



NORTH DAKOTA WORLD WAR ONE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Preserving American Involvement in World War One
In cooperation with
The U.S. World War One Centennial Commission
Website: www.ww1cc.org/nd
Email: NDWW1CentennialCommittee@outlook.com

News Release
October 4, 2018
Additional Comments Darrell Dorgan 701-226-4431

-----WWI Centennial Events-----

One hundred years-ago in October, 26,000 American soldiers died on the battlefields of France in one of the final battles of WWI. Hundreds of them were from North Dakota. During the coming month, events will take place to commemorate sacrifices the young soldiers from North Dakota and across the country made in defense of freedom and liberty.

Communications were poor in the early 1900s and initially it was believed about 700 North Dakota soldiers died in the “war to end all wars”. However, a new study by noted historian Barbara Handy-Marchello now puts the number of state residents who died at just under 1,400. “There were no computers, records were sparse, and many were destroyed or lost over the years. The 1,400 names I have documented are those we have evidence died and the number might even be higher”, according to Handy-Marchello.

Handy-Marchello says more than 120,000 soldiers from across the nation died in in WW1 and those who paid the ultimate price from North Dakota came from all corners of the state. She notes, “A surprising number of the North Dakotans who died were not even U.S. Citizens. Many were immigrants who came to the U.S. to homestead, join in the American dream, vote. Many were American Indians who were committed to the war effort though they were not allowed to become citizens until 1924”.

The listing of those who died, organized by county, is posted on the North Dakota World War 1 Centennial Committee web site. The website address is www.ww1cc.org/nd

There will be informational WWI programs across the state beginning mid-October and leading up to the armistice that ended WW1, 100 years ago on November 11. The North Dakota WW1 Centennial Committee, funded in part by Humanities North Dakota, a non-profit, independent state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, will sponsor the six free WWI programs. Susan Wefald or Darrell Dorgan will moderate each of the event.

Each free program will include a short WWI video that provides an overview of WWI, a 30-minute talk by a noted WW1 scholar, followed by time for audience Q & A and discussion of the significant and lasting changes in America and North Dakota caused by WW1.

The six programs will begin October 16 and end on November 7.

* Williston - on October 16, 7:30 pm Williston Public Library, “World War 1 – America’s March to War,” Prof. Joseph Jastrzembski, Minot State University.

* Minot – October 17, 7:30 pm, Minot Public Library, “World War 1 –America’s March to War,” Prof. Joseph Jastrzembski, Minot State University.

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- * Grand Forks – October 23, 7:30 pm, University of North Dakota Student Union Lecture Bowl, “World War 1 – The Real Game of Thrones,” Prof. Al Berger, University of North Dakota.
- * Fargo – October 24, 7:30 Fargo Public Library, “Kaiser Bill in the Cow Pasture: The Great War at the Grassroots of North Dakota,” Prof. Tom Isern, North Dakota State University.
- * Jamestown – October 30, 7:30 pm, Old Stutsman County Courthouse “Warrior Doughboys”, History Prof. Carol Barrett.
- * Bismarck – November 7, 7:30 pm, North Dakota Heritage Center, “I have seen my dear son’s resting place: Gold Star Mother’s Pilgrimages of World War 1”, Historian Barbara Handy-Marcello.

Dorgan notes, “Our North Dakota committee originated the idea of having bells toll and sirens ring on the morning of November 11 across the state. The National WW1 Centennial Commission is now asking all states to participate. We are asking communities across North Dakota to be involved in this tribute by flying flags at half-staff, ringing bells, and blowing sirens at 11 am on November 11th, on this 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day.

The North Dakota WWI Centennial Committee has also formally requested that County Veterans Services Officers work with local veteran’s organizations to read aloud the names of those who died from their counties at a Veterans Day event, from the steps of the county courthouse or a place of public gathering, in their county of residence, when the bells are done tolling.

Prairie Public Radio has agreed to provide several hours of air-time on November 11th for a conversation about WWI. Many stories written by our committee members about the war will likely be used. Prairie Public is also considering some programming on television leading up to and on November 11.

Groups that have events planned to commemorate WW1 are also asked to contact the WWI Centennial Committee web site, so the events can be listed. The web site manager is Mike Gayette at Gayette@gmail.com.

Dorgan says, “We look forward to working with groups to help publicize the events of 100 years ago to remember the ultimate sacrifice made by millions across the world and thousands of others from North Dakota.”

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