


An Historical Review of the 1918 Pandemic and Its Legacy


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The findings and conclusion in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Agenda


- The Context of the Pandemic – Life in 1918
- The Pandemic
 - Epidemiology
 - Disease Characteristics
 - Medical Care and Countermeasures
 - Non-pharmaceutical Interventions
- Pandemic Sequela
- Pandemic Preparedness Today
 - Continuing risks
 - Preparedness and Response Capabilities

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The World in 1918: At War

www.museumandcafe.com/item.php?id=567144

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U.S. Joins War Effort April 6, 1917

- Lack of planning → confusion and inefficiency in first 12 months
- Army Increases
 - 378,000 in April 1917 → 4.1 million by war's end¹
 - Draft age
 - Originally 21-30
 - Expanded to 18-45 in May, 1918
 - Monthly call-ups cancelled Sep/Oct²
- Men, food, ammunition, and **money** were needed for war effort



www.influenzaarchives.org

The Effect of Wartime Conditions



<http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20140628/news/14062923/>



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Crowding - Military

- Army camps built for 35,000 men quickly housed 45,000
- 1917-1918 winter had been coldest on record east of Rockies
- Efforts to reduce number of men in tents
- Crowding assessed at Camp Humphreys (VA)
 - regiment with 78.5 feet²/soldier experienced 2.5% disease rate
 - regiment with 45 feet² /soldier experienced 26.7% disease rate¹
 - 10X risk of disease in more crowded regiments
 - 5X risk of disease with complications



YooniImages.com

Crowding - Civilian



<https://royhistorywalks.wordpress.com/tag/lower-east-side/>

- Work: War industries adding tens of thousands of workers
- Home:
 - Up to four families in one apartment
 - Rooming house boarders sharing beds (working and sleeping in shifts)
 - Tenement outhouses used by dozens of families
- School: Growing public school system
- Entertainment:
 - Amusement parks
 - Nickelodeons
 - Dance halls

Movement

- Massive troop movement
- Troop movement allowed infection to move from camp to camp
- 10,000 men shipped to France every day in the summer of 1918¹
- Civilian movement as well
 - To cities for jobs
 - On burgeoning mass transit systems to and from work



U.S. Military History: U.S. Army in WWI Era

<https://archive.org/details/historyoftranspo06g>

“Modern” Medicine and Public Health System

- 1912 Federal Food and Drug Act
- Many vaccines available
 - US soldiers vaccinated for typhoid¹ and smallpox²
- PH Service over 100 years old
 - Established in 1789
 - Widespread legitimacy of
 - Surveillance
 - Quarantine
 - Isolation



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<https://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/public-health-service-commissioned-corp/>

¹Shanks: How World War I changed global attitudes to war and infectious diseases, Lancet. 2014. 384:1699-1707.
²https://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/public-health-service-commissioned-corp/
