

For Home and Country:

World War I Posters
from the Newark
Public Library

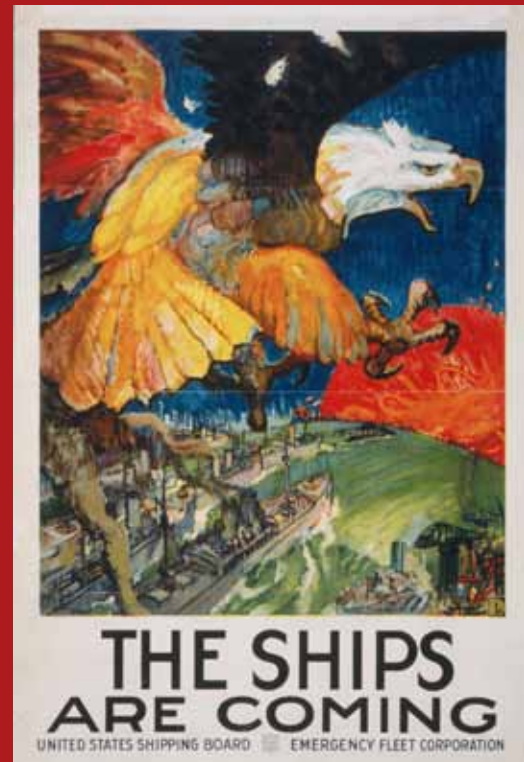
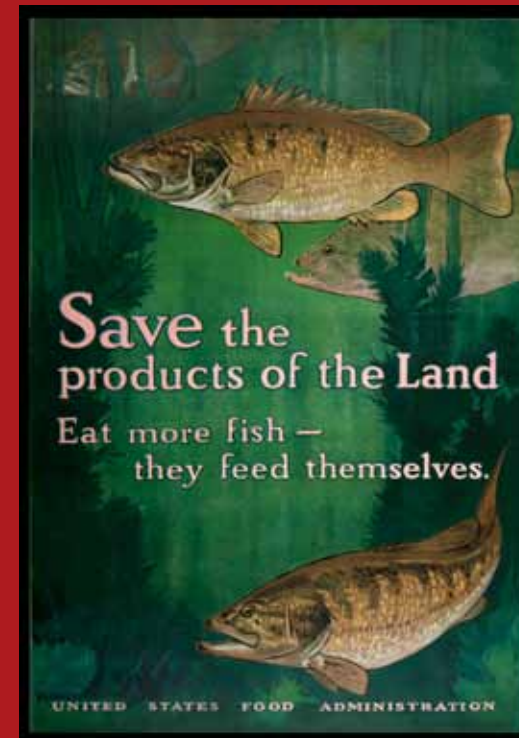
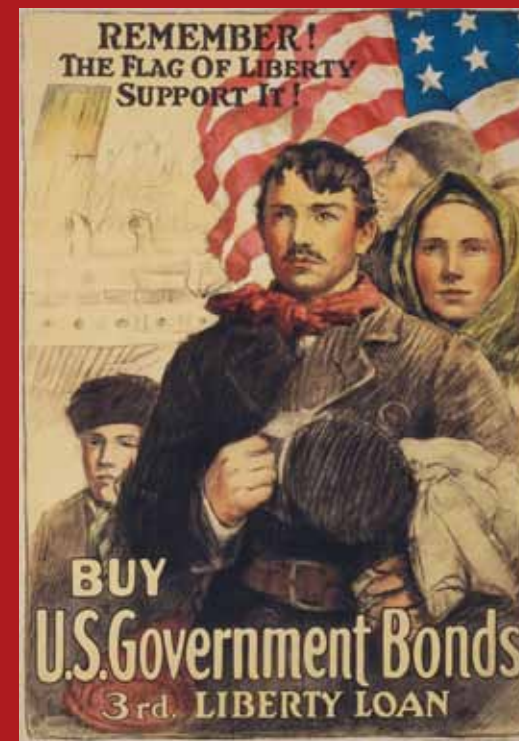
For Home and Country:

World War I Posters from the
Newark Public Library

September 11 – December 13, 2017
University Galleries
William Paterson University



Inside front cover Clockwise from top left
Exhibition checklist 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10



Introduction

Kristen Evangelista
Director, University Galleries



ome of our nation’s most iconic images were created as propaganda during World War I. From 1917-1918, several hundred artists worked diligently in concert with government

agencies to design posters that supported the nation, upheld values of liberty, and promoted participation in the war effort.

