

Canadian War Museum exhibition explores the aftermath of the First World War through art and The War Amps

Ottawa, Ontario, September 20, 2018 — The end of a war is never the end of the story, but the start of a new chapter in which societies and lives are rebuilt. That is the message of **Resilience – The Battlefield Art of Mary Riter Hamilton, 1919–1922**, a new exhibition developed by the Canadian War Museum in partnership with The War Amps. Featuring works of art from the collection of Library and Archives Canada, **Resilience** contemplates the aftermath of the First World War via the work of a Canadian woman artist and the war amputees’ organization that sent her to Europe to record the devastation.

“**Resilience** highlights not only Europe’s reconstruction in the wake of the conflict, but also the remarkable success of The War Amps in rebuilding bodies and lives,” said James Whitham, Acting Director General of the Canadian War Museum. “We are very proud to partner with The War Amps for this exhibition celebrating the charitable organization’s 100th anniversary, as we begin winding down our commemoration of the First World War Centenary.”

In 1919, the newly established Amputation Club of British Columbia — a precursor to The War Amps — hired Hamilton to travel to Europe to paint the post-war period for the club’s magazine. She produced more than 300 impressionistic paintings of scenes in southwestern Belgium and northeastern France: battle-scarred landscapes, commemorations of the lost, and activities signalling a return to normal life. Hamilton considered her battlefield art a labour of love, and in 1926 donated most of the works to the Public Archives of Canada — now Library and Archives Canada — as a gift to the country. **Resilience** features 15 of Hamilton’s most moving works from the Library and Archives collection, along with images and Museum artifacts exploring the history of The War Amps.

“Library and Archives Canada is honoured to be partnering with the Canadian War Museum to make these precious works of art, depicting the cold, brutal aftermath of war, accessible for all Canadians to see,” said Dr. Guy Berthiaume, Librarian and Archivist of Canada. “It was Mrs. Riter Hamilton’s desire when she donated her canvasses to the National Archives that these remain in the hands of all Canadians. With this exhibition we are happy to grant her wish.”

“It is a privilege to collaborate with the Canadian War Museum and Library and Archives Canada in bringing Mary Riter Hamilton’s paintings and story to this exhibition,” said Brian Forbes, Chairman of The War Amps Executive Committee. “As The War Amps marks its 100th anniversary this year, it is especially meaningful for us to be involved. It gives us an opportunity to show the public our passion for supporting and restoring the lives of Canadian amputees since our story began, at the end of the First World War in 1918.”

Resilience – The Battlefield Art of Mary Riter Hamilton, 1919–1922 will be presented at the Canadian War Museum from September 20, 2018 to March 31, 2019.

The Canadian War Museum is Canada's national museum of military history. Its mission is to promote public understanding of Canada's military history in its personal, national, and international dimensions. Work of the Canadian War Museum is made possible in part through financial support of the Government of Canada.

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Media contacts:

Josée Prévost
Senior Communications and Media Relations
Officer, Canadian War Museum
Telephone: 819-776-8608
josee.prevast@warmuseum.ca

Avra Gibbs Lamey
Acting Manager, Public Affairs
Canadian War Museum
Telephone: 819-776-8607
avra.gibbs-lamey@warmuseum.ca

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Media contact for The War Amps:

Martine Lépine
Manager, Communications
Telephone: 613-731-3821 ext. 2225
martine.lepine@waramps.ca