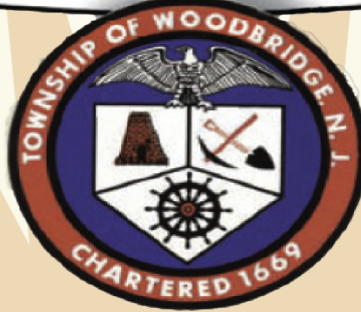


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Historic Tour of
WOODBRIDGE

Volume XIII

“Over Here”

Woodbridge & World War I

Compiled by the
Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

First Edition – 2021

Urging sale of bonds through propaganda efforts



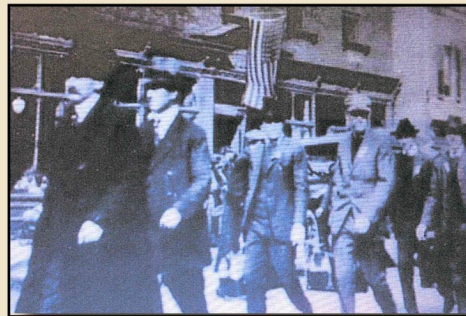
Red Cross "Knit Your Bit" Poster

of the best combat ready armies in the world.

They Answered the Call

The Selective Service Act, signed by Pres. Woodrow Wilson on May 18, 1917, created the Selective Service System, which induced nearly three million men into the armed forces over the course of the war. As a result of the Selective Service Act, more than 24 million men registered for the draft, and close to three million men were furnished to the U.S. Army by conscription. Another several hundred thousand were volunteer enlistments.

In Woodbridge, male residents between the ages of 18 to 26 registered for military service in accordance to this newly enacted Selective Service System. Many more Woodbridge residents not applicable to the Selective Service Act, as well as organizations situated in Woodbridge Township also answered the call to serve our great nation in the Great War.



Woodbridge enlistees marching down the street. WWI casualty Edward M Kelly second from right

On the Homefront

To raise money for World War I and to persuade Americans to save rather than spend curbing inflation during the wartime economy, the U.S. government issued Liberty Bonds sold with the promise to pay the money back, with interest, at a later date. Larger bond denominations were purchased by corporations, banks and wealthy individuals raising over 20 billion dollars to finance the war. To attract enabling middle-income residents in Woodbridge to participate in the war effort, smaller denominations of the bonds were offered.

Every citizen in Woodbridge was urged to purchase Liberty Bonds with many local organizations entering in friendly competition to see who could sell the most. Various posters bearing the slogan, "If you can't enlist, INVEST" were created to publicize the buying of bonds over time. Advertising Liberty Bonds were used in WW1 propaganda campaigns with slogans like "Beat back the Hun," and scenes displaying the American Expeditionary Forces rescuing a victim from the atrocities of war.

Civic leaders of Woodbridge including E.H Boyton, Colby Dill and Andrew Keyes created a Home Defense League. The league induced nearly every able-bodied man to dress in uniform, take up arms, and drill during their spare time to be ready in the event the war might reach American soil.

World War I Begins

The Great War, later known as World War I, began in 1914 with the assassinations of Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and his wife by a Bosnian Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip on June 28, 1914. This sparked a chain of events that led to the outbreak of World War I later dubbed "the war to end all wars." The conflict was fought between two combatant sides: Central Powers which included Germany, Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria; and the Allied Powers which included Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Japan and the United States (1917.) New military technologies and the horrors of trench warfare resulted in the deaths of over eight million servicemen by the time the Germans signed the armistice on November 11, 1918 to end the fighting. Uncertainties exist about the number of civilian deaths attributable to the war, but it is estimated World War I claimed an additional 13 million civilian lives largely caused by starvation, exposure, disease, military encounters and massacres.

