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FIRST DIVISION MUSEUM ANNOUNCES 2020 PLANS

Wheaton, Ill., February 3, 2020 – The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park is launching a series of programs and exhibits to recognize women in the military, inspired by the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

In addition, the museum will commemorate two important military milestones: the 75th anniversary of V-E Day, and the 50th anniversary of the 1st Infantry Division returning from the Vietnam War.

All First Division Museum 2020 plans are rolling out under a new vision statement emphasizing a more inclusive presentation of U.S. military history.

“Our goal is to bring more inclusivity to our historic interpretations,” said Krewasky Salter, Executive Director of the First Division Museum. “Visitors will see this in our exhibit storytelling and programs. Women and people of color who have contributed to the success of the 1st Infantry Division will be interpreted within the museum and during public events.”

Upcoming exhibits and “Date with History” presentations aligned with the 19th Amendment centennial and women in the military include:

- Thursday, March 5th, 7 pm
The Hello Girls: America’s First Women Soldiers
Author Elizabeth Cobbs discusses women who served in World War I (and helped win it) as telephone switchboard operators deployed to France in 1918 by the U.S. Army Signal Corps.
- Thursday, April 9th, 7 pm
“The Six Triple Eight”
Filmmaker James Theres will present and discuss “The Six Triple Eight”, his documentary about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-black, all-female battalion to serve overseas during World War II. In 1945 this unit cleared a massive backlog of mail for U.S. troops fighting across Europe.
- Early March to mid-April
Pop Up Exhibit: Operation Saving Lives: Northwestern as the 12th General Hospital during WWII
This digital and panel exhibit, created by the Northwestern Galter Health Science Library & Learning Center, focuses on the nurses of the 12th General Hospital Unit, U.S. Army. The hospital operated near Oran, Algeria, shortly after 1st Infantry Division landed in North Africa. The digital portion of the exhibit will be available on the touch screen lobby kiosks.

- October

Pop Up Exhibit

This timely exhibit will examine how women’s efforts during WWI contributed to the 19th Amendment’s ratification in 1920. It will feature an interactive component to further engage visitors.

Upcoming exhibits and “Date with History” programs aligned with V-E Day (Victory in Europe Day), marking the end of World War II in Europe on May 8, 1945, include:

- Tuesday, May 5th, 7 pm

Holocaust Survivors

The Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center presents an evening of remembrance featuring the stories of people liberated from concentration camps just prior to V-E Day in 1945. The U.S. Army’s 1st Infantry Division played a role in the liberation. Survivors will provide eyewitness accounts of their life-changing experiences.

- Saturday, May 9th, 10 am to 4 pm

75th Anniversary of V-E Day Celebration

A full day of 1940s-style fun and educational activities for all ages will embrace the spirit of a special day in world history, 75 years ago.

- Mid-April through June

Pop Up Exhibit: V-E Day 75 years ago

A closer look, with emphasis on operations and actions of the 1st Infantry Division.

Upcoming exhibits aligned with the 50th anniversary of the return of the 1st Infantry Division from Vietnam include:

- July 9th through 12th

Exhibit — The Wall That Heals

Cantigny will host The Wall That Heals, a close replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. The park will offer 24-hour public access and free parking.

- July through September

Pop Up Exhibit — Return of the 1st Infantry Division from Vietnam 50 years ago

An informative panel exhibit will also serve as a thank you to all Vietnam War veterans.

The First Division Museum is open weekends in February—from 10 am to 4 pm—on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Six-day operations resume in March. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free with paid parking. For more information, please visit fdmuseum.org.

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About the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park

The First Division Museum, part of Robert R. McCormick Foundations, promotes public learning about America’s military heritage and affairs through the history of the “Big Red One”—the famed 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. The museum’s main exhibit hall, First in War, 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 artillery pieces and a personnel carrier. The Robert R. McCormick Research Center, open to the public, houses the museum’s library, archival and photo collections. For more information, visit fdmuseum.org.