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## Southwest Virginians and the “War to End Wars”

*David McKissack*

When I was a boy, I occasionally heard my grandfather humming the chorus of a tune I later learned was “Over There,” one of the best-known songs of World War I:

Over there, over there  
Send the word, send the word over there.  
That the Yanks are coming  
The Yanks are coming  
The drums rum-tumming  
Everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

When the United States decided to enter World War 1, my grandfather and over two million Americans, including thousands of Virginians, went “Over There” and provided the fresh manpower to turn the tide of what some, including President Woodrow Wilson, idealistically called “the war to end wars.”<sup>2</sup> This year marks one hundred years since the American “Doughboys”<sup>3</sup> helped bring about the German surrender and the Armistice of November 11, 1918, which we now celebrate as Veterans Day.<sup>4</sup> It is fitting that we remember the service of the men and women who participated in “the Great War” in this, the centennial of its ending.

It is easy to overlook things that should remind us of their war and their sacrifices. How many people passing the unusual-looking Harvey-Howe-Carper American Legion Post 30 on Main Street in Radford, Virginia, know it was named for men killed in action in World War I? Or that the American Legion is a fraternal and service organization begun by World War I veterans in 1919?<sup>5</sup> How many Virginia Tech Hokies know the campus War Memorial Gymnasium was originally called the World War I Memorial Gymnasium and resulted from “[an] alumni campaign to finance construction of a gymnasium to memorialize Techmen who had died in World War I?”<sup>6</sup>

American troops suffered 116,516 deaths (53,000 combat deaths) and 204,002 wounded in World War 1, the third highest death count of all American wars.<sup>7</sup> It is estimated that over one hundred thousand Virginians



Harvey-Howe-Carper American Legion Post, Radford, Virginia  
(Photo by William E. Cox)

served and more than four thousand of these died from disease, combat, and training accidents.<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to ascertain what percentage of Virginia's total contribution in manpower and casualties can be counted as coming from Southwest Virginia, but a conservative estimate would place the number at around 10 percent (see Appendix for list of Southwest Virginia casualties).<sup>9</sup>

This article does not examine the Great War's campaigns, military strategy, or the combat performance of individual military units in which Southwest Virginians served. Nor does it address the wisdom of America joining the war. Instead, the discussion that follows attempts to commemorate the World War 1 experiences of the individuals and communities of Southwest Virginia<sup>10</sup> and, where appropriate, provide additional facts about the war in order to place those experiences in context.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the article attempts to further *The Smithfield Review's* goal of "helping to preserve the often-neglected history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and adjacent states." Thus, it first examines how Southwest Virginians viewed World War 1 before the United States entered it and what made American leaders finally declare war on Germany. Secondly, it looks briefly at which Southwest Virginians served and the military units in which most of them went to war. Then it follows the men and women of Southwest Virginia to France and sketches what they faced on the battlefield and behind the lines of the Great War's Western Front. And finally, it looks at how those Southwest Virginians who served viewed their experiences once they returned home from war.<sup>12</sup>

## The Beginning

When World War I erupted in Europe in August 1914, the vast majority of Americans, including Virginians, saw it solely as a European dispute. In fact, President Woodrow Wilson was reelected in 1916 partly because of his slogan, “He kept us out of war!”<sup>13</sup> Radford resident Sadie Johnson Reid recalled after the war,

[In] Radford there was little thought given in 1914 to the possibility of our entrance into the European conflict. The papers of that period record a wide interest in matters that had nothing to do with war and its possibilities . . . . [However,] as early as 1915 flags were displayed on business houses and on private homes. There was an undercurrent of restlessness and a desire to be prepared for whatever might come.<sup>14</sup>

One thing that did come was Germany’s decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917 after a pause of almost two years.<sup>15</sup> Unrestricted submarine warfare violated the previous international understanding that submarines of all nations should first stop a merchant ship—bearing civilians, not soldiers—board it, remove the passengers, and then sink it. Otherwise, there was a good chance many of the passengers would drown. The Germans insisted this approach was not feasible once the British began equipping merchant ships with hidden guns that could sink submarines. Regardless, Americans who were simply trying to reach Europe on business and vacation began dying on the torpedoed ships of Allied forces. American shipping was also forced to change travel routes to avoid certain sea zones declared off-limits by the Germans, and that resulted in increased, and sometimes unprofitable, shipping expenses.<sup>16</sup>

Opinions in Scott County about the war in Europe were representative of those held elsewhere in Southwest Virginia:

The people of Scott County, who, in August, 1914, read the news items from overseas, stating that Germany had declared war against France, and had violated the neutrality of Belgium, little thought that the war thus begun would ever assume such proportions as to have any direct personal interest to them. The probability of the United States becoming involved in a war so far away seemed too remote to be considered . . . .

By and by, as the war dragged on year after year and nation after nation became involved in it, as Germany’s submarine policy, like a giant octopus, reached out to destroy the commerce and lives of neutral and

enemy nations alike, the sense of justice and fair play, characteristic of Scott County people, was powerfully appealed to. . . . [T]here was a deep-seated aversion on the part of the majority of Scott County people to entering this war. However, it was not possible to behold such a struggle as that daily being presented to them in the public press without taking sides.<sup>17</sup>

### **A “Duty to Answer the Call”**

Edward A. Gutiérrez, author of *Doughboys on the Great War*, examined thousands of “Individual/Military Service Records” (hereafter referred to as “questionnaires”) completed by Great War veterans from states that issued them in 1919. Gutiérrez noted that the veterans’ answers often showed that the heroic legacy of the Civil War influenced the prewar motivations and emotions of the young men growing up in the 1890s and 1900s.<sup>18</sup> A modern reader might well wonder if that “heroic legacy” would create a conflicted allegiance in Virginians, where the memories of the Civil War were still alive. The answer lay in the word “duty.” The veterans repeatedly stated that it was their “duty to answer the call” and fight their country’s battles, and their country was now the United States. This sense of duty was voiced throughout the Virginia veterans’ questionnaires, perhaps in its strongest version by African-American Sgt. Harry E. Curry: “Any man living in a country under its Flag and is not willing to go to protect his Flag which he is living under[,] I say should be killed.”

### **Military Units in Which Southwest Virginians Served<sup>19</sup>**

At the start of the war, some Southwest Virginia men were serving in locally based companies of the Virginia 1st and 2nd Regiments of the state’s National Guard. Many of these men had participated in Gen. John J. Pershing’s “Punitive Expedition” into Mexico in 1916–1917.<sup>20</sup> Once war was declared in 1917, these men’s companies were federalized into a new unit, the 116th Regiment of the 29th Division. While the men already knew the basics of military service, they underwent further training with the rest of the 29th’s regiments at Fort McClellan, Alabama. These other regiments were also former National Guard units, and the 29th was known as the “Blue and Gray” because it contained men from both Union and Confederate states during the War between the States: Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. Its shoulder patch is similar to the yin and yang symbol but with blue and gray replacing the black and white. The 116th still exists and has seen service overseas in recent military actions. Some of its components and citizen-soldiers are headquartered in Christiansburg,

Virginia. The Virginia National Guard regiments also supplied companies of men who were reformed into the 112th Machine Gun Battalion, which served with the 116th Regiment in its campaigns in France.



Route 460, a section of which memorializes the 116th Regiment; photo taken on segment between Elliston and Salem, Virginia (Photo by William E. Cox)

Likewise, the 1st Company of the Virginia National Guard Coastal Artillery, consisting of men from Roanoke, Virginia, was mustered into federal service and reformed as the 117th Trains Headquarters and Military Police of the 42nd Division, or “Rainbow Division.” The formation of the 42nd was announced on August 14, 1917. The division was formed with national guardsmen from 26 different states, from east and west, north and south of the United States, for immediate service overseas. Douglas MacArthur, who at the time was a major working in the U.S. Office of the Secretary of War, is credited with saying, “The 42nd Division stretches like a Rainbow from one end of America to the other.” The nickname stuck, and MacArthur was appointed its chief of staff and promoted to colonel.<sup>21</sup>

Yet another Virginia National Guard unit headquartered in Roanoke, the 5th Company of Virginia Coast Artillery, became the nucleus for Battery B of the newly formed 60th Regiment of the Coastal Artillery Corps, which would see action in France in the Argonne offensive from September 17 to war’s end.

