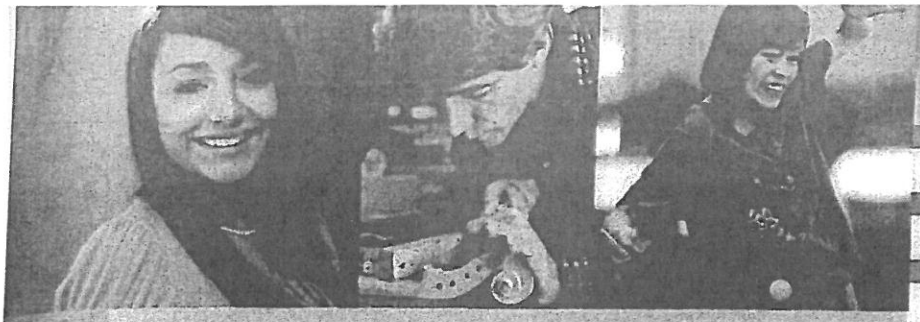


TIMELINE

1910

The Mexican Revolution begins

1914

World War I begins in Europe

1916

Pancho Villa raids Columbus

Gen. John J. Pershing leads the American Punitive Expedition into Mexico

1917

Zimmermann Telegram intercepted

American Punitive Expedition withdraws from Mexico

United States enters World War I

First U.S. Army draft since the Civil War

1917–18

Camps Cody and Funston train thousands of American troops

1918

Millions of American troops of the American Expeditionary Force arrive in Europe to fight the last major campaigns of World War I

Private Marcelino Serna becomes the first Hispanic to earn a Distinguished Service Cross, having single-handedly captured twenty-four German soldiers

Spanish flu epidemic claims more than a thousand lives in New Mexico and 21 million victims in the world

Introduction

The world was rife with violence during New Mexico's early years of statehood. To the south, Mexico suffered through years of chaos and bloodshed in a revolution that spanned a decade, 1910 to 1920. In Europe, the First World War that began in 1914 engulfed countries and peoples around the globe.

At first the United States was able to avoid direct involvement in these terrible conflicts. Pres. Woodrow Wilson was actually reelected in 1916 largely because he had steered the country on a neutral course. A banner in Socorro and many other communities in the United States urged voters to support Wilson because "He Kept Us Out of War."

However, world events swept the United States into conflicts in both Mexico and Europe. The purpose of this chapter is to describe New Mexico's role in:

- a major event of the Mexican Revolution;
- the First World War;
- and a terrible pandemic that struck the state and the rest of the world in 1918.

The Mexican Revolution and Pancho Villa's Raid on Columbus

The Mexican Revolution had begun in 1910 with the overthrow of Mexico's ruler, **Porfirio Díaz**. Dictatorial, corrupt, and supported by powerful foreign companies, Díaz had caused much misery and injustice during his

Exiles from the Mexican Revolution

Caught in the midst of revolutionary bloodshed and chaos, thousands of Mexican men, women, and children fled from their homes, desperately hoping to find safety elsewhere in their country or in the United States. The great Mexican author Mariano Azuela captured the horror of this war and exodus by describing the plight of one small group of characters in his famous novel, *The Flies*:

> [It] was said that the enemy was committing every kind of atrocity, with no respect for women, children, or old people! They carried a flag with the skull and crossbones on it! They were killing people as one would step on ants! . . .
>
> Ahead it was worse. Carts and carriages piled high with trunks, mattresses, furniture, and humanity were moving in all directions. Public buildings were being emptied. Government clerks were . . . dazed, unable to sense the magnitude of the catastrophe. . . .
>
> At the railroad station, which they neared at long last, the tide of humanity washed up to their feet. On every hand they saw ragged and sick-looking soldiers, women all skin and bones, angry and despairing faces. Soon they could push their way through the boiling mass of people with difficulty.

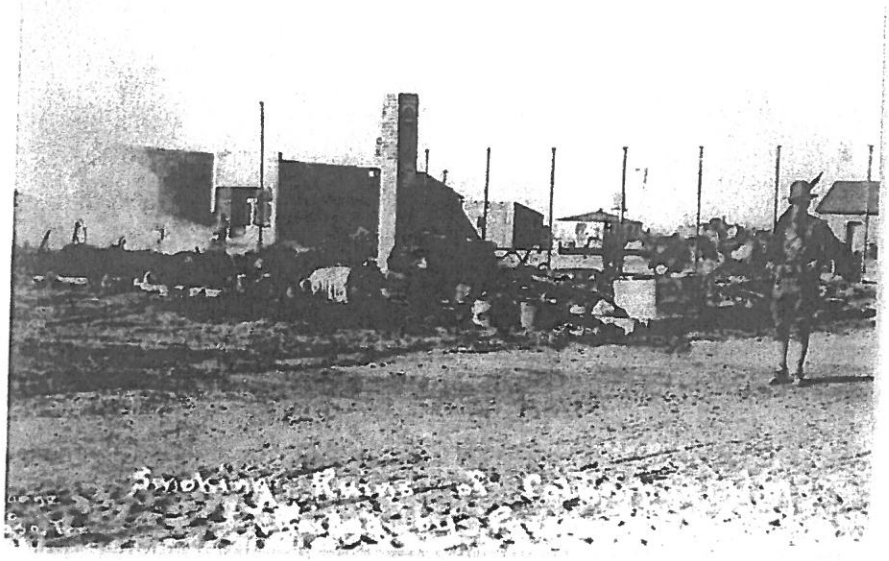
(Mariano Azuela, *Two Novels of Mexico: The Flies, The Bosses* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972], 44, 60.)