America's Entrance into World War I (1917-1918)

As the battles waged in Europe, the United States remained on the sidelines supporting President Woodrow Wilson's policy of neutrality. The country's neutrality was difficult to maintain with Germany's unchecked submarine aggression against neutral ships. Growing protest over passenger vessels sunk by German U-boats, most famously the Lusitania in 1915, resulting in American casualties turned the tide of public opinion against Germany and pushed the United States along the road to war. On April 2, 1917 Woodrow Wilson appeared before Congress and called for a declaration of war against Germany, and on April 6th the United States officially entered the Great War.

The United States economic and military contributions proved to be a turning point of the war. The Allies' effort against the Central Powers was strengthened by U.S. supplies and major extension of credits in the form of U.S. loans to Allies maintaining the flow of U.S. arms and food across the Atlantic. In addition to the U.S. economic assistance, American military contribution proved as important.

The American Expeditionary Forces (AEF)

During the course of the Great War, over four million U.S. men served in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) with roughly half deployed to Western Europe to fight the Imperial German Empire Army. On May 10, 1917, President Wilson installed General John Joseph "Black Jack" Pershing as supreme commander of the newly formed AEF. Pershing, president of the West Point class of 1886, served in the Spanish Philippine-American Wars, as well as led an expedition into Mexico to capture Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa.

Roughly 130,000 to 150,000 servicemen in the AEF, who were often called "doughboys," hailed from New Jersey and entered combat toward the end of 1917. Initially, the AEF was used to fill gaps in the British and French armies. General Pershing resisted having U.S. troops deployed as replacements in Allied units, and due primarily to General Pershing's expertise in military training and supply logistics, by the end of WWI the AEF was transformed into one

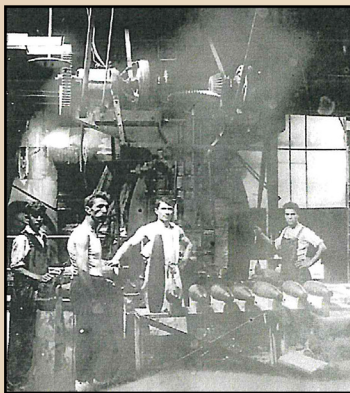
U.S. General Hospital #3, Colonia NJ

When the United States military joined the Allied Forces on the European battlefields in 1917, the need for statewide hospitalization, surgical repair, and rehabilitation was anticipated for the wounded soldiers.

Orthopedic surgeon and bone graft pioneer Fred Houdlett Albee MD, a resident in the Colonia section of Woodbridge Township, spent four months during 1916 in wartime France where he taught bone grafting and limb-saving techniques in military hospitals. Prior to his involvement in the war, Dr Albee, with his stellar record of education at Bowdoin College and Harvard Medical School, practiced and taught orthopedic surgery in New York City hospitals traveling from the local Colonia train station.

Woodbridge's Natural Resources

Woodbridge, along with neighboring towns in the central New Jersey area, was home to some of the richest clay deposits. This natural soil mineral contributed to the opening of factories to manufacture terra cotta in the late 19th century. In 1906-07, four local terra cotta plants merged to form Atlantic Terra Cotta becoming one of the largest terra cotta manufacturers in the United States. In 1909 Charles Greer, the first president of this newly formed merger, left to establish Federal Terra Cotta in Woodbridge, NJ. Federal Terra Cotta became an important producer of architectural ornamentation and extruded wall ashlar used to construct the McGraw Hill Building in New York City and Asbury Park's Convention Hall.



Federal Terra Cotta workers, ca 1918, in front of a machine used to press clay slabs into terra cotta bombs.

Upon the United States' entry into World War I in April 1917, many manufacturing companies scaled down on the production of domestic goods to produce war-related materials. Federal Terra Cotta, at the request from the War Department in Washington D.C., was commissioned to mass-produce practice "dummy" bombs from the terra cotta clay material for the Army Air Corps. An order was placed for 500,000 practice bombs. This Woodbridge site, along with other local factories in Perth Amboy and Staten Island, manufactured these hollow-clay practice bombs made from coarse red terra cotta and filled with white powdered plaster that would explode upon impact marking a visible area to show the accuracy of a practice drop.

