

A Tribute to Victory

— Dubuque in World War II —

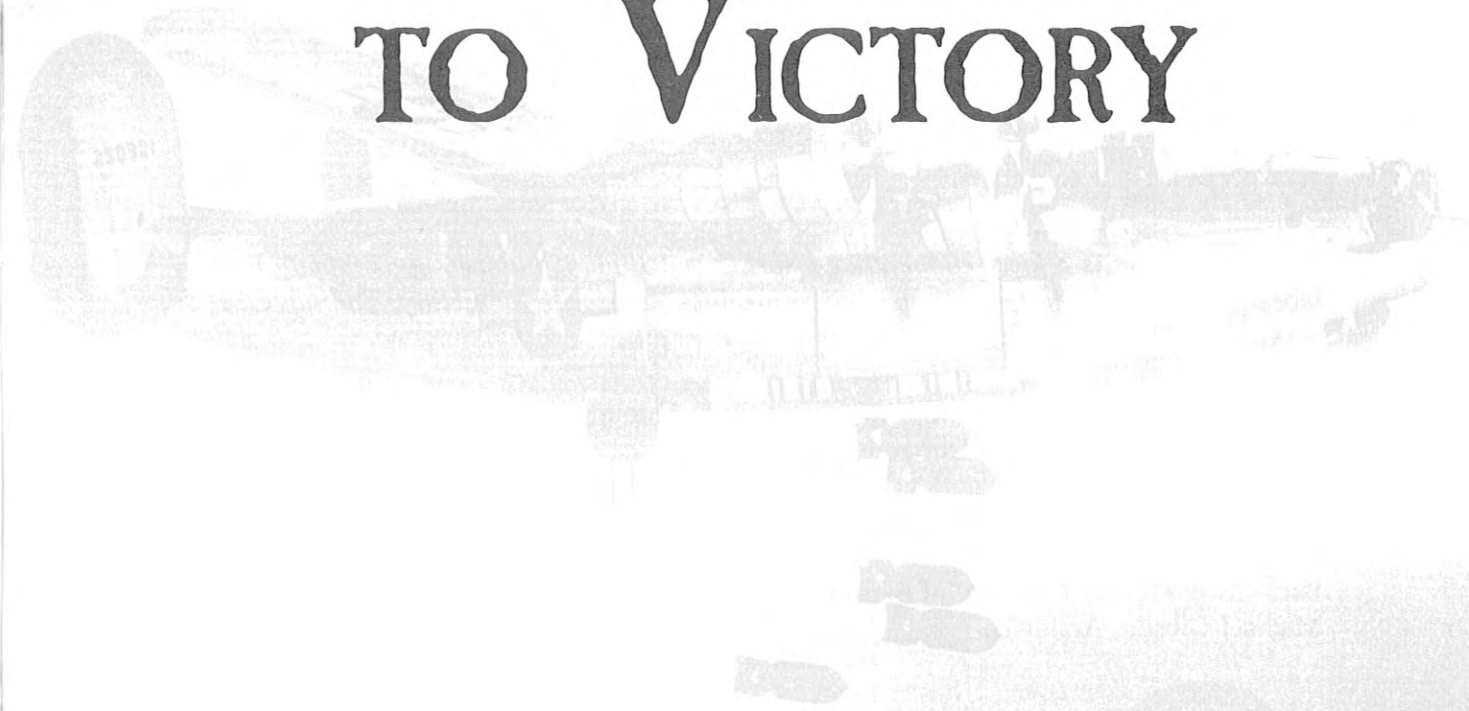


SERVING



OUR COUNTRY

A TRIBUTE TO VICTORY



DUBUQUE IN WORLD WAR II

Central Alternative High School



KENDALL/HUNT PUBLISHING COMPANY
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Preface

In February of 1998, American history and English students from Central Alternative High School invited four members of the famous Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black combat pilots of World War II, to attend an academic seminar in Dubuque, Iowa. Nearly 900 citizens joined us for that incredible evening. The public's overwhelming response to this unprecedented event in our school's and city's history clearly indicated that recognizing these World War II veterans for their service to our country in its time of greatest need was certainly appropriate, if not long overdue. The excitement and enthusiasm that inspired our students; the heartfelt response from grateful citizens; and the practical experience we gained from organizing and hosting that seminar, gave us the confidence to plan another event that would feature the exploits and preserve the memories of Dubuque's World War II veterans and their families. We didn't need Tom Brokaw's book for inspiration.

I had the good fortune to meet General Paul Tibbets, the man who led the mission to drop the world's first atomic bomb on Japan in August of 1945 in the now-famous B-29 *Enola Gay*, at a Minneapolis aviation exposition in August, 1999. After a brief discussion with his business manager, Gerry Newhouse, I learned that the General still made public appearances, and that Tibbets had just published his autobiography. Armed with an autographed copy of the General's book and a homemade video tape of the weekend's aviation festivities, I welcomed the students back from summer vacation in late August of 1999 with a challenging question: what do you think about inviting General Paul Tibbets to Dubuque for a World War II seminar?

I just happened to have on hand *The Men Who Brought the Dawn*, a documentary that dramatically chronicled the events leading up to the day when Tibbets and his air crew ushered the world in to the nuclear age. My teaching colleague, Tim Ebeling, perceptively suggested that each student respond to my question only after we watched the video tape, read a little from Tibbets' book, and then discussed the project's challenges and possibilities. The crowded classroom fell silent as we viewed, read and then thought.

During the ensuing discussion, doubts aplenty about being able to pull this project together were voiced. After all, many of these students had been unceremoniously discharged from Dubuque's two traditional high schools; academic success was an achievement few of them had recently experienced. How much would this cost? Where would we hold the event? Can we raise the money we need? Will Tibbets even *want* to come here? Central High senior Drew Brashaw, the one student who not only worked on the Tuskegee Airmen project, but also was a major contributor to the JFK assassination symposium we presented in March, 1999, smiled quietly. When his turn came to weigh in



PART

I

**STUDENT
RESEARCH**



The Rise of Nazi Germany

Adam

Many people wonder how the Nazi Party ever came to power. They wonder how Germany could ever enter such a phase of terror. Why would the German people ever elect such a man as Adolf Hitler? Well, to tell the truth, most of the people of Germany never saw it coming. This research will explain how an economic depression drove the people of Germany to look for someone to blame for their problems, and for someone to help them recover from their hardships.

After World War I, Germany entered a great economic depression because of the Treaty of Versailles that was signed in 1919. This agreement forced Germany to give up very large portions of its land, and pay very large sums to different countries for their war damages. The amount of money owed was more than the German government had, so the government just printed more money. But by printing more money, it caused inflation that made the German money almost worthless.¹ This, in turn, put pressure on the German economy. People of Germany were looking for someone to blame for getting them into the mess. They were also looking for someone to pull them from these terrible times. This is where Adolf Hitler came in to save Germany from economic depression, and start a war that would change the world forever.

As a boy, Hitler was brought up Catholic. He attended church daily, and sang in the church chorus. His father, Alois, was a short-tempered and brutal man who beat his son on regular occasions. His mother, Klara, would stick up for him, but did not effectively get the job done. In 1907, when Hitler was just a boy, his mother died. Hitler was crushed because of the very close and intimate bond he and his mother shared.²

As a teenager, Hitler attended school in Vienna to become an artist or an architect. He liked drawing in watercolors; his drawings usually consisted of buildings and landscapes. However, his work was not good enough in the eyes of his superiors, so he was rejected from the art institute twice.³

Hitler then went into a lonely depression, and thought that he would never amount to anything. According to author Alan Bullock, Hitler “cut himself off completely from his family as well as his friends. . . .”⁴ He moved into a homeless shelter for men and spent the next three years of his life there, and made a very low income by selling his paintings so he could buy clothes and other necessities. Hitler would later say, “Those were the worst days of my life.”⁵

In 1914, World War I began over disputes over land throughout Europe and the Middle East. Hitler saw that as a way to escape the terrible life he had been living. A video documentary shows a young Adolf Hitler in a large crowd, eagerly responding to the news that Germany was going to war.⁶ In the military Hitler found his place in life.

He did well at most things he did while there. By the end of the war in 1918, Hitler was a Corporal and earned the Iron Cross. By himself, he captured four French soldiers. When he received the first Iron Cross, he said, “This is the happiest day of my life.”⁷

The German surrender at the end of World War I came as a shock, especially to the German people. Germany was not losing in the war, so the people who were in battle never knew who surrendered. Hitler wanted revenge on whoever ended the war for Germany.

Hitler was looking for a way to gain power in Germany, so he created The National Socialist Party, or “Nazi Party” for short. Here is where Hitler would find a way to win over the German people and learn to control all of Germany.

At first, the Nazi Party was a small group of revolutionaries. However, this group claimed to have the way to solve the problems of Germany’s economic depression, and soon, Nazism grew like a bad weed. In 1923, while on a march through the streets of Germany, protesting against the government, Hitler and his fellow Nazis were fired upon by German police; Hitler was arrested, and was locked up. While incarcerated, he almost felt worthless again; however, he soon learned that the people of Germany saw him as a hero. During his trial he shouted with rage at his accusers, making them look bad. He was then sent to prison where he wrote the “bible” of Nazism called *Mein Kampf* (mine kahmpf) which means “my struggle”. This book explained his plans to conquer much of Europe. Lands lost during World War I would be retaken. Germany would grab “living space,” land other European countries had taken from Germany after World War I. In addition, the Jews would be dealt with harshly. Hitler believed they were to blame for most of the evils of the world.⁸

When Hitler got out of prison in the late 1920’s, one of every three people in Germany was out of work. By this time, Hitler, who already had great popularity among the German people, was going to try to gain power through a legal election. He traveled by airplane from place to place giving his speeches. This strengthened his image because when people heard him speak, they said he did so with great emotion. When he addressed his audiences, he had fire in his eyes as he made promises to make Germany strong again. Germans, he said, were the “master race.” He claimed there was only one way out of Germany’s economic depression and it was Nazism.⁹

Hitler introduced the swastika as the symbol of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party. It first appeared on the red armbands of ushers at his meetings. Then it became a badge and a flag. Hitler gave a lot of thought to using the design of the swastika, for he believed that the success of his movement very largely depended upon the use of symbols, because symbols are immediately comprehensible to the people and simple to recognize.¹⁰

In 1932, the Nazi party got four out of every ten votes during the elections. Hitler had won over many German generals and businessmen who believed that the Nazis would save Germany from a Communist takeover. A year later, in January, 1933, the new German Chancellor (head of German government) was Adolf Hitler. After just a few months, he had special laws passed that took away most of the German people’s civil rights. The laws put all the power in the hands of Hitler and the Nazi Party. He soon ruled Germany with an iron fist. He gave himself the title “Der Fuhrer” (dair FYUR-uhr), which means “the leader.” Then his secret police began jailing and killing anyone who was Jewish, or who disagreed with him.¹¹

Hitler had a very interesting and effective way of getting the crowd’s attention just as he was about to give speeches. A video documentary on Hitler’s life shows one example of how this was done. First, he would stand silently in front of the crowd, letting them cheer his

presence. He would refuse to begin his speech until everyone was absolutely quiet and giving him their entire attention. The narrator then comments that in this instance, Hitler waited for over one minute until the crowd was totally silent. Then he would begin his speech slowly and in a very mild voice:

We don’t want to lie, we don’t want to cheat. I therefore always refused to make cheap promises. Nobody here can get up and prove that I have ever said that the renewal of Germany would be just a matter of a few days. Again and again I have preached that the renewal of the nation depends on the German people recovering inner strength and health.¹²

This showed Hitler’s pride for Germany. He had a great ability to speak to the people of Germany and tell them what they wanted to hear. During the speeches, he would often talk about Germany being the “Fatherland.”

Young people like Alfons Heck, who was a member of the Hitler Youth, said that Hitler’s words would hypnotize him and his fellow Germans, and would give them a sense of security which everyone in the country was looking for.¹³ He would speak for two or three hours on the menace of Jews, and how they were the reason that Germany had collapsed. Hitler said that the Jews stabbed the German people in the back after World War I, and that is why Germany was in the depression. He believed that Jews were the people who ended World War I. Hitler told the people that there would be a reawakening of Germany once the Jews were swept away. He waited until the audience was ready to catch fire and then he would launch into a sharp, fierce attack on the German people’s enemies in a voice that would crack across the room like a thousand whips:

In us alone lies the future of German people. When we ourselves lead the German people out of the abyss through our own work, our own industry, our own determination, our own stubbornness, and our own perseverance. Then we will rise again just as our fathers built up Germany, not through outside help, but by their own efforts.¹⁴

This created an atmosphere full of rage from the German people. A new hope was developed from the words of Adolf Hitler.

Hitler would be very fatigued by the end of a speech. The documentary, “The Fatal Attraction of Adolf Hitler” showed how, by the end of a speech, his suit was soaked with sweat, his hair was plastered to his forehead and his face was chalk white.¹⁵

In Hitler’s vision of a revived Germany, the youth played a huge part, for one day he hoped they would take over the empire that he planned to create. For example, at one of the Hitler Youth rallies, Der Fuhrer spoke to a crowd of over 80,000 young Germans. Alfons Heck was present at the rally. He said, “When Hitler spoke, it changed my life forever. After Hitler’s speech your body would fill with a tingling feeling.”¹⁶ Heck also said that Hitler bent over the podium, looked at all the boys and said, “You are the fortunate ones to live in this time because you will inherit what we have started to build. You will one day rule the world.”¹⁷

Hitler started his speech differently when he talked to the boys because he had great pride in them. He said, "You are flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, and your young minds are fired by the spirit that fire our minds."¹⁸ Heck then remembered that Hitler made them feel like they "belonged" by saying to them, "You are all one now belonging to me, you no longer have to feel disturbed by class differences."¹⁹ With speeches like this, and the special, mystical way he could control people, Hitler was now in the minds of all the youth of Germany. He would soon use them as his soldiers to do as he wished.

By the year 1939, Adolf Hitler had what he wanted, and that was complete control over Germany. He now was ready to act on what he had been planning to do since World War I ended, to re-build Germany. Hitler's first move was to take over the Rhineland, which was on the border of Germany. He watched as the world around him never even bothered to stop him. The United States was in the middle of an economic depression and did not have the strength or the willingness to get involved yet. And other nations hoped that Germany would stop there. But Hitler had other plans. When he saw that no country would try to stop him from taking the Rhineland, he figured why not take Austria? Gaining ground, he planned to take back all that was lost during in World War I. But why stop there?



Notes

1. Ira Peck, *Coming of Age* (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1983), p. 146.
2. Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
5. Arts and Entertainment Network: *Time Machine*: "The Fatal Attraction of Adolf Hitler."
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Ira Peck, *Coming of Age*, p. 149.
9. Ira Peck, *Coming of Age*, p. 150.
10. *Time Machine*, "The Fatal Attraction of Adolf Hitler."
11. Ira Peck, *Coming of Age*, p. 149.
12. *Time Machine*, "The Fatal Attraction of Adolf Hitler."
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*

★ "When I Came to, the Ship Was a Mass of Flames . . ."

Shaun and Nate .

The following account of the attack on Pearl Harbor was taken from the pages of The Honolulu Advertiser, special souvenir edition, dated Sunday, December 7, 1941, and from an article in the Dubuque Telegraph Herald that commemorated the 50th anniversary of the attack.

On December 7, 1941, "a day that will live in Infamy," the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

As the officers were eating breakfast aboard the *USS Arizona*, a short signal of the ship's air raid alarm sounded, but Pearl Harbor wasn't on high alert. At 7:02 AM, at Oahu's northern shore radar station, two Army operators detected a group of aircraft approaching, and they contacted a junior officer who disregarded their reports, thinking that they were American B-17 planes, expected in from the West Coast. The senior commanders believed that there was no reason to assume that the attack was coming, so many American aircraft were parked wingtip to wingtip on the airfield. This procedure was designed to minimize the threat of sabotage; and fewer guards would be needed to patrol a smaller area of the airfield. Also, the anti-aircraft guns were unarmed with all ammunition boxes locked. There were no torpedo nets strung across the harbor entrance to protect the naval fleet. And since it was Sunday morning, many officers and crewmen were on leave ashore. Then the Japanese planes began their attack on the ships that were anchored in the harbor.

"As I was running forward on the starboard side of the quarterdeck . . . I was apparently knocked out by the blast of a bomb," said Lt. Commander S.G. Fuqua, the senior surviving officer. That bomb was one of eight that hit the 26-year-old battleship.

"When I came to, and got up off the deck, the ship was a mass of flames amidships on the boat deck," he continued. After regaining consciousness, he tried to extinguish the fire in the gun turrets, but he found the water mains had no water. Seventy wounded men were taken from the ruptured decks and sent to hospitals before Fuqua ordered all hands to abandon ship much later at 9 AM.

The Japanese attack force, under the command of Admiral Nagumo, consisted of six carriers with 432 planes ready to attack. At 6:00 AM, long before the first bombing, the first attack wave of Japanese planes took off from carriers *Soryu*, *Hiryu*, the *Akagi*, the *Shokaku*, *Zuikaku*, and the *Kaga*. The planes were located 230 miles north of the island of Oahu and headed for the U.S. Pacific Fleet that was anchored at Pearl Harbor.

At 7:15 AM Hawaiian time, the first wave of Japanese aircraft began to attack. Included in the first wave were Japanese "Val" dive-bombers, "Kate" torpedo bombers, high level bombers, and Zero fighters. At 7:50 AM, a second attack wave of planes took off from the Japanese carriers and headed for Pearl Harbor.

The first torpedo in the assault on Pearl Harbor hit the *USS Raleigh* at approximately 7:55 AM. Then “Battleship Row” was hit by one of Lt. Commander Murata’s torpedoes two minutes later.

At 8:10 AM, a Japanese attack bomber dropped a bomb that struck the battleship *Arizona*. This bomb was a converted armor piercing artillery shell that ignited the *Arizona*’s forward ammunition magazine. The ship exploded violently, sinking quickly to the bottom of the harbor, with many sailors trapped inside. For a total of two hours and twenty minutes, Japanese aircraft bombed and shot at their targets.

After the second wave of triumphant Japanese aircraft returned to their carriers, nearly 2,500 Americans had been killed, and about 1,200 were wounded. Eighteen American ships of different sizes had been sunk or damaged, and 77 aircraft of all types had been destroyed, most while they were parked on the ground. Only 29 Japanese aircraft were shot down by return fire, mostly during the attack of the second wave. This number of planes shot down by the Americans was a decent score; however, if the defenses of Hawaii had been properly prepared, the number would have been greater.

Soon after the attack, a message was sent out around the community saying, “Blood donors are urgently needed!” Queens Hospital in Honolulu made an urgent call for blood to be used in transfusions. Any person willing to donate blood was asked to make his way to the hospital and go to the fourth floor. When it was all over, Pearl Harbor had become an unusual battlefield where the dead outnumbered the wounded by a ratio of more than two to one.

There were a number of Tri-State residents at Pearl Harbor who were interviewed by the Dubuque *Telegraph Herald* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this famous historical event. Each man was willing to share his views of what happened on December 7th, 1941. However, the time period surrounding the attack is difficult for most veterans to describe today.

Tom Butler from Dubuque, Iowa, who was a Petty Officer First Class on board the *USS Tennessee* during the Pearl Harbor attack, can still see in his mind the Japanese fighter pilots when they dropped their bombs on Pearl Harbor about 60 years ago. Revealing that he joined the service for more than patriotic motives, Butler said, “I went into the Navy because my mother had too many mouths at home to feed. Things were just different then.”

Pearl Harbor survivor Robert Langheim, 82, of Dubuque, was a Gunner’s Mate Third Class aboard the battleship *USS Pennsylvania* during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Langheim was on the edge of the *Pennsylvania*’s gangway when he saw a Japanese plane strike a number of amphibious planes at the edge of Ford Island. “You have no idea of the conditions that existed at the time of Pearl Harbor and the war. The Japanese came out of everywhere,” Langheim recalled, “There was no time to get scared. When the attack was finished, you saw devastation.”

Owen Clayton of Prairie Du Chien, Wisconsin, was a Gunner’s Mate Striker Seaman First Class on board the battleship *USS West Virginia*. Clayton said he joined the Navy because he couldn’t find employment in the Prairie Du Chien area. Clayton’s ship sank after being attacked by torpedo bombers. When the order to abandon ship reached Clayton, he exited the overhang of the boat. Clayton said, “I don’t remember much after abandoning ship until I regained consciousness in a pool of fuel oil several minutes later with a few cuts and scratches.” Regrettably,

there were many other Americans who were not so fortunate. As a result of this “sneak attack” on Pearl Harbor, 2,341 Americans lay dead and 1,143 were wounded.

One result of the passage of years is that memories fade, and many people forget. So it is with the individuals and events of World War II. “People have short memories,” observed Owen Clayton. “We remembered and respected. We were taught as kids to respect the flag, the country and patriotism. The patriotism in the country (today) isn’t there as it used to be. People tell me to ‘chill out, this is the 1990s.’” However, no matter how the times have changed, the Pearl Harbor survivors say they will always be proud of their country and the roles they played during the famous attack and the time surrounding it. Dubuquer Tom Butler concluded, “Our country is not perfect, but it’s the best in the world.”

In an editorial, *The Honolulu Advertiser* tried to put the events of Pearl Harbor in perspective, as the American fleet was still smoking from the attack that certainly showed that we were at war with Japan:

“So this is war, a baptism of fire that will change our lives as it challenges our way of life. Anger is understandable. But what else will it be for Americans? Who knows what our perspective will be five years from today—or 50 years away, in 1991. But one thing we do know today: Americans will fight this war to victory, not matter how long, no matter what it takes to win.”

★ Flying to Victory

Corey

The production of airplanes became a major American industry during World War II. It was like a new fad or fashion statement. Factories collected tons of scrap metal and rubber to assemble aircraft so we could fly our way to victory. While some of our lines of defense were flying in battle, planes were being built so the rest of our team of soldiers could get a piece of the action. All of the countries involved in the war had great aircraft, however, the Americans came out on top. The following research explains how it was done.

In 1940, just before America entered the war, President Roosevelt stated in his message to the Congress that he wanted nearly \$2 billion for national defense, and asked for the money needed to produce 50,000 warplanes a year. Many people thought this request was, to say the least, crazy, because up to that time, American plane companies had produced only 1,800 military planes in 1938 and just 2,195 in 1939.¹ After Roosevelt made his request, the Nazi minister of propaganda, Josef Goebbels, called it the “product of a sick mind.” The chief of the German air force, or Luftwaffe, was Hermann Goering. He responded to Roosevelt’s request by saying, “Americans only know how to make razor blades and refrigerators!”² However, these arrogant Nazi leaders would not be laughing for long.

American know-how and production abilities got into gear. For example, in 1940, the U. S. built 6,028 combat aircraft. In 1941, the total tripled to 19,445! This figure was nearly two times the number that German aircraft companies were producing (which was 11,776), and what is more interesting is that the United States wasn’t even in the war yet!³

In 1942, an astounding 47,836 aircraft were built, and in 1943 *this* number nearly doubled! In 1944, the highest number of aircraft were built. The total production numbered 96,318. This was nearly 25,000 more aircraft than Japan was able to complete between January, 1941, and the end of the war.⁴

In its June, 1985 issue, *Wings* magazine used a 40-point scale to rate some of the famous warplanes that were used in World War II. The judges were experts in the aviation industry and in military history. There were four categories, each with a ten point maximum score. The categories were flyability, firepower, range, and performance. Certain questions about each plane were asked, including does the plane have the capacity to fly, fight, and be dependable all at once? Is the plane well-armed and able to carry bombs? Can the plane reach its target on long missions? Here is a summary of the answers to those questions about the planes that flew to victory in World War II. The following is an abbreviated list of the more recognizable aircraft that flew in World War II.

American Bombers

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress

The B-17, called the Flying Fortress, was perhaps the best bomber of the war, with a rating of 37. The B-17 had thirteen machine guns and could fly 1,000 miles with two tons of bombs aboard. Fast and maneuverable, the first model set a record speed at that time of 232 mph. Able to withstand extreme punishment, the B-17 was a very dependable aircraft and kept its crew of ten safe.

Consolidated B-24 Liberator

Rated 34 out of a possible 40, the B-24 was well armed, and could fly 1,000 miles with two and a half tons of bombs aboard. Without bombs, this aircraft could fly 3600 miles and still defend against enemies with its ten machine guns on the front, back, and bottom of aircraft.

North American B-25 Mitchell

The B-25 was an advanced training plane with adequate firepower. It was no problem for the B-25 to take lots of hits by the enemy and still complete 700-mile missions with 3000 pounds of bombs aboard. It was the B-25 that became famous for Doolittle's Raid in 1942. This aircraft also was credited with sinking over twenty ships during the Battle of the Bismark Sea. It had a 38 out of 40 rating, and a top speed of 280 mph.

Boeing B-29 Superfortress

The B-29 had a maximum speed of 357 miles per hour, and could fly approximately 3,700 miles without refueling. To fight off the enemy, the B-29 was equipped with ten machine guns and one 20mm cannon. It was also the Boeing B-29 named *Enola Gay* that General Paul Tibbets flew to drop the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima, Japan, in August, 1945.

American Fighters/Bomber Escorts and Trainers

North American P-38 Lightning

The P-38 was used as a fighter and also as a small bomber. It could carry two tons of bombs for short missions, along with its 20mm cannon and four machine guns. This fighter/bomber could fly 600 miles as a fighter, also flying at high altitudes with a smooth ride. The P-38 was tough and sturdy, with a top speed of 400 mph and rated 37 points out of 40.

Republic P-47 Thunderbolt

With 467 miles per hour speed and a 32,500 foot altitude capacity, the P-47 was very stable and handled well. It earned a rating of 36 out of 40 points, and was difficult to knock out because it rolled better than any other American-built fighter. This plane could also carry one ton of bombs along with its built-in machine guns on 400-mile missions.

North American P-51 Mustang

Earning a perfect 40 out of 40 rating, the P-51 was a very high performance airplane. The P-51 was said to have one of the best liquid-cooled engines built by the Allies. It was tough, well built, and very maneuverable. Its top speed was 487 mph, with ammunition for its six wing-mounted machine guns and underwing bombs aboard. It could fly 1,200 miles as a fighter, or up to 500 miles with bombs.

Vaught F4U-1 Corsair

The F4U-1 Corsair could carry up to two tons of ammunition for its six machine guns, and was very maneuverable. It could carry 1,000 pounds of bombs on 500-mile missions when used as a light bomber, and was rated at 38 out of a possible 40 points. A strong plane, the Corsair could take many hits, and was extremely versatile at 446 mph.

North American T-6 Texan

The T-6 was used for a variety of purposes during the war. Even though the plane was built to be a trainer, it was also widely used for a fighter, fighter/bomber, interceptor, forward air control aircraft, and counter insurgency (COIN) aircraft. A maximum of 1,000 pounds of bombs could be carried in addition to the two machine guns on board the plane. The T-6 had a top speed of 250 mph.

German Aircraft

Messerschmitt Bf-109

During the first years of the war, the Bf-109 was the German Luftwaffe's main fighter aircraft. This plane carried two 7.92mm machine guns positioned over the engine, and also had two 20mm machine guns in the wings. The 109 displayed superior acceleration and diving ability. This aircraft was a major player in the famous Battle of Britain in 1940.

Messerschmitt Me-262

The Me-262 could very well have changed aviation forever by being the first model aircraft with operational jet engines. This fighter plane was superior to other fighters in speed, acceleration, and climb. One downfall, however, was that the aircraft turned very slowly. However, the Me-262 was built to hold five machine guns to shoot down the enemy. This plane could fire up to 150 rounds a minute with its 55mm Mk 114 guns. With its maximum speed of 540 miles per hour, the Me-262 had at least a 100-mph speed advantage over most other fighters. It also could cover a range of 650 miles at 30,000 feet.

Focke-Wulf Fw-190

The Fw-190 was used as a fighter/interceptor to fighter/bomber and had one of the best roll rates available during World War II. It was easy to maintain at its top speed of 389 mph, and could take many hits from enemy fighters. The Fw-190 could do a lot of damage to other planes with the six machine guns it had readily available. It also had a range of 497 miles.

British Aircraft

Hawker Hurricane

This aircraft will forever be remembered as an important ingredient in Britain's successful attempt to turn back the Nazi war machine during the Battle of Britain in the summer and fall of 1940. It was the first Royal Air Force aircraft to exceed 300 mph in level flight. The Hurricane saw action in virtually every major battle where the Royal Air Force was engaged.

Supermarine Spitfire

The Spitfire was also credited with defeating the German Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain. This classic aircraft had a cruising range of some 400 miles and an endurance of more than two hours per flight. The Spitfire's famous Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, built in Great Britain, was later installed in American P-51 Mustangs.

Japanese Aircraft

Mitsubishi G4M1 Bomber (American code name "Betty")

The "Betty" Bomber had a top speed of 272 mph, and because of its low speed compared to fighter planes, the bomber was said to be an easy kill for the Allies. However, this aircraft could put up a strong defense with its four hand-held machine guns, and one or sometimes two 20mm cannons. This plane had a range of 3,700 miles, and could also carry 1,800 pounds of bombs. The "Betty" was the type of plane that Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto flew when on his mission to bomb Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and was the aircraft he flew when American fighters intercepted him and shot him down in April, 1943.

Mitsubishi A6M Zero

This aircraft took its name and number from the last digit of the 2,600th year of the Japanese Imperial reign. The Zero had a maximum speed of 346 miles per hour and a 635-mile range. The Zero was typically used in the role of bomber escort or as a fighter aircraft. It could also be used as a light bomber, able to carry about 2000 pounds of bombs, along with the ammunition for its six machine guns for fighting off enemy planes. With a ceiling of approximately 35,000 feet, the Zero handled well in combat.

Nakajima B5N (American code name "Kate")

The Nakajima B5N was used as a torpedo attack aircraft at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. It was also highly regarded for its incomparable maneuverability. Carrying a crew of three, it was ranked as one of the best aircraft in the world in its day.

The victory of the United States of America in World War II involved a great effort by all American citizens. Planes were built by many Americans working during the war, flown by pilots and crews, and maintained by ground support personnel. Other people donated what metals and rubber they could so we could get a head start on building all of these aircraft. So thank you, American citizens, for all of your hard work and dedication, and thank you for striving towards victory.



Notes

1. Wings, Volume 21, No. 5, October, 1991, p. 33.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

End for Tokyo:

Doolittle Raid

Andy , and John

1942 was in its fifth month of war. The ashes of Pearl Harbor still smoldered as the Japanese war machine racked up victory after victory in the Pacific. In the United States, politicians and military leaders alike were hungry for good news, hungry for victory. They had to make something happen, if for no other reason than to boost the country's sagging morale. A clear message had to get back to Japan that although America may be down for the moment, she certainly was not out. How could that message be delivered? Thousands of miles of ocean separated the two warring nations. Organizing and then executing such a response would not be easy. However, President Roosevelt made clear his desire to strike back at Japan.

Admiral Ernest J. King met regularly with his staff after attending meetings in January, 1942, with the President. The message to them was consistent: Japan had to be attacked. Responding to the pressure his commander was getting from above, Captain Francis S. Low, a submariner on Admiral King's staff, came up with an idea. He told King,

Today . . . I saw the outline of a carrier deck painted on an airfield which is used to give our pilots practice taking off from a short distance . . . I saw some army twin-engine planes making bombing passes at this simulated carrier deck at the same time. If the army has some plane with longer range than our carrier planes and if they could take off in the length of a carrier deck, then it seems to me a few of them could be loaded on a carrier and used to bomb Japan. It would be a mighty big surprise to the Japanese and would certainly build up the morale of the American people.¹

With encouragement from Admiral King, Low immediately contacted King's air operations officer, a man who was highly respected for his planning ability and knowledge of carrier aviation, Captain Donald B. "Wu" Duncan. The men discussed Low's idea, and then Duncan dug into the details. In five days, he had written a 35-page analysis of the situation. According to author Carroll Glines, Duncan concluded that the North American B-25 was the only plane that could be used. This aircraft could carry two thousand pounds of bombs and make a two-thousand-mile flight only if extra gas tanks were installed.² According to Duncan's figuring, the plan would work if an aircraft carrier could sail to within five hundred miles of Japan. After striking the Land of the Rising Sun, the bombers could then escape to the mainland of America's wartime ally, China.³

The military man chosen to lead this kind of operation had to be someone who was used to doing the impossible with an airplane, and he needed to be an experienced pilot. According to author Glines, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, the Chief of Staff of the Army Air Forces, chose Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle because:

He was fearless, technically brilliant, a leader who not only could be counted upon to do a task himself if it were humanly possible, but could impart the spirit of others.⁴

As the training for this daring attack began, Doolittle informed his new aircrews that the mission would be extremely dangerous, and that the tactics they would be using would contradict certain lessons learned in flight school. He recalled,

I knew it wasn't easy for the pilots to practice minimum-speed takeoffs. Throughout their training, they had always been taught to have plenty of airspeed before attempting to lift a plane off the ground. They were used to operating from mile-long runways; yanking a B-25 off the ground at near stalling speed took some courage and was very much against their natural instincts.⁵

Everything in each aircraft had to work properly, and the crews needed plenty of short takeoff practice. However, because there were so many maintenance problems with the extra gas tanks and gun turrets, the crews didn't get all the hours they needed.⁶

The electronically powered turret guns posed particular problems. Early models of the B-25 had top and underside turrets, each sporting twin .50 caliber machine guns. The bombardier, sitting in the glass-nosed section of the plane, had a single .30 caliber machine gun he could operate if attacked. However, there were no guns in the tail of the plane. This made each B-25 an easy target for enemy fighters coming up from behind. According to Doolittle, this tail gun problem was solved with a little ingenuity:

Much credit must go to Ross Greening for solving our armament problem. He suggested that we install two broomsticks in the tail and paint them black to simulate a tail gun position, which would, hopefully, deter attacks from the rear. I approved. And since the lower turrets gave us nothing but headaches and were very complicated to operate, Greening suggested removing them. Again, I approved. I thought a man could learn to play the violin well enough for Carnegie Hall before he could learn to fire that thing.⁷

Jimmy Doolittle was determined to limit the places his B-25s would target while they flew over Japan. He said to his fellow Army aviators, "I want every crew to get this clear. You are to bomb only military targets. I don't want any of you to get any ideas about bombing the Temple of Heaven - the Imperial Palace." He went on to warn his men to keep away from civilians: "And avoid hospitals, schools, and other non-military targets."⁸ Also, he gave strict orders for how to do the most damage with the bombs aboard the B-25s:

Most planes will carry three five-hundred pound demolition bombs and one five-hundred pound incendiary. You will drop the demolitions in the shortest space possible, preferably in a straight line, where they will do the most damage. You will drop the incendiaries as near to the others as possible in an area that looks like it will burn. You can start a couple of good fires in a Japanese city, their buildings are so inflammable they'll never put them out.⁹

In a 1963 interview with CBS News, Doolittle recalled his firm attack orders to his Tokyo raiders. His instructions were to avoid concrete, stone or steel structures, because not much damage would be done to them with the bombs. When one pilot asked if it would be all right to seek out residential areas to bomb, Doolittle shot back, "Definitely not! You are to look for and aim at military targets only, such as war industries, ship building facilities,

power plants and the like.”¹⁰ He ended his instructions with this: “And remember what I said about the Emperor’s Palace. It isn’t worth a plane factory, a shipyard, or an oil refinery, so leave it alone.”¹¹

On April 18, 1942, one of the new aircraft carriers in the American fleet, the *Hornet*, headed west as part of a naval task force that was bound for Japan. It was on a mission of destiny. Aboard the carrier were Doolittle, the men who made up the crews, and the B-25 bombers. All of a sudden, at about 6 AM, a Japanese surface ship was spotted by an American aircraft flying combat air patrol. Tension ran high as the *Hornet’s* commander feared his carrier or his patrolling planes had been spotted. At 7:38 AM, another Japanese boat was spotted about 20,000 yards from the carrier. Then the *Hornet’s* radio room intercepted a message that was being sent from the small craft. One of the interpreters observed that “. . . it was so garbled I couldn’t understand, but I knew from the urgency and the way it was sent, that he had reported our presence and carriers. . . .” The task force had indeed been spotted.¹² The order was then given to sink the suspected Japanese boat, now identified as the *Nitto Maru*. The little ship eventually was destroyed, but because of the rough seas and the distance from it to the carrier task force, the attack took over an hour and used up 938 round of 6-inch shells.¹³ Then the order was flashed to the *Hornet*: “Launch planes. To Col. Doolittle and gallant men, good luck and God bless you.”¹⁴

Doolittle, pilot of the lead plane, took off first. All the hours of planning and practice now would be put to the test. The bow of the *Hornet* heaved up and down in the rough Pacific seas, and each air crew tried to time their launch to lift off the deck when the bow was at its highest. At the moment the deck began its upward movement, the wheel chocks were removed from Doolittle’s B-25, and he released the brakes. His aircraft moved slowly at first, then picked up speed, its twin engines cutting into the wind at maximum power. Then suddenly, the nose wheel rose, followed by the main gear. Jimmy Doolittle and his daring crew were now airborne with plenty of deck to spare.¹⁵ The remaining pilots revved their engines, rolled down the pitching deck, and soon joined up with Doolittle for their one way mission to Japan. For all the men, this was the first time they had ever taken off in a B-25 from a moving airport. Did luck have anything to do with it? “Luck,” Doolittle once observed, “is something that comes after you’ve taken every precaution to avoid the necessity for luck.”¹⁶

According to author Ron Dick, the decision to launch Doolittle and his planes earlier than was expected meant that the aircraft would have minimal fuel reserves for their planned recovery. They began their journey some 200 miles farther out from their targets than had been intended. But they were now on their way.¹⁷

The “Doolittle Raiders”, as they were to be called, appeared over Tokyo at 12:30 PM Tokyo time (11:30 PM, Friday, Eastern War Time), according to Japanese broadcasts, and raided the city for three hours and twenty minutes, dropping bombs in the outskirts, where many large industrial establishments were located. Interestingly, a Japanese-language broadcast reported a message that seemed to indicate that Col. Doolittle’s men either forgot or ignored his unmistakable orders to hit only military and industrial targets:

Just after noon on the 18th, the first enemy planes appeared over the city of Tokyo. A number of bombs were dropped. The enemy planes did not attempt to hit military

establishments and only inflicted damage on grammar schools, hospitals, and cultural establishments. These planes were repulsed by a heavy barrage from our defense guns.¹⁸

Tokyo Radio also reported that “schools and hospitals” had been hit, and then added, “Invading planes failed to cause any damage on military establishments, although casualties in schools and hospitals were as yet unknown.” The report also said, “This inhuman attack on these cultural establishments and on residential districts is causing widespread indignation among the populace.”¹⁹

In the city of Nagoya, two planes dropped incendiary bombs, setting fires in six places. The damage was reported slight, and the flames soon were brought under control. In another town, a Japanese communique reported, “A single enemy plane raided Kobe, dropping incendiary bombs, but no serious damage was caused.”

