



ON THE TRAIL OF THE HUN

Watercolor

William James Aylward



CROSSING THE PONTOON BRIDGE

Watercolor

William James Aylward



NEWLY ARRIVED TROOPS DEBARKING AT BREST

Ink

Walter Jack Duncan



A BATTERY OF FRENCH 75s

ink

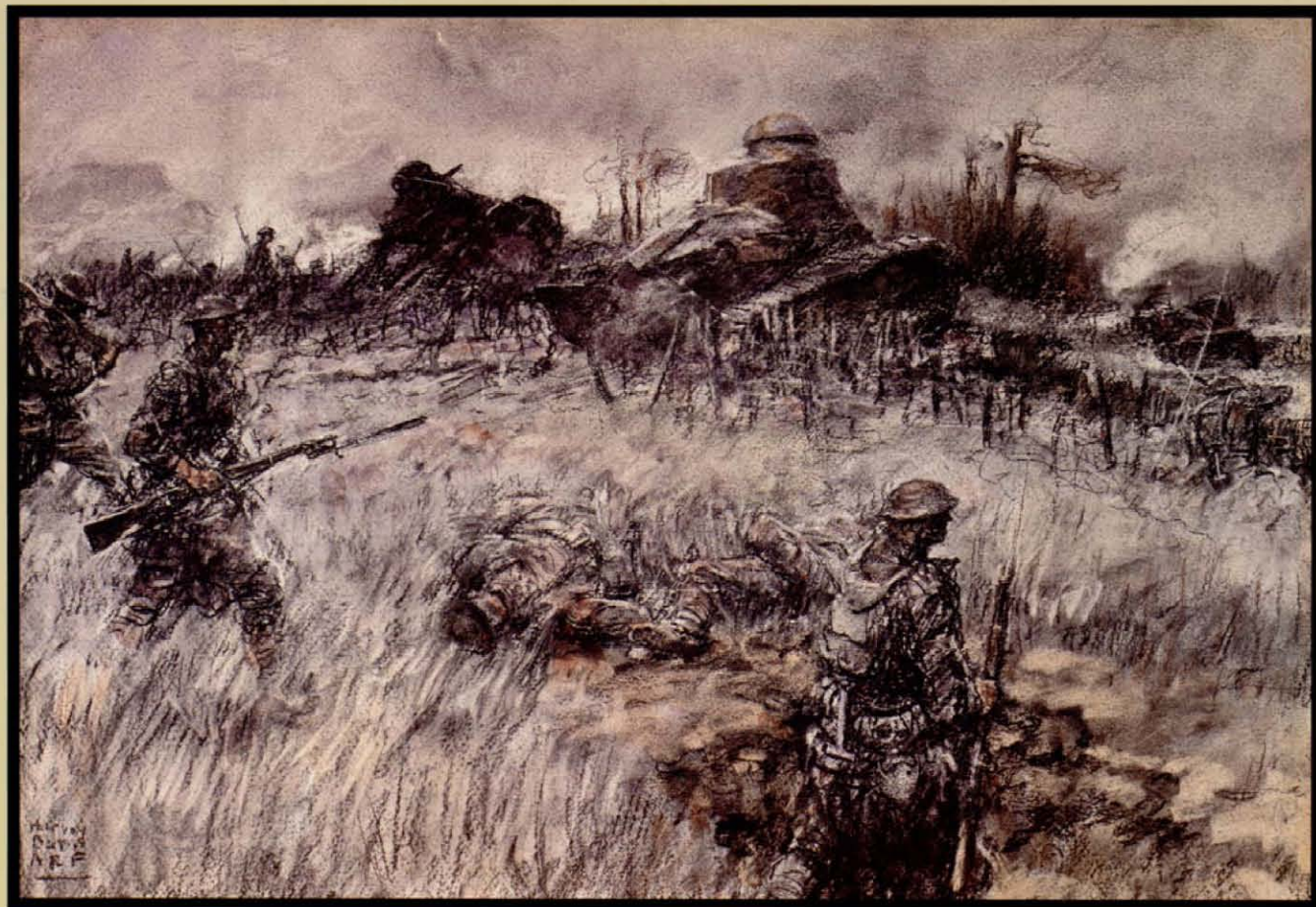
Walter Jack Duncan



SUNDAY MORNING AT CUNEL

Watercolor

Harvey Thomas Dunn



THE TANKS AT SEICHEPREY

Watercolor

Harvey Thomas Dunn



AMERICAN WOUNDED MAKING WAY TO FIRST AID STATION

Pastel

George Matthews Harding



TRAFFIC TO MONT-ST-PERE

Pastel

George Matthews Harding



MOPPING UP CIERGES

Charcoal

Wallace Morgan



INFANTRY AND TANKS ADVANCING

Ink

Wallace Morgan



NEUFMAISON
Ink
Ernest Clifford Peixotto



THE CHURCH, ST. AIGNANT

Ink

Ernest Clifford Peixotto



J. Andre Smith
June 1918

THE RAILHEAD DUMP AT MENIL-LA-TOUR

Ink/Watercolor
J. Andre Smith



OVER THE TOP
Pastel
J. Andre Smith



ON THE GAS ALERT

Ink

Harry Everett Townsend



INFANTRYMAN

Charcoal

Harry Everett Townsend

**Army Art
of World War I
Guide to the Print Set**

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Foreword

The American experience in World War I has been largely overlooked as other wars have cast their shadows across the twentieth century. The traditional commemorative anniversaries found the nation preoccupied with other wars: in 1943, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the end of World War I, the United States was in the midst of World War II; in 1968 the war in Vietnam discouraged a fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Great War. In 1992, however, a nation at peace can appropriately recognize the seventy-fifth anniversary of America's entry into World War I. In commemoration of that milestone the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History present this print set featuring the work of the eight artists officially commissioned to cover the activities of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in Europe.

The collection of art from which these prints were selected represents a milestone in recording the history of war. For the first time artists were specifically commissioned to produce images of the battlefield during the fighting. The art itself became a propaganda weapon intended to increase popular support of the war. The depictions of subjects such as barbed wire, machine guns, gas attacks, and the vast logistical support systems that resulted from the industrialization of the war are a far cry from the knightly images of the Middle Ages or the supposed glory of the Napoleonic era.

In assembling this print set a team of historians, art curators, and printing specialists from the Center of Military History and the National Museum of American History selected two paintings by each artist. They considered the quality, content, and clarity of the artwork, and attempted to provide a representative sample of the diversity of activities of the AEF during the hostilities and of the artists' subjects. The sixteen prints in this set commemorate the sacrifices made by all those who served the American nation in World War I.



