



John Hatheway



Marguerite Sullivan



Fred Walton



Charles Mulligan

## Connecticut's Irish in World War I

This 16-page issue of our newsletter commemorates the 100th anniversary of the armistice which ended World War I just 100 years ago. The United States was in the war for less than two years, but the mobilization of the nation was so huge that almost every family was involved in some way. The different stories of the four Connecticut Irish-Americans pictured here are typical. The rest of this issue tells similar stories of several dozen of the state's thousands of Irish men and women who were involved.

John Hatheway, 28, of Ellington was the son of Dwight Hatheway, a farmer, and his Irish wife Hannah Donnally. John was mustered into the 328th U.S. Infantry in October 1917. He was killed in action in the Argonne Forest on Oct. 18, 1918. In a letter to his parents, his commander wrote: "With a reckless disregard for his own safety, he took charge of a section when its sergeant was killed and at the risk of his own life organized his group and consolidated its position."

Marguerite Sullivan, 27, the daughter of William and Mary Gilligan Sullivan, was a night nurse supervisor at Lawrence Hospital in

New London. She was born in Pittston, Pennsylvania, in 1892. In April 1917, the month the United States entered the war, she volunteered in the Reserve Army Nurse corps. She cared for sick and wounded service men and women as a Red Cross nurse for 10 months at the U.S. General Hospital in New York City. After the war, she returned to New London and four more decades of nursing.

Fred Walton, 23, was a son of Julius E. and Nora O'Connell Walton of Chatham. Fred was a railroad fireman on the New York, New Haven & Hartford. He enlisted in December 1917 and was in combat at St Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. In June 1919, he was transferred to the 3rd Army Composite Regiment which marched in victory parades in Paris, London and New York.

Charles Mulligan, 22, lived in Hamden and was the son of James and Maire Mulligan of New Haven. He was an employee of the New Haven Gas Light Co. He enlisted in the Navy in April 1917, and was a gunner's mate on the *USS Aeolus* making six voyages in convoys to

*(Please turn to page 2)*

## Hartford Red Cross nurse served amid bombardments

Long before the United States went to war, a Hartford nurse was in the thick of the fighting in France. Born in 1884, Agnes M. Ward was the daughter of Michael T. and Mary Ward, both natives of Ireland. Michael rose to the rank of captain of Hook and Ladder Co. 1 in the Hartford Fire Department.

Agnes graduated from the St. Francis Hospital Training School for nurses in Hartford and took postgraduate courses in nursing at St. Luke's Hospital in New York City.

In April 1915, she was with a group of about 30 nurses and doctors who sailed for France. Upon arrival, she was assigned to a field hospital in De Panne, Belgium.

Located on the coast of the North Sea near the French border, De Panne was ravaged during the war. A nearby cemetery contains the remains of almost 4,000 soldiers killed in that area.

In an article on Nov. 14, 1915, about American Red Cross wartime activities, the *Hartford Courant* commented: "Ward has had more than her share of thrilling experiences, as she has been under fire a number of times and has long since grown so used to the sound of heavy guns in action that they do not disturb her."

During the war, Germany bombarded nearby Dunkirk with its "Lange Max," the largest artillery weapon in the world at that time. "When the Germans bombarded Dunkirk with 42-centimeter shells recently at a range of 20 miles," reported the *Courant*,



*Agnes M. Ward*

"Miss Ward and others in her hospital could hear the shells shrieking high overhead with half of their 20-mile trip completed. The town of De Panne has been bombarded several times and many of the shells have found their way to points close to the hospital in which the American nurses are serving.

"In one of the last bombardments a shell fell within 150 feet of the hospital and tore a hole large enough to serve as the foundation of an ordinary dwelling house. The rush of air which followed the explosion broke every window in the hospital. The

patients had to be moved to a place of safety until the bombardment was ended.

"The hospital is often busy far beyond its capacity and after a heavy engagement, the doctors and nurses are able to do little except give first aid treatment. It is so near the fighting lines that the soldiers are often brought there with their wounds still gaping."

In May of 1918, the *Courant* commented on the fact that more than three years after arriving in the war zone, Ward remained on duty. "The group of nurses and doctors had contracted to serve for an interval of six months," the *Courant* explained. The nurses "gradually dropped away until Miss Ward alone remained."

At the end of one year, Ward traveled across France. Later she joined the American Ambulance Corps in which she served for the rest of the war. When the war ended she was stationed at Neuilly near Paris.

In the summer of 1916, she went on leave with two other nurses and traveled to Paris and Rome, where they had an audience with Pope Benedict XV.

On Feb. 26, 1919, the *Hartford Courant* reported, "Capt. M.T. Ward of No. 261 Park Street announces the marriage of his daughter, Miss Agnes M. Ward, to Lt. Roger Petler of the Lafayette Escadrille in Paris on Feb. 13. Madame Petler sailed for France on April 17, 1916."

Sources: *Hartford Courant*, Nov. 14, 1915, May 10, 1918, Feb. 26, 1919; [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): 1900 U.S. Census, Hartford; 1920 U.S. Census, Hartford.

## State library has large collection of World War I records

*(Continued from page 1)*

France. He was at sea 363 days. He died of spinal meningitis in the Naval Hospital at Norfolk, Virginia on Aug. 16, 1918.

Records of Connecticut soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses in World War I are numerous and available in many town and city libraries and museums. The Connecticut State Library has a large collection. As the war began, the state compiled an index of nurses and of men who might be available to serve. In addition, at the end of the

war, an index was created of all state residents who served, including their dates of induction, their units and dates of discharge. The state library has all three volumes of the index. They can be viewed also on [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), free of charge.

After the war, the state library put together a collection of those who served. The library encouraged all veterans, men and women alike, to participate by filling out a brief summary of their service and including photographs. Many thousands partici-

pated. The library has the original collection, but it can be found also on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com). On ancestry, the names are sorted alphabetically by towns. Over the past several years, the library has sponsored a centennial project titled, *Remembering World War One*. The centerpiece of the project is the compilation of similar records and pictures provided by descendants, relatives and acquaintances of World War I participants.

For information: [www.ctstatelibrary.org](http://www.ctstatelibrary.org)

## Sgt. Stubby and Cpl. Conroy went off to war

A homeless dog who hung around the Yale football stadium in New Haven in the summer of 1917 became a national hero with the help of his comrade, an Irish-American recruit from New Britain.

The doughboy was James Robert Conroy, one of thousands of recruits who spent that summer in basic training in a city of tents scattered in the fields around the Yale Bowl on the western edge of New Haven.

Into that bustling scene of drilling, marching, target practice and inspections, there wandered a Boston bull terrier puppy, apparently without a master, but with plenty of curiosity and a healthy appetite. For a while, he came and went, but gradually settled in encouraged by the abundance of food scraps and the many soldiers who stopped to pet him and scratch his ears. The soldiers noticed that wanderer's tail had been almost entirely cut off, and someone began calling him "Stubby."

Stubby was described as "not quite two feet tall ... and two feet long from snout to tail ... sandy brown color, streaked with waves of darker fur ... and patches of white on his chest, face and paws."

Pvt. Conroy, the soldier who paid the most attention to Stubby was one of six children of James and Alice McAvay Conroy of New Britain. Known as Bob, Conroy was a clerk for a New Britain company. He had spent two years in the Connecticut National Guard, then enlisted again just three days after the United States declared war on Germany on April 4, 1917.

The story might have ended then and there except that the soldier and the terrier bonded so well that Conroy smuggled Stubby aboard the train which carried the 102nd Infantry from New Haven to Newport News, Virginia. There in cahoots with a crewman from the troopship *S.S. Minnesota*,

Stubby was taken aboard a day or two before departure and hidden in the ship's coal bin. When the ship reached France, Conroy tucked Stubby in his overcoat and carried him successfully down the gang plank with some of his buddies huddled around him.

Soon after reaching Europe, according to author Ann Bausum who wrote a biography of Stubby, the powers that be admitted what they probably already knew was going on and decided to put an end to it. But, she wrote, "before Conroy or his furry friend could be reprimanded or punished, Stubby, by then a well-trained observer of military protocol, had sat back on his haunches, reared up from the ground, raised his right paw and given the critical officer a doggy salute. That did it. Stubby was pronounced an official mascot for his unit, and he and Conroy were allowed to proceed without rebuke."

The fact that the outfit's higher ups were impressed by Conroy's talents and assigned him to the headquarters company may have been a factor in protecting the dog. During the

winter of 1917-18, he was a dispatch rider mounted on a horse with Stubby trotting alongside as they delivered messages from headquarters to regimental outposts.

