

## World War One in Bridgeport

By Rob Novak

Unlike the American entry into World War II, which began with a single traumatic event at Pearl Harbor, US participation in World War I more resembled a slow-motion train wreck.

By 1916, Bridgeport newspapers clearly favored the Allied over the Central Powers. Allied propaganda, combined with German atrocities on the high seas no doubt caused this. The editorial cartoon below appeared in the *Bridgeport Telegram* on May 7, 1915, in response to German threats to the RMS *Lusitania*. Ironically, this was the same day the liner was sunk by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland.



The death of Bridgeport automobile manufacturer Isaac Trumbull and others from the area aboard the *Lusitania* no doubt contributed to anti-German feeling. Mrs. Roland Anderson, her daughter Barbra, and James H. Brooks of Bridgeport were saved from the *Lusitania*. Isaac Trumbull at right, below, perished on the doomed liner.



**MRS. ROLAND ANDERSON.**  
When he had about given up hope, Drive, was delighted to learn last night that his wife, Mrs. Emily An-



**BARBARA ANDERSON.**  
son, and two year old daughter, Barbara, were among the saved in the wreck of the torpedo-destroyed Lusitania. Besides J. H. Brooks and Mrs. Charles McFarquhar and daughter, Grace, the Andersons are the only persons known to Bridgeporters reported among the "saved." Information concerning the safety



**J. H. BROOKS.**

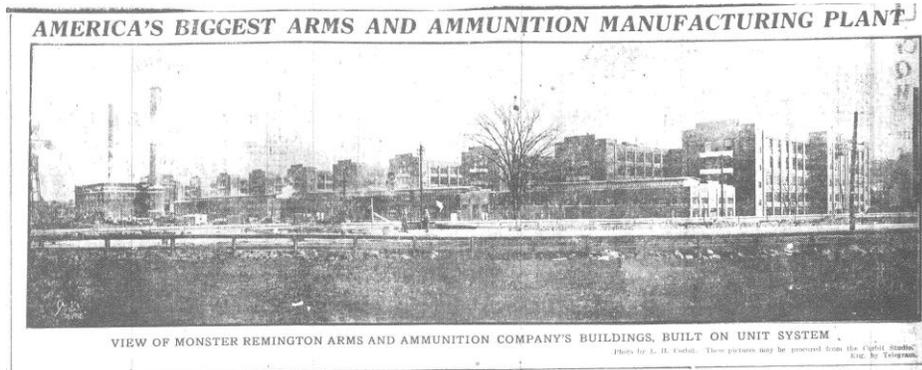
of Mrs. Anderson and daughter was received by the Herald at 2:30 a. m. today.  
James Harrison, formerly a machinist at the Crane Valve company; John Thurston, who roomed in State street, and Isaac Trumbull, secretary and treasurer of the Trumbull Cycle Car company, are not listed among the "safe." Accordingly it now seems certain that they are lost.  
Mrs. Isaac Trumbull and her thirteen year old daughter, Priscilla, spent the night with relatives at the home of her brother-in-law, Alexander, Grace, the Andersons are the only persons known to Bridgeporters reported among the "saved."



**ISAAC TRUMBULL.**

Percy and Elizabeth Brecombe Bridgeport, are also among the lost. Of all the wreck victims, Isaac Trumbull was the best known in the Park City. He had gone aboard to negotiate some cycle car orders with the warring powers.  
Mrs. Anderson and daughter were on their way to visit relatives in England. The husband, who is draughtsman employed by the Kings company, hoped against hope to nearly twenty-four hours as the fate till became known and the names of his dear ones failed to appear. It expected another little Anderson to be born in distant England and the fact intensified his fears.

Bridgeport factories expanded at a phenomenal rate to supply the Allied powers with ammunition, as seen in this January 22, 1916 view of the Remington Arms and Ammunition Company.



The sudden influx of jobs caused a population surge in the Park City. This March 9, 1916 editorial cartoon from the Bridgeport Telegram shows a farm girl coming to Bridgeport and finding a home and employment, thanks to the Bridgeport Young Women's Christian Association. The YWCA was a leading advocate for the large amounts of unmarried women moving into the Park City.



