

WW1, Propaganda, Advertising and the Pan-Chro-Scope

by Ralph Reiley

In Europe, the war had been raging since August 1914. The United States was a neutral nation until April 2, 1917, when president Woodrow Wilson addressed a joint session of the house and senate and requested a declaration of war on Germany, to make the world safe for Democracy. Congress voted on April 4, 1917, and the United States was at war with Germany. In the senate, there were 82 votes to go to war, six against and eight abstentions. In the house, there were 373 votes to go to war, 50 against, and nine abstentions. Nine days later, on April 13, 1917, Wilson signed an executive order to create the Committee on Public Information, or CPI, headed by George Creel. Newspapers reported that Wilson declared war on Germany for a variety of reasons, including the rape of Belgium, the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, the execution of nurse Edith Cavell, the diplomatic debacle of the Zimmerman Telegram, and the German navy re-starting unrestricted submarine warfare on all shipping in the war zone around England and France. Another reason, not reported in the newspapers, was pressure from American bankers on President Wilson. The banks had loaned a massive amount of money to the governments of England and France. If the Allies lost the war, they would be unable to pay back the loans, resulting in a massive default. All of these reasons caused Wilson to shift his policy away from neutrality.

At the turn of the 20th Century, German was considered the second language of the USA due to the number of Americans of German descent.

Most Americans had mixed feelings about getting involved in a European war, and neutrality seemed the best course. As a neutral nation, certain manufacturers in the USA were making a fortune selling and shipping munitions to England and France. Thousands of Americans who felt strongly about the Allied cause enlisted in the Canadian army, the British army, the French Foreign Legion, and the Lafayette Escadrille. In 1916, during Wilson's campaign for re-election, "He Kept Us Out of War" was one of the main campaign slogans that got him re-elected. Now, a few months later in 1917, it seemed that the world needed the USA to save Democracy. To get the American people behind the war with Germany, the Committee on Public Information had the task to sell the idea. The CPI created the first large scale propaganda/advertising campaign in American history. They were going to sell the war in way similar to selling laundry soap and breakfast cereal. By today's standards the propaganda/advertising tactics of 1917 are laughably primitive. At the time, they were very effective, and a few of these techniques are still used.



Top view of the shoe box like Pan-Chro Scope cardboard viewer, with stereo card inserted for viewing. The lens holder fits into the body at the front and the slide holder is placed into the body at the rear and is moved backward or forward for focus. This is the only known Pan-Chro Scope viewer in existence. (Photo courtesy of Doug Jordan)

Hollywood was drawn into the program, and a number of anti-German war films began to appear in theaters. Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin joined the ranks of the Four Minute Men; a group of prominent business men, actors and government officials who at a moment's notice could deliver a four-minute prepared speech. It was

determined that four minutes was the average attention span of the average American. I think it is thirty seconds here in the 21st century. These speeches were very patriotic, anti-German and jingoistic in tone. They were delivered on Vaudeville

Ad in Boys Life Magazine, 1918. This add appears to be very mercenary, as they are requesting that the scouts pool their money, and send it in. I would think that pocket money was scarce in 1918, with so many men serving in the army, and the nation on a war time economy. I can imagine how disappointed the scouts must have been when they got the cheap cardboard viewer and a bunch of crap-py views that were nothing like those described in the advertisement.

BOYS

EVERY
SCOUT
TROOP
SHOULD
HAVE
THE



PAN-CHRO-SCOPE

"The Latest Scientific Invention"
and

LIVING PICTURES
OF THE GREAT WORLD WAR

Interesting—Instructive
"FOLLOW OUR BOYS IN FRANCE"
48 Realistic Views of
Aviation—Battlefields—Army—Navy
Furnished with the Pan-Chro-Scope for
\$1.00 in Currency or Money Order
WE WILL GIVE YOU
One Thrift Stamp with Each Order
Continuous Series of Latest Pictures Will Be
Furnished to You On Application

NOTE! Have Your Troop Raise the Cash
and Send for This Outfit **NOW**

PAN-CHRO-SCOPE
CORPORATION

No. 8 East Market St. Indianapolis, Ind.

stages, outside of movie theaters, busy street corners, war bond rallies, and anywhere people congregated. Newspapers and magazines published photos and articles with a definite anti-German tone.

