



WORLD WAR I

“It was a family affair”

Since several of the county’s historical societies have decided to celebrate 100 years since WW I began, it seemed to me that something should be written about those veterans who served in WW I and who had enlisted from the Tonganoxie area.

Twenty five years after WW I, Walt Neighbarger published an article in the “Mirror” listing all those veterans who were known to have been in that category. It was difficult to list all, because all were not known. A few weeks later additions were added. I am certain that some were not known or listed



This article will have two sections. The first will discuss some of the battles in which these veterans from Tonganoxie served. I am not, nor do I pretend to be, an expert on WW I, especially the battles, but I hope to provide some knowledge about what these veterans did. In general, I will discuss the 35th, and 89th Division, and 104th Regiment of the 26th Division.

The 35th was generally derived from the Kansas and Missouri National Guards. Missouri provided almost twice the number of people that Kansas did. Harry Truman was in this Division. In looking through the members of this Division, I discovered that many people from Leavenworth, Oskaloosa, and Lawrence were in this division. I found very few from Tonganoxie.

Most of the people from Tonganoxie that I could find were in the 89th Division and in particular the 353rd Infantry. These people were drafted or enlisted. Most were enlisted. In Europe and in the United States, it was widely held that the war would not last long and you needed to get involved quickly. FOR MORE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THIS VIEW THE MOVIES, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Das Boot*. These two movies, one in English and one German, basically are the same style of movie.

The 104th Regiment of the 26th Division (Yankee Division) was generally comprised of people from New England. However, it appears that one member of this unit was from Tonganoxie and he along with his entire regiment received the *Croix de Guerre* from the French Government.

The second section will discuss topics not directly related to tactical warfare, but which had a significant effect on the war. As an example the health problems involved with the soldiers, the effect of women on the home front as well as on war materials production, and the RMS Lusitania, just to name a few.

World War I was indeed a family affair. The marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, a true love affair, produced nine children which resulted in eight sovereigns or future sovereigns who were involved in WW I. Many have referred to Queen Victoria as the grandmother, or grandmama of Europe. In fact, three of the four significant European sovereigns were closely related. The King of England was a first cousin to the

Tzar of Russia and to the Kaiser of Germany. The Kaiser of Germany was third cousin to the Tzar of Russia. In addition the Kaiser and the King of England were first cousins of Alexandria, the wife of the Tzar of Russia.

Although the Kaiser, the Tzar, and the King of England were closely related, only the Tzar and the King were truly close friends. Since early childhood, the Kaiser was not liked by his other cousins. However, during the Russian Revolution, the Tzar requested asylum in England. The King refused. This seems to disprove the adage “blood is thicker than water”. When the water is power and self preservation, “Blood” may not be in the thought process.

The spark which began WW I was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand (heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne) and his wife, Sophie. Six Serbian Nationalists conspired to kill the Archduke when he and his wife traveled through Sarajevo, Bosnia. The assassination team was lined up along the route the Archduke’s car was to travel. A hand grenade failed to explode by the Archduke’s car, but exploded on the third car behind. The initial plan failed, but within hours Gavrilo Princip saw the motorcade pass and he shot the Archduke and his wife Sophie.

The political situation involving this part of Europe was complicated. Bosnia and Serbia had been under the Ottoman Empire, but those two plus other countries were no longer under the Ottoman Empire’s control. Austria-Hungary had occupied Bosnia since 1878, but in 1908 they annexed Bosnia. This act made the Serbs and Russians upset. Austria-Hungary viewed Serbia as a threat and the Serbs wanted the slavic people united.

Most of Europe’s rulers didn’t believe this assassination would lead to war, but the Austria-Hungarians were looking for a way to invade Serbia and Issued a 10-point ultimatum to Serbia. Serbia did not like this ultimatum, but agreed to 9 points, and later agreed to the 10th point. But the 48 hour time period given to Serbia had passed. Austria-Hungary believed that a limited war would be all that was necessary.

The Archduke was assassinated on June 28, 1914 and on July 28, 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. This initiated a domino effect involving eventually most of the European countries. Russia came to assist Serbia, Germany came to Austria-Hungary’s aid. France entered on behalf of Russia, and England came to the aid of Belgium and France, and Japan entered on behalf of England.

