



THE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Press Release

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**World War II Veteran & Former US Ambassador
John E. Dolibois to Speak at Main Library – November 11**



Former U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg and World War II veteran John E. Dolibois is the Main Library's **52nd annual Veterans Day** speaker on Saturday, November 11, 10:45 a.m. Mr. Dolibois was a member of the team that interrogated Nazi war criminals before the Nuremberg Trials after World War II. Born in Luxembourg, John E. Dolibois came to Akron, Ohio in 1931 at age 13 with his father and thus began a fascinating life journey. The youngest of eight children, he graduated from Miami University in 1942 and was then inducted into the military. Mr. Dolibois will speak on *Recollections of a Nazi Interrogator*.

Mr. Dolibois recently discussed his distinguished military career, as well as his experience serving as Ambassador to Luxembourg:

Q. Tell us about your time in the military.

A: I had barely graduated from Miami University in 1942 when I was drafted. I was commissioned a second Lieutenant in the Cavalry by General George S. Patton, serving with the 16th Armored Division, and drove a Sherman tank, which I loved! However, when the army found out I spoke fluent German, they decided to transfer me to Military Intelligence, where I trained others in the techniques of PW interrogations. Eventually I was assigned to the International War Crimes Trials in Nuremberg. I reached the rank of captain at the end of my military career.

Q. How did you happen to come to America?

A. I was the youngest of eight. My mother had died two weeks after I was born. My father decided we should move to Akron in 1931 since my sister had married a World War I GI and lived there. I quickly learned how to speak English, and in fact it was my best subject through school. Because of my education in Luxembourg, I had to progress through grade school in stages until I caught up with my classmates. I was the biggest and oldest kid in kindergarten at age 13, "graduating" in increments until I was up to speed.

Q. What was it like to interrogate the Nazis when the war ended?

A. My fluency in German was put to good use at the end of the war when he I was assigned as one of the five interrogators of the high-ranking Nazis at a prison in Mondorf, Luxembourg. There, over a period of three months, I had an opportunity to talk extensively with Hermann Goering, Rudolph Hess, Admiral Doenitz and many other key officials of the Third Reich. I found the Germans to be no different than the rest of us.

They were not supermen, nor the blonde haired, blue-eyed Aryans that they professed to be.

Q. Did the Nazis share any common characteristics?

A. No. Some were tall, some were short, some were highly intelligent, some were dimwitted, some expressed remorse for their crimes, and some were unrepentant. A Nazi-like movement can arise anywhere, given the proper conditions. For that reason, it is very important that we in America do everything possible to maintain the rule of law and our liberties.

Q. How were the prisoners treated and did you establish any type of rapport with them?

A. Despite published reports at the time, we DID NOT abuse the prisoners. We had to remain neutral and emotionless when interrogating them and not show sympathy. You don't get information from people by being cruel; you get it by being correct and impartial.

Q. What stood out in your mind, knowing the major players of the Third Reich surrounded you?

A. The biggest thing was, here I was with 22 of the most infamous high-ranking Nazis, and they were begging us for cigarettes or candy. Because of their importance to the Third Reich, most had been provided with cyanide as a way out before being questioned. Only Goering took his life in this way; the others went to trial and half were sentenced to death.

Q. How did you become associated with Miami University?

A. I enrolled at Miami University after high school, earning a degree in Industrial Management, and then was drafted in 1942 upon graduation. I returned to my alma mater five years later to become Director for Development and Alumni Affairs, and was promoted in 1967 to Vice President for University Relations. During that time I was instrumental in establishing the Miami University European Center in Luxembourg, which was named in my honor in 1988 on its 20th anniversary. I retired in 1981.

Q. How did you become Ambassador to Luxembourg?

A. After retiring from Miami, I was called by President Ronald Reagan to become U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, a position I held for four years. I was the first naturalized citizen to become an ambassador to his native country.

Q. What will your message be at the Library's 52nd annual Veterans Day program?

A. "President Reagan once said that 'freedom must always be stronger than tyranny and good must always be stronger than evil. The crimes and wars of yesterday cannot be undone, nor can we call the millions who died back to life. But we can learn something from the past, and use the lessons we have learned to make a better future.' That is why we must stand strong in Iraq. I intend to speak on those lessons and note how our war on terrorism is related to WWII."

52nd Annual Veterans Day Program
Saturday, November 11, 10:45 a.m. - Main Library Atrium

Program Highlights:

- o Keynote Speaker: John E. Dolibois, World War II veteran and former U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg
- o Sheriff Leis' Bagpipe and Drum Corps
- o The Walnut Hills High School Choir singing "The National Anthem" and other patriotic songs
- o The Scarlet Oaks Jr. ROTC Color Guard presenting colors
- o Presenting of Memorial Wreaths by area veterans' groups.
- o "Lighting of the Flame of Remembrance" by Desert Storm and Iraqi war veteran Staff Sgt. Jennifer L. Jones
- o Ceremony concludes with "Taps," including World War II Navy veteran Ted Gardner singing Taps a cappella.

History of the Main Library's Veterans Day Program

When the Main Library opened in 1955, it was dedicated to the memory of all Hamilton County veterans who had died in combat since World War I. *The Book of Homage*, which lists the names of over 3,000 Hamilton Countians who died serving their country, was unveiled on Memorial Day 1955, and is permanently housed in the Veterans Memorial display in the Atrium. Addendums were added to include the names of 273 Hamilton County citizens who had died in the Vietnam War, and the names of two local veterans were included from the Gulf War. (The book is currently in the process of being updated to include veterans from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.) Each week a page is turned to remember those who gave the supreme sacrifice (it takes 33 weeks to view the entire volume). Facsimile editions of the *Book of Homage* are available at the Main Library, and can be picked up at the program.

Our goal is to make our programs accessible to everyone. Please request ADA services one week in advance at 369-4400 (TTY 369-4409).

Don't Miss:

Forest Park Branch, 655 Waycross Road, 369-6678

Saturday, November 11, 2:00 p.m.

Thank You Veterans! Guest speaker Howard Osterkamp, Past Commander of Chapter 3620 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and a Korean War veteran. Includes display of uniforms from WW II and later. Veterans will be invited to sign the Display of Honor, with refreshments afterwards.

Main Library, 800 Vine Street, 369-6959

Tuesday, December 5, noon

Remember, Understand, Honor: 65th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor: Joe Whitt, Joe Sumner, and Vincent Salotto, members of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association who were at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked by the Japanese on December 7, 1941 will be on hand to share their stories and take questions from the audience. Moderated by Dan Hurley, History Reporter and Producer/Host of "12 Newsmakers" for LOCAL 12, and President of Applied History Associates.