

CHAPTER XV

THE WORLD WAR

In 1917 the United States was drawn into the vortex of the great European war, which became designated, from the number of contesting nations, the World War. It had been going on since the first day of July, 1914, the first nations engaged being Austria and Germany on the one side against France, Russia and England on the other. Later the former powers were joined by Turkey, while Italy took sides with her ancient enemy, France.

American shipping had suffered, many American lives had been lost by the action of German submarines, until the patience of our Government was exhausted, and finally on April 5 President Wilson issued a declaration that a state of war existed between this country and Germany. Loyalty and ratification meetings were held all over the country. In St. Marys a great gathering of citizens was held in the auditorium in the evening of April 6, pledging support to the Government.

On the recommendation of the President Congress passed an act to draft soldiers for the war instead of calling for volunteers. In accordance with the plan Governor John J. Cornwell of this State appointed conscription boards for each county, that for Pleasants being composed of Sheriff O. C. Barkwill, County Clerk R. L. Griffin, Dr. J. R. McCollum, William C. Dotson and William C. Butcher. Mr. Dotson was chosen president of the board and Mr. Griffin secretary.

On June 5 all male citizens between the ages of 21 and 30 were registered, the number in this county being 482. Each man was given a number, and the drawing of the numbers was done in Washington. The first drawing was

July 18, when 51 men of Pleasants county were selected for examination. The first man on the list was Herbert T. Bailey, No. 258. Physical examinations were made by the local board in August, and only one man in every four was found of such sound body that he was pronounced fit for service.

In the meantime, even before war had been declared, many young men of the United States had enlisted in Canadian regiments or had entered the navy in the expectation of seeing active service. Among the latter was Donald Core, a son of William L. Core of St. Marys and a grandson of Alfred H. Cole, a veteran of the Civil War. It happened that Core was assigned to the battleship Mongolia, under command of Lieutenant Bruce R. Ware, and it also fell to Core's lot to be a member of the firing squad on that ship which discharged the first gun fired against the enemy.

Every effort was made by the Government to fill up the quota of soldiers required, and also to utilize every resource in prosecuting the war. Every able bodied citizen, man and woman, was expected to take a part, either bearing arms, aiding in hospital and field work, or producing sustenance and supplies. To this purpose the Legislature passed a vagrancy act, which went into effect June 18. This law provided for the arrest and employment at some public work of any physically fit man who was not engaged in some useful vocation.

The Young Men's Christian Association and the Red Cross Society prepared to devote their energies in taking care of our soldiers both at home and abroad, and for that purpose requested donations of cash, assigning proportionate sums to each county. The first calls were made in June, and in each instance Pleasants county subscribed more than the amount assigned to it, giving \$503.82 to the former and \$4,632.16 to the latter. Societies were organized among the women in various parts of the county for the purpose of making surgical dressings and bandages, also knitting woolen caps, vests and socks to be worn by the soldiers in the Winter season. Many of these articles could have been manufactured better and cheaper with machinery, and countless

thousands of them were so crudely done that they were never sent across seas, so that the time and labor were wasted. But hysteria was rampant throughout the whole country.

The first contingent of conscripted men from this county was sent on September 5 for training to Camp Lee, near Petersburg, Virginia. They were Olin S. Hissom, Arja Morgan and Ralph Core. This was five months after the declaration of a state of war. On the 19th twenty more men were sent to the same camp—Raymond L. Sunderman, Henry M. Davis, William C. Kelley, James W. Farren, Frank H. Hayes, Arland D. Wernecke, Dale Scott, Harold V. Dawkins, Grover C. Seckman, Harry C. Bailey, L. Cecil Hanes, Wesley D. Bailey, Floyd C. Abel, Paul Mercer, Ernest J. Fauss, Peter J. Kurtz, Loman D. Hadley, Fred A. Minter, Willard E. Noland and Harry K. Curtis.

A third contingent was sent October 3, eleven men going to Camp Lee. They were O. L. Gregory, Ralph Gardner, Thomas A. Robinson, Roseman L. Skaggs, Frank E. Russell, George M. Joseph, David A. Butler, Alfred O. Griffith, Samuel J. Brewer, George W. Cunningham and Noah Burga.

