

Exhibit Commemorates Fairport and Perinton Involvement in WWI

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

I have been working with Vicki Masters Profitt of the Perinton Historical Society to commemorate the involvement of Fairport and Perinton residents in WWI. This year is especially relevant, for it is the 100th anniversary of the beginning of this country's involvement in "the war to end all wars." Through the resources of the town of Perinton and the Perinton Historical Society, we have researched the involvement of our citizens, military and non-military, abroad and at home. This effort has resulted in an exhibit now on display at the Fairport Historical Museum, 18 Perrin Street.



A portion of the WWI exhibit at the Fairport Historical Museum

Approximately 280 sailors and soldiers from this community participated in the war, and many more did their part at home. Liberty Loan Drives achieved more than \$500,000 in sales to support the war effort. Our local Red Cross chapter included over 1,200 members, knitting socks, sewing, and making bandages. The Fairport Baptist Home worked with the Red Cross as well. Other organizations that contributed time, money, and effort included The Y.M.C.A., the Knights of Columbus, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Eastern Star, the Odd Fellows, and the San Sebastian Society.

The Perinton Patriotic League was soon formed, with the purpose of "promotion of military training and protection of property in the community and aid in welfare work." Drilling of volunteers was led by Chester Hull, who retired from the United States Army in 1910 after

over 24 years of service. Hull also served in Rochester as a recruiting officer during World War I. The League also provided departing soldiers with “comfort bags” and bibles.

Our exhibit at the Fairport Historical Museum is called, *Over the Top: Honoring Fairport’s World War I Veterans*. Included is information on those who served, including the ten who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Also on display are many artifacts with a Fairport, Perinton, and Rochester connection. Several items manufactured in Monroe County for the war effort are included. Bausch and Lomb binoculars, a communications device built by Stromberg Carlson, and a compass made by Taylor Instruments. My personal favorite is an ingenious trench periscope with leather case made by the Wollensak Optical Company.



Binoculars made by Bausch and Lomb, and a compass made by Taylor Instruments are part of the collection of Rochester-made war products made for use in WWI.

To see *Over the Top: Honoring Fairport’s World War I Veterans*, visit the Fairport Historical Museum, at 18 Perrin Street in Fairport. There is no admission fee. Hours are Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Saturdays, 10:00-1:00 p.m., and Sundays, 2:00-4:00 pm.