

Senate Bill 832, “***SPIRIT OF '45 DAY***”

May 7, 2013

Testimony before the House Committee on Veterans’ Services and Emergency Preparedness

Barbara A. Jensen

Oregon’s State Representative, Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive Campaign

Good afternoon, Chair Matthews and members of the House Committee,

I am Barbara Jensen, Oregon’s State Representative to support America’s “*Spirit of 45 Day*” initiative. This bill designates the second Sunday of every August as *Spirit of ’45 Day* in Oregon to honor the service and sacrifice of Oregon’s World War II generation.

In August 2010, the U.S. Congress and Senate voted unanimously in support of the observance of national *Spirit of 45 Day*, a day of remembrance, honoring the legacy of the men and women who were the ‘ordinary heroes’ of the World War II generation.

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 friend and former foe alike. Life magazine published an iconic photo of a joyous sailor kissing a nurse in New York Times Square that has become the symbol of Spirit of ’45 Day. The year 1945 has been referred to as “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. Earnestly, Spirit of ’45 partners are working to preserve their memories so that this ‘spirit’ lives on. *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 can inspire future generations. Families deserve to have a day of remembrance; a time to climb into the attic for that dated memory box of their WWII loved one. The legacy of the World War II generation and all they endured must always be remembered.

Every August, on *Spirit of ’45 Day*, commemorative events take place in hundreds of locations across the country including museums, memorials, large and small community gatherings, assisted living communities and in signature events in major cities. Acknowledgments are made at major and minor league baseball games. At the end of the day, there are thousands of wreath-laying/‘Taps’ ceremonies that start on the east coast and roll across the country to California and end at the Punch Bowl in Hawaii. It is anticipated that this year, 1,945 buglers will play ‘Taps’ in almost every state. With mayoral proclamations, community citizens, partnered with Buglers across America, hold tributes in honor of the 400,000+ who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II.



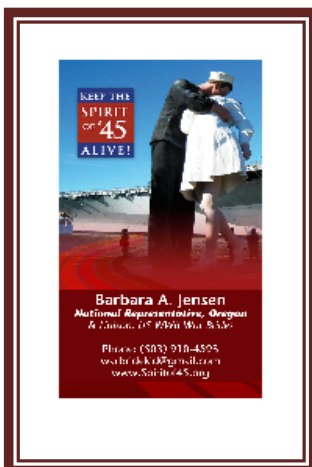
Oregon has had *Spirit of '45 Day* events since 2010, such as the August 14, 2010 event hosted by our Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum and sponsored by Brookdale Senior Living. It is our goal to continue to acknowledge *Spirit of '45 Day* every year and to join the nationwide partners in celebrating the 70th anniversary of WWII in 2015 by which time we anticipate participation in all 50 states.

As part of this initiative, hundreds of volunteers have scanned military photos of the men and women who served in WWII so that they can be carried in Veterans' Day parades, displayed at events on *Spirit of '45 Day* and archived permanently on the Internet for future generations. Wedding photos from the World War II years, that represent the women of the home front, continue to be scanned and added to a mosaic that is shown every August 14th in bi-coastal events in Times Square and San Diego.

America's youth is being called to meet with the members of this generation to hear and record their first-hand memories. Youth participation is an essential part of the Spirit of '45 Campaign and 2013 will bring the beginning of essay contests where youth can describe what Spirit of '45 means to them.

In an effort to firmly establish *Spirit of '45 Day*, leaders organize a national signature event every quarter. In February, a national leader's conference is held in San Diego to plan events for the year. In May, Spirit of '45 holds a Memorial Day of service which includes 400 youth marching in Washington D.C.'s Memorial Day Parade carrying posters with the images of veterans who died in WWII. In August, while smaller events take place across the country, a signature event is held in Washington D.C. at the World War II Memorial and on August 14th, a celebration of the anniversary of the famous kiss takes place in NYC Times Square as well as in San Diego at the Greatest Generation Walk next to the 25-foot "Kiss Statue," originally named by the sculpture, 'Unconditional Surrender.' In November, Spirit of '45 has a youth entry in the NYC Veteran's Day parade as well as San Jose and San Diego. Each year more partners are encouraged to enter Veteran's Day parades in their communities.

Collaborative Spirit of '45 partners include the History Channel, the National Parks Service, the Association of State and Local Historical Societies, the Historic Navy Ships Association, teams in major and minor league baseball, the American Society on Aging, Vitas Innovative Hospice, Ancestry.com/Fold3, Hewlett Packard, U-haul (started by a WWII veteran), Honor Flight, Buglers Across America, and assisted living communities where WWII veterans live. Together, our continually growing number of partners, pair America's youth with members of the WWII generation so that they honor one another in shared service to preserve the WWII legacy for future generations.




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 "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive Campaign" is pleased to support a resolution for the state of Oregon, for observance of *Spirit of '45 Day*, an annual day of remembrance" in honor of the 150,000+ men and women of Oregon who served in WWII and the 3,758 who made the supreme sacrifice.

We are following the leads of California and Florida who have designated *Spirit of '45 Day* resolutions. We ask that Oregon legislators become early adopters in the nation to permanently mark Oregon's calendar with *Spirit of '45' Day*, on the second Sunday of every August.



KEEP THE SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE!

Celebrate the 65th Anniversary of WWII Ending




EASM has joined with the "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive!" campaign and Brookdale Senior Living by offering free admission to the Museum for seniors, retired and active military personnel, and AAA members on Saturday, August 14.



**Saturday,
AUGUST 14**

**FREE
Admission**
for Seniors,
Military Personnel
and AAA members



This nonprofit campaign seeks to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II, as well as honor the courageous men and women who experienced it.

Local high school students will be onsite recording any visitors who would like to share their memories of that special day.



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**For more information and to
make reservations:**

call the Museum Events Dept 503.434.4023
or email: events@sprucegoose.org
www.EvergreenMuseum.org

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Honor Flight 2-minute trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM_XBIWCfNg

Submitted by: Barbara Jensen