

Memorial Salutes Those Who Served in the 'Great War'

As the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, historians looked for lessons from a century earlier when the planet was gripped by the 1918 influenza pandemic. World War I loomed large in that retrospective, as the earlier pandemic spread widely when the soldiers of many nations returned home from battlefields in Europe and northern Africa.



The World War I Centennial Commission weathered pandemic-related construction delays in 2020 to make significant progress on the first national memorial located in Washington, D.C., that will honor U.S. soldiers who served in the Great War. The \$50 million project, being funded largely by private donations, is supported by a \$5 million Lilly Endowment grant approved in 2019.



World War I was of particular significance to the Endowment's founders, as J.K. Lilly Jr. (above) served as an officer in the medical supply service in France during the war. J.K. Jr. was one of the nearly 5 million Americans who served during U.S. involvement in the war.

The memorial is being developed in Pershing Park (below) located on Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House. A focal point will be a 58.5-foot-long bronze sculpture (center) depicting the journey of one emblematic soldier as he departs home, serves on the battlefield and returns from the front. From his New Jersey studio during 2020, artist Sabin Howard continued work on the project, sculpting in clay the first 11 of 38 figures that will be featured in the bas-relief wall. The figures will be cast in bronze at a foundry in England and returned to the United States for a planned installation at the memorial site in 2024.

