

PVT Claire Harrison McGowan

BIRTH	8 Jun 1894
DEATH	10 Oct 1918 (aged 24)
BURIAL	Wildey Cemetery Paw Paw, Van Buren County, Michigan, USA
PLOT	WI-00C-001-001-06
MEMORIAL ID	16287244 · View Source



Age 24 Killed in France WWI

PAW PAW PAID TRIBUTE OF RESPECT MONDAY
FUNERAL AND INTERMENT OF CLAIRE M'GOWAN WAS LARGELY ATTENDED
McGowan Post of American Legion Had Full Charge of the Services

Over a thousand persons gathered at the chautauqua tent last Monday morning at 10:30 to pay their last tribute of respect to the late Claire McGowan, whose remains arrived home from overseas last week Friday under escort of a U.S. soldier.

Flags were displayed all over town, the flag on Memorial Hall having been at half mast since the arrival of the remains in Paw Paw. The tent was appropriately decorated with flags under the supervision of the local chapter American Red Cross and an abundance of beautiful floral offerings evidenced the esteem and appreciation in which the young soldier was held.

At the request of the Village Council, all business places were closed during the hour of the funeral service. The flag covered casket was brought from Lake's Undertaking rooms to the tent under escort of about forty members of McGowan Post No. 68, American Legion. the high school band, and a large concourse of relatives and friends. The services were in charge of Ray A. Curtiss, Commander of the Post, who opened them with the ritualistic ceremonies and Father V. J. Todie offered prayer after which Mr. Louis Michels sang a most appropriate solo accompanied by Mrs. H.E. Shaefer. The sermon was delivered by Rev. C. H. Heaton of Lansing, former pastor of the Paw Paw Baptist church, of which the deceased was a member, and a chaplain in the late world war. A large concourse of friends escorted the remains to their last resting place in the Wildey cemetery, at the close of the services, where they were interred with full military honors including the firing of three volleys and taps. Thus the last chapter in the life of Paw Paw's overseas hero has been written and a loyal citizenry of Paw Paw and vicinity paid a glowing tribute of respect and honor to his memory.

In Paw Paw Township, Van Buren county, Michigan, on the eighth day of June, in the year of 1894, there was born to Mr. and Mrs. Thaddeus McGowan a boy, who was named Claire Harrison. In this child were centered the inestimable wealth of a mother's love and the fathomless depth of a father's affection. He was a bundle of infinite possibilities. A deep pride, great ambition and high hopes gathered around him. As his circle of acquaintances enlarged from the home to the school and finally to the great world of affairs, all of his parents' fondest hopes gave promise to realization.

He received his early education in the rural school and was graduated from the Paw Paw High School in the class of 1914. He took a special course of instruction at the Western State Normal in Kalamazoo and taught the Bell school in Waverly the year after his graduation and then went to South Haven to teach in the Westgate school. While there he decided to enter the service of his country and give his all, if need be, in the cause of world freedom.

On June 19th, 1917, he enlisted as a private soldier in Troop A of the Volunteers of Van Buren county, commanded by the late Major Thompson. He was in camp until the time came for the departure of the troop for active service, when upon taking the final physical examination it was discovered that he was unfit for active service. Being ambitious to do his part and to remain in the service he went to Ann Arbor and underwent a serious surgical operation that he might be able later on to re-enlist. Not being strong enough for service at once he engaged to teach the Moline school in Wood County, Ohio, and commenced his work in September and taught until he was called to the colors on May 25, 1918. He went to Camp Custer as a private in Co. H. of the 337th Infantry. After a short time he went to Camp Mills and then overseas, arriving there on August 3rd. Claire was in reserve down at St. Miheil sector during the big American drive. From there he was sent to Verdun front in the Argonne Forest. On the way to the front as the battalions were passing through Mont Faucon, the Germans were bombing the town and nearly all the men in the first and third battalions were killed, but he was spared to reach the front and fought five days and nights in the worst battles of Verdun. He went over the top and was gassed. On the night of October 10th, nearly exhausted from lack of food and rest, and as his company was marching back to Mont Faucon, with twelve others, he met his death by a shrapnel shell. He did his full duty as an American soldier, making the supreme sacrifice on October 10. He was buried in the American Cemetery in Gesnes, Meuse, France.

(transcribed by Diane McGowan Tichenor)

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Claire H. McGowan

COMPANY K, 7TH UNITED STATES INFANTRY
JUNE 8, 1895 - OCTOBER 11, 1918

Claire was born in Paw Paw, county of Van Buren in Michigan on June 8, 1895, the son of Thaddeus and Jessie McGowan. Claire received his early elementary education at the Gliddenburg Rural School in Paw Paw Township. He attended and graduated from Paw Paw High School (The Old Red Brick) as part of the Class of 1914; and continued his education at Michigan State Normal School (Western State University, now known as Western Michigan University) in Kalamazoo, Michigan where he received a teaching certificate. He then taught at the following schools in Van Buren County: Bell Rural School in Waverly Township and the Westgate School in South Haven Township.

Claire enlisted in the Michigan National Guard in 1917. However, when this unit was mustered into the Federal service, he was unable to pass the physical examination and was rejected.

He then entered the University Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan where he had the physical condition corrected. After this, Claire accepted a position to teach at the Moline School in Walbridge, Ohio.

In May of 1918 Claire re-enlisted into the United States Army. Upon the completion of basic training Claire was transferred overseas to Company K, 7th United States Infantry Regiment. On October 11th, 1918 in the Meuse-Argonne Sector where he was killed in action. His body, one of the few to be returned to the United States at the end of World War I, is interred in the Wildey Cemetery in Paw Paw Township.

Claire was survived by his parents and his brother, Hugh McGowan.



Added by Scout



Added by Scout



Inscription

A.E.F. CO. K 7 INFT.

Family Members

Parents



[Thaddeus Stephens McGowan](#)
1869–1923

[Jessie L. Hulbert McGowan](#)
1872–1954

Siblings



[Hugh Hulbert McGowan](#)
1898–1923

McGOWAN, Claire
October 10, 1918

CLAIRE MCGOWAN

Claire McGowan was killed in action in France October 10th. Such was the text of an official message received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest McGowan of Gliddenburg, the first of the week. Claire enlisted when war was first declared, but was rejected at the time on account of some physical defect which was later corrected. He was a member then of the Van Buren county contingent which was sent to Camp Custer early in July. He did not remain there long, and was soon on his way across, reaching England August 3rd. He was in the now historic battles on the Western Front, and made the Supreme Sacrifice as related in the sad message. Claire was twenty-three years of age and a graduate of the local schools in the class of 1914. He was a general favorite among his companions, popular with both young and old,—a clean, talented, ambitious young man with bright prospects. His parents and friends are bowed down with grief, but the thought in the years to come that their son was not afraid to die, but gave his life in the defense of the stars and stripes will be a source of some consolation.