One newspaperman wrote without much exaggeration, "Stubby's history overseas is the story of almost any average doughboy." The once homeless New Haven bulldog was so generally accepted that like the troops themselves he wore a dog tag fashioned by his comrades, with the inscription "Stubby, 102nd Inf., 26 Div." and Conroy's name and serial number — 63254 — just in case.

Conroy had a special gasmask made for Stubby, and saw to it that the dog had enough training with it so he would not try to shed it. It was claimed that with his keen sense of smell Stubby would recognize a gas attack before the soldiers and alert

them with his barking.

Conroy wrote that during combat, "Stubby was always on his own, never tied up. He seemed to know that no one could bother with him during action and that he had to stay quietly under cover."

On April 20, 1918, at Seicheprey, Stubby was wounded in his breast and leg by shrapnel. An ambulance took him to a field hospital and he recovered.

In the Meuse-Argonne campaign in late September, when the enemy was reeling from allied attacks, Stubby captured a German soldier. Versions of the story have the dog chasing his victim toward the American line where he surrendered or running him down and clamping his jaws on the seat of his pants. Whatever the case, the incident seems to have won the New Haven dog the honorary title of Sgt. Stubby which stayed with him permanently.

Stubby's fame grew by leaps and bounds after the war. Along with Conroy and the rest of the 102nd Infantry, he sailed home. Arriving in Boston in April 1919, Sgt. Stubby led the regiment in the victory parade of the Yankee Division. During the spring and summer, Conroy and Stubby starred in victory celebrations throughout Connecticut. In November that year, they attended the first convention of the newly formed American Legion.

In 1920, Conroy moved to Washington, D.C., to attend law school at Catholic University. Stubby went along and became mascot of the university grid team. A year later, Stubby and Conroy attended a party for wounded veterans at the White House where they were received by President Warren Harding. In July 1921, Gen. Pershing presented Stubby a medal for his work as a rescue dog in the war.

Stubby died on March 16, 1926, his obituaries appearing in newspapers across the United States. The Smithsonian Institution mounted his remains in a plaster cast and he is on display there now. Conroy died in 1987.

Sources: Ann Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby*, 2014; Online: Connecticut Military Department, *The Story of Stubby*; Hartford Courant, April 8, 13, 1919, May 23, 2018.



Cpl. Conroy and Sgt. Stubby

## With roots in Canada, Lafferty got into the fight early

Fred T. Lafferty was one of the first Connecticut Irishmen to serve in World War I. He enlisted in the Canadian armed forces almost a year before the United States entered the conflict. Lafferty was born in 1893 in Belleville, Ontario, an industrial town near the eastern end of Lake Ontario. His parents, Edwin and Marian Lafferty, were children of Irish emigrants. In 1897, the Laffertys emigrated to New York State, then moved again to East Hartford where Edwin found work on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad.



*Fred T. Lafferty is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in East Hartford.*

In his teens, Fred became a trainman on the same line, but in July 1916, he went back to the country of his birth to enlist in Canada's Overseas Expeditionary Force. He served for the better part of three years. He was assigned to the First Battalion of Royal Canadian Field Engineers, an outfit that constructed bridges and railways, and dug trenches and tunnels for mines. Known as

In spring 1917, the sappers were transferred to the Ypres salient, a small area of Belgium where trench warfare and the use of poison gas began by the Germans. Lafferty was gassed while at Ypres and also was wounded by a piece of shrapnel. He survived to fight in the last major German campaign in spring 1918. The withdrawal of Russia from the war had freed up 50

"sappers," the battalion arrived in France just in time to fight in the first major British campaign of the war, the Somme Offensive. The campaign dragged on just north of the Somme River from July to November 1916 with the allies suffering an appalling 650,000 casualties. In a letter to his family on New Year's Day 1917, Lafferty wrote: "Nobody realizes what war is until they are in it. It means a lot of hardship and suffering. If you only saw what we see here."

German divisions which attempted to drive the British into the North Sea. At Villers-bretonneux on the Somme, the Canadian sappers dug trenches, wrote Lafferty, "in frenzied haste and still farther north dug again ... in the last line of defense between the Germans and the Channel."

During April 24-25, the town changed hands twice. It was taken first by four German divisions in an attack that featured the first ever tank vs. tank fight. Then in a night attack, it was recaptured by allied troops. In August, the First Battalion, said Lafferty, "had its part in the offensive which ... for three solid months ... was busy fighting and marching ... and when the armistice was signed it was far up in Belgium."

On March 10, 1919, the *Hartford Courant*, reported, "With souvenirs from the battlefields of France, Fred Lafferty, the first man from East Hartford to see action overseas, arrived home after three years."

*Sources: Hartford Courant, Feb. 9, 1917, March 10 & 11 1919. ancestry.com: 1910 U.S. census, East Hartford; 1871 Canada census, Edward Lafferty; Canada WWI Attestation Papers, Fred Thomas Lafferty; Connecticut Military Questionnaires, 1919-1920, Alfred Thomas Lafferty. Jim Bancroft photograph on Find-A-Grave; Martin Gilbert.*

## Picketing White House in wartime: patriotic or treason?

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany so that the world "be made safe for democracy." Some Americans — among them a 20-year-old Hartford Irish-American activist named Catherine Mary Flanagan — thought the president's request hypocritical because American women could not vote. That summer Flanagan went to Washington and picketed at the White House asking Wilson to take care of problems on the homefront before trying to save the world.

The picketing, which began in January 1917, was at first ignored by the administration. By the time Flanagan arrived, the government had lost patience with the pesky women. Flanagan described the situation: "On Aug. 14, we were attacked by sailors in uniform and by government clerks who tore our banners from us. The



*A sailor and a policeman accost Catherine Flanagan at the White House.*

police did nothing in the way of intervention." The harassment continued and on Aug. 17, Flanagan was among a group of suffragists arrested, charged with obstructing traffic and unlawful assembly, and sentenced to 30 days in jail.

Public opinion, even within the suffrage movement itself, was sharply split. The National Woman's Suffrage Association and its Connecticut affiliate opposed the picketing at a time when the nation was at war.

Some Connecticut suffragists stood by Flanagan and her fellow protestors. Mrs. Thomas Hepburn, president of the state association, said, "I admire Miss Flanagan very much for being willing to go to jail for her convictions. It is more than most people could even conceive of doing for an ideal ..."

*Sources: Bridgeport Herald, Sept. 23, 1917; Hartford Courant, Aug. 18-25, Sept. 13-16, 1917.*

## Ansonia native among nation's first female sailors

World War I opened the door for women to serve in the United States military and Irish women in Connecticut stepped right up to help end the Navy's men-only rule.

The abrupt about-face in policy was due in part to Germany's decision in January 1917 to conduct unrestricted submarine warfare in an effort to bring England to its knees. By March, German submarines were sinking hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping not only of its enemies, but also of neutral nations including the United States.

The situation became so dangerous that President Woodrow Wilson authorized immediate construction of 60 submarine chasers and an increase of Navy manpower to a wartime level of 87,000. The quick enlistment of 6,500 male sailors that followed was encouraging, but left the Navy undermanned.

In mid-March, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels instructed naval commandants at shore stations and all recruiting officers "to be prepared to enlist women in the actual naval service ..." Daniels said the judge advocate general had ruled that women could be enlisted under the laws regulating recruiting.

"While it is not intended to place women aboard ships," he said, "they may be utilized for shore duty in connection with coast defense work."

A Navy rank of yeoman would be awarded to women who qualified as stenographers, clerks and typists, as well as those with skills in radio telegraphy and other communication work. "By filling the posts on shore with women," Daniels said, "the department expects in time of emergency to relieve the men for fleet service and sea duty."

Nationwide, the first enlistee was a young Irish woman, Loretta Walsh. She enlisted at the Navy recruiting station in Philadelphia, fittingly on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.

In Connecticut, it immediately became obvious that women were not only interested, but anxious to do their part in the war effort.

A few days after the enlistment in Philadelphia, the *Hartford Courant* reported that an Irish woman had enlisted in Connecticut: "Miss Marion R. Phelan, a writer on a Bridgeport newspaper ... has yielded to the lure of the salt sea. She enrolled in the Park City yesterday in the United States naval reserve



***Ellen V. Houlihan was among many Connecticut women who answered the call when the U.S. Navy opened its ranks to women during World War I. Born in Ansonia in 1899, one of seven children of Maurice and Nora Hogan Houlihan, she enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve on March 28, 1918, and rose to the rank of chief yeoman in the anti-submarine squadron at New London. Discharged in July 1919, she became chief clerk and stenographer at the U.S. Submarine Base.***

coast defense department. She received a temporary assignment in the intelligence division."

The newspaper added that Katherine T. McCartin, a bank clerk in New Britain had sent a letter to the Naval Service Recruiting Station in Hartford. "I learn that a law has been passed where women are eligible to enter the naval service as stenographers, typists, etc.," she wrote. "Will you kindly send me some information regarding same, such as if I have to enlist for a certain time, salary, etc.?"

