

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wellesley Celebrations Committee
wellesleycelebrations@gmail.com

**Wellesley Salutes Veterans during November
Celebrations Committee Plans WWII Window Displays and Activities for Safe Family Fun**

October 29, 2020 (Wellesley, MA) - Wellesley is honoring its Veterans during the month of November by exhibiting displays and artifacts from World War II and other wars in vacant Wellesley storefronts on Washington Street, Church Street, and Central Street. Families are invited to view the windows in a safe and socially distanced way.

The window displays and other activities saluting Veterans are planned by the Wellesley Celebrations Committee (wellesleycelebrations@gmail.com) which is collaborating with the American Legion Post 72, the Veterans' Services office and the Select Board. Events include:

- November 10th (and possibly another night) – A WWII theme family-oriented mobile movie at the Tailby commuter rail parking lot.
- November 11th at 11:00 a.m. – Veterans' Day ceremony at the War Memorial at Wellesley Town Hall. Details to be announced.
- November 14th at 1:00 p.m. – Boston Fireman's Band at 77 Central Street with a performance by the Wellesley High School cheerleaders.

The World War II window display event will start on Thursday, November 5 and run through Saturday, November 28. The list below highlights the themes and locations of the displays.

Washington Street

- **467 Washington Street, Haskins Automotive Showroom: WWII Military equipment and encampment experience.** Straight from Fort Devens Military Museum in Massachusetts, experience a WWII encampment complete with a 1943 Willys Jeep with all accessories needed to dig out of any situation. This jeep was the backbone of the United States military transportation system during the war. See actual military equipment used by US Armed Forces along with uniforms of the day, both men and women; the uniforms worn by Wellesley enlistees during WWII and present day.

Church Street

- **8 Church Street: D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944.** Experience the largest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare. More than 160,000 allied troops landed in Normandy France. View the famous Higgins boat that was used to land the troops at Normandy. See the WWII aircraft, ships, and tanks, and see the original American Legion photos of Wellesley's Post 72 American Legion from 1919.
- **24 Church Street: Military Issued Equipment Display.** Envision yourself in 1944 and the present military uniforms worn by the US military personnel. See the helmet that saved a Wellesley serviceman's life from an enemy soldier so he could live to tell the story of a malfunctioning rifle that misfired and saved his life. Imagine cooking your WWII K-Ration (your daily meal) in this helmet in order to survive another day in the combat zone.

Central Street

- **34 Central Street: Military History and Wellesley Veterans Photo Exhibit.** See a photo of the Pearl Harbor survivors; out of 18,000 only 20 veterans are left. Set your eyes on the first Commander of Wellesley's American Legion Post 72, **Captain Jack Early**, who in 1919 became

the youngest Selectman in Wellesley's history at the age 25. He was also recipient of the United States Army's second highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross. See actual pictures of the WWI American Legion Post 72 building and the 1919 Legion members. Reflect on how 57,939 soldiers gave their lives so others could gain freedom from tyranny; the famous Vietnam Memorial picture "*Reflections*" where a soldier reflects on the past and the cost of freedom for all.

- **77 Central Street: William Raveis Real Estate Office, "How Citizen Support Helped GIs Win Wars."** Actual documents showing the endurance of American families both men and women when resources to support the war effort became scarce; a photo of female WWII pilots, the original "Fly Girls" of about 1,100 women stateside flying aircraft, who were aircraft flight testers before delivering aircraft to the war zone; documented personal combat logbooks written under extraordinary combat conditions by Wellesley veterans trying to stay alive amid heavy flak fire from antiaircraft artillery over enemy territory; how a Wellesley hero brought his B-24 bomber and crew back to life after losing three of his four engines to enemy flak fire.

Wellesley Town and Health officials encourage residents to enjoy the displays and continue to follow current COVID-19 guidelines and do their part to keep our community safe.

###