Museums, libraries, and universities across our state and country have turned their attention to commemorating the centennial of the U.S. entry into “the forgotten war.” The William Paterson University Galleries is honored to participate in this endeavor by presenting the exhibition, *For Home and Country: World War I Posters from the Newark Public Library*. This exhibition fosters meaningful interdisciplinary dialogues, as the posters are both rich historical documents and stunning works of art created using an array of artistic styles. The works in this exhibition yield valuable learning experiences for faculty and students in various disciplines including art history, graphic design, history, and women’s and gender studies.

First and foremost, I would like to thank WP Professor of History George Robb for his unwavering cooperation, vision, and dedication to realizing this exhibition and publication. This significant undertaking reflects his astute judgment, focused scholarship, and curatorial expertise.

We received indispensable guidance from Professor Alejandro Anreus and Professor Thomas Uhlein in the refinement of the exhibition checklist. Graduate students Sarah McCoy and Nicolette Solomita contributed thorough research and writing that informed the written didactic material.

I am grateful to the Newark Public Library for lending us important works from their Special Collections through the assistance of Special Collections and Digital Initiatives Librarian Nadine Sergejeff and Exhibit Designers Daniel Schnur and Joseph Gerard Sabatino. We previously collaborated with the Newark Public Library in 2013 to present *The Indignant Eye: Prints of Social Protest* (curated by Professor Alejandro Anreus) and we are privileged to develop another exhibition from their rich collection.

We were fortunate to work with graphic designer James Wawrzewski who expertly designed and produced this

polished publication. He was patient and diligent while offering fresh perspectives on these historical prints.

Special thanks go to William Paterson University President Dr. Kathleen Waldron, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Warren Sandmann, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Sandra Hill, former Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Stephen Hahn, Dean of the College of the Arts and Communication Daryl J. Moore, Associate Dean of the College of the Arts and Communication Loretta McLaughlin Vignier, and Chair of the Art Department Professor Lauren Razzore.

I would like to especially thank the entire gallery staff for their hard work and commitment to all that we do. Emily Johnsen adeptly coordinated numerous aspects of the exhibition and publication with a constant eye for detail. Graduate assistants: Meghan DeMora and Angel Fosuhene, intern Anna Arcuri, and work-study students: Michael Campbell-Vincent, Jacob Eppinger, Jacquelyn Portillo, and Jonte Silver provided vital support to realize this exhibition.

The exhibition and catalogue were underwritten in part with support from Daryl Joseph Moore, dean of the College of Arts and Communication, Dr. Kara Rabbitt, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Joanne Miyang Cho, chair of the History Department.

Finally, we are continually grateful that our programs receive significant support from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. We recognize the value and importance of state and federal support of the arts.



Victor Forsythe, *And They Thought We Couldn't Fight*, 1917, Color lithograph, 30 x 20 inches

American Poster Propaganda in The First World War

George Robb
Professor of History, William Paterson University



World War I is sometimes referred to as “the poster war,” as propaganda posters were utilized more heavily than in any other war, before or since.

In an age before radio, television, or the internet, posters were the most effective way for the government to reach millions of Americans with information, instructions, and requests for help. During the war, posters were used to drum up patriotism, vilify the enemy, recruit soldiers, raise money and supplies, and conserve scarce resources.

The poster had only recently emerged as a form of mass advertising, made possible by late nineteenth-century developments in paper making and color lithography that enabled millions of colorful posters to be printed quickly and cheaply. Professional illustrators and advertising agencies developed new techniques for grabbing the public’s attention by utilizing dramatic imagery, bold

captions, and psychological strategies that played on consumers’ desires and insecurities. Advertisers used the poster to market everything from soap to cigarettes. By the early twentieth century, the poster had also gained artistic respectability, through the work of artists like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Alphonse Mucha.

Posters used the new techniques of advertising to mobilize Americans in support of the war, which had been raging in Europe since 1914, but which the United States avoided joining for three years. In 1917, American neutrality suddenly gave way to a massive mobilization of people, resources, and opinion. World War I was the first “total war,” involving not only enormous armies fighting on the battlefield, but millions of civilians on the home front making weapons, growing food, and raising money. Those nations that could best keep their huge militaries supplied and their citizens fully engaged in the war effort would win. Since total war required the absolute commitment of a nation’s

citizens, propaganda emerged as a vital new weapon in the war’s arsenal. To create and maintain a high level of support for the war, the United States’ government and its allies in business, the press, churches, and schools bombarded the eyes and ears of Americans with patriotic parades, speeches, sermons, pamphlets, magazines, music, films, and especially, posters.

