



## The Allied Expositionary Forces in WWI: From Encouragement to Commemoration of War

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It is common to see a cannon in front of many courthouses or city halls, town squares, or cemeteries across America. Similarly, military planes are often on display at airports (often on a stalk to simulate flight) and tanks and helicopters can be seen at Veterans of Foreign Wars or American Legion posts as well. But the display of the military hardware at each of these sites carries a different valence: civic honor at a government building, remembrance at a cemetery, or sacrifice at a veteran's post. Inquiring how this diverse use of commemorative weaponry came to be is more complex than may at first appear, and when our attention is narrowed to World War I and its immediate aftermath, even more interesting situations of display become apparent.

This paper explored the *other* "AEF" during WWI—the Allied *Expositionary* Forces—and the interest in displaying war relics and trophies back at home. In particular, it asks how and why this was done, and how the attitude and meaning of these objects changed from wartime to the postwar period.

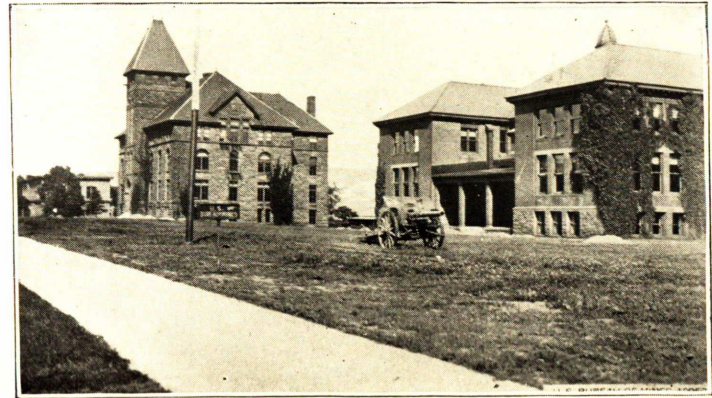
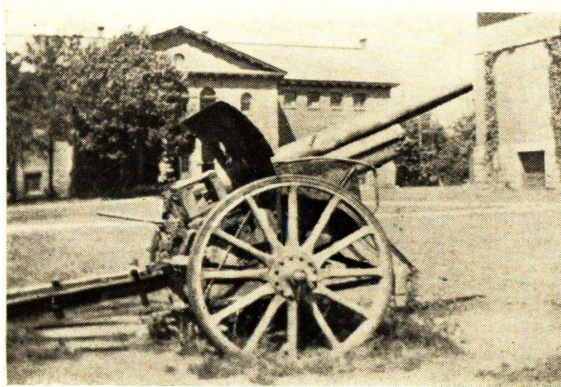
### Introduction – the Local Story

In August 1919, local Houghton County papers recorded the arrival of a captured German field piece with great ceremony.<sup>1</sup> Captured by the 32<sup>nd</sup> "Red Arrow" division made up of Wisconsin and Michigan recruits, the gun, it was said, was taken at the [Second?] Battle of the Marne. When it arrived, the locals beheld a quite pristine example of a camouflaged Prussian 77mm Feldkanone, that resembled the French 75mm gun of the day with which American doughboys would have been very familiar, as we mostly used French guns once we got "over there."

The gun arrived at the Copper Range station drawn by one of the fire teams of the Village and was escorted to the college by the soldiers themselves, some of whom had served in Europe during the conflict, as well as local Civil War Veterans and the home guards, and led by the Houghton Band conducted by Maj. Ralph Loveland of Calumet as Marshall. All members of the 107<sup>th</sup> Engineering battalion, which was raised and based at the then Michigan College of Mining, were asked to report to campus by 1:30, and then all veterans were to assemble at the Amphidrome [now Dee Stadium] at 2:00pm. Interestingly, the assembly was largely in civilian garb, the veterans being explicitly told not to trouble with their old uniforms, it being "more convenient for them to get away from their work in civilian clothes."

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<sup>1</sup> From 4 newspaper articles from unidentified newspapers dated 26, 27, 29, and n.d. Aug. 1919 [Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, MI, vertical file: "World War One"]. Subsequently, it was confirmed that these were from the *Daily Mining Gazette* [Houghton, MI] and the *Calumet News* [Calumet, MI].



*Figure 1. German FK16 77mm artillery piece on display on the Michigan College of Mines Campus. Source: 1924 Keweenaw Yearbook, pp. 6 and 147.*

When it arrived on campus, Capt. Andrew T. Sweet, MCM Class of '16, professor of metallurgy, and until recently the head of the 107<sup>th</sup>, received it on behalf of the college. C. Harry Benedict (1876-1963) of Lake Linden, representing the Board of the Federal Reserve of the Northern District, gave a speech at 3pm. After Sweet spoke about the struggle in Europe, the band struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner."<sup>2</sup> Although the newspapers note that the gun was placed on its "final resting place" that afternoon, to later be made permanent by the installation of a concrete base, there is no indication where it actually was displayed. Further research has found that it was installed on the lawn in front of the Metallurgy Building, though it had been (re)moved by 1930 and its subsequent history is unknown. (Figure 1)

As to why it was displayed here, the immediate and obvious answer is that the 107<sup>th</sup> Engineers were raised and trained here and took part in a number of significant actions during the war. In addition, MCM provided considerable vocational training in mining and mine rescue for the Committee on Education and Special Training throughout 1918. At the dedication, John W. Black of the Ninth District of the Federal Reserve in Minneapolis, who was instrumental in the distribution of trophies in 1919, sent a letter for the dedication (See Appendix A). He wrote that the MCM gun "will rest fittingly upon the side of the engineers training camp and upon the grounds of an institution that was devoted unreservedly to the winning of the war." He added the commonplace that such a trophy would be "a constant reminder of the sacrifices that the U.P. made of her sons to the mighty struggle overseas." But Black went further and politicized it to say that the gun stood for "Hun domination, Hun principles of government and a Hun attitude towards the peoples of the world, should hereafter control the nations of the earth" and that "It represents right which is conquered might. It represents the preservation of democracy, liberty, freedom and opportunity, through a crisis that but for a victory, might have engulfed these precious heritages and forever buried them under the heel of the Prussian war god." (His comments are made with no sense of the fact that we and the Entente powers, of course, used virtually the same hardware).

<sup>2</sup> This song had only become the most widely-recognized patriotic song in America during WWI, being officially recognized by President Wilson in 1916 but only made the official National Anthem in 1931.



On the other hand, C.H. Benedict, a local metallurgical engineer for Calumet & Hecla mining company<sup>3</sup> but also on behalf of the Ninth District, gave a presentation address that offered a different perspective (See Appendix B). He emphasized that,

the past war was above anything else a technical and scientific one. Not only was soldier pitted against soldier, nation was pitted against nation and for every warrior on the firing line there were 10 civilians at home striving with the implements of the arts of peace to forge a more effective weapon for the sterner art of war. And if there is to be no next-door as all the peoples hope and pray it will be because science and engineering and industry has constructed a weapon so destructive of life and property to invoke its use as an arbiter of national dispute is to imperil the very foundations of civilization itself.