Other units in which Virginians served were “national,” which meant they were created by the federal government and filled with new, untrained volunteers and draftees. The 80th Division was one of these, and nearly half its men were Virginians. Like the 29th Blue and Gray Division, it contained men from former Union and Confederate states: Virginia, West Virginia, and the western mountains of Pennsylvania. Consequently, the new division chose

to call itself the “Blue Ridge” Division because that mountain range passes through all of those states.<sup>22</sup> Most importantly for this article’s focus, the 317th Regiment of the 80th Division was composed almost entirely of men from Virginia’s “mountain country.”<sup>23</sup> During training, some of the 80th’s recruits were formed into the 314th Machine Gun Battalion, which served with the 80th Division in France. Many of these men were Southwest Virginians.

One hundred years ago, the American military was segregated by race.<sup>24</sup> In World War I, many African Americans from Southwest Virginia—they were listed as “Colored” on official documents of the time—were formed into the 510th and 511th Engineer Service Battalions, which had white officers and noncommissioned officers. These battalions reported to the Chief Engineers in the U.S. and to the commanding officer of the Engineers, American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) in France. They did not see combat but contributed labor to war operations.

Some Virginia African-American men, however, wanted to join combat-oriented infantry units. The 92nd (Buffalo Soldiers) and 93rd (Blue Helmets)<sup>25</sup> were the only all-black divisions in the American army, and they contained African-American men from throughout the United States. “Buffalo Soldiers” was the name given black troops in the late 1800s by the American Indians against whom they fought; “Blue Helmet” derived from the fact that the regiments of the 93rd were integrated with French troops in France, and their French-supplied Adrian helmets were blue. The 92nd was organized in October 1917 at Camp Funston, Kansas, and formed with black soldiers from all states.<sup>26</sup> The 93rd included the famous 369th “Harlem Hellfighters” and the 370th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed “The Black Devils.” The questionnaires show Southwest Virginians of color saw combat with the regiments of both of these divisions.

### **Women Who Served**

While women were not allowed in combat roles during World War I, many Southwest Virginia women eagerly enlisted as army and navy nurses, as well as clerks and stenographers. In fact, once war was declared, Fairfax lawyer and political leader Robert Moore would write, “My observation is that in Virginia women are much more completely aroused than are the men.”<sup>27</sup> One thousand and seventy one Virginia women enlisted in the navy alone. Bessie Alexander Coleman, who served in the U.S. Naval Reserve, expressed the sentiments of many women volunteers: “I felt that every citizen of the United States should take some part in winning the war.” Likewise, Cecilia Turner Stevenson of Radford wrote, “My attitude toward military service was always favorable and I was privileged to be of service to my country.”



The Virginia questionnaires show that most of these women volunteers lived in the eastern part of the state and worked in the navy facilities near the coastline, serving as clerks and stenographers in Norfolk, Newport News, and Portsmouth. Nevertheless, Miss Ralph Drumheller of Roanoke made the trip east and served as a storekeeper at Portsmouth Naval Yard. Other Southwest Virginia women made their contribution with their nursing skills. Bettie Jane Wingfield, a Hollins College graduate, enlisted as a reserve nurse in the Army Nurse Corps. She served at the hospital in Toul, France, eight miles from the combat lines, and wrote on her questionnaire, “I felt that it was a privilege to have an opportunity to help and nurse our American boys.” Three women from Rockbridge County, Virginia, also worked in the hospital at Toul: Nora Black Sandford, Mattie Frank, and Helen Gibbs Moore Beecher. Mary Graham, also of Rockbridge County, served as a nurse, though she did not go overseas. Verna Mae Smith of Clifton Forge, Virginia, was likewise stationed near Toul and described how the nurses helped not only to heal wounds, but also, to some extent, homesickness:

There soon came a call for help at the front. Ten girls were sent to Toul and I was sent with five nurses to Baccarat. There we were only three miles behind the rear trenches and could not sleep for the sound of the guns . . . .

I’ll never forget the way the American boys received us . . . . It was worth more than all our hard labor. They gave one yell—AMERICAN GIRLS!—and ran up and almost shook our hands off. We really thought we were going to get kissed and by george we wouldn’t have cared. They had not seen any American girls since they’d been over and we took them by surprise. The spirit that existed between the boys and nurses overseas was great. They were all our big brothers and we their sisters. We laughed together, cried together, and worked together all for the one great cause.

Going “Over There,” of course, was no prerequisite for a nurse to face danger. Nurse Victoria Ruth Good, who enlisted while living in Clifton Forge, was stationed first at Norfolk Naval Hospital. Transferred to Brooklyn (New York) Naval Hospital, she died of influenza contracted while caring for patients with that disease, which was sweeping across the globe. It is not clear who filled out her questionnaire, but someone returned it with basic information on her service and the note, “[She] won the love and respect of all around her. Gave untiring service during influenza epidemic. Contracted influenza and died at her post, and for her country.”

## What It Was Like “Over There”

Once training had been completed, the divisions of Virginia men began trickling into France in the late spring and summer of 1918. While many Virginia soldiers participated in holding actions or short offensives throughout the summer of 1917 and spring of 1918, most of them experienced combat during the 1918 Allied drives that occurred near the war’s end and which in later years were dubbed “The Hundred Days” or “Grand Offensive.”<sup>28</sup> This period began with an attack by French and Americans on a bulge in German lines at Saint Mihiel in early September 1918<sup>29</sup> and ended with the Armistice on November 11, 1918. During that period, Virginia troops not only helped flatten the German hold on the Saint Mihiel salient, but also participated in other offensives (primarily in the Meuse-Argonne) that broke the German Hindenburg Line and convinced the German high command to ask for the armistice. Anyone interested in a detailed narration of the fighting experienced predominantly by Virginia units, as well as anecdotes of the soldiers’ lives, can turn to the unit histories (several of which are online) and the letters and diaries of the veterans mentioned in this article’s endnotes.<sup>30</sup>

## At the Front

It is impossible in a short space to give a comprehensive account of what the men from Southwest Virginia experienced while at war in France. The fighting occurred on a front that was longer than the distance from Norfolk, Virginia, to Charleston, West Virginia: over four hundred miles. Millions of men—mostly French, British, Americans, and Germans but others from countries around the world—faced each other along those lines. Twenty thousand men sometimes died in one day of fighting. Some veterans later said they felt like part of a giant, impersonal machine far bigger than themselves and expressed amazement at all its working parts. In fact, by the time America entered the war in 1917, the Western Front, after nearly three years of war, in the grim words of British soldier-poet Robert Graves, “was known among its embittered inhabitants as the *Sausage Machine* because it was fed with live men, churned out corpses, and remained firmly *screwed* in place.”<sup>31</sup>

These massive casualties mentioned by Graves resulted not just from the size of the opposing armies but also from advances in military technology—especially long-range, precision artillery and machine guns—which made standing on open ground even miles behind the front lines hazardous. The front lines became a strange, other-worldly place, often muddy, infested with maggots and giant rats that fed on the bodies and body parts scattered throughout the soil, blanketed by air that reeked with the stench of rotting human flesh.<sup>32</sup> Maj.