Pancho Villa

thirty-four years as president, from 1876 to 1910. Revolutionary generals like Emiliano Zapata in the south and **Pancho Villa** in the north fought each other with countless casualties and no clear outcome for years.

The United States managed to avoid direct involvement in the Mexican Revolution until April 1914. American naval forces landed in Veracruz, Mexico, in an attempt to weaken Victoriano Huerta, a particularly brutal revolutionary general who had seized power in 1913. The United States withdrew from Mexico in November 1914 when Huerta was overthrown.

A far more direct threat to the United States occurred fewer than two years later. In the early morning hours of March 9, 1916, Pancho Villa's revolutionary army crossed the international border and attacked the small border town of Columbus, New Mexico.



Columbus in ruins after the raid

Although no one saw Pancho Villa that day, nearly 500 of his men raided Columbus, burning businesses and homes and killing 11 civilians. U.S. soldiers based in a camp south of town fought the Villistas, finally driving them across the Mexican border with the loss of 8 American soldiers and an estimated 190 Mexican lives. Much of Columbus lay in ruins, especially its central business district.

Upset by the news of this tragedy, Americans across the United States asked what had caused this sudden attack, the first by a foreign force on American soil since the War of 1812.

There are several possible explanations for Villa's raid on Columbus. One is that Villa was angry at the United States for aiding one of his revolutionary enemies in a key battle that Villa had lost in 1915. In a much stranger explanation, some say that Germany paid Villa to raid Columbus in order to draw the United States into the Mexican Revolution and prevent America from entering the world war against Germany and its allies in Europe. A third explanation, which most residents of Columbus believed, involved revenge against a local merchant who had reportedly cheated Villa in a business deal for war goods and supplies.

We will probably never know the real reason for Villa's raid on Columbus, but in 1916, the American public sought justice against their foreign attacker. Organized under **Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing**, an **American Punitive**

Heroine Susie Parks

Susie Parks was only twenty years old when Pancho Villa raided her hometown of Columbus. As the town's only telephone operator, Parks stayed at her telephone station, dutifully calling for help while the battle raged outside. With bullets flying around her, Parks sheltered her infant daughter in her arms and bravely did what she could to save her neighbors and her town. Parks was one of the true heroes of that most tragic day in Columbus.

The American Punitive Expedition in Mexico, 1916–17

Expedition entered Mexico to chase, capture, and with luck punish Villa for his misdeeds. Meanwhile, the New Mexico National Guard joined thousands of other national guardsmen and U.S. troops in securing the U.S.-Mexican border against additional raids.

Corrido: "La Persecución de Villa"

While most Americans were outraged by Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus, many Mexicans were outraged by the American Punitive Expedition's search for Villa in their country. Reflecting these feelings, the following translation of a Mexican corrido, or ballad, portrays Villa as a hero for his ability to elude the invaders, despite their numbers and modern machines:

[In 1916 Mexican President Venustiano]
Carranza let
[Thousands of] American soldiers
And [many] airplanes
Come search for Villa.

Carranza told them, If you are brave and
Want to fight, I'll gladly
Grant you permission to die
Searching for Villa
Throughout the whole country.

The expedition began,
The airplanes flew all over,
They looked everywhere
To kill Pancho Villa.

Those soldiers from [America]
Couldn't find Pancho Villa,
After [many] boring hours
They just wanted to go home. . . .

When they thought Villa dead
They all shouted with glee,
Now we can all go back [home]
With honor and glory.

But they found that Villa lived,
That they couldn't catch him,
Unless they wanted to visit him
Deep inside the rugged mountains. . . .

(Quoted in David Dorado Romo, *Ringside Seat to a Revolution* [El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2005], 133.)

With its base in Columbus, the American Punitive Expedition traveled four hundred miles into northern Mexico, searched in all directions, and fought a small battle without ever finding Villa in a region he had known and traveled through since childhood. One reporter said the U.S. Army chasing Pancho Villa in northern Mexico was as impossible as an El Paso city policeman chasing a jackrabbit in Kansas.

Pershing and the American Punitive Expedition finally withdrew from Mexico in February 1917. Although the expedition had failed in its primary goal, it had some important achievements. For the first time in its history, the U.S. Army had experimented with the use of airplanes and land motor vehicles in combat conditions. The army experienced problems with both of these new forms of transportation but gained valuable knowledge that would be applied on other fronts in the near future. General Pershing and thousands of his soldiers, including New Mexico National Guardsmen, also benefited from valuable field experience in preparation for later combat in the world war that had been raging in Europe for nearly three years.

In a strange twist of fate, Columbus itself benefited from the Punitive Expedition. Serving as the expedition's headquarters, the small town recovered from Villa's raid and enjoyed an economic boom like none other in its history. The raid was no less tragic: precious lives had been lost, and battle scars on the terrain are still visible in parts of Columbus today.