ROGER G. KENNEDY
Director, National Museum
of American History



HAROLD W. NELSON
Brigadier General, USA
Chief of Military History

Washington, D.C., 1992

**Army Art
of World War I**

Guide to the Print Set

Introduction

Planning for official artists to cover the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in World War I began in May 1917, a month after the United States declared itself a belligerent. The Committee on Public Information had been established in April to coordinate propaganda for the war effort, and the idea for official artists originated in the Committee's Division of Pictorial Publicity. The Army commissioned eight artists, most of them experienced magazine illustrators, to record the activities of the AEF in France.

In May 1918 the artists were all captains in the Corps of Engineers. Once in France they were attached to the Press and Censorship Division of the Intelligence Section of the AEF's General Staff. Armed with credentials authenticated by both French and American officials and with their rank of captains, they toured the American battlefields, using whatever transportation they could find, to create their impressions of the war. Although officially banned from participation in actual combat, more than one found the opportunity to join the troops at the front to observe firsthand the effects of close combat.

By the end of the war the artists had produced almost 500 pieces of art before returning to civilian life. Since at that time the Army had no way to properly care for the artwork it had commissioned, the Smithsonian Institution assumed responsibility for the collection, where it remains in the care of the National Museum of American History.

William James Aylward

(1875–1956)

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, William James Aylward developed an early interest in things nautical because his father built and owned Great Lakes ships. Much of the work from his early career reflects that influence. He studied art at the Art Institute of Chicago, at the Art Students' League in New York City, and with several artists in Europe. Like some of the other future official artists, he studied with the famous illustrator and teacher, Howard Pyle.

Aylward began his professional career by writing and illustrating eighteenth-century marine history for magazines such as *Harper's* and *Scribner's*. His artwork also appeared in illustrated editions of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and Jack London's *Sea Wolf*. He combined his interest in the sea and his abilities as an illustrator to produce advertisements featuring nautical themes. In addition to his proficiency as an illustrator, Aylward was an award-winning artist and received a number of prestigious prizes such as the Salmagundi Club's Shaw Purchase Prize and the Philadelphia Color Club's Beck Prize for his work before the war.