Edgehill of the 317th Regiment vividly described the landscape seen by his Virginia mountaineers when they reached the front lines:

It is a useless waste of time and words to try and describe a battlefield, because even large and elaborate paintings can give only the faintest conception of the ghastly and horrible scenes. For instance, take the awful destruction to vegetation that gas alone does; aside from terrific shellfire throwing up tons of earth and shattering the wonderful forest. Then the endless chains of trenches with hideous barbed wire in front of them and the once prosperous villages completely razed to the ground. The utter desolation of the whole landscape, with nothing living in sight, just makes creepy shivers go stealing over your body.<sup>33</sup>

Lt. Herman R. Furr, who served in a machine gun battalion in the Blue Ridge Division with Maj. Edgehill, similarly described his unit’s position on Dead Man’s Hill:

All of the trees in that part of the world had been shot to pieces, only splintered stumps left; not a foot of ground on Dead Man’s Hill that had not been plowed up and churned by bursting shells. Desolation was complete.<sup>34</sup>

Many Southwest Virginia veterans, when asked after the war, “What impressions were made upon you?” by the fighting, answered by quoting Gen. William T. Sherman, “War is hell.” Hugh Roberts French of Radford, gassed while fighting with the 116th, put a finer point on that famous quote, stating, “Sherman owes hell an apology.” Yet, despite the horrors of war, contemporary accounts and memoirs often described how Virginians and other American troops arrived in France with an optimism and confidence that had long since disappeared among the British and French and how this attitude continued until the end of the war. American commanders in the field repeatedly mentioned the high morale and confidence of their troops.<sup>35</sup>

An example of the American spirit was well illustrated by Capt. Lloyd W. Williams, a former cadet at Virginia Polytechnic Institute<sup>36</sup> (VPI, now Virginia Tech). When a French officer told him that an attack was imminent and the Marines should retreat, Williams responded, “Retreat, hell, we just got here!” thus creating a famous battle cry for the United States Marine Corps. Williams was gassed and wounded in the ensuing battle, dying when a shell exploded nearby while he was being evacuated. For his heroism, Williams was posthumously promoted to major and awarded three silver star citations and a purple heart. Major Williams Hall on the Virginia Tech

campus bears his name, and it appears on the campus Pylons memorializing cadets who died in war.<sup>37</sup>



Major Williams Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg  
(Photo by William E. Cox)

### **Behind the Lines: Hospitals**

Behind the lines, Virginia nurses and doctors worked to patch up the wounded and sick, often with inadequate facilities and supplies. Nora Black Sandford of Lexington, Virginia, remembered working in a four-story building at Toul without water for washing or use in the bathrooms:

We arrived at Toul for the St. Mihiel Drive. We had no equipment—food issued for only a day—water a hundred yards from the old four story barracks we were using as a hospital—with hundreds of boys arriving from the field day and night. I had pneumonia wards—the most virulent type. We could do nothing [but] nurse them, give them food (not enough) and a place to lie down, but they were so grateful, so wonderful in every way. Some had not had food for days and would eat anything, though temperature raging and in acute pain. But they never complained—would beg me to stay by them sometimes. . . . Their wonderful [illegible] impressed me the most I believe—and their fortitude. We all longed for the end of it all—and to return to our own beloved land—always and at all times.

Nurse Verna Mae Smith remembered the uptick in casualties at Base Hospital 18 in Bazoilles-sur-Meuse during the Hundred Days offensive:

We worked steadily though not overly hard up until four months before the Armistice was signed, then our hospital was turned into an evacuation hospital for the center and our big drives were on. We certainly worked then, patients were coming in, sometimes three trainloads a day, and we had to send out equally as many in order to make room for more. We were also getting patients by ambulance right from the field. We did not get time to bathe these patients, we took them in, operated, dressed their wounds and sent them out as fast as we could. Sometimes we were on duty day and night and often we were so tired we couldn't sleep when we got off. . . . Really, I can't see how we got through with so much work under such circumstances, but we [kept up fairly well;] only a few broke down and had to be taken off duty . . . . When the 11th of Nov. came and we got the good news, many of us were too tired to celebrate, but the boys who were not beat all the dish pans up and hurraed until they were hoarse.

### **Distinguished Service**

Southwest Virginians would distinguish themselves in these and other battles. Many received medals for their heroism—the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the French Croix de Guerre, the British Military Medal—and were cited by their commanders for bravery. A complete list of these men can be found in “Virginians of Distinguished Service,” a publication of the Virginia War History Commission (unfortunately, not available online).<sup>38</sup> Below are just a few of the citations of medal winners taken from that publication; they give some idea of the fighting these men experienced and their valor under fire.

With regard to America's highest combat medal, the Medal of Honor, the first Virginian to win it was Earl Gregory, who single-handedly captured a machine gun, mountain howitzer, and 22 Germans.<sup>39</sup> Gregory would enter Virginia Tech after the war, become a leader of the corps of cadets, and graduate with honors. The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets' precision military marching unit, the Gregory Guard, was named in his honor in May 1963.<sup>40</sup>

Many Southwest Virginians won the nation's second-highest medal, the Distinguished Service Cross, awarded for “extraordinary heroism.” For example, the citation of Priv. George Bishop of Salem, Virginia, while serving with the 38th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Division, A.E.F., near Mezy, France, 15 July 1918, reads:

Against the advice of his companions, Private Bishop advanced through intense artillery and machine-gun fire against an enemy machine gun, which was maintaining a damaging fire on his company. Single handed, he killed the crew of this gun, returning to our lines with the captured gun.

Other Southwest Virginians received the Silver Star, as did Mess Sgt. Asa D. Reed of Floyd County, Virginia, who was cited by his division commander for “distinguished conduct” while serving with Ambulance Company 27, 3rd Division:

He remained at the kitchen in performance of his duties, preparing hot soup, chocolate and other nourishing foods for the slightly wounded, even under the hottest shellfire. He showed absolutely no sign of fear in his conscientious devotion to duty, and when everyone else had deserted the kitchen to seek refuge from the fragments of exploding shells he remained at his post, furnishing a most inspiring example to the men of the organization.

### **The Aftermath**

A few Southwest Virginia veterans said their service had little effect on them. Walter J. Wright saw combat in several sectors with the 318th Regiment but wrote that he had seen “very little if any change” in his state of mind afterwards. African-American Charles Roscoe Perry of Pearisburg, Virginia, fought with the famous Harlem Hellfighters in the 369th Regiment and wrote, “I can’t see that [my service] has made any change whatever in my mind.” Other men could not, or did not choose to, articulate how their service affected them.

Only a few Southwest Virginia veterans described having what we would today call post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the most vivid symptoms of which are flashbacks, nightmares, or moments of reliving traumatic events.<sup>41</sup> Cpl. Andrew M. Parcell of Bland County, Virginia, fought in the Argonne Forest with the 317th and wrote after the war, “I feel some older than I should at my age, and I cannot forget what we had to go through. Seems at times I am surrounded by conditions as they were and can see things that happened as if I was going through with the same again.” Garnett D. Claman of Bristol, Virginia, was more emphatic. Remembering his service with the 30th Division, where he was gassed and wounded in the face and right eye, he wrote, “Before the war I was an innocent, ignorant child, while now I feel I could easily go insane by permitting my mind to recall and dwell upon the horrors of my experience.”

Other men emphasized positive aspects of their experiences during the war. African-American Ahaz Thomas of Washington County, Virginia, said his service with the Buffalo Soldiers Division “made a man of me.” Isaac A. Hamilton of Rockbridge County, a soldier in the 111th Field Artillery of the Blue Ridge Division, wrote, “I thought it was the finest experience I had undertaken.”

Many other veterans felt they had gained valuable training and knowledge from their service. Thomas M. Shuler of Smyth County, Virginia, wrote that his time with the Marine Corps “was much more educating and beneficial than I had looked for.” Some thought their service had given them important, new habits. Lennie Lee Cox of Grayson County, Virginia, wrote that his camp experiences “taught the meaning of endurance, accuracy, promptness, regularity and obedience.”

