

# *The* **AMERICAN** **LEGION** *Weekly*

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## **The Army Death Record**

**I**T is only four years since American Army transports bound for France were transformed into hospitals in mid-ocean. It is only four years since those transports docked at Brest and St. Nazaire and Le Havre with their holds stacked with coffins, their decks crowded with regiments of doughboys wearing gauze masks. But four years have been almost enough to erase the memory of the summer and autumn of 1918 when an influenza epidemic was threatening to assume the proportions of a plague that might have halted the war.

There was a censorship four years ago, but nevertheless the facts that could not be hidden were spreading alarm through a world which had become accustomed to the tradition that pestilence and famine are the inevitable accompaniments of war. Yet the potential menace of disease ceased to cast its spell of fear when the great American battles of the autumn of 1918 were being fought, and after the victory and during the making of the terms of peace the country found too many other things to think about and forgot the days when disease had seemed to be doing more than German guns to decrease our fighting forces.

In the four years that have elapsed since the war, the impression seems to have grown stronger than it ever had been that medical science has made war rather a prophylactic pastime—what with vaccinations and inoculations, safeguarding of food and water supplies, better standards of shelter and transportation and concessions to the necessity for recreation. The memory of the days when men in training were dying by hundreds in the cantonments seems dim indeed today. Too many persons think of the war only as an unprecedented mobilization of business and industry for the supplying of the materials of fighting. They have forgotten what that war meant to the millions of young men who underwent the trials and tests of camps and cantonments in the days when each individual's physique and his stamina were cast by nature in an equation of life or death.

Statistics of the World War prove, however, that war was, from the standpoint of mortality, not vastly different from other wars. In spite of the improvements in methods of killing by machinery, Nature managed to run up a higher score than the enemy's bullets and shells. The Surgeon General of the Army, at the request of The American Legion Weekly, has prepared the following figures for the period of the war, from April 1, 1917, to December 31, 1919:

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## The Army Death Record

Killed in action.....	36,694
Died of wounds.....	13,705
	50,399
Total battle deaths.....	50,399
Died of disease at home and abroad .....	58,119
Accidents, etc.....	5,591
	63,710
Total non-battle deaths..	63,710
Grand total, all deaths.....	114,109

The significance of the figures above is even plainer when the following sub-division is made:

Total of enlisted men dying of disease in the forty principal training camps.....	23,226
Total for disease for officers, all stations in the United States, and for enlisted men outside forty camps mentioned above .....	11,632

Total for disease, officers and men in the United States.....	34,858
Total for disease, officers and enlisted men, outside United States	13,261
Died of accidents, etc., in United States .....	2,564

The tables above show that the number of officers and enlisted men dying of disease at home and abroad exceed by 7,720 the number of men killed in battle or dying of wounds, and the number of officers and men who died of disease in the United States is only 1,836 fewer than the number killed in action. The figures also show that, contrary to the public's opinion, the training camps in the United States were not havens of safety even as compared with the battlefield, a fact testified to by their death roll of 23,226.

The Surgeon General's statistics show, as everybody already knows, that influenza was the most deadly wartime disease. The number of influenza victims equals a division almost at full strength. In the whole Army during the war, influenza killed 24,664 men. Of these, 16,571 died in the camps at home. Other diseases claimed the following:

	Whole Army	Army in the U. S.
Pneumonia, broncho.....	9,022	4,143
Pneumonia, lobar.....	10,145	5,787
Measles .....	2,370	1,987
Bronchitis .....	439	39
German measles.....	82	78
Diphtheria .....	177	96
Typhoid .....	227	74
Smallpox .....	14	1
Mumps .....	187	116
Scarlet fever.....	354	268
Meningitis, cerebro spinal	1,836	986
Dysentery .....	73	21
Anthrax .....	22	15
Tuberculosis .....	2,766	1,457
Syphilis .....	143	93
Cancers and tumors.....	159	102
Mental diseases.....	113	71

## The Army Death Record

Diseases of ear.....	284	201
Diseases of nose.....	310	196
Diseases of throat.....	274	183
Heart diseases.....	596	327
Diseases of the circulation	184	101
Appendicitis .....	586	362
Nephritis .....	384	202

The statistics for causes of death other than disease or battle show that 607 men committed suicide during the period between April 1, 1917, and December 31, 1919, and of these 411 took their lives within the limits of the United States. Homicide, a polite name for murder, accounted for 101 men in the whole Army—59 of them in camps at home. Drownings caused 499 deaths, 255 of them within the United States. Accidental gunshot wounds killed 65 men in the whole Army, 37 in camps at home. Poison gas claimed 102 men, only thirteen of them in camps at home. Food poisoning caused 15 deaths, and other forms of poisoning 110 deaths.

If anyone still believes that the 2,000,000 men of the wartime Army who did not get to France never risked their lives, let him study the following table which shows the number of deaths of enlisted men in the principal camps in the United States between October 1, 1917, and December 31, 1919:

Beauregard ..	631	Lee .....	936
Bowie .....	491	Lewis .....	341
Cody .....	445	Logan .....	191
Custer .....	907	MacArthur ..	347
Devens .....	981	McClellan ...	419
Dix .....	953	Meade .....	985
Dodge .....	1,039	Mills .....	476
Doniphan ....	311	Pike .....	1,145
Eustis .....	110	Sevier .....	612
Forrest .....	35	Shelby .....	200
Fremont ....	182	Sheridan ....	238
Funston .....	1,501	Sherman ....	1,348
Gordon .....	577	Syracuse ....	135
Grant .....	1,265	Taylor .....	1,191
Greene .....	490	Travis .....	570
Greenleaf ...	136	Wadsworth ..	271
Hancock .....	740	Wheeler .....	539
Humphreys ..	496	Upton .....	682
Jackson .....	756	Others .....	16
Johnston ....	219		
Kearny .....	269	Total.....	23,226