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Democracy's Shield: Voices of WWII

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Description

Based on a body of 700 oral history interviews archived at Gettysburg College, *Democracy's Shield* relates the American military experience through the voices of those who served – from early awareness of the conflict in Europe and East Asia to the dropping of the atomic bomb, victory, occupation and homecoming.

The text is illustrated with images of artifacts from the library's Special Collections.

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Keywords

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DEMOCRACY'S SHIELD

Voices of World War II

Edited by
Michael J. Birkner
with Grace Gallagher and Rachel Main

71st Infantry Division - World war II - Europe

1. Staging Area from February 6 to March 8 vicinity Limesy, France. Under 15th Army. Assigned to 7th Army 2 March 1945.
2. Moved by rail and motor 8—11 March from Limesy to
13. Coburg and Neustadt captured 12 April.
14. Bayreuth captured 14 April.
15. Assigned to XX Corps 17 April at Kulmbach.
16. Amberg captured 22 April.


HANNOVER
BERLIN
MUNSTER
DORTMUND
OUR ATTACHED UNITS
761
530
TD 635
G 81
G E R M A N Y
564
607
609
608
Artillery
ELIMINATED 6TH SS MOUNTAIN DIV. NORD
3 APRIL – 6 APRIL
Boom
RESORT COUNTRY
FULDA APRIL 6
APRIL 8 MEININGEN
APRIL 5 ULMBACH
APRIL 3
BUDINGEN
LANGENSELBOLD APRIL 31
FRANKFURT
HANAU
HAUSENSTAMM MARCH 31
MAINZ
OPPENHEIM
MARCH 30
DARMSTADT
HIMMEL ALLES KAPUT
LUDWIGSHAFEN
MANNHEIM
SPEYER
FREINERSHEIM MARCH 24
LANDAU
MARCH 23
STUTTGART
COMMITTED TO ACTION VIC. LEMBERG 12 MARCH
THEMAR APRIL 10
HILDBURGHAUSEN APRIL 11
COBURG APRIL 12
DAMMIT-BARRACKS AGAIN
FRATERNIZING PASTURES
REDWITZ KULMBACH APRIL 14
OPERA
BAYREUTH
TROCKAU APRIL 17
PEGNITZ
BAUERBACH APRIL 20
HOLENSTEIN APRIL 22
SULZBACH APRIL 23
AMBERG
NURNBERG
MAINE RIVER
NAAB RIVER
OFF LIMITS TO G.I.'S
PRAG
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
PILSEN
HEY JOE - DIS "BLUE" DANUBE IS DOITY GREEN
SCHWANDORF
BURGLENGENFELD
LEONBERG APRIL 24
WENZENBACH APRIL 25
PFATTER APRIL 28
REGENSBURG
DANUBE RIVER BRIDGES
FRIESHEIM APRIL 27
STRAUBING APRIL 29
REISSING APRIL 30
CROSSED DANUBE 26 APRIL
CROSSED ISAR 30 APRIL
LANDAU MAY 1
ARNSTORF
PFARRKIRCHEN MAY 2
SEIZED DAM, CROSSED INN RIVER 2 MAY
ISAR RIVER
DANUBE
ERING MAY 3
RIED
MUNICH
THIS DAM CROSSING TAKES US INTO AUSTRIA! STILL NO (SIGH) FRATERNIZING
SEIZED STEYR 4 MAY
LINZ
DANUBE
STEYR
AMSTETTEN
WAIDHOFEN
BAD HALL
GMUNDEN
SIERNING MAY 6
LAMBACH MAY 5
GASPOLTSHOFEN MAY 1
BERCHTESGADEN
ENNS
CONTACTED RUSSIANS 7 MAY.
ZURICH
INN RIVER
A U S T R I
VODKA

Front Cover: *Dog tags belonging to Abner Rainbow, 391st Fighter Squadron, 366th Fighter Bomber Group of the 9th Air Force.*

End Pages: *Campaign map, 71st Infantry Division – World War II – Europe by Emil Albrecht and Roland Wille, ca. 1946.*

Back Cover: *Chapel and bugler. Photograph by Walter Lane.*

DEMOCRACY'S SHIELD

Voices of World War II

Edited by
Michael J. Birkner, with Grace Gallagher and Rachel Main

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College 2022

ISBN: 978-0-578-30740-4


ON THE
LOOKOUT
FOR

In Memory of

John J. Birkner
U.S. Army Air Force, 1943-1945
738th Signal A.W. Co., XIX Tactical Air Command, ETO

and

Henry J. Wagner
U.S. Navy, 1945-1946

John J. Birkner, 1920-1992

Henry J. Wagner, 1927-2020

These remarks (right) are from a graduation address that Eisenhower composed to deliver to air cadets at Kelly Field in Texas on December 12, 1941. In wake of Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was called to Washington to assist in war planning. Consequently, he never delivered the address.

Daniel D. Holt observes in *Eisenhower: The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941* that the prepared text clearly testifies to Eisenhower's own sense of duty at the time the United States entered World War II and his talent for patriotic inspiration. Pages 562-563.

"A Democracy resorts to war only when the vast majority of its people become convinced that there is no other way out. The crisis they have entered is of their own choosing, and in the long, cruel ordeal of war, this difference is likely to become decisive. The unification and coordination achieved in this way is lasting. The people work together because they have a common belief in the justice of their cause and a common readiness to sacrifice for the attainment of national success."

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

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Leaning Tower of Pisa and US Navy Blimp. Albert Chance. May 29, 1945.

– FOREWORD –

I recently came across the transcript of an oral history with my father, Henry Wagner. In it, he shared his memories of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He was 14 when Japanese warplanes attacked the American fleet; like so many of his generation, he heard the news on the radio, and had no idea where Pearl Harbor was—or Hawaii, for that matter.

My father spent most of the war on the home front. He recalled food and gasoline rationing, collecting scrap metal for munitions, and the overall mood of uncertainty. He watched the war unfold daily on the pages of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and in the occasional newsreel before a feature film. He read letters home from his older brother, Bud, who after the attack had wasted no time in joining the Marines.

