



THE SUPERIOR SIGNAL

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World War I Reached Even into Keweenaw County

Written by KCHS Editorial Committee Member Eugene Johnson

World War I began 100 years ago on June 28, 1914, when Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, the Duchess Sophia, were assassinated at Sarajevo, Serbia.

Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip and accomplices carried out the assassinations and were soon caught by the Serbian military. Princip was a Yugoslav nationalist associated with the “Young Bosnia” movement that sought Yugoslav independence from Austria.

Even though the Serbian Military quickly rounded up the assassins, the murders became the pretext for Austria and Hungary to invade Serbia. That action led to WWI, also called “The Great War” and “The War to End All Wars.”

The United States didn’t enter the war until 1917. Although some local men enlisted earlier with Canada or other Allies, soldiers and sailors from Keweenaw County didn’t fight in American uniforms until 1918 (see WWI list of key dates, p. 13).

32nd Division shot through German lines

Many of the men serving from Keweenaw County were part of the 32nd Division of the Army National Guard. It was composed of 15,000 men from Wisconsin and 8,000 from Michigan.

The 32nd National Guard Division arrived in France in February 1918. From May to November in 1918, it was in constant battle, with just 10 days spent in a rest area. It fought on five fronts in three major offensives: the Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne and Meuse-Argonne. It met and vanquished 23 German Divisions, capturing 2,153 prisoners.

It became known as the “Red Arrow Division,” signifying that the division “shot through” every line the enemy put before it. It was first to break the famous “Hindenburg Line,” and troops from the 32nd became the first U.S. troops to set foot on German soil. (A good recap of its battles and victories is contained on the Internet at Wikipedia. Look for the 32nd Division in WWI.)

Another good source is the book “32nd Division (USA) in WWI.” The division fought with the famous French Tenth

Army in July and August 1918 around Aisne-Marne. Some excerpts from the book capture the mood:

“To those who had passed through Paris on their way into France some months before the change in the attitude of the people was very noticeable. In March, the crowds in the streets looked up as the American troop trains passed, and some of them waved; but there was nothing spontaneous or particularly enthusiastic about it. But lately the Americans at Chateau-Theierry and on the Marne had saved Paris, and the bulletins in the papers of the day the 32nd Division passed through Paris indicated that these same Americans were about to save France. And so the French folks waved—all of them—and ‘vive-d’ for ‘les Americans.’”

Another excerpt describes a battle on July 31, 1918: “On the left, the 63rd Brigade made its ‘big league’ debut in a workman-like manner, promptly reaching its objective, Hill 212. The Michiganders dove into Les Jomblettes and mopped it up, and then cleaned out the Bois Pelger, allowing the 42nd Division to advance. It was hot work, and some wicked fighting”

The 32nd division’s victories were costly. It suffered 14,000 casualties in a brief time period. Wisconsin-Michigan National Guard soldiers left Germany homeward bound in April 1919 and were demobilized in May when they arrived back in the U.S.

Certainly not all 216 WWI Keweenaw County veterans (see list, pp. 14-15) were part of the 32nd Division. And there is no easy way to determine how many of those 216 veterans were volunteers and how many were conscripts. President Woodrow Wilson began the draft in 1917 to fill a one-million man quota because only 73,000 volunteers enlisted after the U.S. declared war on Germany.

County suffered two casualties

There is also no simple way to determine how many of Keweenaw County’s 216 veterans died in action. However, the Mohawk American Legion Post No. 230 knows of two who died. The post is named for Private Clyde Johnston from Gay. The other Keweenaw County known casualty is Corporal



Pvt. Clyde Johnston

Rossiter Raymond Ellis from Allouez. Large portraits of both men hang in memoriam at the Legion hall (see photos).

A cross-check of WWI Michigan casualties finds only those two men from Keweenaw County died just a day apart during the Second Battle of Marne. Ellis was killed in action on August 28, 1918, and Johnston died of his wounds on August 29, 1918. Both soldiers served with the 32nd Division—Ellis with the 128th Infantry and Johnston with the 125th Infantry. Both are believed to be buried in the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in Northern France.

Newspapers at the time complained of poor reporting of casualties, said Lindsay Hiltunen, senior archivist at Michigan Tech's Van Pelt and Opie Library. Student assistant Jeff Kabel did find "Corporal Ross R. Ellis, Allouez," listed in the Casualty List in the October 24, 1918, edition of *Calumet News*. That's almost two months after he was killed in action.

