

NATIONAL
WWI
MUSEUM
AT LIBERTY MEMORIAL

News Release

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**Special Exhibition *Over By Christmas: August-December 1914*
Opens at National World War I Museum**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – War was romantic. War was colorful flags, spiked helmets and flashing sabers. War was an adventure. As soldiers across Europe marched to war in the summer of 1914, most expected to be home in weeks, surely by Christmas. The special exhibition [*Over By Christmas: August-December 1914*](#) examines these romantic notions colliding with the harsh realities of war and opens Saturday, May 3 at the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial.

Pistol shots of an assassination in a Sarajevo street on June 28, 1914 ignited the match of the war. Quickly, the growing flames led to threats, armies mobilizing, war being declared and dreadnoughts steaming to sea. This special exhibition, *Over By Christmas: August-December 1914*, highlights the first five months of the war through specific topics and case studies, including Germany Mobilizes, Germany’s Rush to War, Invasion: Belgium and France and War in the East.

“*Over By Christmas* presents fascinating events that transpired during the initial period of World War I, “said National World War I Museum Senior Curator Doran Cart. “Most of these items have never been previously exhibited in a museum, so people will have the opportunity to see new objects, while learning about pivotal events during the early stages of the Great War.”

One prominent case study featured in the exhibition stems from the early war in the Pacific with the S.M.S. *Cormoran*. Waves crashed against the hull of the Russian mail steamer, the S.S. *Rjasan* in the Straits of Tsushima north of Japan in a rough sea on Aug. 4, 1914. A lurking German raider, the S.M.S. *Emden*, spotted her as quarry. The *Rjasan* (originally built in Germany) was captured and soon brought to the German-controlled port of Tsingtao, China and renamed the S.M.S *Cormoran*. A brass and glass porthole, the lower end of a copper voice tube used to communicate between decks and an engine room steam gauge made by Schaffer & Budenberg in Magdeburg, Germany are among the exhibited items.

“*Over By Christmas* continues our efforts to learn lessons and derive meaning from the Great War by bringing to life incredible stories and events from those critical first few months of the war,” said National World War I Museum President & CEO Matthew Naylor.

All objects and documents featured in *Over By Christmas* are from the extensive collection of the Museum. The majority of items have not been displayed before with several recently acquired for this special exhibition, giving new and repeat visitors a fresh viewpoint on the critical first months of the war.

The exhibition showcases objects that represent different aspects of the war including:

- 1914 Prussian flag
- Bronze medallions honoring events or individuals from the war
- Lithograph print by French artist George Scott
- French colonial zouave infantry uniform
- *The Silver Bullet or The Road to Berlin* game
- Brass and glass porthole from the S.M.S. *Cormoran*
- German cigar box for Christmas 1914 with portraits of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Emperor Franz Joseph
- Belgian grenadier's dark blue wool coat

The exhibition, located in Exhibit Hall and free with admission to the Museum, runs through March 2015.

About the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial

The National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial is the only American museum solely dedicated to examining the personal experiences of a war whose impact still echoes in the world today. The National World War I Museum holds the most diverse collection of World War I objects and documents in the world and is the second-oldest public museum dedicated to preserving the objects, history and experiences of the war. The Museum takes visitors of all ages on an epic journey through a transformative period and shares deeply personal stories of courage, honor, patriotism and sacrifice. Designated by Congress as America's official World War I Museum and located in downtown Kansas City, Mo., the National World War I Museum inspires thought, dialogue and learning to make the experiences of the Great War era meaningful and relevant for present and future generations. To learn more, visit www.theworldwar.org.

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