SPIRIT OF ’45

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF WWII VICTORY

Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

Department of Veterans Affairs

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SUMMARY OF THE SPIRIT OF ’45 EVENTS

It was a great time for the veterans to gather for the 70th Anniversary of WWII Victory with two very specific and different events on the weekend of August 15-16.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15.

On Saturday, August 15, a WWII Victory Celebration and Concert was held at 11 am. The venue was the Haney Center of the Seminole State College. Around 80 were in attendance for the morning’s festivities, as we specifically gave honor and tribute to the WWII veterans present. There were five (5) veterans from WWII, and we asked them to come forward and introduce themselves. We also recognized all veterans present, as we said thanks to them for their service as well. Galen Greenwalt, Director of Veterans Affairs for the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, coordinated and presided over the event.

The morning began with the posting of the colors by the Color Guard of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. The National Anthem was sung by a California singing ensemble called DESIAH. The invocation was given by a Seminole veteran, Dorsey Nero, in the Seminole/Creek language. The tribal Assistant Chief, Lewis Johnson, gave a word of welcome and made a few remarks about the Seminole military history. The three Princesses of the Seminole Nation were then given the stage to introduce themselves and make some remarks to the audience also. Introduction of the WWII veterans followed. As the group DESIAH prepared to come forward to sing, John Lewis (producer of the group) read the tribal Proclamation for the Spirit of ’45 Commemorative Week.

The group of five young people in the group DESIAH then came up to the stage area and gave a rousing patriotic concert, which brought tears to many eyes. One particular song in the set of the concert presentation gave honor to each branch of the military, with the hymns of each branch included to give indication to those present to stand, if they served in that particular branch of service. Maj.Gen. (ret.) Myles Deering, Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the state of Oklahoma and also Exec. Director of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs, gave a wonderful speech about patriotism and courage, specifically citing the volunteer enlistment of the Native Americans following Pearl Harbor. Assistant Chief Lewis Johnson gave the closing prayer. The retiring of the colors by the Seminole Nation Color Guard concluded the event. Many stayed around to take photos with the WWII veterans and greet one another.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16.

On Sunday, August 16, a Wreath-Laying and Taps Ceremony was held at the Seminole Nation National Veterans Cemetery near the Mekusukey Mission area of Seminole. It was held at 9 am on a sun-filled Sunday morning.

The event began with the entrance of the Seminole Nation Color Guard to the cemetery plaza. The colors were already posted on the flag poles in the Veterans Plaza and Wall of Honor. Galen Greenwalt, Director of Veterans Affairs for the Seminole Nation, presided at this Wreath-Laying event. DESIAH, the group of five young people from California (ages 16 to 22), sang the National Anthem, and Dorsey Nero (tribal veteran) gave the invocation.

After a brief welcome, Principal Chief Leonard Harjo read the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Proclamation, declaring the week of August 9 – 16, 2015, to be the **WWII 70th ANNIVERSARY SPIRIT OF ’45 COMMEMORATIVE WEEK.** He gave a few brief remarks to remind the audience of close to 35 people of the historical significance of this occasion. Following the Chief’s words, Rex Hailey (Commander of the Seminole Nation Color Guard) and Galen Greenwalt (Director of Seminole Nation Veterans Affairs) brought the special wreath to the base of the Veterans Plaza Wall of Honor to honor all those who served and fought in WWII. In lieu of using a bugle, the group DESIAH sang a solemn and moving rendition of Taps, with amazing voices of harmony. To close the ceremony, Dorsey Nero led the group in singing the Creek hymn “Allelu” and concluding with prayer.

It was an amazing weekend to honor and remember the valor and duty of the WWII veterans.

*Contributed by K. Galen Greenwalt, Director of Veterans Affairs of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma*