CALIFORNIANS OVER THERE:
CALIFORNIA’S ROLE IN WORLD WAR ONE

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CALIFORNIANS OVER THERE:
CALIFORNIA’S ROLE IN WORLD WAR ONE

A Project

by

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Abstract

of

CALIFORNIANS OVER THERE:
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Deborah Hollingsworth

The lyrics to George M. Cohan’s 1917 song, Over There, aroused the patriotic fervor of a country marching off to fight in World War One. Separated by thousands of miles, the only thing that connected families to the boys over there were the letters they wrote back and forth to each other. “Californians Over There: California’s Role in World War One” is a museum exhibit that features the letters of doughboy Edward Bates to his family. The exhibit also highlights the experiences of another Californian, Colonel Nelson M. Holderman, who was a member of the “Lost Battalion” that survived six days surrounded by the Germans. This paper details the planning and fabrication process of creating the Californians Over There exhibit, which was on display from June 14, 2011 to June 1, 2012 at the California State Capitol Museum in Sacramento, California.

________________________
Committee Chair

Patrick Ettinger, PhD

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Date
DEDICATION

To Edward Bates and his family, to Colonel Nelson M. Holderman, and to all of the young Americans, including my grandfather, Harold B. Monroe, who fought in the First World War for this country.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I recently found a letter tucked away in my mother’s attic that I wrote in March 1977. “I am definitely going to major in history,” I wrote. “With that I could major in museum studies…There’s a great demand for what they call public historians.” My life took a different turn after that. I forgot all about being a public historian until 2007 when, after returning to school to finish my bachelor’s degree, I took a history class with Dr. Patrick Ettinger. He encouraged me to pursue my master’s degree in public history. I am truly grateful to him, my family and friends who have supported me in this endeavor.

The Californians Over There project warrants a long list of people to thank for their cooperation because there would be no exhibit without them. First, I am indebted to the staff of the California State Library. Although now retired, Principal Librarian Gary Kurutz, enthusiastically allowed me to use the letters of Edward Bates and his family in this exhibit. In addition, the library’s staff is the most helpful group of people I have ever met. Thank you to Catherine Hanson, Karen Paige, Michael Dolgushkin, Kathleen Correia, Janet Clemmensen, Kelisha Skoglund, Kira Graybill, Victoria Newton, and Elizabeth Yeatts for all of your patience and assistance.

A very special thank you goes to Carol DeBell, Senior Librarian with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Home of California, Yountville. Carol’s passion and devotion to her subject is beyond comparison; she went out of her way to accommodate and help us with anything and everything we needed for this exhibit.
Thank you to my colleagues on the *Californians Over There* exhibit team: Robert Maciel, Tim Gellinck, Renato Consolini, and Ty Smith. Thank you also to Adella Valdez, who even though she was transferred to another division during the project, left her indelible mark on this exhibit. She conducted research, connected with the veterans home, and contributed irreplaceable curatorial expertise to the project. My deepest thanks goes to Renato and Ty, with whom I bonded so closely on this exhibit. Renato is a talented designer who drives the exhibit and makes sure everyone performs on task. We will forever be at odds as I clamor for more space and panels, but he is nothing but patient with me as we work on our exhibits. I most especially thank Ty Smith for his expertise and support. As an historian and past graduate of CSUS’s Public History Program, Ty understands the importance of historical scholarship and interpretation. Without Ty’s guidance, this would have been another “information-driven” exhibit. His passion for history inspires me. I learned more than I can say from him on this project.

Professionally, I must thank the three people who have mentored me and offered me the opportunity to work in the field of public history. Thank you to Sacramento City Historian, Marcia Eymann, for whom I interned and worked at the Sacramento History Museum and Center for Sacramento History. Marcia taught me the importance of professional, historical research. I am very grateful for Marcia’s expertise, support, and friendship over the years. I am also indebted to (retired) California State Parks and Recreation Curator III, Bruce Stiny, and California State Parks and Recreation Capital District Superintendent, Cathy Taylor for taking a huge leap of faith by hiring me as a
Park Interpretive Specialist. As my direct supervisor in five exhibits, Bruce supported me and had the most calming influence as the stress of deadlines loomed. I am also thankful for Cathy Taylor’s confidence in my abilities and assigning me to the exhibits at the California State Capitol Museum.

Thank you to all of the professors I have taken classes from at CSUS. I especially thank Mona Siegel for her expertise and inspiration, and Chris Castanada for his guidance and help in the reading of this paper. No one has motivated me more than Dr. Patrick Ettinger who has always shown the most remarkable faith in me and made me believe I could achieve this goal.

On a personal level, I never would have made it without the friends and family who have encouraged me along the way. Katie Van Wie stands out as the person who has done more for me than anyone in the world. I owe this project to her and her angelic guidance that led me through some of my hardest days.

Finally, I thank my family. Thank you to my ex-husband, Jim Hollingsworth, for his support. I could not have pursued my dreams without it, and am truly grateful. Thank you to the true inspirations in life, my daughters, Margo and Lesley. They have supported me with their encouraging words, love, and patience and make everything in life worthwhile.

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Chapter 1

CALIFORNIA STATE CAPITOL MUSEUM EXHIBIT

This paper examines the process of creating a museum exhibit for California State Parks and Recreation at the California State Capitol Museum in Sacramento (CSCM). The title of the exhibit, *Californians Over There: California’s Role in World War One*, opened on June 14, 2011 and closed June 1, 2012. Although the exhibit features the personal stories of two California soldiers, their stories are intended to represent the universal experience of all California men who served: men who volunteered or were drafted; men who saw action at the front or performed service jobs that kept the military operation functioning; men who left home for the first time, bound for a world few could imagine; men who survived and men who died. This paper explains the process of creating an exhibit from the initial research and idea stages, through the procurement of objects, graphic selection, writing of text, exhibit design, display techniques, and finally, to the opening of the exhibit.

The California State Capitol sits on forty acres of land in the heart of Sacramento on 10th Street between L and N Streets, and the California State Capitol Museum (CSCM) occupies the ground floor of the Capitol building. Created during the Capitol Restoration Project of 1978, the museum is part of the California State Parks and Recreation system. The museum consists of six historically recreated rooms with the Archives, Attorney General, and State Library rooms remaining unfurnished in order to
accommodate a rotating exhibit schedule. The CSCM welcomes 250,000 visitors a year; admission is free and open to the public seven days a week.¹

The CSCM maintains some of its own collections in the Capitol’s archive. These consist mainly of photographs and information pertaining to the history of the Capitol, as well as the 1978 restoration. One of the Capitol’s most treasured collections, the historic flag collection, is housed at the California State Archives, and the decision to display these flags provided the impetus for the World War One exhibit. The Californians Over There exhibit is the third and final in a series of exhibits designed to showcase the Capitol’s collection of flags. Exhibits about California in the Civil War and Spanish American War were previously staged.

The flag collection dates back to 1863 when the Secretary of State at the time proposed displaying the flags carried by Californians during the Civil War in the Assembly chamber. In 1911, the legislature appropriated $600 to install cases in the rotunda “for the display in the State Capitol of certain colors, flags, guidons, and standards carried by California soldiers in certain wars and active service.”² As a result, the flags from the Civil War, Spanish American War, and (later) World War One remained on permanent display on the second floor of the rotunda for seventy more years. By 1976, the flags were in chronic need of conservation after suffering noticeable damage not only from age but also from exposure to decades of unfiltered sunlight.

¹ Visitation statistics are visual compilations based on tallies from museum guides who are stationed in the exhibit rooms. These are rough estimates and are not precise calculations.
² Lucinda Woodward, A Documentary History of California’s State Capitol (California State Capitol Restoration Project, 1981), 177.
With forty five flags in the collection, the expense of restoring them all at once was unrealistic. Consequently, their conservation has been an on-going project since 1982. From 2001-2008 the California State Senate, Assembly, and CSCM funded the conservation of eleven flags. By that time, the flags had remained hidden from public view for nearly a generation, and legislators discussed the need to display them once again. In 2009, the CSCM sponsored a three-year exhibit schedule that dedicated a one-year display program for each set of the war’s flags, beginning with the Civil War, continuing with the Spanish American War, and finishing with the First World War.

This proposal challenged curators to find a way to safely display the flags without harming them in the process. As always, the flags’ main enemy remained the sun and its damaging rays. Exhibit planners solved the problem by outfitting the former Library exhibit room with shaded windows to shield the flags from exposure to sunlight, and they also turned off the room’s electric lights. Additionally, the legislature authorized funding for the CSCM to purchase specially designed, climate-controlled display cases outfitted with motion-activated light-emitting diode (LED) lighting.

As visitors enter the dark exhibit room, motion detectors activate the LED lighting inside the cases, thus safely illuminating the flags for short lengths of time. When visitors are not present, the flags rest in the darkness of the room. Back-lit text panels offer the means to provide the historical background for the flags without adding extra light to the room. The adjoining Attorney General’s room, with no lighting restrictions, offers additional exhibit space to interpret the war that the flags represent.
My role as a California State Park Interpretive Specialist was to research, help plan, and write the text panels for the exhibit. I have been the Interpretive Specialist for all of the flag exhibits. The first displayed *Our Union Forever: California’s Role in the Civil War* from May 2009 to May 2010. The second exhibit, *This Means War: California’s Role in the Spanish American War*, ran from June 2010 to May 2011. This paper explains my role in the planning of the Capitol’s third flag exhibit, *Californians Over There: California’s Role in World War One*. 
Chapter 2

THE GREAT WAR:
CALIFORNIA IN WORLD WAR ONE

World War One, or the “Great War” as it was referred to in its day, traces its origins to June 28, 1914. It was on that day that the heir to the imperial throne of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Sophie visited the capital city of Sarajevo, which was located in the recently-annexed province of Bosnia. A young Serbian nationalist who wanted Bosnia to be a part of an independent Serbia assassinated the royal couple and triggered a diplomatic crisis among Europe’s Great Powers, who were committed to each other through a complex system of military alliances.

Austria declared war on Serbia, prompting Germany’s emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, to do the same in support of his nation’s ally. Russia was committed to Serbia’s defense, and the European powers fell in line according to their treaty obligations. Two opposing sides materialized: the “Allied” nations of Russia, France, and Britain against the “Central” Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. On August 4, 1914, German troops crossed the border into the neutral country of Belgium. Great Britain was committed to securing Belgium’s neutrality and declared war on Germany. World War One had begun.³

A world war it truly was, for combatants fought in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean theatres. There were four European sites of war, including the Italian, Macedonian, Eastern, and Western Fronts, but Americans fought primarily on Germany’s Western Front. This front extended 475 miles through Europe from the English Channel to the Swiss Alps. By the end of 1914, with death tolls topping a half million men and little gain in territory, the offensive war of movement stopped and a defensive war of attrition began. Each side dug in and built elaborate systems of trenches from which to fight, separated only by a narrow strip of land ensnared with barbed wire and protected by machine gun fire from the opposite side. The men labeled it “No Man’s Land,” because no man wanted to venture out there and become an immediate target. This trench warfare remained the Western Front’s fighting method for the four years of the war.

The Eastern Front in Russia, on the other hand, covered vastly more land. This war was much more turbulent and mobile than its European counterpart, but with a death toll equally as painful. By 1917, the Russian economy stood at the brink of collapse, causing revolution and the overthrow of Czar Nicholas II from power. Ravaged by war, revolution, and the death of one million of its citizens, Russia negotiated its own peace terms with Germany and withdrew from the war in early 1918.⁴

America remained neutral throughout the conflict until Congress, at the urging of President Woodrow Wilson, declared war on Germany in April 1917. A slogan used in

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Wilson’s 1916 re-election campaign, “He kept us out of war,” demonstrated the president’s determination to keep America from intervening in the European war. But by 1917 conditions escalated to the point that the United States would not remain neutral. Unrestricted German U-boat, or submarine, attacks against neutral U.S. ships crossing the Atlantic, and a German plot encouraging Mexico to join in a war against the United States together made neutrality out of the question. Wilson urged Congress to declare war on Germany during a special session held on April 2, 1917. “It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war,” he stated, “but the right is more precious than the peace, and we shall fight for the things we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy.” Congress responded with a declaration of war, and four days later President Wilson signed the war resolution into effect.

The United States was now at war, but grossly underprepared to fight. First and foremost, the army was far too small to engage in such a monumental undertaking. With enrollments numbering at only 137,000 Regulars and 181,000 National Guardsmen, recruitments needed to number at 800,000 or more troops to be of any value to the Allies. Not only were the overall numbers low, but there was also a great deficiency in trained officers, needed to lead the raw troops to war against the superior, battle-tested German army. Finally, time—or the lack of it—was a critical issue. It would take a year to recruit, train, mobilize, and supply the troops before they could serve overseas.

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The French and the British understood the weaknesses facing American mobilization and vigorously argued for immediate American troop reinforcements. “It is vital that American troops of all arms be poured into France as soon as possible,” British Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated. But Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force, General John J. Pershing, steadfastly refused any American troop amalgamation proposals. “The two Allies, France and Britain,” he explained, “had decided the best way to use the American forces when they got there [France] was just to feed them into the depleted French and British divisions. . . . In other words, to have the Americans fight under another flag.”

Pershing’s commitment to sending full-strength American divisions overseas rather than supplying Americans as replacements within Allied divisions frustrated the French and British leaders. By 1917, Allied death tolls were staggering. French deaths added up to one and one half million men since the war began, and British casualties for the previous year alone totaled 450,000. Their armies were exhausted and weakened. To make matters worse, Germany prepared to send dozens of new divisions to the Western Front after Russia’s withdrawal from the war. Germany hoped to defeat the Allies before the Americans could revitalize Allied divisions with fresh troops.

Pershing, however, refused to send American doughboys, a term used for American soldiers, overseas to fight under any flag but America’s. He had good reasons.

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9 Ibid, 17.
for his steadfast commitment to this policy. Pershing understood the importance of public opinion and he believed it would be unpopular with the American people and bad for troop morale to send American men over in such an uncontrolled manner. Charles Dawes, an officer and close associate of General Pershing, observed that the General believed that sending the men to war in complete divisions would preserve the their “esprit de corps, the pride of their country, the support of the American public, the honor of our nation.”

General Pershing also opposed a policy of amalgamation because he believed the Allies should launch an aggressive assault against the Germans to overwhelm and defeat them. He hated the strategy of attrition that the Western Front had settled into, and feared that sending Americans over as replacements would allow France and Britain to reopen the eastern front in “pursuit of political aims.” He did not want his troops dispatched “here and there” away from the Western front. Pershing’s dedication to sending Americans overseas as members of American-led divisions put him at odds with French and British leaders time and time again.

Pershing did, however, make an exception with one group of American soldiers: African Americans. The War Department “temporarily” incorporated four African American infantry regiments, the 369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd from the 93rd (provisional) Division into the French military. These African Americans served under the command of French officers; they wore French helmets and French uniforms, and fought with

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10 Ibid, 125-6.
11 Kennedy, Over Here, 172-3.
French arms and equipment. They were as “outcast” in the AEF as in American society itself, but these black American soldiers fought bravely under the French flag for the duration of the war. They participated in the Champagne-Marne offensive and lost 1,500 men. The French treated the African Americans respectfully and awarded more than one hundred of the men with France’s venerated *Croix de Guerre* medal.

The 93rd Division was one of only two African American combat divisions in the segregated U.S. Army. The army assigned the remaining African Americans to the areas requiring mostly unskilled and menial labor such as digging ditches, working on the docks, burying the dead, and disposing of garbage. Seventy-five percent of the more than four hundred thousand African Americans drafted into the armed forces worked in labor units where they performed grueling, tiresome work under demeaning conditions.

