

“Soldiers will Understand Best” The American Army in World War I

Today the military budget of the United States equals what the next seven world powers spend on their armed forces, combined. This contrasts sharply to 1914 when the mass armies of the great powers of Europe collided on the battlefield, beginning the great struggle we know today as World War I. With weak neighbors and protective oceans cancelling any realistic threat to the homeland, the U.S. at the beginning of the war had an authorized army of only 3,820 officers and 84,799 men, ranking 17th in the world.

The scholar president Woodrow Wilson was determined to stay out of this global conflict and kept the army's leadership on a short leash. But when Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare and conspired with Mexico in 1917, the United States was drawn into the war.

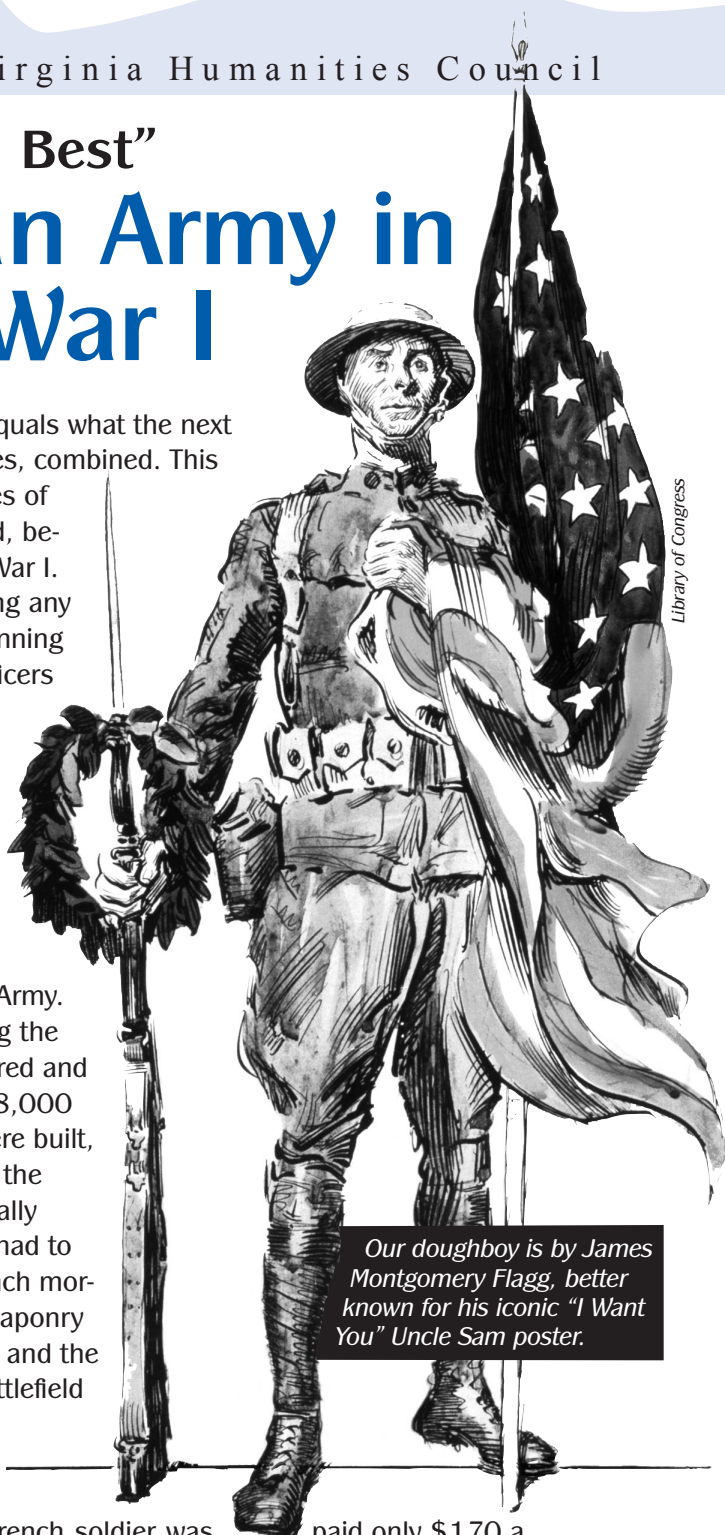
Americans, however, did not rush to the colors. In the first ten days only 4,355 young men joined the Army. Wilson then made a war-winning decision, embracing the military draft. Over 24,000,000 young men registered and some 3,000,000 were later inducted, including 368,000 African-Americans. Meanwhile 32 training camps were built, but the Army lacked the officers to train recruits and the modern weaponry to equip them. The latter never really changed. The greatest industrial power in the world had to rely on foreign tanks, aircraft, artillery, and even trench mortars. Our major contributions to the era's military weaponry — the superior M1917 Browning heavy machine gun and the Browning automatic rifle — did not appear on the battlefield until the last weeks of the war.