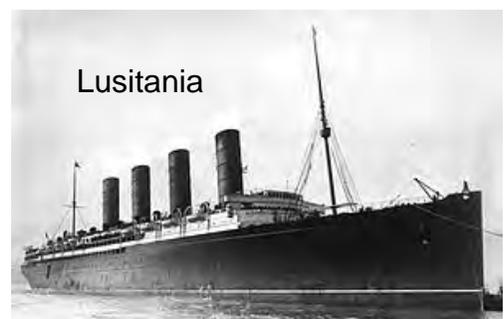
World War I was quickly escalated. Italy had an alliance with the Austria-Hungarian Empire, but refused to recognize this agreement because according to Italy, the agreement was for the defense of Austria and Austria-Hungary were the aggressors. Later Italy would enter the war on the side of the Allies.

The American entry into World War I was not a direct route. The British believed that the United States should enter the war, but Woodrow Wilson was President and he was an isolationist. On May 7, 1915, the Lusitania was sunk by a German U-Boat. There were 128 Americans on board the ship who lost their lives. Many of the U.S. citizens were outraged, but Wilson stated that “We are too proud to go to war”. He won the next election using the slogan, “He kept us out of war”.

Wilson was not happy with this unrestricted submarine warfare, and ultimately he was able to get the Germans to rescind that policy. It seems that the sinking of the Lusitania only involved some outrage. At most it opened the door for war. It was 1917 before the U.S. became declared war.

The sinking of the Lusitania is controversial.

1. Only one torpedo was fired but the second explosion



(coal dust may have exploded) was much larger than the torpedo explosion.

2. The construction and design was financed by the the British Admiralty. She could be fitted with arms.
3. Captain Turner had stopped one boiler thus slowing the speed of the ship. He also was closer to shore than most ships went. He never heeded warnings nor did he ever respond to requests for information from the British.
4. In 2008 divers discovered 4 million rounds of ammo. In other articles the ammo has been described as 303 caliber.
5. Other people have noted that the official manifest reported carrying 46 tons aluminum nitrocellulose, a large consignment of “fur” shipped by Du Pont di Nemours, an explosive manufacturer, and 90 tons of unrefrigerated butter destined for the British Navy.

There are more issues involving the Lusitania, but the sinking of this ship did not get us into war. Wilson was able to get an agreement with the Germans to cease unrestricted submarine warfare.

It seems two significant events actually got the U. S. into the war. That was that Germany initiated unrestricted submarine warfare again and the Zimmerman Telegram.

World War I was a war of attrition and the British Blockade of Germany had placed the German people and military into a starvation mode. This starvation continued until the war was over.

The Germans intended to place a blockade around England. When the Lusitania was sunk, the German submarines were using unrestricted submarine warfare on any ship that was in the labeled war zone. President Wilson was extremely upset with this unrestricted warfare, but did not want war. He was able to persuade the Germans to stop unrestricted submarine warfare. During Wilson’s communications with Germany on this issue, the Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan resigned. He felt Wilson’s actions were too war like. The Germans stopped using unrestricted submarine warfare. This lasted until early in 1917 when the English blockade of Germany was seriously affecting Germany. So in an attempt to blockade England, the Germans initiated again unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans believed they could do this and cause the war to end before the Americans could enter the war. This action made Wilson very upset.



The final blow was the Zimmerman Telegram. It was intercepted by the British who after some time gave it to the Americans. This telegram was an offer by Germany to Mexico. The Germans wanted Mexico to go to war against the United States. For this the Mexican Government would get a large amount of money and the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, would be returned to them. When this became known to the people of the United States the path to war became easy. April 6, 1917 The United States officially entered the war with the Allies. Officially the United States was never an Ally, but an “associated power”.

When war was declared the United States was totally unprepared. It had an army of ca. 100,000 personnel. To solve this problem Wilson began conscription. When the war was over, more than 2,000,000 Americans had served in the war and 25% had sacrificed their life. Although conscription was begun, many Americans joined the services. It is impossible for me to differentiate (with the resources I have) those who were drafted from those who joined.

