

BYRON DONALDS

19TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

DONALDS.HOUSE.GOV

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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September 4, 2024

Marco Island
City Council
51 Bald Eagle Drive
Marco Island, FL 34145

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to you to respectfully advocate for the inclusion of World War II Merchant Mariners in the Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities observed by the City of Marco Island. As the community gathers to honor and commemorate those who have served our nation, it is crucial that we recognize the contributions of all who have been formally acknowledged for their service, including the brave individuals of the WWII Merchant Marines.

The Merchant Mariners of World War II played a pivotal role in the success of the Allied forces. They faced extreme danger on the high seas, delivering essential supplies and equipment to support our troops. Their courage and sacrifice were instrumental in achieving victory during the war. It is important to note that under the WWII Merchant Mariner Services Act of 1988, these Mariners have been granted veteran status, underscoring the official recognition of their service and sacrifices.

Despite this acknowledgment, the Merchant Mariners of World War II are often overlooked in our public commemorations since post WWII Merchant Mariners do not have the veteran designation. By including them in our Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities, we would not only honor their significant contributions but also align with the recognition they have been granted. This inclusion would serve as a meaningful tribute to their bravery and dedication, ensuring that their legacy is preserved and respected within our community.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc.

Serving America in Peace and War

September 08, 2024

Marco Island City Council,

City of Marco Island
50 Bald Eagle Drive
Marco Island, FL 34145

Subject: Support of Merchant Marine Flag installation at Veteran's Community Park.

Dear Marco Island City Council members:

Our organization represents the American Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II. It was founded in 1984 by several veterans of the Merchant Marine with the main purpose of gaining veterans benefits and title for the WW II Merchant Seamen. This mission was attained in 1987 and effective January 01, 1988 the sailors were granted veterans status equal to that of all other branches of the U.S. Military Service. At that time AMMV was host to 6000 veterans of WW II.

We encourage parks and memorial sites around the United States to fly the Merchant Marine flag, play the official song, *Heave Ho*, and erect monuments and markers commemorating the heroism and dedication of the Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II.

We support the recognition of the U.S. Merchant Marine (USMM) through the installation of a new flagpole, Merchant Marine flag, and paver at a designated location within the City Veterans Park Memorial. This flag, a powerful symbol of our service and sacrifice, is a fitting tribute to the USMM.

We sincerely appreciate your support in recognizing and honoring the legacy of the courageous men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine veterans. Their significant contributions were instrumental in the Allies' victory in WWII and all other U.S. military sealift operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darin Huggins".

Capt. Darin Huggins
National Vice President
American Merchant Marine Veterans

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
P.O. Box 2024, Darien, CT 06820-2024
(475) 470-9200; ammervets@gmail.com
<https://ammv.us/>



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
American Merchant Marine Veterans
Serving America in Peace and War

September 3, 2024

Councilmen, Marco Island City Council;

Our organization represents the American Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II. It was founded in 1984 by several veterans of the Merchant Marine with the main purpose of gaining veterans benefits and title for the WW II Merchant Seamen. This mission was attained in 1987 and effective Jan 1, 1988 the sailors were granted veterans status equal to that of all other branches of the U.S. Military Service. At that time AMMV was host to 6000 veterans of WW II.

Our purpose continues to advocate for the Merchant Mariners both past and present in Peace and War and to educate and promote awareness of their contributions to our nation. In more recent years we were instrumental in obtaining the Congressional Gold Medal for Merchant Mariners of WW II, which was signed into law March 13, 2020, and has been distributed to living mariners of WW II as well as to the families of those deceased. We have taken WW II representatives to Washington DC to participate in the Laying of the Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. AMMV participates in the parades in Washington DC and elsewhere around the country honoring our veterans. Our members support and participate in Wreaths Across America each December where we honor the Merchant Mariners of WW II at cemeteries throughout the U.S. We have provided speakers for events all over the USA and in Europe to spread the word of the U.S. Merchant Marine which has participated in every war since its founding in 1775 including the Revolutionary War. This past June we erected a monument at Utah Beach to the Merchant Marine upon commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

We encourage parks and memorial sites around the United States to fly the Merchant Marine flag, play the official song, *Heave Ho*, and erect monuments and markers commemorating the heroism and dedication of the MM Veterans of WW II.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn C. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Lynn C." on top and "Kelly" below it, with a flourish at the end.

Lynn C. Kelly
National Office Administrator
AMMV