



National World War I Museum

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For publication: 816-784-1918

Extraordinary Historical Collection Donated to National World War I Museum

*Largest Number of Historical Objects Given by One Donor in Museum's
89-Year History Donated by Widow of Devoted Collector*

For more than 30 years, Carl Hauber avidly collected unique historical objects from the First World War. With a connoisseur's eye, he traveled the world searching for objects that told the story of the machine gun during World War I.

In all he collected 27 machine guns from eight countries – an amazing accomplishment by itself. But he didn't stop there. Hauber also collected complementary objects that told the full story of the machine gun and the men who used them – from ammunition boxes and battlefield tools to uniforms and artwork depicting them in action. He also gathered hundreds of documents, vintage photographs, manuals and books on the subject.

Hauber's passion for collecting will now be shared with the world. His encyclopedic collection – more than 1,700 objects in number – has been donated to the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri.

"We are ecstatic about the donation of this one-of-a-kind collection which is without peer," explains National World War I Museum President & CEO Brian Alexander. "The Museum's mission – to make the experiences World War I meaningful and relevant for future generations – is significantly enhanced by this remarkable collection. We are incredibly grateful for this extraordinary gift."

The decision to donate the collection to the National World War I Museum was made by Wanda Hauber after her husband Carl's passing. Knowing what the collection meant to her husband, she took time to find it the right home.

After searching for a year, and visiting the only museum in the nation dedicated to the First World War, Mrs. Hauber donated the collection.

"I chose the National World War I Museum as a 'home' for my husband's extensive collection because I wished to honor his many years of dedication to the preservation of WWI memorabilia," explains Mrs. Hauber. "I wanted to assure the protection of his

collection and to provide for its active use, benefitting present and future generations. The things which shaped my decision to offer the collection to the Museum were its national status, my discussion with collector friends about the caliber of the Museum, and my visit to the Museum which showed me the patriotism and unflagging support over the years of the Kansas City citizenry for the Museum.”

A Stunning Addition to Most Comprehensive WWI Collection in America

“The sheer volume of the donation is overwhelming,” says Museum Curator Doran Cart. “While the museum collection held some similar examples, most objects in the donation are the first ones that we have acquired. It is very important in a research collection to be able to tell the story of related objects in as a complete fashion as possible. There are literally some objects in the donation that I had only seen in books prior to this.”

The historical objects from this donation will be integrated into the permanent collection, upgrading the already magnificent displays. Portions of the Hauber donation will be previewed in an upcoming special exhibition “Man & Machine: The German Soldier in World War I” which will debut in September 2010.

Examples from the donation which the Museum did not have in the permanent collections and which illustrate the breadth of the collection include:

- A U.S. Browning Model 1917 machine gun, .30 caliber complete with tripod, ammunition belt loading machine, panoramic sight in case, 1917 steam receiving can, disposable ammunition box, extra flash hider, and extra steam hose in carrying case.
- A U.S. gun camera with the original roll film box of 12 exposures mounted in the false barrel cooling jacket. To the enemy, this would have appeared to be a machine gun mounted on an airplane. In reality, the pilot only shot pictures in mock dog fights training to indicate position of the gun when the trigger was pulled. Exposed film negative from the camera was also donated.
- Extremely rare chain mail shoulder pad and chain mail and leather mittens used for carrying hot machine gun barrels.
- Other machine guns, such as an Austrian Schwarloze Steyr M1907-12, a Bulgarian model, and ones used by British, French, Russian and Belgian forces.
- Machine gunner uniforms and equipment from Austria, Russia, Germany, France, Italy and the United States.
- An Austrian oil painting of a decorated Austrian soldier named Gurstucker, who was killed in action. It is signed by artist J. Olschawski.

- Insignia and badges from many countries
- Almost eight hundred different objects and hundreds of wartime manuals and rare reference books, all associated with machine guns of World War I.

Machine Guns in World War I

In August 1914 a British officer of the 4th Middlesex Regiment wrote that “the value of machine guns was a revelation to all of us, and though ours had done good work, the enemy’s had too, and they had lots of them.” The value of machine guns in the next four years of warfare would prove to be a revelation to the whole world.

The machine gun transformed what could have been a war of rapid advance into a highly defensive struggle. Machine guns delivered a huge amount of firepower quickly and accurately and were a major factor in the outcome of the war.

Although machine guns had been used before 1914, the numbers of machine guns with improved designs and newly-developed tactics for their use during the war truly changed a war of movement to one of trenches and stalemate. Machine gunners could operate from the relative safety of a trench.

The machine gun came to symbolize industrialized warfare. Mass-produced by the tens of thousands, it killed with rapid efficiency and dominated the battlefield. The firepower of a single machine gun was estimated to equal that of 60 to 100 rifles.

Machine guns mounted on planes were synchronized to shoot through the propellers.

World War I saw the development of a series of remarkably innovative and terribly lethal weapons systems. Airplanes, artillery, submarines, poison gas, and the tank all played new or greatly expanded roles in this modern war. The National World War I Museum possesses the best collection of WWI artillery in the United States, recently acquired a two-man French Renault tank that saw service on the Western Front, and now with the Hauber donation holds the premiere American collection representing the machine gun.

The National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Museum is closed Mondays, except for Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Museum is also closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. Tickets can be purchased on the day of your visit. The Liberty Memorial is operated in agreement with the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners. For more information call 816-784-1918 or visit www.theworldwar.org.

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