The American Library Association in World War I
Synopsis

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the involvement of the United States in World War I. **This two frame Display exhibit tells the story of the Library War Service of the American Library Association in World War I.** It is an expansion of a one frame gold medal exhibit shown previously in 2014.

Background
The American Library Association was one of seven national level welfare relief organizations that stepped forward during and immediately after World War I to meet the social and non-military needs of the four million plus men from the United States who served in the War.

Treatment and Importance
This exhibit was expanded of a one frame exhibit to two frames in order to more effectively tell the story of the ALA Library War Service in WWI. It is not anticipated that the material or story will warrant further expansion of the exhibit. The exhibit is organized as follows: 1) Prologue; 2) Organization of the Library War Service; 2) Fundraising; 3) Books & Magazines; 4) Camp Libraries in U.S.; 5) Hospital Libraries in U.S.; 6) Merchant Marine Library Service; 7) Overseas Library Service; and finally the 7) Epilogue. As a display exhibit, the exhibit contains both philatelic and non-philatelic items. **The importance of the exhibit is that it tells a story of U.S. involvement in World War I that has not been told in an exhibit before (other than my previous one frame exhibit) with philatelic and other artifacts that are difficult to acquire.** In addition to philatelic material, the exhibit includes unusual ephemera and postcards related to the LWS.

Knowledge, Study and Research
I’m a serious student of library history. One aspect of the history of America’s libraries that I have been most interested in has been the role of the American Library Association in World War I. I have been collecting postal and other artifacts related to the Library War Service of the American Library Association for more than 20 years. I have researched each of the items in my collection, and have written about many of the items (including the items in this exhibit) on my Library History Buff Blog. See [http://libraryhistorybuff.blogspot.com/search/label/ALA%20Library%20War%20Service].

Rarity and Condition
According to the WWI A.E.F. Study Group, there were only 117 American Library Association workers in Europe and “corner cards are very scarce”. The covers with an American Library Association corner card mailed from APO 927 in Coblenz, Germany are among the scarcest items in this exhibit. The cover in the exhibit with a date of Nov. 25, 1919 and with an “Army Mail” free frank is pictured on page 17 of the WWI A.E.F. Study Group publication. The unused postcard which pictures American troops in Siberia and extends Christmas greetings is scarce. The WWI A.E.F. Study Group publication indicates that there have only been nine copies of this postcard recorded. I have included material in the best condition available which helps tell the story of the ALA Library War Service. The importance of an item as it relates to the history of the ALA Library War Service has taken precedence over condition.

Resources
The Library History Buff Blog – ALA Library War Service (link to all posts written about the LWS) [http://libraryhistorybuff.blogspot.com/search/label/ALA%20Library%20War%20Service]

