



The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia

Welcoming Young & Old Alike to Join in Remembering the Past and Working for an Even Better Future

**The District's Oldest Civic Organization –
Founded December 7, 1865 – Our 153rd Year!**

**Bulletin #146
March 2018**

President's Message...

The Centennial of World War One...

The AOI applied for and received a permit to hold a ceremony at the DC War Memorial on November 11, 2018 to honor the 499 D.C. men and women who perished in service to their nation. Additionally, we are very pleased to announce that the District of Columbia National Guard led by Gen. William Walker will be partners in this once-in-a-lifetime observance.



"Women Marines & Yeoman flunk Secy. of the Navy Josephus Daniels and Ass't. Secy. of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt and their aides on the occasion of the women's final review on July 30, 1919" (National Archives)

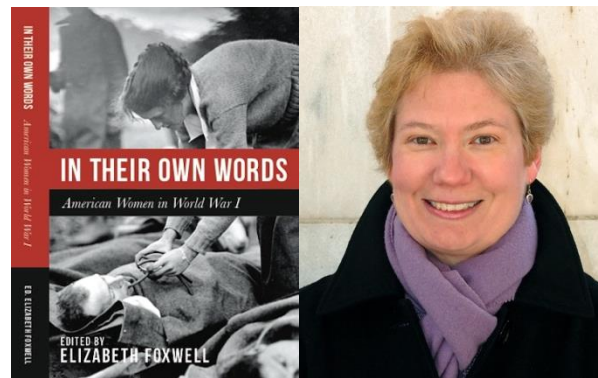
Many who are familiar with our multi-year effort to preserve and maintain the DC War Memorial as "The District's" war memorial, know our resolve in making this Armistice Day Centennial Observance a huge success. So, mark your calendars, **Save the Date:** Sunday, November 11, 2018, 10:30am to 1pm at the DC War Memorial on Independence Avenue across from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

Bill Brown

March's Luncheon Event:

"DC Women in World War I"

With Elizabeth Foxwell



Please join us...

Friday, **March 16**, at the **Capitol Skyline Hotel** (free Parking) 10 I ('eye') Street, SW. (Metro Rail to Navy Yard Station), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m.

(\$35 per person - please make your check payable to "AOI" and have it completed prior to arrival or bring exact payment).

Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our voice mail **202-342-1865**, not later than noon Tues., March 13, 2018. **This voice mail box number is the only means to make a reservation.** Late reservations make planning very difficult for us and **failure by you to cancel prior to Noon on Thurs., 3/15, will result in you being charged.** Please be prepared to leave your name, the number in your party, your guest's names for name tags, your meal preferences (***Grilled Salmon with Kang Pao sauce, Grilled Skyline Chicken Breast, Grilled Black Angus Flank Steak, or Braised Ratatouille of Vegetables***) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or a last-minute event cancellation.

Future Meetings...



The AOI's 153rd Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

- April 20, 2018 – John DiFerrari, “Bygone Industrial D.C.” reviving our tradition of member reminiscences
- May 18, 2018 – W. Douglas Fisher & Joann H. Buckley, “African American Doctors of WWI: The Lives of 104 Volunteers”
- June 15, 2018 – Loretta Neuman Smith, “The Battle of Ft. Stevens & the Civil War Roundtable”
- Sept. 21, 2018 – Dr. Ruth Troccoli, “D.C. Archeology”

NOTE: All meeting subjects and speakers have been invited to appear, but nevertheless are tentative. If our published RSVP line (202-342-1865) is not answering or appears out-of-order, please call 202-342-1638.

Remember: No luncheon meetings July/August nor December/January

Note: The Board of Directors meets at the Heurich House Museum at 10 a.m. on the Monday immediately prior to a scheduled luncheon meeting.

Be Advised: In case of inclement weather call AOI at 202-342-1865 for last minute information.

If You Were Not At Our Last Meeting...

[Here are the draft minutes of our last meeting for approval at the March 16, 2018 luncheon.]