Further, he took the high road and noted that “the world needs production and producers, and not destruction and destroyers.” His speech continues in the sort of laudatory campus commencement speech style you would expect, but closes, “though it stand here a thousand years may it never behold an American sword drawn, save in a righteous cause, nor if drawn, sheathed unless the cause be victorious.”

Ultimately this local story raised a number of questions. First, there is the question of how is it that the MCM received a gun in August 1919, when the general distribution of war trophies after WWI did not happen until the first half of the 1920s. But the contrasting yet not conflicting approaches of Black and Benedict raise the question of what sort of rhetoric surrounded a war trophy, and, in particular, an artillery piece, at the time. More broadly it raises the question of why we display military hardware, whether our own or captured, at all.<sup>4</sup>

### Displaying War Trophies

There were examples of the Allies exhibiting captured German war materiel as early as November 1914 and the Canadians, as part of the BEF with more immediate access to trophies, began collecting objects from the French as early as Spring 1916; the first show back at home was mounted in Halifax in October 1917 and later in Toronto in late 1918.<sup>5</sup> Some war trophies were sent for their sheer novelty—such as the “strange... crude, but ... effective” German water purifier

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<sup>3</sup> C. Harry Benedict (1876-1963) was chief metallurgist for the Calumet & Hecla mining company for 47 years and published *Red Metal: The Calumet and Hecla Story* (1952) and *Lake Superior Milling Practice: A Technical History of a Century of Copper Milling* (1955). See MS-043, *Keweenaw Historical Society Collection*, Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, MI.

<sup>4</sup> What became of the gun remains a mystery. It most likely disappeared in a scrap drive for World War II, yet if that was the case, it is strange that there are no other pictures of it in the 20+ years it would have stood on campus. It is also possible that the gun was recalled and redeployed to some other city considered more deserving, although this last possibility seems unlikely given the Michigan College of Mines’ participation during the war and its links to the 107<sup>th</sup> Engineers.

<sup>5</sup> See Michael J.K. Walsh and Andrekos Varnava, *The Great War and the British Empire: Culture and Society* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 186-188. Catalogue of war trophies captured by Canadian Forces on the Western Front ([Toronto?]: n.p, 1918?), but title page notes, “Shown in the Armouries, Toronto, November 2 to 9, 1918.”



discovered near the town of Jaulney<sup>6</sup>—and others taken for what appears to be spite that still carry tense resonances—such as the three church bells from the Balangiga Massacre during the Philippine Insurrection on 28 Sept. 1901.<sup>7</sup>

In one sense, the Michigan Tech gun was simply a tiny example of a much larger phenomenon. Consider the scene in Boston in May 1919, when the city hosted the “artillery train”:

On a month-long tour of the country, the train comprised seventeen cars loaded with thirty pieces of artillery and other military equipment. A military band led the procession of cannons, trench mortars, anti-aircraft guns, and eight-inch howitzers through the business district, attracting large crowds. Individual guns were exhibited at prominent locations, along with other war gear, such as a thirty-six-inch spotlight, a field radio outfit, ambulance, and a carrier pigeon vehicle. Fifteen of the heavy guns went on display on Boston Commons, making frequent firings that reverberated throughout the city.<sup>8</sup>

Because World War I was at such a scale and because it dragged on well beyond that hoped-for Christmas by which everyone would be home, all the Allied nations had to turn to fundraising to continue fighting. And in that era where radio was in its infancy, and the newsreels that accompanied silent films still relatively rare, the display of captured enemy equipment aroused great excitement throughout the land. Local shops would often mount a small window display of war relics in order to both lure in customers and to sell Liberty Bonds, but the more novel and considerable the hardware, the better.

For example, there were already subs on display in 1917—captured by the British and sent to the US (in this case on display in Central Park and ceremoniously rechristened from “UC-5” to “U-Buy-A-Bond”)<sup>9</sup> and then also displayed alongside a British tank that had supposedly seen action in France to raise money—and they played on the novelty of their technology to lure visitors. At the close of the war, the U.S. received a considerable share of the now forfeit German war equipment that included 161 submarines. Eight of these “Hun devil boats” came to the U.S. in 1919 and considerably advanced American submarine engineering.<sup>10</sup> The captured subs also toured the country as both curiosities and profit engines for the government. One, the German UC-97, even came into the Great Lakes (getting as close to Houghton as Escanaba on July 30-31, 1920)

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Army Engineers Regiment, *History of the Twenty-Sixth Engineers (water supply regiment) in the World War, Sept. 1917- March, 1919* (N.p.: Published by the Regiment & New England Water Works Association, 1920), 41.

<sup>7</sup> Alton Latson, et al., “The Philippine Insurrection. ‘US retaliates,’” USASMA Digital Library, 2005, p. 12, online at <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/utills/getdownloaditem/collection/p15040coll2/id/5185/filename/5186.pdf/mapsto/pdf/type/singleitem>, accessed 2 May 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Chris Dubbs, *America's U-Boats: Terror Trophies of World War I* (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 103-04.

<sup>9</sup> Emily Nonko, “100 years ago today, a German U-Boat submarine ended up in Central Park,” *6sqft* [blog], Oct. 25, 2017, online at <https://www.6sqft.com/100-years-ago-today-a-german-u-boat-submarine-ended-up-in-central-park/>.

<sup>10</sup> “Japan Sends for Hun Submarines as War Trophies,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 18 Dec 1918, p. 1.



on her way to Chicago and the Great Lakes Naval Training Station. Audiences thrilled at the “German sea murderer . . . menacing in aspect with her decks almost awash, her steel, gray conning tower rising high above the water and the four-inch gun forward,” as she sailed into various ports from April to August 1919.<sup>11</sup> She was sunk by gunnery practice on June 7, 1921 and still lies on the bottom of the lake, somewhere off Kenosha, WI.<sup>12</sup>

Even more substantial was the Allied War Exposition (AWE), which toured two dozen cities in 1918 and 1919.<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 2) The Committee for Public Information (CPI) was organized in April 1917 by Wilson’s Executive Order No. 2594, empowering the Secretaries of State, War, and the

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<sup>11</sup> “German U-Boat Arrives Here,” *Detroit Free Press*, 30 Jun 1919, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Dubbs, 162-67, 98-200.

<sup>13</sup> Although the AWE was widely noted in papers of the day, there are but four archive holdings about it in all of *ArchiveGrid* and none of note in the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC. The only consolidated holdings of AWE material is at Norwich University: <http://archives.norwich.edu/digital/search/searchterm/Allied%20War%20Exposition%20Photographs/field/all/mode/exact/conn/and/order/nosort/page/1>.