The term propaganda has been with us since 1622, when Pope Gregory XV coined the term as he created the Congregation for Propagating the Faith, a group of cardinals who began writing articles on why the Catholic Church was the best church of all churches. Propaganda and advertising are hard to separate. Both are used for political and financial gain through diabolical means that work on our emotions. George Creel was very careful not use the word propaganda in the work done by the CPI, as the term had already been associated with government lies, especially those coming from Germany. The German use of propaganda was particularly ham fisted and bumbling in WW1. George Creel was an imposing figure with a strong personality. His reputation included

being a crusading journalist, a champion of women's suffrage, or a muck raking yellow journalist and soulless advertising man, depending on who was asked. The CPI quickly went to work, and soon had a staff of 275, and 75,000 volunteers, the Four Minute Men. Among the staff were Robert Lansing from the State Dept., Newton D. Baker from the War Dept., and Josephus Daniels from the Navy Dept.

One of the principle goals of a national propaganda program for war is to transform the designated enemy from being people like us into the *Other*, a sub-human and uncivilized part of humanity that needs to be stamped out of existence. If their language is different, or their culture, or their religion, then these all become crimes and not just the diverse nature of being human. In a multi-cultural nation of immigrants like the USA, one would think that this would be a difficult task. It turns out, it was not difficult at all.

Pan Chro Scope Corp. 1918 Series 2, No. 27, "Armored Cars of the French Army in active service." A 1909 model Automitrailuses Hotchkis armored car with an unusual front plate protecting the driver. Usually with this model, the driver just had a small armored plate over his head protecting him and no front armor.



No. 27—ARMORED CARS OF THE FRENCH ARMY IN ACTIVE SERVICE.

Here we have shown to us the Latest Types of Armored French Cars, ready for Action in the GREAT BATTLES on the West Front, and they are doing most effective work.

Observe these Motor Cars closely, notice how each Car carries a Mounted GUN (Rapid Fire) ready for Action at a moment's call, showing the precautions that have been taken to protect the Driver as well as the operator of the Death-Dealing Machines.

This Picture gives to you some idea of the WAR and

FIGHTING ABILITY of the FRENCHMAN, and you see this Picture in the Pan Chro Scope, giving you a REAL LIFE-LIKENESS, so that YOU feel in the very presence of these CHAMPIONS of FREEDOM and LIBERTY.

With these Powerful rapid fire Guns the FRENCHMAN is enabled to give a good account of himself in the Fighting of the HUNS, and thousands of GERMANS have lost their Lives through these Death-dealing Mounted ARMORED GUNS.

This VIEW authorized for use in the PAN CHRO SCOPE. We will furnish continuous SERIES of the latest WAR and other PICTURES of National and WORLD-WIDE interest from time to time. Prices on Application.

THE PAN CHRO SCOPE CORPORATION

Copyright by Underwood & Underwood

Pan Chro Scope Corp. 1918 Series 2, rear of card No. 27. The back text here is propaganda fluff with little factual information.

All things German were now alien and unpatriotic. Dachshunds became Liberty Dogs. Sauerkraut became Liberty Cabbage. Hamburgers became Liberty Sandwiches, and German Measles became Liberty Measles. Remember Freedom Fries from 2003? Some propaganda techniques are timeless. Berlin, Michigan, was changed to Marne, Michigan. German street names in many cities were changed. Some schools stopped teaching German-language classes. People named Schmidt had their name changed to Smith. Very quickly, Germans became the Other, the Enemy. The line between propagan-

da and advertising is murky. It is used by those who are truly patriotic with a noble cause. It is also used by those with other motives. Those whose purpose is only to make a quick buck saw an opportunity to cash in on the spirit of the times, as they still do today. In the cloak of patriotism, one can make a fortune with some clever propaganda/advertising.

