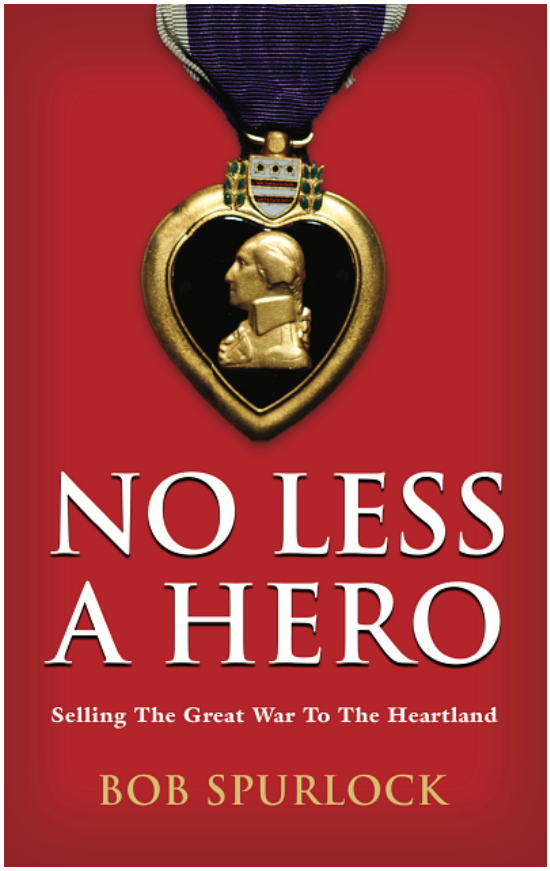

Woodrow Wilson spent two years convincing Americans to stay out of Europe's conflict. Now he had to changes American's minds, and he needed a hero.This is the story of selling America's war, and how a one young man became a national hero.

No Less A Hero
By Bob Spurlock

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NO LESS A HERO

Selling The Great War To The Heartland

BOB SPURLOCK

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Certain characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to a living person is coincidental and not intended by the author.

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Chapter 17

The declaration brought festering domestic issues to the forefront. On March 31, the city of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, held a referendum on the war, and the result, consistent with several other Wisconsin cities, was more than ten to one against. On April 7, the American Socialist Party met in St. Louis, Missouri, and drafted an anti-war resolution, calling the declaration "a crime of our capitalist class against the people of the United States and against the nations of the world."

At the same time, pro-war members of Congress urged swift and decisive action not only to weed out spies but to suppress dissent, with violence if necessary. Immediately following the Manitowoc referendum, Attorney General Gregory ordered the Secret Service to interview and surveil German American citizens in the city. On April 9, a pension examiner from Eau Claire County in Northwest Wisconsin was contacted by the US attorney general's office and told to " be on the lookout for, and report any disloyal and treasonable utterances." In Royal, Iowa, a blacksmith who allegedly made "unpatriotic remarks" was fined twenty-five dollars and ordered to salute the flag.

President Wilson was not oblivious to the grassroots opposition to the war. In late March, he reached across his desk and retrieved a letter he'd received a week earlier. The writer was concerned with political and military leaders who wanted absolute censorship of war criticism. He suggested "controlled

expression, rather than suppression," and listed various ideas to engender American support for the coming war. Wilson reread the letter, buzzed his chief of staff, Joseph Tumulty, and directed him to "locate this George Creel fellow. I want him here in Washington as soon as possible."

Chapter 32

Christmas Eve, 1917

Pearl was a Methodist and attended St. Paul's on West Main Street, but her reputation earned her frequent invitations to sing at other local churches. On Monday, December 17, Reverend Ilten of Trinity Lutheran stopped by the theater and asked her to sing at their Christmas Eve children's program. He mentioned the program would be conducted in English, and everyone in town knew about the heated debates that led to that decision.

Since war had been declared eight months ago, rural churches with large German-speaking populations wrestled with abandoning German services. In some towns, groups of vigilantes pressured church elders to conduct only English services, but many Midwestern Lutheran churches resisted the pressure.