Some boys on his street were drafted, while others enlisted. He remembered two in particular—one who perished in combat shortly after deployment, and another who left behind a wife and newborn child. Those deaths brought the war home, but they didn't dissuade him from wanting to serve. Like so many young men whose memories are collected in this book, he couldn't wait to join up.

My father got his mother's signature (required, since he was underage), and left school before graduation. His card shows he enlisted on February 5, 1945—three days before his eighteenth birthday. Two weeks later, he was training at the Great Lakes Naval Station in Illinois. When asked to explain what made him so eager, especially after the deaths of two neighbors, he replied, "Nothing else mattered. You just had to go."

My father was proud of being the first in his class to enlist. He expected to head to the Pacific after basic training, but his military career was an abbreviated one: the Japanese surrendered on August 15, 1945, before he could depart his base in Newport, Rhode Island. That wasn't the case for the many sailors, soldiers, pilots, medics, and nurses whose wartime memories were recorded by a generation of inquisitive Gettysburg College history students, along with one sagacious and far-seeing professor.

For the past 30 years, Musselman Library has been privileged to serve as custodian of these memories. We also act as caretakers for the many artifacts donated by interviewees so that future researchers may handle the tangible manifestations of their wartime experiences. *Democracy's Shield*, composed of excerpts from over 250 oral histories, was envisioned as a comprehensive, thematic distillation of this vast archive. Our hope is that through these words and images of artifacts readers will appreciate the sacrifices, understand the hardships, marvel at the heroisms, and sometimes even laugh at the hijinks of these ordinary Americans in an extraordinary time.

It's not only interviewees who donated keepsakes. Thanks also go out to the many relatives who combed attics and basements for World War II memorabilia to add to our primary-source collections. There has been a remarkable influx of World War II-related donations in the last five years. In every case, family members told us that Gettysburg College was their first choice of permanent repository because they knew our Special Collections staff would actively teach with their artifacts, photographs, letters, and memorabilia.

The individuals noted here comprise only a sampling of the many to whom we are indebted:

Barbara Chance Hall led the way by donating the exceptional wartime photographs, letters, and scrapbooks of her great-uncle Albert Chance, who served in North Africa and Italy with the 360th AAA Searchlight Battalion. The daughters of Sergeant Burdette J. Marker—Holley Marker Thompson, Loretta Bush, Shelley Marker Hoff, and Natalie M. Schaible—entrusted to us their father's remarkable photographs of civilians and soldiers, street scenes, military patrols, mass relocations, and prison liberations in the European Theater. Will Lane, a member of the Gettysburg College faculty, recognized the educational value of his father Walter Lane's world-class photography of the Pacific war.

Nancy Daniel and her siblings donated World War II pieces from the collection of their father, Luther Jacob "Jake" Thomas. Patricia Millar and her daughter, Lyne Aurand, have given us William Millar's artifacts from both the Pacific and the home front. Sue Gallion hand-delivered all of her husband Don's wartime letters. Gail Jones donated the uniform and memorabilia of her father, Ralph Peters; soon after which, her husband, John "Buzz" Jones, gifted us with the wartime mementos of his own father, Paul Revere Jones.

Alumni have also been generous. Robert McKee, Class of 1971, donated the vivid wartime correspondence of his father, Elmer, and mother, Elizabeth. Susan Southgate, Class of 1967, gave us the Purple Heart earned by her stepfather, Anthony Kachmarsky. Michael Hobor, Class of 1969, encouraged his sister, Nancy Dewing, to donate the uniform and wartime and occupation photographs of her mother-in-law, First Sergeant Elisabeth Covington Smith Dewing. Susan Schweppe Moreau, Class of 1971, and Sally Schweppe Quick, Class of 1976, took great care in preserving the Camp Ritchie materials of their father, Homer Schweppe.

All of these donations have enhanced our teaching collections at the library. Moreover, such gifts allow Special Collections to grow in ways that complement our strong oral history collection. This book, as well as a treasury of spoken remembrances, is a showcase for many of these artifacts.

We've also been enriched by the many donors who have supported our oral history program, beginning with Kenneth H. Newbould, Class of 1958, whose estate gift established the G. Kenneth and Mary J. Newbould Fund for Oral History. Over many years, Chris and Greg Dodds, Class of 1962, have actively supported our publication program at the library. Other important partners in our publishing ventures have been members of the Eisenhower Society, whose funding permitted this project to go forward.

The gratitude we feel is without measure—for our donors, for our student interviewers, and for the friends and relatives of the brave men and women whose stories this volume tells.

Robin Wagner
Dean of Musselman Library
Gettysburg College

Destruction near Flagella Theatre, Foggia, Italy. Albert Chance. June 9, 1944.

Abner Rainbow on the wing of his plane, the Anna Louise.

– INTRODUCTION –

They came from across America—big cities, small towns, farming communities, the whole spectrum of life in a country of just over 130 million people. Many citizens volunteered and many more were drafted, entering service with attitudes running the gamut from "Kill the enemy" to "Let's just get on with it." With the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, life in the USA, as historian Tracy Campbell recently put it, "was suddenly transformed."[1]

16 million Americans wore the uniform during World War II as soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Seabees, and in branches designed for female volunteers.[2] Some made careers in the military, but for the great majority, the goal was to get the job done, return to their civilian lives, and either pick up where they had left off or explore new romantic, occupational, and educational opportunities.

Based on a body of 700 oral history interviews archived at Gettysburg College, *Democracy's Shield* relates the American military experience through the voices of those who served – from early awareness of conflict in Europe and East Asia to the atomic bombs, victory, occupation, and homecoming. Some reminiscences convey familiar attitudes about the war. Certainly, the predominant sentiment is a willingness to do one's duty to defeat the enemy in Europe and the Pacific. But stemming from that common mentality are wry, poignant, humorous, and at times wrenching reflections. Though no one book could capture the totality of wartime experience, we have done our best to represent a wide range of lived experiences.

