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Canadian premiere of Portraits of Courage at the Canadian War Museum

Ottawa, Ontario, June 27, 2019 — Opening tomorrow at the Canadian War Museum, **Portraits of Courage: President George W. Bush's Tribute to American Veterans** features 51 of 67 paintings by former President George W. Bush created as a tribute to the sacrifice and courage of those who served in conflicts during his time as President. The exhibition will be presented in Ottawa from June 28 to September 3, 2019.

"Portraits of Courage explores the visible and invisible injuries suffered by American veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the stories of their resilience and determination in recovery," said Mark O'Neill, President and CEO of the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History. "The exhibition offers a unique perspective — that of a commander-in-chief using art to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the men and women who were under his command. The Canadian War Museum is proud to be the first Canadian venue to share it."

First presented at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in 2017, the exhibition resulted from former President George W. Bush's commitment to the U.S. Armed Forces, and his work with the Bush Institute's Military Service Initiative.

In the spring of 2012, after reading Sir Winston Churchill's essay "Painting as a Pastime," former President George W. Bush began painting. Over the next three years, he took lessons from three American artists — Gail Norfleet, Jim Woodson and Sedrick Huckaby — who guided him from the basics to finer techniques. "Paint people you know," Huckaby said, "but others don't." Taking that suggestion to heart, in September 2015, the former President began painting some of the men and women he had come to know during his presidency as their commander-in-chief and, after that time, through sporting events that the Bush Center hosted for wounded veterans.

"Portraits of Courage honours the service, sacrifice, resilience, and continued leadership of some of our most severely wounded Post-9/11 Warriors and their families," said Matthew

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Amidon, Director of the Military Service Initiative at the George W. Bush Presidential Center. “On behalf of President and Mrs. Bush, the Military Service Initiative is committed to fostering successful transitions from military to civilian life. In doing so, our nations all benefit from their continued leadership as they contribute to the security, economy and sustained health of our democracies as veterans. We are pleased to be able to show this exhibition at the Canadian War Museum.”

The American men and women depicted in **Portraits of Courage** represent the stories of a handful of the estimated five million American service members who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. A guide available in the exhibition space features the personal story of each of the veterans represented.

Following the September 11 attacks on the United States, Canada joined coalition operations in Afghanistan as part of an international campaign against terrorism. Some 40,000 Canadians served there, alongside Americans, from 2001 to 2014.

Portraits of Courage: President George W. Bush’s Tribute to American Veterans is on loan from the Ambassador and Mrs. George L. Argyros Collection of Presidential Art at the George W. Bush Presidential Center, a non-profit organization whose Military Service Initiative is focused on helping veterans and their families. The exhibition of this collection in Ottawa is made possible with support from United States Ambassador to Canada Kelly Craft and Mr. Joe Craft.

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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