

MEDIA ADVISORY

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

*A wreath will be laid at the Battle of the Bulge bronze bas-relief in tribute
to the 19,000 Americans killed during the United States' bloodiest battle of WWII.*

Washington, DC – On Tuesday, December 16 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 the Bulge, the biggest and bloodiest single battle in U.S. history.

By mid-December 1944 the allies, standing on the doorstep of Germany, believed that Hitler's army had all but lost. That belief changed when, on December 16, 1944, Hitler launched a massive offensive into Belgium breaking the allied line creating a large “bulge.” Dogged resistance by American units surrounded at key crossroad towns, along with German fuel shortages brought about the demise of Hitler's December offensive by the end of January 1945.

The Battle of the Bulge involved approximately 610,000 U.S. forces that suffered more than 89,000 casualties, leaving 19,000 killed, 47,500 wounded, and 23,000 captured or missing. Among those who fought and suffered terrible losses were more than 2,000 African American soldiers who had volunteered to go to the front lines. Because of troop shortages during the Battle of the Bulge, Europe's Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower temporarily desegregated the army for the first and only time during World War II.

To mark this pivotal battle in U.S. history, World War II veterans, Friends chairman retired Army Lieutenant General Mick Kicklighter, and others will lay a wreath at the Battle of the Bulge bas-relief of the World War II Memorial to honor all those who served in this historic battle and to remember the 19,000 Americans who lost their lives.

Who: World War II Veterans
Retired Army Lieutenant General Claude (Mick) Kicklighter
Friends of the National World War II Memorial Board Members
U.S. Army Band Bugler

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

When: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 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.