However, a report from United Press International one day after the raid indicated that the fires in Kobe and Nagoya might have proved more devastating than first admitted . . . the fires were not controlled until 4 PM, an hour and a half after the raid in that zone began.²⁰

After the bombs were dropped, things did not look good for the Raiders. Author Ron Dick states,

Darkness was imminent, the weather was bad, fuel was low, and no radio contact of any kind could be made. All fifteen aircraft were lost when the crews were forced to either crash land or bail out. Three men were killed and several were injured in the process, and eight were captured by the Japanese. Three of the latter were later executed as war criminals, and another died in captivity. The sixteenth B-25 landed near Vladivostok (in Russia), where it was appropriated (taken) and its crew interned (jailed) by the Soviets.²¹

The next day, Doolittle convinced himself on his long trip home that the attack he led on Tokyo had failed, and when he returned to the United States he would be court martialed for the loss of his men. However, he was informed that the raid “deeply shocked” the Japanese, and gave a tremendous boost to American morale at a difficult time.”²²

The results of the “Doolittle Raid” soon became news all over the world. Major Alexander P. de Seversky, a noted airplane designer, was quoted in an article published in the *New York Times*, saying that, “. . . the reported bombing of Japan was ‘a shot in the arm to us and valuable because it may cause the Japs (sic) to pull their guard’, (and) draw planes back from their far-flung outposts, thus cutting down their offensive striking power.” Like many other Americans, Seversky wasn’t sure if the attack was launched from aircraft carriers or on land bases in China, but he continued, “. . . if the raid was made from carrier-borne planes . . . its success indicates it was carefully planned and brilliantly executed. It was a very difficult maneuver.”²³

Not surprisingly, Japanese radio had a different point of view about the raid. Soon after the attack, a statement from the Japanese tried to make a mockery of Doolittle’s efforts by saying it was “just another Yankee joke and propaganda stunt for home consumption in America.”²⁴

Doolittle was able to reach the Chinese city of Chungking, and soon got orders to return home “by any means possible” and without any publicity. When he arrived back in the States, he was ordered to the Pentagon. When he learned that the President of the United States was

going to present him with the Medal of Honor, Doolittle was shocked, and quickly responded, "That award should be reserved for those who risk their lives trying to save someone else. Every man in our mission took the same risk I did. I don't think I'm entitled to the Medal of Honor."²⁵

At the White House, President Roosevelt pinned the Medal of Honor on Doolittle as his wife stood by him and the photographers took their pictures. Later, a bit overwhelmed with the attention everyone was paying to him, he said of this honor,

. . . While I was grateful, I would spend the rest of my life trying to earn it. I felt then and always will that I accepted the award on behalf of all the boys who were with me on the raid. I have always felt that the Medal of Honor should be reserved for men who risk their lives in combat to save others, not for individual feats like shooting down a number of enemy planes or bombing enemy targets.²⁶

So was the Doolittle raid successful? According to the Japanese it wasn't, but to the citizens of the U.S., it helped out a lot in several ways. American morale was improved greatly, and people in the country could feel a sense of victory. Also, after the raid, the Japanese sent out many coded messages that America was able to intercept. The large numbers of messages gave intelligence teams a chance to break the Japanese code, and learn that the enemy was dispersing its troops throughout the East. With this kind of important information, U.S. military planners could then send troops to defeat a smaller Japanese force than attack one large concentrated fleet.

Jimmy Doolittle risked his life and the lives of his crew for our country, just as all the other soldiers in the war did. But his effort made a large difference in the war, even though he didn't think it did so at the time. His accomplishments were a great step in winning the war for the United States. Overall, Jimmy was a highly trained pilot, perfect for the task that had made history for him and his men. For being a Doolittle, he didn't "do little".



Notes

1. Carroll Glines, *The Doolittle Raid* (New York: Orion Books, 1988), p. 13.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Carroll Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, p. 55.
9. *Ibid.*
10. From an interview conducted by the CBS Television Network for "The Doolittle Raid," produced by the Public Affairs Department of CBS News, as cited in Carroll Glines, *Doolittle Raid*, p. 55.

11. Carroll Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, p. 55.
12. Lowell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976), pp. 178–179.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Carroll Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, pp. 68–69.
16. Lowell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography*, p. 181.
17. Ron Dick, *American Eagles: A History of the United States Air Force* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Howell Press, 1997), pp. 148–149.
18. *The New York Times* (18 Apr 1942).
19. *Ibid.*
20. *The New York Times* (19 Apr 1942).
21. Ron Dick, *American Eagles*, p. 149.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *The New York Times* (19 Apr 1942).
24. *Ibid.*
25. General James H. Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, p. 287.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 287–288.

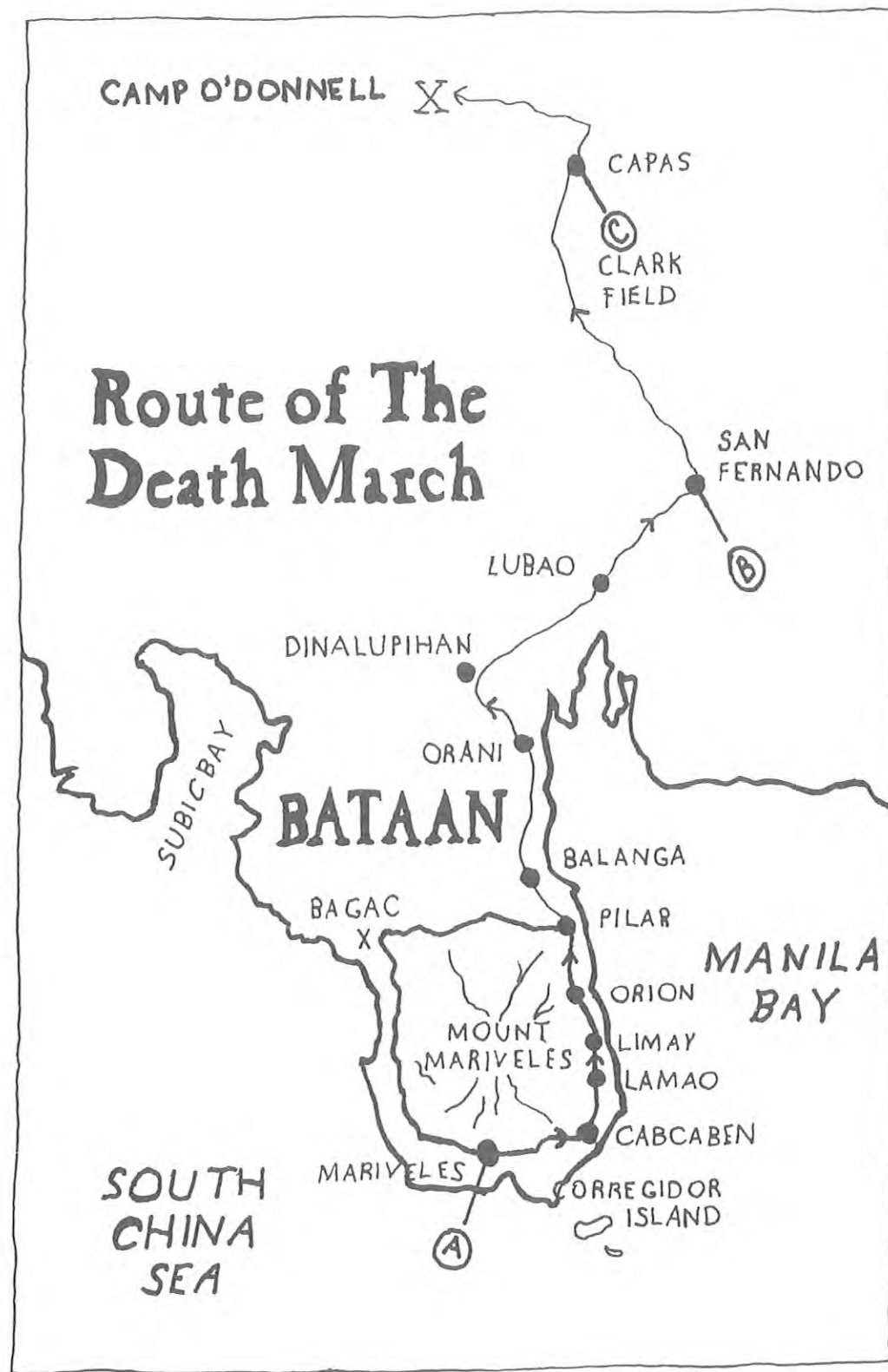
★ The Bataan Death March

Josh

“Dying was easy, the living was Hell.”¹ These were the words of one American prisoner of war who suffered through the torture of the famous Japanese forced march, forever to be remembered in history as “The Bataan Death March.” This horrible experience was a forced march of 70,000 American and Filipino POWs. Beginning at Mariveles (A), (see diagram), the POWs were moved to the southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. They were then forced to march north 55 miles to San Fernando (B), eventually forced to board a train to Capas (C), where they were marched eight miles to their final destination at Camp O’Donnell.

The year was 1942, and the Allies were suffering multiple defeats in the Pacific at the hands of the Imperial Japanese military forces. “MacArthur had withdrawn to the Bataan peninsula with about 80,000 men, under heavy fire from the Japanese. MacArthur was persuaded to leave by his own staff.”² When he left he left, General King in charge of the unit on Bataan.

On April 3, 1942, the Japanese Army launched a full-scale assault to take Bataan. There were many factors that led to our eventual surrender, six days later. American and Filipino forces, “had sufficient supplies for 100,000 men for 30 days and had to feed 25,000 civilians.”³ They were cut off from any new rations, had no additional ammunition, no medicine, and no attendant materials. Most of the ammunition that they did have was old and corroded which made it almost useless. The AA shells and 155mm artillery shells lacked proper fuses for function. Tanks, trucks and other vehicles were needed. Gasoline was also in need to power the tanks and trucks. Poorly trained Filipino soldiers, most of whom had never fired a weapon before in their lives, were placed into the front lines against the highly trained Japanese Imperial Army. There were Americans from non-combat outfits, such as the Air



Corpsmen, and in some cases, civilians, found throughout the provisional infantry units. The defenders of Bataan bravely continued to hold their ground without reinforcements and without having sufficient supplies. "Disease, malnutrition, fatigue, and a lack of basic supplies hindered our soldiers by 70%."⁴

On the 9th of April 1942, General King surrendered his troops at Bataan after the Japanese had fought their way through the Filipino and American soldiers' last main line of resistance. The Japanese rounded the captured soldiers into various divisions in Bataan, but mainly at Mariveles, at the southernmost tip of the Bataan peninsula. Although American trucks were available, the Japanese decided to march the POWs to their destinations. The events of this historic march are chronicled in this paper.

According to a survivor of the Bataan Death March, "When the surrender came, men were waiting in huddled groups. Many weeping unashamedly, Filipino and American alike."⁵ The soldiers waved their white flags of surrender as the tanks and Zeros roared over the battleground. However, it was a mistake for the soldiers to wave their white flags of surrender because a Zero made a climb and then dove at the surrendering soldiers, guns blazing. Then the plane left after leaving several lifeless bodies littering the ground. The POWs tried to run, but a man over the loud speaker told them to stand where they were. Immediately, the Japanese soldiers started relieving the American and Filipino soldiers of watches, rings, and other personal items for mementos. "The major force captured was 58,000 Filipino soldiers and 12,000 American soldiers. There were also many civilians captured at Bataan."⁶

Frantic Japanese captors tried to form the POWs into groups of 300 but gave in to frustration as thousands of soldiers stood around them. The captors let their feelings towards the prisoners out by slapping and kicking the Americans and Filipinos who did not listen to the orders the Japanese shouted at them. The wandering men were now in bloody, tattered rags. Men who were once proud soldiers, were now shadows of their former selves.

Despite the sweltering heat of night, darkness brought a cold and fearful silence to the men. Any sound or movement from the POWs could bring a burst of gunfire, followed instantaneously by screams. Then the night would be silent once again.

While 70,000 men started the death march, only 54,000 reached Camp O'Donnell. The POWs were mistreated, starved, repeatedly beaten, and killed. According to one survivor, "Many who fell were bayoneted."⁷ Between 7,000-10,000 American and Filipino POWs either died on the march, or escaped into the jungle.

There was a multitude of ways to die. Many died because they were not in any physical or mental condition to undertake such a march. During the march, they were not given any food or water. The Japanese captors killed many POWs through various means. Also, the POWs were repeatedly beaten and treated inhumanely as they marched along the long trail that lay ahead of them.

"For those Americans who were able to survive the horrors of the march, approximately 1,600 died in the first forty days at Camp O'Donnell. The Filipino death rate was much higher. Almost 20,000 Filipino POWs died within the first four months of being held captive in the same camp."⁸ The healthier prisoners, with the help of their buddies, would bury the dead POWs in mass graves. Many knew that the same future lay ahead for them.

In the first nine months of captivity at Camp O'Donnell, more than 40,000 American and Filipino POWs died. Camp O'Donnell was located near Capas Tarlac. "Americans knew it as O'Donnell, Filipinos knew it as O'Donnell and everybody knew it as HELL HOLE #1."⁹

It had been a training camp before the war but was abandoned because the water supply was not suitable for 5,000 men. Now it was to become the first Japanese POW camp and was to hold the whole Bataan force of between 40,000-60,000 half-starved, emaciated, exhausted men. Many of these prisoners were already infected with cholera, dysentery and a variety of other diseases.

Diseases such as beriberi, dysentery, and innumerable fevers were the biggest killers during the march, and once the POWs arrived at Camp O'Donnell. Dysentery is a most horrible disease from which to suffer. Some men would give up running to a benjo [latrine] 20 times a day, so they would take a tin can and wear it on their butts. Due to these problems, "The men were walking zombies. Skeletons with just skin hanging on their bones. Heads looked like skulls."¹⁰

The POWs were held in barracks that had once been chicken coops. There was very little heat, if any, and the winters in Manchuria could go down to forty below zero. The POWs would sleep with all of their clothes on and would even wear their boots to bed to keep themselves warm. POWs did not sleep on beds or cots. They had hard benches on which to sleep. They had no tables or chairs to sit on, either. Men, in the winter, would climb onto the roof of their so-called barracks and shovel snow so the roof would not collapse under the snow's weight.

Prisoners were not given any kitchen utensils. Many would make spoons and forks from useless materials they could get their hands on. They were given small wooden bowls filled with bug infested rice and fish heads that the Japanese would hand out when it was unsuitable for the Japanese to eat. Some POWs would eat anything they could get their hands on like bugs, rats, dogs, ponies, mules, iguanas and monkeys. Some POWs would starve because they gave up hope for their chances of freedom. Though some fought off starvation, it was a losing battle for most among the POWs.

Russell Grockett Jr. described in detail the way his father was fed during the Bataan Death March. The POWs were given bread for the first two weeks, but then they were not given bread any more. Bataan was put on half rations. Prisoners would only receive four ounces of bug-infested rice, 1.5 ounces of sugar, one ounce of canned milk, and 2.5 ounces of canned fish, salmon and/or sardines. This ration would continue from January 1942 until the middle of February when they started receiving more.

During the last part of February, the rations started increasing by four ounces. They would receive eight ounces and then 12 ounces of rice. They started getting 12 oz. of rice towards the end of March, during the final two weeks of their imprisonment. During the last months of the war, they were receiving 16 oz. of rice, but it was still too little for many to survive. POWs would sometimes steal food and hungrily eat, but there was a price to pay for being caught. Men who were caught would be beaten severely.

Grockett then describes a conversation between the Japanese and an American doctor. An American doctor went to the Japanese captors and explained that the POWs were getting dysentery, beriberi and malnutrition from the water and food they were receiving. The

doctor explained that the prisoners were suffering. When the Japanese asked what the POWs needed, the doctor replied: "protein, meat, fish, milk, cheese." Then the doctor said, "You have a lot of soybeans, haven't you?"

The commander said, "You eat soybeans?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, "We prefer meat, but we will eat soybeans." So the soldiers received their request for more protein. They ate soybeans, which they baked, boiled, fried, and crushed into bean curd. It finally got to the point where the POWs would count the number of soybeans they received in their food. If one got five and one got six, all hell would break loose.

Due to the high death rate at Camp O'Donnell, the Japanese captors decided to transfer all of the Americans to Cabanatuan, which was located north of Camp O'Donnell. On June 6th, 1943, they began their journey to Cabanatuan. Five hundred POWs stayed behind as caretakers and for funeral details. Those who stayed behind were sent to Cabanatuan at the beginning of July 1943. The Filipino POWs were set free during the beginning of July 1943. Cabanatuan was the camp in which the men from Corregidor were finally united with the POWs from Bataan.

Lt. Henry G. Lee was a soldier poet. He wrote the following to remember the men of Bataan:

"So you are dead. The easy words contain no sense of loss, no sorrow, no despair. Thus hunger, thirst, fatigue, combine to drain all feelings from our hearts. The endless glare, the brutal heat, anesthetize the mind. I cannot mourn you now. I lift my load, the suffering column moves. I leave behind only another corpse, beside the road."¹¹

Today there are about 1,200 survivors of the notorious Death March. Maybe in ten years they will all have passed on. But most, if not all, would like to have the truth told about what happened at Bataan. To do less would dishonor the brave men who gave their lives at Bataan.



Notes

1. Russell Grockett, Sr., as quoted by Russell Grockett, Jr., in a story about his father, www.jacksonville.net/~rgrockett/POW/intro.htm
2. Chris Ellis, ed., *World War II A Visual Encyclopedia*. [London: PRC Publishing Ltd., 1999], p. 59.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Russell Grockett, Sr., as quoted by Russell Grockett, Jr., in a story about his father.
6. Ibid.
7. Russell Grockett, Sr.
8. <http://home.pacbell.net/fbaldie/outline.html>
9. Russell Grockett, Sr.
10. Ibid.
11. http://home.pacbell.net/fbaldie/death_march.html



Racism

The Other Kind of War

Dereka

When people think about World War II they think of the battles, bombs and the aircraft that flew to help protect their country. They think of Pearl Harbor and the suffering and grief that the soldiers faced. To most people, this world war was hell on earth. But what about the racial conflicts in the world during that time? The issue of discrimination was like its own war. This research will focus on how Germany's, Japan's and America's conflicts with each other were partly because of race. All three countries talked about each other's faults, but they all had serious issues themselves.

Adolf Hitler believed that the German race was better than all others because of his mistaken idea that they were members of a pure race. The Japanese people believed that they were the center of the world and one day the rest of the world would revolve around them. And in many ways, America was hypocritical, too; we thought that Hitler's beliefs were wrong, but in reality, we shared some of the same beliefs, especially when it came to minority people.

Adolf Hitler had a lot of his own beliefs about other races. His opinion strongly influenced a majority of the German people. There is evidence to prove this was true. According to Louis Snyder, in his book *The War: A Concise History—1939-1945*, some of Hitler's off-the-record table talks were taken down in shorthand by some of his Nazi Party associates. Some words that Hitler spoke revealed his thoughts about creating a pure race when he said, "It is our duty continually to arouse the forces that slumber in our people's blood."¹ Hitler's hostility toward Americans became clear when he was quoted as saying, "There is nobody more stupid than the Americans...I'll never believe the American soldier can fight like a hero."²

Hitler mistook his own beliefs for scientific fact. He thought that the German race was pure, and that the majority of Germans deserved to have more power than the Jews who lived within their country. He also believed Americans were inferior because we were made up of different races, all mixed together through marriage, living in the same country. According to author Snyder, Hitler was determined to destroy the Jewish people, and create a "pure-blooded Aryan-Nordic stock."³ During World War II, more than 10,000,000 people were killed in Nazi extermination camps. Of the 9,600,000 Jews living in Nazi-controlled Europe, at least 5,700,000 disappeared, most of them put to death in gas chambers.⁴

Similar to the tragedies that the Jewish people faced in Germany, the people of China also experienced terrible acts leveled against them by the Japanese soldiers during the World War II time period. The host of a documentary on Japanese war crimes commented that the tragedy that took place during World War II was

. . . a story of brutality and death that many tend to forget or choose not to remember. According to some historians, the years between . . . 1941 and the end of World War II in 1945 were officially treated by Japan as some kind of 'dark age'. What happened in between seemed to disappear from public view: Japan's conquests in China, its invasion of

Southeast Asia, and its war with the United States. These were relegated to private memories, unread archives. But for surviving victims of Japan's long reign of terror and torture, these years did not disappear.⁵

The people of Japan called their country the "Land of the Rising Sun". They believed that they were at the center of the world and that the rest of the world revolved around them. The Japanese plan was to take over the eight corners of the world. They even called their army, "The Imperial Japanese Army." Col. Rod Paschall, an author and historian, was also interviewed in the documentary. He said the Japanese were motivated by racism to fight because they believed they were superior to the rest of the world:

Their strongest tenet (principle) was racism. Japanese soldiers were taught that they were superior to white people, Indians, to people who lived in Southeast Asia, to Indo-Chinese, and certainly to Chinese. And they were taught that eventually whites would have to serve Japanese masters.⁶

The documentary continued to describe how the Japanese used their racial views to inflict terror in many different and disturbing ways.

In 1931, for example, as the Japanese moved to conquer more and more land in the Pacific and in Asia, they instituted forced prostitution, and 20,000 cases of rape were documented. 200,000 helpless people were killed. In 1942, the Japanese forced 50,000 disease-ridden and starving soldiers to begin a disorganized and ill-supplied march through blazing heat. The Bataan Death March experience began in April 1942, and lasted for several deadly years. During that time, the Japanese soldiers beat prisoners brutally on a regular basis. They also chopped off fingers and murdered men caught with Japanese money. Captain Kermit Lay was a prisoner of war for three and a half years, and he told what he and thousands of others faced: "There was no water, with no water at temperatures of 105 degrees you were dying of thirst." There were about 50,000 people in this deadly march with only enough food and water for 8,000.

The Japanese killed their prisoners of war for the fun of it, out of pleasure. For example, Sam Grashio was a prisoner of war and Bataan Death March survivor, and he gave an interview about this experience. He explained the following tragic event, one of many which he witnessed while he was being forced to march by the Japanese soldiers: "I saw a Japanese tank swerve out of its course and run over an American and flatten him into the ground. His body became a part of the road."⁷

The narrator of the documentary went on to explain what other prisoners saw: "One man witnessed that he was counting an average of two chopped off heads per mile. Skill with a sword was prized among the Japanese. This was a rare chance to practice their stroke."⁸

While the Japanese were treating the American prisoners, along with many others, as if they were pieces of garbage, back in the United States, some Americans were treating Japanese Americans as if they were not worthy of being treated like citizens of our country. Many Japanese Americans experienced being racially discriminated against during those years of World War II, especially after the country of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

Rae Seaton, a Japanese American who was born in Hawaii in 1942, told the story of her family and friends, and what they went through during wartime in a recent tape-recorded

interview. Rae remembered the stories of what happened to Japanese Americans right after Pearl Harbor was attacked: "They rounded up all the Japanese school teachers, the priests, and the high ranking Japanese officials and shipped them to California to concentration camps."⁹

Shortly after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the U. S. officials immediately took action against Japanese Americans. Mrs. Seaton continued to explain what happened to members of her family:

The military came to the home, confiscated my grandfather's Samurai sword, many of his Japanese artifacts, and a short wave radio. They confiscated that because they were afraid - and some of that I can understand - but they took his Samurai sword; he never got it back. It had a lot of gold in the scabbard, but he never saw it again.

She also stated that the homes owned by Japanese Americans living in Hawaii who were sent to California were sold to white Americans at lower prices. Personal freedoms were also limited: "You couldn't have anything. My aunt was a schoolteacher and she said that they were not allowed to have more than \$50 in the bank at one time."¹⁰

Along with the Japanese Americans, African Americans were also discriminated against during World War II, and they even experienced inhuman and tragic events many years before the war. Robert Martin is a black man who was born and raised in the Midwest, and he described how the country he lived in treated black people even before the war broke out:

Race relations in the United States were deplorable in the North as well as in the South. Negroes were to be kept in their place, offered little or no opportunity for jobs or advancement. The nation was beginning to recover from the Great Depression, and any new employment was targeted for whites. Patterns of segregation varied, being not as oppressive in areas where small Negro populations posed no economic threat of taking any large part of available jobs. Factories employed only a few Negroes, and those mostly in menial or custodial work. Trade unions were for the most part closed to the Negro applicants. Ninety-nine percent of hotels and restaurants were closed to Negroes. Housing was limited to mostly segregated areas and was generally relegated to inferior type buildings.¹¹

Robert then discussed what opportunities were available to him in his hometown:

In my hometown, Dubuque, a city on the Mississippi River, a certain Southern influence was felt. I could not eat in certain restaurants. Though I never tried, I was sure I could not get lodging in any of the hotels because Negro travelers had tried, were refused, and were forced to seek rooms in the houses of Negro families, including mine. I could not patronize a barbershop. There seemed to be no jobs other than that of being a barbershop porter open to me.¹²

When World War II broke out, members of the American military were segregated by race. However, segregated men still fought and died for their country. Some of these Americans earned the chance to fly combat aircraft and serve their country. They became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. Robert Martin is a member of this famous group of African American pilots, and he talked about the importance of fighting to defeat Hitler's ideas, even though as a black man he was discriminated against in his own country:

I had to help defend it. We knew what the Japanese did to the Chinese in Manchuria. We had heard of what Hitler did to the Jews; the Germans used civil records of the countries of Europe to determine who was Jewish. There were many Americans whose interests sided with those of Hitler and who as 'good Americans' had been persecuting Negroes for hundreds of years. If Hitler was to win the war, what could any Negro imagine that the Nazi Americans would do to the Negroes? They would only have to look at the faces to find those who weren't white, and then these Nazi Americans would have their field day solving the "Negro question."

Robert Martin was willing to fight to defend his country, but he also understood the importance of protecting his people from the potential spreading of Nazi race policies:

That could not be allowed to happen. I had to go to fight to help Americans defeat the Nazis, in order that Nazi thought and ideals would never take over America. My action was not about proving again what the world already knew: that a black man can perform as well as any other man. My patriotism—simply American. Rewards will come to my race. After the war!¹³

Hitler thought that he could kill every non-German until the world was purely German. The Japanese thought that they could take over the world and that eventually other races would serve them. America fought on the side of freedom to defeat Nazi Germany and Japan, yet many Americans mistreated Japanese Americans. They also believed blacks were not as good as whites and should not have the same equal rights, and treated them very badly.

Overall, these three countries had racist ideas, and they treated many innocent people as if they were dangerous convicts who were wanted dead or alive. They all stereotyped the "opposites". But no man or woman was put on this world expected to look the same or to believe in the same things. People cannot be executed because they like the color blue, or be separated because they are in the minority. Instead of hiding and pretending that such tragic events never happened, we need to take what has happened in the past and use it as a lesson to be learned, rather than seeing it as just a mistake that was made.



Notes

1. Louis L. Snyder, *The War: A Concise History—1939–1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 49.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 423.
4. *Ibid.*
5. The History Channel, "History Undercover:" *War Crimes and Trials of the Japanese Military: Murder Under the Sun*.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*

interview with Mrs. Rae Seaton, July, 1994, in Dubuque, Iowa.

mann, and Tim Ebeling, et. al., *The Tuskegee Airmen: Victory at Home and Abroad* (Dubuque, Iowa: Dubuque Community School District, 1998), p. 95.

Ibid., p. 99.



Women at Home

War Within a War

Lisa and Jenny

Prior to Pearl Harbor's bombing by Hirohito's Japanese armed forces, American women were mostly known to be housewives. Before World War II, women were not known to work in the work force; they were employed in homes or in jobs that did not pay well. Men were the "bread winners." Women were expected to stay home, while men went to work to support their families. However, after December 7, 1941, men were called to duty with our country's involvement with World War II. While men were at war, women played an important role. They took over men's jobs in war plants and factories, and they still took care of their families. This research is written from a woman's point of view, and is being told so the pain and happiness that women went through in World War II can be appreciated. American women, in some ways, were being taken advantage of. They were a great help in the war effort, but when the war ended, they were expected to go back home and remain housewives.

During the four years of the war, 6.5 million to 20 million women flooded into the American work force.¹ Wages started at 60 cents per hour and increased, depending on how long an individual worked at the same plant. By the end of the war, some women were making up to 90 cents per hour.² Black women made 5 cents less than white women.³ Women worked from 9 to 12 hour days, five days a week. Many times they worked weekends, too.⁴

According to an account in *American Heritage*, before taking over men's jobs at factories, war plants, or anywhere else there was help needed, women worked as maids, cooks, and waitresses.⁵ At least two million women worked as servants in other families' homes.⁶ When women went into factories, they took what were considered men's jobs as welders, riveters, and mechanics. Women quickly learned how to operate welding machines and rivet guns, read blueprints, maneuver heavy machinery, drive and maintain railroad engines, and they became lead 'men' on the assembly lines.⁷ The proportion of women who held jobs rose from 25 percent at the beginning of the war to 36 percent at the war's end. This was an increase greater than in the last four decades.⁸

An interview of working women during the war years was published in the February/March, 1984, issue of *American Heritage*, and it revealed what the dress code consisted of inside the war defense plants where so many women were working. For

example, Winona Espinosa of Grand Junction, Colorado, didn't like the dress code and this is what she had to say about it:

I found the work very challenging but hated the dress. We had to wear ugly looking hairnets that made the girls look awful. The female guards were very strict about them, too. Maybe you'd try to leave your bangs sticking out, but they'd come and make you stick them back in. You looked just like a skinhead, very unfeminine. Then you had to wear pants—we called them slacks in those days—and you never wore them prior to the war. Finally, all women had to wear those ugly scarves. They issued them so they were all the same. You couldn't wear a colorful scarf or bandanna.⁹

As mothers were working in the plants and the men were off at war, many of America's children were often left at home. Juvenile delinquency started to become a problem, and popular magazines in late 1945 were blaming working mothers for this situation.¹⁰ People began to say that children were not cared for as they should be.¹¹ In some war plants there were places to take children. But these places were not always good environments for them. Agnes Meyer, wife of a *Washington Post* publisher in California stated:

In the San Fernando Valley . . . where several war plants are located a social worker counted up to 45 infants locked in cars of a single parking (lot.) In the Valley the children sit in movies, seeing the same film over and over again until mother comes off the swing shift and picks them up. Some children of working parents are locked in their homes, others are locked out.¹²

After the war ended, women were the first to be laid off. Some women actually had to agree to give the men their jobs back before they could even start working when the war began.¹³ But 61% of the women planned to stay in the work force. Still, by November 1946, two million women were laid off.¹⁴ Eileen Simkins, a riveter from Hillman, Minnesota, had a different view about giving her job up, and said, "I missed the money, but I had a small daughter to care for and my husband was home then."¹⁵

After the war, things started to settle down, and very few women were allowed to work in factories. Many were housewives in their own homes, or they worked in other people's homes. But in Lola Weixel's view, women were being used, and she believed that women were only called upon when something went wrong and the men couldn't do it alone. In a documentary titled *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, this is what Lola, a riveter from Brooklyn, New York, said:

I know lots of the women that went to training with me and worked with me believed that we were the 'new woman.' We believed it. I think to America at large, while they may have known what our contributions was (sic) to the production of this country, we were largely a joke. A big joke, a shapely girl with a hot sign on her pants, a girl who was quivering for her man to come home and go back to the kitchen. That's exactly the picture that was given and I think they prepare women psychologically for whatever role the society feels at that particular point they want her to play. After losing so many men, America wanted babies and we wanted babies. It's okay. But we gave up everything for that. We gave up everything.¹⁶

Another riveter featured in the same documentary, Margaret Wright, commented on how she saw the country begin to gently suggest or 'program' women to return to their traditional roles of wives and mothers through the use of subtle psychology very soon after the war was over and the men returned home:

There were more articles . . . about raising your children, and the psychological development of your children. They never mentioned that you know (sic) the psychological development before the war.¹⁷

Magazines featured recipes for food that took all day to cook, so women could cook and do housework the rest of the time. While the men were at work, women were once again expected to stay home with the four million babies that were born after the war.¹⁸

Women went back to work as housewives, because they were not needed in the defense factories any more, but they had served their country as they were expected. After the war, things went back to the way things were. Before the war, women were maids and servants in their own home, and worst of all, some were working as maids in other homes besides their own.¹⁹ They were treated as though they were not important, and throughout the four years of the war, they got very little credit for what they did.

The research shows that during the war years, many women were used and taken for granted, even though they helped their country at a very important time in history. The time has come to give thanks to all the women in World War II for helping to make things how they are today, because now women flood the workforce and are making this a better country for everyone.



Notes

1. <http://www.elibrary.com/s/edumark/ge...id=546909>
2. <http://www.lihistory.com/7/hs736d.htm>
3. *The American Experience*, PBS: "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter," produced and directed by Connie Fields.
4. <http://www.lihistory.com/7/hs736d.htm>
5. Mark Jonathan Harris, et.al., *Rosie the Riveter Remembers*, American Heritage, February-March 1984
6. "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter."
7. Judy Barret Litoff and David C. Smith, *American Women in a World War Contemporary Accounts from World War II* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1997), page 167.
8. *Ibid.*, p.167.
9. *Rosie the Riveter Remembers*, American Heritage, February-March 1984.
10. <http://www.elibrary.com/s/edumark/ge...id=546909>
11. Irwin Unger. *These United States: The Question of Our Past* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1992), p. 782.

12. *Ibid.*, p.782.
13. "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter."
14. <http://www.elibrary.com/s/edumark/ge...id=546909>
15. Taken from an interview conducted with Eileen Simkins of Hillman, Michigan.
16. "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter."
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*

★ Love at First Flight WASPs and the Desire to Fly

Lisa

Some of the information used in this research comes from the book, Love at First Flight, written by WASP Elizabeth Strohfus and Cheryl J. Young. In addition, Mrs. Strohfus responded in writing to several interview questions prepared for this study.

On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and a group of American women were already in England, ferrying planes from factories to air bases. In control of all of this was Jacqueline Cochran, a woman who proposed a program for employing women pilots in the United States military. Ms. Cochran came to be known as one of the most famous women of the 20th Century. General Henry "Hap" Arnold, the Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army Air Corps, was in need of pilots, so he ordered Ms. Cochran home from England to put her plan in action, in the summer of 1942. She was back in the States by early September.

