

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

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Starting at the End: Historical Society looks forward to Armistice Day anniversary
By Jay Graybeal

Nov. 11 will be the 75th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the Great War, an event described by diplomat and historian George Kennan as "the seminal catastrophe of the 20th century."

The era of World War I saw America move from an occasionally imperialistic, yet isolationist nation, to a global power. Reform movements at home resulted in women's suffrage, greater opportunities for African-Americans and the great social experiment of Prohibition. And although America failed to join the newly-formed League of Nations, most Americans felt that the conflict had been the "War to End All Wars." Regrettably, unresolved issues and a harsh Treaty of Versailles led to the conflagration of World War II only twenty years later. In fact, in geopolitical terms, the two world wars were one with a two-decade truce.

Although American involvement came late in the war, the conflict had a direct impact on nearly every household in Carroll County. Countians strongly supported the war with few exceptions. From a population of 34,000 persons, more than 1,000 men and women served with the armed forces. Of these, more than 850 white men, 94 African-American men and 9 white women served on active duty. A majority served overseas; 31 died during the war. The Student Army Training Corps enrolled 42 college students and faculty.

Countless other countians served in the Council of Defense which had sections for men, white women and "Colored" women. Countians also supported war work by joining local Red Cross chapters, the Woman's Cub, Woman's Civic League and other civic organizations. Although there were real concerns that some local residents of German descent would be disloyal, there were only a few isolated incidents of discord among this segment of the population.

In observance of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War I, the Historical Society of Carroll County is planning a special exhibition about this county history. Donors from throughout the county have contributed to an especially rich manuscript collection, newspaper holdings, and militaria for interpreting local civilian and military participation in this era.

The exhibition has been timed to open on the anniversary of the close of the war rather than on the opening of the conflict. The decision is based on the belief that when interpreting a tragic topic such as war, the end of hostilities anniversary provides a focus on a more positive aspect of

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war – the return of peace. Choosing Nov. 11 as the opening date also follows the local and national observances of the Armistice Day holiday, changed to Veterans Day after World War II. The exhibition opening will be a key event in local holiday observances.

Assistance from the community will be critical to the success of the exhibition. Please contact the historical at (410) 848-6494 if you have any artifacts related to a countian’s service in World War I. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Photo credit: Historical Society of Carroll County

Photo caption: American service personnel received a Victory Medal representing their participation in the World War. Various clasps were authorized to denote participation in battles or type of service in the case of Navy personnel. This example was presented to Pfc. William H. Young, 112th Field Signal Battalion, of Westminster. It has battle clasps for “YpresLys” and “Meuse-Argonne” and a clasp for service in a “Defensive Sector.” Gift of Miss Shelia M. Young.

Photo caption: Top, Second Lieutenant Francis Earle Shriner, U.S. Army Air Service. Born in Union Bridge, Lt. Shriner was one of several countians who became aviators in the fledgling Air Service. He went to ground school at the School of Military Aeronautics, Princeton University and received primary flight instruction at Park Field, Tennessee. He was serving at Ellington Field, Texas when the war ended. The half-wing badge on the left breast signifies his qualifications as an aerial observer. Promised bequest of Mrs. Thelma Walden Littlefield Shriner. Above, returning soldiers and sailors were welcomed by hometown crowds waving flags and patriotic banners such as this example. Made by J. S. Miller & Co. in 1919, it shows Army, Marine Corps and Navy personnel. It may have been displayed at the July 4, 1919 parade in Westminster. Gift of Kenneth Greenholtz, Theresa Colson and Sandra Jones in memory of Kenneth Greenholtz.

Photo caption: Far left, Red Cross volunteers throughout the nation made bandages, woolen accessories and other personal items such as this personal effects bag. The use of a printed cotton fabric illustrates the shortage of olive-drab material. Pvt. Harry C. Hunter of Westminster probably received the bag when he became a hospital patient in September, 1918, while serving in France with the 311th Machine Gun Battalion. Gift of Mrs. Audrey Selby, in memory of her father, 1991. Left, Pvt. Granville Eugene Roop, 832 Aero Squadron, Army Air Service, used stationary supplied by the YMCA to write his mother in February, 1918. Pvt. Roop wrote “There are about thirty flying overhead now. At dark when they start to come in it looks like pigeons coming home to roost. There are some very good flyers here, they loop and sometimes go up

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above the clouds and then drop headfirst so as to make out they are falling." Gift of Eugenia Gartrell, in memory of her father, 1991.