

**THE WAR ACTIVITIES OF  
TOPSFIELD,  
MASSACHUSETTS DURING  
THE GREAT WAR-1917-1918**

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The War Activities of Topsfield, Massachusetts During the Great War-1917-1918 by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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# THE WAR ACTIVITIES OF TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS DURING THE GREAT WAR—1917—1918

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Men in the National Service  
Public Safety Committee  
Liberty Loan Campaign Committees  
Topsfield-Boxford Machine-Gun Company  
Topsfield Canning Club  
American Fund for French Wounded  
Special Aid Society for American Preparedness  
Red Cross Branch  
Y.M.C.A. and United War Work Drives

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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
1919

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IN HONOR OF  
THE YOUNG SOLDIER WHO DIED IN FRANCE,  
AND OF HIS COMRADES IN THE SERVICE ON  
BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC; IN HONOR  
OF THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC  
SAFETY COMMITTEE WHO DIED AT HOME,  
THE ONE CROWN GRAY IN PUBLIC SERVICE  
AND THE OTHER JUST AT THE BEGINNING  
OF A CAREER OF USEFULNESS; AND ALSO  
IN HONOR OF THE MANY EARNEST WORK-  
ERS WHO FREELY GAVE IN SERVICE AND  
IN PURSE, THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE  
DEDICATED

## IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY

**I**T IS too easy to record what Topsfield men have accomplished in the actual warfare and in training for the same; nor is the story completed of unwearied service in hospitals behind the firing line. That must come at a later day. Fifty-nine men and two women "did their bit," of whom thirty-four saw foreign service and one man, John J. Farrell, died in France of pneumonia. Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Jenkins, M.C., was already in the State militia when war was declared. Augustus A. Laskey was the first to enlist and was assigned to the battleship Virginia. Even before the United States entered into the World War, two went from Topsfield — Henry Beston Sheahan, who enlisted July 25, 1915, in the American Ambulance Field Service and saw nine months' active service near Pont-à-Mousson and in the defense of Verdun, and Helen P. Jordan, who as a nurse joined the Harvard University Hospital Unit of the British Army and sailed for France in November, 1916, where she was stationed at Base Hospital No. 5.

The following list of those who were in the service from Topsfield is believed to be correct. All additional information, or corrections, should be sent to the Town Clerk in order that Topsfield's record may be made as complete as possible.

### OFFICERS

Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas L. Jenkins, *Medical Corps* \*  
Major Clarence P. Baxter, *Medical Corps* \*  
Captain William E. Baxter, *Medical Corps* \*  
Captain Sargent H. Wellman, *General Staff* \*  
First Lieutenant Philip H. Smith, *Sanitary Corps* \*  
Second Lieutenant Joseph N. Smith, *Balloon Corps*  
Second Lieutenant Russell C. Smith, *Naval Reserve* \*  
Second Lieutenant Henry C. Williams, *Aviation Corps*  
Ensign Frederick Ayer, *Naval Reserve*  
Ensign Roger B. Fiske, *Naval Aviation*  
Ensign Stephen Wheatland, *Naval Reserve*

### NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Sergeant Chester C. Andrews \*  
Sergeant Amedeo Giovannacci.  
Corporal Roy E. Ford  
Corporal Clarence W. Lake \*  
Corporal William A. Perkins  
Yeoman Clarence H. Kneeland

\* Served abroad.



## OTHER BRANCHES OF THE SERVICE

- Captain Ernest H. Pentecost, *British Naval Reserve* \*  
 Henry Boston Sheahan, *American Ambulance Corps; Naval Correspondent on Foreign Service* \*  
 Rev. Arthur H. Gilmore, *Y.M.C.A.* \*  
 Alice L. Lake, *nurse (rank of Second Lieutenant), Harvard Unit* \*  
 Helen P. Jordan, *nurse, Harvard Unit, in British Army* \*

## ENLISTED MEN

## ARMY

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Rufus S. Carter *   | John Longo           |
| John Hiram Clay     | Patrick Lyons        |
| Herbert E. Dexter * | Joseph W. Mulkhy *   |
| Patrick Dolan *     | Ernest L. Pace *     |
| James D. Emalie *   | Charles A. Peaslee   |
| John J. Farrell * † | Russell F. Perkins * |
| Amos W. A. Fuller * | Arlo L. Roberts *    |
| Allen W. Jacobs     | Benjamin B. Towne    |
| Harold Jordan *     | Guy E. Watson *      |
| William McF. Lewis  |                      |

## NAVY

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Dwight B. Andrews *  | Fred G. Smith * |
| Augustus A. Laskey * | John R. Walsh * |

## MARINE CORPS

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| John B. Gamans | Herbert M. Soper * |
|----------------|--------------------|

## NAVAL RESERVE

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Frank E. Harrington | Harold H. Todd     |
| Peter J. Kilhouley  | Randolph H. Todd * |
| James E. Mercer *   | James T. Walsh     |
| Charles A. Sweeney  |                    |

## AVIATION CORPS

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| John J. Cass *     | George Shattuck |
| Chester H. Clerk * |                 |

## TRAINING CORPS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Leslie S. Ray (Instructor), <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i> | David P. Wheatland, <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i> |
| Keith P. Smerage, <i>Harvard</i>   | Robert I. Woodbury, <i>Brown</i>                                 |

\* Served abroad.