Predictably, the great adventure of entering the service and going to a foreign land made normal, everyday life seem tame and unchallenging once the men returned home. John Castleman of Roanoke, who went to France with the Army Air Service, expressed the sentiments of many other veterans that his service “left me in the most restless sort of condition, the excitement which had keyed me to a high pitch, when taken away I did not want to do anything but dream and wander over the country.”

Many of the veterans used the word “broadening” to describe their service. For example, George Washington Childs saw combat as an artilleryman with the 26th Division and said that his service “[b]roadened [my] mind and improved [my] nerve. Would not take anything for my experience.” Swepson Joseph Richter fought with the 116th and wrote, “My army experience broadened my mind almost double to what it was before entering the service.”

Of the women, Miss Ralph Drumheller clearly had one of the most positive experiences of her life while working in Hampton Roads. She wrote,

I . . . like the Navy R[eserve]. Would like to be called back at any time the U.S.A. needs me. [It] gave me a mental picture of myself of what I would have missed. [And in] physical body health much better and stronger. [My service] made me look forward and to be thoughtful to myself and others and want the true and give the truth in all my dealings.”

After the Armistice, Nurse Verna Mae Smith transferred from the hospital at Toul to one in Germany that served the American troops in the Army of the Occupation. In March 1919, she obtained two weeks leave and “went to Paris, Cannes, Nice, Italian Border, Grenoble and Metz, took in the sights of both countries.”

Many veterans said their service had increased their love for America and their hatred of war. Maj. John Adolph Rollings was living in Wise County when he entered the Medical Corps, and he spoke for many veterans when

he wrote that his experiences in the war served “to increase my appreciation of America and things American.” Robert Lee Roope of Pulaski, Virginia, saw a great deal of combat with the 116th Regiment and wrote, “I don’t like war and believe it should be stopped.”

One area in which the questionnaires indicate virtually no change is in the men’s religious beliefs. In response to the question, “What effect, if any, did your experience have on your religious belief?” the vast majority responded, “None” or “No effect.” The next most common response was given by men like William Johnson Price of Blacksburg, Virginia: “Stronger belief.” Price saw combat with the 116th Regiment.

### **African-American Veterans**

Most black veterans, like their white counterparts, slipped quietly back into their prewar lives. Grayson M. Harris of Marion, Smyth County, Virginia, fought with the all-black 370th Regiment, the Black Devils. He described himself as the 370th’s “No. 1 hand-bomber in 2nd platoon/F Co.” After fighting with such an elite band, Harris merely wrote that the war had taught him “[t]o always be ready to do your duty in every calling, and to always try to live upright.”

The pride black Virginians felt about having done their duty was intensified by the fact that they had served despite racial discrimination back home. Their questionnaire responses were sprinkled with statements supporting the same theme as that of African-American Sgt. Harry E. Curry, who wrote that war had taught him “[t]hat if one man is as good as another in the trenches, he is also as good elsewhere.”

Charles Lamond Hogue responded on his questionnaire, “If this record will be of any service to the War History Commission by me filling it out, please use it to the best of our advantage. The colored boys of our beloved State of Virginia.” In a separate letter to the War History Commission, Hogue expanded on his feelings:

I am delighted to fill out this War History blank. I know it is for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of Virginia’s part in the World War. I am glad to state the fact, that Virginia sent me into the service, and I did everything in my power to gain honor for myself and the beloved state whom I represented in the greatest and most terrific conflict that ever defaced humanity. I am not saying it because I went into the service from Virginia, but I want you to know that the black boys from Virginia was second to none. We respected the government regardless of past circumstances.<sup>42</sup>



The war experiences of some African Americans imbued them with a mission to advance social equality. Gillespie G. Lomans from Chilhowie, Marion County, Virginia, answered the question "What was your attitude toward military service?" by writing, "I felt that my going would free the whole world, America included, therefore I went willingly to the army, undergoing the hardships and camaraderie." Lomans also wrote, "[My] experiences have broadened my vision. I am no longer a provincialist. I observed that ignorance is rampant in America and solicits attention." When war was declared, he was attending West Virginia Collegiate Institute and returned there to complete his studies after the war, moving to Covington upon graduation.<sup>43</sup> His 1969 obituary states, in part, "[He] was a retired school teacher and insurance agent, treasurer of the local NAACP and Notary Public. He served for a number of years as a Superintendent of Sunday School at First Baptist Church. He was a member of Alpha-Phi-Alpha fraternity and a member of Alleghany Players." Alpha Phi Alpha, a service organization, was the first African-American, intercollegiate Greek-lettered fraternity.<sup>44</sup>

### **"Done My Duty"**

The majority of veterans were simply proud they had done their duty. In fact, "duty" may very well be the most common word on all the questionnaires. William Johnithan<sup>45</sup> Tracy of Bland County fought with the 317th Regiment and wrote that his service had been "a serious injury to my present health." He nevertheless wrote, "I was not in favor of war but after war was declared I felt it my duty to go and fight for my country." Asked what impressions the fighting made on him, Denver C. Kilgore of Wise County, Virginia, responded, "Most feelings except sense of duty were dismissed."

These men's military service and having done their duty was their induction into a special brotherhood that existed for the rest of their lives. Veterans often feel that only fellow veterans can fully comprehend what they have experienced.<sup>46</sup> That makes them dear to each other. Hugh Roberts French wrote his impression of the war: "I think the slackers got more out of it than we did (in one way) but I wouldn't trade places with them for a million dollars." Sgt. Archer Miller Graham of Pulaski responded to the question about the effects on him of overseas experience with "I learned the worth of friendship."

Alvin C. York, the most famous Medal of Honor winner in the Great War, was a “mountaineer” like many of the Southwest Virginia men, although he was from Tennessee. The following quote from York probably explained why Hugh French and Archer Graham treasured their service:

The war brings out the worst in you. It turns you into a mad, fightin’ animal, but it also brings out something else, something I jes [just] don’t know how to describe, a sort of tenderness and love for the fellows fightin’ with you. . . . I had kinder got to know and sorter understand the boys around me. I knowed their weakness as well as their strength. I guess they knowed mine. If you live together for several months sharing and sharing alike, you learn a heap about each other. It was as though we could look right through each other and knowed everything without anything being hid. I’m a telling you I loved them-there boys in my squad . . . . They were my buddies. That’s a word that’s only understood by soldiers who have lived under the same blankets, gathered around the same chow can, and looked at death together. I never knowed I loved my brother-man so much until I was a doughboy.<sup>47</sup>

### **Requiem**

Tom Williams of Hoge’s Store, Giles County, Virginia, shipped to France with the 317th Regiment. After the war, his partially completed questionnaire was returned with the note, “Enclosed you will find the questionnaire of Tom Williams[;] will say he was killed in France on the 3rd day of November Nov 1918. Respt, Mrs. Tom Williams (X)—her mark.” Three thousand seven hundred and six Virginians would make the ultimate sacrifice in World War I, more than three hundred of them Southwest Virginians. As was mentioned at this article’s beginning, these numbers do not rise to the level of Southwest Virginian sacrifices in the War between the States or World War II, but they nevertheless represent the significant service and sacrifice of young men and women from Southwest Virginia, as well as their loved ones.

### **Acknowledgments**

Appreciation is expressed to the Washington County (Virginia) Sheriff’s Department and particularly to Deputy Sheriffs Joshua Gobble and William Ledford for making access possible to the World War I memorial window at the county courthouse.