In America, there were very few women pilots with enough flying time to qualify for joining the Air Transport Command that ferried planes. But by December, 1942, twenty-five women were members of the WAFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron) under the command of Mrs. Nancy Love. In Houston, Texas, 28 more women enrolled in a flight school. Each of them had a minimum of two-hundred hours of flying time, and was receiving more training. When the facilities became inadequate, the school was transferred to Avenger Field, in Sweetwater, Texas.

As the needs of the Army Air Force increased, so did the duties to which the women graduates were assigned. Women were not only ferrying planes, but were also towing targets for anti-aircraft artillery training. Also, they attended four-engine bomber schools, B-25 and B-26 schools, and were assigned to other bases. Eventually, the term WAFS was no longer used. Instead, the title for these women pilots became WASPs—Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Most people thought bringing women in to fly planes was just an experiment, but that was soon forgotten. After time passed, women pilots proved that their critics were wrong. Up to then, no one witnessed anything like what the women had done in the war. Under top secret conditions, the first groups of women were trained as tow-target pilots. Others learned to fly radio-controlled target planes.

Being a WASP, you came to an air base devoted to train anti-aircraft crews and airborne gunnery men, and often, these trainees used live ammunition. When a WASP-piloted plane landed, you could expect that there would be holes in the planes as well as in the targets! Some women flew fighter aircraft as targets for pilots who learned to “shoot film” rather than ammunition. Others laid down smoke screens in mock chemical warfare, like the kind used in low-level missions.

Flying the same planes as the men did in war, the women proved that they could fly anything the Army Air Force had, and they did it very well. The women, just like the men, gained the knowledge of cross-country navigational skills, they practiced flying exclusively by reference to instruments, and they made deliveries across the nation in more and more complex planes. They also were credited with ferrying every Republic Aviation P-47 “Thunderbolt” fighter aircraft that came off factory lines in 1944, and nearly all of the other fighter aircraft as well.

The WASPs had many duties to perform, and every one was done with willingness and pure enthusiasm. Their ability to carry out their assignments is what directed the eyes of the world toward the women pilots. For example, WASPs flew cargo, top secret weapons, and transported military personnel throughout the United States. They also flew for the Weather Wing. And women pilots tested planes to make sure they were safe for use by instructors and students.

The militarization that was promised to the Women Air Force Service Pilots was not received as it was for other women in military service. For example, there were no military funerals, and no veterans’ benefits given to the WASPs during or after the war. In the line of duty during the war, thirty-eight women died and were buried with no military honors. Over 900 women continued to serve their country to the very last minute until they could serve no longer. Women pilots finally were sent home on December 20, 1944.

Congress eventually acknowledged these brave women pilots as veterans, pilots who took on difficult duties for their country during wartime. Finally, in 1979, the official acceptance was given. In that year, the Air Force accepted women as part of that branch of service. In 1984, each WASP was awarded the Victory Medal, and those who served a year or more of duty received the American Theatre Medal.

There are many personal stories about the women who became WASPs. One woman in particular has written about her life and about her experiences as a Women’s Army Service Pilot. This information comes from her very interesting book.

In Minnesota, on November 15, 1919, Elizabeth Strohfus was born, weighing only three pounds. She was the fifth of six children. “I could remember a wonderful childhood,” Elizabeth said.

Elizabeth fought to stay alive since she only weighed three pounds. Growing up, she was a bit of a tomboy, and she loved to play in trees. “My mother used to look up in the trees and say, ‘Where in the world are you, Elizabeth?’” She also loved to play baseball and was a good pitcher; the boys liked the way she played. Although Elizabeth was athletic, she was a shy girl. As a child, it was hard for anyone to make her angry; she saw no point to it, so she sang.

Graduating from high school in 1937, she wanted to go to college, but had no money. Instead, she got a job working in the local courthouse. In order to travel to and from work, Elizabeth bought a bicycle that would eventually play a big role in her life.

While Elizabeth was at the courthouse, a man by the name of Frank Matejeck would pay frequent visits and talk about flying, and she would often listen in on his conversations. Elizabeth said, “I would sit there with my mouth open.” One day when Frank asked her, “Would you like to take a flight?”, Elizabeth said, “Boy, *would* I like to take a flight!” He picked Elizabeth up and drove her to the local airport, “It was really like a pasture, but I thought it looked beautiful!” she remembered.

A pilot friend of Frank’s, a man by the name of Mr. Voegel, took Elizabeth up to four thousand feet and then put the plane into a spin. After spinning about ten times, he landed the plane. The pilot was green. But Elizabeth had no uneasy feeling at all. Frank mentioned that she should take up flying because of her ability to handle the excitement, and that is exactly what she did.

The local Sky Club was for men only, and required \$100 to be a member. To help pay the dues, Elizabeth went to the local bank and asked for a loan. When the banker asked what she could give him for collateral, she remembered her bike. When the banker asked why she needed the money, Elizabeth said, “I’m going to learn how to fly.” Quick to respond, the banker told her that women do not fly. With pride, excitement, and pure enthusiasm, Elizabeth replied, “This one’s going to!”

In a recent interview, Elizabeth said, “My mother at first was afraid of my flying military aircraft, but she saw I could do it - she and my family were proud.” To prove to her family that she could fly, Elizabeth took her mom to the airport, jumped into a plane, took off, flew around the airport and then landed. When her mother saw her fly and land the plane, she gave her daughter a mother’s blessing.

Elizabeth then joined the local chapter of the Civil Air Patrol, with thirty male cadets. Do you blame her for wanting to fly? She was the only female in her class! Elizabeth thought she might be seen as a little selfish, so she invited a few more of her female friends to the meetings. This brought the number to five women and thirty men.

On August 20, 1943, the former organization of WAFS became known as the WASPs (Women Air Force Service Pilots). The name had been chosen by Chief of Staff of the Army Air Corps, General Henry H. Arnold. After seeing the notice for the WASP organization at the Faribault, Minnesota airfield, Elizabeth applied for a position. She talked her sister into applying, also, and they both went to Minneapolis for an interview. In order to meet the criteria, you had to have a minimum of 35 hours of flying, and stand five feet three inches tall. They both passed, and soon were on their way to Sweetwater, Texas. For them it was an exciting adventure.

Pants were not allowed to be worn outdoors for women. However, they were allowed to be worn when women flew planes. When first arriving, nobody at the base in Texas thought these new recruits would last long because they were women, and women were not supposed to fly aircraft.

Fifteen WASPs came from Minnesota, and three came from Faribault. They were Elizabeth, her friend Catherine Murphy, and Mary Wall, Elizabeth's sister. Mary didn't pass the next phase of training because she could not pull out of a spin. So she put on her dress and headed home.

By November of 1943, Jacqueline Cochran, Director of Flying, decided that the women pilots should get uniforms to show who they were. Up to this time, women did not get to wear official uniforms since they had only civilian status and were not considered real members of armed services. New uniforms were being made and had to be approved by Secretary of War Stimson. Women pilots were doing ninety percent of the work in ferrying aircraft from factories to air bases, and eighty-five percent of all flight training in the United States in 1943 and 1944. These talented women successfully flew every type of aircraft the Army Air Force had, including the B-29 Superfortress, the kind of plane that dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan in 1945.

Avenger Field, Texas, where the women were stationed, became known as "Cochran's Convent." The reason for this was because many male pilots came up with plenty of excuses, including having a faulty aircraft, getting lost, or running out of gas, just so they could land and see what was going on! This became the first all female training base in history, and male pilots wanted to visit there often. The decision was then made to make the base "off limits" to all male personnel!

While she was at Avenger Field, Elizabeth earned her Silver Wings, and was then sent to the Las Vegas Army Airfield Gunnery School in the state of Nevada. She requested a position in the Gunnery School because she loved to fly fighters.

In Las Vegas, Elizabeth was called upon when they needed a pilot. She spent most of her time on the airfield. While she was at the Gunnery School, she needed to be trained as an instrument instructor, so she went back to Avenger Field in Texas, got more training for the position, and then returned to the Gunnery School.

A primary trainer aircraft used for learning how to fly was the little Fairchild PT-19. According to Elizabeth, it was fun to fly. A friend of Elizabeth's, Marie Mountain, a quiet, soft-spoken person, went flying with her instructor one day in an open cockpit. He inverted the PT-19, and began doing spins. Marie forgot to fasten her seat belt and fell out! Marie later married a different pilot by the name of Lt. John Clark. John remembered fifty years later that his wife had never received her "Caterpillar Memento." This unofficial "club" is reserved only for people who have ever parachuted out of an airplane. But Marie is now a recognized owner of the "Caterpillar Pin."

In December, 1944, Elizabeth got a notice saying that the Army Air Force didn't need the WASPs any more, and that the women could go home. When they returned to their families, these brave women were not recognized for what they did. In an interview, Elizabeth said this: "We got very little publicity-and *no* support from the male-dominated aviation group."

One would think if you were a pilot who flew fighter planes in the war, that you could get a job flying a civilian airplane after the war without a discussion. Elizabeth went to Northwest Airlines to get a job, but she said, "Northwest Airlines was uninterested in our accomplishments—no jobs of flying for women." Northwest knew that Elizabeth had a great resume, but they asked if she would take a job in the front office, doing paperwork. Elizabeth,

expressing her feelings, said, "I told them what they could do with their front office job! I was ahead of my time."

For the next three years, finding steady employment was very difficult for Elizabeth. She went through fifteen different jobs in a small amount of time. Eventually, Elizabeth returned home, where she married Arthur Roberts on December 27, 1947, had five children, and led a "normal life." This consisted of raising her children, working for the American Cancer Society and various volunteer organizations. But this normal life had nothing to do with flying.

Forty-seven years later, in August of 1991, Elizabeth had her first flight in military aircraft since the war days in 1944. This all happened in St. Paul, Minnesota, at Holman Field. She got to fly several World War II "Warbirds" that were on display. While she was in St. Paul flying in the Warbirds, Lieutenant General Gene Andreotti of the Minnesota Air National Guard asked Elizabeth if she had ever been in a jet before. "Heck, no. You wouldn't let me near one," Elizabeth replied.

General Andreotti then contacted the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., to get permission for Elizabeth to fly. The Pentagon called the general and asked if Elizabeth would be able to handle it. He could not think of anybody who could handle it better than Elizabeth. Not only was she seventy-one years old, she was a woman!

August 28, 1992, was the day that Elizabeth put on a G-suit and flew in an F-16 "Fighting Falcon," thanks to General Andreotti. She called her kids the night before her flight, and said to them, "Kids, your Mom's going to fly an F-16. Don't forget, if something happens to me, I went the way I wanted to go."

The media were there to record this historical event, a seventy-one year old woman flying in the F-16. "It was such an indescribable experience. I thought I had died and gone to heaven," said Elizabeth. Everyone asked her the same question, how did you like the flight? Elizabeth answered with a grin, "It was terrible. The plane and I didn't want to land. We wanted to just go and go. It was wonderful. . . ."

Today, Elizabeth is still flying, and is still involved in aviation. She is an active member in eight different organizations. They include the International Ninety-Nine Women's Aviation; the Forest of Friendship; the Faribault Area Pilots' Association; the Women Military Aviators; the Women Airforce Service Pilots; the Confederate Air Force; the American Legion Auxiliary; and the American Auxiliary.

In the time I have done this research, I found Elizabeth to be a very determined woman. She did not let anything get to her. If somebody told her she couldn't do this, or she couldn't do that, she did it anyway. She reminds me a little bit of myself.

I am glad I did this report about Elizabeth Strohfus. Her life has been filled with excitement and many problems that she had to overcome, just because she was a woman. By doing this research about the women's role in World War II, Elizabeth has taught me to never give up on my dreams, and that you can accomplish anything if you want. I hope that this paper has an affect on the reader as it did on me.



The Navajo Code Talkers

Daniel

The assault has been planned for weeks. All preparations are completed and the Marines are ready. The order is given. With little resistance, the troops land on a small island in vast numbers. Enemy soldiers, however, have advance knowledge about the invasion. Casualties start mounting as Japanese soldiers suddenly counter-attack with devastating precision . . .

The above situation illustrates the problem American troops faced while fighting in the Pacific during the early part of World War II. The reason for their difficulty was simple: the enemy kept cracking military encryption codes, and Japanese intelligence officers often could sound like they were American soldiers in radio or walkie-talkie transmissions. Because of this, the Marines had trouble preventing their messages from being intercepted and understood. Military leaders needed a code that was unbreakable, and they needed one quickly, or many more Americans would die.

Enter a man named Philip Johnson. The son of white missionaries, he grew up on the Navajo reservation. Being raised among Native people who spoke Navajo allowed him to learn the language as a child. Later in life, Johnson helped the tribe by acting as a translator for the Navajo, also known as the “Dineh,” and the Hopi when the two tribes petitioned President Franklin Roosevelt for improved government services.¹

As a civilian at the beginning of World War II, Philip Johnson learned that the military was exploring the idea of using a Native American language for communication purposes in the Pacific. In the past, he had read about an experiment that had been conducted during World War I. A division of American soldiers had assigned some of the “Indians” who were part of their company to coordinate maneuvers. This idea helped keep communications secure, leaving the Germans unprepared for attack. After the success of their operations, a new training program was started to instruct more “Indians” to be communication officers. Unfortunately, the war ended before their training was complete.

After World War I, Japan sent many observers to America to learn about Native American languages. At that time, only thirty or forty people outside the Navajo tribe could understand the extremely complex Navajo language. Because of this, Philip Johnson thought that it was unlikely that the Japanese military observers had ever heard about the Navajo tribe, let alone their language. Armed with this knowledge, he spoke with one of the soldiers at Camp Elliott in Southern California about his bold idea. The soldier then talked to his Commanding Officer.

In a meeting with a high ranking Marine stationed at Camp Elliott, Johnson presented his idea to use the Navajo language as a code. At first, the Marines were skeptical about the plan. In order to alleviate worries about the challenges of using the Navajo language as a code, Johnson invited two Navajos to help him give a demonstration to the Marine officer. During the demonstration, the Dineh were given scraps of paper with typical military messages written on them. They then used their language to radio these messages to each other. After the information had been sent and received, the messages were compared

to the originals so the accuracy of the translation into Navajo could be evaluated. The demonstration was a success, and the go-ahead was given to organize a thirty-man pilot program utilizing the Navajo language as the new code.

Recruiters sent into the Navajo reservation met with many problems when they looked for thirty recruits who were qualified for what became known as the “Code Talker Program.” The mistrust that existed between the Dineh and the white “Anglos” caused great feelings of reluctance by the Navajo to come forward. Navajo history was filled with violated treaties and broken promises between themselves and the United States government. One tragic example of this treatment came when the Dineh were forced to travel three hundred miles away from their homeland and on to reservation lands after their war against America in the 1800s. During this harsh trip, many tribesmen died, and still more died the following winter. Sam Billison, a Navajo Code Talker, shared his view of the exile from his tribe’s homeland when he said, “There was . . . a lot of mistreatment, and the Navajo says ‘this will probably never be written in history books’ . . .”²

Even though boarding schools were set up on the Navajo reservation to educate young children, the strict classroom rules forced upon the Dineh made them distrustful of the teachers and the government. One Navajo Code Talker had this to say about the restrictions placed on Navajo children in the boarding schools: “Speaking your own tongue was forbidden, *total-ly* forbidden. And . . . if you’re ever caught talk(ing) Navajo, talking your own language, you were punished.”³

Despite the ban on speaking their native language in the schools, a few Dineh learned how to speak English, and retained their own language at the same time. However, those who learned the English language didn’t have many chances to use it in their rural communities.

This didn’t mean that the Dineh were unwilling to serve their country. On the contrary, many Navajo men had tried to enlist in the armed forces the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked. The U. S. Army, however, turned them away because most could only speak their native language. Another reason these potential recruits were rejected was because there was no draft set up on the Dineh reservation at the time.

Although the age limit for volunteers was 18 through 30, this age limit did not stop some of the older Dineh. For example, Carl Gorman was 34 years old when he enlisted.⁴ However, in order to be eligible, he lied about his age and said that he was 27. Another Navajo man, William Dean Wilson, was only 15 years old, but he, too, lied about his age so he could join the Marines.

These recruits needed to weigh 122 pounds as well. Since many Dineh weighed less than that, they found ingenious ways to increase their weight. Some drank a lot of water before they were weighed in. Still others ate whole bunches of bananas.⁵

The sudden change from a quiet, traditional lifestyle on the Navajo reservation to a regimented and challenging boot camp caused culture shock among the Dineh recruits. Some clashes erupted between this military way of life and the Dineh tribe’s cultural values. The following examples illustrate some of the difficulties they faced.

Marine Corps drill sergeants insisted that all recruits make eye contact to instill respect and discipline in the ranks, but the Dineh considered direct eye contact to be a sign of rudeness. In addition, the Dineh people are typically quiet and don’t often raise their voices. Marine Corps drill sergeants, on the other hand, screamed in the recruits’ faces to force

compliance to the military way of life. Because of these and other differences in culture and lifestyle, many career soldiers felt that the Navajo wouldn't be able to make it past boot camp.

The organized physical regime wasn't bad, though. The long hikes, for example, were something familiar to the Dineh. On one occasion, white and Navajo recruits were ordered to go on a 48-hour survival trip in the desert with only one canteen per person. On the second day, all the recruits except the Dineh had run out of water, and they were in danger of becoming dehydrated. Since no one on the base had seen the Dineh sneak out at night to drink stored water they knew could be found in the local cactus plants, many Marine officials believed that the Navajo possessed super-human powers because their canteens were still full.⁶ Interestingly, only one Dineh washed out of Marine boot camp.

Once their basic training had been completed, it was time for the Dineh recruits to learn how to use the military's sophisticated communications equipment. However, a few Dineh mistook the word "Marine" for the word "submarine." As a result, they thought they were going to be inducted into the Navy!

At first, the Navajo soldiers thought the assignment they were given to create a code based on their own language was a joke. After a while, though, they realized that they had better start working. But the size and complexity of the task was apparent even from the start: none of the 29 original Navajo Code Talkers knew the first thing about ciphering.

The first task the group tackled was to create an alphabet that could be used to spell names of places and people. After some work, the Code Talkers completed the alphabet. The following example is just a small part of famous Navajo code:

Letter	Navajo word	Navajo meaning
A	"Wol-la-chee"	Ant
B	"Shush"	Bear
C	"Moasi"	Cat
D	"Be"	Deer
E	"Dzeh"	Elk
F	"Ma-e"	Fox
G	"Klizzie"	Goat
H	"Lin"	Horse
I	"Tkele-cho-gi"	Ice ⁷

From this table, it can be seen that the English word "bed" would be translated into the Navajo words "shush", "Dzeh", and "Be". The Code Talkers would use their language to send messages that were broken down and sent letter by letter.

The next task proved to be a little easier. Since the Dineh language has no words for modern military terms, familiar names were given to replace them. Some choices were made based upon the descriptive traits of an object or person. For example, the Navajo word "besh-legai-a-lah-ih," meaning "one silver bar" was used instead of the English words "first lieutenant." Interestingly, the Code Talkers selected other terms as little inside jokes. As a result, the word "Army" was translated into "dog faces" in Navajo, created because the Marines and the Army were, and still are, spirited rivals.⁸

Since there were still people who doubted the effectiveness of this new group of Code Talkers, top military decipherers were called upon to decode test messages that were sent in

the Navajo language. However, the Anglo decipherers could not begin to decode messages because they had too much trouble determining what sounds were being made, let alone being able to separate those sounds into words. Next, a few Dineh not involved with the Code Talkers were asked to interpret messages that had been sent in the Navajo language code. This test was given to find out if a Navajo taken by the Japanese as a POW could decipher any messages. The response given by those tribe members who did not know the code was simply, "That's crazy Navajo."⁹

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Navajo language code was that it was never written down until decades after the war. This meant that the enemy would never be able to crack the code by stealing one or two book manuals. To further protect the code, all military personnel involved with the Code Talker Project were placed under a strict oath of silence. Not even fellow soldiers, Anglo or Navajo, could be told about the code. In the words of Mr. Begay, a Dineh who served as a Code Talker during World War II, "Even my buddies didn't know what I did. All they knew was I was a radio operator."¹⁰

That is not to say that word didn't get out about the Code Talkers. At one point, a newspaper published an article that mentioned the top-secret project. Although no details were revealed, any outsider boasting knowledge of the existence of this top-secret project meant that they knew too much, or that someone on the inside was violating his oath of silence. Philip Johnson, who was part of the Marines' administrative section of the Code Talker Program at the time, was punished because his superiors thought he was leaking the secret information. Ironically, after the war ended, Johnson told the whole story to the press and was never disciplined.¹¹

After completing the code, two of the original twenty-nine Code Talkers stayed in the United States to teach their code to the next batch of Navajo recruits. The rest of the company went off to fight in the Pacific.

At first, the Code Talkers' commanding officer had no clue how to best utilize the Navajo soldiers assigned to his unit. In their early missions, they were just used as message couriers. It was not until a Marine named Lieutenant Hunt tested the Navajo code against a decoding machine that it was taken seriously. Marines using these machines under combat conditions regularly required four hours to decode a single message. The Dineh, however, were able to code and decode messages in two minutes and thirty seconds.¹²

At least one example underscores the importance of the Navajo Code Talkers, and the significance of their service to their fellow Marines and to their country. A group of Marines fighting on the island of Saipan had managed to capture a Japanese bunker. Unfortunately, the American artillery gunners on the island did not know about the advance made by this unit, so they continued to fire at the bunker. When the Marine unit tried to radio in a request to stop shelling their position, the officer at the command post ignored the message, believing it to be a trick. It was not until a Code Talker took the radio and, using the code, relayed the new position of the Marine unit in the captured bunker, that the gunners stopped shelling.¹³

The Code Talkers had to worry about more than just the Japanese during the war. Sometimes their fellow Marines could prove to be downright frustrating. Specifically, the first time the Navajo code was used in combat, other Marine Corps communications officers panicked and jammed the frequency because they thought the Japanese were "on the line." After

this misunderstanding, the code word “Arizona” was spoken in English by the Navajo soldiers so the American troops would know that the language was not Japanese.¹⁴

There were also times when the physical similarities between the Dineh and the Japanese caused problems. Occasionally, the Code Talkers were taken prisoner by American forces when they became separated from their units, so the Code Talkers were often assigned white bodyguards.¹⁵

Despite such problems, the Dineh were able to make friends among their comrades. After one particular battle, a group of Code Talkers killed a horse and had started to cook it. Other Marines discovered the Code Talkers roasting meat and were offered some. The Marines, not knowing that it was a horse, accepted the offer. The members of this group had to head for cover temporarily when a Japanese plane flew overhead, but they went back to finish eating their meal after the plane went by. Afterwards, one of the Marines saw the skin and said, “good horse.”¹⁶

After the war, many Dineh veterans went through a ceremony called the *Enemy Way*. This tribal ritual served to cleanse a warrior’s spirit of violence and protected him from the shades of slain foes. But for many years after, the story of the Navajo Code Talkers remained a military secret, and the service that the Dineh offered to their country went unrecognized.

Finally, in 1968, the Army declassified the files on the Code Talkers. Soon, medals were awarded to those Navajo Marines who served during the war against Japan. However, some Dineh refused to go to the ceremony because they wanted to leave the war in the past.

The story of the Navajo Code Talkers was one of the best-kept secrets of World War II. The Code Talkers kept the Japanese from knowing what our armed forces were doing every time the code was used. Their code was never broken by the enemy. As a result, many American lives were saved. The brave Navajo Code Talkers are true American heroes.



Notes

1. Catherine Jones, *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes* (Greensboro, North Carolina: Tudor Publishers, 1997), p. 1. The word Navajo is Spanish for “great planted fields.” The native Americans known as the Navajo actually call themselves “Dineh,” or “the people.”
2. The History Channel, *History Undercover*: “The Navajo Code Talkers.”
3. Ibid.
4. Carl Gorman died in 1998 at the age of 90. His life story can be found at http://www.elibrary.com/s/edumark/ge...d=1518595@llibrary_d&dtype=0~0&dist=
5. Catherine Jones, *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes*, p. 12.
6. Deanne Durrett, *Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers* (New York: Facts on File, 1998), p. 34; Catherine Jones, *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes*, p. 14.
7. Catherine Jones, *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes* p. 22; Deanne Durrett, *Unsung Heroes of World War II*, p. 41.
8. Catherine Jones *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes*, p. 22; Deanne Durrett, *Unsung Heroes of World War II*, pp. 42–43.

9. <http://Mproaca.cro.net/navajo.html>
10. http://www.elibrary.com/s/edumark/ge...Id=185155@library_0~0&dist=
11. Deanne Durrett, *Unsung Heroes Of World War II*, pp. 52–53.
12. Ibid., p. 64.
13. Ibid., p. 73.
14. Ibid., pp. 63–64.
15. Catherine Jones, *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes*, pp. 32–33.
16. Ibid., pp. 33–34.

★ The Life and Death of Isoroku Yamamoto

Jim

Isoroku (ISS-OH-ROW-KOO) Yamamoto was an excellent Japanese admiral who played a key part in the fight for the Pacific during World War II. Yamamoto said before he started his series of attacks that, “In the first six to twelve months of the war with the United States and Great Britain, I will run wild and win victory upon victory. But then, if the war continues after that, I have no expectation of success.”¹ He later expected that Japan would lose if it went to war with the United States. He said, “I expect to die in battle aboard the Nagato (his flagship). By that time, I imagine, Tokyo will have been set on fire at least three times, and Japan reduced to a pitiful state . . . but there is no going back now. . . .”² By saying this, Yamamoto thought that if the war were short, he would come out victorious, but if the war was long, he would not have a chance to win. Unfortunately for him the war was a long series of battles. Yamamoto met his end in the middle of the war, in April, 1943.

Little did Yamamoto know that winning the battle at Pearl Harbor, a battle that had been planned and carried out chiefly by himself, in December, 1941, would awaken a sleeping giant, the United States. This quote in an editorial from *The New York Times* put into words what many Americans were thinking the day after Pearl Harbor:

The United States has been attacked. The United States is in danger. Let every patriot take his stand on the bastions of democracy. We go into battle in defense of our own land, of our present and our future, of all that we are and all we still hope to be, of a way of life which we have made for ourselves on free and independent soil, the only way of life which we believe to be worth living.³

Yamamoto was born in Nagaoka, Japan, on August 4, 1884. He studied in the United States at Harvard University for three years from 1919 to 1921. Yamamoto did not want to go to war with the U.S. because as a student he learned a lot about America. While he attended Harvard, he found out that the U.S. was a strong country with many resources that could not be destroyed easily. However, when his country called on him, he willingly planned the attack on Pearl Harbor and led the Japanese Naval forces to early victories. Yamamoto was able to achieve victory upon victory until one day on April 18, 1943, when disaster struck the Japanese Navy.

American intelligence had intercepted and decoded a message that said Admiral Yamamoto would be making a visit to the naval base at Bougainville in the Solomon Islands, located in the Pacific Ocean. Through the decoded Japanese message, the Americans had figured out all the plans that the Japanese were trying to accomplish. Lieutenant John Mitchell, a P-38 Lightning pilot, who would soon become the leader of the attack on Yamamoto, was handed a telegram, which he read in silence. It said,

“Washington Top Secret Secretary Navy to Fighter Control Henderson, Admiral Yamamoto accompanied chief of staff and seven general officers Imperial Navy including surgeon grand fleet left Truk this morning for their trip inspection Bougainville bases stop (sic) admiral and party traveling in two Bettys escorted six Zekes stop escort of honour, (sic), from Kahili probable stop (sic) admiral’s itinerary colon arrive Rabaul 16:30 hours where spend night stop (sic) leave dawn for Kahili time for arrival 9:45 hours stop (sic) admiral then to board submarine chaser for inspection naval units under Admiral Tanaka stop (sic).”⁴

In other words, by breaking the Japanese code, the U.S. was able to intercept a message that Yamamoto was going to make a flight to Bougainville. It was now Mitchell’s assignment to figure out a plan to intercept him and shoot him down. Mitchell then sat down with two other flight commanders to discuss how they were going to go about this mission to destroy Yamamoto.

According to author John Deane Potter’s book on the life of Yamamoto, Mitchell’s group planned to attack Yamamoto and his escort 30 miles east of the Kahili airstrip by sending an air attack where he was scheduled to land. This would have been fairly easy if Yamamoto wasn’t as punctual as he usually was. The American fighters had to be in that exact location at exactly 9:35 A.M., which would not be easy. They finally decided they would complete the mission.

Burke Davis, author of the book *Get Yamamoto*, documented the meeting of the flight between Mitchell and his pilots:

“Here’s the pitch. We take off at seven ten, and will be formed up by seven twenty-five. This one’s split-second timing, so we can’t have a screw up on the strip. We’ll be about two hours and ten minutes on the way out. . . .”

“What about altitude?” someone asked.

“Just a guess—about five thousand. Maybe even ten thousand. We figure he’ll travel at under ten thousand to be comfortable and stay off oxygen. . . . But whatever his altitude, this is the way we play it: Lanphier goes in, and the cover goes up top. We climb to twenty thousand, where we can see the airfield and cut off anything that gets in the way. No exceptions. They’ll be no engagement by the cover unless they come up after us. Our job is to watch the killers and cover until the bombers go down.”⁵

Mitchell took several P-38 Lightning fighters at 20,000 feet, while some of his men would fly 11,000 feet below him. They had to leave precisely at 7:20 A.M.; every minute of this flight would be crucial because of the way they had planned to intercept him.⁶ If they were off one minute or off course by one mile, they would totally miss their chance to attack Yamamoto. The Americans had to fly at a pre-arranged compass heading for so many minutes, then turn, and go for so many minutes more, and so on until they reached Yamamoto.⁷

Mitchell and his crew took off as scheduled and followed their flight plan very carefully. Every turn was made with the greatest of precision. The diagram below shows how complex this interception was going to be.⁸ Everything had to be done perfectly, or the Americans would miss their opportunity for victory.

According to author Potter, “When they (Mitchell’s group of P-38s) saw the jungle fringe of Bougainville’s western coastline they went down to 2,000 feet as a precaution. The two (Japanese) bombers were almost invisible against the green shadowy pattern of the jungle.”⁹ As the map clearly shows, Mitchell’s P-38s had to fly 410 miles over the water, skimming over the waves just 30 feet over the ocean. They were right on schedule to reach the southwest coast of Bougainville at 9:35 A.M.

After nearly two and one-half hours of flying their precise course, all of a sudden, Mitchell and his crew spotted Yamamoto’s “Betty” bomber and the Zeros that were fighter escorts, flying in a “V” formation for the Japanese admiral’s protection. Mitchell and his fellow airmen started to climb when a pilot broke the radio silence they had kept for the whole trip, and announced, “Bogeys—eleven o’clock high!”

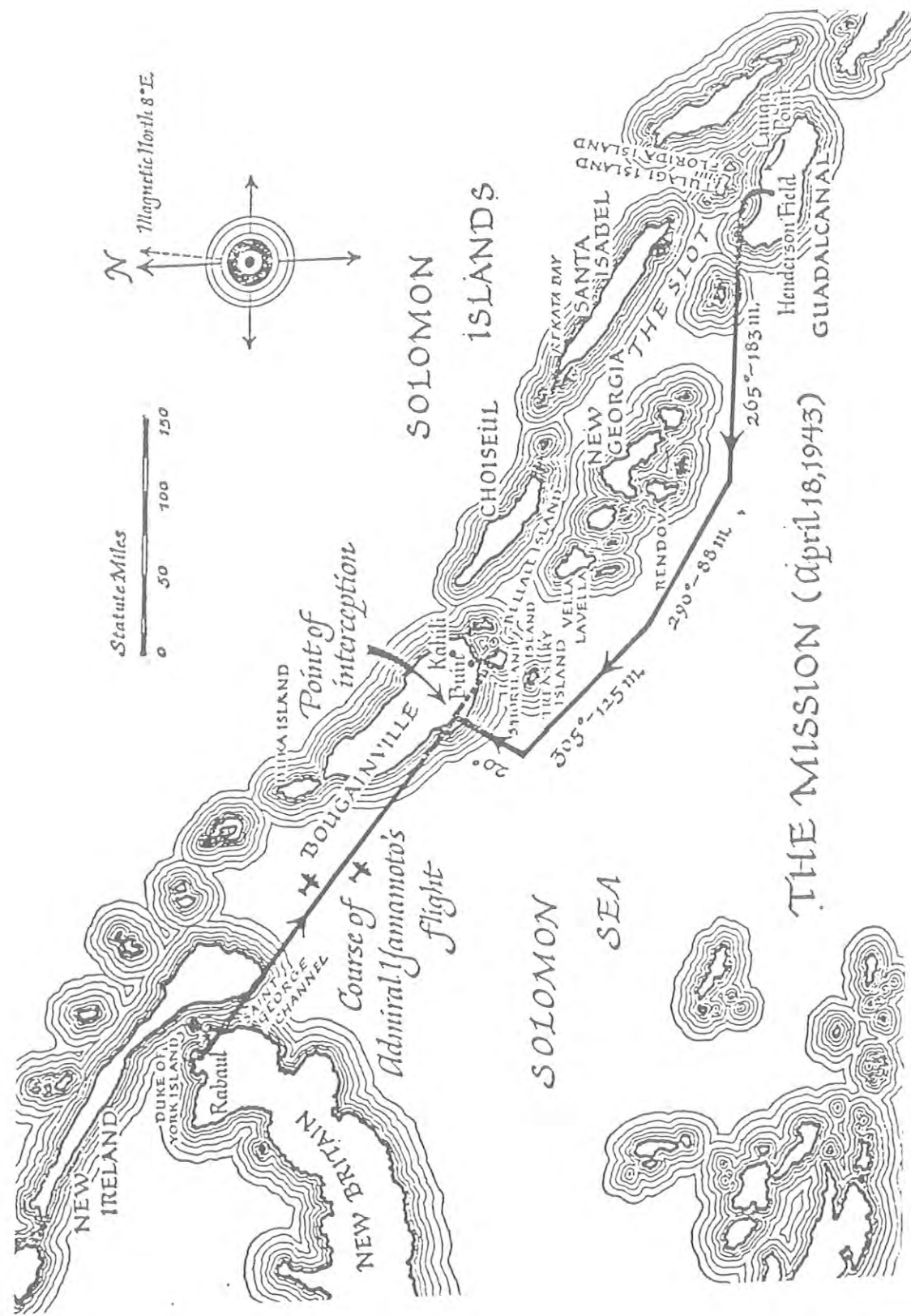
Mitchell immediately began to climb to 20,000 feet. By the time Yamamoto’s escort pilots saw the American fighters, the Americans were only a mile away from the Admiral’s plane. The American fleet’s direct orders were to seek and destroy Admiral Yamamoto. This was a unique mission during the war. According to author Edwin P. Hoyt, “Admiral Yamamoto . . . was . . . the only commander on any side in World War II to be assassinated by the direct order of the chief of government of the enemy.”¹⁰

The P-38 pilots dropped their external fuel tanks located underneath the wings and climbed to the level of the Japanese bombers. The two enemy bombers streaked to the safety of the jungle while the Zeros, also known by the Americans as “Zekes” flew down to cut off the American fighters. The Zekes dropped their long-range tanks and headed for the American fighters. The Americans responded and took care of the Zekes. Then they nosed over at 400 miles per hour and headed for the bomber. Admiral Ugaki, who was accompanying Yamamoto on this trip, described the scene he saw from his airplane as the American pilots moved in for the kill:

. . . Without warning the motors roared and the bomber plunged towards the jungle, leveling off at less than 200 feet. Nobody knew what had happened. Then as we pulled out of the dive horizontally above the jungle we saw our escort fighter turn towards the attacking enemy aircraft now identifiable as the Lockheed Lightnings. The numerically superior enemy force broke through the Zekes and lunged after our two bombers.

For a few minutes I lost sight of Yamamoto’s plane, but finally located it far to the right. I was horrified to see it just above the jungle with bright orange flames rapidly enveloping the wings and fuselage. About four miles away from us the bomber trailed thick black smoke, dropping lower and lower. As our bomber snapped out of its turn I scanned the jungle. The Betty was no longer in sight. Black smoke boiled from the dense jungle into the air.¹¹

When the rest of the bombers and Zeros were finally destroyed, the American fighters returned to their base with the good news. Admiral Halsey, commander of the Pacific forces, sent a telegram which read as follows: “Congratulations Major Mitchell and his



hunters. Sounds as though one of the ducks was a peacock.”¹² The “Peacock” was Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto.

