6. The War

President Wilson had worked diligently for over two and a half years to keep the United States out of the war. There were those of British descent who were urging us to support England, but there was a strong sentiment for neutrality among Irish-Americans, German-Americans, and Scandinavian-Americans, as well as among church leaders and among women in general. Business leaders tended to support involvement, and the working class and farmers were relatively quiet and tended to divide along ethnic lines. Midwestern farmers generally opposed the war, especially those of German and Scandinavian descent, German Americans in particular, even though by this time most usually had only weak ties to Germany. They were fearful of negative treatment they might receive if the United States entered the war, because such mistreatment was already happening to German–descent citizens in Canada and Australia. No one wanted to support Germany. They just wanted neutrality and spoke of the superiority of German culture. Chicago's Germans worked to try to get a complete embargo on all arms shipment to Europe. In 1916 large crowds in Chicago's Germania celebrated the Kaiser's birthday, something they had not done before the war. By 1917, however, they were quieter and simply called neutrality, but proclaimed that if a war came, they would be loyal to the United States. By this point, though, nobody was paying attention to them. And once the war started, they were indeed harassed and suffered humiliating experiences, as we have seen. German American Catholics opposed the war, and the Pope tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a peace. Then the Vatican adopted neutrality. Even American Jews were hostile to war because they considered England hostile to Jewish interests. The Midwest became the stronghold of isolationism.

Neither the army nor the navy were equipped for war, and during 1915, even after the sinking of the Lusitania, there were fierce media efforts on both fronts, and huge confusion about facts and the right thing to do. But when in May 1916 Americans learned that Germany was debating whether America was too weak to fight, that it could be ignored, their anger was roused, and the decision was made to increase the army to 11,300 officers and 208,000 enlisted men, and that a National Guard would be enlarged in five years to 440,000 men. By 1916 a new factor was emerging – a sense of national self-interest and American nationalism. The unbelievable casualty figures in Europe were sobering – two vast battles caused over one million casualties each. Clearly this war would be a decisive episode in the history of the world.

In early 1917 Berlin forced the issue by its declaration on January 31 to target neutral shipping in a designated war zone. Five American merchant ships went down in March, and Americans were outraged and overwhelmingly supported Wilson when he asked Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917. Public opinion had changed radically in three years. The American Expeditionary Forces was established on July 5, 1917, under the command of Gen. John J. Pershing. The first American troops, often called "Doughboys" landed in Europe in June 1917, but the AEF did not participate at the front until late October 1917.But because Pershing wanted U.S. troops well-trained, few troops actually went to France until January 1918. By June 1917 only 14,000 American soldiers had arrived in France, but by May 1918 over one million American troops were stationed in France. Only half of them made it to the front lines. By the end of 1917 four divisions deployed in France including the 42nd "Rainbow" Division, a National Guard division made up of soldiers from nearly every state in the United States.

The flu pandemic killed 25,000 men in the AEF, while another 360,000 became very ill. Relatively few men suffered actual injury from poison gas, even though many mistakenly thought they had been exposed. As a general rule, American soldiers fought "for honor, manhood, comrades, and adventure, but especially for duty." American forces were to fill the gaps in the French and British armies. U.S. banks made huge loans to England and France to help them keep the war going, and U.S. industries were profiting by manufacturing things needed for the war. Virtually all the automobiles manufactured by Ford in 1917, for example, went to Europe. Bethlehem Steel took particular advantage of the increased demand for armaments and became the third largest manufacturing company in the United States. The beginning of the war had coincided with the end of the 1913-1914 Recession in America. Booming economic activity in the cause of war fueled an even more rapid recovery. But when Germany made a secret offer to help Mexico regain territories it had lost in the Mexican American War in an encoded telegram known as the Zimmermann Telegram, it was intercepted by British Intelligence. When that was published, and as German U-boats were sinking American merchant ships in the North Atlantic, war was inevitable. Wilson declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, saying that it would be a war to end all wars and a war that would make the world safe for democracy.

There are many stories to be told when a war is over, many tales of heroism, bravery, hardships, and brutality. Those who glory in the retelling have favorite soldiers, detachments, maneuvers, or battles to describe in proud and thrilling detail. In 1918 we in Wisconsin had what we considered our own Division, nicknamed the *Red Arrow* because it literally and figuratively made a name for itself by piercing every enemy line, including the vaunted Hindenburg Line. The 32nd Division was formed from 15,000 Wisconsin National Guard and 8,000 Michigan National Guard Soldiers. They trained at Camp MacArthur in Waco, Texas on July 18, 1917. Laws at that time prohibited the National Guard from deploying overseas. Once units were trained, they were discharged from the National Guard and drafted into the Army.

However, in early 1918 we learned that our National Guard troops from Wisconsin would be deployed and sent into battle. Once we understood that these 15,000 young men of ours would be facing the enemy that had already destroyed so much of England and France, our patriotic fervor escalated, and these recruitment posters could be seen in some windows as a sign of support. Since there was a general feeling that National Guardsmen were not trained up for war and could not be deployed overseas, the 32nd Division under Major General William G. Haan surprised its critics by reaching such a high level of battle-readiness that it was declared "first and foremost in training and discipline." The critics were also surprised at the many awards and citations achieved by the Red Arrow, and the reports of objectives they reached. It was their powerful assault on the Germans that resulted in their Division being the first to break through the much-feared Hindenburg Line, which earned them the nickname the *Red Arrow*. Its fierce fighting and battlefield successes on Aug. 5-6, 1918, moved General Pairron de Mondesir - commander of the 38th French Corps to which the 32nd Division was then attached - to exclaim, "Oui, oui, les soldats terrible, tres bien, tres bien!" In English, that translates to "Yes, yes, formidable, terrifying soldiers,

very good, very good!" The nickname "Les Terribles" stuck. (Mondesir's appraisal of the 32nd Division led General Emmanuel Mangin to specifically request "Les Terribles" to join his famous 10th French Army shock troops.) The nom-de-guerre was made official in a citation following the battle at Juvigny, and the 32nd Division was the only American division given a nickname by an allied nation during the war. As the first Allied Division to pierce the German Hindenburg Line of defense, the 32nd was proud of its ability to advance over terrain others could not and to pierce the German lines. They adopted the symbol of a line shot through with a red arrow, to signify their tenacity in piercing the enemy line. It then became known as the Red Arrow Division. Bloomington, like the rest of Wisconsin, was filled with pride and cheered for its Red Arrow soldiers.

