

## Other 1918 Influenza Facts

Dr. Victor Vaughn, acting Surgeon General of the Army, receives urgent orders to proceed to Camp Devens near Boston. Once there, what Vaughn sees changes his life forever: "I saw hundreds of young stalwart men in uniform coming into the wards of the hospital. Every bed was full, yet others crowded in. The faces wore a bluish cast; a cough brought up the blood-stained sputum. In the morning, the dead bodies are stacked about the morgue like cordwood." On the day that Vaughn arrived at Camp Devens, 63 men died from influenza.

Lt. Col. Philip Doane, head of the Health and Sanitation Section of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, speaking in Washington, D.C., fuels the rumor and speculation by blaming the Germans for the deadly influenza that was striking Americans. Said Doane: "It would be quite easy for one of these German agents to turn loose Spanish influenza germs in a theater or some other place where large numbers of persons are assembled. The Germans have started epidemics in Europe, and there is no reason why they should be particularly gentle with America."

On September 28, 200,000 gather for a 4th Liberty Loan Drive in Philadelphia. Days after the parade, 635 new cases of influenza were reported. Within days, the city will be forced to admit that epidemic conditions exist. Churches, schools, and theaters are ordered closed, along with all other places of "public amusement."

Boston registers 202 deaths from influenza on October 2. Shortly thereafter, the city canceled its Liberty Bond parades and sporting events. Churches were closed and the stock market was put on half-days. On October 6, Philadelphia posts what would be just the first of several gruesome records for the month: 289 influenza-related deaths in a single day.

Congress approves a special \$1 million fund to enable the U.S. Public Health Service to recruit physicians and nurses to deal with the growing epidemic. US Surgeon General Rupert Blue set out to hire over 1000 doctors and 700 nurses with the new funds. The war effort, however, made Blue's task difficult. With many medical professionals already engaged in lending care to fighting soldiers, Blue was forced to look for some recruits in places like old-age homes and rehabilitation centers.

851 New Yorkers die of influenza in a single day. In Philadelphia, the city's death rate for one single week is 700 times higher than normal. The crime rate in Chicago drops by 43 percent. Authorities attributed the drop to the toll that influenza was taking on the city's potential lawbreakers. October 1918 turns out to be the deadliest month in the nation's history as 195,000 Americans fall victim to influenza.

Celebrating the end of World War I, 30,000 San Franciscans take to the streets to celebrate in November. There was much dancing and singing. Everybody wore a face-mask. Sirens wail on November 21, signaling to San Franciscans that it is safe--and legal--to remove their protective face masks. At that point, 2,122 were dead due to influenza. But by December, there were 5,000 new cases of influenza are reported in San Francisco.