

April 2015

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THE CURATOR'S CORNER

A big project is underway to take professional, publication-quality photographs of a large number of artifacts in the USDC's collection. The end result will be fantastic photos of hundreds of our most compelling artifacts, ready to share online or in print.

Since the project began last December, Alex Jamison – a professional photographer with many years of experience photographing art and museum artifacts – has spent a number of days working in the USDC's collections storage space, photographing a wide variety of artifacts.



Small artifacts are photographed with the camera mounted above on a specialized tabletop stand. Some artifacts, such as this passport, are held between sheets of glass to prevent dark shadows from being cast on the white backdrop

The process is considerably more involved than simply picking up a camera,

- ▶ pointing, and shooting. To take the photos, Alex set up a full photography studio worth of equipment – including tripods, numerous lights, backdrops, and custom mounts.

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- ▶ USDC - Wilson Center Program: (Left) Ambassador Chacon remarks on the Changing Foreign Service (Right) USDC Director Kathy Johnson closes the discussion

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

With construction on the Pavilion well underway, we have been busy with public outreach getting the word out about the Diplomacy Center, working with partners, and conducting a variety of programs!

The USDC and the Wilson Center co-hosted a panel discussion on "The Changing Face and Changing Roles of the Foreign Service" to highlight some of the themes addressed in our traveling exhibit *Faces of Diplomacy*. Director General of the Foreign Service Arnold A. Chacon's opening remarks led to an informative panel discussion with USAID Counselor Susan Reichle and Robert Silverman, President of the American Foreign Association, brilliantly moderated by Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar Diana Negropte. The event showcased the kind of programming we look forward to sponsoring at the Diplomacy Center when we open.

To build public awareness and interest in the USDC, we continue to reach out across the country at conferences and events where we can share information about the Diplomacy Center and our education program. I was honored to be invited to address a group of executive directors at the Global Ties U.S. national conference in Washington, DC in February and to share with them our plans for the museum. We discussed the important role that "citizen diplomats" play in connecting the U.S. to the world. We are delighted to have

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<http://diplomacy.state.gov>

BUILDING THE DIPLOMACY CENTER

A Note from the Director, cont.

received so many requests from Global Ties and World Affairs Council members to participate in upcoming conferences or to host our traveling exhibit, *Faces of Diplomacy*, in their cities. The project is generating great interest and enthusiasm.

The possibilities offered by technology continue to spark my interest as we work to build our online presence. Over 170 participants watched live, and many others have since replayed the Google+ Hangout we hosted in February. The hangout, "What It Takes to be a Diplomat" was conducted with our colleagues from USAID and the State Department's Diplomats in Residence program. Check it out on the Department's [Google+ event page](#).

We appreciate our many partnerships and in particular we would like to thank ECA, Global Ties U.S., World Affairs Councils of America and Sister Cities for their support. Help us get the word out – please share our newsletter with your colleagues and friends!

-Kathy A. Johnson, Director

A VISIT FROM GERMANY

Recently, the U.S. Diplomacy Center was honored to host two senior members of the German Parliament Police who came to the United States through the International Visitor Leadership Program to learn more about the U.S. Capital Visitor Center and our museum and education center. Bureau of Administration's colleagues joined us to discuss how the new facility is designed to blend in with the Old War Department building in both style and functionality. USDC's Douglass Mossman shared details on how the building was designed and pointed out several of the main architectural features of the Center.



A German Parliament Police officer asks a question about the Diplomacy Center

The guests asked many questions, specifically about the glass. They were very interested in the use of fritted glass and how the steel framing would allow for rain and snow runoff. They really appreciated the information we shared as they work to build a visitor center for the Reichstag.

EDUCATION UPDATE

The U.S. Diplomacy Center and the Diplomacy Center Foundation are pleased to have entered into a partnership with Brigham Young University's (BYU) Laycock Center for Creative Collaboration to produce a video presentation: *Why engage in diplomacy?*

Funded by the Hearst Foundation, the overall goal of the video is to illustrate for viewers how the work of American diplomats impacts life in the U.S. It will explain their work on behalf of the American people through a series of stories capturing diplomats at post and in the field tackling issues related to peace, prosperity, democracy and development. The video will be downloadable from USDC's Discover Diplomacy website for use with high school and college audiences.

The Laycock Center at BYU is a creative think-tank that brings together students and faculty in the college of fine arts and communications to conceive and produce projects with outside clients. In our case, the Laycock Center has brought together students enrolled in BYU's David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies to work alongside students in the college of fine arts, resulting in a project team that resembles a real-work situation. Through Google+ Hangout sessions, the students present concepts to the USDC staff and the Diplomacy Center Foundation, and together we work through the ideas. Soon the USDC will connect the students with the diplomats they will interview and filming will begin.

The video will be completed and ready for viewing in the fall of 2015.



Diplomat in Residence Harry Thomas speaks to students at BYU about his experience as a diplomat

Comments or questions? Email us at: usdc@state.gov

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BUILDING THE DIPLOMACY CENTER

The Curator's Corner cont....



