

## World War One and Its Affects Upon a Family in Mattoon, Illinois

Margaret E. Hawkins

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The Great War, after its commencement in 1914, became known as World War I, quite frankly, because it affected almost every continent. All over the world, lives were touched either directly or indirectly. Nations gave millions upon millions of their men to the war cause. Even women and children participated in the war effort. As all attention turned to the war, the economies of the leading nations became war-time economies. Such changes included the factories which began to produce ammunitions and families suffering through food rationing.

Though statistical sources vary widely, one estimate of the Allied Powers states that of 42,188,810 mobilized troops, there was a rate of 52.3% lost, including 5,142,631 killed, 12,800,706 wounded, and 4,121,090 listed as prisoners of war or missing. These estimates are comprised only of France, the British Empire, the United States, Russia, Italy, Japan, Romania, Serbia, Belgium, Greece, Portugal and Montenegro. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria show that of 22,850,000 mobilized troops, 3,386,200 were killed, 8,388,448 were wounded, and 3,629,829 were counted as prisoners of war or missing, making the total casualty rate 67.4% (See Table I).<sup>1</sup>

My own life has been affected by World War I, though it happened over ninety years ago. My paternal grandmother's father, Russell Julius Mouser, served during WWI. Born in 1893 in Missouri, he enlisted voluntarily. After training in Fort Riley, Kansas, he went to Toul, France to help set up a field hospital and a field kitchen, where he worked as a cook for the duration of the war. His first cousin, Alvie Gladdish, went with him, and they remained together until the war's end. Both returned safely. Mouser later set up a bakery, where he worked for a further 23 years.

My paternal grandmother's ancestry is completely German. Both sides of her family, the Mouser side and the Eaker side, came over to the United States sometime in the eighteenth century. One interesting observation that my grandmother, Jacquinot Mouser-Hawkins, makes about the remnants of her German ancestry is that "the family always stood very erect...always at attention...and they took great pride in appearing like that."

Despite his German ancestry, Hawkins remembers her father as being very patriotic. He was 42 when she was born some twenty years after WWI, and he did not speak often of the war, but he spoke enough that my grandmother could garner some of his opinions. He was "very glad for our country," and he always flew the American flag at his bakery. At a young age, he taught my grandmother to care for that flag, talking to her about all the people who have died for it. As a cook in the field hospital, he did not see actual combat, but he was nevertheless glad to return home. He disliked France, thinking it to be "a dirty country," and in his opinion, not only was America cleaner, it was also "a better country." As far as support for the war, Mouser did not see the war as useless, but instead "it had to be."<sup>2</sup>

His patriotic views, even his unwavering support for America's involvement in war, have filtered down through the generations. My grandfather, Hawkins' spouse, served in the Korean War with the full support of my grandmother. Their patriotism has affected me greatly. When my sister and I would visit them as children, we would travel all over Illinois and Missouri to historical sites, instilling within me an early interest in history that has carried on to the

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<sup>1</sup> "WWI Casualty and Death Tables," available from [http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath\\_pop.html](http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html); Internet; accessed 7 Dec 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Jacquinot Mouser-Hawkins, interview by author, 29 November 2009.

present. My grandmother also sparked my interest in genealogy as she taught me to take pride in my ancestors. The values of her father exist even today in our family.

My maternal grandmother's grandfather also served during World War I. Walter Gacek, born 1898, came from Bochnia, Poland to Chicago, Illinois, sometime before 1917. My grandmother, Carole Gacek-Kuzmickas, has no knowledge of his participation in World War I, but she has found a photo of him in a military uniform. His age appears to be in the late teens, which puts the time at approximately World War I. We think that at this time, he most likely was in America, and so it is possible that he served during World War I for the United States. However, we can find no records to confirm this, and it remains a family mystery. The only certainty we hold is that this photo is indeed of Walter Gacek I.<sup>3</sup>