At Trinity Lutheran, the governing board met several times before Christmas to address the issue. The German American directors argued it would be a mistake not to provide a service that parishioners could understand. Other directors responded that speaking German in any context, even in church services, was unpatriotic and a slap in the face to the many Cherokee men who'd answered the call. Finally, a compromise was reached. The Christmas-morning service would be conducted in German and the afternoon service in English. The Christmas Eve

children's program would be conducted and sung only in English. The German American board members grudgingly accepted the arrangement.

Reverend Ilten asked Pearl to lead two songs to begin the program, then play two pieces on the organ. Following a short homily and the exchange of presents, Pearl would lead the children and their parents in singing "Silent Night."

Pearl was a natural mezzo-soprano, but her impressive range allowed her to harmonize in almost any octave, from high soprano to baritone. As she exercised her voice, Pearl considered where to begin. The children's treble voices would be accompanied by parents singing everywhere, from soprano to bass. She elected contralto to create what she felt would be the best harmony.

Pearl picked up her music at the theater and walked to the church, arriving some twenty minutes before the program was to begin. She was surprised to see many families had already arrived, even as more streamed into the church. Even the youngest parishioners were quietly attentive to Pearl's opening songs, and she was pleased to find the organ in perfect tune. She heard no grumbling when Reverend Ilten began to speak, although during his homily, she heard children say "*Papa, Ich verstehe das nicht.*" *Papa, I don't understand this*.

The children had looked forward all day to exchanging gifts. Wrapping paper rained like confetti, and excited little voices echoed through the house of worship. Finally, it came time to close the program, and Pearl stood and asked the assemblage, in English, "Reverend Ilten and I thank you for

coming this evening. As we close, would you all join me in singing 'Silent Night'?"

As she began, she was pleased to hear that almost everyone immediately joined in. Soon, however, she recognized alternate lyrics, muted at first but then becoming more pronounced. "Round yon virgin, mother and child" perfectly tracked "*Nur das traute hochheilige Paar*," and as she sang "Sleep in heavenly peace," voices from the back and even the children's in the front met hers with "*Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh*!"

She looked around as she sang, fearing for a moment that she'd see angry faces, but to her happy surprise, everyone continued to sing together, some in English, most now in German. Pearl had never experienced, nor even heard of, a song performed in dual-language harmony, but it linked perfectly. She knew the modern English translation of "*Stille Nacht*" did not track the original version word for word but was tailored to match the cadence. By the third verse, everyone was singing, each in their chosen language. The final words rang out in unison: "Jesus Lord, at Thy birth!" and "*Christ, in deiner Geburt*!"

When the song ended, the entire room exploded in happy applause, and as the congregation filtered out into the winter Iowa night, she heard heartfelt exchanges of "Merry Christmas!" and "*Frohe Weihnachten*!"

Cherokee had its own Christmas truce.

Chapter 61

Cy Baldridge was midway through his second brandy when a young reporter peeked into his tent. Following the Allied victory at Château-Thierry, *Stars and Stripes* moved its forward offices to Reims, ninety miles northeast of Paris. Unfortunately, there wasn't much Reims left. Other editors complained about the spartan conditions, but Baldridge was accustomed to conditions near the front. He procured the largest tent he could find, and his quarters became the after-hours saloon.

"Mr. Baldridge, we just received a cable from Mr. Creel's office. Mr. Ross wants to see you right away."

Cyrus Leroy Baldridge was born in 1889 in Alton, New York. He was accepted into a prestigious illustration school in Chicago at the age of ten. He stayed in the city, graduating from the University of Chicago in 1911. When war broke out in 1914, he was serving with a National Guard unit on the Mexican border. He requested a discharge and, in 1917, joined the French Army to serve, like a young Ernest Hemingway, on a medical staff.

When the United States entered the war, he joined the nascent *Stars and Stripes,* serving as its chief artist. Because he sketched gory battlefield tableaux, rather than inspirational scenes, Baldridge, like Kilmer, disappointed Creel. However, thanks to the growing popularity of *Stars and Stripes* and

Baldridge's talents, he became a favorite of the doughboys and increasingly, the folks back home.

"Son, I have a better idea. You find Mr. Ross. Tell him I'm in the bar and I'll be happy to discuss that cable over another brandy."

