

## Making a sacrifice for liberty and peace

HUDSON—War was raging oceans away, but the United States remained neutral. That isolationist strategy lasted for nearly three years before the country found itself entangled in what would be called World War I.

When the war began—pitting the Allied powers of France, Great Britain and Russia against Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire—most Americans wanted to keep out of the conflict. The fighting was far away and the United States wasn't directly threatened, so many American's felt there was little to gain by entering the war. The American diplomatic perspective of avoiding “entangling alliances,” which had existed since the country's founding, supported that mindset.

President Woodrow Wilson tried to broker a negotiated end to the war, with little success. By early 1917, actions by the Germans outraged the American public and President Wilson asked Congress for a Declaration of War and got one on April 6, 1917.



Area men stepped up to support the cause. Some came home, others did not. Their military uniforms were a symbol of their loyalty to the cause of liberty and peace. The Hendrick Hudson Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution has put together an exhibit of some of its uniforms to commemorate the centennial of the United States' entry into World War I.

Among the pieces of the exhibit, organized by chapter Collections Manager Patricia Fenoff, is the overcoat worn by Hudson-born Robert W. Evans Jr. Evans enlisted as a private in Company B, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, New York National Guard at Geneva, New York, and served with them later at Camp Whitman and also on the Mexican border at Pharr, Texas.

After his return, he married and had two children, a daughter and son. He obtained a transfer from the Geneva Company to Company F, 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry, New York National Guard, and on April 19, 1917, was made a second lieutenant of this unit and was called into federal service on July 20, 1917. The company left Hudson on July 29, 1917, for Fort Niagara, where they were trained until October. Then then entrained for Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina, where Evans was transferred to Company B, 105<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion, 27<sup>th</sup> Division. This company left the States on May 10, 1918.



After landing at St. Nazaire, the 105<sup>th</sup> proceeded to the vicinity of Abbeville, where they trained with the British for two weeks, after which they took active part in the fighting at Ypres, Dickebush and Mt. Kemmel, in Belgium, with the British.

On September 7, 1918, Evans returned to Camp Dix, New Jersey, where he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant and assigned to the 384<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 96<sup>th</sup> Division, which was then forming at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina.

Evans was honorably discharged from service on December 6, 1918, and then became a member of the firm of C.H. Evans and Sons Brewing Company, a well-known Hudson concern.

Mrs. Fenoff also included in the exhibit the gear of local soldier Myron Hermance, which included a gas mask.

Hermance was born in Greenport and was educated in Hudson public schools, after which he was employed by a Hudson concern as a machinist.

He enlisted as a member of Company F, 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry, New York National Guard on February 22, 1916, and was serving as corporal when the unit was called into federal service on July 20, 1917 by presidential proclamation. The company left Hudson for Fort Niagara, New York, nine days later to undergo three months of military training.

In October, the company entrained for Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina, where Hermance was assigned to the 102<sup>nd</sup> Ammunition Train, 52<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Brigade, 27<sup>th</sup> Division. After serving seven months at Wadsworth, Hermance had two weeks of artillery training at Camp Stuart, Virginia.

On June 14, 1918, the unit left the States for foreign service and landed at Brest, France, later in the month. The 102<sup>nd</sup> proceeded to Camp De Souge, where they received special artillery training. Hermance served on the Verdus sector, and took part in the battles at Le Claire, Chattancourt, Le Mon Homme, Charney, Bois de Forges, Brabant, Haumont and other places.

His unit landed on American soil March 11, 1919, and on April 3, 1919, Hermance was given his honorable discharge.

Private tours of the exhibit are by appointment at the Robert Jenkins House, 113 Warren Street. Call (518) 828-9764 to arrange a time.