There were two divisions in WW I which had a considerable number of Kansans in them. The 35 Division was predominately made from the Kansas and Missouri National Guards. In August of 1917 the entire National Guard was mustered into active military service. Harry Truman was in the 35th division. During the Meuse-Argonne battle he was a Captain in Co. D. 129th Field Artillery of the 35th Division.

I have looked at the rosters of this division. and I see many names from Lawrence, Oskaloosa, and Leavenworth, but only a few names from Tonganoxie. This surprises me, but I may not be looking in the correct place. To the 35th Division, Missouri contributed 14,765 men and Kansas contributed 8,500 men. The 35th Division contained the 137th, 138th, 139th, and 140th Infantry, as well as other units (artillery, machine gun, etc).

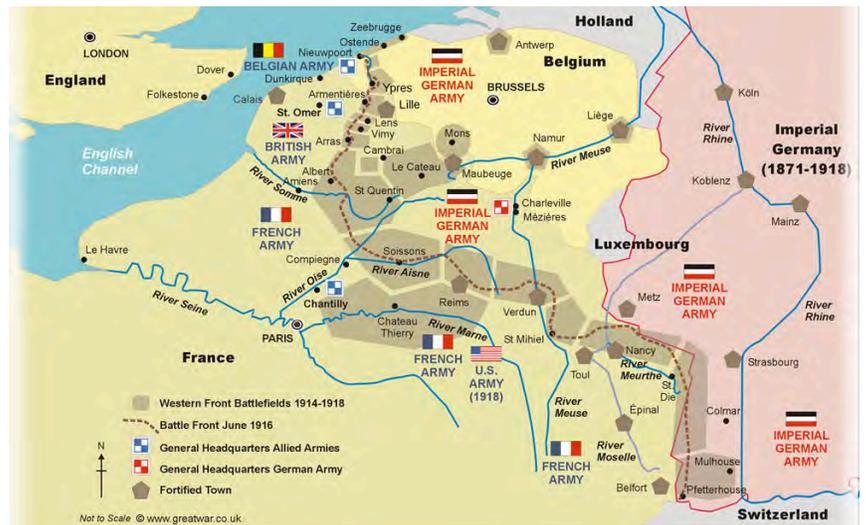
The other Division, the 89th, contained a large number of soldiers from the Tonganoxie area. TCHS has a list of 21 soldiers who died in WW I. I do not know the units of many of those 21 soldiers, but of those who do have known units, two soldiers were in the 35th Division and seven were in the 353rd infantry (part of the 89th Division). The 89th Division was in battle many more days that the 35th Division.

Training for the 35th Division was near Ft. Sill, Oklahoma at Camp Doniphan. Training for 7 months, they received knowledge from battle experienced French and English soldiers on the use of bayonets, hand grenades, and the use of gas masks. This was in addition to the normal training for infantry.

In April the Division began to move and arrived in France on May 10th. On June 6th they moved into the trenches, but only saw a small amount of skirmishes.

It was not until Sept 12, 1918 that they were involved with a major battle, the Battle of St. Mihiel. The battle was from Sept 12, to Sept 16, with excellent results. The Germans had been entrenched here for many months and they knew when the battle was going to begin. In fact a Swiss newspaper had printed the exact day that this battle would start. The German troops throughout the Western Front were weakened by the lengthy war, the British Blockade, and the loss of manpower. The Germans had decided to move back to the Hindenberg line. Consequently, the American troops were quite successful in this enterprise. There was resistance and there were battles but all units achieved a great success in their first major battle.

Triangular area is where the St. Mihiel battle was



In the spring of 1918 the Germans were making a large push to win this war. The Russians had signed a peace treaty with Germany which allowed the Germans to bring more troops to the Western Front. The Germans were starving at home and in the war. Disease, starvation and the long war was taking its toll. They hoped to reach an end to this war before the United States could enter.