The Armistice of November 11, 1918 ended the land, sea, and air fighting in World War I. Production of the practice bombs ceased and the terra cotta plants returned to manufacturing building material, grave markers, chimney pots, and a variety of other items. Many unused dummy bombs lay abandoned next to a railroad siding at the Federal factory location and were forgotten until its discovery during a site visit in October 2001. A museum staff along with members of the Woodbridge Historical Association uncovered 124 bombs during the site find. This discovery served as a reminder of the first use of aerial bombing during war and added to Woodbridge Township's rich history through its efforts with the United States' involvement in World War I.

The Morgan Munitions Depot Explosion

The T.A. Gillespie Company Shell Loading Plant, constructed along the coastline of Middlesex County in the Morgan area of Sayreville, was one of the world's largest munition factories, employing more than 6,000 workers who



WWI practice bombs discovered at location of former Terra Cotta factory.

labored around the clock producing 32,000 artillery shells a day for overseas military action during World War I.

At 7:30pm on October 4, 1918, an initial explosion triggered a fire at the Gillespie Company Plant that set off multiple explosions over the next 48 hours wreaking havoc on neighboring towns including Woodbridge. The Philadelphia, PA Evening Public Ledger publication headlined the story as "12 Towns Shattered by Morgan Explosions: Populace in Flight." In Woodbridge Township, residents experienced shattered windows as well as broken dishes and glassware. Damages were reported more than 20 miles away as far as Manhattan and Asbury Park, NJ.



Man standing in the enormous crater created by the explosion

Government authorities declared martial law ordering the evacuation of approximately 62,000 citizens in Sayreville, South Amboy, and Perth Amboy. The population of those affected towns were in need of outside help. Reported in the October 5, 1918 final edition of The Evening World, a publication in New York, Lucy M. Ryder, who was the Superintendent of the New York Infirmary, organized a corps of nurses to arrive at the Sewaren section of Woodbridge Township. The Sewaren Hotel which had closed in 1913, opened its doors to act as a relief unit for the many refugees victimized by the disaster.

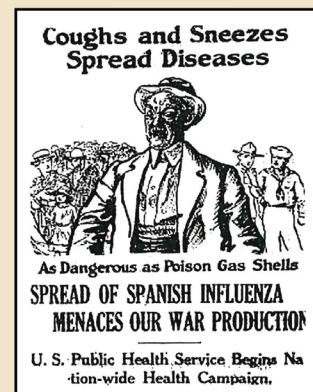
Among those involved in the rescue efforts were the US Coast Guardsmen stationed along the Raritan River in Perth Amboy and Woodbridge. Two guardsmen tragically died while twelve received Navy Crosses for rescuing victims and moving a train loaded with TNT away from the fires and the sequence of explosions.

After the third day of the ordeal, approximately 100 people were killed, over 300 buildings were destroyed, and many more were injured. Evacuated and homeless persons were forced to seek shelter in neighboring towns. Several families were sheltered at Rahway Prison (now

East Jersey State Prison) located in the Avenel section of Woodbridge Township. The makeshift conditions and close proximity of the accommodations made the evacuees more susceptible to the 1918 influenza pandemic. It was estimated many more hundreds perished from this disease as a result of the relocations contributing to October 1918 as the deadliest month in the U.S. during the pandemic when 195,000 Americans succumbed to the flu in that month alone.

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

When assessing the aftermath of the Great War, the toll World War I took in terms of deaths and casualties is complicated by the 1918 influenza pandemic. What was called the "Spanish Flu" infected nearly a third of the earth's human population killing an estimated 50 million including some 675,000 Americans. With the large scale of infections going unreported, no one was prepared for the deadly pandemic that would ensue. Little could be done to stop the spread of the virus as vaccines and antibiotics were not readily available from doctors and health practitioners. Prevention focused on quarantine and personal hygiene through



US Public Health Service ad

a nationwide health campaign.

