



News Release

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**National World War I Museum and Memorial to Host Official United States
World War I Centennial Commemoration Event**

U.S. World War I Centennial Commission Event to be Held April 6, 2017

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The National World War I Museum and Memorial will host America’s national ceremony commemorating the centennial of the United States’ entry into the Great War as announced by the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission.

The national ceremony, “In Sacrifice for Liberty and Peace: Centennial Commemoration of the U.S. Entry in World War I,” will be held on April 6, 2017 at the Museum. Invited attendees include the President of the United States; Congressional leadership; Cabinet members; State governors; U.S. military leaders; veteran organizations; representatives from U.S. military legacy units that trace their history back to World War I; descendants of significant American WWI figures; and other organizations, dignitaries, and VIPs. International invitees include the Heads of State of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the United Kingdom, and all other nations whose people were involved in the Great War.

Designated by the U.S. Congress in 2004 as the official museum dedicated to WWI and in 2014 as America’s National World War I Museum and Memorial, the Museum is uniquely positioned to host the official Commission event.

“It’s a fitting tribute to those who served in the Great War that we commemorate the entry of the United States into World War I in the very same place where millions of visitors from across the world have paid tribute for nearly a century,” said National World War I Museum and Memorial President and CEO and World War I Commissioner Dr. Matthew Naylor. “The National World War I Museum and Memorial is committed to remembering, understanding and interpreting the Great War and its enduring impact and this event underscores how this calamitous conflict continues to significantly affect everyone to this day.”

More than 65 million people across the world served in World War I, marking the first truly global conflict in human history featuring participants from every inhabited continent. More than 9 million died directly from the war and millions more civilians perished. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, the United States possessed a standing military of less than 200,000 soldiers. Upon the signing of the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918, the American military had grown to more than 4 million. More than 110,000 U.S. soldiers, sailors and women in service died during the war.

“It is so important to understand the debate that was going on within the United States about entering World War I,” said World War I Centennial Commissioner Dr. Monique Seefried. “In reaching that decision, the nation became united for the first time in decades. Our goal was to bring peace to a world that had become inflamed. The subsequent decisions and actions taken 100 years ago helped shape and define the world we live in today.”



“In Sacrifice for Liberty and Peace: Centennial Commemoration of the U.S. Entry in World War I” will consist principally of the reading of passages from significant and representative American writings of a century ago about the U.S. decision to enter the war, including selections from speeches, journalism, literature, poetry, and performance of important music of the time. Invited American readers include the President of the United States, Congressional leadership, and descendants of U.S. World War I veterans. Certain Heads of State from other nations are invited to read passages reflecting the reaction of their respective nations to the U.S. entry into the war in 1917. The ceremony will also include flyovers by U.S. aircraft and Patrouille de France, as well as a military band, color guard, ceremonial units, and video productions. Students across the nation will participate in this historic event, learning how WWI changed the United States and the world.

“The April 6 ceremony in Kansas City is an important element of the national conversation about World War I,” said Dan Dayton, executive director of the World War I Centennial Commission. “Why should we care? Because we are all products of World War I. The entire country was involved— everyone has a story. The Commission’s goal is to inspire you to find your personal story and connection.”

Additional details of the event will be released in March. Media interested in more information may contact Mike Vietti at mvietti@theworldwar.org or (816) 888-8122.

About the National World War I Museum and Memorial

The National World War I Museum and Memorial is America’s leading institution dedicated to remembering, interpreting and understanding the Great War and its enduring impact on the global community. The Museum holds the most diverse collection of World War I objects and documents in the world and is the second-oldest public museum dedicated to preserving the objects, history and experiences of the war. The Museum takes visitors of all ages on an epic journey through a transformative period and shares deeply personal stories of courage, honor, patriotism and sacrifice. Designated by Congress as America’s official World War I Museum and Memorial and located in downtown Kansas City, Mo., the National World War I Museum and Memorial inspires thought, dialogue and learning to make the experiences of the Great War era meaningful and relevant for present and future generations. To learn more, visit theworldwar.org.

About the World War I Centennial Commission

The Commission was established by the World War I Centennial Commission Act, passed by the 112th Congress and signed by President Barack Obama on January 16, 2013, and is responsible for planning, developing, and executing programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of World War I. The mission is to educate the country’s citizens about the causes, courses and consequences of the war; honor the heroism and sacrifice of those Americans who served, and commemorate the Great War through public programs and initiatives. To learn more about the Commission activities, visit ww1cc.org/tools.

To further the mission, the Commission is leading the effort to build the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park in Washington, D.C. to honor the 4.7 million American veterans who served. To learn more about the Memorial, visit ww1cc.org/memorial.

The Commission’s founding sponsor is the Pritzker Military Museum and Library (PMML) in Chicago, Ill. PMML is a nonpartisan research institution dedicated to enhancing public understanding of military history and the sacrifices made by America’s veterans and service members. To learn more about PMML, visit pritzkermilitary.org.

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