GIBSON URGED THE ARTISTS TO REPRESENT THE IDEALS OF THE AMERICAN WAR EFFORT, SUCH AS FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY, IN THEIR WORK, RATHER THAN MERELY DEPICTING SPECIFIC EVENTS.

During the war years of 1917-1918, America issued more than twenty million copies of two thousand different propaganda posters. These posters were widely distributed and appeared on walls and billboards, and in shop windows, schools, churches, libraries, factories, and offices. At the time, no American could walk into a bank to cash a check, or into a department store to buy a pair of gloves without passing dozens of war posters urging them to join the military, volunteer for the Red Cross, buy war bonds, or plant victory gardens.

The most famous and widely seen posters were produced under the direction of the Committee on Public Information, the government’s main propaganda agency. The CPI had a Division of Pictorial Publicity that was headed by Charles Dana Gibson, a popular commercial artist and

president of New York’s Society of Illustrators. Gibson recruited more than 300 artists, illustrators and cartoonists to design propaganda posters for the government. Some of these individuals were recognized fine artists like Arthur Dove, N.C. Wyeth, and George Bellows, but most were popular magazine illustrators and advertising artists like James Montgomery Flagg, Howard Chandler Christy, and J.

C. Leyendecker. These artists knew how to convey emotions visually and to sell products of all kinds. They were usually well paid for their work, but donated their services to the government during the war.

Charles Dana Gibson met with his artists every Friday night at the headquarters of the Division of Pictorial

Publicity, 200 Fifth Avenue in New York City. They went over requests for posters sent to them by different government offices in Washington D.C. and assigned the work to specific artists. Gibson urged the artists to represent the ideals of the American war effort, such as freedom and democracy, in their work, rather than merely depicting specific events. The ideal poster should be visually arresting and easily understood, with bold colors, dramatic imagery, and minimal text. Architect Cass Gilbert, who worked closely with Gibson during the war, argued that the mission of the Division of Pictorial Publicity was “to place on every wall in America the call to patriotism and service.”

The posters in this exhibit are on loan from the Special Collections Division of the Newark Public Library and were acquired during World War I by John Cotton Dana, the

Library Director. Dana was a nationally known cultural figure who believed that libraries had an important mission in promoting public education and progressive change. He was an early collector of popular art and ephemera, like posters, in contrast to the “fine art” favored by most

poster “should catch the attention, hold the interest, pierce the understanding, stir the feelings, and impel the will.” American war posters made direct emotional appeals to the viewer, none more so than James Montgomery Flagg’s iconic image of Uncle Sam, probably the most famous

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cultural institutions at the time. The Committee on Public Information in Washington asked Dana to organize an exhibit of forty war posters to tour the nation in 1917. The exhibit, which sought to promote the government’s war aims, was so successful, that Dana created a second, larger touring show in 1918.

Dana’s exhibits, like ours a century later, organized the posters according to certain broad categories and themes related to the posters’ purposes (recruitment, patriotism, fundraising) or intended viewers (soldiers, women, children, immigrants). Like Dana, we also believe that these posters are not just propaganda, but examples of modern American art and design. Indeed, the most successful posters combine a political message with a sharp aesthetic sensibility. As the 1917 pamphlet, *Posters and American War Posters*, by the Newark Public Library argued, an effective

and Flagg were influenced by contemporary advertisements which frequently employed a pointing figure, demanding the viewer purchase their product. The Uncle Sam poster was used again in World War II and is still displayed at Army Recruitment Centers today.

A major theme of American war posters was the specter of the brutal German soldier, often referred to as the “horrible Hun” (a reference to one of the barbarian peoples who destroyed the Roman Empire). To overcome Americans’ reluctance to go to war, many posters focused on the German Army’s harsh occupation of Belgium, depicting ruined towns and churches as well as atrocities against civilians, especially women and children (page 10). Allied propaganda accused German soldiers of raping women and girls, and this was alluded to in a number of posters. German soldiers appeared monstrous and

American poster ever made (page 9). The image first appeared on the cover of *Leslie’s Weekly Magazine* on July 16, 1916 to inspire military preparedness, a year before America entered the war. Flagg drew himself as Uncle Sam, but the pose was copied from a British recruitment poster by Alfred Leete, featuring Lord Kitchener, the Minister of War. Both Leete

subhuman, with spiked helmets and bloody hands (pages 10, 11). Propaganda featuring a bestial enemy was even more common in America than in Europe. Since the war was so far away, Americans might not see any threat to themselves. Posters, therefore, emphasized that if Germany were not defeated “over there,” it would soon bring its beastliness to American shores.