With amalgamation a dead issue, Pershing faced mounting pressure to send trained divisions to the anxious Allies as quickly as possible. As a demonstration of strength and unity with France and Britain, Pershing selected his best trained regiments and formed the “First Division”. On July 4, 1917, America’s First Division marched through the streets of Paris as the bands played and Parisians waved flags and threw flowers. In a speech to the French people, America’s Captain Charles Stanton first uttered the words that American troops would proclaim throughout the duration of the war:

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“Nous voila, Lafayette: Lafayette, We Are Here,” in homage to the Marquis de Lafayette and France’s pivotal assistance to the American colonies during the Revolutionary War.\footnote{Mead, The Doughboys, 106-7. Many mistakenly attribute the quote to Pershing, but Mead explains that Pershing asked Stanton to make the speech because Stanton’s French was better. According to Pershing, it was Stanton who coined “so happy and felicitous a phrase.”} By mid-July, the 1\textsuperscript{st} Division was at the front, followed by the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 26\textsuperscript{th}, and 42\textsuperscript{nd}. These four divisions were the only U.S. troops to spend the entire winter of 1917-18 in France.

Meanwhile, the task of creating a national army for the first time in U.S. history got underway. Unlike the Civil War and Spanish American War, when volunteer regiments from individual states made up the army ranks and each state outfitted and trained its own soldiers, this war required a more efficient and functional process. Congress passed the Selective Service Act on May 19, 1917; on July 20 Secretary of War Newton Baker drew the first number of an eventual 2.8 million men inducted into the draft.\footnote{John S. D. Eisenhower, Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 25.} The American public rallied around the war effort, believing it was America’s role to “make the world safe for democracy.”\footnote{Farwell, Over There, 16. Farwell observes that the United States was the only nation to enter the war without territorial ambitions. This quote from Woodrow Wilson’s April 2, 1917 speech to Congress demonstrates that America’s goals were visionary in nature.}

California responded to the news of war with the same enthusiasm as the rest of the country. Some religious and women’s groups strongly opposed the conflict in the early years prior to 1917, but many of their voices turned to support after America entered the war.\footnote{Mary Ann Irwin, “The Air is Becoming Full of War: Jewish San Francisco and World War I.” Pacific Historical Review 74, no.3 (Aug. 2005): 344-45. Irwin describes a 1916 protest against U.S. militarism in}
state’s largest city, San Francisco, but they generally apologized for Germany’s conduct and tried to remain quiet.\textsuperscript{19} This was prudent behavior since anti-German sentiment existed in many neighborhoods throughout California.\textsuperscript{20}

California’s young men between the ages of 21 and 31 however, responded to the call of their nation by either volunteering for service or registering for the draft. Draftees from California served with the 40th, 42nd, or 91st Divisions and they trained at either Camp Kearny in San Diego or Camp Lewis in the state of Washington. Divisions consisted of one thousand officers and 27,000 men. Two brigades formed the infantry, with two regiments assigned to each, including an artillery brigade and a battalion of engineers. This format remained consistent regardless of whether it was the Regular, National Guard, or National Army. It also made the American divisions approximately twice as large as Allied or German divisions.\textsuperscript{21}

The 40th Division consisted of National Guard units from California, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and New Mexico. The division’s official published history, \textit{The History of the Fortieth (Sunshine) Division: 1917-1919}, proudly states that its men represented the “bone and sinew of the great west, full of its boldness, replete with its

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San Francisco that attracted 4,000 people, including Rudolph Spreckels, son of sugar magnate Clause Spreckels.\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 346.\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 348. Bands of white-robed men reportedly rode through the streets of Richmond for the purpose of “enforcing loyalty.” On May 1, 1918, Guido Poenisich was taken from his home in Richmond by fifty white-robed men; he was “tried” for disloyalty, tarred and feathered, and forced to buy $100 in Liberty Bonds. On May 2, 1918, George Koetzer was taken from his bed, tarred and feathered and chained to a fun in front of San Jose’s McKinley Monument (when they arrived, police arrested Koetzer). Municipal authorities also succumbed to war hysteria: In March 8, 1918, the San Francisco police formed a “neutrality squad” to find out what “every enemy alien is doing to help the U.S. win the war.” \textsuperscript{21} Eisenhower, \textit{Yanks}, 62.
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spirit of individuality and practicality.”

They called themselves the “Sunshine Division,” since the men trained at Camp Kearny in “sunny” San Diego, California. To their disappointment, however, they did not remain together as a fighting division when they shipped overseas. “Thus it was not given to the Sunshine Division,” laments their History, “to stand as a unit to light up the smoke of battle with the torch of western valor and western patriotism so that we might all see and acknowledge.”

One of the Sunshine Division’s most famous members came from California. Captain Nelson M. Holderman served with Company L, 160th Infantry, of the 40th Division until he was transferred to Company K, 307th Infantry of the 77th Division. As a member of the 77th Division, Holderman fought in one of World War One’s most famous battles: the siege of the “Lost Battalion.” He received the Medal of Honor for his “unflinching courage” and “distinguished success” during the extended German entrapment. Holderman was one of more than 27,000 replacements the Sunshine Division provided to the 26th, 28th, 32d, 77th, 80th, 81st, 82d, and 89th Divisions.

Another division with which Californians fought was the 42nd, or “Rainbow Division,” and consisted of the best National Guard units from the District of Columbia and twenty six states including California. Many people credit Chief of Staff Major Douglas MacArthur with naming the unit, as their published history, California Rainbow

23 Ibid, 26.
Memories, explains: “Truly it was a ‘Rainbow,’ for it was composed of a group of men who represented as many different American ideals, traditions, and temperaments [sic] as they represented communities.” The 42nd was one of the original four divisions sent to France in 1917. They trained at Camp Mills on Long Island, New York, and fought in several campaigns, including the St. Mihiel, Champagne-Marne Offensive, Aisne-Marne Offensive, and the Meuse-Argonne. The 42nd also served with the Army of Occupation after the signing of the armistice. Praising the men at the end of the war, General Pershing wrote that each man played a part in “bringing glory to the American army and to their fellows throughout the American Expeditionary Forces.”

The third division in which Californians served was the 91st, which included conscripts from the states of California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and the Territory of Alaska, and they trained at Camp Lewis, Washington. The motto of the 91st, or “Wild West Division,” was “Always Ready” because they were made of the “hardy pioneer families that had settled the West.” Combat positions were not the only needs of the army. Skilled technicians, as well as supply, transportation, and service personnel, were also required to carry out the

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26 “Formation of the Rainbow,” California Rainbow Memories: A Pictorial Review of the Activities of the 2nd Battalion, 117th Engineers During the World War, ed. E.J. Sadler, 1925. (no page numbers)
27 Aurora Hunt, “World War I,” 65. This is a chapter in a photocopied document written by Aurora Hunt about California regiments and flags from the Civil War, Spanish American War, and WWI. There is no publishing information available.
28 Ibid, 67.
bureaucratic and logistical needs of the new national army. Engineers, railroad men, truck drivers, and other noncombatants accompanied the infantry units to France.  

One of the units in the 91st Division, the 2nd Battalion of the 117th Engineers, consisted almost entirely of Californians. The job of the engineer was demanding and dangerous. Engineer regiments did not build roads “peacefully” removed from the front-line fighting, as their Colonel J.M. Johnson stated in a tribute to his men, but were in actual conflict more than of any other branch of the service. One man, Lewis J. Ashby from Los Angeles, served with the 117th Engineers. “Many times we go out in the front of the infantry to work, building roads, bridges, putting up barb wire,” he wrote in a September 18, 1918 letter home. “We also go ahead of the tanks. An engineer’s life isn’t all together an easy job.” The Wild West Division arrived in France in July of 1918, and fought in the St. Mihiel Bulge, Meuse-Argonne, and Ypres-Lys in Belgium. They demobilized on May 13, 1919 at San Francisco’s Presidio.

These Californians and other Americans trained and shipped out in ever-increasing numbers as 1917 rolled into 1918. In March 1918, 60,000 soldiers sailed to France; 93,000 deployed in April; 240,000 in May, and 280,000 in June. In the end, two million American men shipped off to France. They fought in battles named for their locations in France, such as Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Wood, but the main area of American operations was the sector around Verdun, France, near the Argonne Forest.

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29 Jennifer Keene, *Doughboys*, 39.
30 Colonel J.M. Johnson, “Forward,” in *California Rainbow Memories*.
Located close to the German border, it was an important area to Germany for its proximity to coal fields, iron ore, and rail lines. Pershing and his French and British counterparts concluded that a successful Allied invasion there would create an opening for the invasion of Germany and an end to the war. The strategic importance was not lost on the Germans who defended the area so fiercely throughout the war that British and French forces made no attempt to capture it until the arrival of American troops.33

This, the Meuse-Argonne campaign, the final battle on the Western Front, brought the French, British, and American divisions together to uniformly fight back the Germans. From September 26 to November 11, 1918, twenty-two American infantry divisions, or 1.2 million American soldiers, participated in the battle. The sector assigned to the AEF consisted of 150 kilometers of brutal terrain, bordering the dense Argonne forest on one side and the Meuse River to the other. With German defenses poised at the high ground, the Germans possessed the geographic advantage over Allied advancement. In an engagement that could be potentially catastrophic for the Americans, Pershing hoped the size, strength, and energy of his army would overcome the tactical disadvantages facing him. In the end, it did.

In forty seven days of brutal warfare, one half of America’s war casualties occurred in this final series of battles. “No single battle in American military history, before or since, even approaches the Meuse-Argonne in size and cost, and it was without question the country’s most critical military contribution to the Allied cause in the First

33 Eisenhower, *Yanks*, 47.
World War,” writes author Edward G. Lengel.\textsuperscript{34} Fighting ended with the signing of the armistice at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, or at eleven o’clock am on November 11, 1918.

The impact that the war to end all wars had on world history is almost immeasurable. The world’s great empires, the Austro-Hungarian, czarist Russia, and imperial Germany all crumbled, thus leaving the victors, Britain and France to the task of drawing new world maps. America’s President Woodrow Wilson fought for, but ultimately failed, at creating a lasting world peace organization, League of Nations. In California, the seeds of the future military industrial complex germinated in the hospitable California climate. Millions of soldiers and civilians died worldwide, leaving the people who were left behind to grieve for their lost generation. Many of those who survived the war returned home wounded both in body and spirit.

Europe felt the war’s impact more profoundly than the United States since there were no battles fought on American soil and America’s involvement was shorter in duration compared to Europe. These reasons may account for a comparative lack of interest in the war by most American scholars. Historian Jennifer Keene calls attention to the fact that the “public and historians eagerly study the Civil War, World War II, and the Vietnam War, but World War I has received scant attention recently. Compared to those other great conflicts, it is seen as a brief, mostly dissatisfying, experience, with little

\textsuperscript{34} Lengel, \textit{To Conquer Hell}, 4-5; Williams, \textit{Torchbearers of Democracy}, 136.
transcendent significance.”  

Keene is not the only American historian who notes the indifference displayed toward American World War One scholarship.

Gary Mead, author of *The Doughboys*, notes in his book’s introduction: “The huge book-publishing industry which has grown up around the U.S. Civil War probably generates annual revenues bigger than those of some of the world’s smaller nations. Almost all aspects of the campaigns American soldiers participated in during the Second World War, in Korea, in Vietnam, have been microscopically scrutinized. But who remembers the two million Americans shipped to France in 1917-1918, never mind the two million more who joined up but never even crossed the Atlantic?”  

To Conquer Hell’s author, Edward G. Lengel, observes that “German World War II and American Civil War militaria fetch high prices at public sales; similar items from World War I go cheap. Johnny Reb, Billy Yank, and the GI live forever in the American psyche. The Doughboy has been forgotten.”

How do American historians explain the dearth of attention paid to the Great War? “Obviously,” write Meirion and Susie Harries in their book, *The Last Days of Innocence*, “this conflict has been overlaid by the wars that followed, the Second World War in particular. But emotion has helped make America’s memory selective too—and

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35 Keene, *Doughboys*, ix.  
the strongest emotion in the mix has been shame: the nineteen months of war began in a blaze of patriotic unity, and ended in bitterness, division, and regret.”

Among the American public, however, there is a resurgence of interest in the Great War as families interested in genealogical studies research the experiences of their grandfathers, great-grandfathers or other relatives who fought in World War One, but it still pales against the public memory of World War Two. Approximately twenty thousand people per year visit World War One’s Meuse-Argonne American Memorial Cemetery located outside of Verdun, France, whereas more than one million visitors travel to World War Two’s Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France. The contrast in these yearly visitation figures illustrates the difference in memory and interest levels between these two wars.

This does not take away from the fact that America played an important role in bringing an end to a catastrophic war, and American troops, including Californians, suffered in the process. Author and historian John S.D. Eisenhower writes that the “overseas experiences of the American troops—“doughboys”—bore little relationship to the rousing patriotic songs such as George M. Cohan’s “Over There,” or to the parades and banners. It entailed arduous duties performed in the wet, the cold, sometimes the heat, with death always lurking.”

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39 Jason Blount, Assistant Superintendent of the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, e-mail message to author, February 10, 2012.
40 Eisenhower, *Yanks*, viii.
Chapter 3

EXHIBITING WAR: HISTORY AND MEMORY

War is a complicated topic for public historians to examine because memory of the event can summon strong sentiments and reactions from the parties involved. “Memory is emotional,” writes historian Robert R. Archibald, and is “absolutely related to individual personality, and inherently unpredictable.”\(^{41}\) Because memory is “ubiquitous” in the field of history, as World War One historian Jay Winter has stated, it is an area of study and interest among public and academic historians alike.\(^{42}\)

History and memory are linked for individuals who live through momentous events, such as war, and their memory is influenced by the way they experienced an event. “The act of recalling the past,” writes Winter, is a “dynamic, shifting process, dependent on notions of the future as much as on images of the past.”\(^{43}\) Because memories are not “snapshots” of the past, but rather “reconstructions” subject to feelings and beliefs, the notion of memory is unstable and continually reshaped. Public historians must remain sensitive to the ways in which memory can exploit the meaning and historical context of a subject.


As subject-matter expert in the Californians Over There exhibit, I needed consider how the public learns in order to create an interesting and thoughtful exhibit. “Understanding the various ways in which societies think about the past and use it in the present,” writes historian David Glassberg, “can help public historians to understand the institutional contents in which they operate.” As a society, we understand our past in varied ways. We do this as individuals or as members of groups, in which the media, academic historians, books, or other cultural sources influence our memories and comprehension. Not all memories can stand the test of history. “Sometimes,” Winter observes, “[people] reshape their own memories to fit with history; at other times, they are certain that they have the story right, and historians who say otherwise—whatever the evidence they produce—are wrong.”

