



Dear Mr. Sams:

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for Sumter's application to be designated as a World War II Heritage City and County. Our community holds a unique and significant place in the history of World War II, and this designation would honor the enduring legacy of our contributions to the war effort and the profound impact on our community.

Sumter played a critical role during World War II, serving as a hub of industrial production, military training, and community support. During World War II, Shaw Field, now known as Shaw Air Force Base, developed and rapidly expanded to meet the demands of a global conflict. It became a critical site for the training of pilots and aircrew in advanced flying techniques, aerial combat, and reconnaissance. The rigorous training programs conducted at Shaw ensured that pilots were well-prepared for the diverse and challenging conditions they would face in theaters of war across Europe and the Pacific. Many of the airmen trained at Shaw Field went on to serve with distinction, contributing to key victories that helped turn the tide of the war in favor of the Allies. The impact of Shaw during World War II cannot be overstated. It not only provided essential training and support that were critical to the success of Allied air operations, but it also fostered a sense of duty and service among its personnel. The base's legacy is reflected in the countless stories of bravery and sacrifice demonstrated by the airmen who passed through its gates.

The citizens of Sumter showed unwavering support for the war effort. From volunteering for military service to participating in civil defense, rationing programs, and war bond drives, the community's spirit and dedication were exemplary. This collective effort not only contributed to the Allied victory but also fostered a sense of unity and resilience that remains a defining characteristic of our community.

In addition to our wartime contributions, Sumter is home to numerous historical sites and memorials that preserve and honor the legacy of World War II. These include the new Tuskegee Airmen P-51 Monument that highlights the four Sumter residents who served in this capacity as well as the soon to be enlarged Military Museum. Both of these serve as educational resources and reminders of the sacrifices made by our citizens and service members. The preservation and recognition of these sites are crucial for educating future generations about the importance of this period in our history.

The designation of Sumter as a World War II Heritage City and County would provide a fitting acknowledgment of our community's contributions and sacrifices. It would also

*enhance our efforts to preserve and promote our historical sites, attracting visitors and historians, and fostering a greater appreciation of our heritage.*

*As elected officials representing Sumter, we wholeheartedly endorse this application and urge the committee to recognize our City and County's significant role in World War II. The designation would be a great honor for our community and a testament to the enduring legacy of our contributions to the war effort.*

*Thank you for considering our application. Please contact us if you require any further information or support.*

*Sincerely,*



*David P. Merchant*  
Mayor

*James T. McCain, Jr.*

*James T. McCain, Jr., Chairman*  
*Sumter County Council*

---