

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER TO HOST SPECIAL MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND EVENTS

Philadelphia, PA (May 10, 2010) – This Memorial Day weekend, the National Constitution Center will pay tribute to the brave men and women who have given their lives in our nation's service. From Saturday, May 29 through Monday, May 31, 2010, visitors can participate in an array of special activities about the history of the holiday. The Center's Memorial Day celebration is free with museum admission.

The Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, offers visitors the chance to learn about our nation's involvement in wars and conflicts, and reflect on the service and heroism of American veterans. Guests can view letters home from soldiers, a video representation of uniforms from different wars throughout U.S. history, and a display of flags from each branch of the armed services. In the World War II section of the exhibit, visitors can see a "blue star" flag, which families hung in their windows of their homes to show they had a family member in military service, and three air medals. Additionally, the Center's signature theater performance, "Freedom Rising," dramatizes the sacrifice of soldiers during the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and World War II, highlighting contributions that veterans have made in shaping our nation's history.

Throughout the weekend, visitors can participate in a 20-minute, interactive program, "Memorials: How a Nation Remembers." Guests will learn the history of monuments across the country, including Little Bighorn, the U.S.S. Arizona, and the Lincoln Memorial, and how they contribute to popular memory. The program will take place daily at 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 2:00 p.m.

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## ADD ONE/MEMORIAL DAY

Guests will also learn how poppies came to be the symbol of Memorial Day following World War I. In honor of this tradition, families are invited to create memorial poppy pins and American star memorial wreaths at activity tables from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

In addition, visitors can celebrate the first anniversary of the Pennsylvania Liberty Tree dedication. Participants will hear the compelling story of this living memorial during an interactive presentation at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The idea for the Liberty Tree began in Boston before the American Revolution, when the Sons of Liberty chose a great elm tree on Boston Common as their clandestine meeting place for secret planning of anti-British action. Protests against the Stamp Act and planning for the Boston Tea Party took place under that Liberty Tree's branches. Soon after, a Liberty Tree was chosen in each of the original 13 colonies for the same purpose. Planted in 1646, the original Liberty Tree stood for 129 years until the British burned it down in 1775. The last of the original Liberty Trees, a tulip poplar, which stood on the grounds of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, fell in 1999 after being fatally damaged by Hurricane Floyd. In order for the legacy of the American Liberty Tree to live on, seeds were harvested from the Maryland Liberty Tree to propagate 13 new Liberty Trees, thus preserving the living legacy of America's enduring freedoms. The Pennsylvania Liberty Tree was planted on the 6<sup>th</sup> Street lawn of the Center last year.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising." The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).