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30 May 2024

**Charles F. Sams, III
National Park Service Director
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240**

Dear Mr. Sams,

I am writing to endorse and fully support the effort to designate Sumter as a World War II Heritage City. The community is well deserving!

Sumter's substantial and direct contributions to the World War II combat efforts abroad and home front and its ongoing commitment to preserving its wartime legacy make it an ideal candidate for this prestigious honor. Sumter's involvement in World War II is exemplified by the establishment of Shaw Field in August 1941 (named in honor of Sumter native, 1st Lieutenant Ervin Shaw, one of the first Americans to fly combat missions in World War I). Shaw Field played a critical role in training over 8,600 combat pilots, including not only American, but British, Canadian and French cadets.

The presence of this flying school and the construction of the base's Friendship Chapel, which remains the oldest building on the base, are testaments to Sumter's dedication to the war effort. Additionally, Shaw Field served as a German prisoner-of-war encampment, housing approximately 400 prisoners from March 1945 to 1946, and as a separation center for thousands of discharged Airmen, Sailors and Soldiers, post-war.

Following World War II, Shaw Field was renamed Shaw Air Force Base (AFB) on 13 January 1948 and became home to the 9th US Air Force of Tactical Air

Command. The units assigned to Shaw AFB played significant roles during the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam Conflict in Southeast Asia, the Global War on Terrorism, and the Gulf Wars in the Middle East. Today Shaw AFB has assigned the 20th Fighter Wing (host unit), 9th US Air Force (and Headquarters Air Forces US Central Command), 15th US Air Force, elements of the 432nd Wing, the 16th US Air Force, the 557th Weather Wing as well as 3rd US Army (and Headquarters Army US Central Command) – further highlighting Shaw AFB’s and Sumter’s ongoing military importance.

Sumter’s recognition of its World War II contributions is also illustrated through the community’s numerous memorials and initiatives. The Sumter County Courthouse has a memorial that was specifically dedicated (in 1949) in recognition of the Sumter County citizens who sacrificed their lives during World War II. And more recently, the Sumter community unveiled a new monument to specifically commemorate two members of the famed Tuskegee Airmen that were originally from Sumter.

Local historian Dr. Sammy Wade has made significant contributions to preserving Sumter’s military heritage and history. His initiatives, such as renaming city streets in honor of local veterans’ help ensure that the legacy of Sumter’s servicemen and women is preserved for future generations. The planned, new Sumter Military Museum, planned to open in 2026, will further enhance these efforts with a wealth of exhibits highlighting Sumter’s heritage of contributions with a dedicated World War II gallery.

Sumter’s annual Veteran’s Day programs, Memorial Day events, and the Veteran’s Day parade are just a few more ways this patriotic community demonstrates its patriotism and commitment to those who have served and sacrificed for our Nation. Recent census data is showing that Sumter County has the highest per capita veteran population in the State of South Carolina highlights the strong and ongoing bond between the community and its military members.

The city’s motto, *“Uncommon Patriotism,”* reflects Sumter’s enduring sense of duty and commitment to preserving its World War II heritage and in honoring all those among us who have served to protect our nation, our values and our freedoms. Designating Sumter as a “World War II Heritage City” would be a fitting

recognition of its significant and ongoing efforts to honor and remember its wartime legacy.

I wholeheartedly endorse and support this effort and believe Sumter's rich history and continued dedication to honoring its World War II contributions make it a deserving recipient of this designation.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Michael Moseley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
President and CEO, Moseley and Associates, LLC
General (ret), United States Air Force
18th Chief of Staff

28 May 2024

To: Mr. Charles F. Sams, III, National Park Service Director

From: Sammy Way, Sumter ITEM Archivist and Director of the Sumter Military Museum

Re: Letter of Support

Dear Sir:

The ensuing letter of support concerns America's entry into World War II and explains Sumter's emerging role in this monumental conflict. On December 7, 1941, The ITEM headlines stated that the empire of Japan had attacked the U.S. Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor. The White House acknowledged that a toll of some 3,000 American military had been killed or wounded in the Japanese attack on Honolulu. Imperial Tokyo headquarters claimed a smashing naval and air victory over the United States. On December 8, 1941, Congress voted a formal declaration of war against Japan after President Franklin D. Roosevelt requested immediate action as an answer to Japan's "unprovoked and dastardly attack on Hawaii."

Thus, the United States entered World War II and began rapid preparation for the ensuing conflict. Sumter, like thousands of other communities across the nation, prepared for war. An article published in the *Sumter Daily Item* detailed the steps implemented by this community to prepare for war.

Sumter's preparation addressed "public utilities, buildings, railroads, and highways in Sumter which would be guarded by soldiers from Shaw Field and men from Fort Jackson. Shaw Field was also under strict guard immediately following the attack, and no one was admitted to the base without an official pass. All city officials were put on alert. Two soldiers were stationed at the overhead bridge located at the end of South Main Street; two were positioned at the city

waterworks; one soldier was posted at the downtown court house. The railroads were also being closely guarded by the Home Guard and Shaw soldiers.”