As it turned out, the enthusiasm of young women to be sailors was a few steps ahead of the Navy's willingness to allow that. The *Courant* reported from Bridgeport on March

25: "The enlistment of Miss Marion R. Phelan, the first woman in Connecticut to enroll in the Naval Reserve, and of six other women in this city who followed her ... have been rejected by the Navy Department, which has notified the enlistment office here that no women will be received into the naval reserve in any capacity. The applications of several other women received after the new order came were rejected by the local recruiting force."

The on-again, off-again handling of the issue may have been the result of a slow moving bureaucracy in Washington. Or, it may have been that some high-ranking officers in the chain of command fought a last-minute battle to save the longstanding tradition of an exclusively male Navy.

Whatever the case, the new policy caught on and by mid-summer the staff of the Naval Coast Defense Reserve in New London consisted of 10 young women with the rank of yeoman. To distinguish the females, the Navy gave them a rank of "Yeoman (F)."

If the Navy dragged its feet a bit, it quickly changed its mind about the value of women in uniform. By the spring of 1918, it was advertising, "40 qualified women stenographers, preferably with business experience are wanted at New London and Newport, R.I., to relieve male yeoman for active sea duty."

Later that year, the Navy base in New London was publicizing the benefits available to female yeoman. Pay was \$32 a month, and since there were no barracks yet for women, a stipend of \$60 for their room and board. In addition, they were eligible for government insurance of up to \$10,000.

"The Navy needs every available man for duty afloat," said a press release from the base, "and they are being sent across as soon as they can be relieved from shore duty over here. Every woman who finds it possible to enroll in the service should feel it her patriotic duty to respond to the call."

Sources: *Hartford Courant*, March 21-25, July 29, 1917; April, 24, May 20, July 15, Oct. 18-19, 1918. National Archives, "The Story of the Female Yeomen during the First World War," by Nathaniel Patch, Fall 2006, Vol. 38, Nr. 3, Genealogy Notes.

# Medals and monument honor Fair Haven Irish lads

Out near the Yale Bowl in New Haven stands a bronze monument of a World War I soldier in an unusual pose. Recognizable by his round tin helmet and his puttees, the doughboy is neither charging into battle nor leveling his rifle to fire at the enemy. Instead he appears to be scribbling with a pencil on a piece of paper which he rests on his thigh.

The monument depicts an actual critical moment in the military career of the soldier, Cpl. Timothy Francis Ahearn, and his comrades in the famous Yankee Division.

Ahearn was born in 1898 in the largely Irish Fair Haven neighborhood of New Haven, the son of Patrick and Bridget Ahearn, both natives of County Limerick. Patrick emigrated in 1886, Bridget in 1887. They were married in St. Francis Church in 1892. As did many New Haven Irish, Patrick worked for the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad.

After attending St. Francis School, Tim entered the McKeown Business College where he learned stenography, and then found employment as a clerk for the Marlin Firearms Co. He was a charter member of the Maples Athletic and Canoe Club which was organized in 1916. He was known as a stalwart of the Maples football team.

When the United States sent troops to the Mexican border in June 1916 to chase down Gen. Francisco Villa, Ahearn was in the ranks with his National Guard unit. After several months of searching for the elusive Villa, the guardsmen returned to Connecticut.

A year later, Ahearn and many of his Maples A.C. friends were back in uniform when the United States went to war with Germany in the spring of 1917, and they enlisted in Co. C of the 102nd Infantry Regiment. That summer thousands of Connecticut young men were mustered in and trained at a tent city in the area around the Yale Bowl.

Shipped to France by way of Montreal, the 3rd Battalion arrived at Le Havre in early October 1917. The 102nd Regiment was in combat at Chemin des Dames, Toul sector, Seicheprey, Aisne-Marne offensive, Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel offensive, Marcheville Raid and Meuse Argonne offensive..



***The statue at Derby Avenue and Ella Grasso Boulevard in New Haven depicts Cpl. Timothy Ahearn writing a message informing 102nd Regiment headquarters that he and the few soldiers left were carrying on even though all the officers and sergeants of C Company were killed.***

In early October, the Yankee Division was pulled from the front lines, reorganized and sent to the Verdun sector with orders to prevent the Germans from sending reinforcements to the northern section where the allies had mounted an offensive.

On Oct. 24, 1918, the 102nd was one of several regiments which attacked the enemy along a ridge that skirted Belleau Wood. The attack ran into determined resistance from the Germans, and their machine-gun fire took a heavy toll on the attackers. Company C of the 102nd was reduced to 40 men and of that remnant, 20 including Cpl. Ahearn, were assigned to protect the left flank of the regiment.

On Oct. 25, the company commander, Lt. Harold Carruth, was seriously wounded. The next in command, Lt. Barney Egan and Sgt. Clayton Squires, were huddled behind a low hill trying to figure out a way to silence the enemy machine guns when an artillery shell landed near them, killing Egan and wounding Squires. That left Ahearn as the only non-commissioned officer in the company.

He had both the good sense and courage to rise to the occasion. Fishing a letter from home out of his pocket, he wrote a message on the envelope and sent it off to regimental headquarters. The message read: "To commanding officer, 102nd — From: C Company commander — Have made two skeleton platoons of four squads apiece. Pvt. Keeney is made 1st Sgt. — Am ready for any duty I am called upon to perform. Am ready for replacements."

Throughout that day, Ahearn actively and aggressively commanded what was left of his troops, and the thin line held. Late in the day he went to the rescue of a wounded officer and succeeded in bringing him into a place of safety through terrific machine-gun fire."

On the evening of Oct. 28, the battalion was relieved by troops from the 104th Infantry. Then with but a few days rest, the division moved back into the frontlines where it was on Nov. 11 when hostilities ended with the armistice.

For his actions on Oct. 25, Ahearn was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government and the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest U.S. military award. The citation for the latter read: "After all the officers and sergeants had become casualties, Cpl. Ahearn took command of his company, leading it throughout the remainder of the day's action with great bravery and ability.

Ahearn was the only New Havener to fight in all of the regiment's battles. He was gassed twice and wounded once. At the time of the armistice, he was being treated at an army hospital at Revigny.

The regiment arrived in Boston in April 1919 and Ahearn was discharged on April 28 at Camp Devens, Massachusetts..

In 1920, census returns show Ahearn living with his family in New Haven and again working as an office stenographer.

Later, Ahearn's exposure to mustard gas contributed to lingering health problems. He drifted to the West where he became a migrant agricultural worker. He died in California on Jan. 29, 1925, and was brought home to New Haven for burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery not far from the monument at Ella Grasso Boulevard and Derby Avenue, which honors his memory.

#### **Sgt. John T. Dillon**

A schoolmate, fellow Maple Athletic Club member and comrade in arms played a large role in the decision to make Ahearn the subject for the monument honoring all of New Haven's World War I soldiers.

Dillon was born in 1895 in Ennis, County Clare, son of Timothy and Nora Dillon. He came to Connecticut a year later with his parents. He attended St. Francis School and was known as a skilled wrestler and football player. After graduating, he worked as a clerk at the Knights of Columbus national headquarters in New Haven before enlisting in the 102nd Infantry in 1917.

In France, Dillon kept a diary in a little three-inch by five-inch book. His daily entries chronicled Co. C progression ranging from inspections and drills on the voyage from Montreal to life in the trenches and deadly combat. One entry in late May tells of the toll of combat and the loss of good friends: "We held this line all morning under a heavy barrage in which Cederholm was killed also 3 more of our men ... also wounded Corp. Lohnoiss, Pvt. Jacque, Devio, J.F. Sullivan ... It was here I learned my two pals Jim Coleman and Joe Roach were prisoners of war ... It was said Jim was wounded and tried to get through the barrage ... It sure is lonesome without them ..."

Promoted to sergeant in July, Dillon was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery at Chateau-Thierry on July 22. His citation read: "After being wounded,

he refused to go to the rear, but volunteered to act as a runner and repeatedly carried messages through the enemy barrage. Later the same day, he voluntarily joined a platoon and fought with it in a successful attack against the enemy's lines."

In the 1930s, Dillon was chairman of the Yankee Division Association committee that proposed a monument in honor of their comrade Tim Ahearn. The monument, featuring an eight foot tall statue of Ahearn, was constructed under the auspices of the Federal Art Project program in the government's Works Progress Administration during the Depression.

