

VIRGINIA WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II COMMEMORATION COMMISSION

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, Chairman

April 14, 2016

10:00 a.m.



Members present: Delegate M. Kirkland Cox (chair); Delegate Richard L. Anderson; Delegate John M. O'Bannon; Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr.; Charles F. Bryan, Jr.; Jon C. Hatfield

Chairman Cox called the meeting to order.

Legislative update: Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission

Chairman Cox; Delegate Betsy Carr

Chairman Cox observed that the 2016 budget bill combines commemoration of World War I and World War II under the Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission (the Commission), which supercedes the existing World War II 75th Anniversary Commission. There will be two new legislative members of the Commission, one appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and one appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, who will serve as the chairman and vice-chairman of the Commission's Advisory Council. Chairman Cox noted that, while the Advisory Council serves in a consultative capacity, the Commission is the final arbiter in accepting or rejecting suggestions and will establish the work plan of programs and events. At present, the Commission has available funds of \$997,000, and discussions are underway regarding additional funding.

Delegate Betsy Carr reported that in 2014 a committee on the centennial of World War I began meeting. While the group had no funding or statutory authority, it brought together a number of experts and stakeholders to plan and coordinate activities, collaborate with the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, and establish a 501(c)(3) foundation related to the Carillon. Members of the World War I committee will be invited to serve on the Commission's Advisory Council.

Dr. Bryan pointed out that the influenza pandemic claimed a vast number of lives during World War I and suggested holding a symposium on the world pandemic, in collaboration with, for example, the VCU Medical Center. Dr. Treadway noted that the Library of Virginia is planning an exhibit on the pandemic and would be delighted to work with the Commission on the topic.

Report of the World War II 75th Anniversary Advisory Council

Sandra Treadway, Librarian of Virginia

The World War II 75th Anniversary Advisory Council held a meeting on December 10, 2015. Staff presented an overview of the Commission (which at that time was limited in scope only to World War II). Representatives from the national World War I commission were present to offer guidance on partnering and working together to leverage resources. Participants were invited to respond to a series of seven questions designed to facilitate brainstorming:

1. *What should be the overall vision for the commemoration?* Responses emphasized global context as well as paying tribute to veterans and examining the war's impact on the home front.
2. *What events, programs, or projects would you hope to see for Virginia's observance of the 75th anniversary of World War II?* Most respondents thought that a wide variety of inclusive

programs to honor veterans and educate the present generation should be sponsored, making the fullest use of resources Virginia has to offer.

3. *The Commission's first Signature Event will be a tribute to veterans, to be held on December 8, 2016, at the University of Richmond. What is important to include at that event?* The consensus is that veterans should receive a tasteful tribute but also should be involved in the program, though without being worn down by it.

4. *How can the work of the Commission, or the opportunities afforded by the 75th anniversary commemoration, best serve your organization or institution?* Suggestions included providing grant funding opportunities and working together to plan events that would bring more visitors to Virginia and more revenue.

5. *How can your organization or institution support the work of the Commission?* There was general agreement that organizations have resources to make available to the Commission and that the key to most effective support was having a relationship of partnership and collaboration.

6. *How do we ensure that the commemoration appeals to a broad spectrum, including those who are not history buffs or who do not have a personal connection to the war? What perspectives are important to include?* Responses emphasized the personal connection, the personal stories that people have to tell. Individuals should be encouraged to think about how the war affected their family.

7. *What are the most important lessons of World War II?* This question elicited a large variety of responses, many conveying the idea that to understand the world today requires understanding the world of 1945.

Staff updates

Cheryl Jackson, Executive Director

Ms. Jackson explained the new language in the budget bill, which specifies that the Commission shall plan, develop, and carry out programs and activities appropriate to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II. She presented an organizational structure that includes an Advisory Council as well as staff workgroups established as needed for programs and events, grant review, and website content development. The Commission will also work with affiliated organizations, including the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, the Virginia World War I Centennial Foundation, the Virginia World War II Heritage Alliance, and the Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive Coalition. Staff has streamlined logos for unified branding and developed distinctive websites combining the two wars and easily enabling the viewer to hop from World War I to World War II. Among other features, the website has a frequently updated Statewide Calendar of Events, a comprehensive listing of locations to visit, and educational resources. Web addresses are VirginiaWorldWarI.org and VirginiaWorldWarII.org.