Walter Gacek I, b. 1898, d. 1965

My maternal grandfather's ancestors also came from Poland in the same generation. My grandfather's maternal grandfather came from Poland in the early 1900's, and his surname was Antczak. He served during WWI as a United States Army messenger, and at some point during the war, he died. His daughter, my great-grandmother, was very young, and as a result, did not remember much about her father. The repercussions of his death were severe for my grandfather cannot even recall his own grandfather's first name. He knows nothing about "Grandfather Antczak," except that he died during the Great War, and as a result, I do not even know my great-great-grandfather's name. We have no pictures, no records and no memorabilia of any kind. My great-great-grandfather and his memory were completely lost during the Great War.<sup>4</sup>

World War I had repercussions not only for my family, but the area I grew up in as well. I was born in Mattoon, Illinois, and I have lived in Coles and neighboring Cumberland County all of my life. In the early years of my childhood, my parents bounced back and forth several times between Mattoon and Charleston. When I was in my early teens, my mother moved my sister and me to Toledo, Illinois, in Cumberland County, and I returned to Charleston in my early twenties.

It is a testimony to the scope of WWI that its fire could be felt all the way in the rural Midwest, and there are indeed small reminders of the war still in Coles County. I have found little information on Mattoon during the span of WWI, and indeed, there is more information available on Mattoon during the Civil War. The reason for this, I believe, is the devastating tornado that swept through Coles County on 26 May 1917, just days after the draft was announced. The tornado, at ½ mile wide with hail 7 ½ inches across, killed 64 people, injured 467, destroyed 496 homes, 4 industrial plants, 3 churches, 4 schools, and partially destroyed 143 more homes and damaged 200.<sup>5</sup> Throughout all U.S. involvement in WWI, the City Council Committee Minutes make no mention of the war, the draft, the war effort, or the soldiers. Once the tornado hit, recovery and rebuilding dominated the conversation of the City Council. Only once, on 1 October 1918, do the minutes make reference to the war, merely noting that the Legal Advisory Board of the Selective Service Dept. of the U.S. Army was using

<sup>3</sup> Carole Gacek-Kuzmickas, interview by author, 9 October 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald Schon, interview by author, 13 October 2009.

<sup>5</sup> "Mattoon Memories," Souvenir Program from Mattoon Sesquicentennial 1855-2005, 29 September-2 October 2005, Timeline compiled by Chris Rankin and Joyce St. Michael (Mattoon: Spectrum Printing) found in Carnegie Library, Charleston, IL.

the City Council room to transact “official business,” so the City Council meeting had been moved to another room.<sup>6</sup>

Other random tidbits of information can be found concerning Mattoon during WWI. For instance, the railroad station in Mattoon brought the war home. In May 1915, trains carrying 100,000 horses destined for the battlefields of Europe passed through Mattoon. When the Mattoon Theater was destroyed by fire in 1916, a WWI army tank was used to demolish the remaining structure as a war bond raising stunt. On May 25, 1917, the day before the tornado struck, the Red Cross was organized in Mattoon, and 18 year old Ruth Easton was one of the first volunteers. She served 85 years. The Spanish influenza struck Mattoon in 1918, forcing the city to close all schools, theaters and churches during its October peak. That month alone saw 374 patients inflicted with the influenza and 13 dead from it.<sup>7</sup>

In the December 1919 issue<sup>8</sup> of the Mattoon High School yearbook, the name had changed from “Green and Gold” to “The Riddle,” in honor of Sgt. Lawrence Riddle, a Mattoon High School alumni who died in the war. The dedication reads:

When the call came for men to aid the country, many of the pupils and alumni of our High School answered, but the only alumnus who did not return was Sgt. Lawrence Riddle. He paid the supreme sacrifice. We, as a school body, wish to honor him in some way, so we call our magazine “The Riddle.”<sup>9</sup>

To this day, the Mattoon High School yearbook retains that title.

An extensive search through *Soldiers of the Great War*, a compilation of soldiers who became casualties from death, wounds or disappearance with or without explanation during WWI, yielded the names of ten soldiers from Mattoon, IL. There were five killed in action – Sgt. Lawrence Scott Riddle, Pvt. Elmer E. Hamilton, Pvt. Lawrence C. Reed, Pvt. Loy Whalen, and Pvt. Samuel F. Leitch. Four men, Sgt. Ray A. Wilson, Cpl. Roy Matthews, Mechanic Arthur W. Vann, and Pvt. Charles R. Hicks, died of disease, and Pvt. Frank J. Fitzgerald died from his wounds.<sup>10</sup>

I also found a Mattoon resident who had a family member that served during WWI. Butch Ealy’s great-uncle, Charles Miller, had ancestors that came here from Germany. According to Ealy, his grandparents put Miller’s father on a ship bound for America “because he couldn’t kill people.” Miller



Charles Miller, courtesy of Butch Ealy.

