

VIRGINIA WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II COMMEMORATION COMMISSION



NEWS RELEASE



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WWII 75th Anniversary Commemoration Pays Tribute to Veterans

Special Tribute Program Planned For December 8 at UR's Robins Center

RICHMOND, VA – Registration is now open for a statewide tribute to World War II veterans that will take place on Thursday, December 8, 2016, at the University of Richmond's Robins Center from 9:30 a.m. to noon, when the Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission will host *Dawn of Infamy: America Goes to War*.

The program is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required by November 15. To register, visit www.VirginiaWorldWarII.org/2016tribute or call Lily Jones at (804) 786-3591. Lunch will be provided for all attendees. Veterans are encouraged to register early.

The date marks the 75th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War II on December 8, 1941, following the previous day's attack on Pearl Harbor—an event that launched the nation into a worldwide conflict that had been raging for two years. In the years that followed more than 400,000 Americans, over 11,000 of whom were Virginians, gave their lives, while millions of others put their lives at risk.

“It is with immense gratitude that we recognize the veterans who fought for our freedom during World War II,” said Delegate M. Kirkland Cox, who serves as Chairman of the World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission. “We are honored to commemorate this anniversary in the presence of the very men and women who, 75 years ago, went into war with no guarantee that they would return.”

“The Virginia War Memorial and Department of Veterans Services is honored to participate in this special commemoration of World War II veterans,” said John Newby, Commissioner for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. “These members of ‘the Greatest Generation’ were the determining factor in winning the war, rebuilding the American economy and creating historic achievements that to this day are unsurpassable.”

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Dawn of Infamy will feature an Honor Parade of World War II veterans and a special recognition ceremony, remarks by dignitaries, and a keynote address from Pulitzer-Prize winner and military historian Rick Atkinson, author of the New York Times best-selling *Liberation Trilogy*, a narrative history of America's role in the liberation of Europe during World War II. The event will be livestreamed, with simultaneous ceremonies happening across Virginia.

Calling the event a “celebration of victory and recognition of the victors,” University of Richmond Chancellor E. Bruce Heilman, who joined the U.S. Marines in 1944 and fought at Okinawa, will lead the Honor Parade. “As a veteran of World War II, my life during and since that experience has been blessed with the satisfaction of having served my country when it made a difference. Now, 75 years after its beginning, I take pride in this special tribute taking place at the University of Richmond where I have, for 46 years, served as President and Chancellor.”

The Commission’s new mobile exhibit, *Profiles of Honor*, will be open for visitors outside the Robins Center, and a number of partner organizations will be present, including museums across the state. Among them is *Voices of Freedom*, a mobile recording studio set up by the Americans in Wartime Museum to record oral histories from veterans of all conflicts. VCU’s Virtual Curation Laboratory will also be onsite to demonstrate 3D scanning and printing of artifacts, showcasing the project’s 3D-printed World War I and World War II object replicas.

About the Virginia WWI and WWII Commemoration Commission

The Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission was created by the Virginia General Assembly during its 2016 Session by expanding the existing World War II 75th Anniversary Commission to include programs and observances marking the 100th anniversary of World War I.

Over the next four years, the Commission will carry out programs to recognize the 75th anniversary of World War II and the 100th anniversary of World War I, which begins in April 2017.

Among the Commission’s projects are a mobile tour—*Profiles of Honor*—that will debut on December 7 and bring an interactive exhibit to sites across Virginia, and a statewide teacher symposium. For more information on the Commission and its projects, visit www.VirginiaWorldWarI.org and www.VirginiaWorldWarII.org.

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