



Places in Time

FALL 2018: WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL ISSUE

“No Slackers” Says Home Guard

When the federal government mobilized the National Guard to fight World War I, local volunteers stepped up to defend the home front.

Under the National Defense Act of 1916, the National Guard was called into active duty on the Mexican border to deal with revolutionary leader Pancho Villa. After basically no action, Guardsmen returned home in the spring of 1917 anticipating going back to their civilian lives. The U.S. entry into the war on April 6, 1917 ensured that would not happen. In order to bring the military to “maximum strength,” the entire National Guard was drafted into the Army by August 5. While greatly improving America’s ability to fight “Over There,” federalizing the militia left states vulnerable “Over Here.”

New Jersey’s role as an arms manufacturer for the Allied Powers made it a target of German saboteurs. Operatives twice set fire to Trenton’s Roebling Wire Works in 1915 and the next year blew up a munitions depot at Black Tom Island in Jersey City that killed four people and left a permanent shrapnel scar on the Statue of Liberty’s torch. Acts of sabotage were devastating, but never stopped America’s war enterprise. These attacks and others fueled anti-German sentiment often misdirected at neighbors.

In this heightened climate of fear, Governor Edge developed a defense plan that included home guards. Over eighty municipalities in New Jersey established units. The home guard movement spread across the country with congressional approval in the spring of 1917.

Within days of the President’s call to arms, the Lawrence Township Committee made up of Thomas Stevens, A. Crozer Reeves, and John C. Hill organized a home guard at its meeting on April 11, 1917 “for the patriotic purpose of serving the township in case of emergency.” The plan called for a company to represent each of the township’s centers of Lawrenceville, Lawrence Road and Slackwood.

November 11, 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the signing of the armistice to end World War I. The Great War in Europe came to an end on “the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month” and this day has since been commemorated as Armistice Day, Remembrance Day, or Veterans Day. This issue commemorates Lawrence Township’s role in the war at home and in Europe.

A company consisted of one sergeant, one corporal, and fourteen privates all overseen by a captain and lieutenant.

The application form included in the township minutes shows how the committee modified the state’s qualifications. They kept the requirements for citizenship, good character and physical condition, but deleted the five-year residency rule and changed the age range from between twenty-five and fifty to just men over twenty-five.

The committee approved or rejected all applications. The form asked about police, fire and military experience, motorcycle proficiency and willingness to use personal vehicles on duty. Volunteers were also required to submit affidavits of support from two character witnesses affirming that an individual was a hard-working, upstanding citizen and not a drug addict or drunkard; a doctor’s signature to verify physical fitness; and an employer’s agreement to give time off with pay. Note newspapers shamed employers who refused to support home guards. Lastly, applicants were investigated and cleared by the police.

The township clerk swore in sixty-two volunteers on May 26, 1917. Edwin Pahlow, a teacher at the Lawrenceville School, served as temporary captain until Andrew P. Kelley was appointed a month later. Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, Kelley moved to Lawrence

from Trenton where he was a machinist. His military experience as a second lieutenant in the Spanish-American War earned him command of the home guard.

The ranks closely mirrored membership in the township's volunteer fire companies also headquartered at Lawrenceville, Lawrence Road and Slackwood. Trenton potteries employed about one-third of the guardsmen. A number worked in construction trades, while farmers were also represented. Six staff members from the Lawrenceville School joined up.

Civic leaders like A. Crozer Reeves, local politician and future New Jersey senator, also did his patriotic duty. Altering the age limit allowed Charles Horner, one of Mercer County's last surviving Civil War veterans, to be a home guard.

The units met weekly at local schools or firehouses for training. The township provided ammunition for target practice, supplies for gun racks and badges. As special police officers, their main duty was patrolling local roads to keep the township safe from speeders, a result of the rise of automobiles.

At least eight home guards served overseas during the Great War: Austin P. Carter and Henry G. Piggin of Slackwood; Charles C. Conard, William Hendrickson, Edward S. Hendrickson, William F. Hughes, Edwin Pahlow and Samuel Polk of Lawrenceville. Most were young and unmarried unlike the majority of guardsmen. Carter and Conard paid the ultimate sacrifice and are discussed elsewhere in this issue.