While German soldiers were pictured as barbarians and monsters, American servicemen were represented as defenders of women, children, and democratic values (cover image). Posters depicted American soldiers and sailors as young, handsome, and ruggedly masculine (page 12). America’s warriors were compared to chivalric knights on a holy crusade. Posters focused on soldiers’ valor and heroism and downplayed the death and disfigurement that accompanied combat on the Western front.

Whatever their message, war posters targeted specific segments of American society, such as women, children, and immigrants. Images of women in propaganda posters were especially diverse, reflecting contemporary debates over whether women should be allowed to vote or pursue careers outside the home. Some posters showed women as victims of war, needing male protection (page 10), while others showed women as active and energetic defenders of their nation (page 12). Initially, American women were asked to support the war through traditional, domestic activities. Posters urged women to conserve food, can their own vegetables, and knit socks and scarves for soldiers (page 13). As the demands of total war became more apparent, posters asked American women to take on more

unconventional jobs, such as making munitions or driving trucks and ambulances.

Even children were expected to support the war. Posters encouraged America’s youngest citizens to plant victory gardens, sell war bonds, and collect money for the Red Cross. Over the course of the war, eleven million American children joined the Red Cross, which entitled them to display “service flags” in their windows (page 14). Other children joined the Junior Industrial Army, collecting scrap metal to manufacture weapons. The Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts offered war-related merit badges in first aid and conservation.



merica has always been a nation of immigrants, and this was especially apparent in the years preceding World War I. Nearly ten million immigrants entered the United States

between 1900 and 1917. During the war, these newcomers’ loyalties to America were frequently questioned. Posters, printed in a wide variety of languages, urged immigrants to prove their patriotism by joining the military, buying war bonds, and conserving scarce resources (page 15).

One group, conspicuous by their absence from war posters, was African Americans. Very few propaganda posters, and none produced by the Division of Pictorial Publicity, featured black people. Although the government needed African Americans to serve in the (segregated) military and to undertake other war work, it was unwilling to ask them openly, or to acknowledge their service via poster

art, for fear of offending white Southerners and generating a racist backlash from those people reluctant to see African Americans as valuable citizens.

Posters sought to mobilize a diverse population in a wide variety of ways. They recruited soldiers and war workers, they raised money for the war, and they encouraged people to economize on key resources like food and fuel. Recruitment posters invoked a sense of duty, but they also cast the war as a great adventure and a righteous crusade for freedom. By implication, those men unwilling to fight for their country, were represented as un-American and un-manly.



While most civilians (the elderly, women, children) couldn't fight for America, they could help finance the war by buying "liberty bonds."

A huge number of posters were created for five separate Liberty Loan Campaigns, which raised more than twenty billion dollars from 1917 to 1919. These posters invoked the sanctity of the family (cover image), celebrated the heroism of American servicemen, and raised the threat of German invasion. In response to this poster blitz, sixty million Americans from all walks of life bought war bonds.

Another way civilians could assist the government in winning the war was by reducing consumption. If Americans used less coal to heat their homes, more would be available for factories making weapons (page 16). If people planted victory gardens and consumed less food,

more would be available to feed our soldiers and allies overseas. Posters asked Americans to observe wheatless days and to substitute corn syrup for sugar and fish for beef. Wartime propaganda depicted food as "ammunition" and conservation as the equivalent of military service (page 16).

Some of the art and imagery in this exhibit may appear quaint and old fashioned just as the poster as a medium of communication seems technologically primitive in the internet age. Nevertheless, the wartime poster campaign marks the beginning of a modern American visual style and political culture. Propaganda hasn't gone away, however much we might condemn it. Commercial and political advertising has become bolder, more outrageous and psychologically manipulative, building on the style and techniques of wartime image makers. World War I inaugurated a new culture saturated with startling images, colorful advertisements, and calls to action.

Further Reading:

Robert Cozzolino, Anne Classen Knutson, David M. Lubin, *World War I and American Art*, 2017.

Pearl James, *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture*, 2009.