The 1995 Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum illustrates this tension between memory and history. When museum curators planned an exhibit in recognition of the fiftieth anniversary of American use of the atomic bomb that ended World War Two, they focused the exhibit on the display of the airplane, the Enola Gay. American pilots flew this plane when they dropped the bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Curators proposed presenting the bomb as both “savior and destroyer” by

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45 Winter, Remembering War, 5.
examining the history of strategic bombing in warfare, questioning the necessity of using such force, and focusing on the Japanese victims of the bomb.\textsuperscript{46}

Members of the World War Two generation disputed this interpretation, however, because their collective memory differed from the historical interpretation on the subject. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs wrote about this phenomenon in his seminal work, \textit{The Collective Memory}. “Lived history,” he writes, “is clearly differentiated from written history: it possesses everything needed to constitute a living and natural framework upon which our thought can base itself to preserve and recover the image of its past.”\textsuperscript{47} The images developed by these individuals as they enter society are based on a wider social experience. Their memory is “socially framed,” and he adds that “collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time.”\textsuperscript{48} In the \textit{Enola Gay} exhibit, veteran groups were determined to keep their collective memory alive, and opposed using the plane as a center piece of what they perceived was a negative exhibit about strategic bombing. Many of them believed the exhibit should focus on the fighting and suffering endured by American troops as they fought against the Japanese. The veterans held that the exhibit’s main theme should be “remember what we did and the sacrifices that were made.”\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{49} Linenthal and Engelhardt, \textit{History Wars}, 29.
Museum planners believed they were provoking a thoughtful historical examination, but as Halbwachs argues, “as long as a remembrance continues to exist, it is useless to set it down in writing or otherwise fix it in memory.” War veterans’ memories held that America’s use of the atomic bomb saved thousands of American lives in the face of an unrelenting enemy. The Smithsonian’s curators backed down in the face of the huge political opposition to the exhibit. The incident demonstrates how narratives that stray from individual recollection or official versions of events can offend certain audiences. War and remembrance is particularly vulnerable to this experience. The Enola Gay episode reminds public historians of the sensitivity with which they must approach their subjects.

Even the most striking events fade away as they recede into the distant past, as David Lowenthal writes in the *Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. “Unless communal memory is sustained as heritage by ritual rehearsal,” he continues, “time soon distances it beyond retention.”50 Jay Winter concurs, and writing along with his co-author, Emmanuel Sivan, they observe that “Collective memory has no existence independent of the individual, and in consequence, ‘collective memory’ has a shelf-life, after which individuals cease to share and express it.”51 Simply put: “the duration of the collective memory is the duration of the group(s) producing it.”52 This phenomenon

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52 Ibid, 24.
affected the *Californians Over There* exhibit. Members of the World War One generation have passed on, so the collective memory of that war passed along with them.

Collective memory issues are not the only considerations when researching an exhibit. Discerning the difference between triumphal and factual literature is an important component in researching the topic of war. With patriotic sentiment running high, literature, film, and photographs tend to reinforce the glory of the mission as they venerate the troops. A majority of the first generation of literature following a war consists of books written by those who were in political and military positions of power, and public historians must avoid reinforcing national myths and heroic stories when interpreting the event. “Twentieth century warfare is infused with horror as well as honor;” Jay Winter observes, but he warns us that “the proper balance in representing the two is never obvious.”

These memory and research approaches informed the development of the *Californians Over There* project. Sometimes it is challenging to decipher factual from triumphal literature and separate it from influencing an exhibit’s interpretation. A perfect example rests in this Winston Churchill quote: “Half trained, half organized, with only their courage and their numbers and their magnificent youth behind their weapons, they were to buy their experience at a bitter price. But this they were quite ready to do.”

This is a moving quote that describes the arrival and condition of the American Doughboys through the eyes of the anxious Allies; it is factual in every sense, making it

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easy to be influenced by its rousing nature, but as the widely acknowledged father of interpretation, Freeman Tilden states, “interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact. . . . The true interpreter,” he cautions, “goes beyond the real, beyond a part to a whole, beyond the truth to a more important truth.”55

Searching for the truth behind the Churchill quote as Tilden encourages us to do, lie in the last phrase, “this they were quite ready to do.” As an exhibit team, we asked ourselves, were they? Were those young men really ready to die? As soldiers, the answer might be a resounding “yes,” but as men—as sons, fathers, brothers, friends, were they ready to die? Did they understand why they were going “over there?” Working off of this premise, we determined that the narrative of the Californians Over There exhibit must be told from the point of view of a young soldier who dutifully responded to his nation’s call to arms, but did not fully understand why he was fighting. This method of interpretation would help us strike that “proper balance,” as Jay Winter pointed out, between the horror and honor of war.

What would be the best way to convey a California doughboy’s feelings as he dealt with the experience of war? Jay Winter devotes a chapter of his book, Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century to the letters soldiers wrote home during World War One. He estimates that soldiers wrote millions of letters and postcards to their families and they remain an “essential,” but relatively

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55 Ibid, 8.
“unexplored contribution to the cultural legacy of the Great War.”\textsuperscript{56} Letters or journals are “privy to a truth,” he writes, and their experience was something “they and they alone had had.”\textsuperscript{57} Winter maintains that the soldiers’ letters form a “cultural memory.” Their letters, he states, disclose the “exposure of soldiers to a level of extreme violence and suffering that most of us never approach; their passage through the crucible of war [give] their voices reverberations which seem to come from another world.”\textsuperscript{58} Winter adds that the stories soldiers relate tell us something of what they have been through; but the act of narration tells us “who they are at the time of the telling.”\textsuperscript{59}

This resource of personal letters allows for some potent storytelling, and succinctly applies to Freeman Tilden’s principles of interpretation, which he established in his 1957 book, \textit{Interpreting Our Heritage}. The first of these principles applies to the visitors’ ability to relate to the material presented. If people do not connect on a personal or experiential level, he states, the exhibit (in our case) will be “sterile.”\textsuperscript{60} Applying this principle to the \textit{Californians Over There} exhibit, we realized that not everyone can relate to the experience of war, but most people can relate to letters as a form of communication and as expressions of personal feelings.

As rich a resource as the letters are, however, it is not enough to present them without interpretation. “Interpretation is revelation based on information.” But, Tilden

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} Jay Winter, \textit{Remembering War}, 103.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 115.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 114.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 116.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Tilden, \textit{Interpreting Our Heritage}, 9.
\end{itemize}
cautions, “All interpretation includes information.”61 “Interpretation is an art,” he continues.62 He charges park interpreters with a sense of mission—the need to be different. Anyone can recite dictionary definitions when describing a place, object, or historical site, but good interpretation goes beyond that; it stimulates the visitors’ senses. We knew we needed to attach the letters to the broader history of the war, which meant the composition of accompanying text to offer the reader that bigger perspective.

The key tenet for writing exhibit text in the Californians Over There exhibit was Tilden’s belief that “the chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.”63 California State Parks acknowledges the same sentiment in its Interpretive Mission Statement:

Interpretation is a special form of communication that helps people understand, appreciate, and emotionally connect with the rich natural and cultural heritage preserved in parks. It is the mission of interpretation in California State Parks to convey messages that initially help visitors value their experience, and ultimately will foster a conservation ethic and promote a dedicated park constituency.64

The need to reduce a large amount of information into a small exhibit feels like an impossible task at times. Too often, interpreters fall into the trap of providing too much information. As public historians and interpreters, we must guard against telling people what we want them to know instead of focusing on what they want to know.65

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61 Ibid, 9.
63 Ibid, 9.
65 Alan Leftridge, *Interpretive Writing* (Fort Collins: The National Association for Interpretation, 2006), 4.
Interpretive writer, Lisa Brochu, alerts us to this exact point in the preface to the book, *Interpretive Writing*, by Alan Leftridge. “Interpretive writing,” she states, “is a specialized skill. It is not journalism, or creative writing, or technical writing. It is, perhaps, one of the most powerful types of writing that can be employed because when done well enough that people read it, a message is delivered.”66 This is a motivating observation. With all the work that encompasses an exhibit, from idea formulation to research, to artifact and graphics selection, to design and fabrication, it serves no purpose if the public is not interested.

Interpretation drives the exhibit, but exhibits must also demonstrate a wide appeal to attract the general public. The CSCM is unique among Sacramento’s museums. As part of a public institution, the museum is financed by the state legislature, alleviating the need to charge admission or raise funds for exhibits. Clientele who visit the exhibits vary widely from the professionals who work every day in the building (including legislators or possibly even the Governor) to the hundreds of school children who arrive by the busload on a daily basis. The Capitol building also lures tourists from all over the state, country, and world. Consequently, every person who walks through the exhibit room’s doors brings with him or her a different level of interest, knowledge, and language ability. As museum professional Mary Ellen Munley observes, they “pay attention to

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different things, and they leave the museum with a personal and highly individualized experience.”

This means that museums occupy a distinctive place in the arena of education because they offer the public an opportunity for experiential learning. Historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen conducted an extensive national telephone survey in 1995 for the Center for Historymaking in America in order to discover the ways Americans understand their past. It remains one of the most thoroughly conducted studies to date, providing insightful findings. According to their research, Rosenzweig and Thelen found that Americans visit museums and historic sites in order to feel connected to the past. Respondents said they uncover ‘real’ or ‘true’ history at museums and historic sites. “Visits to historic sites and museums,” write Rosenzweig and Thelen, “sparked an associative process of recalling and reminiscing about the past that connected them to their own history. Their visits—far from a passive viewing of a version of the past arranged by a museum professional—became a joint venture of constructing their own histories either mentally or in conversation with their friends and kin.”

Visitors to the Californians Over There exhibit have that opportunity to feel “connected” to the objects we have chosen to display. For example, visitors might connect to the display of the doughboy uniform, associating it with a photograph they may possess of a grandfather or other family ancestor wearing similar attire. They can

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look at that uniform, made entirely of wool, and compare its comfort and practicality to
the uniforms worn by the military today. They can connect to the helmet or gas mask, and
wonder what that experience might have been like for an American doughboy.

The letters also offer visitors a supplementary and even more powerful connection
to the past. Whether visitors view the actual letters Edward and his mother, father, and
brothers wrote to each other, or they read the excerpts we have displayed on the text
panels, museum patrons witness war through the eyes of those who lived through it. The
sentiment expressed in the letters has a universal appeal. Edward’s mother, for instance,
may have written her letters to her son almost a century ago, but almost anyone can relate
to a mother’s anguish and worry about her son being so far away. For example, in a letter
dated September 24, 1918, Helen Bates writes to her son after receiving two letters that
day from him: “I can’t tell you how welcome these [letters] are and how greedily we
devour every word. Oh how I wish I could see you dearest….Of course we are devoured
with curiosity to know where you were going—I fear it is towards the front.” Visitors
experience both the joy and apprehension expressed in those written lines.

This differs vastly from the classroom method of learning history with which
many people grew up that stressed the importance of dates and events from dispassionate
text books. When asked to describe the manner in which they studied history in school,
Rosenzweig and Thelen discovered that respondents most often used the words “dull and
irrelevant.”69 People had trouble connecting to the history they studied because they did

69 Rosenzweig, and Thelan, The Presence of the Past, 12.
not recognize themselves in the version of the past presented to them. Historian David Lowenthal expands on this point by contending that “Youngsters have been taught history as they were taught math—as a finite subject with definite right or wrong answers…High marks depend on the ‘correct’ gloss of regurgitated facts.”^70

As public historians, we must continue to move away from this restricted manner of teaching and the perpetuation of the “right and wrong” views of history. We need to create exhibits that present multiple viewpoints including a range of ethnic, cultural, and class perspectives because, as museum consultant and author Mary Ellen Munley observes, American society and culture is becoming more “variegated” and splintered.”

The goal of attaining “inclusiveness,” therefore, further challenges us as public historians because the museum collections upon which we build our exhibits are generally limited to reflect the views of a particular ethnicity or gender. Munley reminds us that “historical interpretation is itself subject to continuous rethinking and reanalysis,” and “such ‘revisionism’ is frequently a source of controversy among tradition-minded groups.”^71

We confronted this issue with the *Californians Over There* exhibit, since Edward Bates and his family were white, middle class people who lived in Alameda, California. Our other Californian, Colonel Nelson Holderman, was also white. Without letters or collections to represent the points of view of Californians of varying ethnicities, we dealt with the issue in the text, by writing:

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70 David Lowenthal, “History and Memory,” *The Public Historian* 19, no. 2 (Spring, 1997), 36.
Of course California society in 1917 consisted of more than middle-class white people. Immigrants made up more than half of San Francisco’s population, sending men of varying ethnic backgrounds to serve together in the armed forces. African Americans, however, served in separate units. They were mostly restricted to labor battalions and performed unpleasant tasks such as unloading ships, digging trenches, removing unexploded shells from fields, clearing disabled equipment, and burying soldiers killed in action. Only two black combat divisions, the 92\textsuperscript{nd} and 93\textsuperscript{rd} Infantries, fought at the front lines.

While not an ideal circumstance, we did not ignore the issue of race completely because our exhibit revolved around the Bates Family and their letters. Instead, we created an opportunity to discuss racial issues since it was not already a part of our exhibit.

Rosenzweig and Thelen discovered that Americans put “more trust in history museums and historic sites than in any other sources for exploring the past.”\textsuperscript{72} This belief highlights the need for public historians to research their topics thoroughly and employ the latest scholarship to pass along to an audience that possesses a desire to learn more without doing the research themselves. Jay Winter writes that public historians possess the unique opportunity of bringing professional scholarship to a wider audience.\textsuperscript{73} Good exhibits require a balance of research, scholarship, and interpretation to stimulate interest and excitement among its visiting public.

\textsuperscript{72} Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, 105.
\textsuperscript{73} Winter, \textit{Remembering War}, 202-3.
Chapter 4

CREATING AN EXHIBIT

Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people’s curiosity. It is enough to open minds: do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good flammable stuff, it will catch fire.

French novelist Anatole France

This chapter details the steps involved in the development and production of the *Californians Over There* exhibit. Planning for the exhibit began in September 2010, approximately nine months before its scheduled opening date of June 14, 2011. State Park’s publicity department requires short write-ups describing upcoming exhibits several months in advance of an exhibit’s opening in order to assure advertising space in travel publications. This usually means we decide on a title before beginning the research. This can present a challenge since the content of the exhibit should drive the title and not the other way around. In this case, however, we already knew our exhibit would be about California’s role in the war, so the exhibit team chose a title that played off the lyrics of the popular World War One anthem, *Over There*, by George M. Cohan. We incorporated “California” into the song’s title and called it “*Californians Over There!* California’s Role in World War One.”

This title also made it easy to draft a “big idea,” or a simple statement that tells what the exhibit is about. A succinct big idea guides the exhibit plan and limits the content; it focuses research, label writing, and image selection. According to Beverly

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Sorrel, author of *Exhibit Labels*, the big idea “provides an unambiguous focus for the exhibit team throughout the exhibit development process by clearly stating . . . the scope and purpose of an exhibition.” The big idea for *Californians Over There* was the same as the other war exhibits I had worked on: What role did California’s play in World War One.

As subject-matter expert, it is my job to conduct the research and write the text for the exhibit. For each exhibit, I begin my research from a broad perspective in order to gain an informed overview of the topic. This includes reading secondary sources such as monographs, journal articles, and online websites and research sites. I look for repetitions regarding subjects and resources and follow up on them and footnotes when I customize my research. In an exhibit like this, my priority is to consider the source’s importance to California. It usually takes a few weeks to locate all this information and formulate the exhibit’s main ideas and themes.

For this exhibit, I laid out four objectives: (1) Showcase the flags, uniforms, weapons, and personal items used by California troops in the Great War; (2) Emphasize the personal stories of some California men who served in the war; (3) Highlight the importance of the home front and how California’s citizens sacrificed and worked to support the war; (4) Educate the public about the war, California’s involvement, the new weapon-technology introduced, and how it impacted those who fought.

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I worked with a new exhibit team for this project, and throughout this paper I will omit names and refer to team members by title. The head of the team was the district exhibit director. She had been appointed to the position around September 2010. Her state park title was Curator III. The other person on the team was the newly-appointed Capitol museum manager. His state park title was Interpreter III. He had recently transferred from State Park Headquarters Interpretation and Education Department. Also present at this first meeting was the exhibit designer and a Curator II, both of whom I had worked with on several previous exhibits. I presented an exhibit outline to our new exhibit team on November 22, 2010.

