FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 15, 2019

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MCPL’s Woodneath Press Publishes ‘Front Lines to Headlines’

WWI Narrative Review Tells Story of Kansas City Star Reporter through Overseas Dispatches

Greater Kansas City, MO – The Story Center at Mid-Continent Public Library is proud to announce the upcoming release of Front Lines to Headlines: The World War I Overseas Dispatches of Otto P. Higgins, written by local historian and author James J. Heiman and published by the Library’s publishing division, Woodneath Press. The narrative review, which covers the complete collection of overseas World War I dispatches from embedded divisional correspondent Otto P. Higgins, will be released on April 20, 2019—the 100th anniversary of Higgins’ return to Kansas City.

“We’re very proud to be able to bring such a unique and important work to readers in Kansas City and beyond,” said Dr. Mark Livengood, Director of The Story Center at Mid-Continent Public Library. “Front Lines to Headlines will not only be of interest to those who enjoy Kansas City history, but anyone who enjoys a good story!”

In addition to the dispatches, the work includes 42 field photographs, which were also taken by Higgins and published in The Kansas City Star between May 1918 and July 1919. Descriptions of the dispatches are presented in narrative form in the book and organized sequentially in monthly installments by date of composition, followed by a representative sampling of photographs and intact articles.

“The Great War came home to me in a personal way when I read some of the stories Higgins wrote, stories stored since the war in an old steamer trunk,” said Heiman, who is also the author of Voices in Bronze and Stone: Kansas City’s World War I Monuments and Memorials.

Higgins wrote 218 dispatches, beginning in the cemetery where the Lusitania victims are buried in Ireland; continuing on to the headquarters of the American Navy in London; and ending with the fight in France and the occupation in Germany. Behind the lines, Higgins reported from the salvage, supply, transport, and repair operations in support of American doughboys on their way to the front lines. Along with other journalists headquartered in Paris, Higgins ventured forth to provide his readers at home with a sure sense of the support their boys were receiving “Over There.”

A launch event for Front Lines to Headlines will be held on Saturday, April 20, at 2:00 p.m. at MCPL’s Woodneath Library Center (8900 NE Flintlock Road, Kansas City, MO 64157) where Heiman will discuss his work and share stories of Kansas Citians in the Great War as seen through the eyes of Kansas City Star reporter Otto P. Higgins. The
presentation will be followed by a book sale and signing. Heiman will give a similar presentation at MCPL’s Midwest Genealogy Center on Friday, April 26, at 2:00 p.m. and at the National World War I Museum and Memorial on Wednesday, May 22, at 6:30 p.m.

Since it was founded in 2014, Woodneath Press has published a total of six books, ranging from memoirs to children’s books, all written by authors in the greater Kansas City area. In September 2017, the imprint released The First Beverly Hillbilly, a posthumous memoir by Ruth Henning, wife of esteemed Hollywood screenwriter and Independence, Mo., native Paul Henning who created such hits as The Beverly Hillbillies, Petticoat Junction, and Green Acres.

Front Lines to Headlines is available for purchase anywhere books are sold. Learn more at mymcpl.org/WoodneathPress.

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Mid-Continent Public Library is the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, operating 31 branches and two Library-To-Go locations and serving more than 800,000 people in Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties. The Library strives to enrich our citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration. MCPL is a 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winner. Connect with the Library on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The Story Center at Mid-Continent Public Library

Funded in part by a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, The Story Center at Mid-Continent Public Library was developed to help people create and share their own stories and connect with the stories of others. The Center offers a wide range of classes, services, and resources for storytellers of all mediums. To learn more about The Story Center, visit mystorycenter.org.