



DEUTSCHES
HISTORISCHES
MUSEUM

Press release
May 2014

1914–1918. The First World War

29 May to 30 November 2014

In remembrance of the beginning of the First World War a hundred years ago the German Historical Museum is presenting the only exhibition in Germany that will provide an overview of the war in its European context and global dimension. Under the title "1914–1918. The First World War", running from 29 May to 30 November 2014, the museum will show a multifaceted picture of the "ur-catastrophe", the primal disaster of the 20th century, and examine its genesis and consequences, displayed over a surface area of more than 1000 square meters.

Taking 14 salient places as points of departure, the exhibition offers a geographical-chronological survey of the war. These places represent specific battlefields – such as Verdun, Tannenberg, German East Africa or Gallipoli – but also political-cultural centres like Petrograd or Berlin as well as occupied cities such as Brussels. All of the places stand for important stations and situations during the war. They point to overriding developments: the modernisation of war technology with its physical and psychological consequences for the people, the worldwide wartime economy, the global escalation of the fighting as well as the totalisation of the war on the "home front".

The focus of the exhibition lies on the escalation of the violence. The experience of violence changed not only subsequent wars, but also political thought and action in the 20th century. Objects and media stations in the exhibition illustrate different dimensions in the escalation of violence. Verdun provides an example for battles of attrition in which vast amounts of men and material are ravaged in a compact space. Ypern in Belgium was the site of the first use of poison gas. This specific place serves to illustrate the development of poison gases and their physical and mental effects on the soldiers and civilian population. However, the violence was not limited to battles and was not directed exclusively against the enemy's civilian population. The example of Galicia in Austria-Hungary shows that during the war the state itself marked off individual groups within the population as "enemies within" because of their language or religion and deported them or detained them in prison camps.

Deutsches Historisches Museum
Zeughaus und Ausstellungshalle
Unter den Linden 2
10117 Berlin
www.dhm.de

Media and Public Relations
Sonja Trautmann
T +49 30 20304 411
F +49 30 20304 412
presse@dhm.de

Media Relations Special Exhibition
ARTEFAKT Kulturkonzepte
Ursula Rüter & Stefan Hirtz
Marienburger Straße 16
10405 Berlin
T +49 30 440 10 686
F +49 30 440 10 684
mail@artefakt-berlin.de

Special Exhibition

1914-1918.
The First World War
29 May to 30 November 2014
daily 10 am to 6 pm

Press Conference: 27.05.14, 2 pm
Vernissage: 28.05.14, 5 pm

Press downloads at:
www.dhm.de
www.artefakt-berlin.de

The global dimensions of the war are revealed in a number of places in the exhibition. A media station takes up the question of how the worldwide currents of trade among political alliances and new demands on the wartime economy were transformed. The example of German East Africa reveals the devastating consequences of the European war on African territories. In his diary Heinrich Schnee, the Governor of German East Africa, unequivocally describes how the indigenous population had to bear the burden of the European war on African soil. In the exhibition the peninsula of Gallipoli stands for the struggle of the United Kingdom against the Ottoman Empire, where soldiers from British dominions like Australia and New Zealand had to participate in the fight.

The exhibition also examines the fate of a number of individuals and the way they experienced the First World War. In his letters to his wife the reserve officer, postman and expressionist writer August Stramm describes the horrors of the Eastern Front. In his wartime diaries Ernst Jünger depicts the events on the Western Front and his rise from an enthusiastic volunteer to a highly decorated assault unit officer. Two of these notebooks, the basis of Jünger's still popular description of the First World War, are displayed, together with a British steel helmet that he captured. However, the war affected not only the soldiers, but equally the civilian population. In her diary the painter and sculptress Käthe Kollwitz describes the "home front" in the German capital Berlin, where daily life was marked by apathy and war weariness in the face of mobilisation for the war economy and growing shortages of supplies. Photos and letters also recall the fate of Belgian civilians who were deported to Germany from the occupied territories for forced labour.

A companion volume to the exhibition takes a closer look at the First World War on the basis of 100 objects from the collections of the German Historical Museum. A programme with scholarly lectures, expert panel discussions and readings supplements the exhibition. In cooperation with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) the Zeughauskino offers a film series and a media workshop for young people.

A multimedia guide offers visitors the possibility of planning their own individual access to the exhibition. Special tours and informational material for schoolchildren facilitate their access to the topic.