dead were lying thickly in every nook and cranny, along with horribly wounded men, moaning and digging for water. When Fiddian was spotted, "Unwounded limbs were waved in the air; shockingly mutilated forms began to crawl grotesquely and infinitely slowly towards me."

Horrendous Casualties on the First Day

By nightfall the British had suffered 57,470 casualties, including a staggering 19,240 dead. Reg Bareham, initially reported missing in action, was one of those who lay dead between the lines. Twenty percent of the 100,000 English soldiers who entered "no man's land" were killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

While it is the first day of the Battle of the Somme that has riveted the attention of historians, the battle itself continued for four and a half months until mid-November, 1916. At that time, the British and the French had advanced about six miles on the Somme, on a front of 16 miles, and at a cost of about 420,000 British and 195,000

French casualties, as compared to about 465,000 German. The battle of attrition had taken its toll. The Allied forces and those of Germany had been pushed to their limits of endurance, but Germany had suffered an irrevocable strain and was not able to replace its casualties with equally trained and motivated soldiers.

Reg Bareham's Posthumous Son is Born on July 8

At the time of my birth in Newton, Cambridgeshire, England, on July 8, 1916, my mother, Florence Freestone Bareham, was in a state of shock. All England had heard the news from France that the long-expected British offensive north of the River Somme, had commenced on July 1st. She would have been sure that her husband, Sergeant Reginald Bareham of the 11th Suffolks, an infantry unit, had participated in the attack.

My mother would not learn for many weeks that my father had been killed on that first day of that great battle.

On January 14, 1917, having searched hospitals in England for weeks to determine if her husband had possibly been brain damaged and evacuated, my mother received Army Form B. 104-82:

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received this day from the War Office notifying the death of (No.) 13777 (Rank) Sergeant (Name) Reginald G. Bareham (Regiment) 11th Suffolk Regt. which occurred at place not stated on the 1st of July 1916, and I am to express sympathy and regret of the Army council at your loss. The cause of death was 'Killed in Action'

Previously reported 'Missing.'

My mother had initial doubts that the body of my father had actually been found, but in 1958, I confirmed the official report by visiting the grave of Reginald Bareham: Plot 15, Row G, Grave 2 in Ovillers Military Cemetery, France.

Tribute to Bareham

On September 29, 1916, while Reg Bareham was still missing, Sir Charles Waldstein, noted archaeologist and owner of Newton Hall Farm, which had been farmed by Reg and his father, wrote this tribute for a Memorial Ceremony at the Cambridge and County School for Boys.

"Among the losses sustained by the brave Suffolks in the great

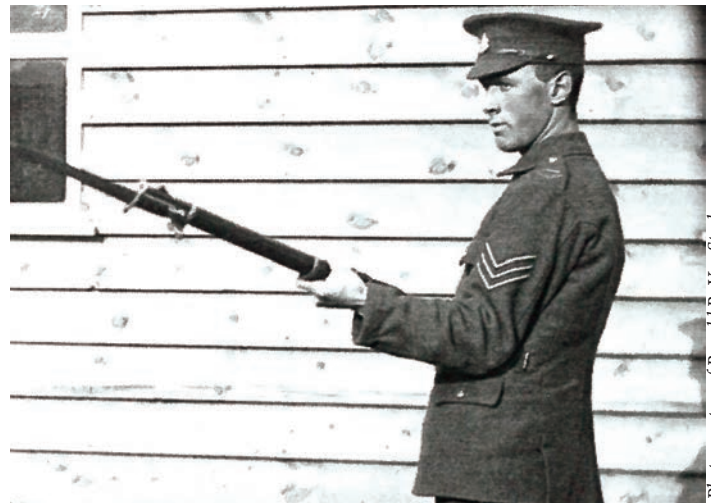


Photo courtesy of Ronald R. Van Stockum

By nightfall on the first day of the Battle of Somme, the British had suffered 57,470 casualties, 19,240 of them dead. Reginald Bareham was one of those killed.

push on July 1st, none is felt more deeply and universally in this neighbourhood than that of Sergt. R. G. Bareham, of this village. Before the war he was the leading spirit among the young men of this neighbourhood — not only as the captain of the cricket club, but for his moral qualities, which were a strong influence for good among all his contemporaries."

About the Author

Brigadier General Ronald R. Van Stockum, U. S. Marine Corps (retired) served for 30 years in various positions of responsibility in war and in peace. In 1970, he settled with his family at his wife's historic Shelby County, Kentucky farm, Allen Dale, and commenced a second career as an administrative officer at the University of Louisville. A past president of the Filson Historical Society, he has been active in community affairs. He is the author of five historical books that have been sold at the Kentucky Book Fair: *Kentucky and the Bourbons: The Story of Allen Dale Farm; Squire Boone and Nicholas Meriwether: Kentucky Pioneers; Remembrances of World Wars; Coming to Kentucky; and My Father: British Sergeant Reginald G. Bareham (1894-1916) and The Battle of the Somme*. He continues to write a historical column in the Shelbyville, *Sentinel News*.

A Note on Sources

King's College, Cambridge University Archives provided a remarkable collection of letters, written by Reginald Bareham during his formative years as a farm boy to his mentor, Oscar Browning. Phil Curme, British military historian and Walker of Battlefields World Wide, an authority on the on the 11th Suffolks, has been a principal and essential research contact.

Most helpful has been "11th Bn, The Suffolk Regiment (Cambridgeshire)," a definitive history of Reginald Bareham's battalion, by Sir Andrew Barkworth Wright KCMG, CBE, who served as a lieutenant in that battalion.

Another remarkable source of detailed primary information about the Battle of the Somme was provided in Martin Middlebrook's classic *First Day on the Somme*, a definitive study of that fateful day.



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