#### **Sgt. Francis J. Higgins**

Ahearn and Dillon were not the only Irish doughboys in the 102nd Regiment honored for heroic actions. A Meriden native, Sgt. Francis J. Higgins was an unlikely candidate because he was a mess sergeant., Higgins was the son of Irish immigrant parents. Like many other soldiers of the 102nd Infantry, he served first in the 1916 campaign in Mexico, and in 1917 enlisted as a private in Co. L. where he became a cook.

In September 1918, he prepared meals for the company during the combat at Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel and Verdun. How he managed to get involved in the fighting itself was explained in his citation for a Distinguished Service Cross: "Mess Sergeant Francis J. Higgins, then a cook acting mess sergeant of Co. L, 102nd U.S. Infantry, during the occupation by the regiment of their position in the sector north of Verdun, always accompanied the 3rd Battalion

ration train to the front and on numerous occasions was in charge of the entire train. The distance from the kitchen to the front lines varied from six to eight kilometers and the route traversed was continually under heavy shell fire.

"Sgt. Higgins never failed to accomplish his mission on any trip to the lines. After arriving at the front line on one occasion he volunteered and acted as a stretcher bearer searching for and bringing in the wounded.



**Sgt. John T. Dillon**

In discharging his duties as the party responsible for the delivery of rations to the front line, Sgt. Higgins demonstrated decisively that he possessed the qualities of courage, bravery and fidelity to a marked degree." Higgins was gassed twice during his time in France and spent two months in 1917 in the base hospital. He returned to the United States and was discharged in April 1919. In the Connecticut veteran's questionnaire he filled out, he wrote of his tour of duty: "I voluntarily enlisted ... and am very proud of having the distinction of being of service to the United States."

#### **John Jr. and John Sr. Fitzpatrick**

One of the saddest stories of the 102nd Regiment was that of a father and son, Cpl. John Dennis Fitzpatrick Sr. and Pvt. John Dennis Fitzpatrick Jr.

John Sr. was born in New Britain in 1872. In 1894 he was married in New Haven to Mary J. Reilly. Their son John Jr. was born in 1895 followed by two daughters, Mary in 1896 and Agnes in 1897.

In 1916 both father, a machinist at F.B. Schuster Company, and son, a machine hand at Winchester Repeating Arms, served with the Connecticut National Guard in the Mexican campaign.

Father and son enlisted again in September 1917 in Co. D of the 102nd Regiment. They fought shoulder-to-shoulder through all of the first engagements of the regiment until July 18. "My boy was placed in my company," said John Sr., "and was my partner. We were making a charge at Chateau-Thierry. My boy was with me in the dash. Then he got struck in the head with a machine gun bullet and a grenade."

"It was a tough blow to me but I had to put up with it. I buried Jack, my boy in a little French town called Mandran. Near him are the other brave boys of our outfit."

*Sources: "The Timothy Ahearn Memorial in New Haven, Connecticut," posted online by Theo Mayer in 100 Cities / 100 Memorials; Daniel W. Strickland; "Connecticut Fights: The Story of the 102nd Infantry," 1930; New Haven Register, March 18, 1919; May 3, 1936; July 10, 1988; Mary Clare Ahearn, "Col Timothy Francis Ahearn, First Generation Irishman"; Cpl. John T. Dillon, diary, picture and papers, courtesy of his son. John T. Dillon; Connecticut Military Questionnaires, 1919-1920, Meriden Francis Higgins; New Haven, John Fitzpatrick Sr. and Jr., online at ancestry.com; Laura A. Macaluso, "New Haven in World War I," 2017.*

## Daring young men in their flying machines

**A**erial warfare is one of the many military innovations that came of age in World War I. Some scoffed at the very idea. One British general commented, "Aviation is a useless and expensive fad advocated by a few individuals whose ideas are unworthy of attention." Such shortsighted skepticism was quickly dispelled as planes and the aviators who flew them proved invaluable not only in locating the enemy and assessing his strengths and weaknesses, but in bombarding him with explosives dropped from high in the sky and with machine gun bursts fired during tree-top dives.

### Murray Leo Howard

Murray Leo Howard was one Connecticut Irishman who fit the description of a daring young man waging war in a flying machine.

Born in New Haven on Oct. 10, 1891, Howard was the son of John Michael Howard and Agnes McCabe, who herself was the daughter of Thomas McCabe, a native of Ireland, and his wife Agnes. The 1900 census returns show Murray Howard, age 9, and a brother, John Howard, 6, living with Charles and Susan Caffrey in the town of Orange. Charles, age 60, was a native of England and a railroad worker; Susan, age 55, was of Irish birth.

Murray Howard was an energetic young man. At the age of only 15 years, he was making a living in the high tech industry of the early 1900s as a telephone operator for the Western Union company. He was involved, too, with the Knights of Columbus, in New Haven, the city where that fraternal organization was founded in the 1880s.

Howard was filled with wanderlust and in 1909, he put his experience as a telephone operator to good use when he enlisted in the U.S. Army's Signal Corp. His enlistment took him halfway around the world. In 1909, he was a military telegrapher stationed in Manila, the capital of the Philippine Islands, which were occupied by the United States after the Spanish-American War. A year later, he was at Fort McDowell on Angel Island, Calif., in San Francisco Bay.

By 1912, Howard had been discharged from the army, but instead of returning to New Haven, found work in Baker City in northeastern Oregon, as a telegraph opera-

tor for the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Co. which operated a rail network of 1,143 miles throughout the northwest.

In 1912, Howard once again followed his wanderlust, heading north into Canada, to the city of Cranbrook, British Columbia, 50 miles above the U.S. border. Cranbrook was a boom town after the Canadian Pacific Railroad in 1898 made it a stop on its line through the Canadian Rockies. Howard became a telegrapher for the railroad.



*Lt. Murray L. Howard*

Apparently, Howard also met his wife to be — Margaret A. Drummond — in Cranbrook. They were married there on March 16, 1916. However, the Canadian census that year lists them as living in Blairmore, a town in southwestern Alberta. The census lists Howard as 25 years of age and Margaret as 19. Both are listed as of Irish descent and Catholics.

Also that same month, March 1916, there is a military record that indicates Howard enlisted in the Canadian Flying Corps. The enlistment document shows his residence at Blairmore, Alberta, but Cranbrook, British Columbia, as his wife's address as next-of-kin.

Howard's service records indicate that he arrived at the Royal Flying Force aerodrome at Brooklands in County Surrey,

England, on Jan. 16, 1917. Under the category of special qualifications, they indicate that he was a "wireless operator."

The records contain the comment "unfit for any service" for the months of June and August that year, but that may have meant only that he was in training because by March 1918, the records state, "since joining Royal Flying Corps, flown SE5, 186 hours as an artillery observer." The SE5 — Scout Experimental 5 — was a single-seat biplane fighter developed by the Royal Aircraft Factory. It was stable, maneuverable and fast, and a favorite of British pilots.

Howard won praise for his daring. On one mission, a dispatch of the war office stated, "A German battery consisting of four gun emplacements hid behind a fine cluster of hedges was bothering the Allies for some time. Lt. Howard mounted his machine and soon found the location of the enemy. After taking photographs of the battery he dropped a few shells, which not only destroyed, but obliterated all trace of it. Afterward, the locality was again photographed, but there was not even a blade of grass to show where the hedges were ... Nothing but bare ground with shell-holes."

On Aug 25, 1918, Howard was on patrol near Seclin, a town near the Belgian border in northeastern France when he was engaged by two German Fokker planes. He attacked and shot down one, but, according to the report of the engagement, "was then attacked from behind ... and received a bullet through the back ... in spite of his severe wound he landed safely and was taken to No. 1 Casualty Clearing Station, Pernes, where he succumbed to his injuries at 3:30 p.m." He was buried in the British military cemetery at Pernes.

### James Patrick Murray

James Patrick Murray's aviation career spanned a half century. He learned to fly in single-man, open-cockpit planes in World War I. In the 1920s, he was a pioneer in the U.S. transcontinental airmail service. And in World War II, he played a significant role in making the four-engine, 10-crewmen B-17 the workhorse of the American Air Force.

Murray was born in Norwich in 1892, the son of Patrick Murray, a woolen mill foreman and his wife Margret Donovan. James

was a go-getter. He earned a bachelor's degree in three years at Trinity College in Hartford and taught for several years. He went to Toronto in 1917, enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps and was promoted to lieutenant. He arrived in France in late 1918. When the war ended, he flew mail from England to the Army of Occupation in Germany.

In 1920, Murray was selected to fly the Omaha to Cheyenne to Salt Lake City leg of the first U.S. Postal Service attempt to deliver airborne mail from New York City to San Francisco. On Sept. 9 that year, the *Cheyenne Leader* reported: "Begrimed with grease and smoke from the engine of his DeHavilland Four airplane, J.P.Murray ... at 5:51 o'clock Thursday afternoon swooped down on the Cheyenne landing field ... In the rear cockpit were packed 11 pouches containing 400 pounds of letters ... 16,000 separate pieces of mail ...

