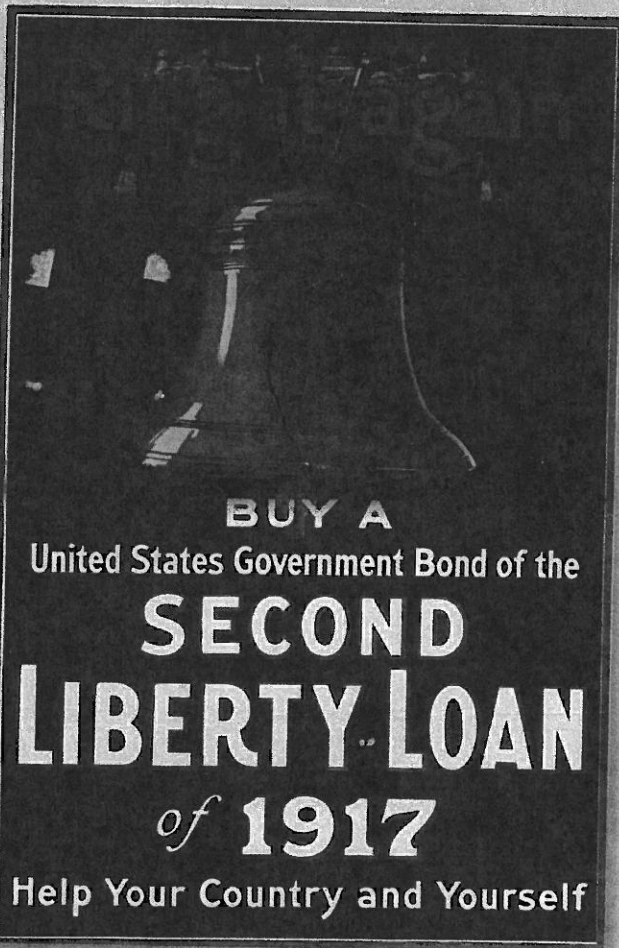


RECRUITMENT, CONSERVATION *and* LIBERTY BONDS

Posters and the War to End All Wars

Richard C. Saylor



The Pennsylvania State Archives holds a large and significant collection of World War I posters—460 in all—that were hung throughout the Keystone State and around the country during the Great War. Many of these posters were produced on a national scale, although some were created specifically in Pennsylvania. The posters provide a fascinating glimpse at the means by which valued American symbols and ideals were used to mobilize the country for war.

Left, Patriotic symbols such as the Liberty Bell were featured on posters to encourage Americans to help fund the war by purchasing Liberty Bonds. This poster by an unknown artist for the Second Liberty Loan drive was printed in Philadelphia in 1917 by Ketterlinus Lithographic Manufacturing Co.

Opposite, An American doughboy makes an appeal for ammunition in this 1918 poster for Liberty Bonds by Vincent Lynel, published in Philadelphia by the Ketterlinus Lithographic Manufacturing Co.

“Ammunition!”



And remember —

Bonds buy Bullets!

With America's entry into World War I in early 1917, colorful posters began to appear in public places all over the United States. Millions were printed and displayed. Designed by some of the most renowned commercial artists of the time, the posters stressed the necessity of volunteerism for both recruitment in the military and support on the home front. The messages were intended to stimulate a patriotic spirit among citizens and facilitate the transition of the country's position from isolationism to military partnership with the Allied forces in Europe. In an age before television, at a time when public radio stations were ordered to shut down or were taken over by the government, posters were an inexpensive and effective means of communicating patriotic messages to the masses.

The Great War began in Europe in July 1914, shortly after Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by a Serbian

nationalist on June 28. Initially the United States remained neutral as the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Turkey and Bulgaria) fought against the Allies (France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy). President Woodrow Wilson was adamantly against American entry into the war, refusing even to consider conscription as an answer to increasing the size of the country's military forces. He was re-elected in 1916 on his promise to keep America out of the war; however, on April 6, 1917, Congress declared war on Germany. The impetus, according to Wilson, was Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare in the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Shortly after America entered the war, President Wilson organized the Committee on Public Information. It was charged with managing all official advertising and propaganda for the wartime government.