Thanks to KCHS member Jean Ellis, a search on Ancestry.com produced 1910 census information listing both Johnston and Ellis and their draft registration information.

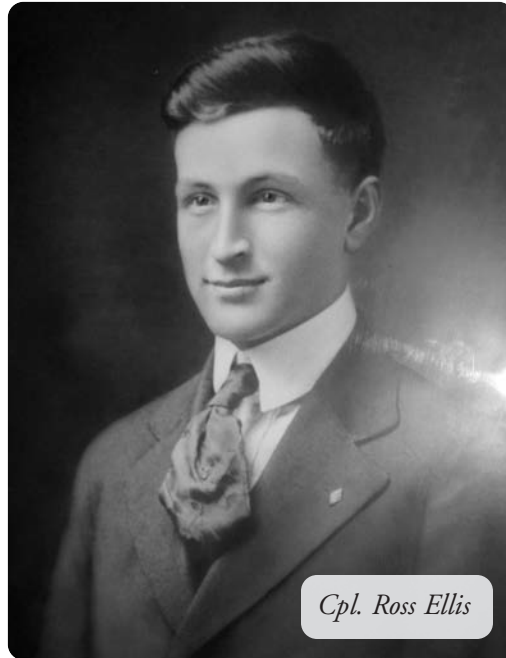
Clyde Johnston was born October 8, 1889, in Allouez, Michigan, a son of John A. and Anna Johnston. John was a concentrator foreman at the Mohawk and Wolverine mills in Gay and a noted taxidermist (see Nov. 2010 Superior Signal, p. 24). Clyde was one of 13 children. When Clyde registered for the draft on June 5, 1917, he was single and working as the wash foreman at the mill in Gay. Johnston was 28 when he died in France.

Rossiter R. Ellis was born on December 3, 1895, in Laurium, Michigan. His parents were Thomas and Louise Ellis, and Ross had three sisters. Ross Ellis also was single when he registered for the draft on June 5, 1917. He was working as a machinist at the Cadillac Motor Co. and lived in Detroit. Ellis was 22 when he was killed in action.

Post named for Clyde Johnston

Forty members chartered the American Legion Post in Mohawk on August 10, 1920 (see WWI Keweenaw Veterans List, pp. 14-15). This was less than a year after Congress chartered The American Legion on September 16, 1919. The American Legion sought benefits for WWI veterans for medical, disability, and educational needs. Those three things remain the organization's main missions today.

The Legion lobbied for creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau formed in 1921. It's now the Veterans Administration and is a Cabinet post. The American Legion supports the Boy Scouts of America, American Legion youth baseball, and Boys and Girls State conventions that teach the responsibilities of citizenship.



Cpl. Ross Ellis

In Mohawk, the Legion post took on the same mission and provided a place where veterans could share their war-time experiences. Otherwise, they mostly kept their war stories to themselves, according to post officers. Mohawk Post Commander William A. Hannon, Chaplain Pete Halley, and a senior post member, Joseph Enrietti (age 89), sat down with this writer and talked about WWI vets and the post's history.

They said the Legion post offers veterans a place to socialize, and it's an organization where veterans can join together and work on community projects. Many of the post's records have been lost, but Enrietti produced an adjutant's book for the years from 1925 until 1945. His late father-in-law, Art Hagman, a

post adjutant, told him to save the book. In it, a 1925 list of new officers and their titles offers a clue into the post's activities:

Commander Roy Dodge
Sr. Vice-Cdr. J.F. Jackson
Jr. Vice-Cdr. Dom Petitti
Adjutant John D. Nigra
Fire Officer J.T. Paquette
Historian Jos. Belobraidich
Chaplain John Kurie
Welfare Officer Ernest Hodges
Sgt. At Arms T.W. Hibband
Sector delegates: W. Williams and Al Gipp
Standing committees: Entertainment, Sports, Sick
(visitations, cards, condolences).

In 1925, the post voted to buy a piano for entertainment rather than a radio. The Entertainment Committee sponsored skating parties, movies, pinochle tournaments, pasty suppers, dances, and the list of activities goes on in those minutes. Sometimes events were held in cooperation with The Sons of St. George (an English fraternal organization). The post dispatched firing squads and honor

guards to military funerals, Memorial Day cemetery programs, and July Fourth parades. Today, the post supports youth activities, including baseball, and hosts a “Cabin Fever” party featuring several bands each January. And there’s the weekly bingo tournament.