New Mexico on the Eve of World War I

The United States entered the First World War two months after the American Punitive Expedition's return from Mexico. The nation was forced to abandon its neutrality and enter the international conflict because Germany refused to respect American rights as a neutral nation. In President Wilson's famous words, the United States also fought to "make the world safe for democracy."

There were other reasons the United States entered the war, one of which directly involved New Mexico. In January 1917, a coded telegram sent by the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, was intercepted before it reached its destination in Mexico. Known as the **Zimmermann Telegram**, this German message proposed that if the United States entered the war in Europe, Mexico should become Germany's ally. Germany hoped that with Mexico as its ally the United States would have to fight on two fronts, making it a far less dangerous enemy in Europe.

How would Mexico benefit from such an alliance with Germany The Zimmermann Telegram stated that if Mexico were Germany' ally and they won the war, Mexico would be rewarded by receiving al the land it had lost to the United States in the U.S.-Mexican War o 1846–48. This large territory included New Mexico and all the Amer ican Southwest.

The Zimmermann Telegram outraged Americans in the Southwes and throughout the nation when its contents were revealed. The telegran never reached Mexico, and the Mexican government never responded tc it, but Americans bristled at the thought that Germany would tampe with American land, people, and resources. The telegram did not caus American entry into World War I, but it helped deepen resentmen against Germany in the months before April 1917.

New Mexicans were also eager to fight in World War I because thei loyalty to the United States was questioned again, as it had been durin the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. One author even sug gested that New Mexicans might readily assist an invading enemy arm in the Southwest. Outraged, Senator Albert B. Fall called these charges a "fantastic mixture of ignorant, malicious, and false statements." Patriotic New Mexicans agreed, expressing their desire to once again prove thei state's loyalty with strong actions as well as words.

New Mexicans on the Home Front in World War I

New Mexico's lieutenant governor, **Washington E. Lindsey** o Portales, assumed office on the day after Governor C de Baca' death. Lindsey had hardly settled into his new job when th United States entered World War I.

Governor Lindsey acted with decisive leadership. Lindse called a special week-long session of the state legislature, whic assigned $750,000 in state funds for public defense. A statewid Council of Defense, with leaders from towns from Los Lunas t Roswell, was created to coordinate all war efforts. Smaller coun cils were created in each of the state's thirty-six counties.

Coordinating New Mexico's war efforts was not easy. Wit 423,649 residents scattered over 78 million acres (making Nev Mexico the nation's fourth largest state in area), it was difficult t communicate war needs quickly and efficiently. New Mexican spoke many different languages and, with the exception o

New Mexico's Hispanic State Governors

New Mexicans have elected six Hispanic governors since statehood in 1912. They are

- Ezequiel C de Baca, January 1 to February 18, 1918
- Octaviano A. Larrazolo, 1919–21
- Raymond S. "Jerry" Apodaca, 1975–79
- Toney Anaya, 1983–87
- William B. "Bill" Richardson, 2003–10
- Susana Martinez, 2011– .

newspapers and movie theaters in larger towns, there were no regular means of mass communication.

New Mexico's leaders dealt with their state's communication problems in several ways. Twice a month a publication called *New Mexico War News* was printed in both Spanish and English. More than eleven hundred posters illustrated how New Mexicans could contribute their time, energy, and money to the war. Students staged patriotic school plays, while theaters showed movies with titles like *The Beast of Berlin*, referring to Germany's leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II. Singers formed Liberty choruses, and 250 speakers delivered forty-five hundred speeches in small and large communities alike. Promising to limit their remarks to just four minutes at public gatherings, these speakers were appropriately known as the **Four-Minute Men**. New Mexicans responded to these calls for help far beyond expectations. Asked to purchase more than $11 million in **Liberty Bonds** to help the national government pay for the war, New Mexicans bought almost $18 million worth of bonds. Corporations like the Santa Fe Railroad, workers like underground coal miners, and students like those at the Albuquerque and Santa Fe Indian schools purchased bonds and gave what they could to help other worthy causes, like the Red Cross. Twenty-one students at Albuquerque High School gave persuasive speeches to urge fellow students to buy Liberty Bonds; senior Helen Drury gave the best speech and won a fifty-dollar Liberty Bond.

Asked to use less food so there would be more for our troops and factory workers, a third of all New Mexico families signed pledge cards to serve "loyalty menus," observing at least one meatless and one wheatless day per week. About three thousand families also grew small backyard gardens, known as **victory gardens**, with good practical advice from the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanics, now New Mexico State University.

Farmers and ranchers did their share as well. New Mexican farmers, who had produced 2.1 million bushels of wheat in 1916, grew 3.3 million bushels in 1918. Ranchers increased their herds from 1.5 million head of cattle in 1915 to 1.9 in 1918. The number of sheep had grown to more than 3 million by early 1918. As a speaker at a wartime meeting of the New Mexico Cattle and Horse Growers Association told his audience, it was the job of "every patriotic citizen . . . to produce as much as he can."