George Creel (1876–1953) was chosen as the chairman of this organization. He devoted most of his time in this post to encouraging complete public support for the United States war effort. His office was involved in all facets of media production, including posters, paintings, cartoons and films. Shortly thereafter, Charles Dana Gibson (1867–1944), one of the best known and highest paid illustrators in America, volunteered his talents for the war effort. Creel soon put Gibson to work as the head of the Division of Pictorial Publicity, coordinating the efforts of numerous American artists creating poster art for the war effort.

Gibson and Creel put into motion a plan to make war sacrifices more palatable to the nation by employing artists who were nationally recognized. Artists known throughout America for their artistic styles in advertising, popular magazines and children's books were signed up for this mis-



In this U.S. Navy recruiting poster created by artist James Montgomery Flagg (1877–1960) in 1917, a heroic sailor guides a civilian male to action, gesturing in front of steam-powered naval ships at sea and a winged Lady Liberty carrying American flag and sword.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200



One of the most iconic posters of the first half of the 20th century, *I Want You for U.S. Army*, featuring Uncle Sam, by James Montgomery Flagg (1877–1960), was originally published as a cover for the July 6, 1916, issue of *Leslie's Weekly*. More than 4 million copies were published in 1917–18. Because of its popularity and effectiveness, it was reissued during World War II.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200



From the early days of American combat flight, this recruitment poster for the U.S. Army Air Service by Charles Livingston Bull (1874–1932), a skilled animal and bird illustrator, shows a U.S. bald eagle fighting a black German imperial eagle amid biplanes in flight.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200

sion, including Howard Chandler Christy, James Montgomery Flagg, Joseph Christian Leydendecker and Herbert Paus. Many of the posters were printed by federal agencies such as the Federal Recruitment Office and the National War Garden Commission.

Posters were a key tool in the government's drive to mobilize the nation for war. Enticing Americans to commit to the war effort was not an easy task, but the poster graphics proved to be an effective way to convey a lot of compelling information in

a small amount of space. The three most common themes of American World War I posters were recruitment of volunteer enlistees into the Armed Forces, conservation of food and other resources, and Liberty Bond sales to fund the war effort.

At the start of America's involvement in the conflict, the U.S. Army was undermanned. The regular army numbered only about 120,000, with National Guard units totaling only about 80,000 men. Before the Selective Service Act of 1917, which was

passed on May 18, 1917, many of the early recruiting posters emphasized Americans' patriotism and their natural inclination for adventure. Recruiting continued to be a major theme of World War I posters, even after the draft was instituted. Many of these recruitment posters portrayed handsome, brave and adventurous "doughboys" fighting for freedom and glory across Europe. Eventually, more than 4 million Americans served in the United States' American Expeditionary Forces. More than 100,000



AVENGE THEM!

"The Canadians have seen their own men crucified. One hesitates to believe this, but no man who has a husband or a son, or a brother, can doubt their story. They are now dying upon their comrades, dead and dying, crucified after a German retreat!"
—Report of William Allen White.

And not one-tenth has been told or will ever be known. You and every clean-minded American, grow hot with rage at each fresh report of the Kaiser's system of savagery. You must have the courage to look at the cold facts and fight fight this thing through to its end—ends—with every ounce of energy in every way you can.

Buy Liberty Bonds with the money you've saved, then buy more on installments with all you can possibly spare in the months to come, and thank God for the opportunity!

This poster created by W.N. Wilson, member of Philadelphia Liberty Loan Committee, Third Federal Reserve District, Lincoln Building, Philadelphia.

There is immediate and urgent need for every dollar you can spare. You are not lending; you are giving your money. Your Government guarantees the return of your money with interest at 4%.
THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!