With the signing of the Armistice and return to peace, Captain Kelley recommended the township discharge the home guard on November 30, 1918. By providing a sense of security during wartime and allowing men to show their patriotism, the home guard had served its purpose.

Goodbye Camp Donnelly, Hello France!

For some local doughboys the journey to the western front started at Camp Donnelly in Lawrence. It was formed in mid-August 1917 to temporarily house members of the New Jersey National Guard Second Regiment.

These men were among New Jersey's 9,285 Guardsmen drafted into the Army. They were recalled from outpost duty at munitions plants, railroad bridges and other strategic points across the state for combat training in Alabama.

Camp Donnelly was located between Brunswick and Princeton Avenues on land owned by the Burton Realty Co. (south of the Brunswick Circle where the NJ Lottery office is today). Trenton's mayor named it after his father and former mayor, Gen. Richard A. Donnelly. Over one thousand soldiers pitched their tents, including units from Trenton, Camden, and New Brunswick. Their training base in Alabama would also be open-air as the War Department considered Guardsmen partially trained, unlike draftees, and thus ready for army life without comfortable wooden camps.

Soldiers lived in a constant state of readiness to break camp. While awaiting orders, soldiers trained, drilled and paraded. Many took the chance to visit family while they could.

Camp Donnelly gave men a taste of America's moral army. Trenton's vice squad rounded up disorderly women hanging around camp and sent them off to the workhouse or State Home for Girls. A saloon owner convicted of selling alcohol to a soldier in uniform was sentenced to nine months in jail. The Trenton Evening Times warned: "It's risky business fooling with Uncle Sam at any time, and especially while the war is on and he is training an army to fight for the freedom of the world against Kaiserism."

Not all locals felt military camps made good neighbors. Some complained about over-crowding on the trolley. However, residents on Indiana Ave. were forever grateful after soldiers risked their lives to save women and children from several burning houses.

The men finally departed for training at Camp McClellan in Anniston, Alabama on September 30, 1917. The Trenton Evening Times described their departure as "devoid of military discipline" but still "an imposing sight."

Family and friends marched beside troops to the Mulberry St. siding while the regimental band played “Where Do We Go From Here, Boys” and “Hail, Hail, The Gang’s All Here”. It took four hours to load and sixty-four rail cars to hold the regiment. The crowd cheered “loud and long” as the trains left. Blocks away “[w]hat had been a good sized tented village for several weeks ceased to exist.”

The Taylor Opera House, Trenton’s oldest theater, shot film-footage at camps Donnelly and Dix that tugged on the patriotic heartstrings of local audiences at the sight of their young men on screen. The newspaper ads indicate that Taylor’s camera crew amazingly captured soldiers fighting the fire on Indiana Ave.

A year later Camp Donnelly’s soldiers (part of the 29th “Blue and Gray” Division comprised of National Guards from the mid-Atlantic region) were engaged in a much bigger fight in the trenches of the Meuse-Argonne to end the war.

African American Soldiers

Besides Buffalo Soldiers, few African Americans had military experience prior to World War I. About 370,000 black troops served in segregated units during the Great War, including approximately 4,800 from New Jersey and a dozen men from Lawrence Township.

The vast majority of black troops, including men from Lawrence, were assigned to non-combat roles because of racial discrimination. They dug trenches, graves, and latrines. They built barracks, roads, and bridges. They washed laundry, cooked food, and cared for the army’s horses and mules. Many worked in French ports loading and unloading supplies.

Several men from Lawrence were in black pioneer infantry units. In Europe, black pioneer infantrymen performed dangerous work for the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). Pioneer infantry operated directly behind the front lines, building roads, salvaging battlefields, and burying the dead. Unlike other support troops who labored behind the lines, black pioneer infantrymen were in the line of fire.

