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News Release

Wednesday, January 12, 2021

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**Special Exhibition “*Why Keep That?*” Opens Wednesday, Jan. 27 at National WWI Museum and Memorial**

*Why Keep That?* explores the decision-making and archival process of collections staff and how everyday objects provide insight and context to historical moments.

Select exhibition images/captions available to [view on Dropbox](#).

**KANSAS CITY, MO.** – [Why Keep That?](#), the latest special exhibition at the [National WWI Museum and Memorial](#), follows the journey of a collection item from the moment it is donated to the Museum, to the decision-making and archival process of our collections staff. To help illustrate, archival staff track the processing and digitization of a collection of 16 objects and share behind-the-scenes information about obtaining the artifacts, processing the items and storing and protecting them. Largely featuring ephemera – objects usually meant to be thrown away, like ticket stubs, advertisements and written scraps – there is a wry sense of irony in objects meant to be short-lived that have lasted 100 years and are now preserved in a museum.

These objects provide a wealth of historical information. Some were only used for their intended purpose and forgotten; others kept as souvenirs. But what they all have in common is the ability to tell the stories of the individuals who acquired them. The objects provide insight into those serving in wartime and context for a historical period shaped by a world in conflict, interpreting a catastrophic global event through human interaction.

“*Why Keep That?* showcases the Museum and Memorial’s archival collection, that started in 1920, with thoughtful selections of objects that give visitors a good idea of its scope,” said Jonathan Casey, director of archives at the National WWI Museum and Memorial. “I think visitors will come away with an understanding of what an archives collection is and how it is managed and used.”

Highlights of the exhibition include a [Barometer of Feelings](#) – a chart which provides a weekly timeline of the war through one woman’s emotional reactions – as well as dance cards, receipts, tickets, coupons and posters, sometimes accompanied by a letter that provides personal context and value to the item.

*Why Keep That?* is on view in the Ellis Gallery on the Research Center Level of the Museum and Memorial. Admission to Ellis Gallery is free. Regular hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the Museum and Memorial is also open on Mondays.

**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](http://theworldwar.org).

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