

LIFE CARE LEADER

WWII

Special Edition



A TRIBUTE TO THE GREATEST GENERATION

From the Editor

Ever since I was a young boy, I've loved stories. I love hearing them, and I love telling them. There is something powerful about stories that brings people together. They remind us that we are not alone – that other people love, laugh and cry. They not only capture our imaginations; they teach us right and wrong.

Some of my favorite stories are the war stories that my grandfather used to tell me when I was a boy. He was a medic in the army during World War II. As a child, my mind was flooded with the acts of bravery, humility, servanthood and sacrifice that his stories shared.

Many Life Care residents have similar stories. Every day, in our facilities across the country, our associates serve those men and women who once served our country during the greatest war this world has ever known. Hands that once held rifles now struggle to hold a drinking glass. Ears that listened to emergency radio signals now strain to hear what is being spoken to them. Our associates know this and are proud to lend a helping hand and provide a good conversation, for though our residents may be older, they are still heroes.

My grandfather is 90 years old now and can no longer share like he used to. The stories he once told have become mine to tell to my boys. I will also be sharing with my children the stories from this issue of LEADER, so they will know the kind of brave men and women who have made the United States of America great.

This issue of LEADER was born out of the recognition that we need to honor our veterans of World War II while their stories are still within living memory. It is our privilege to have spoken with them and gleaned from their wisdom. Those who supported the war effort and fought valiantly during World War II have often – and rightly – been called “The Greatest Generation.”

We are proud to bring you this special edition of LEADER Magazine that features the war stories of residents from Massachusetts to Hawaii. Their bravery and influence have spread far beyond their imagining to the benefit of us all.

To our residents who served in World War II, we cannot thank you enough for all you have done and given. Let these stories be our tribute to you. We love and appreciate you.

Rob Alderman

Rob Alderman
Director of Public Relations



LEADER

SPECIAL EDITION



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CHAIRMAN
FORREST L. PRESTON

PRESIDENT
BEECHER HUNTER

EDITOR
ROB ALDERMAN

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
LEIGH MICHELS

ART DIRECTOR
BOB GRAYSON

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
JAMIE PHILPOTT

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LIFE CARE LEADER
LIFE CARE PUBLIC RELATIONS
P.O. Box 3480
CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE 37320
(423) 473-5533

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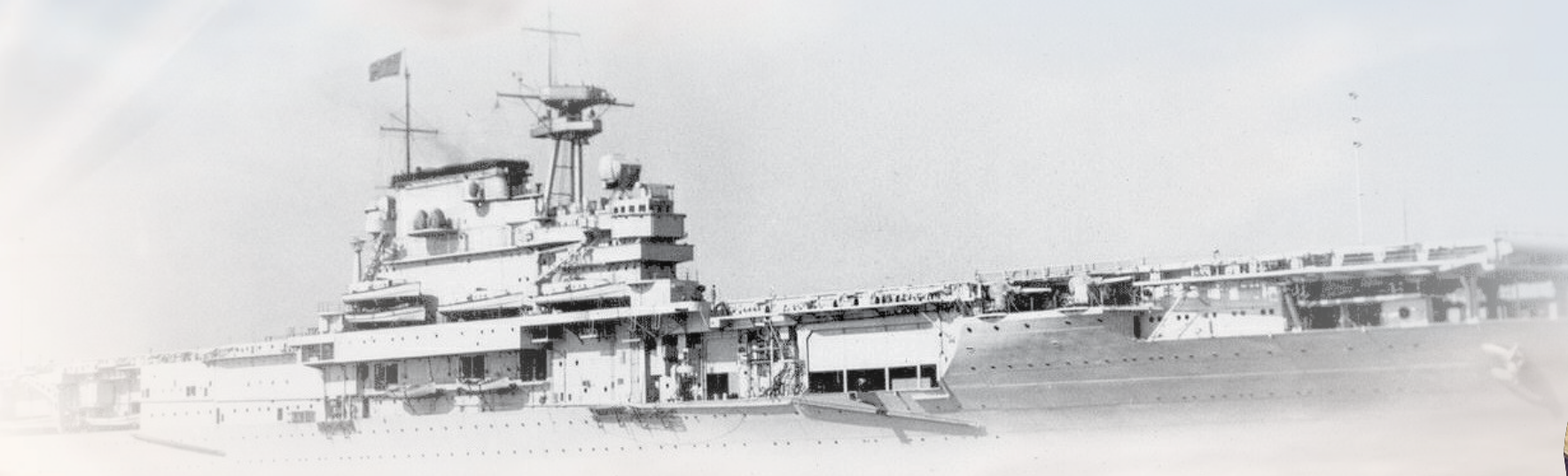


Harve Norman

★ ★ COLONIAL HILLS NURSING CENTER ★ ★
Maryville, Tennessee

A MAN OF THE FIGHTING LADY

By Jared Powers



The USS Yorktown participated in the attack of Iwo Jima and supported the Marines that landed there in the early part of 1945.

A hero lives in Maryville, Tenn., and on his wall hangs a painting. This is no ordinary image. It encapsulates all-but-forgotten memories in the shape of a World War II aircraft carrier. It is a proudly displayed remnant of a time when this hero saw the world through younger eyes – one chapter in a long and full life.

This hero's name is Harve Christopher Norman, and he was born in Byington, Tenn.

On April 14, 1943, at the young age of 19, he was drafted into the Navy. One day later, the aircraft carrier in the painting on the wall was commissioned the USS Yorktown (CV-10). Norman's tale is intertwined with the tale of the Yorktown, or The Fighting Lady as it was referred to in a 1944 U.S. Navy film. The Yorktown became his home for the next two-and-a-half years.



Norman completed basic training in Bainbridge, Md., and married his sweetheart, Emma, on June 19, 1943, while home on furlough. He then received training to work on diesel engines at a Naval Training School in Cleveland, Ohio, before he learned he would serve aboard the Yorktown.

Norman was happy he was serving in the Navy. "You didn't have to be in the line of fire all the time," he explained

Norman may not have been in the line of fire, but his company saw some of the fiercest battles of the second half of the war in the Pacific Theatre.

Early in 1944, the Yorktown was part of the task force that took two islands in the Marshall Islands, the first penetration of the outerring of Japanese defensive islands.

The Yorktown also participated in the attack of Iwo Jima and supported the Marines that landed there in the early part of 1945.

While performing an attack on the Japanese Islands in the same year, the Yorktown received its only battle scar of the war. During an all-day counterattack by the Japanese, a formation of three Yokosuka D4Y dive-bombers, given the reporting name of "Judy" by the Allies, began a bombing run. The first two failed in their attempts and were shot down; the third was successful in releasing its payload, hitting near the signal bridge.

The bomb passed through the flight deck and exploded near the hull, leaving two large holes, approximately 12-14 feet in diameter, in the side of the ship. The lives of five men were lost, and 16 were injured as a result of that bombing.

Losing crew members was tough for the Yorktown crew. "It didn't take too long to make buddies," Norman explained. Working and fighting together created strong bonds; these men were family.

Norman and the Yorktown crew experienced their greatest triumph

in April 1945. While supporting troops on the island of Okinawa with air raids, the Yorktown crew discovered an operation put into motion by the Japanese government. Operation Ten-Go, or Heaven One, was a mission to beach the largest battleship ever constructed, the Yamato, on the shore of Okinawa. The ship could then act as a shore battery and no longer fear being sunk.

The Yorktown, along with other carriers in its task force, hurriedly scrambled jets from the deck to stop this last desperate offensive. After several torpedo hits, the Yamato, ablaze, finally crawled to a stop and began to sink. When the fires aboard reached the main magazine compartments, the Yamato erupted in an explosion that could be heard and seen 125 miles away.

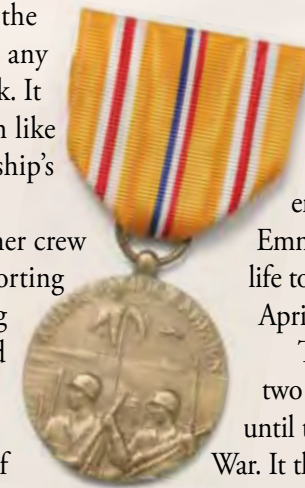
Norman's job at that time was Motor Machinist Mate Third Class, which meant he was in the engine room deep in the bowels of the

Yorktown attending to the diesel engines, far from any action on the flight deck. It was the diligence of men like Norman that kept the ship's engines running.

The Yorktown and her crew went on to aid in supporting the amphibious landing and taking of the island of Okinawa. They were also near Japan during the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

For his time aboard the Yorktown, Norman is authorized to wear the following medals: an American Theatre Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon with one Silver Star and four Bronze Stars, and a Philippine Liberation Ribbon with two Bronze Stars.

After his honorable discharge from the Navy in November 1945, Norman went on to work at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tenn., a Department of Energy facility that works to improve



national defense through the military application of nuclear energy. He also worked for Burns and Roe, an engineering firm. He and Emma lived a long and happy life together until her death on April 22, 2011.

The Yorktown received two refits and served the Navy until the end of the Vietnam War. It then was portrayed as a Japanese aircraft carrier in the 1970 film "Tora! Tora! Tora!" about the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Yorktown is docked in Charleston Harbor in S.C., where it serves as a museum.

Norman loved serving his country and was proud to be a member the Yorktown's crew. The painting, displayed in front of his bed, is the one piece he looks at daily to remind himself of the chapter of his life where he selflessly served and fought for freedom.

This infamous German phrase translates to "Work sets you free" and was hung at the entrance of many Nazi concentration camps to greet incoming prisoners. This one is at Auschwitz I and was made by prisoners.



March 1933:
First concentration camp opens outside Berlin.



March 1935:
Hitler violates the Treaty of Versailles by beginning to rebuild the German military.

January 1933:
Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.

September 1935:
German Jews lose rights under the Nuremberg Laws.



Darryl Webster

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF VISTA ★ ★
Vista, California

IN GREAT SUPPLY

By Ryan Faricelli



Dec. 7, 1941, changed the course of U.S. history as Japanese fighter planes attacked Pearl Harbor. This attack officially pulled the U.S. into World War II.

Darryl Webster was still attending Louisville High School in Louisville, Colo., when Pearl Harbor was attacked. An avid athlete, he watched as teammates who had graduated the year before enlisted to fight in the war. He used the organizational and record-keeping skills he learned in the stockroom of his father's department store to track and collect the newspaper articles about those local heroes as they went off to war, won medals or were listed as killed in action. After graduation, in early 1942, he needed to do more.

With a group of his friends, Webster attempted to join the Navy. Unfortunately, he and one of the others failed to qualify because of their eyesight. Refusing to give up, he instead enlisted in the Army, which had no eye test. On May 5, 1943, Webster was inducted, traveling to Ft. Warren, Wyo., for basic training.

During Webster's first year of service, his stockroom experience helped shape his military training. He attended an Army Specialized Training Program in engineering before reporting to Camp Lee (now Ft. Lee), Va. There, Webster graduated from Administration and Supply School.

Assigned to Regiment Co. C, 3rd Bn., Webster underwent an extensive three-month quartermaster operations and functions course, graduating Quartermaster School in late July 1944. As a quartermaster, his job was to maintain and distribute all supplies on a base or military outpost. He began working in the battalion supply office at Camp Beale, Calif., and remained until October, when his regiment was ordered overseas.

Using a map of the Pacific and Far East he was issued during boot camp, Webster drew lines marking his path as his regiment crossed the ocean. He also began a hand-

written log of where he went, how he got there and with whom he went, his attention to detail and records utilized once more.

Boarding the USS Catalina, Webster traveled from Sacramento, Calif., to San Francisco on Oct. 21, 1944. Arriving in San Francisco, he immediately boarded the USS La Porte, setting sail on the Haskell-class attack transport's maiden voyage for Oro Bay, New Guinea. They arrived Nov. 11, taking LCP(L) amphibious transports ashore. On Dec. 1, Webster was assigned to the 343rd Depot Supply Co., APO #503, as a tally-out clerk for Class II and IV supplies.

Near the end of his service as quartermaster in New Guinea, Webster worked to acquire beer for the few remaining soldiers cleaning up the encampment before they left. It was a difficult task, and the local commander refused to help. Webster remained dedicated to his friends and was always a bit of a joker, so when

that same general came to him for use of a jeep, Webster told him there wasn't one available. He did say that he could probably find one if the general could locate enough beer for the men. The beer arrived that afternoon.

In the summer of 1945, Webster was assigned quartermaster duties in Tacloban, Leyte, in the Philippines. The U.S. had just taken the islands, and all supplies for the troops were routed through Webster. Conditions were particularly hard on the locals, who were hungry and battered, and Webster did what he could to help.

"They would throw a stick of dynamite into the river, and then they'd let all of the people who lived there go and get the fish," recalled Webster's wife, Elsie. "They'd go and get great big buckets, like rain barrels, full of fish. Those people were just in fifth heaven."

Webster's time in the Philippines was not always so lighthearted. In March 1945, he received word that his father had passed away. There was no one qualified to take his place, so the commanders would not allow Webster to travel home to help his mother through the difficult time. It brought a great deal of strife between him and his mother, as she believed he simply didn't want to return.

On Jan. 27, 1946, Webster received his orders to return to the United States. Traveling with 1,512 other soldiers aboard the USS Santa Maria, he finished his service at the rank of Sergeant (E-5).

