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### **Special Exhibition *Posters as Munitions, 1917* Opens Feb. 21 at National World War I Museum and Memorial**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** - Soon after the outset of World War I, the poster, previously the successful medium of commercial advertising, was recognized as a means of spreading national propaganda with unlimited possibilities. Its value as an educational or stimulating influence was more and more appreciated. The poster could impress an idea quickly, vividly, and lastingly.

[\*Posters as Munitions, 1917\*](#), a new special exhibition opening at the National World War I Museum and Memorial Tuesday, Feb. 21, showcases the depth and breadth of the collection through a series of works on exhibition for the first time at the Museum. Posters from France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the United States and more are featured, providing a sense of the global nature of this form of communication.

“Through *Posters as Munitions, 1917*, we’re able to convey how posters during World War I from different cultures and countries were depicted through art,” said National World War I Museum and Memorial Senior Curator Doran Cart.

Historian Pearl James wrote “when World War I began in 1914, the poster was a mature advertising tool and artistic medium.” Lithography, paper rolled over a treated and inked stone, had evolved from the first uses in the late 18th century. Posters flew off the production lines like cartridges, helmets, and uniforms.

The Central Powers found posters to be necessary as well. They urged “caution in conversation” and appealed to their peoples for aid in men and money. Posters stimulated love of country and urged German women to sell their hair for the good of the country and trade in their “gold for Iron.”

The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee gave commissions initially for more than 100 posters with 2.5 million copies distributed throughout Great Britain. British posters, while not generally flashy or well executed, were always right to the point.

French posters illustrate deep-felt emotion and the poignant appeal of the artists available to the poster production industry. From the early posters for the Journee du Poilu (Soldier’s Day), French war posters had the stamp of genuine understanding of the purpose in view. They exhibit hard-edged gaiety, nationalism and imperialism, humor and sex appeal, tragedy and victory.



In the United States, posters began to make their appeals to the “American sense of right and wrong” quickly after the country officially entered the war on April 6, 1917. In all, over 7 million posters were displayed throughout the country for the Second Liberty Loan drive. One observer noted: “posters literally deluged the country. On every city street, along the rural highways, the posters were to be found repeating their insistent messages day and night.”

“From this exhibition, we’re able to see vivid portrayals of how individual countries throughout the war viewed the Great War,” said National World War I Museum and Memorial President and CEO Dr. Matthew Naylor.

*Posters as Munitions, 1917* is open from Feb. 21, 2017 – Feb. 18, 2018 in Memory Hall.

The National World War I Museum and Memorial 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 personal experiences of the war.

Media interested in covering any of the Museum’s offerings should contact Mike Vietti at 816-888-8122 or [mvietti@theworldwar.org](mailto:mvietti@theworldwar.org).

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

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