



## National Campaign to Establish Spirit of '45 Day in U.S.

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History Groups, Museums, Memorials, Parks Host Public Events on  
August 14 to Commemorate 65th Anniversary of End of World War II

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Grassroots Coalition Leading Nationwide Campaign to Establish Annual “Spirit of ‘45 Day” to Honor Men and Women of Greatest Generation

NEW YORK, NY, August 11, 2010 – A grassroots coalition of World War II heritage and history organizations, military museums, memorials, World War II heritage and other groups are hosting public events throughout the country on Saturday, August 14, to pay tribute to the men and women of the Greatest Generation on the 65th anniversary of the end of WWII.

“This may be the last chance for America to say ‘Thank you’ to the last remaining members of the generation who endured the Great Depression, fought in uniform and on the Home Front to save Western Civilization, and then helped both friend and foe rebuild a shattered world. August 14, 1945 was undoubtedly the Greatest Generation’s ‘Greatest Day,’ ” said Warren Hegg, national supervisor for “Keep the Spirit of ‘45 Alive,” a nonprofit campaign to establish a permanent annual day of remembrance to honor the WWII generation that would be observed on the second Sunday of every August beginning next year.

Three presidential libraries, representing the legacies of wartime leaders Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower were all “present at the creation” of the idea of a special national day to honor the memory of the WWII generation which was proposed during a gathering of the nation’s top WWII history and heritage organization held on the Queen Mary, hosted by Edith Shain. Shain was the nurse in the iconic Life magazine photo of her being kissed by a joyous sailor in Times Square on the day America learned the war was over. Shain had campaigned for a permanent national day to honor her generation until her death at age 91 in June.

“I remember vividly where I was on the day the war ended, as do many World War II veterans and those of us who were youngsters at the time,” said Rear Adm. Edward K. Walker, Jr., SC, USN (Ret.), President and CEO of the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, DC. “We

are thrilled that so many Navy heritage sites around the country are joining us in observing this historic day by participating in the Spirit of '45 campaign." The Navy Memorial will be screening a collection of short videos produced by WWII veterans and youth, and hosting a wreath laying and playing of "Taps" at 7 p.m. EST.

Several members of the Historical Navy Ships Association are hosting events, including the USS Kidd, the USS New Jersey, the USS Hornet and the USS Cod.

The USS Kidd Veterans Memorial & Museum is hosting an event commemorating the national "Spirit of '45 Day" at the Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. CDT, where they are planning a full day of activities, including musical entertainment, a salute with its 5-inch guns, and a complimentary lunch for WWII veterans who will receive individual proclamations honoring their service.

"We will be making every effort to continue to commemorate this very important day every year to help preserve the history and honor the memory of the men and women who sacrificed so much in defense of their country," said Maury Drummond, Executive Director. The USS Kidd was named after the Admiral of the USS Arizona who was killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor, and participated in several rescue missions during the war.

The USS New Jersey in Camden, New Jersey, expects thousands of visitors to come to an all day program that will feature World War II military vehicles, artifacts, a meet and greet with Tuskegee Airmen, a BBQ and swing dancing with a '40s band.

In San Francisco Bay, Alameda, California, surviving heroes from the legendary all Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team will host a special commemorative program on the USS Hornet, with live music and a wreath laying ceremony. The Hornet was attacked 59 times in 18 months of combat but was never hit. Nicknamed the "Purple Heart Battalion," the 442nd sustained heavy casualties during the war and is the most heavily decorated fighting unit in American history. Senator Daniel Inouye, one of the co-sponsors of "Spirit of '45 Day," is a decorated 442nd veteran.

The USS Cod, in Cleveland, Ohio, which performed the only submarine-to-submarine rescue in history, is inviting the public to come in period clothes to a "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" event will include dancing to big band music and a "Kiss-In" contest on the deck, commemorating the Life magazine cover photo of the famous "Times Square Kiss."

In Portland, Oregon, the **Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum**, home to the famous "Spruce Goose," is collaborating with Brookdale Senior Living and other partners to host a special "Spirit of '45 Day" event, with a corps of youth volunteers prepared to record the memories of August 14, 1945. Brookdale, the nation's largest owner/operator of senior living communities is hosting events in its more than 550 residential facilities in 35 states.

Navajo Code Talkers will share their memories of service in WWII in Gallup, New Mexico in conjunction with the 83rd Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremonial.

The Veterans Museum and Memorial in San Diego's Balboa Park is inviting WWII veterans to bring pictures of themselves in uniform so that they can be digitized and made into posters that can be carried by youth in the annual Veterans Day Parade each year. "We want to be sure that these courageous men are remembered forever for their service, and the youngest members of our community take an active part in preserving their legacy," said Dan DeMarco, member of the VMM board. "With so many WWII vets in our community, we intend to be a hub on the West Coast for keeping the Spirit of '45 alive with events like this every August."

In Silicon Valley, more than a thousand people will gather in San Jose's 14-acre History Park to express their appreciation to the men and women of the WWII generation, who will pose for a "Class of '45 Reunion" group photo that will be placed in City Hall and become part of a National Spirit of '45 Yearbook that will be published at the end of the year. The all day program will feature live swing band music, hundreds of re-enactors, and guest appearances by several local decorated veterans of WWII.

Buglers will be playing "Taps" at the National World War II Memorial, and the East Coast and West Coast WWII Memorials at the end of the day on August 14, in honor of the 400,000 who gave their lives in WWII and the millions of veterans who have passed away since the war ended.

"America is the most powerful nation in history, but we are in danger of losing our memory," said Hegg. "Organizations that are responsible for preserving our WWII era heritage and educating the public about this important chapter in America's history have a vital role to play in sustaining an annual day of remembrance as part of their core mission."

For more information and a list of activities currently being planned for August 14 please go to [www.Spiritof45.org](http://www.Spiritof45.org) or [www.facebook.com/spiritof45](http://www.facebook.com/spiritof45).