

From: [Public Works](#)  
To: [Rodriguez, Rey](#)  
Subject: FW: WYANDOTTE Park Name.  
Date: Monday, August 20, 2018 7:51:30 AM

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FYI

**From:** John Kostka  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 19, 2018 12:02 PM  
**To:** , Public Works  
**Subject:** WYANDOTTE Park Name.

To the City,

One hundred years ago, The First World War was raging. The war was truly a worldwide affair, and did not leave Mountain View untouched.

On April 6th 1917, the United States declared war on Germany, and little more than a month later the men of the region were registered here in Mountain View at the old city hall for the draft that would expand the US Army from a small peacetime force to almost 4 million men by the end of the conflict.

I first learned about the person that I think the park should be named after at the veterans memorial at Eagle Park a few years ago. His was the only name on the plaque commemorating those from Mountain View who have been killed in conflict under the title "World War One". I was inspired to learn the story of this man and as such put some time in during Summer Vacation to visit the history center at the library and learn what I could.

Leon Robart was a resident of Mountain View in 1917, and was likely drafted into the army sometime in the Summer of 1917 after registering for the draft on June 5th 1917. He joined the 91st Division in Fort Lewis WA, which was newly created for the War, and made up of men from the Western US. Earning it the nickname "the wild west division".

After training with Company H, 363rd Infantry Regiment, 182nd Brigade at Fort Lewis under the command of Brigadier General Frederick S. Foltz for 10 months, in late June 1918 the Division was entrained and sent East. Part of Robarts regiment was sent through Canada on this journey, taking the soldiers on what might have been their first trip out of the country. The Division arrived at Camp Merritt, NJ between June 24th and 30th after a journey of 6 days across the country. The men remained there until July 5th, during which time they were given steel helmets and other equipment needed for trench warfare in France. On July 6th, the men of the division taken by ferry to the docks were they were to embark, and set off in convoy for England.

The men were packed into the troopships, as the Germans has launched a major offensive in March 1918, pushing almost all the way to Paris, thus necessitating major American reinforcement in France. They lived in very close quarters for the twelve days it took for the convoy to zig-zag it's way across the Atlantic, protected by British and US destroyers from the German Submarines that frequented the Atlantic at that time.

On July 17th at 6 o'clock, anchor was dropped in Liverpool. The troops were recieved by cheering civilians and disembarked to the strains of the regimental bands. Not all ships of the

convoy were put in at Liverpool, with some docking at Glasgow, Southampton, or proceeding directly to Le Havre, France. Those who had landed in Britain were transported by rail and channel ferry to France, where the first contingent arrived on July 23rd, 1918. The Division was encamped at Le Havre in a rest camp for several days before entraining for the French interior in small French Boxcars that were well known for their marking of: "40 hommes- 8 chevaux", 40 men-8 horses.

It is interesting to note just how far the men of the 91st Division had traveled in just a month. Many of the men had likely never been outside their home states, much less out of the country. It would have been an amazing experience for citizen-soldiers like Leon Robart, something that would have changed their view of the world.

The start of August 1918 saw the 91st undergoing rigorous training, with long hours of drilling, marching, and exercise to get the soldiers ready for combat. With this training period complete, the Division was judged to be ready for combat, and made it's way to the "front" on September 7th. From the 11th to the 13th, the 91st was held in reserve while the American 4th Corps and the French 2nd Colonial Corps reduced a German Salient near St-Mihiel. After this action, the 91st was slated to be one of the leading units in the next offensive through the Meuse-Argonne forest.

The objectives of the offensive was to capture important Railway lines that were used by the Germans to re-supply their troops in the West, and to force the Germans to retreat from Northern France lest they be outflanked from the South. The 91st Division was part of the American V Corps, attacking Avrocourt in the center of the line.

On September 25th at 11:30 P.M the preliminary bombardment of the offensive began, raining artillery fire down on the German trenches. Leon Robarts 363rd Infantry had no trenches for protection, and so simply lay down on the far side of a ridge for the duration of the barrage. When the leading waves of the assault went over the ridge and were concealed by smoke and mist as they crossed no-mans-land. The details of the attack are clearly laid out in a Book entitled The Story of the 91st Division, which is in public domain due to copyright expiration. I encourage the reader of this letter to reference it for further information considering the first four days of the attack, for I have made this much longer than it needs to be as it is.

By the 5th day of the offensive, September 30th 1918, the 182nd Brigade had advanced up to Exermont, North of Avrocourt, and was issued orders that the V Corps would not be attacking that day, but would resume offensive operations on the 1st of October. Leon Robarts 363rd Infantry Regiment was put into a line of surveillance near Exermont, where a large enemy force was thought to be. The regiment was near a wood called the Bois de Baulny, and it was on this uneventful day that Leon Robart was killed. His battalion of the 363rd lost ten percent of it's strength that day according to The Story of the 91st Division. It is that he was killed by shellfire, as the Germans would have likely been shelling the forest, but it is also possible that he was killed by small arms fire. I have not found documentation for a cause of death other than that he was killed in the war, so a conclusive answer eludes me.

He was buried in the American Meuse-Argonne Military Cemetery after the cessation of hostilities, from whence he was not expatriated after the war, and remains today.

I believe that his family may have lived on Independence Ave at the time, as his nephew was recorded as living on that street at the time of the Korean War. However, this is an assumption, and I have no proof beyond that, but seeing as the new park is near there, it may be appropriate to name the park for Private First Class Leon Robart. Also, in connection with the centennial of The Great War and recognizing our nation's involvement and the local history that pertains to it, naming the park for a local person who was involved in the conflict, yet little remembered seems like a good idea that I hope you will consider.

I thank the Mountain View History center for much of the research material I made use of.

John Kostka,  
Age 16