



NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

CONTACT:

Melissa George Bowman

Director, Media & Public Relations

Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce

www.montgomerychamber.com

mbowman@montgomerychamber.com

Office: 334-230-8300 • Cell: 334-207-3197

August 2, 2017

Bond connecting France and Alabama that surpasses time and distance will be memorialized during Rainbow Soldier dedication

Public invited to attend historic event commemorating 100th anniversary of the 167th U.S. Infantry Regiment's departure from Alabama to fight alongside the French in World War I. At 5 p.m., August 28, a bronze sculpture of the Rainbow Soldier designed by acclaimed British sculptor James Butler, R.A., will be inaugurated at Montgomery's Union Station. Its counterpart stands in Fère-en-Tardenois in France.

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – A century ago, 3,677 Alabamians left Montgomery's Union Station to serve their country in World War I. At 5 p.m. on August 28, 2017, exactly one hundred years to the day of their departure, a bronze sculpture designed by world-renowned British sculptor James Butler, RA, will be dedicated in their honor in front of historic Union Station.

ABOUT THE 167TH

These brave men comprised the 167th U.S. Infantry Regiment of the famous 42nd Rainbow Division, and their contributions in multiple battles were vital to winning the war. Known as "The Immortals," these heroic soldiers, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice, were revered for their unwavering courage in the face of unrelenting enemy attack. Their bravery in fighting alongside the French at the Battle of Croix Rouge Farm helped push back the Germans at the Ourcq River, one of the most critical points of the war. Success there came at a high price, as the Battle of Croix Rouge Farm remains the second deadliest battle in Alabama history.

Those who survived were welcomed home to Alabama in May of 1919 with celebrations befitting their heroic status, but time has faded remembrance of their service and sacrifice. The statue to be dedicated on August 28 will ensure these Alabamians will never be forgotten.

ABOUT THE SCULPTURE

The sculpture is a gift to the City of Montgomery from the Croix Rouge Memorial Foundation made possible through the generosity of longtime business and community leader **Nimrod T. Frazer**. A military hero himself, having earned the Silver Star for his service in Korea, Frazer has dedicated much of

his life to ensuring present and future generations understand the legacy of the 167th. Author of *Send the Alabamians: World War I Fighters in the Rainbow Division*, which tells the remarkable story of these soldiers, Frazer commissioned the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial in 2011. Located to the south of the French city of Fère-en-Tardenois on the site of the Battle of Croix Rouge Farm, the memorial is a bronze sculpture that stands in honor of the 42nd Rainbow Division. The Montgomery sculpture will be a second casting of the one in France.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Both sculptures were designed by acclaimed British sculptor **James Butler, RA**. Butler also designed the bronze sculpture of Daedalus that was inaugurated at Maxwell Air Force Base on April 6, 2017. It commemorates the centennial of World War I and the World War I pilots for whom the Order of the Daedalians was established at Maxwell Air Force Base in 1934. Butler has been a member of the Royal Academy since 1964 and is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. His influence has traveled the globe, as his monuments and memorials stand in the United Kingdom, the United States, Kenya, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, France, Singapore and Madeira.

BOND BETWEEN FRANCE AND ALABAMA

It is a fitting tribute that Butler's Rainbow Soldier monument will now stand in both Fère-en-Tardenois and Montgomery. Although 100 years have passed, a deep bond remains between France and Alabama in remembrance of their native sons who fought and died for a noble cause. These statues, though thousands of miles apart, memorialize that connection and offer a permanent reminder of the heroic men they symbolize.

FRAZER TO RECEIVE LEGION OF HONOR DISTINCTION

Nimrod T. Frazer's effort to keep the memory of these soldiers alive has been recognized by France, as he will soon receive that country's highest national decoration, the Legion of Honor. For more than two centuries, the Legion of Honor has been bestowed upon those considered models of French civic service. It was founded on the principles of individual merit, universal recognition and contribution to the public good. Frazer will be among such Americans as President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Eleanor Roosevelt, Miles Davis and Barbra Streisand who have also been distinguished in the Legion of Honor.

PUBLIC INVITED TO ATTEND HISTORIC EVENT

Among those who will be attending the 5 p.m. statue dedication at Union Station on August 28 will be **Consul General of France Louis de Corail**, as well as military leaders, elected officials and business and community leaders. The public is also invited to attend this historic event. The soldiers of the 167th were from hundreds of cities and towns throughout Alabama. Therefore, **communities across the state are encouraged to send representatives to the ceremony to pay tribute to their hometown heroes**. A roster of Alabamians in the 167th can be found in *Send the Alabamians: World War I Fighters in the Rainbow Division* as well as online at <http://croixrougefarm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/CroixRougeCompleteRoster.pdf>.

For further information please visit www.croixrougefarm.org.

Suggested reading: *Send the Alabamians: World War I Fighters in the Rainbow Division*, written by Nimrod T. Frazer, available at local retailer, Montgomery Visitor's Center, Goat Hill Museum Gift Shop and www.amazon.com.

###

Committed to exceptional service, the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce works to improve the economic well-being of the business community and enhance the quality of life of the area through the creation and preservation of jobs.