



## Press Release

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### **First Division Museum Plans 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration August 17-21**

*Five days of “50 and Forward” special events include birthday observance; memorial service honoring Vietnam veterans; and Huey helicopter unveiling*

**WHEATON, IL, August 5, 2010** — The First Division Museum at Cantigny, part of the McCormick Foundation, will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with five days of special activities and events for all ages beginning August 17.

The First Division Museum opened on August 20, 1960, in a renovated horse stables building that is now part of the Cantigny Park Visitors Center. It moved to its current 38,000-square-foot home in 1992.

“Visitors often tell us that they remember the original museum, how small it was, and the tanks displayed out front,” said Paul Herbert, executive director of the museum. “We’ve come a long way in 50 years, but we’ve always stayed true to our mission of preserving and interpreting the history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, and providing an opportunity to learn more about our country’s military heritage.”

Cantigny’s benefactor, Robert R. McCormick, served in World War I as a member of the First Division. Establishing the museum five years after Colonel McCormick passed away was the first major decision of his original Board of Trustees.

Herbert noted that the museum is honored to be sharing its anniversary milestone with all Vietnam veterans because 2010 also marks 40 years since the 1<sup>st</sup> Division returned from Vietnam.

Parking will be free at Cantigny on August 20 and August 21. Several key events are planned for these days:

- **Friday, August 20**
  - 1 pm at First Division Museum**  
*50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Observance*  
Cake will be served following brief remarks by VIP guests including U.S. Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL).
- **Saturday, August 21 – “LZ Cantigny”**
  - **9 am at Cantigny Visitors Center**  
*Memorial service honoring Vietnam dead and missing*
  - **11 am at First Division Museum parking lot**  
*Unveiling and dedication of restored UH-1C “Huey” gunship helicopter*

“We’re calling Saturday ‘LZ Cantigny,’ which is short for landing zone, a widely used term during and after the war in Vietnam,” said Herbert. “The Huey we’re dedicating

served in that conflict and sustained combat damage. It's a big thrill to be adding another important macro-artifact to the First Division Museum's permanent collection. We expect a great deal of public interest in the restored helicopter, just as we did last year for the World War II landing craft."

Like the tanks outside the First Division Museum, the Huey helicopter is a "conditional donation" from the U.S. Army. After its debut at Cantigny, the aircraft will reside at the Illinois Aviation Museum in Bolingbrook, until appropriate space is available at Cantigny for it and the landing craft.

The WWII landing craft and the First Division Museum's historic vehicles will be on display at Cantigny throughout anniversary week. In addition, at a special Open House on August 17, museum visitors can see unique artifacts not on public display. Open House hours are 10 am to 8 pm.

Another popular event will be a special edition of the First Division Museum's "Date with History" lecture series on Wednesday, August 18, at 7:30 pm. One of the U.S. Army's most decorated helicopter pilots in the Vietnam conflict, Hugh Mills, will discuss his book *Low Level Hell: A Scout Pilot in the Big Red One*. The book recounts his service with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division as an OH-6 "Loach" pilot, during which he flew more than 2,000 combat hours. Doors open at 6:45 pm, and a book signing will follow the presentation.

Family-oriented activities at the museum during anniversary week include:

- Tuesday, August 17
  - Tank Park Tours (11 am, 1 pm & 6 pm)
  - Scavenger Hunt (10 am-5 pm)
  - Dress Like a Soldier (10 am-5 pm)
- Wednesday, August 18
  - Craft project: paint a camouflage "boonie hat" (10 am-3 pm)
- Thursday, August 19
  - History Alive! (children's drop-in program about Desert Storm; 1-3 pm)
  - Animal Adventures -- meet exotic animals that soldiers encounter all over the world! Fennec Fox, Burmese Python, Black-Throat Monitor, Wallaby, Kinkajou, Bearded Dragon, Tarantula and more. (10 am-4 pm)
- Friday, August 20
  - Artillery Park Tours (11 am & 1 pm)
  - Water Balloon Artillery Challenge (10 am-3 pm)
  - Movie in the Park: *The Big Red One* (8:30 pm)
- Saturday, August 21
  - "How Does it Fly?" (children's drop-in program about helicopters; 10 am-3 pm)

More details about the First Division Museum's "50 and Forward" events are posted online at [First DivisionMuseum.org](http://FirstDivisionMuseum.org).

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### **About the First Division Museum**

The First Division Museum at Cantigny, part of the McCormick Foundation, promotes public learning about America's military heritage and affairs through the history of the Big Red One—the famed 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. It stands in tribute to all who have served our country in the armed forces. The museum's main exhibit hall transports visitors to the trenches of World War I, the beaches of World War II and the jungles of Vietnam. Outside, tanks are displayed from every era, along with personnel carriers and artillery. The Robert R. McCormick Research Center, open to the public, houses the museum's library, archival and photo collections.

The First Division Museum's location at Cantigny Park is traceable to the battlefields of France in World War I. There, in 1918, a "citizen soldier" commanded an artillery battalion for the U.S. Army's First Division in the Battle of Cantigny, America's first victory of the Great War. That soldier was Col. Robert R. McCormick, the 37-year old publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. For many years "the Colonel" would host reunions for his First Division comrades on his 500-acre Wheaton estate, which he renamed Cantigny to commemorate his unit's achievement.

Visit the First Division Museum at Cantigny online at [FirstDivisionMuseum.org](http://FirstDivisionMuseum.org).

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