Step One: Plan the Main Topics

I proposed an exhibit that included eleven text panels in the main exhibit room. The left side of the room, as the visitor walks in, would be devoted to the war front; the back side of the room would feature a fully-outfitted war horse with a mannequin on one side wearing a World War One uniform, and on the opposing side, another human form wearing a sailor’s uniform. The right side of the room would be devoted to the home front. I arranged the panels in the following order:

Panel 1, Introduction: Short background of the war and how the 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand provided the spark that set off a world war.

Panel 2, California Divisions That Fought in the War: This would include units from the California National Guard 40th “Sunshine Division” and the 42nd “Rainbow Division,” and drafted men from the 91st Division.

Panel 3, The Battle of Meuse-Argonne: This panel would focus on one of the major battles in which Americans fought. It would also provide
background for the story of Colonel Nelson Holderman and “The Lost Battalion.” We planned to display Holderman’s Medal of Honor in this section.

Panel 4, Aviator’s War: At the onset of the war, many Americans volunteered to fight in the French Air Corp. The Americans called themselves the Lafayette Escadrille and this panel would feature some of the Californians who fought with the Lafayette Escadrille.

Panels 5, 6, and 7 would accompany the horse and mannequins and would describe the uniforms and gear.

Panel 8, Women and the Home Front: This section would be based on local newspaper research to portray California society’s perspective of the war.

Panel 9, Role of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts: Both were created at the time of WWI and they collected money for Liberty Bonds, grew victory gardens, and collected millions of peach pits (for gas mask filters), and rolled bandages.

Panel 10, Hollywood’s Role in the War: This would offer a true California perspective since there is only one Hollywood. Celebrities supported the war effort and headed drives to raise money for Liberty bonds.

Panel 11, Aftermath: What was the result of the war? There were long-lasting, world implications: The Russian Revolution, the rise of Hitler, America’s emergence as a world power, World War II, turmoil in the Middle East, and the use of modern weaponry and war. For California, it marked the beginning of the military industrial complex because California’s climate provided a perfect location for military bases.

Overall, the group gave my initial outline high marks. The exhibit designer voiced his opposition to featuring a horse as a centerpiece to the exhibit since this would be the third exhibit that included a war-outfitted horse. Instead, he wanted to design a whole new look for this exhibit. The only other comment regarding content came from
the museum manager who reminded me to be inclusive of African Americans and their role in the army.

This represented a good first step in the planning of the exhibit. The panels I had proposed remained true to the big idea. I proposed one additional idea regarding images for panels. In an effort to put a “face” on the war, I proposed devoting a panel to dozens of photos of California men in uniform. I wanted keep the humanity of the war in the minds of the public. This personal aspect of war was a theme we would continue to work with and enhance as the exhibit process progressed.

**Step Two: Locate the Objects**

California State Parks possesses over one million objects including everything from artwork to furniture, clothing, vehicles, wagons, toy trains, Indian baskets, and more in its extensive collection. I consulted with the curator in charge of the collections for items that we could display in our exhibit. In this case, the state’s collection yielded the flags and some weapons from the World War One era. Because we needed more items around which to build an exhibit, we consulted outside collectors and organizations to supplement our own artifacts.

Our exhibit team’s curator contacted the librarian at the archives of the California State Veteran’s Home in Yountville. Founded in 1884, the facility is the largest veterans’ home in the United States, and accommodates approximately 1,100 aged or disabled veterans (both men and women) from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War,
Desert Storm, and Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. The home administers a library and archive, and their collection consists of uniforms, weapons, photographs, and other personal items donated by the veterans of wars dating back to the Civil War. Suffering from funding cuts of their own, the veteran home’s librarian and archivist was happy to loan CSCM any objects we wanted in order to garner publicity for veteran affairs and the Yountville Veteran’s Home.

The librarian generously loaned CSCM two uniforms: the first was a complete doughboy uniform with helmet, hat, and puttees, and the other was a sailor’s uniform. She also allowed us to borrow original World War One propaganda posters; personal items owned by doughboys including a mess kit, grooming items, a Red Cross checkers/chess kit; and a King George letter written by the British monarch for each American soldier, thanking them for their service. Finally, the veteran’s home librarian loaned us books, personal papers, and the eleven medals of valor—including the Medal of Honor—awarded to Colonel Nelson Holderman who fought with the Lost Battalion, one of World War One’s most infamous battles. With the display objects accounted for, I returned to the research and planning of the exhibit text panels.

**Step Three: Research and Planning**

The exhibit team next met on December 6; I presented the same basic outline and ideas, but rounded out the research and panel ideas. I also presented some thoughts for

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interactive exhibits. While the team approved of the outline and ideas, it was a private conversation I had with the museum manager after the meeting that inspired a very different direction for the exhibit. We decided that someone who actually fought in the war could tell the war experience most effectively. What would a soldier heading off to war be asking himself? I thought it was an inspired way to design this exhibit, so I spent the next week reading a collection of soldiers’ letters at the California State Library.

I presented a new exhibit proposal to the team at our next meeting a week later. Scrapping the idea of a comprehensive panel exhibit, I suggested the creation of a composite soldier who would tell the experience of war through fictitious journal entries. As far as the exhibit lay-out was concerned, the journal entries would still comprise the room’s left wall. I planned a composite soldier who had served with Colonel Nelson Holderman and the Lost Battalion. Likewise, the home front wall on the right side of the room would involve letters from our soldier’s mother. Through the mother’s eyes, visitors would observe how California society sacrificed and contributed to the war effort.

The team embraced the idea of a composite soldier telling his experience of the war. Deciding it was important not to glorify war, our museum manager suggested that the soldier would have to either die in battle or return home badly wounded. World War One introduced the world to warfare unlike anything previously experienced, and this would help illustrate the horror and reality of that fact.
The new direction of this exhibit corresponded with one of Freeman Tilden’s foremost principles, namely, “the chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.” The first exhibit proposal that I had submitted with eleven panels provided too much instruction and not enough “provocation.” It was too comprehensive and tried to do too much. This new idea would allow me to tell the same story I had previously submitted, but through the eyes of the people who lived through it. This represented a challenge because it needed to be accurate and believable. I returned to the California State Library to read more letters, and in the process, I discovered a full set of letters from one soldier to his family, as well as the letters they wrote back to him. With this discovery, I realized there would be no need to fabricate a composite soldier and his mother because we had the genuine article.

The letters I uncovered introduced me to a twenty-three year old U.C. Berkeley medical student named Charles “Edward” Harold Bates who wrote the letters while serving in France during World War One. He left school in his senior year to enlist in the U.S. Army. In order to deal with a severe lack of qualified officers, the army encouraged qualified college students to enlist in officer training school, and Edward chose to follow this path. He came from a military family, with three older brothers serving in separate branches of the military. Edward lived at home with his parents and a younger brother in Alameda, California. He trained at Camp Kearny in San Diego, served at the front until the Germans signed the armistice, and then served with the Army of Occupation. He

77 Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage, 9.
experienced the entire war and wrote dozens of letters home detailing the experience. All of the letters provided great insight and emotion.

I presented this new discovery to the exhibit team at our next weekly meeting, and they approved of changing the fictitious, composite soldier for a genuine doughboy who actually fought in the war. This represented a third and final change of direction for the interpretation of the exhibit. The team loved the idea and the opportunity to display the true drama associated with Edward’s letters.

**Step Four: Challenges and the Team**

With the content portion of the *Californians Over There* exhibit decided upon, the group turned its attention to the centerpiece design of the exhibit: the horse. Some members of the exhibit team favored presenting a fully-outfitted war horse, while others opposed the idea. The opposition argued that the horse had occupied the center of the exhibits in that room for two years, and it was time for a change. In addition, the estimated $3,000 cost of outfitting the horse with period appropriate gear was difficult to justify in an era of budget cut-backs.

The “pro-horse” side, to which I belonged, argued that the horse was historically pertinent to the exhibit and provided an opportunity to create a “No Man’s Land” battlefield interactive experience. The public, we argued, would find a horse wearing goggles and a gas mask very intriguing. The horse has been very popular in the previous exhibits; it always received the most questions from school children and presented a popular photo opportunity for everyone. Additionally, Hollywood film director Steven
Spielberg was producing a movie named *War Horse*, based on the book of the same name about the life of a horse caught up in *World War One*. With the film’s scheduled release during the exhibit dates, it would provide a great draw with which the marketing department could attract visitors.

Both sides presented strong arguments, but in the end, the exhibit team director sided with the designer and his vision for the exhibit. His ideas included the display of a World War One-era motorcycle or a re-created trench scene. Tensions in the group ran a little high, with each side believing their idea worked the best. The centerpiece is the first thing visitors see when they walk through the door of the exhibit; it arouses their curiosity and attracts them to come in and explore the exhibit, so it comprises an important component to the exhibit.

Good exhibit planning thrives in a collaborative arena, and this interchange created an opportunity to explore other historical options. After considering the ideas presented at that meeting, I researched some of my own and compiled a new list for the team to consider so we could make an informed decision based on historical accuracy instead of emotion. On January 17, I presented a list with seven ideas including highlights, historical significance, and whether it added any additional cost to the exhibit. (See Appendix A) The team considered the ideas, but reached no conclusion at that time.

Another challenge arose between the exhibit designer and myself over his design of the exhibit panels. He designed the *Californians Over There* exhibit with fewer, but larger text panels than we had used in previous exhibits. He wanted strong, dramatic
images to dominate the panels. He planned to divide the text into small sections located at the bottom of the panel. In essence, I had more space to work with than previous panels, but still needed to keep text to minimum amount per section. As such, I was not certain how to write text for this large design. I normally write panels consisting of no more than 150 words per panel, but these larger panels allowed for more text. We talked about the issue, but he could not provide me with an exact word-count since this was a new design. He listened to my ideas and I listened to his, and he provided me a rough lay-out of the panels. This really helped, and from there I wrote the text and divided the letters into themes. We knew we could work out any issues in the final design phase.

The most critical issue we had to overcome in this exhibit was over the question of content and who authorizes its final form: marketing or interpretation? This is a common area of discussion in museums as curators strive to create thoughtful, innovative exhibits and balance that against the need to attract the public and generate revenue. This same dynamic challenged us in planning of the Californians Over There exhibit as we determined the content that should remain in the text and that which should be edited out. One episode illustrates the way we dealt with the issue.

After reading the letters between Edward and his family, I happened upon an incident that brought Edward’s mother a great deal of anguish. Edward fell in love. While recovering from illness and a case of jaundice in a hospital and rest leave in the South of France at the war’s end, Edward met a French girl named Clairette. He wrote home and informed his mother that he wanted to remain in Europe, finish his education,
and marry Clairette. Edward’s mother responded with a few heartbroken, confused, and angry letters. After the passage of a few weeks, his failure to gain acceptance into any of the European universities to which he applied, and his inability to gain more leave time to visit Clairette again, Edward realized the rash nature of his decision. He dropped the subject of marriage, and returned home to California when his enlistment ended. The episode added some romantic drama to a story filled with battles and death, and I told my exhibit director about the “crisis” that happened so long ago in the Bates family.

She also enjoyed the story and mentioned it to the marketing manager who viewed the story as an interesting way to attract visitors to the exhibit. Marketing reasoned that the public is weary of war, and a love story would offer an interesting contrast to the bleak despair of war. In addition to the war-related guns, uniforms, and medals, marketing wanted to highlight the love story between an American soldier and a French girl. The exhibit director sent me an email regarding the decision that she and the marketing manager had arrived upon, namely to include the story in the text and highlight the exhibit’s publicity around the soldier’s romance with a French girl.

At this late stage in the interpretation and writing process, I strongly disagreed with adding the love story to the exhibit. I had very limited space with which to tell Edward’s story, and had already cut out important material. I felt this romantic interlude took the exhibit off-topic, but the exhibit team director overruled my objections. She told me to change the exhibit text. I complied and added a paragraph explaining how Edward fell in love while recuperating in the South of France.
Our exhibit team changed a few weeks after this with the transfer of two members of our team to different sites requiring their expertise. The exhibit team director moved to a larger museum in the district and the Curator II moved to another site to assist with a project in the museum collections department. As a result, our Capitol exhibit team was smaller by two people and consisted of the museum manager, exhibit designer, two exhibit specialists, and me.

**Step Five: Interpretive Panel Design**

By mid-April, I completed the text and the other components of panel design for which I was responsible: titles, quotes and images. For the text panel titles, I decided to carry the *Over There* theme throughout the exhibit and use the song’s lyrics. I also picked out quotes in the Bates Family’s letters that related to each panel title. As far as images were concerned, I had an assortment of photographs to show the exhibit designer when he was ready to meet with me.

The first panel of this exhibit, as in most exhibits, is the introduction. In the *Californians Over There* exhibit, we had a lot of introductory information to cover. We first needed to provide a background of the war to give visitors a basic understanding of the subject matter. Since World War One is such a vast subject, we agreed to start the exhibit with America’s entry into the war, and included only a few sentences explaining the war’s origins. Secondly, I needed to explain what we meant by the title, *Californians Over There*. This would have to include an introduction to our doughboy, Edward, the Bates Family, the concept of the letters, and our other Californian, Colonel Nelson M.
Holderman. The third item regarded the origin of the exhibit title itself. Realizing that the “Over There” part of the title would have little relevance to modern generations unfamiliar with the song, *Over There*, I needed to print the words to the song and explain its significance. (See Appendix B for unedited text for all panels).

The second panel, “The Yanks Are Coming,” includes text about Edward’s training and the feelings he and his family shared about his deployment overseas. The quote, written by Edward to his family in July 1918, encapsulates his youthful eagerness and idealism as he reacted to Congress’ declaration of war. “I can’t help but feel the call to duty and yearn to respond. It’s a great war to be in and . . . know that I will be a better man having been in it,” he wrote.78 Edward’s letters describe the patriotic fervor he experienced as he traveled by train across the country. Crowds, including many young women, met the soldiers at every stop and gave the men flowers and food; some offered their addresses and promised to write to the soldiers while they were away fighting for their country. For a young man experiencing his first time away from home, it was all very exciting.

The third panel, “Somewhere In France,” is one of two panels in the exhibit that does not quote a song lyric because a different title was more appropriate to the subject matter. The term, “Somewhere in France,” was ubiquitous in the war’s vernacular because military censors did not allow troops to disclose their locations for reasons of national security; I used it to place Edward at the front, and the panel covers Edward’s

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78 Edward Bates to his mother, 3 August 1918, Charles E. H. Bates family correspondence, Box 2275, California State Library.
first experiences there. It also includes his description of a fierce battle in which he held back German forces, almost single-handedly, to allow his Colonel time to escape and avoid capture. Edward, too, escaped the episode unscathed and he ended up receiving America’s second highest military honor, the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery. The quote on the panel describes his first battlefield experience: “I have gone over the top—how terrible! When the time comes to get it, we will get it.”  

The fourth panel is the centerpiece panel which covers the Lost Battalion and the experiences of Colonel Nelson M. Holderman. I will return to this subject later in this paper in order to continue with Edward’s story and panel design.

The fifth panel, “Say a Prayer,” is another title connected to the song lyric. The quote, from a letter written by Edward’s father relates back to the title: “We shall pray every day for your safety, and that you be given strength to do your duty, and for a speedy return home.” The panel highlights the importance of letters to families and soldiers at a time when it took up to three weeks to receive word from home or from the front. As the only means of communication between soldiers and their families, letters represented a life line between them. “You are a good son to write us so often,” writes Edward’s father, who worried about his son as the fighting over there intensified.

We also witness in this panel Edward’s evolution from the idealistic young man who declared “it’s a great war to be in,” in panels two and three to the more mature
soldier of panel five who embraces a sober outlook on the war and on life. One of the most poignant letters in the entire collection is highlighted in this panel. It simply states: “Dear All: Going over the top again tonight. So here’s goodbye in case anything happens. God Bless You All.” It is Edward’s goodbye letter to his family. Written on October 13, 1918, he has already gone over the top several times and does not know how many more times he can survive; we can only imagine how he felt as he quickly scribbled those few short lines on a piece of paper. There are no other letters like it in the collection. (See Appendix B: Figure 2).