<sup>6</sup> City Council Committee Minutes, Mattoon, found in Mattoon Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> “Mattoon Memories,” Souvenir Program from Mattoon Sesquicentennial 1855-2005, 29 September-2 October 2005, Timeline compiled by Chris Rankin and Joyce St. Michael (Mattoon: Spectrum Printing) found in Carnegie Library, Charleston, IL.

<sup>8</sup> The 1917 issue makes no mention of the war, and the 1918 issue could not be found by the author.

<sup>9</sup> *The Riddle Yearbook*, Mattoon High School, Mattoon, IL, Dec 1919.

<sup>10</sup> *Soldiers of the Great War*, vol. I, compiled by W.M. Haulsee, F.G. Howe and A. C. Doyle (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920).



WWI Memorial, Charleston, IL

served in France, and when he returned, refused to speak about the war. Ealy recalls that Miller suffered from shell shock, the most notable effect being constant tremors, but Ealy comments that “behind the wheel he was as steady as can be.”<sup>11</sup>

Charleston, Mattoon’s neighboring city as well as the county seat, provided a great deal more information on the intrusion of the war than Mattoon, despite the fact that the same tornado that devastated Mattoon and stole its complete concentration for two years also ripped through Charleston. The prevailing public opinion of WWI in Charleston centered against the war; on the belief that the U.S. had no business getting involved. On 18 May 1917, the announcement of the draft was in the *Charleston Courier*, and just eight days later, the tornado swept through Coles County. Just like in Mattoon, the Red Cross had been organized prior to the tornado, and it became instrumental in the weeks following. The Charleston war effort coincided with the tornado clean-up effort, and women knitted woolen sweaters, rolled bandages, held book drives to donate to soldiers’ camp

libraries, and saved fruit pits, which were burned and used to provide charcoal filters for gas masks. Businessmen devoted portions of their advertisements to slogans such as “Be Prepared,” “Your Country Calls,” and “America Must Feed the World.”<sup>12</sup>

On 29 August 1917, festivities were held for the first group of Coles County soldiers to leave for the war. Days later, 5 September 1917, the first farewell demonstration was held, and hundreds showed up to bid farewell to the 12 departing soldiers.<sup>13</sup>

Patriotic Community Sings were held during the summer of 1918, where songs like “Rally ‘round the Flag,” “Pack Up Your Troubles,” and “Over There” filled Charleston’s town square. To assist the war effort, women served special meals on meatless days, wheatless days and sugarless days, concocting inventive recipes for conservation. Farmers in the area worked diligently to produce more food, and L.C. Lord, wife of Eastern Illinois University president Livingston Lord, announced free classes for area women where they could learn practical bandaging, first aid, telegraphy, typewriting, stenography, making war bread and canning.<sup>14</sup>

When Armistice Day arrived, public schools were dismissed, and two peace parades were held. The *Charleston Courier* stated, “Charleston was jubilant all day long and the celebration was remarkable. Never in the history of Charleston was there enacted a scene as was in those early hours before dawn, when the courier’s bulletins were fresh and people gave themselves up to joy spontaneous and unrestrained.”<sup>15</sup>

A large board was erected on the courthouse lawn of the square, bearing the names of all soldiers and sailors of Coles County with a star to indicate their safe return. Today, a WWI monument stands on the southwest corner of the square, bearing twenty-one names. The

<sup>11</sup> Butch Ealy, interview by author, 22 October 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Easter-Shick and Bonnie Brooks Clark, *Round the Square: Life in Downtown Charleston, Illinois 1830-1998* (Charleston, IL: Easter Chick Publishing, 1999), 209-212.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-215.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

inscription reads, “The American Legion has erected this memorial in commemoration of the patriotism, love of country, and devotion to duty of our comrades who gave their lives in the service of humanity in the World War, 1914–1918.” Of all the names listed on this memorial, only Cpl. Fred R. Dunn, Pvt. Adolphus B. Curtis and Pvt. James E. Rauch are listed in *Soldiers of the Great War*.<sup>16</sup>

