

MAHANAOY CITY CHRONICLES/Researched by Lorraine Stanton

The war years of 1917-18...

Remember Your First Thrill of AMERICAN LIBERTY



YOUR DUTY—Buy
United States Government Bonds
2nd Liberty Loan of 1917

By BILL O'BRIEN
Herald writer

MEMORIAL DAY 1988 finds few, if any, veterans of World War I still around in Mahanoy City.

Those war years of 1917-18 were times of great patriotic fervor in town. Flag raisings, patriotic programs and parades were held at practically every colliery. Each contingent of enlistees who left for military training camp was escorted in a parade to the railroad depot where throngs gathered to see them off.

Liberty Bond campaigns were conducted in every community to help the government finance the war. Additional drives were undertaken to collect tobacco and other sundries for the doughboys.

Those years leading up to World War I were the peak of the boom for Mahanoy. The population in the 1910 census was 15,936 and with the influx of immigrants still in progress, the number of residents undoubtedly surpassed 16,000 between 1910 and 1917.

Then came the war and the turning point. Hundreds of men left for the service and the downtrend began. By 1920, with the war long over and the soldiers mustered out, the borough had dropped 15,599 residents, a decrease of 33%.

Since then, it's been a constant downside. The 1980 census listed 6,167 and this had fallen to 5,650 by July 1, 1986, according to U.S. Census Bureau updates.

During the war years, some people kept scrapbooks with newspaper clippings of the

happenings. It was a time unlike any other before it, with hundreds of young men marching away, soon followed by increasing telegraph messages from the battlefield of France report men dying in battle or from the staggering severity of the flu bug that quickly led to fatal pneumonia during worldwide Spanish influenza epidemic of that period.

It was a time when people wanted to keep memoirs so that their children and grandchildren would know what it was like. One such ledger (compiler unknown) is the source of the following items which provide some idea of events that kept the people of Mahanoy City watching the front pages in 1917-18:

1917

March 29 — Mahanoy City Company E, Pennsylvania National Guard, commanded by Captain Abraham Hinch, officially assigned to 8th Regiment with presentation of regimental flag.

April 6 — United States enters war with Germany.

May 17 — 12,000 participated in borough's patriotic parade.

June 14 — County war bond campaign raises \$1,275,000.

July 11 — Cpl. W. W. Gipe decorated by France and United States for bravery.

July 29 — Harry Norris first local soldier injured.

Sept. 12 — W. A. Dennis missing in action.

Sept. 20 — M. Schierka killed.

Sept. 25 — M. Lazar, U.S. Marines, killed.

Oct. 8 — J. Tarquini wounded.

Oct. 11 — William Karnaros wounded.

Oct. 12 — J. J. McCall wounded.

Oct. 16 — I. M. Dresibach injured in action.

Oct. 26 — J. J. Wargo died of wounds received Oct. 20 while serving with field artillery.

Oct. 30 — Sgt. Ralph Roebuck wounded.

Nov. 1 — Cpl. Edward Brownmiller wounded.

Nov. 2 — Pvt. Frank Wesner wounded.

Nov. 4 — Francis McCullough and Anthony Kulinsky wounded.

Nov. 7 — Joseph Wassel wounded.

Nov. 13 — Charles Althoff wounded.

Nov. 12 — John B. Dempsey missing in action.

Nov. 15 — Angelo Consorte and Stiney Daniels wounded.

Nov. 20 — John Hoben wounded; Walter Jones taken prisoner.

1918

Jan. 21 — Nationwide heatless Monday observed to conserve coal for war effort.

March 5 — Pvt. Michael Christoff died.

May 28 — Pvt. James Coleman killed.

June 11 — Cpl. W. E. Geise decorated by France and U.S. for Chateau-Thierry bravery.

June 15 — Cpl. George W. Reese and Pvt. Joseph Hall killed in France.

June 19 — Pvt. Michael Andras killed.

June 22 — Pvt. Joseph Kaiser killed.

Aug. 6 — Mahanoy City and Tamaqua boys in 108th Machine Gun Battalion taking casualties in heavy fighting.

Aug. 7 — Sgt. Edward Romanosky

killed.

Sept. 1 — Pvt. Hayden Davis died at Fort Bank Hospital.

Sept. 5 — Pvt. William Karnaros, wounded last Oct. 11, this time killed in action.

Sept. 18 — Pvt. John J. McCall died in France.

Sept. 20 — Boatswain John Dodds died in New York Navy Hospital.

Sept. 20 — Pvt. Harry T. Boyle killed.