Woodbridge was not spared. Some of the injured soldiers from the European front, who were admitted to the U.S. General Army Hospital #3 in Colonia, brought the deadly disease back home. Woodbridge has always been a transportation hub and the crossroads of a populated area where travelers passed through the town by trains, boats, and other means of public transportation. Consequently, examination of Woodbridge death records verified the death rate in town increased significantly during that period. Many of the deaths occurred at the Army Hospital #3 or at the Woodbridge Emergency Hospital set up as a temporary make-shift hospital to quarantine and treat those affected by the "Spanish Flu."

The Legacy

World War I brought Americans into the 20th Century. Advanced technologies and social upheaval gave way to industrialization ushering in the modern-day era. While Europe was devastated by the ravages of war, America saw its economy boom. Towns, like Woodbridge, located close to large urban cities benefited from this transformative economy that laid the foundations for modern society. World War I led to pivotal changes in America's culture, technology, economy, and our country's role in the world. It redefined how we saw ourselves as Americans and its legacy continues today.



Dr. Fred Albee

U.S. Surgeon General William Crawford Gorgas planned for Army Hospitals #1 and #2 in Washington and Boston respectively, but they were never built. However, Dr. Albee's persistence while searching for a hospital location and a meeting with his neighbor, Charles D. Freeman, who owned a large estate on New Dover Road in Colonia, were the driving forces for the U.S. General Hospital #3. Mr. Freeman offered his land and home in Colonia and gave Dr. Albee power of attorney over the 200-acre estate.

As the only civilian surgeon during the war, Dr. Albee took action to organize and build U.S. General Hospital #3. Construction began on February 2, 1918 moving materials and supplies by means of a railway spur constructed to the northeast corridor railhead at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million. By the summer of 1918, 500 beds were open with the first patient, Private Charles Blalock, admitted on July 5, 1918 with tuberculosis of the spine. Admissions increased quickly as the hospital grew to 2,000 beds and 110 buildings. The complex also included a swimming pool, heating plant, kitchens and mess halls, laundry plant, fire department and telephone network. A chapel was built in 1919 where religious services were held.

Medical services for those patients were extensive including orthopedics, general surgery, neurology, anesthesia, artificial limb manufacturing and a department for the eye, ear, nose and throat. At the time it was one of the most complete hospitals in the country providing the largest orthopedic military surgical service. Many orthopedic cases involved severe injuries to the extremities due to shrapnel and explosives. Wounded men arrived at the Colonia hospital with nonhealing wounds due to amputations undergone at field hospitals in Europe.

State-of-the-art techniques, such as the Carrel-Daken solution introduced and overseen by Dr. Albee, prevented infection and other serious repercussions. Of those who arrived, not everyone would benefit from Dr. Albee's pioneering expertise with bone grafting and wound management to save limbs.

Equally important was the work of rehabilitating post-traumatic stress disorder to prepare the WWI veterans for return to productive civilian life. Physical therapy offered at the Army Hospital helped men adjust to artificial limbs and promote self-confidence. A Curative Workshop taught skills such as carpentry, drafting, printing, welding, automobile mechanics, and construction of artificial limbs. Academic classes were offered in subjects including mathematics, reading, writing, and business administration. As a result of these workshops, most patients returned to active civilian life while some continued to work in the Curative Workshop to assist making prosthetic limbs.



Curative Workshop for Hospital Patients

During its 15 months of operation, some 6,000 injured military men were treated at the U.S. General Hospital #3 in Colonia. After the Armistice was declared on November 18, 1918, the hospital was ordered to decommission in the spring of 1919. With over 1000 patients still in need of care at Colonia in 1919, Dr. Albee traveled to Washington to acquire an extension to the required shut down. After his initial request was denied, his persistence gained a reprieve of several months to provide necessary treatment to the many remaining patients. When most of these patients were discharged and the remaining transferred to permanent military hospitals, the U.S. General Hospital #3 closed in October 1919.