Later that day, the Japanese confirmed the location of Yamamoto’s downed plane, and search parties were sent into the jungle to bring his body back to Japan. The army team recovered the bodies after a long, hot search through the jungle. According to Hoyt,

Admiral Yamamoto was found sitting in the pilot’s seat, which had been wrenched loose and thrown out of the plane. He was strapped in, gripping his short samurai sword by the handle, his face composed, and, to the rescue team, looking almost alive and very dignified in death. A postmortem examination found two bullets, one in the lower jaw and one in the back, and the doctors concluded that he was killed instantly by gunfire.¹³

In spite of the grief of the Japanese Navy and the rejoicing of the U.S. Pacific Fleet on the death of Yamamoto, no details of the momentous tragedy were allowed to leak out. In fact, in America, the first mention of Yamamoto’s death was made nearly one month after it occurred.¹⁴ For many years, there has been much speculation about this. Why was the news about Yamamoto’s death kept from the American people? It certainly would have been something to cheer about. The research suggests there were at least two reasons. Reason number one had to do with the fact that if word had gotten out that Yamamoto was intercepted at a very precise location, the Japanese would have known that the Americans had broken their code. However, there was a more personal reason. According to author Potter, Lieutenant Lanphier, one of the pilots who shot Yamamoto down, had a brother who “. . . was shot down over the Kahili airstrip and became a prisoner in Japanese hands. The American government feared reprisals against him.”¹⁵ Lieutenant Lanphier was later promoted to the rank of captain, awarded the Navy Cross, and received a personal telegram of congratulations from President Franklin Roosevelt.¹⁶

In an official communication entitled, “Marine Aircraft Group Twelve, First Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force, Care of Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif.,” dated April 19, 1943, and written by the Commander Fighters, Solomon Islands, Major John Mitchell’s work was highly praised as well. Describing the mission to shoot down Admiral Yamamoto, the letter stated that Mitchell “. . . flew at low altitude . . . to the estimated position of the enemy formation, which he located with faultless precision, achieving complete tactical surprise.” The memo went on to say that (Mitchell’s) “. . . superb leadership, professional skill, high courage, and outstanding audacity were responsible for the successful completion of an enterprise in which so many factors had to be right that it can best be summed up as incredible.”¹⁷

There has been much controversy over certain comments that Admiral Yamamoto was supposed to have made about Pearl Harbor, and defeating the Americans. In a newspaper article that was published three days after his death, *The New York Times* quoted Yamamoto from a report aired by Tokyo Radio soon after the Pearl Harbor attack in which he supposedly said,

I shall not be content merely to capture Guam and the Philippines and to occupy Hawaii and San Francisco. I am looking forward to dictating peace to the United States at the White House in Washington.¹⁸

This made Americans very angry, and they believed Yamamoto was arrogant and brutal. *The New York Times* also reported that Yamamoto hated the Americans, that he “. . . was taught by his father . . . to hate the barbarous people who had come in their black ships, broken down the doors of Japan...and trampled upon the ancient customs of Nippon.”¹⁹

Recent research suggests that Admiral Yamamoto was not as arrogant as the Americans thought he was. According to Yamamoto biographer Edwin P. Hoyt, the Admiral was a man of wit and irony, and his words were misinterpreted:

Employing the sarcasm of which he was a master, he (Yamamoto) had said that the *only* way the Japanese were going to win the war with America was to go to the White House and dictate the terms of peace.²⁰

In other words, Admiral Yamamoto was trying to make a joke, but the meaning of it was misunderstood.

Even though Admiral Yamamoto had a nagging feeling that Japan was not going to win the war, it is ironic that he was the one who ended up starting the war. People will always remember his name and connect it to Pearl Harbor, and this is why many have called him “the man who menaced America.”

In this war there were millions of deaths, and to talk about just one death almost seems to be insignificant. But in the case of Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, his life and death meant a lot to the United States, the country of Japan, how World War II began, and how it ended.



Notes

1. Rjgeib.com/heroes/tanimizu/yamamoto.html
2. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Planned Pearl Harbor* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1990), p. 11.
3. *The New York Times* (8 Dec 1941). A “bastion” as used in this quote is a fortress, a stronghold.
4. John Deane Potter, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Menaced America* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), pp. 303–304.
5. Burke Davis, *Get Yamamoto*, pp. 133–134.
6. Author Davis reported that the mission began at 7:10 AM.
7. John Deane Potter, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Menaced America*, p. 304.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 306.
10. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Yamamoto, The Man Who Planned Pearl Harbor*, p. 248.
11. John Deane Potter, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Menaced America*, p. 307. The “Betty” referred to in this passage was the code name the Americans gave to the Japanese bomber Yamamoto was flying in.

12. Ibid., p. 308.
13. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Yamamoto, The Man Who Planned Pearl Harbor*, p. 248.
14. *The New York Times* (21 May 1943), p. 1.
15. John Deane Potter, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Menaced America*, p. 310.
16. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Planned Pearl Harbor*, p. 310.
17. U. S. Army Air Force document #KV12/P15-1/jjf, is dated April 19, 1943. This memo was sent from Maj. W. C. Flewelling, Jr., the Commander Fighters, Solomon Islands, and was sent to The Secretary of the Navy.
18. *The New York Times* (21 May 1943), p. 1.
19. Ibid.
20. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Yamamoto: The Man Who Planned Pearl Harbor*, p. 250.



A Famous Last Flight

The Story of Lt. Robert Breitbach

Jake

The information used in the research of this story about Dubuque native son Lt. Robert Breitbach and his B-17 bomber came from several editions of the Telegraph Herald newspaper, published in Dubuque, Iowa.

On Wednesday, February 9th, 1944, in the Dubuque daily newspaper, the *Telegraph Herald*, a story was published about a man named Lieutenant Robert J. Breitbach, age 23. Breitbach was the son of Mrs. Susan Breitbach, and he was also a local World War II hero. He was a member of Dubuqueland’s first high school group wanting to enter the Army Air Force, sponsored by the Dubuque Elks Lodge. He was also the victim of a tragic accident during a routine training flight which occurred only a few miles away from his home and loved ones.

Robert began his pilot’s career in January of 1942, when he and three other Dubuquers reported for training at an air base in Oxnard, California. After going through training at numerous bases, he earned his wings on Sept. 29th, 1942, at an air base in Roswell, New Mexico. Eventually he was transferred to Walla Walla, Washington, where he was assigned to the 99th Bomber Squadron. He was then sent to North Africa. From there, he completed 50 missions without a scratch. These missions included raids over Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, Messina, and Bologna, all located in Italy; over southern France; and five bombing raids on the island of Pantelleria within four days. The bomber used during these raids was named *Sweater Girl*, because of the girl wearing a sweater painted on the side of the plane.

In October of 1943, Breitbach returned to Dubuque on a 20-day furlough to visit his mother. While he was home, he was a guest speaker at several service clubs and other organizations. During one of these speeches, telling about his experiences in the war zone, he said, “We were hit plenty of times by ‘flak’ but we always came through without a scratch. We had to have a wing replaced after one raid, and a few times had to have stabilizers replaced, and there were plenty of times when there were a lot of ‘flak’ holes in the bomber.”

Breitbach went on to say, "I did not get any of the German fighter planes which attacked us many times, but the members of my crew were credited with nine 'positives' and four 'probables.' A couple of times I manned the guns, hoping to get at least one to my credit, but no German planes came close enough for us to get a shot."

After his furlough, Breitbach returned to North Africa where he stayed as an instructor for a while, but was then sent back to the States and was stationed at Chanute Field, in nearby Illinois. During a routine training flight on Tuesday, February 8th, 1944, he and his crew were flying their B-17 Flying Fortress over Dubuque.

They came into town from the northeast, circled around, and then proceeded to head west. They just missed crashing into Heller's Tavern near Center Grove, went out of control, and then, flying upside down, skimmed over the Seifker residence, exploded while still in the air then crashing against a small hill.

Mr. Seifker was working in his blacksmith shop at the time when he heard the plane coming in. He said, "I first thought it was merely flying low. Suddenly, there was a crash and an explosion that sent flaming gasoline high into the air. Fearful that I would get caught in the fire, I ran in the opposite direction."

Dorothy Heller, 13, and Donald Heller, 16, the son and daughter of Frank Heller, the owner and operator of Heller's Tavern, also witnessed this frightful event. Dorothy said, "It (the aircraft) seemed to be heading right for us and we ducked. I could see two men (in the aircraft) who seemed to be struggling with equipment." In a statement Donald later gave to police he said, "We saw the plane crash nose down into the trees." He added, "and the tail seemed to hang up in the air for a few seconds and then topple over. Within a few seconds, there was a terrific explosion," he said. "I ran for the telephone in our apartment above the tavern and called police headquarters. I thought maybe I could help," he added, "so I ran to the wreckage. As I neared the place where the plane hit, there was another tremendous blast. I guess that was when another gas tank let go."

Before the crash, a *Telegraph Herald* reporter also witnessed the plane flying over the town. He said, "The plane seemed to bank to the right and lose altitude, and then headed west. I heard the alarm about five minutes later." The roads quickly filled up with cars heading to the accident scene.

Dubuque Chief of Police Joseph Strub, Sheriff Leo J. Eisbach, and acting Fire Chief Thomas Hickson, took charge and cleared the area of all spectators. The personnel of Company K from the Iowa State Guard, and members of the local Civil Air Patrol, were mobilized for police duty. Local Fire Department officials and Dr. F. S. Leonard, the Dubuque County Coroner, said that only four bodies were visible in the wreckage after the fire had been extinguished.

It was said by Lt. Col. Harland F. Sieley, commandant of the Loras Academy ROTC unit, that a plane of this type would have a crew of at least eight, and normally it had nine. There were stories that some of the crew might have jumped or had parachuted to safety, and Sheriff Eisbach sent out volunteer searchers, but there were no survivors.

Fred W. Woodward, *Telegraph Herald* publisher, arranged to light up the Municipal Airport in Dubuque so that recovery planes from Chanute Field could land at night. He also

offered to transport the Army officers to the crash site. At 7 o'clock the evening of the crash, four men arrived under the command of Col. A.B. Odgen, U.S. Army Air Force. They were Lieut. Col. H. G. Crank; Major A. D. Odom; and Capt. H. C. Bowser. They were in town to investigate the crash of the Flying Fortress.

Of the five men who died in the crash, Lt. Breitbach and the flight engineer, Corporal William C. Akers, were the first to be identified. A third body was pulled from the wreckage the next day, and the men from Chanute Field found the other two men at 10:30 AM on Wednesday. Permission to remove the bodies was received from the commanding officer of the Seventh Service Command, in Omaha, Nebraska. The bodies were taken to the Didesch Funeral Home, Strueber Funeral Home, Hoffmann Mortuary, Ashworth and Bennett Funeral Home, and Haudenshield Funeral Home. The other three victims were later identified as 2nd Lieut. Ernest D. MacManus, Jr.; 2nd Lt. William D. Maloney, Jr., and Flight Officer Ernest H. Wood. The public relations office said that the bodies would be sent directly to their hometowns from Dubuque. Col. Ogden said that the crash was the first fatality in the history of the 87th Pilot Training Squadron, activated in September 1940, at Barksdale Field, in Louisiana.

The next day, on February 10th, 1944, in an article entitled, "Plan Escorts for Bodies of Crash Victims," the *Telegraph Herald* reported that the funeral escort would arrive Thursday afternoon from Chanute Field, in Illinois. The bodies of the other crew members would then be shipped out of Dubuque on Friday. The funeral service for Lt. Breitbach would be held at the Hoffmann Mortuary, and then proceed to Holy Ghost Church on Saturday. He would then be buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Dubuque. The article added that the salvage operations on the wreckage began Thursday, after two huge Army maintenance trucks arrived.

Col. Ogden also left Dubuque by train on Thursday. Before leaving the city, he commended the local Fire Department, the Dubuque County Sheriff's Office, Dubuque City Police, the Civil Air Patrol, the Iowa State Guard, and other organizations that assisted in maintaining order and helped in the recovery of the bodies.

☆☆☆

Many years later on November 7th, 1992, there was another article in the *Telegraph Herald*, entitled "World War II Pilot Wings Returned to Brother." This time, the story focused on Lt. Breitbach's family. Don Breitbach, Robert's younger brother, was retired and living in San Antonio, Texas. The former Dubuquer had recently returned home for his 50th high school class reunion. While in town, Don ran into one of his high school classmates, Norman Zipeski, who told him about a pair of wings that a man found at the place where Lt. Breitbach's plane crashed many years ago. "I'll be dog-gone," were Don Breitbach's words when John Davis handed him the bent wings. Davis found the wings 30 years after the crash at "the old B-17 crash site" just off Crescent Ridge Road (across Highway 20 by the Menards home improvement store) in the early 1970s. Davis heard the story about the fatal crash, and knew that, "there were still some small bits of wreckage." After only looking around the site for about five minutes, he turned over a rock and there they were. Over the years, Davis told many people about his find, and that is how Zepiski heard about it. The insignia on the wings meant that they could have belonged to two of the five men. When Davis heard that Breitbach

was in town for the class reunion, he knew what he had to do, because there was a good chance that the wings belonged to Don's older brother. Don Breitbach said he'll keep the wings with his brother's photograph, his service diary, a picture of his airplane on a mission in Italy, and a piece of glass from the crashed bomber. "I've got kind of a little grotto," he said.

Don Breitbach does not know who was flying the plane or what caused it to crash. He said, "I've often thought about inquiring, or getting a copy of the crash report, if it still exists. I don't think anybody will ever really know."

He also said he remembers "the good things" about his brother. The wings mean a lot to him. He said he gave his brother's first set of wings to his mother. She wore them during the war, and, "When she died in 1973, I pinned them on her dress," he said. "She's buried with them, because that's the way I remember her best."

Two years later, on February 7th, 1994, another article ran in the *Telegraph Herald*. Why the Breitbach plane flew over Dubuque and what the crew was doing is still the subject of controversy for many older Dubuquers. Some people say that Breitbach was showing off his flying skills to impress his friends and relatives. Others aren't so sure.

Erma Heller, the owner and operator of Heller's Tavern, a favorite spot of Breitbach's, said, "He was interested in my niece." Heller's niece, Marilyn "Toots" Heller, is now married and living in Florida. At the time of the crash, she was Marilyn Segner. She doesn't believe that Breitbach was showing off for her. "If he was, I didn't know it," she said. But she added, "I can picture him yet. He was very nice, very handsome, very intelligent."

The crash will always be remembered by the only living eyewitnesses, Erma Heller's children, Don and Dorothy. "It was unusual for a plane that size to be flying over Dubuque," Don said. The Hellers were close enough to see the crew members struggling with the equipment in the cockpit. Don still remembers seeing a big number "7" on the tail of the plane as it passed over. The plane then hit a tree and nosed into a hillside behind the tavern. Dorothy couldn't watch after she knew the plane was going to crash. "I can still remember the sound. It sounded like a bomb. It bothered me for a long time," she said.

After calling the fire department, Don ran to the crash site. He said, "I saw one body in the fire. There wasn't anything you could do. The plane was burning so bad that the metal was running down the hill."

Neither Don nor Dorothy thinks their mother is right about Breitbach trying to impress "Toots," or anyone else for that matter. "I don't think he was the type of guy who would do anything foolish," Don said.

Two days later, another article was published in the *Telegraph Herald*. It was entitled, "Few Details in '44 Crash Report." It had been 50 years since the terrible crash, and the United States military still won't tell the whole story about it. The *Telegraph Herald* obtained a crash report that was filed on February 16, 1944. It has never been made public. The Air Force Safety Agency released the report, but some of the words are blacked out, such as the official cause of the crash. This confirms what many people believe, that Lt. Breitbach was flying too low, just to impress hometown people. The team of four investigators from Chanute Field was in Dubuque right after the crash, and conducted their

investigation for a week before they released their final six-page report. What follows is a portion of the narrative included in the report:

"The airplane took off at 1300 CWT (Central War Time) for a five-hour bomb approach mission with Lt. Breitbach as pilot instructor, Lts. (Ernest D.) McManus and (William D.) Maloney and flight officer (Ernest H.) Wood as students, and Corp. (William C.) Akers as engineer. The airplane (here a section is blackened out) flew directly to Dubuque where it was (part of this line is deleted) fly low over town. The airplane made several turns over the town at extremely low altitude and crashed after hitting a tree in the southwest edge of town. The plane made two turns over the tavern (section deleted) and, shown in the attached sketch, before hitting the tree on a shallow dive toward the tavern. (Another section deleted) The right wing tip hit a tree down in the ravine causing the plane to crash into the hillside and burn immediately."

Col. John R. Clapper, in a letter accompanying the report, said parts of the report are censored to honor a promise of confidentiality made to witnesses and investigators at the time of the crash. "Witnesses and investigators would be less candid if they knew that at some future date what they said would be released outside of safety channels," he wrote.

So with all this information, Dubuque citizens still don't know the exact story of what happened to Lt. Robert Breitbach and his now famous B-17 bomber. This research was very frustrating because the answers are out there somewhere, but certain people are not talking about this. With so many years gone by, the facts should now come out, so the true story about the crash of this B-17 Flying Fortress in Dubuque during World War II can finally be put to rest.



The Atomic Bomb Changing the Face of War

Drew

Just as the spear had been more deadly than the club, the bow and arrow a more formidable weapon than the spear, gunpowder had made the bow and arrow obsolete. Each technological advance in weaponry had made war more hideous but so far had not persuaded mankind to abandon this means of settling quarrels between peoples. Now certainly we had developed the ultimate argument for keeping the peace.

—Gen. Paul W. Tibbets¹

As World War II buffs and novice historians alike know, the atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 are the only nuclear weapons ever to be used to take human lives. This study will explain a few aspects of the atomic bomb and its development; its deployment; the difficult decision that President Truman had to make regarding the atomic bomb; and why this awesome power has not been

unleashed on humans since. In addition, the consequences of the use of atomic weaponry will be discussed.

On August 2, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt received a letter from a German-born physicist named Albert Einstein. This letter spoke of efforts in Nazi Germany to purify Uranium-235, which could be used to create an atomic bomb. In part, Einstein told the President,

... Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the administration. I believe, therefore, it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations: In the course of the last four months it has been made probable, through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America, that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of now radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future. This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable - though much less certain - that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air.²

Shortly after receiving this letter, and another from Einstein and his colleague Leo Szilard, another prominent scientist at the time, President Roosevelt decided to take action. He enlisted the services of General Leslie Groves, who helped design the Pentagon, to head a top-secret undertaking known at the time only as "The Manhattan Project" (named for the Army's Manhattan Engineer District). General Groves immediately purchased a site in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to extract the necessary amount of uranium from the ground and then separate the rare uranium-235 from the much more common uranium-238. Groves then appointed J. Robert Oppenheimer, a well-respected professor who had taught at the California Institute of Technology and the University of California at Berkeley, to lead the day-to-day operations of the project.³ The next step was to select an appropriate site for the development of the bomb itself. The site would obviously have to be remote and not easily accessed by civilians. When Oppenheimer was asked his opinion on a suitable site, he chose Los Alamos, New Mexico. Oppenheimer had vacationed near Los Alamos in the past, and knew that it would be a near perfect site for a top-secret research lab. General Groves liked Oppenheimer's choice, and a suitable site in Los Alamos was selected. The Los Alamos Ranch School on the Pajarito Plateau (or "the hill") in the Jemez Mountains was the choice. The school's officials were given notice on December 7, 1942 (the one-year anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor), that their facility would be taken over by the War Department. Students at the school were given until mid-February to wrap up their classes and vacate the premises. In January of 1943, the University of California was chosen to run the lab for the Manhattan Engineer District.

By the spring of 1943, more people and supplies were arriving at the Los Alamos facility. Soon Oppenheimer, or "Oppy," as he was called by those close to him, and his colleagues

were joined by world-renowned scientific masterminds such as Neils Bohr, Richard Feynman, Norris Bradbury, Edward Teller, and Enrico Fermi.⁴

In 1942, Fermi had already created a sustained nuclear fission chain reaction in an underground lab situated beneath a squash court in Chicago. This was the first controlled nuclear chain reaction in history. The task at hand for the scientists at Los Alamos was a daunting one: to use Fermi's work on the chain reaction to produce a viable nuclear weapon. These men knew that the work they did on "the hill," or "Project Y" as it was referred to, would without a doubt, give new meaning to the phrase "weapon of mass destruction."

Throughout the course of the project, morale among the scientists remained high. This was credited to Oppenheimer, who encouraged his men to communicate their ideas to each other. He knew that the free flow of information and opinions between the scientists would be the key to the success of this operation. Oppenheimer worked with General Groves to allow the scientific staff to leave "the hill," when needed, so they could enjoy the simple luxuries not usually allowed in a military operation. Groves and Oppenheimer knew that if their staff's morale became low, productivity would decrease, and the project would be doomed. They managed to keep their staffs busy and highly motivated, working them six days a week, sometimes for more than 18 hours a day.⁵

By 1945, the Manhattan Project had spread to more than 40 laboratories, and it employed more than 20,000 people nationwide. Included in the tens of thousands of Americans involved in the project were 64 men and women from Dubuque, Iowa. According to a published report in 1945, mechanics, engineers, and other highly skilled specialists were sent from Dubuque to a project plant in Pasco, Washington, to join in on the atomic effort.⁶ It was clear that the United States government had a strong desire to develop this weapon of mass destruction before its enemies did.

This project was so secret that most of the many thousands of people involved in it didn't even know what they were building. Janitors hired to empty the trash at the labs had to be illiterate. Newspapers around the country were given a list of words that were strictly forbidden from being printed, such as "nuclear fission," "atomic," and other project-related words. The Manhattan Engineers felt that such words might incite paranoia, and should not be printed.⁷

The thousands of man-hours and \$2 billion spent finally paid off when, on July 16, 1945, the Manhattan Engineer District tested its first nuclear device. This test, known as "Project Trinity," was to take place on a 100-foot tower on the Alamogordo Bombing Range in south central New Mexico. At 0530 hours, the masterminds of the Manhattan Project anxiously looked on from a safe distance in an underground bunker as the "Trinity Nuclear Device" was detonated.⁸

With a pink flash of light and a huge tower of smoke, the face of war was forever changed. The nuclear blast given off was equal to that of 19 kilotons of TNT, and was hotter than the interior of the sun. General Thomas Ferrell, Deputy to General Groves, had this to say following the Trinity test: "The effects could well be called unprecedented, magnificent, beautiful, stupendous, and terrifying. No man-made phenomenon of such tremendous power has ever occurred before."⁹ Trinity director Kenneth Brainbridge could only comment, "Now

we are all sons of bitches.”¹⁰ J. Robert Oppenheimer gave his own account of the Trinity test and said this: “We waited until the blast had passed, walked out of the shelter and then it was extremely solemn. We knew the world would not be the same.”¹¹ Like Mary Shelly’s Doctor Frankenstein, the brilliant minds of the Manhattan Project had created a monster, and were about to unleash it on the world.

By August of 1945, Nazi Germany had already taken its bloodstained hat out of the charred ring of war, but Japan was not so easily swayed. With no immediate surrender in sight, the newly sworn-in American President, Harry S. Truman, was faced with a horrible and difficult decision. Truman, who had assumed the office after Franklin D. Roosevelt’s death in April of 1945, had little or no prior knowledge of the Manhattan Project. He was briefed on the development of the bomb in a meeting with Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson on April 25, 1945, less than two weeks after becoming President.¹² The weight of the world was suddenly placed on his shoulders as the bloody four-year war dragged on. Truman was faced with a very difficult decision: how to go about putting a swift and successful end to the war. He had a number of options from which to choose.

President Truman made no mistake about it; the atomic bomb was a military weapon, and he had every intention of using it as one. He knew that dropping an atomic bomb (or two) would end the war faster and much more efficiently than an invasion of Japan’s home island. A conventional operation such as that would cost many American lives, and worse, it would not necessarily insure victory.¹³

It was possible that demonstrating the atomic bomb’s awesome destructive power to Japan might persuade them to surrender. However, this option was not chosen for a number of reasons: a successful demonstration would not guarantee surrender, while an unsuccessful demonstration would be humiliating to the U.S., and would probably encourage the Japanese to fight on. There were other possibilities, such as negotiating acceptable surrender terms between the U.S. and Japan, but Truman didn’t really consider this an option. The only acceptable surrender would be an unconditional surrender. Interestingly, Truman saw the atomic bomb as a weapon of war just like any other. The object of war is to win, and the atomic bomb was certainly an “ace in the hole.”¹⁴

Not all of Truman’s advisors believed that dropping this awful weapon was the right thing to do. For example, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, said this of the decision to drop the atomic bomb:

. . . I was against it on two counts. First, the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated to see our country be the first to use such a weapon.¹⁵

But Secretary of War Stimson agreed with Truman, and he gave this explanation:

In the light of the alternatives which, on a fair estimate, were open to us I believe that no man, in our position and subject to our responsibilities, holding in his hands a weapon of such possibilities for accomplishing this purpose and saving those lives, could have failed to use it and afterwards looked his countrymen in the face.¹⁶

The decision was made. The atomic bomb would be dropped on Japan.

On the fateful day of August 6, 1945, Col. Paul W. Tibbets and his fearless bomber crew climbed into the *Enola Gay*, a B-29 Super Fortress bomber named after Col. Tibbets’ mother. This crew was to embark on a mission of epic proportions. They were to fly across enemy lines and deploy the atomic bomb. The primary target for the mission was the Japanese city of Hiroshima, with alternate targets being Kokura and Nagasaki. Intelligence reports stated that there were no Allied POW camps located in Hiroshima, making it an optimal target.

The mission began with three F-13A weather reconnaissance aircraft flying along with Col. Tibbets and his crew in the *Enola Gay*, with two additional B-29s to observe the bomb drop and its effects following about an hour behind. While en route to Japan, Tibbets and his crew got the nod from their weather recon escorts: the sky was clear over the target.

Getting the bomb ready for deployment was a risky task in itself. Arming the bomb on the ground at the military base was far too dangerous. Should the bomb go off while arming it, Tinian Island, where the crew was stationed, would have been completely wiped off of the map. As a result, the designers planned that the bomb should be armed in flight, and then be made ready for the drop.

At exactly 0816 hours on August 6, 1945, the *Enola Gay*’s bombardier, Maj. Thomas W. Ferebee, released the uranium atomic bomb known as “Little Boy.” The bomb was equipped with a radar fuse that was set to detonate when it reached an altitude of 2,000 feet. When the bomb exploded over the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall (now known as the A-Bomb Dome), its casualties included an estimated 75,000 lives, and it destroyed nearly 48,000 buildings. Reporting the news that flashed around the world, the headline in the August 6, 1945, *Telegraph Herald* read: “New ‘atomic bomb’ hammers Japan, blast equals 20,000 tons of TNT.”¹⁷

In an immediate press release from the White House, President Truman made a statement to the American public regarding the devastating bombing of Hiroshima. He stated that an American airplane dropped one bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. He then added, “That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT, more than 2,000 times the blast power of the British ‘Grand Slam’ which is the largest bomb ever used in the history of warfare.” Truman gave the American people this explanation of how the new atomic bomb worked: “It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the far east.”¹⁸

Takeharu Terao, a survivor of the Hiroshima blast, was a student attending Hiroshima Teacher’s College at the time. He gave this account of the horrific events of August 6, 1945:

. . . Suddenly, a bluish-white light flashed like an electric welding spark, gas welding torch, or magnesium burning at a time. The world went white. I instinctively thought that this was a big accident of the gas supply company in Kannon-district or in the transformer substation in Misasa. I rushed to the window, widely opened for ventilation. I saw the direction of the possible accident. I witnessed a yellowish scarlet plume rising like a candle fire high in the sky surrounded by pitch black swirling smoke (As I had no idea of an A-bomb, I never imagined that a mushroom cloud was about to arise). At the same time, houses levitated a little and then crashed down to the ground like domino pieces. It was just like a white wave head coming toward me while standing on the beach. The wave steadily approached (this was later called a blast shock wave). I felt terrible for the first time. I had

to do something, the second floor would have soon crashed down. My friend nearby, Mr. Soma or Mr. Yoshikowa shouted something. I dashed under the desk and held my breath, awaiting something to come. It was just a few seconds that I saw the flash and got beneath the desk. Then, suddenly the floor fell down with a big sound. A massive cloud of dust rose up. I got frozen at that point. I felt the bomb explode right in front of me. But no explosion took place. I felt beyond all doubt that the bomb was a blind shell and I crept out slowly. I found the floor fell down by blast.¹⁹

Hiroshima was devastated. Approximately four square miles of the once-proud city were reduced to smoldering rubble in just a matter of seconds. The flash from the bomb was seen from 170 miles away. The gigantic mushroom cloud that was given off rose to 40,000 feet and hung over Hiroshima for about four hours after the blast, and was seen as far away as 160 miles.²⁰ Col. Tibbets said of the grim happenings of August 6, 1945, “. . . as the *Enola Gay* approached the Japanese city of Hiroshima, I fervently hoped for success in the first use of a nuclear weapon. To me it meant putting an end to World War II. I viewed my mission as one to save lives.”²¹

Japan was down, but not quite out. When the Japanese still did not surrender after the bombing of Hiroshima, President Truman gave them this message: “Surrender, or face a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.”²²

But Japanese Emperor Hirohito and his military leaders were not so easily swayed. They still refused to surrender. With Japan’s stubborn reluctance, Truman did what was thought by some to be the only thing that would successfully put an end to this war: he ordered that another atomic bomb be dropped.

On the morning of August 9, 1945, the plutonium atomic bomb “Fat Man,” was loaded into *Bock’s Car*, a B-29 named after its pilot, Capt. Fredrick C. Bock. *Bock’s Car* left the ground that morning, piloted by a Major Sweeney (Bock was flying an observation plane), and headed for its primary target, the Kokura arsenal. When *Bock’s Car* reached the target, her crew saw that it was obscured by dense smoke from an earlier conventional bombing raid on nearby Yawata. Despite taking three separate runs over the intended target, *Bock’s Car* could not pinpoint the bomb’s exact aiming point.

Major Sweeney and the crew of *Bock’s Car* knew what to do in the event that their target was obscured. They quickly headed for their secondary target, a Japanese city named Nagasaki. This target was covered by clouds as well, and it took a few runs over it before the bombardier could find an adequate opening in the cloud cover. At 1100 hours, after establishing visual contact with its target, *Bock’s Car’s* bomb bay doors opened and “Fat Man” was released. “Fat Man” detonated over Nagasaki with even more explosive power than “Little Boy;” it was equal to 22 kilotons of TNT. Although “Fat Man” was larger than “Little Boy,” the damage dealt to Nagasaki, due to its geographical structure, was less devastating than that of Hiroshima. The immediate blast killed about 35,000 people.²³

The damage dealt to Japan was unprecedented. Never before had anyone seen destructive power of this magnitude. The U.S. had played its trump card, and a war-ravaged Japan had no choice but to surrender. On August 10, 1945, Japan and the U.S. began their peace talks. By September 2, the two countries had reached an agreement, and Japan signed their surrender.²⁴

At long last, the Second World War had come to an end. Proud Americans lined streets and seaports and greeted the homecoming troops, patriotically waving “Old Glory” and celebrating victory and peace. But at what cost did victory come? The United States had developed a very powerful and expensive weapon to end a war. Now that it had served its purpose, what was to be done with the awesome atomic bomb and its secrets?

Many believed that any remaining bombs should have been dismantled and destroyed, along with the formula for building more. Some, however, thought that the atomic bomb was nothing more than a tool of war (and an effective one, at that). Today, the “nuclear threat” is ever-present.

Regardless of what happens in the future, whether or not this awesome power is unleashed on civilization again, the atomic bomb served the purpose for which it was built in the 1940s, and that was to end a hellish war. However, this is a case where the solution may have been, unfortunately, worse than the problem. It has been said that history has a way of repeating itself. In the case of the atomic bomb, let’s pray that it doesn’t.



Notes

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PART

II

**PERSONAL
ACCOUNTS**

★ When the Lights Go On Again

Dereka

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. On Monday, December 8, 1941, a young lady named Virginia DeLay went to school. She was a high school senior in Manchester, Iowa on that cold day when all the classes were ordered to assemble in the auditorium for a school meeting. Virginia remembers the pure silence as the student body listened to President Roosevelt announce the bombing of Pearl Harbor and tell America that she was going to war.

“America was naïve . . . this was the first time we actually realized that we were going to war,” said Virginia. She believed that many people who lived in the Midwest were isolated from the growing problems in Europe.

“You could hear a pin drop when Roosevelt announced the declaration of war. I can almost still hear the President’s voice,” she recalled.

Most of her classmates either were eighteen, or would be turning eighteen shortly. “Without a word spoken, these young men, who might still be considered young boys, knew that they were of prime draft age, and would, no doubt, be among the first to go to war.” Virginia did recall that some of the farm students were later deferred from the service as they were needed on the home front. Their hard working skills were necessary for the production of food for the armed forces and the nation.

There were around ninety-six students in the Manchester High School graduating class of '42.-Little did they realize how quickly they would be scattered throughout the world. While



Pictured center is Veteran Lyman Sheets.

all of this confusion was in the air, Virginia thought back to what her government civics teacher, Frank Gannon, had told her class only a few years before. He predicted that, 'Germany will rise again.'

"When war was declared, those words of Mr. Gannon kept playing over and over in my head," Virginia reflected. 'Germany will rise again. Germany will rise again.'

"At that time we had no idea of what was ahead of us," Virginia said.

Being thrust into this world conflict proved to be very stressful for many Americans in those years, but citizens found some cheer in different ways, including music. Virginia said that, "The war seemed to bring on beautiful music." She remembers listening to the radio and the music and lyrics of famous artists like Russ Morgan and Iowan, Glenn Miller.

"Most of the music was dance music with meaningful words telling stories of farewells and reunions. The lyrics were often filled with tales of sadness and pain."

She remembered one particular song entitled *When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World*. "Many towns and villages had nightly periods of blackout during the war. Citizens were required to turn off every light in their house so the town would not be susceptible to nighttime bombing raids. The song spoke of a peaceful time when the world would once again be filled with light, and the fears of war would be ended."

When Virginia remembers about those wartime years, she remembers going to the movies regularly. Newsreels were shown before the actual movie, reels that told Americans what was going on at war. She also recalls that, while many women around the nation went to work in defense plants, in small-town Iowa, her mother and many of her friends were still stay-at-home moms.

"Gas, hosiery and cigarettes had been rationed. If you lived in suburbia, carpooling or taking the bus was the way life. The auto industry had ceased building cars during the war, with their efforts going into defense. Yes, life had changed," Virginia stated.

The radio was an important source from which people got their information about the war. Keeping up on what was happening was really important because everybody had a friend, brother, son, or father out there. Family members were often unaware of where their loved-one was stationed.

Virginia recalls how depressing it was when one of their favorite classmates, Jay Trainor, was killed in action in his first day in battle. "He had married one of our classmates before he went overseas. He never lived to see his daughter who was born after he was killed."

After the war ended, Virginia DeLay married a man named Lyman Sheets. Lyman was originally from Union, Iowa. He had entered the service shortly after graduating from college and first served as a private in the Army. He was shipped to Hawaii and helped lay an airstrip, and he served as a chauffeur for a captain. The captain liked him, and recommended him for officer's school. He was based in Seattle, then sent, by train, to Florida for more training.

Lyman was sent to England for active duty with the 100th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force. Lyman served as an Intelligence Staff Officer, with duties involving planning in the "war room," and as an interrogator, interviewing the airmen when they returned from their missions. He mentioned that he had also gone on some runs over Germany serving as a tail gunner. "At this point in the war, the life expectancy of a tail gunner was rumored to have

been four minutes," Virginia recalled. "Before he died, Lyman told a friend that he had survived the perils of a tail gunner on some runs over Germany, but he didn't know if he could survive cancer."

Mr. Sheets served in the war for three years. During those three years he received an Overseas Medal and a Silver and Bronze Medal. He was then released with an honorable discharge in December of 1945. "My husband was a very persistent man. This persistency certainly helped him during his three proud years of service."

Throughout their marriage Virginia learned much about her husband's war experiences, and has kept many momentos. These war experiences are very important to Virginia; she holds a major part of Lyman's life in a folder where she keeps his war records. Even though she met him after the war, she still helped him get through the lifelong scars that still had an effect on their lives long after the war had ended.

On February 20, 1991 Lyman lost his battle with cancer. Like so many veterans, he died with honor, having accomplished much.

This interview with Virginia was very emotional and interesting. The encounter was therapeutic for both the reporter and Virginia. I gained a better understanding of what happened during those four, long years of war. Virginia told me, "When I watch scenes of World War II, it reminds me of the years young people, like Lyman, gave of their lives. While we were only one generation away from World War I, our country was once again embroiled in a conflict that would steal the carefree, teenage years from thousands of young Americans. Like those from the generation before, they were loyal, and they fought bravely."

It was my impression that Virginia was able to open up and talk about some difficult things. Talking to someone about painful memories can make the person talking feel as if they just lifted a hundred pounds off their back. I hope that following this interview, Virginia felt one hundred pounds lighter.

★ George Frode A Decorated Hero

James and Ryan .

There is something very flashy about a National Guard uniform, especially to a 16 year-old person. George Frode was that 16 year-old person, and his friend, Laurence Folk, had just appeared on the streets of Minneapolis, Minnesota, wearing his new National Guard outfit. "I knew I had to have one," recalled George, thinking back to the mid- 1930's. After this encounter with his friend, George knew that he wanted to enlist in the National Guard.

With a small lie about his age, the teenager became Private George Frode, Company Bugler of the Minnesota National Guard. After one year, he traded his bugle for a rifle, and by the end of his third year, he was promoted to Corporal George Frode of the National Guard. On February 2, 1941, he was transferred to Camp Clayborn, a boot camp in Louisiana. He later earned another stripe and became Drill Sergeant George Frode of the U.S. Army.

As a drill sergeant, George was responsible for training men who were drafted, preparing them for war the best way he knew how. This training was hard work, but life as a drill sergeant

did leave some time for letting off a little steam. George remembered, "My friends and I went out on the town; we had to leave for some fun. One time, as my friend Floyd and I were just walking and chatting, we heard a car horn go off. In the automobile were two of the most beautiful women we had ever seen. I jumped in the front and Floyd jumped in the back. This was one of the many times I had some fun during the war."

George also said, "One time I remember, like it was yesterday, when Floyd and I were sitting in a café and some MPs (military police) came in and said that the Japs (sic) had bombed Pearl Harbor. My immediate thoughts were that it was time to go back to the hotel to grab our gear. When we got there, Floyd and I were very surprised to see that the hotel was burning down. It was a strange day for me, indeed."



George is pictured here in Texas during Blue vs. Red Maneuvers.

George received another assignment in Pensacola, Florida. "I loved Pensacola. My assignment was to watch the German aliens. Our uniforms consisted of a white helmet, field scarves, white gloves and leggings," recalled George.

George and a friend spent eight hours on duty and sixteen hours off. "I definitely considered this to be one of the better assignments I had. On November 6, 1942, I found myself riding to Fort Dix, New Jersey. When we got there, the first thing we got told was to prepare a full pack and be prepared for a night hike."

"The next morning we were on the ocean." Traveling on a ship to Ireland, George also learned that he was being switched from C Company to A Company, in the 133rd Infantry from Dubuque, Iowa. "This was rather hard for me because I had grown very close to the people in C Company," he said. George continued, "I was then sent across seas to Ireland. This was the first time I had seen the ocean, let alone crossed it." During the journey across the ocean, the navy found themselves preparing for submarine attack. He came to find out that his group was the first American troops to be going across seas. It turned out to be a ten day trip.

"When we got there, we had to have combat training from the British commandos. There was a lot of hiking, about forty miles a day. We stayed in Ireland for about a year or so. While still in Ireland, three staff sergeants were told to be ready in case we had to return to the U.S. to Fort Benning, Georgia."

George's Company was part of the important North African invasion. Going through the Straits of Gibraltar, his ship was torpedoed. Almost everybody on the ship survived, and they



Camp Clayborn, LA: George Frode stands between two other sergeants.

finally arrived in North Africa. After walking a few days in the desert, "We set up defense on a hill. Very soon after, we saw a cloud of dust coming from a distance. We knew this would be our welcome."

From this position, German General Irwin Rommel, nicknamed the "Desert Fox," and his unbeatable tank corps, fired screaming artillery shells all around George's group. The tanks were followed by troops on foot. "At this point we realized how poorly we were equipped. The most important tool to an infantryman was a special shovel called an entrenching tool, used to dig foxholes. We had only one per squad, limited ammo, and no anti-tank artillery. We had no choice but to retreat many miles by foot and then travel by truck. We left many good men on that hill."

When the troops finally arrived at their staging area, they were met with fresh supplies from the United States. They received new M1 rifles, anti-tank weapons, endless supplies of ammunition, tanks, artillery, and airplanes. Better than the weapons, though, were the food supplies they received: smokes, beer, and all sorts of things that made them ready to fight.

The sky was filled with P-38 fighter planes, tanks kept rolling in, and George felt like they were now ready to fight the war. George remembered, "As we were clearing out the area with the brush about four feet high, my platoons were stationed about ten yards apart. I was looking right and left trying to keep eye contact. I saw a man with a rifle. I waved to him, and then he waved back. But when he faced his front, I noticed the swastika on his helmet. My heart jumped into my throat, and I shot from the hip. As his helmet flew to the sky, I knew I had hit my target. When I went to check if he was dead, I noticed that he was only fifteen or so. Although I was only in my early twenties when this happened, I felt like an old man."

At this point in the North African invasion, the Allied forces were on the move, chasing down the Germans. Although the Allies lost a number of men, George's group was doing better than many had expected. George recounted a problem that then occurred.

"The Germans ran up, and on the hill, they could have observed us for miles." After a few unsuccessful attempts to remove them from their hilltop bunkers, a colonel came up with a good plan. He ordered one thousand men to line up, shoulder-to-shoulder, and approach the Germans, firing at them. He believed the Germans would have no choice but to stay where they were in their foxholes. The colonel's strategy was successful and George's group overtook the enemy, "my platoon captured fifteen German soldiers," he remembered.

"This group of Germans was a sharp looking group of soldiers. Their leader told them in both English and German to shut up and sit down. He (their leader) sat next to me, and he told me that he was a concert pianist, and was worried about the condition of his hands."

The Allied troops now had the Germans on the run all the way to Tunis. It was there in Tunis that the Germans finally surrendered. After the surrender, it was on to Italy where the orders were to liberate each town along the way. "Each town had about twenty-five German troops in them," George recalled.

In their second liberation mission, George stated that his group was to reclaim the town of Vernofro, a German stronghold. After many unsuccessful attempts, it was decided that a night crossing might be a successful tactic. George said, "During the night crossing, we heard German tanks, trucks and soldiers yelling in German. My group and I had to go on night patrol to see how many German soldiers there were. While I was on this patrol, my foot

caught a wire. I knew that it would alert the Germans, so I told my group to get out. I figured I would at least play dead. They (the German soldiers) came over after it (the wire) went off, and rolled me over. Then they stuck the bayonet into my chest. But I laid there as quiet as possible."

Eventually, Allied medics arrived and took George to a truck that transported him to the hospital. On his way to the first hospital, an enemy dive-bomber blew up the area where he had been lying, wounded. George was then moved to several other field hospitals before he was eventually moved to the general hospital in Naples. After several weeks, he was placed on a hospital ship that brought him back to the United States. He found his way to a hospital in Clinton, Iowa, where he spent a little over a year.

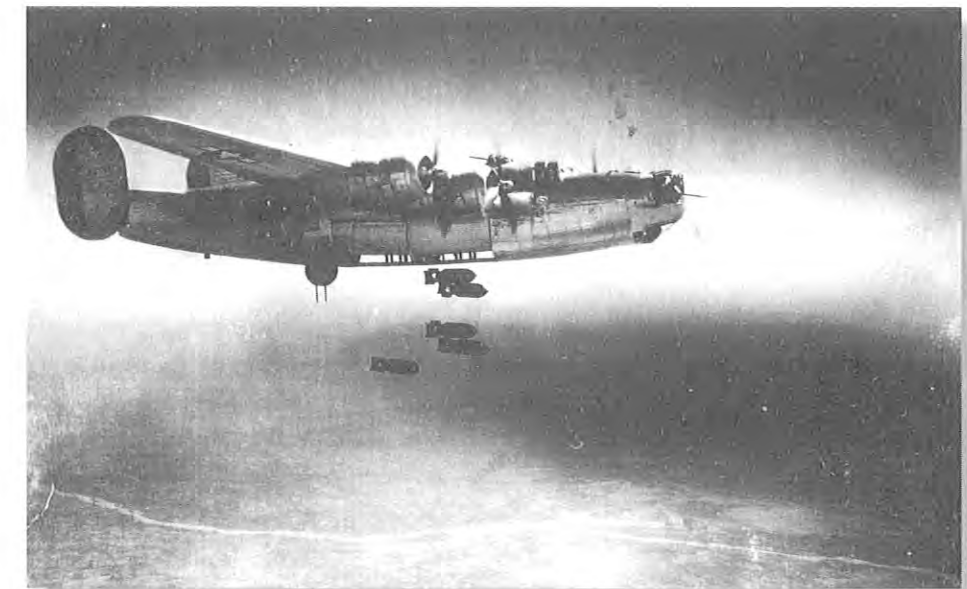
After being discharged from the hospital, he was awarded a Purple Heart for his wounds. He also was able to say that he served and survived World War II as part of the 34th Division of the United States Army, which was the most decorated division in World War II.

★ Dubuque's Own

Corey

Dubuque's own Earl Genthe served his country during World War II. Earl was born on January 10, 1925, and lived on 22nd Street and Central Avenue. When his mother passed away in 1927, Earl moved up farther on Kaufmann Avenue to live with his grandmother.

Earl decided at age 17 to enlist for service in the Army Air Force. He went to basic training in Lake Childs, Louisiana. After basic training in 1942, he was sent to mechanics school in Biloxi, Mississippi where he spent the next six months. In Biloxi, he went to school six days



a week in order to learn all about servicing the Consolidated B-24 Liberator airplane. Then he was off to a factory in San Diego, California, to watch the B-24s being built. After leaving San Diego, Earl went to Laredo, Texas. In Laredo, Earl went to gunnery school to learn about guns and also to take shooting practice.

With his training in mechanics and weaponry nearly complete, Earl and a crew of ten got their B-24 aircraft in Fremont, Nebraska. Then it was off to Boise, Idaho, for final training before they were sent to Italy where they were finally stationed. On the way to Europe, they stopped in Miami, Florida, Puerto Rico, Brazil, and North Africa. The trip took about two weeks to complete.

Their first combat mission was flown on May 13, 1944. After dropping bombs on missions that lasted up to nine hours, including flying over Europe in places such as Vienna, Austria, and Munich, Germany, it would have been very easy to grow tired of flying in battle. Earl and his crew, however, kept going for 51 missions with zero casualties from their group! According to Earl, his comrades and he were escorted a few times by the Tuskegee Airmen, who flew their famous red-tailed P-51 Mustang planes.

During these missions, Earl's job was to read and record the mileage from the plane, and he was also the first engineer on the plane. Earl did get to relax sometimes, though, and watch the little puffs of smoke rise as bombs would hit the ground.

On days when they had missions, the whole crew would get up in the morning, and sometimes, without eating breakfast, have a pre-flight briefing where their target was announced. After missions were over, there was another meeting, called a debriefing. At this time the mission would be analyzed and the crews would discuss the effectiveness of the mission, in hopes of avoiding making the same mistakes twice.

Missions could get dangerous, of course, and people were susceptible to injury. Luck was with Earl and his crew, though, and the only injury his crew incurred was to the camera on the tail of their plane!

As the war waged on, Earl was sent back to Laredo, Texas, for schooling on the B-29 aircraft. By the time he was an expert on the B-29, however, the war was coming to an end, and Earl, along with 104 other men, were sent to a defense plant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to wait for their dismissal.

Earl was finally able to come back to his home on Kaufman Avenue. This time, though, he was not alone. He had three friends accompanying him: an Air Medal, a Flying Cross, and a Victory Medal to show that he had a lot to do with the success of our country.

Earl came back to work at his father's filling station for a year. He was married in 1948 and has six children, three boys and three girls. Eventually, Earl became an electrician and worked at John Deere for 30 years, retiring in 1985. Earl still is a model, hard-working Dubuque citizen.

Like many Americans who served for the United States during World War II, Earl is proud of his achievements, as he should be. The sacrifices made by those in war years changed the future for everyone today and for every generation to come.

★ **Clarence Gilligan**
Proud Member of the 543rd

T. J. and John

Clarence "Mickey" Gilligan, born in 1924, was raised in Dubuque and is a graduate of Dubuque Senior High. On Sunday, December 7th, 1941, Clarence had a job as a clerk at Hartig's Drug Store. "I was at home when my aunt called and told me that Pearl Harbor had been bombed." The next afternoon at Senior High, an assembly was held and students listened to President Roosevelt declare war.

Clarence graduated from Dubuque Senior High in 1942. Along with many in his senior class, he enlisted in the Navy in 1943. After his enlistment, he was sent to Farragut, Idaho, to start his military training in boot camp. Shortly after Clarence graduated from boot camp, he was sent to Solomons, Maryland, outside of Washington, D.C. to another training facility to be trained as a signalman. After his training in Solomons, Maryland, he was sent to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, to become part of the 543rd Landing Craft Infantry. The LCIs earned the name "Waterbug Navy" when an admiral, looking down from his battleship, observed the LCIs scurrying back and forth. The admiral commented that the ships looked like a bunch of waterbugs: the phrase stuck. The primary job of these bug-like ships was to safely deliver our combat troops to the enemy's shore.

After the ship was assigned her crew, they took the ship down to Norfolk, Virginia to have the giant vessel outfitted. The craft was outfitted with two sets of quad General Motors cylinder diesel engines, generating 3,600 horse power per quad, 8 engines total. The ship was 158 feet long and 23 feet 3 inches wide at the center. The hulls of the big ship were made up of one-inch steel plates. The crew of the ship provided the infantry cover and support with machine guns and rockets. After the outfitting, her crew and she were ready to get underway.

The crew traveled to Key West, Florida, then to Panama, through the Panama Canal and out into the Pacific Ocean. From there the crew watched their homeland slowly fade away into miles of endless ocean.

The 543rd was heading for New Guinea, with one stop at Bora Bora in the Society Islands, about 75 miles from Tahiti. As the ship approached New Guinea, Clarence said, "It was obvious that the Japanese held the entire island." The Japanese did hold most of the island along with the British and Dutch territory, except a little part of the island down towards Port Moresby.

"That's where we started out," said Clarence. "Then we made landings at Wakde, Biack, Noemfoor, Sansapore, and by that time we worked our way up all the way through New Guinea."

Douglas MacArthur, the Commanding General, was ready to go back to the Philippines from New Guinea, so the 543rd had several landings around that particular area. The ship and her crew made a major landing at Ormac Bay. "There was a big old sugar mill there. Then we dropped the troops ashore there. After Ormac Bay, we were told to go back down

to Tacloban, Leyte and pick up the Army Rangers. The orders were to drop them up at Lingayen Gold, which was about 100 miles north of the Manila Bay.”

The 543rd and her crew went to the Gulf, which was held by the Japanese at that time. “We went behind Japanese lines. We dropped the Rangers inside there, and they went into Cabanatuan. That was the first prisoner of war camp that was rescued during the Second World War.” Those thankful prisoners were the POWs from Bataan and Carridor. Most of the prisoners had spent four or five years of their lives in that camp.

After the successful rescue from the camp where the POWs were left to die, the rangers radioed back to the 543rd. The ship and her crew took all the POWs/prisoners aboard and made their way to Tacloban, Leyte, so they could be transferred to hospital ships to take them back to Pearl Harbor.

From Pearl Harbor, the former POWs were sent to their homes back in the United States. Clarence said, “The irony of the thing—there were three of the fellas from Dubuque that were prisoners in that camp. They weren’t on our ship, but they were in that group that the Rangers rescued.”

After the rescue, the military sent the 543rd back to Pearl Harbor. There the LCIs were to be converted into gunboats for the upcoming invasion of Japan. The classification of their ship was being changed to an LCIG, a gunboat, that would be armed with 40mm and 20mm guns, 50 caliber machine guns and rocket launchers. Instead of landing troops on enemy shores, the ship would now be a gunboat that was going to be used for the invasion of Japan. The 543rd returned back to Tacloban, Leyte, where the planning of the invasion of Japan was set for July of 1945. The plan was to put troops on the shores of Japan. “The day our ship pulled into Pearl Harbor in August was the day they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima,” recalled Clarence.

The 543rd was allowed four to five day liberty in Honolulu. From there, their tenancy was changed back to Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay. “We were lucky,” said Clarence. “We were lucky the day we pulled in there they dropped the atom bomb, and so they changed our orders.”

The other alternative to dropping the bomb was to deliver American troops on the shores of Japan. “There was no other way they (United States military) could have done it. So we were lucky. We lucked out.”

The LCIs and the men who served on them did the “dirty work” of bringing invasion troops right up to the fighting. The men who fought on the LCIs suffered many casualties.

Today, Clarence and his wife, Adele, are living quietly in a retirement home. As a couple, they are still involved in their community. Adele is also a veteran. She was a Coast Guard SPAR. They belong to some of the local retired veterans’ groups that include PFW 9603 and the American Legion #6, where Clarence assumes the duties of chaplain of burial detail.

★ The War Experiences of Robert Louis Hanson

Nick

Bob Hanson was a 20 year-old infantryman in the United States Army when World War II broke out. Mr. Hanson explained a standard Army rule of the time, “You had to stay in the infantry for a year before you could get out,” but his year was not finished when the war started, so he had to stay for the remainder of the war. He weighed about 145 pounds, had short brown hair and blue eyes, and wore blue jeans, short sleeve t-shirts, and boots or tennis shoes.

Hanson was first stationed at Camp Claiborne in Louisiana. He was later shipped out to New Orleans to guard a military train the same day Pearl Harbor was bombed. Bob had friends that were killed in Pearl Harbor. Later in the war, Mr. Hanson was stationed in Africa and Italy.

Mr. Hanson’s first battle experience began in February of 1943, when he landed in Oran, Africa. “Landing at Oran was easy, except for a few die-hard sniper types. You didn’t want to turn your back on any Frenchman,” Bob explained. French snipers held the beach and defended it by firing bullets into American forces with deadly results. Eventually a beachhead was achieved, but only after Allied forces suffered several casualties.¹ After landing, he battled through North Africa to Tunis. From there, the 133rd, the group to which he was attached, went down to Bel Abis to prepare for the invasion of Italy.

Hanson said, “I saw a total of 530 days of action, first in Africa, and then later in Italy.” Bob was not very impressed with the war in Italy because he felt that it took too long, and he spent most of his time in the hills and mountains. He said, “Africa, opposing the forces of



German General Irwin Rommel, was easy compared to Italy because it was flat and they (the Germans) gave up quicker.”

He landed in Salerno, Italy, and participated in heavy combat. Salerno was destroyed by retreating German troops so it could not be used by the Allied air forces to attack Naples.² In pushing north from Salerno, they encountered an even stronger resistance than they had when they landed. With nowhere to retreat to but the sea, American forces fought hard to maintain their positions on the beaches. Life in combat was rough on the men involved. “You could hardly even write a letter home because you couldn’t say anything about where you were,” said Bob. Hanson’s division captured Naples after Salerno.

Their next mission was to capture Rome, and although the distance from Naples to Rome was fairly short, the path was mountainous, hilly, and difficult to cross. It was at the same time very easy for the Germans to defend from hilltop bunkers and machine-gun emplacements. It was impossible for heavily mechanized units like tanks to pass through the rocky, mountainous area north of Naples. On the other hand, the hilltops and ravines provided an unlimited supply of good machine gun positions for German troops to fortify.³ This allowed the enemy to defend the area with a bare minimum of troops and equipment. Breaking through to Rome was difficult and required a huge expenditure of manpower.

After moving north toward Cassino, they were stopped at the Gustav Line until the spring of 1944. Every inch of ground gained was hard fought and costly in terms of lives lost. Although Bob was never wounded, many in the front lines were. “I was one of the lucky ones,” said Bob. At some points, he had to walk over top of bodies to get where they were going.

Then, since they could not get past the German defenses at Cassino, an amphibious assault around the end of the German defenses at the Gustav Line was planned.⁴ The plan was named “Operation Shingle,” and called for the landing of two divisions, sixty miles north of the Gustav Line, in a town called Anzio, that was still in the process of being built. After landing, these troops were to go south, attacking the Germans’ rear while other American forces pushed through the front.⁵ If all went as planned, German units would be trapped between the two advancing Allied armies, a breakthrough could be achieved, and the Allies could continue on to Rome. As the preparations were completed, American forces were ordered to attack Cassino in order to divert attention from the landings at Anzio. It was planned that Allied forces be ready to break through Cassino on time to link up with our forces landing at Anzio.⁶ Had it worked, Bob Hanson would have soon been on his way to Rome.

The first three days of the attack on Cassino went smoothly. Unfortunately, it went downhill from there. Allied forces suffered reverses and lost the ground they had gained. Unable to break through, General Mark Clark ordered his troops to go north, above Cassino, to break through while the French attacked Cassino.⁷ “Clark was always looking for glory; that’s why he lost so many men,” Bob exclaimed. This too failed, as it was impossible to get past the German’s hilltop bunkers and machine gun emplacements.⁸ On 12 February, American forces were relieved and replaced by fresh forces from New Zealand.

However, the New Zealanders had as difficult a time advancing as previous forces had. Although Allied aircraft had been bombing German positions atop Monte Cassino, it had accomplished nothing but the complete destruction of the famous old monastery.⁹ In fact, the bombing strikes only created more rubble, making the area into an obstacle course, easily

defended by the Germans. When this offensive failed, the attempt to take Monte Cassino was postponed until March.¹⁰

This meant grave consequences for the men who landed at Anzio on the 22nd of January. The landing had begun as a flanking maneuver to break through German defenses in a simultaneous attack on both sides of the enemy position. But when the attack at Cassino failed, the invaders were left with no place to retreat but the sea. The relief expedition was now the one in need of relief.

Living conditions in combat left something to be desired. Mr. Hanson had insufficient supplies, and the food was poor as well. Hanson said, “We had a lot of equipment that was left over from World War I.” Sleeping conditions were also lacking in comforts. “Ya had a pup tent and a rain coat. Depended on the weather. You slept in the snow. You slept in the rain. You slept in the mud,” Hanson remembered.

Ironically, the actual Anzio landing was carried out without German knowledge, but it was not long before the Germans realized that General Lucas and his forces were there and counter-attacked. Bob was shelled by the largest German artillery piece in the war at Anzio. It was nicknamed “Big Bertha,” by the men who captured it. “So many men went to see it, about a thousand, all walking on the same path. Then this one, ‘whack,’ steps on a mine that blows him away,” said Hanson of the incident.

The landing party was only 40 miles south of Rome and might have captured the city by surprise had they gotten the orders to do so.¹¹ But having received no orders to the contrary, General Lucas kept his forces in place, while German units rushed in from northern Italy and Yugoslavia. Soon they were surrounded. Here they stayed, held by the Germans until May.¹² Hitler was shocked by the audacity of the landing at Anzio and was determined to eliminate the forces there. Calling the Allied offensive an ‘abscess,’ Hitler told his forces to eliminate them with all necessary force.¹³ Fortunately for Hanson, they were not very successful in doing so. The landing party was driven back to the beaches, but once there, they held out until a breakthrough was achieved at Cassino late in May. “Operation Shingle” may not have been successful, but the Allies did not plan on evacuating Anzio if they could hold the position.¹⁴

In the long run, Hitler’s obsession with destroying the Allied landing party at Anzio proved good luck for the Allied forces near Cassino, because while German forces were concentrated in that effort, no attempt was made to strengthen their position along the Gustav Line. When the Allied attack was renewed, the Germans’ lack of reserve forces disabled their ability to withstand it.¹⁵ The Allied commanders carefully avoided concentrating their forces at Cassino in this new offensive. Instead they decided to deploy the troops along a much wider front; units of the Eighth Army, that were withdrawn from positions along the Adriatic coast, assisted the Fifth Army. Together, they were to coordinate an attack on German defensive positions over a thirteen-mile front that stretched from the sea to the Liri Valley.¹⁶ If all went as planned, they would punch a hole in the German position somewhere along the line, the landing party at Anzio would be saved, and the Allies would gain control of coastal Highway 7, which led directly to Rome.

The attack was concentrated in the hills since previous attacks along the coast had proven to be disastrous. At the same time, the Eighth Army renewed its offensive near Cassino, hoping to get through below the city. A third effort, an attempt to climb the mountain of Monte

Cassino, was to be carried out by the newly arrived Polish Corps.¹⁷ The offensive was set to begin on the 11th of May.

The Germans had not prepared for the Allied attack along such a wide front. As a result, the Allies were finally able to break through the German line. By May 17, 1944, French forces, which had helped the Poles in their attempt, had successfully dislodged the Germans from out of their hilltop bunkers and machine gun emplacements, and on the following day, the Poles reached the top.¹⁸ For the Allies, this was the breakthrough they had been waiting for, and for the Poles, this was sweet revenge.

Due to the huge breakthrough at Cassino, German forces were forced to withdraw from the Gustav Line on May 23. They retreated to Rome, where a new defensive line was quickly thrown up.¹⁹ This barrier was flimsy and soon fell to the Allied tanks and men. To the Germans' credit, they refused to destroy the Eternal City in order to delay the Allied advance. On 4 June, Rome was declared an open city and the Allied forces were greeted by the angry Italian citizenry when they arrived later that day.²⁰ "These Italian women were Fascists and hated Americans. They would cuss and spit at you," says Mr. Hanson of Italian hospitality.

The capture of Rome was a symbol of the collapse of the Axis Powers. Bob was stationed in Rome the day before D-Day. He amazingly survived approximately 400 days in heavy combat under fire from unknown directions.

After Rome was declared free, Mr. Hanson was sent home on furlough. Back in the States he got some well-needed rest and relaxation. Shortly after his return to Italy, his group broke through to Milan where Mussolini was killed by a group of Italian Communist partisans armed with machine guns. His body was publicly displayed in Milan and then buried in a field with no stone to mark the spot.²¹ Bob said, "I didn't even go to see him." A short time later the war in Europe ended with the Allied capture of Berlin.

Bob Hanson got out of Europe on September 1, 1945. During the time he spent in combat, his division was credited with capturing over 40,000 Italian and German POWs.

Other information about Mr. Hanson is that he had no girlfriend during the war and was not married until afterwards. He had five brothers who served in the Pacific front. Even after the war was over, he was angry at the Japanese for bringing America into the war. Bob Hanson served in Dubuque A Company, 133rd Infantry, of which there are only six men left in Dubuque, and several more out of town.



Notes

1. Ronald Heiferman, *World War II* (London: Octopus Books Limited, 1973), p. 166
2. Ibid. p. 179.
3. Ibid. p. 180.
4. Ibid. p. 180.
5. Ibid. p. 180.

6. Ibid. p. 180.
7. Ibid. p. 181.
8. Ibid. p. 181.
9. Ibid. p. 182.
10. Ibid. p. 182.
11. Ibid. p. 182.
12. Ibid. p. 182.
13. Ibid. p. 183.
14. Ibid. p. 183.
15. Ibid. p. 183.
16. Ibid. p. 183.
17. Ibid. p. 183.
18. Ibid. p. 183.
19. Ibid. p. 183.
20. Ibid. p. 183.
21. Ibid. p. 237.

★ Through the Eyes of a Teenager My Grandmother's Story

Joyce

Frances Holland, my Grandmother, was fifteen years old when World War II began. She grew up near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. In 1938, she moved near the Wisconsin Dells. When World War II broke out, she moved in with one of her friends and got a job at a sock factory. Girls back then were encouraged to leave home and find a job around the age of fourteen or fifteen. Some girls even left home at age thirteen to find a job in people's homes. "There was no money at home," Frances said. "You had to live at a friend's house that was near your high school and find a job near there. During the war, when you quit your job, you had to wait six weeks to get another one. This was done on purpose to keep people from quitting jobs."

Frances had four brothers, and three of her brothers served in World War II. This meant that there were three blue stars displayed in the window of their home. A blue star signified that a family member was involved in the war. If a family member died, the blue star was replaced with a gold one.

World War II changed the working lives of women. Men had to go to war, and their jobs needed to be filled by women. More jobs were created because of the war. Those jobs also needed to be filled by women. Women were employed making guns, sewing war clothing, and making shoes and socks. Workers had to be at least sixteen years old to be employed in a factory. Before World War II, most women worked at home; during the war women were often financially forced to find a job.

At the start of World War II, America was just beginning to recover from the economic problems of the Great Depression. One federal program designed to alleviate joblessness was called the Works Progress Administration, more commonly known as the WPA. The Program, designed by President Franklin Roosevelt, paid people to build dams, hospitals, schools, libraries, public swimming pools, and parks. They built, for example, Dubuque's Eagle Point Park.

"It was said that F.D.R., in a way, got us into the war on purpose to stop the Depression," Frances recalled. "I would hate to think he did it on purpose. A lot of men were killed in the war. Some felt (Roosevelt) could do no wrong."

My Grandmother recalled that few Americans were aware that F.D.R. had any kind of physical disability. The public did not learn that he was disabled by polio until after the war and after his presidency. Everyone was pretty surprised at learning this news. It seemed difficult to believe that they were unaware of this. Frances couldn't believe that it was possible to keep this a secret with all of the media taking pictures of him.

Food and other items were rationed from 1942 to 1945. Citizens had to sign up for coupon books which would last about three to four months. The amount of rations received depended on how many people were in a family. If you had a large family, you would get more than if you had a small family. Meat, sugar, gas, rubber, and butter were all rationed. Cigarettes were in very short supply and were also rationed. Because food was in such short supply, farmers who had tractors and needed tires would get as much gasoline and rubber as they needed.

"There were victory gardens," Frances said. "Almost everyone had a garden, even before the war. People that had victory gardens kept them going, even after the war. They would can whatever food they could."

During the war people did a great deal of letter writing, and to save on paper and extra weight, they used V-mail. V-mail was a piece of paper that was able to be folded and used as the envelope, too. It was less weight for shipping. Frances would write all of her brothers while they were in the war with V-mail. She said she wrote at least one letter per week. They hardly ever wrote back, but they enjoyed her letters because they always wanted to know what was going on at home. She could send her brothers goods such as cookies, but because it took about two months to reach them, the only time her family sent packages to her brothers was at Christmas.

Everyone was required to pick milkweed pods during wartime. It was said that the seeds inside the pods were used to line the insides of parachutes. Sometimes women would get together in a town and take care packages to the men who were leaving on trains to go fight in the war. These care packages included a toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving cream, a razor, and other personal items.

Frances used to have a scrapbook that held all of her brothers' medals. In it she also saved fake leaves that the Japanese had designed to scatter. It was considered bad luck if one fell on you if you were a soldier.

Though life was difficult during those long years of war, there were some happy times. One of Frances' good memories is that of her father's school bus. "My father owned a school bus. My brother and I were picked up at the door and dropped off at the door. I never had to walk in the mud or anything."

When she was in high school, she lived near an Army base. On Saturday nights they would go out with the soldiers. Regarding high school, Frances said, "I started early and I finished early."

Frances also has fun memories of the farmers' picnics. Local farmers would bring their fastest horses and have races. At the farmers' picnics, the crowds also enjoyed three or four carnival rides. With a quarter in their pockets the children were able to partake of several five-cent rides.

Frances Holland made many sacrifices during the Great Depression and the years of war that followed. Like so many of her generation, she did what needed to be done, and she did it without complaining. The sacrifices that my Grandmother made during those troublesome years in our country's history have allowed me to live in freedom today. For that, I am grateful.

★ Six Years of Bombing Life in London

Katie and Jenny

Sister Anna Howeley was twenty-one years old in 1939 when World War II started. She was teaching English and history at Ursuline High School, an all girls' high school, which was located about twenty miles from London, England. Her students were not interested in school, though, because they were always scared of being bombed by the Germans. When bomb threats occurred, all of Sister Anna's forty-six students were instructed to go to the bomb shelters that were located under the ground in dirt-floored basements. Some days, the entire school of 600 had to go to the bomb shelters as many as three times. Occasionally, those students who were boarders at the school, had to spend from supper time until three in the morning in the shelters.

During World War II, London and the surrounding areas had blackouts at night so that all light was hidden from the bomber planes. The citizens covered all the windows with black shades. In November of 1940, the Germans bombed London and the Ursuline School. The Sisters helped the firemen who put out fires after the Germans bombed the oil refineries along the Thames River. The Sisters fed the firemen when they were off-duty. Because the pilots of the German planes could see the fire trucks parked outside of the school, the pilots bombed the school. Eight people in the town died in the attack, but luckily Sister Anna and her students were in the shelter when the bomb hit their school.

After this bombing, many children left the school to live with relatives in the United States because it was safe there. The children and teachers who remained were very scared. Some nights, Sister Anna and another Sister with whom she taught slept under desks in the classroom, so that if a bomb hit, they would have some shelter.

As World War II raged on, food became very limited. Ration cards were given to citizens, and with the cards, they could get supplies such as soap, sugar, coffee, and tea. Many foods, such as oranges or limes, were never seen in wartime.

The Germans started to use planes without pilots called V-1's and V-2's. These planes were programmed to fly until they ran out of fuel, and then they exploded. Sister Anna and the residents had to endure six years of this horrible bombing. As she looked back on all that happened during the war, Sister Anna said, "I don't know how I lived through it! It doesn't seem like it really happened. I like to share my story with high school students."

After the war, Sister Anna continued to teach in England. It took eight years for the building in which she taught at Ursuline High School to be repaired after the war had ended. She taught at Ursuline for nearly thirty years before she came to Dubuque. When she moved to Dubuque, she taught at Wahlert High School for 12 years, and then spent two years teaching at Holy Cross. Even in her retirement, Sister Anna continues to teach as she tells her stories to younger generations of Americans.

★ Keeping Up with the Joneses

Jake

Becky Jones was 12 years old when World War II broke out. She remembers coming home from church on December 7th, 1941, the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Her whole family was sitting paralyzed in silence. The next day, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was on the radio saying that the United States had no other choice but to declare war on the country of Japan for bombing Pearl Harbor. He said, "This day will go down in infamy."

Becky Jones was a member of a military family. She had six brothers and one sister. Four of her brothers served in World War II. Her father, John Bockes, was in WWI, and her mother, Ethel, was a volunteer during WWII.

She recalls her mother volunteering for everything, which meant Becky was volunteering for everything. Her mother had a list of servicemen that she would write to every day. There were about twelve or thirteen of them, and when they came home on leave, she would get cards and letters from them. Becky said, "My Mom was a great, wonderful lady during those times."

Her mother was also an air raid warden. When there were warnings, she would patrol the streets with a gas mask and a flashlight; she could not turn the flashlight on. It had to be completely dark. She said, "It was scary." According to Becky, some people thought Dubuque might be a bombing target because the Savanna Ordnance Depot was only about 40 miles away.

While her brothers were off to war, Becky had to take on a lot of their chores. She recalls a time she went hunting with her father, and he shot a squirrel. She started to cry and never went hunting again. Another time she was fishing with her father and accidentally hit him in the head with a sinker. Becky also had to tend to the family's four gardens. The vegetables would then be canned and given to people in need. They had food but not much money.

Becky was very close to her two oldest brothers, Walter and Jack. Walter, the second oldest, was like her mentor. She wanted to be just like him. While he was away to war, Becky

wanted to drop out of school, but her brother soon sent her a letter telling her what she could do. This letter quickly changed her mind about school.

Before the war broke out, Jack, her oldest brother, was a milk truck driver. She would wake up at 3:30 a.m. to go on his route with him. Her brothers were also lumberjacks, and Becky would sometimes go in the timber with them. Wherever they were, she was. Another thing they did together was go to the Avon Theater in downtown Dubuque to watch the war in Europe on the movie newsreels. She can still remember how interested Jack was, which is probably the reason he enlisted so fast when the United States got involved. Becky remembers Jack as being little, but tough.

Jack Bockes enlisted in the Marine Corps the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked, and Walter enlisted in the Army the day after that. A few months later, her other two brothers were drafted into the military. Larry was drafted into the Army artillery and Bernie was drafted into the Army Air Force. Her two younger brothers continued to serve in the military after World War II; Bill in the Korean conflict, and Dan was a medic stationed in Germany.

Jack and Larry served in the South Pacific Theater. They frequently tried to meet, but one would be going to one theater and the other would be going to another theater. Jack, the Marine, was wounded at Iwo Jima. While serving overseas, Jack's officers told him not to shoot until he could see the whites in his enemies' eyes, but he would say, "After what they did on December 7th, they have no whites in their eyes."

Walter and Bernie served in the European Theater. Walter was involved in Army correspondence, like the Secret Service, and was wounded during the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. Becky's brothers received Silver Stars, Gold Medals, Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, and sharpshooter's awards during their time in the military. Becky actually believes that her brothers began their sharpshooting careers by shooting rats at the family lumberyard off Fourth Street.

Sisters-in-law Dorothy and Ruthy, wives of Jack and Walter, were also involved in the war effort. They were known as "Rosie the Riveters." They were sent to Washington state to build bombers. When Dorothy's husband, Jack, was stationed in San Diego at the Marine base, Dorothy and their son went to visit, and she was involved in all the military defenses there.

