

Blairsville Couple to Re-Enact Times Square Kiss

Ray and Ellie Williams, both WWII Navy Veterans, have been selected by the Spirit of '45 organization to represent the Greatest Generation and kick-off the activities in New York City on Friday, August 14, 2015. They will re-enact the famous kiss that took place in Times Square to celebrate the end of WWII. This re-enactment will begin a weekend of special events commemorating the 70th Anniversary of President Truman's Oval office announcement that Japan had surrendered; thus ending World War II. The Spirit of '45 group works with other veteran organizations to promote events across the country leading to the weekend of August 14-16, 2015; to inspire and pass on to the youth of the nation, the dedication, courage and sacrificial spirit that existed in 1945.



Ellie was a Navy WAVE, during WWII, serving as a Yeoman Secretary and Ray was an Aviation Radio Technician who saw action in combat aboard the aircraft carrier USS Cowpens, CVL-25 that operated with the Fast Carrier Task Forces of the Pacific Fleet. The ship was named after the Revolutionary War Battle of Cowpens, South Carolina where the Continental forces of Brig. General Daniel Morgan defeated the British Regulars of Lt. Col. Tarleton. This stunning victory caused the British General Cornwallis to withdraw his forces and abandon his occupation of the South.

During 1945, Ray and Ellie were both stationed at the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Gainesville, Georgia where, after a short engagement, they were married at the First Baptist Church of Gainesville on Saturday Evening, August 15, 1945. Ray and Ellie believe it's providential that they will be celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary on the weekend of this national celebration.

The August 2015 activities will culminate in an international wreath laying ceremony to honor those who paid the supreme sacrifice in the allied struggle against military aggression and the defense of freedom. The wreath laying ceremony will begin at the American Cemetery in Manila, Philippines, continuing westward to the American Cemeteries in Europe, then across the United States, ending at the Punchbowl Cemetery in Honolulu, Hawaii. To start the series of ceremonies in the United States, LT Ray Williams, USNR (Ret) will lay a commemorative wreath at the East Coast Memorial, in Battery Park, NYC on Sunday, August 16, 2015. This international wreath laying tribute will be the largest of its kind in history.

Ray and Ellie live in Blairsville, Georgia and have three children and two grandchildren.



Wedding of Ellie and Ray Williams
August 15, 1945



Ellie and LT Ray Williams, USNR (Ret)
May 20, 2015