The times were difficult for Keweenaw County’s returning WWI veterans. Mining jobs were beginning to dwindle, and The Great Depression was soon to begin. The post had to pay some members’ dues to the district, with the understanding those members would repay the post when they were working again. In 1925, dues were \$5 annually; dues are \$34 today.

Some WWI veterans came home with disabilities. Enrietti recalled one who was gassed and suffered a mental disability, requiring care the rest of his life. Enrietti’s father (also named Joseph) served in France during WWI. The elder Joseph knew Johnston and Ellis who died, but he returned home safely. (Enrietti noted he served in the Army Air Corps during WWII flying 14 missions as tail-gunner on a B-24 Liberator from England over Germany.)

At first, the Legion post met in Ahmeek in the house adjacent to Rinne’s Fuel & Excavating. “It was a Sears Roebuck house,” Enrietti said. In 1926, they sold that home for \$300 and moved to their current building in Mohawk. It is believed to have been built in 1908 and served as the clubhouse for The Sons of St. George.

As a youngster, Enrietti used to help sweep and mop floors at the Legion hall. He remembers WWI veterans singing songs in French. He remembers dances where as the night wore on the kids would go sleep among the winter coats in the balcony. The balcony is covered now by a drop-ceiling

installed to conserve heat. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) renovated the hall during the 1930s and built a stone fireplace similar to the fireplaces at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge.

Over the years, the Mohawk Post has gone up and down in membership. When Pete Halley joined in 1997, the post had 142 members. Currently, it has 57 members. “We’d like to see younger veterans from “Desert Storm” and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan join,” said Cdr. Hannon. “An older clutch of members is keeping things going, and we would like to pass the post on to new members.”

WWI failed to “end all wars”

Although Germany surrendered on November 11, 1918, it was not until June 28, 1919, when the Germans signed the Treaty of Versailles, which some say so hobbled Germany that it caused WWII.

The War to End All Wars was fought on several fronts. The Western front in Europe brought gas warfare and trench warfare. German dirigibles were used to drop bombs. The Eastern front in Europe involved the Russian Empire and its eastern satellite countries.

The war even spilled over into the Middle East when Turkey allied with Germany. The Ottoman Empire wanted back land it had lost to Russia in Eastern Anatolia. The Allies feared the Turks might capture Mideast oil fields and focused on their defeat with several battles engaging Arabian nations against the Turks.

T.E. Lawrence, a British Army officer, helped organize the Arab Revolt against Ottoman Turkish rule. He became known as Lawrence of Arabia and was made famous by books and a motion picture of the same name. (The July-August, 2014, *Smithsonian* magazine has a detailed story on Lawrence’s exploits, including his dissatisfaction with the European settlement with Arab nations. In essence, the Arabs traded Ottoman rule for European control.)

After the war, France, Italy, and Great Britain partitioned the Ottoman Empire, drawing lines creating Middle Eastern nations. Two of those nation’s border lines are in dispute today. Iraq and Syria currently are involved in wars of terror that could redraw those borders. The Ottoman Caliphate was abolished in 1924. Today the insurgent Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) claims to have reestablished the Caliphate as a motive for their brutal war.



Long-time Legion post member, Joseph Enrietti (left), shows the adjutant record from 1925 to 1945 to post Cdr. William A. Hannon and Chaplain Pete Halley. Enrietti’s father-in-law, a former adjutant, entrusted the post log to him.

So The War to End All Wars failed to achieve that noble goal. World War II began in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. Wars rage today in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe where the Ukraine is fighting Russian separatists backed by Russia. ■

Other Sources include:

- History Learning Site of the U.K. for the key dates during WWI;
- Wikipedia for warfare activity on the many battle fronts;
- “The 32nd Division (USA) in the World War;” and
- “Soldiers of the Great War,” edited by William Mitchell Haulsee, Frank George Howe, Alfred Cyril Doyle, Soldiers record publishing association, 1920 - World War, 1914-1918.