The sixth panel quotes another song lyric. Titled “It’s Over, Over There,” the phrase aptly captures the feeling of the signing of the armistice, which ended the war at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Towns and cities all over California erupted with great joy at the news that the war was over. California’s governor declared the day a holiday, and Edward’s mother and father celebrated the news by attending impromptu parades and festivities held throughout Oakland and San Francisco. “Everyone was wild with joy,” wrote Edward’s mother on November 12, 1918, “and nearly every machine [vehicle] had old tins of every description dragging along behind to make as much noise as possible—or bells—all dangling.”

The quote I highlighted on the panel, however, describes a much different view of the war’s end: Edward’s experience at the front. “It was a very dramatic end for us…we

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82 Edward Bates to “All,” 13 October 1918, Charles E. H. Bates family correspondence, Box 2275, California State Library.
83 Helen Bates to Edward Bates, 12 November 1918, Charles E. H. Bates family correspondence, Box 2278, California State Library.
were given orders to stop. It was eleven o’clock. Edward’s letter to his parents, also written on November 12, 1918 describes the tenuous situation he dealt with the day the war ended. He wrote that his company had reached a “cross road” where there were “beaucoup Germans” perched and waiting on the “other side.” Edward said that he and his men would have been “mowed down” by machine guns if they had not received the order to stop fighting. “The last few days have been terrible for us, for we have been holding very difficult positions…We are certainly lucky, and yesterday, acceptance of the armistice has saved a good many lives.”

That letter, however, and many others he devotedly wrote to his family in those joyful, post-battle days failed to reach them until late November. The black-out of receiving letters sentenced Edward’s family to weeks of relentless anxiety because they did not know if Edward had survived the end of the war. Sick with worry, all Edward’s mother and father could do was to write letter after letter asking Edward if he was alright. I excerpted several of the letters in this panel to show the family’s increasing panic as each day passed with no word from Edward. This letter, written by Edward’s father on November 25, 1918, illustrates the frustration and worry from which he and his wife suffered. (“Sned” is Edward’s father’s nickname for his son):

My dear old Sned:

We have not heard from you in two weeks, your last letter being dated Oct. 20th and you were then expecting to go into another offensive. We know of course that there has been very heavy fighting and a big casualty

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84 Edward Bates to family, 12 November 1918, Charles E. H. Bates family correspondence, Box 2275, California State Library.
85 Ibid.
list since you wrote, and although the Government promised to notify parents promptly of any accident they have not done so. Yesterday the paper says a woman in Alameda got word that her son had been killed Sept. 5, two and a half months before! They are very slow in advising the families and we are anxious about you. Mother is worrying a great deal...  

Edward had, in fact, cabled his family to let them know he survived the war and that the army transferred him to the 32nd Division, the Army of Occupation, but the cable did not reach the family for several weeks.

The seventh and final panel, “Army of Occupation,” once again strays from the Over There song lyrics, but it demonstrates that there was an aftermath to the “it’s over” aspect to the war. Whereas most of the surviving American doughboys returned to the United States after the signing of the armistice, some divisions remained to occupy Germany and ensure the peace. As he marched across France, Belgium, and Luxembourg and through territory previously occupied by the Germans, Edward described the people who greeted the American soldiers with homemade American flags and tears in their eyes. “Think of it,” Edward writes, “would you have believed that your son had been through it all and now was actually going to cross the Rhine. I can hardly believe it myself.”

What Edward encounters while stationed in Germany inspired the quote I chose for this last panel. The quote, spoken by Paul Baumer, in Erich Maria Remarch’s classic novel about World War One, All Quiet on the Western Front, wraps up Edward’s war

87 Edward Bates to Mother and Father, 22 November 1918, Charles E. H. Bates family correspondence, Box 2275, California State Library.
experience with an important realization. Baumer states, “You were only an idea to me before . . . we always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death . . . how could you be my enemy?” Edward, too, discovered the humanity of his sworn enemy, and I thought this quote perfectly captured this realization.

Edward wrote about it as he continued his march into Germany with the Army of Occupation; the German people hospitably welcomed the Americans and opened their homes to them. In what must have been a surreal turn of events, Edward and his fellow doughboys stayed in the homes of the officers and soldiers who had been trying to kill them a few short weeks before. “They are proving themselves to be good losers,” Edward observed in a letter dated December 3, 1918, “and it teaches us one big thing—that we have also been filled with rot and unbelievable stories concerning their home life.”

American propaganda against the Germans was intense when America entered the war. We exhibit some propaganda posters in the next room of the exhibit that portray the Germans as evil, marauding beasts. Edward, too, believed the terrible stories about the German people, and he was as surprised as All Quiet on the Western Front’s Paul Baumer to discover that the Germans were regular people. Edward tells his parents in the same December letter, “I can’t believe the German people are all sinners. In this home, pictures of Christ, Mary and others are hanging in all the rooms.” His astonishment continues as

88 Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front, 223.
89 Edward Bates to Helen Bates, 3 December 1918, Charles E. H. Bates family correspondence, Box 2275, California State Library.
he writes, “They are not bowing down to us in fear, but are merely trying to show us, I suppose, that they are not what we think them to be.”

The panel concludes with General Pershing’s review of Edward’s division in March, 1919, Edward’s recognition ceremony in which he received his Distinguished Service Cross and the French *Croix de Guerre* (Cross of War) on April 5, 1919, Edward’s safe return home to American soil, and a conclusion describing how he lived the rest of his life.

**Step Six: Graphic Image Selection**

Graphic images include photographs, pictures, drawings, cartoons, or anything else that helps illustrate the main idea of the text panel. Good online sources for photographs include the Library of Congress, National Archives, and the Bancroft and Huntington Libraries. The California State Library remains my first choice when researching images for an exhibit. We have a close working relationship with the staff there; they are always supportive of the work we do. For the *Californians Over There* exhibit, I found a sufficient number of pictures from the California State Library, the Yountville Veteran’s Home, and some exceptional local photographs from the San Jose Public Library.

As a team, we saved the final graphic selection as the last step because we needed to consider the break-down of the text in the panels. In all of our exhibits, we choose images that promote the text. It usually remains among the last steps in the exhibit

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90 Ibid.
process, but depends on the exhibit. For *Californians Over There*, the California State Library’s photos worked perfectly for panels one and two, “Californians Over There,” and “The Yanks Are Coming,” respectively. Panel one shows thousands of California doughboys in uniform, boarding trains. It is a very active photograph and illustrates the commotion and anticipation of a nation going to war, which fits with the theme of that panel. (See Appendix C, Figure 1).

Panel two includes three photographs of uniformed men performing calisthenics, bayonet, and various other training exercises at Camp Kearny. Another photograph shows the men standing against tents lined up in rows. This is the same place where Edward trained, so the photographs are a perfect complement to the text. Edward describes his experience there: “We march all day long” he writes, and “We have learned grenading and bayoneting.” He adds, “We live in tents, and the life is hard.” His is a California story and the images from a California camp showing Californians training is perfect for our exhibit. (See Appendix C, Figure 2).

Finding photographs of Americans, let alone Californians fighting in the war proved to be a very challenging endeavor in this exhibit. There are numerous websites with high quality photographs of World War One, No Man’s Land, men in trenches, and bombs exploding, but I had to be very careful that the soldiers in the photographs were American doughboys, and not soldiers from Britain, Germany, Canada, France, or any other country that fought in the war. This drastically reduced the number of choices at my disposal. The images in the Veteran’s Home collection were invaluable to us. They were
American, dramatic, and we could scan them to the quality we needed for exhibit panels of this size.

Panel three, “Somewhere in France,” contains three photographs depicting the experience at the front. The first photograph shows a tank making its way past men perched in a trench. The second photograph provides an example of the power of the heavy artillery employed in the war, and the third photograph is a classic image of American doughboys crouching with weapons drawn against a No Man’s Land background. These are very dramatic images designed to give visitors a sense of what the war experience looked like. (See Appendix C, Figure 3).

Panel five, “Say a Prayer,” also contains two photographs. The first shows a bombed-out church (working perfectly with the title), converted into a makeshift hospital. Close inspection reveals a number of dead bodies covered in blankets and numerous wounded laid out on stretchers. The second picture demonstrates the tedious and messy logistics of fighting a war. Troops marched from city to city in the rain and mud, carrying supplies and heavy artillery. Soldiers must have muttered many prayers to themselves as they marched forward to the unknown events that lay ahead. (See Appendix C, Figure 4).

Panel six, “It’s Over, Over There,” features the two photographs from the San Jose Library’s collection. The pictures represent the celebration of the end of the war. Each photo is from a parade. The first shows a truck “float” decorated with flowers, flags, and soldiers in uniform and a large “11-11-11” sign signifying the time of the signing of
the armistice on the side of the truck. The other photograph is of a marching band in the parade celebrating the end of the war. (See Appendix C, Figure 6).

Panel seven, “Army of Occupation,” contains the photograph that probably invites the most comments out of all the panels. It shows a line of children, from behind, watching soldiers marching into their town. We cannot see the children’s faces, but we stop and think about the war’s impact on the youngest members of society. What are the children thinking as they see soldiers marching into their town? What have they already experienced? Most villagers greeted the American soldiers with joy and relief at war’s end. It is a haunting image that instigates some introspective thought. (See Appendix C, Figure 7).

Step Seven: Fabricating the Centerpiece Display

With the panels finished, we turned our attention to the centerpiece display. We agreed to focus on Colonel Nelson M. Holderman and the Lost Battalion. Author Robert H. Ferrell, who wrote the book *Five Days in October*, describes the battle of the Lost Battalion as the U.S. Army’s most famous action in France during World War One.91 Two movies and numerous books and articles have been written over the years about the horrifying circumstances the men endured during the Meuse-Argonne Campaign in October 1918.

Their story began on October 2, 1918, when Major Charles W. Whittlesey of New York’s 77th Division led an attack in the Argonne Forest that penetrated German

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defensive lines and reached his assigned objective. He did exactly what authorities expected him to do, but other units did not keep pace with him. Alone behind enemy lines, the Germans promptly surrounded Whittlesey and his men. Whittlesey awaited reinforcements, but on the following day, only a single company from the 307th Infantry managed to break through the lines and connect with the trapped Americans.

This action placed Whittlesey in command of a hybrid group of approximately seven hundred men who endured five days of the most harrowing experiences imaginable. Enemy sharp-shooters and machine guns fired at their every move, and bombed them with grenades and trench mortars at all other times. The men ran out of food and water on the second day, forcing them to survive on berries, bark, and leaves for the duration of their entrapment. The Germans closely monitored a small water hole filled with muddy water, but shot any man who attempted to gain relief there. The constant enemy barrage wounded so many men that medical supplies quickly ran out, so they reused bandages from the dead to treat the wounded. Newspapers covered the story and the American public anxiously awaited updates regarding the men of the so-called “Lost Battalion.”

The California connection to this story concerns the company from the 307th Infantry that broke through the lines on the second day of the siege and linked up with Major Whittlesey. The 307th Infantry’s leader was California’s Colonel Nelson M. Holderman, whom an officer in the 77th Division described as a man who “took to

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soldiering like a kitten to catnip. “Colonel Holderman, who was actually a Captain at the time of the battle, demonstrated commendable strength, courage, and fortitude throughout the men’s five-day ordeal, but he saved his best for the last day of their ordeal. According to Holderman, that was the day that Company K withstood “the fiercest attack of the entire siege.”

The Germans bombarded the weak and starving men with everything they had at their disposal. In Holderman’s words, “the enemy had reserved his liquid fire until the last. . . . His plans did not work, for this act angered the men instead of disorganizing them, and the men rose out of their fox-holes, went forward to a new firing position and killed the Germans carrying the flame throwers.” The counterattack drove back the Germans, and American forces broke through the next day and rescued the survivors of the Lost Battalion.

There were many dramatic moments in the story of the Lost Battalion, which, in reality, was neither “lost” nor a “battalion,” since American forces knew their location from the start. Most of the trapped men were from New York’s 77th “Liberty” Division, and the majority of books and articles appropriately focused their attention on the odd assortment of New Yorkers and their leader, Major Whittlesey. Our exhibit placed California’s Colonel Holderman in the center of the interpretation of the Lost Battalion’s

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93 Gaff, 151.
94 Ibid, 246.
story. Holderman won the Medal of Honor for his actions during the siege, as well as the Silver Star and the California Medal of Valor; he was worthy of the spotlight.

We needed a visual attraction in the Holderman display that would entice passers-by to the exhibit. The exhibit designer and I sifted through images and discussed ideas. We considered a drawing that appeared in a 1930s magazine article which depicted Holderman’s great stand against the Germans. The full color picture portrayed Holderman, his leg bandaged and bleeding, standing propped on two rifles that served as his crutches, shooting his pistol at the Germans while liquid flames shot over from the other side. It was colorful, exciting, and sensational, but it would not reproduce clearly enough for the size panels we needed.

One of the items the veteran’s home loaned us was a rare comic book named *Two-Fisted Tales*. Similar to graphic novels, this series of books written in the 1950s maintained a comic book format of sequential drawings, and described non-fiction stories of war and battle. This particular issue dated March/April of 1953 included a chapter about the Lost Battalion, and illustrated it from the point of view of a soldier fought there. The soldier describes what happened to him in the Argonne Forest in 1918 on a day-to-day basis and discusses the Lost Battalion’s rescue at the end of the comic. The caption of the very last frame says: “The boys will go back but I’ll stay here…covered with branches and why not…I’m DEAD!” It is a shocking end, but drives home the reality that so many men died during the terrible battle.

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Our exhibit designer thought that reproducing this comic would both tell the story of the Lost Battalion and attract younger people to stop and read about it. He chose to change the color pictures to black and white to match the rest of the text panels in the room. We did not intend for the background to replace the text, so I wrote text to go on top of the pictures to more concisely explain what happened to the Lost Battalion and Holderman. In cases built into the panels, we displayed all eleven of Holderman’s medals. In a separate case, we exhibited the Medal of Honor with a picture of Holderman wearing all of his medals. We also showed one of his personal belongings: his trumpet from the days that he played in the company’s band. (See Appendix B for unedited text and Appendix D, Figures 1 and 2 for visuals).

The exhibit designer also fabricated two cannon to stand at either side of the Lost Battalion display. He and the exhibit manager developed this idea to provide an interactive and to utilize touch-screen computers purchased by the department a few years prior for a different project that never materialized. One cannon would offer information about Nelson Holderman and his military career. The other kiosk would provide scans of the actual letters Edward Bates and his family wrote to each other, as well as transcripts of the letters. This format allowed me to include information we could not include in the exhibit panels due to lack of space. It appeals to visitors who want to know more about the subject matter. (See Appendix D, Figure 1).

Unfortunately, the idea did not turn out as we had planned. The kiosk’s computers were already a few years old and the technology outdated. This frustrates visitors who try
to use it, and encourages others to play with the screen and overload it. Consequently, the kiosks frequently break down. They remain in the exhibit, but we programmed them in a limited manner. The Holderman kiosk displays only the comic book from which the background panels were designed, and the Bates kiosk displays a few sample letters and transcripts. Overall, it was a good idea and one we need to pursue in future exhibits, but we must solve the technology issue before proceeding with another exhibit.