Oct. 1 — Pvt. Bart McCloskey died.

Oct. 3 — Pvt. Joseph Kasparavich died.

Oct. 4 — Pvt. Daniel McCullin killed.

Oct. 6 — Pvt. Michael J. Lucyk died.

Oct. 7 — Pvt. George Schlier died; Pvt. John Gastager died; Pvt. John Dolne killed.

Oct. 9 — Cpl. Francis Weeks killed; Pvt. Richard Sheehan killed; Pvt. John Muldoon died of flu; Pvt. William McLaughlin killed.

Oct. 10 — Pvt. Joseph Donahue killed.

Oct. 11 — Pvt. William Harris died; Pvt. Edward Dreisbach died.

Oct. 14 — Pvt. John Telesky died; Pve. Florinde Deliska died.

Oct. 15 — Pvt. John Bedding killed; Pvt. Mike Floor died.

Oct. 16 — Pvt. Patrick Doris killed.

Oct. 19 — Pvt. John Burke died.

Oct. 22 — Pvt. Angelo Consorte died of wounds.

Oct. 25 — Pvt. Frank Dochney died.

Oct. 28 — Pvt. Guiseppa DiBenedetto died of wounds.

Oct. 29 — Austria surrenders.

Oct. 31 — Turkey surrenders.

Nov. 5 — Pvt. William Barbaris died of wounds.

Nov. 6 — Pvt. Leo Raczkowski killed; Sgt. Stephen Walk died.

Nov. 7 — Germany surrenders; Pvt. John Cooper died.

BOYS OFF TO WAR — This was the scene at the Reading Railroad Depot in Mahanoy City on May 28, 1918, when a group of men left for military service. The

troop train is standing on the eastbound track. At right is the freight station and just below it the passenger station, both now gone from the scene, as are the doughboys

who marched away to fight the Kaiser on that May morning 70 years ago this weekend.



Nov. 8 — Pvt. Claude Wertz died.

Nov. 11 — Armistice signed. War ends.

ONE OF Mahanoy City's fallen sons was buried at sea: Joseph F. Donaho. Fourteen others rest in the soil of France: Matthew Andruscavage, Harry T. Boyle, Joseph DiBenedetto, Angelo Consorte, John Muldoon, William McLaughlin, Richard Sheehan, George Reese, David Yourosky, Garrett English, Daniel McCullough, George Kropp, John Cooper, Patrick Doris.

Four local women served their country as military nurses. Mary Williams saw duty with the AEF in France, Ida May Davies, Camilla Dilibio and Mary Thomas served in stateside hospitals.

SONGS OF WAR were the most popular melodies on stage and in the music stores during the two years that America was in the conflict.

Many folks today remember the more familiar tunes of World War I such as "Over There," "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag," "Til the Clouds Roll By," and "Hinky Dinky Parlez Vous."

But how about these ditties which have been long forgotten during the 70 years that have elapsed since that first Armistice Day:

"Good-bye Broadway, Hello France."

"Bing! Bang! Bing 'em on the Rhine."

"Dear Old Pal of Mine."

"I'm Gonna Pin My Medal on the Girl I Left Behind."

"I'd Like to See the Kaiser with A Lily in His Hand."

"If He Can Fight Like He Can Love."

"We Don't Want the Bacon — What We Want Is a Piece of the Rhine."

"When Alexander Takes His Ragtime Band to France."

"When You Come Back."

"Would You Rather Be a Colonel with An Eagle on Your Shoulder or a Private with a Chicken on Your Knee?"

"Au Revoir But Not Good-bye, Soldier Boy."

"Bring Back My Daddy to Me."

"Good-bye Ma! Good-bye Pa! Good-bye Mule!"

"I Don't Know Where I'm Going but I'm on My Way."

"I May Be Gone for a Long, Long Time."

"Lorraine — My Beautiful Alsace Lorraine."

"Meet Me at the Station, Dear."

"Send me Away with a Smile."

"We're Going Over."

"When the Boys Come Home."

"When Yankee Doodle Learns to Parlez Vous Francais."

"Whose Little Heart Are You Breaking Now?"

"Sound off."

"Singing Soldiers."

"Dear Little Boy of Mine."

IT'S A LONG way to Tipperary, says another song of World War I. It's also a long time since the days when all these events made the sombre headlines. How many Mahanoy residents of today ever stop to remember the men and women who served in 1917-18?

Also forgotten by most is the fact that during the 1930s the churches and lodges of Mahanoy paid tribute to the town's fallen heroes of 1917-18 by planting trees at the East End Park, one for each Gold Star.