Key Dates in WWI’s Timeline

1914

- July 5, Kaiser Wilhelm II promised German support for Austria against Serbia.
- July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia.
- August 1, Germany declared war on Russia.
- August 3, Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium.
- August 4, Britain declared war on Germany.
- October 29, Turkey entered the war on Germany’s side.

1915

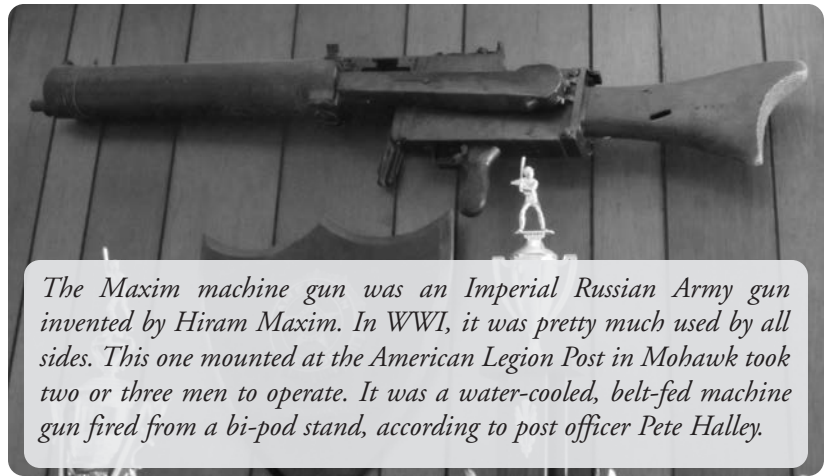
- May 23, Italy declared war on Germany and Austria after a German U-boat sank the Lusitania on May 7th.

1917

- April 6, the United States declared war on Germany.
- December 5, Armistice signed between Germany and Russia.

1918

- March 3, Russia and Germany signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
- July 15, Second Battle of the Marne started, which involved the Allies (including Keweenaw County soldiers).
- August 8, Advance of the Allies was successful.
- September 19, Turkish forces collapsed at Megiddo.
- October 4, Germany asked the Allies for an armistice.
- October 30, Turkey made peace.
- November 3, Austria made peace.
- November 9, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated.
- November 11, Germany signed an armistice with the Allies, officially ending WWI.



The Maxim machine gun was an Imperial Russian Army gun invented by Hiram Maxim. In WWI, it was pretty much used by all sides. This one mounted at the American Legion Post in Mohawk took two or three men to operate. It was a water-cooled, belt-fed machine gun fired from a bi-pod stand, according to post officer Pete Halley.



Legion post WWI souvenirs include a “Doughboy’s” helmet on the left and a German helmet on the right. The canteen is German, as is the Mauser 8mm rifle and bayonet on the right. The bolt-action rifle was made in 1908 in Berlin. The rifle on the left is a U.S. Model 1917 Remington Enfield. The Doughboy name came from U.S. infantry-men baking dough in their helmets or shaped dough on their bayonets and baking it over a camp fire.

World War I Keweenaw County Veterans

Record of Keweenaw County Soldiers and Sailors in Service in *The Great War* taken from a book in the State of Michigan Library and compiled by KCHS Member Nancy Sanderson.

The post's charter member names are denoted with asterisks [] on this list.*

Alexandria, DavidMohawk
 Allegría, AgatinoMohawk
 Anderson, CharlesAllouez
 Anderson, John Emil.....Gay
 Anderson, John NesterAllouez
 Anderson, YalmerGay

Bailey, FrankAhmeek
 Baragwanath, John PerkinMohawk
 Bartonen, Arthur PaulMohawk
 Batten, Joseph ArthurMohawk
 Beaudoin, EdmondGay
 Belobraidich, Alexander.....Ahmeek*
 Belobraidich, James George.....Ahmeek*
 Benson, AlbinMohawk
 Benson, Howard FredMohawk

