



## All Major League Baseball Games Rally in Support of National Day of Remembrance to Honor Greatest Generation

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*“Spirit of ’45 Day” Celebrations Mark the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of End of  
World War II on August 14*

NEW YORK, NY, August 10, 2010 – Yankee legend Jerry Coleman, a long-time broadcaster for the San Diego Padres, has helped convince all Major League Baseball teams playing Saturday, August 14, the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II, to pay special tribute to the men and women of the Greatest Generation.

“On August 14, I was returning from a year of service as a Marine dive-bomber pilot in the Philippines,” said Coleman. “I was given a week’s leave in San Francisco and was due back when we got word that the war had ended. I was relieved and elated, but I was only 21 years old and I remember thinking ‘Now what will I do?’”

Coleman went on to an All-Star career with the New York Yankees, playing on four World Series championship teams with fellow WWII vet and baseball legend Yogi Berra. He later became the Voice of the San Diego Padres, and was ultimately inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame as a broadcaster.



*MLB legend Jerry Coleman presents NBC Anchor Chuck Scarborough with a Spirit of '45 pin during the 2010 National Veterans Day Parade in New York City. Jerry was the Honorary Grand Marshall.*

Coleman also served in Korea, flying a total of 120 combat missions in the two wars, for which he received numerous awards and medals, including two Distinguished Flying Crosses for bravery.

“August 14<sup>th</sup> gave us a sense of national unity and of international peace,” Coleman added.

More than 4,500 professional baseball players, including 500 major leaguers, lay down their bats and gloves and did their part to help defend freedom; turn back the forces of aggression, and bring liberty to oppressed nations.

Among them was Cleveland Indians great Bob Feller, who enlisted in the Navy and was highly decorated for his service as a gunner on the USS Alabama.

“The generation I was brought up in, during World War II this generation had unrelenting resolve. The people in the military, the people in the factories, the people on the farm, we had shared goals and great leadership,” Feller said.

Coleman will participate in the *Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive!* celebration at the Giants-Padres game in San Francisco on Saturday.

Thanks to Coleman and Linda Laurie, National Events Coordinator for *Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive!* all Major League Baseball teams have agreed individually to honor the Greatest Generation on Saturday.

“I’m am overwhelmed by the generosity of the Major League Baseball clubs who stepped up to the plate to support this effort which was difficult for them with such short notice,” Laurie said. “They are really hitting a home run for our WWII folks who have loved the national game for decades.”

Of the 400,000 American service members did not return home, 127 were professional ballplayers, men who sacrificed their dreams of Major League glory for the greater good of our country. Now, as this Greatest Generation fades into history, all Major League Ballparks around the country and fans of America’s favorite pastime are ensuring that we remember the legacy of these men, and of all those who served and sacrificed.

New York City will be launching a nationwide series of “Spirit of '45 Day” events with a ceremony in Times Square in front of a 25-foot sculpture depicting the world-famous kiss between an unnamed sailor and nurse Edith Shain. Edith had passionately campaigned for an annual day of remembrance for her generation until her death in June at age 91.

“Spirit of ’45 Day” events are being held at museums, memorials, military cemeteries, public parks, veteran homes, senior living communities and other locations across the country to build public awareness and rally support for a permanent national day. Thousands of the last surviving members of the Greatest Generation are being invited to come together in hundreds of communities to be honored and be part of a “Class of ’45 Reunion” photo that will be published in a National Yearbook at the end of the year. Youth are being asked to participate by recording the first hand memories of the people in their community who experienced August 14, 1945 so that they can be preserved in digital form for future generations.

For more information about “Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive!” campaign, including a registry of events and activities being organized for Saturday, August 14, visit [www.Spiritof45.com](http://www.Spiritof45.com) or [www.facebook.com/spiritof45](http://www.facebook.com/spiritof45).



*The San Diego Padres have helped promote National Spirit of ’45 Day to Major League Baseball teams as a way to remind fans of the important role professional baseball played during WWII with observances like this one in PETCO Park.*



*Youth carries Jerry Coleman’s photo in the 2010 New York Veterans Day Parade. Hundreds of youth volunteers march each year in Veterans Day Parades throughout America.*