



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION



THE NATIONAL
WWI MUSEUM
AND MEMORIAL

News Release
November 8, 2017

Contacts:

Mike Vietti, National World War I Museum and Memorial, (816) 888-8122, mvietti@theworldwar.org

Chris Isleib, U.S. World War One Centennial Commission, (301) 641-4060, chris.isleib@worldwar1centennial.org

Special Exhibition Featuring Striking Modern Images of WWI Battlefields from Acclaimed Photographer Michael St Maur Sheil Opens Nov. 9, 2017 at Pershing Park

WASHINGTON, D.C. –It's been said that photographs open doors into the past, but also allow a look into the future. A special, outdoor exhibition, [*Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace: The Doughboys, 1917-1918*](#), will exemplify this statement when it opens at Pershing Park on Friday, Nov. 9. The exhibition, which documents the experience of American soldiers in the Great War, is a special U.S. World War One Centennial Commission event and will be on display through Sunday, Dec. 3.

The exhibition features the incredible contemporary photographs of Michael St Maur Sheil on massive panels depicting the battlefields of the Western Front where the Doughboys fought. The exhibition was co-curated by the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Mo.

"This exhibit is a special one, and tells a story that needs to be told," said Daniel Dayton, Executive Director of the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission. "We are honored to work with the National World War I Museum and Memorial to bring these photographs to our nation's capital."

Prior to Washington, D.C. the exhibition debuted at the National World War I Museum and Memorial in March and was on exhibit through Oct. 31. A second edition of the exhibition traveled throughout the United Kingdom in 2017, including stops in London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff. To date, the exhibition has been viewed by more than 2 million people in the U.S. and U.K.

"The U.S. involvement in the First World War was a hugely significant factor," said Sheil, whose work has been featured in *National Geographic* and *Time* magazine among others. "Today, it is often overlooked, but it was a New World coming to the aid of an Old World, from which many of the young American soldiers – as first generation immigrants – had sought to escape. Their humanitarian effort in supplying and shipping over seven million tons of food to save the peoples of Belgium and northern France from starvation marked the advent of America as a united nation."

When the United States entered the cataclysm of the war to become known as World War I, the global conflict had consumed many nations since 1914 and continued for years. The Armistice of Nov. 11, 1918 halted the fighting on the Western Front. The Western Front the American forces saw when they arrived and until they returned home included scenes of environmental degradation, obliterated villages, vast cemeteries, and continuing massive destruction. Much of the landscape of the Western Front looked like an uninhabited planet very foreign to them.



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION



THE NATIONAL
WWI MUSEUM
AND MEMORIAL

“Through *Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace: The Doughboys 1917-1918*, we trace the journey of the American forces during the height of their involvement in the war and we commemorate their efforts,” said National World War I Museum and Memorial President and CEO Dr. Matthew Naylor. “It is both poignant and beautiful work and serves as another example of our commitment in helping the public understand the enduring impact of the Great War.”

Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace: The Doughboys, 1917-1918, is open through Sunday, Dec. 3 at Pershing Park. The exhibition is presented by the Aon Foundation with additional support provided by Edward Jones, PNC Financial Services Group and UMB Financial Corporation. The U.K. version is presented by the Aon Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Embassy.

About the World War I Centennial Commission

The Commission was established by the World War I Centennial Commission Act, passed by the 112th Congress and signed by President Barack Obama on January 16, 2013, and is responsible for planning, developing, and executing programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of World War I. The mission is to educate the country’s citizens about the causes, courses and consequences of the war; honor the heroism and sacrifice of those Americans who served, and commemorate the Great War through public programs and initiatives. To learn more about the Commission activities, visit ww1cc.org/tools.

To further the mission, the Commission is leading the effort to build the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park in Washington, D.C. to honor the 4.7 million American veterans who served. To learn more about the Memorial, visit ww1cc.org/memorial.

The Commission’s founding sponsor is the Pritzker Military Museum and Library (PMML) in Chicago, Ill. PMML is a nonpartisan research institution dedicated to enhancing public understanding of military history and the sacrifices made by America’s veterans and service members. To learn more about PMML, visit pritzkermilitary.org.

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 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 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.

###