On the other hand, U.S. doughboys were the highest-paid soldiers. An American private got \$33 a month if he served abroad. By contrast, a French soldier was paid only \$1.70 a month. The government also furnished life insurance to protect fallen soldiers' families and attempted to provide a healthy environment for new recruits, shutting down red-light districts near U.S. training camps and providing prophylactics for soldiers serving overseas.

Half the American soldiers sent to France were transported by the British because of our small prewar merchant marine. Another 25 percent sailed in confiscated German ships that had been marooned in U.S. ports when war erupted. One German ship, the largest passenger liner in the world, transported more than 150,000 American doughboys over the course of the war. Amazingly, traveling in convoys, only one troop ship was sunk by German torpedoes.

A single and understrength U.S. division landed in France in April 1917. Its commander, John J. Pershing, and his staff had arrived earlier. By the beginning of 1918, only four divisions, in various stages of readiness, had been shipped to war. It would not be until August 1918 that an independent U.S. army could be assembled in Europe, with its own command. Until that date the Americans largely fought alongside French troops. Time was of the essence because the Germans had decided to go

Our doughboy is by James Montgomery Flagg, better known for his iconic “I Want You” Uncle Sam poster.

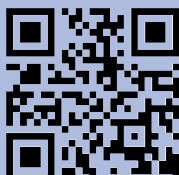


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Open to the public.

Bread on the waters

There's a bible verse to the effect that we may cast our bread "upon the waters" in the full expectation that it will return to us at some future time, perhaps when least expected.

Like a lot of scripture, this is a little mysterious. Perhaps it's meant to encourage charity, assuring us that the good we do will eventually repay itself, but it may as easily be read to mean that diligence of any sort will pay off. As a mostly secular person, I guess I've more often taken it in the latter sense, that we should always make our best effort and surely something worthwhile will come of it.

Thus it was gratifying for me to read a recent article in the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, regarding changes planned for a local recreational site and incidentally referencing humanities work that was done years ago and with no thought at all to the matters currently under discussion in the newspaper.

Now, the management of public parks is a long way from what we normally do here at the Humanities Council, but as it happens the site in question – Shawnee Regional Park in suburban Kanawha County – is rich in both history and prehistory. Those things *are* very much what we do, and reporter Lori Kersey built her story partly on an archeological report we funded more than a dozen years ago on Shawnee's best-known feature, an ancient Native American burial mound.

Kersey went on to base later paragraphs of the article on information from the *West Virginia Encyclopedia*, another Humanities Council project. She graciously acknowledged both sources (something that not even careful reporters always do!), though there was no indication as to whether she connected the two. There was no reason for her to do so, and certainly it took nothing from my satisfaction in seeing humanities research put to good use in hands-on news reporting.

It was a reminder that diligence really does pay off, that effort is returned, and frankly of the practical value of work that sometimes may seem pretty impractical at first impression.