"About 50 persons were at the field to welcome the first airmail ship ... They first observed the trail of smoke from the airplane's exhaust. A moment later, the ship itself became visible at first as a mere speck, but quickly assuming the outlines of a bird with outspread wings. Flying smoothly, the ship slanted down to the field and landed with hardly a perceptible jar. Murray, who had flown from Omaha since 12:55 p.m. covering 453 miles in 236 minutes ... showed nothing to indicate nervous strain from the journey." A few days later, Murray had the honor of delivering the first airmail to Cheyenne from the west when he landed Plane Nr. 71 from Salt Lake City.

It soon became obvious that delivering airmail the 2,700-plus mile width of the nation was not only a worthwhile service but a dangerous business. After just 10 months, 21 pilots and eight mechanics lost their lives in accidents. Murray himself came very close to disaster.

On Oct. 20, flying east in a blizzard from Salt Lake City at 100 mph trying to complete his route before nightfall, he lost his bearing and crashed into a hill 95 miles west of Cheyenne. Fortunately uninjured, he built a fire with sagebrush and huddled by the wreckage of the plane overnight.

With no sign of a rescue plane the next morning, he walked 17 miles to the tiny village of Arlington, hitched a ride to the

railroad station at Rock Ridge 14 miles away and telegraphed Cheyenne. A crew sent to recover the plane was said to have located the site by backtracking the steps of a bear that had followed Murray as he walked out of the wilderness.

Murray continued to fly the 930-mile leg of the airmail route for eight years until the government discontinued the airmail operation. He is said to have flown 7,000 hours, more than any other airmail pilot.

"Boeing Air Transport took over the Chicago-to-San Francisco mail route from the Post Office and 'inherited' Jim Murray, moving him to Washington, D.C.," according to



**James Patrick Murray**

the Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame. "In Washington, Jim dealt with the Commerce, War, Navy and State Departments. Appointed a Boeing vice-president in 1931, he led the efforts in the Washington political arena for Boeing defense programs, including the B-17, B-47, B-52 and Wyoming's own Minuteman missiles."

In his book, *Flying Fortress*, Edward Jablonski describes the difficult negotiations between Boeing and the government regarding production of the B-17 long-range bomber of the U.S. Air Force in World War II. "It fell to James P. Murray," wrote Jablonski, "to contend with the assorted forces he was to encounter in the old Munitions Building. It was a frustrating assignment ..."

In negotiations over production costs of

the B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, Murray bargained with the Air Force chief, Gen. Henry 'Hap' Arnold and his second in command, Gen. George H. Brett. In one session, Jablonski wrote, "Brett complained, 'If we could only get a little cooperation from Boeing, maybe we could do a little business.' His Irish up, Murray responded, 'If we could only get a little cooperation from the Air Corps ...' At that point, wrote Jablonski, "Brett ordered him out of the office."

Arnold intervened and the negotiations continued until a price per bomber that was acceptable to both parties was reached. The B-17 became the workhorse long-range bomber of the U.S. Air Force in World War II. "It proved efficient enough to be used in every theater of the war," according to the National World War II Museum, "legendary for its ability to sustain heavy damage in battle and bolstered by its nearly self-sufficient firepower."

Murray retired from Boeing in 1962. When he died in Washington on Jan. 22, 1972, the *New York Times* wrote, "While at Boeing, Mr. Murray was credited with being instrumental persuading the armed forces not to drop the development of the B-17 Flying Fortress after initial test trouble. The B-17 went on to be a mainstay of American bombing tactics during World War II."

*Sources: for Murray L. Howard: Ancestry.com: 1880 U.S. Census, New Haven, Agnes McCabe; New Haven birth record, Murray Howard, Oct. 10, 1891; 1900 U.S. Census, Orange, CT; U.S. 1910 Census, Saulalito Calif.; 1916, Alberta, Canada Census; British Columbia, Canada, Marriage Index, 1872-1935; Canada, WWI Attestation Papers, 1914-1918; Find A Grave, Lt. Murray Leo Howard; Canada War Graves Registers, 1914-1948; UK, Royal Air Force Airmen Records, 1918-1940; Canada, Ledgers of CEF Officers Transferring to Royal Flying Corps. Knights of Columbus, San Salvador Council Monthly Bulletin, December 1918, p. 4.*

*Sources for James P. Murray: British National Archives, AIR/76/366, James Patrick Murray. Ancestry.com: 1910, U.S. census, Norwich, CT; James P. Murray, U.S. World War I Draft Registration Card. A.E. Roedel, "The Mail Must Go," Annals of Wyoming, Jan. 1945, Vol. 17, No. 1. Peter Knapp, "Pioneer of Transcontinental Airmail Service," Trinity (College) Reporter, Spring 2001. Cheyenne State Leader, Sept. 8-14, Oct. 20, 1920. Edward Jablonski, "Flying Fortress," James P. Murray, New York Times, Jan. 22, 1972.*

## K. of C. offered soup and solace for friend and foe alike

St. Mihiel, a strategic town on the Meuse River in northeastern France was captured by German troops in September 1914. Its capture left a German salient within French lines, a triangular wedge of land that for most of the war blocked railroad transport between Paris and the eastern front despite repeated Allied attempts to recapture it.

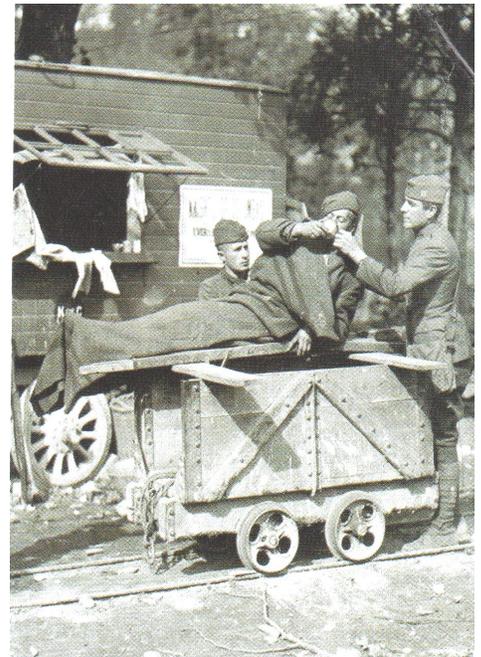
Finally in September 1918 in a four-day battle during which foul weather turned the trenches and fields into mud, American troops drove the Germans from the salient. The battle, in which a young American officer, named George Patton won his first laurels as a tank commander, was important because it greatly lifted the morale and confidence of the doughboys.

A small but interesting story told about St. Mihiel involved what one report described as a strange little vehicle “that puffed along jogging determinedly close on the heels of the flying Yankees who obliterated the salient.”

The first German prisoners were being marched up toward the American prison cages when the vehicle arrived “snorting and grunting as it struggled along ... smoke curling upward from the funny little stack that topped it. On across no-man’s land the vehicle lurched and dipped with shells always falling just to leave the thing unscathed.” It was said the German prisoners shied away from the contraption thinking it might be a torture chamber where they would be tormented.

In fact, the strange wagon was not only harmless, but a vehicle of rest and relaxation for battle-worn soldiers. It was one of the mobile soup kitchens provided by the Knights of Columbus during the war. At St. Mihiel, the soup was served not only to the doughboys but to the German POWs who, it was said, “tasted it timidly at first, then ... with less show of fear as they noticed that the soup given them came from the same boiling pots from which the doughboys were drawing their steaming ration.”

Founded in 1882 in New Haven by Father Michael McGivney and a group of Irish laymen, the Knights of Columbus grew and prospered throughout the United States and Canada as a fraternal benefit society in



*A uniformed Knights of Columbus “Casey,” left, doles out hot soup to doughboys gathered around a mobile soup kitchen in France. At right, a wounded soldier is fed.*

the latter part of the 19th century.

When World War I broke out in August 1914, K. of C. councils in Canada teamed up with Catholic chaplains to provide money and personnel to meet not only the spiritual, but also the social and recreational needs, of Canadian troops. Then, in the summer of 1916, the K. of C. established half a dozen independent rest and recreation stations for United States troops sent to protect the southwestern border against Mexican military excursions.

When the United States entered the war in 1917, K. of C. leaders committed the organization to a huge expansion of its efforts to aid the troops. Supreme Knight James A. Flaherty of New Haven wrote: “We did something for the spiritual comfort and for the recreation of the National Guard along the Mexican Border last year. The call now comes from all over the country that this work shall be continued and enlarged ...”

