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### World War I exhibit arrives at Ouachita Baptist University

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*Arkansas State Library*

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## CLARK COUNTY CHRONICLES

# World War I exhibit arrives at Ouachita Baptist University

By Wendy Richter  
For the Siftings

"The Great War: Arkansas in World War I," a traveling exhibit chronicling Arkansas's role in World War I at home and on the battlefields, will be displayed in the main floor lobby of Riley-Hickingsbotham Library on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia from Nov. 23 through Dec. 16. OBU is the third site to host this new exhibit produced by Arkansas's State Archives earlier this year.

"The Great War" exhibit panels were designed to commemorate the centennial anniversary of America's entry into World War I by illustrating the effects of the first modern, global war on the 65 million who were mobilized, including over 70,000 soldiers from Arkansas. The exhibit includes panels showcasing images from the Arkansas History Commission — original documents, photographs, maps, drawings, paintings, and artifacts illustrate the story of the war's impact in Arkansas.

In addition to the exhibit panels, some very distinctive World War I artifacts will be displayed along with documents and books from the holdings of OBU's Archives and Special Collections. Many of the artifacts were collected from the battlefields in Europe for the History Commission by Arkansas L.C. Gulley.

Among the items planned for display are U.S.,

German, and French helmets. There is an U.S. Army issue "dishpan" trench helmet, as well as a French trench type helmet. A German camouflaged steel helmet pierced by bullets was described this way by Gulley: "Helmet with three machine gun bullets through it. Taken from the battlefield of St. Quentin. Still on the wearer's head when I found it."

Weapons included in the exhibit will be a German rifle, specifically a Model 1898, Mauser 8 mm, used by the German infantry during the war; and a German bayonet with metal scabbard. Additionally, a U.S. Army issue bolo and sheath will be displayed. It is a Model 1910, made in 1917 at Springfield Armory. About 59,000 Model 1910 bolos were made between 1910 and 1918.

The exhibit also contains canteens used by U.S., French, and German soldiers, as well as a mess kit that includes a knife, fork, spoon, and cloth pouch with drawstring. Another food-related item is a frying pan from Verdun. Gulley stated that the pan was "found on the defenses of Verdun at the entrance of the smashed-in French dugouts. A shell had hit at the entrance and a piece of shrapnel had gone through the pan without knocking it off the fire." A flashlight that will be shown was described by Gulley as "French flashlight used in back areas from Verdun sector." Gulley also collected what he called

a "game board from French heavy artillery camp near Verdun." Another distinctive item to be displayed is an empty brass artillery shell hammered into a design of a pear branch and the word "Verdun." It appears to be "trench art," likely made during the war, in France. The top of the shell is about seventy-seven millimeters.

The public is invited to view the free exhibit during the library's usual hours of operation (8 a.m.-11 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday; noon-5 p.m., Saturday; 6-11 p.m., Sunday, except school holidays). The exhibit is funded in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council, the Department of Arkansas Heritage and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In anticipation of increased interest in the World War I era, the Clark County Historical Association published "Clark

Countians in World War II: Soldiers' Discharge Records at Arkansas's State Archives" in 2014. Compiled by Jane Wilkerson, Archival Manager at the Arkansas History Commission, the volume contains information pertaining to approximately 1,000 Clark County residents who served in the military during the conflict. In most cases, each entry includes

the name, residence, place of birth, age, serial number, discharge date, and reason of discharge (such as "Honorable Discharge" and "demobilization"). Additional details may be found within the original records housed at the History Commission in Little Rock.

For directions or more information about the exhibit, contact Wendy Richter at 870-245-5332

or richterw@obu.edu. For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum at the train depot (www.clarkcountyhistory.org or 230-1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245-5332).



Armistice Day in Gurdon, 1918 (COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION)



OBU campus (about where Cone-Bottoms is today), 1918 (COURTESY OF OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES)