

**HISTORY OF  
THE FIRST YEAR**  
OF ALLEN O. DELKE POST POST NO. 16

Date of organization meeting: **June 20, 1919** Date of Charter: **August 1, 1920**

Place: **Slatington, Pennsylvania** County: **Lehigh**

Chairman: **Roscoe C. Berlin** Secretary: **Owen E. Owens**

Organizers: **Roscoe Berlin, Harold Berlin, William Reinsmith, William Sauerwine, Allen Davis, John H. Roberts, John M. Roberts, Rowland G. Pierce, John J. Morris, Ellis Owens, Floyd Hausman, Norman E. Smith, John J. Griffith, Owen E. Owens, A. Dewey Benninger and Harry W. Muschlitz.**

*Temporary Officers:* **Norman E. Smith**

Vice-Commanders: **David Kern**

Adjutant: **Owen E. Owens** Finance Officer: **Albert Schertzinger**

Chaplain: Sergeant-at-Arms:

Other Officers: **Allotment & Post Employment Officer: Paul Schertzinger**

Executive Committee: **Roscoe Berlin, William Sauerwine, Lawrence Haines and William D. Reinsmith.**

*History of Post Name:* **Named after Allen O. Delke, first local boy killed in action. He was a private in Co. "I" 314th Infantry, 79 Division, killed Nov. 2, 1918, Meuse-Argonne.**

*Important Events in Organization:* **Charter applied for with sixteen members, committee appointed for county: Floyd Hausman, Alfred Neff, Earl Brown.**

*Additional Data* **Temporary charter, June 20, 1919, Permanent charter was issued August 1, 1920, named Allen O. Delke Post #16.**

## Doughboy's sacrifice still inspiration

Slatington man remembered as first from town to die in World War I

*Take up our quarrel with the foe  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
in Flanders fields.*

*John McCrae, 1872-1918*

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By VALERIE HILDEBEITEL  
Of The Morning Call

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The induction order was dated May 20, 1918. Following the traditional "Greetings" from the president, Allen O. Delke, a 31-year old Slatington bridge builder, was given a week to settle his affairs and report for duty at 3 p.m. May 27 at Lehigh County Courthouse.

Although war had raged in Europe for more than four years, it was Germany's unrelenting submarine warfare and its attempt to enlist Mexico as an ally that finally brought the United States into the hostilities in 1917.

On May 28, 67 years ago today, the young man reported to camp for infantry training — one of 2.8 million men who would be inducted for military service over the 19 months the United States was involved in the war.

The draft notice didn't specify which camp Delke was assigned to, but it was the first leg of a journey that would take a gentle Slate Belt construction worker to the trenches of France and to places that are merely names in history for most.

It was there, during the third battle of the Argonne Wood, that Infantryman Delke, Co. I, 314th Infantry with the American Expeditionary Forces, died — nine days before the Armistice was signed — and a little more than five months after his induction.

▲  
Delke was born May 30, 1887, in Lehigh Gap. He was a 16-year old orphan — his father, William, died in 1897 and his mother, Sabilla, eight years later — when he came to Slatington. Members of the borough American Legion Post that bears his name speculate the boy was probably looking for work.

Although Delke had relatives in the area, Eva Schlosser Krum, one of the few people surviving today who knew Delke, said that relatives "didn't want him" and so the boy took a room in the Schlosser home at 116 Main St.

For the next 15 years, Delke made his home with Lloyd and Jennie Schlosser. His work with bridge construction crews would take him from the area for months at a time, but he always returned to the Schlosser home.

"He called my mother 'Mom' and even used to send money home to her," Mrs. Krum, now 78, said. "He was outgoing and friendly and treated me and my brother Earl like a sister and brother.

"I can still remember a time when he came home from a bridge project and brought a doll for me and a little girl who lived on the third floor. My mother told me not to go up

those steps but I did and fell and broke the doll.

"Allen just said he would buy me another when he found out. He was the best sort."

▲  
The last letter Delke wrote to his cousins was dated Oct. 16, 1918. Creases in the paper make much of it unreadable and time has faded the sprawling pencil script. What is discernible reads:

"I am in a resting camp. It is a town the Germans took from the French some time ago but it is a real nice place... Two days before I left for the front I went over the top (a Legion member explained this meant Delke left the trenches to fight on the ground). I was there for several days and it was exciting at some times."

▲  
The telegram, addressed to Lloyd Schlosser, arrived at the Main Street home on November 27, 1918.

It's one line message, signed simply Harris, the Adjutant General, read: "Deeply regret to inform you that Private Allen O. Delke infantry is officially reported as killed in action Nov. Second."



**Portrait of Allen O. Delke in his uniform**

"My mother cried a lot. She wasn't the fainting type, but she just sat in a corner and brooded and cried," Mrs. Krum recalled.

▲  
Allen O. Delke was not to return from Europe until three years after his death. It is believed that he was buried in Flanders Field during that time.

On Dec. 12, 1921, Delke was laid to final rest in Slatington's Union Cemetery, beside his mother and father.

Edward Haley, chairman of the American Legion Post committee to research Delke's background, turned up information on that funeral with the help of Slatington funeral director and post member George Harding.

A Rev. Peters of the United Church of Christ conducted the service and the church choir sang.

"Allen's relatives took up the first pew in the church," Mrs. Krum remembered. "The biggest light in my life came when the ushers put up chairs in front of the family for my mother and father and our family. They knew mother raised him when his family didn't want him."

Delke's flag-draped casket was taken through the borough's Main Street on a horse-drawn caisson. Uniformed members of a National Guard unit or from the American Legion Post, it's not clear which, stood honor guard throughout.

The Allen O. Delke Post was already in existence, named for the first man from Slatington to die in the war.

As far as anyone can remember, a band and the choir accompanied the cortege to the cemetery gates and played and sang as the body was taken to the burial plot.

Both Mrs. Krum and Legion members document the services as "one of the finest funerals in the Borough of Slatington." An old receipt found by Harding shows the entire cost was \$109, paid for by Delke's cousins.

▲  
About five months ago, Mrs. Annette Hayes of Slatington was cleaning the family garage. Among her father's papers were Delke's original induction notice, the telegram relating his death and a memorial death certificate certifying his honorable death. The certificate is signed by John J. Pershing, commander-in-chief of the Expeditionary Forces.

Mrs. Hayes has donated the papers to the Allen O. Delke American Legion Post in Slatington.

The Post, the oldest and largest in Lehigh County, continues today as an active service organization donating in the neighborhood of \$10,000 a year to community activities.

The post supports the ambulance corps, a medical van for senior citizens, provides military funerals for veterans and sponsors Boy Scout, Cub Pack and Little League organizations, in addition to numerous other activities.

To continue their work and to sustain the memory of men like Allen O. Delke, the post is seeking the membership of other



The caisson carrying Allen Delk's body proceeds along Main Street in Slatington

The last military funeral in which the "CAISSON" was used in the year 1934. the Caisson was used to carry "Fred C. Wehr" (A World War I Veteran) to the Union Cemetery. During World War II the Caisson was melted down and used in the war effort.

veterans, particularly those of the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the Gulf War which just ended in 1991.

Haley, an unabashedly patriotic man, summed up the point of the Legion:

"We of the American Legion would like the general public to know that we, as survivors of the previous wars, still fight for what

they died for.

"Allen O. Delke and millions like him gave their lives for the cause of liberty, freedom and humanity. We still give our all to the cause... in their names so they may never be forgotten."