Dr. Fred Albee would turn his post-WWI efforts toward the peacetime treatment of injured workers. He would later lobby for the creation of the New Jersey Commission for Rehabilita-

tion and serve as its Chairmen for 28 years. In 1939, he was awarded the New Jersey Distinguished Service Cross. Two years prior to his passing, he would pen his autobiography in 1943, **A Surgeon's Fight to Rebuild Men** documenting the Woodbridge Township resident's time at the U.S. General Hospital #3 and his work in the advancements in orthopedic surgery and bone grafting. Today, a marker erected by Woodbridge Township Historical Preservation Commission is located on S. Park Drive in Colonia to commemorate the army hospital and Dr. Albee's medical and surgical contributions.



Front page of an Over Here publication

Over Here


With the vocational skills the patients acquired, the wounded servicemen published their own newspaper, *Over Here*, the "Official Publication of U.S. Army General Hospital, No. 3"

The newspaper name was in reference to the patriotic song "Over There" popular with the U.S. military and became a common phrase of the time to rally young men to enlist and fight the war. The publication ran many stories of sports and cultural activities in the Woodbridge area, contributing to the morale and recovery of the patients. Among the activities held and reported in the newspaper were athletic events featuring the basketball and wrestling teams sponsored by the hospital, theatrical group performances and "Amputation Dances" designed to raise the morale and recovery of the soldiers who returned back home.



*Panoramic view of General Hospital No. 3, Colonia, N.J.
National Library of Medicine, public domain*

Panoramic view of U.S. General Hospital



This list includes the names of those from this township who were in the United States service, in the Army and Navy, during the “War of Nations” in Europe, and was obtained through the courtesy of Sergeant Charles H. Kuhlman, of Company H, 311th Infantry, American Expeditionary Forces:

Woodbridge- Charles Anness, Marion C. Anness, Roy Anderson, Thomas Bennett, Joseph Bernards, Percy G. Browne, Captain C. A. Campbell, Jr., Thomas Cody, David Coffey, Commander Michael J. Conlon, Charles Corey, John J. Coughlin, Henry Debennerdo, Angus A. Deter, John A. Dobermiller, Joseph Dorosch, Charles W. Drews, Henry and Wallace Drews, Stanley Drummond, Charles Dunham, George F. Dunigan, Joseph J. Einhorn, John J. Einhorn, Lieutenant Ralph Ensign, Edward J. Everett, Joseph Everett, Joseph Farkus, Patrick H. Fenton, Joseph G. Ferraro, Corporal George F. Finn, Edward A. Finn, Joseph Flanagan, Joseph Flecshuk, Edgar Freeman, George Fromme, Kendal Fromme, Raymond J. and Andrew J. Gerity; Wilton Z. Gilman, Sergeant-Major August F. Greiner, Corporal Peter P. Greiner, Charles J. Greiner, Captain B.W. Hoagland, Lewis P. Hoagland, William J. Holohan, Joseph Holzheimer, George Houser, Howard Huber, John Huerster, Patrick J. Hughes, Martin F. Jaeger, Jr., Leo E. Jardot, Edward Kath, Henry L. and Thomas F. Kath; George R., James E. and Peter F. Keating; Charles Kellerman, John Kenczal, John A. Kennedy, John F. Killeen, William P. Klein, Joseph Kolodish, Walter Koyen, Sergeant Charles H. Kuhlman, Michael J. Langan, Sergeant Alfred F. Larkin, Robert L. Larsen, J. Furman Lee, Arthur B. Levi, Stanley Lockwood, William Lorch, Gregory W. Love, Victor N. Love, Arthur H. Ludwigsen, Sherman W. Lusk, Alexander MacPhee, John Maczarski, Corporal Daniel Maider, Louis Maider, Gurov Makarchuk, Lester Martin, Frederick Mawbey, Matthew L. McCarter, Hugh McCloskey, Sergeant E.J. McDonald, John J. McDonald, Allen P. McDonnell, Leon A. McElroy, Russell McElroy, Edward J. McLeod, John S. McLeod, Major W.H. McNair, Sergeant Edwin W. Melick, Jose Menendez, Gilbert M. Meredith, Jr., William C. Mesick, Frank Miller, Captain Raymond R. Moore, Arthur J. Morrissey, Joseph Muka, George Mundy, Benjamin Nathan, Henry Neder, Albert E. Nelson, Sidney and Raymond Noe; Peter J. North, John and Henry O'Brien; George L. and John Olbrick, Derk J. Oldenbloom, Sergeant Leo Ostraw, Earl E. Overholt, William E. Paine (colored), Harold C. Peck, Roy, Arthur T., Abel C. and Seth Peterson; Peter Peterson, Lieutenant J. Berry Potter, Corporal L. Runyon Potter, Stanley Potter, Trofin Racok, Steven Remais, Henry Ryder, Martin and Winfield Ryder; Charles Roder, Jules A. Romond, George Rudovic, Paul Sabo, Stephen Sabo, John Sagjady, Angelo Scalzo, Louis Schack, Sergeant-Major Barron W. Schoder, Stewart A. Schoder, John Sedlack, Louis Silksay, Joseph Silas, Anthony Silkoskie, Michael Slobodien, Frank Stongeski, Robert Sullivan, T.J. Sullivan, Herbert Taylor (colored), William D. Taylor, Michael J. Trainor, Charles A. and William Treen; Mariona Trobenillo, Homer Vagelos, Lieutenant Earl Valentine, Louis R. Valentine, Sergeant R.G. Valentine, Joseph Varanai, Benjamin W. Vogel, John O. Volonuth, Cesore Vornali, Walter Walsh, Thomas and Alexander Wand, Edward C and Herman Weber, Major J.C. Williams, Charles Woglom, Corporal Henry J. Yusko and Louis Zehrer.