Main Countries at War in World War I

The Allied Powers:
United States, England, France, Russia, Italy, and Japan

The Central Powers:
Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey

A Recipe for Wheatless Days

Newspapers encouraged New Mexicans to conserve wheat for the war effort by preparing wheatless recipes, such as the following from the *Albuquerque Journal* (April 21, 1918):

Corn Meal Bread
2 cups milk
1½ cups cornmeal
1 tablespoon flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon melted fat
1 egg

Mix and sift dry ingredients. Combine milk, egg, and fat and add to the dry ingredients. Mix well and pour into oiled muffin tins or shallow pans. Bake in a hot oven. Serve hot.

Fuel production also rose to meet climbing wartime demands. Coal companies in Colfax, McKinley, and Santa Fe counties mined record amounts of coal in 1918. With wartime demand far outreaching supply, New Mexico producers of essential raw materials earned greater profits than ever before. With such high demand for its valuable products, the state soon experienced a wartime labor shortage. The University of New Mexico started classes in October so students could work longer through the summer, especially in agricultural jobs. Governor Lindsey even pardoned some inmates at the state penitentiary so they could fill in for the labor shortage. Further, many families who had fled the chaos of the Mexican Revolution found new jobs and peace in border states like California, Arizona, and New Mexico. American employers welcomed Mexican immigrants, sometimes transporting them by the trainload to work sites like the coal fields of Colfax County.

A recruiting poster for the Women's Land Army

New Mexico women helped fight the war by playing both traditional and nontraditional roles. In addition to conserving food and fuel in their homes, many women rolled bandages, knit clothing, created "comfort kits" for soldiers, and helped sell Liberty Bonds. In a less traditional role, women formed the Women's Land Army to help farmers in particular need of labor. To save the hay crop in Grant County, women in the Land Army mowed, raked, and stacked hay. To save the fruit crop, fifty women volunteers worked tirelessly in the orchards of Otero County.

New Mexicans clearly proved their loyalty on the home front, but some New Mexicans went too far. In their zeal to win the war, New Mexicans sometimes pressured people to buy Liberty Bonds, suggesting that those who did not buy bonds must not be true Americans. Four miners who refused to buy bonds were tarred and feathered in northern New Mexico. A woman in Roswell wrote to Governor Lindsey to turn in her German-American neighbor who, she suspected, must be a spy because he did not fly an American flag outside his house each day. At least twice, crowds forced suspected German sympathizers to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States by kissing the American flag. Teaching the German language was banned at the University of New Mexico, although only two students were enrolled in the university's sole German class. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* newspaper supported shooting suspected traitors without trial. In Congress, New Mexico's Representative William Walton declared that those who criticized the government "ought to be shot within twenty-four hours after their crime is discovered!"

Liberty Mania

Americans expressed their overzealous patriotism in an intolerance of anything identified with the German enemy:

- German shepherds became known as the more patriotic liberty dogs;
- German measles became known as the more patriotic liberty measles;
- sauerkraut became known as the more patriotic liberty cabbage;
- playing German music was banned or discouraged;
- and drinking German beer—and all kinds of alcohol—was banned with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Some New Mexicans had let their emotional support for the war become extreme. The loss of freedom, especially the freedom of those identified with the enemy, is always a tragic cost of war. This was especially ironic in World War I, which was fought to "make the world safe for democracy" and its freedoms. Facing threats to their freedom in New Mexico and many other states, German-Americans reacted by showing their loyalty whenever and wherever possible. Many purchased more than their share of Liberty Bonds, grew victory gardens, volunteered for the military, and applied for American citizenship, if they had not already done so before the war. It was good that German-Americans participated in the war effort, but tragic that they felt forced to do so for their own protection.

New Mexicans in the American Armed Forces

More than fifteen thousand New Mexicans helped win the war by serving in the American armed forces during World War I. Of these men, more than eight thousand were inducted in the nation's first **draft** since the Civil War. Another seven thousand volunteered for service in the army, navy, or marines. Volunteers in New Mexico included cowhands, farmers, miners, railroad workers, medical doctors, draftsmen, carpenters, salesmen, bookkeepers, and at least one newspaper editor, a playwright, a chauffeur, and a movie-picture camera operator. More than 70 percent of all male students at UNM and the entire Lobo football team enlisted by the fall of 1917. So many male students volunteered at New Mexico A&M that

Soldiers' Letters Home from Europe

France September 8, 1918

Dear Brother [Milford Attabery],

Well finally we are near the business part of France for us. Last night we finished three days and nights of travel. . . . Now we are close to a rather quiet front and fully expect to hike to our [battle] stations tomorrow. . . .

We buy Velvet tobacco for 6 cents . . . and candy is cheap when we can get it. Good wines are not very plentiful and U.S. soldiers are really not supposed to get any. We get small mail editions of New York and Chicago [newspapers] published in Paris that give us part of the news.

This is a great country and I can see why they put up such an awful fight [for it]. Everyone is glad to see us and will do anything they can for us. . . . Hope I will soon be able to pull the trigger for [the] defense of France and America.

I have not seen anyone from home as yet.

Harold [Attabery]

(As printed in the Silver City Enterprise, October 11, 1918.)

