



**News Release**

## **Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in World War I**

*Free presentation continues Black History Month at Cantigny's First Division Museum*

**WHEATON, IL, February 3, 2012** — The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park invites the public to a free presentation about the role of African American soldiers during the World War I era. Plan to attend on **Thursday, February 16, at 7:30 pm.**

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson thrust the United States into World War I by declaring, "The world must be made safe for democracy." For the 380,000 African American soldiers who fought and labored in the global conflict, these words carried life or death meaning. Join us as Chad L. Williams discusses the central role of African American soldiers in World War I and how they, along with race activists and ordinary citizens alike, committed to fighting for democracy at home and beyond.

Williams is a leading scholar of U.S. and African American history and currently serves as associate professor of history at Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y. He received the Society for Military History 2011 Distinguished Book Award for United States Military History for *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era*.

A book signing will follow Williams' presentation and copies of *Torchbearers of Democracy* will be available for purchase.

Doors open at 6:45 pm. Admission and parking are complimentary. For more information, call 630.260.8187.

The event is part of the First Division Museum's popular series, *A Date with History*. The monthly programs feature an evening of lively discussion with authors, panelists, historians and special speakers. Information about upcoming programs is online at [FirstDivisionMuseum.org](http://FirstDivisionMuseum.org).

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### **About the First Division Museum**

The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park, part of the Robert R. McCormick Foundations, promotes public learning about America's military heritage and affairs through the history of the Big Red One—the famed 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. It stands in tribute to all who have served our country in the armed forces. The museum's main exhibit hall transports visitors to the trenches of World War I, the beaches of World War II and the jungles of Vietnam. Outside, tanks are displayed from every era, along with personnel carriers and artillery. The Robert R. McCormick Research Center, open to the public, houses the museum's library, archival and photo collections. Visit the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park online at [FirstDivisionMuseum.org](http://FirstDivisionMuseum.org).

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