This photo shows Brig. Gen. Haan and his Staff of the 32nd Division at Camp Mac Arthur in Waco, Texas. The camp was simple tents, and the men slept on cots, much more elementary than the barracks where my brother Andrew trained when he was called up to train in Des Moines, Iowa.

General Haan quickly earned the respect of his troops, and by late 1917 he was ordered to prepare his troops for deployment. The first troops left Camp Mac Arthur January 2 to go to Camp Merritt in New Jersey, to embark at Hoboken. By March 1 the camp was empty. On January 13 the first detachment left for France. On January 24 the SS Tuscania left Pier 34 in new York and on February 5 was destroyed by a German submarine attack. 230 soldiers and crew died, and 13 of these men were from the 32nd Division.

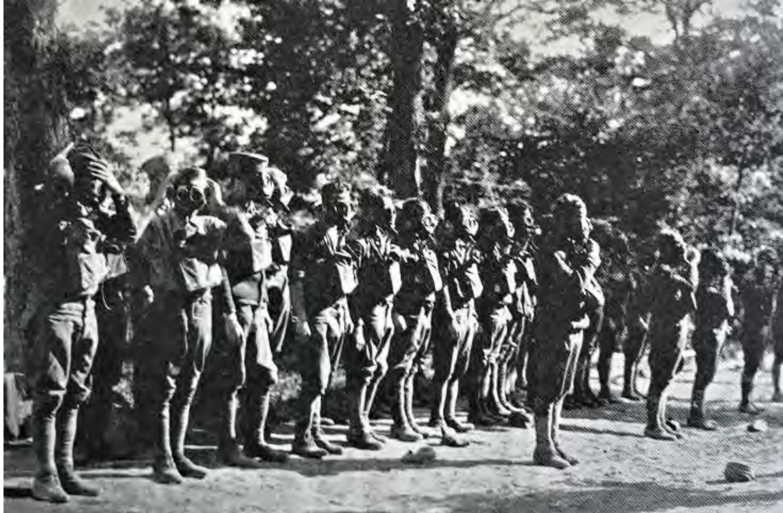
On March 4 the USS Leviathon left Hoboken with 8500 troops on board, plus a crew of 1000. The massive ship was crowded and uncomfortable, but because the ship was one of the fastest on the seas, a captured German troop ship, it made the trip in seven days while other vessels took up to 20 days to cross. Life belts had to be worn at all times because of the fear of submarine attack. The lifeboats held only about 900 people. They reached Liverpool on March 13 and found little food there because by then the British were starving after their years at war. The soldiers ate cheese, bread and tea and called their new quarters “Camp Dwindle Down” and “Camp Cheese”. On March 20 they arrived at Le Havre, France, on cattle boats for the six hour crossing from Southhampton. They had been designated as a replacement organization but were still dismayed when 7000 of them were sent as replacement troops for the Big Red One. They had trained together and had become a tightly-knit army Division of 27,000 men when they left for France. They now had to adjust to the loss of 7000 of their buddies and adjust to replacement troops coming into their own Division. General Haan was disappointed to have his hard-won troop organization disturbed, but quickly instructed his staff to keep morale and discipline high as they incorporated into the 32nd Division new soldiers from all over in the United States, Canada, and many foreign countries, including England, Italy, Russia, the Isle of Cyprus, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Montenegro.

This photo shows all the privates and Captains of the 128th Infantry of the Division as they marched in transfer to the 1st Division as replacements in Rayaumiex, France on March 21, 1918.

Then the Division was ordered into Alsace, and spirits soared because their Division was to be the first American troop Division to set foot on German soil.

The striped pole near te center of the picture is a marker of the 1914 boundary between France and Germany, in Sentheim, Alsace.

In Alsace, the 32nd Division was thoroughly rehearsed in the various drills prescribed in the training manuals, including the gas defense drill. They had their first gas mask drill March 21, 1918, and found the masks cumbersome, difficult to put on, and difficult to wear. The first use of poison gas in World War I occurred on January 3, 1915, but both sides in the war had experimented with tear gas in 1914.



In January 1915 the Germans used a more deadly chemical – xylyl bromide – killing around 1,000 Russian troops at Bolimov, on the Eastern Front. At Ypres in Belgium, gas was used for the first time on a large scale. Germany unleashed thousands of canisters of chlorine gas, causing over 7,000 casualties among the British, Canadian and French. Its effect was devastating, terrifying soldiers and causing uproar at home. In these photos we see German soldiers standing downwind as they release poisonous gas, and British troops blinded by the gas during the Battle of Estaires in 1918.

We are learning how many changes came to our world as a result of World War I. The use of chemical warfare was another of those changes, along with the development of high explosives.

The widespread use of the agents of chemical warfare, and wartime advances in the composition of high explosives, gave rise to an occasionally expressed view of World War I as "the chemist's war" and also the era where weapons of mass destruction were created.

Both sides in the war used the agents of chemical warfare, in direct and open defiance of the 1899 Hague Declaration and the 1907 Hague Convention on Land Warfare. France was the first to release tear gas, in 1914, and both sides in the war used that during the first year of the war because they considered it not a "poisonous" gas and therefore not a breach of the Hague rules. Germany was the first to use the poisonous gases, in 1915. Because of the historical importance of the use of chemical warfare in World War I and because the horror of its abuses led finally to the *Geneva Protocol*, an updated and extensive prohibition of poison weapons, I think we should spend a little time on this issue.