In 1943 there were 3ft. of records in the National Archives, but the finding aid for RG63 compiled in 1962 no longer includes them, noting, “Transfers of records to other agencies and disposals of useless papers have resulted in a reduction of the records to less than one-fourth of the volume that the Council for National Defense reported to be in its custody in 1920.” However, the finding aid for RG 63 in the Research Consultation room at Archives II at College Park, MD has penciled annotations of current recorded locations for the items in the 1938 classification scheme noted, and shows that the entire subseries on the Expositions Bureau (CPI 10B) had been *discarded by 1962*. It is also worth noting here that when the record group was organized in the National Archives in the 1930s, the catalogers were also unable to locate any records of the Division of Exhibit at State Fairs run though the CPI. Quote from *Handbook of the Federal World War Agencies and their Records 1917-1921* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1943), p. 95. See Council for National Defense, “A Report Concerning Papers, Files, Records, Public Property, Assets and Liabilities, etc. of the Committee on Public Information” June 9, 1920, (manuscript in the files of the Committee); Roscoe R. Hill and Frank Hardee Allen, *Classification Scheme: Records of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919* (Washington, DC: National Archives Division of Classification, 1938), 32-34; *Handbook of Federal World War Agencies and Their Records 1917-1921*, National Archives Publication No. 24 (Washington: USGPO, 1943), 610; and Janet Weinert, *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-19 (Record Group 63)* (Washington, DC: The National Archives, 1962).

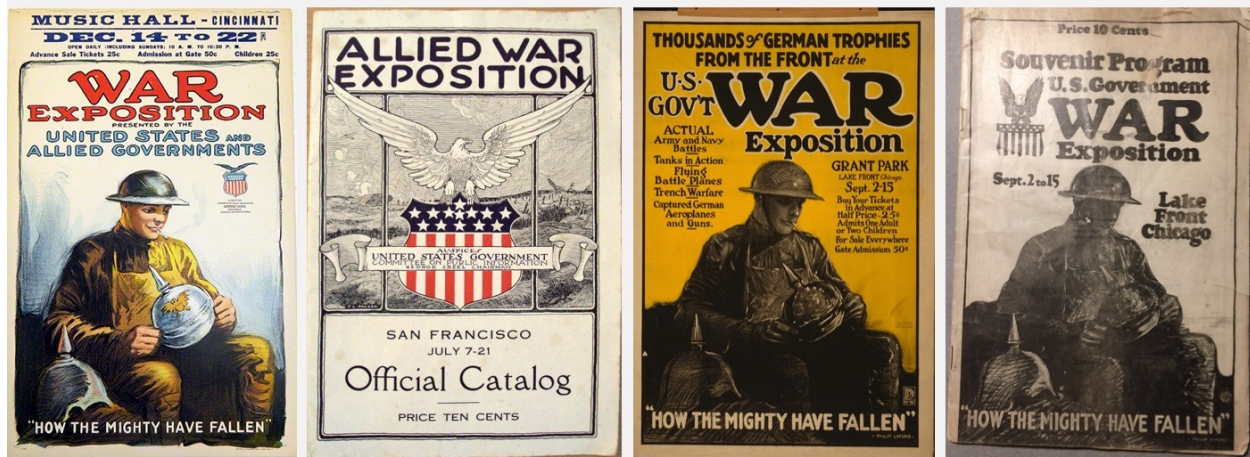


Figure 2. Covers of catalogues from various stops of the AWE: Cincinnati (poster), San Francisco (program), Chicago (poster), and Chicago (program). Sources (L to R): Cincinnati Museum Center; eBay; Chicago History Center; author's collection.

Navy to work with George Creel, formerly an investigative journalist, who promptly asked for \$100,000 directly from the White House to run numerous projects under five divisions: External Communications, Publicity, “Vise” (*i.e.*, vice, that is, for its suppression), Pictures, and Foreign Affairs (*i.e.*, what we would today call “soft power” through public information [propaganda]). Creel initially assumed that most of the outreach to the public would be through the monthly (and ultimately) daily printed, subscription-based, *Official Bulletin*.<sup>14</sup> At first he neglected to consider the power of film, though he included “photo plays” in his initial request, and he had to modify the organization as 1917 went on. The CPI’s most well-known contributions were the organization of the “Four-Minute Men,” propaganda posters, and considerable censorship enforcement—or “to make the fight for public opinion both in this country and in other countries of the world” as their charter proclaimed.<sup>15</sup>

The War Expositions Bureau (WEB) was set up in May 1918 under the CPI films division to arouse the interest of the public in the war through exhibits showing armaments and captured war trophies. Chester I. Campbell, a major New England commercial exposition planner, served as its

<sup>14</sup> The CPI *Official Bulletin* was issued daily from 10 May 1917 – 31 Mar. 1919 and amounts to 12 linear ft. in the National Archives and was followed by the weekly *United States Bulletin* from 3 Apr. 1919 – 14 Feb 1921 (NARA, RG63 E49 and E50).

<sup>15</sup> NARA, RG 130, Records of the White House Office, E 18 Records Relating to the Committee on Public Information (hereafter CPI-WH). Alfred Emile Cornebise, *War as Advertised: The Four Minute Men and America's Crusade, 1917-1918*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 156 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984) and J. Michael Sproule, “The Four Minute Men and Early Twentieth-Century Public Speaking Pedagogy,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 13, no. 2 (2010): 135–147. The Committee also issued *How the War Came to America* in 1917 (and printed it in multiple languages, including 100,000 copies in German, 75,000 in Bohemian, 50,000 each in Polish and Italian, and 15,000 in Spanish) to sway public opinion (see orders from Thomas K. Claffey, Chief Clerk of CPI to the U.S. GPO in CPI-WH).



first director.<sup>16</sup> It absorbed the Bureau of War Photographs on September 1 and was discontinued on June 30, 1919. The WEB organized the expos but did so with the direct involvement of the various host cities who had to post a very large bond to get the travelling show to come to their city, provide the venue, and most of the helpers to pull it off. While some towns had it in their fairgrounds, others brought it inside. Cincinnati, for example, held it at the Music Hall and the Chamber of Commerce posted a \$25,000 bond against losses on the event. So sure were they of the appeal of the event, local businesses posted a total of nearly \$200,000 in bonds to bring the AWEs to their towns. Although attendance was depressed by the influenza epidemic, Cincinnati, for example, did manage to attract 160,000 visitors and posted a small profit for the government over and above this amount.<sup>17</sup> In other cities, an advance agent from the CPI engaged local bankers to distribute and pre-sell tickets. In Cleveland, for example, fifty men from the American Institute of Banking marshalled twenty-five motor cars to deliver tickets for sale to 600 stores across the region, netting sales of 75,000 tickets and a profit of \$7,500.<sup>18</sup>

The WEB spent just over \$1 million to mount the shows, and gate receipts alone totaled over \$1.4 million (Fig. 3), a clear profit for the government. Samuel Insull, the electrical systems magnate, oversaw the most successful stop in Chicago and it alone *netted* nearly \$584,000 from over two million visitors (with a quarter million in one day alone!). “Parades and other special events helped stir enthusiasm, and there was a daily sham battle on land and in the air, employing the services of 3,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines, and a British-American squadron of fourteen war planes.”<sup>19</sup> In most cases, the central government exhibition was augmented by local and regional attractions. Cincinnati added displays by the Commission on Training Camp Activities and the Commission on Volunteer War Agencies, band concerts by the men of Great Lakes Naval Training Station, motion pictures (still quite a rarity in 1918), and even speeches by various foreign representatives. Other societies like the Knights of Columbus, the American Library Association, the Red Cross, and even the Humane Society mounted booths to both encourage and capitalize on the war fervor.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “Chester I. Campbell,” *The Boston Daily Globe*, 10 August 1926; “Death Claims C. I. Campbell,” *The Boston Daily Globe*, 21 Jan 1933.