Besides these several had gone to the officers' training camp, Fort Benjamin Harrison, in Indiana, among them being J. C. Powell, Homer W. Grimm and Lyle VanValey. Charles Locke of Eureka had volunteered in the navy as an electrician; S. E. Outward was a machinist in the aviation corps in France, and Ralph Rife was also in France.

In October Olin Hissom was made corporal of Battery A, 314th Field Artillery, Fred Minter and Arnold Wernecke sergeants in Battery C, L. C. Hanes a sergeant in Battery D, and Corporal Floyd Abel second bandmaster of his company.

The Government needed funds with which to prosecute the war—not merely millions, but billions of dollars. To our allies we were not only giving sympathy but we were also giving money, loaning it, as it was supposed, in staggering amounts. The country was prosperous; the credit of the Government was unquestioned, and when

loans were requested on what were called Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps the response was generous. At every call the people of Pleasants cheerfully made up more than the required quota. This was greatly aided by the rapid rise in the price of crude oil, the production of which was still the leading industry of the county. At the beginning of 1917 oil was quoted at \$2.85; at the end of the year it was \$3.75, going up to \$4.00 in February, at which price it remained until after peace was declared.

The activities of the Government in the prosecution of the war were not limited to the field of operations, but were also directed towards a control of the citizenry. Councils of Defense were organized in every county in the United States and committees appointed to see that the rulings issued at Washintgon should be carried out. Dennis M. Gibbs of Belmont was chosen as president of the Council here, and Ross Wells secretary.

While many of these rulings were undoubtedly wise, yet some savored of hysteria. Despite the great aid that newspapers were to the Government in disseminating orders from Washington, in every instance gratuitously, they were subjected to many unnecessary restrictions, such as cutting down the size of their issues and being forbidden to send copies to persons and firms who were not bona fide subscribers. In the midst of the extremely cold weather all places of business were required to do without heat on Mondays, and limitations were placed upon food supplies, special days being set apart as "fasting days" with regard to certain sorts of food. But for the most part the people bore these regulations cheerfully, feeling that by every self-deprivation they were aiding in the war.

The Winter of 1917-18 will long be remembered as one of unusual severity, ranking as one of the three worst seasons experienced since the formation of the United States. Throughout January the temperature in this vicinity ranged about zero, sometimes going to twelve degrees below. The continuous steady cold penetrated deep into the ground, freezing water mains so that for weeks one-third of the town suffered for lack of water.

On January 29 the following recruits were sent from this county to Vancouver: Okey J. Hawkins, George N. Mercer, Bruce Cronin, John T. Cronin, Daniel P. Scadden, Jonathan F. Gilmore, James C. Sunderman, Freeman Wright, William C. Shingleton, Ode J. Samberson, Tice Harris, Thomas Sparks, Hobart Flowers, Earl Shingleton, Jacob Wells and Clyde Lancaster.

Others sent to Fort Leavenworth on January 31, were Bernard L. Wagner, Clyde M. Cunningham, Lawrence Little, Wayland F. Williamson, Clyde T. Ingraham, Roy C. Seckman, George Lane, Charles A. Cramblett, John W. Bailey, Robert B. Little, Chester A. Deems, Donald B. Riggs, Richard Little and Ira Myers.

A few days later, February 3, Otha Wilson, George C. Cox, Thomas E. Brewer, Thomas Brock, Wiley Sloan, Dewitt Poynter, Harrison Boley, Okey S. Buchanan, Dennis A. Locke, John I. Scadden and Emory B. Morris were sent to Vancouver.

Such was the patriotism of our citizens that on February 27 Pleasants county was commended by the National Food Administration as being the first county in the nation to abandon needless feasting.

The Government was rushing men across the sea as rapidly as they could receive an initial training and be supplied with arms. The large training camps were now fully equipped, the railroads had been commandeered for the easy and quick transfer of troops, and there was no confusion in the handling of recruits. In the course of a few months four more contingents of soldiers were taken from Pleasants county.