George E. McCown mentioned a "field card" in his letter home in 1918. These postcards had been in use since early in the war in an effort to encourage soldiers to write home but also limit the information they gave that might be of aid to the enemy.

A typical field card had several printed remarks, allowing soldiers to simply check off the comments that pertained to him, such as:

___ I am quite well.
___ I have been admitted into the hospital.
___ Wounded, but am getting on well.
___ I received your recent letter.
___ I have received no letter from you for a long time.

(*Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 9, 1917.)

the graduating class of 1918 had only seven members, and most of them were female. So many cadets volunteered at the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell that the school's commander urged students to finish their military education so they could be better soldiers once they went off to war. Several Rough Riders from the Spanish-American War enthusiastically offered to fight for their country again but were turned down because they were considered too old. Motivated by both loyalty and self-interest, a group of convicts won their early release from the state penitentiary in exchange for service to their nation. All races and ethnicities, including Hispanics, Native Americans, Anglos, and Blacks, were represented in the ranks of those who volunteered. New Mexico's volunteer rate was among the highest in the United States.

France

Dear Mother and Father, [October 1918]

This sure is a beautiful country. The towns resemble the towns in [New Mexico] to some extent except that the houses instead of being made of adobe are all of solid rock. Most of the towns I have seen are torn up to a large extent. When one of these big shells hit a house there is not much left of it except a pile of rock.

I sent you a field card the other day. They are easy to use as they are printed when you get them and all you have to do is to scratch out what you don't want [to say]. This sure is a hard place to write a letter as when you do see anything you cannot tell about it or where it is.

We have traveled over quite a bit of France since we landed [on May 30, 1918] and I have seen all I want to see while I am in the army. . . . [J]ust now I would rather see the good old U.S.A. . . .

The Americans are doing good fighting and taking prisoners every day. You ought to hear the fireworks when a big bombardment is on. It sounds alright when you are a long way off in a good dugout but when you are close up and out in the open it [doesn't] sound so good. . . .

Going across the country you find shell holes everywhere. They are from two to four feet across and from 18 inches to three feet deep. There are barbed wire entanglements everywhere the Germans have been. . . .

Fritz [an American nickname for German pilots] was flying around a good deal last night. We were in our pup tents and it was rather uncomfortable to hear him up over us not knowing when he would drop a bomb. We have got the best of him tonight for we have a dugout even if it is full of fleas and cooties. This sure is a muddy place when it rains and it don't have to rain very much.

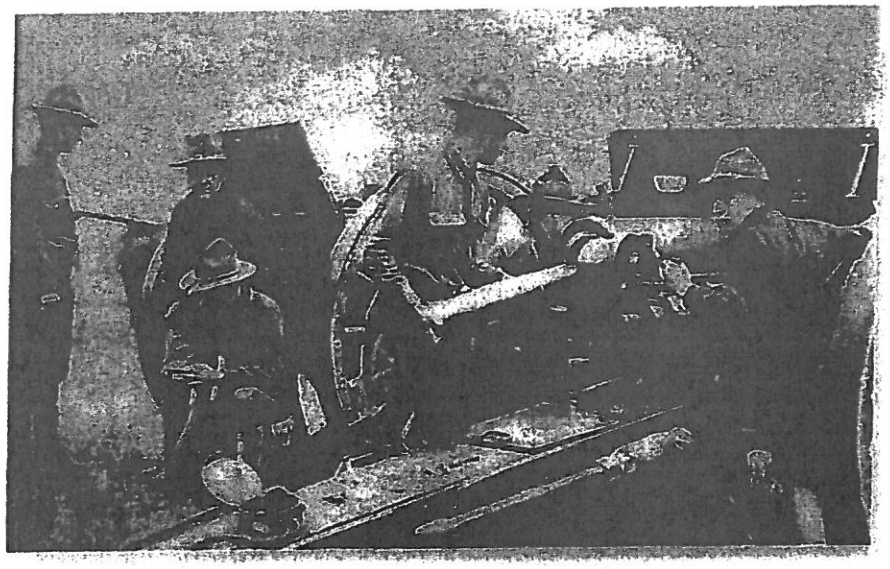
Write me a long letter soon, and tell all the boys [in Hurley] hello for me. . . .

George [E. McCown]

(As printed in the *Silver City Enterprise*, November 1, 1918.)

New Mexico had few "slackers," or men who refused to serve, because most young men were eager to serve in this national emergency. Some men were exempted from service because they had physical disabilities or worked in essential work industries, like mining or the railroad. Even these men often joined the military rather than face embarrassing questions about why they were not serving in uniform. Often accused of being cowards, some discovered that their front doors had been painted yellow. As with those who were mistakenly identified with the enemy, these young men suffered unfair pressure and loss of freedom during a war that was fought to protect freedoms in the United States and around the world.

Once drafted or enlisted, New Mexicans joined millions of their peers in training camps across the United States. New Mexico had two main



Soldiers training at Camp Cody

training camps. The U.S. Army built **Camp Cody** on twenty thousand acres west of Deming because its location—near the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads—made for easy troop transport and cargo shipments and because the weather there was so mild that soldiers could train outdoors most of the year. Unfortunately, few of the more than thirty thousand soldiers from Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas who trained at Camp Cody appreciated southern New Mexico's strong winds, desert sand, and high daytime temperatures. After several months at Camp Cody, members of the 34th Infantry Division actually christened themselves the Sandstorm Division.

