

HONORING OUR WORLD WAR II GENERATION

My wife Kay and I are new to Patriots Colony coming here in November 2016. In our previous lives, we lived in Northern Virginia for 41 years. While there, we volunteered at the National World War II Memorial for the National Park Service and also greeted Honor Flight veterans as they came in to visit their memorials. While volunteering, we discovered that most people did not know about a simple way to honor that generation which I have attempted to explain below – the World War II Registry.

The National World War II Memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day weekend in May 2004. The purpose of the memorial is to honor and remember the sacrifice and service of the 16 million Americans who served in uniform, the over 400,000 who were killed or missing in action and the millions of civilians on the home front who contributed to winning the war.

With these many millions of Americans to remember, it would be impossible to put all of their names on the memorial. Therefore, the World War II Registry was created. The registry is an online listing of these Americans which can be accessed by anyone around the world with a computer. Those veterans who were killed or missing during the war were entered on the registry by the National Archives with either a killed or missing in action designation. Additionally, those buried or listed as missing in action in our overseas military cemeteries have a second page by the American Battle Monuments Commission (the organization responsible for maintaining the overseas military cemeteries and the construction of the National World War II Memorial). This listing will state the location and name of the ABMC overseas military cemetery with the location of the grave by section, row and number. If missing in action or buried at sea, their name will appear on the registry showing the name and location of the cemetery where they are listed on the tablet of the missing.

In order for the names of all those millions of Americans who survived the war to be listed on the registry, someone has to submit their name and information to the ABMC. This can be done in writing or the best way is to enter the information online and submit electronically. To start this process, go to the National WWII Memorial website at <http://www.wwiimemorial.com> and click on the link to the registry. Before you fill out the online forms to register the honoree, you can do a search of the name to see if that person has already been registered. If they have not been registered, then you can go to the Register an Honoree link, fill out the online forms and submit. Registering an Honoree is completely free to do. In 2 to 3 days you will receive an email stating that the Honoree has been added to the registry. This email will also contain an account 15 number which is unique to you and allows you to edit and make changes to the listing in the future. If you have more than one honoree, use the same account number for these additional submissions. Another feature is to add a photo of the Honoree to the listing. You can do this once your page has been placed on the registry and you have your account number. Scan a picture (WWII or current) and electronically send it in using your account number and the Honoree Photo link on the website. However, adding a photo does cost \$10 and is charged to a credit card.

In addition to American veterans, civilians on the home front are also eligible to be included on the registry. These civilians had to have contributed to winning the war in a large or small way. Examples are defense workers, farmers, Civil Defense, USO, Air Raid Wardens, steel mills, railroad workers, collecting tin and rubber as a boy or girl scout, etc. One example I am aware of was a woman in a small town in Nebraska where troop trains stopped for a rest break. She would bake donuts and take them down to the trains to give to the GI's. Some questions which people ask about the registry are:

Does the ABMC verify the information I submit on my registration form? No; the ABMC does not have a data base on these millions of Americans. However, they do edit or deny the entry if someone is trying to register Mickey Mouse or submits information which is obviously not true, such as the Honoree was awarded 3 medals of honor. They will also edit the entry if it is too long to fit on the page or if it contains information not related to the Honoree's WWII service. Personally I have found that if my entry contained information that the Honoree continued his or her military service after the war and later retired, that this information was not edited out by the ABMC.

My Honoree was submitted by someone else and some of the information is incorrect or I have additional information to add. Can I edit this page on the registry or add a photo? No; you cannot modify a page submitted by someone else. However, you can submit your own page for the Honoree and get your own account number which allows you to edit your page or add a photo. Also, if your honoree was killed or missing and listed on a page submitted by the National Archives, you can submit your own page with additional information not included on the National Archives page.

Another way to remember your Honoree, once his or her name is on the registry, is to visit the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. There are computer screens on the outside of the information building where you can type in the name and bring their page up on the screen. Then you can see their name on the memorial.

I hope this information was helpful. If you have additional questions, you can catch me in the hallway or at dinner or give me a call at 757-707-3301. You can also call the registry directly at 800-639-4992.

– Tim Ketchum –