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (AOI) held the first luncheon meeting of its 153rd year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel at Noon Friday, February 16, 2018 with 63 members and guests present. President Bill Brown welcomed the attendees and called for approval of the notes of the November meeting, which were printed in the current newsletter. There being no corrections or additions, a motion made by **Wallace Rossmiller** and seconded by **George Hutchinson**, the notes were approved and their reading waived.

New Members: Four new member was nominated: **Nina Black Reid** (wife of CBS correspondent Chip Reid and Bill Brown's neighbor); **Katherine Brizzolara** (discovered through research and a family obituary); **Johanna Pezzullo** (discovered our webpage on line via Google); and **Winfield Swanson** (Nelson Rimensynder recruited her). A motion was made by **Maggie Hobbs** and seconded by **Betty Walker** to approve the new members, who were approved enthusiastically.

Hulit Taylor presented the Treasurer's Report:

RECAP OF 2017

Finances

- Income from Dues covers our basic membership expenses, such as the Newsletter and Telephone. Donations help us meet other expenses, such as Grants
- Thanks to your renewals and generous donations, we met our Budget again last year

Average Meeting Attendance

- The average attendance at our luncheon meetings was 75

Membership

- 341 members which is in keeping with recent years

2018 YEAR-TO-DATE

Budget

- The Board approved the Budget.

New Year's Day Brunch

- Once again, the annual New Year's Day Brunch was very festive and social.
- 52 members and guests attended
- Plan to join us next year!

Membership Renewals

- Within the five weeks of our Membership Renewal letter, 229 have renewed. That's 67%!
- If you haven't renewed, please do so as soon as possible.

Bill turned the lectern over to AOI Director **Thomas Neale** who is serving as Program Chairman for AOI's November 11, 2018 Centennial of the Armistice Observance at the DC War Memorial. Tom recapped the meeting that he, **Barbara Bates** and **Bill Brown** attended with the National Park Service who approved our application and issued a permit to hold our event at the DC War Memorial. Tom then explained how representatives of the DC National Guard had reached out to us to see how they could help or partner in our event. As a result, Tom was able to introduce **Brig. General William Walker**, Commander of the DC National Guard and **Major Michael Odle**, Special Assistant to the General who asked to be a part of today's luncheon and hear our guest speak on one of our four World War I related luncheon topics. Both the General and Major were warmly received and stated how much they looked forward to planning and contributing to the November 11th event.

President's Remarks: Bill welcomed everyone and in addition to spouses and family members, two new members: **Sybil Williams** and **Preston Huey** and the following guests: **Carolyn Crouch's** guest was **Brenda Turner**; and, even though he had to cancel at the last minute **W. Earl William's** guests were **Lucy and Don Murray**.

Brief Announcements: Bill attended an inurnment service for long-time member **Earl Eisenhart, Jr.** at St. Columba's Church on Sat., Feb., 3rd. His daughter-in-law Linda said that AOI's tribute to him on our memorial page and the In Memoriam Resolution presented to the family were

the nicest tributes her father-in-law had received. Earl was a retired General Counsel for Southern Railroad, had been an AOI member for a very long time and was 101 years old when he passed away in January.

Bill also took a few minutes to explain a development in AOI's luncheon pricing policy: Since last reported there has been an increase of \$2/person in the luncheon price; however, the AOI Board has decided to increase its subsidy of about \$3.66/person to keep members' cost at \$35. AOI also covers the bartender fee and the guest speaker's lunch. We just wanted everyone to know to what extent we have gone and continue to go to keep our events affordable and worthwhile.

Nelson Rimensnyder challenged everyone with several history trivia questions and provided prizes.

The Day's Speaker: [Note: **Barbara Bates** had proposed an excellent panel for last fall's DC History Conference only to have the planner snub the topic; so, AOI is dedicating 4 luncheons this year to each of those four panelists and their topics.] Bill introduced the day's speaker, **Matthew Margis** a historian in the Histories Directorate at the US Army Center on Military History to speak on "African Americans in World War I." Dr. Margis began by providing an overview of African American service in World War I through the lens of the National Guard. In 1903, a new National Guard was created and World War I is the first time they fight overseas.

