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**News Release**  
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**Special Exhibition *Revolutions! 1917*  
Opens April 7 at National World War I Museum and Memorial**

*President Wilson's War Proclamation from the National Archives on Exhibit for First Time in 50+ Years*

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – A new special exhibition featuring objects rarely, if ever, exhibited in public comprise the latest centennial special exhibition from the National World War I Museum and Memorial as *Revolutions! 1917* opens on Friday, April 7.

*Revolutions! 1917* showcases the incredible events that occurred worldwide in 1917 from America's official entry into the war and Russia's upheavals from an Imperial state to popular rule. The battles on the Western Front and in other theaters and troubles on the home fronts also led to societal changes, mutinies and revolts.

The vast majority of objects and documents featured in *Revolutions! 1917* have not been on exhibit at the Museum or anywhere else in the world. The exhibition also features items on loan from other institutions, including President Woodrow Wilson's original war proclamation (National Archives), articles of President Wilson's clothing (The President Woodrow Wilson House) and an American suffragette banner (Kansas City Museum). The proclamation of war has not been on exhibit to the public in more than 50 years.

"When people think of a revolution occurring in 1917, the focus tends to be on Russia, but the reality is that there were revolutions taking place throughout the world," said National World War I Museum and Memorial Senior Curator Doran Cart. "In *Revolutions! 1917*, we're able to explore not only the Russian revolution, but the other pivotal revolutions that helped shape the world we live in today."

"The National Archives is pleased to loan President Wilson's original war proclamation to the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and to partner with the Museum for this special exhibition," said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero.

Discover the National Archives' extensive World War I records holdings [online](#).

While the common conception of the United States' entry into World War I on April 6, 1917 is one of unbridled patriotism and unified support, the country went through painful transitions and anti-war efforts. In the public debate over the draft in the Congress, criticisms were hurled against conscription. It was seen by some as an effort



to “Prussianize America...destroy democracy at home while fighting for it abroad...conscription is another word for slavery.”

A revolutionary concept in America was “Industrial Mobilization;” the government took over control of private businesses for the war effort. The Committee on Public Information was created for the “dissemination of ideas and emotion-rousing” and censorship.

In the days leading up to America’s entry into the war and then throughout its involvement, women played a large part, not just in the home front mobilization, but in the military. The dichotomy of American involvement in World War I was, of course, that America was in the war fighting to make the world safe for democracy, but many African Americans in the U.S. did not enjoy that very premise.

Russia reeled under revolutions and military uprisings. German sailors mutinied against low morale and mistreatment. More than 300,000 workers went on strike in Berlin, joining protesters against many shortages including food. French soldiers, many of them veterans of three years of fighting, refused to attack. From the Canadian troops’ actions at Vimy Ridge, Brigadier-General A.E. Ross declared after the war, “in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation.”

*Revolutions! 1917* is open from Apr. 7 – Apr. 8, 2018 in Exhibit Hall.

#### **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).

#### **About the National Archives**

The National Archives is an independent Federal agency that serves American democracy by safeguarding and preserving the records of the government, so people can discover, use and learn from this documentary heritage. The National Archives ensures continuing access to the essential documentation of the rights of American citizens and the action of their government. From the Declaration of Independence to accounts of ordinary Americans, the holdings of the National Archives directly touch the lives of millions of people. The agency supports democracy, promotes civic education and facilitates historical understanding of the national experience. The National Archives carries out its mission through a nationwide network of archives, records center and Presidential Libraries and online at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

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