



A Coin to Maintain The WWII Memorial

As America's longest war ends and our country welcomes evacuees from Afghanistan, I am reminded of a time over 80 years ago that feels eerily similar. My family escaped Nazi Germany and the Holocaust when I was a young boy and started a new life in America. I was lucky and fortunate.

I felt a sense of duty and returned to Germany as an American soldier to fight in World War II. This was a time when our country was unified, had shared values, and came together for a common goal. Our generation, which included all Americans – those

serving on the battlefield and the home front - had a binding and enduring commitment in the face of authoritarianism and fascism. We were united as a country in our goal of defeating those great evils. For those of us still living, our greatest symbol of that generation and our spiritual home is the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The Memorial honors the 16 million who served in the Armed Forces of the U.S. during World War II, the more than 400,000 who died, and the millions who supported the war effort here at home.

For many young visitors, their

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visit to the Memorial is a first glimpse at a grateful Nation's remembrance of the sacrifices made by the brave men and women who fought against tyranny. For World War II veterans like myself, the Memorial is a special destination, a rendezvous point, and a gathering place for reflection, reunions, and commemorative programs.

As a World War II veteran who lives just across the river in Virginia, I'm fortunate enough to be able to visit the Memorial from time to time. It causes me great distress to see this wonderful treasure fall into disrepair because it cannot be properly maintained. I understand and greatly sympathize with the backlog of maintenance issues with the National Park Service. It is not their fault.

There is good news though. Representatives Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) introduced the National World War II Memorial Commemorative Coin Act in February, a bill to authorize the U.S. Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial. Proceeds from the sale of the commemorative coins will be used to maintain and repair the Memorial, as well as for commemorative and educational programming.

The legislation ensures that the World War II Memorial will be properly and appropriately maintained, and that the commemorative and educational programming at the Memorial remains robust and substantial. The Greatest Generation Memorial Act S. 1596, a Senate companion bill, was introduced by Senators Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.). I call on my Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner to co-sponsor the important bill and support the World War II Memorial.

While my generation might not have much time left to visit the Memorial, we must teach the lessons of yesterday to unite the generations of tomorrow and understand that above all, it serves as an important symbol of American national unity, a timeless reminder of the moral strength and awesome power that can flow when a free people are at once united and bonded together in a common and just cause.

Colonel Frank Cohn, USA (Ret.)

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