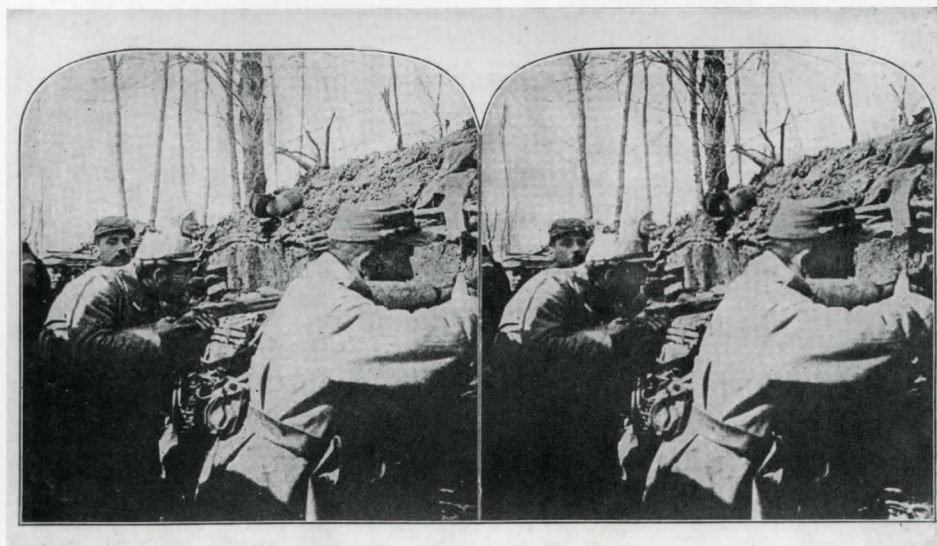
Soon magazines and newspapers were filled with advertising for patriotic products for all ages. Products were being advertised for families to send to their sons, fathers and husbands serving in the army. Some

were useful, some were useless. Some were well made; some were just shoddy pieces of junk sold to make a quick buck. Patriotic items were popular in all nations at war. Those on the home front could proudly wear patriotic trinkets or display them in their homes to show their support of their government and the troops at the front.

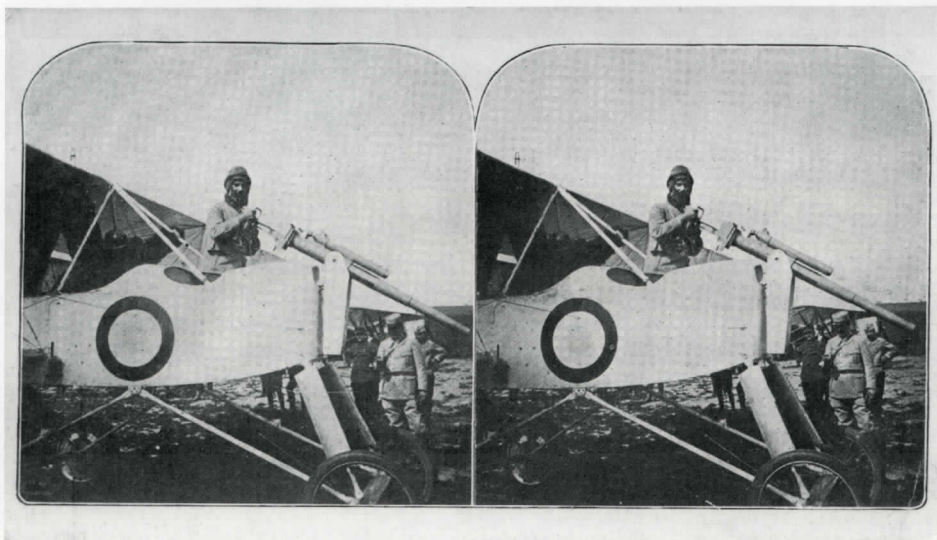
Children were not forgotten, and advertising targeting them and their money began to appear. Boy's Life magazine targeted boys with a vast array of patriotic and military style items to buy. The Boy Scouts was never a para-military organization, but the magazine did glorify the adventure and excitement of the strenuous outdoor life in the wild, including serving in the military. Before the USA entered the war, BB guns and 22 rifles were advertised in Boy's Life. After the war began, Remington, Savage and others advertised the 30-06 Springfield rifle for sale, the same rifle the army was using. The company that made boy scout uniforms also made uniforms for the army. After April 1917, the boy scout uniform took on an even more military look.