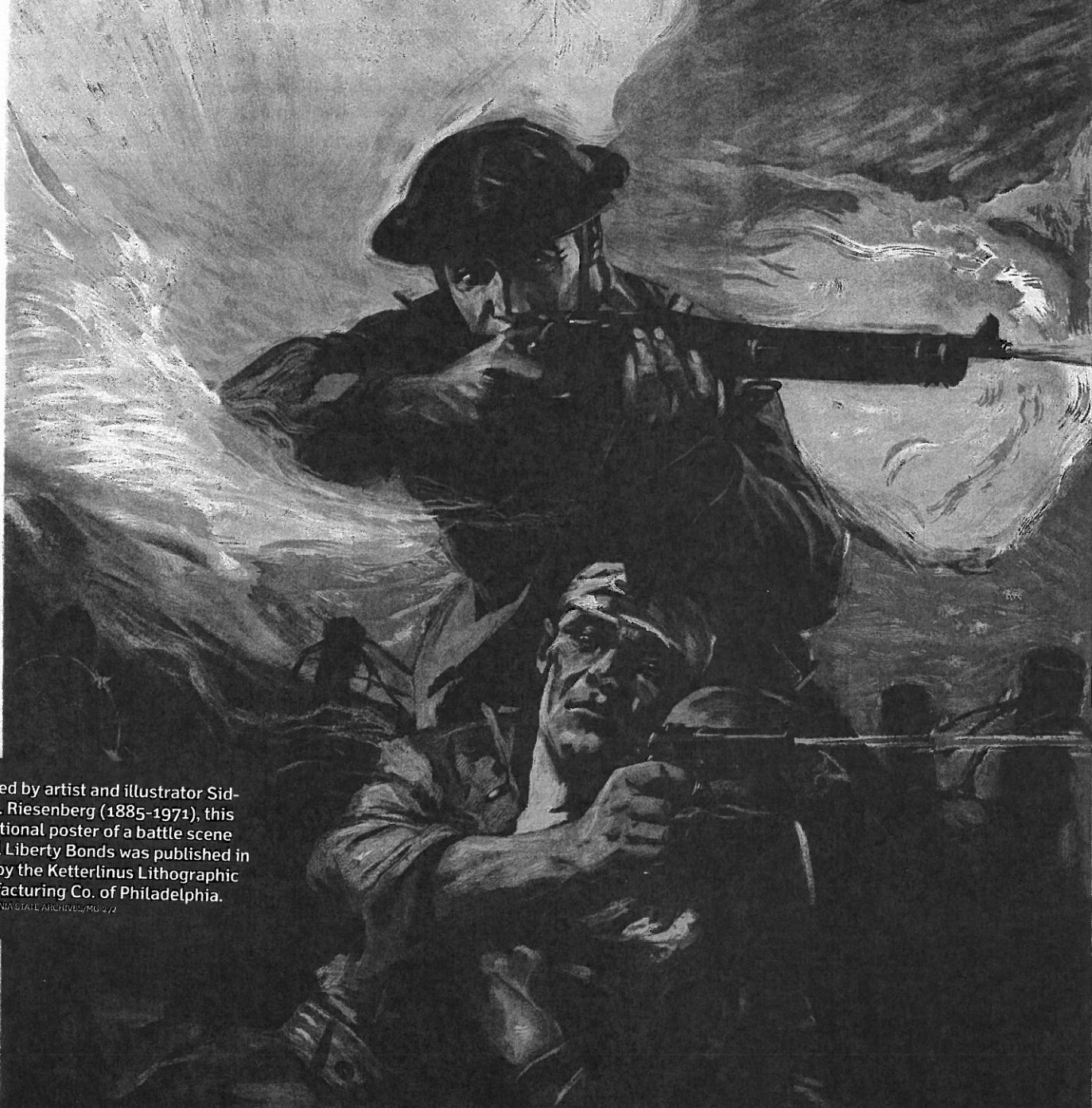
Originally created in 1917 by artist Adolph Treidler (1886–1981), this particular design was issued as a supplement to *The North American* newspaper of Philadelphia on September 22, 1918. It promotes War Savings Stamps, an inexpensive alternative to Liberty Bonds, using the image of a menacing German infantry soldier carrying a knife dripping with blood lurking through the ruins of a war-torn town.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200

