WHY THEY Fought

Attitudes on the war varied among veterans, but many of those interviewed expressed the popular sentiment of the time: they were driven to fight by a sense of duty and love for their country. Soldiers like Harry Hammond, from Paducah, KY, felt driven by their sense of duty. "I felt all right. I thought it was my duty to fight for my country."

"I was 17 years old... I volunteered, enlisted, but I lacked a little bit of being 18 years old. I didn't know that I had to be at 18 to get in the service... I went to the recruiting office... and talked to the boss man there. He said, 'If you really want to go to service, and your dad is willing now for you to go, I'll ship a gun and we'll get you back tomorrow. If he signs the card that he's willing, then I can take you right in.'"

Mr. Williams: "They were just calling in for volunteers to fight because of the war... When I got in, a few, of course, were left there to carry on the work at Camp Taylor."

Carl Milam, from South Fulton, TN. In Milam's case, he served only because he was drafted and, being 37 years old at the time, was already settled into his career. "I was drafted... and gave them the shots and prepared them for any kind of future service, overseas and domestic."

"Some of the boys captured a German soldier... They came back with that fellow. I felt sorry for him. They took everything in the house... That was really good, but overseas, you didn't fair like that..."

"They were just calling in for volunteers to fight because of the war... I've been in 1919. Olds' friend, Shepherd, was gassed at the same time Olds was struck with artillery shrapnel in the Argonne Forest. They recovered together in the field hospital."

"All at once, there was a big shell. It was a pretty good size. It fell right back behind us. A piece of that shell knocked me up off the ground..."

Mr. Olds: "I felt all right. I thought it was my duty to fight for my country."

"Well, I think it's everybody did... I wanted to go someplace, I didn't want to stay where I was..."

"And then I had a younger brother, under me, but wouldn't be old enough for the draft for a while..."

Carl Milam, from South Fulton, TN: "In Milam's case, he served only because he was drafted and, being 37 years old at the time, was already settled into his career."