The use of toxic chemicals as weapons dates back thousands of years, but the first large scale use of chemical weapons was during World War I. They were primarily used to demoralize, injure, and kill entrenched defenders, against whom the indiscriminate and generally very slow-moving or static nature of gas clouds would be most effective. The types of weapons employed ranged from disabling chemicals, such as tear gas, to lethal agents like phosgene, chlorine, and mustard gas. This chemical warfare was a major component of the first global war and first total war of the 20th century. The killing capacity of gas was limited, with about ninety thousand fatalities from a total of 1.3 million casualties caused by gas attacks. Gas was unlike most other weapons of the period because it was possible to develop countermeasures, such as gas masks. In the later stages of the war, as the use of gas increased, its overall effectiveness diminished. The use of poison gas by all major belligerents throughout World War I constituted war crimes as its use violated the *1899 Hague Declaration Concerning Asphyxiating Gases* and the *1907 Hague Convention on Land Warfare,* which prohibited the use of "poison or poisoned weapons" in warfare. Widespread horror and public revulsion at the use of gas and its consequences led to a nearly complete refusal by all combatants to use poison gas in World War II.

The most frequently used chemicals during World War I were tear-inducing irritants rather than fatal or disabling poisons. During World War I, the French army was the first to employ gas, using

26 mm grenades filled with tear gas (ethyl bromoacetate) in August 1914. The small quantities of gas delivered, roughly 19 cm^3 per cartridge, were not even detected by the Germans. The stocks were rapidly consumed and by November a new order was placed by the French military. As bromine was scarce among the Entente allies, the active ingredient was changed to chloroacetone.

In October 1914, German troops fired fragmentation shells filled with a chemical irritant against British positions at Neuve Chapelle; the concentration achieved was so small that it too was barely noticed. None of the combatants considered the use of tear gas to be in conflict with the Hague Treaty of 1899, which prohibited the launching of projectiles containing asphyxiating or poisonous gas.

The first instance of large-scale use of gas as a weapon was on January 31, 1915, when Germany fired 18,000 artillery shells containing liquid xylyl bromide tear gas on Russian positions on the Rawka River, west of Warsaw during the Battle of Bolimov. Instead of vaporizing, the chemical froze and failed to have the desired effect.

The first killing agent used by the German military was chlorine. Chlorine is a powerful irritant that can inflict damage to the eyes, nose, throat and lungs. At high concentrations and prolonged exposure it can cause death by asphyxiation. German chemical companies BASF, Hoechst and Bayer (which formed the IG Farben conglomerate in 1925) had been making chlorine as a by-product of their dye manufacturing. In cooperation with Fritz Haber of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Chemistry in Berlin, they began developing methods of discharging chlorine gas against enemy trenches.

According to the field post letter of Major Karl von Zingler, the first chlorine gas attack by German forces took place before January 2, 1915: "In other war theatres it does not go better and it has been said that our Chlorine is very effective. 140 English officers have been killed. This is a horrible weapon ..."

By April 22, 1915, the German Army had 168 tons of chlorine deployed in 5,730 cylinders from Langemark–Poelkapelle, north of Ypres. At 17:30, in a slight easterly breeze, the liquid chlorine was siphoned from the tanks, producing gas which formed a grey-green cloud that drifted across positions held by French Colonial troops from Martinique, as well as the 1st Tirailleurs and the 2nd Zouaves from Algeria. Faced with an unfamiliar threat these troops broke ranks, abandoning their trenches and creating an 8,000-yard (7 km) gap in the Allied line. The German infantry were also wary of the gas and, lacking reinforcements, failed to exploit the break before the 1st Canadian Division and assorted French troops reformed the line in scattered, hastily prepared positions

1,000–3,000 yards (910–2,740 m) apart. The Entente governments claimed the attack was a flagrant violation of international law, but Germany argued that the Hague treaty had only banned chemical shells, rather than the use of gas projectors.

In what became the Second Battle of Ypres, the Germans used gas on three more occasions; on April 24, against the 1st Canadian Division, on May 2, near Mouse Trap Farm and on May 5 against the British at Hill 60. The British Official History stated that at Hill 60, "90 men died from gas poisoning in the trenches or before they could be got to a dressing station; of the 207 brought to the nearest dressing stations, 46 died almost immediately and 12 after long suffering. "The British expressed outrage at Germany's use of poison gas at Ypres and responded by developing their own gas warfare capability. The commander of II Corps, Lieutenant General Sir Charles Ferguson, said of gas: "It is a cowardly form of warfare which does not commend itself to me or other English soldiers ... We cannot win this war unless we kill or incapacitate more of our enemies than they do of us, and if this can only be done by our copying the enemy in his choice of weapons, we must not refuse to do so."

It quickly became evident that the men who stayed in their places suffered less than those who ran away, as any movement worsened the effects of the gas, and that those who stood up on the fire step suffered less—indeed they often escaped any serious effects—than those who lay down or sat at the bottom of a trench. Men who stood on the parapet suffered least, as the gas was denser near the ground. The worst sufferers were the wounded lying on the ground, or on stretchers, and the men who moved back with the cloud. Chlorine was less effective as a weapon than the Germans had hoped, particularly as soon as simple countermeasures were introduced. The gas produced a visible greenish cloud and strong odour, making it easy to detect. It was water-soluble, so the simple expedient of covering the mouth and nose with a damp cloth was effective at reducing the effect of the gas. It was thought to be even more effective to use urine rather than water, as it was known at the time that chlorine reacted with urea (present in urine) to form dichloro urea.

Chlorine required a concentration of 1,000 parts per million to be fatal, destroying tissue in the lungs, likely through the formation of hypochlorous and hydrochloric acids when dissolved in the water in the lungs. Despite its limitations, chlorine was an effective psychological weapon—the sight of an oncoming cloud of the gas was a continual source of dread for the infantry.

