



News Release

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Special Exhibition “*Empires at War: Austria and Russia*” Opens Friday, Aug. 27 at National WWI Museum and Memorial

Empires at War features never-before-seen objects from the Eastern Front of The Great War.

Select exhibition images/captions available on [Dropbox](#).

KANSAS CITY, MO. – By the close of World War I, four empires had collapsed, including both the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Empires. *Empires at War: Austria and Russia* examines the conflict on the Eastern Front, an aspect of the war often less surveyed but with cataclysmic results for the millions affected.

Often viewed as the "spark" that ignited the First World War, Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, were assassinated on June 28, 1914. As one of the very first nations to declare war, Austria accused Serbia of plotting and backing the assassination and threatened invasion. Russia roared in to support its Slav brothers, rapidly mobilizing its forces, resulting in huge losses and contributing to revolutions at home.

The Eastern Front was a ‘war of movement’ where the Central Powers, with over 2.5 million troops, faced a much larger, but disorganized, force of 4 million Russians. Drawing from original objects recently added to the Museum and Memorial’s collection, the exhibition features an extraordinary collection of never-before-seen Austrian and Russian material culture – uniforms, equipment, flags, hats, helmets and more.

“The subject matter of this exhibition rose out of the wealth and diversity of Austrian and Russian objects and archival materials that the Museum and Memorial has been fortunate to acquire over the last decade. Unlike many exhibitions, it is not presented chronologically but by topics.” said Doran Cart, senior curator at the National WWI Museum and Memorial. “Pivotal battles, Austrian and Russian women in the war and the changes in the nations are illustrated, and their stories told by the participants.”

Although the Museum and Memorial has been collecting internationally since 1920, material culture from the Eastern Front of the war has been difficult to acquire due in part to the collapse of dynasties. The commemoration of the Centennial of WWI brought opportunities to reengage the international

community and enrich the collection, shedding new light on the enduring impact of war on the Eastern Front.

Empires at War: Austria and Russia opens Aug. 27, 2021 and is on view in Exhibit Hall through January 2023. Admission is included with the purchase of a Museum ticket.

Austria, as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, lingered until the last shots were fired. Although a state of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the term 'Austria' is used here in general reference.

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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