Harold Ross, editor-in-chief of *Stars and Stripes*, had been in the newspaper business since 1905 when he wrote articles for the *Salt Lake Tribune* at thirteen. He enlisted in 1917 and was editing his regimental journal when Creel tapped him to head the new military organ. After the war, Ross and his wife, Jane Grant, would co-found *The New Yorker.*

Stars and Stripes was headquartered in Paris, but as the war turned in the Allies' favor, Ross traveled closer to the front. He had an uncanny ability to anticipate a big story and even, without being privy to the latest intelligence, sensed the current counteroffensive could end the war. He'd traveled to Reims to ensure the first stories out of the front came from *Stars and Stripes*.

Ross was not in Paris when the cable arrived, and when it reached him in Reims, he'd already missed Creel's twenty-four-hour deadline. Fortunately, the perfect man for the job was imbibing not one hundred feet away. Minutes after the young reporter returned with Baldridge's invitation, Ross ducked into his tent with a copy of the cable and the August 9 edition in hand.

"Cy, Creel wants a poster of this resolution—he's calling it a 'pledge'—and wants to kick off the next Liberty Loan drive with it. I thought you'd be the person to put something together."

"Hello to you, too, Hal. Welcome to my little tavern. Now pour yourself a brandy and tell me—more slowly this time—what George is looking for."

Ross accepted the invitation and showed Baldridge the cable. "I'm sorry, Cy. But you can see he wanted an answer in twenty-four hours. I just saw it an hour ago."

Baldridge read Creel's request and then reviewed the article containing the pledge. "I can put something together, but why isn't Creel going through channels on this? I'm flattered, Hal, but Creel's got a whole stable of illustrators back in the States."

"I don't know the answer to that, Cy. All I have is his cable. So, how soon can you put something together?"

"Tell Creel I'll have an illustration for him within the week."

Baldridge knew that Creel preferred more positive subjects, but considering Private Treptow was killed in action, he thought it fitting to feature a dying soldier. Baldridge also felt that reciting the entire pledge would dull the message. Working from the *Stars and Stripes* article, he added a short introduction and only some of Martin's words. The Illustration read,

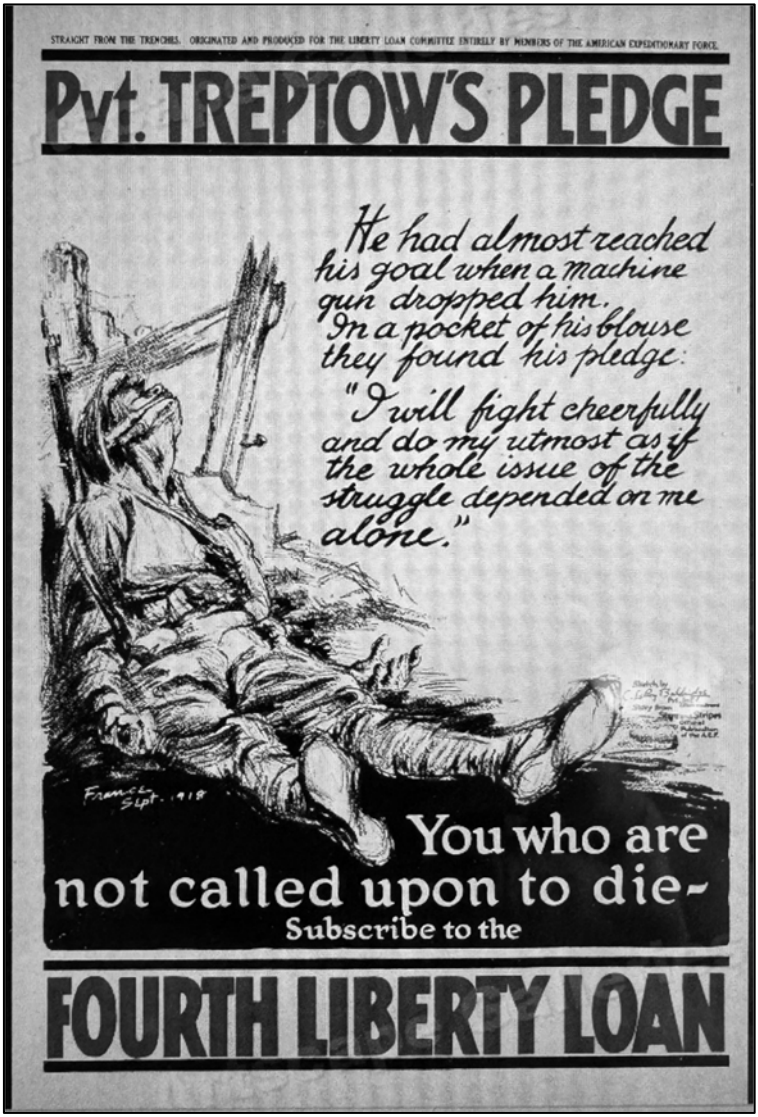
He had almost reached his goal when a machine gun dropped him. In a pocket of his blouse they found his pledge: "I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost as if the whole issue of the struggle depended on me alone."

