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News Release



NORTH CAROLINA
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

A Smithsonian Affiliate



Purpose, Meaning, Honor Between Soldiers – WWI and Today!

RALEIGH, N.C. — Close to 200,000 people have come to the **N.C. Museum of History's** incredible new experiential exhibition ***North Carolina and World War I***, which transports visitors to another time!

The exhibit serves as the backdrop to an upcoming unique evening talk — **WWI and Its Legacy: A Discussion with Today's Veterans** — taking place at the Museum of History on Thursday, September 28, at 6:30 p.m. Four student veterans from N.C. State University will discuss several themes that they found in common with soldiers who fought in World War I, including "Why Fight," "The Experience of War," "America on the World Stage," and "Coming Home." **Four short film clips will introduce the themes.**

Jessie Lopez, a veteran linguist and analyst with the U.S. Marine Corps and current Fellow at NCSU Libraries, will serve as moderator.

The panelists are:

Commander Michelle Parkington. Following graduation from Virginia Tech with a BS in marketing management in 2000, Parkington joined the U.S. Navy as an ensign. She earned her Wings of Gold in 2002 and has almost 3,500 flight hours piloting various helicopters. Parkington transitioned into the Navy active Selected Reserves in 2009. She returned to Virginia Tech and earned a BS in psychology. Parkington was recalled to Navy active duty in 2013 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, on foot, in Afghanistan. After she honorably separated and returned to Navy active Selected Reserves, she was accepted in 2017 to N.C. State's Ph.D. program for comparative biomedical sciences.

Lance Corporal Justin Rigdon (Ret.). After high school graduation in 2007, Rigdon enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He joined the 0351 Infantry Assaultman MOS, including one deployment to patrol Ar Ramadi, Iraq, in 2008-2009. In 2012 he had a medical separation after being a lance corporal holding the billet of squad leader. After departing the service, he attended and graduated from Coastal Carolina Community College with an AS degree and was soon accepted at N.C. State. Rigdon graduated in 2017 with a BS in textile engineering with minors in materials science engineering and business administration entrepreneurship from N.C. State.

Sergeant Justin Salerno (Ret.). He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 2007. After a short 3043 MOS (supply administration), Salerno was transitioned to a machine gunner. He served two combat deployments: first in 2009 to Iraq on a Police Transition Team, and second in 2011 to Afghanistan's Operation Enduring Freedom on a personal security detail for a brigadier general. During this deployment, Salerno received a Purple Heart for wounds received in action, as well as a combat meritorious promotion to the rank of sergeant for outstanding leadership, valor, and combat performance. He was honorably discharged in 2012. In 2015 Salerno graduated with a BA in political science and economics from N.C. State. He is now working toward an MBA degree at N.C. State.

Petty Officer First Class Ted Spencer (Ret.). Spencer enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1999, serving as a Nuclear Electrician's Mate First Class. He spent most of his service aboard the USS Ronald Reagan, stationed out of Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, and Naval Air Station North Island, California, between 2001 and 2006. In 2004 Spencer was deployed in support of Summer Pulse to South America, and in 2006 he was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. He completed his service in 2009. In 2011 Spencer graduated with a BS in electrical engineering from N.C. State, specializing in renewable electric energy systems.

Come hear their thoughts and enjoy meeting these young veterans who served our country so bravely.

[Register here.](#) For information, call 919-807-7969.

This program is FREE, as is parking in the evenings.



This program is funded as part of World War I and America, a two-year national initiative of the Library of America and presented in partnership with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and other organizations, with generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

IMAGES Dropbox link, caption and credit –

Image – Soldier on horse

World War I cavalry soldier wearing his gas mask. Courtesy of North Carolina Museum of History.

Image – Graphic

Sponsor's logo. Courtesy of Library of America.

Image – Graphic for series

Combat controllers give a C-130 takeoff clearance and provide air traffic control during a mission, Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan, 2001. Courtesy of <http://www.afhistory.af.mil>.

Access images [here](#).

For information about the N.C. Museum of History, call [919-807-7900](tel:919-807-7900) or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ or YouTube.

About the N.C. Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate

The N.C. Museum of History is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum collects and preserves artifacts of North Carolina history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. Each year more than 400,000 people visit the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

About the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build

the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the nation's first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call 919-807-7300 or visit www.ncdcr.gov.

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