Even as new housing was built as quickly as possible to accommodate the new workers, rents were high, as illustrated by these May 21 and June 11, 1916 editorial cartoons.



By early 1917 it appeared the question was when, not if, America would enter the Great War. As early as February, Bridgeport was preparing for war. Militiamen guarding the railroad tracks pose in for the *Bridgeport Herald* February 25, 1917 edition.



This ad for the Bridgeport Red Cross was one of many which appeared in February 1917.



**Honor Your Flag!  
Love Your Country!**

**SERVE It By Becoming  
A MEMBER OF THE  
AMERICAN  
RED CROSS**

Enroll yourself in Bridgeport chapter  
this week.

Annual membership, \$1.00.

Enrollment makes you a supporting  
member, but does not require  
field service of any kind.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

BRIDGEPORT CHAPTER  
AMERICAN RED CROSS

307 First Bridgeport Bank Bldg. Tel. Barnum 10,000.

Date .....

I hereby apply for membership in the class checked below and en-  
close the sum of ..... Dollars (\$.....) therefor.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Annual Member	\$1	Mr. ....
<input type="checkbox"/>	*Subscribing Member—Annually	2	Mrs. ....
<input type="checkbox"/>	*Contributing Member—Annually	5	Miss .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	*Sustaining Member—Annually	10	Address .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	*Life Member—One Payment	25	.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	*Patron Member—One Payment	100	.....

\* **IMPORTANT** Members in classes starred (\*) above include annual subscription to the American Red Cross Magazine, handsomely illustrated, published monthly.

War appeared certain by March, when President Wilson issued an ultimatum to Germany to cease unrestricted submarine warfare. The below illustration from March 18, 1917, illustrates the fear residents felt as tensions mounted:

Third Section  
Illustrated Features About  
Bridgeport and the World.

# Bridgeport Sunday Post.

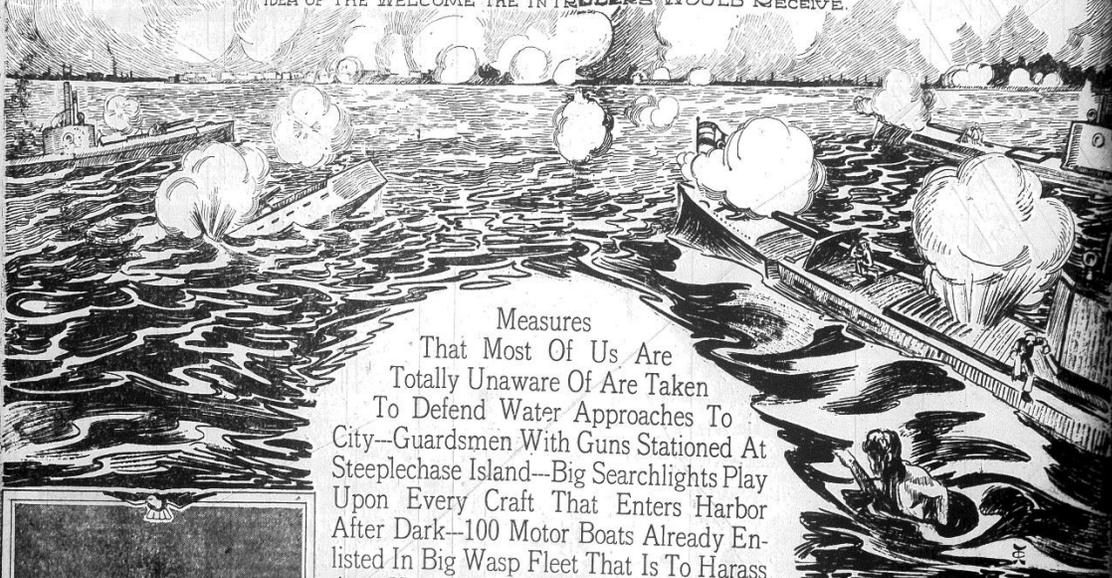
BRIDGEPORT CONN., SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1917. 19

Sunday Post  
Special Articles Lead the Field.  
Know Your City!