The 1917 issue of the Charleston High School yearbook contains nothing on the war. However, the 1918 yearbook was entitled, “War Annual,” and had quite a deal of war-time material within. The dedication of the yearbook reads, “To those members of the Faculty, Alumni and Undergraduates of Charleston High School, who, for the love of our country and the democracy it represents, have so nobly offered themselves for military service during the present national crisis, we respectfully dedicate this war annual.”<sup>17</sup> The yearbook begins with an eloquent, patriotic speech from Woodrow Wilson, who says, “It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance.” Wilson advocates the protection of democracy, explaining how the United States was fighting for “the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts,” democracy, rights and liberties. He concludes by saying:



To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.<sup>18</sup>

This speech, beginning the *War Annual*, reflects the pro-war and pro-America sentiment held throughout the yearbook.

The *War Annual* contained an article on democracy, reminding readers of the values on which America had been built. It emphasized ‘mutual responsibility,’ maintaining that “each member contributes to the welfare of each and receives all that it can give.” The article also declared that schools were vital to the sustenance of democracy, and that they should be kept as intact as possible during the war, because after the war “will be needed men of trained minds and faculties, able to do their share in the great work of the reorganization and rebuilding of our social fabric.” The author recognized democracy as a spirit, a human force that “has the power to overcome Czars and Kaisers.”<sup>19</sup>

Further influence of the war can be seen in the senior and junior class poems. The senior class poem contains a stanza reading, “Some will go forth to battle/For freedom and for

<sup>16</sup> *Soldiers of the Great War*, vol. I.

<sup>17</sup> *War Annual*, Charleston High School 1918 Yearbook, Charleston, IL (Charleston, IL: Prather the Printer, 1918), found in Carnegie Library, Charleston, IL.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

right;/Others will do their bit at home/Each helping with his might.” The entire junior class poem took on a brilliant military theme throughout, using military terminology to describe their school life. For example, the opening stanza reads, “The Juniors started, one and all,/To fight their battles large and small/Their armor thick consisted of/Intentions all the best/As, “Study Hard” and “Whisper Not,”/And “Pass on every test.”<sup>20</sup>

The 1917 tornado is also mentioned in the yearbook, citing 35 dead in Charleston and 104 in Coles County, and it recalls the invaluable help of the Red Cross.<sup>21</sup> A later article spoke of the departure of the Red Cross for Europe, stating, “Near the close of the last semester of their senior year, the entire class, both boys and girls, had resolved to enter the service of Uncle Sam, which decision, I think, was highly commendable, in these troublous times when our beloved country was in need of all the help that was available.” The article mentions the girls, in their Red Cross uniforms, leaving Norfolk, Virginia bound for the American hospital at Neuilly, France. Only male names are mentioned by the author, 9 of the 17 boys in the senior class of Charleston High School. According to the author, Herbert Anderson, Frank Moffett, and “Doc” (student unknown) were three seniors who enlisted in the U.S. Navy and had a brush with a submarine, but survived. Raymond Goodwin and Trevor K. Serviss worked in Nieuport scouting aeroplanes. Allie Sanderson became a Major-General, and Harold Cavins, author of the senior class poem, a radio operator. Chester E. Faust and Paul Bailey had the ‘hazardous duties’ of balloon observers, and “Tripp,” who could be either Charles Tripp or Leo Tripp, was in the army band. The author alludes that the others not mentioned by name were machine gun operators and ambulance drivers.<sup>22</sup>

A long article in the *War Annual*, written by senior John Conrad, explains why he thinks America is at war. He asked students and elders that very question, and received varied responses such as, “Because they murdered American citizens,” “To make the world safe for Democracy,” “Because we sold supplies to the Allies,” and, my personal favorite, “Because the Germans thought they could whip the whole world.” Conrad insists that the people, who “abhor war,” should shoulder the responsibility for America’s unpreparedness upon our entrance into WWI. Interestingly, Conrad’s own explanation of why America entered the war focuses on German atrocities. He tells of the German soldier who “drove his bayonet into a child’s stomach, lifted the child into the air and carried it away on his bayonet,” along with other reports of the merciless slaughter of children. He also speaks of the actions of Germany, who had always been our ‘friend and neighbor,’ against the United States, such as the sinking of neutral American ships.<sup>23</sup>

The most note-worthy aspect of not only this article, but the entire *War Annual* itself, is the avid patriotism of the students. If Charleston’s public opinion was, as mentioned earlier, against the war, it really speaks to the effectiveness of the United States propaganda campaign that the students held such a radically different opinion of the war.