In September 1917, an item began to be advertised in full page newspaper spreads and Boy's Life magazine. The item was the Pan-Chro-Scope, manufactured by the Pan-Chro-Scope Corporation. For 75¢ you could mail order the Pan-Chro-Scope, a folding cardboard stereoscope and 48 Realistic Pictures of Army-Navy-Aviation of the war in France and Belgium. The stereoviews were printed on card stock and are post card sized, 3.25" x 5.5". They were low resolution lithographs of Underwood stereo views. The back of each card has a lengthy description of the photo, in small print. The tone of the text is patriotic, jingoistic, educational, and full of pro-American propaganda. There is also a good bit of propaganda about the benefits of the stereo view. One image is printed on two separate cards, one in stereo, one flat, for educational purposes. The Pan-Chro-Scope and two series of 48 views were sold from 1917 to 1924. It was a popular item, and the cards are fairly durable and not that difficult to find, 100 years later. The cardboard stereoscope was cheaply made, and I know of only one still in existence. It was a very ungainly

Pan Chro Scope Corp. 1917 Series 1 No. 36, "French Soldiers in protective trenches firing through gun-holes." An Underwood view from a French Source. This does look like a front line trench in early 1915. The lithograph is not very clear, with high contrast. The HEGI Feldstereo views were small format, but printed on heavy photo paper, with a much sharper image.



Pan Chro Scope Corp. 1917 Series 1 No. 9, "Quickfires (37 millimeter) mounted on armored aeroplane." A common Underwood view of an early form of ground attack aircraft. This example was not very successful as a ground attack machine. Despite its frail appearance, it was a very rugged aircraft and served to the end of the war as a night bomber.





The HEGI Feldstereo case that held the folding viewer and box of views. It's a slip case made of cardboard, with a bright, distinctive label. Photo courtesy of Bob Boyd.

looking viewer, resembling a shoe box with cut outs.

There are not many details of the Pan-Chro-Scope Corporation. In the Indianapolis City Directory, one can find it listed as an active business from 1917 to 1924. It was located on the fourth floor of the American Central Life Building, at 8 East Market Street. According to the city directory, their main business was advertising. Due to the patriotic nature of the text on the back of the cards, and the military nature of the photos, there is a theory that the CPI was directly involved in the production of the Pan-Chro-Scope. There is no smoking gun evidence to support this theory, just some circumstantial evidence that implies involvement by the CPI. The photos and the text on the back of the cards used the strict guidelines of the CPI, giving no direct information on the army or navy that might help an enemy. If the CPI was not directly involved in creating the stereo cards, the guidelines set out by the CPI were followed in meticulous detail.

All the views carry the Underwood & Underwood copyright. Bert Underwood was serving in the US Signal Corps at the time, but there seems to be no direct link between Underwood and Pan-Chro-Scope, other than the licensed use of their images. The images used in the Pan Chro-Scope would not have been the top selling stereoviews in 1917 and 1918. Supplying licensed photos to maga-



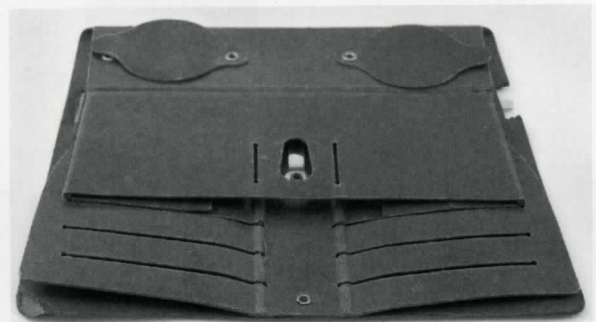
Ad from a 1918 German children's magazine. Loosely translated: "Field Stereo, the ideal gift of love. More vivid than words and photos, the Field Stereo portrays the War as it is. Learn about the field campaigns and life at the front with your own natural visual perception. Apparatus with 50 images Mk 7.50. Ask for a detailed illustrated brochure." Not quite sure that photos of the war made this an ideal gift of love. In 1918, Mk 7.50 was about \$1.35, or about \$17.50 today.

zines and newspapers was typical of a photo publisher like Underwood. The first series of photos is made up of thirty views of war taken in 1914 and early 1915. The other eighteen are of the US Navy. All the navy views are pre-war; They were originally published during the Spanish American War in 1898, making them safe from CPI censorship. While most of the ships in the photos were still in service, all were obsolete for use in the First World War. The text on the back of the cards includes quotes from American and French authors of recently published books about the war. William J. Robinson, an American who served in the British Army at Ypres, is quoted several times. His book, *My Fourteen Months at the Front*, was popular at the time and he was very well known.