At the bottom, he added, "You who are not called upon to die – subscribe to the FOURTH LIBERTY LOAN."

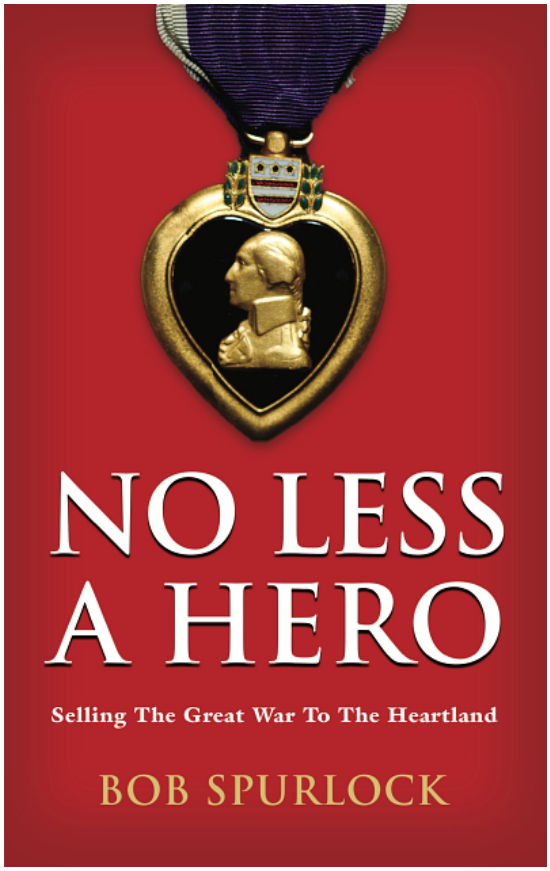
Creel approved it the moment he saw it. To have it spearhead the new loan drive, he needed the poster printed as soon as possible. He knew competitive bidding would delay the process and directed his staff to use whatever printer could turn it around the fastest. Ultimately, the job was performed by an East Coast box company. Creel also had a researcher compile a list of newspapers to receive the poster.

His team first focused on small circulation newspapers, publications that ordinarily would not receive direct correspondence from Washington. In late September 1918, the poster ran in dozens of American newspapers, ranging from the Oahu *Hawaiian Gazette* to the *Arizona Republican*, and the *El Paso Herald.* They especially blanketed the Midwest, gambling that the pledge and Private Treptow's story would spur bond sales and tamp down the continuing vigilantism. Full-sized posters went to the Fargo *Forum*; the Tabor, South Dakota, *Independent*; the Holt County Nebraska *Frontier*; the *Topeka State Journal*; the Wausau, Wisconsin, *Pilot*; the Rock Island, Illinois, *Argus,* and many other papers.

Creel's team also hit the major cities, asking several metropolitan newspapers to print the poster as a separate edition. In October, the *New York Tribune*, the *New York Sun*, and the Wilmington *Evening Journal* ran a special fourth Liberty Loan edition, highlighted by the Treptow poster.



Fourth Liberty Loan poster, including the Treptow pledge.



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