

## Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive

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**For Immediate Release**

## **Thousands Honor Greatest Generation at “Spirit of ’45 Day” events from East Coast to Hawaii**

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*Joint Times Square – San Diego Celebration on August 14 to mark 68<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of end of WWII*

Hundreds of communities across America observed National Spirit of '45 Day on the weekend of August 10-11, honoring the men and women of the World War II generation at community events that featured oral history interviews, 1940's swing dance music, WWII re-enactors and wreath laying ceremonies.

Spirit of '45 Day weekend officially began with a ceremonial event in Bangor, ME on Saturday, August 10, that paid tribute to Maine senior Senator Susan Collins, who introduced the idea of a new annual day of remembrance honoring the “ordinary heroes” of the WWII generation in the US Senate in 2013, together with the late Senators Dan K. Inouye of Hawaii and Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, last two WWII veterans to serve in the US Senate.

<http://www.spiritof45.org/Media%20Elected%20Officials%20.pdf>

“The Spirit we celebrate today goes beyond courage in battle and support at home. It includes America's ongoing commitment to assist nations shattered by conflict and to advance the cause of liberty and peace around the world. It describes the civic engagement, volunteerism, and service to community and country that is the hallmark of the World War II generation, “ said Senator Collins in a prepared statement. “That is the “Spirit of '45 that guided our nation through its darkest days and that lights our way into the future.”

The weekend began with Spirit of '45 Day activities on the West Coast held Saturday at the [USS Iowa Museum](#) in Los Angeles, and the San Jose History Park that featured live '40's entertainment, WWII re-enactors and appearances by veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and the liberation of Europe.

On Sunday, August 11, a public ceremony was held at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC at 10 a.m. as part of a cross country "[Tribute to America's Greatest Generation](#)," that included hundreds of wreath laying ceremonies that, ending in the Punchbowl National Cemetery at the gravesite of the late Senator Dan Inouye.

The ceremony at the WWII Memorial featured remarks by former Vice Chief of Staff of the US Army and four-star General Frederick J. Kroesen, Jr., **Dr. Robert Sutton**, Chief Historian of the National Parks Service; US Navy Memorial Founder **USN Admiral (Ret) Bill Thompson**; **Lt. General USAF (Ret) Richard Y. Newton, III**, Air Force Association; and **Linda Mathes**, CEO of the American Red Cross National Capitol Region.

Also speaking was Jerry Yellin, 89, who flew the final combat mission of WWII on August 14, 1945, and is a national spokesman for Spirit of '45 Day. Mr. Yellin later spoke at a ceremony hosted by Amtrak and Honor Flight in Philadelphia on Sunday.

[http://www.spiritof45.org/jerry\\_yellin.aspx](http://www.spiritof45.org/jerry_yellin.aspx)

Many of the "Tribute" ceremonies were organized by members of "We Honor Veterans," a partnership between the Veterans Administration and hospice care providers that will take place at WWII memorials and other venues. Rhode Island which had the highest percentage of its population in uniform during WWII, held 17 Spirit of '45 Day events over the weekend.

Several communities scanned the wartime photos of their WWII vets and uploaded them to become part of a national "Wall of Honor" project that is archiving the photos and stories of the 16 million who served in the war.

Couples who were married during the war are being invited to send in their wedding photos so they can be included in a mosaic collage of photograph of the famous "Times Square Kiss."

The collage will be displayed on giant screens in Times Square this Wednesday (August 14) on the anniversary of the day President Harry S. Truman announced that WWII had ended on August 14, 1945. A mass public event will be held in San Diego at the 25-foot Seward Johnson sculpture depicting a sailor kissing a nurse that stands in front of the USS Midway at the finale of the 2013 Spirit of '45 Day celebrations.

A number of Major League Baseball teams are having Spirit of '45 Day observances during their games during the month of August, celebrating their WWII legacy.

“Spirit of '45 Day is a wonderful time for all Americans to come together to celebrate the achievements and values of the WWII generation, and to reflect on what made them great,” said Warren Hegg, who leads a grassroots nonprofit initiative, “Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive!” which promotes the observance of Spirit of '45 Day. “By remembering their courage, shared sacrifice, ‘can do’ attitude, sense of national unity and commitment to service, we can renew the same spirit of national unity that we need to meet the challenges of today and follow their example of helping to assure a better future for our children and their children's children.”

“Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive!” is helping to organize a nationwide commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII that will take place on August 14 -15 - 16, 2015.

For a partial list of Spirit of '45 Day events and activities, please visit [www.Spiritof45.org](http://www.Spiritof45.org).

For additional information contact:

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