Tiffany stained glass window honoring those who served in World War I, Washington County Courthouse, Abingdon, Virginia (Photo by William E. Cox)

## Appendix

### Southwest Virginia Soldiers Who Died in the Great War<sup>48</sup>

#### Killed in Action

##### *Lieutenants*

Fairfax, Norwood C., Eagle Rock  
Harvey, Alfred R., Radford  
Howe, Elliott H., East Radford

Leavell, John C., Salem  
Moomaw, Clovis., Roanoke  
Taylor, Oscar M., Toms Creek

##### *Sergeants*

Carper, Jacob E., East Radford  
Dwier, Charlie H., Eagle Rock  
Hudnall, James W., Critz  
Laphew, Ernest C., Max Meadows  
Leffel, Alvey R., Covington

Mitchell, Roy T., Figsboro  
Painter, Sidney M., Jonesville  
Salyer, Walter G., Castlewood  
Stulz, Fred B., Roanoke  
Turner, Samuel E., Falls Mills

##### *Corporals*

Coleman, Charles A., Healing  
Springs  
Durham, Rufus M., East Stone Gap  
Foster, Henry L., Brookneal  
Grimes, Charles A., Hillsville

Harrison, Daniel O., Hardy  
Hawks, Rosco S., Roanoke  
Holland, Lloyd, Axton  
Houston, Lee Meade, St. Paul  
Inman, Samuel J., Whitmell

Innes, Henry W., Castlewood  
Kelly, Walter W., Marion  
Lucas, Wiley S., Pearisburg  
Melton, Chester, Osaka  
Moneyhun, Ralph C., Toms Creek  
Moran, Thomas D., Bassett  
Payne, Morris L., Maringo  
Perdue, Marshall V., Blacksburg

*Buglers*

Barger, Lawrence Guy, Buchanan  
Nicholas, William R., Crabbottom

*Mechanics*

Goings, John, Rose Hill  
Marsh, Earl M., Vinton  
Tate, George K., Thaxton

*Privates*

Adams, Lee, Troutdale  
Akers, Waitman J., Sowers  
Alderman, Frederick L., Willis  
Alexander, James William, Lebanon  
Anders, Warrick A., Independence  
Atkins, Roscoe C., Fries  
Austin, Samuel J., Fincastle  
Ball, John, Swords Creek  
Barrett, Gordon M., Benhams  
Bazzarre, Roy A., Lowmoor  
Beavers, Maurice, Bristol  
Bell, Harry T., Copper Hill  
Bishop, Connie, Blackwater  
Bishop, John F., Sowers  
Bishop, Steve B., Pilot  
Brickhead, Thomas W., Red Hill  
Blankenship, Charles, Gladehill  
Blankenship, Charlie P., Boissevain  
Bowling, Martin, Sowers  
Brett, Jarvis L., Newsoms  
Burton, Miller T., Bland

Reynolds, Byron, Newcastle  
Richmond, Garnett C., Rural  
Retreat  
Scott, Claude S., Hardy  
Stone, Benjamin L., Sanville  
Swats, Cecil F., Lone Mountain  
Tardy, Jackson R., Murat  
Thompson, William O., Roanoke

*Cook*

Cooper, Ned J., Blue Ridge Springs

*Wagoners*

Corum, John H., Abingdon  
Priode, Fred H., Clintwood

Byers, Hobson D., Roanoke  
Byers, Joseph A., Covington  
Cain, Frank, Arno  
Calhoun, James, Spears Ferry  
Calhoun, Robert Edward, Teas  
Candle, James A., Fries  
Carroll, Charles, Pilot  
Carter, Millard D., Blackwater  
Carvele, Toney, Mount Clair  
Carter, Thomas G., Shuff  
Chafin, Dennis, Carterton  
Compton, Aubrey L., Roanoke  
Compton, Axley, Council  
Compton, William, Swords Creek  
Cress, Arthur G., Atkins  
Davis, Levi B., Redwood  
Dickerson, George T., Indian Valley  
Dunn, Joseph C., Burkes Garden  
Eanes, Arthur L., Roanoke  
Eanes, Edward F., Roanoke  
Edwards, Willie N., Cana

Elliott, John C., Roanoke  
Farmer, Dave L., Carterton  
Fleenor, Thedford H., Bristol  
Folden, Daner G., Stewartsville  
Frith, Jesse, Sydnorsville  
Fry, James William, Seven Mile  
Ford  
Garman, Harry V., Catawba  
Goad, Robert, Hillsville  
Goings, Monteroville, Carters Mills  
Goldsby, Robert O., Fairfield  
Goodall, Daniel, Covington  
Grow, Hansford M., Buena Vista  
Grubb, Wiley H., Seven Mile Ford  
Guynn, Everett M., Fries  
Haburn, Chester Jonesville  
Hammonds, Clayton, Gate City  
Hardy, Sheridan, Pulaski  
Harlow, Cris, Bristol  
Harris, William E., Hagan  
Haynes, William, St. Charles  
Hayton, Joseph K., Bristol  
Hendricks, Roy, Lebanon  
Herrington, Stuart M., Oak Dale  
Hess, Silas, Monk Branch  
Holmes, Frank S., Graden  
Horn, Granville M., Skeggs  
Hull, Albert R., Rocky Gap  
Ingersoll, John W., Galax  
Ingle, Henry, Pounding Mill  
Jefferson, John D., Sandy Level  
Jenkins, Luther Kelly, Speers Ferry  
Jessie, Joe W., Nickelsville  
Jones, Charles, Ewing  
Jones, Finess B., Eagle Rock  
Jones, Jeter H., Boones Mill  
Jones, William A., Ivanhoe  
Justus, William L., Hurley  
Kenley, Grover C., Indian Valley  
Kennedy, Harry B., Ellmore

Kennedy, Horace, Toms Creek  
King, Grover C., Cana  
Lambert, Harvey, Jonesville  
Lamkin, Posey L., Galax  
Lancaster, Claude S., Bent  
Mountain  
Law, Frank B., Warm Springs  
Leonard, Billy K., Galax  
Lilly, Clownie W., Hicksville  
Lucas, Mason, Pembroke  
McCloud, Charles W., Marion  
McCracken, Thomas D., Graham  
McFalls, Harry Preston, Hollins  
McMeans, Frazier B., Gratton  
Maiden, Reece A., Abingdon  
Meade, Henry H., Wise  
Meade, Thomas B., Drill  
Meadows, George W., Roanoke  
Metz, Clarence E., Poages Mills  
Monday, George T., Ivanhoe  
Morris, Herbert Wane, Crandon  
Musser, John W., Atkins  
Nichols, Emmett, Baywood  
Pack, Rosco C., Cedar Bluff  
Page, Willie E., Durmie  
Pannill, George E., Martinsville  
Pasley, Granfield, Scruggs  
Pendleton, Adison D., Crandon  
Perry, Aubrey H., Roanoke  
Phillip, Robert L., Goshen  
Pierce, Willie L., Exeter  
Piland, Roger L., Franklin  
Pulliam, Joe D., Round Bottom  
Raines, John F., Prater  
Rainey, William Anderson, Lodi  
Rasnake, Della J., Honaker  
Rasnick, James J., Cleveland  
Ratcliffe, Sherry W., Dublin  
Reedy, Everett K., Rugby  
Rhodes, John, Buchanan

Rhoten, Rufus, Blackwater  
Riddle, James K., Elkton  
Riggleman, Charles W., Dovesville  
Ring, Vester, Ararat  
Ringley, Conley Barker, Hiltons  
Rodgers, Robert J., Martinsville  
Salyer, William H., Virginia City  
Sayers, David L., Delton  
Seay, George B., Natural Bridge  
Sheets, John L., Sugar Grove  
Shrader, Emery Chappen, Marion  
Sisk, Willie H., Monk  
Slagle, Frank, Bristol  
Smith, Eldridge D., Wytheville  
Smith, James R., Toms Creek  
Smith, Lester J., Covington  
St. Clair, Harry, Roanoke  
Starnes, Jadie, Dante  
Steffey, John W., Castlewood  
Stewart, James M., Cummings  
Sutherland, Edgar, Coulwood  
Sweeney, Charlie L., Roanoke

### **Died of Disease**

#### *Lieutenant*

Mouser, Vivion K., Big Stone Gap

#### *Sergeants*

Breuer, Charles, Marion  
Lee, Roben, Abingdon

#### *Corporals*

Cheek, Morgan, Ewing  
Dickerson, Posey Grover, Floyd  
Keister, Mason H., Cambria  
Quinn, Charles A., Roanoke

