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FIRST DIVISION MUSEUM LAUNCHES TRAVEL PROGRAM

“Footsteps of The First” leads off with World War II tour of Europe in 2021

Wheaton, Ill., October 14, 2020 – The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park has introduced “Footsteps of The First,” a small-group travel program combining cultural exploration and military history in partnership with Academic Travel Abroad (ATA).

The new program offers powerful learning opportunities packaged with the lure of comfortable, hassle-free overseas travel. Destinations will include battlegrounds, museums, cemeteries, monuments, and other venues important to the history of the U.S. Army’s illustrious 1st Infantry Division, to which the First Division Museum is dedicated—with a solid mix of local culture weaved into the trip.

“We believe ‘Footsteps of The First’ is an ideal way to leverage the expertise of our museum professionals and extend the First Division Museum’s reach,” said Krewasky A. Salter, who joined the museum in 2019 as executive director and previously served as a Smithsonian Journeys Expert. “This is an exciting new direction for us and something we are uniquely qualified to do. Having worked with ATA before, I am confident we’ve secured the professional travel planning that’s essential to an outstanding experience. ATA and our selected expert for this inaugural ‘Footsteps of The First’ will collectively offer an enlighten and memorable experience.”

Salter envisions the First Division Museum hosting a trip annually or every 18 months. “Footsteps of The First” is intended for audience enrichment, engagement and public outreach; the program does not benefit the museum financially.

Our initial “Footsteps” destination is Western Europe, September 5-16, 2021. With First Division Museum historian Jacquelyn Gillaspie serving as expert guide, travelers (limited to 25) will explore sites where the “Big Red One” made history during World War II, leading the way to Allied success.

“The trip will be educational, but also deeply meaningful for all of us who believe in freedom and want to experience the places where so many brave soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice to protect it,” said Gillaspie. “Some days, we’ll literally be standing on hallowed ground.”

Highlights of the 12-day journey include Omaha Beach in Normandy; the city of Aachen, Germany; the Hürtgen Forest; and several key Battle of the Bulge sites. Impressive war cemeteries, monuments, cathedrals and museums are on the itinerary, too, many located in spectacular settings.

“Footsteps of The First” offers well-rounded travel, with time set aside for enjoying local attractions and culture. The trip begins and ends in Paris. Along the way, travelers will enjoy special dining experiences, 4-star accommodations and ground transportation via luxury motor coach.

A full itinerary, travel details and pricing are posted online at FDMuseum.org. Reservations are now being accepted.

The First Division Museum is currently open Wednesday-Sunday on a reservations-only basis. Visitors can choose a morning or afternoon session by registering in advance at FDMuseum.org. Admission is free with paid parking at Cantigny (\$5).

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About the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park

The First Division Museum, part of Robert R. McCormick Foundations, promotes public learning about America’s military heritage and affairs through the history of the “Big Red One”—the famed 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. The museum’s main exhibit hall, First in War, 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 artillery pieces and a personnel carrier. The Robert R. McCormick Research Center, open to the public, houses the museum’s library, archival and photo collections. For more information, visit fdmuseum.org.

About Academic Travel Abroad

Washington, D.C.-based Academic Travel Abroad, Inc. is an educational travel provider for some of this country’s most prestigious organizations. Riding the post-war wave of interest in travel to Europe, ATA launched operations in 1950 by assisting universities and cultural institutions in the creation of group travel programs for their members. Today, ATA is a leader in cultural and educational group travel and serves partners such as The New York Times, Smithsonian Institution, American Institute of Architects and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. For more information, visit academic-travel.com.

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EDITORS: Photos, including a head shot of tour expert Jacquelyn Gillaspie, are available for download [here](#).