While the war was going on overseas, Becky was busy getting an education. It was there when one of the most memorable times in Becky's life occurred. She was sitting in English class at Washington Junior High School in Dubuque, Iowa. A Dubuque man by the name of Lieutenant Robert J. Breitbach, age 23, flew his B-17 over town. According to Becky, he was rocking the plane from side to side to let people know it was he. She said, "He was so low you could see the people in the cockpit." Ten minutes later the plane crashed near English Mill Road, a few miles west of Washington Jr. High. School was then let out and everybody went to see the blaze. She still remembers getting sick to her stomach.

Another time she remembers is when her school had all of the students bring in their stars. (Families were given a star for every member who was serving in the armed forces.) Becky had four stars which was more than any other person in her school.

While Becky attended Dubuque Senior High School, she earned "As" in her history and geography classes. She gave her father credit for this. While her brothers were serving overseas, her father had a map on the kitchen wall. He then wrapped string around the ends of pins and stuck them where each one of his sons was stationed.

After she graduated from Dubuque Senior High School, Becky met her soon-to-be-husband, Chuck Jones. Chuck was also involved in World War II. He was in the Army Air Force stationed in England as a radar technician. Together they had a son whose name was also Chuck. Her son later enlisted in the Air Force, but due to medical problems, was not able to serve in Vietnam.

Together Becky and Chuck traveled all over the United States, living near various military bases where Chuck was stationed. While living in North Carolina, Chuck passed away. Becky had his body brought back to Iowa to be buried. She ordered a headstone for the grave that was supposed to say, "United States Army Air Force." When she got the headstone, there was a mistake. It only said, "United States Air Force," so she sent it back to be replaced.

Becky is now living in her own apartment in Dubuque, Iowa. She is always willing to talk about the things her family and she did to help in the war effort. Her family is a model for the true American family: a committed group of people willing to give their lives fighting for their country. From the time her father served in World War I to the time her son enlisted in the Air Force during Vietnam, Becky's family has answered the nation's call. If it were not for families like Becky's, it would not have been possible for the United States to win World War II.

★ Wings

Corey

Hugh Lambert, a bulky and rounded man at age 87, stood in his yard filled with scrap metal, still working. One might wonder if, at age 87, someone might be extremely bored and tired with life, but Hugh Lambert strongly contradicts this hypothesis. His stories, energy level, and enthusiasm suggest a totally new perspective and a strong grip on life.

His eyes, timid yet extremely serious-looking, did not budge at the first part of the story he told. As Hugh talked more and more, those mysterious eyes opened wide and danced around as if he was in a daydream. He talked about his life, stressing the time period of World War II.

Hugh played a very important part in the war as a pilot trainer. Even though he never left the United States during the war, Hugh was just as important as any fighter pilot or general. He was like a piece to a puzzle. They all came together to create a masterpiece that was beautiful and successful.

Hugh sat down at his dining room table and began to look around with wonder in his eyes. This hulking man could be intimidating, but he doesn't mean to intimidate anybody. Such a hard shell of a frame could inspire wonder if raw emotions would be hard to reach. They came, though.

"I was born in Monticello, Iowa," Hugh began.

"1912," his wife chimed in.

"In 1912. I had two brothers and a sister, all of whom have perished by now. I went to school, of course, and I had a normal education. I graduated high school and went on to Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for three years. While there, I studied pre-medicine. But there

was always something about flying that fascinated me." Hugh's eyes began to wander; then after a few seconds, he continued.

"When I was in my teens, my Uncle, A. P. Lambert, started an airport in Monticello, Iowa. I used to work there doing odd jobs for people, and a man I would often work for would sometimes take me flying with him as a treat. There was a space in the dash I could see through, and I would watch his every move. One day he let me fly by myself. The feeling was just unbelievable to be so free. That day was like an all day adrenaline rush for me. Then in the 1930's the Great Depression hit us, and I had to give up a lot of things because my family and I had no money. I even had to quit school."

The conversation then shifted and Hugh began to talk about flying. Flying was obviously extremely important to Hugh because he talked at great length and was very specific as the pleasant thoughts all came back.

"At first, during takeoff, there is a great deal of acceleration and the experience can get to be terrifying. When you get up into the atmosphere and touch the controls, it almost feels as if the plane is a live person because of the vibrations from moving through the air. If you're a passenger, a pilot could play tricks on you by turning or diving downward with the plane and then letting go of the controls. But if the airplane's controls are set right, the plane will level itself off and correct its path of travel. Flying is a very pleasurable experience, but at the same time, it can become a nightmare. If you make too fast of a turn or dive, a person could actually pass out because the force of gravity (G's) gets too strong for your body to handle, and a lot of blood flows from your brain. But it is an experience I yearn for."

To imagine such an experience was amazing. It's unusual to think that such a hard job could actually be so exciting. Hugh's desire to fly was fulfilled when World War II broke out, and he was chosen to train new pilots to fly. There were many important aspects of the war, and every job and every person contributing had a specific job and significance. Hugh then began to talk about his job and its importance.

"I was in the tire recapping business when the war started. One day a general came to me and said that he knew I had a commercial license with the CAA (now FAA). The Army Air Force wanted me to come to Kansas City to help train new pilots for the war because they needed someone with experience and who could explain the process of flying in a quicker than normal time frame. They called the program an accelerated program. I took a few days and I finally thought, 'I'll do something valuable for my country.'"

Hugh continued, "The Army Air Force paid my expenses to go to Kansas City, and I was told that I would be more valuable of an asset here training pilots than overseas in combat. I had to go to Army Air Force school for three months to learn new maneuvers and procedures. Then I started my first job training in Tarkio, Missouri. I didn't stay in one place for very long. I moved around a lot to work wherever I was needed."

To train a person how to fly is a complicated and stressful job. At the same level, it is an exciting and joyous experience. To teach is to expand another person's mind and fill a space with the power to succeed.

"The first few lessons were hard for the students, but they had a pretty good plane to fly," Hugh said. "The training planes were Howards, also called DGAs. They got the nickname DGA because, after the first test flight, the plane was described as a 'Damn Good Airplane.' Also, we used "confidence maneuvers" to show new pilots that flying shouldn't be scary."

Reflecting back, Hugh said, "The Japanese surprised us all and bombed us at Pearl Harbor. Everyone thought that the next step was to invade California and the rest of the West Coast, so lots of bases and people were moved inland so they would be safer. But I just kept on training."

Training, like many other jobs of World War II, involved plenty of risk. There is always risk in every situation in life, risk for many different things. Unfortunately, with flying, risk is a huge factor, and it could make or break someone's dreams. Especially in training, the risk factor could probably scare a person enough to forget their lifelong dream and go home to stay safe. There are always accidents that can happen.

Hugh said, "I never got really close to combat, so I didn't experience many losses, other than the people that belonged to my country as a whole. One of my roommates did crash in the Himalayas. He was never found. I was in two different plane crashes with two different students. It was horrifying at first because I was responsible—no matter what—for my students. One student was lucky enough to come out unharmed. The other ended up with a broken leg. I had suffered a hand injury in which my hand swelled up as big as a boxing glove, but it healed and I was okay."

Hugh saved the best part of his reminiscing for last—his achievements. This humble man, with a subtle but determined approach to things, had a great deal of flying experience. Hugh has flown nearly thirty different planes. While training, he broke the record at his base for time in flight in one day: fourteen hours and twenty minutes. He broke the old record by twenty minutes.

After the war was over, Hugh was given an Honorable Discharge from the Air Force, and he and a few friends started the local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, EAA Chapter 327.

Possibly the most important achievement that Hugh Lambert made was sharing his story so it can be recognized by a younger generation of Americans and for many generations yet to come. Without Hugh and people just like him who served for their country in the war, the United States would not be the great place it is today. Just like Hugh, everyone and everything around him is another story and another important piece to the always-growing puzzle of American history.

★ Thirty Missions The Hazard Express

Krystal and Ben

Imagine yourself flying with flak bursting around you, the metal pellets missing your plane by just a few feet. That is what you would have experienced if you were to fly a B-17 during World War II. A person with whom we spoke had this very thing happen to him. Merle Mathis was a waist gunner in World War II. He flew 30 missions.

"The plane in which I flew was called the *Hazard Express*, a B-17. I was drafted in 1943. I was 18 years old. Being in the service is something I had to do for my country. I grew up in Dubuque, Iowa, and attended Dubuque Senior High School. I was involved in many extra-curricular activities such as baseball and softball." Before being drafted, Merle worked at Klauer Manufacturing, which is still in business today.

"I started my training at Camp Dodge in Des Moines, Iowa. From there I went to basic training in Wichita Falls, Texas. After basic training, I went to gunnery school in Las Vegas, Nevada. While in Las Vegas, I was only allowed to leave base once the whole six weeks I was there. Then I was shipped off to Dyersburg, Tennessee."

During a training mission in Tennessee, Merle's crew had gotten lost. The pilot spotted an airstrip and decided to land. "We didn't know it at the time, but the landing strip had been a practice field for small planes. Now if you know what a B-17 looks like, with its massive and long wing span, you know it couldn't have been an easy landing, especially at night."

From Tennessee, Merle's crew was sent to North Dakota where they picked up the plane, the *Hazard Express*. It wasn't actually given this name until the crew started flying missions. "We then flew the plane to Gander Bay, Newfoundland, refueled, landed in Ireland, and finally went to our base in a small town north of London."



Merle is pictured here with student interviewers Ben Hoover and Krystal Russell.

The first combat mission Merle and the crew flew was to Pas de Calais. "We also flew over Berlin twice, which was one of the most heavily guarded cities in German territory. This would have been even more dangerous if it weren't for the P-51's that were our escorts. The German planes couldn't contend with the P-51. The P-51's were lifesavers." Some of the thirty missions Mr. Mathis flew would last up to nine hours.

While Merle was in the service, he kept a diary of all the missions he flew. The entries from that diary are included in our book. He gave a simple description of each mission and a list of all the crew members. "Only one time did we encounter a dramatic situation while flying over Germany. One of the planes from the group took a hit, and the whole crew blew up right in front of our plane. It was the most horrifying thing I'd ever seen, and the bad part is that I knew them. The places I thought were the most dangerous were Schweinfurt, Pas de Calais, Munich, and Berlin. In Berlin, clouds of flak would surround the planes while we were trying to bomb, and you weren't able to see below the black clouds."

Although Merle felt the war could have been avoided, he knew it was something that had to be done. He also knew he couldn't dwell on what had occurred. Merle did receive an honorable discharge on October 31, 1945. He had earned many different medals, two of which were the Air Medal and the Gold Leaf Cluster. The Air Medal and Clusters were given to those who distinguished themselves in meritorious achievements while participating in aerial flight.



A Daily Diary of War

Thirty Missions: Merle A. Mathis, B-17 Waist Gunner

Compiled by John

When Mr. Merle Mathis visited our school to be interviewed by the students, he brought with him a small, but well-preserved paper and cardboard journal book that describes the bombing missions he flew as a B-17 Flying Fortress waist gunner over Nazi-occupied Europe during the war. Chronicling the missions he flew from July, 1944, through January, 1945, Mathis's thirty, neatly handwritten entries are short, to the point and, to the casual reader, may grow somewhat repetitive and predictable. However, each page represents one service man's record of events, an eyewitness account and on-the-spot analyses of flight conditions, fighter protection, aircraft damage, enemy strength, weather conditions, and overall mission effectiveness.

Mathis reports very little action from enemy fighters in his journal entries. By 1944, the German Luftwaffe was very much on the defensive, having already lost many front line aircraft and irreplaceable pilots with combat experience. In addition, American aviators in their P-51 Mustangs—the B-17's primary combat escort and premiere fighter of the war—proved to be more than a match for most German pilots brash enough to challenge them.

A group photograph accompanies the journal that shows Mathis and his fellow crew members casually posing in front of their aircraft. They are wearing

leather flight jackets with the inscription, Hazard Express, the name of their aircraft, emblazoned on their backs.

The combat journal of Merle Mathis has been reproduced here in its entirety.

Property of S/Sgt. Merle A. Mathis
37677048
413th Bomb Sq.
96th Bomb Gp.
APO 559
HUT No. 71

The rest of my crew:
Pilot—Lt. R. McIntyre
Co-pilot—Lt. M. Gantmacher
Navigator—Lt. J. Silliman
Bombardier—Lt. J. Holm
Mickey Op.—Lt. L. Rodriguiz
Engineer—T/Sgt. Zeke Zink
Radio Man—T/Sgt. Ford Herring
Ball Turret—S/Sgt. R. Thomas
Right Waist—S/Sgt. M. Morton
Tail Gunner—S/Sgt. R. Merrill

No. 1: Pas de Calais—July 6, '44

This was our first mission. You could certainly call it a milk run, but other groups did have trouble. Not much flak to (sic) close to us but some came within 300 yards. No fighters seen today. All our crew safe and sound. Bombed flying bomb targets in that area.

No. 2: Munich—July 12, '44

Went on number two today. Was a long trip, 9 1/2 hours to be exact. Were on oxygen 8 hours. Ran into flak north of Saarbrücken but it was not very accurate. Got flak from the IP (initial point) till (sic) out of the target area. Our ship was not hit and nobody was hurt. Couple of pieces of flak bounced off. No fighters seen. Had plenty of escorts along. Bombed the town as the target was covered by clouds. Flak was heavy.

No. 3: Stuttgart—July 16, '44

Chalked up number three today. Started out for Munich again, but bad weather over the target changed the plans. Dropped incendiary bombs and really started a blaze. Seen a lot of flak going in and coming out. Quite heavy over the target area but not very accurate. Hit flak over Brussels and they had our number. Got five holes in the plane. Two large ones in the nose. Almost clipped the navigator and bombardier. No fighters seen. Had escort all the way.

No. 4: Schweinfurt—July 19, '44

Another one added to the list. Bombed the ball-bearing factories there. Seen some flak going in and coming out but none of it was accurate. The flak was very heavy over the target area and fairly accurate. We were lucky and only got two holes in the ship. Nobody hurt on

the crew. No enemy fighters seen, had plenty of 51s (P-51 Mustangs), 47s (P-47 Thunderbolts), and 38s (P-38 Lightnings) along as escort. Seven hours mission, six on oxygen.

No. 5: Regensburg—July 21, '44

They cut the crews down to nine men today so I sat this one out on the ground. Hit an airplane component plant today. Flak was heavy from the IP into the target but light over the target. Shot a lot of rockets up at the boys. Nobody hurt and only one hole in the ship. No enemy fighters seen. Fighter support was good.

No. 6: St. Lo—July 24, '44

Not much of a mission today. Went over and were to bomb enemy troop concentrations in the St. Lo area. Our troops were to withdraw 1,000 yards while we bombed. This gave us an area of 1,500 yards to hit the target. Everything was fine till (sic) over the target. A light overcast screwed up the works. We didn't drop our bombs but other groups did. Flew at 15,000, a six hour mission, three on oxygen. No fighters seen. Light flak but not accurate.

No. 7: St. Lo—July 25, '44

Sat this one out once again. The boys went back to St. Lo and bombed enemy troop concentrations in that area. Did a poor job yesterday killing 17 and wounding 75 Americans. Went in at 13,000 today. Flak was light but accurate. No holes in the ship. Some rockets seen over the target. Plenty of fighter support and no enemy fighters seen. Six hour mission.

No. 8: The Maquis—Aug. 1, '44

Had a little different run today. Dropped supplies to the French in that area. It was a swell trip no fighters or flak seen. That is really beautiful scenery down around there. We were about thirty miles from Italy and just west of Switzerland. Seen Geneva from a distance. This place was right in the heart of the Alps. Plenty of fighter support. Nine + a half hour mission seven on oxygen. Bombed at 500 feet.

No. 9: Le Fere—Aug. 7, '44

Had another easy mission today. Were to bomb a railroad bridge at Le Fere in France. This is a very small town about sixty miles north of Paris. Encountered heavy overcast over the target so brought our bombs back. Flew deputy lead today. No fighters seen, had a little flak in a number of spots. It was a six hour mission 4 1/2 hours on oxygen. Flew at 27,000 once to get above overcast. Had P-51s over target as escort.

No. 10: Nurnburg—Aug. 9, '44

Well another mission went to the dogs. Headed for Nurnburg to bomb the MAN tank works. Bad weather forced us back not quite halfway to the target. Saw flak just inside the coast. Were hit hard by flak at the time the mission was recalled. Just a few guns but they had our range. Got five holes in the ship. No fighters seen. Had P-51s at the time we were hit by flak.

No. 11: Mulhouse—Aug. 11, '44

Swell mission today. Rather long but very pleasant. Bombed a bridge, railroad center and oil storage at Mulhouse in France. This town is right in the corner between Germany and Switzerland. Hit flak at Chartern and it was close. The lead group got more of it. No flak over

the target. No enemy fighters seen. Had P-51s along as escort. Hit the target right on the head. It was a nine hour mission, seven on oxygen. Flew at 17,000 most of the trip

No. 12: Politz—Aug. 25, '44

Bombed the synthetic oil plant at Politz in Germany. Was a long mission 9 1/2 hours in the air. Only spent 3 1/2 on oxygen however. Saw some flak just as we reached the Danish coast. It was light and a couple of miles off. Flak was very heavy and accurate over the target. Got four holes in the ship. Nobody hit. No enemy fighters seen, our escort of 51s and 47s was good.

No. 13: Berlin—Aug. 27, '44

Started out for Big B today but didn't make it. Ran into bad weather over the Danish coast. The formation was all split up most of them flying alone. Got off course and flew over Kiel. They tossed up some flak and knocked out our number three engine. Also got a small hole in the left wing. Turned around and came back. Dropped our bomb load in the North Sea as the load was to (sic) heavy for three engines. P-51s escorted us to the English coast.

No. 14: Frankfurt—Sept. 1, '44

What a mission this turned out to be. Were to bomb a factory just south of Frankfurt. Ran into heavy overcast and got all mixed up. Finally got a recall and came back home. No flak seen as were (sic) over our own territory most of the time. Had 51s as escorts, no enemy fighters seen.

No. 15: Stuttgart—Sept. 5, '44

Bombed the Daimler Benz aircraft factory today. Was really a nice mission. Flew over our own territory most of the way no flak seen until approaching the target. There the flak was heavy and fairly accurate. Got two small holes in the ship. Hit the target right on the nose and knocked it out. Had P-51s as escort and they sure did a swell job. No enemy fighters seen.

No. 16: Mainz—Sept. 8, '44

Went to the tank and ordnance depot a little south of Mainz. This is located on the Rhine River south of the Ruhr. Bombed PFF and the results were fair. Heavy flak over the target but not accurate. Had P-51s along as escort. No enemy fighters. Flew at 29,000 once to get above overcast. Temperature went as low as 46 below. Got a little frostbite on my right ear.

No. 17: Dusseldorf—Sept. 9, '44

This makes it two days in a row. Hit the oil plants at Dusseldorf in the center of Happy Valley. That place sure is flak infested. Had flak from the IP to the target and out to the RP (return point). It was intense over the target but not accurate on our group. Other groups got hit hard. Three planes went down behind us. Some fighters reported in the area but none hit us. Had P-51s along as escort. Co-pilot thought he saw an Me-110 (German fighter/bomber) high above us.

No. 18: Chemnitz—Sept. 11, '44

Bombed a tractor works at Chemnitz, Germany near Brux. It was our first target on the shuttle mission to Russia. Little flak over the target. A lot in the area but we were out of range of all of it. Got two holes in the ship. The co-pilot rode in the waist as we had a command

pilot with us. No enemy fighters seen (sic). They were up that day and shot down around 70 Forts (B-17 Flying Fortresses) and Libs (B-24 Liberators). Had swell cover from the P-51s.

No. 19: Piosgyor—Sept. 13, '44

Hit the largest steel plant in Hungary on our way to Italy. Very little flak over the target but quite a bit in the area. No holes in the ship. Had P-51s along as escort all the way. No enemy fighters seen. None reported in the area. Did a good job on the target.

No. 20: Beilefeld—Sept. 30, '44

Bombed the ordnance depot at Beilefeld, Germany. Flew our first mission as PFF. Were deputy lead of the 8th Airforce (sic). A few rockets but no flak over the target. Fighters were in the area but our escort of 51s and 47s took care of them. Seen two fighters go down in flames don't know whose they were though. A 6 1/2 hour mission 5 1/2 of it on oxygen. Very good mission altogether.

No. 21: Berlin—Oct. 6, '44

After two tries we finally got to Big B today. Bombed an ordnance plant in the northwest part of town. Flak was heavy to intense over the target. Their accuracy was pretty fair. Got around six holes in the ship one large one in the waist. Flew our first lead today. Led the A group of the 45th Combat Wing. Bombing results were good. Enemy fighters hit the group behind us and knocked down six heavies. Had good escort from P-51s.

No. 22: Mainz—Oct. 9, '44

Played a return engagement at Mainz, Germany today. Bombed the railway yards through heavy overcast. Results were unobserved. Flak was light and inaccurate over the target. This was the only place we had any flak. Had 51s, 47s, and 38s along as escort. And as usual they did a fine job. Saw a dogfight out in the distance but no enemy fighters came near. Seven hour mission six on oxygen. No holes in the ship. Led the low group.

No. 23: Cologne—Oct. 14, '44

Had a return trip to the Happy Valley today. Hit Cologne and its (railroad) marshalling yards. Bombed PFF and the results were unobserved. Flak was moderate to heavy and fairly accurate. Got five small holes in the ship one in the waist. No enemy fighters seen, escort of P-51s was good as usual. Led the low group again today. Seven hour mission five and a half on oxygen.

No. 24: Hamburg—Oct. 25, '44

Bombed the oil refineries at Hamburg today. I was in the hospital so didn't get to go. Flak was heavy but inaccurate. No holes in the ship. No fighters seen. Fighter support was good. An 8 hour mission five on oxygen.

No. 25: Wiesbaden—Nov. 4, '44

This sure was a mixed up mission. We flew deputy lead today. The lead plane could not be found until we were about 30 miles from Germany. We had 5 ships and he had four, so we joined formations. Half way down the bomb run number one (engine) blew a cylinder so

we dropped out of formation and down about 2,000 feet and dropped our bombs on the town. The rest bombed the airfield the target. Saw a ship blown up from flak. Flak was light but inaccurate.

No. 26: Merseburg—Nov. 25, '44

Bombed the synthetic oil plant at Merseburg today. Had an undercast so dropped by PFF. Led the low group. Saw some flak going in and coming out but none was close. Flak over the target was heavy to intense but not accurate on our group. Didn't get any holes in the ship. No enemy fighters seen, but were reported in the area. Fighter support of P-51s was very good. 9 1/2 hour mission, six on oxygen.

No. 27: Lutzendorf—Nov. 30, '44

Bombed the oil refineries at Lutzendorf today. It was easily the roughest mission we have had so far. Had the oxygen system shot out, radio transmitter also was shot out. Number four engine went out just out of the target area. Had around 40 holes in the ship, nobody hurt but the tail gunner passed out from lack of oxygen. Flak was intense and accurate(.) The 8th (Air Force) lost 56 bombers + 30 fighters to flak alone. Dropped our bombs in Germany someplace (sic). (Bomb) racks and doors both screwed up at the target.

No. 28: Hanover—Dec. 14, '44

Bombed the railway yards at Hanover today. Dropped by PFF today as there was a heavy undercast. Results were unobserved. Weather was very poor and contrails thick. Led the high group today. Flak was light and inaccurate. No holes in the ship. Escort of P-51s was good. No enemy fighters seen. Seven hour mission 5 1/2 on oxygen. Duer's crew finished today.

No. 29: Kassel—Dec. 30, '44

Bombed the railway yards at Kassel today. Led the low group once again. Bombing was done PFF so results were unobserved. Flak was light and inaccurate. No holes in the ship. No fighters seen. Had good fighter support as usual.

No. 30: Hilbrunn—Jan. 5, '45

Pulled our last mission today. Bombed the railway yards at Hilbrunn southwest of Frankfurt. Results were unobserved as we dropped through heavy clouds. No flak over target but some came close over the battle lines. No holes in ship, however. Led the division today, Col. Warren group C. O. flew as command pilot. Weather was bad all over. Fighter support good, 10 1/2 hour mission.

FINIS



The Heroes of the 44th

Andy

Verne Mauer served in the 44th Tank Battalion, a unit that consisted of 800 soldiers and 53 tanks, half-tracks and artillery. The 44th was the first U.S. Tank Battalion deployed in the South Pacific. Verne was the clerk for the commanding officer; he kept a day-by-day log of their trips during the war, and he also wrote a history of the battalion. This book of history was very detailed and included everything about the battalion. Verne enlisted in the military as an assistant tank driver but never got the chance to test his driving skills in war.

Verne's battalion boarded the USAT boat, the *Kato Baroe*, on March 22, 1944, in Portland, Oregon and sailed across the southwest Pacific without an escort. They stopped thirty-two days later on April 21, 1944, in Milne Bay, New Guinea, a rendezvous point before moving on to their first destination. The battalion's first destination was Finschahafen, New Guinea. Traveling without a guide, they journeyed past their destination and had to backtrack

before successfully arriving in Finschahafen fifty-six days later. This ocean-crossing trip of 56 days was the longest on record.

The battalion made a series of stops, taking cities along the way. The battalion traveled to Leyte in the Philippines. In Leyte the D Company was instrumental in clearing an airstrip. Verne and other headquarter's personnel also did a lot of outpost guard duty. From Leyte they traveled to the Admiralty Islands. After the Islands, The 44th went to Luzon, where Japanese snipers were awaiting their arrival. When the battalion landed on the beaches, they were hit with heavy enemy artillery fire.



Pictured here from left to right: Arthur Candler, Donald Donath and Verne Mauer. Candler and Donath were killed in the Battle of Manila.

Because the battalion had direct orders to rescue from captivity 3,768 American and Allied civilians the Japanese had interned at Santa Tomas University, they traveled 100 miles to Manila. There, they demolished the gates at Santa Tomas and rescued the starving prisoners. Verne distinctly remembered one building. The Japanese guarded the first floor, and the prisoners resided on the second and third floors. The battalion could not blow up the building because they would end up killing all the prisoners. The only thing they could do was to talk them out. After 12, long, painstaking hours, they reached an agreement that the Japanese could march out with their rifles between two rows of U.S. soldiers. The Japanese went free in exchange for the prisoners' lives. They didn't remain free for very long.

The battalion proceeded to the Wall City in the old part of Manila. The city got its name because a giant, concrete wall surrounded it. The only way in was to break through the wall, so the tanks fired their guns. They got through and took over the city.

The battalion was scheduled to go to Tokyo to launch an attack, but the atomic bomb was dropped, and soon there was a successful end to the war. Verne's unit did, in fact, travel to Tokyo. But rather than launching an attack, now they simply were to stop there briefly before returning to the United States. Unfortunately, the boat Verne's unit was on was 45 minutes late in leaving for Tokyo, and inspectors would not let them sail. They sat in the harbor for one week with nothing to do.

When they finally set sail for Tokyo, Verne's battalion traveled through the South China Sea. The boat was overloaded with tanks, half-tracks, and artillery. Sailing with such a heavy load, Verne was scared. Because of the huge swells that rocked the ship, he thought it would sink. Fortunately, the ship stood up to the angry sea.

Verne feels fortunate that the dropping of the bomb happened before his unit was scheduled to attack. He said, "The assault would have killed ten times more people than if we hadn't dropped the bomb."

On the way home from Tokyo Verne finished the *History of the Battalion*. It took only seven days to get back home to San Francisco. They arrived in San Francisco and immediately boarded a ferry to Camp Stoneman. From there they went to Fort Leavenworth, in Kansas, and he finally boarded a train to Dubuque. He was very happy to see his wife and daughter after being in the war.

Thirty-six members of the 44th Tank Battalion lost their lives during World War II, including two men from Dubuque, Donald Donath and Arthur Chandler. Verne was one of the lucky ones to have his life spared and to be able to come back home to his family and friends. Thanks to Verne and all the other members of the 44th Tank Battalion, thousands of lives were saved during the war. Those of us who live free today owe a great debt of gratitude to Verne and his fellow members of the 44th.



Don Palmer Ball Turret Gunner

Nick

Although the atomic bomb brought about the end of World War II, there were many other things that helped win the war, including the B-17 Flying Fortress bomber. The B-17 was an airplane that carried ten crew members. The plane had a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, two waist gunners, a tail gunner, a nose gunner/engineer, top turret gunner/radio operator, and a ball turret gunner. The ball turret gunner, in this reporter's mind, was the worst position to be in the B-17, because the ball turret was on the bottom of the plane, and if the plane ever crashed, there would be a slim chance of surviving.

Don Palmer is a retired A. Y. McDonald purchasing agent who still lives in Dubuque. During the war, Don was a ball turret gunner. He believed it was the best place to be on the airplane.

"The door that I laid on was armor-plated. It shielded you from about half of the flak from anti-aircraft guns." Don added, "I was one of the crew members that had a heated suit, which had electrical wires running through the suit. When the guns were level, the door would open to the outside of the airplane. Pull the latches, and it was real easy getting out of the airplane if you needed to bail out. Then, when you rotated the turret and the guns were pointed down, the door opened to the inside of the airplane. Anywhere else in the rotation and the door wouldn't open at all."

Don continued reminiscing, "Gunnery school was in Las Vegas. It was a fun thing. I liked flying, so I went into pilot training program. But by the time I was done with basic training, they decided that they had enough pilots. I could go to gunnery school or infantry, so I chose gunnery school. The training was six weeks long. There was rifle target practice, skeet, and 12-gauge shotguns. The toughest part was when I was put in the back of a pick-up truck and driven around a track. When I passed a skeet house, a clay pigeon would fly out. I would have to shoot this moving target from the moving truck. In normal skeet there were 25 pigeons per round and we shot between 20 to 25 of them, but in the truck we hit nowhere near that. We got about 10 to 15 hits. Then they put us in the B-17 and gave us a ride. I was the only one who didn't toss his cookies on the first ride. I was the only one that didn't get air sick," Don said proudly.

Don was in the 15th Air Force, 463rd Bomb Group, 774th Bomber Squadron. On August 25th, 1944, Don's B-17 crew bombed the Ploesti Oil field in Romania. On other days they had bombed bridges in support of the invasion of southern France. They also bombed ball bearing factories, airfields, and other tactical targets that came up.

Then one day, things changed. Even though it was his 18th mission, Don said, "I always say 17 1/2. The half is for when I got shot down." The date was August 30, 1944.

This became his most memorable mission. "You know, it's a very unique experience, bailing out of an airplane. I was shot down over the coast of Yugoslavia, near a town called Mostar, as we were returning from a mission. Every other group had returned to base because the weather was so bad that day, but we didn't. We went to the main target, then flew to the

'second chance,' and then the 'last resort,' but we still couldn't see anything. So we turned around and headed for home. Otherwise, we would have run out of fuel. And that's when we got hit."

Don continued, "We still had the bombs and some of our ammo. There was a small 'nuisance area', a place where there weren't any targets to speak of, but where the Germans had installed a four-gun flak battery. Normally, we would fly around this piece of ground; this time we didn't."

The first burst hit them. It splintered into tiny pieces, and metal penetrated anything that it came in contact with. "It hit the fuel tank while we were transferring fuel from both of the wing tip tanks, so both tanks exploded. We got two hits on the aircraft. The reserve fuel tanks—we called them 'Tokyo tanks,' on the wingtips—were hit." With the explosion, the plane's nose cone and the tail blew off.

Don remembered preparing to bail out of the airplane. "Get the turret in the right place to pull the two latches, then you pull yourself out of the turret." Don resumed, "I had to finish putting my parachute on after I got out of the plane because the turret was too small to have both sides of the parachute attached. You have no sensation when you are falling because you are so high up in the air. I knew I was falling, because on the way down, I passed a life raft that came from the plane."

According to Don, six of the crew members survived. "The pilot, navigator, radioman and one waist gunner didn't. The tail gunner got out, and so did the bombardier who was in the nose. The Germans told us later on that our navigator's parachute opened, and he landed on a cliff overlooking a river. Then the parachute dragged him over the cliff, and he drowned in the river. Our pilot had logged 48 missions. This was his 49th. He had only one more after this one and he could have gone home. I came out of the whole thing better off than anyone else in the aircraft, thanks to the protection I got from the belly gun."

It took two months for the Germans to get the new prisoners from the coast of Yugoslavia to the first POW camp. The Germans put Don and his fellow prisoners on a train, but the Americans bombed the train tracks. "The Germans would put us in a jail somewhere while they worked to fix the tracks. Then we would move a little more until the tracks got bombed out again."

Don said, "We spent two weeks in Sarajevo. When we first came into town right after it was bombed, the citizens of Sarajevo thought that we were the bombers. They tried going after us, but they didn't get close enough to hurt us. After about six weeks and six jail stops—some with dirt floors, rats and insects—we finally arrived in Budapest, where we were interrogated."

The Germans asked Don questions like: what was your mission that day, or what is the bomb group's identification? Don remembered, "The Germans also asked about the personnel back at the base. I never knew the answers to the questions except about the mission. They seemed to know more about the base than I did," Don said.

Then, about two weeks later, the prisoners arrived at the first camp in the town of Stettin, called Stalag Luft 4. After three or four months, the prisoners went to a town called Barth, which is on the Baltic Sea. This camp was called Stalag Luft 1. These were prison camps for captured air corps personnel. The Germans never hurt the prisoners in the later years of the

war, Don observed, because “the Germans knew that they were losing the war, so they treated the prisoners better.”

Many times in the two camps, Don thought to himself, ‘When is the war going to be over?’ He didn’t have any doubts about getting out alive. He had survived two explosions in an airplane. He also had survived a bail out from the airplane.

“While in the camps, we would play card games like poker and bridge, or we would read books if they were available. There were never enough beds to sleep in. A room about 16 feet by 16 feet could hold 16 POWs.” The room that he was in held 26 people. “It was really crowded. Ten men had to sleep on the floor.”

Don recalled, “Sometimes, we would go outside and walk around the compound, and we took apart the surrounding barracks when the guards weren’t looking. Then we would take the wood inside and put it in our stoves to keep warm. The Germans were always hollering like hell because we were tearing apart their buildings,” he laughed.

“When we got into Stalag Luft 1 (the second camp), the Germans gave us Red Cross parcels, which was 75% of our main food supply. Instead of giving us the food individually, they sent us to a mess hall. Some people thought that others were being favored and got more than their share.”

According to Don, the prisoners finally said, “Give us the Red Cross parcels, and we will divide them up.” The American colonel in charge said, “No, all the Red Cross parcels will go to the mess hall.”

Don added, “Then two days later the mess hall caught on fire, so they gave us the Red Cross parcels individually. By the way, I don’t think that the mess hall just caught on fire by itself.”

When things like shoes, blankets, and coats, were in limited supply for the POWs, the men drew cards for whatever they needed. The ones with the highest card got what was available. “When I came to the camp,” Don said, “I didn’t have any shoes, because when I opened my parachute, my boots flew off!” Two months later, Don got his chance to draw cards for shoes. “I drew a high card on the first try, and got a pair of shoes. The only other thing I had on was my flying suit, so, when it came around to draw cards for overcoats, I got a high card again to get a coat.” He thought that someone was looking after him.

On April 30, 1945, the Germans left. The Russians liberated the prisoners from Stalag Luft 1. Don traded the rest of a pack of cigarettes for a pair of boots and a major’s uniform. (He later sold them for \$80 apiece.) The next morning the Russians were there, and they opened the gate and said, “You’re free.”

Then Don and some other POWs went into town. “We saw the Russians taking whatever they wanted. We, as Americans, were very welcome into the Germans’ homes. You see, the Russians wouldn’t bother the Americans, so some of us moved into the Germans’ homes. The Russians wouldn’t hurt or touch the Germans if the Americans were in their homes. And the town was mostly full of women and children,” Don said.

The Russians also wouldn’t let the United States military land vehicles come onto their territory to take the American POWs out. They were negotiated out, and it took more than two weeks. “So there I was, living with a German family. We went on picnics out on the Baltic Peninsula. It was too cold to go swimming, but I did get my feet wet in the Baltic Sea.

Eventually, the U.S. sent B-17s over to bring us back to the repatriation camps in France. These camps were named after cigarettes—*Lucky Strike*, *Chesterfield*, and *Camel*. I ended up in *Camp Lucky Strike*.”

While they waited to go home, Don said that he and the other former POWs took advantage of the supply of food they found in the repatriation camps. “When I checked in to the German POW camp, I weighted about 105 pounds,” Don smiled. “After I left *Camp Lucky Strike*, I weighed about 170! Wow, did we eat! We had eggnog and cheese sandwiches. I usually went through each of those lines twice. I’d get there early, finish, and then do it again.”

