



## Elected Leaders Across the Nation Rally in Support of National Day of Remembrance to Honor Greatest Generation

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### *Congress Supports Observance of “Spirit of ’45 Day;” State and Local Elected Officials Issuing Supporting Proclamations to Commemorate 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of End of World War II on August 14*

NEW YORK, NY, August 6, 2010 – Elected leaders from around the nation from New York to California are rallying in support of Congress’ endorsement of “Spirit of ’45 Day” which was passed last month in the House and in the Senate yesterday.

**Senator Susan Collins** (R, Maine) led a group of bipartisan co-sponsors in support of a national day of remembrance to be observed on August 14, the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. “As we approach the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II, it is fitting that we honor the men and women of the Greatest Generation who sacrificed so much for our security and freedom,” said Senator Collins. “I was pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the anniversary of the end of World War II by supporting a passage of a resolution to commemorate this significant anniversary, and am happy that Senators Lautenberg, Burr, Lieberman, Akaka, and Inouye joined me in my efforts. We owe a supreme debt of gratitude to our World War II veterans, and I will continue to work hard to ensure that all our veterans and service members are recognized for their service.”

On July 26, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a concurrent resolution supporting the observance of “Spirit of ’45 Day” with the strong bipartisan support of more than 75 co-sponsors.

“I was proud to sponsor the resolution supporting the observance of Spirit of ’45 Day to encourage communities across the country to celebrate this historic day and to preserve the stories of those who experienced that day,” said Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy of New York’s 4<sup>th</sup> District. “It is incumbent on all of us to honor the legacy of the World War II generation whose members are rapidly passing into history. Celebrations of the anniversary of the end of World War II should not only serve as a remembrance of that important day in our country’s history, but also of the unity and personal sacrifice that defined a generation.”

Also supporting “Spirit of ’45 Day” efforts in the House is Wisconsin **Congressman Tom Petri**, whose father was killed in WWII. “It is hard for many to imagine a world dominated by Nazi Germany to our east and the Japanese Empire to our west, but it could easily have happened if not for the commitment and sacrifice of millions of young Americans during World War II. The existence and vitality of democracy and freedom around the world today is their hard won legacy. Many faced the horrors of combat, many were injured, and many died. The living veterans of the Greatest Generation richly deserve our gratitude, and those who have passed away must never be forgotten.”

Several states and local governments are following suit with legislation and proclamations of their own supporting a national “Spirit of ’45 Day.” Louisiana and California passed legislation earlier this year supporting “Spirit of ’45 Day” in their states, and Governor Martin O’Malley of Maryland and Governor Mitchell Daniels, Jr. of Indiana have both proclaimed “Spirit of ’45 Day.” Other states are expected to pass similar legislation.

Indianapolis **Mayor Gregory Ballard**, a retired Marine Corps colonel, issued a proclamation stating that August 14, 1945 “marked not only the end of the war, but also the beginning of an unprecedented era of rebuilding in which the United States led an effort to restore shattered nations and to create institutions to work towards a more peaceful global community.” It goes on to cite the model of unity and community that day 65 years ago as a source of inspiration for current and future generations of Americans.

Earlier this week, **Mayor Michael Bloomberg** proclaimed August 14, 2010 “**Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive! Day**” in New York City, “in recognition of the invaluable contributions of the Greatest Generation” to “pay tribute to all of the remarkable citizens who bravely served our country in that time of peril...They fought fearlessly to defend our freedoms, ensure our continued safety, and promote liberty and democracy abroad.”

**Mayor Cheryl Cox** of Chula Vista, California, an early supporter of the “Spirit of ‘45 Day” campaign is calling on her fellow mayors from around the country to join Mayor Bloomberg to use the example of the WWII generation to inspire a new era of volunteerism, civic engagement and service in America.

“As Chula Vista prepares to celebrate its Centennial in 2011, it is a time to recognize the members of the Greatest Generation who played a significant role in helping to shape our community,” said Mayor Cox. “Spirit of ’45 Day will remind all Americans, especially our young people, of the dedication and service of these men and women as we look towards the future of our city and country.”

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 on August 14, 1945. Edith had passionately campaigned for an annual day of remembrance for her generation until her death in June at 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. 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.

“By bringing the generations together, ‘Spirit of ’45 Day’ is encouraging youth to take an active approach to learning and preserving history, and provides them with a vivid and personal connection with the past that cannot be acquired from a textbook” said San Jose **Mayor Chuck Reed**, a Vietnam era veteran who hosted several public rallies for Ms. Shain in Silicon Valley during the past three years. “Edith was a teacher and it was her vision that the children of today should be ‘present at the creation’ of this special day.”

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).