The sheer magnitude of the American military enterprise staggers the imagination. War materiel was manufactured in enormous quantity and supplied to battlefronts ranging from the Aleutians and various Pacific atolls to the North African desert, Italian mountain ranges, and villages in France, Germany, and other European countries. Collective effort was essential, given the drive and resourcefulness of the enemy. But the accomplishments of individuals—average Americans who in the crucible of war did remarkable things—also stand out.

These oral histories depict the experience of both frontline troops and servicemen and women in support roles. You'll read testimony from pilots, navigators, bombardiers, radiomen, and ball turret gunners facing heavy flak yet repeatedly returning to their work. Sailors operating guns, putting out fires caused by Kamikaze attacks, or rescuing men forced overboard by a damaging attack. Seabees

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[1] *Tracy Campbell, The Year of Peril: America in 1942 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), x.*

[2] *Members of the Merchant Marine engaged in important and often dangerous service, but did not wear uniforms or carry weapons.*

ducking Japanese aerial assaults on the runways they were building. Bridge engineers desperately trying to reinforce battered structures over the Rhine River. Intelligence officers gathering and analyzing information to assist field commanders. Glider pilots like Lt. Col. Stewart Moyer who, crossing the English Channel in the summer of '44, was driven so low by cloud cover that "you could hear the waves splashing underneath the plane." No one claimed to be doing more than his duty.

Robert J. Monahan, recalling his experiences with the 10th Mountain Division in Italy, told his interviewer not once, but four times, that he was "just a guy serving his country." In his view, there was no reason to make anything special of his wartime service. When asked about his experience as a bomber pilot who flew more than 45 missions at a time when the survival rate for those flying 30missions was less than 50 percent, Marcus Humphrey agreed that it was serious business; then he added, "Boy did we have fun."

The "duty" documented in these interviews was essential, but usually unglamorous. Long nights on watch aboard a ship, medics injecting morphine to calm a wounded soldier, studying maps and charting enemy positions. Servicemen and women flying cargo planes or mechanics keeping bombers and fighter planes flying, even after being badly shot up. GIs providing fuel for tanks plunging across France in the summer of '44 and early '45. Seabees working in the heat of New Guinea, Guadalcanal, Saipan, and other battlefronts. Deck crew helping comrades wounded by enemy strafing at various islands in the Pacific. Censors, cooks, orderlies, drivers, supply officers, Army nurses, MPs, and more.

You'll read of occasions where wounded soldiers insisted on returning to the front, and others where wounds or injuries ended their war prematurely. You'll get the perspective of the healers as well as the wounded. There are wry and even humorous references to individual battlefield threats or off duty escapades. But there is no braggadocio.

Some interviewees, though they did reflect at length on other aspects of their military service, declined to discuss their combat experience. Others, referring to what today we call post-traumatic stress disorder, told of night terrors and other psychological issues they faced after returning home. This too was part of the World War II story, and should not be airbrushed out.

These oral history excerpts evoke a world we have largely lost. As you will see, a commitment to common cause, a sense of humor, and, often, a bit of luck helped many veterans make it through to war's end. One veteran claimed, with an undeniable kind of truth, that he "won" World War II: "Me, along with General Eisenhower and 14 million others."

Michael Birkner
Department of History
Gettysburg College

Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill on the HMS Prince of Wales for a Sunday service during the Atlantic Conference, August 10, 1941. Behind them are Admiral E.J. King and Admiral Stark USN.

– PORTENTS OF WAR –

It wasn't that Mr. and Mrs. Average American ignored world politics during the 1930s, as a surging militarism engulfed Japan, Benito Mussolini strutted in Rome and Adolf Hitler took power in Germany by scapegoating Jews and promising to make Germans proud again. They were simply prioritizing other matters, such as feeding, housing and clothing their families. They had elected Franklin D. Roosevelt president because he promised them a New Deal, not because he might get America into another world conflict. Public polling showed that Americans in the 1930s wanted no part of any war that might occur in Europe.

For that reason Roosevelt maneuvered carefully on national-security issues, even after the 1940 Blitzkrieg that knocked France on its back and threatened Britain with invasion. By then, as Roosevelt imposed a draft and oversaw a hurried military buildup, 70 percent of Americans were paying greater attention to wartime developments, and were willing to materially aid Britain in its defense. Still, in the summer of '41, millions of Americans were more focused on the "Yankee Clipper" Joe DiMaggio's torrid hitting streak, which ran 56 consecutive games, and the two major leagues' pennant race. That insularity would vanish on December 7, with the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Paul Baird: Like most young people at the time, I saw [the world crisis of the 1930s] as a distant problem which didn't particularly involve me.

Bruce Boenau: I had two friends across the street who were Jewish. I saw them every day throughout our school years. All three of us were aware of what was going on in the world but nothing was ever said. We knew how terrible it was and we shared an unspoken bond.

Winslow Boynton: I remember listening to Hitler make his speeches. He held his midnight rallies in Germany, 'cause that's prime time over here. And they'd beam it right at us. It would come in like it was next door. He was quite an orator. That SOB was really a talker.

Dale Alwine: We had no idea of what the political situation was in Europe and really didn't care too much, but we knew that the draft was out there, so that was an even better reason to have a good time.