Percy Bosley, Caperton Holmes, Sheldon Jordan, Isaiah Winborne, Joseph T. Holmes and Daniel McCrea served in different companies of the 807th Pioneer Infantry. They were inducted into the military on June 20, 1918 and sent to Camp Dix for training before shipping overseas in September to join the Meuse Argonne offensive. The regiment had a high casualty rate, but all of them made it home.

Wilbur Jordan was drafted in September 1917 and served with the 350th Field Artillery of the 92nd Division. He counted among the ten percent of African American soldiers given the chance to fight. The military created two black combat divisions: the 92nd from draftees and the 93rd from National Guard units. Jordan was with the first black draftees to report for training at Camp Dix. Jordan crossed the Atlantic in the summer of 1918 along with most of the AEF. Both black combat divisions entered the great battle of the Meuse Argonne, where they faced the additional challenge of proving themselves. The 93rd fought with distinction under French command, while the 92nd was unjustly dishonored for a long time.

When Wilbur Jordan returned home with combat troops in February 1919, black service units stayed behind until summer to rebury the dead, salvage equipment from the battlefields, clear barbed wire, fill in trenches, and remove unexploded shells.

Family ties as well as military brotherhood united several black troops from Lawrence. Siblings from Lewisville Road included Wilbur and Sheldon Jordan, and twins Clarence and Percy Bosley. Fred LeCompt registered for the draft in Philadelphia where he lived at the time of the first call. A month later, in July 1917, he married the Bosley twins’ sister Frances. Sheldon Jordan married another of their sisters after the war. In 1989, Lavinia (Bosley) Melton, remembered attending a big parade on Broad St. in Trenton to see off the twins where her aunt marched with the soldiers boldly waving an American flag rather than watching on the sidelines. The family also bid farewell to Fred in Philadelphia when he was called up a year after his marriage. Lavinia described how her big sister fainted as her husband boarded the train. Years later she could still picture Frances’ fancy hat falling off and rolling down the train track.

“From Tanks to Tractors”: A Soldier Rehab in Lawrence

The Great War tore apart men’s bodies and left them

“shell-shocked.” The federal government recognized its obligation to help disabled soldiers return to civilian life. The Lawrenceville Agricultural School and Convalescent Hospital was an “interesting experiment in rehabilitation” intended to fulfill that promise.

Dr. James E. Russell, dean of Columbia’s Teachers College, was responsible for establishing the farm school hospital in Lawrence. When looking to develop an educational plan for veterans, the federal government naturally turned to Russell, one of the nation’s leading experts.

The hospital was located on Lewisville Road at what was often called the “Hildebrecht farm.” The Hildebrecht family, proprietors of a popular Trenton restaurant, sold the farm in 1903. It passed through a number of owners, including Dr. Russell who purchased it in 1916 to pursue his interest in cattle breeding. Ultimately, Dunlevy Milbank, a New York capitalist and Russell’s associate, donated the site for government use in 1918.

America’s farms. The conflict “had been a war of machinery.” To farm in the modern age required gas-powered equipment and a scientific approach.



Federal Board for Vocational Education, 1919 (Internet Archive)

Soldiers studied subjects from book-keeping to tractor repair. According to an article in *Over Here*, a newspaper produced by staff and patients at General Hospital #3 in Colonia, instruction at Lawrenceville was “given in short unit courses to individuals or small groups with the emphasis on doing things rather than telling about them.”

The experiment lasted about six months. Even in the Garden State, not enough doughboys were interested in farming. The total enrollment was less than 200. Despite what the Federal Board suggested, tractors did not provide the same “thrill of pleasure” as tanks or planes. The army handed management over to the Federal Board on April 1, 1919, which ran the school for enlisted and discharged soldiers until on August 5. The sixty-five remaining staff and men were transferred to other institutions such as the army hospital at Colonia or Rutgers to study agriculture.

Today, the Bristol-Myers Squibb campus on Princeton Pike occupies the place where the Lawrenceville Agricultural School and Convalescent Hospital once stood.