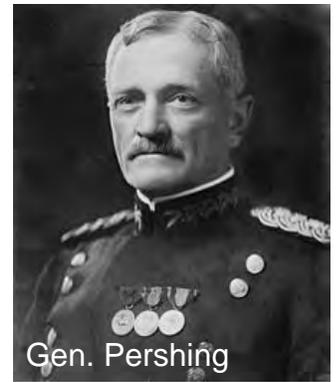
In the late spring several AEF (26th Div) forces were in France. Contrary to how the Allies wanted to use the AEF, General Pershing had always wanted the AEF to fight as one army under control of one United States Commander. But he could see the need to immediately help the Allies. He agreed to allow a few of the units to fight under French and English control. The units that I know which fought under these conditions were the 26th, the 92, and the 93rd Divisions. The 26th Division, the Yankee Division, had the

104th Infantry in which Bill Stephenson was a member. The 92nd and the 93rd were entirely black units. The 93rd Division's war effort was always with the French, and it was the most decorated unit in World War I.

Pershing agreed to this because he was able to get Foch to agree to let the AEF fight entirely under the American control. The first battle in which this would happen was to be St. Mihiel. Just before this battle Marshall Ferdinand Foch had a change of mind on the control of the AEF. He and General Pershing had a shouting match over how to utilize the AEF. Britain and France wanted to break up the American units and place them within their troops. Pershing wouldn't allow that. He wanted the American Units to fight under an American command. Foch backed down. The American Troops would fight entirely under American control.



Marshal Foch



Gen. Pershing

The next battle for the 35th Division would be in the Meuse-Argonne. This was a totally different situation with extensive cover of hills carved by glacier, rivers and creeks, a dense forest, and German troops well supplied and well defended. The German Division personnel numbers were lower than normal, but in the 35th's situation, the German troops were battle seasoned, considered some of the best in the German

Army, and they were generally around the age of 35. They were good fighters.

The 35th had extremely tough conditions and on the first day the AEF forces did progress several kilometers.



Argonne Forest

However, the progress was slowed. Pershing believed in the strength of the soldier and his rifle. Waves of soldiers were mowed down by one machine gun. On Sept 27 and 28th several AEF units began to fall apart with confusion. The New York 77th Division and the Kansas and Missouri National Guard Unit were struggling. In the October 1993 issue of Military History Thomas Flemming wrote, "In the valley, the Kansas and Missouri National Guardsmen of the 35th Division were suffering severe internal command problems. On the eve of the battle, Pershing had relieved the two brigade commanders, the chief of staff and three of the four regimental commanders, replacing them with regulars. They barely had time....before fighting

the First Prussian Guards Division.

On the 27th and 28th the 35th literally fell apart. The two brigades became chaotically entangled.....The 35th's commander, Peter Traub was roving the battlefield in a sleepless glaze (this action was noted in another article that stated Peter Traub's actions started 30 minutes after he received new orders)".



HAROLD A. CLINE

Died in the Battle of the Argonne Forest in France on October 5, 1918, age 28. He was wounded and was struck by a shell while being "taken to a hospital". He was in six

On the 29th the Prussian Guards launched a counter attack. In a German Diary it was written how badly the American troops were being routed by the German artillery. This counter attack was stopped by the 35th's field artillery of which Battery D of the 129th Regiment, headed by Capt. Harry Truman performed with distinction.

The entire 35th Division was relieved. Some of the excuses offered were they were not well trained, their unit commanders were replaced just before battle and they had never been seasoned in battle. The 35th Division never saw battle again as a unit. Portions of the 35th did fight again and Harry Truman's battery D did fight some more with distinction. Steve Kramer was a bugler for Harry Truman and the Kramer family has his bugle. (Editorial opinion: I think the biggest problem with the 35th was Pershing's belief in the rifle and the "Over the Top" mentality of how to fight a war. Sort of full speed ahead; damn the torpedos.)

The 89th Division was formed at Camp Funston, Ft. Riley in August 1917. In early June, 1918, the Division sailed for France. It also fought in the St. Mihiel battle and the battle of the Meuse-Argonne. The 89th stayed in the St. Mihiel area until it was relieved by the 37th Division on Oct 7th. The total casualty rate for wounded, died from wounds and died was 4,483 for all ranks.



In the Meuse-Argonne section it was in reserve from Oct 12th to Oct 20th when it relieved the 32nd Division in a mopping up of the area and making preparations for an attack on Nov. 1, 1918. The Division seemed to move effectively each day, capturing numerous areas as they progressed to Pouilly-Sur-Meuse across the Meuse River. November 11, 1918 they had gained the "High Ground" above the town. Total casualties for this time period was 4,142 wounded, died from wounds or killed in action.

