

Anne Landis Testimony in support of H 5452 AN ACT RELATING TO HOLIDAYS AND DAYS OF SPECIAL OBSERVANCE -- HOLIDAYS My father, Samuel F. Peirce, joined the US Army in 1943 after working in the defense industry. By 1945 he had completed training as a 2nd Lieutenant and awaited deployment. In the summer he was waiting to be part of forces that would invade Japan if there was no surrender. After the war he was stationed in Korea and took surrenders from Japanese forces there. The Korean people thanked him with beautiful gifts, a kimono, and a captured samurai sword. He later served in the army in Korea and was stationed at the 45 parallel where he said, "I was shot at." That is all I know about his army service. His army records are unavailable because they were destroyed in a fire. My father grew up in Westerly. He and my mother spent summers in Weekapaug from the 1930s until 2000. Many of his friends were in combat. None of them talked about it to us. When I was young I found his army uniform and wanted to parade around the neighborhood. He angrily forbade me and subsequently got rid of all the things that he had collected from his military service. The war was in the past. Victory over Japan was never bragged about. We watched the Memorial Day parade every year and, as a historian, I knew the significance of Armistice Day when the celebration of Veterans Day was changed to that date. In the 1990s I was part of Women For a Non-Nuclear Future that advocated for Rhode Island to join the rest of the nation and stop celebrating V-J Day. This Victory Day celebration, also coming with the anniversaries of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, fails to recognize the terrible human casualties in these cities. The estimation of US military deaths in an invasion of Japan were so high that I should be glad that my father did not need to do this. I would rather honor his service by honoring the cause of peace, a cause that my father honored by his silence. His willingness to serve is a testimony to his patriotism, but a commitment to honoring peace instead of a wartime victory is a testimony that he would prefer.