North Carolina and World War I

As the United States entered the “war to end all wars” in 1917, no one could imagine a second world war. For the 86,000 North Carolinians who fought in the war and for the 195 Tar Heel nurses who served overseas, as well as for the countless families left behind to wait in anguish, it was the World War.

In this educational packet:

- Read “My Grandfather’s War” from the Fall 2017 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- Follow the first-hand accounts of World War I soldiers, nurses, and families by watching our narrative series, “585 Days, if You’re Lucky”.
- Review “Acting the Past” from the Fall 2017 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- Read “Supporting the War Back Home: North Carolina’s Home Front during World War I” from the Fall 2017 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- One of the Home Front efforts during World War I was posters made with the purpose to raise awareness for ways everyday citizens could help. Research examples of World War I posters and create your own to inspire community involvement; pick your own issue to raise awareness for!
- Take a look at “Nursing in a War Zone: The Women of Base Hospital 65” article from the Fall 2017 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- Madelon “Glory” Battle Hancock was one of the most decorated nurses to serve with the Allied Forces in WWI. Did you know she had North Carolina ties? Find out more about this little-known figure in history by working through our research questions.
- Watch “North Carolina and World War I: LIVE!”, an archived tour of our 2017 award-winning exhibit which featured life-size trenches, a re-created field hospital, a detailed diorama, and of course, artifacts!
- After Germany was defeated in World War I, leaders met in 1919 to sign the Treaty of Versailles. They broke up empires and redrew boundaries. They even created new countries! Spot the differences with our activity sheet!
My Grandfather’s War
by R. Jackson Marshall III*

When I was young, my parents sent me to stay with my grandfather on the family farm each summer after school was out. Back then I thought my grandfather was a very old man. I found out that he was born in 1895 before cars or airplanes had been invented. When he was young, he had to ride a horse or on a horse-drawn wagon when he traveled, or by train if he went a long distance.

My grandfather did not talk very much, and when he did, he was direct and to the point. He did not waste words. He had strong opinions about what was right and what was wrong. He did tell me stories about our family history, especially during the Civil War, and the history of our community all the way back to the French and Indian War in the 1750s. I always felt safe when I was with him. I was named after him. And I wanted to be just like him when I grew up.

In my grandfather’s closet, I discovered an old uniform, and in the pantry off the back porch there was a bag with a scary thing inside it. When his sleeves were rolled up in the summer heat, I noticed that he had an American flag, an ugly skull, and “USA” drawn on his arms (tattoos). I also saw that one of his boots had a crooked slant worn down on the heel. What, I wondered, was all of this about?

As I got older, I asked my grandfather many things, and eventually I learned that they were connected to World War I. In 1917, as a young man, he had left the farm to volunteer in the army. He enlisted when the United States declared war on Germany. It was his uniform in the closet, and he told me what all of the clues on it revealed about his war service.

The American Indian patch meant that he had been in the 2nd Division, and the crossed cannons and “15/A” on the collar discs meant that he served in Battery A, 15th Field Artillery Regiment. The different sets of chevrons revealed that he had been a corporal, that he had served a year and a half in France, and that he was honorably discharged from the army after the war ended.

One of the medals pinned to the uniform was a Purple Heart—that meant he had been wounded in battle!

When I tried to ask him more about the war, he wouldn’t tell me much and usually wanted to talk about something else. Only slowly over time did he tell me about when he had been wounded in the leg by an exploding shell. (This is why his boot heel was worn out crooked when he walked.) His older brother Matt, who served with him, was injured by poison gas. The thing in the bag that scared me when I was young was my grandfather’s gas mask.

Over the years I got him to tell me a few other stories about World War I, but he never seemed interested in telling me much. I later found out from other family members that when he came home from the war, he suffered from terrible nightmares and was really messed up for years before he slowly recovered.

When my grandfather died in 1980, I felt like I had lost my best friend. He taught me the value of learning history, starting with my family history, the history of my community, and the history of the state and nation.

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experienced. I gathered their stories and published a book, "Memories of World War I," so people would not forget them or their service in the war.

I have gone to France many times to walk the World War I battlefields and have been to the place where my grandfather fought and was wounded. Now his uniform and gas mask rest in my closet for another generation to discover, and wonder about, and to learn of his story in the war.

