

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
OCTOBER 13-14, 2010**

Resolution No. 15: Redesignate The Liberty Memorial In Kansas City, Missouri And The District Of Columbia WWI Memorial As National WWI Memorials

Origin: Internal Affairs Commission

Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, This resolution combines Resolution No. 15 (Internal Affairs 2010 Spring Meetings) and Resolution Nos. 4 (District of Columbia); 154 (Maryland); and 238 (Missouri) from the 2010 National Convention; and

WHEREAS, The United States joined its European allies in 1917 to help defeat Germany and its allies in the first World War which, after cessation of hostilities, was referred to as the Great War or the War to End all Wars; and

WHEREAS, The United States mobilized over 4,700,000 Armed Forces personnel for that war and lost 116,516 killed in action or died from other causes as well as 204,002 wounded; and

WHEREAS, There is no National World War I Memorial which was ever authorized by Congressional action, although private citizens and other states raised funds for the design, construction and dedication of World War I memorials, stadiums and museums; and

WHEREAS, In 1919 the people of Kansas City, Missouri, expressed an outpouring of support and raised more than \$2,000,000 in two weeks for a memorial to the service of Americans who served in World War I which was paralleled by any other city in the United States irrespective of population and reflected the passion of public opinion about World War I, which had so recently ended; and

WHEREAS, Following the drive, a national architectural competition was held by the American Institute of Architects for designs for a memorial to the service of Americans in World War I, and the competition yielded a design by Architect H. Van Buren Magonigle; and

WHEREAS, On November 1, 1921, more than 100,000 people witnessed the dedication of the site for the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri; and

WHEREAS, The dedication of the site on November 1, 1921 marked the only time in history that the five allied military leaders, Lieutenant General Baron Jacques of Belgium, General Armando Diaz of Italy, Marshal Ferdinand Foch of France, Admiral Lord Earl Beatty of Great Britain, and General of the Armies John J. Pershing of the United States of America, were together at one place; and

WHEREAS, General of the Armies John J. Pershing, a native of Missouri and the Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, noted at the November 1, 1921 dedication that “the people of Kansas City, Missouri are deeply proud of the beautiful memorial, erected in tribute to the patriotism, the gallant achievements, and the heroic sacrifices of their sons and daughters who served in our country’s armed forces during the World War which symbolized their grateful appreciation of duty well done, and appreciation which I share, because I know so well how richly it is merited”; and

WHEREAS, During an Armistice Day ceremony in 1924, President Calvin Coolidge marked the beginning of a three year construction project for the Liberty Memorial by the laying of the cornerstone; and

WHEREAS, The 217 foot Liberty Memorial Tower has an inscription that reads”, In honor of Those Who Served in the World War in Defense of Liberty and Our Country” as well as four stone

“Guardian Spirits” representing Courage, Honor, Patriotism, and Sacrifices, which rise above the observation deck, making the Liberty Memorial a noble tribute to all who served in World War I; and

WHEREAS, During a rededication of the Liberty Memorial in 1961, World War I Veterans and former Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower recognized the memorial as a constant reminder of the sacrifices during World War I and the progress that followed; and

WHEREAS, The 106th Congress recognized the Liberty Memorial as a national symbol of World War I; and

WHEREAS, The 108th Congress designated that the museum at the base of The Liberty Memorial as “**American’s National World War I Museum**”; and

WHEREAS, The American’s National World War I Museum is the only public museum in the United States specifically dedicated to the history of World War I; and

WHEREAS, The National World War I Museum is known throughout the world as a major center of World War I remembrance; and

WHEREAS, In the 1920s, The American Legion was advocating for a National Memorial in Washington, DC but the idea just died after the National Fine Arts Commission studied with no action taken; and

WHEREAS, Many states, counties, cities built elaborate WW I memorials, coliseums, stadiums, libraries, buildings and monuments because the mood of the country at the time was a small central government and the local communities would honor the veterans in addition the country was experiencing a large National war debt and then the depression and WW II were probably key reasons why a Federal Memorial on the Mall in DC never got off the ground; and

WHEREAS, The District of Columbia was authorized by a Joint Resolution of the 68th Congress on February 7, 1924, to construct, at no cost to the Government, a memorial on the National Mall to be dedicated “to those members of the Armed Forces of the United States from the District of Columbia who served in the Great Wars”; and

WHEREAS, The DC World War Memorial was dedicated on November 11, 1931 by President Herbert Hoover, and an annual observance has been held at the Memorial on the third Sunday of May by the District of Columbia World War Memorial and May Day Corporation since that date; and

WHEREAS, Over the years although it sits on the Mall, it fell into disrepair and it took The American Legion in 2006 going to Congress to get \$7 million in authorized funds to refurbish the memorial and to this day only a \$2.3 million improvement was started in July 2010 with stimulus funds; and

WHEREAS, The last living World War I veteran, Mr. Frank Buckles of West Virginia, aroused the interest of Congress to have a National World War Memorial on the Mall to honor all veterans of the Great Wars, not just DC soldiers killed in Europe; and

WHEREAS, The World War I Memorial Foundation was established in August 2006 as a private nonprofit organization to raise funds for the rededication and an additional enhancement of the World War I Memorial on the Mall as a National and District of Columbia World War I Memorial; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meetings assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 13-14, 2010, That The American Legion support the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri as the National WWI Memorial and Museum and the District of Columbia World War I Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC as the District of Columbia and National World War I Memorial without financial obligation to The American Legion.