While many New Mexican soldiers trained in camps out-of-state, about one out of ten trained at **Camp Funston**, built on the outskirts of the University of New Mexico campus. The campus was transformed as fifteen hundred soldiers from Battery A of New Mexico's National Guard marched, dug trenches, and competed for the bragging rights of having the highest-rated company each week. In the words of UNM historian Dorothy Hughes, the campus was soon "khaki-clad," and, with all its military activity, Camp Funston "made the war seem real in New Mexico."

New Mexico sent its young men off to war with great fanfare. In September 1917, Governor Lindsey and three thousand men, women, and children saw twenty draftees off at the Santa Fe train depot. A month later an equally large crowd bid farewell to members of Battery A, presenting them with gifts of nine thousand apples and oranges to eat as snacks on their long train trip ahead. In Silver City, the local newspaper reported that forty-eight "strapping specimens of young manhood all

Atanacio Springer García in France

Two-thirds of the 5 million American soldiers and sailors who served in World War I were drafted. Atanacio Springer García of Los Duranes of Albuquerque registered for the draft on June 5, 1917, and was drafted a few months later. Thanks to the research of **genealogist** Henrietta M. Christmas, we can learn who Atanacio was and what became of him once he entered the military to serve his country.

Using information recorded on his draft registration card, Christmas discovered that Atanacio was born in Los Barelas in 1894. Doing additional genealogical research, Christmas found that Atanacio was a direct descendent of several founding families who had come to New Mexico with Juan de Oñate in 1598. A farm laborer, Atanacio was tall, of medium build, with brown hair and dark eyes.

Once in the army, Atanacio was assigned to the 356th Infantry Regiment and was trained at Camp Funston, Kansas, before shipping out from New York in mid-1918. In Europe he fought on the western front in the offensive of Meuse-Argonne. A fellow member of the 356th recalls their stopping

> at a place the boys called "mud valley"... within easy range of [German] artillery and great precautions were taken not to show fires at night.... Every man slept in a hole regardless of mud and water. It was here we learned to sleep [as] next door neighbors to big guns and not lose any sleep.... [I]n a few days we went "over the top."

Four days after these words were written, Atanacio Springer García was killed in battle. Along with thousands of other American troops, he was buried in France. Three weeks later the First World War ended, and those who were fortunate enough to have survived went home.

(Henrietta M. Christmas, "Albuquerqueans Mourn Native Sons, Heroes of World War I," *Herencia: The Quarterly Journal of the Hispanic Genealogical Research Center of New Mexico* 14 [April 2006]: 30–34.]

eager to 'do their bit'" left for training in California with much encouragement in May 1918; another seventy-six left two weeks later. Similar scenes were repeated in large and small towns alike.

Like millions of American soldiers, sailors, and marines, those from New Mexico arrived in the war zones of Europe by the spring of 1918. They arrived just in time to make the critical difference in several major military campaigns, including at Champagne-Marne, Alsne-Marne, and Meuse-Argonne. Whether serving in support roles or in muddy trenches on the front lines, New Mexico's members of the **American Expeditionary Force (AEF)**, led by Gen. John J. Pershing, helped defeat

The USS *New Mexico*

One of the most modern war ships of World War I was named for New Mexico. A 33,400-ton battleship, the USS *New Mexico*, was launched at the New York navy yard on April 23, 1917, christened by former Gov. Ezequiel C de Baca's daughter, Margaret. Although the ship proudly bore our state's name, few, if any, of its 1,323-man crew were New Mexicans. To remind the crew of New Mexico and its culture, the state contributed a collection of books by New Mexico authors and a silver setting engraved with images of New Mexico, from the state seal to a Native American home. The ship's commander accepted these gifts, a military band played patriotic tunes, and all present gave three cheers for New Mexico, "with enthusiasm," according to an eyewitness at the scene.

Back in New Mexico, local residents proudly read of the *New Mexico*'s launching. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* even offered its readers thirty-six-inch felt pennants with the image of "the newest and most modern warship in the world."

The USS *New Mexico* saw no action in World War I but was very active in World War II, playing important roles in the invasions of the Gilbert Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Guam, and Okinawa.

