

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE DR. MADELEINE ALBRIGHT,
ALLIED NATIONS AND WWII VETERANS TO MARK
70TH ANNIVERSARY OF V-E DAY AT THE WWII MEMORIAL**

Ceremony to be followed by "Arsenal of Democracy World War II Victory Capitol Flyover"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Former Secretary of State Dr. Madeleine Albright and representatives of embassies of European Allied Nations will gather at the World War II Memorial on Friday, May 8, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. to pay tribute to the Greatest Generation during a special event commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Allied Forces Victory in the Atlantic and the end of World War II in Europe.

Record numbers of veterans and their families, including hundreds of World War II veterans, are also expected to assemble at the World War II Memorial to mark this historic anniversary.

"Nearly 70 years have passed since millions of people around the globe poured into the streets to celebrate the end of World War II in Europe," said Friends of the National World War II Memorial Chairman Josiah Bunting III. "This commemoration gives us the opportunity to celebrate our World War II veterans who served overseas, all those who served on the home front, and our Allies who together helped defeat tyranny, preserve freedom, and literally saved the world."

Dr. Albright served as Secretary of State during the Clinton Administration. She was the first woman to hold that position. Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Dr. Albright and her family spent the war years in exile in England. Raised Catholic, Dr. Albright did not learn until adulthood that her parents were originally Jewish and that many of her relatives in Czechoslovakia had perished in the Holocaust, including three of her grandparents.

Also taking part in the ceremony will be dozens of World War II veterans and representatives of the United States and the embassies of nearly 30 European Theater Allied Nations who will lay wreaths at the "Freedom Wall" of the Memorial in memory of the more than 400,000 Americans and 60 million people killed worldwide during the deadliest military conflict in human history.

Alex Kershaw, renowned historian and author of "The Bedford Boys: The Story of Bedford, Virginia's Extraordinary D-Day Sacrifice" and "The Liberator: One Soldier's 500-Day Odyssey from the Beaches of Sicily to the Gates of Dachau," will serve as the event's Master of Ceremonies and Expert Historian.

The ceremony, co-hosted by the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) and the National Park Service (NPS), will be rain or shine. Bunting will speak on behalf of Friends and acting Superintendent Karen Cucurullo will represent NPS. The Military District of Washington will provide military support for the event including performances by The Airmen of Note, the premier jazz ensemble of the United States Air Force.

The ceremony will be followed by the "Arsenal of Democracy World War II Victory Capitol Flyover," which will include dozens of World War II aircraft flying in 15 historically sequenced warbird formations overhead. The formations will represent the war's major battles, from Pearl Harbor through the final air assault on Japan, and conclude with a missing man formation to "Taps." The Flyover is set to start at 12:10 p.m. and last approximately 40 minutes.

About Friends of the National World War II Memorial (www.wiimemorialfriends.org):

Founded in 2007, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to ensuring that the legacy, lessons, and sacrifices of World War II are not forgotten. To meet this mission, Friends sponsors an annual public lecture series featuring prominent historians; provides teachers with curriculum materials; and collects and archives video interviews of World War II veterans and other members of the Greatest Generation. Additionally, Friends has the lead responsibility in planning and staging five or more major national commemorative events annually and each summer sponsors a dozen free public performances of military bands at the Memorial. Friends relies on private support to breathe new life into the Memorial and to ensure that it continues to serve as a living lesson for all Americans.

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