

USAHEC demonstrates the Soldier's experience in World War I exhibit

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"Good-Bye Broadway, Hello France" is the theme of the Army Heritage and Education Center's WWI exhibit. The exhibit takes a look at the Soldier experience, highlighting their stories by using images, artifacts, and archival materials. The exhibit is currently open and will continue through November 11, 2019

As you enter the exhibition you hear what it could have been like for a Soldier during the war. The sounds of weapons firing and shells flying overhead as you get immersed into the stories of WWI Soldiers, like Sgt. Evan Miller while stationed in France at an Army hospital, or Medal of

Honor recipient Sgt. Lloyd Seibert as he finds himself in the middle of the Argonne offensive armed with just a M1897 shotgun.

“At this exhibition we take you right down into the trenches of WWI and introduce you to soldiers and, using their words and material, tell the story of what was going,” said John Leighow, Director of the Army Heritage Museum.

“When you couple the artifacts with photographs, letters, and archival material and put them together in a way that tells the story of World War I, it allows the visitor to really relate to the experience through the eyes of the individual soldier -- and to better understand what was going on at the soldier level,” he said.

Throughout the exhibit, the stories of 16 different soldiers are intertwined with displays of how soldiers peered over the tops of their trenches, the weapons used by the Allies and German Armies, and what it might have look like from a manned observation balloon high in the sky looking down onto the battle fields of France.

“I am compelled by the material of the individuals that are in this exhibit,” said Leighow. “At the very end we used up-lifting stories from soldiers and the drawings of soldiers about “cooties” (slang term used for body lice). These drawings come from a soldier’s papers and to me that just says a lot about the experience more than can be conveyed with just words.”

“The exhibit also examines how new technologies, such as machine guns, tanks, poison gas, artillery, and aircraft, were important in both influencing the outcome of the war and increasing the devastation and loss of life,” he said.

A second WWI area is located on the bridge deck of Ridgway Hall, with additional artifacts and a photographs exhibit.

After experiencing the WWI exhibit, visit the other exhibits featured at AHEC, including Treasures of USAHEC, and The Soldier Experience, where you’ll find a WWI-era French-built Renault tank. Everything is open to the public and free, with plenty of easy-access parking at 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle 17013.