On the outskirts of the city at the junction of U.S. Highways 76 and 521, military guards were stationed: two at each highway and two at the Clayton Lowder Store located at the city limits. Sergeant Saffermann of the 128th Field Artillery, which was stationed at Fort Jackson, informed a member of The ITEM staff that two hundred men from his outfit were on guard duty in the Sumter district. The Sergeant himself was located at the courthouse. “Orders were dispatched from the Mayor’s office to members of the police and to the fire departments to be on the alert for any trouble that might arise.” Industrial leaders were also warned to be on the lookout in what the mayor described as “simply a precautionary measure.” “At county police headquarters a telegram was received from Governor Harley advising the officers to be ready for any orders.” Life in the Sumter County community changed on that day and would not return to normal until hostilities subsided.

The Residents of Sumter Take Action

Numerous civilian activities arose throughout the community. Service groups took the initiative to sponsor paper drives along with collecting scrap metal to be dispensed to the military at specific collection points throughout the city. Concerns about rations necessitated businesses, as well as other organizations, to begin Victory Garden programs. One specific program was undertaken by Mr. A.T. Heath, president of Sumter’s Coca Cola Company. He gave property to the city to be developed as a garden. “The Victory Garden begun by the Coca Cola employees was started on five acres. The employees planted onions, Irish potatoes, cabbage, mustard greens, turnip greens, carrots, radishes, and corn. Many of the plant employees worked in the garden after hours.” The fresh vegetables produced were canned and divided among all the employees of the plant and given in proportion of the size of their families and the amount of work contributed.

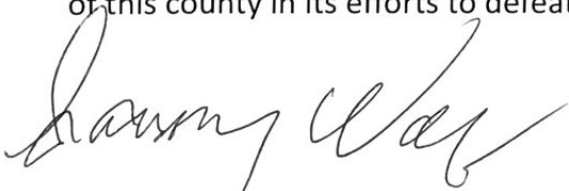
As the names of military personnel killed in action were received, the Sumter community addressed ways to honor their memory. A plaque listing the first fifty

men to be killed in action was established by the American Legion organization. Immediately following the war, a beautiful white, marble monument sponsored by the Sumter Pilot Club was placed (and still remains) in front of the local court house. This monument carried the names of all men who were killed in action in World War II. (Research determined that over the course of conflict during WWII, the Sumter community provided the service of approximately 4,000 military personnel.) The number of men and women serving was substantial considering the population of the Sumter community at that time.

Contributions to the war effort could also be found in the local high schools. Edmunds High School students invested enough money in War Bonds and Stamps from March 1 through April 19, 1942, to purchase twenty-one Jeeps for the Army. The campaign was part of the school's "at war" program which was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Treasury's national program. The goal, in terms of the number of Jeeps, was 10,000 for the nation. South Carolina's quota was 63 Jeeps, thus the local high-school students reached exactly one-third of the whole state's quota.

The organization of Civil Defense in Sumter County was completed according to Mayor F.B. Creech who stated that training in multiple voluntary services had begun. In making this announcement of the establishment of defense organizations, the mayor also listed the members of the Sumter County Council for Defense. The establishment of an air raid system was also announced; the city had been divided into four sections using Main and Liberty Streets as the dividing lines.

The city of Sumter worked closely with the military units stationed at Shaw Field and at Fort Jackson in Columbia. The willingness of the citizens of Sumter to participate in Civil Defense programs, the purchase War Bonds and Stamps, and the large number of men and women who willingly volunteered to serve in the military, and the guidance and leadership of their civilian leaders made a viable contribution to the nation's war efforts during World War II. Sumter served as a model of "extraordinary patriotism," totally dedicated to the defense and success of this county in its efforts to defeat the Axis powers during World War II.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Danny Way".



SUMTER MUSEUM

May 24, 2024

Charles F. Sams, III
National Park Service Director
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Sams,

Sumter Museum is proud to endorse the nomination for the City of Sumter/Sumter County to be jointly named an American World War II Heritage City. Sumter is full of history that makes it unique and the military is a huge component of that uniqueness. Sumter citizens have willingly embraced the call to serve its country through every major conflict. This can be particularly seen during World War II as thousands of "Sumterites" answered the call to both serve in the military and to assist however possible at home.

Sumter is thrilled to be able to share this history through the Sumter Military Museum. This Museum highlights the roles of Sumter veterans and the community to preserving our country's freedom. Dr. Sammy Way, Director of the this museum, Archivist of the *Sumter Item* newspaper, and former beloved history teacher, took it upon himself to share this legacy with first his students through special programs like the street naming project to rename streets after those killed in action, with focus on World War II, and now the general public through his Military Museum.

Our institutions are merging now so that we can ensure all of his hard work is preserved for future generations. We have plans to break ground this September on a new state of the art facility that will house a much larger military museum, with a dedicated WWII gallery, to share Veteran stories with our community and its visitors.

Sumter's motto of "Uncommon Patriotism" is not just a saying. Personally, as a Sumter transplant that moved here around ten years ago, I've witnessed this first hand and can say that no other community I've lived in has recognized military service the way Sumter does. There are numerous monuments throughout the city and county that recognize this service, particularly during World War II. While there has always been patriotic spirit and commitment to serving one's country in Sumter, the addition of Shaw Field in 1941 ignited a renewed sense of community identity and purpose to serving and recognizing and caring for those who served.

Dr. Way and I have provided the City and County with some archival material highlighting Sumter's role in World War II that will be included in their application. We wholeheartedly support the effort to name Sumter an American World War II Heritage City. We appreciate the National Park Service's Heritage City program and hope to be included among your impressive locations.

Annie Rivers,
Executive Director