

**For Immediate Release**



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## **Bugler Traveling 12,000 Miles on 2-Year National Unity Tour to Renew America's Spirit**

***Will perform "Taps" at Lone Sailor Statue in Burlington, VT this Sunday***

(Sunday, April 28, 2014, Burlington, VT) Auston O'Neill, Jr is on a mission: he and his wife, Bonnie, are traveling throughout America to rekindle the spirit of America's "Greatest Generation."

The O'Neill's will be in Burlington, VT on Sunday, April 28, where they will lay a wreath at the statue of the Lone Sailor statue and perform "Taps" in honor of the men and women who were the "ordinary heroes" of the generation that endured the hardships of the Great Depression, preserved freedom and democracy in WWII, and rebuilt the postwar world.

The wreath laying ceremony will take place at 2:00 PM.



photo by Rajan Chawla, Burlington, Vt

"These people understood the importance of coming together during difficult times," said O'Neill, whose father was a decorated combat infantryman during the war. "We need to revive their spirit of courage, shared sacrifice, 'can do' attitude, and service to others if we are going to meet the challenges of our own time."

The O'Neill's son was deployed to Afghanistan on the day they began their tour from Washington, DC on February 7.

"The Lone Sailor statue reminds us of how important it is to support today's generation of men and women who serve in our name, and make sure that they are able to successfully transition back to civilian life when they return home," said Mrs. O'Neill.

The O'Neill's have traveled more than 12,000 miles through more than 30 states since leaving their home in Virginia on February 7, as part of a national nonprofit, nonpartisan grassroots campaign that is promoting public awareness about Spirit of '45 Day, the new annual day that honors the WWII generation. Spirit of '45 Day is observed on the second Sunday in August (aligning with the anniversary of the end of WWII on August 14, 1945.)

Next year several events and activities are being planned to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII next year, including a round the world wreath laying that is being organized by the Military Order of the Purple Heart in cooperation with the American Battle Monuments Commission, the National Parks Service and other groups.

"It is an honor for me to host Auston and Bonnie here in Burlington," said Capt. Zachariah Fike, Vermont State Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, a veteran of the Iraq war. "It is up to my generation now to carry on the best of their values and achievements so that we, too, can assure a better future for our children and their children's children."

The Spirit of '45 Day Express will continue on to Maine after the Sunday ceremony where it will meet the father of Sen. Susan Collins, who sponsored Spirit of '45 Day when it was passed unanimously by the Congress in 2010. It will travel throughout the rest of the Northeastern states before returning to Washington, DC to appear in the National Memorial Day Parade on May 26.



For more information about the Spirit of '45 Day tour, please visit [www.Spiritof45.org](http://www.Spiritof45.org) or contact Warren Hegg, National Coordinator, "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive!" [Warren@Spiritof45.org](mailto:Warren@Spiritof45.org) (408) 857 – 5252

### About the Lone Sailor Statue in Burlington

*Lone Sailor*© statue was dedicated on June 18, 2005 in Burlington, Vt., on the Lake Champlain Basin. The statue is located on the picturesque site of The Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, adjacent to ECHO, a lake aquarium and science center in Burlington. The Leahy Center was named for Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy. This Memorial rests on the former site of the U.S. Naval Reserve Center. The Memorial commemorates Lake Champlain's significant naval history and honors all men and women who are serving and have served in the sea services.

For more information visit <http://www.navymemorial.org>

