

VICTIMS OF THE OTRANTO

OCTOBER 6, 1918



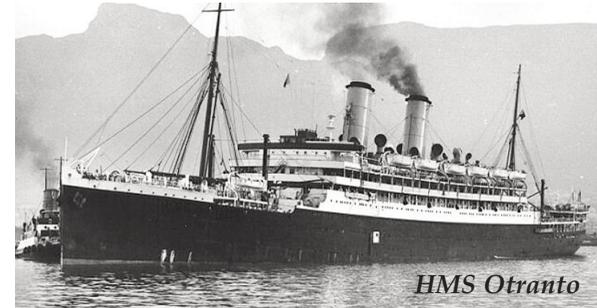
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VICTIMS OF THE OTRANTO

Just over a month before World War I ended on November 11, 1918, Berrien County experienced the horrors of war in a way that probably no other county in the United States has in the loss of its homefolk. Twenty-five young men from every town that was part of the county at the time—Adel, Alapaha, Cecil, Enigma, Lenox, Milltown (now Lakeland), Nashville, Ray City, and Sparks—lost their lives on October 6, 1918 when the British transport ship, the *HMS Otranto*, on which they were traveling, was struck by another British ship, the *HMS Kashmir*.

The collision occurred during a severe storm, while the convoy was only a day away from port in the Irish Sea. The ships faced gale-force winds and an ensuing wave struck the *Kashmir* causing it to veer hard and ram the *Otranto*. Taking on water and listing badly, the *Otranto* ran aground and broke in two just 500 yards off the Isle of Islay. 431 troops lost their lives. 596 survived. Only 5 Berrien soldiers survived.

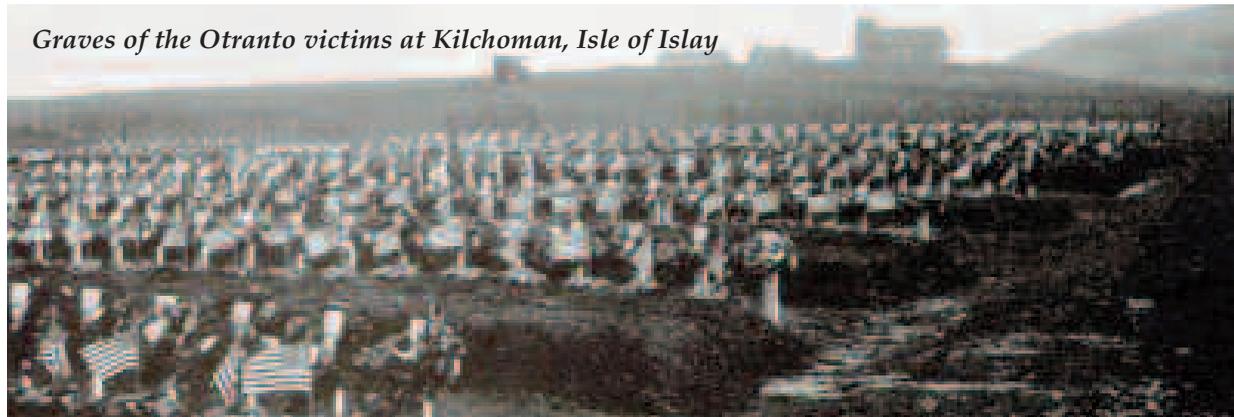


HMS Otranto

ROLL CALL OF THE OTRANTO DEAD FROM BERRIEN COUNTY

Privates Hiram Marcus Bennett, Jim Melvin Boyett, John Guy Coppage, Rufus Davis, Mack Hilton Easters, George Bruce Faircloth, Lafayette Gaskins, Bennie E. Griner, Lester A. Hancock, Robert J. Hancock, Arthur Harper, William P. Hayes, Thomas H. Holland, George H. Hutto, Ralph Knight, Benjamin F. McCranie, James M. McMillan, William McMillan, John Franklin Moore, Charlie S. Railey, Tillman W. Robinson, Thomas J. Sirmons, Shellie Lloyd Webb, Joel Wheeler, William C. Zeigler.

Graves of the Otranto victims at Kilchoman, Isle of Islay



THE FIRST DOUGHBOY

E.M. VIQUESNEY, SCULPTOR



“SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN DOUGHBOY”



One of the most reproduced life-size sculptures in the United States is a memorial statue of a World War I American soldier, designed and sculpted by Ernest Moore Viquesney.

The “Spirit of the American Doughboy” statue in Nashville was the first fabricated of the famous figure in the United States. It is made of copper, pressed over a mold and the pieces welded together. It is hollow inside and the figure only weighs about 200 pounds.

In 1920 the statue was shown in a national exhibition in Centralia, Washington, toured

across the country, then displayed in Americus, Georgia while Viquesney worked on the one ordered for delivery to Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. The statue for Furman was the first installed, but the one in Nashville is the “original.” It was placed in Nashville in 1921, but was not unveiled until it was paid for in 1923.

The cost of the monument was quite expensive for the period. The original “monument fund” articles in The Nashville Herald lists the cost of \$1375 for a granite monument that was fourteen feet high. However the

price of the Doughboy statue itself for Nashville, GA, was \$5,000, in August of 1920.

More than 150 full size copies of the statue have been created for municipal memorials across the nation according to the Smithsonian Institution. Each one is mounted on a different monument base and in settings ranging from government buildings, to veteran’s parks and cemeteries. The Viquesney “Doughboy” statues are viewed more than any other statue, except the Statue of Liberty.

The monument in Nashville was originally placed in the center of the intersection of

Davis Street and Marion Avenue. Land-scaping at the base of the monument was added sometime around 1930. When the road was widened for vehicle traffic, it was necessary to move the monument to its present location in 1939. Brick-work was placed around the base of the monument when the Courthouse was refurbished in 1981.

When the Berrien County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, the “ Spirit of the American Doughboy” monument was placed on the National Register as well.