#### *Cook*

Muncus, John C., Galax

Tate, Henry N., East Stone Gap  
Tetter, Campbell W., Salem  
Thompson, Benjamin H., Burkes  
Garden  
Tillison, Jahue, Benhams  
Triplet, Roy M., Mouth of Wilson  
Vest, Herbert M., Kerrs Creek  
Ward, Velpo D., Lamsburg  
Weddle, Chester, Stewartsville  
Weddle, Edgar, Floyd  
Wells, Clyde, Fairview  
White, Byrd, St. Charles  
White, Leonard J., Debusk  
Whitt, Lee H., Hagan  
Williams, Rayburn E., Clifton Forge  
Woolwine, Earnest, Christiansburg  
Woolwine, Walter, Christiansburg  
Wray, William A., Wirtz  
Wright, Crockett I., Rocky Mount  
Wright, George W., Ferrum  
York, Will, Dante

#### *Army Field Clerk*

Tensley, Benjamin T., Salem

Rhodes, Oscar W., Gala  
Sutphin, Samuel La Fayette, Willis

Sayers, Wash L., Cratton  
Thompson, Prentiss G.,  
Christiansburg  
West, Oscar Duval, Buchanan



*Privates*

Atkins, Charlie E., Atkins  
Banks, William, Covington  
Bishop, Beverly H., Duffield  
Blackwell, Willie J., Sunnyside  
Brown, John, Brownsburg  
Bourne, Daniel F., Fries  
Bousman, Thomas, Union Hall  
Boyer, Bays F., Carsonville  
Burgin, George, Hubbard Springs  
Cale, Alex F., Marion  
Calloway, Homer, Henry  
Charlton, Rufus N., Christiansburg  
Cole, William H., Tazewell  
Collins, Hugh C., Longsper  
Conner, John C., Huffville  
Conner, Sam L., Meadows of Dan  
Deel, Charlie W., Vacey  
Deel, John H., Maxie  
Delph, Charlie W., Nicholasville  
Dew, Alner R., Irongate  
Doss, Joseph, Hollins  
Elmore, Oaty H., Pearisburg  
Garman, Lucian F., Catawba  
Goad, Noah, Peck  
Goodpasture, William E., Atkins  
Grimes, Fred Davis, Norton  
Haley, Walter Elam, Salem  
Harbour, John H., Stuart  
Hargis, Harmon, Murphy  
Harman, Bill, Sayersville  
Harris, Harmon W., Tip Top  
Harter, Luther E., Floyd  
Hawkins, Jones A., Troutdale  
Hay, Luther, Haysi  
Herron, Harvey D., Watauga  
Hollins, Homer, Hollins River  
Iddings, Castilie, Terry's Fork  
Ison, Stuart L., Galax  
Jenkins, Corbett L., Hillsville  
Johnson, Arvel, Coeburn  
Johnson, Hal, Pulaski  
Kasey, Samuel H., Moneta  
King, Heiner, Figsboro  
King, Willie S., Houston  
Lam, Bedford C., Covington  
Lester, Jesse, Big Rock  
Lester, Jessie J., Big Rock  
McClanahan, George, Big Rock  
McPeak, Franklin L., Draper  
Macarroni, Agostino, Roanoke  
Mayo, Ellis, Cartersville  
Meade, John W., Nickelsville  
Musse, Zack, Naffs  
Myers, Charles H., Maggie  
Nicely, James M., Longdale  
Pasley, Samuel H., Vinton  
Payne, Wilbur R., Warm Springs  
Pennington, James K., Independence  
Perkins, James M., Dye  
Phillips, Corbett, Peck  
Pope, Ezra T., Ivanhoe  
Quesinberry, Arthur D., Mayberry  
Rodgers, William W., Stuart  
Sampson, Erwin L., Big Stone Gap  
Semenes, James G., Lone Ash  
Setliff, Posy A., Dodson  
Snead, Roy M., Pennington Gap  
St. Clair, Clarence Alvin, Vinton  
Stanley, John W., Sontag  
Starke, Eugene E., Bristol  
Stinnett, Jack A., Stone Mountain  
Talbert, Lawrence, Pulaski  
Tickle, John Nye, Longspur  
Tilson, Charles M., Monarat  
Walker, Willie B., Hurley  
Washington, Vint E., Meadowview  
Washburn, George P., Sago  
Weddle, Charles Emmett, Elliston  
Wyatt, John, Stella

## **Died of Wounds**

### *Lieutenants*

Kent, Thomas D., Lexington  
Moore, Arthur B., Blacksburg

Williams, Harry Clay, Roanoke

### *Sergeants*

Clark, Robert D., Buchanan  
Clingempell, John P., Roanoke  
Gilbert, Charles, Saltville  
Lawson, Enoch, Bristol

Osborne, James E., Dante  
Plogger, Fred A., Carrie  
Smith, Fred B., Ocala  
Williams, Roland A., Clifton Forge

### *Corporals*

Busch, Roy H., Lowmoor  
Peake, Laurence S., Pocahontas  
Rose, Thomas M., Independence  
Rose, Wilber McK., Rich Patch  
Sanger, Miles D., Clearbrook

Walls, Fulton, Hillsville  
Whitmire, Roy O., Salem  
Williams, Lee, St. Charles  
Williams, Ralph E., Comers Rock  
Wilson, Samuel B., Raphine

### *Bugler*

Davidson, Elbert L. Buena Vista

### *Mechanic*

Harkrider, George W., Belsprings

### *Wagoner*

Stump, Joseph, Copper Hill

### *Privates*

Altice, Galvin Jack, Redwood  
Bailey, John E., Keesee  
Bane, Erwin R., Tip Top  
Buchanan, Emette, Bondtown  
Camden, Abb., Glasgow  
Catron, Jack J., Saltville  
Cox, Eugene Eldridge, Indian  
Valley  
Deyerle, Addison A., Roanoke  
Dishman, Charles, Bristol  
Dixon, Lieu S., Roebuck  
Doak, Neith O., Rural Retreat  
Dodd, Kent C., Fincastle  
Duncan, Leonard C., Rich Creek  
Earls, Fieldin K., Clifffield

Elmore, Chap J., Maggie  
Epperly, Everette R., Roanoke  
Fisher, Luther W., Lone Mountain  
Fleenor, Oscar Lee, Gate City  
Fletcher, Earnest A., Nickelsville  
Gray, Ira Vandorn, Austinville  
Greene, Samuel B., Toms Creek  
Grow, Hansford M., Buena Vista  
Hagy, Hubert R., Abingdon  
Hale, Herbert, Dodson  
Hatcher, Elbert M., Troutville  
Hensley, George L., Groseclose  
Hickman, Thomas H., Eagle Rock  
Hoback, Floyd A., Wytheville  
Hodge, Monroe C., Atkins

Honaker, Jason Harrison, Draper  
Jennings, Britain, Shorts Creek  
Keese, Arthur L., Bristol  
Killen, Alexander, Osborns Gap  
Lam, William B., Lexington  
Layman, Henry H., Indian Valley  
Lumsden, Clarence, Boones Mill  
McCoy, Steve A., Clear Creek  
Mills, Joe W., Toms Creek  
Pannill, Jeb S., Martinsville  
Powers, Charles B., Virginia City  
Quarles, Lowry O., Hardy  
Ratcliff, John William, Grundy  
Reedy, Leonard M., Raven  
Rhoton, Benjamin, Clinchport  
Richardson, Guy H., Galax  
Richardson, Willie, Toms Creek  
Salyer, Pierce S., Nickelsville  
Sexton, Sidney L., Volney  
Short, John, Raven Creek  
Six, Charles C., Rural Retreat  
Sloan, Lee, Grundy  
Smith, Keller T., Boone Mill