It's good to have such a reminder at this time when federal and state support for the humanities is under discussion – and especially good to see it in a front-page story in the state's leading newspaper.

— Ken Sullivan

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A state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the West Virginia Humanities Council serves West Virginia through grants and direct programs in the humanities.

We welcome letters, comments, and financial contributions. Please address correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, WV 25301 or sonis@wvhumanities.org.

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The Board of Directors welcomes two new members elected at the recent board meeting in Parkersburg: Gayle Manchin of Charleston, Secretary of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts and former First Lady of West Virginia, and Amy Pancake of Romney, affiliate director at Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation. Five board members are governor appointees, and the Council has also asked Governor Justice to appoint or reappoint five individuals to those positions. We thank departing board members Paul Papadopoulos, Jay Cole, and Larry Grimes.

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on the attack to win the war before the doughboys arrived in strength. Beginning in March, the Germans launched five offensives, one each month.

America's first offensive came on May 28, 1918, when a U.S. regiment, supported by French artillery and aircraft, advanced against Cantigny. The Germans were driven from this village at a heavy cost. In several days' fighting, a quarter of the men in the American regiment were either killed or wounded. Elsewhere on the Western Front, the Germans began their third offensive of the year. As this powerful drive towards Paris began to ebb the Americans again went into action, with the Marines driving the Germans out of Belleau Wood.

Following the failure of the fifth German offensive in mid-summer, the Allies went on the attack with the doughboys playing an important role. Pershing now gained Allied acceptance of the creation of an independent U.S. army, which became operational on August 10. The resulting First Army then began a largely independent action to clear the St. Mihiel salient. This U.S. offensive took place as the Germans were withdrawing to a new defensive position, and it was a resounding success.

Rather than continue this push, a reluctant Pershing was persuaded to participate in a general Allied advance. To keep his First Army intact he agreed to launch an offensive between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest against formidable German defenses. On September 26, U.S. troops moved forward after a massive bombardment. More ammunition was expended in one day than the combined Union and Confederate

"American infantry in the Argonne won the war."

—General Erich von Ludendorff

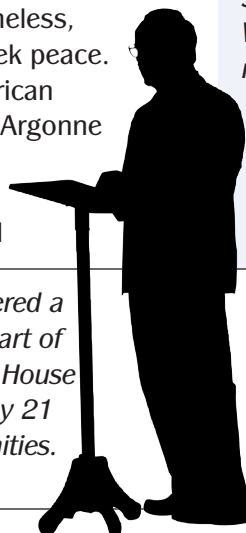
forces used during the entire Civil War, but the First Army's advance fell far short of Pershing's expectations. As casualties mounted with little or no progress, morale plummeted. Stragglers multiplied, with perhaps as many as one of every ten soldiers failing to do his duty. Poor training and inexperienced officers largely explain this breakdown.

The First Army didn't really achieve its anticipated break-through until November 1, less than two weeks before war's end. Private Henry Nicholson Gunter, the Baltimore son of German immigrants, was apparently the last American to die, charging a German machine-gun nest on November 11 at 11:59 p.m., one minute before the Armistice was to go into effect.

The largest U.S. Army cemetery in Europe is found on this battlefield. Two of every two hundred Americans who took part in World War I died from combat (50,000) or other causes, especially influenza (63,000). By contrast, 1,500,000 French soldiers were killed. Nonetheless, U.S. troops played a vital role in the German decision to seek peace. Germany's leading general, Erich von Ludendorff, told American reporters after the Armistice: "The American infantry in the Argonne won the war. I say this as a soldier, and soldiers will understand me best."

—David R. Woodward

Little lectures continue: Historian David Woodward delivered a longer version of this World War I lecture on March 26 as part of the 2017 Little Lectures Series at the MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston. The remaining lectures will take place on May 21 and June 25. Call (304)346-8500 or visit www.wvhumanities.org.