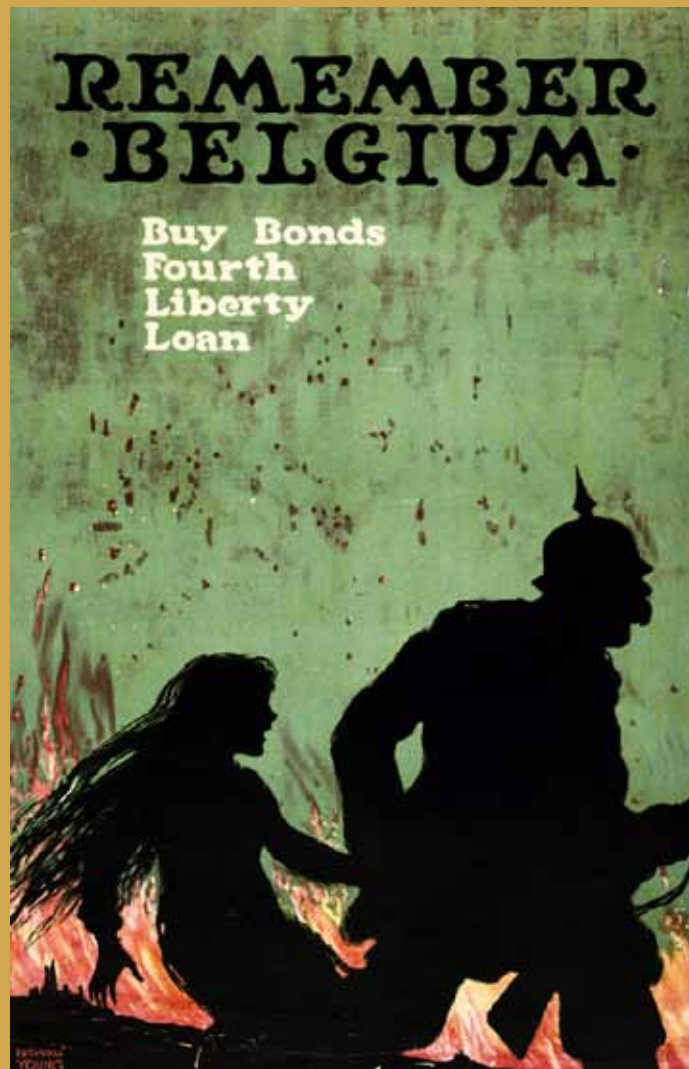
Celia Malone Kingsbury, *For Home and Country: World War I Propaganda on the Home Front*, 2010.

David M. Lubin, *Flags and Faces: The Visual Culture of America's First World War*, 2015.

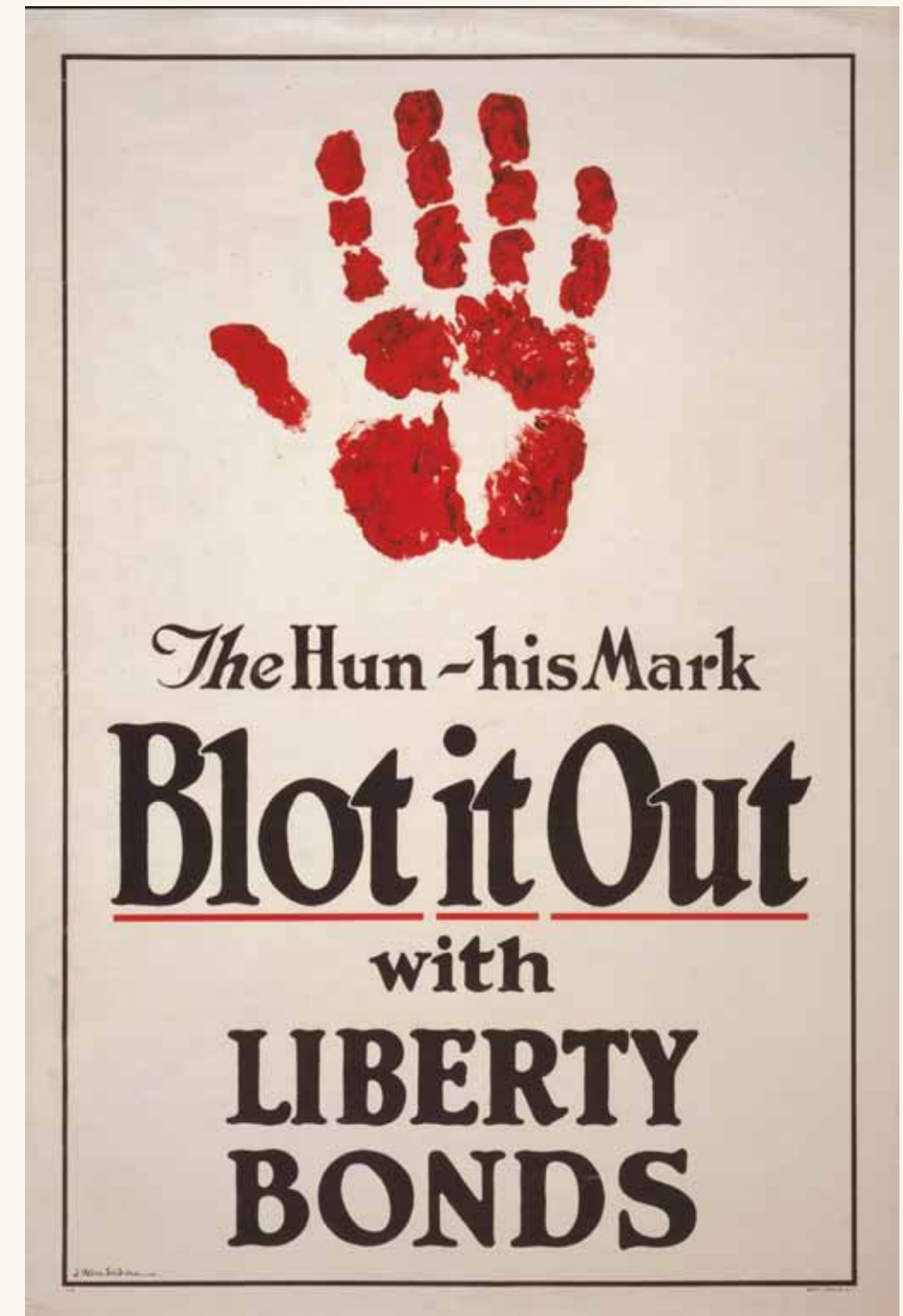
Walton Rawls, *Wake Up, America!: World War I and the American Poster*, 1988.



