



Military memorabilia to honor four local service members' time in World War I is on display at the Alder Creek Pioneer Carousel Museum in Bickleton through September.

In East Klickitat County Remembering the Great War

*Exhibit at Alder Creek
Pioneer Carousel Museum
honors local World War I
veterans*

By Jeanie Senior

November 11 marks a century since the end of World War I: four bloody years from 1914 to 1918 when 8 million lives were lost.

A special exhibit at the Alder Creek Pioneer Carousel Museum in Bickleton, on display through the end of September, brings WWI home.

The exhibit pays homage to the men from east Klickitat County who fought in what has often been called the Great War and the War to End All Wars.

Four soldiers from the area, among the 80-plus who enlisted to fight, did not come home from the war. They were Edward Lindblad, Dewey V. Bromley, Harry Gotfredson and Virgil Wommach.

The exhibit includes a poster and a

certificate from France honoring Pvt. Harry Gotfredson who “served with honor in the World War and died in the service of this country.” There is a photograph of the grave marker for Pvt. Dewey Bromley, and another of the gates to the Oise-Asne American cemetery in France where he is buried—one of 6,012 American war casualties in that region.

Sandra Powers says when she and other museum board members decided to put together the exhibit, storyboards prepared by the Washington State Historical Society helped with a narrative of the state’s war years.

They also turned to information compiled by two local historians: Ada Ruth Whitmore and the late Freda Powers.

When word of the planned exhibit got around, “people just donated to us



Clockwise from above, Marine Pvt. Robert Glasco is one of four WWI veterans from the area. Museum board member Sandra Powers talks to a young visitor about the display. Sandra looks at a wall of photos as she tries to identify people.

and brought all these things in,” Ada says, pointing to the exhibit, which includes a battered World War I bugle, two saddles, a Liberty Bond poster and a service flag with two blue stars next to a photograph of Pvt. Robert L. Glasco in his Marine Corps uniform.

Besides a Victory Medal and good conduct and sharpshooter medals, Robert Glasco earned five battle stars and clasps for five battles, including Verdun.

A certificate from the Marines commends Robert for obedience, sobriety, industry, courage and cleanliness.

The Binns family provided a panoramic photo of a large company of soldiers, as well as a photograph of the *USS America* with homeward-bound troops.

Research indicates the ship was the former German passenger liner *Amerika*, captured in the war and used as a troop transport.

Visitors can peruse a notebook of soldier Henry Piendl’s letters to his mother, posted “somewhere in France,” and an album of another soldier, Al Matsen, and his wartime photographs.

Scanning the list of soldiers who served,



Sandra notes those whose families still live in the area, some with no living relations, others whose families have moved away. She says some families still come to Cleveland Cemetery on Memorial Day to honor their fallen service members.

Fitting the World War I exhibit into the existing military section of the museum required a fair bit of planning. It also served as a good illustration of how much the museum’s collection has grown since the facility opened in 2006.

“The good news is we are going to expand and we will have more space,” Sandra says.

A \$430,000 state grant paid for the existing building, built chiefly to house its prize artifact: a circa 1900 24-horse, four-chariot Herschell-Spillman track carousel that is one of 11 still operating in the U.S. and Canada. Bought by the Alder Creek Pioneer Association in 1929, the carousel

is a popular ride at the annual Pioneer Picnic and Rodeo.

The carousel horses and chariots, restored over several years, are mounted around the inside perimeter of the round museum building.

Work on the museum’s new wing—funded by a \$485,000 state grant—will start in September. It will include a library with shelves for dozens of history-crammed notebooks; a workroom; a large room for collection storage; and an additional 2,284 square feet of exhibit space.

Sandra says the design is not extravagant, but it will provide what the museum needs most: space.

“It’s amazing what people bring in,” she says.

Next February, Sandra and the other museum board members—Lynn Mains, Barbara Gall, Myrna Giles, Emlie Bowcutt and Gale Blankenship—will work two days a week through March to ready the new and existing exhibit spaces for the 2019 season. The museum closes October 13, and will reopen the first Friday in April. ■

The museum is at 4 East Market Street in Bickleton. It is open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday and Saturday; Sundays, noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$1 for children and \$10 for families. Group tours are available by appointment, call (509) 896-2007. The museum is closed on holidays.