That same year, he met Elsie, and the two were wed in November 1946. They raised four children in Louisville, where Webster took over his father's department store and kept locals supplied until the "big box" stores moved into the town and ultimately put them

out of business. He became a traveling salesman for Wolverine Boots, and eventually moved the family to Helper, Utah, where he bought another department store in 1968. They remained in Helper until 2002, when they retired to California, to be closer to family.

Webster and Elsie will celebrate 65 years of marriage in November, spending their afternoons keeping one another supplied with love. 🍷





German Chancellor Adolf Hitler is saluted by Parliament members at Krolloper (Kroll Opera House) in Berlin, Germany. The raised right arm was the traditional Nazi salute in the 1930s and '40s and was often accompanied by the phrase, "Heil Hitler."

March 1938:
Germany invades Austria.



September 1939:
Germany invades Poland,
triggering the start of World War II.



September 1939:
Britain and France
declare war on Germany.

September 1939:
South Africa and Canada declare war on
Germany a few days after Great Britain
and France's declaration.



Francis Paul

★★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF ATTLEBORO ★★
Attleboro, Massachusetts

TRIUMPH IN LOVE AND WAR

By Cari Shanks



Author David McCullough described the general this way: “You couldn't shrug your shoulders at Douglas MacArthur. There was nothing bland about him, nothing passive about him, nothing dull about him. There's no question about his patriotism, there's no question about his courage, and there's no question, it seems to me, about his importance as one of the protagonists of the 20th century.”

In the months following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entrance of the United States into World War II, many young American men volunteered to join the various branches of the military, and some were drafted into service.

Francis Paul lived both of these experiences.

A native of Attleboro, Mass., born on March 22, 1924, Paul was drafted by the Army at 19, but wanted to go into the Navy. So in typical confident, independent fashion, he signed up for the Navy at the recruiting office in the old Attleboro City Hall.

“All you had to do was pass the test,” Paul said. “I told them, ‘I've been drafted!’ They said, ‘Don't worry about it.’”

Paul did pass the test, and as of Dec. 11, 1942 – just after the first anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor – Francis Paul was a member of the Navy.

His hometown newspaper, “The Pawtucket Times,” reported some of his Navy service, noting, “He was

assigned to several ships in the Atlantic fleet, one of which was sunk beneath him in action off North Africa.” Specifically, Paul served on the SS Virginia, SS John Fiske, SS Webb Miller, SS Negley D. Cochran and the US Mariposa. The latter sank in battle.

When the time came to re-enlist or leave the Navy, Paul decided he wanted to move on to another branch of the military. He joined the Army and was sent to Japan during the United States' occupation that followed the surrender.

“I was under MacArthur!” Paul declared, proudly.

Author David McCullough described the general this way: “You couldn't shrug your shoulders at Douglas MacArthur. There was nothing bland about him, nothing passive about him, nothing dull about him. There's no question about his patriotism, there's no question about his courage, and there's no question, it seems to me, about his importance as one of the protagonists of the 20th century.”

Paul became a quartermaster and mechanic. He was sent to school in Tokyo for advanced training in the 24th Division. Life in the Army took an unexpected but happy turn for Paul during the occupation of Japan because it was there that he met the young lady who would become his wife. Her full name was Kiyoko Segana, and she was a native of Tokyo. Their meeting was unexpected, certainly, but Paul's role as quartermaster brought him into contact with local citizens frequently.

“We used to get rid of the old rations that were outdated for the Army but were still good to eat. Rations were taken to an area where local residents could pick them up,” Paul recounted. “Her father came out to get some of the leftover rations. I said, ‘Papa-san, where do you live?’ He said, ‘Over there.’ So I followed him in my truck, and all the neighbors were coming in and getting some of the rations. That's where I met my wife. She could speak some



English, and she said, ‘The neighbors appreciate what you're doing.’”

Paul continued to take the leftover rations over a period of time. He would bring huge bags of rice to Kiyoko's house so all the neighborhood could enjoy the food.

He was stationed six years in Tokyo, which were interrupted by a mission to fight in Korea. Paul described one of the sources of the conflict there: “The food in Korea was grown primarily in the South. That's why the Northern army came down to invade the South because of the need for food.”

Paul faced great danger in Korea. “The Pawtucket Times” reported his story of love and war on Jan. 29, 1952, and said Paul was “among

those GIs assigned to the 24th Division under Maj. Gen. William F. Dean. He was shot in the leg during an ambush by the North Korean Troops on July 29, 1951.”

For the wounds he sustained in the battle, Paul was awarded the Purple Heart. He was later awarded the Bronze Star for actions performed beyond his regular duties in the conflict; after he recovered from his wounds, he returned to action on the Korean front. Fortunately, he was not wounded again in battle.

“I was lucky. I've got a leprechaun on one shoulder and a guardian angel on the other,” Paul mused.

Following his service in Korea, Paul was happy to be reassigned to his former post in Japan so he could return to Kiyoko.

“Her father was a little iffy about [the marriage] – like most fathers would be!” Paul remembered, laughing. “But her father liked me.”

They were blessed in a marriage ceremony by local Buddhists. Many months later, he and Kiyoko had their

first daughter. Not long afterward, orders came to send Paul back to America, and upon their arrival, the couple was united in a Catholic ceremony at St. John's Parrish in Attleboro. A missionary performed the ceremony and aided Kiyoko in the translation of the language.

Paul was glad to discover that people in his community accepted Kiyoko, and for the 55 years that have followed, they have been going strong. The couple has enjoyed a beautiful life together with their two daughters and son.

He is a member of a generation whose unassuming qualities and quiet perseverance have inspired our nation. When asked what his military service means to him now, he said firmly, “You don't give up. No matter what happens, you've got to keep going.”

In 1944, Argentan, France, was bombed heavily before and during the D-Day invasion. The city was almost completely destroyed.



November 1939:
Polish Jews are ordered to identify themselves with Star of David armbands.

September 1939:
The United States declares its neutrality.



May 1940:
Germany invades Belgium and the Netherlands.

April 1940:
Germany invades Norway and Denmark.



Jerome Welter

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF CAPE GIRARDEAU ★ ★
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

PATRIOT'S PRIDE

By Cari Shanks



It was a day that saw, for the first time, U.S. troops take Japanese soil. The victory dealt a strong blow to the morale of the Japanese army and signaled a turn of the tide in the conflict. There were many witnesses of the flag raising that day from the various branches of our country's military. Jerome Welter was one of them.

It is an image that has become part of our national consciousness. It has come to symbolize military struggle, comradeship and triumph. The photo that chronicled the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima on Mount Suribachi won a Pulitzer Prize for photographer Joe Rosenthal. It was a day that saw, for the first time, U.S. troops take Japanese soil. The victory dealt a strong blow to the morale of the Japanese army and signaled a turn of the tide in the conflict. There were many witnesses of the flag raising that day from the various branches of our country's military. Jerome Welter was one of them.

The oldest son of a farming family, Welter chose to enlist in the Navy when war was declared. His assignment to the Navy eventually took him to the South Pacific and, ultimately, to the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945.

The name Iwo Jima means "sulfur island." The island's volcanic activity bore that moniker out, although the volcano was considered inactive at the time of the battle. The U.S. Navy's

historical account notes that it "was strategically important as an air base for fighter escorts supporting long-range bombing missions against mainland Japan. ... The seizure of Iwo Jima would allow for sea and air blockades, the ability to conduct intensive air bombardment and to destroy the enemy's air and naval capabilities."

The battle lasted 36 days. Commander, Pacific Fleet/Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas Admiral Chester W. Nimitz described the actions of U.S. servicemen that day and forever sealed it into American memory when he declared, "Among the Americans who served on Iwo Island, uncommon valor was a common virtue."

After days of bombardment by the Navy, Army and Marine Corps fighter planes, the Japanese were waiting out the guns and explosions. When the Marines advanced to the beachhead, no enemy soldiers were in sight. A platoon of 40 U.S. soldiers was ordered to scale the hills to reach the summit. When they arrived there

and readied the attack, they were again surprised to find no Japanese soldiers. They had gone underground to hide in caves dug within the volcanic crater of the mountain.

On Feb. 23, 1945, as the Marines scaled the 560-foot mountain, Navy personnel observed their progress from the ships in the surrounding waters. Welter, was one of the scores of crewmen watching from the decks of the ships.

There were two flag raisings by the Marines the day American forces took the island. The troops marched up the trails to the volcano's crater. The American flag was attached to a length of pipe the Japanese had been using to pipe water down the mountain and raised on the edge of the crater.

Upon the Aug. 20, 2006, death of Rosenthal, the photographer who immortalized the flag raising in his photograph, Associated Press writer Justin M. Norton gave the description of what happened next:

"Once the original flag was raised on that summit, a larger flag (96 by

56 inches) was taken from one of the landing craft. Photographer Rosenthal immediately realized the purpose of this second flag and closely pursued its bearer. Sgt. Michael Strank, Cpl. Harlan Block, Pvt. Franklin Sousley, and Pvt. Ira Hayes carried the colors up the hill. As they reached the summit,



commanding officer Lt. Harold G. Schrier ordered that the second flag be raised and the first flag be lowered. Sgt. Strank found a second length of pipe and fastened the larger flag to it. Seeing that the four men were having trouble raising the flag on the rugged terrain, two men standing nearby – Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class John H. Bradley and Pvt. Rene A. Gagnon – came to their

aid. As the six men struggled to raise the colors, Rosenthal snapped the picture, which has been called the single most famous photograph ever taken."

Evelyn Welter shared how her husband did not speak much about his military experiences with her in the years following the war. But when he saw the flag raised on Iwo Jima, she said, "He thought that was really something. He was really enthused and felt patriotic and proud of his country."

In the years that followed the decisive Battle of Iwo Jima, Welter came home and met his wife one night in a honky-tonk in Kelso, Mo. The two danced the jitterbug, and "it was love at first sight," she said, laughing.

Remembering the love of her life, Evelyn Welter said, "Everything's special about him! Our wedding day was Jan. 14, 1947. He was a good dad and husband. He never gave me a [difficult] time – he was always a good husband and never cursed in front of me."

The photograph of the scene Welter witnessed that day from the waters surrounding Iwo Jima became the

model for the Marine Corps Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Richard Nixon, vice president of the United States at the time of the dedication of the memorial, delivered these words on Nov. 19, 1954: "This statue symbolizes the hopes and dreams of America, and the real purpose of our foreign policy. We realize that to retain freedom for ourselves, we must be concerned when people in other parts of the world may lose theirs. There is no greater challenge to statesmanship than to find a way that such sacrifices as this statue represents are not necessary in the future, and to build the kind of world in which people can be free in which nations can be independent, and in which people can live together in peace and friendship."

Jerome Welter and scores of servicemen like him who served during World War II sacrificed a great part of themselves to see the conflict through. We will always remember them for their valor, and for their pride in their country. 🇺🇸

From the bomb bay door, airmen got an up-close view of their targets.



May 1940:
Winston Churchill becomes prime minister of the United Kingdom.

June 1940:
Germany officially occupies France.

June 1940:
Italy enters the war, declaring war on Britain and France.



June 1940:
Germany takes over the Channel Islands, the only British soil to actually be occupied by Germany.



Wally Pabitzky

★ ★ LAKE FOREST NURSING CENTER ★ ★
Lake Forest, California

MARKSMAN ON A MISSION

By Heidi Tompkins



The USS General R.L. Howze is credited with making 11 trips into battle, bringing much-needed troops and supplies to Guadalcanal, Micronesia, the Cook Islands, New Caledonia and other locations in the Pacific, as well as transporting prisoners of war.

“Hey, Wally, wake up! We’re going to war!”

These were the first words 20-year-old Wallace Pabitzky heard on Dec. 7, 1941. His brother, Bill, delivered the news of the Pearl Harbor bombing that morning at their home in Redondo Beach, Calif.

Pabitzky, who everyone called Wally, soon volunteered to serve his country in the Coast Guard. He loved the ocean, so serving at sea was a perfect fit.

After training in San Diego in 1942, Pabitzky was assigned to a brand-new transport ship, the USS General R.L. Howze, stationed at San Francisco with 1,500 sailors. He became a marksman on the rear of the ship, loading shells and firing the heavy artillery. While much of the offensive during the war in the Pacific was performed



by aircraft and amphibious vehicles, Pabitzky’s job was primarily defensive, keeping the Howze safe so it could deliver what it needed to.

On Pabitzky’s first hitch, or journey at sea, the crew was engaged in the New Guinea campaign, transporting troops to Milne Bay and Lae on the eastern side of the island. New Guinea was a key to controlling Australia, not only because of proximity but also because it offered an unusually large landmass (the island is the second-biggest in the world).

Edward J. Drea with the U.S. Army Center of Military History wrote: “The remorseless Allied advance along the northern New Guinea coastline toward the Philippines forced the Japanese to divert precious ships, planes and men who might otherwise have reinforced their crumbling Central Pacific front.”

The Howze returned to San Francisco, and before the second hitch, the Navy took control of the vessel.

Pabitzky’s most vivid memories of the war came from this second hitch, when the ship saw combat in the Gilbert Islands and Marshall Islands. The battles on these islands (many were really atolls with little land space) kicked off the island-hopping strategy the Allies would carry on, continually pushing the Japanese forces back east toward Japan.

The attack on the Gilbert Islands in November 1943 proved to be a testing ground for the Americans. Defensive structures stood up to aerial attacks, the coral reef proved treacherous for landings, and at Tarawa, the missing the high tide left troops stranded on the beach, making them easy targets for Japanese fire from the shore. The Allies captured the territory in the end, but with heavy casualties.

The Americans had better success at the Marshall Islands in January and February 1944. They surprised the Japanese by going after some of the inner islands in the chain and only suffered minimal casualties.

Pabitzky and the crew of the Howze participated in the battle of Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands.

“Planes flew overhead, enemy airplanes,” Pabitzky remembered. “We came in during the action, we started to get bombed, and we just fought and shot down a few planes. Our ship took a hit herself from the torpedoes. It scared us all.”

The ship was sent to dry dock in Seattle, Wash., for repairs, but then it was sent back into the war.

The Howze is credited with making 11 trips into battle, bringing much-needed troops



and supplies to Guadalcanal, Micronesia, the Cook Islands, New Caledonia and other locations in the Pacific, as well as transporting prisoners of war. Pabitzky can personally attest to the ship’s power in sinking three or four Japanese ships (not counting aircraft).

When the war ended, Pabitzky returned to California. He went on to marry a lady named Nancy, and the couple had two sons.

Pabitzky’s life, however, had been forever changed by his war experiences. He worked many years as a finance officer in the Veterans Affairs office in Oakland, Calif

For a man who enlisted in the war and faithfully carried out his mission as a marksman, perhaps it is not surprising that this same patriotism inspired him to put even his peacetime skills to work for his countrymen. 🇺🇸





The destruction of Paris by the Axis powers was vast and widespread. American troops assisted with the liberation.



July 1940:
Battle of Britain begins.

August 1940:
Britain begins air raids
on Berlin.



Bofors 40mm anti-aircraft guns, like these aboard the USS Hornet, were commonly used throughout the war.



September 1940:
The London Blitz begins.

September 1940:
Germany, Italy and Japan sign
the Tripartite Pact, officially
establishing the Axis powers.



William Corrigan

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF BRIDGETON ★ ★
Bridgeton, Missouri

A CHARMED LIFE

By Tanya Bumgardner



Corrigan was a part of a unit of engineers assigned to build roads and bridges adequate for Allied troops and their vehicles.

World War II stories of battle, atrocities and survival in Europe and Japan abound, but approximately 15,000 American troops were actually fighting two wars in Southeast Asia – one against Japan and one against nature. William Corrigan was one of those men.

Corrigan was drafted in 1941 and was stationed at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, where he performed odd jobs including office work, guard duty and overseeing the base's theater. It was during this time that he met and proposed to a young girl named Jeannette. She agreed under the condition that they would not marry until the war was over and he was home safe.

Eventually, Corrigan was given orders to report to Camp Beal in California and then to Calcutta, India, an area of the world not usually associated with World War II. But this lesser-known theater was critical to tearing down the stronghold of the enemy. While traveling to India, Corrigan soon realized his time in the military was becoming more dangerous.

In his book, "Me and My Guardian Angel," he wrote:

"We saw two Japanese subs, so our captain headed south until we crossed the Equator before he started toward Australia. We were supposed to land in Sydney, but there were two subs on top of the water at about 3 o'clock.

The captain turned off everything and coasted past them. I could have thrown a rock and hit one of the subs. They must have been having tea or sleeping. Our captain headed for Melbourne, [Australia], and we got there OK.

"We left [Melbourne] about noon [one day], and the captain followed a British freighter about a mile behind until sunset. He had a feeling that we needed to pass this freighter. The Japanese sub that had been following us didn't realize that we had passed the freighter and fired on 'us.' They sank the freighter instead.

"Believe me when I say I saw those several days from a very scary point of view. We were all very, very glad when we came into our port at Calcutta, India."

But Calcutta presented its own challenges. Corrigan was a part of a unit of engineers assigned to build roads and bridges adequate for Allied troops and their vehicles. In 1942, the Japanese had captured Lashio, Burma, thus, closing off part of the Burma Road, China's last route for supplies. In an effort to push the Japanese out of the area and get supplies to China, the Allies decided to build what would become known as the Ledo Road, later renamed Stillwell Road, and connected it to a part of the Burma Road. The road was vital to the Allies' success.

Prior to Corrigan's arrival, the British had already been working with the Indians to build the road. The Japanese had pushed them back out of Burma; however, in 1943, U.S. forces stepped in to help.

Building the road was no easy task. Existing roads in the area were in no condition to handle military vehicles, and other parts of the proposed route were in thick, uninhabited jungle. Many of the soldiers faced malaria, dengue fever and dysentery, all while working

with simple tools such as picks and shovels. Men reported that equipment often did not work, and parts were scarce. They did all this while constantly fearing attacks from wild animals and their greater enemy, the Japanese, who were in the surrounding areas.

Corrigan wrote: "One evening, someone yelled, 'Come quick. There's a dog fight in the sky.' It was British Spitfires shooting at a Japanese bomber. They were able to down the bomber. As he was going down, he threw a bomb, and it went through a B-29 and didn't explode. We soon learned to hit the ditches and bomb shelters and not watch the fireworks."

If disease, wild animals and threat of attack weren't enough, the monsoon season became another formidable enemy. The torrential rains not only washed away their hard work, but often turned violent, creating conditions almost as frightening as battle.

"One night, we heard a very loud noise, and the wind came up blowing really hard," recalled Corrigan. "Our lights went out. I knew where there was

a large table. I guided the other two fellows to the table, and we crawled under it. In just a few minutes, the table with us under it was all that was left. The entire building was gone. ... One of the Indians had a leg cut off in the storm, but he wouldn't go to the hospital because he wasn't relieved of duty. I finally took him myself. I used a crane to lift the heavy objects off a number of other soldiers. For this I received a citation. There were 14 killed in that storm in the British group."

While he wasn't fighting on the front lines, Corrigan had his share of life-threatening moments, but he always managed to escape unscathed. He claims he had a guardian angel protecting him the entire time. Corrigan was later sent to China, where the conditions weren't much safer. Again, he felt divine protection.

He wrote: "I left Kunming, [China], on a truck convoy. I was in the fourth truck. The first several days were not so bad, and then we started a route where the road curved back and forth almost on top of each other. The driver of the first truck was shot by a band of guerrillas.

"We slept in the trucks at night. The rains began, and the next day, the road caved off. I was 'driving' down the side of the mountain, trying hard to miss the trees and rocks when I felt a hand on the steering wheel helping me drive!"

Corrigan remained in China until the end of the war. When the war finally ended, a fellow soldier shared the announcement he had just heard on the radio. Corrigan couldn't get home fast enough, despite an offer from his captain.

"Our captain called me in and said that he would make me a captain if I would stay another six weeks. I told him I wanted to get home as fast as I could so that I could get married," he stated.

After several weeks of travel, Corrigan finally arrived home. He and Jeannette married as soon as he returned and have had, as Jeannette puts it, a "charmed life."

Corrigan claims his guardian angel wasn't just with him during the war, but all his life. And his 93 years are a testament to that. 🍀

By 1944, more than 20 million women were filling the shoes of brave men who went to fight. Previously, women had typically done clerical jobs or taught, but the war opened up opportunities for welding, construction and assembly work.



October 1940:
Britain defeats Germany in the Battle of Britain; this is considered one of the first major victories for the Allies.

October 1940:
Draft registration begins in the United States.

November 1940:
Franklin D. Roosevelt is re-elected as United States president.



March 1941:
Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act to assist the Allies with war equipment; this signifies the unofficial end of U.S. neutrality.



Randall Richardson

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF KONA ★ ★
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

THE EVOLUTION OF A FLYING TIGER

By Dara Carroll



It soon became clear that the AVG's unorthodox combat techniques gave its pilots the upper hand in air battles against the Japanese. As news of their successes spread around the globe, they were hailed as the Flying Tigers.

More than two years before Germany invaded Poland, inciting the start of World War II, China and Japan were already at war. The Second Sino-Japanese War, which started in the early morning hours of July 8, 1937, escalated into the Pacific War and raged until the Japanese surrendered on the USS Missouri on Sept. 2, 1945.

To stymie Japanese expansion in the late 1930s, the U.S. helped finance war supply contracts to China. One of these contracts authorized the creation of the American Volunteer Group, led by retired U.S. Army Air Corps Capt. Claire Chennault. A 1941 executive order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave AVG leaders the authority to recruit from the Army Air Corps, Navy and Marines. Willing servicemen were given special discharges so they could volunteer for one-year contracts with the AVG. In addition to fighter pilots, ground crew and support staff were also needed.

Navy aerographers mate Randall Richardson jumped at the opportunity. The pay was lucrative – up to three

times what servicemen were being paid by the U.S. forces – but the real pull for Richardson was the chance to edge closer to his lifelong dream of becoming a pilot.

Born in 1919 in rural Jamestown, Tenn., Richardson grew up believing that the best way to achieve his goal of flying was to join the Navy. After high school and two years at Lambert College in Jackson, Tenn., he enlisted.

In November 1940, Richardson was sent to aerographer school at NAS Lakehurst, N.J., where the Hindenburg had crashed three years earlier. He graduated in January 1941 and was assigned to FAW-5 at NAS Norfolk, Va. Before getting settled at his new post, he was recruited as an aerographer by the AVG and left for the Far East.

It soon became clear that the AVG's unorthodox combat techniques gave its pilots the upper hand in air battles against the Japanese. As news of their successes spread around the globe, they were hailed as the Flying Tigers, easily recognizable by the ominous shark teeth painted on the noses of their aircraft.

Detailed reconnaissance and intelligence were keys to Flying Tiger victories, including reliable weather reports. Analyzing everything from air pressure to wind speed and direction, Richardson and other members of the aerological branch of the AVG were charged with the task of preparing weather maps and forecasts before missions. These charts helped pilots determine the best flight levels, and details about wind and air density aided the accuracy of aerial gunfire. It was tedious, yet lifesaving work.

The Flying Tigers were a tight-knit bunch, and Richardson has vivid memories of their colorful personalities. He enjoyed working for Chennault. "He was a great guy," he said, "a good employer and a straight shooter."

Richardson's memories of other famous Flying Tigers are a little less tame. When asked about ace Maj. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, the first thoughts that popped into Richardson's head had more to do with barroom brawls than aerial catfights. "Pappy was very fond of Scotch whisky," he mused.

As fame of the Flying Tigers increased, so did worldwide discord toward Japan. Oil and steel embargos against the nation crippled its ability to fight China, but Japan would not go quietly. While Richardson was working in French Indochina on Dec. 7, 1941, he heard the awful news: Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. The next day, the U.S. declared war on Japan. Three days later, Hitler declared war on the U.S.

The U.S. suddenly found itself fighting a war on two fronts, and the defense of China was no longer a priority. When the one-year AVG contracts expired in July 1942, the group disbanded.

Eager to join the fight, Richardson re-enlisted in the Navy in February 1942, before the AVG officially broke up. Like a surprising number of Flying Tigers support personnel who integrated back into the armed forces, Richardson became a pilot, finally realizing his dream of soaring through the skies.

After flight school in St. Louis, Mo., Richardson spent the remainder of the war as a flight instructor at a

Navy airbase in Texas. In addition to training new pilots to fly on an N3N Navy trainer, he was able to use his background as an aerographer to teach them about weather patterns and reading the skies.

At the end of World War II, Richardson was discharged from the Navy, but when he heard Chennault was organizing a new group in China – the Civil Air Transport – Richardson was quick to join and return to China, this time as a pilot.

On the surface, CAT was a commercial airline, but the airline evolved into Air America and became a cover for covert CIA operations throughout Asia. During his stint with the CIA, Richardson flew thousands of top-secret missions, including assignments during the Chinese Civil War, Korean War and Vietnam War. Along the way, he became fluent in

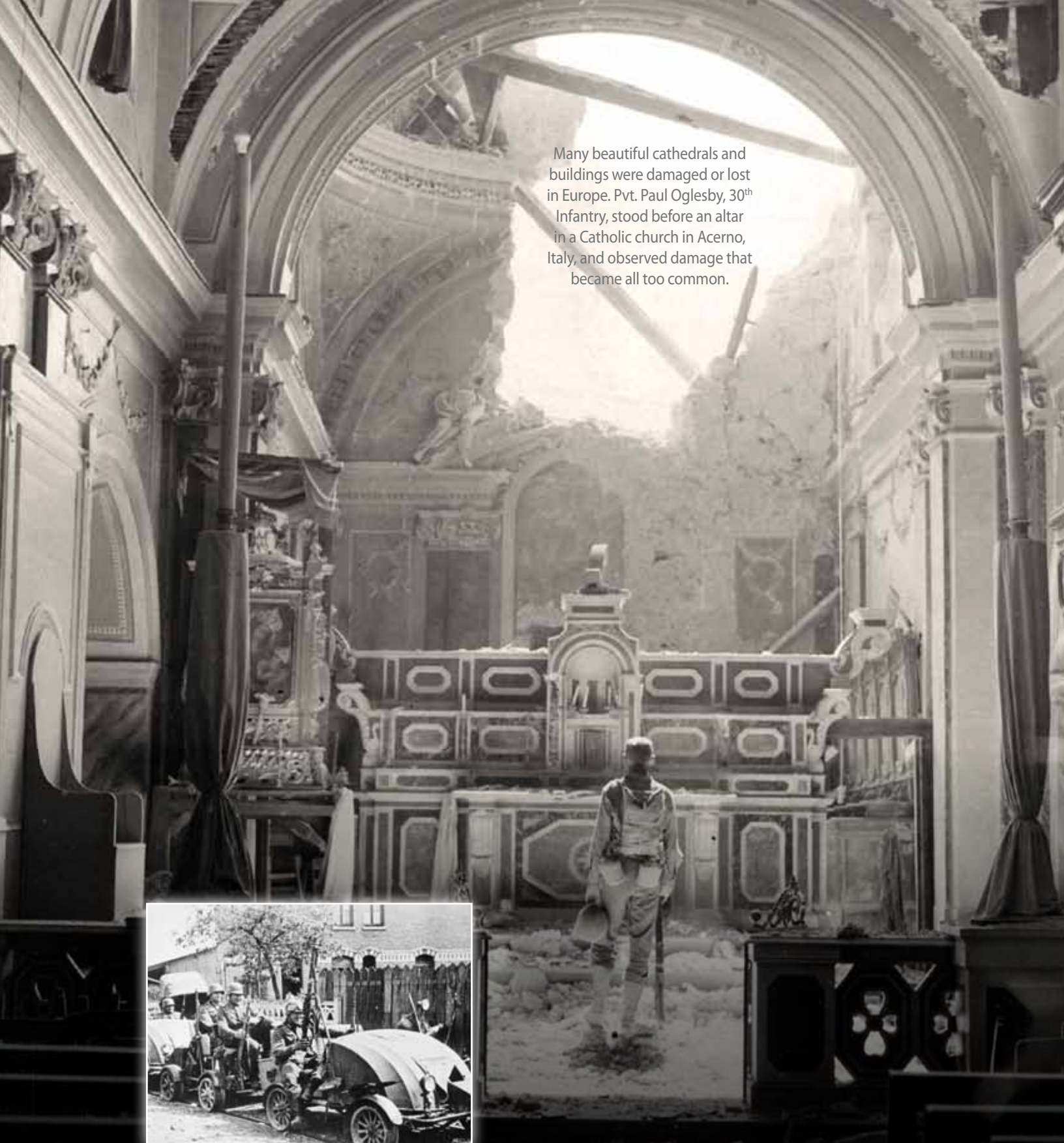
three Chinese dialects and could "get by" in several other Asian languages.

