



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Freedom Fest Returns to the NIM!

Independence Day celebration combines American history and family fun

Columbus, Georgia – June 21, 2017: The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center will host its fifth annual community-wide Independence Day celebration on **Tuesday, July 4, 2017**. Freedom Fest will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and will be filled with music, kids' activities, historical reenactments, food, and fun.

In the spirit of the holiday, the festival will focus on American and military history. The Columbus Historical Reenactors Association will be back firing a Civil War era cannon every hour on the hour. Living historians from Westville and Port Columbus will have encampments and interactive demonstrations. Additional living historians will set up tables inside the museum to show off period weapons, tools, clothing, toys and housewares.

The Silver Wings Parachute Demonstration Team, representing Airborne Soldiers from Fort Benning, will drop in at Inouye Field at 12:30 p.m. to deliver a copy of the Declaration of Independence.

All day, kids will enjoy bounce houses, face and hair painting, balloon animals and Superheroes. There will be a rock climbing wall for adults and kids as young as 6. And the popular Pint-Sized Patriots Parade, sponsored by Muscogee Moms, will be back. Youngsters are invited to dress up their bicycles, tricycles, and wagons – and themselves! – for a fun and patriotic parade down Heritage Walk. Prizes will be awarded to winners 12 and under.

Live bands will perform throughout the day just outside the museum's rotunda. Large tents will provide seating and shelter from the sun.

World War II Company Street will be open for self-guided tours between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Volunteers will be on hand to help visitors locate names on the Vietnam Wall, and the Memorial Walk of Honor will be open all day.

The Giant Screen Theater will be the perfect place to cool off. The NIM Kids Summer Film Fest continues with free screenings of Frozen and Moana at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Vendors will sell ice cream, barbecue plates, chicken sandwiches, funnel cakes, hot dogs, hamburgers, pretzels, beer, frozen mocktails and soft drinks. The Fife and Drum restaurant and the Rally Point Canteen concessions stand will be open for diners who'd rather stay indoors.

The museum's activities will end at 5 p.m. Festival-goers will be encouraged to head to uptown Columbus or Phenix City for a concert in the riverside amphitheater and fireworks at dark.

Admission to Freedom Fest is free. There will be nominal costs for the theater, simulators, food and drink. Donations made on July 4th will go toward the new national monument to the Global War on Terrorism, now under construction on Heritage Walk. The National Infantry Foundation relies on donations to operate the museum and preserve the artifacts that tell the heroic story of the American Infantryman.

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The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park, a 155-acre tract linking Columbus, Georgia, and the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, is the first world-class site to pay tribute to the U.S. Army Infantryman and those who fight alongside him. As the only interactive Army Museum in the United States, the museum showcases the contributions of the Infantry Soldier in every war fought by the U.S. by offering immersive participation and engaging visitors in the unique experiences of the Infantry Soldier. The complex also includes a parade field, memorial walk of honor, Vietnam Memorial Plaza, authentic World War II Company Street and Giant Screen Theater. For more information, visit www.nationalinfantrymuseum.org.