

American Legion

Charleton-Polan Post #233

Lake Orion Michigan

Chartered April 27, 1921



Post Namesake

Charleton-Polan post was named after Verne Emmet Polan and Newell Thomas Charleton

Verne Emmet Polan, US Navy

Verne Emmet Polan was born April ,1897 on the Charles Parkhurst Farm, located on Orion-Oxford Rd. He was inducted into the Service in Detroit Michigan, July , 1918. Then sent to the Great Lakes Training Field.

Polan then served at New Port News, Virginia. He was transferred to the Battle Ship, Iowa, where he became ill with pneumonia, and was sent to Belle View Hospital. On October 4, 1918, Verne Emmet Polan became Lake Orion's first casualty of World War I.

Polan's father, Riley Polan was born in Toledo, Ohio in 1857. Riley died in Lake Orion, in 1920 two years after Verne.

His mother Mrs. Nellie Polan, was born in Utica, February 9, 1877. Daughter of Charles and Rosilie Parkhurst. She has been a Charter Member, Gold Star Mother, and faithful worker through the years, seldom missing a meeting unless ill. She has been Chaplain the most of the time.

Mrs. Polan's son Lynn better known as Peter, served in various locations as a technical Corporal in World War II. Her son George, served Her son George, served as a Merchant Marine, Her son Sydney served as Radio Technician, also in World War II. Her daughter Helen served as a WAC Corporal Photographer.

What a patriotic family!



Verne along with his father Riley and his mother Nellie, are buried in Evergreen Cemetery original section to the left of Axford Street. Follow the trail down towards the back of the cemetery and to the left is a family plot surrounded by stones.

The American Legion has marked the grave with a US Navy grave marker and each year on Memorial Day Legionnaires place a flag on the grave to remember the service that Verne gave to our country.

Newell Thomas Charlton, US Army 88th Infantry Division

Newell Thomas Charlton was born in Lake Orion in 1894. He was inducted into the service at the Buck Building Center in Detroit Michigan in April 1917. He was sent to Columbus Barracks in Columbus, Ohio six days later. There he served as Ordinance officer and Military Police.

Charlton was transferred to Camp Hancock in Augusta Georgia on July 4th, 1918, then Base Depot at Camp Dodge, Iowa. Next he was sent to France. In France at the Maritime Hospital he died of Pneumonia on February 13, 1919.

Charlton's father Thomas Charlton, was always interested in the Legion and Auxiliary and always contributed generously to poppy Days funds and other projects. He grumbled about the fact that no Father's Organization could be carried on in Orion.

Mrs. Clara Charlton, mother of Newell was born in Attica, Michigan. The daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Davis.

Clara was a Charter member of the Charlton-Polan Unit, and was a faithful, active member until her health failed. She served as President and held other various offices.

Her Grandson Newell Lemp could not serve in the Armed Forces of World War II, because of poor eye sight.



Newell is buried right next to Verne Polan in the Evergreen Cemetery.

The Influenza Pandemic of 1918

You may find it strange that both Charleton and Polan died of pneumonia. The truth is the Influenza Pneumonia Pandemic of 1918 killed 600,000 people in the United States and more than 25 million people worldwide.

It was called the "Spanish Influenza" because of a large outbreak of the disease that occurred in Spain in May and June of 1918. The influenza may, however, have originated in March 1918 among U.S. soldiers in Kansas; about 500 men there were infected, among whom 48 were listed as having died of "pneumonia". Those who survived the illness may have carried the disease to Europe, where in the summer and fall of 1918 over one and one-half million U.S. soldiers were sent to fight in World War I.

The influenza affected all the armies in the European War. In some American units, the influenza killed 80 percent of the soldiers. But when the U.S. Army general in Europe said that

he wanted more men, the President sent them, even though this meant jamming soldiers onto troop ships where they would breathe on one another and transmit the disease. In September 1918, a further 13 million men across the United States were crowded into schools, city halls and post offices, when they were called together to register for the draft.

In the midst of the epidemic the acting Surgeon General of the Army noted the unusual character of this epidemic: whereas influenza normally was a mild disease that killed only the very young and the very old, this influenza was most dangerous to people 21 to 29 years of age. This influenza took the strong and spared the weak.

At that time of the epidemic there were no scientific instruments that could have discovered the existence of viruses. Health officials were faced with a disease the cause of which, namely a virus, they did not even know existed.

The end of the epidemic was celebrated along with the European Armistice on 11 November 1918.

A Post Born Out of Confusion



The first meetings for the **Verne Polan** Post were held in the home of the Honorary Commander William Iden in 1919. Home meetings continued until March 1920 and then meetings were moved to the Lake Orion Town Hall.

During that time Newell Charlton was reported diseased and the Post made the decision to honor both war casualties, but thereby hangs much confusion and misunderstanding, as it changed the name of the post.

In the early years of the post, opinions differed as to the date the decision was made to change the name, but the date agreed to is September 1920, even though a temporary Charter was issued on March 2, 1920. The Permanent Charter was issued on April 27, 1921.