**Step Eight: Display Case Design**

The final area of design and interpretation involves the display cases for the objects. The *Californians Over There* exhibit contains display cases in both exhibit rooms: the text panel room (historic Attorney General) and the flag room (historic Library). The Attorney General’s room contains one display case divided into two sections. The first section, facing the entrance to the room, we loosely termed “the things they carried” because this case contains personal items a doughboy might have kept with him in his time at the front. The other side of the case displays weapons of the war. (See Appendix E, Figures 1, 2, and 3).

Visitors leave the historic Attorney General’s room and enter the darkened historic Library room to the left, where period music, including *Over There*, plays in the background. The left side of the room, as one enters, includes three display cases with two war posters included in each. The first case’s theme appeals to American patriotism. The first poster presents an idealized version of the “typical” American mother. She is white, a little plump, and has white hair. She is standing against an American flag.
backdrop and there are battlefield scenes in the distant background. Her arms are outstretched in a welcoming manner to the words: “Women! Help America’s Sons Win the War.” The second poster appeals to the men of America, with the image of three men. The most dominant is the American doughboy standing in the center; to his left is a farmer, and at his right is a man dressed in a business suit holding a bag of money. The words, “Your Country Calls—Enlist, Plow, Buy Bonds,” demonstrates how everyone can contribute and do their part for the war.

The second case contains posters that play on Americans’ fear by portraying the Germans as sinister and evil. The first, with the words “Help Stop This,” features a menacing German soldier carrying a rifle in one hand and a bloody knife in the other stomping on a dead, bloody body through the ruins of a burned-out village. The words at the bottom say, “Buy WSS and Keep Him Out of America.” The second poster’s message is the same, as it shows the silhouetted body of a German soldier dragging off a child against the background of flames. “Remember Belgium,” is this poster’s message.

The third case contains two more posters aimed at engaging people’s sympathies and fears. The first poster shows an American doughboy caught up in the barbed wire of No Man’s Land. He is trapped and calling for help with one hand raised in the air. “Remember the Bond,” is written across the top and is clearly reminding the viewer to remember the soldier who is sacrificing everything at the front. The second poster shows a blood-red arm, with a fist clutching a knife dripping with blood, reaching up out of the
ocean. In the background is a ship, clearly flying an American flag. “Help Crush the
Menace of the Seas,” is this poster’s message. (See Appendix E, Figures 4 and 5).

Proceeding to the right of the posters is a case containing a guidon from the 117th
Regiment of the 42nd Rainbow Division. The guidon measures 26 inches by 43 inches. It
features a white castle with a rainbow coming out of the top, all set against a red
background. The numbers “117” and the letter “D” are also appliqued to the background.
(See Appendix E, Figures 5 and 6).

To its right lies another case which stands at the center of the room. It contains an
impressive-looking, large blue flag from the 159th Infantry of the 40th Division; it
measures 55 inches by 66 inches. An American eagle dominates the center of this flag, as
it clutches arrows in one of its talons and an olive branch in the other. The eagle is
holding a banner with the words, “E. Pluribus Unum” in his beak. Above the eagle’s head
is a round emblem with thirteen white stars, and located at the bottom of the flag is a red
banner with the words, “159th U.S. Infantry” embroidered on it. (See Appendix E,
Figures 5, 6 and 7).

The case to the right of the 159th’s flag contains representative samples of the
Bates family letters. There are a total of ten letters; Edward wrote some of the letters,
which are addressed to his mother, father, and brothers. The others are letters from his
mother, father, brothers, and a high school student named Dorothy Anderson. The letters
are very popular objects that visitors to the exhibit examine very carefully. (Appendix E,
Figures 6, 7, and 8).
Next to the letters, stands a large case that displays two World War One-era uniforms. One uniform is that of a California doughboy and features a hat, helmet, jacket, pants, boots, and puttees (wool, leg wrappings worn from the ankle to the knee). The other is a 1917 sailor’s uniform which is navy blue in color and features the pants, top, scarf, and hat. (Appendix E, Figures 7 and 9).

The last case in the room features another large flag. This one measures 38 inches by 49 inches. It, too, features an American eagle almost identical to the eagle on the other flag, but this is set against a gold, silk background. The banner at the bottom has the words, “322 Battalion U.S. Signal Corps.” (See Appendix E, Figure 10).
Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

As the third in a series of war exhibits at the CSCM, *Californians Over There* represented a change from a broad-based, information-driven exhibit into a more focused, personal view of war. Inspired by Freeman Tilden’s principle stating that interpretation is not “instruction,” but “provocation,” we developed an exhibit that examined California’s role in World War One from the perspective of those who knew the war best: two California soldiers who served. That big idea drove the research and planning of the exhibit, but the theme evolved as we proceeded. This exhibit revolved around the exchange of letters between the home and war fronts, and the life-line such a form of communication fostered between the millions of soldiers “over there” and their loved ones “over here.”

The second California soldier, Colonel Nelson M. Holderman and his experience with the Lost Battalion, occupied the centerpiece of the exhibit. Exact numbers vary widely from source to source, but Holderman himself stated that the Germans trapped 700 men and officers in the October siege, and after five days and six nights, only 192 men walked away. The men accomplished their mission, he said, and “avoided capture by the enemy.”97 Their story, however, captured the attention of the public at home, and America hailed the survivors as national heroes. Holderman devoted his life to the cause of veterans after the war. California’s governor appointed Holderman as commandant of veterans after the war. California’s governor appointed Holderman as commandant of

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the Veteran’s Home of California at Yountville, and he occupied that post from 1926 to 1953. Holderman made many needed improvements during his tenure, including the construction of a 500-bed hospital that bears his name today. We were fortunate that the Yountville Veteran’s Home shared Holderman’s inspiring story with us.

In this paper, I presented a step-by-step examination of the process I followed as part of the exhibit team that created the *Californians Over There* exhibit. I covered several challenges, including budget constraints, timelines, content decisions, marketing, design, and fabrication. My graduate studies of history, memory, theory, and methodology informed my plan for this exhibit and will continue to do so in my future research projects. Museum administration literature offers helpful information, but organizations differ and those specific needs should always be considered when creating museum exhibits. Provocative exhibits should represent a collaborative product of people who work together to plan and research a finished product.

Public historians bring historical scholarship and interpretation to a society with varied interests and backgrounds. No one forces the public to enter an exhibit and no one forces them to remain, so it is up to the public historian to offer an exhibit that provokes and engages their interest. The task of a public historian, writes David Glassberg, is to “create spaces for dialogue about history and the collection of memories, and to insure
that various voices are heard in those spaces, than to provide a finished interpretation of
events translating the latest professional scholarship for a professional audience. ”\[^{98}\]

APPENDIX A

Centerpiece Design Ideas Memo

Californians Over There!

Exhibit Ideas

Exhibit Meeting: January 17, 2011

1. **The end of the era of the horse and benefits of mechanized vehicles.**
   - Horses were used to pull big guns, ammunition wagons, and wheeled field kitchens.
   - Horses needed special care and were driven to exhaustion.
   - Airplanes and modern weaponry brought an end to the traditional role of the cavalry.
   - Horses could not penetrate barbed-wire fences and were mowed down by machine-gun fire. Millions of horses died in military service.

*Historical Significance:*
WWI marks the last war in which horses played a major role in combat. Displaying a motorcycle (on loan from The California Military Museum) demonstrates this transition, and is an object of interest intended to attract visitors into the room.

- No additional cost to the exhibit.

2. **Expanded display of Holderman and the Lost Battalion**
   - Of 554 men, only 197 survived
   - Numerous books have been written on the topic, as well as 1919 movie and a 2001 A&E made-for-TV movie.

*Historical Significance:*
Books about The Lost Battalion focus mainly on the 77th and its leader Major Charles W. Whittlesey. California’s own Nelson Holderman is largely overlooked, but he was a key player in the battle. He led K Company of the 307th Infantry and valiantly held back the German attack on the battalion. Holderman was wounded and awarded numerous medals for his part in the battle, including the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was the most decorated soldier of WWI and WWII. After the war, Holderman served as commandant of the Yountville Soldier’s Home from 1923-1953 where he made significant improvements to the facility and lives of veterans.

- The veteran’s home archivist has loaned state parks Holderman’s medals, personal objects, and personal papers...also great graphics! It is a compelling, dramatic story, with a California soldier at the center of the story. He should rightfully be located at the “center” of an exhibit named “Californians Over There.”
- No additional cost to the exhibit.

3. **WWI weaponry**
● New technology (poison gas, machine guns, tanks, flamethrowers, grenades) combined with old military tactics yielded horrible death toll.

**Historical Significance:**
WWI began with countries anticipating a war fought with rifles, cannons, cavalry, and fighting spirit. After 4 years of war, the strategy, tactics, and weaponry of war had changed dramatically as the arms race within each country escalated.

- *No additional cost to the exhibit*

4. **Trench warfare**

- The exponential killing power of the new weapons required immediate ways for the men to protect themselves.

**Historical Significance:**
The ugly reality stands in stark contrast to the romanticization of war. A war of attrition developed as each side “dug in” with an intricate system of underground trenches that spread thousands of miles across Europe. In order to enable visitors to “experience” life in the trenches, we could create a “trench” with sandbags. This would add additional cost to the exhibit. An alternative would be to create a trench with blown-up graphics, which would not add additional cost to the exhibit.

5. **The California home front**

- How did Californians support or oppose the war?
- This display would enable an expanded look at the war at home. It could include the role of women who went to work, the “hello girls,” the Red Cross. It could include the role of the boy and girl scouts.
- The backdrop could display the WWI posters on loan from the Yountville Veteran’s Home and an expanded discussion of their importance to propagandizing the war. It would also allow for an explanation of Liberty bonds and their significance to financing the war (a relevant topic in today’s world).
- Not everyone supported the war. There was a significant peace movement in California.
- The bombing at the Preparedness Day Parade: San Francisco, July 1916. More than 51,000 spectators lined the parade route to show their support of strong U.S. defense when a bomb exploded and killed 40 people.

- *No additional cost to exhibit*

**Historical Significance:**
This allows visitors to experience how people (like themselves) viewed the war. This is particularly significant since our country is fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan today. How does this compare to current events?

6. **The Aviator’s War**

- WWI marked the evolution of aviation used for the purpose of reconnaissance to aerial warfare.
- The Lafayette Escadrille was a famous American unit that served in the French air force. Two Californians served in this unit.
One of the Bates Brothers (Lesley) enlisted with the air service, so we can display his letters which describe his experience.

Historical Significance:
The development of the aviation industry is particularly significant to California and the build-up of the military industrial complex and the importance of the air force bases to the economy of this state.

- No additional cost to exhibit

7. African Americans and Army segregation
   - The AEFs racial segregation extended only to African Americans. For the most part, African American troops were restricted to menial tasks, such as laboring and grave-digging.
   - Discussion of other ethnic groups: Native Americans were not segregated and often used for communications tasks and tracking purposes.
   - America was an immigrant nation at this time...how were men who recently emigrated from enemy nations such as Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy treated?
   - The Jewish population had its own issues with the war due to America’s alliance with Russia

Historical Significance:
This moves the war experience beyond the white person’s point-of-view...which is significant to all visitors of the exhibit.

- No additional cost to the exhibit
APPENDIX B

_Californians Over There_ Panel Text

Panel 1: Californians Over There

California’s Role in World War One

Over there, over there
Send the word, send the word over there -
That the Yanks are coming,
The Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming
Ev'rywhere.
So prepare, say a pray'r,
Send the word, send the word to beware.
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over
Over there.

“He Kept Us Out Of War!” This 1916 campaign slogan reminded Americans that President Woodrow Wilson kept the United States out of the Great War that had consumed Europe since 1914. By 1917 he could no longer keep that promise. Arguing that civilization was “in the balance,” Wilson asked Congress to declare war on the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary to make the world “safe for democracy.” Over the protests of a broad-based American peace movement, the United States joined the Allied Powers of Great Britain and France…and entered World War I.

Two million Americans volunteered for the army and nearly three million were drafted. In California, over 100,000 men enlisted. Californians fought and died “over there” on the front lines, and served behind the lines in supply, medical, and engineering units. “Over here,” on the California home front, anxious families kept up with the latest newspaper accounts of overseas battles and wondered if their sons were safe. Only letters connected the home and war fronts. Only letters reassured worried parents. Only letters consoled men stationed so far from the comforts of home. In lives disrupted by war, letters provided a sense of security to those who sacrificed everything for their country.

The stories of two “Californians Over There,” 2nd Lieutenant Charles “Edward” Bates from Alameda, California and Captain Nelson Holderman from Tustin, California, presents 2 differing portrayals of war. Edward's letters to his family, and their letters back to him, provide a deeply personal account of Edward’s life. It also represents countless other California “doughboys,” a popular term used for American soldiers during World War I.
War I. Each man, like Edward, weighed the daily prospect of death against his strong commitment to duty and country. In contrast, Captain Nelson Holderman’s experience with the “Lost Battalion” stands alone, and is not representative of the general war experience. The drama of the group of American soldiers trapped behind enemy lines captivated the nation’s attention and demonstrates both the senseless slaughter and selfless heroics of war.

**Who was Edward Bates?**
Charles Edward Harold Bates was born on August 13, 1894 in Alameda, California to Henry and Helen Bates. Edward studied medicine at the University of California Berkeley and left school in his senior year to enlist in the U.S. Army.

**Who were Edward’s Family?**
Edward’s father, Henry, worked as an insurance executive, and his mother, Helen, tended to the home and her 4 other sons:
1. **Norman**, the eldest, was born in 1887. He was a Major in the U.S. Marine Corps, and served in the Philippines for the duration of World War I.
2. **Lesley** was born in 1889 and joined the U.S. air service in 1917. He trained in California, but never served overseas.
3. **Richard** was born in 1892, went by the common nickname, Dick, and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1915. He was stationed in Central and South America for the duration of the war.
4. **Jocelyn**, the youngest son, was born in 1896. Health issues prevented him from serving in the military, and he pursued an agricultural career during the war.

The Henry Bates family is representative of white, middle-class life in the San Francisco Bay Area in the early years of the twentieth century. Of course, California society in 1917 consisted of more than middle-class white people; immigrants made up more than half of San Francisco's population, and men of varying ethnic backgrounds served together in the armed forces as American citizens. Racist policies regarding African American citizens, however, forced these Americans to serve in separate units restricted mostly to labor battalions. This meant they performed the most unpleasant tasks of the war such as unloading ships, digging trenches, removing unexploded shells from fields, clearing disabled equipment, and burying soldiers killed in action. Only two black divisions, the 92nd and 93rd Infantries, fought at the front lines, representing 2% of the AEFs combat troops.

**Leaving Home**
The white, middle-aged American mother was the predominant image of womanhood in the war culture of the First World War.
Women dominated the peace movement in the early years of the war. Media in the form of posters, film, and songs targeted mothers in order to diffuse the lingering anti-war sentiment. Their messages emphasized the patriotic value in sending American sons to fight for their country.

Edward's mother supported her son's decision to enlist, but she worried about her 22-year-old boy when he left home in January 1918.

My own dear Edward, January 7, 1918
I feel a little anxious dearie knowing that for the first time you are on your own resources in a crowd of strangers. Be most careful that you are not led into unwholesome companionship...Signed, “Your loving mother, R. Helen Bates”

Panel 2: The Yanks Are Coming

California Basic Training
The Allied forces needed immediate reinforcement when the United States entered the war in 1917, however the U.S. Army was small and unprepared. General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), insisted in sending an organized independent American Army rather than dividing soldiers among English and French forces. Only 2 Regular Army and 2 National Guard divisions shipped out in 1917, while the remaining 2.8 million raw recruits trained vigorously in training camps throughout the United States and deployed the following year.

