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# Historic FDR photo emerges in massive traveling exhibit



A portion of a 10-panel exhibit by the Dutchess County Historical Society is pictured above. Entitled, "Over Here: The Yet-to-be-told Stories of Dutchess County's Men, Women and Children During the World War 1917-1919," the massive exhibit will begin its run at the Wallace Center at the FDR site on May 1. Photo courtesy of Bill Jeffway

by Curtis Schmidt

An immense exhibit, which even includes a never-before-published photo of Franklin D. Roosevelt, is being prepared for a momentous unveiling by the members of the Dutchess County Historical Society (DCHS).

Entitled "Over Here: The Yet-to-be-told Stories of Dutchess County's Men, Women and Children During the World War 1917-1919," the 10-panel exhibit, taken largely from more than 330 glass plate negatives, will be on display beginning on May 1 at the Wallace Center at the FDR site in Hyde Park.

The opening event is set for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 1, at the Wallace Center, following an annual DCHS meeting and special presentation. To attend, RSVP at (845) 293-7711 or [bill.jeffway@dchsnyc.org](mailto:bill.jeffway@dchsnyc.org).

It is also a traveling exhibit. Once it leaves the Wallace Center in early June, it will be available for display at town halls, libraries, schools and community centers throughout the county. It will also be displayed at the Dutchess County Fair, Aug. 21-26.

It's all part of the DCHS' salute entitled "Year of the Veteran" in this, the 100th anniversary year of the end of fighting in

World War I.

Program chairperson Melody Moore said historians from all over Dutchess County have contributed to the effort.

"The glass plate negatives form the backbone of the exhibit; however, we have also included images from period newspapers, posters of the time, draft cards and a wide range of graphics and illustrated scenes," she said.

One of the most important artifacts to emerge in the search is the never-before published photograph of then Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano

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## Historical exhibit *continued from cover*

Roosevelt. He is leading and marching in the September 1919 "Welcome Home" Parade on Main Street in Poughkeepsie.

Moore said the photo is quite ironic as Roosevelt is "marching briskly with purpose and pride two years before he was stricken with polio." She said it is further ironic in that he was also "unknowingly marching into an uncertain future. World War I was hailed as the 'War to end all wars' and Roosevelt had no way of knowing that 20 years later, he would be leading the U.S. in World War II."

Each panel revolves around a different subject of World War I and conveys how preparations for the war and the war itself affected the lives of all Americans in a variety of ways.

The exhibit, consisting of six-foot-high panels, begins with an introduction with a quote from President Woodrow Wilson: "The Supreme Test of the nation has come. We must all speak, act and serve together."

The following is a short synopsis of each panel.

(2) War is declared on April 6, 1917: The U.S. went from no mobilization to training and shipping soldiers overseas. More than 200 men from Dutchess County joined the effort.

(3) Women Respond: Women are called into non-traditional roles, such as mechanics, ambulance drivers and working in factories and farms.

(4) Persons of Color: The men enlisted separately. The country was still segregated. They served in units that were highly decorated, but they were not treated equally. They served with confidence and hoped to return on equal footing, but that did not happen.

(5) Boys and Girls find roles: Children helped in farm cadet programs, shaping public opinion and raising funds.

(6) Home Front Mobilization: There was no war budget. Money was raised with liberty bond drives. Food and other items were rationed and there were coal shortages – all to provide more for our soldiers.

(7) American Identity: It was about being 100 percent American. There was backlash against Eastern Europeans. Examples included not teaching German in schools and music by Bach and Beethoven was not allowed.

(8) Welcome Home: Troops returned from fighting in France and Belgium to a country in transition. America did not sign the Treaty of Versailles and did not join the League of Nations. Americans fought to save democracy, but ironically turned to isolationism.

(9) Supreme Sacrifice: We take a look at soldiers who lost their lives and were buried in France.

(10) A Brief Shining Moment: This panel features the historic photo of Roosevelt. This was the "Great War" and no one anticipated World War II.

Moore and Justin Kemp will start off the program on May 1 at 6 p.m. with a presentation entitled, "Getting to Know My Great-great-grandfather Fred: His Coming of Age on a Pine Plains Farm via Honolulu." It is the story of a young man from Pine Plains who heads off to fight in the Spanish-American War. The talk is drawn from Fred Knickerbocker's letters home, his journals and the photographs he took while stationed in Hawaii. County Historian William P. Tatum will put Knickerbocker's personal experience in a larger historical context.



Above are two panels from the Dutchess County Historical Society's exhibit on World War I with contributions by historians from all across Dutchess County. Photos courtesy of Bill Jeffway

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