Created by W.N. Wilson, a British poster artist, and published by the Liberty Loan Committee of Philadelphia in 1917 to sell Liberty Bonds, this poster depicts the crucifixion of a Canadian soldier at the hands of savage Germans. This story using imagery of Christian martyrdom was actually fictitious and was spread widely at the time.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200

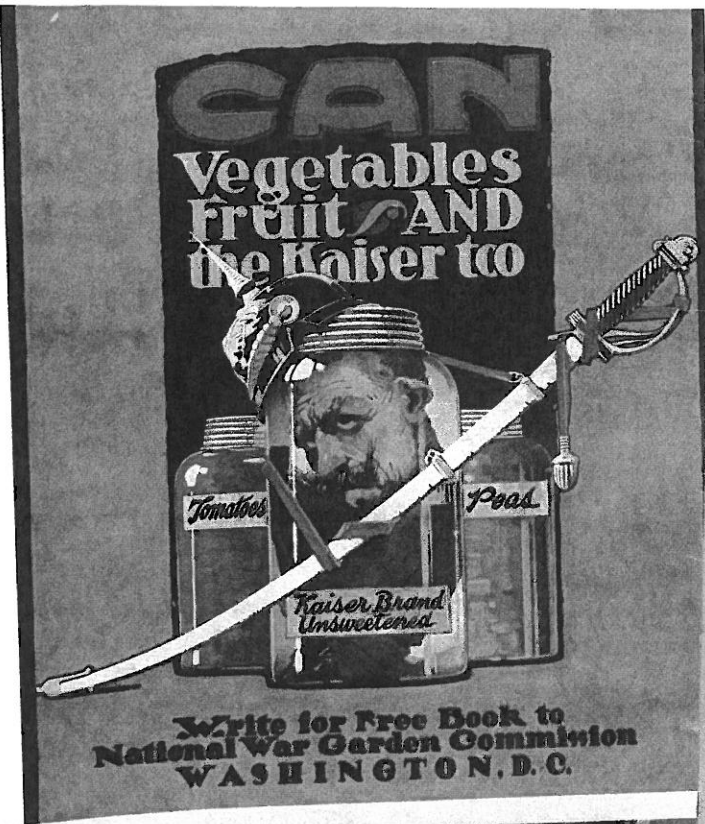
Lend as they fight



Created by artist and illustrator Sidney H. Riesenberg (1885-1971), this sensational poster of a battle scene to sell Liberty Bonds was published in 1918 by the Ketterlinus Lithographic Manufacturing Co. of Philadelphia.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG 272

Buy More
LIBERTY BONDS



Left, A poster encouraging wartime food conservation by Belgian-born artist J. Paul Verees (1889–1942) cleverly suggests canning Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany as well as fruits and vegetables.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200



Above, Adolph Treidler designed this poster in 1918 for the United War Work Campaign through the YWCA, which supported women working in American factories to produce the equipment, ammunition and ordnance needed for the fight in Europe. The YWCA's main wartime focus was its assistance with women workers in industries.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-200



Left, Created by illustrator Charles Edward Chambers (1883–1941), this 1917 poster encourages recent immigrants to conserve wheat for the war effort.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/MG-222

FOOD WILL WIN THE WAR

You came here seeking Freedom
You must now help to preserve it

WHEAT is needed for the allies
Waste nothing



UNITED STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION

American service members lost their lives during the war.

Some later recruitment posters emphasized the inhumane nature of the enemy, particularly Germans, and encouraged recruitment as a way to keep the horrors of war and German militarism from reaching America's shores. Others depicted German soldiers as being less than human, many portraying them as murderous monsters or apes.

Numerous posters were directed at women in roles such as mothers, gardeners, shoppers and seamstresses. Mothers were encouraged to send their sons off to war, create victory gardens, conserve food, and sew and knit clothing for their families and the troops overseas. Unlike World War II posters, these rarely depicted women as

part of the manufacturing team for the war effort. There were exceptions, however.