Richardson logged hours in dozens of different makes and models of aircraft in mostly unfriendly skies. Close calls came often, including flying in a convoy of aircraft delivering supplies to embattled French forces at Dien Bien Phu in northern Indochina on May 6, 1954. One of the planes was shot down, killing legendary

pilot James "Earthquake McGoon" McGovern and five others. These were among the first American fatalities of the Vietnam War.

Richardson is one of only a handful of original Flying Tigers still living. He retired from the CIA in 1974, No. 7 on the pilot seniority list. At the end of his storied career, the little boy who longed to be a pilot had grown up to bravely log 27,800 hours of clandestine flight time and 32 years of service. Dreams do come true. 🍷





Many beautiful cathedrals and buildings were damaged or lost in Europe. Pvt. Paul Oglesby, 30th Infantry, stood before an altar in a Catholic church in Acerno, Italy, and observed damage that became all too common.



June 1941:
Germany invades the Soviet Union.

November 1941:
Battle of Moscow slows the German attack on the Soviet Union.



Before the war was even over, the flag of Iwo Jima was a symbol of American sacrifice and triumph.



December 1941:
Japan bombs Pearl Harbor. The U.S. declares war on Japan.

December 1941:
Great Britain, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia and China declare war on Japan.



Thomas D'Aquino

★ ★ WOOLDRIDGE PLACE NURSING CENTER ★ ★
Corpus Christi, Texas

THE MASTER BEHIND THE LENS

By Dara Carroll

In the 1940s, war shattered the innocence of America, and professional photographer Thomas D'Aquino did not escape its intrusion. He was drafted in 1943 and assigned to the 42nd Infantry Rainbow Division. Made famous during World War I, the division was elite – the only one composed exclusively of National Guard units from across the United States.

“We had a special salute, unlike the rest of the army,” he said. “It indicated more of a rainbow emblem. There was a lot of ‘glory, glory’ involved.”

After basic training at Camp Gruber in Oklahoma, D'Aquino was assigned to the Signal Corps, in charge of radio communications. He and three team members were trained in radio encoding and decoding, Morse code and mine and booby traps. He also spent time taking portraits, including photographs of Rainbow Division's commander, Maj. Gen. Harold Collins.

Soldiers in the division came from all parts of the country, but prejudice was nonexistent. “It didn't matter if they were Jews, Catholics, Poles, Italians, or what,” D'Aquino said. “Once we got a uniform on, there was no such thing as black and white. There was no concern about that because we all suffered the same way.”

In 1944, Rainbow Division set sail for Europe. When they reached Marseilles, France, two weeks later, everyone went ashore in the middle of the night and quickly scattered, finding shelter wherever they could. Collins had no idea where his men were, so he commissioned D'Aquino to photograph the area. Collins radioed his commanders with orders to hang yellow banners, and, straddling the bomb doors



of a piper plane as it flew over Marseilles, D'Aquino spied the yellow banners and took photographs. Collins used D'Aquino's photos to locate his troops and quickly reform them.

As Rainbow Division marched through France and Germany, D'Aquino's team often went ahead of the main army to scout the territory and radio information back to the rest of the division. Hundreds of German POWs were captured along the way.

Although many surrendered without incident, D'Aquino could never let his guard down, even with civilians. On one occasion, after capturing a hospital, D'Aquino and his team entered one of the rooms to find a nurse standing over a bed.

“He's krank,” said the nurse, mixing her German with English. She pointed to the man in the bed.



Although D'Aquino was in Dachau less than 48 hours, the things he witnessed there never left him. The sights, smells and sounds of the liberation were seared in his heart and mind, just a sleepless night away.

“Leave him alone; don't bother him. He's very sick.”

D'Aquino moved closer to investigate and discovered that the boots beside the patient's bed were wet. His socks were wet, too.

“I knew he'd just gotten there,” said D'Aquino. “He'd just gotten in bed. And in his closet was his uniform: he was SS. We pulled him out of bed and dragged him down the stairs.”

As Rainbow Division marched toward Munich, Germany, in the early hours of April 29, 1945, it passed through the small town of Dachau and raided a local concentration camp. The discovery changed the course of the war and – for the first time – gave people around the world a true picture of the hatred bred by Nazis in their quest to establish a “pure” Aryan race.

“Suddenly, we were on top of Dachau,” D'Aquino recalled. “Some of the units went through the main gates and started shooting at the SS in the top of the turrets,

and, before you knew it, we just swarmed in there.”

Inside the compound, Rainbow Division found more than 30,000 prisoners and the bodies of thousands more who had already been exterminated.

“The prisoners were emaciated,” said D'Aquino. “All you could see was skin and bones, a lot of teeth missing. They smelled badly, very weak voices. They were half-dead.”

Although D'Aquino was in Dachau less than 48 hours, the things he witnessed there never left him. The sights, smells and sounds of the liberation were seared in his heart and mind, just a sleepless night away.

After the war, the transition from the battlefield to life as a civilian was not easy for D'Aquino.

“I had no authority anymore,” he said. “[Life] was going on here when all this carnage was going on over there. And everything was small to me. The rooms were small.

I had been living outdoors so much... It was all very difficult.”

D'Aquino experienced one of the most notorious events of the 20th century, but his children grew up not knowing the role their father played as a Dachau Liberator.

“He witnessed many horrors,” his daughter, Linda Charlton, said, “but he just put them away. I'm sure he saw a lot of things that brought back memories, but he never discussed it.”

In his life, D'Aquino has captured history and changed history. Now it is up to us to cherish that history. 🇺🇸



On June 5, 1944 – the day before the D-Day invasion – Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower gave paratroopers the order of the day: “Full victory – nothing else.”



January 1942:
The first U.S. troops arrive in Britain.



April 1942:
Japanese Americans are sent to relocation centers.

December 1941:
The United States formally declares war on Germany and Italy.

February 1942:
Japan captures Singapore.



Luther Craig

★ ★ THE WOODLANDS ★ ★
Muncie, Indiana

DEAD-EYE WITH A TENDER HEART

By Heidi Tompkins

As a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne, Craig was one of the first Americans on Sicily, landing on the south shore of the island on July 9, 1943, a day ahead of the Allied invasion of the Axis-held territory.



Luther Craig wasn't always known as Dead-Eye. For him, as for many young men in the 1940s, war was a terrible interruption. It broke into his happy life in Indiana as he was listening to a football radio broadcast; the announcer carried the news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

It wasn't long until Craig was drafted. While his three brothers went on to join the Navy, Air Force and Merchant Marines, he went into the Army. Leaving home tugged on the tender heart of 20-year-old Craig – he was leaving behind his lovely wife, Leota, and their 2-month-old son, Wayne, for an uncertain future.

Craig did his basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., and became known for his sharp aim, which earned him his nickname. He joined the paratroopers because, as he said, "I wanted to ride in a plane."

From training, it was off to Casablanca, Morocco, and from there to Europe.

As a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne, Craig was one of the first

Americans on Sicily, landing on the south shore of the island on July 9, 1943, a day ahead of the Allied invasion of the Axis-held territory.

"We generally got dropped behind the lines – that way we could fight them from both sides – and then we fought our way out," Craig explained. "We got out, they'd load us in another plane, take us back in somewhere else, and that got old real quick."

Craig remembers an incident between two towns in Sicily:

"We were almost back to our lines. There were 12 of us, and we tried to make the best way we could. I saw a big bunch of hedgerows. Well, I had to get on the other side, so I was slashing off petals here and apples there, and I finally got about 20 feet. I got through that hedgerow, and I turned around and was admiring my work (I'd made a beautiful tunnel so that the later guys could follow me), but that didn't work because there was a German tank sitting just about 500 yards up the hill. He was shooting at us, and you could hear the bullets coming down through

that hedgerow. It didn't take me near as long to get back."

When the rest of the troops arrived, Craig witnessed war on a scale he had not seen. "I was on a hill," he explained. "I could watch the battle, the boys coming in off the ships, and it was very gruesome to watch."

It would not be the last sight of war, however, for soon it was time for the All-American 82nd Airborne to advance in Italy.

During one nighttime mission in Italy, Craig's group of paratroopers saw a snaking black line and thought it was the river they were supposed to land in. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a road, and Craig's back was injured from the impact of the landing. Paratroopers carried equipment weighing 80-90 pounds (including jumping gear, weapons and items necessary for survival), so if they did not let their shoot out early for a hard landing, the force of hitting the ground could be dangerous.

Craig's biggest injury, however, occurred when his team was fighting in the vineyards, close to the front lines.

According to Perry Bowden, Craig's grandson, "The mission was to parachute close to the enemy gun emplacements, sneak in close and disable those cannons by hand. My grandfather landed safely and rallied with the other members of his squad. They managed to get to the enemy emplacements and threw grenades down the barrel of a couple of cannons relatively easily. The next gun did not go down so well. The enemy located them and started shelling. One shell landed so close to my grandfather's position that it knocked him into a muddy ditch."

Craig lay powerless while the battle raged around him.

"I was paralyzed," Craig said. "The only thing I could do was open and close my eyes."

While Craig lay in the mud for two days, the Germans moved on, and the Americans came through to clean up the battlefield. Craig was almost left for dead in the ditch until a lieutenant saw him blinking.

It was a precarious business getting Craig out of the mud – one wrong

move, and he could have been killed or paralyzed for life. Thankfully, the men got him out safely by sliding a board under him in the mud. Then he was sent to a hospital just east of Fez, Morocco.

Craig recovered slowly in North Africa and was told he could no longer serve as a paratrooper. Due to the injury from the shell and his back injury, he was reinstated as military police, a position Craig never felt was a good fit. He now had to follow other outfits at a distance as they fought in North Africa.

As an MP, Craig's duties at one time included guarding German prisoners of war in a camp near Casablanca. "We had no problems with them," he shared. "I think they were glad to get out of the shooting part of the war just the same as we were."

Late in the war, Craig's company left for the States from Livorno, Italy, on a call that they were needed in the South Pacific. However, when they got to New York, they were notified that they were no longer needed, a huge relief to the war-weary men.

The men had to go to Indianapolis for debriefing before returning home, but Craig finally got back to his wife and son. The long, brutal interruption in the life of this peace-loving man was finally over. He and Leota went on to have another son, Robert. The family has since grown to include two grandsons (Perry and Sean) and three great-grandsons (David, Liam and Aidan).

For his service, Craig received two Purple Hearts, a Silver Star medal, a Bronze Star medal, a Good Conduct medal, a European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign medal with two Bronze Service Stars with an arrowhead, a World War II Victory medal, a Combat Infantryman Badge 1st Award, an Honorable Service lapel button, and, perhaps his favorite, his Paratrooper Jump wings.

Craig doesn't like to talk about the war, but those around him appreciate the sacrifice he and the other soldiers made to ensure their freedom. 🇺🇸

This photo was taken on the morning of Dec. 30, 1940, during the Second Great Fire in London. Churchill ordered that St. Paul's Cathedral be protected at all costs.



April 1942:
Mass murder in gas chambers begins at Auschwitz II – Birkenau.

May 1942:
Japan captures the Philippines and Burma.



May 1942:
Bill creating the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps is signed.

June 1942:
The Allies defeat Japan in the Battle of Midway.



Richard Swart

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF PALM BAY ★ ★
Palm Bay, Florida

CHASING CHALLENGES

By Dara Carroll



During his active service, Swart flew 78 missions as lead navigator on the famed Yankee Guerrilla, a Martin B-26 Marauder.

Richard Swart saw his share of combat during World War II. But his most searing memory of the war might surprise you.