During the war Aylward concentrated his efforts on recording the activities of the ports and transportation systems developed to support industrial warfare. Some of his best wartime work was done at the port of Marseilles after the armistice when he had the time to paint in some detail. Following the war, he exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1924 and the National Academy of Design in 1925.





"On the Trail of the Hun, St. Mihiel Drive." In this painting Aylward provides a glimpse of the seemingly endless truck and wagon trains that followed the advancing armies to keep them supplied with the materiel of modern warfare.

"Crossing the Pontoon Bridge, Chateau-Thierry." The fledgling truck making its way across the bridge in the midst of a convoy of horses, wagons, and artillery captures the introduction of the internal combustion engine to war.



Walter Jack Duncan

(1881–1941)

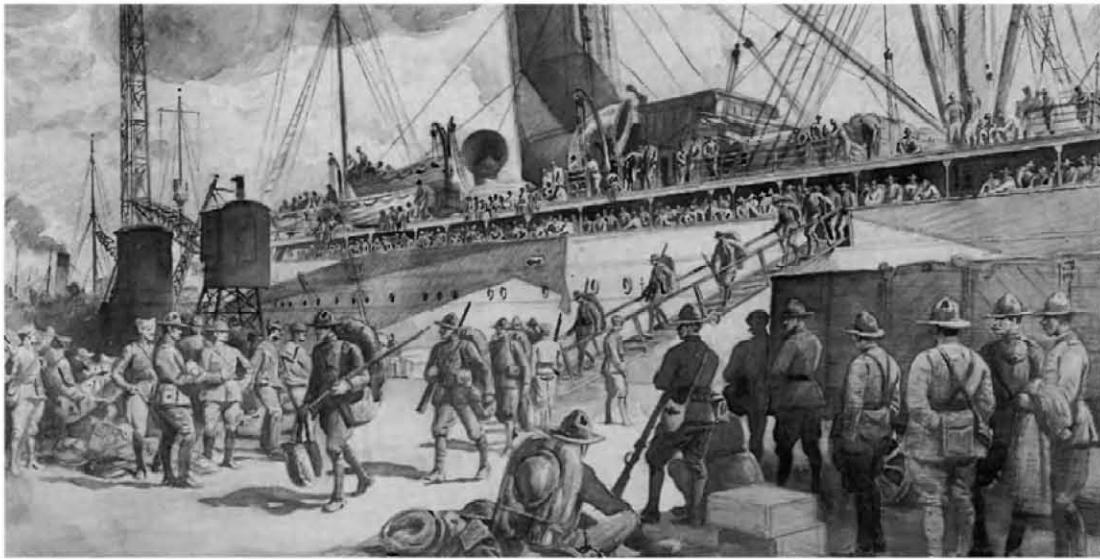
Walter Jack Duncan was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. He lived there with his family, which included a number of prominent actors, until he finished high school. Upon graduation, along with a writer-artist friend, Robert Cortes Holliday, he moved to New York to study at the Art Students' League under the prominent landscape artist John H. Twachtman. After three years at the League, Duncan began his long career of magazine illustration with *Century Magazine*. Some of his other magazine credits included *Scribner's*, *McClure's Magazine*, and *Harper's*. His varied illustration assignments before the war had given him the opportunity to travel abroad to Canada



and England. He also spent time in the backwoods of Kentucky drawing the descendants of Daniel Boone in their natural habitat.

Like Aylward's, much of Duncan's wartime effort focused on the support activities of the AEF. He traveled from the ports to the battlefield producing detailed works that recorded some of the less glamorous, but essential aspects of modern warfare. Much of his work reflects the influence of his studying under a landscape artist.

Duncan's favorite medium was pen and ink, and he especially liked producing illustrations for books. His work in that medium earned him the accolade of "wizard of pen and ink" from contemporary artists. During his career he became associated with a number of writers, working closely with them to illustrate their books. After the war he illustrated a number of Christopher Morley's books, including *Plum Pudding* and *Pipefuls*.



"Newly Arrived Troops Debarking at Brest." Duncan's skill as a detailed illustrator is evident in this depiction of the arrival of one of the many ships that transported the 2 million "doughboys" who eventually reached Europe.

"A Battery of French 75s Shelling the Germans on the Ridge to the Left of Chateau-Thierry." This scene of an American field artillery battery armed with the famous French 75-mm. guns provided Duncan the opportunity to include some details of the French countryside.