<sup>17</sup> Seventieth Annual Report of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce and Merchants’ Exchange for the Year Ending December 31, 1918 (Cincinnati: The Robert T. Morris Printing Co, 1919), 57–58.

<sup>18</sup> Frank B. Mellen, “Cleveland Chapter,” *Bulletin of the American Institute of Banking* 1, no. 3 (Jan. 1919): 276–277.

<sup>19</sup> James Robert Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War; The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1939), 69-70.

<sup>20</sup> “Our Field Correspondents,” *The National Humane Review* 7, no. 4 (April 1919): 76, noting that a quarter million visitors saw the Red Star Animal Relief Society booth in Cincinnati, distributing thousands of leaflets and “tagging” nearly 11,000 children(!).



City	Receipts	City	Receipts
Chicago, IL	\$583,731.24	St. Louis, MO	\$23,570.40
Cleveland, OH	167,355.51	Houston, TX	22,684.05
Pittsburgh, PA	147,804.16	Waco, TX	16,904.70
Cincinnati, OH	66,541.10	New Orleans, LA	14,439.20
Los Angeles, CA	65,875.75	St. Paul, MN	8,986.65
Detroit, MI	63,470.74	Oklahoma City, OK	4,236.43
Buffalo, NY	60,354.27	Jackson, MI	2,946.48
San Francisco, CA	54,274.80	Little Rock, AK	1,595.14
Toledo, OH	50,003.02	Waterloo, IA	983.93
Kansas City, MO	28,646.20	Great Falls, MT	977.53
<b>TOTAL: \$1,385,381.30 [Approx. \$22.7M today]</b>			
<small>SOURCE: Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee for Public Information, 1917:1918:1919 (Washington: US GPO, 1920), 59-60.</small>			

Figure 3. Allied War Exhibition 1918 Receipts.

The exhibition hit the major cities from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Chicago, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, but also stopped in convenient places like Waco, TX and Waterloo, IA when the Des Moines show fell through. It is also clear, given the expositions’ dates, that the show divided itself into two parallel expos. (Table 1 and Fig. 4) The expos were marketed with such slogans as, “Like going over the battlefields of Europe. Like visiting the War Museums of Paris, London and Rome,” and exhortations to

Go to the War Exposition as a matter of interest. You may never have another chance! It will give you several of the most interesting hours of a lifetime. But go, primarily, to learn more about the war and the things you can do personally to hasten our inevitable victory. The admission price is fifty cents. You can buy your tickets at half price in advance from your employer, drug store, department stores, banks, clubs, theaters, in fact almost anywhere. Don’t miss having the children see the war exposition.<sup>21</sup>

The core of the objects on display were captured war materiel, and some stops included a British tank and a battle re-enactment. Some cities like Cincinnati posted nearly 6,000 photographs of the men who were serving—or by the time the Expo there actually happened, had served—in Europe.<sup>22</sup> Other eclectic war trophies were sometimes included, though it is not clear whether these

<sup>21</sup> “Like a Trip Into ‘No Man’s Land’” [advertisement], *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 1 Dec. 1918, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Breidenbaugh, “Ludlow Luther: Cincinnati Area’s First African American Casualty of WWI,” *Off the Shelf!* [blog], Cincinnati Museum Center, 28 June 2017, online at <https://www.cincymuseum.org/blog/ludlow-luther-cincinnati-area’s-first-african-american-casualty-wwi>, accessed 20 May 2018.



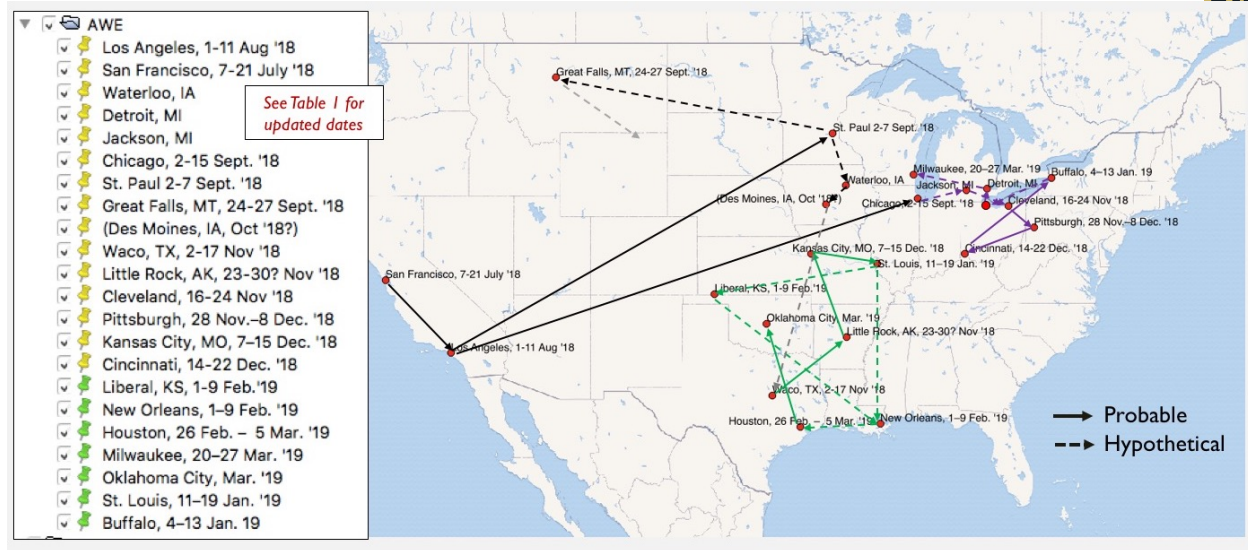


Figure 4. The Travelling Road Show of the A.W.E.