The scene was London, 1943. A German V-2 rocket fell from the sky and met its mark with a deafening explosion. In the chaotic aftermath, Swart stood less than 200 yards away, staring at a smoking crater that was nearly 100 yards wide and 40 yards deep. His heart was in his throat. “That was too close,” he thought; it would be safer at the base.

Swart hailed a cab, but a few blocks away, they were stopped by a woman standing in the middle of the road, waving her arms wildly and screaming. She asked to be taken to the nearest hospital, exclaiming: “My water broke!”

The young, single airman had no idea what that meant.

Moments later, the lady screamed for the cab driver to pull over. “The baby’s coming,” she

groaned. “Take these diapers and catch the baby as it comes out.”

In shock, Swart followed her orders. “She had her dress up over her hips,” he said, “and I could see the baby’s head slowly emerge, along with a lot of blood. I was too scared to be embarrassed!”

After the wailing baby girl was born, Swart used a Swiss army knife to cut the umbilical cord and then fumbled with the slippery cord to form a knot. As he finished, the mother announced, “You’ve tied your first belly button!”

Swart arrived at the hospital covered in blood. To remove the stains from his uniform, he showered in his clothes. When he finally returned to his barrack that evening, his bunkmates noticed the late hour and that he was soaking wet. Swart tried to explain what had happened, but the unbelievable story was, in fact, unbelievable.

“Too much drinking!” they razzed. “So, that’s how you explain falling into the River Thames.”

Swart never did convince them that the story was true, but the events were forever etched in his memory. They reminded him that in spite of the ravages of war, life went on. They reminded him what he was fighting for.

Swart was drafted into the Army Air Corps in 1942 and assigned to the 386th Bombardment Group, which was sent to Europe in 1943. During his active service, Swart flew 78 missions as lead navigator on the famed Yankee Guerrilla, a Martin B-26 Marauder. Stationed primarily in England, the Marauder Men played a vital role in the bombardment of the continent between 1943 and 1945. They bombed Nazi V-weapon sites and airfields in France, Holland and Belgium, and were so highly regarded that they were designated as the last group to bomb the French coast before Allied troops stormed the beaches on D-Day.

Close calls were sobering and came often. On one occasion, Swart

and another pilot swapped seats mid-flight. “As soon as the co-pilot settled into [Dad’s] navigator seat,” recalled Swart’s son, Richard Swart Jr., “a piece of shrapnel flew through the bottom of the plane and took out the seat, killing the pilot.”

Members of his crew weren’t the only friends Swart lost. Oldest daughter, Barbara Harburg, said that on several occasions, “He would be flying in formation, and all of the planes would be shot down except his.”

Not all of Swart’s military service was marred by loss. There were good memories, too. While touring Windsor Castle one day, he and a fellow airman were approached by a guard who asked if they would like to have tea with the queen. Later that day, they enjoyed high tea with Queen Mary and also met a teenage Princess Elizabeth, soon to become Queen Elizabeth II.

Like so many of his comrades, Swart faced his role in the war with an indomitable spirit and selfless

sense of adventure. Boldly chasing challenges whenever he could, he never forgot what he was fighting for, and he wanted others to remember too.

“Dad was always teaching us lessons,” said his daughter Tricia Perry. “Be honest and polite, work hard and never quit learning. He did so many terrific things in his life. I hope I live to be 90 and accomplish half of what he did.”





This scene became commonplace as American soldiers fought to protect their homeland and freedom.



November 1942:
Operation Torch, the U.S. invasion of North Africa, begins.



February 1943:
German troops surrender in Stalingrad.

September 1942:
Battle of Stalingrad begins; war starts to turn for Allies.

May 1943:
Axis troops in North Africa surrender.



Dean Perry

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF IDAHO FALLS ★ ★
Idaho Falls, Idaho

THE REPLACEMENT

By Dara Carroll



It was January 1945, and Allied troops were engaged in the Battle of the Bulge, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. Perry was sent to the front lines, in the Ardennes Forest.

In the summer of 1944, Dean Perry's training at Camp Fannin, Texas, was cut drastically short. The U.S. Army was suffering heavy losses and desperately needed replacements. After only 17 weeks of training, the teenage rifleman from Idaho was deployed to Europe.

"We were going in there as a replacement for somebody who got killed," explained Perry.

It was January 1945, and Allied troops were engaged in the Battle of the Bulge, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. On the front lines in the Ardennes Forest, Perry's life suddenly depended on the men around him – and theirs on him – but there was no time for socializing.

"You gotta blend in with everybody," Perry explained. "You'll have some from New York and some from the Southern states, and they're all mixed up. You don't even know their name some of the time."

In the early hours of March 2, Perry's platoon had orders to travel to a location near the Rhine River. The route was blanketed with mines, 10-foot high hedges, barbed wire and trenches filled

with enemy soldiers. The Americans split into three flanks: 300 men on the right, 300 on the left, and 300 in the center. The center flank – including Perry – moved first. As they fought their way through the brutally cold night, the Germans opened fire.

"When we got across that field, we'd lost everybody but 30 [out of 300]," said Perry.

The survivors headed for the safety of an old brick building and captured the German soldiers they found inside.

As daylight approached, Perry and his comrades spotted men coming in from the right flank – Nazis. The Americans had no hope of defending themselves and were quickly taken by the Germans, who then freed their fellow soldiers.

In the first few days of captivity, Perry was interrogated – and surprised to find out how much the Nazis knew about him.

"They knew a lot about Idaho," said Perry. "They knew about my company. They told me [everything]. They knew what the U.S. soldiers were doing!"

Once the interrogation stopped, Perry found himself constantly on the move.

On one occasion, they were paraded through the streets of Dusseldorf, Germany, as war trophies. They crossed into the city on a bridge wired with explosives as big as bathtubs. As soon as Perry and the others got across the Rhine River, the Nazis blew up the bridge so trailing American troops could not follow.

At night, they often stayed in barnyards. One night, Perry and a few others slept in a hayloft. The next morning, they decided to hide in the hay, hoping to get left behind. However, the Germans quickly realized men were missing.

"They came up there with big, long pitchforks and started digging down in that hay," said Perry. "We decided we better get out!"

Constantly moving required energy, but food and water were scarce.

"They'd give you an old rusty can and march you past five-gallon buckets," said Perry. "It was just clear water with

some grass in it or something. If you dug right down to the bottom, you might get a piece of potato. That's all we had. And, you might only get that once a day."

Anything more became a commodity.

"Their bread is awful coarse," explained Perry. "But, we'd put part of it in our pocket because we didn't know when we would get more. In your pocket, the bread just turned into crumbs, like sawdust. But it was still good."

The worst part of captivity was the constant fear of death.

"You have the fear every day of not knowing what they might do with you," Perry said.

Never were those fears more real than in the hours Perry spent at the infamous Stalag IX-B, a POW camp in Bad Orb.

"They had us take our helmets off and throw them in the corner, into a pile that looked like it was 10 feet high," remembered Perry. "We figured we were going into the big furnace."

To Perry's relief, they were not at Bad Orb long, but he faced more close calls.

"They put us in four box cars just as thick as they could," Perry said. "Americans would bomb the track, and we'd sit there in those hot cars until they were repaired. Then, we'd go a little further, and the track would get bombed again. Some got killed in the box cars 'cause the Americans shot holes in them – not knowing it was us inside. When they let us out, a lot couldn't even walk. Hitler's boys – the SS – were waiting for us. I don't know what happened to the men who couldn't walk; they got left with the SS. We never saw them again."

In the early hours of March 27, Perry was sleeping in a hayloft when something screamed through the roof above his head.

"You could hear that big shell coming," said Perry. "We didn't know where it was gonna go, but you can hear the big ones quite a ways off. It hit the top of that barn and shattered things, but nobody got hurt."

When daylight broke, the guards were gone, and Perry was free. He was flown to France and hospitalized, where he fought to regain his strength. He had lost more than 80 lbs. in one month.

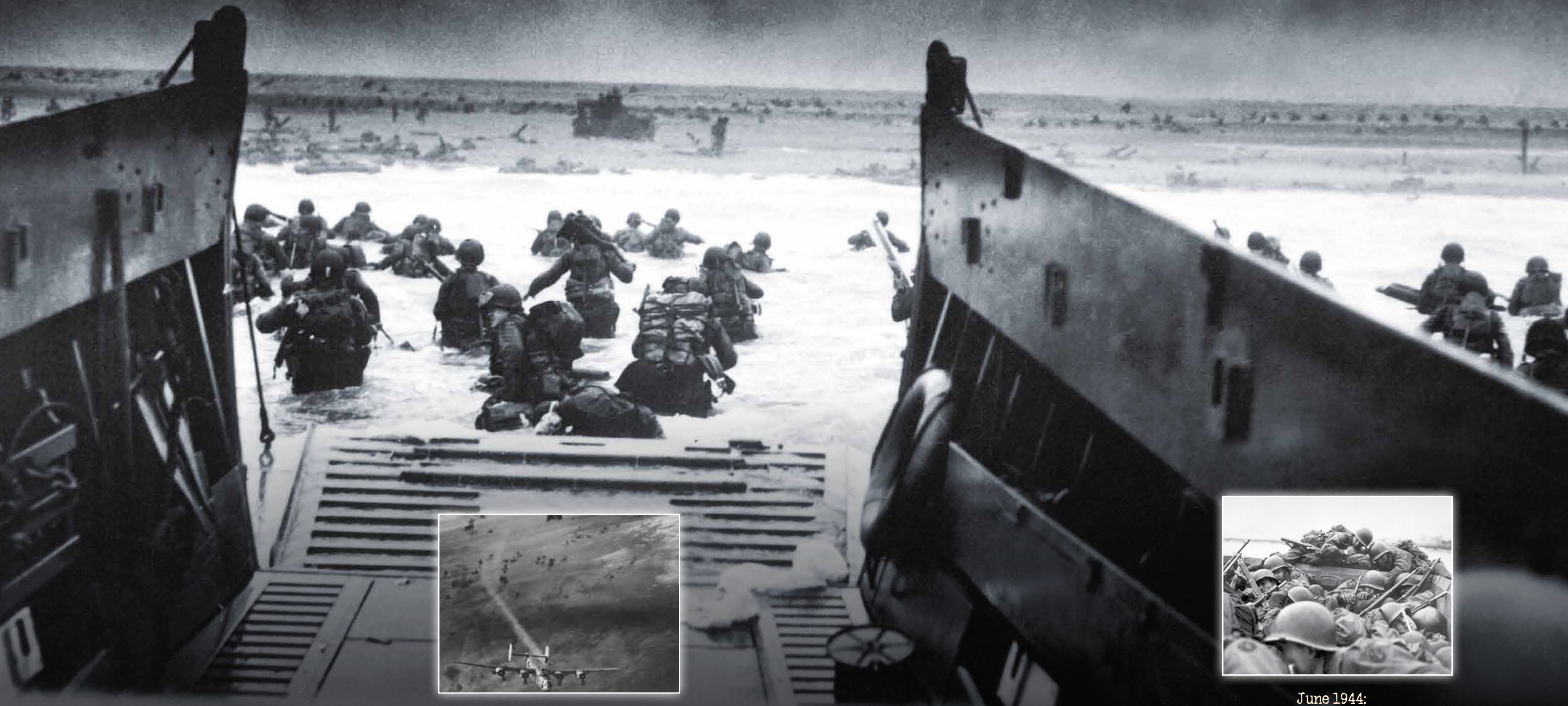
A few months later, Perry was reunited with his family in Idaho. While there, Americans dropped bombs on Japan, and the war was over. A year later, Perry was discharged.

Perry and thousands like him dutifully fought for the freedom we enjoy today. According to his daughter, Dorothy Ann, our duty is simple: we must remember. She summed up our task with a quote from a recent "Music and the Spoken Word" broadcast:

"To remember is to read and share their stories, so their memory remains alive and fresh. Remembering means we strive to avoid making the same mistakes that made their sacrifice necessary. To remember is to think of them as they thought of themselves – not as heroes of extraordinary bravery but simply as regular people who recognized their duty and tried hard to do it."

Perry and his comrades did their duty. Now we must do ours. We must remember. 🇺🇸

Army soldiers waded toward the beaches of Normandy as part of the D-Day invasion in June 1944. A total of 160,000 troops landed as part of the attack.



September 1943:
Italy surrenders to Allies.



October 1943:
Italy joins the Allies and declares war on Germany.

November 1943:
U.S. forces invade Tarawa.



June 1944:
Allied troops land in France and begin Operation Overlord, which will later become known as D-Day.



Nicus Loveless

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF CENTERVILLE ★ ★
Centerville, Tennessee

BUILDING BRIDGES

By Ryan Faricelli



Loveless was assigned to the 333rd Engineer Special Service Regiment, a group specializing in construction of bridges, buildings and roads.

“I was thinking I wouldn’t ever see the United States again,” recalled Nicus Loveless of the day he waded through the waist-deep harbor water of the Irish Sea, moving towards the shore of Liverpool, England.

Loveless had spent the last 12 days aboard the USS James Parker, a former Pacific Railroad cargo ship commissioned by the Army. They had traveled from Camp Shanks at the New York Port of Embarkation to Great Britain as part of the largest convoy of U.S. vessels thus far in the war, arriving in England on Oct. 18, 1943.

Enlisting in September 1940, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Loveless shared a common belief that those who enlisted before the draft would get better jobs away from the front lines of combat. He and 98 other young men from Hickman County, Tenn., joined the local National Guard unit, Battery C.

When the unit was activated to join the Army in the war, Battery C was split up. Loveless was assigned to the 333rd Engineer Special Service Regiment, a group specializing in

construction of bridges, buildings and roads.