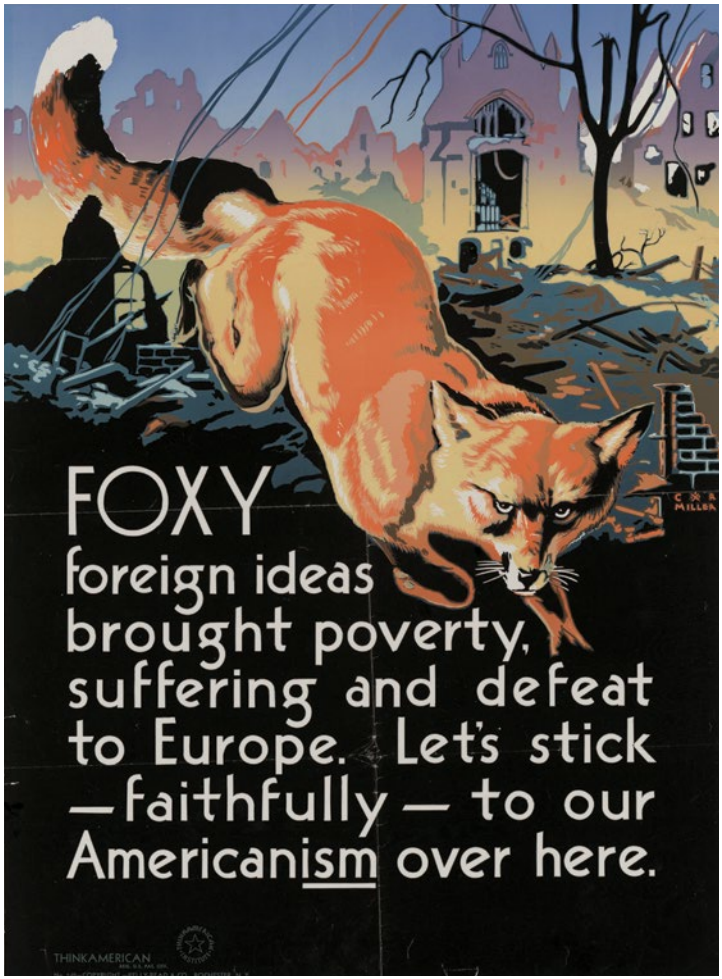
William Railing: Hitler had full employment, building roads. People used to look at that and say "Wow this guy has got something." We didn't know anything about the Holocaust. All we did know was that Jews were leaving Germany and Hitler was anti-Semitic, but we had no idea that he was killing them.

Mary Heiges: My husband and I took a Mediterranean cruise in 1937. The ship was detoured through the Azore Islands, because there was trouble in Spain. We witnessed a little fight between two airplanes in the sky. Something must have been brewing.

Wilmer Diehl: We heard about it [troubles in Europe]. "So what? It's over there," I guess was the attitude most people had.

Basil Crapster: Most of the country was rather isolationist in 1939. I was part of that, too, I must say. I remember my European history professor [at Princeton] in 1939-40 was a man named [Raymond] Sontag, a very eminent diplomatic historian who had been in the First World War. I can remember his arguing that the United States did not have much reason to get involved in European affairs. There were a few students who by 1941 were strongly in favor of intervention—coming to Britain's aid. But most of the students tended to be isolationist.

Mary Ruth Thomas: I remember as a child seeing the Pathe News, before a movie usually, and seeing these young men goose stepping in Germany, and feeling fear. Just a feeling that I thought wasn't right. And of course, it turned out it wasn't.



Charles Gardner: We didn't pay too much attention to it. I mean that was over there in Europe. Here we were in the United States, we got a great big ocean, and remember, we didn't have any jet planes, we had prop planes. Ship was the only way to travel. I mean, "Hey, you want to come invade us? Try it; we'll sink you on the way over." There's just no way you could get an army over here that quick.

Paul Cober: I knew trouble was brewing.

Tom Mulkey: When I go to the doctor's office or go to a restaurant, the worst thing they can do to me is ignore me. It just irks me to no end. Well, that basically is what our diplomats were doing to the Japanese prior to World War II. We were just ignoring them, you know, not paying any attention, not being concerned with any of their concerns.

William Railing: War broke out in Europe in 1939 and a lot of people were just not in favor of us getting involved at all. We felt we were pretty safe over here with a two-ocean navy.

Myron Beatty: I was at the Ohio State Fair and suddenly, through some sort of public announcement, we heard that the Germans had invaded Poland. At the moment I didn't really understand what it meant, but I knew it wasn't good.

George F. Smith Sr.: I didn't think it would affect me since I'm so young.

Winslow Boynton: I thought to myself, "Why should anybody worry about a guy that looks like Charlie Chaplin?"

Aloys Heyen: We didn't want any part of that European war.

Gerald Duncan: I don't think it was a complete surprise to me or anybody else. It was just a matter of time. The plant I worked at [York Safe and Lock Company], they weren't going to build 40-millimeter anti-aircraft guns if we weren't going to war.

Guillermo Barriga: Everybody knew about Hitler. The whole world, the whole world knew. But we never thought he would open things up the way he did. Suddenly he declared war and invaded [Poland]. Not even the Europeans believed that would happen. They never thought anything like that would happen.

David Fell: We had a gym teacher, Mr. Zimmerman, and he was from World War I. He knew this war was coming on so every time we had gym, we would practice forward march, back march and all that military stuff. We all got that pretty good and I got along very well with the drill instructor.

Jack Shand: I had the opportunity to go to Germany in the summer of 1937, when I was a sophomore in high school. The head of the host family had two sons with whom I had a great opportunity to talk about Germany, what it needed to do, and its future. There was no question in my mind at that time that the Germans were planning a major war.

John "Jack" Conroy: My mother realized what was coming. With a large family, she started, well before we got into the war, hoarding things that she knew would be in short supply. She would send my brother and me to the store with a wagon and we would buy a twenty-five-pound sack of sugar.

Whitfield Bell: I remember [history professor Conyers Read at the University of Pennsylvania] spoke in his lecture after the *New York Times* had reported that morning the bombing of Rotterdam. He began his lecture by making some remarks about which some of the students were not sympathetic. There was still some feeling that we should stay out of it.

