



Fall Speakers Series 2017

Ross County Historical Society

45 West Fifth St., Chillicothe

Free & Open to the Public

“The Great War” Centennial Series



World War I in the Sky: The Pilots & Personalities of the 28th Aero Squadron

Featuring Robert A. Kasprzak, Major USAF (Retired) and president of the Military Heritage Chapter (Ohio Region) of the League of World War I Aviation Historians, Dayton

Wednesday, October 18, 7:30 p.m.

World War I was the first major conflict fought after the advent of the airplane. What started out as aerial reconnaissance quickly evolved into a deadly contest between squadrons of heavily armed bi-planes seeking to dominate the skies over the trenches of the Western Front. By the time the U.S. entered the fray in 1917, the warring parties of Europe already had several years of experience perfecting air combat. The new U.S. air squadrons had a lot of catching up to do. Retired U.S. Air Force Major Robert Kasprzak will discuss the origins of one such squadron, the 28th Aero Squadron, and the action its members experienced over France during the last year of the war. His presentation will include interviews of actual pilots, highlights of other pilots' lives before, during, and after the war, and a show and tell of artifacts from the period.



Searching for Homer Lawson: Ohio's African American World War I Soldiers

Featuring Paul LaRue, historian, retired teacher, and member of the Ohio World War I Centennial Commission, Washington Court House.

Wednesday, November 1, 7:30 p.m.

Typically, African American soldiers of World War I are barely mentioned or completely left out when the war is discussed. Ohio has a rich World War I heritage; including important contributions by African American Soldiers. Here in Chillicothe, thousands underwent basic and advanced training at Camp Sherman where they were formed into various military units ranging from Combat Engineer Regiments, Signal Corps Battalions, Pioneer Infantry Regiments, and Depot Brigades. Join Paul La Rue, award winning history teacher (retired) and member of the Ohio World War I Centennial Committee, as he examines Ohio's African American World War I Soldiers' service and sacrifice.

Bill Lambert: Ohio's Other World War I Flying Ace

Featuring Samuel J. Wilson, Professor of History at the University of Rio Grande, Rio Grande, Ohio.

Wednesday, November 15, 7:30 p.m.

You have heard of America's top World War I flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker of Columbus, but did you know that another Ohioan was next in line? Join us for an evening with Professor Samuel Wilson of the University of Rio Grande to learn about the exploits of William C. Lambert of Ironton, Ohio, who served as a fighter pilot in the British Royal Flying Corps during World War I and was credited with shooting down 22 enemy aircraft (compared to Rickenbacker's 26) between April and August 1918. Suffering from battle fatigue, Lambert was sent back to England on medical leave during the last two and a half months of the war thus ending his chances of topping Rickenbacker's record. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and went on to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II.