Harvey Thomas Dunn

(1884–1952)

Harvey Thomas Dunn's first sketches were on the blackboards of the one-room school he attended in his birthplace of Manchester, South Dakota. He entered the South Dakota Agriculture College in 1901 where an art instructor, Ada Berthan Caldwell, encouraged him to pursue his talents at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1904 he left Chicago to study with Howard Pyle in Wilmington, Delaware. While studying in Delaware he met future AEF artists William J. Aylward and Ernest C. Peixotto and developed a lifelong desire to teach. During his career as a teacher and illustrator Dunn worked for a number of weekly and monthly periodicals and books, but his longest-lasting professional



relationship (1906–1939) was with the *Saturday Evening Post*. While there he provided illustrations for writers such as Kathleen Norris and Rudyard Kipling.

During the war Dunn was one of the artists who periodically accompanied troops as they moved out of the trenches to go over the top into combat. He designed a special apparatus for working in the trenches; its rollers enabled him to wind finished sketches into a box and to unwind clean paper as needed. Carrying this contraption, he followed the fighting units across their battlefields, capturing his images of war as he traveled. His work reflects the time he spent with frontline units, capturing his impressions of the American soldier at war.

Following the war, Dunn resumed his teaching career and became the best known of the war's official artists. In addition to operating his own school in Leonia, New Jersey, he taught at the Grand Central School of Art in New York City.



"Sunday Morning at Cunel." This impressionistic view of the aftermath of battle shows American infantrymen who have just overrun an enemy position, as evidenced by the abandoned German helmet in the foreground.

"The Tanks at Seicheprey." In all probability Dunn made the preliminary sketches for this piece using his unique artist's box as he accompanied the tanks and infantry into the barbed wire-infested no-man's-land.



George Matthews Harding

(1882–1959)

George Matthews Harding was born in Philadelphia, where his choice of careers was influenced by his older sister Charlotte. (She had studied art at the Pennsylvania School of Design for Women at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and with Howard Pyle.) After Harding spent a brief period



studying architecture at Boston Tech, his sister encouraged him to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He attended the academy at night and worked as an architect during the day. Following an introduction by his sister, Harding, like other future AEF artists, studied for a time with Howard Pyle.

Harding's first illustrations appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1903, and in 1906 he became an illustrator and author for *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. While with *Harper's* he traveled extensively throughout the United States and the world. In 1915 he joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania as an associate professor in the department of fine arts, a post he held until 1935.

He began his World War I service as a member of the poster committee of the U.S. Navy Recruiting Service, and from there he was selected for the Army's program. Much of the work he produced during the war reflects his attempts to satisfy critics in Washington who wanted to see more action scenes. After the war Harding returned to his painting and teaching in Philadelphia, publishing a limited-edition portfolio of some of his war art entitled *The American Expeditionary Forces in Action*. In World War II he once again became a war artist, this time as a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps.



"American Wounded Making Way to First Aid Station in Village of Marne in German Attack." Here Harding shows the ever-present human toll of war along with two of the innovations of the Great War, the airplane and barbed wire.

"Traffic to Mont-St.-Pere." This jammed road provides a vivid reminder of the chaos and confusion that surrounds modern war even in the rear areas.



Wallace Morgan

(1875–1948)

Born the son of an art teacher and painter, Wallace Morgan grew up in Albany, where his family had moved shortly after his birth. Upon graduation from high school he returned to his birthplace, New York City, to pursue a career in art. He studied at the National Academy of Design while working at the *New York Sun* as a part-time artist.

In 1898 he joined the staff of the *New York Herald* and became a full-time newspaper artist covering whatever assignments came his way, including a 1902 trip to Martinique to cover the eruptions of Mt. Pele. During this period he developed the ability to render a faithful picture of nature with little need for preliminary sketches, an essential skill for a newspaper illustrator who had to convey



to readers the image of an event quickly and accurately.

After eleven years with the *Herald* he opened his own studio. Shortly thereafter *Collier's* commissioned him and Julian Bond to tour the United States and report their findings in words and pictures. Two trips across the country each produced a book that presented a light view of life in America. World War I and Morgan's selection as an AEF artist brought an early end to a third trip.

Morgan put his ability to sketch quickly to good use during the war. His work projects an air of activity and movement into scenes of combat. A number of his pictures also reflect his apparent interest in the many columns of troops, animals, and equipment that moved ceaselessly across the battlefields of France. After the war Morgan returned to work in his studio in New York City.