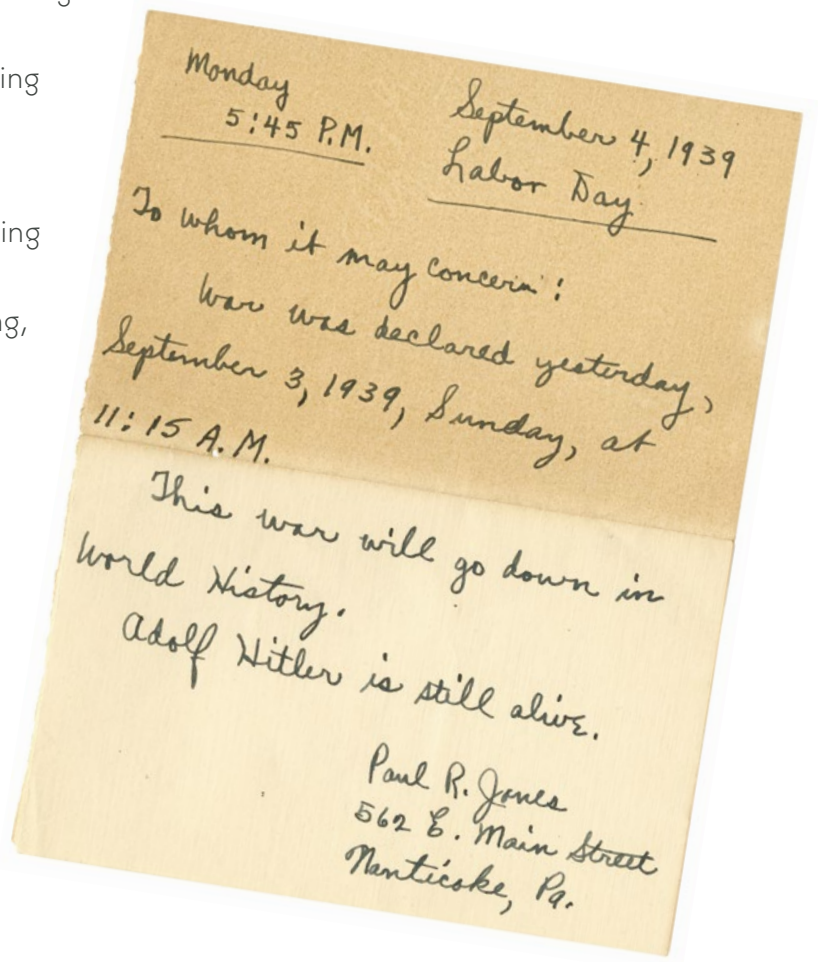
John Kresky: We had this isolationist attitude in this country, and I guess I felt like that myself. I was young. I felt Europe should take care of its own problems. But in hindsight, that was not a good attitude to have.

Robert Reynolds: There's no question that [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt was preparing us for war.

Howard Hinkelday: I was at that time delivering newspapers, and the newspaper put out a special edition that war was declared [September 1, 1939]. It was far away, in Europe. We had no idea that we were going to be part of it.

Edward Baskerville: There was a crisis building, and I was too young to understand fully all the ramifications of what was going on. We had no television in those days; we had radio and the newspaper. Most people, I think, had pretty much expected that Hitler would do something and that the Western powers couldn't let him get away with everything [he intended to do].

Herman Steumpfle: We were all aware of the ways in which we were helping [Great Britain] materially, with things like Lend-Lease, and it seemed like a natural step for us to become more involved. I think the only question was when and under what circumstances.


Monday
5:45 P.M.

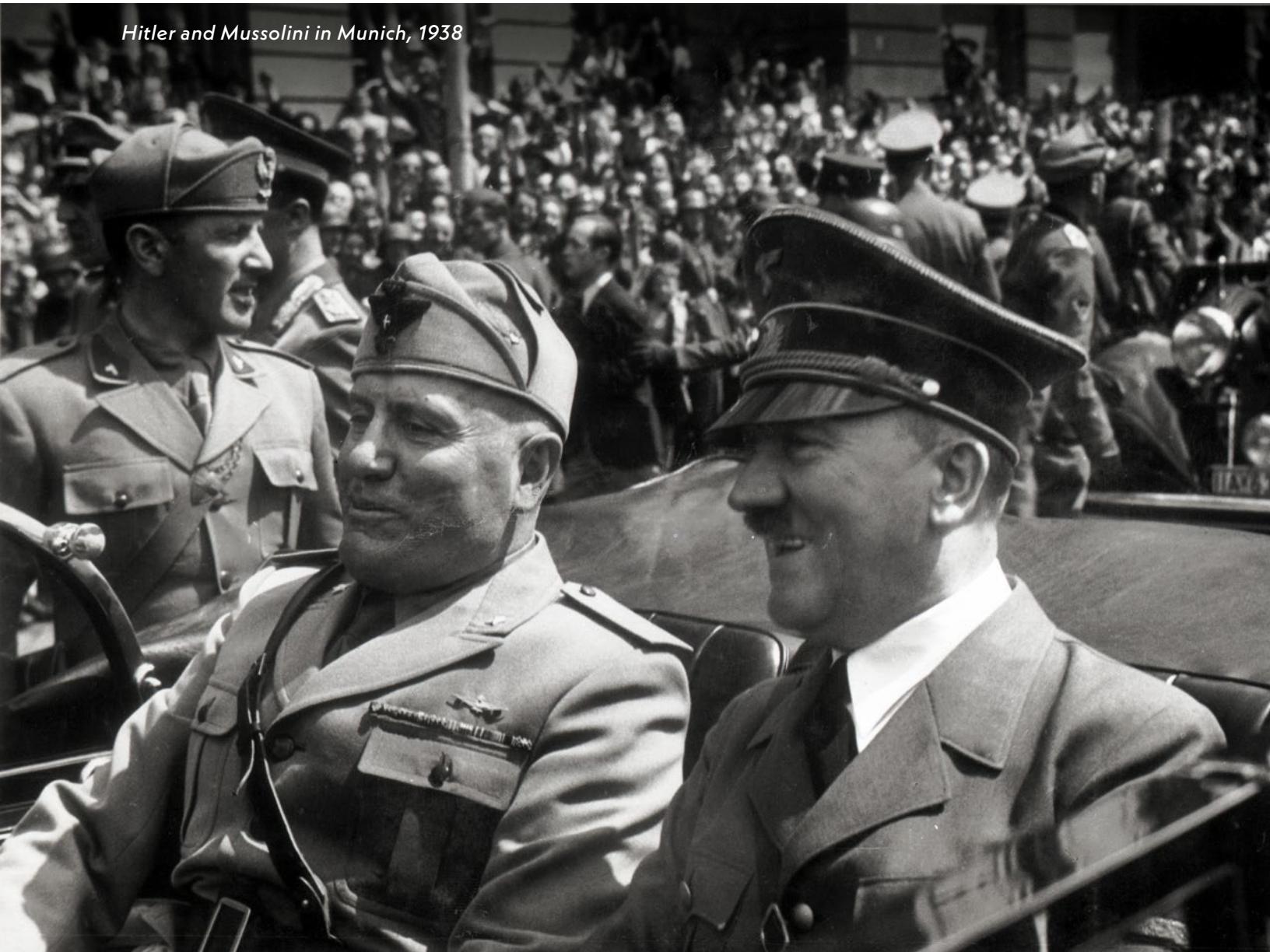
September 4, 1939
Labor Day

To whom it may concern:
War was declared yesterday,
September 3, 1939, Sunday, at
11:15 A.M.

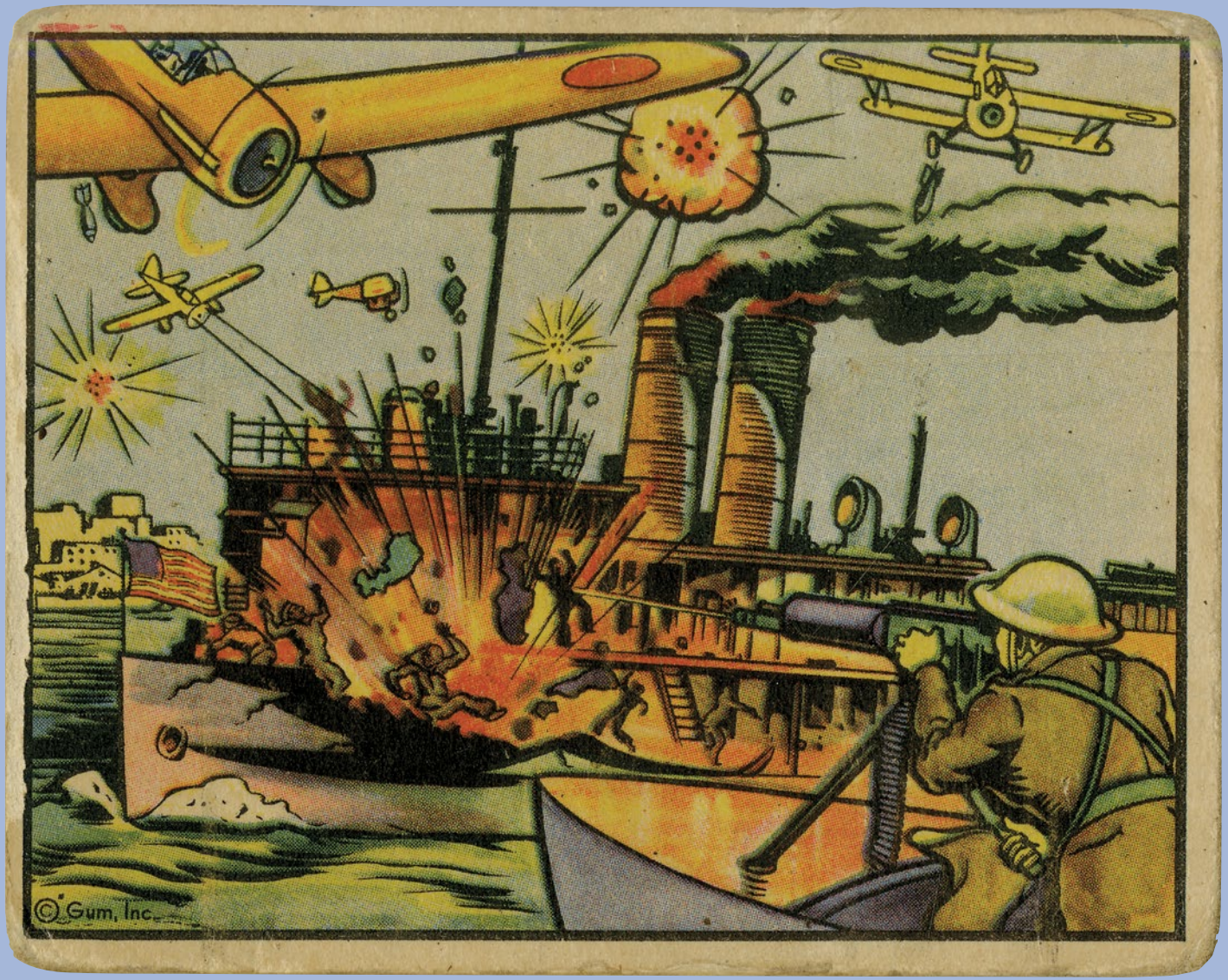
This war will go down in
World History.
Adolf Hitler is still alive.

Paul R. Jones
562 E. Main Street
Nanticoke, Pa.

Muriel Dunlop: Monday [December 8, 1941] we went to school and we went to the auditorium. I was a sophomore in high school. We listened to President Roosevelt declare war, and I don't think we really realized what it was all about. But I remember going back to the homeroom and our homeroom teacher said, "Your lives will never be the same." I thought, "That's a funny thing to say." But it was true, because the fellow who sat next to me in homeroom, his brother was killed near the beginning of the war.



Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, 1938


©Gum, Inc.

