

Spanish flu more deadly than World War I — much more

The Bethlehem Gadfly coronavirus, Spanish Flu May 27, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the Spanish Flu 

For perspective on our current coronavirus situation, we are following the entrance of the 1918 Spanish Influenza, that paragon of pandemics, into the minds and bodies of Lehigh Valley residents who got their news through the Morning Call (the files of the Bethlehem Globe are closed to us at the moment).

Gadfly has been reading through the *Morning Call* in the post Armistice period — November 11 – December 1, 1918 — looking for signs of a second wave like we are starting to talk seriously about now. Some interesting info on that will be coming soon.

But this article caught Gadfly's attention.

Around 58,000 died in the interminable Vietnam War, and we are now approaching 100,000 deaths in the several months of the coronavirus war.

Same with the Spanish Flu. More people dying at home than in the war.

Our *deaths* at the present moment are larger than the total number of American *casualties* in World War I and 4 x greater than the number of deaths.

Something to think about.

GREATER CASUALTIES AT HOME THAN IN BATTLE

The final casualty reports have not yet been received from the theatre of the recent war, but the indications are that the total casualties resulting from the war will not reach the 100,000 mark and the number of killed in action plus those who died of wounds, accident and disease will not reach 25,000.

The figures are large, of course. The loss of one man was too much, but the losses were small compared with those of any other nation engaging in this war and smaller than the casualties of the people at home.

A report issued by Dr. B. F. Royer, state health commissioner, last week, stated that the influenza epidemic "claimed more than thirty-five thousand lives in the commonwealth since the first of October." Twice as many persons lost their lives from one disease in this one state alone in one month as lost their lives in more than a year of fighting in France.

There is another very interesting comparison to be made at this time between the casualties of the entire American army since the war began more than a year and a half ago, and the toll of injury to industrial workers in this state of Pennsylvania during the last ten months. During this period 2893 workers were killed and 155,735 were injured.

So it will be seen that dangerous as

the war was, greater dangers passed comparatively unnoticed, as in the case of the great number of accidents to workers, or the large loss of life from **influenza**.

These comparisons suggest that there are wars against disease and carelessness to be fought at home that are quite as important as the big issues of the battlefield because of the tremendous toll taken of human life, the great misery and suffering they bring and the tremendous loss of production that they entail.

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