Port Reading- James E. Anzorino, Thomas Anzisine, Raffaele Benzullo, Biogio Antonelli, Ernest Burrows, Enoch G. Bylecki, Ellis Chapman, David W. Carpenter, Patrick Cassidy, Pietro Cappolini, Pasquale Casale, Nicholas Cerbus, Matti Cotrigno, Matteo Ciuffredo, Antonio De Andrea, Sabato Defazio, Carmen De Luca, Biogio De Luca, Saverio De Marino, Angelo Dettessio, Angelo Doppolito, Cornelius Doody, Jr., Michael and Michele Eonato; Valentine Felice, Michael Fitzpatrick, Martin J. Greisheimer, John Hadam, George H. Hoer, John C. Herman, William Hilton, Carl F. and Peter M. Jensen, Christian P. Larsen, Joseph Maklinsky, Frederick W. Mezier, Jr., Biogio Minicci, Natali and Sabatino Minucci; Rocco Minichillo, Frederick and Henry Neibank; Raymond Neville, Peter R. Peterson, Clarence O. Redd, Rafak Renzullo, Salvatore Ricci, George Richardson, Guiseppe Rogucci, Anaungio Rosso, Luigi and Nicholas Russo; Joseph Saposa, Andrea Sasso, Michael Sasso, Charles H. Schaffer, John Sciarpeletti, Barardino Scutti, William Seel, Antonio Siano, Giovanni Siano, Guiseppe Simeone, Corporal Gorman N. Steel, Joseph P. Steiner, Francesco Teta, Christopher Thompson, Peter M. Thompson, Matteo Totarro, Felix Travostino.