Both National Guard at 150,000 to 200,000 and Army at 50,000 are understrength. In 1916, 48 states and DC National Guard units are sent to Mexican border for training in newest weapons and warfare. That same year Army redesigned the division structure and 125,000 National Guardsmen were moved into this new structure. The 1st to 25th Divisions were composed of the regular Army; 26th to 75th was composed of National Guard reserve units and drafted soldiers. The 26th was the New England and 27th the New York units; the 33rd to 34th from the mid-West and 41st from Oregon. There were no African American Divisions in the original structure. There was an outcry from the civil rights community. The Secretary of war Newton Baker created the 92nd Division as an all-black combat division to be the last to go overseas.

The only full divisions that were ready to go overseas were the 26th and 27th. Douglas MacArthur had put together an orphan division called the Rainbow Division made up of those units from all over the country. William Hayward had put together the 15th New York Division; he went to planners of the 42nd and was told that black was not a color. Secretary of war realized the need to get them overseas. The 15th New York and 8th Illinois were made a new part of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) as support labor troops. The Navy only allowed African Americans to serve as stewards and waiters and the Marine Corps banned them altogether. The Secretary and General Pershing decided to create a new division. The French and British needed soldiers and General Pershing wanted independent command. The 93rd provisional Division was created made up of four African American infantry combat regiments that would assist the French and still be part of the AEF. The 15th New York would serve in

combat. The Division never trained together as regiments. They couldn't train together in southern camps so didn't serve as regimental units until overseas when they served under French command. The four regiments were the 369th infantry composed of the 1 5th New York; the 370th composed of the 8th Illinois; 371st were draft soldiers; and 372nd from DC, Maryland, Tennessee, and Ohio. These soldiers wore French helmets, British uniforms, and used French weapons. The 369th were the first to go over followed by the 370th; and the 371st and 372nd were later in March and April of 1918. They got a reputation as good combat fighters. Henry Johnson and Nedham Roberts became American heroes as they had managed to fight off 25 Germans in hand to hand combat when their own weapons jammed. They received the French Croix de Guerre. Only in 2015 did Johnson receive the U.S. Medal of Honor. French newspapers were free to publish the results and gave recognition while US journalists could not report war activities. The 372nd underwent a training period and put into the French line; basically they received "training under fire." In August and September they started to move into front lines. The 157th French Division had been decimated and was reorganized as the Franco-American Division on July 4, 1918. The African Americans were embraced by the French. The 372nd moved to Champagne front and in September-October were part of the Meuse Argonne offensive led by General Pershing but with French officers.

When the war was over, the four regiments were brought back into the AEF. They were fully segregated and not allowed to participate in the Victory Parade in Europe. The French and British included their colonial division troops in their parades. The Army said they had no combat records for them. They received no recognition by the U.S. until the 1920s and then units did get citations. After World II some units were reformed and became the catalyst for the civil rights movement.

The group was advised that the DC National Guard Museum is located at the DC Armory and is open to the public.

The next AOI luncheon program will be Friday, March 16, 2018 when Elizabeth Foxwell will discuss "In their own words: Women in World War One."

Respectfully submitted by Bill Brown and Barbara Bates on behalf of John P. Richardson, Secretary

AOI's Newsletters are printed and distributed by:



AOI's web address is: aoidc.org and our email address is: aioifdc@gmail.com

Please check out our redesigned Home Page and listen to the audio of our luncheon talks by our esteemed guests at www.aoidc.org. And, follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org which may contain more timely events and calls-to-action than our web site.

Address Correction Requested

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The Historical Society of Washington, DC and its Kiplinger Research Library, together with portions of the Washingtoniana Division of the DC Public Library, are operating from temporary quarters in the Newseum while the Carnegie Library undergoes restoration by Apple, due for completion in Dec. For information about programs and exhibits, check: <http://www.dchistory.org> or call 202-249-3955 for further information



The Heurich House Museum is the former home of the Historical Society of Washington and served as AOP's headquarters from 1956 until 2003.