Eastern Illinois University, then known as the Eastern Illinois State Normal School, also caught the war spirit that infected Charleston High School. On 18 April 1917, the first of Eastern’s volunteers enlisted, and eventually, 11 of the 17 boys of the 1917 class entered military service. Eastern’s librarian, Mary Josephine Booth, took a leave of absence to work for the Red Cross in France and Germany. She was the only faculty



Mary J. Booth, photo courtesy of ‘Round the Square.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 24, 35.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 42-3.

member to serve during WWI, but over 200 former students and 4 former faculty members took their turn to fight for America.<sup>24</sup>

Anti-German sentiment at this time forcibly changed the school song, which had been previously sung to the tune of “The Watch on the Rhine.” The music was rewritten by Friederick Koch, a native of Germany and the Music Master at Eastern. Koch was repeatedly harrassed, though he had U.S. citizenship and remained loyal to America.<sup>25</sup> While falsely believed to be a German sympathizer, it was true that nearly all of his family was fighting for Germany.<sup>26</sup> There exists a story of Eastern’s president, Livingston Lord, giving Koch fifty dollars to buy his first war bond, and luckily, when later asked by the Secret Service if he had bought any, he was able to say yes.<sup>27</sup>

According to Isabel McKinney, a biographer of Lord, “He did his best to hold the school steady against the tidal wave of prejudice, hate, distorted values, disordered morals which war always heaves over the land.” When faced with a clamor to drop the German language from the curriculum, Lord is said to have replied, “Not from knowledge of German, but from ignorance of it, do we get into trouble.”<sup>28</sup>

The German language was indeed omitted from the curriculum during the 1918-1919 school year, and it did not reappear until the 1926-1927 school year. The German teacher, Ruth Carmen, taught Latin during this time.<sup>29</sup> However, the discontinuation of German did not result from the pressure of the community, but because of unpopularity. It was kept in the school until the class size fell to two students, and was restored as quickly as possible with a class of five.<sup>30</sup>

The 1919 yearbook of Eastern, the *Warbler*, holds within its pages some of the influences of WWI; more so than Mattoon High School, but less than Charleston High School. The yearbook dedication reads, “To the memory of those of our former students and alumni who gave their lives in the service of their country, we respectfully dedicate this annual.”<sup>31</sup>

Mary J. Booth received her own page in the yearbook, along with a short summary of her war-time work. She was sent to France as a canteen worker after she enlisted in the Red Cross in the fall of 1917. From there, she was sent to Paris under the auspices of the American Library Association, and at the time of the yearbook’s publication, she was sent to Cobelnz, Germany by the ALA after the Armistice.<sup>32</sup>

The yearbook also speaks of a Better Speech Carnival, held November 10-17, 1918. The carnival was intended to help the war effort by the “Americanizing of the Americans,” and promoting better English. Furthermore, it contains a lengthy poem by Cpl. Maurice A. Bryant about the war. The poem is mostly about the journey of the soldiers to Europe, emphasizing the effort, if not the actions of the United States soldiers. The last three stanzas exemplify his meaning:

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<sup>24</sup> *Eastern Illinois University Centennial*, (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1995), 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Isabel McKinney, *Mr. Lord: The Life and Words of Livingston C. Lord* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1937), 274.

<sup>27</sup> *Eastern Illinois University Centennial*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> McKinney, *Mr. Lord*, 273.

<sup>29</sup> “A History of the Department of Foreign Languages, Eastern Illinois University,” Elizabeth Michael, Martin M. Miess, Paul Kirby and Gerald F. Carr (Eastern Illinois University May 1974), 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> McKinney, *Mr. Lord*, 274.