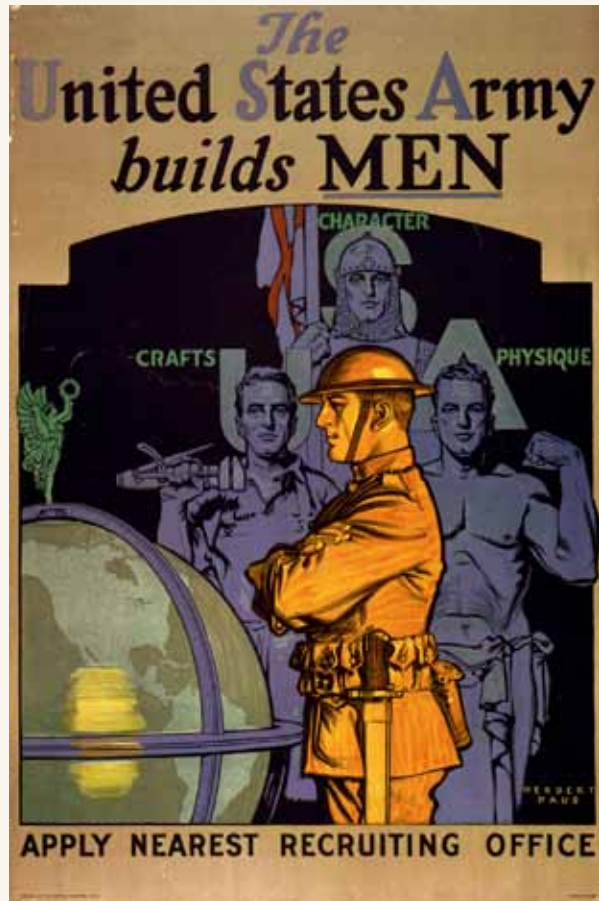
James Montgomery Flagg, *I Want You for U.S. Army*, 1917, Color lithograph, 40 x 30 inches



