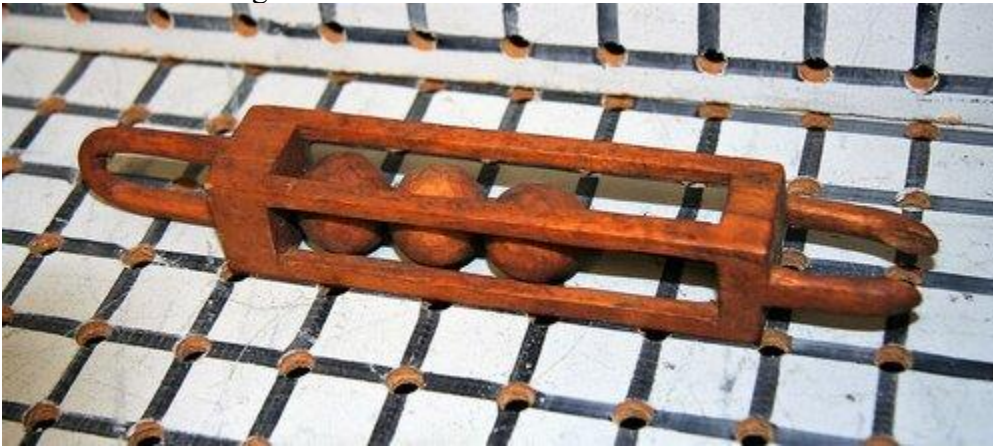


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Exploring World War I Trench Art

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, J. Gleim, Museum Curator)

Trench Art is typically defined as art made by anyone in response to war or composed from war time materials. Most often, these materials are items that were easily accessible including shrapnel, shell and bullet casings, destroyed building materials, or pieces of military gear. Soldiers in all conflicts have produced such art, but the term is most often associated with those works produced during World War I. Soldiers produced art to pass time when they were away from the front lines, to commemorate a particular battle or experience, and as a way to cope with the intense psychological and physical demands war placed on them. Sometimes, trench art was produced by local civilians and sold to soldiers as souvenirs as a means of making a living. The practice continued after the war as local people continued to collect battlefield debris that they crafted into souvenirs and sold to those visiting battlefields and soldiers' cemeteries.



John Franklin Goodman of Sunbury, PA created the wood carving seen here. One of a collection of 16, it is fashioned from a single piece of wood and has three wooden balls inside a square cage, with a loop at each end. Goodman was a Private First Class in the Headquarters Company, 107th Machine Gun Battalion 28th Division. He entered the army in May 1917 and went to France in May 1918. Goodman participated in the Second Battle of the Marne and in the Argonne Forest. He was exposed to poison gas in October 1918 and spent two weeks in the hospital. It is possible that Goodman created the carvings during his time in the hospital. According to his great-grandson, after the end of the war Goodman never carved another piece of wood.



The decorated 37mm shell casing belonged to Edward H. Lightner of Ninevah, PA. Lightner also served with the 28th Division as a sergeant in the Headquarters Company, 111th Infantry. He went to France in May 1918 and participated in the 5th German Offensive, the Meuse-Argonne campaign, and at Thiaccourt. The shell is pierced with an image of a shield at the center, flanked by the American and French flags. While it is unknown whether Lightner decorated the shell himself or not, it remained among his possessions until his death. It is one of approximately 20 decorated shells in the museum's collection.