<sup>31</sup> *Warbler*, 1919 Eastern Illinois State Normal School yearbook (Charleston, IL: Prather the Printer, 1919).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 54.

When we land at a port cross the ocean  
 And each of us goes to our homes,  
 We may not have wounds from the bullets  
 But many will have broken bones [from the hard journey to Europe].

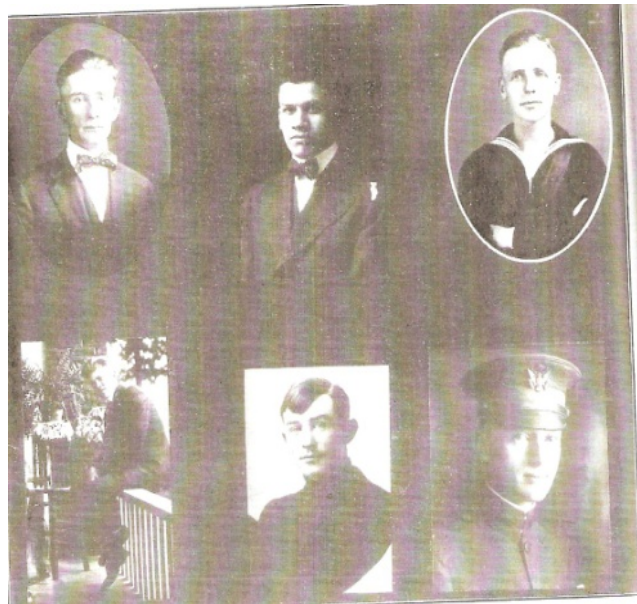
We may not have handled the rifle,  
 But the combatants' battles are won,  
 While we in the remounts are fighting  
 The war for us guys is still on.

But wait till some fine sunny morning  
 We'll go back o'er the sea just like you,  
 And the folks back at home will receive us  
 And call us real soldiers true blue.<sup>33</sup>

His poem is interesting, focusing on the contributions of those who did not make it to Europe in time to see combat. It seems to reflect the spirit on the homefront, showing that regardless of the individual contributions of the men and women in WWI, everyone was considered important to the war effort.

Even the Athletics section of the yearbook bore traces of the war, lamenting that the war came as a jolt to the Athletic department when 5 of the best athletes enlisted in 1918. Stephen Turner, Merrell McCabe, Ralph Adams, Dale Coyle and Horace Gray all left their comfortable lives at Eastern to fight in WWI.<sup>34</sup> It appears that all 5 survived, for none are mentioned in the School War Record page of the *Warbler*.

The War Record article claims 249 blue stars (soldiers on active duty) and 8 gold stars (soldiers deceased during service) on Eastern's service flag. The article does not boast of this fact, stating, "These boys who went into the service did only what hundreds of thousands of loyal Americans did...But they made the greatest sacrifice that human beings can, and it is of these, and of the others that went willingly to make that sacrifice, that we are rightfully proud." The article remembers the eight that perished, and though three died of disease in America, it maintains that "every one died like a true American, with courage unshaken by fear." The article announces that none died in vain, for they are recognized as giving their lives for their country and therefore earn the respect, admiration and love of Eastern and the United States citizenry. It also praises the soldiers who returned home, declaring that not one of Eastern's service stars were soiled by 'a disloyal act or shirking of responsibility.' The homefront is



Eight stars of the fallen. 1919 Warbler.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 71, 93.

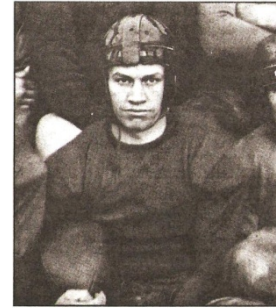
<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 79.



also mentioned, those who bought Liberty Bonds, gave to war-relief and helped out in any way possible, but the article reminds that the soldiers “were the ones who really won this war, no matter how much the rest of us helped, and it is to them that the honor belongs.”<sup>35</sup>

The eight stars of the fallen belong to Bruce Leamon, Cpl. Martin Schahrer, Ralph Winkleblack, Cpl. John Balch, Cpl. Fred Dunn and Lt. Andrew Dunn, from top left to bottom right in the picture. Fred Percy and Burt Chenoweth (both not pictured), along with Winkleblack, died of disease in the United States, all in 1918. Fred Dunn, Andrew Dunn, Balch, Leamon and Schahrer were all killed in action in 1918.<sup>36</sup>

