

National Constitution Center displays AHEC posters

Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office



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The "Pro Patria! Join Army for Period of War," poster designed by H. Devitt Welsh for United States Army Recruiting in 1917 encouraged young men to enlist by illustrating the great Army tradition of the horse Soldier. The poster, from the Army Heritage and Education Center collection, is part of the "Inspiring A Nation: World War I Posters of the Philadelphia Sketch Club," exhibit at the National Constitution Center on display until April 25.

March 24, 2010 – "It all started off with an exhibit we did with the Trout Gallery at Dickinson College," said Jim McNally, curator of art for the Army Heritage and Education Center.

Designing for Victory 1914-1945 showcased WWI and WWII posters from the AHEC collection of more than 3,000 posters.

Philadelphia Sketch Club members saw the posters in a traveling display and created a new partnership with the Army Heritage and Education Center, to mark the club's 150th anniversary.

On February 4, the National Constitution Center unveiled a new display called, "Inspiring a Nation: World War I Posters of the Philadelphia Sketch Club," showcasing World War I-era posters from the AHEC collection.

"Some of the nation's leading artists, including members of the Philadelphia Sketch Club, donated their time and work to create them," said David Eisner, president of the NCC.

Each of the 25 exhibit posters was designed by sketch club members; they've been seen by more than 50,000 visitors already.

"This exhibit explores how artists and government agencies used these posters to justify wars, bolster morale and persuade citizens to enlist for combat, buy war bonds, conserve vital resources, and accept sacrifices and losses," said McNally. The posters were responsible for raising more than 2/3 of the funds needed to cover the cost of the war, he noted.

The posters on display are painstakingly-created facsimiles made from originals in AHEC's collection, McNally explained. Scott Finger of the USAWC photo lab invested two to three hours on each to scan, clean up, print and prepare for framing.

"This is a prime example of how we partner for success at AHEC,' said McNally. "By working with the Philadelphia Sketch Club and National Constitution Center we are able to share the history of the Army all over the nation and world."

Visit the poster display at Philadelphia's National Constitution Center, through April 25, or visit virtually at http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/AHM/constitution_center.cfm