Fellowships Awarded

Humanities Council Fellowships are awarded annually to college faculty and independent scholars for research and writing in the humanities. The \$2,500 grants are unique in the Mountain State. The 2017 Humanities Fellows and their subjects are:

Charles Damien Arthur, Huntington, *Architect of Appalachia: Senator Robert C. Byrd's Leadership on the Appropriations Committee*

Anna Rose Casey, Morgantown, *Intellectual Property and Collaborative Female Authorship in Zoe Wicomb's "David's Story"*

Catherine Gouge, Morgantown, *Divergent Paths: Paying Attention to Nonadherence to Prescribed Health Guidelines*

Matthew Jacobmeier, Morgantown, *Demographic and Political Influences on Participation in the Arts and Humanities*

Anne McConnell, Institute, *Literary Interrogation: A Study of Contemporary Literature*

Jamie Shinn, Morgantown, *Culture and Conservation in the Okavango Delta, Botswana: The Implications of a World Heritage Site Designation*

Janet Snyder, Morgantown, *What's the Story? Twelfth-century Sculpture and the Perception of Narrative*

Michele Stephens, Morgantown, *Criminal Women in Yucatan, Mexico, 1900-1940*

Jesse Wozniak, Morgantown, *Legal Decision Making in Iraqi Kurdistan*

The Fellowships application deadline is February 1, 2018.

Grant Categories

The Humanities Council welcomes applications in the following grant categories.

Major Grants (\$20,000 maximum) support major humanities projects, symposiums, conferences, exhibits, lectures.

Due Sept. 1, Feb. 1

Minigrants (\$1,500 maximum) support small projects, single events, or planning and consultation.

Due *June 1, Oct. 1, Feb. 1, April 1

Fellowships (\$2,500) support research and writing projects by humanities faculty and independent scholars.

Due Feb. 1

Media Grants (\$20,000 maximum) support projects intended to produce audio or video products, websites, or a newspaper series.

Due Sept. 1

Publication Grants (\$20,000 maximum) are available to nonprofit presses and academic presses, and support the production phase of a completed manuscript.

Due Sept. 1

Teacher Institute Grants (\$25,000 maximum) are available to colleges and universities, and the state Department of Education, and support summer seminars for secondary and elementary teachers.

Due Sept. 1

*** Approaching Deadline!**

Grant workshops offered:

If you'd like to know more about Humanities Council grants, contact grants administrator Erin Riebe to schedule a grants workshop for your area. Erin's workshops provide details on grant categories, guidelines and deadlines, as well as tips for strengthening grant applications. Call (304)346-8500 or email riebe@wvhumanities.org.

HDR, Inc.



Big Bridge named for Major Delany: The spectacular new bridge carrying WV Route 9 across the Shenandoah River is to be named for Major Martin Robison Delany. A Charles Town native, physician and activist journalist, Delany was also the highest ranking African-American officer in Union service during the Civil War. The legislative action was sponsored by Delegates Jill Upson, Paul Espinosa and Riley Moore of Jefferson County and other legislators from elsewhere in the state. For more on Martin Delany, visit *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia* at www.wvencyclopedia.org.



Michael Keller

High school students from Mercer and Wyoming counties and nearby Virginia enjoyed Brazilian musician Felipe Karam's recent visit to Bluefield State College. In collaboration with the Fulbright Program and with Humanities Council support, the college also invited scholars from Bolivia, Nigeria, and Tanzania to share their countries' cultures, history and traditions.

