

# Herbert Stoops – Jell-O and World War I

by Lynne Belluscio

I visited the New York Historical Society in New York City this past week. I wanted to see the exhibit “World War I: Beyond the Trenches.” This exhibit builds on the exhibit “World War I and American Art,” which was organized by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. The exhibit brings the visitor through the early stages of the war, with an image of a mother and child drowning after a German U-boat torpedoed the Lusitania. One of the most daunting paintings is the huge canvas by John Singer Sargent, “Gassed.” It depicts a group of soldiers walking from the battlefield after being bombed with mustard gas. The exhibit also includes work by Ivan Albright, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Claggett Wilson. A haunting painting by Charles Burchfield titled “The First Hepatica” is a reflection on the war, done in dark somber colors, with a hidden hepatica plant, that seems to be growing

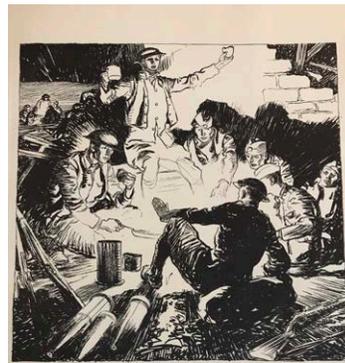
deep in the ground away from the landscape of war. We are not apt to think of art and war, yet it is often the artist’s interpretation of war that elicits powerful emotions. During World War I, illustrators and artists provided images on posters - - think of the “I Need You” and the Uncle Sam recruiting poster, as well as images that encouraged patriotism, and involvement in the war effort by women and financial support in purchasing war bonds.



**IN THE CANTONMENTS**  
Rough fare for rough appetites. A catch-as-catch-can struggle with beans, spuds and boiled beef as staples. The difference of Heaven and Hell being measured by the capabilities of the Mess Sergeant.

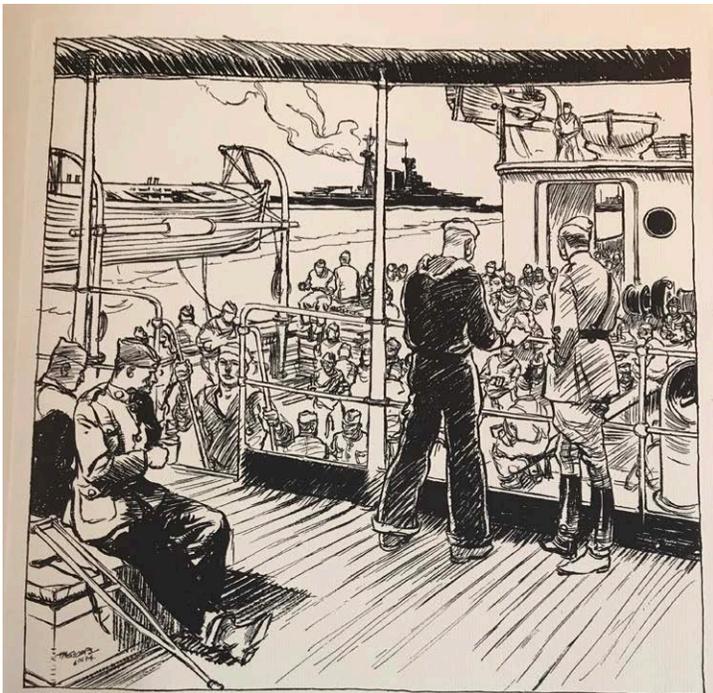
My interest in this exhibit is from my plans for an exhibit next summer on World War I and LeRoy: “The War to End All Wars.” I think I will feature the artwork of Herbert Stoops, who illustrated the large portfolio of black and white images for the Jell-O Company entitled “Inked Memories of 1918,” which was published in 1924. The large books were given to American Legion Posts around the country. They are not Jell-O advertising, but rather a commemorative book about the war, from the perspective of an artist and soldier.

Herbert Stoops was born in 1887 in Utah and grew up in the west, at a time when the stories of cowboys and the frontier were fictionalized in stories and books. He graduated in 1905 from Utah State College and then worked as an illustrator in San Francisco for two newspapers. In 1915, he joined Officer’s Training at Fort Sheridan in Illinois. During World War I he served in France as a first lieutenant in the 6th Field Artillery, First Army Division. He did illustrations for American Legion Magazine and apparently, Jell-O acquired the rights to some of his illustrations. After the war, Stoops continued to do illustrations for the Blue Book magazine. It was comparable to Redbook Magazine, and had a reputation for good writing and articles, that were of interest to both men and women. Stoops did many illustrations for Colliers, and Cosmopolitan, and in the beginning of World War II he did a series of recruiting posters. He was a member of the Society of Illustrators and President of the Artist’s Guild of New York. He died in 1948, when he was just 60.



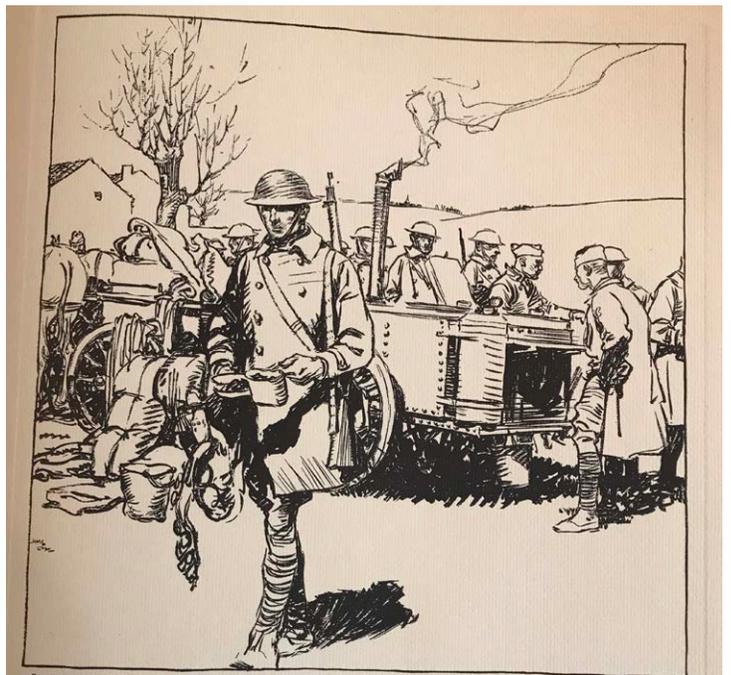
**ARMISTICE NIGHT**

Fires twinkling everywhere in a land that has been dark for more than four years. You could lift your head without getting a cold sensation in the small of your back—your coffin was hot—corn willie fried was a brand new dish. The powder from Jerry’s fired ammunition made a blaze that would kindle wet wood, and the replacements illuminated the whole sky with German rockets and Vêry lights. “Just like Broadway,” says some sentimentalist.



**THE NAVY BRINGS YOU BACK**

PROBABLY a more efficient transport service was never seen in the world than the homeward bound route from France. You were still searage—but headed west—so who cared? Seasickness, dungarees, crowded quarters, and even goldfish were items too trivial to elicit the usual growl. Nothing mattered—you were going home.



**ON THE HIKE**

THE rolling kitchen comes into its own. Slum seems to be the only product that this jolting piece of machinery can turn out—but did you ever turn your mess kit down?