

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TO HOST COMMEMORATION AT  
WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TO MARK 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF PARIS**

*A delegation from France and representatives from the divisions that liberated the city will be present.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – On Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m., the Friends of the National World War II Memorial will host a ceremony to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Paris from Nazi Germany.

Throughout World War II, cooperation among the Allied Nations was critical in defeating the forces of tyranny and ending the deadliest military conflict in human history. For the United States, alliance played key roles dating back to its founding. The “First Alliance” between the U.S. and France has endured for more than 240 years.

During WWII, the U.S. and Free French (Forces Francaises Libres) joined forces in several important campaigns with other Allies to combat the Axis powers in Africa and Europe.

By August 19, 1944, with an uprising already taking place in the city, Free French and American troops set their sights on liberating Paris. Just before midnight on August 24<sup>th</sup>, the French 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division reached the Hôtel de Ville in the heart of Paris. On the morning of August 25<sup>th</sup>, Free French forces and the U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division entered the city, liberating Paris after four years of Nazi occupation. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, the “Victory Day,” the U.S. Army’s 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division paraded up the Avenue Hoche to the Arc de Triomphe, then down the Champs Élysées, greeted by joyous crowds as they made their way through Paris.

“The liberation of this iconic European city from Nazi control was a meaningful victory in the long road toward defeating Hitler and it served as an important symbol for all the Allied nations,” said Josiah Bunting III, chairman of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial.

During the August 29<sup>th</sup> ceremony at the World War II Memorial, we will remember, honor, recognize, and thank these heroes who – through sacrifice, valor, dedication, and determination – preserved our freedom, liberated Paris, and saved the world. At the ceremony will be Susan Eisenhower, the granddaughter of General Dwight D. Eisenhower and a senior delegation from the French Army, including their former Chief of Army, General Bruno Cuche, along with Col. Gregory Colombani, Brigade Commander, Combat Tank Regiment which represents the French 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division which led the liberation in August of 1944. Major General Andrew Schaefer, Commanding General of the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the Division color guard, and Colonel Ike Sallee, Brigade Commander U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and Division color guard – both units which played significant roles in the liberation of Paris – will also be present and recognized. Friends Board member retired Army Lieutenant General Claude “Mick” Kicklighter and The Honorable Carole Brookins, chairwoman of The First Alliance Foundation will provide welcome remarks.

A 40-piece band from the United States Army Band (Pershing’s Own) will provide a pre-ceremony concert as well as musical tributes throughout the ceremony and the Military District of Washington will provide U.S. military support. Monseigneur Antoine de Romanet, Bishop to the French Armies, will give the Benediction at the end of the ceremony.

*This special commemoration is made possible by the generous support of The First Alliance Foundation, whose mission is to honor and enhance the French-American strategic and military alliance.*

**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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