## BRIDGEPORT'S GREAT BIG "IF"

MILITARY AUTHORITIES DECLARE THAT IN EVENT OF WAR WITH GERMANY U-BOATS WOULD BE SENT TO ATTACK BRIDGEPORT, AND IN VIEW OF WHAT THE U-53 DID, IT SEEMS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE HERE IS THE SUNDAY POST'S STAFF ARTISTS IDEA OF THE WELCOME THE INTRUDERS WOULD RECEIVE.

Measures  
That Most Of Us Are  
Totally Unaware Of Are Taken  
To Defend Water Approaches To  
City--Guardsmen With Guns Stationed At  
Steeplechase Island--Big Searchlights Play  
Upon Every Craft That Enters Harbor  
After Dark--100 Motor Boats Already En-  
listed In Big Wasp Fleet That Is To Harass  
Any Hostile Submarines--Work Of Re-  
cruiting All Branches Of Military Service  
Being Rushed--Monitor Amphitrite Be-  
lieved To Be Making Huge Net To Be  
Stretched Across Entrance To Sound To  
Bar Underwater Invaders--Coast Artillery  
Men On Qui-Vive.



STEEPLECHASE--ONE STRATEGIC POINT

BY SPECTATOR.  
WITHIN the last ten days Bridgeport has had another phase of its industrial and munitions importance forcibly brought home to it, and while it is not as pleasant as looking in the sunlight of commercial glory from morning until night, the city admittedly loves to do it--it demonstrates that Bridgeport's place in the war is real. There is nothing mythological about it.  
How in Connecticut the spirit of peace is domi-

GUNS MIGHT EVEN BARK AT SEA

machinery of armaments in this country. Subsequent events have wiped out most, and most of the port's U-killer effectively destroyed a great deal of the formerly admitted that peace at the price of the United States was altogether too expensive to be considered. Just to recall how utterly unexpected was the visit of the destroyer from across the sea, the following is quoted from The Sunday Post of October 31, 1914, p. 1, Oct. 1: "The German war submarines were required preparation, but can you imagine the force that would invade the city when the citizens heard the first rounds fired at the intruder? To bring home how the boats would look--of course it can not be drawn accurately or foreseen exactly--the staff artist has drawn an imaginary picture of a U-boat, firing off in the sound, under cross-fire from defenses at Steeplechase Island and Shandy point. Just imagine real war at our doors, with the most sensational weapons of modern warfare, trying to demolish and cripple

Like many cities in Connecticut, Bridgeport formed a "Home Guard", or local militia, to guard sensitive locations from feared German sabotage. As the March 25, 1917 editorial cartoon demonstrates below, not all Bridgeport residents were eager to enlist.



Less than a month later, the long wait ended, and the United States entered World War I

**The Bridgeport Post**  
 BRIDGEPORT, CONN., FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 6, 1917.  
 VOL. LXXI, No. 82—THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR.

# UNITED STATES IS AT WAR WITH GERMANY

**INTERNED SHIPS OF GERMANY ARE SEIZED BY UNITED STATES**  
 Twenty Passenger Liners in Those Taken Over at New York. Among them the Vaterland, One of Biggest and Finest Liners in the World—Your Taken at Boston—Willehad, at New London and Liners at Baltimore Now in Hands of Collectors of Customs—Troops Used in Making Seizures—Interned Sailors at New York Taken to Ellis Island—Machinery on Some Ships Smashed.

**ONE WOMAN IS OPPOSED TO WAR**  
 Mrs. Frank, Oak, Woman "Caucasian," Led Sobbing from House Chamber by Her Friends.

**2D AND 4TH CO.'S MUSTERED INTO FEDERAL SERVICE**  
 Members Take Oath This Morning—Destination of Troops Kept Secret.

**TWO EASTER EGGS FOR BERLIN FOLKS**  
 These Were Accompanying the Day's Mail.

**BY FRANK CHAMBERLAIN**  
 Staff Correspondent International News Service.

**NEW YORK, April 6.**—Germany's BELGIUM fleet which had been interned here since the outbreak of the war were released today. There were 29 passenger liners in the fleet, among them the Vaterland, one of the biggest and finest liners in the world.

