

GEORGE C. MARSHALL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

COLLECTION SUMMARY SHEET

COLLECTION: JOHN W. DOWNER COLLECTION
ACCESSION NUMBER: 399
DONOR: Joseph P. Downer
DATE OF GIFT: 1978
SIZE: 1 1f
INCLUSIVE DATES: 1908-1943

BIOGRAPHICAL AND SUBJECT SUMMARY:

John W. Downer (1881-1977) of Charleston, West Virginia, attended Virginia Military Institute, class of 1902, before beginning a long and illustrious military career with the U.S. Army. Commissioned in 1904, Downer served first in the Philippines; during World War I he commanded the battalion which fired the first American Artillery shot in combat. Decorated for heroism by the United States, Belgium and France, Downer returned in 1923 to the United States after serving with the Army of Occupation in Germany in Coblenz. Additional service included instructor of artillery in New York, commander of Ft. Dix, New Jersey and Camp Upton, New York. Downer retired in 1943.

In addition to his military career, Downer was a skilled horseman excelling in polo, flat racing and steeplechase. He rode in the Inter-Allied games in Paris and at the Seventh Olympiad in Antwerp in 1920.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AND ARRANGEMENT:

The bulk of the collection consists of photographs including many of Downer's military associates such as Fred T. Austin, Robert Lee Bullard, and Lucius Holbrook; Downer and associates playing polo and scenes of Germany and France during World War I. Most of these photographs were taken by the Germans. Also included in the collection are certificates and appointments, play programs, and a pamphlet: "Refutation of the charges made in the Campaign against French Coloured Troops..." The photographs have been removed and are housed separately as have several books pertaining to WWI. The remaining documents are in one box in the vault-upper level.

RESTRICTIONS: None
LOCATION: Vault-upper level
COLLECTION REGISTER AVAILABLE: no

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SEPARATION RECORD

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The following items have been removed from the collection:

Description of items	Photographs	Location
Box S-1:	<p>Polo Players, Coblenz, Germany, June, 1922. "Inter-Allied Polo Tournament. XIV Kings Hussars vs. A.F. in G. Team. A.F.G.: No. 1, Henderson; No. 2, Col. Jeffries [Barry]; No. 3, Maj. Herr; No. 4, Maj. Downer. XIV Hussars: No. 1, Capt. Hamer; No. 2, Capt. Miller; No. 3, Capt. Hurndall; No. 4, Capt. DeWend Fenton. Score: America--4, British--3."</p> <p>John W. Downer on horseback, jumping a stone wall.</p> <p>Soldier on horseback, in front of Quartermaster's Office.</p> <p>Photograph Album. Contains World War I original photographs-- includes one of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Hindenburg, Ludendorf. Other photos picture army officers of Germany, scenes of devastation in Germany, peasants, cemeteries, mutilation, army weapons, planes in flight and as wreckage. Most of the photos look to have been taken in Germany, but a few are in Italy and Russia, according to the enclosed list. This inventory is in German.</p> <p>Photograph Album. Contains photos of sinking ship and others taken by German submarine officers during World War I; included are photos of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Hindenburg, Schoeder.</p> <p>Photograph Album. Contains World War I photos of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the Crown Prince of Germany, Hindenburg, and Duke Albrecht of Wurttemberg, scenes of French Villages before and after being destroyed by the Germans.</p> <p>Postcard. To Colonel and Mrs. John W. Downer. Depicts a scene from the Spanish Court Riding in Vienna, Austria.</p> <p>Drawings. Painting of John W. Downer in riding habit. Coblenz, 1922.</p>	unaccessioned photograph collection

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Description of items	Photographs (continued)	Location
Box S-1:	<p>Fred T. Austin, Major General of U.S. Army, Chief of Field Artillery. Inscribed, "To Col. J. W. Downer with pleasant memories of the days when we followed the same guidon."</p> <p>Robert Lee Bullard, Lt. General. Inscribed, "For my comrade of the 1st Division, Col. John W. Downer."</p> <p>Lucius R. Holbrook, Major General, First Division. Inscribed, "To my good friend and comrade in service Colonel Downer."</p> <p>C. P. Summerall, General, Retired. "For Lt. Col. John W. Downer in appreciation of his loyal and able services."</p> <p>J. G. Harbord, Major General, Retired. Inscribed, "With best wishes to Col. John W. Downer, and _____ of his victory on this day on the Rhine."</p> <p>D. E. Nolan, Major General, U. S. Army. Inscribed, "For Colonel John W. Downer with _____ regards."</p> <p>Sixth Field Artillery Veterans of the World War serving with the regiment--May 9, 1930. Standing: Sgt. Siminski, Sgt. Czekanowski, Sgt. J. Long. Seated: 1st Sgt. Hartney, Sgt. Parker, Lt. Col. J. W. Downer, Col. W. S. McNair, Sgt. Howell, 1st Sgt. Nowak, 1st Sgt. Handschue.</p> <p>L-R: Field Marshall, General Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of Staff, Imperial General Staff, British Army; General H. T. Allen, A.E.F.; Major Downer commanding the artillery. Coblenz, Germany, 1919.</p> <p>General John J. Pershing, Coblenz, Germany, 1922.</p> <p>Henry T. Allen, Coblenz, Germany, 1920-22. Inscribed, "Henry T. Allen commanding General A F in G Coblenz, 1920-22."</p>	Unaccessioned Photograph collection

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Box S-1:	<p>John W. Downer, riding.</p> <p>John W. Downer.</p> <p>Polo players. "Yellow" Team Winners. A.F. G. Inter-allied Polo Tournament, 1921. R. Talbott, Donaldson, Henderson, Downer."</p> <p>Polo Players, rider swinging in foreground.</p> <p>Joffre and John W. Downer. Wiesbaden, Germany, 1922. Inscribed, "Joffre and Major Downer, Wiesbaden, Germany--1922. Joffre and myself going over the last jump. Wiesbaden, Concours Hoppigue--1922."</p> <p>John Jeffreys with horse, Coblenz, Germany, 1922. Inscribed, "In memory of our good day in Coblenz."</p>	Unaccessioned Photograph Collection

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<p>Dupuy, R. Ernest. <u>World in Arms</u>. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1940.</p> <p><u>Grosser Bilderatlas Des Weltkrieges</u>. Muenchen, Germany: Berlag von F. Bruckmann, U.G., 1915-1919.</p> <p><u>Verdun and the Battles for its Possession</u>. Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin and Cie, 1919.</p> <p><u>The Americans in the Great Wat; The Battle of Saint Mihiel</u>. Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin and Cie, 1919.</p> <p><u>The Americans in the Great War; Meuse-Argonne Battle</u>. Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin and Cie, 1919.</p> <p><u>The Americans in the Great War, The Second Battle of the Marne</u>. Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin and Cie, 1919.</p> <p>Dupuy, R. Ernest. <u>World in Arms</u>, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1940.</p> <p><u>Grosser Bilderatlas Des Weltkrieges</u>. Muenchen, Germany: Berlag von F. Bruckmann, U.G., 1915-1919.</p> <p><u>Verdun and the Battles for its Possession</u>. Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin and Cie, 1919.</p> <p><u>Ypres and the Battles of Ypres</u>. Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin and Cie, 1919.</p>	<p>Library</p>