Ellsworth Young, *Remember Belgium*, 1918, Color lithograph, 30 x 20 inches



James Allen St. John, *The Hun—His Mark*, 1917, Color lithograph, 30 x 20 inches



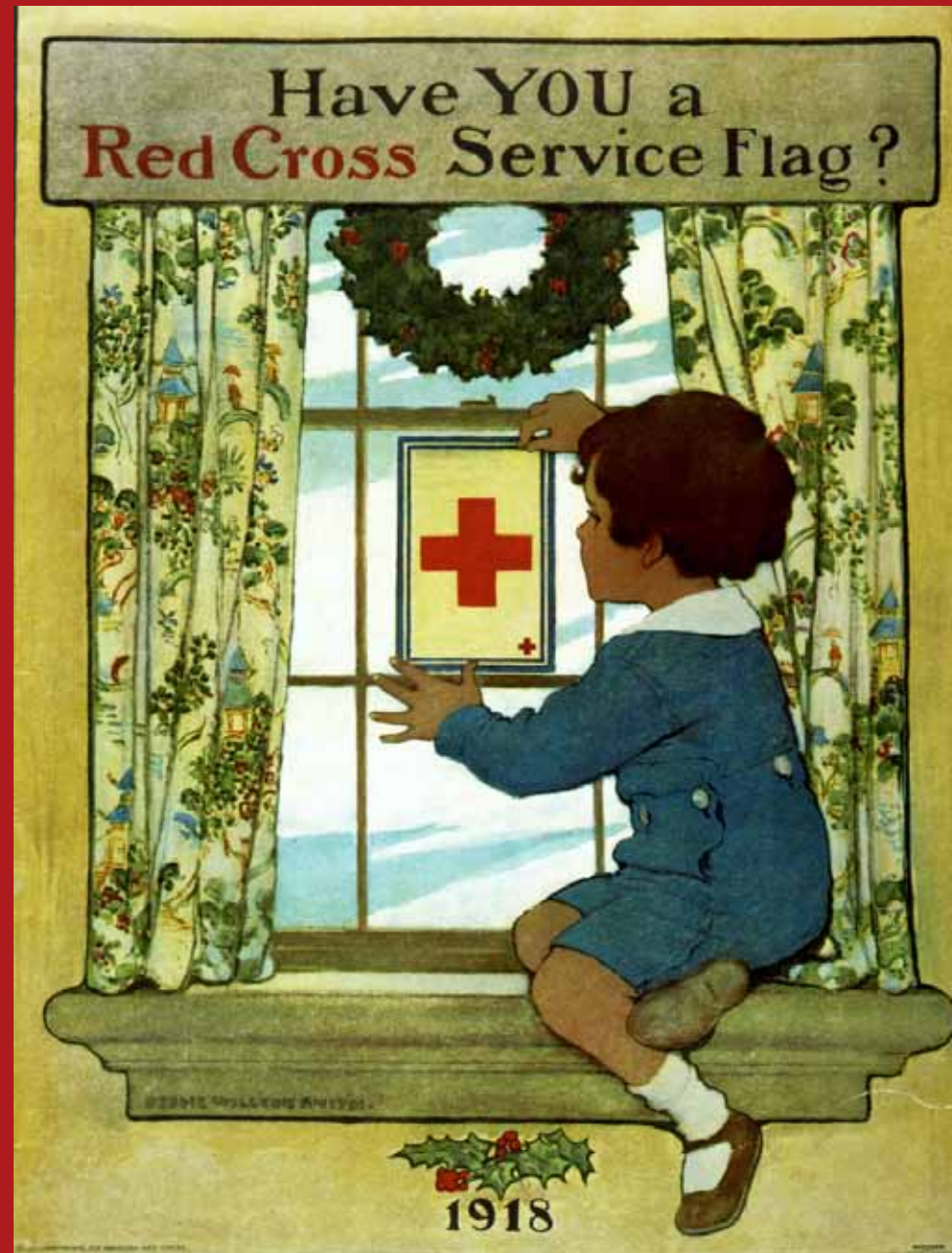
Herbert Andrew Paus, *The United States Army Builds Men*, 1917, Color lithograph, 29 ½ x 19 ½ inches



Howard Chandler Christy, *Clear the Way*, 1918, Color lithograph, 30 x 20 inches



Władysław Theodor Benda, *You Can Help*, 1918, Photomechanical print with color silkscreen, 30 x 20 inches



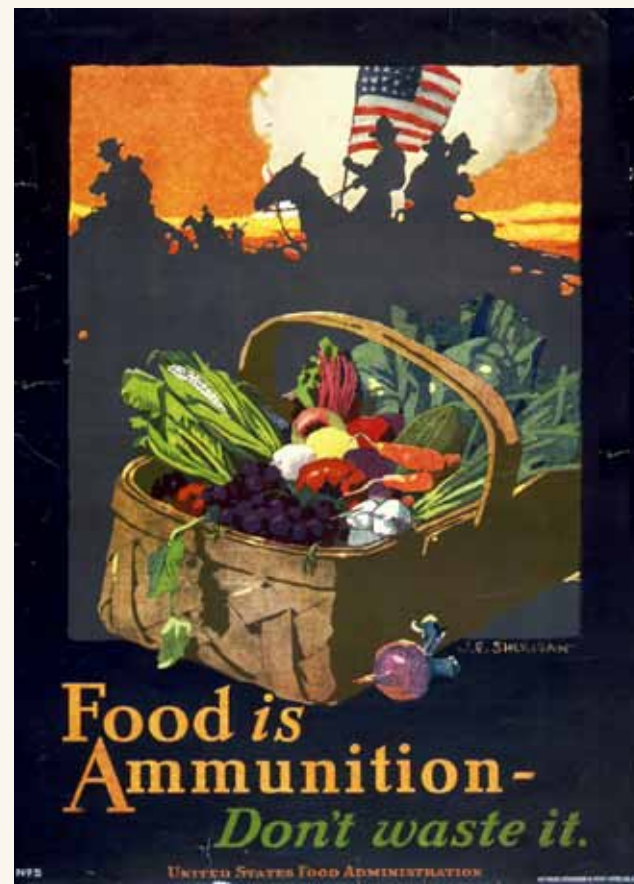
Jessie Wilcox Smith, *Have You a Red Cross Service Flag?*, 1918, Color lithograph, 28 x 21 inches