came via the CPI or other sources: Cincinnati displayed a bronze statue of St. John the Baptist as a child “which the Germans in their haste had to leave behind, but attempted to destroy by heaping rubbish upon it and setting fire to it.”<sup>23</sup> In Kansas City the American war dog brigade made an appearance where cross-breeds of an Airedale and an English sheep dog were shown that had been taught not to bark but were “taught to hate the Germans” (“in the course of their training German uniforms have been put on dummies and the uniforms saturated with a ... disagreeable [odor that] they will associate [with] a German soldier”).<sup>24</sup>

Whether one sees the AWE as propaganda or entertainment is a matter of perspective. Creel, head of the CPI, argued that,

Disunity and disloyalty tear at the very heart of courage. The Committee [for Public Information] fights ignorance, misunderstanding, and disaffection. It works for the maintenance of morale by every process of stimulation. We do not call it propaganda, for the word in German hands has come to be associated with lies and corruptions. Our work is educational and informative, for we have such confidence in our case that we feel that no more than a fair presentation of its facts is needed to win the verdict.<sup>25</sup>

Much like air shows today, the line between displays of military hardware being marketing and diversion gets rather blurry. It is, however, no coincidence that the AWE opened in San Francisco

<sup>23</sup> A picture of the statue and this text featured prominently on the cover of *Souvenir Catalogue. United States and Allied Governments War Exposition*, price 10 cents, clearly playing on the emotions of how horrible the Germans must have been to do this (and note that if they were retreating, it was probably in a French or Belgian church before they took it).

<sup>24</sup> *United States and Allied Governments War Exposition at Convention Hall Kansas City* (Kansas City, MO: n.p., 1918), 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



in direct and planned conjunction with the annual conference of the Associated Advertising Club of the World.<sup>26</sup>

*Table 1: Tracing the Allied War Exposition Across the U.S.A.*

**Cities** in red indicate simultaneous expos. **Dates** in purple and green are what appear to be a Midwestern and Great Plains traveling circuits, though there is no necessary reason to think that they remained entirely insulated from one another as cars could be shifted at will and newly captured materiel from Europe could be added or exchanged.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Location</b>
July 7–21, 1918	San Francisco, CA	Golden Gate Park?
Aug. 1–11, 1918	Los Angeles, CA	Exposition Park, 18 carloads
Sept. 2–7, 1918	St. Paul, MN	MN State Fair, big steel machinery bldg. (came from LA and arr. 24 Aug.)
Sept. 2–15, 1918	Chicago, IL	Grant Park
Sept. 24–27, 1918	Great Falls, MT	Milwaukee Depot
Oct. 1918 (Not held)	Des Moines, IA	Planned for Coliseum or Auditorium. Initially planned for 14 carloads filling a 400x250 ft. space in mid-August; then shifted to begin on 6 Oct but was postponed so as not to conflict with the 4LL, held there from Sept. 28–Oct. 19 <sup>1</sup>
late Sept.– early Oct., 1918	Waterloo, IA	At the Dairy Cattle Congress. 5,300 attendance on opening day.
Nov 2–17, 1918	Waco, TX	Texas Cotton Palace
Nov. 3–17, 1918	Jackson, MI	Four carloads of recently returned materiel plus existing carloads.
Nov. 16–24, 1918	Cleveland, OH	Wigmore Coliseum? Originally scheduled for Nov. 9-17, but postponed a week due to influenza. 47 car loads.
Nov. 23–[30?], 1918	Little Rock, AK	Municipal Auditorium / Board of Commerce Bldg. Delayed until 25 Nov due to transport delays.
Nov. 28–Dec. 8, 1918	Pittsburgh, PA	Exposition Building at the point
Dec. 7–15, 1918	Kansas City, MO	Convention Hall
Dec. 14–22, 1918	Cincinnati, OH	Music Hall
Jan. 4–13, 1919	Buffalo, NY	Broadway and Elmwood Music Hall
Jan. 11–19, 1919	St. Louis, MO	Coliseum Building
Feb. 1–9, 1919	Liberal, KS	Heineman Ball Park
Feb. 1–9, 1919	New Orleans, LA	Heinemann Park. 25 carloads.
Feb [5?]-12, 1919	Toledo, OH	
Feb. 20–[27?] 1919	Detroit, MI	Wayne Gardens and Arena
Feb. 26–Mar. 5, 1919	Houston, TX	
March ? 1919	Oklahoma City, OK	“At Third and Elgin”
March 20–27, 1919	Milwaukee, WI	Civic Auditorium

<sup>26</sup> “Ad Men Will See Allied War Show,” *The Atlanta Constitution* [Atlanta, GA], 7 Jul 1918, p. 12.



Returning to our initial topic of this paper, the local Chicago paper headline blazed, “Go and see the ‘German 77’s,’ the favorite field piece of the Hun army, captured in battle, battered and made useless by allied shells.”<sup>27</sup> After enticing readers to see the torpedoes (“mate to the one with which the Germans sunk the *Lusitania*”), a 3-ton anti-aircraft gun, “official French photographs of Hun atrocities” (“official photographs,” they repeated, “which cannot be denied”), and the mockup of the trenches, the paper pronounced:

Go down to the War Exposition and picture to yourself that hail of shell, that smudge of poison gas, that shower of machine-gun bullets, all the atmosphere of treachery and hate and unfair fighting our boys had to face.

When you get that realization you will be readier to do your full share here at home. And THAT is the sole reason for the exposition.

After the AWE wrapped up, there were also “special war trophy trains” that travelled the country as part of the Third Liberty Loan campaign in mid-1918,<sup>28</sup> and then the Victory Loan program—that is, the fourth Liberty Loan—to continue raising money for the money we had already spent on the armed forces.<sup>29</sup>

### War Trophies for Sentiment

The AWE maintained a strong theme of the sacrifice of the soldiers in France. The great triumphal arch that was constructed in Chicago (Fig.5), for example, read, “Our Heroic Dead. There is no death. They all survive,” and listed the major offensives of the war. The Kansas City program proclaimed it was for “the members of the ‘Army at Home’ who through days of toil and nights of anxiety pray for the safe return of those who ‘Over There’ have been fighting humanity’s battle,” and added that “Surely no one can witness these priceless trophies bought with the blood of those who have died in the Battle for Humanity without being stirred to the depths of his heart and aroused to a determination to do all in his power ‘over here’ to bring victory to America and her Allies ‘over there’.”<sup>30</sup> The back of a ticket for the Cincinnati show read “Do not pass lightly by these trophies; study them, and when you leave the Exposition Buildings, do so with your heart filled with gratitude for the brave men who have fought, and are fighting your battles, for THIS IS YOUR WAR.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Herald and Examiner* [Chicago], 1 Sept 1918.

<sup>28</sup> *The Daily Ardmoreite* [Ardmore, OK], 7 Apr 1918, p. 1. “War Exhibits in Green Bay Tuesday Noon,” *Green Bay Press-Gazette* [Green Bay, WI], 23 Sep 1918, p. 1, which was also accompanied by a lecture by Prof. Kowaike on “Science and the World War—Wisconsin’s Contribution,” at the Bijou theater.