Adobo is a savory meat dish and also the name of the sauce it's made with—and yes, Philippines Best Food of Parkersburg has got adobo. This is Ellen and Daniel



Emily Hilliard

Lubuguin (at right), who own the popular restaurant, with the help of (l to r) Renzo Falvatore, Madel Morris, and Arlene Everson. State folklorist Emily Hilliard recently interviewed the Lubuguins as part of her West Virginia folklife survey. She also interviewed fiddle maker Ray Fought of Parkersburg and turkey call maker Aaron Parsons of Ravenswood, and conducted public interest meetings at the Sandyville and Ripley senior centers and the Ripley public library in Jackson County. Emily learned during her visit to Philippines Best Food that the Lubuguins make their pork adobo with potatoes to appeal to West Virginia "meat and potatoes" tastes. Visit www.wvhumanities.org or www.wvfolklife.org.



Digging Warwick's Fort

Archeologists Steve and Kim McBride continue their analysis of Warwick's Fort in Pocahontas County. The excavations are part of a larger project documenting 18th-century frontier defenses in the Greenbrier River watershed, sponsored by the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission with long-running financial support from the Humanities Council.

Humanities grants have previously supported excavations (at left) at Warwick's, unearthing a bastion, stockade walls, and a powder magazine. This year, the team will focus on the main living area where a large

cellar is located. On Saturday, May 27, the site will open to the public at 11:00 a.m. with site tours, artifact displays, and a ceremony honoring the builders of Warwick's Fort. For directions, email kim.mcbride@uky.edu.



Carl Fleischhauer

West Virginia lost a friend when fiddler and master folklorist Alan Jabbour died earlier this year at age 74. Among his many contributions to the field of folklore was his documentation with Carl Fleischhauer of the Hammons family of Pocahontas County. He contributed articles, ideas, and support to *Goldenseal* magazine, West Virginia's folklife quarterly, and to the Humanities Council's folklore efforts. As founding director of the American Folklife Center, Alan put his heart

into the job for 23 years. Though his work took him across the United States, he had a natural feeling for West Virginia and we will miss him.

Pricketts Program: This summer, Humanities Council grant funds will support a week-long program at Pricketts Fort State Park near Fairmont, titled *The African American Experience on the Western Virginia Frontier: 1770-1850*. The program begins July 8. Scholars will focus on issues surrounding the interpretation of slavery at historic sites and museums, and a newly opened museum exhibit in the Pricketts Fort visitor's center will present information and artifacts pertaining to frontier slaves. The week-long event includes a presentation by the Council's popular *History Alive* character Harriet Tubman and daily hearth-cooking demonstrations by Cordelia Spencer. Throughout the week, storyteller Shelia Arnold (above) will present her interpretation of an 18th-century tavern slave who will discuss events happening in the colony in the 1770s.

For a complete list of the week's activities visit www.prickettsfort.org or call (304)363-3030. The original Pricketts Fort was built by frontier settlers in 1774 to provide refuge from Indian attacks, and the present structure is a reconstruction.



Briefs

The **West Virginia Folklife Program** collaborated with West Virginia Public Broadcasting to produce "Building a Broom by Feel," a short documentary. Charleston Broom and Mop Company's James Shaffer, the state's last commercial broom maker to do the work by hand, is featured. The audio piece aired on *West Virginia Morning* and is also part of the *Inside Appalachia* podcast. The video went viral with over 250,000 views on Facebook, and now airs on the West Virginia Channel.

The **Contemporary American Theater Festival** kicks off its 27th season on July 2 in Shepherdstown. The Humanities Council is again involved, funding stage reading of new plays and discussions on issues raised by performances as part of *Humanities at the Festival*. Visit www.catf.org.

Three new citizen members have been elected to the **Humanities Council Program Committee**: Deborah Piscitelli of Harpers Ferry, former director of the Harpers Ferry Historical Association; Rebekah Karelis of Wheeling, project manager for the Wheeling Heritage Area Corporation; and Cassandra Pritts of Keyser, history professor at Potomac State College. We thank departing members Bob Enoch, Myra Ziegler, and Wally Hastings.