**Men Taken to Ellis Island.**—The German officers and crew comprising more than 3,000 men were taken to Ellis Island for

**VOTE OF HOUSE ON WAR RESOLUTION.**  
 WASHINGTON, April 6.—Fifty representatives voted against America's entrance into the world war as the first gray streak of dawn were coming through the high windows of the capitol this morning. Thirty two Republicans, 16 Democrats, one Prohibitionist and one Socialist opposed the measure.

**REPUBLICANS OPPOSED.**  
 Bacon, of Michigan; Britten, of Illinois; Brown, of Wisconsin; Cary, of Wisconsin; Cooper, of Wisconsin; Davidson, of Wisconsin; Dillon, of South Dakota; Eack, of Wisconsin; Frazier, of Wisconsin; Davis, of Minnesota; Fuller, of Illinois; Hauger, of Iowa; Hayes, of California; Hill, of Iowa; Johnson, of South Dakota; King, of Illinois; Kinkaid, of Nebraska; Knutson, of Minnesota; Lapham, of Washington; Little, of Wisconsin; Rankin, of Montana; Reavis, of Nebraska; Roberts, of Nevada; Rodenberg, of Illinois; Sloan, of Nebraska; Stafford, of Wisconsin; Voight, of Wisconsin; Wheeler, of Illinois; Woods, of Iowa.

**DEMOCRATS OPPOSED.**  
 The following Democrats voted against the resolution: Alston, of Alabama; Barnett, of Alabama; Cramer, of California; Combs, of Kansas; Decker, of Missouri; Ell, of Washington; Donnell, of South Carolina; Hendley, of Missouri; Hild, of Colorado; Igoe, of Missouri; Keating, of Colorado; Kitchin, of North Carolina; McAdams, of Texas; Shufeldt, of Missouri; Sherwood, of Ohio; Vanzyle, of Minnesota.

**One Socialist, London, of New York, and one Prohibitionist, Randall, of California, also cast their voice against the measure.**

**President Wilson Signs War Resolution at White House at 1.13 P. M. Following Signature of Vice President Marshall at 12.14 o'clock Today.—Every Department of Government Ready to Engage in Struggle for Maintenance of American Honor Against Aggressions of Germany. Following Passage of Epoch-Making Resolution by Congress Early Today—President Issues Proclamation Calling for Volunteers.**

**WASHINGTON, April 6.**—President Wilson signed the joint resolution declaring a state of war exists with Germany at 1.13 o'clock this afternoon.

**President Wilson also signed a proclamation addressed to the American people, calling for volunteers for the army and navy, which was not being stated.**

**Vice President Thomas R. Marshall signed the joint resolution declaring that a state of war exists between the United States and Germany at 12.14 today. Immediately after the signing was attached, a special messenger was dispatched to the White House with the document.**

**Staff Correspondent International News Service.**

**WASHINGTON, April 6.**—Lashed across the city with his resounding, "God bless the flag," President Wilson, following the signing of the war resolution, declared a state of war exists between the United States and Germany at 1.13 o'clock this afternoon.