On March 4 the following men were dispatched to Camp Greenleaf in Georgia: James A. Bradford, Alpha Taylor, Ed D. Hughes, Asa C. Smith, Claude M. Bonner, Tom J. Johnson, Floyd C. Howell, Martin L. Higgins, Ola Weekly, William H. Feeney, George B. Barnhart, Everett H. Rodgers, Frank M. Bailey, Charles Anders, Homer E. Pollard and William E. Wherry.

April 25 Kenneth C. Russell, William J. Oldfield, John O. Elliott and Clarence Northcraft were sent to Camp Meade.

May 25 twenty-seven left for Camp Lee: Floyd L. Dot-

son, William A. Cross, Peter W. Highley, Raymond M. Meyer, Lee Wells, Michael R. Malone, George Hashman, Glenn Gatrell, Charles H. Morrell, Dan C. Markley, Howard M. Dearth, John E. Wilson, Ira C. Roby, Howard E. Hupp, William E. Horner, Donald Triplett, Abraham Ingraham, Bernard Wayne Defibaugh, William C. Matheny, Alva T. Hart, Charles H. Colvin, John L. Campbell, James H. McCullough, Leo E. Flowers, William E. Adams, Charles E. Williams and Robert E. Kester.

August 20 the following were called to the service: Samuel F. Bailey, Fred DeLong, Alonzo G. Barron, Roy Dewey Carpenter, Willard L. Graver, Ben A. Winland, John W. Riley, Henning R. Reynolds, Albert C. Mercer, Alva B. Oliver and Wiley M. Williamson.

The last contingent to leave the county departed on September 8 for Camp Lee, and comprised Clifford R. Bailey, Bishop Stewart, John William Trembley, Roy M. Gregg, Ernest Lee Wise, Hobart Pethtel, H. Eugene Carroll, Wm. R. Wright, Truman M. Gardner, Lawrence E. Dunn, George E. Cornell, Paran DeLong, James W. Ingraham, Brady Janes, Everett S. Boley, Ernest Underwood, Abe B. Samberson, Homer B. Smith, Clyde Brammer, Michael L. Eddy and Robert H. Bell.

Other Pleasants county boys who entered the service were Clarence Ankrom, Moses Adams, Harry Atkinson, John Quincy Adams, George Black, Earl B. Barker, David J. Blouir, Frank J. Barron, Earl K. Barkwill, Brady B. Barnhart, Pearle Raymond Butcher, Lawrence Brammer, Pearle Brewer, James F. Cunningham, Fred M. Cramblett, James E. Cornell, Leroy Cross, Benjamin Cumblidge, Fern Carroll, Herman Carroll, C. Allen Carson, Henry W. Campbell, Frank Cramblett, Donald Core, Henry Dearth, John Henry Dennis, Bernie Wesley Doty, Wm. C. Dotson, Jr., Roy Doty, Harry G. Dotson, Benjamin Ellis, Brooks F. Ellis, Leroy C. Fauss, Ervin V. Flesher, James Wm. Farson, Wm. Garrison, Henry C. Griffith, Kenney Ross Gardner, Roland Graver, Herbert L. Gard, Truman Greenwalt, Harley Greenwalt, Herbert Clyde Hescht, C. W. Hall, W. A. Hall, Albert P. Hoy, Harry Dean Hughes, Donald H. Harper, Benjamin H. Hines, George Haddox, Howard Ingraham, Kenneth P.