Larger artifacts were shot from overhead

▼ Different setups are required for different types of artifacts, depending on their size, shape, and the desired view for the photo. In general, artifacts that are largely flat or two-dimensional (e.g. documents, booklets, passports) are photographed from directly above, with the camera pointed straight down at the artifact.

Artifacts with more depth (that are more three-dimensional) are shot from a tripod with the camera facing forward, and the artifact placed on a table. Larger three-dimensional artifacts are photographed the same way, but without the need for a table to elevate them.

So far, Alex has taken photos of about 150 artifacts. By the end of the project, we hope to reach nearly 200. When combined with existing professional photos taken in previous years, the USDC will have excellent, publication-ready photos of hundreds of its most compelling artifacts – all ready to share online or in print.



An artifact sits on a table, ready for its moment in front of the camera

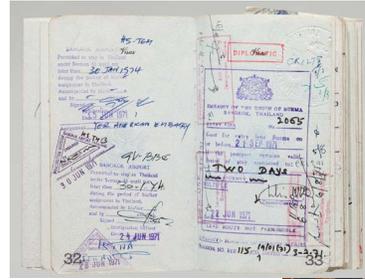
In the meantime, we would like to share just a few of the finished photos, alongside (admittedly amateur) photos taken by USDC staff of the professional photo being staged and shot.

Be sure to like and follow us on Facebook and Twitter, as we'll be sharing many more photos in the coming weeks and months!

-Eric Duyck

Please [contact us](#) if you have interesting or noteworthy objects you wish to donate or loan to the USDC.

ARTIFACTS BEING PHOTOGRAPHED



Passport used by diplomatic courier Walter M.C. "Mick" Miller, issued in 1970



Sword given to Secretary Powell by Mr. Ali Al-Qabandi, al-Qabandi Diwan-iyah Ahmadi of Kuwait, 2001



Autographed baseball bat and jersey; examples of items given away by "sports ambassador" Cal Ripken, Jr. to youth participating in baseball clinics and events



BUILDING THE DIPLOMACY CENTER

BUILDING UPDATE



The project team ponders the layout of the marble

Last fall, the project management team – including representatives from the General Services Administration, the State Department’s Bureau of Administration, the USDC and the architect – headed for the quarries of the Tennessee Marble Company in Friendsville, Tennessee. They inspected the blocks of marble which will be cut into slabs for use in the Diplomacy Center. This famous quarry, and ones like it in Tennessee, have provided the “Tennessee Dark Pink Rose” marble – as it is known – for Washington, DC’s landmark buildings and monuments for many decades, including the flanks to the Lincoln Memorial, the US Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, the Newseum and others.

The USDC will follow in this tradition by having the upper and lower Pavilion floors lined with this marble. After 25 blocks have been extracted from the quarry,



Tennessee pink marble being quarried in Friendsville, Tennessee

600 pieces will be cut into slabs and laid out on the factory floor, as if it were on the museum’s floor, to see how the marble looks. Pieces will be moved around to form the most pleasing layout. When the right look is achieved each piece will be numbered, stacked, stored and later shipped on to Washington, DC. It is a lengthy and painstaking – but ultimately rewarding – process.

Follow our progress via our construction webcam at diplomacy.state.gov.

SOCIAL MEDIA AT THE USDC

Although the USDC is still a construction site, our online presence – through social media and our website – is up and running, and engaging our virtual visitors. We have been busy creating content that gives our audiences a preview of what to expect in the Diplomacy Center, and they seem to like what they see!

Posts on Facebook and Twitter tell the story of American diplomacy by showcasing the USDC artifacts, highlighting dates in U.S. diplomatic history, promoting our ongoing education programs, and providing construction updates. In the last six months, the USDC Facebook “likes” have more than doubled to 11,374 and our Twitter following has bloomed to 1,513 since we started in late August 2014.



One post in particular attracted a lot of attention on both platforms. Featured by the USDC in December 2014, “The Story behind the State Department” comic series was first published in February 1949 in True Comics #75 (first page pictured here). Rather than featuring superheroes, True Comics portrayed government and historical figures. In this comic strip, our Foreign Service Officers prove to be the real heroes in the end! If you missed the series, make sure to visit our [Facebook photo album](#).

The USDC *Discover Diplomacy* website continues to draw a large number of visitors, regularly attracting more than 140,000 unique visits a month. It is an excellent education resource and provides snapshots of work that U.S. diplomats conduct on a variety of issues around the world.

If you would like to help get the word out about the Diplomacy Center, please feel free to like, share, and re-Tweet our posts – we appreciate your support!

ABOUT THE U.S. DIPLOMACY CENTER

The USDC is a privately-funded, non-partisan museum and education center dedicated to bringing the story of American diplomacy to life. Located at the Department of State’s historic headquarters, the Harry S Truman Building, the Center will invite visitors to explore the history, practice, and challenges of American of diplomacy through interactive exhibits, artifacts, hands-on education programs, diplomatic simulations, and the expertise of foreign affairs specialists.



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