

Behind this U.S. Army 3-inch field gun is the graphic explaining how America mobilized for war in 1917.

Article Claire M. Caterer
Photos Courtesy of the National World War I Museum

Explore The Great War at The Liberty Memorial

Liberty Memorial and National World War I Museum

100 W. 26th Street, Kansas City
816.784.1918
LibertyMemorialMuseum.org

Although most people recognize the Liberty Memorial as a prominent Kansas City landmark, not everyone realizes that housed below the tower is the country's only national museum devoted to the First World War. Whether you're a history buff or looking to entertain out-of-towners with a visit to a unique, world-class museum, the Liberty Memorial has plenty to offer.

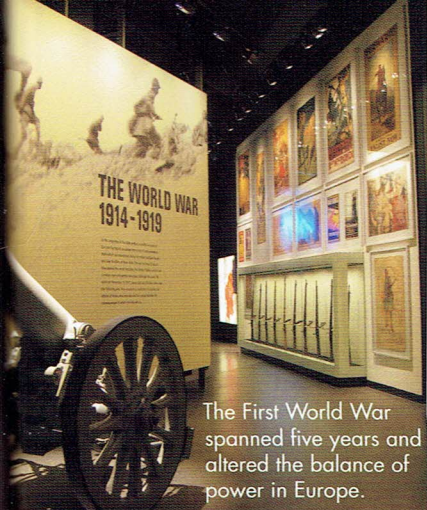
Rising 217 feet on the hill across from Union Station is the tower honoring the men and women who served "in defense of liberty and our country." Military leaders from the Allied nations of Great Britain, Belgium, France, Italy and the United States attended the site dedication in 1921—the only time all five leaders stood together in one place. The tower is flanked by two sphinxes—one faces east, toward the war-torn Europe of the past; the other faces west, toward a future of peace. Visitors can ascend the tower for a marvelous view of Kansas City.

On either side of the tower stand two buildings dating from the Memorial's opening in 1926. Memory Hall is dedicated to those servicemen from the Kansas City area who lost their lives in World War I. Exhibit Hall contains rotating special exhibits. Now through December 2011, it features "Man & Machine: The German Soldier in World War I," exploring the machinery of the war as seen through the eyes of German infantrymen.

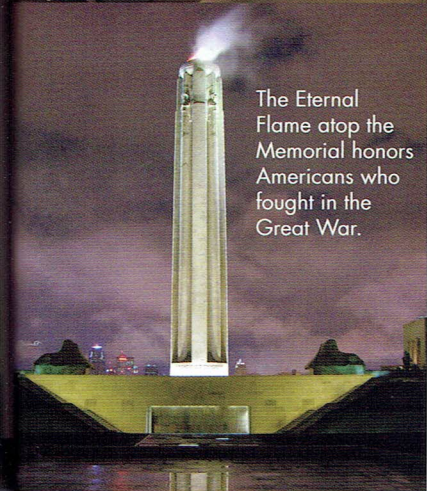
Crossing the grassy area near the museum entrance, explore the Walk of Honor, where private donors have purchased more than 7,000 bricks in memory of loved ones who have served in the armed forces, including veterans of conflicts from World War I to the present day.

The Museum

Descend from the Memorial's base down several steps into the bunker-like National World War I Museum. There you'll cross a glass bridge over a faux field of red pop-



The First World War spanned five years and altered the balance of power in Europe.



The Eternal Flame atop the Memorial honors Americans who fought in the Great War.

pies, calling to mind the famous poem "In Flanders Fields," penned by Canadian Army surgeon John McCrae. Each of the 9,000 flowers represents 1,000 combatants killed in the Great War.

The museum itself is arranged in a circle, moving counterclockwise through the war years in chronological order. Museum officials advise allowing at least two and a half hours to take in the exhibits, which include panoramic photographs, three-dimensional recreations of life in the trenches and thousands of artifacts. Uniforms, weapons and personal items are just a few of the hundreds of objects that give visitors an idea of what the doughboys' lives were like.

Don't pass up the various multimedia exhibits throughout the museum. Three short films present the story of the war's causes, the American years and the final peace treaty. Especially moving is the 15-minute film, "Should America Enter the War?" Presented in the Horizon Theater overlooking a moonscape of trenches and barbed wire, viewers are immersed in Woodrow Wilson's somewhat unpopular decision to send troops into Europe's bloodiest conflict.

Other multimedia treats include the Reflections alcoves, where you'll hear poems, music and prose

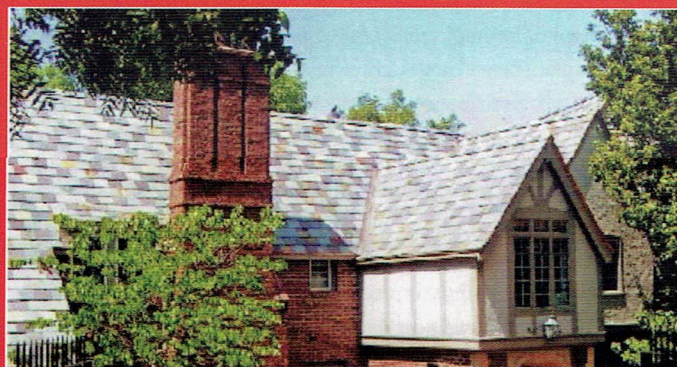
from doughboys to generals. Follow battle plans or design your own propaganda poster in the interactive exhibits. Around every corner you'll find something startling, from a Renault FT17 tank to the cigarette case a young corporal carried into battle.

Research Opportunities

The Public Research Room, located on the lower level of the museum, contains a library of nearly 6,000 books and periodicals devoted to study of the Great War. Scholars of all levels can peruse the open collection in the Research Room or make an appointment to examine archived documents and objects (call 816-784-1918 to speak to the archivist or curator). Researchers are asked to take notes on pencil and paper or with laptops (no ink, please). The Public Research Room is open Tuesday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Extras

The excellent gift shop includes an extensive collection of books about the Great War as well as clothing, CDs, toys and other souvenirs. The Over There Café down the hall offers sandwiches and hot entrées. Visit the museum's website for up-to-date information on special events like film screenings, lectures and the annual Veterans' Day celebration. LL



Quality installer of all types of roof materials, including Composition, Wood, Metal, Flatroofs, Tiles and Slate such as Tru-Slate (pictured Left).



- Licensed and Insured
- Free Estimates
- All Types of Roofing
- References Available
- BBB Member
- Transferable Warranty
- Great Website! www.bradenroofing.com

(913) 341-0200
(816) 931-1959

Braden Roofing now does all types of Guttering Work & Attic Blown-in Insulation!

You can receive up to a \$1,500 Tax Credit on these home improvements.

Call us for details.
Check us out on AngiesList.com