In this issue of Tar Heel Junior Historian, you will read about the discoveries that other people have made to tell us more about World War I, fought 100 years ago. They found clues in old photographs and film, and in letters and diaries. Others studied the artifacts of the war, old helmets and uniforms, weapons and posters, and battlefield relics. Some historians had a chance to listen to the recorded stories of people who lived during the war.

Here we offer examples of how people have pieced together the nearly lost story of North Carolina in World War I. We will learn about some of the soldier experiences in the war, about the nurses who cared for the wounded and sick men in the army hospitals, and of the folks back home who worked in factories, raised money, and took care of the soldiers, all in support of the war.

All of this is offered to commemorate the state’s role in World War I and to encourage students to remember the men and women who served in what they hoped would be “the war to end all wars.”

*Jordane Marshall III is deputy director of the North Carolina Museum of History.

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**Why War?**

**Fear. Jealousy. Pride. Greed.**

Nations have always fought. But World War I was different. It was huge! So many countries were swept into the fight. At first people just called it the Great War. And it was a war like no one had ever seen. New technology gave armies new ways to fight. Machine guns. Tanks. Airplanes. And deadly chemical weapons like poison gas. With these new weapons, armies caused more death and destruction than ever before.

The war lasted four years. By the time it ended in November 1918, more than 9 million soldiers worldwide had been killed. Some 21 million more were wounded.

**CENTRAL POWERS**

- Germany
- Austria-Hungary
- The Ottoman Empire

**ALLIED POWERS**

- Great Britain
- France
- Russia
- Italy
- Japan
- United States

During the war, sending postcards was a popular way to share photos, news, and humor—kind of like Instagram today. This one shows a US soldier firing his gun at the start of Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany.

**Why did Europeans go to war against each other?**

- **Jealousy** between nations over economic wealth and colonial possessions led to secret plots to undermine each other.
- **Pride** led to arrogant beliefs of national superiority.
- **Fear** of losing power drove nations to strengthen their armies and navies. And that led to more fear.

In the years leading up to WWI, terrorists known as anarchists tried to destroy many governments. From 1894 to 1914, 20 world leaders were assassinated. This caused fear and mistrust among nations.

By 1914 European kings, prime ministers, diplomats, and military leaders threw their countries into a horrible war—a war that destroyed some of their nations, permanently damaged others, and cost millions of lives.

**Why did Americans go to war?**

At first, Americans did not want to go to war. They did not want to get involved. But then pressure grew.

- **First**, Germany began sinking unarmed American merchant ships.
- **Second**, Germany was caught plotting to convince Mexico to declare war against the United States.
- **Third**, Great Britain and France were nearing bankruptcy. If they were defeated in the war, they would not be able to repay millions of dollars that they owed to American businesses.

President Woodrow Wilson wanted to make the European countries stop fighting. So he decided that the best way to end the war was for the United States to jump in. He took his case to Congress. And on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany.
585 Days if You’re Lucky

Based on primary sources, these videos share firsthand stories from the trenches, hospitals, and homes of those troubled times.

Watch at: https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/585-days-if-youre-lucky
The actors brought to the project their expertise and experience, but they delved into the history and personalities of the folks they portrayed and gained insights from the film project.

Angie Ottosen-Staheli played one of the nurses. To prepare, she read “everything I could get my hands on about ‘Glory’ Hancock, the WWI nurse who most of my lines were based upon. I felt an obligation to portray her as humanly as possible, and that required understanding how her life experiences shaped her into the strong, spirited, courageous nurse she became.”

Yolanda Rabun, who portrayed a soldier’s mother, shared, “I am a mother, so I used my motherly instincts to estimate how I would feel writing a beloved son who was away from home and potentially in harm’s way. Knowing that the words were real made it easier to share the mother’s journey and mix of emotions because there was a sense of authenticity to them.”

Matthew Hager, who played one of the front-line soldiers, believes his character “begins as the toughest, coolest kid in town and winds up more of an everyman. Knowing my lines were based on the words of a real person made me have a greater reverence for them, and it made me feel more emotionally charged in performance.”

Jackson Bloom, playing another front-line soldier, explained that “it was a gift to work with such specific texts, full of idioms and imagery, and at other times blunt in their frankness. It felt like my character had flesh on the bones already—I didn’t need to work very hard to put blood into the veins.”

Catherine Calloway, whose portrayal of a sweetheart was based on several young women’s letters, decided “the best approach would be to simply make myself, Catherine, the character. After all, I’m from North Carolina, I’m a young woman, and I have people in my life that I would fear for and think about if they went off to war. . . . Speaking lines straight from actual letters was incredibly special to me.”