Ms. Jackson presented a proposed slate of Signature Events and Programs, related key dates, and partner support programs that serve the following primary goals of the Commission:

Honor our veterans: Honor the service of veterans. By remembering yesterday's veterans, we are communicating to today's service members that they won't be forgotten, either.

Inspire a desire to learn more: Provide opportunities for people to explore personal connections and highlight multiple perspectives of Virginia's role in World War I and World War II (battlefront and military support from Virginia; home front and civilian support; Holocaust and stories of survival, and more).

Connect through travel and tourism: Make it easy for visitors to connect to museums, memorials, and sites in Virginia related to World War I and World War II.

Preserve historic sites: Encourage preservation and interpretation of significant sites in Virginia related to World War I and World War II.

Proposed Signature Events and Programs and key dates, which reflect Commission action and include a date inadvertently omitted from the slate presented at the meeting, and proposed partner support programs include:

1. World War I and World War II Tourism Marketing Grant Program

2. Legacy Project: Virginia Profiles of Honor Tour

- Mobile tour focused on (i) honoring veterans and engaging visitors with history by exploring their family connection; (ii) scanning images of soldiers and civilians related to WWI/WWII and collecting oral histories as available; and (iii) serving as a mobile tourism welcome center, providing information on museums and destinations in Virginia related to WWI/WWII history
- Tour will work with hosting location to scan service photos, documents, diaries, journals, etc., and to record oral histories
- Exhibit space will include hands-on, interactive exhibit

3. 2016 Signature Event and Key Date:

December 8, 2016: Pearl Harbor 75th anniversary: Tribute to WWII Veterans (Richmond)
“Dawn of Infamy: America Goes to War”
University of Richmond
Keynote speaker: Rick Atkinson

4. 2017 Signature Events and Key Dates:

April 6, 2017: 100th anniversary of U.S. entry into World War I

June 4–6, 2017: 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

75th anniversary of the U.S. naval victory of June 4–6, 1942, near Midway Atoll; U.S. Navy traditionally holds large-scale events to mark the Midway anniversary

Conduct statewide teacher symposium:

- Work with Virginia Department of Education, colleges, and partner institutions across the state to conduct a symposium for middle school and high school teachers, providing resources for teaching WWI and WWII history
- Symposium will go on the road, be held in each of the eight superintendent regions, and be recorded for Internet download by teachers who are unable to attend
- DOE regions: Central Virginia, Tidewater, Northern Neck, Northern Virginia, Valley, Western Virginia, Southwest, Southside

5. 2018 Signature Events and Key Dates:

Untold Stories of Service, Support, and Medicine during the World Wars

- Program recognizing the efforts of VCU/MCV and UVA Medical School (both of which formed hospital units), American Red Cross, YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, Armenian Relief Society of America, American Library Association, and other support organizations

- Discuss the influenza pandemic of 1918–1919, which killed more people than World War I. An estimated 20–40 million people died, and it is cited as the most devastating epidemic in world history
- Panel suggestions: “Soldier’s War,” “Sailor’s War,” “Doctor’s War,” “Civilian’s War”

100th Anniversary of Armistice Day (Carillon)

November 11, 2018: World War I: 100th anniversary of Armistice Day

- Events may include music, bell ringing, speakers, and dedication of marker for World War I veterans from Virginia

6. 2019 Signature Event and Key Date:

75th Anniversary of D-Day (Bedford)

June 6, 2019: Commemoration of 75th anniversary of D-Day (June 6, 1944)

- Events in Bedford at National D-Day Memorial
- Encourage student attendance by making a Statewide Field Trip (simulcast to schools, provide scholarships to send students free of charge)

7. 2020 Finale Event and Key Date:

75th Anniversary of V-J Day (Norfolk)

September 2, 2020: Concluding event of the commemoration to recognize the Allied victory over Japan, which formally surrendered on September 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay

- Partner with McArthur Memorial, Hampton Roads Naval Museum/ USS *Wisconsin*, Oceana NAS, Mariner’s Museum, Military Aviation Museum, and other local partners
- Include the role of Virginia’s ships, harbors, and shipbuilding industry as the key to America’s might. Involve Huntington Ingalls Industries’ Apprentice School (Newport News)

The Commission will support, encourage, and enhance programs conducted by museums, nonprofits, veterans groups, and other partners through (i) a comprehensive web presence that includes a Statewide Calendar of Events, interactive listing of Places to Visit, educational resources, and Profiles of Honor stories; (ii) marketing, branding, and statewide coordination for promotion of events; (iii) overseeing logo use; and (iv) providing a comprehensive web-based list of teacher resources.