More is written about the 35th Division than is written about the 89th Division, but both were involved in the Meuse-Argonne which has been said to be the battle with the highest number of casualties in WW I. In the 89th the 353rd infantry seemed to possess the most people from the Tonganoxie area.

The "Yankee Division" was the name given to the 26th Division. Its commanding officer was Maj. Gen Clarence Edwards, a leader who was quite often at odds with General Pershing. Some say the Division was the whipping boy for Gen. Pershing. This unit was the second unit to get to France. It received a considerable amount of training from the French and on Feb. 19th its training ended.

On April 10th serving with the French, the 104th regiment held off the Germans. It was a superior effort and for this the entire unit received the Croix de Guerre from the French. William J. Stephenson was part of this unit. All of the 26th Division was bombarded by gas at least 5 times. One time many were injured, but not too bad. They quickly learned to wear their gas masks when warned.

This unit served in the St. Mihiel area, the Meuse-Argonne and several other lesser known battles. The thing that I think is important is they came into battle during the German spring offensive. The Germans had realized that frontal attacks were too costly in human lives. They now used small groups of men which could be secretive and quiet. In doing this they were quite successful. However, after the 26th Division and other groups from the United States arrived, the manpower provided by these troops was effective in eventually stopping this spring German offensive. This was the time that Pershing allowed the Americans to operate under French and English control.

There were 10 black men from Tonganoxie. It has been difficult for me to determine where these people served. This was a time when segregation in the military was strong. No one wanted blacks in their white units. Consequently, most of these men, and all that I have information about, were in the war area, but they were part of the Pioneer Infantry. In the Civil War these were the builders of roads, building, etc. I

expect this was true in WW I. Although I have not found any in other groups, some of the Sanitary Train units also could have been black.

If it hadn't been for W.E B DuBois, the NAACP, the Urban League and several black newspapers, none of the black people would have been in an actual combat unit. Because of their actions, the 92 and 93rd Divisions were all black and in combat. The 93rd was entirely operating under French and the 92 operated under French Command, but this outfit also operated under American Control, but not with a white unit. I don't need to discuss all the invalid excuses given by white America as reasons not to be with Blacks, but I will say that the 93 division was most highly praised by the French in WW I. "It never lost a foot of ground". The French liked them and they were highly praised. The 393rd Infantry (part of the 93rd Division) was the most highly decorated unit of WW I.

In this section I will attempt to provide some information about areas that affect war, but are not always discussed when writing about war.

Code Talkers-The Navajo Indians in a popular movie about WW II suggest the Navajo's were the first Code Talkers. Not true. The Choctaw Indians of Oklahoma were the first Code Talkers in WW I. The idea happened when a young officer heard two Choctaws talking in their language. He asked them if they were talking Russian. They responded no, they were talking their own language. It was discovered that there were many Choctaw Indians in the AEF. Soon the Choctaws were baffling the Germans with the Choctaw language.

Women doing mens work

Rosie The Riveter-Again it was the British women who took over the male jobs when the men went to war in WW I. According to the British Museum, if the women had not made the bullets, etc, the British would not have had ammunition. The females replaced the men in every way. This was true in America too. Without listing each job the women did, they did it all. Manufactured bullets, shells, tanks, ran trains, etc. Interestingly enough, both British and American women were granted the right to vote in 1920. Many historians believe this was because of the tremendous success they had in "stepping up" when the men became soldiers.



The Flu of 1918- The total affect of the flu on military forces is impossible to determine because the military did not report those kinds of issues. That information could affect military outcomes. It has been suggested that the Germans were affected, but the Allies were probably equally affected. 9 million soldiers died in World War I; 18 to 20 million civilians (collateral damage) and military people died in WW I. The 1918 flu epidemic killed 50,000,000 people. The flu epidemic actually surfaced twice and this figure may be calculated from both.

Spain did report the number of people with the flu and/or those who died from the flu. In some areas it was called "The Spanish Flu".

The origin of the 1918 flu is purely speculative. A British team of virologist pinpointed Estaples, France. Some say it originated in the Far East. The Chinese imported to work in the war area brought the disease. Dr. Hannoun from the Pasteur Institute believed the virus came from China, mutated in the Boston area and spread to France. A more recent evaluation suggest that the flu did originate in China and spread when the Chinese went to France (through Canada) to work behind the military lines. Some historians have speculated that the flu started in Kansas and one narrowed it down to Haskell County. My bottom line is no one really knows.

An interesting twist on the flu was noted in 2008 when a researcher determined a relationship between death from the flu and Aspirin. During WW I the dosage suggest for using aspirin was quite higher than today's. Bayer's patent period for aspirin was over. Many small companies were now manufacturing aspirin and they quickly advertised and promoted the use of aspirin. This increase in aspirin use and the higher doses used was observed. The researcher noted a significant rise in death rates with rise in use of aspirin. The Surgeon General and the American Medical Association urged the use of aspirin in flu patient, and the doses used would be considered extremely high by today's standards.

Tradition vs Technology- Teddy Roosevelt's charge up the San Juan Hill in the Spanish/American war of 1898 probably represents the character of how generals directed the infantry in WW I. WW I has been described as a defensive war by some. The troops were in the trenches and stayed there waiting for the enemy to charge. When the enemy charged all "HELL" broke out. Military tactics had remained the same since the Revolutionary War. The infantry using single shot rifles led the charge. Even in the Civil War, rifles were not accurate, and most only had one bullet and then required reloading.

"Going over the Top" described how both Allies and Central Powers used the infantry. Soldiers would charge from the trenches, rifles and bayonets fixed, race across "no man's land", go through the barbed wire to fight with the enemy. The problem was technology had rapidly advanced--resulting in numerous soldiers, wounded and killed on the battle field.

At the start of the WW I canons were placed in the front and aimed directly at the soldiers. Soon, that was changed. These artillery pieces were rifled, very mobile, easily reloaded and with recoil mechanism. Because of this recoil mechanism the artillery pieces did not have to be reset after firing. They could now be used behind the lines and fire over the soldiers-and hit the target. Late in the war they used what was called "rolling artillery" which met the shells fired would explode-the next shots would explode further down the line and so on. The Infantry would follow behind. These pieces were called the "King" of the army and they have been described as causing the most casualties.

Machine guns were the "Queen" of the army and could fire at a rate of 600 rounds per minute. It took sometimes as many as four people to operate a machine gun. Two at the gun and two to carry the shell canisters.

The rifles were also very accurate, very durable and all had more than one shell to fire before reloading. The British .303 could hold 12 shells, the French Berthier was similar to the 303 except it could hold only three shells, and the U.S. Springfield (really a 30-06), was used by the allies. The Germans used the Mauser. The 303, the Mauser and the 30-06 are calibers that are used today. The 30-06 has the best ballistics using today's powders.

Poison Gas was used by both sides. Many soldiers were killed by this method, but gas (Chlorine, Phosgene and Mustard) was not actually as effective as was the "fear factor" of being gassed. It was extremely difficult to control where the gas went. Mustard gas was the most effective and did the most damage. With it sometimes it took several days to die. Ray Brown from Tonganoxie was gassed in WW I. I knew him. His nose was very large, very red, and pebble like.

Airplanes and tanks were new to the military scene. Although air to air combat was done in WW I and many movies, usually involving the Red Baron who had 80 kills before being killed, suggest that this type of combat was very significant. In fact, it was not that important. What was important was arial surveillance and strafing the infantry on the ground. And of course tanks played a big part in WW I, especially later in the war after some modifications were made.

With all of these new rapid ways to destroy people, many of the generals on both sides still used the "Going Over the Top" method of conquering the enemy. This new technology is why 9,000,000 soldiers were killed in a defensive trench like war. In the spring of 1918, the Germans had learned this lesson.



During their spring offensive, they used 30 minutes of artillery fire and sent small groups into battle. These groups would take small areas to fight and move on. This was successful until the Allies had help from the Americans.

Pershing never learned this lesson and the AEF used the "Over the Top" charge. Several of his generals disagreed with his tactics. This has been mentioned in several articles, although they don't specifically state the topics disagreed upon. I speculate that sending men directly into machine guns, etc. was at least part of the disagreements.

