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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**AUTHOR JOHN W. GRAHAM TO SPEAK NOVEMBER 5**

**Wheaton, Ill., October 23, 2014** — The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park announces a presentation by author John W. Graham on Wednesday, November 5. He will discuss his book, “The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s.” The program and parking are free.

Graham’s work chronicles the overseas grave visitations by “Gold Star” mothers and widows of American soldiers killed in World War I. Between 1930 and 1933, the U.S. government took 6,654 Gold Star pilgrims to visit their sons’ and husbands’ graves in American cemeteries in Belgium, England and France. Veteran Army officers acted as tour guides, helping the women come to terms with their losses as they sought solace and closure. The government meticulously planned and paid for everything from transportation and lodging to menus, tips, sightseeing, and interpreters. Flowered wreaths, flags, and camp chairs were provided at the cemeteries, and official photographers captured each woman standing at her loved ones grave.

Graham covers the Gold Star pilgrimages from their launch to the present day, beginning with an introduction to the war and wartime burial.

A book signing will follow Graham’s presentation. Copies of “The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s” will be available for purchase.

This 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 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 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).