– PEARL HARBOR –

Pearl Harbor was the ultimate wake-up call for a nation accustomed to what one scholar has dubbed "free security"—safety from direct attack (since the War of 1812, at least) by a foreign power. "Pearl," as the base was generally called, was America's military outpost in the Pacific, home to thousands of sailors and airmen and their support systems. Its beautiful beaches and warm breezes, made it a welcome posting—until December 7. More than 2,400 soldiers and civilians were killed at Pearl Harbor on that day of "infamy." More than 1000 were wounded. Some 350 Japanese planes, launched from six aircraft carriers, engaged in the surprise offensive. All eight battleships in the harbor were damaged; four were sunk. Nearly 200 U.S. aircraft were destroyed as well. Japanese losses were light.

The numbers are startling even today. But more pronounced at the time was the sheer shock that such a military disaster could happen. In the oral histories collected for this volume, the most common reaction—aside from confusion as to Pearl Harbor's location—was determination to avenge the assault. President Roosevelt's request for a declaration of war against Japan was met with thunderous assent by both houses of Congress. The military's recruiting units were soon besieged with volunteers. United States involvement in World War II had truly begun.

Winslow Boynton: My first-year algebra teacher had told me, "Mark my words, we will soon be at war with Japan." Which happened later that year, actually, as Japan hit Pearl Harbor.

Joseph Lockard: At 7:02 a.m. [December 7, 1941], this is what I saw. [Points to radar scope illustration.] This huge, huge, huge display here. I had never seen anything like that before. Of course, I had never had one hundred and eighty planes flying at me before.

Bombing of USS Arizona

Fred Feiser recalls how his close friend survived the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941.

Fred Feiser: He said, "You know why I'm a Pearl Harbor survivor? I got a leave and I was in town shacking up." [Laughs] He told that to me! He said that he was on the *Arizona*, and all of his clothing and all everything went down with that ship.

Harold Noble: I think if the Japanese had kept going when they done Pearl Harbor, if they'd kept coming, we probably wouldn't be here to tell about it today. We found suitcases of invasion money for the United States they had made up, you know.

Rocco Montanelli: I was in the movies when the announcement came over that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Everybody ran out of the movies, crying, screaming. It was insane.

Larry DeCesare: I know exactly where I was when the news broke. I was driving a 1939 Oldsmobile, and I was on Webster Avenue and Gun Hill Road in the Bronx. We had the radio on, and it said, "The Japanese have invaded Pearl Harbor." I had two other friends in the car with me, and they said, "Where's Pearl Harbor?' We never heard of Pearl Harbor." [When] we got home and listened to the radio, we found out it was in the Hawaiian Islands. And we had no idea they even belonged to us, you know. We had no knowledge of that. We didn't know we had a big naval base there.

John Gallagher: I was driving my mother to Lebanon [PA] to visit her relatives there and half way up to Lebanon we got this information on the radio that there was a bombing at Pearl Harbor. My mother started to cry because we had a brother who was in Hawaii in the 19th Infantry Regiment.

Esther Fortenbaugh: I was dancing with my boyfriend in the dining room. We stopped dancing, fast.

Charles Gardner: I was washing the car and the car radio was on, and they talked about how Pearl Harbor was attacked. "What the heck? Where's Pearl Harbor?" I never heard of such thing. Nobody knew where Pearl Harbor was. I went in and talked to my folks: "Hey, Pearl Harbor got hit." [They replied:]"That's good, who's Pearl Harbor?"

Joseph Spinner: We were listening to stories like *The Green Hornet* and *The Shadow* that all the kids listened to. And they announced that Pearl Harbor was attacked. I can remember it vividly.

William Sterrett: We talked about it, but didn't pay too much attention to it because we thought this was probably another Orson Welles program.[3] They kept interrupting with these the broadcasts about Pearl Harbor and finally after it went past three hours, we figured this isn't Orson Welles, this must be real.

Charles Heinbaugh: I was at the Redskins-Eagles football game. The Redskins beat the Eagles, something like 16 to 7. At the game, they never announced what was actually happening. They didn't want to cause any panic. What they said was: "Admiral So-and-So, call your office. General So-and-So, call your office. Secretary So-and-So, call your office." And it wasn't until I was standing in line to turn my jacket in, to get my dollar pay, when people with radios had heard all of this and were buzzing back and forth and telling people. That's when I found out that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

Mildred Marsilio Birkner: We were two boys and two girls going out for a ride on a Sunday. There wasn't that much else to do in them days. As we were going down the driveway by my house my mother opened the window and yelled, "Millie, Millie, they just announced a war." I said, "Oh, alright mom." And went on my way. I never realized how bad the war was until I learned that my friend's brother had been injured in the Japanese attack.

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[3] *A reference to Welles' October 30, 1938 radio play about Martians invading New Jersey. A common mythology suggests that millions of Americans listened in and thought a Martin invasion was in progress. There is, however little evidence that the show generated panic on even a mild scale.*

Edwin Peterson, Jr.: My father was sitting at the table by the radio playing solitaire. He stopped in the middle of his game, dropped his cards on the table and said, "Jesus Christ. The goddamn Japanese bombed us." It was a shock. I didn't even know they were mad at us.

Robert Reynolds: I was listening to Sammy Kaye's "Swing and Sway" when the announcement came on. It said, "All service personnel, report back to your stations immediately. All service personnel, report right away." Nobody knew where Pearl Harbor was. Nobody knew anything about it. I was about the only person who knew where Pearl Harbor was.

Atlee Rebert: [At Penn State University on December 7, 1941] Some guy ran through the dorm and yelled, "Where in the hell is Pearl Harbor? The Japs just bombed it." We had never heard of it. Had no idea that it was even there. I can still hear him yell, "Where in the hell is Pearl Harbor?"

Robert S. Hayes: [In Annapolis matriculating at the Naval Academy] It was a Sunday. I was playing basketball. Somebody came by and [cupping his hands around his mouth] "Hey, did you midshipmen hear about the fact that the Japanese have attacked us at Pearl Harbor?" And I said, "Is that up in the Aleutians?" [Laughs]

Harry Emigh: [In prep school on Dec. 7, 1941] I was friendly with this fellow from Frederick, and he rushed into the room. My roommate and I were studying. He said, "We're at war! Turn on the radio! Don't you know what happened at Pearl Harbor?" All the words were jumbled and mixed up. So we had to say, "Calm down, what is it? Try to tell us." So he started all over again. And got the speed down to twenty-five miles an hour from fifty. We turned on the radio and got some of the initial reports. That night the teacher at an assembly used a map to show where Pearl Harbor was.