Bergerson, Carl WilliamGay
 Bessalo, AbramMandan
 Bessalo, John J.Ahmeek*
 Betzing, John Jr.Mohawk
 Bogdan, LouisAhmeek*
 Bowden, Edwin Thomas.....Ahmeek
 Bowden, JohnMohawk
 Bradshaw, Harry.....Mandan
 Bruneau, Edmond Jr.Phoenix
 Bruneau, NormanPhoenix*
 Bruneau, Oliver.....Phoenix*
 Buddo, Louis WilliamMohawk*
 Capriloff, Stephen.....Ahmeek
 Carpenter, Harold M.C.Mohawk
 Chopp, DanielAhmeek
 Clark, Raymond ChesterMohawk
 Collins, Warner ArvidMohawk
 Collins, William AlexanderMohawk
 Cravello, RomanoAhmeek
 Crepeau, AldericGay
 Cronenworth, GeorgeMohawk*
 Curtis, Oculus CurnerMohawk
 Dahlgren, John P.Eagle River
 David, JosephAhmeek
 Devine, JosephPhoenix
 Dodge, William JohnAhmeek*
 Dolan, ThomasMohawk
 Dolbee, Henry Chester.....Allouez*
 Domitruck, Wasily.....Mohawk
 Doney, Matthew M.Ahmeek*
 Dowd, Ira JohnMohawk
 Dunstone, William HaroldAllouez
 Dyni, Henry Jr.Central Mine
 Ellis, Rossiter RaymondAllouez
 Enrietta, JosephMohawk
 Eva, Leonard Henry.....Mohawk
 Faull, Claude Charles.....Allouez
 Ferkins, FredPhoenix
 Filipovich, ThomasMohawk
 Forster, JalmerMohawk
 Frederickson, Emil.....
 Frisk, EmilMohawk*
 Garipey, WilliamCentral Mine
 Geborkoff, MigidichMohawk
 Glovinski, Joseph PeterGay
 Goedert, Henry.....Phoenix
 Gregorich, TonyAhmeek
 Grentz, Samuel E.Allouez



The American Legion Hall is a familiar landmark in Mohawk. Built in 1908 for the Sons of St. George, the building was purchased by the Legion Post in 1926. Pictured on the steps from bottom to top are long-time member Joseph Enrietti, Cdr. William Hannon, and Chaplain Pete Halley.