Handling props is part of an actor’s job, and sometimes that task is more challenging, and more special, than others. Kyle Bullins, who

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played a behind-the-lines soldier, experienced this when he held an original stretcher from the war. “Knowing what this instrument was used for and wondering how it returned after all these years made me emotional for me. And it held the stretcher by myself, so I definitely appreciated the effort it took for two men to carry it and a man on it, because it’s heavy!”

Yolanda noted that she enjoyed “using the lighted candle for a shot. It was a reminder of the simplicity of the time, along with the quiet and stillness of the moment.”

Elura Rogers, who portrayed a nurse in the films, remembered, “I was covered in [theatrical] blood and dirt, especially on my hands. The blood gave me the feeling that I couldn’t touch anything and a kind of helplessness. That feeling matched very well with the helplessness of my character at that moment.”

Matthew remembered acting with the real food that stood in for the awful food of the era. “I was holding the stretcher by myself, so I definitely appreciated the effort it took for two men to carry it and a man on it, because it’s heavy!”

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Men came to North Carolina from all over the country to learn how to be soldiers. Our state was chosen as a location for training bases because of the mild climate. But the winter of 1917 and 1918 turned harsh. At Camp Greene the cold, wet weather turned the clay-soiled camp into a mud pit. There was no sewage system, and the mud prevented the removal of garbage, which led to unsanitary conditions. Oct 23, 1917.Military Japanese from World War II.San Francisco, Calif. Collection of North Carolina Historical Records, School for the Blind. Photograph provided by North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Joining the Fight
When the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, Tar Heels were eager to join the fight. Patriotic fervor swept North Carolina as the state celebrated draft day with patriotic parades and banquets, honoring the men who had enlisted. The nation went to war singing popular songs like “Over There” and “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary.” About 86,000 men and women from North Carolina eventually served in the war.

Training Locally
Soldiers from all over the United States came to Carolina to train. Camp Greene, outside of Charlotte, was the first military base established in 1917. Camp Polk was next, built in Raleigh near the North Carolina State Fairgrounds. Camp Polk served as a tank training facility; barracks and other facilities were set up on Hillsborough Street near the present-day North Carolina State University.

Camp Bragg was established near Fayetteville in September 1918 to train artillery soldiers. The camp was not completed until after World War I ended, however. But the camp was renamed Fort Bragg and became a permanent army base.

Supporting the War Back Home:
North Carolina’s Home Front during World War I
by Kathryn Edwards*

When we think of war, we often think of soldiers. But the story of war is also the story of the folks back home. How did WWI change life for people in North Carolina?

World War I affected North Carolinians in many ways. When tens of thousands of men and women left to serve overseas, those back home in the Old North State took on the task of managing the war effort. It was on the home front where men, women, and children all stepped up to support the cause.

Financing the War from Home
One of the most popular ways that North Carolinians supported the war effort was by selling and purchasing war bonds and savings stamps. Congress passed the First Liberty Bond Act on April 24, 1917. Not only did purchasing the stamps help finance the war, but the practice fostered community spirit and patriotism.

Communities around the state rallied to promote savings stamp sales. Many businesses closed early to encourage people to buy stamps from children selling them on the streets. North Carolina raised more than $27 million for the war effort.

Women Join the Fight
Women of all classes and races mobilized to assist at home with the war effort. Many joined volunteer and relief organizations such as the American Red Cross, the

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Helping from Home!

Students canning food at the North Carolina State Normal and Industrial College (now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro), ca. 1918. Image courtesy of Martha不到Hedges Special Collections and University Archives, University of North Caroli不到as NC, USA.

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YWCA, and the Salvation Army, while others served as nurses in military hospitals and bases throughout the state. The Red Cross even created branches called the Junior Red Cross, which involved children in the war effort.

Feed Yourself Campaign

Feeding America's soldiers during the war created food shortages throughout the country. In 1918 Governor Thomas W. Bickett encouraged North Carolinians to grow their own food in "Victory Gardens" during the Feed Yourself campaign. Farmers grew Victory acres and children grew their own thrift gardens.

Preserving and drying food through canning also increased as those on the home front were urged to conserve food. North Carolina had approximately 142 canning clubs, with a total membership of 12,000 women and girls. The number of 4-H and other agricultural clubs dramatically increased.

