

DOVER TIDINGS

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Pamela Kunkemueller
Editor

The Dover Historical Society, P.O. Box 534, Dover, Massachusetts 02030
www.doverhistoricalsociety.org

The President's Letter

In our last issue of Tidings I observed that it was surprisingly difficult to gain meaningful perspective upon the role played by Dover in World War One. Howard Chandler Christy's poster for the Third Liberty Loan certainly captures the fervid spirit of the time, with its flag waving woman in white superimposed upon legions of doughboys, all marching valiantly to halt the Hun and make the world safe for democracy.



However, perhaps perspective is best found in this photograph. George B. Preston was one of two brothers adopted by Elbridge and Lillian Mann of 52 Main Street. Enlisting in the Massachusetts National Guard, Preston was sent to the 102nd Infantry Regiment which arrived in France on September 21, 1917. He was killed in action on April 20, 1918 when German forces overwhelmed the American trenches at Seicheprey during the Saint-Mihiel Offensive. The encounter



was one of the first combat engagements of American Expeditionary Force and the hand to hand fighting was reportedly so intense that even the regimental cooks were engaged, one of whom is said to have killed several of the enemy with a meat cleaver. Private Preston's body was brought home to be buried in Highland Cemetery with full military honors and our American Legion Post is named in his honor. In the final measure, Preston's photograph might be that of any of the roughly 11 million who lost their lives in the Great War. In 1976 South African songwriter Eric Bogel wrote eloquently of their legacy in his ballad *The Green Fields of France*:

*Did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind
In some faithful heart are you forever enshrined
And although you died back in 1916
In that faithful heart are you forever nineteen?
Or are you a stranger without even a name
Enshrined forever behind a glass pane
In an old photograph torn tattered and stained
Fading to yellow in a brown leather frame?*

George Preston is generally considered to be Dover's one combat casualty of the Great War, thus it was with some puzzlement that I came upon paperwork pertaining to the death of another man, Private Michale Guiseppe. While Guiseppe's name appears on the town's memorial as having served, there is no record of his death on the Massachusetts Role of Honor nor does he appear in any of the casualty reports published on a daily basis during the war. Some clarification came with the discovery of his draft record, which notes that he was born in Teramo, in the Abruzzo region of Italy, on January 10, 1893 and at the time of his induction on October 4, 1917, was employed as a laborer on Michael W. Comiskey's Valley Farm. The name he signed, however, was Giuseppe Michelucci. Assigned to Company K of the 61st Infantry, Michelucci was killed in action on October 27, 1918 in the vicinity of Aincreville, a small town just west of the Meuse River. He is buried in Plot B, Row 21, Grave 35 in the

Meuse Argonne American Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon. The name on his grave marker is Guiseppi Michele and the official history of the Fifth Division lists as a casualty Private Giuseppe Micheluccio.*

Not so much as a photograph of Giuseppe Michelucci remains today, and we are left to wonder why his sacrifice went unrecognized. Was it simply because notice of his death was sent, not to Dover, but to an uncle in Ausable Forks, NY? Did the multiple interpretations of his name render him effectively anonymous, or was the death of the young immigrant deemed somehow less worthy of recognition than a home town boy? After nearly a century these questions may never be answered. Only George Preston's haunting visage remains to remind us of the needless waste that was the ultimate legacy of the War to End All Wars.

Elisha Lee

**The Official History of the Fifth Division U.S.A. During the Period of its Organization and of its Operations in the European World War, 1917-1919. Washington, DC, The Society of the Fifth Division, 1919. p 259.*

Eighth Annual Preservation Award

Dover's history is richer because of its inventory of older homes. If there is a house you admire, please nominate it for the Eighth Annual Historic Preservation Award by sending the name of the homeowner and address by February 1, 2018 to the Dover Historical Society, P. O. Box 534 or doverhistoricalsociety.org. A list of prior winners may be found on our website.

Priscilla Pitt Jones
Preservation Committee Chair

Welcome New Members

We are delighted to welcome 20 new members to the Society. We hope you will enjoy participating in our programs and activities; most of all we encourage you to volunteer to help us!

Caryl House

We are delighted to welcome our new caretaker, Mya Wilke. A native Midwesterner, Mya brings a wide variety of experience and expertise to us. She is employed at the Natick Community Organic Farm as manager of one acre of cut flowers, including planning, growing, marketing and educating both children and adults about the advantages of organic farming which is her passion. She has already begun to bring her talents and training to the Caryl House Home Lot.

Educated at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Mya has a BS degree in Social Policy and has worked in Illinois and Washington D.C. concentrating on environmental and public policy issues before coming to the Boston area in 2010 to pursue her first love: organic farming.



Do stop in and say hello. She is often around when the Caryl House and Barn are open on Saturday afternoons and will also be at the Holiday Open House, Sunday, December 10.

