On June 28, 1914, a Serbian nationalist assassinated an Austro-Hungarian archduke in Sarajevo, Bosnia. One month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The conflict quickly escalated into a global war, pitting Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, known as the Central Powers, against the Allied Powers of Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and Japan.

The United States originally declared itself neutral, but joined the Allied side in April 1917. Originally known as the World War, the Great War, or the “War To End All Wars,” it came to be called World War I when World War II began.

It was the war that introduced the machine gun, chemical weapons and trench warfare to the world, creating a scale of destruction unseen up to that time. Almost nine million soldiers died on all sides, with 21 million wounded. Of 4.7 million U. S. soldiers who served, 117,000 were killed with 204,000 wounded.

In November of 1918 various members of the Central Powers agreed to an armistice. The war officially ended with the Treaty of Versailles, signed in Paris on June 28, 1919.

At least 140 men who lived in Rancho Bernardo served in World War I. That figure was the total number of members of Rancho Bernardo Barracks no. 1089, a branch of Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., an organization composed of men who served in the war.

The Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc. was organized by War I Buddies in 1948, uniting those who served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States during the period of World War I beginning April 6, 1917 and ending November 11, 1918, Armistice Day. It also included those who served in Siberia from November 11, 1918 to July 1, 1921. Among Americans, 4,734,991 men and women participated in the First World War. The VWWI was incorporated by the 85th Congress on 18 July 1958.
The RB Barracks no. 1089 was formed in February 1965, and so many attended the initial meeting, they had to move the next meeting from a club room to the Seven Oaks auditorium. The members were officially called “Buddies.”

As part of our exhibit, we are gathering the names of all Rancho Bernardo residents who served in World War I. We are also creating short biographies of each person. As they are written, we will add them to a binder on display at the museum. We hope to have a biography for everyone completed by Veterans Day in November, if not sooner.

Included now in the binder is a list of all the names we have found, along with some biographies. We will also be featuring individuals in the display window, and this display will change each month.

If you know of other individuals in RB who may have served, please let us know and we will add their names. If you are personally related to one of these servicemen or knew them, we would love to hear from you. Please visit the RB History Museum, at the Bernardo Winery to see the list of names.

“Historic Rancho Bernardo” is produced by Peggy Rossi for the Rancho Bernardo Historical Society