

Final Report

University of Denver

LIS 4810: Digital Libraries

Nadia Ceniceros

Logan Ford

Amy Page

Richard Robles

Samantha Shandy

Abstract

This final report gives an updated overview of the creation of the Battle of The Bulge digital collection and will provide a look into the scope, collection process, roles, and items for the now completed digital collection that is hosted in Omeka. The collection includes objects of varying types from various institutions. Items in the collection had to have an institutional copyright statement allowing educational access for the item or asserting that the item is in public domain. This collection was created in the Digital Libraries class at the University of Denver during the Summer 2020 quarter and was made possible by Amy Page, Logan Ford, Nadia Cenicerros, Richard Robles, Samantha Shandy, and with oversight from Dr. Krystyna K. Matusiak.

Introduction






The Battle of the Bulge (also referred to as the Ardennes Counteroffensive) is a historical battle that occurred from December 1944 to January 1945. It signified the nearing conclusion of World War II and the victory for the Allies after six long years at war with the Axis powers. We wanted to create an enriched, cohesive, and accessible resource that focuses on the hardships faced by the Allied soldiers leading up to the momentous victory at the Battle of the Bulge. However, instead of showcasing the outcomes of the Battle of the Bulge or sticking to pure tactical artifacts, our group instead aspired to highlight what the soldiers fighting saw during their time on the battlefield. Our collection is compiled of photographs, sound recordings of interviews, diary entries, and other items carefully selected to create a comprehensive collection of what Allied soldiers saw and experienced during those cold winter months of battle.

Along with increasing our knowledge of building digital collections using the web publishing platform Omeka, our goals for establishing this digital collection were increasing awareness and visibility of first-person accounts of war and improving artifact discovery for students, educators, and historians alike.

Project Scope and Selection Process

For the selection process of the collection, each member of our group was tasked with finding five to ten digital objects pertaining to the Battle of the Bulge. We decided our initial brainstorming process would be to each researched a digital object and record the link and basic metadata information of the item on an excel spreadsheet. Ideally, we planned for the collection to have a range of objects from photographs, maps, and media recordings. Our Collection Development Specialist team members analyzed the objects listed on the spreadsheet, making sure that the metadata and the right information was recorded. From there, the Collection Development Specialists measured if the object would be a great representation and addition to the collection.

The Development Specialist team participated in meetings where they met and discussed selection criteria. Our group originally set a goal for 30 objects for the collection, but at the end, we decided that including 23 items would be more manageable, due to time constraints. The team provided a minimum of four objects each and dedicated the time and effort to: 1) ensure the accuracy of metadata, 2) determine what value the objects would add to our collection, and 3) uploaded their researched objects to Omeka. Our objects all range from a variety of institutions—from cultural heritage museums like the Library of Congress, public libraries such as Pikes Peak Library District, and academic institutions such as University of Montana. The objects in our collections include photographs, audio recordings, maps, correspondence, and a moving image. The image below is an example of the Omeka digital collections where the team included the objects they researched:

<input type="checkbox"/>	 Diary Entry Details · Edit · Delete	Eisenhower, Dwight D.	image
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Battle of the Bulge: historical map (Private) Details · Edit · Delete	United States. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency	Image
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Pvt. Charles Preston (Private) Details · Edit · Delete	Heslop, J. Malan	Image
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Situation 1200 Hours 27 December 1944 Twelfth Army Group (Private) Details · Edit · Delete	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. Twelfth Army Group. 7/14/1944-8/1/1945	Image
<input type="checkbox"/>	 G-5 Section, Headquarters VII Corps in the Battle of the Bulge (Private) Details · Edit · Delete	War Department. The Adjutant General's Office. 3/4/1907-9/18/1947	Image

Building the Collection

The first step to building our digital collection was to create an Excel spreadsheet that would house our initial object sources. Our lead Metadata Creator created two tabs within an Excel document—the first being a designated area that members could input their initial findings as potential collection objects (Appendix A). This spreadsheet included the following sections: Source Link, Brief Description, Type, Subject Headings, and Group Member. The goal of this spreadsheet was to provide the Collection Development team with a list of potential objects for our collection, with the understanding that they would select 20 to 30 objects from the list based on what aligned with our goals for the collection, while also scanning and deleting duplicate entries to hone the collection.