Expecting at least 100,000 of its 400,000 members to serve in the U.S. armed forces, the K. of C. assured President Wilson of its “unconditional support.” Recognized by the government in Washington as “the representative Catholic society of the United States” to provide religious and social assis-

tance to the troops, the K. of C. raised an initial \$1 million to establish recreation facilities in military camps throughout the nation and overseas. As the U.S. involvement in the war grew, the investment multiplied to \$3 million and eventually \$14 million with 150 huts in the United States and another 150 in Europe. Sometimes the huts were stationery and sometimes mobile as was that at the battle of St. Mihiel.

The motto adopted by the K. of C. for its huts was “Everybody Welcome, Everything Free,” a slogan which won admiration and respect from soldiers of all denominations and even from German prisoners of war like those who got a cup of hot soup after the four days of battle at St. Mihiel.

To staff its huts, the K. of C. hired many of its own members and also a number of Catholic and Irish women. They all were known as “Caseys,” from the affiliation with the K. of C.

Another aspect of the organization’s programs for the troops was the provision of sports gear and equipment. Sent overseas were 14,772 baseballs, 2,286 sets of boxing gloves and 1,687 football. One of the Caseys who went to France and helped promote

baseball on off-duty time was Johnny Evers a Hall of Fame player on the 1914 Boston Red Sox champions and a member of the Knights of Columbus in Troy, New York.

From Connecticut alone, the K. of C. Casey volunteers included: Daniel William Brennan, New Haven; James A. Buckely, Bridgeport, Peter H. Campion, New Haven; John F. Cavanaugh, Thompsonville; Jeremiah J. Coffey, New Britain; Marie Katherine Daly, Hartford; Michael J. Dineen, Thompsonville; Madeline Maria Doyle, South Norwalk; Julia A. Egan, Wethersfield; George M. Fahy, New Haven; George D. Fitzgerald, Hartford; James W. Fitzpatrick, Waterbury; Thomas J. Gibbons, New Haven; Patrick G.

Hayes, Hartford; Walter S. Holden, Meriden; Matthew Joseph Howley, Norwalk; Michael J. Keyes, Bridgeport; Thomas Edward Kiley, New Haven; Thomas M. Lafin, Windsor Locks.

Also. Mary Langdon, Hartford; James B. Madigan, Wethersfield; Patrick Andrew Marren, Derby; James Joseph McGillicuddy, Hartford; Rev. P.J. McGinney, Bridgeport; Michael McKiernan, Bridgeport; Michael F. McMahon, Hartford; Frederick W. Miller, Waterbury; James Gilmory Moran, New Haven; Michael J. Morkan, Hartford; William P. Mulville, Greenwich; Alexander Murphy, New London; Patrick Edward O'Brien, Thompsonville; John E. O'Connell,

Norwich; Edward J. O'Hearn, Waterbury; Jeremiah J. Ormond, Stamford, Edward John Real, Waterbury; Fred J. Riler, Torrington; George J. Riley, New Britain; John W. Scully, South Norwalk; Michael Henry Scully, Waterbury; Albert F. Sullivan, Bridgeport; James Francis Sullivan, New Haven; Edmond Patrick Wall, Torrington; Leo M. Whelan, Bridgeport; Thomas A. Wigmore, Greenwich.

*Sources: Joseph Pronechen, "K. of C. Service in the Great War," Columbia magazine, May 2017; Russell Council, New Haven, monthly bulletin, December 1918, Laura A. Marcuso, New Haven in World War I, 2017.*

## Sailor from Roscommon wrote poetry aboard destroyer

At least one sailor-poet can be found among the many Connecticut Irish who did their duty in World War I.

Born in Strokestown, County Roscommon, in 1888, John Kenny left his job at the Underwood Typewriter Co. in Hartford in March 1918 to enlist in the U.S. Navy. He left behind his wife Theresa Ward, who also was of Irish birth, and four children.

After training at Philadelphia, Kenny spent time at the U.S. Navy Station in Queenstown, better known as Dun Laoghaire near Dublin, and at the U.S. Navy Station in County Wexford. From August 1918 to the end of the war, he was assigned to the crew of a destroyer, the USS Downes.

In the papers he submitted to the Connecticut Military Questionnaires, 1919-1920, Kenny describes briefly the mission of the USS Downes. He said the destroyer patrolled the Irish Sea in search of German submarines which were sinking numerous Allied ships.

He explained that during his time aboard the Downes had "dropped 41 depth charges." He added that twice — once near Liverpool and once "off the northeast coast of Ireland," the depth charges "brought oil to the surface," indicating that the explosives had struck submerged enemy subs.

Kenny, who was discharged in April 1919, wrote poems, the one here suggesting he greatly enjoyed his time in the Navy:



**John Kenny**  
**Fireman First Class**

"There are memories of childhood, past and gone,  
That make strong men's eyes grow wet.  
There's love for the flag and thoughts of home  
Sometimes contract your throat.  
But to me there's a feeling naught else can beat  
That I've felt ashore or afloat.

And is caused by a sound some folks don't like.

But to me it's a grand refrain.

For it twangs in my heart, a vibrant note  
Blend of pride and joy and pain.

It comes after days with a convoy  
Days of pitch and roll and lurch  
Standing four on and four off  
Hearing things you don't hear in church.

It comes when your convoy's inside the nets,

And the troops are lining the rail,  
And your boat slips by on an easy bell,  
Within easy reach of a hail.

To a destroyer man it's like word from home.

Or like meeting a pal from a wreck;  
It's a good old hearty Yankee cheer  
Busting out from the troopship's deck.

It's the army's thanks to the navy,  
It means that they've come to fight;  
It means they are glad to have met us  
And it shows that their hearts are right.

It's the soldier's goodbye to a sailor,  
As again he is heading to sea;  
To stand between subs and those Doughboys  
Seems like an honor to me."

*Sources: Connecticut Military Questionnaires 1919-1920, Hartford, Box 9, p. 687.*

# Windsor Locks physician cited for extraordinary valor

By Philip R. Devlin

Few people are aware of the heroism of a Windsor Locks native, Captain Daniel H. Lawler, during World War I.

Born in Windsor Locks on May 1, 1887, Lawler lived on 3 Grove Street and attended local schools. His father, James Lawler, Sr., had come to Windsor Locks from Ireland as a five-year-old boy in 1855.

Daniel then attended college at the University of Maryland and, later, Johns Hopkins Medical School. Following medical school, Dr. Lawler interned for one year at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford and later served as house surgeon at the Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., prior to the war.

He was the youngest surgeon ever appointed to the Johns Hopkins staff at the time. Just prior to joining the Army, Dr. Lawler married Eva Wright from Baltimore on June 16, 1917.

Daniel Lawler — like the vast majority of the 179 men from Windsor Locks who served in the Great War — was part of the 102nd Regiment from Connecticut. The 102nd was attached to the 26th Division, nicknamed the "Yankee Division."

Lawler became the Battalion Surgeon for the 102nd and served his country with great distinction. He was wounded severely on March 16, 1918, at the Battle of Chemin des Dames, where he was gassed. In a letter to his mother from France dated Aug. 1, 1918, Pvt. Fred T. Koehler (future brother-in-law of funeral director Tommy Johnson) had this to say about Dr. Lawler: "By the way, Drs. Lawler and Gettings were two of the heroes of our battle, dressing and taking care of the wounded while under heavy shell fire. The two of them worked night and day."

*The Bridgeport Post* published the following article on then Lt. Daniel H. Lawler in the fall of 1918: "Lt. Daniel Lawler of the 102nd Ambulance Corps was mentioned for distinguished service with the 102nd Infantry, Third Battalion as Battalion Medical Officer ... It will be remembered that Lt. Lawler was on the severely wounded list



***Dr. Daniel Lawler of Windsor Locks was battalion surgeon of Connecticut's 102nd Regiment during World War I.***

several months ago. At that time, it was reported among friends here that his condition was grave."

Daniels' brother, James Lawler of Bridgeport, inquired about his brother's condition through the YMCA International Committee and received the following reply: "Replying to your telegram April 20, Lawler gassed March 17. Returned to regiment April 12. Cited on orders for 'extraordinary valor.'"

Lt. Daniel H. Lawler received the Silver Star — the nation's third highest decoration — with the following citation: "Lieut. Daniel H. Lawler, Medical Corps. He rendered first aid to more than 100 cases during an unusually intense gas bombardment in sector occupied by the 102nd Infantry, not only in his aid post, but going out to a point where a large number of casualties had occurred due to the concentration of German fire. This trip was made to render relief to men before they could possibly be brought to any aid station. Throughout the

night, he went all over the shell area, giving aid."

Lawler was soon promoted to captain following his citation for valor. Captain Lawler continued to serve throughout the autumn until the end of the war on Nov. 11, 1918. He remained in France until April 2, 1919, continuing to treat wounded soldiers at Base Hospital Number 8. Lawler then returned home and was honorably discharged on April 29, 1919.

