



100 W 26TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, MO 64108
P 816.784.1475
F 816.784.1929
www.theworldwar.org

For more information

Denise Rendina
National World War I Museum
816-784-1945
drendina@theworldwar.org

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Digital images are available upon request.

National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial Announces Two New Exhibitions Opening in April

World War I All-Stars: Sports & the Inter-Allied Games

Opens April 5, 2012, in Exhibit Hall

Beginning April 5, 2012, the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial will explore the important role sports played during the Great War through a new exhibition entitled **World War I All-Stars: Sports & the Inter-Allied Games**.

Located in Exhibit Hall, the exhibition highlights the Inter-Allied Games of 1919, an Olympics-type competition that was designed to strengthen the bonds of understanding among soldiers of the Allied nations after World War I ended.

“Despite the competitive nature of athletic events, the Inter-Allied Games effectively bridged international borders and served as a common ‘language’ unfettered by culture or nationality,” says Vice President of Collections and Research & Chief Historian Dr. Lisa Budreau. “We are proud to share this important yet fairly unknown story with both sports fans and history buffs alike.”

In addition to the Inter-Allied Games, the exhibition places a special emphasis on American baseball players and other famous athletes who served in the Great War. Visitors will view the Museum’s rare collection of wartime athletic gear as well as items on loan from various institutions across the United States, including the National Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., First Division Museum in Cantigny, Ill., the YMCA Archives in Minneapolis, Minn., Ohio State University, and many more.

“As thousands of baseball fans embark upon Kansas City this summer for Major League Baseball’s All-Star Game,” says Brian Alexander, President & CEO, “we hope to enhance these visitors’ experience by offering a look at sports history they won’t find anywhere else in the country.”

World War I All-Stars: Sports & the Inter-Allied Games is made possible through the generosity of Pioneer Services, Courtney S. Turner Trust and the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund. Open through December 2012, the exhibition is included with admission to the Museum and free for members.

Panthéon de la Guerre: From Paris to the Chicago World's Fair to Kansas City

Opens April 14, 2012, in Memory Hall

On April 14, 2012, a special exhibition tracing the *Panthéon de la Guerre's* remarkable journey will open in conjunction with *Inventing the Modern World: Decorative Arts at the World's Fairs, 1851-1939*, a major traveling exhibition on view concurrently at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Located in Memory Hall, ***Panthéon De La Guerre: From Paris to the Chicago World's Fair to Kansas City*** explores the history of the famous mural housed in Memory Hall through photographs, video and original wartime paintings that were used to guide the *Panthéon's* artists. Additionally, the exhibition will display sections excised from the painting that have not been seen by the public since 1940.

"For more than 50 years, the *Panthéon de la Guerre* has been admired by guests who visit Memory Hall but few people know the fascinating story behind it," says President & CEO Brian Alexander. "With this special exhibition, we are pleased to share the rich history of this one-of-a-kind work of art that has become a priceless part of the Museum."

Mark Levitch co-curated the exhibition with Museum staff and is author of the book "*Panthéon de la Guerre: Reconfiguring a Panorama of the Great War*," (University of Missouri Press and the National World War I Museum, 2006).

"Revered, forgotten and eventually repurposed, the *Panthéon de la Guerre* is a unique testament to how World War I was remembered through the course of the twentieth century," said Levitch. "Staging the exhibition in Memory Hall affords us the exceptional opportunity of tracing the *Panthéon's* epic history – stretching from Paris to Kansas City – at the foot of the painting in its final, reconfigured form."

Panthéon De La Guerre: From Paris to the Chicago World's Fair to Kansas City runs through September 2012, and is included with regular admission to the Museum and free for members.

About the World's Fair and *Panthéon de la Guerre*

Huge crowds milled about. Flags of the world snapped in the breezes of Lake Michigan. Cascades of ever-changing blue, orange and yellow electric bulbs lit the night. Whirling carnival rides elicited screams of joy and fear. This and thousands of other sights made up the Chicago World's Fair of 1933-1934.

What did the World's Fair have to do with the World War that ended fifteen years earlier? At the north end of the Fair's midway, near roller coasters and alligator wrestlers, a circular building housed the war's single most ambitious artistic undertaking: The *Panthéon de la Guerre*. Painted in Paris as the Great War raged, the massive panorama – at 402 feet in circumference and 45 feet in height, the largest painting in the world – depicted about 6,000 prominent Allied wartime figures.

Forgotten after its interwar U.S. tour, the *Panthéon* was stored outdoors until Baltimore restaurateur William Haussner bought it at auction in 1953. In 1957, Kansas City artist Daniel MacMorris persuaded Haussner to donate the panorama to the Liberty Memorial Association. MacMorris cut and pasted sections from the huge canvas, rearranged them around the American section, and fit the newly configured composition to the north wall of Memory Hall, where it remains today.

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