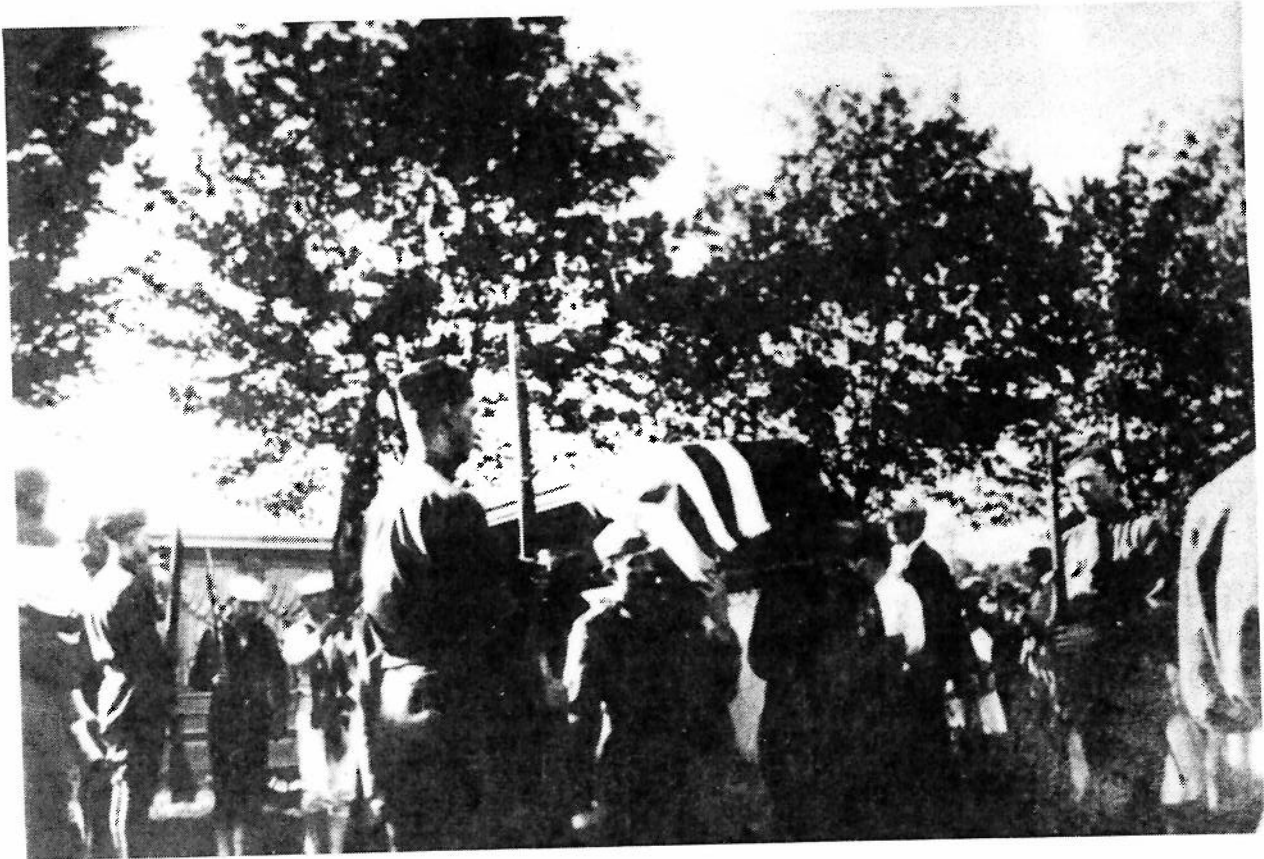


FUNERAL PROCESSION OF ALLEN O. DELKE TO UNION CEMETERY — DEC. 12, 1921





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LEGIONNAIRE HARLAN REMALY, grave registrar at Union Cemetery, Slatington replaces flag on grave of World War I veteran, Allen O. Delke. The Slatington American Legion Post 16 was named for private Delke, who was the first casualty from that

area, during that war. Legionnaires holding flags for distribution are 1-r: Robert Harry Jr., vice commander; John Hedmeck, Vincent Miller, Sgt.-at-Arms; Sherwood Yenser, and Mark Queen, adjutant. (Janet Kunkel/TIMES NEWS)

### SLATINGTON LEGION REPLACES U.S. FLAGS ON VETERAN'S GRAVES

The members of the Allen O. Delke American Legion Post 16, of Slatington, replaced over 130 dozen American flags on the graves of Veterans in 11 area cemeteries yesterday morning. The group of about 20 members led by Arthur Kistler, commander of Post 16, placed flags in the following cemeteries: Slatington proper, Union and Fairview cemeteries, the Seventh Street and Washington Street Catholic cemeteries; outlying areas, Friedens, Neffs, Jacksonville,

New Tripoli, Heidelberg, Slatedale, and Williamstown cemeteries.

Special recognition was given to the gravesite of the first casualty victim in the Slatington area of World War I, Private Allen O. Delke, who served with Company I, 314th infantry division, after whom post 16 was named. He was killed in France, November 2, 1918, and is buried in Union Cemetery, Slatington, beside the grave of his parents, William O. and Sabilla Delke.





Order of Induction into Military Service of the United States.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

To Allen O. DeLise

(Christian name.)

(Surname.)

Order Number 3498 Serial Number 651

Greeting: Having submitted yourself to a local board composed of your neighbors for the purpose of determining the place and time in which you can best serve the United States in the present emergency, you are hereby notified that you have now been selected for immediate military service.

You will, therefore, report to the local board named below at Court House Allentown Pa, at 30 m., on the 27 day of May, 1918, for military duty.

From and after the day and hour just named you will be a soldier in the military service of the United States.

Leave for Camp May 28 - 9 A.M.

Member of Local Board for

Jos Richards

Report to Local Board for

Local Board for Division No. 1 For the County of Lehigh, State of Pennsylvania Court House Allentown Pa

Date May 20 - 1918

To be inclosed with each order into military service (Form 1028) sent to a selected man.

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEN SELECTED FOR MILITARY  
SERVICE AND ORDERED TO REPORT TO A LOCAL BOARD FOR  
MILITARY DUTY.**

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The day and hour specified on the Classification List of this Local Board, and on the order and notice of induction into military service which accompanies this notice for you to report to this Local Board for military duty is the time that marks your actual obligation as a soldier of the United States.

Failure to report promptly at the hour and on the day named is a grave military offense for which you may be court-martialed. Willful failure to report with an intent to evade military service constitutes desertion from the Army of the United States, which, in time of war, is a capital offense.