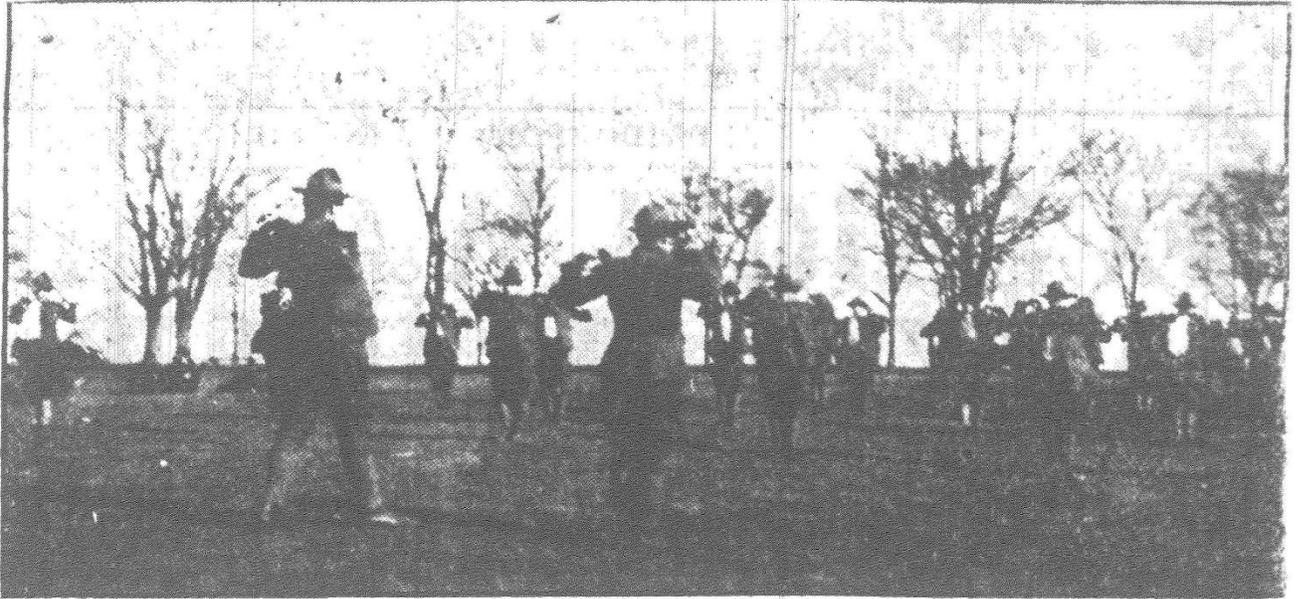
**With Telegrams Addressed to Every Unit of Organization—Order Will Bring Out Entire Reserve of**

**UNITED STATES NAVY IS READY TO MOBILIZE**  
**WILHELM CALLS BIG CONFERENCE**

The Bridgeport Home Guard immediately mobilized, with public drills at Seaside Park to ease the fears of an anxious population.

DAY POST, APRIL 8, 1917.

## ROOKIE TROOPERS TRAIN AT SEASIDE



Drill at Seaside Park Wednesday Afternoon.

After being at war since 1914, one of the most critical things needed by the Allied powers in Europe was food. Americans were encouraged to sustain themselves with “Liberty Gardens” so a greater portion of our food could be shipped overseas. Public parks were utilized to allow tenement dwellers to plant Liberty Gardens, and even some of Bridgeport’s most beautifully landscaped yards were repurposed to grow vegetables.

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## Bridgeport Millionaires to Turn Front Lawns Into Potato Fields



By the time the ad appeared on May 14, 1917 for this patriotic show at Main Street's Poli Theater, Bridgeport's World War I experience has only just begun.

BRIDGEPORT EVENING POST. MONDAY



# OLD GLORY WEEK

# POLI'S

**A Star Spangled Jubilee of Fun**  
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY

**AMERICAN BOYS & GIRLS**  
A QUINTET OF MIRTH-MAKERS IN A SNAPPY ARRANGEMENT OF SONGS AND DANCES.



**FILM OF 1001 THRILLS**  
7 REELS 7 REELS

## MASQUE OF LIFE

SENSATIONAL SPECTACLE  
LOW PASSION, TENDREY, EXCITEMENT,  
LOUD, TENDREY, TENDREY, IS ENTIRETY.

**INTERNATIONAL GIRLS**  
CLASSIC POSINGS

**Eddie & Lew MILLER**  
In a Song Révue

**SYLVIA LOYAL**  
In a Beautiful Offering

**WEISER & REISER**  
In a Variety Skit

**America Prepares**  
See How In  
HEARST - PATHE NEWS

COMING—THURS.,  
FRI. AND SAT. **"AMERICA FIRST"**