

# "Spirit of the American Doughboy"

## 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



## America's First Doughboy

One of the most familiar sculptures in the United States is a memorial statue of a World War I American soldier, designed and sculpted by Ernest Moore Viquesney. The original was placed in Nashville in 1921, but was not unveiled until it was paid for in 1923. Landscaping at the base of the monument was added sometime around 1930.

The "Spirit of the American Doughboy" statue in Nashville 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.

More than 150 full size copies of the statue have been created for municipal memorials across the nation according to the Smithsonian Institution.



*Otranto-Doughboy Exhibit, Old Courthouse on the Square, Nashville, Georgia*