Following his military service, Daniel Lawler and his wife, Eva, took up residence in Baltimore. While working at the United States Public Health Service in Baltimore, Dr. Lawler suffered a near fatal injury at a Baltimore railroad station on June 17, 1920. Lawler fell about 25 feet into a culvert off of a path near the railroad station at Round Bay near the Severn River. According to an article in the *Baltimore Sun*, "Surgeons announced yesterday that his spine is injured severely and that his recovery is doubtful."

Dr. Lawler defied the odds and survived the fall, although he apparently remained partially paralyzed for the rest of his life. Following his recovery, Lawler continued to practice medicine in Baltimore until 1932.

In 1932, he moved to Barre, Vermont, where he practiced medicine for the next five years. Following his work in Barre, Dr. Daniel Lawler was appointed school physician for Hammond, Indiana, where he spent the rest of his life.

Dr. Daniel Henry Lawler, one of the most highly decorated servicemen in Windsor Locks history, died on March 15, 1947, following a brief illness. He was only 59 years old and had most likely suffered from the long-term effects of being gassed in the Great War. His wife, Eva, survived him for another 18 years, dying on Jan. 2, 1965, at age 76.

Both were survived by their two daughters, Sarah Frances (Lawler) Lyon and Mary Katherine Lawler. Dr. Lawler and his wife were buried in Section 111 in Arlington National Cemetery, a fitting location for a war hero.

## Manchester native skilled with both scalpel and pen

William Patrick Stuart Keating enlisted in the Connecticut National Guard in 1913 and served until 1919. He was a doctor by profession, a surgeon in the 102nd and 101st Infantry Regiments and the 66th Field Artillery. After the armistice, he cared for soldiers who had been in a German prisoner of war camp.

Fortunately, Keating, a native of Manchester whose practice was in Willimantic, was as talented with pen and paper as he was with scalpel and stethoscope. His legacy included a number of letters that he sent home describing in detail the everyday life of doughboys.

In February 1918, he wrote: "This is the way they moved us in France. Toward noon the men put on their packs and moved out through the muddy country roads. ... We hiked about 10 miles when we arrived at the 'camions' on the railroad siding ... The box cars you are put into are marked "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8," — 40 men, 8 horses — but these cars were never constructed for American soldiers or horses. A compromise was made on 30 men ... The men piled in and tried to make themselves comfortable which was impossible ... A troop train never moves on schedule ... It usually starts five hours late and well into the night ...

"We were two nights and days on the road. We finally reached the town where we were to detrain. It was afternoon and raining. We marched from here to our reserve line. The mud was ankle deep making it hard for the men with their heavy packs.

"All towns we marched through were totally destroyed and deserted. The fields were one mass of shell holes and communicating trenches, barbed wire entanglements and dugouts.

"Just at dusk, we reached a quarry or big cave, which had been occupied by the Germans up to October 1917 when they were driven out by the French. It was a wonderful place and would hold a division of troops. It had numerous passageways and chambers that were occupied by the men ... There were small side rooms for the officers. An electric light here and there lit up the cavern.

"After two days rest we marched five miles to another cave or chalk mine very much the same ... In this neighborhood a terrific battle had been fought in 1914, late in the winter. I saw a number of wooden crosses in a graveyard and read the names of the Coldstream Guards and Connaught Rangers and the First Irish Regiment ...

"On the night of the fifth day we marched up to the first line trenches to relieve a company of our regiment. It was quite an exciting trip in the dark as the Germans were throwing over a few shells to welcome us. We had to proceed in groups of 15 or 18.

"Some of the shells burst near us and we had to duck into the dugouts which were on the roadside. After an hour and a half's march, we reached the point from which the men were distributed to their various positions. The main station was an immense chalk mine and was used as a battalion hq. It was ... a large underground city and would hold probably ten thousand men. It was all arranged with connecting streets on which were many chambers the enlisted men occupied ... You walk along narrow passageways which were propped up with timbers, each passageway had a name so you could not get lost. In this cave was our main medical dressing station, eating quarters for the men and a canteen ....

"To reach our first aid station you had to pass through muddy trenches, broken by German shellfire at many points. At these broken points we had to walk in the open. It was there a German machine gunner would pour over four or five shots, this meant drop down in a muddy shell hole ... It had been a German first aid station on the Hindenburg line, facing a ravine just across from the German lines. It was rather an exposed dangerous spot. Several times while passing ... machine guns opened up, but I escaped injury.

"One of our companies was in on that raiding party ... which captured 19 German soldiers and two officers. These soldiers have been awarded the Croix de Guerre. None of our men were injured, but one French soldier was killed. Thanks to the wonderful artillery barrage put over by our

gunners, the raid was successful.

"While I was up at the first line we lost several men by accident due to flying shrapnel and a cave-in. I can't describe my sensations the night I was called to give aid to a wounded soldier. The German big guns were shelling the hills where we were and the shells were eating up the ground all around but I pushed on and heaved a sigh of relief when I reached the dugout where the man was. I did not return until late in the night. .... Our return to the reserve line was made at night through muddy shell torn roads. It took us five hours and we reached the camp at midnight ... We expect to move back 100 miles or so in a week; then we will get our 10-day furlough."

On June 24, Keating wrote: "After being out of the front lines for seven days ... I returned to the front with my regiment ... the sector we occupied was a little better than our former one ... We were better protected from the big gun fire of the Germans. our battalion and station was an underground cave and was well equipped for all emergencies and in case of gas attack would accommodate 500 people. The roads in our vicinity were constantly being shelled ...

"The first night three of our men were killed by shell fire. The second night, Fritz gave us plenty of mustard gas and 20 of our men had to be sent to the hospital. I was slightly gassed and experienced considerable trouble with my eyes and received a slight burn from the gas ...

"On June 2, the side of my dugout was blown in by a big shell and two other officers with me were knocked out of their bunks by the force of the explosion. We received scratches from flying sand and gravel. I had a piece of shell pass over my head and sank in the wall above my bunk. Shells were coming over all around us, but we folded up our bedding rolls and made for the underground dugouts. During the night another shell hit our dugout and caved it in. It was well for us we left."

*Sources: Hartford Courant, April 28, July 23, 1918; www.ancestry.com, Connecticut Military Questionnaires, 1919-1920, Windham, Box 58, p. 112 ff.*

## Kilted Hartford warrior died at Amiens

“Ladies from Hell” was the nickname of Canadian and British World War I units whose troops wore kilts. For centuries, knee-length woolen kilts were worn by Gaelic men in Scotland’s highlands in peace and war. The tradition of kilted warriors was brought to America in the French and Indian War of the 1750s. Among the British units in that war was the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment of Foot, known as the Black Watch. Three battalions of kilted Black Watch troops fought in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War I.

It is little wonder that a Hartford young man named Robert Lavery Jr. would choose to serve in the Black Watch. He was born in Scotland in 1897, the son of parents Robert Sr. and Sarah Gibson Lavery, both born in County Antrim, Ireland. Robert and Sarah immigrated to Scotland. In 1881, they were living in Glasgow where Robert Sr. was a foundry laborer and Sarah worked as a weaver. In 1909, the Laverys emigrated again — to Connecticut.

In 1915, while war was raging in Europe, Robert Lavery Jr., 18, left his job as a machinist at Pratt & Whitney in Hartford, and loyal to his Gaelic heritage went to Montreal. There he enlisted in the 13th Battalion Canadian Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment. The 13th had been sent to Europe in October 1914, one of the first Canadian outfits on the frontlines. Throughout the war, it was a workhorse battalion that suffered 5,881 casualties including 1,105 fatalities. It fought at Ypres, the Somme, Vimy Ridge, Chaulnes and Roye, earning the nickname of “Ladies from Hell.”

Lavery was wounded four times. Then, on Aug. 8, 1918, he was killed in action along with many comrades on the first day of the Battle of Amiens when the 13th Battalion attacked German machine gun nests that were holding up the Allied advance in an area known as Hangar Wood.