"Mopping Up Cierges, 1918." American infantry are shown here finishing the job of rooting out the enemy after artillery has virtually destroyed the town.

"Infantry and Tanks Advancing on Field, July 10, 1918." Morgan captures a turning point in the history of warfare as both tanks, the weapon of the future, and horses, which would never again play any significant role, move intermingled with columns of infantry, the ever-present mainstay of war.



Ernest Clifford Peixotto

(1869–1940)

Ernest Clifford Peixotto received a public school education and studied painting at the School of Fine Arts at the Mark Hopkins Institute in his hometown of San Francisco. In 1888 he entered the Atelier Julien in Paris and spent a number of years touring and sketching the French countryside. From 1897 to 1899 he lived in New York City working for *Scribner's* and *Harper's*.

In 1899 he returned to France and established a studio near Fontainebleau which he used for many years. During the years he lived in France he traveled extensively in Europe and to North and South America writing and illustrating books and articles on his adventures. He also became well known as a muralist, decorating rooms in the United States and Europe. When the war began in 1914 Peixotto initially joined the local defense group, but in October he returned to the United States.

Although his age (he was the oldest of the eight artists) prevented him from entering active military service, his experience living and working in France and his fluency in French made him a natural choice as an Army artist. Considered the painter among the eight official artists, most of whom were illustrators, Peixotto combined his talent and his knowledge of France before the war to produce a body of work that captures the widespread destruction caused by the weapons of modern warfare. He also uses the small towns of the French countryside as background in many of his paintings. At the close of the war he was assigned as director of the AEF Art Training Center at Bellevue, France, for a short time before he returned to the United States in 1919.





“Neufmaison. A Typical Village of the Lorraine Front in Which the American Troops Are Billeted.” This scene captures the peaceful atmosphere of a small French town in a rear area away from the fighting.

“The Church, St. Aignant.” Peixotto’s image of church ruins is representative of the impact the war’s massive destruction made on a number of the artists.



J. Andre Smith

(1880–1959)

J. Andre Smith, born in Hong Kong, was the son of a sea captain and ship-builder. After his father's death in 1887 the family lived for a few years in Hamburg, Germany, and then moved permanently to New York City. In 1898 he entered Cornell to major in architecture. He received a degree in architecture in 1902, went on to earn a master of science degree in the subject in 1904, and then spent two years in Europe on a Traveling Fellowship from Cornell.

Upon his return from Europe Smith worked for an architectural firm in New York City and pursued etching and drawing in his spare time. He developed the ability to work quickly and preferred to finish a piece in one sitting (he produced more pieces of art during the war than any of his fellow official artists). In addition to his success as an etcher he spent time in Europe studying art where he produced some moody and gloomy experimental work.

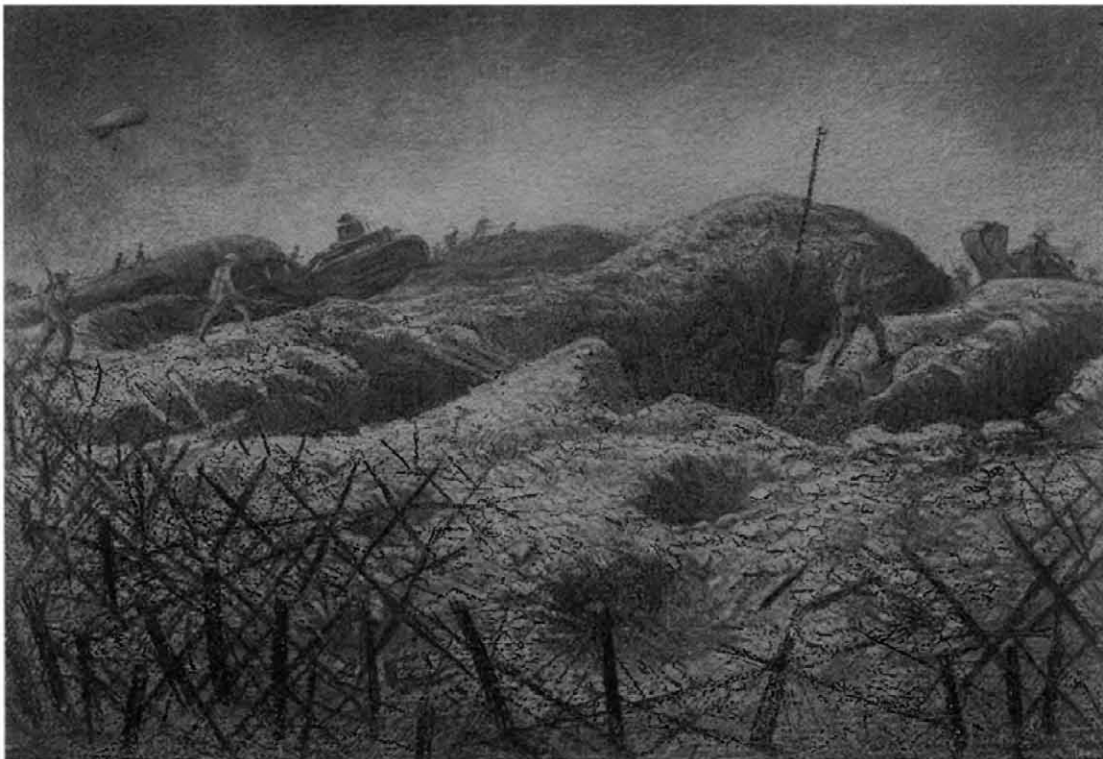
Shortly after the United States entered the war Smith underwent officer training and became a first lieutenant in the Engineer Reserve Corps. He was soon promoted to captain and called to active duty as an artist. Since he was the only one of the artists with any military training, he was designated the senior officer of the group. Although his architectural background enabled him to produce detailed pictures of buildings, he also drew upon his skills as an artist to produce disquieting and somber images of the war. He returned to etching after his discharge and published *In France with the American Expeditionary Forces*, an illustrated volume of his work.





"The Railhead Dump at Menil-la-Tour." Loading hay onto railroad cars for transport to the front was only part of the huge logistical effort required to feed the thousands of animals used in the war.

"Over the Top." The mood set by Smith, the shrouded images of men and machines advancing through an artillery ravaged no-man's-land, reflects the somber reality of war.



Harry Everett Townsend

(1879–1941)

Harry Everett Townsend was born in Wyoming into the family of a prosperous farmer and merchant. Early in life he displayed his talent for art by earning money as a sign painter for local businessmen. After graduation from high school he went to Chicago to study at the Art Institute. During the summers he serviced farm equipment for the McCormick Harvester Company and traveled to the American Southwest. Both the Rock Island and Santa Fe railroads used his scenic paintings for advertising.



In 1900 Townsend began to work with Howard Pyle, after which he studied briefly in Paris and in London. He returned to Chicago in 1904 to teach for a short time at the Academy of Fine Arts, after which he moved to Leonia, New Jersey, to begin a successful career illustrating magazines such as *Harper's*, *Century*, *Everybody's*, *Scribner's*, and *McClure's* as well as a number of books. In 1912 he established a studio in northern France so that he could be close to both Paris and London. The onset of war forced Townsend to return to the United States, where he resumed his work as an illustrator.

He began his war service drawing posters before receiving his captain's commission in 1918. Much of Townsend's work during the war focuses on the human element. He produced a number of images showing how the rigors of combat eventually leave little to distinguish between winners and losers in war.

After the war Townsend returned to illustrating. His experiences with the AEF, *War Diary of a Combat Artist*, were published in 1991.



"On the Gas Alert." Townsend portrays the narrow line between life and death in the trenches for both men and animals as gas became a weapon of war.

"Infantryman." This portrait captures the subdued confidence—of winning the war and of getting back home—that the American soldier carried with him into battle.



Further Readings

The most comprehensive look at the Army's official artists in World War I is found in Alfred Emile Cornebise's *Art from the Trenches: America's Artists in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1991). Although it forms only a relatively small part of the book, the earliest look at the program is in *Art and the Great War* by Albert Eugene Gallatin (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1919). *War Diary of a Combat Artist* (Nivot: University Press of Colorado, 1991), Alfred E. Cornebise, ed., is an edited version of Harry Everett Townsend's wartime diary. After the war J. Andre Smith published *In France with the American Expeditionary Forces* (New York: Arthur H. Hablo & Co., 1919), a collection of his art. Edward M. Coffman's *The War to End All Wars: The American Experience in World War I* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986) provides an overview of the war, and *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938; reprinted by the Center of Military History, 1992) provides a guide to the terrain over which the AEF fought.

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