Countermeasures were quickly introduced in response to the use of chlorine. The Germans issued their troops with small gauze pads filled with cotton waste, and bottles of a bicarbonate solution with which to dampen the pads. Immediately following the use of chlorine gas by the Germans,

instructions were sent to British and French troops to hold wet handkerchiefs or cloths over their mouths. Simple pad respirators similar to those issued to German troops were soon proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel N. C. Ferguson, the A.D.M.S. of the 28th Division. These pads were intended to be used damp, preferably dipped into a solution of bicarbonate kept in buckets for that purpose; other liquids were also used. Because such pads could not be expected to arrive at the front for several days, army divisions set about making them for themselves. Locally available muslin, flannel and gauze were used, officers were sent to Paris to buy more and local French women were employed making up rudimentary pads with string ties. Other units used lint bandages manufactured in the convent at Poperinge. Pad respirators were sent up with rations to British troops in the line as early as the evening of April 24.

In Britain the *Daily Mail* newspaper encouraged women to manufacture cotton pads, and within one month a variety of pad respirators were available to British and French troops, along with motoring goggles to protect the eyes. The response was enormous and a million gas masks were produced in a day. The *Mail*'s design was useless when dry and caused suffocation when wet—the respirator was responsible for the deaths of scores of men. By July 6, 1915, the entire British army was equipped with the more effective "smoke helmet" designed by Major Cluny MacPherson, Newfoundland Regiment, which was a flannel bag with a celluloid window, which entirely covered the head. The race was then on between the introduction of new and more effective poison gases and the production of effective countermeasures, which marked gas warfare until the armistice in November 1918.

The deficiencies of chlorine were overcome with the introduction of phosgene, which was prepared by a group of French chemists led by Victor Grignard and first used by France in 1915. Colourless and having an odor likened to "mouldy hay," phosgene was difficult to detect, making it a more effective weapon. Phosgene was sometimes used on its own but was more often used mixed with an equal volume of chlorine, with the chlorine helping to spread the denser phosgene. The Allies called this combination *White Star* after the marking painted on shells containing the mixture.

Phosgene was a potent killing agent, deadlier than chlorine. It had a potential drawback in that some of the symptoms of exposure took 24 hours or more to manifest. This meant that the victims were initially still capable of putting up a fight; this could also mean that apparently fit troops would be incapacitated by the effects of the gas on the following day.

The most widely reported and, perhaps, the most effective and dreaded chemical agent of the First World War was sulfur mustard, known as "mustard gas". It is a volatile oily liquid. It was introduced

as a vesicant by Germany in July 1917 prior to the Third Battle of Ypres. The Germans marked their shells yellow for mustard gas and green for chlorine and phosgene; hence they called the new gas *Yellow Cross*. It was known to the British as *HS* (*Hun Stuff*), and the French called it *Yperite* (named after Ypres).

Mustard gas is not an effective killing agent (though in high enough doses it is fatal) but can be used to harass and disable the enemy and pollute the battlefield. Delivered in artillery shells, mustard gas was heavier than air, and it settled to the ground as an oily liquid. Once in the soil, mustard gas remained active for several days, weeks, or even months, depending on the weather conditions. There is controversy even today about long-term health effects from poisonous gases embedded in the soil.

The skin of victims of mustard gas blistered, their eyes became very sore and they began to vomit. Mustard gas caused internal and external bleeding and attacked the bronchial tubes, stripping off the mucous membrane. This was extremely painful. Fatally injured victims sometimes took four or five weeks to die of mustard gas exposure. One nurse, Vera Brittain, wrote: "I wish those people who talk about going on with this war whatever it costs could see the soldiers suffering from mustard gas poisoning. Great mustard-colored blisters, blind eyes, all sticky and stuck together, always fighting for breath, with voices a mere whisper, saying that their throats are closing and they know they will choke." A British nurse treating mustard gas cases recorded: “They cannot be bandaged or touched. We cover them with a tent of propped-up sheets. Gas burns must be agonizing because usually the other cases do not complain even with the worst wounds but gas cases are invariably beyond endurance and they cannot help crying out.” For mustard gas, which could cause severe damage by simply making contact with skin, no effective countermeasure was found during the war. Many of those who survived a gas attack were scarred for life. Respiratory disease and failing eyesight and lifetime blindness were common post-war afflictions, especially from chlorine or mustard gas. Death by gas was often slow and painful.

The distribution of gas cloud casualties was not limited to the front. Nearby towns were at risk from winds blowing the poison gases through. Civilians rarely had a warning system to alert their neighbors of the danger and often did not have access to effective gas masks. When the gas came to the towns it could easily get into houses through open windows and doors. An estimated 100,000-260,000 civilian casualties were caused by chemical weapons during the conflict and tens of thousands (along with military personnel) died from scarring of the lungs, skin damage, and cerebral damage in the years after the conflict ended. Many commanders on both sides knew that such weapons would cause major harm to civilians as wind would blow poison gases into nearby

civilian towns but nonetheless continued to use them throughout the war. British Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig wrote in his diary: "My officers and I were aware that such weapon would cause harm to women and children living in nearby towns, as strong winds were common on the battlefront. However, because the weapon was to be directed against the enemy, none of us were overly concerned at all."[

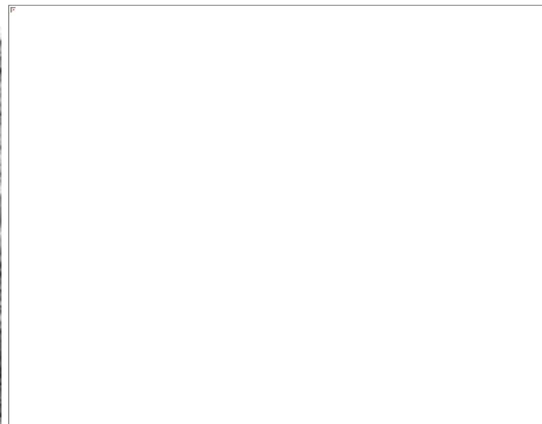
Horses and mules were important methods of transport that could be endangered if they came into close contact with gas. This was not so much of a problem until it became common to launch gas great distances. This caused researchers to develop masks that could be used on animals such as dogs, horses, mules, and even carrier pigeons.

As we have seen, the early gas masks gave protection by being dipped in anti-gas chemicals that neutralized the harmful gas before it was breathed. The later masks were then created to cover the eyes and neck preventing damage to those parts of the body. They also introduced carbon filters, which entangled particles before entering the mouth and nose. After the first gas attacks by the Germans the British made crude masked made of cotton and a long cloth that was dipped in a solution of bicarbonate of soda (known as the black veil). Next, since there were limitations of the Black Veiling Respirator it focused British attentions on a more effective and operationally practical replacement. The result was the 'British Hypo Helmet' or, officially, the 'British Smoke Hood'. It had a wool flannel hood entirely soaked in a solution called the Hypo solution, which was a mixture of sodium hyposulfite, sodium bicarbonate and glycerin. The hood fitted the head to the shoulders and had a mica window. Finally, towards the end of the war the in 1916, the Germans added larger air filter drums to their respirators containing gas neutralizing chemicals. The allies soon added

filter drums to their respirators as well. One of the most notable gas masks used during WW1 was the British Small Box Respirator or SBR designed in 1916 and the German GM-15 mask.

The Small Box Respirator featured a single-piece, close-fitting rubberized mask with eyepieces. The box filter was compact and could be worn around the neck. The SBR could be readily upgraded as more effective filter technology was developed. The British-designed SBR was also adopted for use by the American Expeditionary Force. The SBR was the prized possession of the ordinary infantryman; when the British were forced to retreat during the German Spring Offensive of 1918, it was found that while some troops had discarded their rifles, hardly any had left behind their respirators.

Countermeasures were effective. In 1915, when poison gas was relatively new, less than 3% of British gas casualties died. In 1916, the proportion of fatalities jumped to 17%. By 1918, the figure was back below 3%, though the total number of British gas casualties was now nine times the 1915 levels.



On the Western Front, much of the war was fought in trenches like these at Benholz, Alsace, where the Red Arrow dug in during July 1918.

On July 19 the Red Arrow pulled out of Alsace and was sent to another sector of the front. They were moved by train to Compiegne, then by truck to Chateau-Thierry.

The defiant sign being held by soldiers on the truck above, “To Hell with the Kaiser,” was emblematic of the general high courage and enthusiasm of the Red Arrow troops. That extended even to the nurses. On July 29 two members of the Army Nurse Corps who were attached to the Red Arrow’s 127th Field Hospital continued to care for the wounded soldiers even during a severe bombardment. For their uncommon bravery they awarded the Silver Star Citation for Bravery, two of the first three women to be honored this way. In the beginning of the war women were kept away from the front, but as the war progressed, they increasingly served right at the front.

On July 30 the Red Arrow had its first major offensive action at Bois des Grimpettes, pushing through the woods. While the Michigan boys were engaging fiercely with the foe on the left, the Wisconsin boys were pushing through the village of Cierges and running into fierce German resistance at Bellevue Farm. The objective was to break the German line at Ourcq where courageous German resistance and a cunningly arranged machine gun defense had kept the line protected. By the morning of August 1, the Wisconsin outfit was given the objective to take Hill 230. The Germans were fighting to the death and Division 32 found themselves in vicious warfare, but 32

kept rushing with their famous Arrow momentum, and in the end Hill 230 was taken, the key to the larger objective of Ourcq. The Wisconsin men continued to hold Hill 230 as the 6th French army moved into position, and the batteries of the 57th Field Artillery Brigade, which was on the move since July 30, all finally reached their positions on August 2nd, ready to protect the infantry for the final push. The toll of dead and wounded on both sides was horrific, with gruesome injuries and bodies ripped by shells and mortar. There was some indication that the Germans had started abandoning their position, leaving "sacrifice" machine gun crews to slow down Allied progress, but after the Allies reached a line north of the village Dravegny, the command was to push on to the Vesle to continue to gain ground.

However, the Germans stood firm on Vesle, raining very heavy artillery and machine gun fire on the allies and successfully holding the town and railroad yards during the early hours of the afternoon of August 2. Allied casualties were heavy and despite some success in temporarily taking the railroad yard, positions had to be abandoned and troops were withdrawn. By now the 127th Infantry battalion of the Red Arrow was badly cut up. Still Colonel Langdon organized a provisional battalion out of what was left of his regiment and sent this force forward to storm the town of Fisme . They took the town and holed up there in what poor cover was available because the town had been nearly completely destroyed. By August 5 the Third Battalion of the 128th Infantry of the Red Arrow was ordered into Fisme to relieve the 127th. There were still German snipers in the town, but by nightfall on the 5th, all Germans had been killed or captured and Fisme belonged to the Allies. However, they realized that an organized Allied attack would be necessary to take Ourcq. The town of Fismes was an important capture and proved to be almost completely destroyed.

In the Eastern part of the town German and American troops clashed in fights for possession of the sheltering walls.

The Red Arrow was relieved to fall out of the front line on August 7th to drag their weary feet back to the shattered, filthy towns which a few days before they had rushed through in the heat of their first big battle. They found what shelter was available but did find

plentiful hot food and needed rest even as the airplane bombs and heavy shelling at the front continued. They started to tally up their losses and had to deal with the sorrow. At least the Division troops found their rolling kitchens with plentiful hot food, near Mont. St. Martin.

