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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cantigny Park Remembers D-Day

*Full day of activities planned in commemoration of 70th anniversary of
1944 Allied invasion of France during World War II*

Wheaton, Ill., May 21, 2014 — The [First Division Museum](#) at [Cantigny Park](#) will commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-Day and honor surviving World War II veterans on Saturday, June 7. Activities at the museum are scheduled from 10 am to 5 pm and all ages are welcome. Participation is free with paid parking (\$5).

Featured activities will include:

- A meet and greet with World War II (WWII) veterans who took part in D-Day. Visitors can talk with the veterans and hear their first-person accounts of the Invasion of Normandy, France. There are more than 1 million surviving WWII vets nationwide; 36,496 in Illinois alone. Of the Illinois veterans only 85 who participated in D-Day are still alive. An estimated 500 WWII veterans pass away every day.

A brief ceremony at 11:15 am with WWII veterans in attendance placing sand from Omaha Beach in the ground of First Division Museum to symbolize the permanent connection between France and Cantigny Park. Several WWII veterans will also be presented with the French Legion of Honor by the French Consul General.
- A re-enactment demonstrating the training and tactics used to prepare the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division for its assault on Omaha Beach.
- A performance by The Legacy Girls, an Andrew Sisters musical revue, singing music from the 1940s. Special guests will be attending a 1940-era themed lunch at Cantigny Park's restaurant, Le Jardin (invitation only).
- A rare WWII landing craft (also known as a "Higgins boat" or LCVP) will be on display June 3-8. It is the earliest known surviving artifact of its kind and was likely used in the Allied invasion. On D-Day this type of landing craft carried soldiers of the Army's "Big Red One" (the 1st Infantry Division) to Omaha Beach.
- Dr. Cecilia Gowdy-Wygant, a history professor at Metropolitan State University of Denver, will discuss the history of Victory Gardens. Her presentation begins at 10 am in the Visitors Center Theater.

Other attractions and activities include:

- Vehicles from the museum's collection of running historic military vehicles from World War II will be on display.
- Young visitors can make their own WWII landing craft and conduct an assault in the stream in front of the museum. By simulating their own airborne landing with gliders and green army men, kids can learn about the paratroopers that participated in D-Day.
- Remote controlled historic model tanks will demonstrate how Sherman tanks were used during the battles in Normandy.
- The DuPage Amateur Radio Club will share how soldiers communicated with the ships supporting them during the landing. Historic radios will be on display and visitors will have the chance to communicate on a vintage radio set.
- Visitors to the museum will see a World War II-era "dog tag" machine in action. Personalized tags are available for \$6 each or two for \$10.
- Visitors will see artifacts from Jack Thompson, a *Chicago Tribune* reporter who landed with the 1st Infantry Division on D-Day. A living history actor will portray Thompson and kids will have an opportunity to talk to him and be a "Reporter for a Day." Guided tours of the Robert R. McCormick Museum will highlight what was happening during WWII and Colonel McCormick's thoughts about the war.

The 1st Infantry Division led the landing on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944. Omaha was one of five beaches the Allied forces assaulted that day and where they faced the strongest resistance from Hitler's "Fortress Europe." The German troops were defeated but thousands of American soldiers died in the battle.

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About the First Division Museum

The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park, part of the nonprofit Chicago-based Robert R. McCormick Foundation, 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. 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.

To learn more about the McCormick Foundation's Cantigny Park, visit Cantigny.org.