“Our engineer unit was made up of skilled labor,” Loveless explained. “They didn’t get our officers from the Army. They were contractors, builders and everything. But they didn’t have any military training. Maybe Boy Scouts or something, but they didn’t know anything about the military.”

The threat overseas was always on Loveless’ mind, and the fear of not returning was very real. He had fallen in love with a young woman from the Brushy Community, the rural area that was his hometown near Centerville, Tenn., and refused to marry her. He would not allow her to become a widow.

The 333rd’s first assignment was repairs and upgrades to Aldermaston Airport in Liverpool. Afterward, the 333rd began rebuilding the destroyed port of Fort du Roule, a classic 19th-century fort in the important port city of Cherbourg, France, on June 27, 1944.

The port had been bombed and heavily damaged, and the work ahead of them was daunting. Civilian help was unproductive, as the French were starved

and weakened from their treatment during the occupation. For the first time, the 333rd constructed a prisoner of war enclosure and employed German POW labor. By January 1945, they were using nearly 4,500 POWs.

“They were getting good meals and a place to sleep at night, so they were good to us,” Loveless said of the POWs. “We had one man working with the German laborers on the pilings, and the tide was coming in. A timber fell and he broke his leg. He was caught down there: the water was way up on him. They could have not said anything if they wanted to. He would have drowned because he couldn’t get out. And they came out and got help, got a crane and picked him out.”

The work in Cherbourg was finished on Feb. 28, successfully completing 196 projects there.

On March 10, the 333rd began its move to the German border. Gen. George Patton was leading the Third Army in an aggressive assault across Germany, putting

the Germans on the run and chasing them back from the French border.

Less than 10 miles from Patton’s front lines, the 333rd was rebuilding the railroad tracks and bridges from France through Germany in order to provide maximum rail access for Patton’s men. Beginning with the reconstruction of the bridge over the Saar River at Saarbrücken, they remained on the heels of the advancing Third Army for 63 days, building 78 bridges and opening 438 miles of track using only captured enemy steel and materials found locally.

“Patton was in front of us,” remembered Loveless. “He was taking the foot troops with the armored division. We’d get the roads built and railroads, and that’s how we shipped in the supplies, gas and stuff, to keep Patton supplied. We were pushing the Germans so fast; they were running out of gas!”

Patton’s advance ended just outside of Berlin to allow the Russian military to take that city. The Third Army headed south, and so did

Loveless’ regiment. On April 24, they began rail and bridge reconstruction from Nuremberg to Munich, completing another 40 bridges.

On April 29, Loveless and his commander left a worksite to scout for steel. They came upon the concentration camp at Dachau, liberated that morning, where thousands of prisoners remained. Twenty American Red Cross trucks were on their way. Bodies and bones were everywhere, along with piles of thousands of shoes. Helping to remove weapons from the dead German soldiers, Loveless kept one of the bayonet-equipped rifles. It would be one of his only souvenirs of the war.

The next day, everything changed. “Just before lunch, they told us the war ended,” said Loveless. “Hitler killed himself – committed suicide. We were working on a bridge in Munich. It was about 10 a.m. We didn’t finish the bridge.”

While the war was not officially over for several days, the members of the 333rd were relieved of their duties.

“We boarded up on box cars and headed back to France,” shared Loveless. “We thought the next thing we knew we’d be going back home. But it was some time before we got out. We didn’t know what was going on in Japan.”

Loveless and his regiment would remain in Rheims, France, until after the bombing of Hiroshima in October, the true end of World War II. He was discharged on Oct. 19, 1945.

Despite the fears he felt the day he stepped off the James Parker and into the cold Irish Sea, Master Sgt. Nicus Loveless would see the United States again. While they would return from different places at different times, all 98 of the men who enlisted with him would also go home alive.

Loveless married Eva, the young woman he refused to risk leaving a widow, and the two had a daughter named Becky.

“Anybody that goes over there in the service,” concluded Loveless, “if you’re up there like we was, you’re all lucky if you come back.”

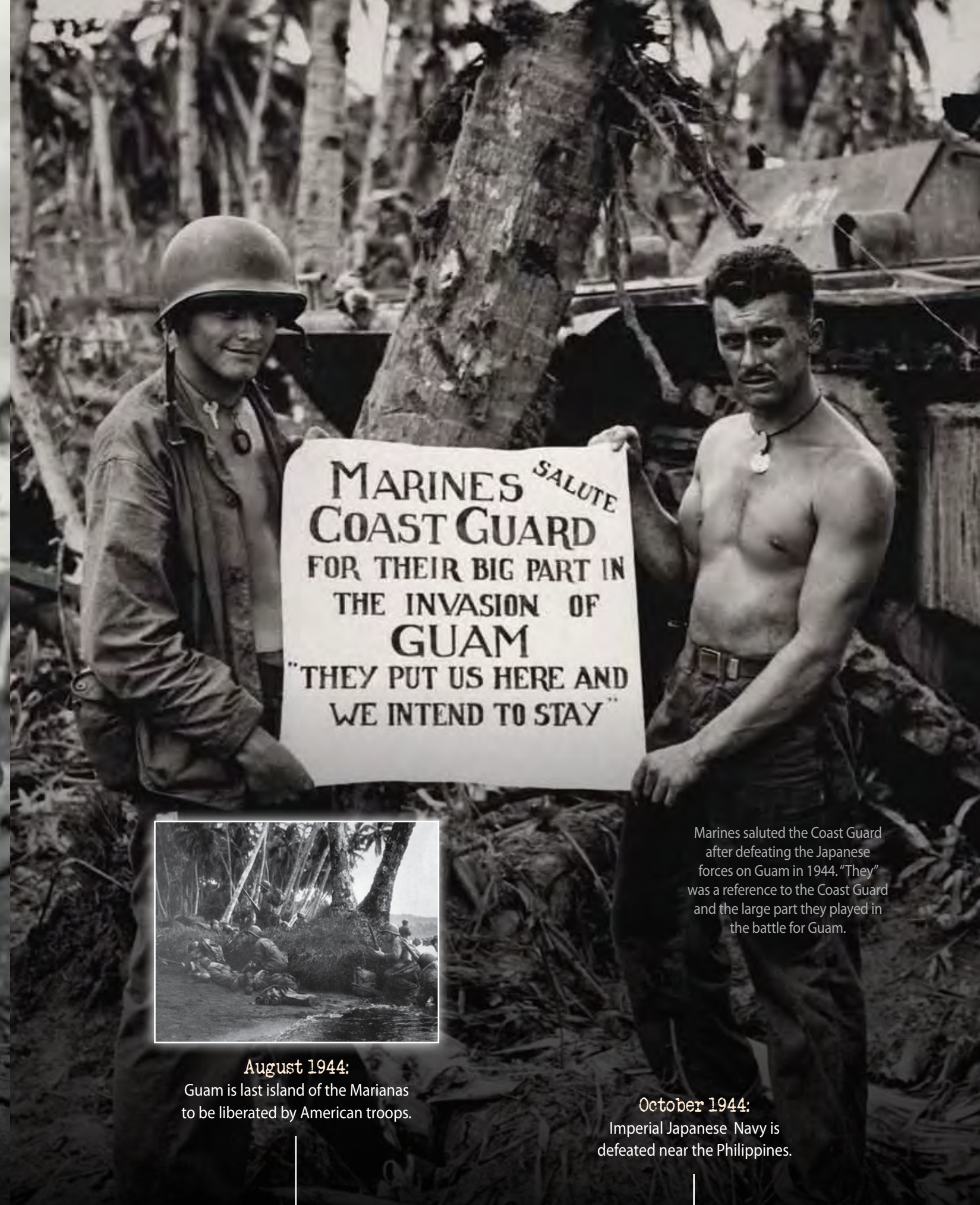


In the Pacific Theatre, soldiers often faced the harsh conditions of the jungle during battle.



July 1944:
Liberation of concentration camps begins with Majdanek in Poland.

August 1944:
Paris is liberated.



MARINES SALUTE
COAST GUARD
FOR THEIR BIG PART IN
THE INVASION OF
GUAM
"THEY PUT US HERE AND
WE INTEND TO STAY"



August 1944:
Guam is last island of the Marianas to be liberated by American troops.

Marines saluted the Coast Guard after defeating the Japanese forces on Guam in 1944. "They" was a reference to the Coast Guard and the large part they played in the battle for Guam.

October 1944:
Imperial Japanese Navy is defeated near the Philippines.



Color photos by Moments in Time Photography by Ellen Davis

William Houston

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF CARROLLTON ★ ★
Carrollton, Missouri

A PROFILE OF A PRISONER OF WAR

By Tanya Bumgardner



William Houston was a member of Company B, 43rd Tank Battalion, 12th Armored Division and spent four months as prisoner of the Germans, walking around the European countryside from prison camp to prison camp in what was known as “The March.”

I was a member of the crew on a medium tank, an expert marksman, responsible for firing 75mm guns. On Jan. 16, 1945, at or around 0500, we attacked our objective near Offendorf, France (500 yards from the River Rhine). Our objective was a patch of woods about 1,000 yards long and 200 yards wide. As we approached the objective, two German outposts surrendered to our boys. Soon after that, the first shot was fired by the Germans. As daylight broke, four German burp guns open fired on our boys and had them trapped. Our tanks were brought up for support, but to no avail. Two tanks were knocked out immediately; the entire crews of both tanks were trapped inside. The tanks burned. ... My tank and three others were heavily damaged and fell back, waiting for artillery support. After a while, the artillery support stopped, but the German burp guns kept firing. Soon after, we saw one of our boys with a white flag and 15 others yelling, ‘Kamerad! Kamerad!’ All firing ceased, and we were prisoners of war.”

William Houston has never talked much about the war. These words he wrote – taken from notes and letters that his daughters found years after the war – are nearly all his family knows about his time as a POW during World War II.

Houston – a member of Company B, 43rd Tank Battalion, 12th Armored Division – spent four months as prisoner of the Germans, walking around the European countryside from prison camp to prison camp in what was known as “The March.”

In 1944, Adolf Hitler ordered the evacuation of war prisoners and German civilians to the west in an effort to escape advancing Soviet forces. The closer the Soviets moved in, the more the Germans and their POWs marched. The cold was brutal, and supplies were scarce. When Houston’s battalion was captured, they were forced to join this march that had started months earlier.

“We marched on,” Houston wrote. “I do not believe anyone

knew where we were going. We were just walking through the wet and cold. God, I was hungry. During this march, we met many kind Germans who gave us bread. Many times, our boys would get the butt of a German rifle for taking the food. When you are starving, you feel no pain other than hunger.”

When they received food, it was usually black bread and soup made from potato skins or rutabagas. According to his daughters, Deanna Carr and Dorothy Thrasher, Houston claimed the food was horrible, but the cold was worse. Eastern Europe was experiencing some of the coldest temperatures the area had seen during the entire 20th century, and the American POWs were ill-equipped to protect themselves from it.

On April 15, as Germany’s power was slipping, the marching finally came to an end for Houston and his fellow POWs.

“Rumors were stronger [that day] than ever before,” wrote Houston. “The first [German] sergeant of our group made an announcement. ‘The English are two hours away.’ He told us we would move out at 0700.

“On April 16, we heard German convoys going by the barn all night. ... At 0630, we were outside making ready to march when we heard machine gun fire. Someone yelled the SS were opening up on us. We all headed for the barn.

“We all got as low as possible, and I know I was shaking like a leaf. I was scared. I heard the door open. I turned to see a young English soldier standing there. The gunfire stopped, and we came out of the barn to see Jerries surrendering 4,000 yards away.”

Houston and the other men were given soap, dry socks, razors and a bed to sleep on for the first time in four months. The men were then divided up according to medical condition.



Houston recalls: “I went with the first group because they said I was pretty sick. I was; I weighed right at 100 pounds. I had pneumonia. I had been starved for months, and my feet were frozen. I could not walk.” Houston remained hospitalized for seven months, first in Europe and later in America. On Nov. 30, 1945, Houston was finally discharged so he could return home.

Back home in Missouri, Houston’s wife, Anna, had been notified that he was missing in action, but never knew his fate. The war ended, and all she had left was hope that somehow he was still alive.

“The way mother found out that he was OK and that he was coming home, she was in the garden with

my brother and her grandmother,” said Thrasher. “Grandmother saw someone walking down the road, and she said, ‘Well, that looks like [William.]’ Mom turned around and looked, and it was him. He was just walking down the road to the house. ... Mother said, ‘My legs were so weak, I just sat down right in the middle of the garden. I couldn’t walk.’”

Houston and Anna were inseparable from that moment on. After returning from the war, those who know him say you would never know what he had been through. He spent his days laughing, joking and being a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. They suspect his experience as a POW left him with an appreciation for life and those he has shared it with. 🇺🇸

The Pacific Theatre presented its own set of challenges as it was fought from island to island. This American soldier stood guard as tanks lined the beach, preparing for the next battle.



December 1944:
Battle of the Bulge begins.

January 1945:
Battle of Berlin begins; it is considered one of the bloodiest battles in history.

January 1945:
Auschwitz is liberated.



March 1945:
Allied troops capture Iwo Jima.



William Wallace

★ ★ LIFE CARE CENTER OF WILBRAHAM ★ ★
Wilbraham, Massachusetts

A CIVILIAN HERO

By Leigh Michels

"I saw that we were being shelled by a war ship. It was a heavily armed cruiser. We didn't have a chance, and the captain knew that. That's why we were abandoning ship."