Fords- Edward J. C. Balderston, Jacob Boelhouwer, Andrew H. Clausen, Leroy I. Cyrus, Russell H. Dunham, John R and Thomas R. Egan; E.S. Genge, Corporals Alfred Geiling and Eugene J. Geiling; Corporal Carl W. Hansen, Rasmus E. Hansen, Genge Jakub, Eli Jensen, Dennis Klomsky, Sol. Klomoseky, Arthur R. Lind, Corporal Charles A. Lipka, Carl Marchese, Myers Marchese, Lind R. Osear, Boginskie Stadiuk, William Stuart, Jr., Carl Sundquist, John Sundquist, Carl L. Marchere, Salvatore Marino, Harry J. Mundy, Sergeant Raymond W. Mundy, Harry Murdock, Samuel J. Olsen, Harry Peterson, Guido S. Pians, Rudolph Rasmussen, Gerald Reynolds, Joseph Ward, Harry Wenigar and Edward Zich.

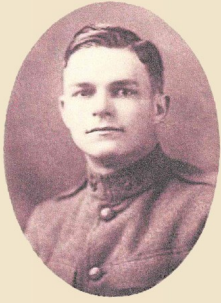
Sewaren- Herman J. Bauman, Captain Albert Boynton, John Brcining, Ensign Robert L. and William B. Clarkson; Corporal Joseph Coley, Wallace Christie, Jerome Cuppia, John C. Fowler, Roger Gimbermat, Wesley Hall, Herbert D. Hammett, Oswald Higgins, Edward Hunter, Lieutenant Alphonse LaFon, O.W. Marks, Alfred Mason, Lieutenant J.C. Neff, Edward G., Harry W. and Robert M. Pender; Yeppe Peterson, Charles Peterson, James R. Quackenbush, Nobel Wyman Sheldon, Andrew, Edward and Henry Simonsen; Maurice Smith, Lieutenant Herman Switzer, Howard R. Tappen, Harold Whitake and Walter F. Zettlemyer.

Keasbey- Charles J. Blum, Julius Copernacke, Joseph F. Fafrovitch, Francis and Michael Fee; George Fullerton, Julius Glot'f, William Gloff, John Kimas, Sergeant Dewey H. Klein, Jacob Lowenkopf, Andrew P. Lutreas, Michael J. Parsler, George Perhaski, John Peterson, Charles Pfeiffer, Charles and James A. Romer; Harry Schilcocks, Michael Stark, Joseph Toth, Joseph Vilosky and Joseph J. Wilkanowski.

Avenel- Harry J. and William F. Baker; John and Philip Denbleyker; John Fox, Michael Hopta, Sidney Levi, Robert McCracken, J. Lloyd Schiller, Oscar L. Schiller and Thomas Thompson, Jr.

Ellendale Terrace- John Jaucisko, Michael Kochik, John Malnosky, August and Paul Matthews; Stephen Novak, Andrew Samo and Stephen Sutch.
Iselin- Charles Bonhardt, Frank E. Cooper and Michael Tomaso.

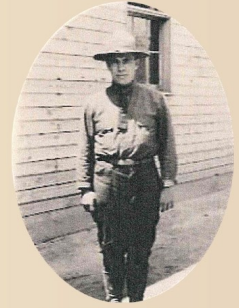
In Memorium - WWI Deceased



Lawrence Ballard



Charles Farrell, Jr.



Charles Marty



Godfride Bjork



John Griffins



Joseph Resh



Stanley Carlson



J.G. Hendre



William Senson



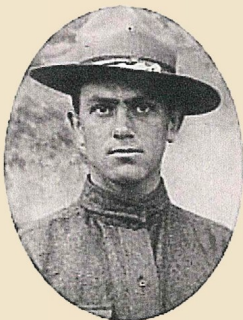
Antonio Coppola



Edward Kelly



Thomas Terp



Ira C. Dunn



Stephen Kocsi



Harley Wilbert

Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

The mission of the Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission is to inform, educate, advise and unite public officials and the community at large as an advocate for the preservation of the rich history of Woodbridge Township.

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Historical Association
of Woodbridge Twp.
Brenda Velasco,
Township Historian

Special Thanks to Mayor John E. McCormac



American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Memorial
located between Woodbridge Main Library and Woodbridge High School

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New Jersey Historical Commission.

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