Upon reporting to your Local Board, you will not need, and you should not bring with you, anything except hand baggage. You will not be permitted to take trunks or boxes with you on the train. You should take only the following articles: A pair of strong comfortable shoes to relieve your feet from your new regulation marching shoes; not to exceed four extra suits of underclothing; not to exceed six extra pairs of socks; four face and two bath towels; a comb, a brush, a toothbrush, soap, tooth powder, razor and shaving soap. It will add to your comfort to bring one woolen blanket, preferably of dark or neutral color. This blanket should be tightly rolled, the ends of the roll should be securely bound together and the loop of the blanket thus formed slung from your left shoulder to your right hip.

You should wear rough strong clothing and a flannel shirt, preferably an olive-drab shirt of the kind issued to soldiers.

NOTE. — Local Boards may have prepared, in the form of a rubber stamp, and stamp in below or on the back hereof any special instructions such as a direction to request permission to eat and spend the last night at home, as it may desire to give.

LOCAL BOARD FOR DIVISION NO. 1,  
for the County of Lehigh,  
State of Pennsylvania COURT HOUSE,  
5th & Hamilton Sts., Allentown, Pa.

(Stamp in designation of Local Board.)  
P.M.G.O. FORM 1028A

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
Telegram	
Day Letter	Blue
Night Message	Nite
Night Letter	N L

If none of these three symbols appears after the check (number of words) this is a telegram. Otherwise its character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM



NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT      GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
Telegram	
Day Letter	Blue
Night Message	Nite
Night Letter	N L

If none of these three symbols appears after the check (number of words) this is a telegram. Otherwise its character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

RECEIVED AT

31 - Gov  
 5 P Washington DC 434 PM  
 11/27/18

Mr Lloyd H. Schlosser  
 116 main st

Deeply regret to inform you  
 that Private Allen J. Deke  
 infantry is officially reported  
 as killed in action Nov. second

Harris  
 The adj Gen  
 817 a



**Army of the United States of America**

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

*This is to certify that*

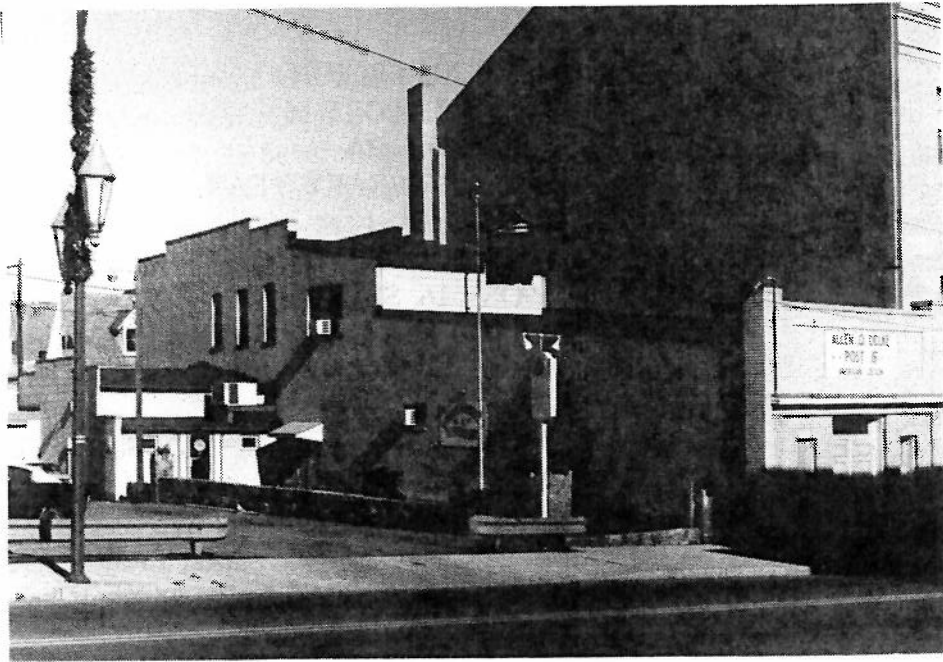
ALLEN O. DELKE

Private, Company I, 314th Infantry.

*died with honor in the service of his country*  
*on the* second *day of* November, 1918.

*Given at Washington, D.C., office of The Adjutant General of the Army,*  
*this* eighth *day of* July, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen

*W. V. Carter*  
Adjutant General.



The "American Legion" Allen O. Delke Post 16  
510 Main St. Slatington Pa., 18080  
As it looked on 5 June 1988



Monument Dedicated to those who served their Country  
World War I  
World War II  
Korea  
Vietnam  
Picture was taken 5 June 1988