"Come over here!" yelled the German officer from the gangway.

"I'm coming," responded a tired and injured merchant mariner.

"Come over here!" he yelled again.

The merchant mariner had given up. Having just watched his oil tanker sink and knowing he was miles from land, he had lost all hope. Becoming a prisoner of war of the Axis powers was his only option. That was until he heard a voice from the opposite direction call out: "Who is there?"

In a voice weak from inhaling steam and ammonia gas in the engine room, the merchant mariner answered, "Third assistant engineer."

The mysterious voice responded, "Well, come over here. We've got a raft."

And, all of a sudden, hope returned.

Born in 1919, William Wallace's love for the sea started at a young age. After a short stint in the Navy Reserves, Wallace attended the Massachusetts Nautical School, a training school for merchant marine officers.

While all members of the Merchant Marines are considered civilians, during wartime, they serve as an auxiliary to the

Navy. This is the work that Wallace took up after graduating in the early 1940s.

In July 1942, a new assignment placed Wallace on the SS William F. Humphrey, an American oil tanker sailing from Cape Town, South Africa, to Trinidad to pick up oil. The tanker was traveling alone – without any military escort.

Wallace worked in the engine room, and on the ninth day, in the middle of Wallace's evening shift, a loud noise and explosion changed the route of the Humphrey. The captain's orders came down: full astern on the engine. However, the second part of the captain's orders – to abandon ship – never reached Wallace.

With the steam lines to the engine room shot out by enemy fire, the Humphrey stopped, and the engine room began to fill with steam and ammonia gas, permanently scarring Wallace's lungs. The sharp impact of the ship stopping and debris flying caused Wallace to receive two head injuries.

Managing to escape the engine room, Wallace stopped by his room to get \$300 he had in his locker. As he was placing the money in his back pocket, another shell

hit the ship and blew in the ceiling of his room, causing a serious head wound that almost knocked him out. Forcing himself to focus and get out of his room, he ventured out on deck.

"I saw that we were being shelled by a war ship. It was a heavily armed cruiser. We didn't have a chance, and the captain knew that. That's why we were abandoning ship," explained Wallace.

It was later learned that the war ship was Michel, a German surface raider.

Wallace began swimming away from the ship, careful to put enough distance between himself and the Humphrey. About 100 feet from the ship, Wallace observed the sturdy Humphrey still afloat. It was a strong ship – built to withstand harsh conditions.

However, the Michel wasn't done with its attack.

"In the water, I felt something go by my feet. I thought it was a shark, but it was a torpedo that just missed my feet. Then it hit the ship; it was a tremendous explosion. I felt something go by me again in the water. I knew it was another torpedo."

Within five minutes, the Humphrey sank.

It was in the moments after watching his home-away-from-home sink that Wallace decided it would be better to become a POW than to die at sea. Thankfully, he was intercepted by a few brave men on rafts.

Swimming toward the direction of the mysterious voice, Wallace joined 10 other men, including the captain, on three different rafts. When daylight came, the men were able to find two lifeboats from the Humphrey. They used one lifeboat for supplies, and the 11 of them filled the other boat.

Nine of the 11 men had injuries, but the gun captain sustained the worst injury – half of his knee had been blown away. At first he ran a high fever and hallucinated. The other men all agreed that the gun captain should get as much water as he wanted, while the rest of them lived on a ration of eight ounces per day.

Not knowing when and if a rescue would happen, the men quickly established a routine and a plan, figuring they were about 800 miles from land.

"Actually, we had good sailing weather," explained Wallace. "We put a sail up on the lifeboat. We traveled about 500 miles. We were feeling pretty good. We were talking about what we would have to eat. We were hungry, you know? We were just joking that we'd fill up on hamburgers and hot dogs and a few beers to wash it down."

This tight-knit crew became surprisingly comfortable and adept at life in a lifeboat. So comfortable, in fact, that they became lax about watching the horizon for other boats. Unknown to them, six-and-a-half days into their journey, the Triton, a Norwegian freighter, spotted them.

"They were circling around us with their guns trained on us," said Wallace. Once the ship determined that the 11 men were of no threat, they picked them up. "They gave us excellent care. We were covered with oil. They gave us diesel fuel to wash up with, and then a little fresh water to wash the diesel off of us."

Three days later, the Triton docked in Sierra Leone. Wallace and the 10 other men were given the option of continuing to Great Britain on the Triton or staying in the nation's capital, Freetown. The group

decided to stay because the gun captain needed serious medical care, and they didn't want to leave him alone.

It was during this moment that the \$300 Wallace carefully grabbed came in handy. He was able to loan his fellow crew members money until funds could be wired to the captain. After a few weeks, the gun captain was settled in the hospital, and the other 10 knew it was time to return to the U.S. The captain secured passage for everyone except for the gun captain on a British ship, the Aquitania.

Once the ship docked in Boston, and Wallace was able to reach a phone, he called home. "My parents were really amazed to hear my voice because I had been reported missing in action twice. They were surprised I was still alive," he explained.

After World War II, he went on to serve the country in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The memories of his time aboard the Humphrey and the six-and-a-half days in the lifeboat are still vivid.

"If you want to know if I was scared or not, I was," said Wallace. "I thought I was going to die a slow, painful death. I was lucky to get out alive." 🐾



In June 1945, Gen. George S. Patton was honored at a parade in Los Angeles. During his visit to the city, Patton addressed thousands of civilians.



April 1945:
President Roosevelt dies, and Harry Truman becomes president.



April 1945:
U.S. troops liberate Dachau.



April 1945:
Hitler commits suicide.



May 1945:
Germany surrenders, ending World War II in Europe.



Women of the War

THE UNSUNG HEROES

By Lindsay Tunnell



World War II brought unimaginable changes, challenging the normalcy of daily life in countless households. Despite the struggles of the changing times, women served their nation like never before – both at home and overseas.

For nearly 19 million women across the U.S., World War II brought unimaginable changes, challenging the normalcy of daily life in countless households. Despite the struggles of the changing times, women served their nation like never before – both at home and overseas.

These remarkable women are testaments of courage, servanthood and determination. While each woman holds a unique war experience, a common thread unites them. These are the women who were left behind as their husbands, brothers, fathers and friends were called to serve in battle. Though each one answered the call of duty in her own way, these women courageously stepped up on the homefront and stood behind the men until the war's completion – the true unsung heroes.

Irene Jacobson

LIFE CARE CENTER OF THE SOUTH SHORE
Scituate, Massachusetts



Born in 1914, Irene Jacobson witnessed many critical events in the United States – from the Great Depression to Sept. 11 – all of which contributed to her fascination with history. However, no event impacted Jacobson quite like the lingering memories of the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

Jacobson moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, with her husband, John Peter Jacobson, in 1940. A lieutenant in the U.S. Army, he was stationed at Pearl Harbor on that fateful day.

For Jacobson and her husband, the morning of Dec. 7 began like any other as they chatted and read the newspaper over a fresh cup of coffee.

Suddenly, Jacobson heard two loud booms. While shaken, she assumed they were part of a drill or training exercise. She realized the gravity of the situation, however, when a neighbor ran out of his house shouting, “We’re

being attacked! We’re at war! This is the real thing!”

Jacobson recalled, “I looked up at the blackened sky and saw the Rising Sun emblem on the Japanese aircraft. I thought for sure it was the Day of Judgment.”

With tears streaming down her face, Jacobson begged God for protection for herself and her husband. She hurriedly climbed into a military truck and was transported to a shelter 30 miles from the barracks, along with the other surviving military wives and children. There, Jacobson stayed for six weeks, sleeping on the floor and anxiously checking the daily casualties list for her husband’s name. Thankfully, his name never appeared.

After what seemed an eternity, Jacobson finally returned to Pearl Harbor and was recruited to work in the Honolulu post office. She was proud to serve the men on base by aiding communication from the island to the mainland. Jacobson worked until April 1942, when the women and children on base were evacuated and returned stateside.

Though the war separated Jacobson and her husband, she never ceased to pray for him and sent him hundreds of letters as he courageously served the nation in Italy and Germany until the war’s end in 1945. While her husband returned home safely and life slowly began to return to normal, the day’s earth-shattering memories stayed with Irene Jacobson for the rest of her life.

Grace Merisso

LIFE CARE CENTER OF PARADISE VALLEY
Phoenix, Arizona



Living in Chicago, Ill., at the onset of the war, Grace Merisso was eating Sunday dinner with her family when she heard the devastating news on the radio of the Pearl Harbor attack. Merisso felt an immediate call to action during this time of crisis.

As a result, Merisso left her job as a traveling cosmetics saleswoman and began reporting daily to a small apartment located above a hardware store. This apartment was used by the

military as a private location to house important wartime documents. Merisso worked with one other woman in a small room of the apartment. Bare and empty, it contained only two small desks and two typewriters.

Each day, Air Force officials would bring the ladies handwritten, top-secret information. Sworn to secrecy, it was Merisso’s job to type the information into a document. The material was so classified that the men would bring the pages out of sequence so they did not make sense, and the women were locked in the room to ensure security of the information.

“We would have to leave blank spaces on some documents for very sensitive material,” remembered Merisso. “The men would go and write the information in after we typed the rest.”

After her workday ended, Merisso would eat dinner and head to the local Red Cross to volunteer. She knitted scarves and sweaters for men away at war, packaged medical equipment and rolled bandages.

“I worked at the Red Cross every evening until quite late,” stated Merisso. “I volunteered there until the war ended.”

Through Merisso’s tireless efforts, military communication and functioning was strengthened during the war. The men who worked with Merisso awarded her a written letter of thanks and a congratulatory pin for her dedication and loyalty.

“I just wanted to help out,” Merisso shared. “The men were so appreciative of us women, and I felt so patriotic. We all had to stick together.”

Marjorie Usher

HALLMARK NURSING CENTER
Denver, Colorado



Marjorie Usher was enthusiastic about helping her country in any capacity that she could. Living in the small town of Seneca, Kan., at the beginning of World War II provided the perfect opportunity.



“One day, when I had just turned 18, a group of men showed up at my door,” explained Usher. “They asked me to join a team of women in the local War Price and Rations department. I was so thrilled I nearly hugged them, and I accepted the job immediately!”

Usher’s enthusiasm carried over to her job, which entailed working with four other women to review community residents’ requests for new tires, shoes and other common items. The department, under the capable leadership of Father Matthew, a Catholic priest in town, held monthly board meetings to discuss the worthiness of applicants’ requests.

“Father Matthew was efficient and a great man to work for,” Usher explained. “He and the rest of the men in town who were unable to fight were very accepting of us women. I never felt apologetic as a woman or that I was being looked down upon. For the most part, I believe men were just thankful that we stepped up.”

While Usher buzzed about the office, staying busy until the war’s end with paperwork of new requests and meetings for reviewing applicants, there were still many times of discouragement.

“The war was terrible,” Usher recalled. “I remember reading the newspaper and finding names of people

I had graduated with who were killed in battle. That was one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do.”

Despite setbacks, the pride and enthusiasm Usher displayed in serving her country is extraordinary.

“The hardest transition for me after the war was figuring out what I would do next,” Usher reminisced. “I just knew I wanted to keep serving the nation and the men who had just returned from war.”

Helen Sigler

LIFE CARE CENTER OF KONA
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii



Helen Sigler’s passion for the open skies began when she was a wide-eyed farm girl from Camden, Maine. Her unbreakable spirit, however, began soaring much earlier.

As a young woman, Sigler was enthralled by airplanes. She began flying at 18 years old as often as she could, enrolled in pilot lessons and worked a variety of jobs to raise money to satisfy her unquenchable desire for flight.

Sigler recalled her first ascent, explaining, “As soon as I got in the air, I knew flying was for me!”

While she was attaining her pilot’s license, the war began. Sigler found an advertisement in a local newspaper for a job at the Piper Cub airplane plant and decided to apply. She was thrilled to find she had been hired. Each day, she welded landing gear for small airplanes. The assignment gave her the opportunity to unite two of her desires – flying and serving her country.

As the war progressed, her extensive experience, not to mention her daredevil spirit and craving for adventure, made her the perfect candidate for the Women Airforce Service Pilots – a brand-new World War II initiative.

“I read about the WASP in the paper,” Sigler remembered. “I wrote to them, was accepted and moved to Texas!”

What Sigler didn’t realize, however, was the program’s competitiveness. Of nearly 25,000 women who applied for the program, Sigler was one of only 1,830 women asked to join.

As a WASP, Sigler was one of the first American women to ever fly military aircraft. Her duties included transporting cargo, towing targets and simulating air missions from aircraft factories to military training sites and back again.

“I loved spinning and doing tricks,” said Sigler. “One time, I wanted to see how a forced landing felt, so I tried it. I cut my engine off, but I was going too fast, and I got right up to the trees before my airplane stopped. I ended up upside down!”

Certainly, Sigler’s risk-taking personality made the WASP the perfect fit for her. Sigler flew in the WASP until it was disbanded in 1944 due to the program’s expense.

“I was glad to be able to do it,” Sigler explained of the program. “As a woman, I was happy to be accepted by the men. I was proud they considered me skilled enough to fly.”

Susan Sohler

PARKVIEW CARE CENTER
Evansville, Indiana



For the millions of America’s soaring above the clouds, Susan Sohler proved to be incredibly instrumental – with her feet planted firmly on the ground. Rather than serving the nation in the skies, she had the equally important duty of monitoring them.

