



**ADKX to Open Exhibition Exploring the Contributions of Adirondack People
To World War II and Impact of War on the Region**

***From Wilderness to Warfront* Features Stories of Personal Resilience and Innovation,
Many Previously Unknown**

**ADKX to Kick-Off Summer Season with Exhibition-Inspired Day of Celebration
On July 1, 2021**

New York, NY—June 29, 2021—With its public reopening on July 1, the Adirondack Experience (ADKX) will present a special exhibition focused on the contributions of Adirondack people to America’s World War II effort. The exhibition, developed in conjunction with the war’s 80th anniversary, captures the impact of the war on the Adirondacks, through both the experiences of the men and women who left to serve and those who stayed behind in the region. Titled *From Wilderness to Warfront: The Adirondacks and World War II*, the show features an extensive array of artifacts and ephemera, including photographs and scrapbooks; letters and journal entries; military uniforms and insignia; advertisements, signage, and graphic works that advanced the war effort at home and abroad; and a wide range of other objects. *From Wilderness to Warfront* also includes oral histories from two Adirondack veterans—Private Charlie Smith and Lt. Colonel David Hanning—whose recollections and stories are captured for the first time as part of the exhibition. Those histories will also live on the ADKX website. The show will remain on view through ADKX’s summer season, closing on September 30, 2021

To celebrate the formal opening of the summer season and to engage audiences further with the exhibition, ADKX will host a day of activities inspired by the World War II era. **From 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on July 1**, visitors will be able to enjoy big band sounds from the 1940s in a festive outdoor environment, decorated with red, white, and blue bunting and banners. Children will be able to draw their own “dog tags” and pose like Rosie the Riveter in a photo area, with images available to take home. Smith and Hanning will also be onsite to greet and talk to visitors about their experiences and the exhibition.

“We’re thrilled to welcome the public back to ADKX for the summer season and to share this exhibition, which offers an opportunity to explore the incredible contributions of Adirondack people to this critical moment in our global history. Many of the objects in the exhibition are on loan from current and former residents of the Adirondacks, so it is a particularly intimate and community focused presentation,” said

David Kahn, ADKX's Executive Director. "We look forward to seeing people at the museum and on campus on July 1 for our opening celebration, which captures the spirit of the exhibition, and throughout the season."

From Wilderness to Warfront covers a wide range of topics relating to the war effort, from America's entry into World War II to the experiences of soldiers and nurses in training and on the field to the challenges faced by communities in the Adirondacks and across the United States, and through to the healing and rebuilding that took place after the war. Each of these subjects is illuminated through both objects of national relevance, such as propaganda produced by the government and circulated through the press, and personal effects that capture memories and responses in journal entries and letters. Together, this mix of communal and individual artifacts and ephemera highlight the impact of international and national happenings on people's individual lives, making the exhibition a particularly singular exploration of the way Adirondack communities were affected by the global conflict.

The exhibition features a selection of stories about individuals from the Adirondacks, including, for example, Gladys Hunt (1915-2008) from Indian Lake, who enlisted in the Army Nurse corps in 1943 and served on the frontlines in hospitals in France, Holland, and Germany. After Hunt was honorably discharged in 1946, she enrolled in Pratt Institute, where she focused on designing one of the first truly wheelchair-accessible kitchens, inspired by her work with soldiers who were disabled. Although she received very little credit for her innovations, she was instrumental in furthering modern accessible design. Another example is Clarence Petty (1905-2009) from Coreys near Saranac Lake, who enlisted in 1942 and served as a transport pilot in the Pacific. After the war, he returned to the Adirondacks and put his flying skills to use as a ranger in the NY Department of Environmental Conservation. He became the first person to extinguish a forest fire by dumping water from an airplane, and his outspoken commitment to conservation contributed to the creation of the Adirondack Park Agency. These narratives are just two of the many featured in the show, which also include the important contributions of members of the Mohawk Nation as well as the experiences of refugees who resettled in the Adirondacks following the war.

"It was important to us that this exhibition speak to the lived experiences of people from this region. This exhibition is really the first to examine the different ways that the people from the Adirondacks contributed to the war but also shaped life following it, both in this region and well beyond. We're so delighted by the individual histories we've been able to bring to light, and think audiences will be surprised and inspired by the many people that are represented in the exhibition," said Laura Rice, ADKX's Chief Curator.

About Adirondack Experience, The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake

Adirondack Experience, The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake (ADKX), accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, shares the history and culture of the Adirondack region through interactive exhibits, hands-on activities, and culturally rich collections in more than 20 historic and contemporary buildings on a 121-acre campus in the heart of the Adirondacks. The museum is supported in part with donations from the general public, with some general operating support made possible by the New York

State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. For additional information, call 518-352-7311 or visit www.theADKX.org.

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