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112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2717

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one city in the United States each year as an ''American World War II City'', and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 1, 2011

Mr. MCINTYRE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one city in the United States each year as an ''American World War II City'', and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Many cities across the United States contributed to the war effort during World War II, including through defense manufacturing, bond drives, service in the Armed Forces, and the presence of military facilities within the city.

(2) Many of those cities have sought to preserve the history of those contributions, including through the establishment of preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition of World War II veterans.

(3) The city of Wilmington, North Carolina, made remarkable contributions to the United States war efforts during World War II.

(4) During World War II, Wilmington was the country's unique wartime boomtown, aptly and officially named ''The Defense Capital of the State''.

(5) Wilmington based and trained all five military services: the predecessor to the Air Force at the Wilmington Airport, the Army at Camp Davis and Fort Fisher, the Navy at Fort Caswell, the Coast Guard at Wrightsville Beach, and the Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune.

(6) The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company of Wilmington, the State's largest employer at that time, constructed 243 cargo vessels with which to provide goods and equipment to our soldiers.

(7) Wilmington provided the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad headquarters, three housing camps for German prisoners of war, a major training base for P–47 fighters, defense industries producing goods

and equipment, a British patrol base, and a shipping point for Lend Lease supplies to the Allies.

(8) Wilmington dispatched thousands of its sons and daughters to fight the enemy on land, sea, and air as Navy frogmen, P–51 fighter aces, Tuskegee Airmen, submarine skippers, bomber pilots, Marine riflemen, Army artillerymen, physicians and nurses, and volunteers of all sorts.

(9) Wilmington tragically lost 248 men as a result of their courageous efforts to defend the United States, and two New Hanover High School graduates received the Congressional Medal of Honor and numerous others received high decorations for valor, including Navy Crosses, Distinguished Service Crosses, and Distinguished Flying Crosses.

(10) Wilmington's strategic position made it vulnerable to enemy attack by German U-boats, which marauded shipping off our beaches. In July 1943, in perhaps the only German attack on the United States, a U-boat fired at the Ethel-Dow chemical plant in Wilmington. Wilmington endured this attack, as well as constant civilian defense restrictions and air raid drills, including black-outs and dim-outs. The city's population more than doubled with the influx of military personnel, forcing

locals to cope with strain on housing and schools, transportation, medical and social services, law enforcement, and food supply.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF AMERICAN WORLD WAR II CITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall designate one city in the United States each year as an ''American World War II City''.

(b) CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION.—The Secretary shall make each designation under subsection (a) based on the following criteria:

(1) Contributions by a city to the war effort during World War II, including those related to defense manufacturing, bond drives, service in the Armed Forces, and the presence of military facilities within the city.

(2) Efforts by a city to preserve the history of the city's contributions during World War II, including through the establishment of preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition of World War II veterans.

(c) FIRST AMERICAN WORLD WAR II CITY.—The city of Wilmington, North Carolina, is designated as an ''American World War II City''.

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