But this was the battle when the Red Arrow got its nickname Les Terribles. When the fight started, General de Mondesir, commanding the 38th French Corps, under whose orders the 32nd was serving, came up to see how the Americans were conducting the battle, he looked over their plans, asked questions, then shook hands with everybody and expressed himself as "tres content." But then he decided he wanted to see first-hand how the Americans fought. He found a good observation point, saw the Americans as they climbed the heights to the north of the Ourcq containing the strong position that included in Bellevue Farm, Hill 230, the Jomblettes Woods and the heights in the left of our sector. He saw them clearing the enemy out of those powerful positions with a regularity and determination that caused him to say later, "Oui, Oui, Les soldats terrible, tres bien, tres bien." The name stuck. General Mangin heard of it and thereafter referred to the 32nd Division as "Les Terribles". And officially asked for them to be assigned to his 10th Army as they prepared for the punch at Juvigny.

Casualties were high on both sides. In the 32nd Division 777 were killed or died of wounds, 2253 were severely wounded, 2009 were slightly wounded, 12 were missing, 2 officers and 6 men were captured. As news filtered back to Wisconsin, people were jubilant with the successes of the 32nd Division and filled with anger and sorrow for all the losses. Many of the people in Bloomington knew Albert H. Tyler Pvt. Co.B, 121 Mg.Bn of nearby Prairie du Chien and grieved his death on August 2. They also sorrowed to learn of families who lost not just one son, but two, like James McCann and his wife of Shullsburg, Wisconsin, who lost 2 sons: Fred on July 31, 1918, and George on August 5, 1918.

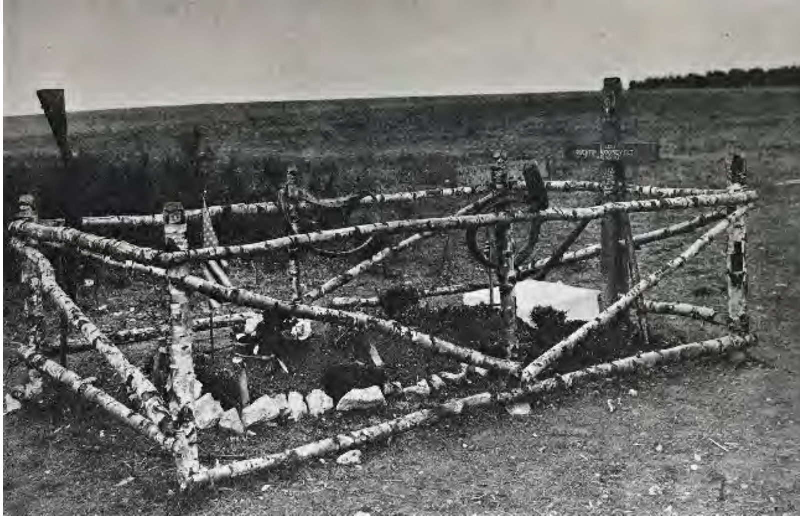
Ten young men from Madison lost their lives, and people in Bloomington grieved as the names filtered in. There were three officers from Madison:

Brigham, Stephen O. 1st Lt. Co.G. 127 Inf. on 8/1/18, shown left below

Cranefield, Marion C., 2nd Lt., Co.G., 127 Inf. 7/31/18

Roberts, John Basil, 1st Lt., Reg. Int. Officer 8/4/18, shown right below

Seven enlisted men from Madison died: Cairns, William B., Sgt. Co. G. 127 Inf. 7/30/18; Dahlem, Glenn G. Corp. Co.G. 127 Inf. 8/3/18; Graham, James H. Sgt. Co.G. 127 Inf. 8/6/18; Hickey, John J. Pvt. 1cl Co. G. 127 Inf. 8/4/18; Lang, Michael J. Sgt. Co. G. 127 Inf. 8/3/18; Nichols, Ramond, L. Pvt. 1cl. Co. G. 127 Inf. 8/3/18; and Stekelberg, William C. Corp. Co.G. 127 Inf. 7/31/18.



A poignant moment occurred on August 7, 1918, when soldiers from the 32nd Div. found the grave of Lt. Quentin Roosevelt, son of former president Theodore Roosevelt. He had been shot down July 14 behind enemy lines and the Germans had buried him by his wrecked plane.

The 32nd Division was ordered on. The attack on Juvigny at the end of August, again successful, took another four young men from Madison alone. It was one of the bloodiest battles fought by the Red Arrow, with the Michigan troops taking the heaviest casualties. General Mangin came out to Juvigny to congratulate the Red Arrow soldiers. He wanted to give out awards and citations on the spot but was told that such would have to go through proper channels. He decorated the colors of all four infantry regiments and all three machine gun battalions with the army order of the Croix de Guerre. And cited 500 officers and men for gallantry in action under his command. August 29 found the men of the 107th Field Signal Battalion of the 32nd Div. repairing telephone wires broken by enemy shells neat Juvigny.

On September 5 orders were suddenly received to transfer the 32nd to the First American Army and the troops were again on the move riding in trucks.

This photo was taken September

22 near Souilly, France.

This photo shows a caravan of horses hauling the heavy artillery and provisions.

Marshall Foch called for a coordinated series of assaults upon the Hindenburg Line. Starting Sept. 26, 2018, Allied forces began an offensive to take the Hindenburg Line, attacking from many positions, having overwhelming material superiority at that point because Germany was exhausted and short of food. The American First Army under Pershing had 411 tanks, the French had 654. On the 27th, the British launched the Second Battle of Cambrai, taking that objective on October 9. On the 28th, the Belgians moved in Flanders, and on the 29th, the French and British attacked again. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive, fought by Pershing's First Army under Foch's overall coordination, was intended to breach the Hindenburg Line west of Verdun. That offensive has been called "the biggest logistical undertaking in the history of the U.S. Army, before or since." French and US forces crossed the Canal du Nord, broke through the Hindenburg Line and took 36,000 prisoners and 380 guns.