Gromelack, Anton	Allouez	Larcinese, Frank.....		Repola, Charles	Allouez
Grose, Carl Andres.....	Allouez	Larsen, August.....	Gay	Robinson, Lafayette Edward	Ahmeek
Guidi, Giovanni Casci	Mohawk	Lassila, Ivan	Mohawk	Rosenberger, Frank	Mohawk
Gunnari, Victor John.....	Mohawk	Lassila, Paul Jr.	Mohawk	Rosenberger, John	Mohawk
Hartmann, Carl E.	Mohawk	Lauren, Adolph Leonard	Gay	Rowe, Melvin.....	Mohawk
Hartmann, John F.	Mohawk*	Lindburg, Elmer	Mohawk	Rowe, William Andrews.....	Mohawk*
Hebbard, Thomas W.	Mohawk*	Lookus, Charles O.	Mandan	Ruonavaara, Felix Edwin.....	Gay
Heikkanen, William.....	Mohawk	Luokkanen, John	Mohawk	Ruonavaara, Adolph Peter	Gay
Hensela, Nick	Allouez	Luzmoore, Henry Irving	Mohawk	Ruts, Alex	Ahmeek
Hiltunen, Albert	Ahmeek	Maki, Eric Emil.....	Gay	Ruts, Edmund	Ahmeek
Hiltunen, Andres	Ahmeek	Maki, Olaf.....	Mohawk	Sasri, Albert	Ahmeek
Hiltunen, Isaac.....	Mohawk	Maki, Yalmer Hill		Sackrison, Walter	Mohawk
Hocking, Fred	Mohawk	Manninen, John.....	Mohawk	Safar, Rudolph	Ahmeek
Hodges, Ernest	Ahmeek*	Massole, John	Ahmeek	Saronen, Carl A.	Mohawk
Hodges, Richard	Ahmeek*	Mattson, Emil Gabriel	Phoenix	Sauti, John	Gay
Holland, Walter D.		McCarthy, Patrick Jerome	Mohawk	Schafer, Casimer	Gay*
Hosking, Roland B.	Ahmeek*	Medatoff, Alex	Mohawk	Schafer, Frank	Gay
Jacksa, John James	Mohawk	Miller, Emil	Eagle River	Schafer, George Peter	Gay*
Jackson, Bertram Thomas	Eagle River	Miller, Matt	Eagle River	Schoch, Frederick John	Mohawk
Jackson, James F.	Mohawk*	Mills, George	Ahmeek	Schoch, George Peter.....	Mohawk
Jackson, Marvin L.		Modronich, Joseph A.	Ahmeek	Schuster, Raffael	Ahmeek
Jennings, Richard H.	Mohawk	Moretto, Crispino.....	Ahmeek	Schutte, George Jr.	Phoenix
Jenson, Carl Waldemar	Mohawk	Murphy, Joseph	Mohawk*	Seager, George R.	Ahmeek
Jilbert, William F.	Ahmeek	Nastwold, William Berger.....	Ahmeek	Selanaho, Fred	
Johnson, Elmer	Eagle River	Negosoff, Ogenus	Mohawk	Sirola, William	Ahmeek
Johnston, Clyde.....	Gay	Nelson, George Henry	Phoenix	Staricha, Jacob Jr.	
Juirmo, Herman	Copper Harbor	Nelson, Oscar W.	Mandan	Storey, Alfred Britton	Ahmeek
Kaikkonen, Otto	Mohawk*	Nicholas, James Henry	Mohawk*	Stukel, John	Mohawk*
Kempf, Earl William.....	Ahmeek	Nordstrom, Edward Wilfred	Allouez	Stukel, Joseph Jacob.....	Mohawk
Kempf, Rudolph Henry	Ahmeek	O'Brien, Thomas Lester	Ahmeek	Sukoff, Samuel.....	Mohawk
Kerkkainen, Henry	Gay	Ojennus, Gusta	Mohawk	Taivalkoski, August.....	Mohawk*
King, Richard John.....	Ahmeek	Olfky, Harry	Ahmeek	Taivaloja, Verner	Mohawk
Kingston, James Harrison	Eagle Harbor	Olson, Edward.....	Mohawk	Taivaloja, Yalmar	Mohawk*
Kinnunen, Jacob	Phoenix	Olson, Thomas Andrew	Allouez	Talapa, Charles.....	Mohawk
Kivela, Werner Wilfred	Allouez	Ortquist, Arthur		Tapero, Tony	Mohawk
Kivila, John Mattias	Mohawk	Otto, John	Phoenix	Tomasa, James	Mohawk
Kivila, William.....	Mohawk	Palmine, Peter Michael	Gay	Tomasi, Anthony Delo	Gay
Kline, John Joseph Henry.....	Mohawk*	Panyan, Matt	Ahmeek	Tossava, Benhart	Mohawk
Kline, Mervin Andrew	Mohawk*	Paquette, John Thomas	Mohawk	Trebilcock, Lloyd	Phoenix
Koivo, Charles		Paynter, Edward John	Ahmeek	Tucker, Albert R.	Mohawk*
Koljonen, Albert.....	Mohawk*	Paynter, Thomas Hosking.....	Ahmeek	Van Lokeran, Emil.....	Mohawk
Koljonen, Arthur	Mohawk*	Pehar, Gabriel		Vanni, David	Mohawk
Korpi, Arthur Alex	Allouez	Pelto, Raymond Matt.....	Mohawk	Vecchia, Dominic.....	Mohawk
Kraemer, Matthew M.	Calumet*	Petermann, Edward John	Allouez	Vollmer, Adolph	Gay
Kumpula, August	Delaware	Philpotts, Arthur James	Mohawk	Warren, Frederick	Mohawk
Kumpula, Emil J.	Delaware	Piquette, Joseph Edward	Gay	Wiinimaki, Hjalmar.....	Mohawk
Kunnari, Edward	Allouez	Poshak, John Rudolf	Ahmeek*	Winqvist, James.....	Mohawk
Kurie, John Jr.	Ahmeek*	Prisk, Albert James	Mohawk*		
Kurie, Stephen	Ahmeek	Puhek, Frank Joseph.....	Mohawk*		
Kytta, John Henry Jr.	Mohawk	Raisonan, August	Eagle River		
Lane, Frederick Edgar		Ralof, Albert J.	Ahmeek*		
Lantto, John Mattias	Gay	Ranta, John H.	Mohawk*		
Lantto, Paul	Gay*	Rapson, Clifford Chester	Allouez		

(Editor's note: Thanks to Pegg Johnson for key-entering the 216 names from Nancy Sanderson's list and cross-referencing those names with the Charter Membership Roll for the Clyde Johnston American Legion Post No. 230 in Mohawk.)