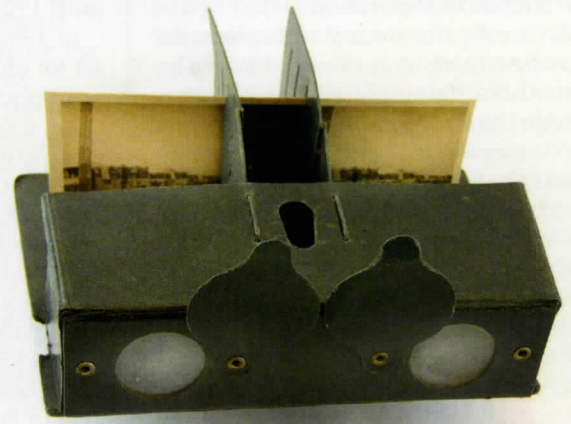
The second series of photos came out in 1918. Advertising at the time shows that the price had been raised to \$1.00 and in 1919, the price dropped back to 75¢. The second series was very different from the

first. Twenty of the views show the nation gearing up for war. Twelve of these views show army training camps at Plattsburg, NY, which had been an army training camp for business and professional men since 1915. Eight of the views showed patriotic ceremonies in New York

The HEGI Feldstereo viewer, folded flat for storage.



The assembled HEGI Feldstereo viewer. It was made of heavy cardboard, and riveted together. Note the various slots that acted as a rudimentary focus for the views while holding them square to the lenses. The views are of a high quality, while the viewer is very basic and sturdy.





Feldstereo-Verlag
Frankfurt a. M.

Serie A.

1045
Deutscher Fesselballon

Series A No. 1045, "Deutscher Fesselballon, German Captive Balloon." The Feldstereo views were taken far behind the front lines, but they were usually of interesting subjects, such as this observation balloon about to ascend.



Feldstereo-Verlag
Frankfurt a. M.

Serie A.

1047
Aufstieg eines deutschen Fesselballons

Series A No. 1047, "Aufstieg eines deutschen Fesselballons, Ascent of a German captive balloon." A close shot of an observation balloon about to ascend.



Feldstereo-Verlag
Frankfurt a. M.

Serie A.

2100
Hauptmann Boelcke vor seinem Fokker

Series A No. 2100, "Hauptmann Boelcke vor seinem Fokker, Captain Boelcke with his Fokker." Germany's premier fighter ace at the time, and the father of German fighter squadron tactics with his Fokker E-III. There were at least five series of photos for the HEGI Feldstereo, Series A through D.

City and Pittsburg. One view makes reference to Decoration Day, a holiday in the northern States commemorating the end of the Civil War. The southern states refused to acknowledge Decoration Day, until after WW1 ended, and Decoration Day was changed to Memorial Day, to commemorate the dead from all our nation's wars. The other twenty-eight views were standard Underwood views from the early part of the war. After the end of the war the Pan Chro-Scope continued to be advertised in toy catalogs, hardware

catalogs, and educational magazines until 1924.

In 1915, in Germany, a stereoview set for children began to be sold, and was popular during the war. The HEGI, produced by Feldstereo Verlag, was owned by Herman Gilbert, of Frankfurt. It has been suggested that HEGI is an acronym of Herman Gilbert's first and last name. The HEGI was a small folding stereoviewer, complete with a box of twenty-five small format views. Several series of views were available, most were war related, and a few were scenes of eastern European countries occupied

by the German army. It came in a cardboard case that held the viewer and the box of views. Unlike the Pan-Chro-Scope viewer, it was constructed with durable materials. Examples in the United States are rare, but in Europe the HEGI Feldstereo sets can be found complete with carrying case. The images are on heavy photo paper, and are the same size as the small format glass stereo images, 43mm x 107mm. The most notable photos in the various series are several images of Oswald Boelke and his Fokker E-III, taken in mid-1915 or early 1916. Boelke was the father of the German fighter squadron, and the premier German fighter ace; until his death in late 1916.

The work of the CPI has vanished with the passage of time. The Four Minute Men are a very dim memory. Dachshunds are no longer called Liberty Dogs. We no longer eat Liberty Cabbage, or Liberty Sandwiches, and we still eat French Fries. The hysteria of wartime does pass, and some form of sanity returns. For the stereoview collector, the Pan-Chro-Scope and Hegi Feldstereo views are a reminder of the wartime propaganda/advertising of the First World War.

I would like to thank Robert Boyd and Doug Jordan, whose scholarly work and World War 1 stereoview collections made this article possible.

Sources

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