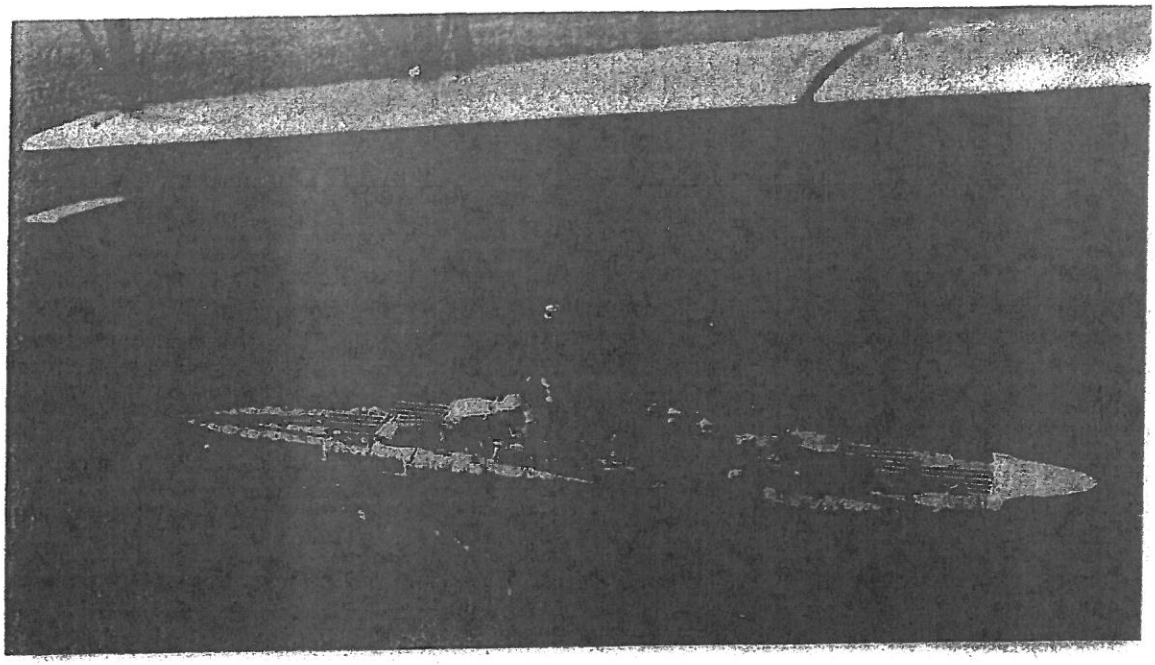
Dismantled after World War II, the battleship's bell remains on display in a place of honor outside Zimmerman Library on the University of New Mexico campus. A shell casing from the *New Mexico* is on display in the Raton Historical Museum.

A new $2.5 billion submarine, called the USS *New Mexico*, was christened in December 2008. Its first commander was Robert Dain, a proud native New Mexican and a St. Pius X High School graduate. The ship is the nation's newest and most advanced nuclear-powered submarine. Emilee Sena of St. Pius High School designed the ship's crest in a contest among 180 high school students.

the German military and cause the enemy to finally surrender on November 11, 1918.

New Mexicans could boast of a proud record in the war. Only four New Mexican soldiers deserted, while 501 died in combat or from disease. Many New Mexicans earned military medals for their acts of bravery and honorable service to their country. Army **Private Marcelino Serna** of Albuquerque became the first Hispanic in the nation's history to earn a Distinguished Service Cross, having single-handedly captured twenty-four German soldiers on September 12, 1918.

New Mexicans welcomed news of the end of the war with joyous celebrations. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported that on November 11,



USS *New Mexico*

known as Armistice Day, citizens in the capital city "were whistled out of bed at 6 o'clock this morning to celebrate the end of the world war. By 6:30 scores were parading in the streets and by 7:00 there were hundreds carrying flags, cheering and shouting in a frenzy of delight."

Similar excitement reigned in other New Mexico towns. Far to the south, the *Deming Graphic* described Armistice Day as a "perfect day" in which "the town went mad. Sane and ordinarily sedate men and women rushed about the streets, shouting, laughing, crying, beating each other on the back, waving flags. . . . Every motor horn in town needed throat medicine [by noon]." In Las Cruces a large parade was held on Main Street with the Aggie marching band and a character dressed as the kaiser, whom the crowd condemned for "every thinkable crime" against humanity.

The Spanish Flu Epidemic

Just as news of the war's end arrived in New Mexico, a far smaller, though more deadly, enemy appeared to threaten the state, the nation, and the entire world. The most deadly flu epidemic of all time, misnamed the **Spanish flu**, struck New Mexico and nearly every part of the globe in the fall of 1918. The flu was dangerous and mysterious because it was

Spanish Flu Poem

As reflected in the following poem from Ratón, people did everything possible to avoid catching the dreaded Spanish flu:

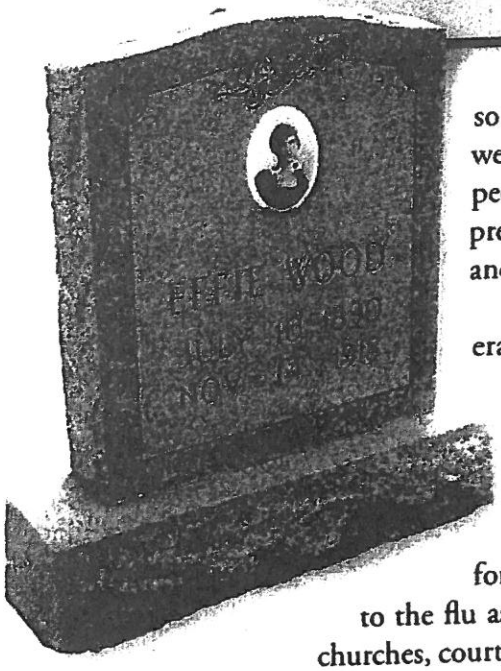
The flu has got my nanny;
I'm skeered as skeered can be;
If I meet a guy a-sneezin'
I just quiver like a tree.