Once the items were selected, our lead Metadata Creator introduced a second tab within the spreadsheet that would serve as our designated spot for inputting the fifteen Dublin Core metadata fields for our selected objects (Appendix B). Once team members input their metadata for the fields, this information was inspected by the Metadata Creation team for accuracy and consistency (i.e. descriptions were roughly the same length). After the final inspection of the spreadsheet, we met as a group to input the first object into Omeka so all members felt

comfortable and confident adding their objects on their own. With a shared understanding of how to add objects into Omeka, we added the remainder of items over the next few days, with a final total of 23 objects in the digital collection.

Discussion

The project coordinator oversaw and finalized all aspects of the project. While each group member had various assigned tasks, members assisted in each area of the project as needed. For the project plan, each member was assigned a specific portion which they had to complete. As a group, we reviewed the document as a whole, with the project coordinator approving and submitting the final draft. This final report had a similar process, with the removal of the live session meetings due to the quarter ending. For the project, group members worked on their assigned tasks, while assisting teammates as needed. The note takers took notes during our meetings in class, as well as Zoom calls outside of class. Group members worked together to provide the required minimum 20 objects for the collection and ended up with a final total of 23 objects. Once the initial objects were in our spreadsheet, those assigned to the collection management portion of the project were in charge of deciding which objects would make it into the digital collection. Objects were added later as rights management statements were worked out or as permalink errors appeared. After each object had the accurate metadata imported into the second tab on the spreadsheet, they were imported into Omeka. The metadata team was primarily responsible for this, however other group members assisted where necessary. The poster designers prepared the poster, with approval and edits from the group. All group members that were in the live session helped present this poster and information on the collection, as well as showing off some of the objects in the collection. The roles of the project are listed in the table below.

No.	Role/Responsibility	Activities	Student Names
1.	Project coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Oversees all project activities · Communicates with the group members and the instructor · Coordinates the preparation of the project documentation (project plan, progress report, and final report) · Conducts quality review 	Amy Page
2.	Collection Development specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Coordinates the selection of items for the collection · Identifies digital objects relevant to the collection topic/focus · Evaluates the objects' formats and attributes · Investigates copyright permissions 	Nadia, Logan, and Richard (all as needed)
3.	Metadata creator /Omeka manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Prepares the metadata profile · Builds metadata records in the Omeka instance 	Samantha, Amy, and Richard

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reviews the quality and consistency of records · Manages the Omeka instance · Manages selected content files 	
4.	Note taker/ Poster designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Takes notes during the group meetings and maintains the documentation of the project · Prepares a poster for the final presentation · Works with the project coordinator on selecting the content for the poster · Designs the electronic version of the poster 	Logan and Samantha

Assessment

When assessing the collection, we placed emphasis on the needs of potential users. We assumed, based on the subject matter of our collection, that the primary users of our collection would include undergraduate and graduate students studying history, college professors, and

history enthusiasts. Though the needs of the individuals vary, the goal of the collection was to increase user access to digital items that pertain to the Battle of the Bulge. Through images, sounds, and texts, users can browse through the collection and research the object for further analysis. For the student, the collection offers a variety of mediums to further their research. For the professor, the collection offers a resource their students to easily browse through the school's database systems and locate objects that fit the requirements for coursework applications. For the history enthusiast, the collection is primarily for leisurely browsing and researching.

In terms of theoretical quantitative assessment, our team has chosen to use Google Analytics. Google Analytics allows us to see how many visits our collection has gotten, which object is the most clicked on, which object is the most downloaded, what types of objects are the most popular, and other constructive quantitative data. We can then use this information to further enhance our collection, according to the perceived needs of our users. For example, if we find that the audio recordings are the most popular digital objects, we may want to expand those records and add more to our collection to serve our users more efficiently.