*Sources: Hartford Courant, Aug. 20, 1918; ancestry.com: 1910, 1920 U.S. census, Hartford*



## Doctor aided reconstruction in Serbia, Albania

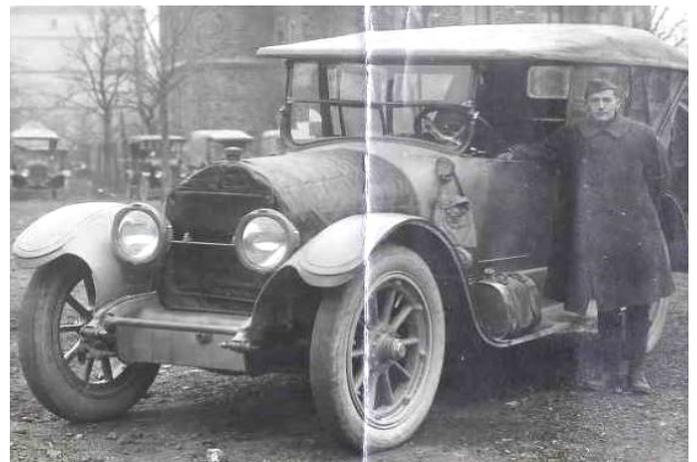
When his first hitch ended at the end of World War I, Lt. John Reynolds signed up for another. He left his hometown of New Britain in 1917 for Fort Devens, sailed to France in July 1918 and did not return until October 1921. Reynolds attended St. Mary’s parochial school and graduated from New Britain High School in 1910. While in high school he was captain of the basketball team. He then entered the Fordham School of Medicine. He served his internship at St. Mary’s Hospital in Brooklyn and entered the Army Medical Corps in 1917. He sailed to Europe in July 1918 and was on the staff of a base hospital in France until the end of the war. After the signing of the armistice, Dr. Reynolds received a call from the American Red Cross to assist in reconstruction work in Serbia and Albania which had been devastated during the war. Interviewed after his return to New Britain, he expressed confidence that the future looked bright “because the people of these countries are sturdy and ambitious.”

*Source: Hartford Courant, Oct. 25, 1921*

## Driving a Cadillac 8

Before the war, Daniel J. Kennedy of Hartford was a partner in a grocery business with his Irish-born father. His job apparently involved motor vehicle deliveries for when he enlisted in June 1917, the army picked him as a driver. He was promoted to sergeant and after he arrived in France in 1918, he was assigned to the 1st Motor Supply Train and drove troops, ammunition and supplies to the front line in the Toul sector. He later was reassigned to the headquarters troop of the 4th Army and when the war ended he drove the “Cadillac 8” in the picture chauffeuring officers of the Army of Occupation to meetings, parades and ceremonies.

*Source: Connecticut Military Questionnaires, Hartford, Box 9, p. 669.*



# Joy and sorrow mingled when armistice ended the killing

During the first week of November 1918, Americans held their breath in the hope that an end to World War I was in sight.

On Nov. 7, a false rumor of an armistice set off premature celebrations in the United States, but in France, doughboys waited anxiously in their trenches, fearing that they would be commanded to go over the top into the enemy's line of fire just one more time.

A 22-year-old Wallingford soldier, Edward J. Quinn, enlisted on April 17, soon after Congress voted to go to war. He was assigned to the 103rd Machine Gun Battalion. He shipped to France that autumn and fought with the 103rd throughout 1918. He was lucky a couple of times, wounded but only slightly on July 27 and Oct. 10. After the armistice became a reality, he told of the tension just before it: "For several days prior, we held the lines and the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month found us in no-man's land going over the top and about to bust, or try to, the Boche front lines.

"It was pretty hard going that morning. We had hiked, full equipment, throughout the night before, leaving one position for another and only had a couple of hours trying to repose in shell holes when our barrage opened up and we were told we must go over. With no breakfast and some pretty hazy thoughts of the coming armistice, we started ... We advanced but a few hundred yards when — wow — not a gun was firing. We stopped where we were, not a word, just looked and wondered ... When the truth dawned on us, we built a fire right there, sent a detail to scout some food and remained until the next day."

In Paris, where Cpl. Frank J Moriarity of New Haven was stationed, the scene was joyful chaos. "At 11 o'clock Nov. 11, all the whistles, bells, sirens, the booming of cannon, noise-making contrivances doing their utmost to make themselves heard ... And the crowds started to form parades of every description. By noon the streets were black with people and in many places it was blocked for hours, little or no relief and impossible to go one way or the other ... The United States flag was as prominent as the French and 'Vive L'Amérique' was heard on



***On Nov. 11, 1918, while the world gave thanks for peace after four years of warfare, a chaplain buried the remains of Sgt. Thomas Donovan of Hartford, above, in Belgium. Please turn to page 16.***

all sides ...

"Auto trucks were crammed with people and even hanging from the fenders, hood, top, sides or any place that a hold could be had if even for only a few minutes and shouting, singing, waving flags and having fun in general. At night the crowd started to feel extra gay and then the wildest time I ever witnessed in my life. Cannon were hooked onto taxis, trucks and all crowded with soldiers waving flags ...

"About 10 of us ... started parading through the streets doing the lockstep, hollering, singing and enjoying ourselves ... while crowds would gather and watch us, ... before long we had about as mixed a bunch of people as you ever saw. French, Belgians, English, Australians, all in a line with our lockstep parade ..."

An Irish-American woman from Hartford saw the celebration from one of most historic of Paris landmarks: Notre Dame cathedral. She was Hilda Keller, the daughter of George Keller who knew something about landmarks. A native of County Cork and an architect, Keller had designed the soldiers monuments at Gettysburg and Antietam after the American Civil War.

During World War I, his daughter Hilda was a leader of the Red Cross in Hartford. She had come to Paris in late autumn 1918 to visit nurses and Red Cross personnel already there. She and others with her were preparing to return to Connecticut.

She recalled vividly the morning of Nov. 11: "We went down to the Prefecture of Police to get our passports ... The streets were still quiet ... The city looked grave. The last rumors we had heard were that the armistice would be rejected. We went up three flights of stairs to the Prefecture and were, all nine of us, seated on a long bench waiting our turn ... when a big jovial official came along calling out 'L'armistice est signe!'"

Immediately the whole place went wild. Then we could hear the cannon, the signal that was to tell the news and everyone crowded to the windows to see the flag go up on Notre Dame ... We got through the forms quickly (and went) to Notre Dame. ... The bells were ringing and ringing over our heads. You heard the sounds of cheering and singing from outside. But inside there were very few people as yet — and these mostly widows. They knelt before the little shrines sometimes whole rows of them.

"There were a few American soldiers too and some of other nationalities but none of the cheering crowd was left. They must've dashed outside to see the fun ... As we went out a girl stood at the door and gave us each a violet "pour la victoire" ... We had a long talk on the corner with three American officers just returned from 29 days in the front line trenches and we all had a little private thanksgiving because America had helped.

"There was joy and excitement everywhere and yet through it all and behind it all one had the consciousness of the appalling suffering that has been left. It was not a crowd mad with pride of victory alone, always there was the sadness behind it ... with the bells booming above and the crowds singing heard dimly from the street and the widows praying before the brightly lighted shrines."

*Sources: Meriden Record, Dec 18, 1918; New Haven Union, Dec. 8, 12, 1918; Hartford Courant, Dec. 13, 1918.*

## Sgt. Thomas Donovan buried in Belgium on Armistice Day

On Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1918, U.S. Army Chaplain Calvin R. Smith buried the remains of Sgt. Thomas Timothy Donovan of Hartford in a small town named Bevere in Belgium. Donovan was severely wounded on Nov. 3 as his unit, the 362nd U.S. Infantry, Third Battalion, was on the offensive in the final days of the war.

In a letter to Donovan's sister, Ellen, a nurse in Hartford, Chaplain Smith said he found the sergeant's body in a foxhole "at the foot of a little knoll on which stood a windmill. He was one of the attackers and apparently had been shot as he was climbing over the crest of the hill ..."

Smith added that he found "a small purse

with a broken crucifix containing his name and address ... I secured permission to have him buried in the Catholic churchyard at Bevere and the grave was dug by a detail of his fellow soldiers, also a detail carried his body on a stretcher to the grave and he was buried with full military honors. A large crowd of soldiers were at the grave. I gave a short talk and decorated the grave and put up a marker. Secretary McCullough of the Knights of Columbus made a cross of shell and engraved Sgt. Donovan's name on it ..."

Donovan was born in Wethersfield in 1887, the son of William and Katherine Hurley Donovan, Irish emigrants from County Cork. They emigrated in 1882 and

moved to Hartford several years later. Thomas's father, a machinist by trade, died in 1909 or 1910.

Before Thomas enlisted, he was a metal lather. He trained at Camp Devens, Massachusetts. On Oct. 29, 1918, he wrote a letter telling his mother that he was in Belgium and going to the front the next day.

Smith wrote, "Your brother was buried on the day the armistice was signed. I hope the fact that his death helped to bring about peace and freedom will console you."

Sources: *Hartford Courant*, February 4, 1919; [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): *Connecticut Military Questionnaires, 1919-1920*, Hartford, Box 7, p. 359; 1900 U.S. census, Hartford.

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*In Ireland, a Shanachie is a folklorist,  
historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.*

"We have kept faith  
with the past;  
we have handed  
a tradition  
to the future."

*Padraic Pearse*

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