

October 21, 2019

MEDIA ADVISORY

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE 75TH ANNIVERSARIES OF THE BATTLE OF LEYTE AND THE BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

SUMMARY:

On Wednesday, October 23rd at 11:30 a.m., the Friends of the National World War II Memorial will hold a brief ceremony and wreath presentation at the National World War II Memorial to mark the 75th anniversaries of the Battle of Leyte, the largest amphibious operation in the Pacific to date, and the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest and last naval battle of the war.

In late October 1944, the campaign to liberate the Philippines officially began. General Douglas MacArthur led the largest amphibious operation in the Pacific to date onto the shores of Leyte, while the American Navy waged the largest and last naval battle of the war in Leyte Gulf to defend the landing troops from Japanese sea attacks. This invasion finally initiated the liberation of the Philippines and severely crippled Japan's military strength in the Pacific.

The Battle of Leyte and Battle of Leyte Gulf 75th Anniversary Commemorations are part of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial's four-year WWII 75th 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 75th Anniversary Commemoration, marking every major battle in which American troops participated during World War II.

WHO:

- World War II veterans William Ryan, Ira Rigger, Harry Miller, and Colonel William Weber
- Josiah Bunting III, Chairman of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial
- Joan Cox Dazansky, daughter of Army Colonel Joseph W. Cox, Jr., who was a casualty in the Battle of Leyte
- Rear Admiral Sam Cox, USN (Ret.), Director of the Naval History and Heritage Command
- Commodore Mat Hudson, CSC, RAN, Naval Attaché of the Embassy of Australia, Washington, DC
- Captain Jesus L. Portiz, Philippine Navy (GSC), Naval Attaché of the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, Washington, DC
- Chaplain (Commander) Garry Thornton, USN
- Military District of Washington

WHAT:

Friends of the National World War II Memorial Chairman Josiah Bunting III, retired Navy Rear Admiral Sam Cox, and "war orphan" Joan Cox Dazansky will each provide brief remarks. World War II veterans and representatives of Allied Nations will present wreaths at the Pacific Arch of the National World War II Memorial in remembrance of the more than 15,000 Allies killed, wounded, or missing during the Battle of Leyte and the more than 3,000 Allies killed, wounded or missing during the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

WHERE:

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

WHEN:

Wednesday, October 23, 11:30 a.m.

*Media can RSVP to Thalia Ertman at tertman@wwiimemorialfriends.org or to Scott Warner at 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):

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.