<sup>29</sup> “Local Briefs,” *Medford Mail Tribune* [Medford, OR], 29 Mar 1919, p.2. “War Trophy Train Will Open Fourth Liberty Loan Campaign in Indiana,” *The Indiana Gazette* [Indiana, PA], 26 Sep 1918, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> United States and Allied Governments War Exposition at Convention Hall Kansas City (Kansas City, MO: n.p., 1918), cover and p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ticket stub, in “Remembering Those Who Served: The WWI Servicemen Portrait Collection,” *Off the Shelf!* [blog], Cincinnati Museum Center, 19 April 2017, online at <https://www.cincymuseum.org/blog/remembering-those-who-served-wwi-servicemen-portrait-collection>, accessed 21 May 2018.

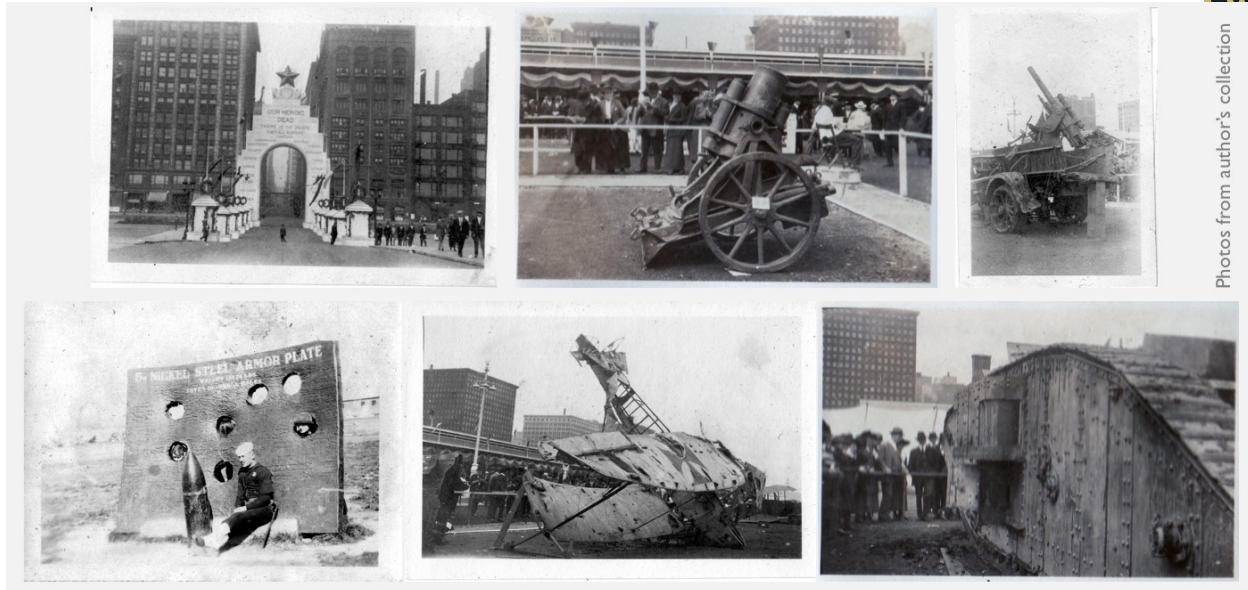


Figure 5. Example tourist snapshots from Chicago A.W.E. Source: Author's collection.

Today, of course, war equipment on display tends to be associated with war memorials and cemeteries, not fundraising. This shift from one to the other is not as straightforward as one might expect. After the war, local garrisons that had received both our own war surplus as well as captured German materiel for training purposes would occasionally bring it out for public viewing, and small local exhibits of trophies brought home by troops also seem to have remained in fashion into the mid-1920s.<sup>32</sup>

This shift from fundraising to memorialization began in 1921. In the spring of that year, the Senate passed a bill (S.674) and the House a resolution (H.R. 3160) that facilitated the equitable distribution of war trophies across the country, apportioning them according to the number of men from each state and territory that served, and appropriating \$400,000 to facilitate the process.<sup>33</sup> When the bill went to the floor in August of that year, it was objected to on two grounds: the Secretary of War said it was his right to distribute the war trophies, and the amount of the appropriation was considered far too high in its sum or too low in its estimate (initial discussions had proposed a \$1 million appropriation), as well as that receiving sites had to pay the transportation costs for their trophy. The bill then stalled for six months.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Camp Grant in Rockford, IL provided exhibits for the Mc Henry Co. Fair: “New Features of 1919 Fair,” *Marengo Republican-News* [Marengo, IL], 14 Aug 1919, p. 1. Classified Ads, *The Dayton Herald* [Dayton, OH], 7 Jun 1924, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the information on the life of this bill comes from “Equitable Distribution of Captured War Devices and Trophies,” 76<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., U.S House of Representatives, Report 171 [H.R. 171], 13 June 1921 and “A Bill to Provide for the Equitable Distribution of War Devices and Trophies to the States and Territories of the United States and to the District of Columbia,” 76<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., U.S. House of Representatives, Bill S.674, 29 Aug. 1922 [this is the House reading of the Senate Bill]. See also H.R. 979, H.R. 14105, and bill S.643.



*Table 2: WWI War Trophies for Distribution.*

Guns and Howitzers		Trench mortars	
77 mm	404 (+83)	76 mm	418 (+34)
88 mm	10 (+15)	170 mm	141 (+15)
100 mm	3 (+6)	240 mm	10 (+10)
105 mm	449 (+702)	245 mm	161 (+9)
120 mm	7 (+1)		730 (+68)
135 mm	10 (+9)		
150 mm	427 (+72)	Total captured guns, howitzers and mortars:	3,206
210 mm	144 (+43)		
4.2 in.	13 (+10)	Other vehicles	4,000
Total:	1,467 (+941)		

*Source:* House Report 171 (1921), pp. 4-5

*Note:* numbers in parentheses are the number of additional guns issued to the service and retained by the Ordnance Dept.

Although a great deal of materiel was captured (Table 2), the competition between the 11,000 American Legion posts (who argued that it was their members who captured the guns, after all), parks, museums, and public squares, left the Committee on Military Affairs at loggerheads. In fact, when the bill went to the House, they so seriously rewrote it that in effect nothing survived. Part of the objection was that to display war materiel was tantamount to encouraging war, and some member(s) wanted to recall all materiel already on display throughout the country and destroy it: The Socialist Representative from New York, Meyer London, wanted to put it all on a battleship and scuttle the lot at sea.