Postcard of Red Cros Hospital, circa 1918-1919
Courtesy of Gary Hullfish

The site included three barracks, an office building, green house, farm buildings, and a Red Cross House for activities and entertainment. The facility had space for 150 patients plus staff. Edgar Higbie directed the agricultural school and Lt. Frank McClellan was the physician in charge of the hospital. At Higbie’s request, the Township supplied fresh stone for Lewisville Road in the summer of 1918. Camp Dix soldiers completed construction in December 1918 and the first patients arrived in the New Year.

A Federal Board for Vocational Education pamphlet encouraged soldiers to put their wartime mechanical experience with tanks, airplanes, and trucks to use on

The Ultimate Sacrifice

by Paul Larson

Lawrence Township lost four sons in the Great War – Austin P. Carter, Richard Bloor, Charles Crozer Conard, and Jasper Hughes Allen, Jr.

AUSTIN P. CARTER

Austin was born August 23, 1895 at Chesterfield, NJ to John and Ida Carter. He was the son of the bridge tender at Bakers Basin and lived in the white house by the bridge.

He was active in the Bakersville community and participated in numerous local activities, including Christmas programs, fundraisers and the Bakersville Sunday School (1). In addition to being a member of the Bakersville Sunday School, he was a member of the American Mechanics and the P. O. S. of A. He was associated with the A. Thompson Milling Company of Trenton prior to his enlistment.

Austin was sworn in on May 26, 1917 into the Home Guard in Lawrence Township and served as a private in the Slackwood Company. Austin was the first local boy from this vicinity to join the U.S. Army being inducted at Trenton on April 4, 1918. At the time of his enlistment, Austin was described as short, medium build, brown hair and blue eyes.

His mother, Mrs. Ida Carter, wrote in her letter to the NJ War History Bureau:

“Austin enlisted in the army and was called into service on April 4, 1918. He was sent to Camp Dix and placed in the Headquarters Company of the 309th Infantry, 78th Division as Private.” After almost six weeks of training as a member of the 12 Co. 3 Tng Bn 153 Dep Brig, he was assigned to the Hq Co., 309th Inf. and his unit was sent overseas on the U.S.S. Morvada embarking from Brooklyn, New York on May 20, 1918.

As a member of Headquarters Company, 309th Regiment, Austin served as a messenger. He was well-liked by his fellow soldiers referring to him as “a kid” and “was such a good boy.” They looked out for him and got him extra rations and chocolate when possible. “He [Austin] was always glad to take along somebody’s canteen and fill it for him at the water cart, where ever that might be.”

The 309th was part of the AEF offensive to reduce the St. Mihiel salient (the bulge in the front line which disrupted French communications and rail traffic). St. Mihiel was



salient (the bulge in the front line which disrupted French communications and rail traffic). St. Mihiel was the first major battle by American troops in the war with 550,000 involved in the successful offensive and aided by 110,000 French troops under the command of General John J. Pershing, Supreme Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces.

On September 17, 1918, the Germans launched a barrage at the location of Carter’s headquarters unit. Corporal William L. Thompson, wrote in a letter home “It was still dark when “Jerry” threw up such a Barrage that Sergeant Andrews called us back from the guns. We started and I smelled gas. Out went our masks, and in the dark I rounded up my men, and gave the command “follow me”, when a shell burst so close that the shock nearly made me fall. We jumped to our shelter and another shell hit a building a couple of hundred yards in rear of us and put it in flames. Cries of help were heard.

1 The church was first located at the corner of Princeton Pike and Meadow Road (now Princessville Cemetery) and then moved to the corner of Mill Road (now Franklin Corner Road) and Brunswick Turnpike (now US-1). The church site is now the jughandle by the Howard Johnson’s.

Photo: courtesy New Jersey State Archives

Oh: that was a terrible thing ... My bunkmate, Austin Carter, was laying outside the building as a runner and was killed.”

