Loudoun and the Great War
1917-1918
In 1914 most county residents, as well as the rest of the United States, believed that the country should avoid the battlefields of Europe. After three years of following the war in newspapers, many people in the United States and Loudoun began to accept the possibility that the U.S. was going to enter the war.

On April 6, 1917 the United States declared war on the German and the Austro-Hungarian Empires. The entry of the United States in World War I began a massive shift of the country’s population from rural communities to urban centers. The war impacted and changed America’s agriculture, industry, banking, transportation, and especially its future role in the world. In less than 100 years, and two world wars, Loudoun County become a microcosm of America’s 20th century transformation from a rural base society to an international urban center.

“Vote for peace-vote for smiles on our women’s faces-vote that our boys may live out their allotted lives-vote that our daughters may never face what those of Belgium faced and suffered”.

*Loudoun Times Mirror, November 1, 1916*

“The Time has come, when we, the American people, must awaken to the fact, that we are living in an atmosphere of false security. We cannot longer afford to disregard danger signals seen on every side nor ignore recent bloody history”.

*Loudoun Times Mirror, September 27, 1916*
Loudoun County historic sites and local government jurisdictions have formed a World War I Centennial Committee to commemorate Loudoun’s role in the Great War. Over the next three years, residents and visitors will have the opportunity to view unique World War I documents and artifacts at a variety of programs and events offered by the Centennial Committee.

- Black History Committee
- George C. Marshall House
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground
- Loudoun County Public Libraries
- Loudoun Museum
- Morven Park
- Mosby Heritage Area Association
- NOVA Park Authority
- Oatlands
- Purcellville Historical Society
- Thomas Balch Library
- Town of Hillsboro
- Virginia's World War I Centennial Committee
- Visit Loudoun
- Waterford Foundation
The Selective Service Act of 1917 required all males between the age of 21 and 31 to register for the draft. The draft had five classes of draft eligibility:

- Class 1, all eligible males
- Class 2-3, temporary and exempted from draft until needed
- Class 4, exempted for hardship
- Class 5, ineligible

Unlike the draft in the Civil War, hiring a substitute was not allowed. The first draft was on June 5, 1917. In 1918, the law was modified to raise the draft age to 45. The final draft call ups of the war was in July and then September 1918. Draftees made up 2.8 million of the 4 million strong Armed Forces in World War I. Of the 2.8 million men drafted, 290,527 were African Americans. The draft mobilized 2,224 men from Loudoun County and 591 were inducted into military service.

- 1,755 White
- 468 Black
- 1 "Oriental"
- 591 Inducted
- 32 Lost their lives

(From Frontier to Suburbia by Charles P. Poland Jr., page 312)
The Draft continued

Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records has two books: *Muster Roll in the War with Germany*, and the *World War Memorial Record* (only eight veterans are listed in Loudoun's war memorial record).* Each county in Virginia was mandated to create a *Muster Roll in the War with Germany* listing county residents serving in the Armed Forces. The following is a breakdown of Loudoun's Muster Roll:

Race:
- 443 White
- 179 Black
- 12 Unknown

Draft:
- 509 Drafted
- 107 Volunteered
- 24 Unknown

Branch:
- 571 Army**
- 12 Marine
- 27 Navy
- 24 Unknown

*An act passed by the Virginia General Assembly on March 16, 1918 required records be kept of the names of drafted men. The chairmen of each local draft board in the counties and cities of Virginia were required to furnish the Clerk of Court with a list of residents who joined the Armed Forces through the selective draft law. (Library of Virginia)

** Thirty-two of these individuals were Student Army Training Corp cadets. The SATC officially began on October 1, 1918. It was located in 525 educational institutions and inducted 200,000 total students on the first day. Unlike the Selective Service Draft, enrollment in the SATC was completely voluntary.