Finally, be sure to **SAVE THE DATE** for this year's Caryl House Annual Holiday Open House. Back by popular demand to provide suitable Holiday music and lead a sing-a-long for those so inclined will be Diane Taraz. Diane has performed for us several times and her return for this occasion promises to be a special treat. **The Holiday Open House is Sunday, December 10** as mentioned above, from **2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Diane will perform from **2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**



Janet Comiskey-Giannini
Curator, Benjamin Caryl House

The Sawin Museum

New Exhibit Commemorates the United States' Role in WWI

When the major Entente Powers (Britain, France, Italy and Russia) and Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary soon joined by Turkey) attacked one another with gusto in August 1914, the Germans thought they would shortly be in Paris and the British in particular believed it would all be over by Christmas!

Two and a half years later, in the spring of 1917, after incalculable material damage and millions of dead and wounded on all sides, not to mention civilian losses, no end was in sight. The protagonists were slowly fighting to a standstill, with neither gaining the upper hand. Two major developments at this time were the collapse of Imperial Russia (excellent news for the Germans as it enabled their armies to reinforce the Western Front) and the increasingly pro-British and French stance of President Woodrow Wilson (very bad news for the Germans). It should never be forgotten that if the United States, that sleeping giant, had not been swayed to enter the war on April 6, 1917, the slaughter would certainly have dragged on for much longer than it did. So it came to be that exactly one year later, on April 6, 1918 thousands of Americans began fighting under British and also later under French command to gain battlefield experience. If the prospect of the US entering the fray was an immense psychological boost for Britain and France especially, it was also the signal for a massive war effort at home, with patriotic posters requesting financial and physical support for the conflict, as shown on the front page, by an artist who had obviously never seen close-up the helmets worn by the American troops since their shape is somewhat incorrect.

The scene of Marines “going over the top” is equally stirring, but totally unrepresentative of the gritty, murderous conditions that the American Expeditionary



Force, known as the AEF, would encounter when it first saw action under American command in September 1918 against a well-trenched and battle-hardened German army, adept at mowing down attackers with heavy machine gun fire. As a point of interest, the Marine is carrying a Lewis Light Machine Gun which with a full magazine would have weighed around 40 pounds.

Although the AEF as an independent unified fighting force under the command of General J. J. Pershing, a controversial figure generally disliked by his soldiers and distrustful of the latest battle-tested military tactics, only saw action in the field for two months, its contribution to the final outcome was vast. So too was the cost, with over 117,000 American dead and 200,000 wounded. The armistice that came into effect on November 11 at 11 a.m. could not come soon enough for friend and foe in the muddy trenches of northern France, but it did come too late for the 11 million military and 7 million civilians who had perished in the “War to End All Wars”. Ironically, and tragically, this armistice served to end nationally sanctioned bloodshed in Europe for only the next 20 years.

Though much of the attention today is on the US contribution to the fighting on the Western Front, its fledgling industrial might also focused on maritime matters, building up a large merchant fleet as exemplified by the eye catching poster of the American eagle sending armed merchant ships on their way to Europe.



Although in WWI the US Navy was never engaged in a battle, it had rapidly become a formidable naval force as exemplified by the interesting photograph showing the crew of the USS Mississippi, many of whom are standing or sitting on her massive 14 inch guns.



Somewhere in that sea of 1,056 faces smiles my late father-in-law, John I. Wyld freshly out of Annapolis, who told me they were just itching for a fight. Much later, a refitted USS Mississippi was to see plenty of action in WWII.

The Sawin Museum has mounted a series of displays, some contrasting iconic US and German equipment and arms, others showing the “little things” of great importance to the “doughboy”, such as his pocket Bible, mess tin and utensils, sewing kit and the kind of bed he slept on when fortunate enough to be offered one. Examples of uniforms worn are also on display as well as many other intriguing items. The citizens of Dover patriotically served their country, for which five of them ultimately gave their lives.

Do come and see for yourself. The Museum is open now through November on Saturday afternoons, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and by appointment, call 508-675-1832 and leave your contact information.

Two valuable sources of information for the theatre of operations in which the United States was involved are:

Mark Adkin, *The Western Front Companion. The Complete Guide to How the Armies Fought for Four Devastating Years, 1914-1918.* Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg PA, 2013.

Mitchell Yockelson, *Forty-Seven Days. How Pershing's Warriors Came of Age to Defeat the German Army in World War I.* New American Library, New York NY, 2016.

Stuart Swiny
Curator, Sawin Museum

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p. 4, courtesy Mya Wilke
p. 7, U. S. Navy

Sources of illustrations: p. 1, 5, DHS Archives
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Save the Dates

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Frederick Law Olmstead

Alan Banks

Supervisory Park Ranger of Fairsted, Brookline, MA

7:30 p.m.

Dover Library, Lower Level

Co-Sponsored with Chicatabot Garden Club

Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Mr. Baker's Fairyland of the Beautiful and Bizarre

Gloria Greis, PhD

Executive Director, Needham Historical Society

7:30 p.m.

Dover Library, Lower Level

Admission to all programs is free
Refreshments will be served