Imlay, James B. Jordan, Ernest Kester, Charles Edwin Kerns, Arthur M. Kiester, Charles W. Locke, George A. McFadden, Charles McKnight, Okey O. McKnight, Alfred W. Martin, Frank Mercer, William R. Morris, Harvey Maston, Kencil Myers, Harry H. Morgan, Harry Noland, Robert H. Outward, Stephen E. Outward, Richard V. Outward, Corda Owens, James Arthur Pethtel, Bert Patterson, Earl E. Poynter, Reese Asa Poynter, Richard Pethtel, Elmer E. Riggs, Howard C. Riggs, Ferris Riggs, Lynden E. Reynolds, Harry M. Roby, Walter Otha Robinson, Daniel Lester Ryan, George F. Roberts, Jr., Frederick W. Riggs, Arthur Rogers, Ralph A. Rife, Andrew Gale Riggs, Howard T. Sweeney, Wm. H. Simonton, Ingle S. Smith, Joseph B. Steere, Lawrence Schultz, John Randolph Seckman, Franklin Luther Tice, Howard L. Trautman, Leon Albert Tarbox, Earl Underwood, G. Wallace VanValey, Dustin Vincent, Samuel Ray White, Ronald R. Walker, Arza E. Wiley, James P. Wiley, Jesse Wright, John Loomis Watson, Clarence R. West, Leslie A. Wood, Jed C. Wilcoxon, James Winland, Homer C. Williams, Lewis James Watson and Clifford Edwin Zipf.

In addition to these several young women enlisted as "yeomanettes," proceeding to Norfolk, where they served the Government in various capacities. They were Garnet Edmonds, Ethel Smith Heilman, Bethel C. Riggs, Nellie Seckman, Estella Snyder and Martha Stanley.

The men were variously employed by the Government. Many of them were taken over sea and participated actively in the fighting; others were sent to the Northwest to get out lumber for the manufacture of airplanes, which had become a large factor in warfare, while still others were found qualified for mechanical and scientific occupations; but all, of course, were subject to an efficient and beneficial military training.

On June 27 came word that Dale Scott, serving in France, was killed by the enemy, the first victim of the war from Pleasants county. Then on August 27 came the news that Ola, son of James M. Weekly, had also been killed in battle, and not long after was received news of the deaths of Tom Johnson and Ingle Smith—the former slain on the field, the latter dying of illness. Two others

who lost their lives in France were Alva, son of Randolph Hart, and Grover, son of John V. Seckman, while several were reported wounded.

