



SPRIT OF '45 – LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

THE QUEEN MARY – LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14 2008

National organizations gather in Long Beach to mobilize youth to preserve WWII legacy

On August 14, 2008, representatives of more than twenty national and local organizations will gather on the Queen Mary in Long Beach for the first annual “Spirit of ’45 Leadership Seminar” to discuss plans for engaging America’s youth in a national campaign to help preserve the history and heritage of World War II.

Among those attending the seminar will be leaders from the National World War II Museum, National History Day, the Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, History (formerly the History Channel), the WWII War Brides Association, the Go For Broke Educational Center, the American Veterans Center, heritage foundations of the major service branches, and other groups. They will be joined by representatives from the Long Beach Unified School District, the Long Beach Historical Society, and other local organizations interested involving the Long Beach community in the national campaign. .

The seminar is being organized by Stories of Service, a non-profit initiative that mobilizes youth to use computers to produce “mini-movies” of the lives of those who experienced World War II so that they can be shared with schools, libraries, museums and a global audience on the Internet to educate and inspire future generations. (www.stories-of-service.org). Using training materials developed with the support of the AMVETS California Service Foundation, seminar attendees will be developing strategies to reach out to more than one million middle and high school students throughout America this fall. They also will discuss plans for laying the foundations for an annual “National Day of Remembrance” in August of each year to honor the legacy of the World War II generation.

The public is invited to join the seminar participants in the historic Queen Salon for a special “Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive!” event from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM, hosted by Edith Shain, the nurse who was kissed in Times Square in the famous Life magazine photo. The evening program will include dinner with live music from the era, remarks by leading WWII authorities and other special guests, and a multimedia presentation of personal memories of members of the “greatest generation” produced by youth. Tickets for the evening event are available at \$45.00 each, and can be ordered by phone by calling (408) 918-1042, or purchased on the Internet at www.spiritof45.org.

The city of Long Beach was chosen as the venue for this national event due to its rich World War II heritage and history. The Queen Mary is herself a “veteran,” having served as transported more than 750,000 troops across the Atlantic during WWII, and bringing back thousands of “war brides” to begin their lives in America at the war’s end. Bob Hope gave his first wartime performance in the Queen Salon the night Britain declared war on Nazi Germany in September 1939. The Long Beach Unified School District plans to introduce Stories of Service to students this fall as part of its innovative service-learning program and will be working with the national partners to make Long Beach a model city in preparation for an expanded version of this year’s Spirit of ’45 event in August 2009.

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National World War II Legacy Leadership Coalition List of Participating Organizations (as of 8/20/08)

American Veterans Center
American World War II Orphans Network
AMVETS Department of California Service Foundation
Air Force Association
Army Heritage Center Foundation
Boeing Company*
City of Long Beach
Daughters of the American Revolution
Digital Clubhouse Network/Stories of Service
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum
Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI)
Go For Broke Education Foundation
Greatest Generation Foundation
Latino and Latina World War II Oral History Project
Lockheed Martin Corporation*
Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum
History (formerly The History Channel)
Immortal Chaplains Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Long Beach Historical Society
Long Beach Public Library
Long Beach Unified School District
Marine Corps Heritage Foundation
National History Day
National World War II Museum
Pearl Harbor Survivors Association
Rosie the Riveter and Home Front Memorial Park
Naval Historical Foundation
Tuskegee Airman Incorporated
U-Haul Corporation
USS Hornet Museum
USS Midway Museum
VA Long Beach Healthcare System
WWII War Brides Association

Honorary Co-chairs and National Campaign Advisors:

- Ernest Borgnine, Academy Award winning actor and WWII vet (Navy, 1935-45)
- Edith Shain, nurse in kissing photo taken in Times Square at the end of WWII
- Joe Mantegna, actor and host of annual PBS National Memorial Day Concert
- Ken Burns, documentary producer/director of the PBS miniseries THE WAR

*Invited. Others to be announced



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STORIES of SERVICE Program Mobilizing YouTube Generation to Preserve the Heritage of America's Veterans

Hollywood spends millions of dollars to produce epics like “Saving Private Ryan”, “Band of Brothers” and “Flags of Our Fathers,” casting movie stars to portray the ordinary heroes who fought to preserve America's freedoms. But now thanks to an innovative program called Stories of Service, middle- and high-school students across America are volunteering their time and talent to help veterans in their communities star in their own “mini-movies” that are being used to educate and inspire future generations about courage, sacrifice and service to community.

Using computers and digital video editing software, teens combine photos, music, sound effects and the veteran's own voice to create powerfully moving “digital stories” that are being shared with schools, libraries and museums and with a worldwide audience on the Internet. More powerful than just oral histories, these multimedia videos have the “look and feel” of Ken Burns' PBS series THE WAR and documentaries seen on The History Channel.

“The experience of producing a digital story has a deep impact on both the youth and the veteran,” explained Ryan Hegg, National Stories of Service Program Director. “Youth develop a much deeper understanding about the true meaning of service to community by learning about the courage of young Americans not much older than themselves who were asked to do extraordinary things for their country. The vets are grateful to have an opportunity to tell their story, in their own words, and in a way that makes it easily accessible to anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world.”

Stories of Service started in California's Silicon Valley in 1998 at the Digital Clubhouse Network, a nonprofit created by NASA, that has received three medals from the Smithsonian for its “visionary use of information technology to improve society,” and was one of the founding partners of the Library of Congress' Veterans Oral History Project. AMVETS California Service Foundation has provided funding to develop teaching resources and a website that will be introduced by to more than one million youth and teachers as part of National History Day and The History Channel, and a coalition of organizations led by the National World War II Museum. Academy Award winning actor and WWII veteran Ernest Borgnine has volunteered to be Stories of Service National spokesman, urging his fellow WWII vets to come forward and share their stories.

While the emphasis has been on preserving the legacy of World War II veterans who are now passing away at an estimated rate of one every 90 seconds, Stories of Service also encourages youth to preserve the stories of vets from the Korea and Vietnam eras. In 2005, a special version of the program was created to assist Gold Star families produce videos to honor the memory of loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Youth who participate in Stories of Service by contributing videos, are officially recognized by the National World War II Museum, and invited to represent their school and community in a annual National Memorial Day Rally held in Washington, D.C., and other national events in New York City on Veterans Day and to commemorate the end of WWII in August.

For more information about Stories of Service and how you and your community can get involved, please visit www.stories-of-service.org.