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**News Release**

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## **National WWI Museum and Memorial Announces Gifts from William T. Kemper Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities for Digitization of Collection**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – The National WWI Museum and Memorial announced a \$500,000 gift from the William T. Kemper Foundation – Commerce Bank, Trustee and a \$155,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities toward the goal of digitizing the Museum’s entire collection.

The Museum and Memorial’s Second Century Strategic Plan (2020-2026) includes three “big ideas,” one of which is to make the Museum and Memorial more accessible to audiences across the globe through effective use of digital learning technologies. A diverse digitized collection enables the Museum and Memorial to remain a significant global resource for information for the globe’s 3.9 billion internet-connected people through online exhibitions, online education lesson plans, education newsletters and website content. The Museum and Memorial holds the world’s most diverse collection of WWI archives, making this project even more significant for students, families and researchers seeking primary source materials.

“We would like to thank the William T. Kemper Foundation and National Endowment for the Arts for their continued generous support and advocacy for our digitization program, especially during this pandemic,” said National WWI Museum and Memorial President and CEO Dr. Matthew Naylor. “These gifts support our continued digitization efforts and have also allowed us to transition staff members to support this project and avoid layoffs.”

“The William T. Kemper Foundation has supported the Museum’s digitization initiatives since 2011, preserving, facilitating and promoting broad access to the Museum’s world-class collection of materials,” said Jonathan Kemper, Chairman of the William T. Kemper Foundation. “While our support of the Museum’s program has always been justified with these long-term benefits in mind, it is gratifying to know that current restrictions on physical public access and travel have underscored the current utility of digital access.

In the future, we fundamentally believe that leadership in understanding digital technology, and employing it in innovative ways, can and will be transformative to the Museum, keeping it vital, relevant and engaged.”

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Museum staff have transcribed over 13,000 letters and artifacts from the collection. Additionally, over 2,000 object records have been digitized in 2020, thanks to support from funders, which will allow the content to be easily indexed, searched and translated into other languages in the future.

Thousands of digitized versions and transcriptions of letters, diaries and journal entries are available at [theworldwar.org/database](http://theworldwar.org/database).



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

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