

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
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70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA TO BE COMMEMORATED AT WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

*A wreath will be laid at the Pacific Arch of the Memorial in honor of
the 183,000 Allies who served during this historic battle of WWII.*

Washington, DC – On Wednesday, April 1 at 12 p.m., World War II veterans and members of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) Board of Directors will gather at the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa.

On April 1, 1945, Allied forces invaded the island of Okinawa and engaged the Japanese in the bloodiest battle of the Pacific War. The 82-day campaign was the Pacific Theater's largest amphibious assault and the final land battle of World War II. "Okinawa, in important ways, was both the most significant and costliest of the American island battles and victories in the Pacific," said Josiah Bunting III, chairman of Friends.

Ground forces were made up of four divisions of the U.S. 10th Army and two Marine Divisions. The invasion was supported by naval, amphibious, and tactical air forces, including the British Pacific Fleet.

When the island was finally secured, more than 12,500 U.S. soldiers and Navy personnel were dead or missing and more than 38,000 were wounded. Thousands more suffered from psychological wounds and illnesses. 70,000 soldiers of the Japanese 32nd Army died or committed suicide and 100,000 to 150,000 civilians lost their lives during the battle.

To mark this pivotal battle in U.S. history, World War II veterans, new Friends chairman Josiah Bunting III, and others will lay a wreath at the Pacific Arch of the World War II Memorial to honor all those who served in this historic battle and to remember the more than 12,500 Americans who lost their lives.

Who: World War II Veterans, *including Battle of Okinawa Veterans James L. Riffe and John (Jack) Cassidy*
Josiah Bunting III
Friends of the National World War II Memorial Board Members
U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" Bugler

Where: National World War II Memorial
17th Street between Constitution and Independence Avenues
Washington, DC

When: Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 12 PM

About The Friends of the National World War II Memorial (www.wwiimemorialfriends.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. Capturing the Voices of World War II, a service-learning program in which high school students interview World War II veterans at "their" Memorial, transforms the Memorial into an outdoor classroom and provides a unique platform to digitally document the stories brought to life through first-person veteran accounts. 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.