Don applied for a POW medal as soon as the applications came out. He got one. “I was a better man coming out than I was going in as a boy. I was too young to be scared,” Don said.

Don never had any regrets about what he did in the war. “I was glad to get out of school and I didn’t want to go to college, so I went into the Army Air Corps.” After the Army something changed his mind because he went to college, and the Army paid for his education.

In Don’s view, the ball turret was the best place to be on the airplane. Don was pretty brave to be that B-17 ball turret gunner, and a man who survived being a prisoner of war during World War II.



All Who Served Were Heroes

Char

During the course of this World War II expedition, various guests have been invited to speak to our class about their war experiences or the experiences of a loved one. On February 3, 2000 my grandmother, Char Simon, was invited to speak to our class. She talked to us about my grandfather, Paul Simon, who tragically passed away on April 7, 1997. My grandmother spoke of her brave husband’s war experiences, and she concluded her presentation by complimenting us on the important work we were doing. What follows are the words my grandmother spoke to our class.

Corey

My late husband, Paul Peter Simon, was working of the railroad in Butte, Montana, when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He fibbed about his age and enlisted at age seventeen. He was sent to the Great Lakes base for his training, and was ordered to report to San Diego, to an ammunition ship named *USS Pyro* AE-1. Names of all the ammunition ships referred to fire, explosives or volcanoes; “pyro” is the Greek word for fire. AE stands for Ammunition Explosives. An ammunition ship is seldom in on the initial phases of a beach landing, but it stays close behind the front line ready to replenish fighting ships in a minimum amount of time.

The *Pyro* was moored at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked. Even though a bomb landed on the deck within ten feet of the ship’s side, the ammunition on board and nearby on the dock was not set off. The *Pyro* was credited with damaging one enemy plane during the attack.

As Paul and the other sailors realized what kind of a ship the *Pyro* was, they were apprehensive and very fearful of the real possibility that the ammunition on board could explode. They soon decided that if the ship did blow up, they wouldn't feel it anyway, and chose not to waste time worrying about it.

Their fears came close to being realized when a sister ammunition ship, the *USS Mt. Hood*, blew up in the same harbor out of which the *Pyro* was steaming. The *Pyro* had just transferred fresh ammunition to the *Mt. Hood* and had taken on the *Hood's* outdated supply.

Four thousand five hundred pounds of explosives completely destroyed the *Mt. Hood* and killed all 350 officers and men on board. Only the six *Mt. Hood* men on shore remained of the entire crew.

Some of the harbor craft nearby just vanished like the *Mt. Hood*, with all hands on board, and thirty other ships and harbor craft were damaged. Nearly 1000 were killed or wounded. There were no bits of human remains, no remnants of supplies of any kind; destruction was complete.

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Despite their perilous situation, the sailors had time for fun. There is a ceremony held aboard a ship for all sailors passing over the Equator for the first time. These sailors are called "polywogs" and the experienced others are called "shellbacks." One sailor is designated the "Royal Baby" to rule over the goings-on, while clad only in a diaper! They chose one of the tallest, biggest polywogs on the ship, nicknamed "Tiny," to be the Royal Baby. He was quite a sight! The others were dressed in grass skirts and leis and had to put on a show for the crew.

Paul enjoyed telling about one sailor from Montana who, before coming on ship, had never used a telephone. Whenever Paul would send him down to the hold to fetch supplies, he would pretend he forgot the order just so he could use the phone to call Paul and be reminded.

The bow of the ship was Paul's favorite spot. He would go there at night and stretch out and just enjoy the moonlight and the peaceful, gentle movement of the ship.

☆☆☆

Teenage boys who entered basic training soon became men in combat. Most were drafted and forced to leave home and family for up to four years. They gave up their freedom to live life as they wished. Instead they had to obey orders without question, put up with rough and tough sergeants, and get into top physical shape. And once in the field they had K-rations to eat! On ship, Paul and the sailors did enjoy good food, served on time. Paul was in Food Service, and that's where he learned to be the good cook he was.

Serving on board ship, Paul had no man-to-man combat or nearby exploding hand grenades or sniper bullet near misses to tell about.

During the war, many found faith in God and the power of prayer. One of Paul's brothers also served in the Navy. At sea during a terrible storm, he made a deal with Mary, the Mother of God, that if he lived through that storm he would always go to church on Sunday. Stories were told of families at home feeling an intense impulse to pray, and later it was determined that at that moment their son was in a very dangerous situation, but came through it safely.

Just recently I heard the story of six soldiers in position in a trench when a shell landed nearby, killing five. The remaining soldier heard a voice strongly urge him to leave the trench immediately. He did, and a shell landed and exploded in that very spot. Again he heard that voice, moved from the trench, and again a shell exploded in the spot he had just left. Five times that happened. So, if a veteran tells you a story that seems farfetched, I hope you won't write it off as a dream and decide not to include it.

Not all who came through the war came back whole. It is sad to think of the men who came back blind, without arms or legs, paralyzed, or mentally wounded. Some came home to find their wives or girlfriends didn't wait for them; many got "Dear John" letters while in the field or on ships. Four years is a LONG time. There were also "Dear Jane" letters from servicemen who married girls in the countries in which they served.

Mostly, I think of the many who did not return. They gave their lives so we can enjoy the freedom we have. At this very moment in many places on this earth people are fighting in their won lands, in their hometowns, against terrorism, torture, persecution, and the loss of their freedom. We in the United States are so blessed!

Not all died by enemy bullets or bayonets. Some sacrificed their won lives to save others by absorbing with their own bodies the force and shrapnel of an exploding hand grenade to save their buddies from being wounded or killed.

It is impossible to imagine the pain and grief parents experienced when they answered a knock on the door to find two uniformed men on their doorstep, to hear them say the words they fervently prayed they would never have occasion to hear, "We regret to inform you..." that their son was killed or reported missing in action.

☆☆☆

I was ten years old when the war ended, and I remember the blackouts, fear when a plane flew overhead at night, war bonds, rationed food, flags in windows with stars to show how many sons in each house were at war or killed in action, and troop trains. We lived on a street next to the railroad tracks, and the first person to see a train carrying soldiers would scream, "Troop train! Troop train!" Everyone would drop whatever they were doing to run across the street to wave and shout at the boys. Sometimes the train would stop, and the close neighbors would give them cookies and the girls would give the soldiers their names and addresses.

I remember the church bells ringing and factory whistles blowing when the war ended, and everyone running out into the street to rejoice with great relief at the good news.

☆☆☆

The account of the *Mt. Hood* explosion is buried in a volume entitled "U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings." Stories of the men awarded Purple Hearts and other medals are also filed away. But all who served during the war are heroes, not just those men and women who received awards. Interviewing them and publishing their stories gives them honor and recognition for the sacrifices they made.

Your book will be preserving history in the form of personal accounts of actual happenings by the soldiers themselves! I will consider Paul honored when I see a story about him included in your book. The completed publication will be a great accomplishment for all who work on it. I congratulate you for taking on this major project and wish you the best of luck with it.



Duty Calls

The Story of Pat Sweeney

Crystal

Before World War II, Pat Sweeney led a normal American life. In 1942, Sweeney worked at North Home Furniture, which is now Flexsteel. As a young adult, Pat was drafted and was taken into the Army Air Force. Mr. Sweeney said, "It was hard to say goodbye, and I felt it was too early." World War II disrupted Sweeney's life because he wanted to finish school.

After joining the Army Air Force, Pat Sweeney had to go through basic training. During basic training, he was trained to be a soldier, then a technician. After attending different trade schools, Mr. Sweeney was reassigned to the 45th Air Depot Group.

The *R.M.S. Aquitania* played an important role in World War II and transported the 45th Air Depot Group to Europe. It transported most of the 45th Air Depot Group from Kilmere, New Jersey, to different posts in England. At first, the *Aquitania* was a luxury ship. Then, the *Aquitania* was converted to a war ship, a large transporter of soldiers. Pat said, "The trip was long and difficult. While on duty, I only got eight hours of sleep for five days." During the journey to England, the *Aquitania* kept changing course to throw the submarines off. Sweeney said, "I was nervous about going to England, but I knew it was part of the service." He was nervous because he didn't know what to expect, and he didn't know if he would ever return home.

The 45th Air Depot Group spent almost 16 months preparing for the invasion of Europe. Pat Sweeney said, "We didn't focus strictly on military things because our jobs were first priority." The 45th Air Depot Group worked with other attached units. Some of the attached units were the ordnance, quartermaster, and signal corps.

Mr. Sweeney gave me a quick overview of the different groups that made up the European Theater Operations. "The European Theater Operations were in charge of Mediterranean bombing. In Italy, they were coordinated with the Tenth Air Force. Working in England, was the Eighth Air Force. Also, the Ninth Air Force continued with the invasion. Finally, the Eighth and the Tenth Air Forces were involved with heavy and long range bombing and were not involved in the North African battle. After North Africa surrendered, the Eighth and the Tenth Air Forces were involved with the invasion of Italy."

Pat was a mechanic and a supply technician at a London Air Base. As a mechanic, Pat Sweeney power-operated the gun turrets and computed sites. Being a supply technician, he covered about thirty different classes of material, ranging from complete aircraft to nuts and bolts.

When Pat Sweeney was not on duty, he spent a lot of time thinking of the past and hoping to live for the future. Sweeney said, "Anything could have happened." During World War II, the scattered air raids made life so unpredictable. Thinking of his family kept him going.

The different air bases of England had day rooms. The day room was used by the men as a place to gather, read books, play cards, and play pool. Every night, the lights went out at 9:00 P.M. and Mr. Sweeney was grateful for all of the soldiers that could see another day.

Due to World War II, many new fighting strategies were used. Sweeney said, "Central fire control was a big change in my eyes. Central fire control was a fighting strategy where only the pilot could shoot fire." Also, Mr. Sweeney had to get used to using radar. Pat had a buddy who was an electrical engineer. His name was Harold Aderton, and he developed high altitude photography. Aderton and many technicians went up in planes at night and took pictures to help plan attack strategies. High altitude photography gave the veterans a lot of advantages. The United States wanted to liberate the entire continent of Europe, so every six weeks they would take another picture to observe military maneuvering by the enemy.

After the war came to an end in 1945, Sweeney did not stay in contact with any of the boys from the England Air Base, but he stayed in contact with some of the veterans that he served with throughout World War II. Charles Guemelata was the veteran that kept the veterans together for fifty-two annual reunions. Though Guemelata passed away, Pat Sweeney still has telephone conversations with his widow and family, and the annual reunion continues.

In 1995, the 49th reunion took place in Dubuque, Iowa. The reunion brought buddies together from twenty-two different states. The reunions meant a lot to the veterans. At the reunions, Pat and his buddies talked about their memories and successes. Pat said, "We worked in different areas but were still a group." Mr. Sweeney said, "I'm still in contact with six men from Iowa and eight men from Wisconsin." Pat uses e-mail to keep in contact with the veterans from Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, California, Ohio, and Illinois.

After the war, the veterans got an opportunity to go back to school. The G.I. Bill was organized, so the soldiers had something to look forward to. Pat thought the G.I. Bill was great because it gave many people opportunities to move on with their lives. He added, "I got very disgusted every time I thought about being forced to join the war. The war was so sudden and everyone had to think quickly and focus on saving their land."

In conclusion, Pat Sweeney said that he liked World War II because he was exposed to many cultures, but he didn't like how the war disrupted his life. Pat worked very hard making sure all of the aircraft were in stable condition, so that their missions would be successful. Mr. Sweeney always got his tasks completed, and during his free time, he helped others. Finally, Pat acknowledged all of the veterans' hard work.



Some Thoughts of Yesteryear and World War II Days

Dale

Edited by Joe

The following narrative was written by Mr. Dale Walbrun of Dubuque, Iowa. His original story gives the reader one young boy's perspective on the events that affected not only his life, but the lives of virtually everyone with whom he came in contact during World War II. From December 7, 1941, to August of 1945, Dale's personal account describes the war from the point of view of a ten-year old boy, and is left in its original language, with few changes. Words in italics reflect the emphasis in the original writing.

I was born in 1935, so I was only ten years old when the war was finally over. As a very young kid on December 7, 1941, I can still *well remember* when Pearl Harbor was attacked. I can still see, *after all these years, the look of fright* on my mother's face when she told me that our country was at war. I was too young then to *understand* what war was, but I'll always remember the look on mother's face, so I knew that war was something *real bad*.

As soon as war was declared, my father, Ed Walbrun, wanted to rush off and enlist in the service. In those days *all* Americans were very patriotic, and our brave men and many women flocked to the 'colors.' My father didn't make it into the war. Each time Dad wanted to enlist, Mother would talk him out of it. In fact, Father and Mother would have one big fight each year about it, but each time my mother would win the 'verbal battle,' and Dad was again talked out of enlisting.

This went on until 1944 when Dad was called up by the Draft Board. Dad was in his glory. At last he would get a crack at either the Japs (sic) or the Nazis. Dad didn't care which one, just as long as he could fight for his country, the good old USA. When Dad was called up for the service, my mother was crushed, and I can still see the look of *dread* on her face. Dad assured Mother that he would be OK, as Dad was very sure of himself. He was also highly skilled in the use of firearms.

Dad was called up in 1944 by the Draft Board along with my second cousin, John Gruber. John was a married man with two children and another on the way. John never got to see this unborn child. Dad and John went together to Des Moines, Iowa, to take the service exam. Dad and John were in a lineup for the exam. John was only three to five men up from Dad, and the call came out that no more married men would be taken. The Draft Board cut the line off only two men in front of Dad.

Dad came home to the joy and relief of my mother, but Dad was crushed for weeks. He really wanted to serve his country and go to war. John Gruber was trained for service and went to England. From there he went to Omaha Beach in the invasion of Normandy. Poor John hit the beach, and a big land mine blew him to pieces. They could only identify John by his dog tags. He gave his all, and is now buried in France. We all took the passing of John very hard.

All Americans in those days were very patriotic. We took our hats off when we saw our flag, and as kids, we all gave a salute to any of our heroes in uniform. For us kids to see one of our brave men in uniform, it made our day, and we always saluted them. When the troop train would pass, all us kids would wave to the boys in uniform, and would holler to them to throw souvenirs and chocolate candy bars. The men on the train would toss war souvenirs and GI chocolate bars to us. Every kid in those days collected war souvenirs, and if you got a GI chocolate bar, then you really had something, as in the World War II days, everything was rationed.

I wrote about us kids collecting war souvenirs, and I should write about the best war souvenirs that, as a kid, I ever collected. They were a pair of Japanese Navy swords. I got them from my Uncle Paul Bardrick. Uncle Paul went all through World War II. First Paul was in Europe, and he told me he had a *really safe* and simple job. The only thing Paul had to do was simply drive a truck that was loaded with gasoline up to the front line. I would say it was a damn dangerous job. Paul got hit once by a German 88 (German artillery), and the good old Lord must have been sitting on Paul's shoulder because the gasoline truck didn't explode.

As the war in Europe was winding down, Paul was transferred to go fight the Japs (sic) in the Pacific. Paul had a Thompson sub machine gun. His job was to mop up islands that our boys had taken, but still had Jap (sic) holdouts on some of them. On this day Paul had told me about, he was in the jungle and heard a ruckus. He found two Jap (sic) Navy officers fighting each other with swords, for no apparent reason. Paul ended the sword fight with a couple of blasts of the Thompson sub machine gun, and after the war, I inherited the two Jap (sic) Navy swords, my most prized souvenirs.

In 1941, we moved into town on Kaufman Avenue and lived there all through the war years. I went to Sacred Heart School, and as I was walking there each day, my friends and I would look at all the red, white, and blue flags that hung in the front windows of homes. The flags in the windows showed that the people that lived there had a boy in the armed forces. We were always happy to see a silver star on the flag because that meant the man in the service was alive and well. On the other hand, a gold star brought great sadness because that meant the soldier had been killed in action. There was also a big flag in church, filled with gold and silver stars, which represented all the men in the parish who were in uniform. As long as the bitter war dragged on and on, we saw more and more of the gold stars. America lost over 300,000 brave men in World War II, and if not for the atom bomb, the war would have probably lasted for eight or ten more years. If so, I too, would have went off to fight for the good old USA.

In 1941, my father went working as a carpenter. Dad was a good worker, and he was paid a dollar an hour. He also worked a 40-hour week. Dad told Mother that he really had the world by the tail. Dad never thought he would see a buck an hour in his lifetime or a 40-hour week either. A buck an hour doesn't sound like much in today's world, but in 1941, my folks bought their house for only \$1,600. A man's wages went a long way back then.

My Grandfather Lay was born on September 30, 1886 in Obersfeltaha, Germany. He immigrated to America in March of 1910. Grandfather Lay was a very patriotic American, and he hated Hitler and the Nazis. Grandfather raised a victory garden and helped with scrap drives. When I would mow his lawn, Grandfather would always leave a big 'V' for Victory

on the lawn. A lot of people left the 'V' on the grass. The symbol on the lawn was eight or ten feet long and a foot or more in width.

My Lay grandparents also helped with the war effort by raising a one-half block long victory garden. Grandfather Lay told me to gather the pods of milkweed plants. I spent a lot of time in my summers gathering gunnysacks of these milkweed pods to use for the war effort. Many kids, beside myself, gathered these milkweed pods. My wife, Delores, who I would first meet in 15 years in 1955, along with her sisters, also collected gunnysacks of milkweed. We were told this was to make a warm lining in pilots' suits. After the war was over, you didn't see many milkweeds growing.

As a young kid, we lived in the country. In those days, game hunting was a very important part of your livelihood. In the fall of one year, rabbits and squirrels were the main meats that you lived on if you lived in a rural area. In the summer, we ate a lot of fish that Dad caught. In the fall of the next year, Dad would sit out in the yard with his .22 caliber Marlin lever action rifle and would shoot across the valley two or three shots, and would *always* have two or three squirrels. These were our supper for the next evening. We also raised a garden. With doing the hunting, on top of the garden, we helped the war effort.

We did everything we could for the war effort. We would save all tin foil. A toothpaste tube in those days was made out of *real* tin and not aluminum. We would find someone's junk or trash piles and find a bit of copper or brass. We were more than happy to turn it in to a scrap drive, and aluminum was real precious. Many women turned in many of their aluminum cooking pots and kettles to the scrap drives. I can still remember a small, house-sized pile of aluminum pots and pans that was in front of the police station at 13th Street. Even the World War I German cannon that was in front of the Courthouse yard was turned into scrap for the war effort. We even saved tin cans. In those days the cans had a tin lining in them, and they also were turned into the war effort. A rubber tire today is a menace, but in the World War II days, if a kid would find an old rubber tire in a ditch someplace and turn it into a rubber drive, the kid was praised. The kid really felt good that he was helping the war effort. I only found two old rubber tires to turn in.

I also must mention that the kids were not paid for these things, and we didn't expect to get paid. We were just helping the war effort, and that was payment enough. Another thing that helped the war effort was coal. Coal in those days was the main fuel for winter heat and also cooking. In the winter we had a coal fire in our kitchen stove, our only heat in the house in those days. Mother would cook all meals on the wood and coal stove. In summer, we had a kerosene stove to cook on, and this didn't make the house hot.

The coal trucks could be seen every day in winter, and a lot of loose coal would fall off the truck. It didn't go to waste. Us kids, (sic) on the way home from school, would mostly all have a big, market-like paper sack that we had carried our lunch in. After lunch was eaten, the big paper sack was saved, and on the way home from school, we picked up any and all coal we saw in the street. This could be a big chunk of rock coal, to a little bit of coal. It wasn't much, but in a week, a kid might find a whole coal bucket full, and in the wintertime, it helped the war effort.

Coal, like all things back then, was rationed. You could only purchase just so much of everything, no matter how much money you had. It didn't make any difference each month.

You got your 'ration book,' and just so many 'red' and so many 'blue' ration points. These ration points were like small change, while the 'stamps' in the ration book were like the big paper money. And for anything you bought, you had to lay out so many ration stamps and points, along with the money for which they cost. Rich and poor alike were rationed.

When you are an eight or ten-year-old kid, the four years that World War II went on seemed to last forever. But finally, 1945 rolled around, and World War II ended. The Nazis surrendered and by August 14, of 1945, we had dropped an atom bomb on each Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japs (sic) were hollering to the president to stop bombing, and the war ended. A lot of people today scream and holler about us bombing the poor Japs (sic), but 55 years ago, we Americans thought a lot different. My mother heard that we had blown hell out of the Japs (sic) with atom bombs. Ma said that the Japs (sic) had it coming because they sneak-attacked us. Ma said that the bastards had it coming. We all knew that the A-bomb probably saved a million American lives, and the atom bomb also saved millions of Japs (sic). Without the 'big egg,' the Japs (sic) would have been fighting on until 1954 or 1955. Since the World War II days, I have had several friends who served as POWs of the Japs (sic). They told me that you had a 57% chance that you would not survive if you were a prisoner of the Japs (sic).

The first I knew that the war had ended was early one day. I was on my way to school. Some guy asked where I was going, so I told him I was going to school. The guy told me there wasn't any school today because the war was over. I didn't need any more convincing, and I turned right around and headed home. On the way, I heard church bells ringing, factory whistles blowing, and several people were in their yard shooting a shotgun in the air. We were all wild with joy because the war was finally over.

I have many, many more memories of the World War II days of 56 years ago, and I thank the good Lord God that America won it.

While editing this manuscript, I have learned a lot about the World War II era. Dale's original story was nearly 30 pages in length. Piecing it together into a chronological narrative was a complicated process, but the final result brought relief and joy to me. It's a unique feeling when I read about what it was like over 50 years ago because our country was at war then, and people of my generation haven't really experienced a war of this magnitude. I'm thankful that a story like this one came my way, and I hope other teenagers read this and think the same way as I did.

★ Bob Zehentner A Modest Hero

T.J.

Bob Zehentner is a World War II veteran who was born and raised in Dubuque. His story is an important part of why America was able to win the war. Even though many years have passed since he fought for his country, Bob's memory is still sharp. In this story he speaks of his unforgettable experiences and events that will never be found in the average textbook. We are proud that he has given us his stories to be written in our book.

Bob's early life before World War II was a busy one. "I was involved with two business establishments, The King of Clubs, which I started, and Zehentner's Market, a family-owned store," he said.

Bob accomplished this immediately after his graduation from Dubuque Senior High School, and he had plans of going on to college in the near future. He continued, "I was involved with a heavy schedule of sports as I was on a bowling team, and played and sponsored softball teams. I also did quite a bit of fishing and hunting."

However, before the outbreak of World War II, Bob's most important interests were in flying, aviation and planes. "I began taking flying lessons in 1939 which continued until I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in the spring of 1941. I just turned 23 when war was declared on December 7, 1941," exclaimed Bob. He then continued to say, "Of course, before December 7, 1941 our country was involved in supplying our allies in the European conflict,



so many young people had to consider their future around our entry into the European war. In fact, the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, I was at home studying an Army Air Corps Flying Cadet course on mathematics as it pertained to flying."

Bob had already applied for admission to the Flying Cadet Program, but was put on hold until there was an opening, as the Army Flying training fields had limited space at that time. "Because of my interest in flying that went way back to 1927, when Lindbergh made his solo flight across the Atlantic in the Spirit of St. Louis, I volunteered early as I wanted to serve in the Army Air Corps."

When Bob finally realized he would be flying, he compared himself to another American who felt that fortune had smiled upon him. "As the world famous baseball player, Lou Gehrig said, 'Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth,'" said Bob.

He continued, "I started my combat flying career in North Africa against the Nazi forces, then moved up to Italy as the campaign advanced." Bob was a member of the 81st Bomb Squadron, 12th Bomb Group known as the "Earthquakers," a name they acquired from the German General Irwin Rommel. According to Bob, "He (Rommel) stated that when our planes attacked, it sounded like an earthquake."

When the Japanese forces invaded India, the entire 12th Bomb Group was transferred there, and Bob spent the next year and a half flying 74 more combat bombing missions. "The highlight of my military career probably was when my plane bombed and destroyed the Japanese supply depot in central Burma." Many military people thought this action saved thousands of lives and shortened the China/Burma/India campaign by many months.

About hearing the news that Paul Tibbets and his crew had dropped the atomic bomb on Japan, Bob felt relief, but also had confused feelings about the bombing. "There were many mixed feelings because of the tremendous loss of life. An invasion of the Japanese mainland would have been very costly for Allied forces. I was very fortunate that this decision never was passed onto me, as all of my targets were railroad yards, bridges, air fields, supply depots, and similar targets," he said.

Among the many decorations Bob was awarded was the *Presidential Citation Award*. According to the description, this medal is awarded to units

Of the armed forces of the United States and co-belligerent nations for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy on or after 7 December 1941. The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing their mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart and above other units participating in the same campaign.

Bob earned the *Distinguished Flying Cross*, which is awarded

To any person who, while serving in any capacity with the armed forces of the United States, distinguishes himself by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight. The performance of the act of heroism must be evidenced by voluntary action above and beyond the call of duty. The extraordinary achievement must have resulted in an accomplishment so exceptional and outstanding as to clearly set the individual apart from his comrades or from other persons in similar circumstances.

Bob was also presented with the *China War Medal*, from the Nationalist Chinese Government. He received the *Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster*, and the British Government presented him with the *Burma Star*. The *Burma Star* was awarded for "one day or more of operational service during the Burma campaign between the 11th of December 1941 and the 2nd of September 1945."

When World War II ended, Bob was asked to join the Army Air Force Reserves, which he did. His military service has totaled 37 years. By staying in the Air Force Reserves, Bob got an opportunity to remain close to the mission of the Air Force. And, of course, at reunions, old memories of certain missions and events would come up. But as a matter of course, Bob revealed, "Most veterans would rather not talk about some of the tragedies of war and war experiences."

Bob then went on to discuss a mission about which he rarely spoke. "In one case, I was assigned to the British 14th Army headquarters in Monywa, Burma, as one of the three flying officers to coordinate U.S. forces with the British forces. During one dramatic mission briefing, the three U.S. officers were let in on the MOST CRITICAL TOP SECRET OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA CAMPAIGN AND THAT WAS THAT THE BRITISH HAD A SPY IN THE JAPANESE HEADQUARTERS IN RANGOON, BURMA" (sic). Bob and the other two officers were dramatically told that if they talked about that or even mentioned it outside of the war room, they all would be court marshalled and shot, and the General who was talking said he would be doing the shooting, while pointing at them!

To this day, Bob is sentimental about those service men who did not come home after the war. To him, they are the men and women who should be honored. "As I mentioned at a Veterans Day Memorial Service a couple of years ago, the real heroes gave their lives, or were disabled and they can't do their own talking."

For years Bob had nightmares about his war experiences and would wake up in a cold sweat. "Many nights I would dream the walls were closing in on me from all four sides. Some of my best Air Force friends never came home to their loved ones and families. All had dreams of being back home and getting married and raising a family. To say that war is hell is putting it mildly. War is like TEN HELLS (sic) all blowing up around you at the same time. To put it in some sort of perspective, watch the war films on the *History Channel* night after night. I pray to God that some day soon, world peace will come, and wars will be no more."

Being married to a terrific lady, Mary Rita, and having seven children and fourteen grandchildren has helped Bob in a big way to overcome his tragic war memories. Also, becoming so involved with gigantic civic projects in Dubuque did not give Bob much time to let his thoughts and mental images of the horrors of war rekindle.

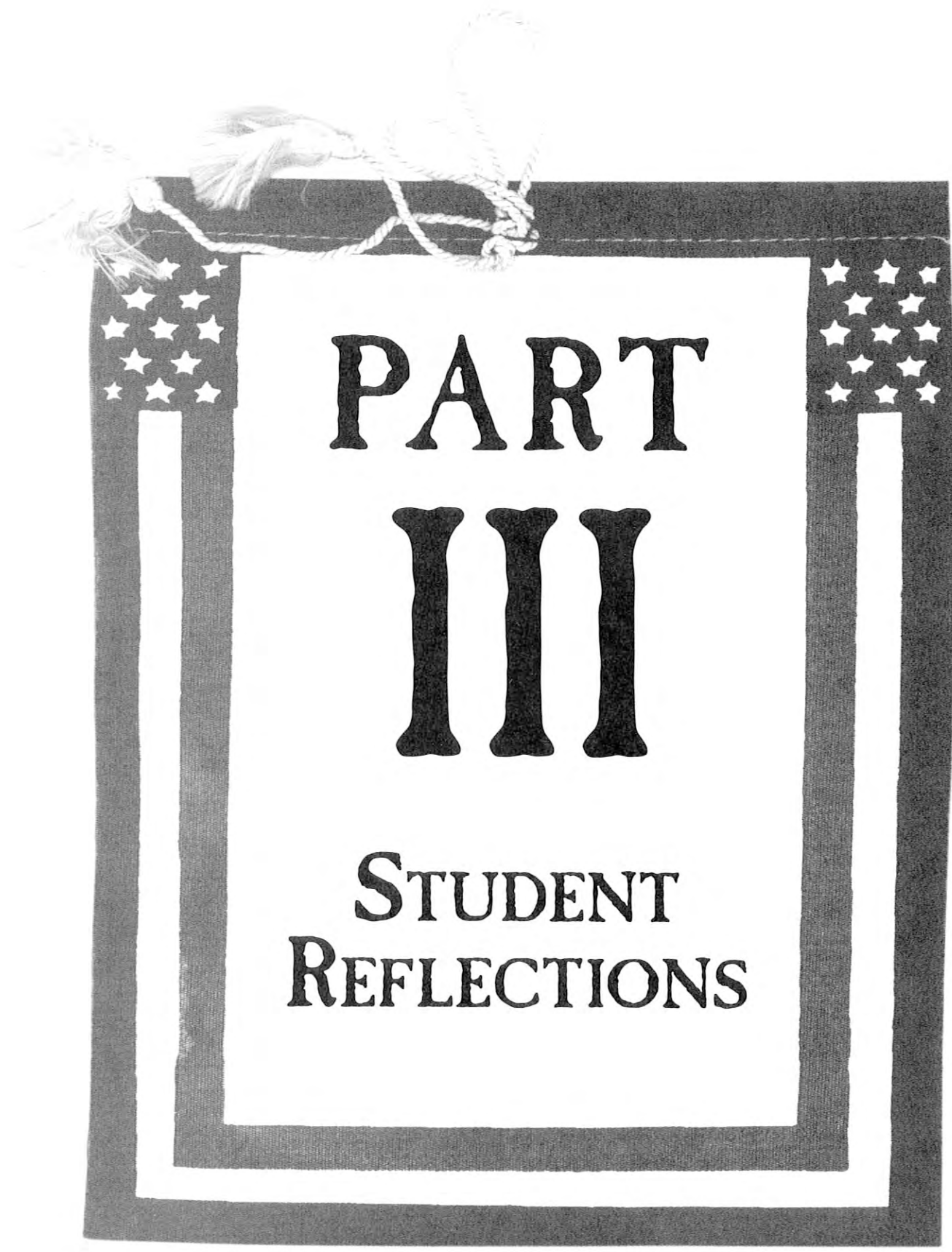
According to Bob, "World War II changed everyone's life who was a part of the world at that time. The victors as well as the vanquished were never the same. The price of freedom, liberty and justice for all on earth does not come without a terrible price for mankind. If man could only find another way to solve world problems and conflicts. I don't know the answer. My country called me, and I responded the best way I knew how," Bob commented.

In one of his meetings with a top ranking Air Force Officer during World War II, Bob stated, "I wanted to be a flying officer, for if I had to sacrifice my life for my country, I wanted it to be in the Air Corps flying." His (the officer's) terse response to me was, "Well Lieutenant, isn't that what war is? Sacrifice and maybe giving your life for your country?"

Bob's two brothers also served during World War II. George was a Technical Sergeant in the Army Air Corps, and Joe worked for the Navy building ships in San Diego.

Bob concluded, "I've been very thankful that God helped me through World War II, and that I was able to return home to raise a fine family, and enjoy the freedom and the millions of benefits in our great country, the greatest in the world. But it came at a terrific price. Over sixteen million Americans served in uniform during World War II, and nearly half a million gave their lives in the service of their country. Let's never forget those who made the supreme sacrifice so that we could remain free."

Bob Zehentner would rather not be in the spotlight, but let others take credit for winning the war. In fact, he is a hero not only because he helped win the war, but also because he has not forgotten the sacrifices that were made by the other soldiers and sailors. Bob's is a truly great story written by a truly great man.



PART

III

**STUDENT
REFLECTIONS**



Lisa

Central Alternative High School student

Lisa has been attending Central for a year and a half and is currently a sophomore.

I would take this class for every history class because I am not sitting all class period and listening to a teacher. I thought all history classes were boring, but this class was fun. We did something new every day, and very seldom found anyone not working.

One challenging part of this class was the teachers. They never made you do something only twice. It might have seemed like it, but I was always doing something different, and they always had something new to say about my paper. But there was nothing I could do about it, except redo my paper. Another difficult thing in this class was meeting the deadlines and having everything so perfect and in the right order. Making the research book was fun, but challenging. To overcome this, I stuck to doing my work in order to get it finished on time and be suitable for my teachers.

I think this World War II project will let the vets open up more and tell stories that are untold. And the citizens of Dubuque, especially the younger adults, will respect these veterans and know that if it was not for the vets, we would not be here today or have what we now have.

When I first came into the class, John and Tim said we had to raise money to have a seminar and needed to raise nearly \$5,000 in order for this project to be complete. I had my doubts, but once we started receiving letters and donations, I did not have any more doubts because the community really wanted to help us. I just want to say thank you to everyone that helped us.



Heidi

Central Alternative High School student

Heidi has been attending Central for three years and is currently a junior. She joined the World War II research class at the start of the third quarter, in January, 2000.

Before I started this class, I thought I knew something about the war from my Grandpa. When I called him for information, I found out that he was in the Vietnam war. So basically I did not know anything about World War II, but I caught on very quickly.

When I think of a history class, I think of boring books and sleeping during classes. This class is all hands-on and nothing is given to you. My partner and I had to get all of the information ourselves. Nobody was there to tell us what to do step-by-step; we did everything ourselves.

The hardest thing for me was the fact that we had basically one month to do our work, for this book and to make it perfect. I knew we were running out of time, but we always got stuck, whether it was finding all the correct information or contacting a person to interview. I had to take a lot of work home and listen to the interview tapes over and over in order to get all the information we needed for our papers.

To me, this class was like being at a newspaper office at the last minute before the paper is printed. We were the reporters running around making sure everything was right, making corrections, and still getting information. No matter where I was in the building, I always found someone working. Somebody was always typing, talking on the phone, interviewing people, or finding people to re-read our papers.



Drew

Central Alternative High School student

Drew is a senior at Central who will graduate in the fall of 2000. This is his third research project and seminar class. To date, he is the only Central student to claim this academic achievement.

Upon entering this project (I do not consider it a class, it is so much more than that), I had a fairly clear idea of what I was getting into. I had been involved in two projects similar to this one, but as I would soon learn, this project would be bigger than anything our (maybe any) school has ever done. In the fall of 1999, when our group first dis-

cussed the idea of holding a public seminar to honor local veterans, a few students may have had their doubts. But when the idea of writing a book to be professionally published and inviting General Paul Tibbets to join us came up, all skepticism was pushed aside and was replaced with a fierce sense of duty. The class pulled together, and although the project may not have always run "like clockwork," I do not have any complaints concerning our project. I feel that the students of this project truly took to the idea of doing something nice for those who fought and gave their lives for our freedoms some 40 years before we were born.

Personally, I sometimes (most of the time) find it difficult to mentally "get up" for a math test or a chapter review in a science book. But when I become involved in a project that makes a difference and actually matters, I become inspired. I think this may be true for other students involved in the class as well. Although a math test or a chapter review may prove to be very important to a student's transcripts, it matters very little outside the realm of high school.

A teacher can preach the same sermon out of his "good book" seven times a day for twenty years, but has he really taught anything? He certainly has not learned anything. When a teacher places the responsibility for learning in the hands of the student, he is teaching something far more important than anything found in a textbook. He is teaching each student to go out and explore and seek out knowledge instead of having it force-fed to him. He is teaching each student to teach himself, and ultimately is teaching him how to learn.



Crystal

Central Alternative High School student

Crystal is now a senior and has been attending Central for one year.

