

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**FRIENDS TO GATHER AT WWII MEMORIAL TO CELEBRATE AND REMEMBER  
AMBASSADOR F. HAYDN WILLIAMS ON 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**

*Friends' late founder to be honored by sculptor Ray Kaskey and Friends' Board.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – On Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:30 a.m., the Friends of the National World War II Memorial will hold a brief ceremony and wreath presentation to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of its late founder, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams. Ambassador Williams was a WWII veteran who played a critical role in the creation of the National World War II Memorial. Ambassador Williams died on April 22, 12016 at the age of 96.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed Ambassador Williams to serve on the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). He was subsequently named chairman of the ABMC's National WWII Memorial Committee with the primary responsibility for the site and the design of the National WWII Memorial. During the complicated approval process established by law, Ambassador Williams presented and defended ABMC's recommendations in 22 public hearings over a period of five years. The WWII Memorial was formally dedicated in 2004.

In 2007, Ambassador Williams led the effort to establish the Friends of the National World War II Memorial and became its first chairman. Following his 2009 retirement, he was elected chairman emeritus and remained actively engaged in the organization and its ongoing mission to honor and preserve the national memory of WWII.

From 1941-42, Ambassador Williams served on Midway Island with Pacific Naval Air Base Contractors building runways, seaplane, and a submarine base. Soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Ambassador Williams was commissioned U.S. Naval Reserve and served on staff of Commander Naval Air Transport Pacific as an air operations officer in the Central Pacific, the Marianas, and the Occupation of Japan, with the primary mission of air evacuating prisoners of war.

Following the war, he worked as a professor at the University of Washington and served as an Associate Dean and Associate Professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. During the Eisenhower Administration, he was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and was invited by the Kennedy Administration to continue to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. He also was a lecturer at the Naval War College Newport and the National War College Fr. McNair.

From 1971-1976, he served as the President's Personal Representative for the Micronesia and Mariana Future Political Status Negotiations with the rank of Ambassador. These Negotiations ended the US Strategic Trusteeship over the islands taken from Japan during WWII.

Ambassador Williams spent several years promoting the development of the American Memorial Park Saipan, the scene of ferocious combat in 1944 as American ground and naval forces broke through Imperial Japan's inner defense rim. Ambassador Williams has been called the father of both the Memorial Park and the American Memorial on Saipan, America's most western tribute to our war dead in the far Pacific.

Born in Spokane Washington on August 21, 1919, Ambassador Williams earned an A.B. from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

"It is to him, as much as any American, that our obligation to assure the legacy of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen during the nation's greatest war remains imperishable and will continue to serve as an inspiration to succeeding generations to their countrymen," said Josiah Bunting III, Chairman of the Friends of the National WWII Memorial.

In attendance at the August 21<sup>st</sup> ceremony will be Ray Kaskey, sculptor of the bronze work at the WWII Memorial; Retired Army Major General John Herrling, former Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission (1995-2005); and Friends' Board Members Retired Army Lieutenant General Claude "Mick" Kicklighter, Robert Bohannon, Jan Evans Houser, Robert Kelley, Rolland Kidder, Robert Peck, Ruth Rodgers, and Holly Rotondi.

**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 and to creating the next "Greatest Generation" of tomorrow. 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, staging, and funding five or more major national commemorative events annually and is currently sponsoring a national four-year World War II 75th anniversary commemoration. 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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