It was another huge success for the Red Arrow. On October 8 Les Terribles found themselves in front of what was known as the strongest position on the whole Hindenburg line in the Argonne-Meuse sector.

On October 10 they met the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. In the fighting of October 10-11 over 500 German prisoners were taken, shown here, most of them surrendering in the Tranchee de la Mamelle. The smash had brought the 32nd Division up to the wire of the Kriemhilde Stellung with both flanks almost astride the German line. Other Brigades were brought in for support. The final assault was ordered to begin October 14 5:30 am.

On October 13th, while Les Terribles were battling for the Kriemhilde Stellung, the following cablegram was received by General Haan from Governor E. L. Philipp of Wisconsin."

"The splendid work of your Division cheers our hearts. On behalf of all the people of this state, I congratulate you, your officers and men, and ask you to express to our Wisconsin boys our deepest love and affection."

Nearly every American regiment has a mascot, which is generally an animal of some kind. A regiment of Marines is greatly attached to an anteater which it brought from Mexico. Others have goats, curious looking dogs, or donkeys. The 64th Regiment outdoes these: its mascot is a young French boy, about twelve years old, whom it has adopted. The story of this youngster, the son of a French soldier killed in action, is an especially tragic one, for he had become lost and had suffered greatly until the Americans found him. Today he is the idol of all the soldiers. He has been given a khaki shirt, military breeches and wrapped leggings. The regiment acted as his family, and they have decided to educate him. He has begun to learn English quickly in order to know his adopted fathers even better. He is devoted to them, endeavors to help them in every possible way, and boasts that he is already half American. He was angry only once: that was when he was compelled to remain behind, during an attack, when he insisted that he had the right to remain with the troops. "The next time," he told us, thinking that his big friends had not overheard him, "I'll find a way of slipping in with them."

October 15-17 special artillery fire was employed on obstinate points, machine gun concentrations were utilized to assist small infantry attacks, and the doughboys relied upon their own weapons in cases where artillery and machine guns were not available. They pushed their line steadily forward until it extended across the sector about two kilometers north of the village of Romagne. In all this fighting, through a tangled wilderness of shattered woods, over small bare hills, across fire-swept gulleys where machine gun bullets ripped and where deadly gas hung low, up difficult slopes, always struggling for the mastering of a terrain that presented a new problem the moment the one immediately in hand had been solved, there had been constant action, varying from the clash of large units using everything from heavy artillery to hand grenades to those ferocious hand-to-hand conflicts between our combat patrols and the enemy outposts left in sacrifice positions in machine gun nests as the foe retired. On October 17 a systematic offensive was launched, and on October 19 the Red Arrow had pushed through the Kriemhilde Stellung and finally got a needed reprieve as replacements came up to relieve them.

In the final Allied push towards the German border begun on October 17, British, French, and American armies advanced, inexorably; and the alliance between the Central Powers began to collapse as one by one they signed a peace treaty, Turkey at end of October, Austria-Hungary on Nov. 3. On Nov. 9 the Kaiser of Germany abdicated, slipping into the Netherlands and into exile.

On November 9, 1918, the Red Arrow was ordered to cross the Meuse and on November 10, their rapid advance into German territory found them, when the fog lifted, surrounded on three sides by German machine gun nests. They had to fall back to a safer position to wait for the other Divisions

to fill their places on the flanks. Casualties were heavy on the 10th, including Madison's own Second Lieutenant Morris Togstad, Headquarters Company, 127the Infantry, Killed in Action November 10 during Meuse-Argonne Offensive.   The weather was cold and miserable. Morale was low. At daybreak on November 11 the Red Arrow nevertheless roused themselves to head once more into battle, shook their equipment into place, and gripped their guns. At 7:00 am some of them took off and went over the top. Others had stopped in the nick of time as runners panted up shouting, "Finis La Guerre!

General Haan wrote to his wife: "This morning we resumed the attack at 6:30 which we had stopped last night after dark. At 7:00 we received orders to stop the battle. That was some job too. We got it stopped entirely at 10:45, just 15 minutes before the armistice went into effect. One of my chaplains was killed at 10:40. Hard luck."

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive September 26- November 11, 1918, was the largest offensive in United States military history, involving 1.2 million American soldiers. It brought the war to an end, with the battle costing 28,000 German lives, 26,277 American lives and an unknown number of French lives. The largest and bloodiest operation of World War I for the American Expeditionary Force commanded by General John. J. Pershing, and the deadliest battle in American history.

For 20 days the Red Arrow had been fighting, through rain and mud, machine gun fire, poison gas, and hand-to-hand combat. Adding to their discomfort, they were all bedeviled by fleas, or "cooties" as they called them. It was a revelation to see how these men pulled themselves together, how they got rid of those little fleas, in the Argonne, France.

General Haan visited the various regiments of Division 32 and spoke to them:

"You men are to be congratulated upon the splendid success which you have again achieved, in that you have taken every objective against which you were sent, and indeed, you have gone beyond. You are the first division that succeeded in getting through the great Kriemhilde Stellung. You have just been through perhaps the greatest battle that has ever been fought in the world, and you were in the very center of that, and every one of you is glad of it. You are not located in a so-called 'rest area', which, without doubt, is from every viewpoint the rottenest and worst in all of France, and you ought to be glad of that, because see what stories you can tell to your friends when you get home, without the least exaggeration."

On Armistice Day November 11, 1918, at 11:00 am. fighting officially ended. The Armistice was signed in Marshal Foch's train car. He was the Allied Supreme Commander at Compiegne, France.

"This is a day of celebration." Those were among the first words Maj. Gen. William Haan, commander of the 32nd Division, wrote to his wife Margaret the evening of Nov. 11, 1918, hours after the armistice ending "the war to end all wars" took effect.