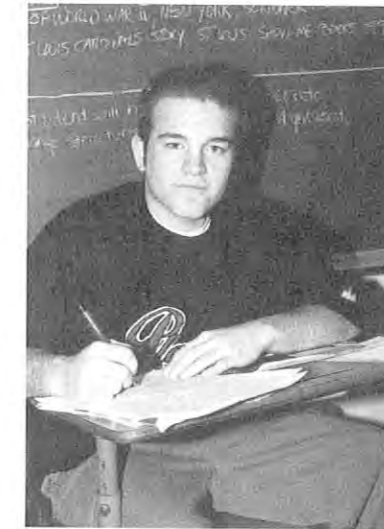
This research class has been very different from other history classes I have endured over the years. I enjoyed interviewing veterans and finding out about the experiences they had during World War II. Also, I think it is great how we are recognizing the veterans for their achievements in our book and at our seminar at Five Flags. Finally, we got to create a research book and get it published. I have never learned so much and had such a blast in the process.

Many things went through my mind when we first discussed the possibility of having a public seminar, inviting General Tibbets to Dubuque, and trying to raise the funds needed to pull the whole thing off. I was unsure about being able to raise the funds. Also, I was worried about meeting a publication deadline. I was excited to have a public seminar because it would give World War II veterans a chance to be recognized. Inviting General Tibbets to Dubuque was a great idea. It gives people a chance to meet the man who dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, learn about World War II, and recognize the achievements of many veterans. In the end, everything seemed to work out great. We have succeeded.

My first reaction to having to make corrections, corrections, and then more corrections was not a positive reaction. Now that I am right in the middle of the research process, my attitude about the draft process has changed dramatically. I believe that the draft process enables students to complete their work to the best of their ability. The draft process gets very frustrating, but your work will reflect your effort in revising your paper. This quarter, revision was essential because we had to get the book ready for publication.

I think this research project and seminar will accomplish many things for the World War II veterans and citizens of Dubuque. It will give the veterans a chance to be recognized. Also, it will give the citizens of Dubuque and others a chance to be informed about World War II.

In conclusion, I think everyone involved with the World War II Project has done a great job on meeting deadlines and completing this project with success. Everyone worked very hard to make this seminar happen and to get the book published.



Jake

Central Alternative High School student

Jake attended Central for three and a half years and graduated at semester in January of 2000.

Before I got into this class, I did not know about any specific events during World War II. I just knew that it was another war. This class is different than other history classes because you do not get lectures all hour or do work out of a textbook. This class was not like other classes. Everybody did their work and seemed to be on task. People helped each other when needed. Students did not wait for the information, they

went out on their own and found it. I have never been interested in history before, but after being in this class, I saw a new way of learning.

When I first heard we were having a seminar and we were having Paul Tibbets come to it, I did not know if it would be possible to raise enough money. I had seen what other Central classes in the Tuskegee Project and the JFK Project had done, but I did not know if it was possible to have an even larger project. After being in the class and talking to many different people about the project, I have seen how interested everybody was. I then knew it would be possible to pull off anything that we put our minds to.

The most difficult challenge was writing papers. I did not know how to write a good paper until I did lots of revisions, and the teachers showed me how. When I first got into this class and I turned my paper in, only to get it back for corrections, I was not happy. I thought I was going to be done. But now that I have been in this class for a while, I know that it is necessary to go through much critiquing to make your paper perfect. I now like to have my papers corrected so that they are complete.

I think what we are doing makes the World War II veterans feel very good about themselves. Also, this is very good for the citizens of Dubuque because people will always remember this, and when people say they are from Dubuque, others will ask them if they know anybody included in this project.

This has been one of the best experiences in my life. I have never done anything that had as much meaning for so many different people. I also think it would not be possible to pull something off like this without the good teachers we have. This experience will help me throughout my life.

James

Central Alternative High School student

James is a junior this year, and has been a member of the class for one quarter, which began in January.

Before I attended this class, I had only known stuff that you would learn in the textbook about World War II. After speaking with someone who was actually in the war, I was able to get a whole new perspective about it.

This class has been unlike any other class I have ever taken. Instead of relying on a boring textbook for getting research, I was able to speak with the people who experienced the war firsthand.

The most difficult challenge was for us to meet deadlines. I had just started the class at the beginning of the quarter with only a few weeks left until we had to get the research to the publisher. I overcame this challenge by getting as much work done as possible during the hours I had in class every day to complete my research.

This project gave me a different perspective of Central High School itself because they were doing something as big as this. This project also made me view the issue of war a lot differently than I did before I came to the class.

I think this project has given the veterans a chance to speak their peace about the war, and it will also give the citizens of Dubuque a chance to recognize the veterans who live in our town.



Aaron

Central Alternative High School student

Aaron is a senior this year and has been a student at Central for nine months.

When I entered this class, I knew many things about Hitler and everything else that is taught to a person in a high school history class. Since becoming interested in World War II, I have learned more about the ghettos and the often-debated number of six million Jews killed during this time.

This research class has been different than any other research class because we actually did research. Any other class at a traditional school is the same every day; students sit and listen to a teacher read from a teacher's edition of a history book. However, in John and Tim's class, we picked our own

report topic, and we also were able to choose a name of a World War II veteran, or family member of a vet, that we could interview. This is so different, because in a traditional school, the teacher assigns your topic.

This history class has changed my perception of other history classes because we have the chance to host a seminar at the Five Flags Civic Center. We have already hosted the "Warbirds Weekend" back in October, and it was very successful. A project like this has never been done before by any other school, and I have never done this before.

I think that this research project will expose the younger tri-state community to what life was like during World War II, not only in America, but also in the tri-state area. Our book will be a written testament of what these men and women went through; some of them have not told these stories for fifty years, or have not told them at all. I hope people will read the interviews and gain a knowledgeable respect of what these people went through, as well as understanding the horrors of war.

We can read these interviews and somewhat comprehend what our grandparents, friends, and neighbors went through, but we cannot ever capture the era and feeling that everybody had in that time. We could never know how genuine the feelings were when an "official" delivered the Western Union telegram to their door informing a family that a son or sons had died. We also will never know the anxiety that they felt about Japanese-Americans or German-Americans living around them, and the thoughts that went through their minds about decent people because a couple of mentally inept people decided, "We want the world . . . and we want it . . . NOW!"



Nick

Central Alternative High School student

Nick attended Central for three and a half years and graduated in January, 2000.

To tell you the truth, I did not know much about World War II. In previous history classes at other schools, teachers would spend a couple of weeks on one topic. At Central, you spend nine weeks on one topic that you want to research. Even now I do not know a lot about World War II, but I know the basics. At other schools, you do not go out and interview veterans. The last time I was in a

"normal" history class, the teacher would lecture and the students would take notes for the whole class period.

Last year, I had many problems in this class. I did some research on a topic that I picked, and it was a pain. There was not a lot of information available for my topic. Instead of struggling with the lack of information, I helped get ready for Central High School's

Warbirds Weekend display that came to the Dubuque Regional Airport back in October, 1999. Then, I decided to write thank you letters to the people who helped get the warplanes here. This year, I came into the class again, but could only do a small number of things because I was about to graduate.

When I first came into the class this year, I felt weird because everybody had things to get accomplished. It took a couple of days to get something to do. Then, when everyone had something to do, occasionally, some students started to slack off and not do their work, but mostly we were actively engaged in our own learning.

The idea of having the public seminar, inviting General Paul Tibbets, and raising the money to pull all of this off, never had happened to this degree before. I did not know whether or not we could pull it off again like other classes had done in the past, but we did it.

This class has not really changed my view of history classes because I was in some of these "outrageously talented" teachers' classes before. And when you are in these classes, everyone knows that they are going to make corrections. No one is perfect. For example, when one of the "outrageously talented" teachers gives me the 10th draft back to make corrections, I sometimes did not want to make some of the corrections that he told me to make, especially when he told me to change it back to what I had previously written!

I think the seminar will do many things for our school. Everybody has stereotypes about Central students, and this project will help create some more good thoughts about the school. The citizens of our community will always remember being a part of Paul Tibbets coming to our town. The veterans will hopefully get a monument and more.

Of course, the "outrageously talented" teachers also need some credit for keeping such good students as myself in line. I would like to thank John Adelman, Tim Ebeling, and all the other people who helped me get my interview papers in their final shape. Oh, and I finally graduated!!!



Andy

Central Alternative High School student

Andy is a 10th grader and has been at Central for a year.

Before I got into the World War II class, I did not know much about World War II, except that America won the war and that we dropped the atomic bomb to do so.

On the first day of class, John and Tim asked us what we thought about writing a book and having it professionally published, and what we thought about having a seminar with many people expected to show up for it. Well, I didn't think it was possible. But now, after three quarters of being in the class, I'm finally seeing things fall into place.

During this class I was involved in interviewing a veteran named Verne Mauer, a member of the 44th Tank Battalion. I also had a hand in writing a paper on Doolittle, a general who launched one of the first attacks on Japan in April of 1942. He really gave the Americans a shot in the arm when we needed it.

This class was a lot better than a traditional school history class because we did not just sit around and read from textbooks and take scantron tests. We actually got out in the community and talked to real people who had real stories to tell. I had a lot of fun in this history class, and feel good about being able to do something for the veterans and citizens of Dubuque.



Nick

Central Alternative High School student

Nick is a senior this year at Central, and he plans to graduate in 2001. He has been a student here for one semester.

Before entering this class, I knew quite a bit about World War II. I knew who was involved, and what country was on what side. I knew a lot about the leaders and their countries' motivations for war. I know more than the average person about the time period and events involved. But what I didn't know really mattered.

For example, I didn't know what it was like to live in that time, what feelings and emotions the people had then. I didn't know the gruesome details of battle at the front. I didn't know what really goes on in a close combat bloodbath, in which many men are killed and wounded.

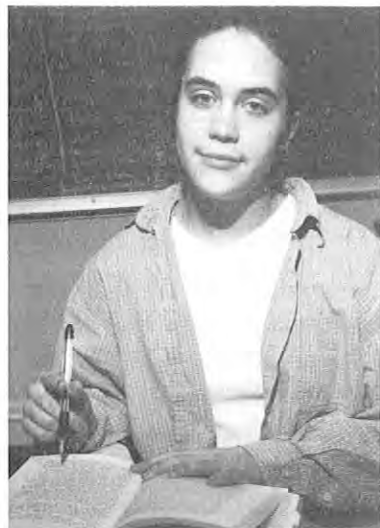
I didn't know these things because the only way I had learned history previously was through reading facts and books in regular boring history classes. But in this class, I learned in a much better way what life in the war was like from a man who actually fought in it. I learned from a direct source in an interview with a World War II veteran. I learned things that were never in a book, until now. My knowledge of the events of World War II now far surpasses the regular textbook learning that most people have.

I faced many challenges in this class that were new to me. For instance, I had to interview a veterans my very first day here. I had never really interviewed anyone before, and wasn't exactly sure on how to conduct a good interview. Fortunately, the man I interviewed was patient and had a lot of good stories to tell me. Another challenge I faced was interweaving my textbook knowledge with the stories and experiences of the veteran I interviewed into a complete tale of the events that involved my interviewee.

I have learned more in this class because it operates much differently than any history class I have been in before. In this class, we were almost never lectured to by the teachers. Instead,

we were doing mostly independent research on specific topics. We did not use textbooks in this class. We found out about what we wanted to know and what interested us, instead of getting a general education. We wrote our papers and submitted them to the teachers for editing.

I have learned many things in this class that I could not have learned in a regular, old history class. I have enjoyed my time here more so than in any other class that I have previously taken. I look forward to working with these teachers on other projects in the future.



Casie

Central Alternative High School student

Casie is in the 11th grade and has been a student at Central for one quarter.

This history class has been different for me in many ways. I like the way that it's not just reading out of a book; instead, we get to make a book. I love how it's not just lecturing about people of the past because I never really learned that way. I've been able to learn a great deal about World War II.

One of the more difficult challenges about this class is we have a deadline that can't fluctuate. It's a lot of work, and everything has to be perfect. There is no time to mess up, and you can't just mess around or block out what's going on. To overcome this challenge, I came to class every day and worked my hardest to get everything done because there wasn't a lot of time.

I enjoyed this class because everyone was there for you if you needed help. At times it was difficult to hunt people down because everyone was working so hard, and we were all running around trying to get everything done. I don't feel like this class operated like a normal history class because it was a lot more interesting and more hands on than the traditional "sit in your desk, read, and get bored." The class was a lot more intense than a regular history class.

This class has helped me to realize that history can be fun and educational at the same time. I stayed awake the entire time, so that says a lot!

I think that this book and the seminar will be appreciated by a lot of people. I think it will give people a new view on what young people in this community are all about. I think the veterans of World War II will have another thing of which they can be proud: knowing that they helped a great deal in this book.



Jim

Central Alternative High School student

Jim is in the 12th grade at Central High School and has been a student at Central for almost one year.

I didn't know much about World War II before I got in this class. I knew that the U.S. won the war, and we dropped an atomic bomb to do it. This class has taught me a lot more in three-quarters than I had learned in three years at a traditional school. Here at Central when we do research, you do most of it yourself and do it on a topic that you think is cool. If you need help, then you can get it whenever you need it. At a regular traditional school

you would barely get any help, and the topic that you have to write about you don't even care about. I never learned anything relevant there, so I didn't pay attention to it.

The only thing I thought was difficult in this class was writing the papers. I had no problem finding information, but I had a problem putting it all together in words. So I just asked for help to start my papers and the teacher was more than happy to help me with this complication.

This class worked out very well for me and I think for everyone else in it, too. There was plenty of help from the teachers, and the students in this class were always there to help if you needed it. When I first got in this class I didn't think that I would learn anything. I found out a couple of days into the class that I was wrong. I had no idea what I was in for.

When I first heard about writing a book and that General Paul Tibbets was going to come, I was a bit skeptical, but I soon found out that this was serious and was going to happen. I knew that it would take a lot of work to do it, and it was.

This class changed the way that I looked at history. I found out that history is actually pretty cool once you get into it. At the traditional schools, I never really got into it because I really didn't care too much. If it weren't for Central I wouldn't ever have gotten into history at all.

The first paper that I wrote took about a quarter and a half to finally get finished. I printed out a total of about fifty or so different drafts to get it summed up perfectly. Sometimes I got a little frustrated with all the drafts that I had to complete, but in the end, it was all worth it.

I think that a lot of people will learn about World War II after the seminar. I know that I have already learned a lot. Because the book is written by people in Dubuque, it will help more people understand the war and how hard it was. I think that it will sink into people's heads better since they have something to relate to.

This class was the best class that I have been in, in a long time. I learned the most in this history class than I have learned in all my years in a traditional history class. The report about Admiral Yamamoto that I wrote was the best report that I have ever done in my life. And it's all because of the help and the encouragement I received from the teachers and students.



Ben

Central Alternative High School student

Ben is a senior at Central Alternative High School and has been a student at Central for nearly one year.

Before I entered this class, I knew very little about the World War II class, but I heard numerous good things from fellow students about what they were doing and how big this project was. Although I didn't join the class until second semester, I have learned many things about the war: the battles that were fought and how they were fought, the people who played important roles in winning the war, such as General Tibbets who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, and weapons used in the war. These are just a few of the many things I have learned.

While in this class, one of my fellow students and I got the chance to interview a man named Merle Mathis. Merle was a waist gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress in the Second World War. We then had to write a selection for this book on the interview. This really meant a lot to me because my grandfather was in the war, and he hasn't spoken a word about it to me.

I can remember being in my old high school during my history classes. While the teacher would lecture, I could feel my eyelids begin to get heavier and heavier, and, eventually, I would fall asleep. In this class I can honestly say I haven't fallen asleep once.

I feel Dubuque and the surrounding area will benefit greatly from this book and the seminar we hold in which General Tibbets joins our school and the community. I am extremely proud to be a part of this extraordinary project.



Joe

Central Alternative High School student

Joe has been attending Central on and off for three years. He is currently a senior and plans to graduate in May, 2000.

When we first brought up the idea of having General Paul Tibbets come to Dubuque and speak, my initial reaction was that there would be no way we could make that happen. Then as things rolled along, we got the confirmation he would be here. I was really happy when I heard that. So we have General Tibbets, but where? We first thought of having the seminar at a local college or perhaps a high school, but with the man who flew the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb, we had to go to the Five Flags Civic Center. We had to change the date of the seminar, but it worked better with the new date.

With Five Flags booked and Paul Tibbets coming, a lot of money needed to be raised. John put me in charge of writing letters to local businesses, and the outcome has been terrific! This class and its teachers, John and Tim, have made me a more responsible person and student. I have mastered the writing process, and have grown interested in the World War II era. I have also developed great respect and admiration for these veterans who we are going to be honoring, simply because they fought for what we are today. Thanks to all the World War II veterans!



Shaun

Central Alternative High School student

Shaun is a senior at Central and has been attending the school for three quarters.

The only things I knew about World War II were what I saw in the movies, "The Diary of Anne Frank" and "Saving Private Ryan."

The history classes at Central give us the chance to do our own research and let us use our own minds on how to find information, instead of a teacher telling you where to look. This also lets us dig down deep, like doing interviews with veterans and using microfilm to get information. Other schools would most likely not allow you do your own research.

I saw everyone putting very hard work and deep thought into their part of the project, and taking time out of their schedule to do what had to be done, and add what they felt needed to be in their project.

At first, I thought we could not, or should I say, would not, be able to pull off having this seminar, but when I saw all the tasks and effort the students and teachers put into it, I had a whole new perspective of the project. I am excited to bring General Paul Tibbets to Dubuque and hold an interview, seminar, and book signing. I hope to get a chance to talk to General Tibbets one-on-one.

I will admit that my partner and I did so many drafts and corrections that at times I got aggravated and wanted to strangle the teachers. I understand that they wanted our work to be perfect, 100%. I did enjoy being in the class, and there were times we slacked off, but we always tried to do our best. The teachers, well, I was honored to have teachers like them keep pushing me to do better and better. So I say yes, these were, actually still are, outrageously talented teachers. I take my hat off to John.



Corey

Central Alternative High School student

Corey has been attending Central, on and off, for nearly one year and is now a junior.

Before taking the World War II class, I did not know a lot about the war, just that Hitler set out to take over the world. This class puts me in the spot where I feel like I am actually experiencing life in the 1940s because we have talked to veterans about their experiences.

One of the hardest things about the class was the countless times I had to revise my papers because Tim was not satisfied. I know Tim is a perfectionist, so I just stuck with it, and now I am glad because my writing sounds better. Revisions are required, of course, but Tim overdoes it. However, I would rather have my writing perfect than be published with all kinds of mistakes.

During the course of this class, most students would disappear within the first ten minutes and go do work, then resurface about the last five minutes in order to put on some finishing touches to their daily expeditions and put their things away for the day.

The idea of a public seminar to me was not too extraordinary because I knew Central did it before. Having General Tibbets come to Dubuque was a long shot, but he managed to find time in his busy schedule that corresponded to the schedule at Five Flags. The money just rolled right into our bank account. Thanks to Joe Keil for writing businesses, and extra special thanks to the businesses for their support.

The World War II in Dubuque Project made me think more of history. This class helped me to have a better attitude towards history in general. I think our project will give a lot of people better knowledge of the importance of World War II. In our community, I think all veterans will feel on the top of the world because they are finally being recognized for their services. Their recognition is our ultimate goal, not just for the community, but the whole country.



Daniel

Central Alternative High School student

Dan was a senior at Central and graduated at the semester in January of 2000.

When I started this class, the only things I really knew about World War II involved the "Battle of Britain." I had learned a lot about Hitler's attempts to invade Great Britain. Most history classes, however, had failed to really capture my interest long enough to make me want to learn more about the subject.

The biggest difference between this class and traditional history classes is that the students have control over what aspect of the war they learn about and are responsible for their own information gathering. If a student fails the class, it is because they do not care about learning. The teachers try to help you successfully navigate the turbulent waters of learning.

This is also the only class that I have been in that has planned to, and did, publish a book. I came into the class knowing about the plans to write a book. I never expected the book to go through a professional publishing house, though! I was naturally excited when I heard the news. I aim to be a published author some day, and feel that this book will help me along that path.

Some students in the class complained about having to revise their work constantly. I, on the other hand, like to perfect what I write. I would rather shred my work than publish a bad piece of writing with my name on it. Because of this trait, I have been called a perfectionist.

The idea of having a war hero like General Paul Tibbets involved with our project is kind of neat. I would have never thought about this school hosting a seminar in the past, let alone holding it at the Five Flags Civic Center. The prospect still intimidates me a little. I hope that the book and the seminar are able to do well.



Ryan

Central Alternative High School student

Ryan is a junior at Central Alternative High School. He has been here for one quarter and is currently in his second quarter.

This history class has been different than any other class that I've been in before. I have never seen this many students working this hard together for one project. Anymore, when I come to school, it's like coming to a job site. Instead of listening to someone talk and waiting for the period to get over, you just get to work.

The teachers explained to me the first day that I was here how this project was about a book and a big seminar. Then they told me when we were supposed to have it completed. I had a lot of doubts, but the project was already started and everyone was really positive about pulling it off.

I think that this book is a good idea for the veterans of Dubuque because the experiences and stories they have about the Second World War deserve to be looked upon, not overlooked. These men suffered a lot to help preserve our freedom. I feel that that this book will give them the recognition they deserve.



John

Central Alternative High School student

John is a senior at Central. He has been attending the school for one year and hopes to graduate soon.

I knew a lot about World War II before I got into this class. I have learned a lot more specifics since I have been in this class for nearly a year. I have learned mostly about the lives of veterans and have studied their experiences in World War II.

This class is a lot better than a conventional history class; we, as a class, have learned more in this short time than all four years in a "normal" school. We take a hands-on approach to our own leaning instead of a planned, redundant learning schedule. We are able to expand on specific subjects that pique our interest, while still learning the stuff we need to know.

The hardest thing about this class is that we have to come up with our own material and resources. It is not handed to us in a book or review sheet. We take the information and write a paper. Putting the information into a paper is the hardest part. It is difficult to figure where or in what order to put the information. I learned how to write a paper using an outline.

This is one of the hardest working classes I have ever taken.



Josh

Central Alternative High School student

Josh is a senior at Central high School. He has attended Central for approximately one year now.

This particular history class differs from traditional history classes in various ways. There are no boring lectures, and no bookwork; we get to chose our own topics about World War II. Then we write an in-depth report about that topic. I think it is easier to learn about something that interests you other than something you dislike. This isn't like the traditional high schools where the work comes and goes chapter after chapter.

The most important part of this class is what we are doing for the community. I have been in and out of this class helping out. I was out at Wal-Mart selling hamburgers and brats as a fundraiser first semester. I was at the airport for the "WarBirds Weekend" helping with the set-up and selling of tickets. And I did get to fly in a World War II T-6 Trainer.

This class has really helped me understand the truth about World War II and the atrocities Hitler and the Japanese did. I never really cared about history or what happened in World War II until this class. It helped me understand what the veterans went through.

We get a choice, and that's what I enjoy. The most difficult challenge that I have faced was the revisions of my report. When you think your done, you're not. When you think you're getting a break, you're not. You're only preparing for more work. You can work all day on revisions, and Tim will still find ways for you to improve your paper.

I really didn't know what to expect when John talked about a public seminar because I personally don't like to be the center of attention. Speaking in front of a crowd isn't something I like, or even will do at all. That really was my main concern. When we talked about Paul Tibbets coming here, I didn't really think much of it because I didn't think it would fly.

I'm proud to talk about the things I have done. I feel we're giving something to the community that we can all be proud of. The World War II veterans are getting the recognition they deserve.



Krystal

Central Alternative High School student

Krystal Russell has been a student at Central for two years. She hopes to graduate next semester.

At Central, I've learned a lot. Before being in this class, I really didn't have a clue what World War II was about. To tell you the truth, I didn't pay much attention to the fact that people died fighting for my country. Now that I'm learning more about it, I'm interested in the types of things that actually went on during World War II. That's why, when I interviewed Mr. Merle Mathis, I realized that I was talking to a real World War II veteran, and with my partner's help, we have organized a biography of Mr. Mathis' time in World War II.

In this class, we just didn't read about veterans; we actually got the chance to speak with them about their experience in the war. Some of the challenges I faced were trying to meet the deadline and gathering up as much information as I possibly could. So, by us students writing a book on veterans, people will get more of an understanding of what they did for us.

Our class worked very hard on this project. We've spent a large amount of time working together so that we could meet the deadline. We all did our part and worked as fast as we could. I appreciate how these veterans took time out for us and allowed us to interview them for the book. We spent a lot of time gathering information and interviewing as many people as possible, and we, as a class, had a definite deadline. Hopefully the book will soon be a reality, and I hope to see the book when it is finished. My greatest achievement is that after only being in this class for one month, I've finished my story and my reflection paper. It took a lot of time preparing for such a thing. I want to thank Merle for his cooperation and wanting to be involved in our book.



Nathan

Central Alternative High School student

Nathan is currently a senior at Central. He has been attending the school for one and a half years.

Before I entered this class I knew little or nothing about World War II. Now I have written a whole chapter on Pearl Harbor and what happened on December 7, 1941, which will soon be part of a book that will become a guaranteed best seller!

My previous experiences in history were really challenging, and I never had anything done. All I ever did was fall asleep in, and fail all of, the history classes I took. But with

this project, the class, all together, has faced the challenge of putting out a book and making all the corrections needed for the chapters to be perfect for publishing.

I saw the class operate how it should in the beginning. Everyone was doing work and putting deep thought into their project. I will admit that my partner and I did a lot of corrections on many drafts, which at times made me angry enough to strangle the teachers, but they do want things done at 1000%, with no mistakes.

I think this research project will accomplish a lot for the veterans of World War II and for the people of Dubuque. It will not only change how much the World War II veterans will be recognized, but will also change how much our school, and the city of Dubuque, will be recognized for their part in the war.



T. J.

Central Alternative High School student

T. J. has been attending Central for two years. He is a senior and plans to graduate at the end of the 1999-2000 school year.

Ihonestly did not know much about World War II before I entered this class. I knew about the atomic bomb being dropped on Japan, but I did not know the whole story behind it. I was impressed by the stories I have heard and by the interviews I have conducted.

This class has changed my perception of history by the way it was taught and also by the way we were given our assignments. Before this class, I thought history was lame and boring. Now, I look forward to getting history into these classes to get my requirements out of the way.

I think the project and seminar will accomplish letting the World War II vets know that they are still important to the community, and that a younger generation still knows what they did and what they died for—this country.



Dereka

Central Alternative High School student

Dereka is a senior at Central and plans to graduate this May. She has been attending this school for four years.

In the four years of going to this school, this World War II class has influenced me the most. Just last year I didn't know anything about World War II. Now, I brag to my family and friends about the knowledge that I have gained from this class. I enjoy doing out-of-school activities, like interviewing veterans and writing letters to important companies to let them know about our project.

What I liked most about this class were the personal relationships that I have developed with the people I interviewed. When people open up and tell you about life experiences, it makes you feel important. It makes you feel like a person can trust you.

For this class, I interviewed a veteran and the widow of a veteran. I also wrote a research paper on the racial events that took place in Japan, Germany and the United States during World War II.

The best part of being a member of this class is that I like being involved in the community and being on the news. We get to be a part of something big. We are also making our own history, as we will be professionally publishing our own book. This has never before been done by Central students. I'm glad that I took this class because, when I do go back and look at my high school years, this experience will be something that I will always remember.



Wanda

Loras College intern

Wanda is currently a senior at Loras College, majoring in history and secondary education. She worked with Central students from September, 1999 through February, 2000, as part of an internship program through her school.

I remember entering Central Alternative High School for the first time with a strange mixture of apprehension and excitement. With some assistance, I found the correct room, and settled down in one of several desks forming a large discussion circle. Students made their way into the

class, barely casting a glance in my direction. As John began the daily routine of catching all students up on the latest news, my stomach began to turn. I nervously introduced myself as a history and secondary education major from Loras College who would be helping out with the World War II project on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

My role in the classroom evolved over time. First, I took students to the Loras library in order to help them research their projects through the internet, the *New York Times*, our local newspaper, and the library's holdings. As I assisted students to navigate the computer system and microfilm machine, I slowly began to learn their names and more about them. Later, editing drafts and interviews became my nearly full-time job while at Central.

This class has given me opportunities that I would not have encountered without the World War II project. During the Warbirds weekend, a vintage aircraft display designed to publicize the upcoming Central seminar, and coordinated by Central teachers and students, I was thrilled to have the chance to take a ride in a T-6 World War II pilot trainer. Another interesting facet of this expedition was a visit we made to the local printing facilities used by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company to get an idea how the students' research book on World War II would be published. Finally, I look forward to a seminar in April with General Paul Tibbets.

However, I received many more intangible benefits from participating in the World War II project. Tim and John modeled a more effective and relaxed way to teach: the students pursued their own ideas and created their own paths with the guidance and support of the teachers. They chose their own topics, found their own sources, and many of them conducted several in-depth interviews with veterans on their own. It was inspiring to see students, who not long ago viewed history as boring, begin to find interest in their work. I will not soon forget the sight of students bent over tape recorders, listening to interviews for the tenth time to insure quotes were exact, or those who faced the computer screen, revising their work repeatedly in order to guarantee quality work. Throughout my time at Central, students continually volunteered to take on extra work, such as writing thank-you notes for donations, and giving speeches about the project to local civic groups. This may not have been an easy process, but it proved

worthwhile to everyone involved. I hope people realize how much effort Tim, John, and the students put into this project. I thank all those who gave of their time and shared stories in order to make this project a success.

Finally, I want to personally thank all the students and two wonderful teachers who accepted me into their classroom and gave me an experience I will never forget. I cannot find the words to describe how much I appreciated being a part of this project, or how much I learned during my time at Central Alternative High School.

John

Central Alternative High School teacher

As I reflect upon all that has transpired to bring this experience to a successful conclusion, more and more I grow to appreciate the time-honored phrase, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." So it has been with our World War II research project and seminar. What began as a nebulous proposition we batted about in a hot, sticky classroom in August of 1999, has truly become a remarkable achievement.

How dare we approach historical figures such as General Paul Tibbets; Tuskegee Airman Robert Martin; WASP Elizabeth Strohfus; Dubuque veterans and their families; and involve them in our research project! How dare we challenge our students to transcend the institutional scholastic limitations and self-imposed barriers they have lived with for years! How dare we expect each of them to take responsibility for their own learning, and become an integral member of an enthusiastic and motivated research team! The standard response to these statements from the Central Alternative High School staff has become, *how dare we not?*

Some educators argue that spending "excessive" amounts of time on one topic or time period is not the most effective method for teaching or learning history; that "breadth" is essential in order to gain an overall understanding of and appreciation for our collective past. But that kind of approach is precisely the reason why many students today are left in the dust. When majestic historical panoramas are condensed into a mind-numbing series of names, dates, and chapter review questions, important personal connections disappear, and the much-heralded "breadth" syllabus stifles the desire for further inquiry in all but the most fired up pupils.

Few things inspire educators as does the witnessing of budding scholars move from passive, disinterested and lackadaisical seat warmers into focused, cooperative and dedicated individuals who grow increasingly concerned with the quality and quantity of their own work. Throughout this entire journey, the pressure to perform came not only from Tim, Shirley, Will and myself, but also from the students themselves. They saw the impact their outreach efforts were having on the veterans, and their own lives began to reflect a new sense of purpose as the public responded to their progress. They were hungry to achieve. They wanted to succeed. They were committed. And they have every reason to be proud of what they have accomplished.

Sadly, our understanding of the nation's history is slowly slipping away. If we can't figure out where we came from, we'll have a hard time determining where we are, and where we want to go. May this academic undertaking and its demonstrable results serve as a wake up call for us all.

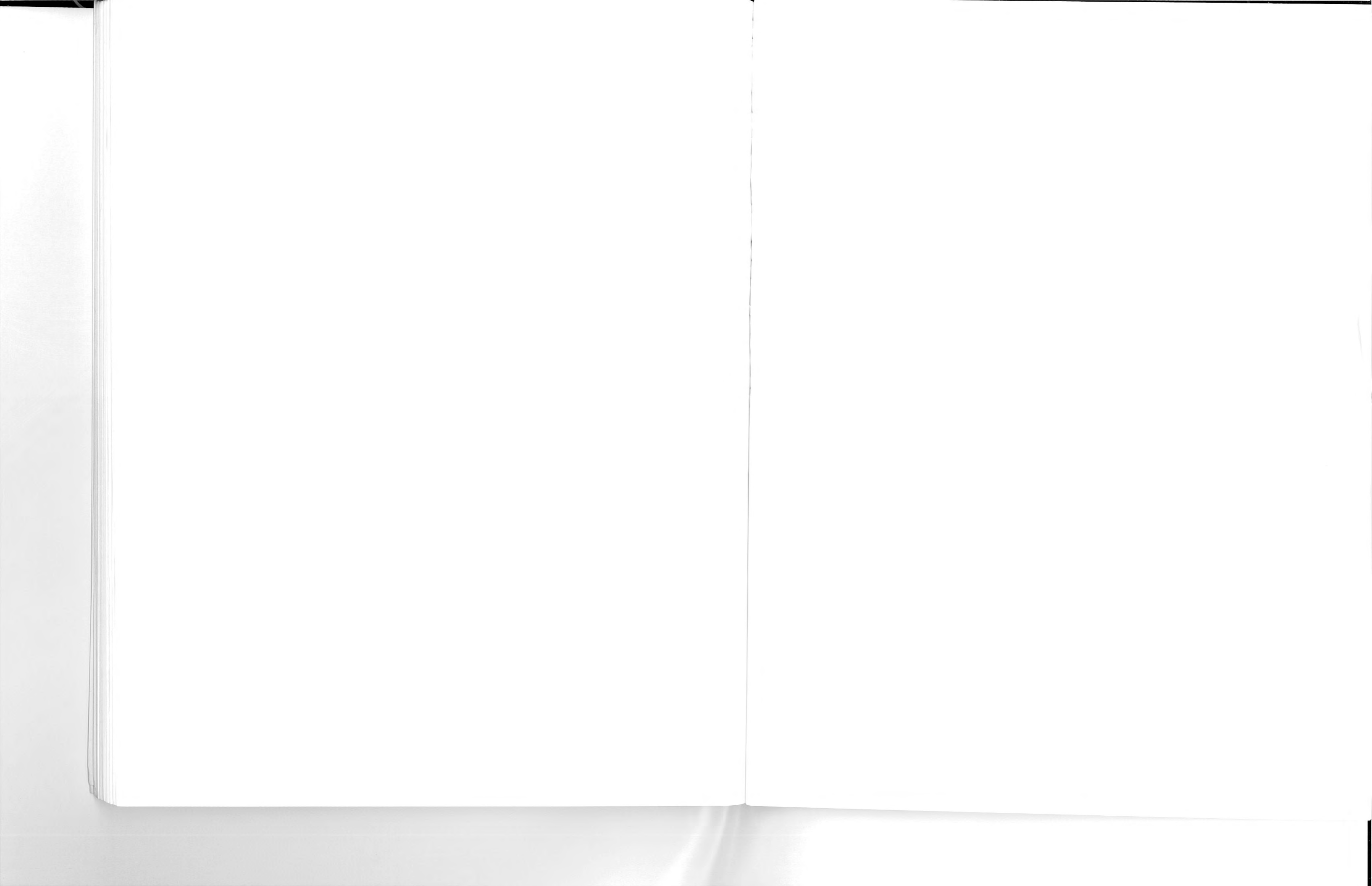
Tim]

Central Alternative High School teacher

While I was not alive to hear the factory whistles blow or the church bells ring marking the joyful end of World War II, I do have a small sense of the elation people must have felt, as today, I turn over to the professional hands at Kendall/Hunt, these stories! For much of the year my students and I have immersed ourselves in the process of writing: thinking, crafting, rethinking, revising and ultimately, publishing. It has been hard work. We have listened intently to those brave women and men with whom we have spoken. We have carefully gathered historical documentation from a variety of sources. We have been frustrated and elated with each other. We have doubted, but we have never lost sight of our ultimate goal of paying tribute to a generation that has come before us, a generation steeped in wisdom.

Textbooks have the power to educate and inform, but they do not have the power to touch. They cannot penetrate the flesh and move the spirit. Meeting the past, human face to human face, has given us a rich understanding of not only the historical facts concerning World War II, but also the human sacrifice endured. Just as the war left its mark on all those alive during its waging, so too, have the voices of the past left their indelible marks on us.

A Tribute to Victory serves as tangible evidence that a stimulating academic environment can lead to a remarkable end. The book's pages reflect the accomplishments of students who have become responsible for their own learning. The struggles described in the stories mirror the struggles the students encountered when they dared to do their best work. Let our book stand as a tribute to the power of people working together for a common cause.



A Tribute to Victory



This research project was made possible through an unprecedented partnership among local civic organizations and businesses; World War II veterans and their families; Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company; and the students and staff of Central Alternative High School in Dubuque, Iowa. We salute those who supported this academic journey into our community's and nation's history.



On the cover: This Gold Star Banner is just one of many that were proudly displayed in windows of homes by families who lost loved ones during World War II.



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