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White Announces Repaired and Digitized World War I Illinois National Guard Maps Now Available Online

Marks 100th anniversary World War I

Secretary of State and State Archivist Jesse White today announced that in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of America's participation in World War I, the Illinois State Archives has repaired and digitized 57 maps used by the Illinois National Guard during the war. The maps may be viewed by the public in the Illinois Digital Archives found here:

<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/search/collection/p16614coll33/page/1>

"More than 350,000 Illinois residents served in the American military during World War I and more than 5,000 died," said White. "It is important that we as a state take the time to remember their sacrifices and honor their efforts."

The State Archives has military topographical maps that show activities in France during World War I. These maps show terrain exercises, the enemy order of battle and the locations of trenches, land mines, railroads, supply dumps and the front lines. Also included with this group of materials is a rare German poster showing the locations of ships sunk by German submarines in British waters.

White, who served in the U.S. Army and the Illinois National Guard and Reserve, said the maps show the importance of Illinois' contribution to the war effort.

These sets of maps feature the 33rd division of the Illinois National Guard, which was the only distinctly Illinois division that saw active service in France during the war. The United States entered the war on April 6, 1917 and, unlike previous wars, most soldiers did not serve in units specific to their home states. The war ended on November 11, 1918 a date now commemorated as Veteran's Day in the United States.

In addition, the Archives has daily correspondence of battlefield orders (October-November 1918) and approximately 150 post-war enemy intelligence and location maps which show the day to day battle lines from October 1, 1918 to shortly after the end of the war. These maps show enemy activities such as shelling, air plane missions and gas attacks.

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is a participating member of the Illinois World War I Centennial Commission, whose website can be found at:

<http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/illinois-wwi-centennial-home.html>.

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