Prepping for War

North Carolina's industry improved dramatically as the war brought jobs and money to the state. Textile mills made fabric for uniforms, tents, and equipment. Farmers sold sweet potatoes and corn to feed soldiers. Navy ships were built in Wilmington, Morehead City, and Elizabeth City, while Raleigh Iron Works produced artillery shells. Airplane propellers were manufactured in High Point, and a Sanford plant produced munitions.

North Carolinians can be proud of the many ways they served during World War I.

In the Midst of War—
The School Bus Is Born

Before the 1900s, children had to walk, ride a horse, or ride in a wagon to get to school. Richard Johnson Corbitt helped change that for North Carolina kids. In 1899 he had started the Corbitt Buggy Company in Henderson. Once the "horseless carriage," or automobile, was invented, he converted his factory to make cars and then trucks.

During World War I, the company began building trucks for the United States Army. In 1917 the Corbitt Motor Truck Company built the state's first motorized school bus for Oriental Graded School to help transport children in rural Pamlico County. It was such a success that other schools soon followed.

THINK ABOUT IT

War is terrible. But war and other disasters seem to bring out the best in people. In WWI, North Carolinians saved and recycled. They grew Victory Gardens. People helped each other. They came together for a good cause.

• Were your ancestors in the United States during WWI? What did they do? Who can you ask?
• Why do we wait for war and other disasters to be heroes and do good deeds?
• How can you bring the spirit of the North Carolina home front during war to your daily life in times of peace?
World War I Posters

One of the Home Front efforts during World War I was posters made with the purpose to raise awareness for ways everyday citizens could help. Research examples of World War I posters and create your own to inspire community involvement; pick your own issue to raise awareness for!
Nursing in a War Zone: The Women of Base Hospital 65
by Jessica A. Bandel*

The Army Nurse Corps totaled just 403 nurses when the United States formally entered the First World War in April 1917. The need to establish hospital facilities quickly throughout the nation required an increase in the number of available nurses and prompted the War Department to launch a publicity campaign to recruit volunteers. Nurses across the country answered the call, swelling the corps to 21,480 members.

To qualify for service in the Nurse Corps, an interested applicant had to be an unmarried citizen of the United States or an Allied nation between the ages of 21 and 45. They were required to pass physical, moral, professional, and mental evaluations. The Nurse Corps required a minimum of three years of service, though the term could be shortened through hardship.

For these women, the decision to go to war was not an easy one. When Clara Fredere Sullivan, of Bladen County, announced her intention to serve overseas as a nurse, her parents were adamantly opposed. “Being a daughter, instead of a son,” she later recalled, “it seemed incredible that I should go to war.” The prospect of their daughter crossing an ocean teeming with German submarines terrified her parents. Clara persisted, however, and noted that it “was not long before all were on my side.”

Word soon spread that two North Carolina doctors—John W. Long, of Greensboro, and Frederick M. Hanes, of Winston-Salem—were actively recruiting North Carolinians for service in a medical unit called Base Hospital 65. Interested nurses across the state submitted applications and anxiously awaited a response. If selected, the recruits were formally accepted into the Nurse Corps and assigned to duty stations for advanced training.

Jone Branch Bain, of Granite Falls, was “breathless with excitement” when she received her letter of acceptance into the corps. Accompanying orders instructed her to “proceed without delay” to a general hospital in Waynesville to learn army rules and regulations. Clara Sullivan, who had graduated from the nurse’s program at St. Peter’s Hospital in Charlotte, served temporary duty at Camp Merritt, New Jersey, upon acceptance.

Following their short training assignments, the women of Base Hospital 65 reported to New York City, where they learned drill, took French lessons, received uniforms, obtained passports, and attended lectures in preparation for deployment to France. They numbered 100 total; 90 were from North Carolina.

Their duty station was the Kerhonau Hospital Center just outside of Brest, a harbor city in the northwest of France. The first of their patients arrived before the hospital’s construction was even complete, just days after the women had landed. The nurses struggled to treat the desperately ill patients, mostly influenza cases, without electricity or stoves for heat. Water had to be carried up from a nearby spring. Most windows didn’t yet have glass, exposing sick men to the elements.

“No sick boy was neglected,” remembered May Greenfield Watson, of Kernersville. “We put all our hearts and strength into what we did, but we were so hopeless.” Many of the patients suffered from delirium—confusion brought (continued on page 18)
on by illness—complicating matters for the overburdened nurses. Clara Sullivan tried her best to keep her patients in bed, but in their confused states, some attempted to climb out the windows. Ione Bain likewise struggled with delirious patients. While holding one patient down in bed, she looked over to see another one attempting to escape through a window. Two others had fallen out of bed. Some sang wildly in the darkness. It was a scene that surely played out in every ward.

