

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 6, 2020

**FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE 75<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF V-E DAY WITH WREATH PRESENTATION, VIRTUAL COMMEMORATION**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) will pay tribute to the Greatest Generation at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. EST, marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied forces victory in the Atlantic and the end of World War II in Europe.

“Despite the necessity to social distance and stay at home as much as possible right now, Friends still aims to ensure that every World War II veteran and all the families of those who served and sacrificed knows that they are remembered,” said Holly Rotondi, executive director of Friends. “On May 8<sup>th</sup>, we remember the estimated 15-20 million people that died during the war in Europe and the 60 million people lost worldwide, including 400,000 Americans, during the deadliest military conflict in human history.”

At 9:00 a.m., Friends will begin its daylong online coverage of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (known as V-E Day) on their [Facebook Page](#). This virtual commemoration will feature remarks from Friends Chairman Josiah Bunting III, Friends Vice Chair Jane Droppa, Former Senator Bob Dole, FedEx CEO Fred Smith, WWII veteran and Pro Football Hall of Fame Coach Marv Levy, journalist and WWII orphan Bob Holliday, son of Captain Karl O. "Hap" Holliday, KIA on 13 April 1945, and WWII veteran Terry Shima.

At 10:30 a.m., Friends will join the U.S. Department of Defense in co-presenting a very special virtual V-E Day 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration, accessible on [defense.gov](#). This commemoration will feature videos from many of the Greatest Generation and others.

Later in the morning, The Arsenal of Democracy commemoration flyover will release an online video tribute, “Victory in Europe – V-E Day 75 Years Later”, on its website.

At 12:30 p.m. on the [Friends Facebook Page](#), Friends will stream live online from the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., where they will join the National Park Service in presenting wreaths at the “Freedom Wall,” a field of 4,048 sculpted gold stars each representing 100 American military deaths during WWII, in memory of all Americans and Allies who served and sacrificed during the war.

Throughout the day, Friends will be sharing on its social media channels numerous videos collected from WWII veterans and others reminiscing and reflecting on V-E Day.

**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 75<sup>th</sup> 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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