From the start of the war, Susan Sohler wanted to help fill the vacancies of jobs

men had left open at home. Though she intended to inquire about a military job, a trip to her local post office in Seattle, Wash., indicated that a job at the Seattle branch of the U.S. Weather Bureau was a better opportunity for someone with her educational background in physics. On March 17, 1942, Sohler became the first woman employed at the Seattle office.

After less than two weeks of training, Sohler began plotting and analyzing maps, taking observations and briefing the newspapers.

“All weather reports were secret,” explained Sohler. “Every Saturday, we copied the reports by hand and sent them to Washington, D.C., for their experts to monitor. No one wanted the enemy to find out what weather we were going to have in case they planned to attack.”

After serving two years at the Weather Bureau, Sohler decided to join the United States Navy WAVES, the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service.

“There were more opportunities with the national government in the WAVES program,” explained Sohler. “I felt it would give me a better chance of having a job after the war.”

Sohler took a train across the United States to complete basic training at Hunter College in New York. The train stopped

along the way to pick up other young women who were joining the WAVES; the ride lasted an entire week.

Upon arrival, Sohler studied aerology and meteorology in depth. Although she had worked with the Weather Bureau, Sohler had never learned to forecast or determine weather patterns.

Following basic training, Sohler requested to be stationed at the Naval Air Station in Ottumwa, Iowa, to be close to her family. At the base, she served as a weather observer and was no stranger to long workdays.

“I had to get used to working a new shift every 10 days,” Sohler described. “One time when I was on the midnight shift, we didn’t have time to conduct drill exercises during the day, and we had to drill at 3 a.m. on the air field.”

Sohler tirelessly served in the WAVES until the end of the war. As a result of her service in the war, Sohler received her GI Bill from the government, allowing her to pay for an accounting course after the war ended so she could stay in the workforce.

Sohler shared, “I had to give up a lot of things during the war.” She quickly added, “But, I was never afraid. I never felt as if our country was in danger, and I had faith that our government and military would take care of us.”



This scene was played out countless times as the Allied troops liberated towns throughout Europe.

July 1945:
First atomic bomb test.

August 1945:
The Soviet Union declares war on Japan.



Our Veterans: Equal to the Challenge

Give me a few moments of your time, and let's get personal.
 Do you attend the church of your faith, worshiping God according to the dictates of your conscience? Thank the American veteran.
 Do you choose to play golf or tennis or perhaps spend time reading newspapers and books? Thank the American veteran.
 Do you participate in presidential, state and local elections, voting for the person you feel can best serve our citizenry in office? Thank the American veteran.
 Do you freely express an opinion in a conversation about the performance - or lack thereof - of your government or some public servant? Thank the American veteran.
 As you read a newspaper, do you realize how fortunate you are to live in a country where the government is not allowed to tell the press what it can or cannot print? Thank the American veteran.
 Do you cherish your right to own property and to be secure in your own home? Thank the American veteran.
 Yes, we should be grateful to the American veteran - the servicemen and women who have paid the supreme sacrifice for their country and those who survive today who gave years of their lives to the cause of liberty.
 We should be ever mindful of the precious freedoms that have been secured by the American veteran. He (or she) earned the hero's badge, fighting valiantly on native soil under Gen. George Washington, in the Civil War, in hilltop charges of the Spanish-American War, in the trenches of World War I, in the tank tracks of World War II, in the rugged hills of the Korean War, in the steaming jungles of Vietnam, and in the heat and sand of Afghanistan and Iraq.
 Sorely tested were members of "The Greatest Generation," a term coined by journalist Tom Brokaw to describe the men and women who grew up in the United States during the Great Depression, and then went on to fight in World War II, as well as those whose productivity within the war's home front made a decisive material contribution to the war effort. "It is, I believe, the greatest generation any society has ever produced," Brokaw said. He declared that these members of the Armed Forces fought not for fame and recognition, but because it was the right thing to do.
 Life Care Centers of America is proud to spotlight these heroes of our nation in this special edition of the Life Care LEADER. We are honored to serve those who so willingly stood against tyranny and the threats to our way of life.

Beecher Hunter
 Beecher Hunter
 President



The Greatest Generation

The public is bombarded by news of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq – in particular, the deaths in combat or roadside bombings, the political winds that swirl around any action, and the outrages that arise from the few in uniform who, by their deeds of misconduct, stain the flag under which they serve.

What is not reported are the daily acts of friendship and kindness of American men and women toward children and adults native to those lands. Nor do we hear much about their unwavering love of country that drives them into hell's fury of gunfire and rocketry, or the compassion that reveals God's grace in the hug of a fearful child.

Associates of Life Care have loved ones in the military, and they serve veterans who come to us as our residents, including members of in "The Greatest Generation," men and women who answered the call to duty during World War II and others who sacrificed to support the military and who are now rapidly passing from this world.

"It is a generation that, by and large, made no demands of homage from those who followed and prospered economically, politically and culturally because of its sacrifices," journalist Tom Brokaw wrote in his book "The Greatest Generation." "It is a generation of towering achievement and modest demeanor, a legacy of their formative years when they were participants in and witness to sacrifices of the highest order."

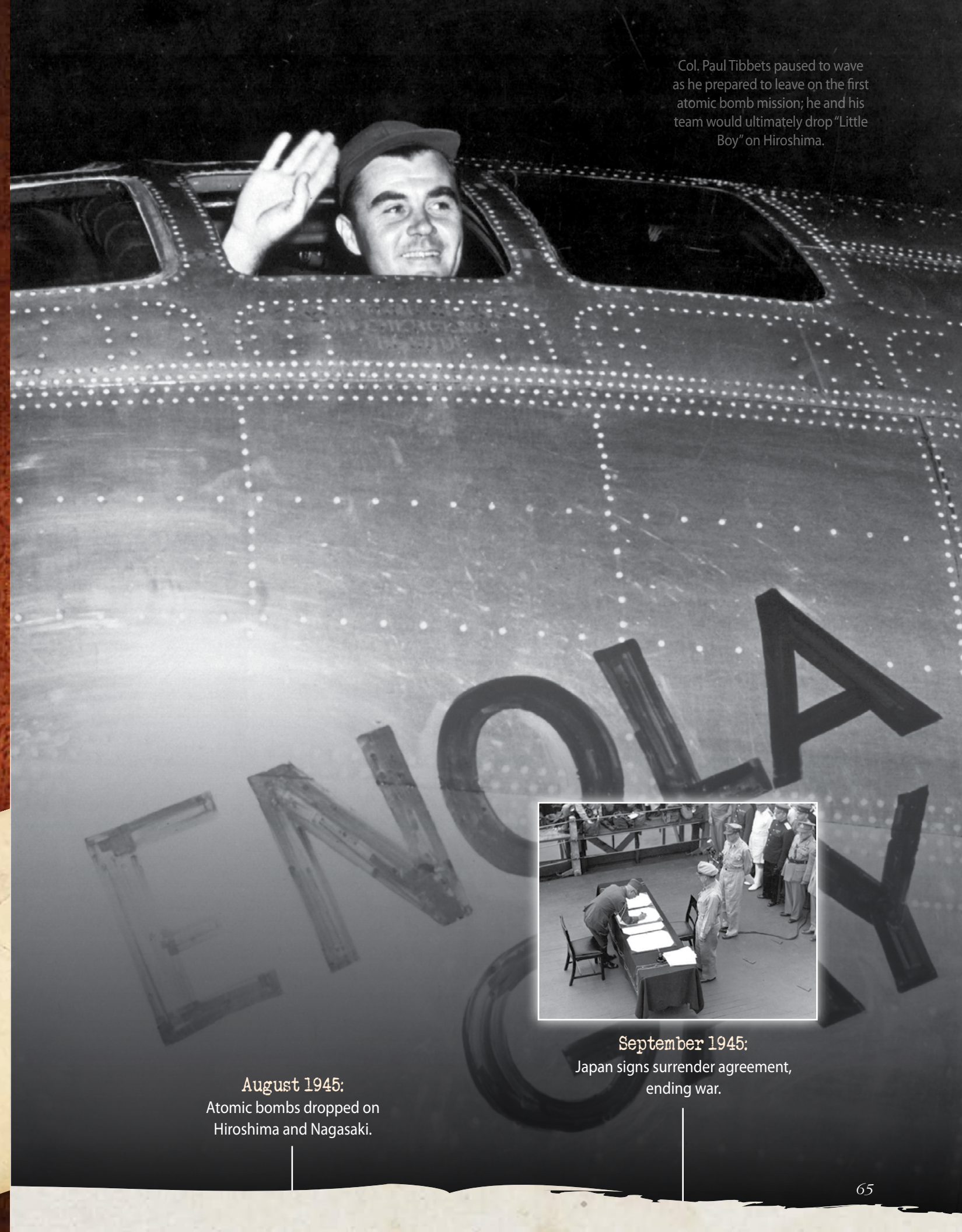
Brokaw said 1940 was "the fulcrum of America in the 20th century, when the nation was balanced precariously between the darkness of the Great Depression on one side and the storms of war in Europe and the Pacific on the other. It was a critical time in the shaping of this nation and the world, equal to the revolution of 1776 and the perils of the Civil War ... The nation turned to its young to carry the heaviest burden, to fight in enemy territory and to keep the home front secure and productive. These young men and women were eager for the assignment. They understood what was required of them, and they willingly volunteered for their duty."

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny."

This special edition of the Life Care LEADER is our salute to all veterans, but particularly those gallant warriors of World War II, and it is a printed symbol of our thanks for their sacrifices to preserve our precious freedoms.

Forrest L. Preston

Forrest L. Preston
Chairman

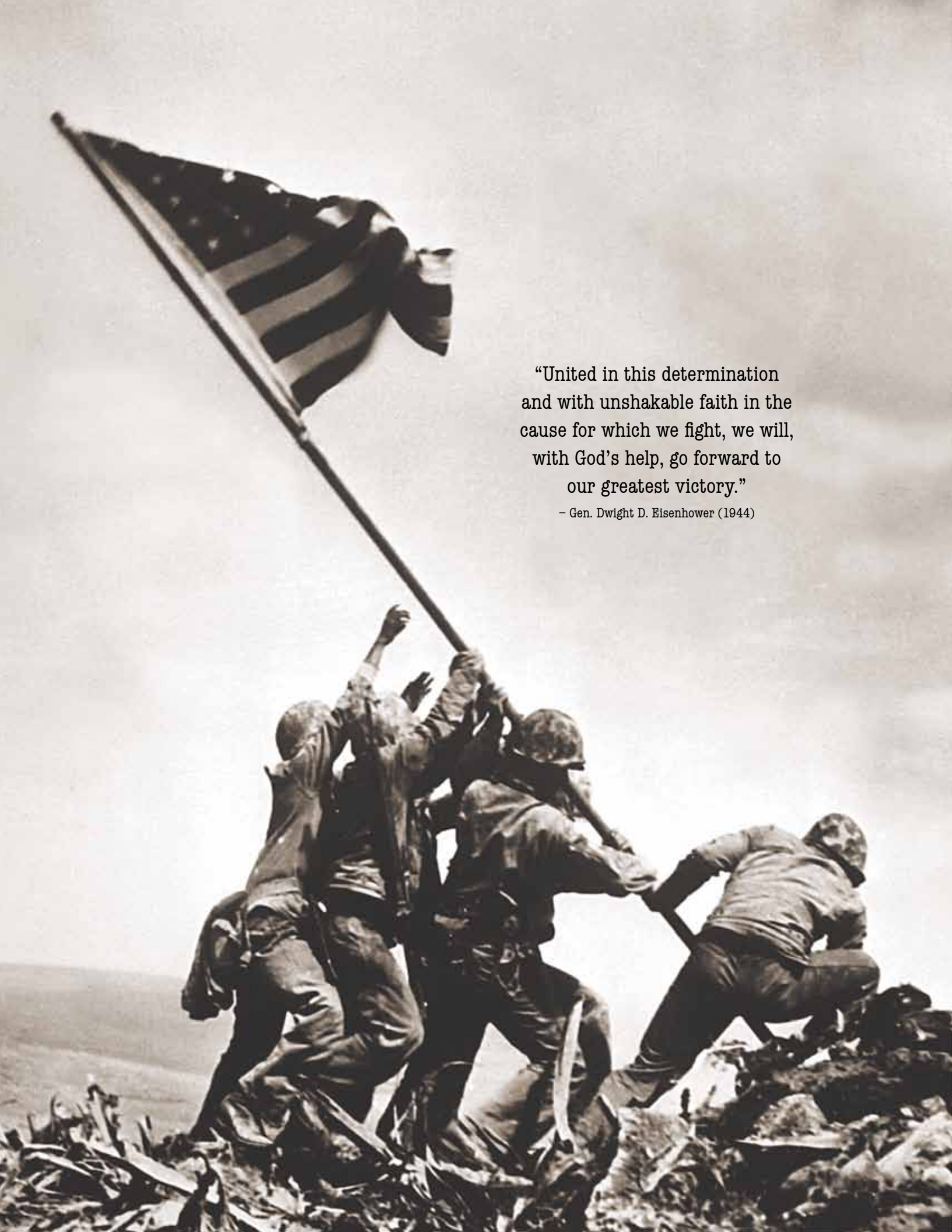


Col. Paul Tibbets paused to wave as he prepared to leave on the first atomic bomb mission; he and his team would ultimately drop "Little Boy" on Hiroshima.



September 1945:
Japan signs surrender agreement, ending war.

August 1945:
Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



“United in this determination
and with unshakable faith in the
cause for which we fight, we will,
with God’s help, go forward to
our greatest victory.”

– Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower (1944)