

Now Arriving

**FALL
LAWN & PATIO
FURNITURE**

**At Outlet
Discount
Pricing**

Seasonal
OUTLET CENTER

McKay's Plaza, Charlotte Hall

301-884-8682 • 301- 274-0615

Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat: 10 am - 7pm

Sunday: 10am - 4pm

Closed Tuesdays

A Journey Through Time

The **TIMES** Chronicle

Columnist Linda Reno is a historian and genealogist specializing in Southern Maryland history. Mrs. Reno is a member of the St. Mary's County Historical Society, St. Mary's County Genealogical Society, Charles County Genealogical Society, Maryland Historical Society and the Maryland Genealogical Society. She has authored many books and articles on local history. We hope you will enjoy these articles and welcome your comments and suggestions for future subjects.

**By Linda Reno
Contributing Writer**

Thirty men from St. Mary's County lost their lives during World War I, but 18 of them died as a result of the 1918 flu epidemic then sweeping the U.S., not from wounds. The first cases of influenza in Maryland appeared at Camp Meade where the men were inducted. They were walking into a death trap. Some escaped infection at Camp Meade and made it to France, dying there instead.

One of these men was Louis Pope Heard (December 16, 1892-October 8, 1918), son of James Abell Heard and Susan C. Pope. Pvt. Heard died at the Base Hospital at L Gourline, France. His body was returned to the family and he was buried at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Newtown on January 8, 1919.

Of the 12 surviving men who did not die of the flu but made it into the battle in France, three were awarded a Bronze Star for exceptional bravery:

Benjamin Harrison Butler: "A very brave liaison agent who distinguished himself carrying orders under a violent bombardment during the attack of Sechault, September 29, 1918." By 1942, he was living in Elizabeth County, Virginia. Cpl. Butler died April

29, 1965 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

John B. Leroy Combs: "On June 11, 1918 while in action at Belleau Wood and acting as battalion liaison agent, he displayed great courage while making important reconnaissance and night patrols in front of the lines under violent artillery and machine-gun fire. When wounded by shrapnel he had his wound dressed at once in order to return under a violent artillery fire to transport some wounded comrades." Pvt. Combs was a marine.

William Theodore Hayden: Also a marine and fellow soldier of Leroy Combs, he was also cited for gallantry at Belleau Wood. "While assisting a wounded comrade to safety he was himself wounded (he was severely wounded in the leg). He had his wound quickly dressed in order to return to transport his wounded comrades who were under violent artillery fire."

After the war, William Hayden moved to Washington, D.C. and began his career as a policeman. He died February 24, 1967 and is buried at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Suitland.

The last soldiers to be discussed were the five of the eight sons of John William Pilkerton and Mary Gertrude Jarboe, all of whom served the same time.

John Ireland Pilkerton. He was reported missing in Monday's casualty list as being "Missing in Action". Son of Mrs. Mary Pilkerton, a widowed lady of Mechanicsville who has 4 other sons in France. He registered for the draft on June 5, 1917;

and sent to Camp Meade for training. He is not a brother of Private Archie Pilkerton who died a few months ago in France."

John survived as did his brothers Philip, Robert, Roy, and Thomas Pilkerton. A miracle!

"A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life wrote a blank check made payable to The United States of America for an amount of up to and including my life."



Photo Courtesy of Historic St. Mary's City Commission
Louis Pope Heard