



News Release
Monday, Dec. 14, 2020

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National WWI Museum and Memorial Announces Gift from Lilly Endowment to Explore Enduring Impact of WWI on Religion and Faith

The grant, which totals \$2.5 million, will establish an endowed curator position on faith and religion, strengthen public programming and enhance gallery and virtual exhibitions.

KANSAS CITY, MO. – The National WWI Museum and Memorial has received a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative to establish an endowed curator position on faith and religion, strengthen public programming on religion and war, enhance online exhibitions and resources on religion and increase its collection of religious objects and materials. The grant totals \$2.5 million.

The National WWI Museum and Memorial is one of 18 organizations from across the United States receiving grants through the initiative. The group includes fine arts museums, historical societies and history museums, museums dedicated to serving children and families and museums dedicated to particular geographic locations and cultures.

Through this program, the Museum and Memorial will strengthen its capacities to explore the enduring impact of World War I on religion and faith. This grant will enable the Museum to preserve artifacts related to faith, religion and spirituality in WWI, deepen its body of knowledge about the history of faith, religion and WWI and make these learnings accessible to the general public. The Museum and Memorial's 2020-2026 Strategic Plan outlines *Three Big Ideas* which are enhanced by this grant – to create a more rich visitor experience, tell the stories of minorities, women and indigenous people who served in WWI and make the collection accessible to a global audience.

“We are thrilled to have the support of Lilly Endowment for this strategic initiative that fits within our *Three Big Ideas*,” said Mathew Naylor, President and CEO. “The endowed curatorial position and accompanying support will allow us to provide global leadership to this area of WWI research and add considerably to our understanding of the Great War and its enduring impact.”

Lilly Endowment awarded grants totaling more than \$43 million in grants through the initiative. These grants will enable the organizations to develop exhibitions and education programs that fairly and

accurately portray the role of religion in the U.S. and around the world. The initiative is designed to foster public understanding about religion and lift up the contributions that people of all faiths and diverse religious communities make to our greater civic well-being.

“Museums and cultural institutions are trusted organizations and play an important role in teaching the American public about the world around them,” said Christopher Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “These organizations will use the grants to help visitors understand and appreciate the significant impact religion has had and continues to have on society in the United States and around the globe. Our hope is that these efforts will promote greater knowledge about and respect for people of diverse religious traditions.”

Lilly Endowment launched the Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative in 2019 and awarded planning grants to organizations to help them explore how programming in religion could further their institutional missions. These current grants will assist organizations in implementing projects that draw on their extensive collections and enhance and complement their existing activities.

[About the National WWI 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 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.

[About Lilly Endowment Inc](#)

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of [community development](#), [education](#) and [religion](#) and maintains a special commitment to its founders’ hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. The Endowment also funds significant programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion. While the primary aim of its grantmaking in religion focuses on strengthening the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations in the United States, the Endowment also seeks to foster public understanding about religion and lift up in fair, accurate and balanced ways the contributions that people of all faiths and diverse religious communities make to our greater civic well-being.

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