World War I began after South Slav nationalist, Gavrilo Princip assassinated Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914. The countries who were involved in the war were, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey, also known as the Central Powers. They were against mainly, France, Great Britain, Russia, Japan, and America, who were allies. The war was deadly because some of the countries didn’t realize how bad the 20th-century technology was when used against 19th-century tactics.

Sergeant, William Shemin, of Jewish decent, was one of the local men who fought in this conflict. Shemin was enlisted in the Army, October 2, 1917. When he was only 19, he participated in the Aisne-Marne Offensive, and when he tried to pull comrades to safety he took a machine gun bullet to his head. After his injury, he received the Purple Heart and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, which was the second highest honor. Although, he could’ve gotten the highest honor but he didn’t because of the way he was viewed at the time. His daughter, Shemin-Roth thought that he didn’t get it because of anti-Semitism since he was Jewish. So she fought for her father to be recognized with this award. In 2015, she won the fight and Obama awarded Shemin the Medal of Honor during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House. This is one example on how we improved in our views.

Another Sergeant, Henry Johnson, of African decent, was also one of the local men who fought in World War I. Johnson was enlisted in the Army, June 5, 1917. When he was guarding the front-line with a fellow soldier, Needham Roberts, they were attacked by a German raiding party with at least 12 soldiers. When he was being shot by them he defended himself, and resulted in several enemy casualties. He even prevented his fellow soldier who was severely injured, from being taken by the German forces. And with himself being also wounded badly, he still continued fighting. After his 21 combat injuries, he was awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme, Frances highest award. When he was alive he was viewed so lowly that he wasn’t even awarded any American medals. But he was finally awarded the Purple Heart in 1996 after his death and the Distinguished Service Cross in 2002. Except, he still didn’t get the highest honor, the Medal of Honor, until 2015 on the same day that William Shemin got his award. He was also the second African American to receive the Medal of Honor for World War I service. This also shows an example on how we improved in our views.

America has changed so much over the years and we now accept all people no matter what skin color or religion. This shows the comparison between how America viewed different races before and how we improved our views on them now.