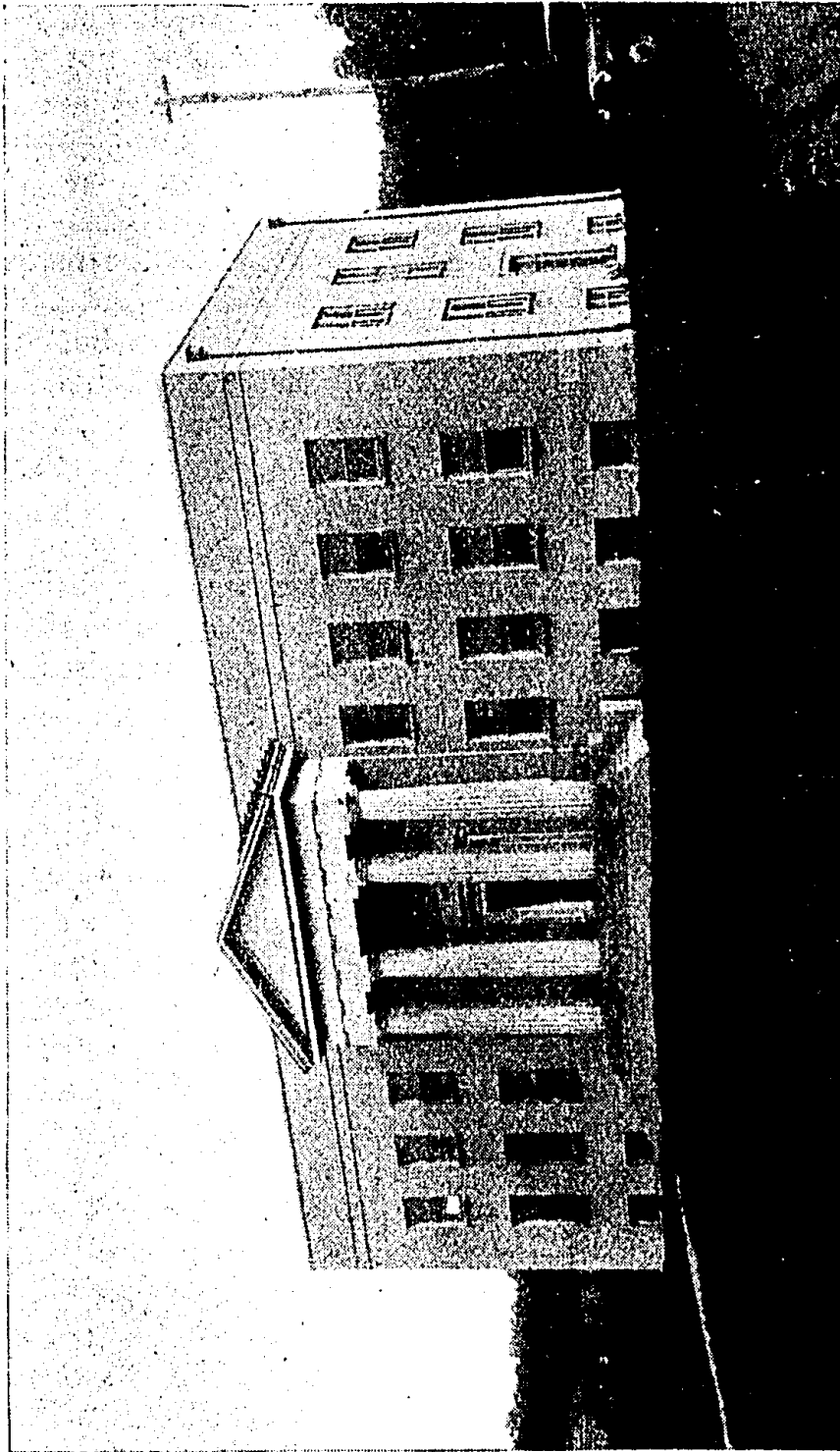
A report was cabled to America on November 7 that Germany had agreed to an armistice, and there was great rejoicing throughout the country. It proved to be a false report. However, on November 11 came certain intelligence that an armistice had been signed that day, and a wave of wild enthusiasm spread over the nation. A great "Victory Parade" was held in St. Marys, participated in by people from all the surrounding country, and then came the anxious waiting for the return of the army. It seemed to take almost as long to withdraw the men as it took to prepare and send them over; but the delay was caused chiefly by arranging the details of peace, also, in the meantime, some of our men had been sent on to guard the shores of the Rhine while the treaty was being prepared. It was not until the 18th of June, 1919, that the first detachment returned. Six men, Roseman Skaggs, Owen L. Gregory, Olin S. Hissom, Ed Heilman, Floyd Abel and Ralph Core, were the first to come back, and were met at the station by a large crowd of people. Within the next week or two many others returned, and soon after all the Pleasants county survivors of the great World War were back home.

The war was ended, but the activities of the veterans of the war continued in service to their country through the organization of what is known as the American Legion. Founded somewhat after the manner of the Grand Army of the Republic, an outgrowth of the Civil War, the American Legion adopted still broader principles and more active work in the various communities in which their Posts were located. The prime object naturally was to help ex-service men, to seek out and aid those who needed assistance, but their attention was also given to the local needs of their communities.

Pleasants Post No. 79, American Legion, was organized February 22, 1920, and in the first year built up a membership of 52. In 1923 the membership fell down to only 28, but by earnest and persistent efforts it rose in 1925 to 177.

The attention of the members was called to the inefficiency of the fire fighting apparatus of the city of St. Marys, and in 1924 it was decided to make its improvement one of their objectives. They determined not only to purchase and equip a chemical fire truck but also to operate it. They commenced a series of "home talent" minstrel shows, besides of late years taking over the management of the annual county fairs. The citizens and business men of the community appreciated the motive and cheerfully co-operated, so that the Post not only purchased two fine chemical engines and motors but also was enabled to erect a two story concrete block building on Gallaher street in which to house the machines, while the second story furnished a suitable place in which to hold meetings.

On several occasions in the last three years the members of the Post, with their chemical engines, have been of great service to the city and surrounding communities, completely taking the place of the old City Fire Department, and with much greater efficiency.



Williams, Photographer

THE NEW COURT HOUSE