



News Release
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Art by World War I Soldiers on Exhibition for the First Time at the National WWI Museum and Memorial

Special Exhibition War Around Us: Soldier Artist Impressions Opens May 22

Exhibition images/captions available at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gbikbllr7zimawp/AADX9n72Y7ycSnNKs-MJdWia?dl=0>

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Creating art when surrounded by war may seem contradictory, but inspiration can take many forms, providing a glimpse into a world that otherwise would be unfamiliar.

Opening May 22 at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, [War Around Us: Soldier Artist Impressions](#) captures the losses and triumphs of war through the eyes of those who lived it in a series of works never previously on exhibition. Although markedly different in their styles and subject choices, the featured artists—Jean Lefort, Curtiney George Foote, Charles Thatcher Shellabarger, Myron Chapin and Clifford Warner— demonstrate several ways one can capture wartime experiences.

For some of these soldier artists, a desire existed to create functions as a way to explore complex feelings, as shown in Foote’s seemingly celebratory portrayal of a victory parade and Shellabarger’s image of a French soldier’s grave. For others, art captures impressions of everyday life, such as letter writing, shoe shining and socializing.

“The images visitors can expect to see appear paradoxical at times, but the reality is that this is what war is like. There are moments of loss and despair, but also times of relief and celebration,” said Jonathan Casey, Director, Archives and Edward Jones Research Center. “Because they were also soldiers, the artists experienced these competing emotions firsthand.”

Using the fields, villages and people who witnessed the devastation of World War I, the artists convey a shared understanding of the importance in depicting the look and feel of war. There are soldiers marching to the front, or advancing into battle and scenes of destruction, but also soldiers at rest, in quiet moments, civilians at work or play and peaceful landscapes.

“It’s easy for us to forget World War I’s effects on societies given how historically and geographically separated we are from it,” Casey said. “In that way these images help advance the mission of the Museum and Memorial to remember, interpret and understand the Great War.”



These images make clear that the war was indiscriminate in its effects, devastating families, communities and ways of life. Despite this catastrophic event, they convey a shared humanity. A century after the war, this art retains its power as a testament to the experiences of those that lived it.

Presented by the National WWI Museum and Memorial, *War Around Us: Soldier Artist Impressions* is open from Tuesday, May 22, 2018, through Sunday, Jan. 13, 2019.

Media interested in covering any of the Museum and Memorial's offerings should contact Mike Vietti at 816-888-8122 or mvietti@theworldwar.org.

About the National WWI Museum and Memorial

The National 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 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 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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