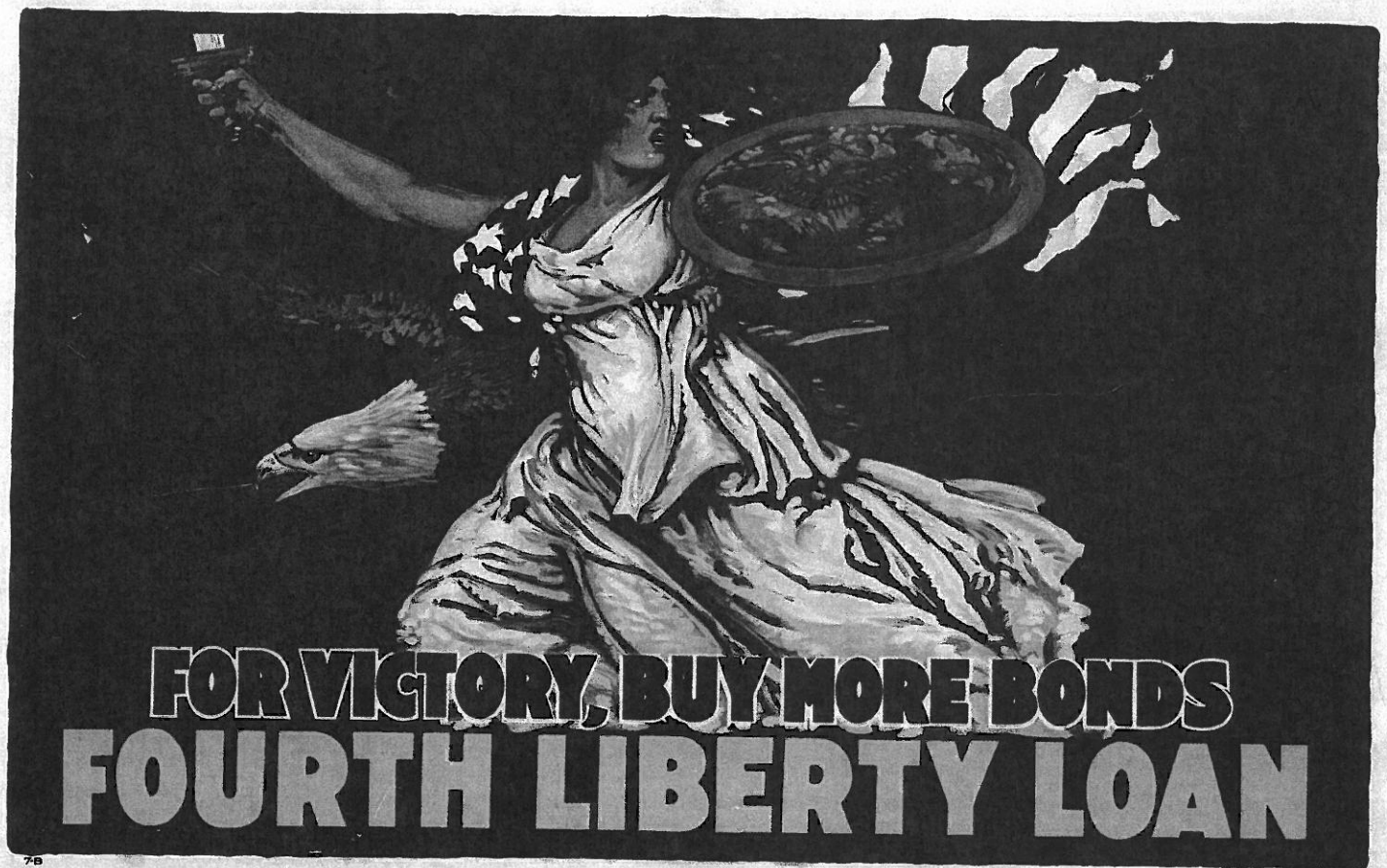
Posters also helped to persuade Americans of the need to conserve food and supplies on the home front in order to assist the war effort in Europe. Numerous posters encouraged Americans at home to consume less fats, meat, sugar and wheat, as these items were needed in large quantities to support overseas troops. Corn, oats and rye were advertised as the preferred alternatives to the use of wheat during the war.

