

August 12, 2019

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF OPERATION DRAGOON

#### SUMMARY:

On Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m., the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) will host an Operation Dragoon 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. The ceremony and wreath presentation at the Memorial's Atlantic Arch will commemorate 75 years since the Allied amphibious invasion in Southern France to divide and smash the nation's Nazi occupiers.

The Operation Dragoon 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration is part of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial's four-year WWII 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration, which kicked off on Pearl Harbor Day 2016 and will go until VJ-Day 2020. Friends is the only organization hosting a full four-year 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration, marking every major battle in which American troops participated during World War II.

#### WHO:

- World War II veterans
- Jean-Marc Choukroun, whose father participated in the landing at Saint-Tropez as part of Operation Dragoon
- Karen Pitts, niece of Lt. Philip D. Pitts, USAAG, who was a bombardier with the 350<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, 100<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, and supported operations in France and Germany before he was killed on September 11, 1944
- Wing Commander Matthew Stuckless, Australian Embassy
- Colonel Emilie Tota, Embassy of France
- Lieutenant Colonel Zafeirios Monios, Greek Embassy
- Colonel E.M. Mabalane, South African Embassy
- Major Richard Mackie RM, British Embassy
- John Fenzel, author and retired senior Army Special Forces officer
- Army Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Todd Wolf
- Master Sergeant Michael Mergen, U.S. Marine Band

#### WHAT:

World War II veterans, family members of those who served in Operation Dragoon, and Allied nation representatives will lay wreaths at the National World War II Memorial in honor and remembrance of the nearly 26,000 Allies killed and wounded during Operation Dragoon. The Military District of Washington will provide military support.

#### WHERE:

National World War II Memorial, 1750 Independence Ave SW, Washington, D.C. 20024

#### WHEN:

Thursday, August 15, 11:30 a.m.

\*Media can RSVP to Thalia Ertman at [tertman@wwiimemorialfriends.org](mailto:tertman@wwiimemorialfriends.org) or to Scott Warner at [swarner@wwiimemorialfriends.org](mailto:swarner@wwiimemorialfriends.org)

*The Friends of the National World War II Memorial's WWII 75th Anniversary Commemoration is generously sponsored by AT&T. Generous support has also been provided by the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation and Worthington Industries.*

#### 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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