

## MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release  
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### **75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC TO BE COMMEMORATED AT WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL**

*Representatives of Allied Nations to place wreaths at the Atlantic Arch of the Memorial  
in honor of all who served during the longest continuous military campaign during World War II.*

**Washington, DC** – On Friday, January 13, 2017 at 11:30 a.m., the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) will host a brief ceremony at the National World War II Memorial to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous military campaign during WWII.

The Battle of the Atlantic began with Great Britain's declaration of war against Germany in September 1939 and continued until the defeat of Germany in 1945. The battle pitted U-boats and other warships of the German navy and aircraft of the German Air Force, attempting to cut off vital supplies primarily from North America to Great Britain and the Soviet Union, against Allied naval forces and Allied merchant shipping. The Battle of the Atlantic involved thousands of ships in more than 100 convoy battles and approximately 1,000 single-ship encounters, in a theatre covering thousands of square miles of ocean. The first U-boats reached U.S. waters on January 13, 1942, as part of Germany's Operation Paukenschlag ("Drumbeat") which planned for U-boat attacks on shipping along the U.S. East Coast. By the time the U-boats withdrew on February 6th, they had sunk 156,939 tonnes of shipping and 397 ships totaling over 2 million tons without loss.

To mark this significant battle in world history, Friends has invited representatives of Allied Nations that took part in the battle to present wreaths at the World War II Memorial's Atlantic Arch in remembrance of the 36,200 Allied sailors and the 36,000 Allied merchant seamen killed during the Battle of the Atlantic and in honor of all who served.

Friends' Chairman Josiah Bunting III will offer remarks on behalf of the host organization. David Alberg, Superintendent of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will also provide remarks. For the past eight years, the Sanctuary has been studying significant shipwrecks off the Outer Banks, most notably WWII Battle of the Atlantic wrecks. They have focused on the Allied warships and merchant mariners vessels as well as the German U-boats. In 2014, their office discovered the last German U-boat to be lost off the mid-Atlantic, U-576, as well as its victim the cargo ship Bluefields. They believe that this site represents the only WWII naval battlefield off the U.S. East Coast.

**Who:** Josiah Bunting III, Chairman, Friends of the National World War II Memorial  
David Alberg, Superintendent, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA  
Ambassador Dirk Wouters, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium  
Lieutenant-Colonel Eric Jan Looman, Assistant Marine Attaché, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
Captain Erik Bøe, Assistant Defense and Naval Attaché, Royal Norwegian Embassy  
Embassy of Canada Representatives  
Chief Musician Gunnar Bruning, United States Navy Ceremonial Band

**Where:** National World War II Memorial  
17<sup>th</sup> Street between Constitution and Independence Avenues  
Washington, DC

**When:** Friday, January 13, 2017 at 11:30 AM

**About Friends of the National World War II Memorial ([www.wwiimemorialfriends.org](http://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org)):** Founded in 2007, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to honoring and preserving the national memory of World War II. To meet this mission, Friends sponsors an annual public lecture series featuring prominent historians; hosts an annual teachers conference in Washington, DC; 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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