During discussion of the proposed plan of events, the Commission agreed that bag lunches should be provided free of charge for all attendees to the December 2016 program, rather than only providing a free lunch for veterans and one guest, as previously discussed. A sufficient number of lunches will be ordered to provide to veterans and their traveling parties, military escorts, distinguished guests, and program attendees (on a first-come, first-served basis).

Members expressed support for the mobile tour, which will provide an opportunity for local communities to build programs and help Virginians tell their stories. Key partners will be the Library of Virginia, Virginia War Memorial, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), and Department of Motor Vehicles. Staff displayed images of a mobile unit at Spevco, Inc., in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, that has been custom built and is currently available to go on tour. It has a glass wall that could contain exciting exhibits that would appeal especially to young people. The estimated cost to design and lease the unit for the Profiles of Honor Tour is \$150,000 per year, and tour operation would entail an annual expenditure of around \$350,000. The estimated cost of digitizing, cataloging, and online access to documents is approximately \$150,000 per year.

During discussion of the statewide teacher symposium in 2017, staff noted that Betsy Barton of the Virginia Department of Education has successfully led similar efforts for legislative commissions and would be a key planning partner. The symposium will go on the road to each of the eight superintendent regions and would be recorded for Internet download by teachers unable to attend. Jon Hatfield observed that the Virginia War Memorial sponsors programs for teachers and urged that it be involved in the development of the symposium so that no duplication of effort will occur.

Delegate O'Bannon moved to accept and approve the programs proposal, with the changes that were discussed. The motion was seconded by Delegate Anderson and passed unanimously.

World War I and World War II Tourism Marketing Grant Program

Steve Galyean, Virginia Tourism Corporation

The goal of the World War I and World War II Tourism Marketing Grant Program is to support the programs of the Commission and provide Tourism Marketing Grants to local partners for the marketing of events related to the commemoration in an effort to ensure that events reach a wide audience. Mr. Galyean reviewed the basic guidelines, elaborated on the eligible expenses and activities covered by the grants as well as what was not eligible, and explained the scoring on application questions. Eligible activities include interpretive markers, marketing of lectures and exhibits, travel-related print materials such as brochures, placement of advertisements promoting the area to visitors and highlighting regional historical connections to World War I or World War II, website development, travel and trade show booths, fulfillment costs, and trade show displays. Activities not eligible include administrative expenses, event start-up costs, the cost of promotional items, directional signage, website maintenance fees, battle reenactments, events deemed celebratory rather than commemorative, and projects that do not contribute to increased visitation.

Ms. Jackson noted that some events that are celebratory might be eligible for a grant; for example, a parade that honors veterans. Instead of categorically excluding all celebratory events, she recommended changing the language to something like "events . . . whose historical accuracy is called into question by the Commission."

Staff will work to get the word out to museums, libraries, and localities about the Tourism Marketing Grants. Reimbursable grants of up to \$5,000 will be available on a 1:1 matching basis, with at least three partners required. The first round of grants will open by July 1, close two months later by September 1, and be announced in early October. A committee composed of VTC staff and Commission staff will review grant applications and make recommendations to the Commission on approval or rejection. Delegate Cox requested that the executive director of the Virginia War Memorial serve as the Commission's representative on the grant review committee.

Delegate O'Bannon moved that the celebratory exclusion be removed and that the Commission authorize the transfer of \$100,000 to the VTC for initial funding of the grant program. The motion was seconded by Senator Ruff and passed unanimously.

Delegate O'Bannon asked whether the mobile unit would belong to the Commission. Ms. Jackson expressed the view that it would be better to lease the unit than to purchase it. The mobile unit would need to be pulled by a large passenger truck such as a Ford F450, which may be purchased or leased for the duration of the tour.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned.