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USAMRMC to exhibit amputated leg of Union major general

(Fort Detrick, Md.) –The amputated leg of Union Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Sickles will go on display May 17 at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command headquarters building here at Fort Detrick, Md. The Command will host a ceremony at 10 a.m. with a presentation and installation of the artifact, followed by remarks from the museum staff.

On July 2, 1863, at the Battle of Gettysburg in western Pennsylvania, Sickles was astride his horse, marching Third Corps along a ridge, without approval, when a cannonball shattered his right leg. As medics carted Sickles from the field, he puffed a cigar and waved to bolster morale among troops already devastated by the losses in the Confederate attack. The Union held its line that day, but Sickles lost his leg. He returned to private life with a carefully preserved personal reminder of the sacrifices made in war.

“The National Museum of Health and Medicine has graciously loaned us this historic treasure. It’s amazing to see how far military medicine has advanced,” said Maj. Gen. James K. Gilman, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command and Fort Detrick. “This is a great opportunity to highlight one of the National Museum of Health and Medicine’s many artifacts and to welcome the museum to the U. S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.”

Since 1862 the museum has documented the history and practice of American and military medicine. Its collection now numbers in excess of 25 million objects. Exhibits are closed to the public until September, when the museum is set to complete its move from the Walter Reed Army Medical Center to its new state-of-the art facility at the Fort Detrick–Forest Glen Annex in Silver Spring, Md.

“We are thrilled to become an element of MRMCM,” says Adrienne Noe, NMHM director. “It’s very fitting for us and our mission to be embedded in a global enterprise committed to advancing and innovating in the realm of military medical research. And it’s certainly fitting that Sickles’ leg can be on display at the headquarters, just that much closer to Gettysburg, for a time, until the museum reopens.”

More online at www.nlmh.washingtondc.museum and www.facebook.com/medicalmuseum.

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