

Family donates World War I-era items to USAHEC

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USAHEC Collection Manager Greg Statler shows a World War I recruiting poster in the Artifact Storage Area to Jack Meikrantz and his father, Josh.

“I just love this stuff!” Jack Meikrantz exclaimed at the conclusion of his tour in the Conservation Facility at the U.S. Army

Heritage and Education Center. The 9-year-old visited the facility with his 8-year-old brother, Connor, and parents, Elizabeth and Josh Meikrantz, to view materials donated to the center by his family.

The artifacts belonged to Jack’s great-great grandfather Charles F. Manness, who served in the Headquarters Company, 107th Machinegun Battalion, 28th Division during World War I. Charles F. Manness’ son and daughter donated the materials in late 2005, and this was the first time Jack and his family saw the pieces since the donation. After years of looking at photographs of the items, Jack begged his mom for a chance to visit the facility and see everything firsthand.

The family finally had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with several USAHEC staff members, learning more about World War I, and the objects which belonged to Charles F. Manness. Jack and his younger brother Connor both agreed that seeing the materials was “cool because they were old,” but even better because they belonged to members of their family. Their favorite? A World War I helmet brought home from overseas by their great-great grandfather as a souvenir.

In addition to learning more about World War I from Charles F. Manness’ materials, Jack and his family had the opportunity to tour the Artifact Storage Areas. The USAHEC uses these sections of the Conservation Facility to store the thousands of artifacts in the collection. The family viewed some of

these materials, including paintings, swords, uniforms, helmets, maps, and military posters. Jack and Connor loved seeing the other items, especially the swords, but also witnessed the dedication the USAHEC staff puts into caring for the materials entrusted to them. Preserving history is a critical piece of the USAHEC mission, and even at the age of 9, Jack already understood, as he affirmed, “it is important to preserve history, so you don’t lose it.”



Jack (left) and Connor (right) Meikrantz pose with a World War I German helmet, part of the collection of materials donated to the USAHEC which belonged to their great-great grandfather, Charles F. Manness.

The USAHEC mission is to make historical materials available for use to support the U.S. Army, educate an international audience, and honor Soldiers - past and present. Donations like those from the Meikrantz family help the USAHEC honor Soldiers, while allowing the facility to preserve the stories of their service and sacrifice to share with future generations.

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