

# “Over There”: Discovering Your Kentucky Ancestor in World War I

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Howard Holtzclaw in World War I training unit



GARRARD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION: J. W. MITCHELL, Cecil Powers, Mason Pollard, Kirby Taylor, Howard Holtzclaw, Price Rhoads. Mr. Holtzclaw has been replaced recently by L. G. Blandford.

## Centennial of the End of World War I

• Armistice went into effect:  
November 11, 1918 (11/11/11)  
11:11 a.m.

???????????????

- Don't fail to ask the question.
- My own failures to capitalize on what I knew.
- World War I uniform found in the crawlspace.

## World War I When Did It Begin

### For the European Nations

August 1914

### For the United States

- American Expeditionary Force (AEF): April 6, 1917 – November 11, 1918

## Possible Role Your Ancestor Might Have Filled

- Military member of U.S. Army, Marines, or Navy
  - Merchant Marines who transported troops, supplies, aircraft, etc. to the European theater
  - Red Cross Nurses
  - Telephone switchboard operators
- Civilian support staff in various capacities

These are by no means all of the possible work positions you may find your own ancestor was involved with. But, there were many different skills and jobs that were required to support the war effort.

## Finding Your Kentucky World War I Ancestor

Major roadblocks – lack of personal identification information

- July 1973 fire at the National Archives (National Personnel Records Center) facility in St. Louis, Missouri
  - Who was affected:
  - Dates of records severely damaged or destroyed
  - Army veterans . . .
- Good News!! -- Navy and Marine Corps records were not affected

## Howard Holtzclaw: My Maternal Grandfather

**Date and place of birth:** June 5, 1895/ Lincoln County, Kentucky

**Date and place of death:** April 20, 1959/Farm on Perkins Lane, outside Lancaster (Garrard County), Kentucky (actually died from a stroke in a field on his farm)

**Registered for both the World War I draft and for World War II**

**U.S. Army Service Number:** 1981263

**Date of Enlistment:** September 21, 1917

**Wounded in battle:** France, September 29, 1918 (less than a month and a half from the war's end)

**Discharged:** June 21, 1919

**Unit:** Company D, 120<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 30<sup>th</sup> Division, United States Army

**Decorations:** SS and PH (Silver Star and Purple Heart)

**Highest Rank Achieved:** Private First Class

## National Archives SF 180

- Information requested
  - Name
  - Address
- Social Security Number

## Histories of Various Counties in World War I

### History of Boyle County in World War I

Found at the Boyle County Public Library

### History of Mercer County in World War I

Found at the Mercer County Clerk's Office (courthouse)

These World War I-related references are likely to be a single volume – check with the local library, historical society or county clerk's office of the county you are researching.

## Internet Resources for World War I Research

- **Ancestry.com**
- **HeritageQuest.com**
- **FamilySearch.com**
  - **Fold3.com**
- **Center of Military History (Historical agency of the U.S. Army)**
  - **Other worthwhile World War I websites**

## Suggested Reading

- Scott, Craig Roberts. *Online Course on Researching Your World War I Ancestors* (Available from National Genealogical Society [www.ngs.org])
- Bettes, David J. *Kentucky and the Great War: World War I on the Home Front*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016.
- Coffman, Edward M. *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968.
- Crocker, H. W. *The Yanks are Coming: A Military History of the United States in World War I*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Press, 2014.
- Graham, John W. – *The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages of the 1930s: Overseas Grave Visitations by Mothers and Widows of Fallen U.S. World War I Soldiers*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005.
- Monographs available for free on Center of Military History website: U.S. Army Center of Military History (www.<https://history.army.mil/>)
- Multiple articles on World War I genealogy, NGS Magazine, April-June 2017 (Vol. 43, No. 2).
- "Gold Stars", *FamilyTree Magazine*, July/August 2014: 16-21.
- "Service Women," *Family Tree Magazine*, July/August 2014: 22-25.
- Local newspapers during the war or in the years following – reminiscences, listings of World War I veterans, etc.
- County histories or county/city historical/genealogical society newsletters/publications
- Possible oral history tapes/materials made in past years.
- Stewart, Richard S. ed. *American Military History* (vol. III): *The U.S. Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2005.

## Local Records Archives

- Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History Library
  - Family and county histories
  - Vertical Files
  - Research Library collection
- Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
- Kentucky Military Records
  - Service cards
  - Other World War I materials

## Questions?

- There is NO stupid question.



## Presenter

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For questions you think of later today or next week:  
 (or if you'd like a PDF copy of this PowerPoint):