



Office of Public Affairs

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## **National Museum of American History Revitalizes Military History Hall -- "The Price of Freedom" exhibition opens on Veteran's Day --**

On Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 2004, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History will open a permanent new exhibition titled "The Price of Freedom." This 18,200-square-foot display will survey the history of the U.S. military from the Colonial era to the present, exploring ways that wars have been defining episodes in American history. The exhibition will be a unique blend of original objects, first person accounts, video presentations and interactive experiences. "The Price of Freedom" exhibition will anchor the new Military History Hall and was made possible through the generosity of Kenneth E. Behring.

"This exhibition will give visitors a comprehensive and memorable overview of America's military experience and the central role it has played in our national life," said Brent D. Glass, director of the National Museum of American History. "The sacrifices of individuals, families, community and nation, including the ultimate sacrifice, are the price of freedom."

Using more than 700 original artifacts, graphic images and interactive stations, the exhibition will tell stories of how Americans have fought to establish the nation's independence, determine its borders, shape its values of freedom and opportunity, and define its leading role in world affairs. The scope of the exhibition will go far beyond a survey of battles to examine wars as both social and military events. The exhibition will also analyze the relationship between wars and American political leadership, social values, technological innovation and personal sacrifice.

The exhibition will have 10 sections with major sections on the following wars:

- The Revolutionary War
- The Civil War
- World War II
- The Cold War
- The Vietnam War
- Afghanistan and Iraq

As they enter the gallery, visitors will be transported back to 1756, where they will find American colonists fighting alongside the British in the French and Indian War. The colonists then turn against the British to fight for independence in the American Revolution. As the story goes from there to recent conflicts, visitors will see an array of images, interactive media, and military objects, including battle flags, firearms, swords uniforms, medals, and soldiers' equipment. Highlights will include George Washington's commission as the first Commander in Chief, a regimental flag of Civil War black troops, the surrender furniture from Appomattox Court House, and a World War II jeep. An icon of the Vietnam War, a restored UH-1H Huey helicopter will be the largest single object on display. The exhibition will extend to recent wars and show selected objects from Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, including Colin Powell's uniform and a first-generation military robot.

"The Price of Freedom" will conclude with an area designed to honor veterans' service to their country. In a display on the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor, visitors will hear medal recipients tell their own stories of heroism. A final video will recognize the suffering and sacrifice that all veterans and their families have made to support and defend the nation.

The exhibition will be designed to appeal to audiences of all ages. Displays will tell stories of how women, and children as well as men have been a part of the nation's military history. Young people will have a range of hands-on opportunities to explore the soldier's experience in different eras. Interpreters in period costumes will engage the audience and answer questions.

The museum plans extensive educational programming and a Web site will offer virtual visitors a look at the exhibition plus in-depth access to the museum's military history collections of artifacts and photographs related to the story of the U.S. military.

The National Museum of American History traces American heritage through exhibitions of social, cultural, scientific and technological history. The museum is located at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W., and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except Dec. 25. For more information, visit the museum's Web site at <http://americanhistory.si.edu> or call (202) 633-1000, (202) 357-1729 (TTY).

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