

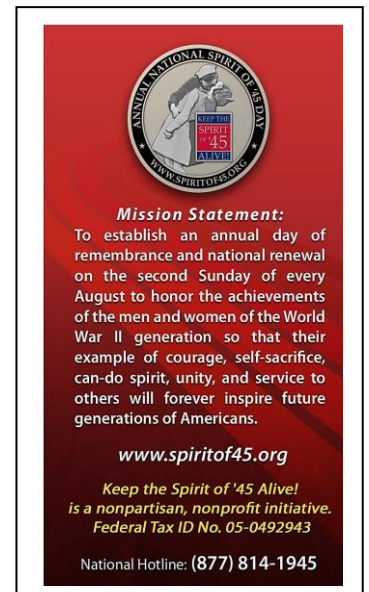
Testimony of Senate Bill 832, "SPIRIT OF '45 DAY"

Before the Senate Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs

April 18, 2013

Barbara A. Jensen

Oregon's National Representative, Spirit of '45



Good afternoon, Chair Boquist and members of the Senate Committee

I am Barbara Jensen, Oregon's National Representative to support America's "Spirit of 45" initiative and this bill in designating the second Sunday of August as "Spirit of '45 Day" in Oregon to honor the service and sacrifice of the World War II generation.

In August 2010, Congress unanimously voted in favor of a national "Spirit of 45 Day," honoring the legacy of the men and women who were the 'ordinary heroes' of the World War II generation; their "Day of Remembrance."

"Spirit of '45 Day" is now observed in hundreds of communities throughout America on the second Sunday in every August, aligning with the anniversary of August 14, 1945 – the day President Harry S. Truman announced that World War II was over . . . the Greatest Generation's Greatest Day.

On that day, as the world rejoiced at the news that the most destructive war in history had ended, the United States assumed the leadership for laying the foundation for a better future for its children and their children's children, for

former friend and foe alike. Life magazine published an iconic photo of a joyous sailor kissing a nurse in New York's Time Square that has become the symbol of the "Spirit of '45 Day," calling the year 1945 "the hinge of history" as a new world was born and with it a new America.

Every town and city has a story of August 14, 1945 to tell. The surviving members of the Greatest Generation that endured the difficult times of the Great Depression, achieved victory in WWII, and then went on to rebuild the world, are now departing but the memory of the extraordinary achievements lives on the family histories of their descendants. "Spirit of '45 Day' provides an opportunity to remind us of their courage, shared sacrifice, and commitment to service so that their example of national unity and community can inspire future generations of Americans, especially our nation's youth.

This five year campaign (2010-2015) intends to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII with nationally-televised events at history museums and heritage groups, at major and minor league baseball games as well as wreath laying ceremonies with the largest performance of buglers playing "Taps" across the nation. In 2013, the campaign seeks stories of communities and women of the Greatest Generation.

The national 'Keeping the Spirit of '45 Alive' calendar holds annual quarterly events to help engage youth and their communities in helping to raise public awareness and participation in the observance of this August "Spirit of '45" Day. These four high profile celebrations include 1) a February national leadership conference in San Diego: 2) a May "Spirit of '45" Memorial day of

Service in Washington, D.C.; 3) an August National “Spirit of ‘45” Event Day in Washington, D.C. and New York City and 4) a November Veterans’ Day Parade in New York City and San Diego.

The ‘Spirit’s’ ongoing engagement programs with partners (e.g., Walgreens, Hewlett Packard and Ancestry.com) have developed to restore a sense of shared community and preservation of our history. These include public participation in building a WWII Wall of Honor and Couples Banner of WWII, as well as stories related to “Our Town, August 14, 1945” (2013) and Growing Up During WWII (2014).

In partnership with the Oregon Honor Flight, Oregon Memorial Foundation along with the support of the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs and Oregon Historical Society, the “Spirit of ‘45” is pleased to be in the State Capitol today, supporting this “Day of Remembrance,” August 14, 1945, as we become early adopters in the nation to permanently mark Oregon’s calendar for the “Spirit of ‘45’ Day.