On the matter of transportation costs, state leaders of the American Legion appealed to their governors, but only three of the forty-five that replied said that their state was willing to pay those costs, noting the inherent unfairness of, say, California having to pay ten times as much for the same number of trophies as New Jersey (captured materiel was stored at the Raritan Arsenal and Fort Newark) due solely to transport costs. In addition, at least half of the captured materiel, especially the wheeled pieces, were in such a state as to be unfit for outdoor display. Most needed to be painted (“The cannon, carriages, and vehicles are all stored in the open and are rapidly deteriorating, and present an unsightly appearance and, to avoid undue criticism or unfavorable comment, should be painted before distribution is made”)<sup>34</sup> but even the Legion realized that this would destroy their historic state at the time of capture (“will spoil their effect as trophies”)<sup>35</sup> as well as cost the government another \$30,000-60,000 (depending on whose estimates one accepted). It was estimated that they could reduce the overall cost to only \$250,000, but that would still leave the trophies to each state to distribute from their capitols.

<sup>34</sup> H.Rep. 171, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> S.674, p. 5



Part of the problem lay in the geography of the situation. As early as 1919, Congress had acted to get trophies of the war to various localities around the country, though how certain smaller towns were favored with such actions while larger cities might be ignored is a curious question of influence. Rep. John Gordon Cooper (R-OH), for example, introduced three separate resolutions (H.R. 4409–4411) to have the Secretary of War donate a German cannon each to the small Ohio towns east of Cleveland of Mesopotamia, Andover, and Orwell. Rep. Joseph Wellington Byrns (D-TN), not to be outdone, introduced five resolutions to donate 12 captured German guns to Stewart, Springfield, Clarksville, Cheatham and Nashville. Rep. Thomas Sutler Williams (R-IL) was modest in his resolutions, requesting only one for Norris City, IL, a farm town in the southern part of the state which still only has a population of 1,244 (in 2016), while Andrew James Hickey (R-IN) proposed eighteen separate resolutions for towns and especially colleges in Indiana. Edward Campbell Lyttle (R-KS) was much more efficient, proposing a single resolution (H.R. 4388) to seven cities and the University of Kansas. And so on.<sup>36</sup>

As John Franklin Miller (R-WA) argued on the floor of the Senate on August 3, 1921:

We realized, as every Member of this House must realize, that some of the congressional districts and some of the States are situated near the source of supply, near where these war trophies are stored. ...Are you going to take the State of California, which was exceeded by only eight States in the American Union in the number of soldiers contributed to the war [applause], and force its citizens to pay the cost of the transportation of these war trophies to the Pacific coast? ...Can you conceive of a man being in favor of this bill, knowing that these war trophies are stored in the eastern part of the United States, who pretends to be honest with himself and with the American people, saying that the folks of this country shall not receive these war trophies unless they go down into their pockets and pay the expense of having them sent to the places where the people live? ...Out yonder in Utah and California and Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, and down in New Mexico it is not fair to expect those people to pay for the transportation of these war trophies, because the cost would be so great in comparison to the transportation cost in the States nearby where the trophies are stored.<sup>37</sup>

Localities, too, took it in their own hands to demand—well, formally and politely request—trophies from the newly-created War Distribution Board [WDB], as when Staunton, VA resolved “Whereas, Staunton furnished over four hundred volunteer troops to the war, in addition to her draft quota, etc.,” therefore “the War Distribution board be requested to recognize [its] claims and award Staunton a fair share of the war trophies allotted to the state of Virginia.”<sup>38</sup>

Debates continued in Congress in 1921, 1922, and 1923, under CMA secretary John W. Weeks (R-MA; Wikipedia calls him a “competent, honest, and respected administrator and adviser who guided the Department of War through its post-World War I downsizing”) and it was not until May 1924 that an act was passed “To provide for the equitable distribution of captured war devices

<sup>36</sup> All of these are from one day in the *Congressional Record* for the House, June 2, 1919, pp. 546-547.

<sup>37</sup> *Congressional Record*, House, 3 Aug 1921, p. 4616.

<sup>38</sup> “Chamber of Commerce is after Hotel,” *The News Leader* [Staunton, VA], October 10, 1922, p. 1. “Show 13 Reasons for War Trophies,” *Reading Times* [Reading, PA], 19 Aug 1920, p. 5. “Relics of War to be Distributed,” *The Bee* [Danville, VA], 4 Oct 1922, p. 7.



and trophies” across the country.<sup>39</sup> In it the simple solution turned out to be that the captured guns, howitzers, machine guns, and the like—other than those reserved by the U.S. military for use or experiment—should simply be apportioned by the relative number of men who served from April 11, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918 from each state or territory. Congress appropriated only \$39,000—“or so much thereof as may be necessary,” and they added a proviso that that money could not be used for “Cleaning, etc.,” apparently leaving that problem to the states—for the distribution of the materiel, however. Within a month the House had to amend the act to put the decision more firmly in the hands of the Secretary of War and extend the period in which all this was to happen from one year to approximately three. In theory, then, by July 1, 1928, all the material should have been distributed, sold or destroyed. Still, Congress had to pass yet another separate resolution in 1926 to explicitly order the Secretary of War to deliver examples of captured materiel not yet distributed to the national museum of the American Legion in Indianapolis.<sup>40</sup>

### Conclusion

Which brings us back to the German 77 that arrived in Houghton in the summer of 1919. Why did we get one? Part of it is clearly a matter of connections. There were only three distributed to all of the Ninth Federal Reserve District from Montana to the UP that summer, one to us, one to Montana and one to South Dakota, though who was directly responsible for these choices has yet to be determined. But as our speech-givers here said, one can claim a war trophy as a symbol of power or a symbol of loss; of power or of humility. During the war they were clearly symbols of might—either ours if it was our equipment running about in mock battles in the local arena or park, or

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<sup>39</sup> Public Law 68-234, ch. 312 (amended in ch. 362), 68 Congress, Session 1, An Act: To provide for the equitable distribution of captured war devices and trophies to the States and Territories of the United States and to the District of Columbia, U.S. Statutes at Large vol. 43, no. Main Section (1924): p. 597-599 [43 Stat. 597]. HeinOnline, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.statute/sal043&i=631>.

See further:

61 Cong. Rec. 402 (1921) legislation dealing with pensions, private claims, distribution of war trophies, etc.

62 Cong. Rec. 354 (1922) Res. 1-Providing that legislation dealing with pensions, private claims, distribution of war trophies, etc., be initiated by petition on suitable furnished forms.

63 Cong. Rec. 31 (1922) Res. 247-Providing funds for the maintenance of public order United States certain war trophies captured by or surrendered.

63 Cong. Rec. 32 (1922) Res. 244-To donate to the American Legion certain war trophies.

63 Cong. Rec. 37 (1922) Res. 398-To donate to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States certain war trophies captured by or surrendered to the armed forces of the United States in the World War.

64 Cong. Rec. 190 (1923) Res. 250-To donate to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States certain war trophies captured by or surrendered to the armed forces of the United States in the World War.

<sup>40</sup> Public Resolution 69-19, ch. 187, 69 Congress, Session 1, *Joint Resolution: Directing the Secretary of War to allot war trophies to the American Legion Museum*. The Senate actually made more or less the same resolution in 1922 (Senate Joint Resolution 244) for the American Legion, and a parallel one (S. J.R. 250) for the VFW, but they must never have come into effect.



theirs if it was the twisted wreckage of captured equipment—and they were explicitly displayed to get Americans to support the war. After the war Congress sent them across the country (and this is a poorly studied process) to recognize the sacrifice of towns to the horror that is war.

