



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**For Immediate Release:** May 9, 2015

**Contact:** Meredith Beatrice

[Meredith.Beatrice@dos.myflorida.com](mailto:Meredith.Beatrice@dos.myflorida.com)

850.245.6522

### **Florida Department of State Announces Launch of the WWII Commemorative Campaign *Victory Florida Aboard the U.S.S. Wasp*** *Secretary Ken Detzner joins Consul General of France to honor WWII veterans*

**PORT EVERGLADES** – During a press conference held today aboard the U.S.S. Wasp docked at Port Everglades as part of Broward Navy Days, Secretary of State Ken Detzner announced the launch of the *Victory Florida* campaign recognizing 70 years since the ending of World War II.

**“Victory Florida is about recognizing the incredible sacrifices made by those men and women who fought for our freedoms 70 years ago,”** said Secretary Detzner. **“There are many important sites, museums and monuments in Florida that tell the story of World War II. I encourage visitors and residents to participate in Victory Florida activities and learn about the important part Florida played in securing victory worldwide.”**

This press conference was one in a series of events organized to recognize the day WWII ended in Europe in 1945. Secretary Detzner was joined by the Consul General of France in Miami, the Honorable Philippe Létriliart; the Consul General of Britain in Miami, the Honorable David Prodger; Speaker Pro Tempore Matt Hudson; Carlos Molinet, Senior Vice President, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau; and Mary Anne Gray, Executive Director, Broward Navy Days to announce this statewide initiative to an international audience.

May 8, 1945, is known as “VE-Day” and is the day WWII ended in Europe following the continued advancement of United States troops into Germany. In addition to the anniversary of VE-Day, other significant dates to commemorate and honor Florida’s veterans this year include those scheduled to take place as part of *Victory Week*, August 8- 15, 2015, which coincides with the anniversary of the global ending of WWII on August 15, 1945. The Florida Department of State encourages partnering communities to plan *Victory Florida* activities across the state as part of this campaign.

Prior to the press conference, the Consulate General of France in Miami presented 14 Knight in the French National Order of the Legion of Honor medals to Florida veterans who fought to liberate France from 1944-1945. The Knight in the French National Order of the Legion of Honor is the highest decoration bestowed by the Government of France.

On Monday, May 11, the Florida Department of State is scheduled to host a press conference at Florida's Capitol building in Tallahassee concluding the two-event launch of the *Victory Florida* campaign. The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, VISIT FLORIDA, Florida State Parks and Honor Flight Tallahassee are also scheduled to participate in the event.

###

**About Victory Florida:**

August 15, 2015, marks the 70 year anniversary of V-Day, or Victory Day, which marked the end of World War II in 1945. The Florida Department of State is drawing attention to this important anniversary during 2015 with the campaign *Victory Florida*, which honors and celebrates the heroes and heroines of World War II while educating Floridians about the important role our state played on the battlefield and on the home front.

There are many statewide organizational partners including museums, historical sites and memorials who are promoting the campaign. These statewide partners are planning events year round to honor WWII veterans and tell the story of Florida during WWII. To find out more about *Victory Florida*, or to view Victory Florida events visit [VivaFlorida.org/Victory](http://VivaFlorida.org/Victory).

**About Broward Navy Days:**

Incorporated in 1990, Broward Navy Days (BND) was formed under the leadership of Captain Jean Fitzgerald, USN (Ret.), to host an annual Fleet Week celebration at Port Everglades. Fleet Week Port Everglades remains the signature event for BND each spring, but the organization is equally committed to actively supporting our seagoing services year-round. The organization plans welcoming events and shore leave activities for visiting Navy and Coast Guard ships periodically throughout the year and supports the activities of the U.S. Navy Southern Command and Coast Guard Station Fort Lauderdale. For more information visit: [browardnavydaysinc.org](http://browardnavydaysinc.org)

**About The Consulate General of France in Miami:**

For more than 25 years, the Consulate General of France in Miami has assisted French communities in Florida, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, The Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands. With services provided for French nationals in the Consular Affairs Office, promotion of a contemporary and dynamic approach to French culture through the Cultural Services Department, and outreach to keep Floridians informed about French news and events involving the French community through the Public Affairs Department, the Consulate performs a vital service for the communities served. For more information visit: [consulfrance-miami.org](http://consulfrance-miami.org).

**About The Consulate General of Britain in Miami:**

The British Consulate General in Miami represents the UK government in Florida, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. This involves work across political, commercial, security and economic areas of interest to the UK and providing consular assistance to British nationals in our region. For more information visit: [Gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-consulate-general-miami](http://Gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-consulate-general-miami).