



News Release**Monday, March 11, 2019**

Contacts:Mike Vietti, National WWI Museum and Memorial, (816) 888-8122, mvietti@theworldwar.org**“We’re Home—Now What?” Special Exhibition Opens Tuesday, March 12 at National WWI Museum and Memorial***Exhibition Features Items Related to Soldiers Returning Home After WWI*

KANSAS CITY, MO. – From the earliest history of armed conflict soldiers have done their duty and returned to their homes and families. In the aftermath of World War I, millions of servicemen and women came home from a war that was unprecedented in its impact on those who experienced it. For some who served, the war’s impact on their bodies and minds lasted a lifetime.

Beyond the dockside homecomings and the main street parades, what was the returning veteran’s experience in being a “civvie” again? Were they able to make this transition smoothly? Return to work or school and get on with their former life? Or, did they find it difficult and require help?

Opening Tuesday, March 12, [We’re Home—Now What?](#) examines the challenging transition for service personnel from war-time duty to civilian life through archival materials such as soldier-issued pamphlets, posters and more.

“The U.S. military grew from less than 150,000 personnel before entering World War I in 1917 to nearly 5 million by the time the war ended in 1918,” said Jonathan Casey, Director of Archives and the Edward Jones Research Center at the National WWI Museum and Memorial. “The vast majority of service members returned to civilian life after the war, which was both a massive and complex transition. This exhibition gives insight into that process and what it was like for military personnel to re-enter the civilian community.”

The U.S. government offered financial, vocational and social resources to the nearly 5 million servicemen and women who began demobilizing in 1919 after nearly half served overseas in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). Finding a job was the first thing on the minds of most veterans, so the government encouraged businesses to hire them.

An article in the April 4, 1919 issue of *The Stars and Stripes* describes the plan of the American Expeditionary Force’s Department of Citizenship to hold “forums” to address three subjects of importance for U.S. Army officials: “Home,” “Health” and “The Workshop.”

Servicemen were given an opportunity to ask questions about when they could expect to be sent home and discharged, the prospects for finding a job, how to maintain good health and sanitary practices for themselves and their communities and how to be aware of the influence of socialism in the workplace.

The exhibition highlights a collection of posters commissioned by the U.S. Army, General Staff’s Morale Section. All but one poster were created by Gordon Grant, an Army captain and illustrator during World War I. These posters communicate messages about how an honorably discharged serviceman can make a positive impact on their



community through appearance and conduct. The posters are essentially an instructional tool, conveying an image of a model former serviceman who uses the discipline, can-do attitude and leadership skills, developed while in the service.

Disabled veterans, who had been coming home since U.S. forces began active combat in late 1917, were offered physical and occupational rehabilitation through the Vocational Education Bureau. Veterans were also encouraged to maintain their War Risk Insurance—life and disability insurance they were required to purchase in the service that later helped them financially after the transition to civilians as a “peace” risk insurance.

After serving their country overseas and making a difference in the outcome of the first global conflict in human history, the veteran was now asked to make a difference on a much smaller scale—in their hometown.

We're Home—Now What? is open in the Ellis Gallery from Tuesday, March 12 through Sept. 8, 2019 and is included with general admission to the Museum and Memorial.

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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