Helpful Links

[Draft in Virginia](#)
[Search Online for World War I Records from Virginia](#)
### Racial breakdown of Loudoun’s soldiers by communities in World War I (From the Muster Roll in the War with Germany)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Race Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Airmont</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aldie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcola</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashburn</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluemont</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catharpin</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harpers Ferry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillsboro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lovettsville</td>
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<td>Luckettles</td>
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<td>Middleburg</td>
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<td>62</td>
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<td>Mountville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oatlands</td>
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<td>Paonian Springs</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Philomont</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Point of Rocks Maryland</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Taylor Town</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>The Plains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upperville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waxpool</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>442</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>634</td>
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</table>
County issues concerning schools, road improvements, and prohibition became secondary concerns for Loudoun citizens and local government with America's entry into the war. On the home front, Loudoun adults and school children organized war related fund raising drives. Thousands of dollars in Liberty Bonds were purchased by county residents. However, it was Loudoun's agricultural economy, and man power that contributed the most to the war effort during World War I and World War II. Agricultural prices, mechanization, and crop production increased during both World Wars, despite the manpower shortages brought on by the draft. Manpower shortages were supplemented with female labor throughout the country and Loudoun County.

Popular War Time Groups and Fund Raisers

- Boy Scout troops planted potatoes
- Patriotic Sunday sermons
- Liberty Loans (War bonds to pay for the war effort)
- War Savings Committee, US Savings & Thrift Stamps (Program was popular with school age children to raise money for the war).
- United War Work Committee
- $17,764.74 was raised by Loudoun citizens for the Committee for United War Work (Governor Westmoreland Davis, donated $1,000 to the Loudoun campaign).
- $1,236.06 was raised by pupils in the county schools by the “Victor Girls” and Victor Boys”;
- $132,350 Liberty Bonds purchased by Loudoun citizens

Helpful Links

Home Front
Food Production
War Production-Short Film
Women Land Army of America
World War I Poster Collection at Library of Virginia
World War I introduced a new vocabulary of words to the world regarding
technology, weapons, medicine, and death. The airplane, tank, machine guns,
poison gas, submarines, and lastly the Spanish Flu (Influenza) became every-
day words in conversation and in local newspapers. By exploring the names
of servicemen in the *Muster Roll in the War with Germany*, and the *World War
I Memorial Record*, one can see a number of soldiers who trained, experi-
cenced, and died from the latest battlefield technology during the war.

**Aerial Warfare**
Lt. James Forest Manning Jr. 49 Aero Squadron
History of the 49th Aero Squadron

**Medical Services**
Capt. Ashby D. Holtzclaw, Medical Corp
U.S. Medical Corp

**United States Tank Corp**
Sgt. William G.C. McDonald
Tank Corp

**Chemical Warfare Service**
Private William C. Whitmore
Chemical Warfare

**Battles**
Private Richard Ratcliffe (Black Soldier)
Battle of Meuse-Argonne
372 Inf. Regiment

**Influenza at Fort Lee**
Levi Beaner (Black Soldier)

**Answers the Final Call**
Lt. Charles C. Riticor
Soldiers and Sailors from Loudoun who lost their lives during World War I
Virgians Who Lost Their Lives in the World War, 1920
(Pamphlet incomplete)
Coming Home

November 11, 1918-County residents celebrate the war's end and all draft call ups are canceled.

*A large parade of flags on bedecked automobiles was formed east of town under the marshal age of Mr. W. Frank Garrett, and passed through town, horns were blown, bells rang, whistles blew and the noise of celebration was heard on every side. The parade extended over several blocks in length and was viewed by a large crowd.*

*Loudoun Times Mirror, November 13, 1918*

**July 25, 1919**-The victory celebration and parade was attended by 7,000 people. Governor Westmoreland Davis, of Leesburg gave a speech and presented medals that were pinned on by the "young ladies of the county." Supper was served to "Loudoun's Fighting Sons" by the Red Cross. The dinner was followed by a Vaudeville show on the court house porch and square dancing on the court house green and the Town Hall until 1 a.m.

**July 17, 1919**-A processional of cars carrying veterans of previous wars paraded around Leesburg. Most of the veterans were former Confederate soldiers.

**Helpful Links**

[World War I in Virginia's Memory](#)
[Returning to Civilian Life](#)