

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **From the Sangamon River in 1917 to the Rhine in 1918**

*Science Series Program Jan. 3 on Teen's Experiences in France During World War I*

SPRINGFIELD, IL – A Springfield teenager's letters and photos from France during World War I provide the background for the Illinois State Museum's monthly Paul Mickey Science Series program on Wed., Jan. 3 at 7:00 p.m. **From the Sangamon to the Rhine: The Letters and Photographs of Kent Hagler** will be presented by Dr. Christopher McDonald of Lincoln Land Community College in the Illinois State Museum Auditorium in Springfield. The event is free and open to the public.

Rejected by the U.S. military as a result of a childhood injury, Kent Hagler volunteered as an ambulance driver in the American Field Service. Hagler left his place at Harvard University and his family in Springfield and travelled to France to drive ambulances in support of the French army. Dr. McDonald's talk will examine Hagler's experiences through the lens of the letters he sent home to his family in Springfield.

Hagler, still a teenager at the time, was decorated for bravery by the French and saw first-hand the impact of war. His letters are insightful, literate, and sometimes humorous; and his photographs give us a glimpse into the life of an ambulance driver as he traveled from the Sangamon River in 1917 to the Rhine in 1918. The letters also provide an interesting view of Springfield at the time. When Hagler returned home in 1919, he brought a large number of souvenirs of the war, which he later donated to the Illinois State Museum. This talk aims to place these items into the context of both an individual and general history.

Each month, the Paul Mickey Science Series features a different speaker and topic. The Illinois State Museum is located in the State Capitol Complex at 502 S. Spring St. in Springfield. For additional information, please contact [events@illinoisstatemuseum.org](mailto:events@illinoisstatemuseum.org) or phone 217-558-6696.