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“Color of Memory” Special Exhibition Opens Tuesday, Jan. 29 at National WWI Museum and Memorial

Exhibition Features Fabric Art Created to Preserve Memories During WWI

KANSAS CITY, MO. – The 1903 edition of Cassell’s New French Dictionary defines “souvenir” as “remembrance, recollection, memory, reminder, keepsake.”

“Remember Me.” “Souvenir de France.” “Mother Dear.” “Merci!” These and countless other sentiments are expressed in the fabric art stemming from World War I. Romantic and patriotic scenes were created on silk and cotton and wool felt. Many of the objects were made in direct response to those loved ones going to war from every country. Others were made for commercial purposes to serve the clamor for souvenirs. Many wounded soldiers created pieces of fabric art as a form of occupational therapy.

[*Color of Memory: Fabric Art of WWI*](#), the latest special exhibition in the Wylie Gallery at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, explores expressions of remembrance through striking and moving works from the Museum and Memorial’s collection.

“World War I took an incredible toll on people,” said National WWI Museum and Memorial Senior Curator Doran Cart. “For many, creating fabric art provided an emotional outlet to help cope with the horrors of the war. For others, fabric art served as a method for preserving memories – both good and bad – from World War I. And, in many cases, fabric art was used as a promotional tool by the nations involved in the conflict. Ultimately, the range of uses of these works of art provides a fascinating window into the mindsets of people across the world during the course of the war.”

The exhibition features incredible objects from Belgium, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, including decorative pillow cases, flags, tapestries, banners, maps and much more.

One particularly fascinating object is a quilt featuring 89 autographs from noteworthy figures from across the world at the time of the World War I armistice on Nov. 11, 1918. Among the signatories: former U.S. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, U.S. First Lady Edith Wilson, Queen Alexandra of Denmark, Helen Keller, Charlie Chaplin, Orville Wright, 41 state governors and Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to hold federal office in the U.S. as a member of the House of Representatives beginning in 1916.

Another intriguing object is a memento to air service personnel from Carruthers Field near Fort Worth, Texas. The unusual object measuring 25.5 inches by 30 inches is airplane fabric covered with drawings of planes and patriotic symbols. Penned on every square inch of the canvas are more than 200 names and home towns of service personnel stationed at Carruthers Field. In the lower left is an “Honor Roll” of four names with home towns and dates of flyers killed in service. Two are for the same date: Jan. 13, 1919.



Color of Memory: Fabric Art of WWI is open in the Wylie Gallery from Tuesday, Jan. 29 through Monday, Sept. 2, 201. Admission is only \$3 when paired with a general admission ticket to the Museum and Memorial or \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and military and \$6 for youth if purchased separately.

About the National WWI Museum and Memorial

The National World WWI 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 and Memorial holds the most comprehensive 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 and Memorial 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 WWI 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.

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