Thompson wrote in a separate letter “He [Austin] was killed by the explosion of the shell that burst a building into flames, outside which he lay asleep, as runner for an officer. I don’t think he suffered. He may never have waked up. I couldn’t see that he was wounded in the face or arms or leg, or anywhere for that matter, so the shock alone may have made his body unfit to live in, and his spirit left it, and left his face relieved and calm, almost with a smile.”

Carter was buried at St. Mihiel American Cemetery in Thiarcourt-Regniéville, France. His name is also on the family gravestone located in Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton, NJ.

Private Austin P. Carter has been memorialized locally on the Mercer County Freeholders Monument (1920), the Trenton War Memorial (1930), the Lawrence Township Memorial Plaque (1967), the Lawrence Township Roll of Honor – World War I, and the Lawrence Township Veterans Memorial (1995).

In early November 1918, the Bakersville Sunday School held a Rally Day along with a patriotic celebration and recognition service for the boys of the church who were in the national army. During the recognition service, a special tribute was paid to the memory of Austin P. Carter, one of the boys from the school, who gave his life for this country.

Austin was also memorialized by the Mercer County Freeholders when they realigned the road to Hopewell. On May 27, 1919, they renamed the local road many of us travel today – Carter Road.

2 The cemetery is administered and maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), a U.S. governmental agency, as they do for 25 other military cemeteries and 55 federal memorials, monuments and markers around the world, including 3 memorials in the U.S.

Charles C. (Crozer) Conard

Military records and monuments usually list him as Charles C. Conard, but his family and friends referred to him as Crozer.

Crozer was born December 26, 1891 to Charles and Teresa (Freeman) Conard. Charles Conard, of Lawrenceville, was a member of the legal and real estate firm of Long &

Conard, with offices in the American Mechanics Building in Trenton. Before entering the service, Crozer made his home with Mr. and Mrs. A. Crozer Reeves, his uncle and aunt, and was employed in the operation of the Reeves farm on the Lawrenceville Road.

“One of the show places of Mercer County was the [Larchmont] farm and residence of A. Crozer Reeves, situated on the Lawrenceville-Princeton Road, just beyond Lawrenceville. ... Mr. Reeves specializes in raising Berkshire hogs, of which he has the most valuable herd in this section of the country. ... All the employees on the farm were students at Rutgers College, and the place is superintended by Crozer Conard, a nephew of Mr. Reeves, who is a student at the college.”



Crozer joined the Home Guard in Lawrence Township on May 26, 1917 and served as a private in the Lawrenceville Company. Crozer then enlisted in the New Jersey National Guard (NJNG) on June 11, 1917. His federal draft registration card is dated June 3, 1917. He was discharged from the NJNG “by reason of being drafted August 5, 1917 into Federal Service.” At the time of his enlistment, Crozer had blue eyes, brown hair, fair complexion, medium build, and was five feet six inches in height.

“Croser [sic] Conard, of Camp Donnelly, Trenton, was a visitor in town [Harlingen] Monday.”

Photo courtesy of New Jersey State Archives

This was among the first evidence of local boys being at Camp Donnelly (3) . He was then sent to Camp McClellan, AL for training.

His unit was sent overseas on the U.S.S. Princess Matoika embarking from Norfolk, VA on June 15, 1918. The Princess Matoika was part of the New York Division of the Transport Force. As a member of the Sanitary Detachment, 113th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division, Crozer served as a litter-bearer.

His brother Winfred was also in the service and he wrote home that he was in a French town near his brother Crozer adding:

“He gave me a hair cut and a shampoo – he is getting to be some barber.

It is about half as dangerous over here as it is to ride in a Trenton trolley car. I have enjoyed every minute I have been here.

Before I came over here I thought an air raid must be something terrible, but now I can go to sleep while one is on.”

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was part of the final Allied offensive of the Great War being one of the attacks that brought an end to the War and was fought from September 26 to November 11, 2018, when the Armistice was signed. The Meuse-Argonne offensive was the largest operations of the AEF with over a million American soldiers participating. It was also the deadliest campaign in American history, resulting in over 26,000 soldiers being killed in action (KIA).