Even though the 32nd Division did not begin combat until May 1918, six months later they were battle-hardened and determined, having participated in the Marne, Oise-Aisne and Meuse-Argonne campaigns. Haan wrote about the start of the final day of battle of World War I, east of the Meuse River:

"At 6:30 officers in command of the take-off line were issuing their last instructions; fifteen minutes later they were looking at their wrist watches, not with the tense excitement which characterized the approach of zero hour on the Vesle, not with the savage elation with which they waited for their turn in the tremendous smashes at the foe at Juvigny, not with the grim determination with which they entered each succeeding struggle in the Argonne, but with the calm deliberation of veterans who had a day's work ahead of them, a day's work the like of which they had done before and which they knew just how to, a disagreeable, dangerous day's work; but well — it was all in a day's work — c'est la Guerre [this is war]!

"Five minutes to seven! The men started to stir around, getting a toehold for the take-off, shaking their equipment into place, gripping their guns. Seven o'clock and some of them were off, over the top. Others had been stopped just in the nick of time, and after the advancing skirmish lines of those who had gotten away went panting runners from headquarters with the magic words: FINIS

LA GUERRE! [The war is finished!]" Haan relayed to his wife the difficulty of reeling in Red Arrows fired in combat.

"That was some job, too," he wrote. "We got it stopped entirely at 10:45, just 15 minutes before the armistice went into effect. One of my chaplains was killed at 10:40. Hard luck!"

The military record tallied for the Red Arrow 32nd Division was impressive:

- Arrived in France February 1918
- Spent six months under fire, from May to November 1918
- Fought on five fronts
- Met and vanquished 23 German Divisions from which 2153 prisoners were taken
- Gained 38 kilometers in four attacks and repulsed every enemy counter attack
- First American troops to set foot on German soil at Alsace, May 2018
- Fought continuously for 20 days, penetrating the Kriemhilde Stellung, crossing the Meuse and starting the drive to flank Metz
- Only American unit in General Mangin's famous Tenth French Army, breaking the German line which protected the Chemin des Dames
- Over 800 officers and men decorated by American, French and Belgian governments
- Arrived back in U.S. April 1919, demobilized

This impressive record came at a high cost. Casualties in the Red Arrow Division during WWI, killed in action or died of wounds:

	Officers	Men
• Alsace	2	54
• Aisne-Marne	66	715
• Oise-Aisne Meuse	15	470
• Argonne	37	1141
• East of Meuse	7	153
• TOTAL	127	2533

The total wounded was 461 officers and 10,352 men.

On November 21 General Pershing made his triumphant entry into the City of Luxembourg and the Red Arrow Division began the long trek north to become part of the Occupation Army in Germany. On April 8, 1919, the Division was officially relieved of duties and on May 1 the first of the troops left Europe. By May 15, all but the casualties had left France. In the US there was a great reception for

the Wisconsin troops. Delegations from Wisconsin and Michigan met the incoming ships in the harbor. A Red Arrow Day was set for June 6, 1919, in Milwaukee, a parade, luncheon, free passes to the theaters and ball games, and an evening ball. Their sense of comradeship was so great that even before disbursing they made arrangements to establish a 32nd Division Veteran Association. Officers were elected, members were recorded, and plans were made for the coming years. I did not see any of this because by that time I was gone, of course, but I was proud of the Wisconsin National Guard's 32nd Division, who had had a front-row seat on that original, historic day that is commemorated today as Veterans Day. Back in the United States, the country exploded into celebrations as the end of the war was announced.

WAR OVER

The Evening World

REVOLUTION SPREADS OVER GERMANY; KIEL MUTINEERS SEIZE WHOLE NAVY

RED FLAG FLIES ON BALTIC; BIG GUNS USED IN HAMBURG

GERMANS WENT TO FOCH WITH WHITE FLAG RAISED

NEW YORK CITY GOES WILD; THOUSANDS CHEER, MARCH, SING AND DANCE IN STREETS

General Haan had declared Nov. 11, 1918, a day of celebration, and in the sense that some of the most horrific fighting in the history of mankind — the advent of chemical warfare, aerial combat, submarine attacks and armored tanks — had swiftly drawn to a close, it was an appropriate declaration.

The Wisconsin State Journal

PEACE!

TRUCE IS SIGNED; YANKS TAKE SEDAN AS CONFLICT ENDS

Germany in Grip of Revolution as Hostilities Cease; Foch Terms Known to Include Provisions Which Will Prevent Resumption of Greatest War of all Times; Peace Conference Will be Held in Brussels; Belief; Wilson Expected to Attend.

NOVEMBER 7, 1918

EXTRA!

WAR OVER

In their eagerness to broadcast the good news, a few newspapers, including our own Wisconsin State Journal in Madison, jumped the gun to declare “Peace” on November 7, 1918, the day that Germany surrendered. Even though the official Armistice would not be signed until November 11, cities and towns started to prepare for huge celebrations as soon as they received word that Germany had surrendered. In truth they appreciated the advance notice.

BLOOMINGTON EVENING WORLD

PEACE!

EXTRA!

An Urgent Appeal
For the Boys
"Over There"

Celebrations were tempered with the sadness of the losses the war had extracted. In New Vienna, Joseph Jacobsmeyer had been exposed to poisonous gas in France and developed emphysema that hospitalized him several times during his life, and John Victor had lifelong skin problems from the gas exposure. Albert Beckmann died on October 20, 1918 of wounds received in the Battle of the Argonne Forest. He was 27 years old, and when his body was finally returned home to his parents, 2 ½ years later, his funeral was one of the largest ever held in Dyersville. Fortunately, most of the homecomings were happy occasions, and families gave big celebration parties of thanksgiving, very like the ones given to celebrate a wedding. When Bill Wente returned safely, there was a special celebration at the home of his parents.

Bill is sthe second soldier from the left, below. Like most of the soldiers who returned, Bill did not like to talk too much about the horrors he had witnessed or the difficulties of the soldiers' lives in the trenches.