Edward trained at Camp Kearny, San Diego, with California's 40th “Sunshine” Division. The division gained the nickname “sunshine” because the men hailed from the sunny western states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Unfortunately the division did not remain together as a solid unit, but were used as replacements for existing divisions. By the end of the war the 40th Division supplied over 27,000 replacements to 8 divisions.

Edward prepared body and soul for war, while his family adjusted to his pending departure and hoped for the best.

January 26, 1918
“Dear Old Dick” We march all day long. That is the work of the infantry...We have learned grenading and bayoneting. We expect to build trenches soon and live in them for 3 days. I can't say that I enjoy this stuff. We live in tents, and the life is hard. The grub is poor and so am I. As I said, I wish I was home. I remain as ever, your loving brother - Edward.
Edward enrolled in Camp Kearny's Officer Training School, and by May 1918, he achieved the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. His brothers, career military officers, offered advice to their younger brother…

April 1918
Make the best of things as they are, improve them where you can, be an example to your men, avoid criticism of superiors as you would the plague, for nothing will destroy the confidence of your men in you and in the superiors you criticize more completely…You have the makings of a splendid officer, Edward, and I want to see you succeed, and I have faith you will – Norman

August 13, 1918
You have the chance of a lifetime to see the greatest adventure in the world thru completely—you will see more of the world and you will get a true insight into human nature – Dick

Edward's mother is proud and supportive of her son:

May 1918
I was just thinking I shall address this letter to Lieutenant CEH Bates for the first time! It is certainly a pleasure to do it—I know you are glad dear and we all are and hope it will mean a great deal to you and that perhaps you can save up enough to finish your Medical Course in the best way after the year is over …Fondest love dearest and may you be able to fill your new responsibilities with dignity and faithfulness and honor.—Mother

Edward left Camp Kearny in July and traveled by train to New York, where American troops deployed for the overseas journey. This was a new experience for the California boys who had never ventured far from home. At seemingly every stop, enthusiastic crowds of well-wishers—especially young women—greeted the troops with food and cigarettes.

August 3, 1918
Dear Mother, The more I see the USA I can't help but love it, and feel that we sure have a wonderful country. To travel across it seeing its wonders fills me with enthusiasm that makes a wonderfully loyal American. I wish you could take such a trip mother, it would be a wonderful thing for you, and for anyone else who has never taken it. – Edward

How does the family cope with sending a son to war?
His mother worries…

August, 1918
My own dear boy, This is your birthday, and for the first time I think in your life we are far apart and I do not even know where you are—Whether sea or land—whether on your way “overseas” to France or whether still in this country.
His brothers are envious…
April 1918
Life is a small thing to give up in the cause of destroying the roots of this monster, and anything less than life is a cheap price for the peace and security of our people.— Norman

September 20, 1918
Dear Edward Boogoo: So you beat me over all right… you’re there and when the big noise is over and people ask me where I was I'll say, “Oh, I was in California. But you can burst a few gold buttons and make them listen to you... The idea is not how long we live but how we live...You who are in France see a light that none others may see and that's the holy grail of human idealism. Much love to thee, old trench hound. Just dig in and keep the Hun worried. Lesley

Edward, the soldier, reassures himself and his family…
September 5, 1918, France
We never know how long we last or what is going to happen. We know we are taking an awful chance, but it must be. We must defeat the Germans, whether we get kicked off or not makes little difference. The nation must go on. It is with this spirit in mind that we are here today. We all hope to come out of it alive. We know some of us won't, who is to come out we don’t know, it makes little difference.

September 11, 1918
Well, everyone, be good and cheer up, for there is no use of worrying, I should be one for that. How-ever, take some spins in the Dodge, and father you take mother on a little vacation.

Panel 3: Somewhere in France

Not So Quiet on the Western Front…
Fighting during the First World War took place primarily on two fronts: the eastern in Russia, and the western in Europe. When Russia withdrew from the war in 1918, Germany focused its full force on the Western Front which had stood at a virtual stalemate with the British and French since 1914. The arrival of the AEF in 1918 brought renewed hope for a swift end to the war. Germany refused to give up, plunging inexperienced American doughboys such as Edward into some of the worst battles of the war.

September 6, 1918
Dear Old Pops, The war is being fought here on the Western Front, and of course I believe it will end here. This is the greatest of all the fronts and am glad to be here...We are hearing guns pounding, and are wondering what they are, we are still very far away...Edward
In September 1918, the Allied Powers executed a grand offensive to drive back the Germans and end the war. The Americans—and Edward—fought in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne campaigns. He wrote a 26-page letter home describing an incident that nearly took his life and put his leadership and survival skills to the test... (Note: It was common for Americans to address the Germans with derogatory names such as “Boche,” “Huns,” or “Fritz,” and Edward used these terms in his letters).

Edward advanced his platoon to the town of Marcheville, France. Greeted by intense German machine-gun fire as they approached the town, Edward ordered his men back to safety, and met Colonel Bearss of the 102d Infantry.

September 30, 1918
I told him that I had met machine gun fire and that the town was full of Boche. ‘Bates I want you to take that town with your platoon. I know you can do it, Go to it.’ I got brave, said ‘yes sir’ and went back to my platoon and told them that orders were that we take the town...At zero hour I said “Boys we are going over now...Every man knew what it meant and they went with grim determination. The town was full of machine gun nests and snipers... 

The Colonel and his staff got into a dugout in the basement of a building in ruins... This P.C. [Post of Command] was on the outside of town toward the German lines, and a road went along this edge of the town. Front this road, open fields extended back into Germany. He asked me to stretch my platoon along the edge of the road, so as to keep watch to the front...

Imagine, a whole Battalion should have taken this town, and here we are, one platoon in charge...well, we laid down in a sort of narrow ditch along the road. The barrage came down. They hit the P.C. and they hit the road, shrapnel flew all around us. We laid down as flat as possible and remained there for several hours. I wasn't nervous although the roar of the bursting shells was terrific.

After the barrage ceased, Edward worried that the Colonel could be captured by the Germans. He lined up his platoon, ordered them to fire at the Germans, and then he ran back to warn the Colonel. When Edward returned, his platoon was gone.

So I grabbed a rifle and fired as fast as I could so as to make the Boche imagine there were several of us there. My idea was to let the Colonel and his staff escape. I felt that I was going to be captured, but I remained there just the same. The Colonel went out of his dugout and saw me holding the line all alone; he hollered over he would send me some men.
Once the Colonel escaped, Edward found his way to a trench. He snuck back to the center of the town, where he found his platoon with a sergeant. The Germans had the men surrounded and Edward searched for a way to break free....

*I found a trench leading part of the way to the rear...So we started down this trench. It lead to a building. I climbed out of a window and jumped into the road below which lead in the direction I wanted. But when I reached the road several Boche standing 50 yards away aimed a machine gun at me. The bullets fell around me, but none hit me. I jumped back through the window and got around a different way. I cut across a swamp when I sunk up to my waist in mud. I tugged along, dodging beaucoup machine gun bullets. Providence was with me all the time. I should have been killed hours before.*

Under heavy fire, Edward and his men escaped through the back part of the town, where they encountered a Major and 100 men from different companies of the 102nd Infantry. Edward informed them that they had orders to hold the town until dark.

*There was a trench running parallel with the town and it offered fair protection. We got back about 5 pm; at about 5:15 another barrage came down. We laid down and hugged the trench...But at 7:30 pm...we went back first...We ran back through this trench to town X about 4 kilometers. It was terrible, for the Boche dropped shells on the trench all along the entire distance. The men were tired and their morale extremely low; and of course nervous...Just as we got through the town, a terrific explosion occurred. I looked back and saw the gate of the town on fire...*

*We had made a miraculous escape. We hurried back home and lost no men on the way. It was then 11 pm. So you see I had some experience. Some said it was worse than their experiences at Chateau Thierry. ..We are moving tonight again so I must close. I will try to write again soon. So far I am very well, but still a little nervous from the great event. Your loving son Edward.*

The next day the General commended Edward on his conduct in the previous day’s action. “You obeyed orders,” he told Edward, “though you knew it might mean great losses.” Unfortunately for Edward, that was only the beginning of his battle-front experiences.

**Panel 4, Centerpiece Panel: The Lost Battalion**

Trapped behind enemy lines, approximately 500 men known to history as the “Lost Battalion” held the Germans off for six days in October 1918. One of the men, a Californian named Captain Nelson Holderman, led his company of men through the dense, over-grown woods of the Argonne Forest to assist Major Charles W. Whittlesey
and hold the territory for the Allied forces. The Germans surrounded the Americans, leaving them with little food, shelter, water, medical supplies, and ammunition. This is their story...

**Day 1: October 2**

“**Our mission is to hold this position at all costs.**”

In a general offensive against German positions in the Argonne Forest, only Major Charles W. Whittlesey of New York’s 77th division and Captain George G. McMurtry’s 308th managed to break through German lines. Unfortunately, support regiments on the left and right sides failed to accomplish the same goal, leaving this group of Americans alone in a “pocket” inside German territory. General Johnson ordered the near-by battalion of the 307th to move in and support Whittlesey’s right side. By evening the men of this “mixed” battalion dug in, shared rations and rested with confidence that reinforcements would arrive the next day.

“I have four bullet holes in my overcoat, and my trousers were torn to pieces by a grenade, but I only had my knees cut besides the bullet in my shoulder. The strap to my field glasses was cut by a bullet, my gas mask was cut in half by shrapnel, and my helmet has a dent from a bullet.”

Lt. Maurice Griffin, 1918

**Day 2: October 3**

“**Situation Serious.**”

Four companies of the 307th set out in the night before to meet up with Whittlesey. By dawn on October 3, only Captain Nelson Holderman and the men of Company K had succeeded. Companies I, M, and F got lost in the rough terrain. The Germans surrounded the Americans and bombarded them with trench mortar and machine gun attacks. The injured tried not to moan and give away their location. German snipers killed anyone who filled canteens at a nearby stream. By the end of their second day, the Americans were critically low on food, water, and bandages. Whittlesey sent three carrier pigeons describing their situation as “serious.”

“It pains like hell, Captain, but I’ll keep as quiet as I can.”

Unidentified doughboy shot in the gut, October 3, 1918.

**Messenger pigeons: Feathered heroes of war.**

Front-line communications depended on methods including telephones and human runners. However, when lines were cut and runners were killed, carrier pigeons offered the next best way to get messages from the front to division headquarters. Officers wrote coded messages and inserted them into an aluminum holder seared into the bird’s leg so
that it could not come off unless the pigeon’s leg did. This method was unreliable at best, since there was no confirmation of the message’s arrival.

Day 3: October 4
“For heaven’s sake stop it.”
Things continued to get worse. With no food, the men ate leaves or acorns; with no bandages, they re-used bloodied bandages of the dead; with no strength, they left the dead unburied. Then, the unbelievable happened! American artillery fired on their location for 1 ½ hours, killing 30 men and uprooting the underbrush and tree branches they used for cover. Whittlesey sent his last pigeon, named Cher Ami, with a message imploring the Americans to stop the barrage. Cher Ami delivered the life-saving message, but he lost an eye, a leg, and suffered a broken breast bone in the process.

“It was the worst mess I ever saw. Comrades all shot up and lying around under trees and every place you looked.
Roy Lightfoot, October 4, 1918

Day 4: October 5
“Do you think we'll ever get out of here?”
The Germans reinforced their position with new arrivals, and relentlessly struck at the Americans with machine gun, grenade, and sniper-fire. American newspapers closely covered the story, and the men’s plight captured national attention. Even though the men were not lost and they were not a battalion, one newspaper editor dubbed them the “Lost Battalion.” To the survivors’ frustration, the name stayed with them the rest of their lives.

“We were not lost, so it could not have been the ‘Lost Battalion.’ We advanced under definite orders with a definite objective, and we reached it, and were surrounded.—
Captain Leo A. Stromee, 1918

Day 5: October 6
Surrounded by the stench of death and fewer than 250 men left to fight, the Americans’ situation was beyond desperate. Many of the men wrote final messages on scraps of bandages using their own blood for ink. The Fiftieth Aero Squadron dropped food, ammunition, medical supplies, and pigeons to the battered troops…but missed their targets! Instead, the Germans grabbed the supplies and taunted the starving doughboys by noisily feasting on food meant for the Americans.

“Surrounded on a bleak, unsheltered ravine, with the German Army on a cliff above... Enemy troops were so close that we could hear the calls and orders of the men. If we showed ourselves in the openings of the wooded forest, we could be reached by German machine guns, rifles, and trench-mortars.”
Private Robert Manson, 1918
Day 6: October 7
“We’re Americans—we can’t surrender!”
German commanders understood the Americans’ grave situation and at 4:00 pm sent a message to Whittlesey asking for his surrender. Whittlesey refused. In retaliation, the Germans waged a fierce attack on the Americans with flame-throwers, grenades, mortars, and machine guns. Company K suffered the brunt. Holderman, wounded 4 times, and using propped-up rifles as crutches, fired at his German foes with his pistol, which inspired his men to fight back with all the strength they could muster.

Around 6:30 that evening everything changed. Troops from the 307th found the struggling Americans and brought their ordeal to a long-awaited end. The rescuers beat back the Germans and delivered cans of corned beef hash to the starving men. With “hands covered in blood and dirt,” one doughboy said it tasted like “sirloin steak smothered with onions. It was the happiest moment of my life. I laughed and cried for joy!”

“The sheer horror of that strip of hillside is unimaginable. The hillside in their position had been literally blown to pieces—hardly a spot that had not been struck.”
Lieutenant Tillman upon the discovery and rescue of the Lost Battalion, 1918

The next day, Tuesday October 8, 194 men walked away, but 202 more were carried out due to the severity of their wounds. Three officers, Whittlesey, McMurtry, and Holderman received the Medal of Honor for their actions during the siege, as well as two pilots who were killed in the attempts to drop supplies to the men. Their courage and defiance in the face of incredible odds inspired many for years to come. Cher Ami was awarded the Croix de Guerre medal for historic service and is on display at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC.

After the war, Captain (later promoted to Colonel) Nelson Holderman re-joined the National Guard. From 1926-1953 he served as commandant of the Veteran’s Home of California in Yountville where he made significant improvements to the living quarters, facilities, and hospital. He spent his life working tirelessly on behalf of veterans. Holderman died on September 3, 1953, and he is buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, California.
Panel 5: Say a Prayer
Soldiers' letters from the front could take three weeks or more to arrive home, leaving families anxious for every word. Soldiers spent a great deal of down-time in the trenches between battles. Thousands of miles of trenches stretched along the Western Front providing cover for soldiers on both sides. Since they were deep enough for men to stand and walk around in without being seen by the enemy, the term “over the top” literally meant climbing out into the “no man’s land” of barbed wire, machine gun and sniper-fire.

October 15, 1918
You are a good son to write to us so often. It brings us all close to you, and you don't know how much is helps your dear mother...I can quite imagine your walking at night, bursting bombs for lightning, and the continuous roar of guns for thunder, but I suppose by now you are an expert on the sounds produced by various projectiles.-Father

When Edward's 26-page letter describing the battle for Marcheville arrives, the family is jubilant. They share the news with friends and family...