Conard was killed in action on October 23, 1918 while carrying the wounded from the field under heavy fire. He was 26 years old at the time of his death. In a letter to Crozer’s uncle, Major Donald Miner of the 113th Infantry wrote “your nephew was lost by acting as a litter-bearer in a severe action and that his conduct in carrying wounded from the field under heavy fire was such as to cause the continued commendation of his officers. In fact, the boy and his loss were felt keenly, even at a time when our losses were considerable.

3 Camp Donnelly was National Guard staging camp in south Lawrence Township in an area thought to be bordered by Brunswick Ave., Mulberry Ave., Spruce St. and Princeton Ave. See separate article on Camp Donnelly.

Charles is buried east of the Brabant Road and southeast of the Molleville Farm, which is about 10 miles north of Verdun, east of the Meuse River. His grave is marked and is being cared for by the Grave Registration Bureau.”

Crozer was subsequently reburied at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France, the largest cemetery administered and maintained by the ABMC. His step-mother, Mrs. Clara H. Conard, was listed in the 1929 Gold Star Mothers list from New Jersey and desired to pilgrimage to Crozer’s grave at Meuse-Argonne Cemetery later than 1930.

Back from the front, Dr. R.S. Siebert spoke in high terms of Conard, saying that he was the most cheerful lad he had ever come in contact with. Conard served under Dr. Siebert most of the time in France. “The poor fellow lost his life aiding others. He was doing first aid work at the time he was shot down by artillery and our contingent had to retire without our learning any of the details of his death.” Dr. Siebert had also signed Crozer’s enlistment record in 1917 as Major, N.G. 2d N. J. Inf., Commanding Sanitary Detach.

Private Charles Crozer Conard has been memorialized locally on the Mercer County Freeholders Monument (1920), the Trenton War Memorial (1930), the Lawrence Township Memorial Plaque (1967), the Lawrence Township Roll of Honor – World War I, and the Lawrence Township Veterans Memorial (1995).

Crozer was a member of the Religious Society of Friends. From the Friends’ Intelligencer (Eleventh Month 20, 1918): “Charles Crozier [sic] Conard is in the Sanitary Corps in France. William Winfred Conard is in the Artillery along the Meuse River. The two above are sons of Charles Conard, grandsons of the late Maria Conard, of Trenton, N. J.”

His great-nephew, Sam Conard of Harlingen, informed me in 2017 that his great-uncle was a ‘conscientious objector.’ Although no mention of ‘conscientious objector’ or similar terminology was located in his military records, Crozer’s serving in the Sanitary Detachment as a non-combatant litter-bearer is consistent with his Friends’ beliefs. In one of Crozer’s last letters home he expressed himself as follows:

“I am very happy in the knowledge that I am trying to save life instead of taking it.”

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Return Service Requested



Next Issue and Upcoming Events

Our next issue will arrive in February and include the second part of Paul Larson's article, profiling Richard Bloor and Jasper Hughes Allen, Jr., as well as information about our Annual Meeting and Spring programs. The annual meeting will be held on February 24, 2019 at Lawrence High School. Our annual Hogmanay Bonfire will be held on December 31 at 6:00 pm at Brearley House. Visit our website at www.thelhs.org for more information.

Contributors

Special thanks to the following Rider University students in Professor Brooke Hunter's New Jersey History course (Spring 2018) for contributing research: Rafael Angeles, Paige Brown, Kevin Innocenzi, Dana Killey, Michael Newton, Stephen Nourijanian, and Matthew Vigna.

Society members Dr. Brooke Hunter, Paul Larson, Laura Nawrocik, and Jacqi Haun contributed to this issue.

To Learn More

- Lawrence Municipal Building History Exhibit: Check out the original artifacts on display in a new exhibit case in the hallway next to the wall of honor.
- National Guard Militia Museum-Lawrenceville Annex: Open Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays 9:00am-3:00pm.
- LHS website: Go to thelhs.org for more WWI documents and images from the Lawrence Township Historical Collection.