

Centennial Commission Announces Donations from VFW, American Legion

Funds will help create America's World War I Memorial

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WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission announced today that the commission has received leadership gifts from the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Each of the gifts is in the amount of \$300,000, and will be used for the creation of America's World War I Memorial, in Washington, D.C.

The Centennial Commission was established by Congress in 2013 to provide education programs, public outreach, and commemorative events regarding the American involvement in the war. The Centennial Commission was also authorized by Congress to create a new national-level memorial in the nation's capital, to honor the men and women who served.

The American Legion was founded by World War I veterans in 1919, as a veteran support organization made up of former and current U.S. military members. It has since become the nation's largest veterans organization. Throughout its history, The Legion has been committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in America's communities, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and support for service members and veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars was founded in 1899 to support all honorably-discharged service members, from any military branch, who served the U.S. in wars, campaigns, expeditions, on foreign soil, or hostile waters. The VFW grew rapidly after World War I, with hundreds of thousands eligible veterans returning from the war. The VFW today is the

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nation's oldest and largest major combat veterans organization.

While it is a Congressional Commission, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission operates solely through private donation. The founding sponsor for the Centennial Commission was the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, in Chicago. Their continued support, since 2013, has allowed the Centennial Commission to undertake numerous successful education partnerships, memorial restoration grants, and historical/cultural exhibits & symposia.

Commission Chair Terry Hamby expressed heartfelt thanks for the new contributions. "The Commission deeply appreciates these gifts from the American Legion, and from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. These organizations are made up of veterans who understand the importance of honoring the accomplishments and sacrifice of our service members. These gifts will help the Centennial Commission fulfill its mission of educating the American people about the war, and about the Americans who served in it."

Denise Rohan, National Commander of the American Legion, expressed support for the Centennial Commission efforts. "No donation can fully reflect the enormous legacy left by our World War I veterans. Their legacy is one of freedom and heroism. Some paid the ultimate price. The American Legion supports this overdue memorial because the world must forever remember the story of those men and women who liberated a continent. Sadly, it was not the war to end all wars. But by studying their legacy, tyrants should be on notice that America will not allow evil to go unchallenged."

Keith Harman, commander-in-chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. agreed, adding "We are tremendously proud to support the National World War I Memorial. Though the voices of our Doughboys have been silent since the passing of fellow VFW life member Frank Buckles at the young age of 110, it is never too late to recognize the service, sacrifice and accomplishments of all who have gone before. The Great War was won because of America's commitment and direct involvement, which thrust the U.S. into a world leadership role that continues today. That is well worth remembering and properly recognizing here in our nation's capital."

The generous gifts from the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars are the most recent of several philanthropic commitments made by leading corporate and foundation funders, to include the Star Foundation, the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, and the Coca Cola Foundation.

About the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission: ww1cc.org.

About the American Legion: Legion.org.

About the Veterans of Foreign Wars: vfw.org.

About the Pritzker Military Museum & Library: pritzkerlibrary.org.