This Memorial Day would be an appropriate time to think about those long-ago heroes who marched away to help make sure Mahanoy City would be around to celebrate its quasiquintennial.

'Leader Dog' pups available

Program trains dogs to work with the blind

NEW RINGGOLD — The Lions/4-H "Leader Dog for the Blind Puppy Program" has six puppies available for placement in local homes at the end of this month.

The Leader Dog School for the Blind in Rochester, Mich., concluded many years ago that puppies raised in family settings, rather than in kennels, become better leader dogs. These puppies are more socialized, because a family can expose them to people, other animals, noises, steps, and a variety of ground surfaces. They are members of the family from the very beginning.

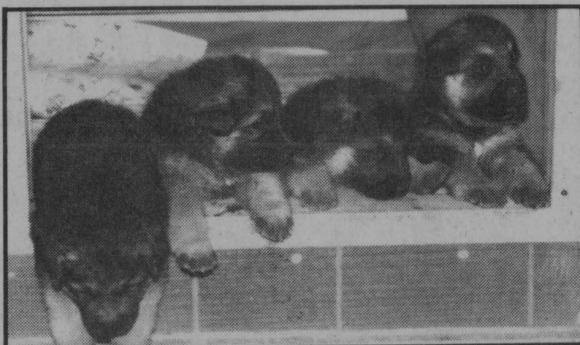
THIS IS VERY important since the leader dog will be the constant companion of a blind person, leading the person through shopping malls, to work and church, across busy streets, and to restaurants.

A 4-H LEADER, CHARLOTTE Williams, owner of Char-Will Kennels, New Ringgold, assists families with the training of the puppies. Only basics are taught,

such as set, stay, down, up and down steps, and walking on a leash. A kennel is provided for each dog, so that damage will not occur when the family is not at home. All medical expenses are paid by the Lions. The family is only responsible for food.

The puppies available now are from a German Shepherd, named Gabby, donated by Williams. Gabby was a leader puppy raised by Fred and Joan Schwer of Pine Grove, and was returned to Pinè Grove from Michigan to have puppies for the program. Puppies in green and white blankets seen at the local malls are from her first litter.

When puppies are approximately 14 months old, they will be transported by someone from the program to the school in Michigan to begin the five to eight months of training. The blind person is also trained at the same school for four



These cute puppies available for adoption!

weeks. When the training is completed, most blind people have what is needed to become self-sufficient. All of this is absolutely free to the blind person.

THE LIONS/4-H green and white bumper stickers state: "Happiness is raising a leader dog puppy." Families will not feel happy for sometime when their puppies leave, but they will be proud when the

puppies finally graduate and are part of the over 6,000 leader dogs placed by the school.

If your family is willing to share a year raising a Shepherd leader puppy, call the Schwerts at 717-345-3122 or Charlotte Williams at 717-943-2624. Puppies not placed by the end of May will be taken to Michigan to be placed in families by the school.

Prison run-a-thon to benefit county VFY

FRACKVILLE — Inmates at the Frackville State Correctional Institution will participate in the eighth annual Pennsylvania Prison Run-a-thon.

The program will take place on June 18 in 12 of the 14 state prisons, and will give more than 1,000 prisoners the chance to help troubled children.

THE INMATES HAVE volunteered to run on tracks inside their prison walls and will contribute all proceeds to the Big Brother-Big Sister-type organization of their choice.

Their goal is to help to keep youngsters out of jail. Inmates say that in a family where children are at the risk of becoming criminals, a good role model may help the youngsters to grow up straight.

"I don't want to see kids follow in my footprints. I don't want them to come to jail," said one inmate.

"MAYBE IF I HAD had someone when I was young, I would never have gone on the streets and into jail," another inmate said.

The run-a-thon will be coordinated by Volunteers in Prison, a program of the Voluntary Action Center that sponsored the first run-a-thon in 1979, after inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Rockview wrote to Marie Hamilton, VAC director, asking for help from the community in order to hold the run.

Proceeds from the runathon at Frackville State Correctional Institution will benefit Volunteers for Youth of Schuylkill County Inc. VFY is the only agency in Schuylkill County that provides Big Brother-Big Sister services, and is affiliated with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.

CONTRIBUTIONS to the run-a-thon may be mailed to the Voluntary Action Center of Centre County, 1524 W. College Ave., No. 8, State College, Pa., 16801. Checks should be made out to the "Pennsylvania Prison Run-a-thon."