Martin “Otto” Schahrer was a particularly regrettable loss for Eastern. Schahrer was 1916 football captain and 1917 class president. When he enlisted, he became a corporal in the Co. I, 6<sup>th</sup> Inf. Division. He died on 15 September 1918, during the St. Mihiel Offensive, and the football field and track were named Schahrer Field.<sup>37</sup>



Martin “Otto” Schahrer

An accurate, complete number of casualties from WWI does not exist. Nancy Easter-Schick and Bonnie Brooks Clark cite 24 deaths from Coles County.<sup>38</sup> *Soldiers of the Great War* totals the casualties of just Mattoon and Charleston at 13, with only 3 from Charleston. The Charleston WWI Memorial claims 21 deaths, including the 3 cited in *Soldiers of the Great War*. However, it also claims Martin Schahrer and 6 others from Eastern’s lists, however, no records of their hometowns could be found.

The Charleston memorial also excludes Paul McVey, the first WWI casualty from Coles County. Pvt. Paul Rutherford McVey was employed as a blacksmith in Charleston, but enlisted in November 1916 via Canada. He was killed in action on 26 August 1917, and his remains are buried on French soil in a French national cemetery. His obituary reads, “The death of Paul McVey brings to the people of this community a closer realization of what our entrance into the great struggle may mean to a number of our people.”<sup>39</sup>

Like my great-great-grandfather, some may have simply been lost, completely consumed from memory by the Great War. Others may be simply forgotten. Either way, I would never claim this paper as a complete list of WWI casualties from Mattoon and Charleston. So many were lost, from every nation that fought in the war, that there probably will never be a fully complete, accurate account of the millions of soldiers that fought during World War I. The lost, including my great-great-grandfather, are the true victims of the Great War, those erased from memory by that horrible event.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>37</sup> *Eastern Illinois University Centennial*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> Easter-Schick and Clark, *Round the Square*, 195.

<sup>39</sup> “Paul McVey Obituary” *Charleston Courier* 8 September 1917.

**Table I.**

Country	Total Mobilized Forces	Killed	Wounded	Prisoners and Missing	Total Casualties	Casualties as % of Forces
<i>ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS</i>						
Russia	12,000,000	1,700,000	4,950,000	2,500,000	9,150,000	76.3
British Empire	8,904,467	908,371	2,090,212	191,652	3,190,235	35.8
France	8,410,000	1,357,800	4,266,000	537,000	6,160,800	73.3
Italy	5,615,000	650,000	947,000	600,000	2,197,000	39.1
United States	4,355,000	116,516	204,002	4,500	323,018	7.1
Japan	800,000	300	907	3	1,210	0.2
Romania	750,000	335,706	120,000	80,000	535,706	71.4
Serbia	707,343	45,000	133,148	152,958	331,106	46.8
Belgium	267,000	13,716	44,686	34,659	93,061	34.9
Greece	230,000	5,000	21,000	1,000	27,000	11.7
Portugal	100,000	7,222	13,751	12,318	33,291	33.3
Montenegro	50,000	3,000	10,000	7,000	20,000	40.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,188,810</b>	<b>5,142,631</b>	<b>12,800,706</b>	<b>4,121,090</b>	<b>22,062,427</b>	<b>52.3</b>
<i>ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS</i>						
Germany	11,000,000	1,773,700	4,216,058	1,152,800	7,142,558	64.9
Austria-Hungary	7,800,000	1,200,000	3,620,000	2,200,000	7,020,000	90.0
Turkey	2,850,000	325,000	400,000	250,000	975,000	34.2
Bulgaria	1,200,000	87,500	152,390	27,029	266,919	22.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,850,000</b>	<b>3,386,200</b>	<b>8,388,448</b>	<b>3,629,829</b>	<b>15,404,477</b>	<b>67.4</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>65,038,810</b>	<b>8,528,831</b>	<b>21,189,154</b>	<b>7,750,919</b>	<b>37,466,904</b>	<b>57.5</b>