Broadsides were also produced to encourage the purchase of Liberty Bonds during the four Liberty Loan Acts and the Victory Loan to help finance the United States' war efforts. The loan drives were embraced all across the United States, from the smallest hamlets to the largest cities. They

were extremely successful, helping to raise over 20.5 billion dollars to support the war effort.

Another prevalent theme was the need for relief donations for battle-scarred Europe. Charity organizations like YMCA, YWCA, Red Cross and Salvation Army used posters to raise money and supplies for Allied soldiers and civilians, before and after U.S. military action in the Great War.

American World War I posters had a propensity to glorify war. The men and women depicted in them were invariably handsome and beautiful, even in times of distress. It was thought that portraying the brutality of war too realistically would distract from the posters' mission to sell war bonds, increase recruitment, or to encourage people to conserve vital resources. More

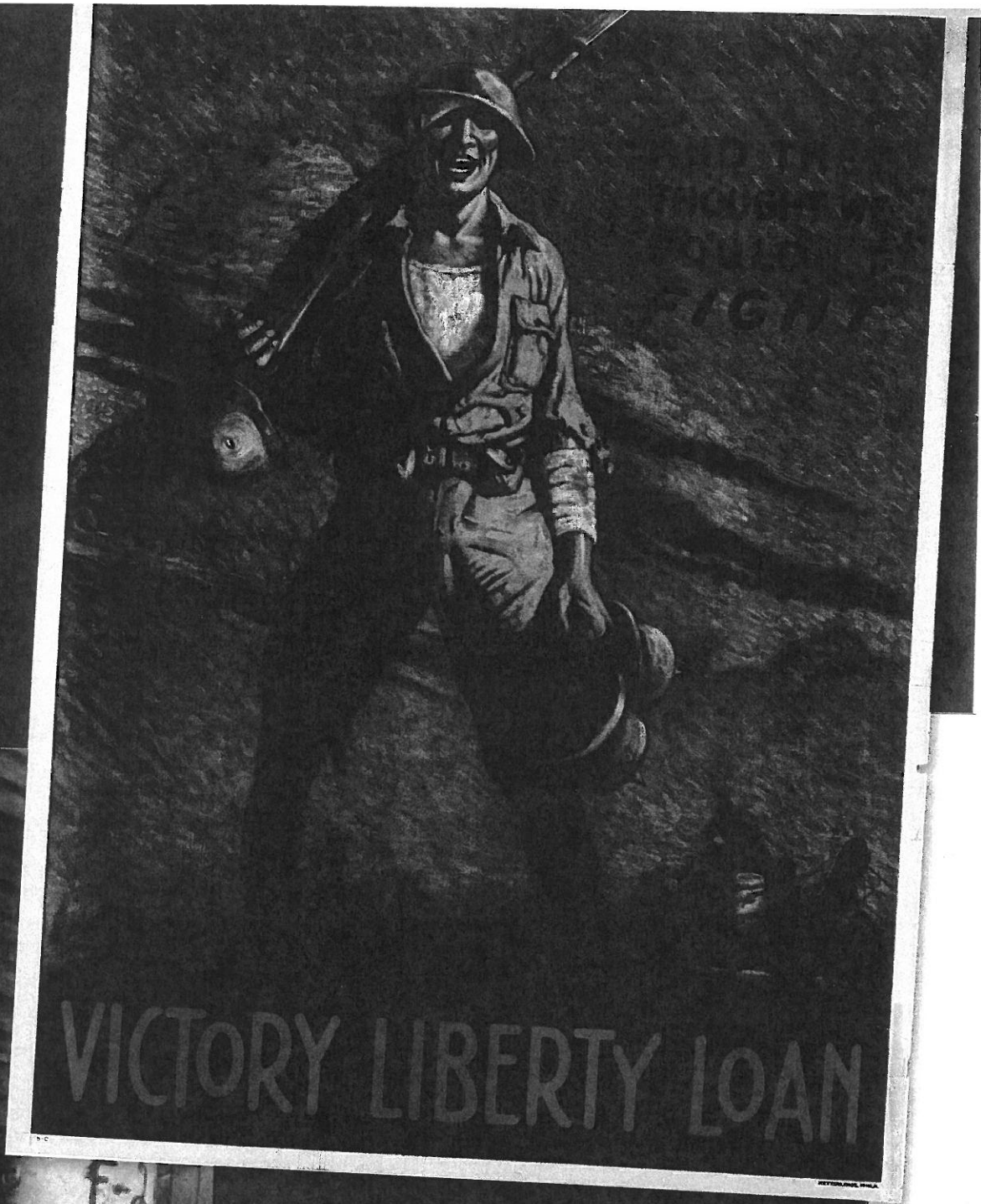


John Scott Williams (1877–1976), a muralist and illustrator who was born in England, but lived for many years in Gettysburg, Adams County, portrayed Lady Liberty with the American flag draped on her shoulders, carrying a sword and shield in this poster for Liberty Bonds.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES/116-272

Right, Victor Clyde Forsythe (1885-1962), an illustrator and cartoonist, created this depiction of a wounded American soldier carrying three German *pickelhauben* (helmets). It was published in Philadelphia by the Ketterlinus Lithographic Manufacturing Co. in conjunction with the 1919 Victory Liberty Loan. This was the final Liberty Loan drive of World War I and occurred after the cessation of hostilities in Europe.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES, NC-272



Left, A group of three 28th Division soldiers rest beside a barracks building in France in early 1919. The poster *And They Thought We Couldn't Fight* is tacked to the wall above and behind the three doughboys in the photo. Such posters made in the United States were also used overseas to increase morale of the troops in the field.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES, MG-155

Opposite, The Liberty Loan Committee of Philadelphia produced this startling scene to sell Liberty Bonds in 1917. It depicts a Red Cross hospital ship sinking in the ocean after an attack by a German submarine to the left. One of two lifeboats has capsized, while men struggle for help and a dead nurse floats in the foreground. The image is framed in the silhouette of a German Iron Cross medal.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES, MG-200



posters focused on the home front and its issues, rather than directly on the battle-front.

Actual physical violence is rarely depicted, although it is implied and insinuated in several significant posters. The word "war," was not often used on posters; in fact, "Liberty" took the place of "war" in the official name for war bonds.

Immigrants were a target audience for some posters. It is estimated that one-third of the United States population in the first two decades of the 20th century were first generation immigrants. Posters appealed to immigrants to buy Liberty Bonds and to donate supplies by reminding them of their former countrymen who were suffering from the war in Europe. Other posters appealed to these new Americans to show patriotism for their new home in America by enlisting to fight for their new country.