Whether war trophies can have other valences is a broader question that cannot be dealt with here. On one hand, it is clear that trophies after WWII were quite different in their associations, given the values for which the Axis stood (attempts to dehumanize the Germans in WWI notwithstanding, the propaganda of suspected “German atrocities” could never equal the clear atrocities of the Nazis or Japanese).<sup>41</sup> Personal war trophies are another element of the question which reminds us that there are personal values and societal values that come into play in the repatriation of war trophies. But since individuals can’t repatriate a 77mm German field gun, that does not play into our story here. Still, it will be interesting to find out what happened to the trophies on display at the AWEs as they travelled around the country, just as it will be interesting to try to find out what happened to Michigan Tech’s German 77.

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<sup>41</sup> Lyneyve Finch, “Psychological Propaganda: The War of Ideas on Ideas During the First Half of the Twentieth Century.” *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 3 (2000): 367–86.





## Appendix A.

Letter of John W. Black as reported in “Captured German Gun Escorted to College by Soldiers,” *Daily Mining Gazette* [Houghton, MI], Aug. 28, 1919, p. 2.

“Only three of these guns are to be placed as permanent memorials in the Ninth Federal Reserve District. One is to signify Montana’s support for its government in the recent conflict, one will remind South Dakota of its part in the war, and one will rest fittingly upon the site of the engineers’ training camp and upon the grounds of an institution that was devoted unreservedly to the winning of the war, as Northern Michigan’s constant reminder of the sacrifices of her sons, and their valiant and heroic part in the mighty struggle overseas for the right.

“I trust that every man who looks upon this captured trophy in the future, will remember that it is not simply an evidence of the conquering power of a free army, fighting for the maintenance in the world of the right of men to be free and equal, and for the preservation of the ideals which are the present hope of humanity, but will reverently recall the heroic devotion, the hardships and the sacrifices of our men who insofar as their part went, did their full measure of service and helped make victory possible. This gun represents not military power, but the triumph of free government over the most terrible autocracy with which civilization in its history has had to contend. It represents right which has conquered might. It represents the preservation of democracy, liberty, freedom and opportunity, through a crisis that but for our victory, might have engulfed these precious heritages and forever buried them under the heel of the Prussian war god. It presents to us a permanent reminder that power that is not based on right principles, justice and equity cannot permanently endure in the world. It recalls many of our bravest and best, who lie under the flowered fields of France and did not come back, because they believed in these things. I am thankful for my life among such men. Their record in the war will be an inspiration so long as we shall live.

“We might have placed a shaft, or a skillfully wrought bronze memorial, in the place of this weapon. I think, however, that this captured trophy is the best and the most fitting reminder of Northern Michigan’s sacrifices and of its devotion to government and the principles upon which this great nation was founded. This mechanism of iron and steel meant to the men who designed it, to those who fabricated it, and to those who took it into action, that Hun domination, Hun principles of government and a Hun attitude towards the peoples of the world, should hereafter control the nations of the earth. Its very efficiency as an agency of destruction marks how great was the fall of the German empire, and how terrible a fate the world has been saved. It is therefore a proper memorial and I think that we shall not forget its great significance.”



## Appendix B.

“Address of C. H. Benedict at Presentation of German Gun,” *Calumet News* [Calumet, MI], 28 Aug. 19, p. 3.

On the occasion of the presentation of a captured German cannon at the College of Mines yesterday afternoon, C.H. Benedict, on behalf of the Federal Reserve of the Ninth district, spoke as follows:

“As I understand it this cannon is one of many others captured by American forces and now distributed to various localities in further recognition of the part they played in the great war. If each locality that did its part were to have one there would not be found enough in the whole German line from Antwerp to the Argonne and so Houghton is very fortunate to be able to claim one of these pieces for its own. Its resting in this city and on this campus can be justified only if Houghton shall truly represent the progressive spirit of the upper peninsula and if this campus, and this college shall truly exemplify all that is best in the industrial and the technical life of this district.

“For the past war was above anything else a technical and a scientific one. Not only was soldier pitted against soldier but nation was pitted against nation and for every warrior on the firing line there were ten civilians at home striving with the implements of the arts of peace to forge a more effective weapon for the sterner art of war. And if there is to be no next war as all the peoples hope and pray it will be because science and engineering and industry has constructed a weapon so destructive of life and property that to invoke its use as an arbiter of national dispute is to imperil the very foundations of civilization itself.

“Who shall say how close to the brink of destruction civilization was on November 11 last or how much we have moved away from that brink since that date? Consider Germany in 1914 and then consider her again in 1919. Let the mute brass lips before us have the power of speech and what a tale they could tell of a flourishing people on that earlier date, alive with industry and filled with hope and then on that later date fallen so low that none could do it homage. And what about Austria and Bulgaria and Turkey? These fell from their highest state you may say because of the enemy without. Who shall say there is less danger now to us from the enemy within? Not the traitor, nor the pro-German do I mean but that more insidious enemy called ease or sloth or luxury; the desire to reap without having sown; the desire to consume without having produced; the desire to enjoy without having labored. ‘As ye sow, so shall ye reap’ is as true now as it was 2,000 years ago and it is just as true physically as it is spiritually. If you do not produce you may not consume and you may consume only as much as you produce.

“Ninety per cent of the ills that inflict us now as a nation would disappear within a fortnight if we each of us practiced the homely virtues of thrift and hard work, practiced them ourselves, mind you, and did not preach them for the other fellow. What the world needs is production and producers, and not destruction and destroyers.

“And so the lesson of this brass instrument of war placed upon this spot must come by contrast. As surely as it stands for desolation and destruction so surely shall this school stand for peace and construction. More iron and more copper, therefore more plows and more thrashing machines and more motors, therefore more food stuffs and more of all those products that go to make up modern human life.



“I have met many of the young men within the last fifteen years who have graduated from this institution and I do not know which is the cause and which is the effect—whether this institution has in the past attracted men of high calibre or whether it has attracted the average run of students and has molded them into a finer form. But this I do know, that the men who left this institution have been men who have been able to take a leading part in the mining industry and its allied branches and so it is not at all strange that the engineering companies which may claim the School of Mines of Houghton County and the Upper Peninsula as their training ground should have played a distinctive part in the struggle now happily passed. And so to the perennial youth that may come to this institution in the future this bronze cannon may stand as a symbol of the valor of American manhood in 1918, the year in which it was wrested from the Germans.

“May it forever give mute testimony to the noble type of men who made possible its capture and though it stand here a thousand years may it never behold an American sword drawn, save in a righteous cause, nor if drawn, sheathed unless the cause be victorious.”