Health-The trenches supported lice, typhus, the flu, and trench foot and trench mouth. Trench foot is a disease which causes the feet to swell, turn red or blue and eventually may cause gangrene. It is enhanced by prolonged exposure to dampness and cold. The solution is to get the feet dry and clean. Something similar to this was seen in Viet Nam. During Viet Nam one of the solutions was to use canvass tops on the boots which allowed air to circulate and keep the feet dry.

Trench mouth is a disease which presents with very painful gums, The gum tissue is swollen, red, and bleeds easily. It commonly has a fetid odor which can easily be noticed without being close to the person. This situation is aided by stress, poor sleeping habits, and very poor oral hygiene. The actual name is Acute Necrotizing Ulcerative Gingivitis. It's cause is a change in the normal flora of the mouth to a more anaerobic form with Spirochetes---don't even go there--there are several types of Spirochetes-- and Fusobacteria. It is not contagious.

Battle Fatigue, PTSD, Combat Stress, or Shell Shock was not given much status until Viet Nam and then many people questioned it. The British Soldiers in WW I recognized this situation. The published comments were something like this--the more you're are in battle the easier it gets. The private comments among the soldiers discussing this situation was more like--it never gets better in fact the more battles which you have been, the more you worry about injury and death. Peter Traub's (35th Division) actions described above--roaming around the battlefield in a dazed manor--probably describes some level of PTSD.

PROGRAMS FOR 1ST QUARTER
Programs begin at 7 P.M.

January 27	Civil War author, Deb Miller
February 24	Political Cartoons since Revolution, Bill Peak
March 24	History of Maple Grove Cemetery Larry Meadows

HOSTESSES FOR 1ST QUARTER

January 27	Pearson Stockman
February 24	C. Putthoff Ramseier
March 24	Peak Brandau

"In each succeeding war there is a tendency to proclaim as something new the principles under which it is conducted. Not only those who have never studied or experienced the realities of war, but also professional soldiers frequently fall into the error. But the principles of warfare as I learned them at West Point remain unchanged."

The deadliest weapon in the world is the marine and his rifle. Both quotes-- Gen. Pershing

**REMEMBER THE CHILI FEED IS
FEBRUARY 19 AT THE METHODIST
CHURCH
CO CHAIRMEN
BILL PEAK AND JIM STUKE**

RING IN THE NEW YEAR

With the advent of the new year TCHS welcomes some new people as officers. Elected at the November business meeting were Kris Roberts, President, Mel Ramsier, Vice-President, and Teresa McGee and Jean Pearson were elected for three year terms as board of directors. At the December board meeting Keyta Kelly was elected board Chairman. These officers will need our support and help during the ensuing year to assure continued growth and maintenance of the historical society.

We offer our thanks to Kathy Peak who so ably served as president for two years and to Jim Stuke and Laurie Walters for six years of service on the board of directors. All three will continue to serve as volunteers.

Much of the November business meeting was spent analyzing specific needs and directions of the historical society. The major focus for 2015 will be the need to increase our membership. A corollary to this would be ways in which we can increase our visibility in the community and become relevant to others we do not reach at this time. Wednesday mornings remain volunteer work day and anyone is welcomed to assist. If you are not available on Wednesday morning, please let your officers know when and how you would be able to help.

Many suggestions were offered by those at the meeting and I would ask our membership to offer their suggestions AND support the new programs with their time. I also challenge every member to reach out and invite someone to join our society. Even if you are a non resident member, you can encourage a friend you know to support us by membership, contributions, contributions of your memories of Tonganoxie, and of course contributions to our museum of items of local historical value.

CURL UP WITH A BOOK

Tonganoxie Library is hosting a book discussion at 10 A.M. on Saturday, February 28 as part of the commemoration of World War I, sponsored by the Leavenworth County historical institutions.

The book to be discussed is *Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* by Diana Preston.. This book is available at the library.

The book makes the history of the sinking of this ship read much like a novel. It reveals the follies of the humans who made decisions involving this ship and the questions of intrigue and conspiracy which arise.

Some believe this event of May 1915 directly influenced the United States to enter the war.

Please join us for an interesting session and while you are in the library check out the display provided by the Tonganoxie Historical Society about WW I