### **Died from Accidents**

#### *Corporal*

Burkett, James G., Groseclose

#### *Privates*

Anders, Warrick A., Independence  
Bratton, Walter, Pulaski  
Cassady, Drewery, Stuart  
Colley, Fred H., Birchleaf  
Cornett, Harvey E., Grayson County  
Cress, Arthur G., Atkins  
Fields, Anthony, Lebanon  
Gilliam, Isaac, Fairview  
Harris, Robert L., Mill Gap  
Henderson, John B., Thessalia  
Hess, Silas, Monk

Stanley, Bruce, Coeburn  
St. Clair, Kenneth L., Eggleston  
Stidham, Clarence V., Norton  
Stidham, Roy E., Pound  
Sublett, William A., White Gate  
Sutphin, Posie E., Willis  
Thompson, Auston, Lexington  
Thompson, Major McK., Damascus  
Tilson, Charles M., Monarat  
Tolley, Walter B., Lexington  
Vires, Henry, Loneash  
Walton, William T., Martinsville  
Wheatley, Hurley, Fox  
Whitecarver, William Robert, Jr.,  
Salem  
Williams, John, St. Paul  
Williams, Tom, Hoges Store  
Winn, Charlie L., Hebron  
Wolfe, Elbert, Ewing  
Wood, James S., Bristol  
Woodall, George R., Stuart  
Wright, Richard D., Rocky Mount

#### *Bugler*

Miller, James H., Wytheville

Howard, William, Christiansburg  
Jackson, Thomas A., Pounding Mill  
Link, Tiney J., Chilhowie  
Long, Bernard J., Clifton Forge  
Matney, Earnest R., New River  
Taylor, Thomas A., Roanoke  
Wiles, Roby F., Lodi  
Wilson, Vilas Z., Norto.  
Wright, Oliver G., Oriskany  
Vogt, Charles A., Atkins

## Endnotes

1. George M. Cohan, *Over There* (Victor, Camden, N. J., 1917), audio, [www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/5977](http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/5977), retrieved from the Library of Congress website 28 August 2017.
2. The phrase “The War That Will End Wars” was coined by H. G. Wells for his book by that title ([archive.org/details/warthatwillendwa00welluoft](http://archive.org/details/warthatwillendwa00welluoft)) in 1914 and had seeped into common usage by the time Wilson used it. Kathleen Jamieson has pointed out that Wilson, in fact, only used the phrase once (Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (Oxford University Press, April 1990), 99, [books.google.com/books?id=DdFFtM1pvzcC&pg=PA99#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=DdFFtM1pvzcC&pg=PA99#v=onepage&q&f=false)), accessed 28 September 2017.
3. Historical sources contain no definitive explanation of how or why the word “Doughboy” came into use to describe American soldiers, but the term was used to describe American infantrymen as early as the Mexican-American War. An infantryman named Napoleon Dana, who served in that war, wrote home, “We ‘doughboys’ had to wait for the artillery to get their carriages over” (Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana, *Monterrey Is Ours! The Mexican War Letters of Lieutenant N.J.T. Dana, 1845-1847* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 166.
4. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, “History of Veterans Day,” [www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp), accessed 23 September 2017.
5. The American Legion, “History,” [www.legion.org/history](http://www.legion.org/history), accessed 23 September 2017.
6. Virginia Tech, “War Memorial Hall,” [vt.edu/about/buildings/war-memorial-hall.html](http://vt.edu/about/buildings/war-memorial-hall.html), accessed 28 September 2017.
7. U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs, “America’s Wars Factsheet” (Washington, D.C.: May 2017), [www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs\\_americas\\_wars.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf), accessed 4 September 2017.
8. United States World War One Centennial Commission, Virginia’s WWI Centennial Homepage, [www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/virginia-centenary-home.html](http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/virginia-centenary-home.html), accessed 14 September 2017.
9. To this author’s knowledge, there is no comprehensive source that lists the names or numbers of Virginia World War 1 veterans by county. The estimate that Southwest Virginia contributed at least 10 percent of the state’s total Great War soldiery is based on two sources: the total number of questionnaires returned by Southwest Virginia veterans and a count of the number of Southwest Virginia soldiers who died during service.

After the war, the Virginia War History Commission sent questionnaires to the state’s more than one hundred thousand World War 1 veterans via their local county commission three-person boards, staffed by volunteers. The questionnaires that were returned are housed in the Library of Virginia. Of a total of 14,900 questionnaires returned for the entire state, soldiers from Southwest Virginia counties and cities returned 3,699. The Library of Virginia’s website states that local boards of the commission had “mixed results” in acquiring completed questionnaires. Sometimes it was difficult for the local volunteer board to locate the veterans once they returned home and then deliver the questionnaires to them. This problem would have been exacerbated by the remoteness and terrain of some Southwest Virginia communities. Furthermore, the Library of Virginia website states, “Many soldiers refused to submit a completed questionnaire, fearing that doing so would subject them to future military service.”

To find the number of Southwest Virginians who died in service, the author consulted the online text of *Soldiers of the Great War: Vol 3* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920), [archive.org/stream/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3_djvu.txt), accessed 27 September 2017). Since that book provides only dead men’s names and hometowns, the author conducted an Internet search to locate each hometown and determine if it lay within one of the Southwest Virginia counties included in this article. This research revealed that 404 Southwest Virginians died in service during World War I. The Library of Virginia also offers an online, searchable list of Virginia war dead for all wars in which Virginians served, [www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/vmdl/](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/vmdl/), accessed September 26, 2017. Likewise, an original of the Report of the Adjutant of Virginia, “Virginians Who Lost Their Lives in the World War,” appears online but is poorly formatted, [archive.org/stream/virginianswholos00virg/](http://archive.org/stream/virginianswholos00virg/)

*virginianswholos00virg\_djvu.txt*, accessed September 26, 2017.

10. For the purpose of this article, Southwest Virginia is defined as the Virginia counties of Alleghany, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Roanoke, Franklin, and Henry, and all Virginia counties west of them. In a few instances, however, veterans from other parts of the state are quoted when they expressed the sentiments of Virginia soldiers particularly well.
11. Three sources of information in particular have been useful in writing this narrative. All of these sources are available to the public online. They are based on materials collected and produced by members of the Virginia War History Commission, which was created by the state on January 7, 1919, “to complete an accurate and complete history of Virginia’s military, economic and political participation in the World War.” All of the commission’s original research and production are archived in the Library of Virginia, *ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi00958.xml*, accessed 28 August 2017,.

The commission’s history of virtually every military unit in which Virginians served, whether overseas or stateside, is Arthur Kyle Davis, ed., *Virginia Military Organizations in the World War* (Richmond, Va.: Virginia War History Commission, 1927). A searchable copy of this document is available online at *archive.org/stream/virginiamilitary00unse/virginiamilitary00unse\_djvu.txt*.

Second, the Virginia War History Commission requested that local historians in every Virginia county submit a narrative of their county’s history, describing how it was affected by the war and the names of the men it sent to war. The intent was to combine all of these manuscripts into a four-volume narrative of Virginian’s wartime experience, which, unfortunately, was never completed. The individual county narratives that were submitted, however, are archived at the Library of Virginia. Transcriptions of some of those pertinent to Southwest Virginia counties, however, can be found online at *www.newriversnotes.com/topical\_history\_ww1\_virginia\_communities\_inwartime.htm*.

A third source of information is World War 1 veterans’ Individual Service Records, also called “Questionnaires.” Virginia was one of four states—Utah, Minnesota, and Connecticut being the others—which sent questionnaires to its veterans after the war, seeking information on their service and their views of their service. The majority of the veterans did not complete and return these forms. Some provided only minimal information. An important few, however, including thousands from Southwest Virginia, completed the forms, sometimes providing answers to personal questions, including how their service affected their religious beliefs, state of mind, and health. All of these questionnaires are maintained online by the Library of Virginia and can be searched by individual name or county. Unless indicated by a separate endnote, all quotations and information provided in this article about the individual service of Southwest Virginians comes from these questionnaires, which are discussed generally at *www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/opac/wwiqabout.htm*.

12. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of Virginia soldiers included in this article have been taken from the Individual Service Records or “Questionnaires” mentioned in Endnote 11.
13. Woodrow Wilson House, “1916 Election,” *www.woodrowwilsonhouse.org/1916-election*, accessed 10 October 2017, and Eric Trickey, “World War I: 100 Years Later: How Woodrow Wilson’s War Speech to Congress Changed Him—and the Nation,” *Smithsonian.com*, April 3, 2017, *www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-woodrow-wilson-war-speech-congress-changed-him-and-nation-180962755/#pKt3QYTDx17b0jxj.99*, accessed 9 October 2017.
14. Sadie Johnson Reid, “A Community History,” in New River Notes, *www.newriversnotes.com/topical\_history\_ww1\_virginia\_communities\_inwartime.htm*, accessed 2 February 2018.
15. U.S. Department of State, Archive, “American Entry into World War I, 1917,” *2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwi/82205.htm*, accessed 28 August 2017.
16. Paul G. Halpern, “A Naval History of World War I” (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 340.
17. Robert Milford Addington, “A Community History, in New River Notes, *www.newriversnotes.com/topical\_history\_ww1\_virginia\_communities\_inwartime.htm*, accessed 5 February 2018.

18. Edward A. Gutiérrez, *Doughboys on the Great War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 2, 11, 54.
19. Except where otherwise noted, all of the information in this section on World War I military units can be found in Davis, ed., *Virginia Military Organizations in the World War*.
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21. Hugh C. Daley, *42nd "Rainbow" Infantry Division: A combat history of World War II* (Baton Rouge, La.: Army & Navy Publishing Company, 1946), 1, [archive.org/details/42ndRainbowInfantryDivisionACombatHistoryOfWorldWarII](http://archive.org/details/42ndRainbowInfantryDivisionACombatHistoryOfWorldWarII), accessed 10 October 2017.
22. Davis, ed., *Virginia Military Organizations in the World War*.
23. Edley Craighill, *History of the 317th Infantry* (1919), 2, [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015035410573;view=lup;seq=5](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015035410573;view=lup;seq=5), accessed 16 September 2017.
24. Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, "July 26, 1948: President Truman Issues Executive Order No. 9981 Desegregating the Military," [www.trumanlibrary.org/anniversaries/desegblurb.htm](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/anniversaries/desegblurb.htm), accessed 26 September 2017.
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27. Jennifer Davis McDaid, "Virginia Women and the First World War" (Library of Virginia, revised July 2002), [www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/WomenofWWI.pdf](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/WomenofWWI.pdf), accessed 15 September 2017.
28. References to "The Hundred Days" appear frequently in British and Canadian histories. See, for example, Gen. Sir Archibald Montgomery, *The Story of Fourth Army in the Battles of the Hundred Days, August 8th to November 11th, 1918* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1920), [archive.org/details/storyoffourtharm00mont](http://archive.org/details/storyoffourtharm00mont), accessed 3 October 2017, or Shane B. Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire: The Canadian Corps in the Last 100 Days of the Great War* (Ontario: Vanwell, 2004).
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29. Frank Freidel, "Flattening the St, Mihiel Salient," *Over There* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), 199.
30. For unit histories, see sources listed in Endnote 11. In addition to the letters and diaries of Virginia soldiers abstracted in Davis, ed., *Virginia War Letters, Diaries and Editorials*, two memoirs of Virginia officers offer accounts of the soldiers' experiences by officers who fought with them. Capt. John S. Stringfellow's memoirs of his service with the 80th Division in World War I (Stringfellow, *Hell No* (Boston: Meador Publishing, 1936)) is a chronological collection of anecdotes about soldiers and their service. Likewise, Lt. Col. Ashby Williams wrote a memoir based on his service as one of the 80th's battalion commanders (Williams, *Experiences of the Great War* (Roanoke, Va.: The Stone Printing and Manufacturing Co., 1919), 79, [archive.org/stream/experiencesgrea00willgoog/experiencesgrea00willgoog\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/experiencesgrea00willgoog/experiencesgrea00willgoog_djvu.txt), accessed 7 October 2017).
31. Matthew J. Davenport, *First Over There* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 78.
32. Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1957), 120, 121, 169, [archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.186550/2015.186550.Good-Bye-To-All-That\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.186550/2015.186550.Good-Bye-To-All-That_djvu.txt), accessed 9 Oct 2017.



33. Craighill, *History of the 317th Infantry*, 47.
34. Herman R. Furr, *314th Machine Gun Battalion History: Blue Ridge (80th) Division (1919)*, 27, [digitalcollections.powerlibrary.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/ssstp-wwii/id/724/rec/3](http://digitalcollections.powerlibrary.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/ssstp-wwii/id/724/rec/3), accessed 2 October 2017.
35. Williams, *Experiences of the Great War*, 20, and Stringfellow, *Hell No*, 143, 285.
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38. Davis, ed. *Virginians of Distinguished Service in the World War*.
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40. Trevor Penkwitz, “HOLD—Gregory Guard Prepares for Another Year,” *Collegiate Times*, (October 15, 2013), student newspaper, Virginia Tech, Blackburg, Va., [www.collegiatetimes.com/news/virginia\\_tech/hold--gregory-guard-prepares-for-another-year/article\\_8547a4f1-8300-5ae5-b9e6-dc676b372685.html](http://www.collegiatetimes.com/news/virginia_tech/hold--gregory-guard-prepares-for-another-year/article_8547a4f1-8300-5ae5-b9e6-dc676b372685.html), accessed 28 September 2017,
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42. Charles L. Hogue, cited in Gutiérrez, *Doughboys on the Great War*, 252.
43. West Virginia Collegiate Institute, *The Collegiate Monthly* (October 1921), 9, [library.wvstate.edu/archives/college\\_publications/Institute-Monthly/1921-10.pdf](http://library.wvstate.edu/archives/college_publications/Institute-Monthly/1921-10.pdf), accessed 27 September 2017.
44. *The Covington Virginian* (Covington, Va.), obituary for Gillespie Garland Lomans (January 10, 1969).
45. This is the spelling as it appeared on the questionnaire.
46. Rally Point: The Professional Military Network, “What are the primary reasons that we as Combat Veterans don’t talk to civilians about our experiences?” [www.rallypoint.com/answers/what-are-the-primary-reasons-that-we-as-combat-veterans-don-t-talk-to-civilians-about-our-experiences](http://www.rallypoint.com/answers/what-are-the-primary-reasons-that-we-as-combat-veterans-don-t-talk-to-civilians-about-our-experiences), accessed 16 September 2017.
47. Alvin C. York, *Sergeant York: His Own Life Story and War Diary*, Tom Skeyhill, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1928), 212–213, quoted in Gutiérrez, *Doughboys on the Great War*, 155.
48. To find the number of Southwest Virginians who died in service, the author consulted the online text of *Soldiers of the Great War: Vol. 3* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920), [archive.org/stream/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3/SoldiersOfTheGreatWarV3_djvu.txt), accessed 27 September 2017. Since that book provides only the dead men’s names and hometowns, the author conducted an Internet search to locate each hometown and determine if it lay within one of the Southwest Virginia counties included in this article. This research revealed that 404 Southwest Virginians died in service during World War I. The Library of Virginia also offers an online, searchable list of Virginia war dead for all wars in which Virginians served, [www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/vmd/](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/vmd/), accessed September 26, 2017. Likewise, an original of the Report of the Adjutant of Virginia, “Virginians Who Lost Their Lives in the World War,” appears online but is poorly formatted, [archive.org/stream/virginianswholos00virg/virginianswholos00virg\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/virginianswholos00virg/virginianswholos00virg_djvu.txt), accessed September 26, 2017.

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