Conclusion

Between all the group members, everyone contributed equally and met personal deadlines set by the team. We were fortunate to have hardworking and cooperative team members, so we really did not come across any issues. Comparing the steps of building the collection to the proposed project workflow, the team was lenient but enforced personal deadlines. For example, when first designing and planning for the collection, as a group, we all shared ideas of what the collection content should be. Once we decided on a subject, the Project Coordinator asked every team member what project role they felt most comfortable completing. From there, we

established our assigned roles and contributed to our portion of the task. As a group, we collectively set personal deadlines and each team member met those deadlines in a timely fashion. Through this process, we were able to accomplish our goals and create and complete our digital collections. The one process that required more attention than we had anticipated was researching the copyright statements. It seemed that every institution had assigned their own version for the copyright statement, creating a range we did not anticipate. However, the team was more than happy to help each other understand the copyright statement and make sure that the object was in fair use. This communicative and collaborative nature was where our team showed strength. Our willingness to help each other and have open communication made our group reliable and took the burden of some sections more bearable.

Although there were challenges, our group was cooperative and helped each other when there were questions or if there were issues with object selection or any aspect of the project. We learned, from participating in this project, that we need to be flexible in order to complete a collaborative project. Digital collections, as a concept, are not an easy task to complete as individuals. Finding the permissions, metadata, and copyright statements is certainly a team effort. As far as collaborative projects, we were fortunate enough to have team members that were easy going and, although that may not be the case for future collaborative projects, learning to be flexible and open to other ideas allows the project to succeed.

List of sources used in research/collection

Collection URL: <https://dulissummer2020.omeka.net/collections/show/3>

- Brigham Young University
- Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library
- Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center

- Library of Congress Digital Collections
- L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University
- National Archives at College Park - Cartographic (RDSC)
- Pikes Peak Library District
- RTBF
- Stanford University Hoover Institution library & archives
- University of Iowa Libraries, Government Publications
- University of Montana
- UNC Greensboro Women Veterans Historical Project
- United States National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

Appendix A

Shot of source tab from the object excel spreadsheet, complete with markings

	1 - Samantha	2 - Amy	3 -Amy	4 - Amy	5 - Amy
Title	Two American soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge	Interview with Frank Kessinger	letters of correspondence: Alan Howenstine and Gerald Swank	Letter from Dorothy Avery to Finnigan, Jan. 1944	Bastogne 15 year tv special
Subject	Ardennes, Battle of the, 1944-1945 World War, 1939-1945	U.S. military servicemen; Oral Histories; Stories of Service	Letters; military life	Letters; military life; Women Airforce Service Pilots (U.S.)	Oral history World War, 1939-1945 Personal narratives
Description	"Two American soldiers in fighting positions in a snow covered forest. Possible 2nd Infantry Division marking on helmet."	Frank Kessinger on his service time and how he became part of the First Special Service as well as the toll of war	162 letters of correspondence between Alan Howenstine to Gerald Swank	Transcribed from UNC: "Avery, probably responding to the Battle of Bulge, writes of her excitement over the possibility that the war will soon be over. She describes what it will be like to become re-acustomed to civilian life for herself and servicemen."	TV program, live from Bastogne, 15 years exactly after the Battle of the Ardennes. Accounts and interviews of Bastogne inhabitants telling of the battle.
Creator	Bates, James L., 1916-2002	Charles Milo McLeod	Alan Howenstine	Avery, Dorothy	RTBF
Publisher	Pikes Peak Library District	University of Montana	Indiana Memory hosted digital collections	Unknown	RTBF

Appendix B

Shot of DC tab from the source excel spreadsheet, complete with markings

	Source link	Brief description	Type	Subject Headings	Group Member	DC Complete	OMEKA
1	https://cdm15981.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/n15981co621/id/40	"Two American soldiers in fighting positions in a snow covered forest. Possible 2nd Infantry Division marking on helmet."	Image	Ardennes, Battle of the, 1944-1945, Photography, War, Documentary photography	Samantha	x	x
2	https://scholarworks.umt.edu/firstspecialserviceforce/	Interview with Frank Kessinger	Sound	World War, 1939-1945; First Special Service Force; 101st Airborne Division; Bastogne, Belgium	Amy	x	X
3	http://libcdm10066.uncc.edu/uncw/eh/collec/162lettersofcorrespondence.htm	162 letters of correspondence between Alan Howenstine to Gerald Swank	Image	Correspondence V-mail Military life Military occupational training	Amy	x	Unavailat
4	http://libcdm1.uncc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/WV/hp/id/4998	"Letter from Dorothy Avery to Finnigan, Jan. 1944"	Text	World War, 1939-1945 Women Airforce Service Pilots (U.S.)	Amy	x	