70th Anniversary of the End of World War II

Round the World Gold Star Tribute to America’s ‘Greatest Generation’
Sunday, August 16, 2015
In 2010, Congress voted unanimously for a national “Spirit of ‘45 Day” to honor the legacy of service of the men and women of the WWII generation ([www.Spiritof45.org](http://www.Spiritof45.org)).

Spirit of ‘45 Day is now being observed in hundreds of communities and during Major League Baseball games on the second Sunday in every August.

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII in 2015, several major events and activities are being organized for the weekend of August 14 – 15 – 16:

- Media events in Times Square/San Diego
- WWII aircraft flyovers (AFA/CAF)
- Cross country convoy of WWII military vehicles (MVPA)
- “Spiritfest” events in Las Vegas, Queen Mary, etc.
Round-the-World Tribute to America’s “Greatest Generation”

- Goal: 1,945 individual wreath laying ceremonies to conclude 70th Anniversary commemoration on Sunday August 16, 2015

- Sites to include all national cemeteries in Asia, Europe, and US, WWII memorials, and other venues

- Network of participating organizations now being confirmed (e.g. ABMC., BAA, Dignity Memorial/We Honor Veterans, youth groups, federal, state and local elected officials)

- Tribute will continue in future years as an annual tradition on the second Sunday in August (Spirit of ‘45 Day)
Honoring the Fallen of WWII

- America lost 405,399 sons and daughters in WWII (including 78,979 MIA)

- Nearly 90 percent of the more than 16 million who served have now passed away into history...
Every Community in America Has a Heritage of Service in WWII

WWII Memorial in Marion, Indiana
A Collaborative Effort

- **American Battle Monuments Commission** – manages all offshore American national cemeteries, and WWII memorials in NYC and San Francisco ([www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov))

- **Bugles Across America** – 7,000 buglers who perform “Taps” at military funerals throughout the country ([www.BuglesAcrossAmerica.org](http://www.BuglesAcrossAmerica.org))

- **“We Honor Veterans”** – joint venture between the VA and more than 2,000 members of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization ([www.wehonorveterans.org](http://www.wehonorveterans.org))

- **Dignity Memorial** – nation’s largest provider of funeral services with more than 2,000 members ([www.Dignity Memorial.com](http://www.Dignity Memorial.com))

- **National History Day** – network of 750,000 middle and high school students being invited to document the lives of the more than 400,000 who fell in WWII. ([www.NHD.org](http://www.NHD.org))
American Battle Monuments Commission Sites

Asia - Pacific
- Cabanatuan Memorial (Luzon, Philippines)
- Manila American Cemetery (Metro Manila, Philippines)
- Papua Marker (New Guinea)
- Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands)
- Saipan Monument (Mariana Islands)
- Western Naval Task Force Marker (Morocco)

Europe/Africa
- Normandy American Cemetery (France)
- Epinal American Cemetery (France)
- Point Du Hoc Ranger Monument (France)
- Utah Beach Monument (France)
- Brittany American Cemetery (France)
- Rhone American Cemetery (France)
- Ardennes American Cemetery (Belgium)
- Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery (Belgium)
- Netherlands American Cemetery (Netherlands)
- Cambridge American Cemetery (England)
- Florence American Cemetery (Italy)
- Sicily-Rome American Cemetery (Italy)
- North Africa American Cemetery (Tunisia)
- Western Naval Task Force Marker (Morocco)

United States
- National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Honolulu)
- East Coast WWII Memorial (New York City)
- West Coast WWII Memorial (San Francisco)
MOPH Invited to Take the Lead

- MOPH logical choice of VSO to lead this new annual tradition (defined by sacrifice in service)
- Purple Heart recipients rest in all ABMC offshore sites
- MOPH annual convention/Purple Heart Day) in August provides natural platform for Tribute each year
- MOPH Region and Department Commanders already demonstrating acceptance/enthusiasm for this project (e.g. support to current Spirit of ‘45 public awareness tour)
Benefits of MOPH Participation

- International visibility
- Re-establish MOPH “brand” in face of competition
- Strengthen membership (current and new)
- Perennial (Tribute will be an annual tradition)
- Means to acquire new strategic partners
- Opportunity to broaden base of community support while emphasizing MOPH’s unique status

- Support Spirit of ’45 tour as it passes through Regions/States
- Develop August 2014 – August 2015 game plan
- Prepare standard ceremony protocols to assure quality
- Identify appropriate venues for individual ceremonies (e.g. memorials, national cemeteries, state houses, community centers, etc.)
- Recruit other stakeholders to participate (e.g. local Dignity Memorial/We Honor Veterans members, BAA, youth groups, etc.)
- Create communications and media strategies
Spirit of ‘45 Express National Unity Tour 2014 -2015

- Two-year cross country tour to help publicize events and activities planned for 2015
- Purple Heart helping to organize visits to state veterans homes and other locations in each state
- First phase to conclude with National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC on May 26
Opportunity for MOPH to begin building support for 2015 project

- Goal is to begin networking and PR efforts to build public awareness and participation in 70th anniversary activities

- Regional Commanders helping spread the word to Department Commanders, who are mobilizing chapters

- Simple ceremonies at local WWII memorials & museums and/or visits to state veterans homes

- Opportunity to significantly raise MOPH profile at local, state and national levels
A New Annual MOPH Tradition on Every Second Sunday in August