October 24, 1918
Your letters of Sept. 30th Oct. 1st and one of the night previously written before “going over the top” and others describing that terrible experience have come today. You can't imagine my dear one how thrilled we are and how proud to think that you came through that day so gallantly and (Thank God forever)—so safely—It seems miraculous indeed—and we can never be thankful enough! I only pray God's protection for you always dearest one—Fond love my dearest one. Everyone sends inquiries and love or regards to you. My breath almost stops when I think of what you have gone through!—If only it were the last!-Mother

November 17, 1918
Father has sent me those letters of yours in which you tell of your wonderfully good fortune to get into action so soon and of the beautiful manner in which you conducted yourself—the whole family is wonderfully proud of you—the only son to have gotten into things has demonstrated his worth and I hope we all should have done likewise had the good Lord so willed it. I am so delighted that for the moment my own regret and sorrow at not having reached the other side—is overshadowed—and I bask as Charlie Chaplin's brother basks—in the fame of my greater brother.—Dick

On September 26, the Allied forces launched the Meuse-Argonne Offensive where the British, Belgian, French, and American divisions uniformly struck back against the German line. Even in retreat, the Germans inflicted heavy casualties on the Allies. Of the
1.2 million Americans involved in this offensive, more than 17,000 died. It was the most brutal fighting Edward had yet confronted, and each letter reveals his maturing attitude toward death.

October 4, 1918
I hear we are going into the thick of it again soon, but don't know how soon. I wish it were over for I have been over the top twice now and have earned recognition from all the 'higher ups' and feel as if I've done my bit. –Edward

October 10 1918:
Dear Mother: I imagine you will receive this letter by Thanksgiving, and so again I think that you ought to have another happy day. You have lots to be thankful for. First, that I am the only one of the family here, second, that my life has been spared so far, and third, that the Americans have met with success everywhere. I shall be thankful because I am here; because my life has been spared, tho I often wonder how it was; and also because the Central Empires are crumbling before our armies. It has been a wonderful experience for me, mother dear, and if anything happens, it will be because I have seen all there is to see, and fate has willed my end. That's the way we get to look at it here and it's the most comfortable way to look at it, for one feels confident in himself under such a state of mind. It's not so bad here after all. I am sitting in sunshine now writing this letter while I suppose you are imagining me, ducking lead everywhere.-Edward.

October 13, 1918
Dear All: Going over the top again tonight. So here's goodbye in case anything happens. God Bless You All-Edward

October 15, 1918
Dear Mother: We are in the lines again, and hoping that peace will have been declared before the next few days. Everyone is anxious for the news every day. We all believe in unconditional surrender, as having the only real moral effect on the German people, but yet if we can gain peace and save many lives, then lets do it. I certainly hate the idea of going over the top again soon, but I fear we must.-Edward

October 26, 1918
Dear Mother, Father, and Joc: We are in the lines again and while the men are standing to, I thought I would try to drop you a line from my P.C. This is a very mean sector, the shelters being few and the Artillery being plentiful. It is about the worst line holding position I have been in and I long for relief any day...

[This life]It is terribly hard, wet feet all the time, no sleep sometimes for long stretches, I had 5 hours sleep last night, the first in 3 days, and yet I feel fine. But unless one is well, he would break down. I shall never regret my experiences here. Next time I pick the
home-guard, but to pass thru the ruined villages, to see the sights I have seen, to live the life I am living is worth a life to live; and I don't regret having come in as I did...

Panel 6: It's Over, Over There!
On the eleventh day of the eleventh month at the eleventh hour, the war ended! Germany and the Allies signed an armistice calling for an end to fighting along the entire Western Front. Edward described the moment the fighting stopped...

November 12, 1918 France
Dear Mother, Father, and Everyone: The war is over, I hope permanently. It was a very dramatic end for us...we started to advance in three waves. We got as far as a cross road on the other side of which was beaucoup Germans, wire, and etc. When we were given orders to stop. It was eleven o'clock.

No one was hurt, and in another minute many would have been killed possibly including myself for how anyone could have gotten through that wire I don't know. The machine guns would have mowed us down. The last few days or weeks have been terrible for us...We are certainly lucky, and yesterday, acceptance of the armistice has saved a good many hides.

Last night we built fires all along the line, a thing never seen before and sang songs. The Boche sent up different colored flares, burning them all up. It was a pretty sight, resembling the 4th of July... everywhere the French (and Boche alike) are rejoicing. I want to wish you all a very merry Xmas. How I would love to be there! And so would all of us, but Xmas has arrived too soon this year....Thank God for the wonderful outcome of the war. Democracy is saved!-Edward

California rejoices! The War is Over!
November 12, 1918
Sunday night at 12:35 p.m. or rather Monday morning at that hour--I was aroused from sleep which was dreams of war—by the sound of siren whistles like New Years Eve. I jumped out of bed and awoke your father and said listen to that!...I stood at the window with a thankful heart, it was the most welcome sound I think that I had ever heard! The noise went on until 2 o'clock i.e. the whistles and bells—more or less until morning—people going by in autos, ringing cowbells etc—at 8 am the whistle began again and kept up a long time, father went to the office but the Governor declared a legal holiday and so all business closed...It was pure joy—I can tell you—after your father came home we went over to Oakland and saw automobiles highly decorated many thousands of them with sailors etc. riding on the radiator—not a procession but everywhere. Everyone was wild with joy and nearly every machine had old tins of every description dragging along behind to make as much noise as possible—or bells—all dangling.-Mother
The family’s jubilance quickly turns to worry...did Edward survive?
Even as they celebrate the end of the war, the family realizes the last letter they received from Edward described the intense fighting at the front. They had no way of knowing if he survived, and they were eager for reassurance.

November 12, 1918

*We are quite anxious to hear from you as we feel sure that you have been into the thick of it since your last letter of October 10.*-Father

November 18, 1918

*My own darling, [Your last] letter haunts us all the time since we know from it you were about to go into action again and we know that on all that front some of the heaviest fighting of the war took place between that date and Nov. 18th. God grant that you came safely through it my dear one! But you can't imagine how we long to know-*Mother

November 25, 1918

*My dear old Sned: We have not heard from you in two weeks...and you were then expecting to go into another offensive. We know of course that there has been very heavy fighting and a big casualty list since you wrote, and although the Government promised to notify parents promptly of any accident they have not done so...They are very slow in advising the families and we are anxious about you. Mother is worrying a great deal, so to make her feel better, I cabled you today but I feel sure you won't get it for a long time.*-Father

November 26, 1918

*My own old darling, No letters from you for 10 days or more and we eagerly watch for one. Your father sent a cable today to try to get word to you we are so very anxious to know how you are and where!!* -Mother

Edward had no idea of his family's 2 week-long anguish, since he promptly telegraphed them to inform them of his transfer to the 32nd Division and the Army of Occupation. This transfer accounted for the agonizing delay in letters. Edward's mother and father were elated when they finally received word from their son.

November 27, 1918

*My own dear Edward, You can't imagine the joy and relief when we received your cable yesterday morning!!! We had been getting more and more anxious and uneasy—each day dragged by and no news...Thank God dearest that you are well!*-Mother

December 20, 1918

*My own darling Edward: God has been good to us! This is certain—I only wish all the poor mothers whose sons went “over there” had been equally blessed! You poor dear*
fellows. What sufferings you have all endured, the danger and the hardships and the uncleanliness must be dreadful indeed—when you told us you had not removed your clothes for so long (over a month) and your shoes only twice in that time it seems absolutely incredible that you can be well and alive under such hardships—but oh how we long to see you and hug you. It does not seem as if the rest of the world could ever do enough for you men who have suffered so terribly for the rest of the world—The American soldiers have certainly covered themselves with glory!-Mother

Panel 7: The Army of Occupation
The end of fighting meant the troops could finally go home, but Edward was not one of them. He was transferred to the Army of Occupation, a small force of 240,000 men that occupied the American zone in Coblenz, Germany. As he marched through France, Belgium, and Luxembourg on his way to Germany, Edward and the other American doughboys were greeted by residents overjoyed with Germany’s defeat.

November 22, 1918 Luxembourg
Dear Mother and Father, and of course all the rest: Of course when you received my telegram the other day announcing that I was transferred to the 32d division, you knew that I was therefore with the Army of Occupation and helping to make history.
We hiked through northern France to Luxembourg where we are now…In one town there was an immense trellis decorated with flags of allies especially American and French and a large inscription “Honneur a nos libérateurs.” That quite touched me. Well we left France and passed into a corner of Belgium and Luxembourg. The Allied Flags fly everywhere, and the people crowd out to meet us as in France. We see all sorts of American flags; hand made. Some have six or seven stars, others have 30, it makes no difference instead of red stripes some have brown stripes. Some have 2 or 3 stripes others have 8 while a few are correct; but damn few. Think of it! Would you have believed that your son had been through it all and now was actually going to cross the Rhine. I can hardly believe it myself. However I am glad and thankful that no more of our family got in it, for I fear there might have been blood shed; luck doesn’t run all the time. I have seen too many good men fall. Think of those poor devils that fell on the last days; that is the curse of war.-Edward

November 29, 1918: Wasserbillig Luxembourg
Dear old dad: For days we have watched the Boche Army returning home along the roads on the other side of the river, and I must say it has been exceedingly interesting. Their houses and wagons decorated with German Flags and bunting, waving to the people as they went by, it was a victorious retreat. I escorted two Boche officers in their car to our Brigade headquarters the other day… he told me that the people had no malice toward Americans and wanted to know “What are you people going to do with us?”-Edward
For the first time since the war began, Edward came face-to-face with regular German people. This forced him to confront his prejudices against them. It surprised him to learn that they were not monsters and they were not evil. In fact, they were not much different from him and his family.

December 3, 1918 Prussian State Germany
Dear Mother: The people have been unexpectedly hospitable and as a matter of fact have opened their homes to us in a much more commendable manner than did the French. These former officers and soldiers are proving themselves to be good losers and it teaches us one big thing that we have also been filled with rot and unbelievable stories concerning their home life. These little German towns have houses and homes somewhat like ours, their surroundings are sanitary and they have electricity... Everywhere we are surrounded by small boys and girls. They are all glad to see us and gather about us laughing, joking, and playing...I can’t believe the German people are all sinners. In this home, pictures of Christ, Mary and others are hanging in all the rooms. In all the homes religious pictures dominate, and there are shrines everywhere. -Edward

December 26, 1918 Germany
Dear Mother: For weeks I have been bothered with my stomach, which 4 days ago developed into jaundice. I am as yellow as a slacker, but feel alright. I am being sent to the hospital this morning, as they have no way to take care of me here. There is no reason to be alarmed, and I am sure everything will be alright.

Edward recovered from his illness and his doctor authorized a two-week sick leave in Nice, France. While there, Edward met a French girl named Clairette and fell madly in love. He wanted to marry her, but his military obligations prevented him from returning to the city where she lived. He applied to European universities to pursue his medical studies and be close to Clairette, but he was not accepted. These factors, as well as his strong family ties, forced him to give up the idea of marrying Clairette.

General of the Armies, John J. Pershing reviews the troops...
March 1919, Weis Germany
Dear Family: Yesterday General Pershing inspected the division, so all week we have been sweating blood trying to get things in shape. Pershing looked fine, with his chest covered with different medals or ribbons standing for the medals of the Allies. He thanked the division for its work and devotion... and told us “That when we came into the war, the Allies were in such a low state of morale, that they did not feel that they could win the war. That by us coming into the war the way we did, saved the day and brought victory not once were we pushed back.” After he was all through, the boys gave three cheers for General Pershing.-Edward
Edward’s heroism is recognized…
Edward was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) and the Croix de Guerre with Palms medals for bravery in the Marcheville battle. The DSC is the second highest military honor awarded in the U.S. Army for extreme gallantry and risk of life in combat with an armed enemy force. The Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) was presented to foreign military forces allied to France and Belgium who distinguished themselves by heroic acts involving combat with enemy.

April 14, 1919, Weis, Germany
Dear Mother and Father: Yesterday was the gala day for Charles EH
It was quite a sight. First we had a flourish of trumpets followed by the Marseillaise and Star Spangled Banner. Then General Mangin gave a speech in French, and then decorated each one of the colors...After that General Dickman (USA) of the Third Army tied the battle ribbons to each staff of the Regimental colors...In the first row were the men and Officers who had won the Croix de Guerre (palm) (Army citation), the men who had won the DSC (about 12 of us in all) and those winning the Belgian decorations...After the decorations were given out, we marched over to the reviewing stand and standing behind General Mangin and the other generals we watched the division pass us in review. It was an event I shall always hold dear, and one which I wish you could see. -Edward

Edward’s family welcomed him home to California in May 1919, but millions of other families throughout the world could not do the same. This first world war claimed a generation of men, but the horror of war did not stop there. Two decades later, this “war to end all wars” gave rise to a second world war that was more terrible than the first.

After his discharge from the army, Edward resumed his medical studies and attended Stanford and Cornell Universities. He earned his medical degree in 1924, interned at Brooklyn Hospital, and completed his residency at Manhattan Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital. Dr. Charles Edward Harold Bates lived with his wife and 3 children, and maintained a medical practice in the San Francisco Bay area for the next 47 years.
Figure 2: Edward’s “Good-bye” letter from the front
APPENDIX C

Interpretive Panels:
“Californians Over There” Exhibit

Figure 1: Panel One (Introduction)

**Title:** “Californians Over There!”

**Quote:** The continued title, “California’s Role in World War One,” takes the place of a quote on this panel.
Figure 2: Panel Two

Title: “The Yanks Are Coming”

Quote: “I can’t help but feel the call to duty and yearn to respond. It’s a great war to be in and...know that I will be a better man having been in it.”

2nd Lieutenant Edward Bates, July 1918
**Figure 3: Panel 3**

**Title:** “Somewhere in France”

**Quote:** “I have gone over the top—how terrible! When the time comes to get it, we will get it.” Edward, September 1918
Figure 4: Panel Five

Title: “Say a Prayer”

Quote: “We shall pray every day for your safety, and that you be given strength to do your duty, and for a speedy return home.
Henry Bates, October 15, 1918
Figure 6: Panel 6

Title: “It’s Over, Over There!”

Quote: “It was a very dramatic end for us . . . we were given orders to stop. It was eleven o’clock.

2nd Lieutenant Edward Bates
**Figure 7: Panel 7**

**Title:** “The Army of Occupation”

**Quote:** “You were only an idea to me before... we always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death... how could you be my enemy?
Paul Baumer in *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarch
APPENDIX D

The Lost Battalion Centerpiece Display

Figure 1: The Colonel Nelson M. Holderman Display

Title: “The Lost Battalion”

Quote: “No one can ever imagine the Hell that we passed through and there is no way to tell the story for the people would not believe. I have never seen so many dead and wounded, even in pictures, and to think we slept (what little we got) and kept them with us for all that time.”

Captain Nelson Holderman, *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, 1918
Figure 2: Close-up of the Holderman case

Colonel Nelson M. Holderman’s war medals, Medal of Honor, his picture, and his trumpet.
Figure 1: Historic Attorney General Exhibit Room

This is a view of the exhibit room as visitors enter. The display case sits in the middle of the room.
Figure 2: The “things they carried” case

This case includes a doughboy’s mess kit, gas mask, shrapnel, dog tags, King George letter, and a Red Cross chess/checkers game set.
Figure 3: Guns and Weapons of World War One
Figure 4: War propaganda posters

1. “Women! Help America’s Sons Win the War”
2. “Your Country Calls—Enlist, Plow, Buy Bonds”
3. “Help Stop This”
4. “Remember Belgium”
5. “Remember the Bond”
6. “Help Crush the Menace of the Seas”
Figure 5

War posters, guidon of the 117th Regiment of the 42nd Rainbow Division, and the flag of the 159th Regiment of the 40th Division.
Figure 6:

Guidon of the 117th Regiment of the 42nd Rainbow Division, and the flag of the 159th Regiment of the 40th Division, and Bates Family letters
Figure 7:

The flag of the 159th Regiment of the 40th Division, Bates Family letters, and World War One uniforms
Figure 8:

Bates Family letters
Figure 9:
Doughboy Uniform and Sailor Uniform
Figure 10:
Flag of the 322\textsuperscript{nd} Battalion of the U.S. Signal Corps
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