Celebrate West Virginia Day at three Charleston historic properties: the 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House at 1310 Kanawha Boulevard will be open on June 20, Tuesday, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and Glenwood on Charleston's West Side from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Craik-Patton House, also on Kanawha Boulevard, will observe its regular hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The **Wyoming County Historical Museum** is scanning nearly 500 historical photographs, maps, newspapers, and documents for digital preservation and online access, thanks to a Humanities Council grant. An open house will be held at the Oceana museum at noon on July 8 to showcase the collection. Visit wyomingcountymuseum.webs.com.



Getting Friendly in Huntington. . .with special thanks to Sarah Denman, Martha Woodward and Frances Hensley for generously hosting our March 8 "friendraiser" at the city's 21 at the Frederick restaurant. Michael J. Farrell, Larry and Cheryl Tweel, Tom and PJ Scarr, and Jenkins Fenstermaker PLLC provided financial support, with close to 100 guests attending. This was the fourth in a statewide series of friendraiser events, which raise funds while allowing local residents to learn more about the humanities in their communities.

Donations November 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017

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Letters from Liberia

Liberia's name is the best clue to its history: The country was founded in the early 19th century as a home for liberated slaves at a time when many U.S. slaveholders were willing to consider freeing their enslaved workers but could not envision a racially integrated America with black and white citizens living freely together. The solution proposed by the American Colonization Society was to send former slaves to Africa to a new nation established for them there. Non-enslaved African Americans were free to join the movement as well, and some did.

The American Colonization Society was most successful in the mid-Atlantic region of Maryland and Virginia, with prominent Virginians (including future president James Monroe, for whom the Liberian capital of Monrovia is named) among its founders. Virginia contributed many emigrants to the colonization effort, including 190 from the Virginia counties that later became West Virginia. More than two-thirds (128) of these people came from Jefferson County, and literate members of the group left a remarkable record in the letters they wrote. Approximately 25 of these letters by Jefferson County emigrants to Africa, dated from 1831 to 1860, are now preserved among ACS papers at the Library of Congress.

These handwritten letters are being transcribed under a Humanities Council grant to the Jefferson County Black History Preservation Society. The writings of another Jefferson County native, black abolitionist and Civil War officer Martin Delany, will be offered as a counterpoint to the colonization argument.

The letter shown here is from Sally Snyder, a free black Jefferson Countian who was 46 years old when she left for Liberia in January 1850 with husband Jacob Snyder and three young daughters. Jacob died soon after arrival — “long, long ago,” Sally says in this

letter from July 1855. She writes to ask for help and to express the hope that her adult sons might join her in Liberia.

The transcribed letters will be available at www.vcdh.virginia.edu/liberia, and a public discussion is planned for September 21 at 7:00 p.m., in Fisherman's Hall, Charles Town.

Monrovia July 18th 1855.
Rev. Mr. McClain
Dear Sir, you perhaps remember
me, (Sally Snyder) who writes this letter
to you, which leaves me pretty well & hope
you & the same. I wish you my dear
friend, to write to William Engle Esq.
near Harper's Ferry, Virginia, between
Shepherdstown, & Charlestown, —
Mr. Engle said to my husband, Jacob Snyder,
"that he would assist him (Sally) after his
arrival in Africa" — well, Jacob my husband,
is dead, long, long ago! and I, having been sick
ever since, much, takes this method of reminding my
friend, Mr. Engle, of his promise.
Again, ask Mr. Engle, to lay the
subject before my children, whom he
knows very well, Thomas Bronitsom, Perry
Brown, Loring Davenport, & Solomon Davis
enport, — I wish my children, or all
whom I have named, to come to Liberia, — but
if none of them will come, — All of
them, must help me come, and
lastly, if any friend, or child, should send me
any thing, it must be sent to you, Rev. Sir, and
you will please direct it to the care of Rev. Mr. McClain
Monrovia. That's all, Your servant,
Rev. Mr. McClain) Sally Snyder.

Sally Snyder, previously of Jefferson County, wrote this letter from Liberia.