In its first 10 days of operation, Kerhuon had received more than 2,000 patients. Despite their best efforts, the women were no match for the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic, which claimed an estimated 30 to 50 million lives worldwide. At the height of the crisis, patients at Kerhuon died faster than staff could procure coffins. In one October day alone, the hospital lost close to 70 patients.

"For almost two months, each day was a repetition of the first," remembered Ione Bain, but as the days wore on, new supplies arrived, operations became more systematic, and construction projects were completed. The nurses soon had a bit of free time, which they spent having afternoon tea at a Red Cross hut or exploring the surrounding area. Simple humor also provided much-needed breaks. One afternoon Ione and fellow nurses accompanied an interpreter into Brest to visit some of the town's shops. At one store the interpreter stepped up to the counter and gave his order in French several times before the shopkeeper politely asked, "Sir, would you mind speaking English?" Try as they might, the ladies could not hide their sly smirks.

On November 11, 1918, just two months after the nurses' arrival, news of an armistice broke—the war was over! The nurses' happy rejoicing, however, was cut short by the sudden influx of wounded from the front. All manner of cases poured through the doors and quickly filled the wards to capacity. Clara Sullivan could not erase from her mind the countless patients who had lost one or more limbs. Others were blinded by poison gas.

"There were those whose faces had been marred almost beyond recognition," she recalled. Quite a few had simply gone crazy, a condition known then as "shell shock." The women did their best to mend the seemingly endless number of horribly broken bodies in preparation for the long trip across the Atlantic.

The last of the Tar Heel nurses of Base Hospital 65 returned to their North Carolina homes in November 1919, having served overseas for nearly 14 months. During the course of their deployment, the women of Base Hospital 65, together with nurses from three other hospital units at Kerhuon, provided care to more than 40,000 soldiers-turned-patients. They battled a wide variety of afflictions, everything from contagious diseases such as influenza, pneumonia, and meningitis, to battle wounds, to psychological disorders like anxiety, depression, and what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder.

Though their military careers had ended, the wartime horrors they had witnessed and endured continued to haunt them well beyond the war's end. Given all she had seen—the devastation wrought upon a whole generation of young men—Clara Sullivan adopted a staunch antiwar stance in the postwar years. "No one can conceive of the horrors of war unless they have seen the results of it," she later wrote. "What I saw day after day for months should be enough to convince anyone that war should never again be entered into as a means to settle a dispute between nations."
Madelon “Glory” Battle Hancock

Madelon “Glory” Battle Hancock was one of the most decorated nurses to serve with the Allied Forces in WWI. Did you know she had North Carolina ties? Find out more about this little-known figure in history. Using the websites below as your guide, answer the below research questions.

- https://www.ncpedia.org/hancock-madelon-glory-battle
- https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/world-war-i/glory-hancock
- https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2014/08/13/glory-hancock-world-war-i-nurse

When was Madelon born?

Where in North Carolina did her family move?

What was her father’s profession? What was he known for?

Where did Madelon graduate from in 1905?

List some of the cities and countries that Madelon served in.

How many decorations did Madelon receive for her service? From which countries?

What’s something new you learned about Madelon?
North Carolina and World War I: LIVE!

On March 6, 2018, historian and curator Jackson Marshall III and museum educator Sally Bloom explored the museum’s exhibit to commemorate World War I. With this video you’ll be immersed in a life-size trench environment while seeing weapons and uniforms, a re-created field hospital, a detailed diorama, battlefield relics, and heart-pounding battlefield sounds and sights.

Watch at: https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/north-carolina-and-world-war-i-live-0
Can You Spot the Differences?

Did you know that maps change?

Old maps—called **historical maps**—show what a place looked like long ago.

After Germany was defeated in World War I, leaders met in 1919 to sign the Treaty of Versailles. They broke up empires and redrew boundaries. They even created new countries!

These 2 maps show how the countries of Europe changed. Look closely.

Try to find at least:

- 5 countries that stayed the same.
- 3 countries that changed shape.
- 3 countries whose names changed.
- 3 new countries on Map 2 that did not exist on Map 1.

Try This:

Pick a date way in the past. Find a map for your town, your county, or the State of North Carolina. Compare to a map from today.

- How have things changed?
- What stayed the same?