† Died in a hospital in France.

## THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

**N**EARLY a century and a half ago when the rights of our ancestors were threatened by an oppressive Government, the freemen of Topsfield gathered in town-meeting on October 11, 1774, chose Samuel Smith as their delegate to the Provincial Congress and instructed him as follows:

That you use your endeavors that all our Constitutional and Charter Rights and Privileges be kept good and inviolable to the Latest Posterity, and that you do everything to the utmost of your power to prevent any of the late oppressive acts of Parliament being Executed.

Three generations later when slavery and rebellion threatened the very foundations of our country, the citizens of Topsfield met in town-meeting on May 7, 1861, and adopted the following preamble and resolution presented by Charles H. Holmes:

Considering the present condition of our Country, not as waging war against the South, nor a party device, but an essay of the people to sustain their own rights, preserve their own institutions, give efficiency to their own laws, invigorate their execution and perpetuate the inheritance of our fathers unimpaired

*Resolved*, that the loyal peoples of the United States, inhabitants of Topsfield, in town-meeting assembled, constitute ourselves a national guard for the preservation of our national integrity.

And again in our day when an autocratic European Government sought to conquer or destroy the civilized world, the citizens of Topsfield, stirred by the dramatic events then taking place, adopted the following resolutions presented by James Duncan Phillips, March 5, 1917, at the annual town-meeting:

As the descendants and successors of the men of one of the group of little communities surrounding Salem Bay, which, during the Revolutionary War and the early days of the Republic, sent out innumerable armed ships to defend American rights on the high seas, it is hereby

*Resolved*, That we, the citizens of Topsfield, endorse the action of the President of the United States in dismissing the German ambassador.

*Resolved*, That we urge the immediate calling of an extra session of Congress and the use of the full power of the nation in defence of American rights, American lives and American honor on the high seas.

*Resolved*, That we pledge our loyalty and our support to the President for this purpose.

*Voted*, That these resolutions be adopted and that the moderator now appoint a committee of three to transmit them with an appropriate letter to the President, the two senators from Massachusetts, the congressman of this district and to the senator and representatives of this district in the Massachusetts Legislature.

In commenting on the action of the towns of Massachusetts at the town-meetings, the *Boston Transcript* said:

Several of the towns adopted resolutions endorsing the action of President Wilson in standing up for American rights against Germany's aggression. Most of

## WAR ACTIVITIES OF TOPSFIELD

them followed the Boston Chamber of Commerce's form of a resolve, but some produced original forms for the President's eye. Among the towns which stood by the head of the nation were Concord, Marshfield, Topsfield, and Wenham. Topsfield's resolution was perhaps the most interesting.

On the editorial page the same day, there was an article particularly commenting on the stand which the town had taken and highly commending its attitude. This article said in part as follows:

When Boston was a town it used to pass resolutions in town meeting on national subjects, particularly in great emergencies, which were heard and regarded in the councils of the nation. As a city it is generally silent in such great crises just as, unfortunately, it is at this moment. But there are still patriotic towns in Massachusetts which are ready to express themselves on great questions and record the sentiments of their citizens. A considerable number of towns, at their meeting yesterday, adopted stirring resolutions of support and stimulus to the President in his attempt to uphold the nation's rights. Among those towns which have passed such resolutions, as already reported, are Concord — Concord, the "star that never sets" — Marshfield, the home of Webster, Wenham and Topsfield. The Topsfield resolutions are particularly spirited. They are in words which deserve to be listened to.

In accordance with these resolutions, a committee was appointed to send copies with an appropriate letter to the persons enumerated, all of whom duly acknowledged them in the following appropriate letters which have been placed on file in the office of the Town Clerk:

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington  
March 8, 1917

MY DEAR SIR:

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of March 6th, with its enclosure, and to assure you and all concerned that he deeply appreciates this expression of confidence and support.

Sincerely yours

H. TUMULTY  
Secretary to the President

UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE LAND CLAIMS

March 8, 1917

MY DEAR MR. PHILLIPS:

I was very much gratified to receive the resolutions adopted by the Topsfield Town Meeting and I only regret that I cannot, under existing rulings, present them to the Senate. They are such resolutions as I should expect to receive from an old Massachusetts town and I need hardly say that I am doing all in my power to give the President the powers which he thinks necessary to protect the lives and the rights of American citizens.

Very truly yours

H. C. LODGE

(If we are later allowed to present petitions and memorials you may be sure that I shall lay the resolutions before the Senate at the first opportunity.)