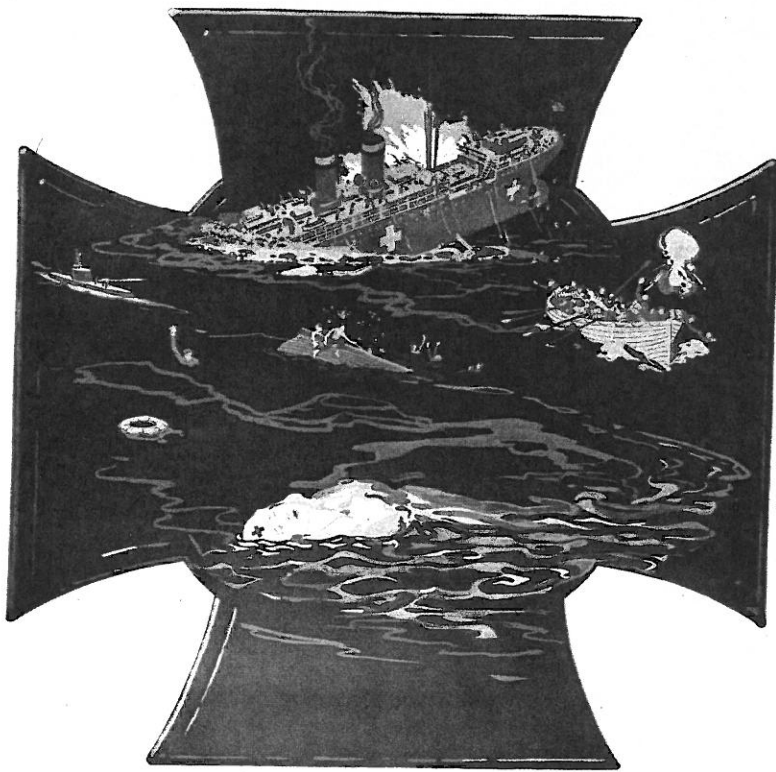
Posters were also used to encourage businesses on the home front to support veterans of the war when they returned home from the battlefields. Whether they had been severely wounded or not while fighting for their country, they all needed jobs when they returned to civilian life.

Several posters were produced in Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia, a number of colorful Liberty Bond posters were printed by Ketterlinus Lithographic Manufacturing Co. Patriotic businessmen in Philadelphia, in conjunction with the Liberty Loan Committee of Philadelphia, produced several dramatic posters depicting horrific scenes of dead bodies floating by a sinking ship and even the crucifixion of a soldier at the hands of German brutes. Pennsylvania artists were also involved in poster designs including Alonzo Earl Foringer, Joseph Pennell, John Scott Williams and N.C. Wyeth.

Approximately 2,500 poster designs were created during World War I. It is believed that more than 15 million individual copies of posters were produced just for the five loan drives held in the United States.

The intervention of the United States in World War I led to victory for the Allied Forces and the end of the war on November 11, 1918. Wartime posters have been credited with playing a key role in that effort by helping to mobilize American manpower and encouraging support at home for food conservation and investment in Liberty Bonds.

Richard C. Saylor is an archivist for the Pennsylvania State Archives and author of the award-winning book *Soldiers to Governors*.



-and They give Iron Crosses for THIS!

Humanity's great heart was beating in sympathy with the wounded men who crowded this hospital ship. Red Cross nurses, dedicated to the highest service of God and man, were ministering in their own sweet way to men who had fallen in a fair and open fight. And yet this sanctuary of human suffering was considered by the Hun a fair target for German shells.

If God made man a little lower than the angels, the Germans have made themselves infinitely lower than the beasts.

Oh, Americans, let's stamp this thing down NOW. Buy Liberty Bonds with every cent you can possibly spare and then buy more on installments with all you can save in the months to come.

There is immediate and urgent need for every dollar you can spare. You are only lending, not giving your money. Your Government guarantees the return of your money with interest at 4 1/2%.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!

LIBERTY LOAN COMMITTEE, THIRD FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICT
LINCOLN BUILDING, PHILADELPHIA

For More Information

Other informative sources on posters in World War I include Walton Rawls, *Wake Up America! World War I and the American Poster* (Abbeville, 2001) and George L. Vogt, "When Posters Went to War: How America's Best Commercial Artists Helped Win World War I," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 84, No. 2 (Winter 2000-01), 38-47. For a general history of posters and their impact throughout the world, see Max Gallo, *The Poster in History* (W.W. Norton, 2000). To view digital versions of all 460 World War I posters in the State Archives collection, go to digitalcollections.powerlibrary.org and scroll to "Pennsylvania State Archives: World War I Posters."

This article highlights Pennsylvania at War, a multiyear initiative of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II. As part of this program, the exhibition *Pennsylvania at War: World War I Posters from the*



Pennsylvania State Archives will open on April 2, 2017, at The State Museum of Pennsylvania.