



**News Release**

## **First Division Museum Adds Improvements for 2012**

*Military museum returns to regular hours with upgrades throughout*

**WHEATON, IL, March 8, 2012** – The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park is pleased to announce it is now open full-time again for 2012 and has made select changes throughout its exhibits. Several mannequins were updated with period-correct equipment and uniforms, and previously unseen German weapons from World War I and II were added.

“The museum does not sit cold and empty during the winter months while we are closed,” said Keith Gill, director of museum operations. “We are extremely busy researching, cleaning, adding to and changing out artifacts or parts of exhibits to give visitors the most accurate portrayal of what soldiers wore, were equipped with and how they fought throughout our nation’s wars.”

Some of the updates include the World War II mannequin on the netting over the D-Day landing craft that shows how a 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division soldier would have been equipped as he stormed Omaha Beach that fateful day.

Added in one of the World War I cases are a German (MG) Maschinengewehr 08/15, which is a man-portable machine gun—though it looks much too heavy for that—and a German Granatenwerfer, or grenade throwing mortar.

In the North Africa exhibit, a case displaying a German Panzerabwehrkanone (Pak) 38 anti-tank gun shell was built to improve the interpretation of the famous anti-tank gun. Also added in the World War II exhibits are a German (MG) Maschinengewehr 34, a German MP (Maschinenpistole) 40, a new German uniform and an American M1 helmet to the *Chicago Tribune* war correspondent Jack Thompson display case.

Later this month a recently conserved command map showing the 1<sup>st</sup> Division spearhead attack during Desert Storm in 1991 will go on display in the lobby.

The First Division Museum’s exhibit designers and curators also are busy preparing the museum’s summer exhibit, opening June 6, titled “Drawing Fire: Bill Mauldin and the WWII GI Experience.” The exhibit will highlight the museum’s WWII collections and some recently acquired D-Day related materials, and feature cartoons by Mauldin, the Pulitzer Prize winning creator of the famous “Willie and Joe” cartoons that were popular with soldiers during the war.

Visitors are welcome to view the upgrades during the museum’s current hours of Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm. The museum stays open until 5 pm starting in May and through October. Admission is free with paid parking (\$5 per car).

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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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