Charles E. Chambers, *Food Will Win the War*, 1917, Color lithograph, 30 x 20 inches



Joseph Christian Leyendecker, *Order Coal Now*, 1918, Color lithograph, 29 ½ x 20 inches



John E. Sheridan, *Food is Ammunition - Don't waste it.*, 1918, Color lithograph, 29 x 21 inches



Anonymous, *V*, 1918, Color lithograph, 29 ½ x 19 ½ inches

Exhibition Checklist

1. Anonymous <i>10,000,000 Members by Christmas</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	5. Władysław Theodor Benda (1873 – 1948) <i>You Can Help</i> , 1918 Photomechanical print with color silkscreen 30 x 20 inches	10. James Henry Daugherty (1889 – 1974) <i>The Ships Are Coming</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	15. Joseph Christian Leyendecker (1874 – 1951) <i>Order Coal Now</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 29 ½ x 20 inches	20. John E. Sheridan (1880 – 1948) <i>Food is Ammunition</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 29 x 21 inches	25. Adolph Treidler (1886 – 1981) <i>Help Stop This</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 28 x 20 ½ inches
2. Anonymous <i>He is Getting our Country's Signal—Are You?</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	6. Charles Livingston Bull (1874 – 1932) <i>Save the Products of the Land</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	11. James Montgomery Flagg (1877 – 1960) <i>I Want You for U.S. Army</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 40 x 30 inches	16. Alfred Everitt Orr (1886 – 1927) <i>For Home and Country</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	21. Daniel Smith (1865 – 1934) <i>Knowledge Wins</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 28 x 19 inches	26. Ellsworth Young (1866 – 1952) <i>Remember Belgium</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches
3. Anonymous <i>Remember! The Flag of Liberty—Support It!</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	7. Charles E. Chambers (1883 – 1941) <i>Food Will Win the War</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	12. Victor Forsythe (1885 – 1962) <i>And They Thought We Couldn't Fight</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	17. Herbert Andrew Paus (1880 – 1946) <i>The United States Army Builds Men</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 29 ½ x 19 ½ inches	22. Jessie Wilcox Smith (1863 – 1935) <i>Have You a Red Cross Service Flag?</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 28 x 21 inches	
4. Anonymous <i>V</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 29 ½ x 19 ½ inches	8. Howard Chandler Christy (1873 – 1952) <i>Clear the Way</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	13. Joseph L. Grosse (1893 – 1944) <i>Help Crush the Menace of the Seas</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 28 x 18 inches	18. Henry Patrick Raleigh (1880 – 1944) <i>Hun or Home?</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	23. James Allen St. John (1872 – 1957) <i>The Hun—His Mark</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	
	9. Haskell Coffin (1878 – 1941) <i>Joan of Arc Saved France</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	14. Lawrence Harris (1873 – 1951) <i>Good Bye, Dad</i> , 1918 Color lithograph 30 x 20 inches	19. Charles E. Ruttan (1884 – 1939) <i>A Wonderful Opportunity for You</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 38 x 20 ½ inches	24. Harry Townsend (1879 – 1941) <i>War Rages in France</i> , 1917 Color lithograph 29 ½ x 19 ½ inches	
					All artwork courtesy of the Special Collections Division, The Newark Public Library.

This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition, *For Home and Country: World War I Posters from the Newark Public Library*, organized by the University Galleries, William Paterson University, and on view September 11 – December 13, 2017. The exhibition was curated by Professor George Robb with research assistance from graduate students Sarah McCoy and Nicolette Solomita.

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wpunj.edu/coac/gallery/

Kristen Evangelista, Director
Emily Johnsen, Gallery Manager

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Inside back cover Clockwise from top left
Exhibition checklist 13, 14, 18, 19, 24, 25



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