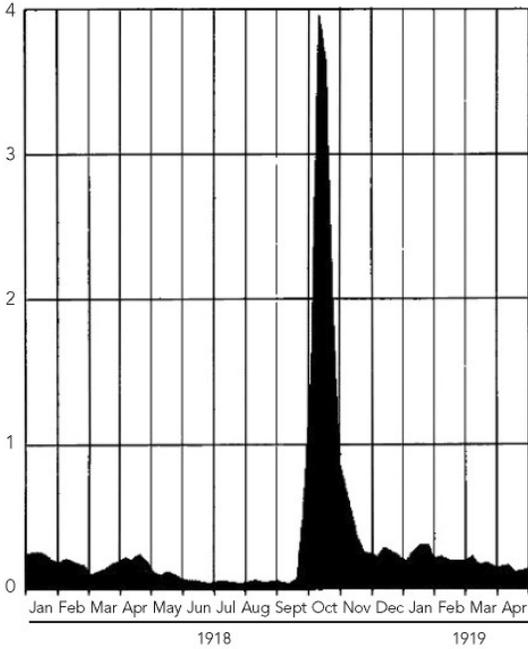




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Influenza 1918



As we all suffer through the COVID-19 lockdown, it is worth reflecting on the last important pandemic to sweep through the US and the world: the so-called Spanish Flu influenza of 1918-19. Most deadly for people ages 20 to 40, the disease raced through the training camps of the US Army and Navy in the fall of 1918 as thousands of service members lived and trained in close quarters. Then the influenza struck Navy ships and front line troops. By the War Department's most conservative count, it sickened 26% of the entire Army and killed almost 30,000 soldiers before they even got to France. The Army lost 8,743,102 days (on both sides of the Atlantic) to influenza among enlisted men in 1918. The chart at left shows the deaths per 1000 soldiers for each week of 1918-19 in the US Army. Influenza cases outnumbered combat casualties. According to the War Departments 1919 report, 227,000 soldiers were hospitalized for battle wounds in 1918 while 340,000 were hospitalized for the flu. Of our 117,000 war dead in WWI, 57,460 died of disease and only 50,280 died in battle (7,920 died of other causes). The epidemic had a dramatic effect on the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, attacking Allied and German combatants alike, and clogging the roads and hospitals with sick and dying soldiers. Death was often startlingly rapid, within hours or a day or two after the onset of symptoms.

Flu Monuments?

We don't know of any overseas monuments dedicated to American deaths in the flu per se, but it is useful to examine monuments erected at the sites of US Army hospitals. One such example is the town war memorial of Is-sur-Tille in the Burgundy region of France. This town was the site of Camp Hospital 41 that operated from 11 March 1918 until 23 May 1919. It was a 500 bed hospital that served Camp Williams, which numbered up to 24,000 troops. This was not



a combat zone, but was a transportation hub and regulating station. Pictured here is Ward A: Respiratory Diseases. On one entire side of the memorial, the town has listed all of the 238 Americans that died there. And while it's impossible to determine the exact cause of death of all 238, an astonishing number that we have been able to find a cause of death for are listed as dying of influenza, pneumonia, disease, or the flu.



Remember, because of the CARES Act, donations up to \$300 (\$600 for joint filers) are tax deductible, even if the tax filer cannot itemize and therefore takes the standard deduction. Please consider us in your charitable giving this year.