I've had three shots of serum,
And I'm searin' of the mask,
But if I hear the people coughin'
I fairly hustle for the flask. . . .

I've lined out several boxes
For victims of the flu,
And you bet your bottom dollar
It makes a fellow blue. . . .

So if there is a remedy
That overlooked have I,
Please give it to me quickly,
For I do not want to die.

(Anonymous poet, *Raton Range*, January 16, 1919.)



The headstone of a victim of the Spanish flu

so fast—many victims caught the flu in the morning and were dead by nightfall—and because it was most fatal for people between the ages of twenty and forty-five, when previous flu epidemics had usually affected the very young and very old the most.

New Mexicans tried to prevent catching the flu in several ways. Taos and other communities required residents to protect themselves by wearing surgical masks over their mouths and noses, using the same gauze material Red Cross volunteers had just recently used to roll bandages for the wounded overseas. In other towns, strangers were not allowed to disembark from trains for fear they might be carrying the flu germ. Referring to the flu as a "crowd disease," state officials closed down schools, churches, courthouses, movie theaters, lodges, and dance halls for weeks at a time.

Sadly, few preventive measures worked. Those who caught the disease tried various remedies, although most could not be taken seriously. The *Deming Graphic*, for example, recommended eating lemons as an effective cure, with consuming onions as an alternative treatment. Manufacturers of patent medicines with strange names like Wizard Oil and Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets used newspaper ads to make exaggerated claims about their ability to cure the flu. A more serious serum was developed at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, but there was hardly enough, and it arrived too late to help many New Mexicans fight the flu.

Annie Dodge Wauneka and the Spanish Flu

Annie Dodge Wauneka was only eight years old in the fall of 1918. A Navajo student at the Fort Defiance Indian School, Annie was one of 250 students who caught the Spanish flu within the first ten days of the epidemic at her school. Fortunately, Annie survived, but many other children did not. In Annie's words, "pretty soon they [were] just dying like flies." Annie helped the best she could, assisting the school's only nurse and spoon-feeding soup to students too weak to feed themselves.

No one could stop the disease, though. Annie recalled that five to ten children died in her school's dorms each night. Running out of coffins for all the dead, "they used to just pile them up like a bunch of wood and haul them away" to be buried in mass graves. As many as twenty-five hundred people died of the flu or its complications on the Navajo Reservation.

Although she could do little to save her fellow students at Fort Defiance, Annie remembered this service to others as a major turning point in her life. After several similar experiences, she decided to dedicate her life to helping Native Americans in the health field. Never satisfied she had done enough for others, Annie became famous for her sincere vow, "I'll go and do more," just as she had done in the Spanish flu epidemic.

(Carolyn Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More: Annie Dodge Wauneka, Navajo Leader and Activist* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001], 27–30.)

By the end of November 1918, more than a thousand New Mexicans had died of the flu or its complications, meaning that more than twice as many New Mexicans died in the epidemic as had been killed in the world war. One out of every five families had at least one family member die of the flu, and sometimes whole families perished. So many people died that carpenters could not build coffins fast enough, and the dead were often buried in mass graves. Church bells rang day and night, announcing new deaths by the hour. Fatalities were especially bad on the Navajo Reservation and in small or crowded towns like Chilili and Dawson. By the end of October, thirteen out of every thousand soldiers at Camp Cody were dying of the flu or pneumonia each week.

Then the epidemic passed, almost as quickly as it had begun. New Mexicans joined other Americans across the nation and people around the world in breathing a great sigh of relief. Both World War I and

the Spanish flu epidemic were behind them. All hoped that after many months of tragic war and terrible disease, peace and good health might be enjoyed at last.

Conclusions

New Mexicans hoped to prove their loyalty to the United States by helping to defend the nation's border during the Mexican Revolution and by fighting in Europe during World War I. Citizens of the new state made every sacrifice requested of them by buying war bonds, conserving resources, working hard, and serving bravely in the military.

As in every war, of course, the cost of victory in World War I was high in lives, money, and freedoms, especially for those identified with the German enemy. We must never forget these great costs whenever our country considers going to war, especially if we lose freedoms at home during a war that is fought to save freedoms somewhere else, as happened during World War I.

TIME TO DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS

1. Why did Pancho Villa raid Columbus, New Mexico, in 1916?
2. How successful was the Punitive Expedition during its campaign in Mexico of 1916 to 1917?
3. Why were New Mexicans so eager to fight in World War I?
4. How did state leaders overcome problems of communication during World War I?
5. What did New Mexicans sacrifice on the home front to help win the war?
6. How were those identified with the enemy treated in New Mexico? Why is this ironic and sad?
7. What groups of New Mexicans served in the military during World War I?
8. What did New Mexicans sacrifice by serving in the military during World War I?
9. How did New Mexicans attempt to prevent catching the Spanish flu in 1918? Were they successful?
10. What aspects of New Mexico would you have been proud of if you had lived in the state during World War I? Why?
11. What aspects of New Mexico would you have been less proud of if you had lived in the state during World War I? Why?
12. What lessons can we learn from the history of New Mexico in World War I?