Tom Mulkey: I didn't know what Pearl Harbor was. I was a sixteen-year old kid, but it didn't take long for it to sink in. And nobody, I say nobody, in my immediate company, around me, had any concept of how serious it was and what all of the ramifications were gonna be.

George Staub: My family was getting ready to go to church. I loved listening to the radio. It broke into the program. If I remember right, it was *The Lone Ranger*—reporting that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. I go running to tell my father, and he just laughed. He said, "Yeah, Georgie. Son, it's just a program." "No, Dad," I said, "They bombed Pearl Harbor." And he said, "Now come on, honey. We're late for church." So we went to church, and as our minister was greeting everybody, he was telling everybody it happened. I thought my dad was going to faint. I mean, he just went white!

Lithea Schlige: We were at my husband's mother's, and his brother is there, and we're sitting at the table, and he takes the sugar bowl and says, "Now, here's Japan—and here's Hawaii." He's moving all the salt and paper shakers and everything around to show us where everything is.


AVENGE
December 7

Jay Gross Jr.: Every Sunday we would go down there [to his uncle's sisters] and play cards. We had to go down there and we never heard of it, because there was not a radio on. When we got home there was an extra edition of the *Daily Press* in the doorway, that said "WAR," and that was the first we knew.

David Brown: On the way back on December 7, 1941, we got as far as New Boston, Virginia, in convoy with all the troops that were coming back from our division to New Jersey. We saw all these people hollering and cheering and waving to us as we went through, but we had no idea what it was for because we didn't have any public radio. We got there and then we realized that the Japanese had hit Pearl Harbor. Then of course we knew. I was scheduled to be discharged, but I could see that it wasn't going to happen.

Russell Richert: Sitting in a chair right there, in my bathrobe, the radio was in the armchair thing right here [pointing to a shelf with an antique-looking radio beneath it]. The radio came on, and they announced the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. I remember sitting in that bathrobe, and as I remember, my comment was,
"Well, here we go [to war]," and damned if we didn't.

Ab Rainbow: We heard on the radio about Pearl Harbor. I immediately decided that I was going to enlist.

James Hudson: I said, "Dad, this is it."

David Burnite: At first the feeling was exhilaration, because we were finally getting into something that we should have gotten into before.

Robert Monahan, Sr.: You didn't have to be a rocket scientist to realize what war meant, even at sixteen.

Edward A. Kennedy: [With the bombing at Pearl Harbor] I had no doubts. I was gung ho. Ready to go.

Benjamin Nevitt: We were shocked and dismayed and anxious to retaliate; do what you could for your country.

C. Windsor Miller: I had mixed feelings—naturally you don't relish the idea of war. But I was young and full of vinegar and I thought, "Boy, this is going to be a neat experience if I get involved."

David Fell: We were all just dumbfounded. We were sitting there thinking, "I can't believe that the Japanese would start a war with the United States." They thought they could whip us.

Michael Coyle: I can remember listening to President Roosevelt's speech declaring war on December the 8th of 1941, the day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. I remember listening in an automobile with a friend of mine en route to a customer of his. After the speech was over and the president asked for a declaration of war, my friend said to me, "Well, I'll be involved in it, but you won't be." Because the general idea was that we clean it up in six weeks.

Bombing of USS Virginia

Gerald Royals: I was at the movies. My dad picked me up that afternoon from the movie and he told me we were at war. He told me about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which I'd never heard of, and eventually said, "Many nations have joined in the fight against the Japanese." He named a dozen or so nations. I said, "Oh, the war ought to be over real quick then, with all those countries [against Japan]." Little did I realize, most of those countries had no standing armies.

Wilmer Diehl: I was still working at the Rice Fruit Company [in Adams County] at that time and some guy made me a $10 bet that the war would be over in a year. "They [the Japanese] won't last long." I said, "Oh boy."

Bernard Sadusky: We couldn't believe it! Holy Christ, a small country like that! The Japanese, "yeah, we'll kill 'em in a couple of weeks." Like hell!

Charles Reimer: As I walked in the door, my kid brother greeted me with this: "Hello soldier." He knew it wouldn't be long before I'd be in the service one way or the other.

Robert O'Brien: First of all, we didn't start the war with Japan, they started it, okay. When they started it and attacked Pearl Harbor, they controlled the whole Pacific region, even Korea and China.

Guillermo Barriga: [Serving in the Colombian Navy] In Latin America, every country did just about what Colombia did the next day—declared war on the Axis after Pearl Harbor, when a direct attack on America was a fact. Before that nobody ever thought of declaring war on Germany, but as soon as Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Axis—Germany and Japan were the same thing—no questions asked, no hesitation. In less than 24 hours, the time it took to write the papers, Colombia declared war on the Axis. It was the power of the democracies united.

William Railing: The attack of the Japanese on Pearl Harbor really did concentrate the country on this situation. From that point on there was no doubt about it; we had to win the war.

Robert Monahan: Everybody got patriotic all of a sudden.

Anne Marie Baird: [Sings]

Oh, we will remember Pearl Harbor as we go to meet the foe.
We will remember Pearl Harbor as we did the Alamo.
We will always remember how they died to make us free.
Let's remember Pearl Harbor and go on to victory.

Framed portrait of an American sailor with inscription "Remember December 7, 1941."

At right: Sheet music cover "Remember Pearl Harbor."

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR


YOUNG MEN:
3 YEARS IN THE U. S. REGULAR ARMY
WILL EARN YOU
4 YEARS IN THE COLLEGE YOU CHOOSE
EXPENSES PAID BY UNCLE SAM
ENLIST NOW!
VISIT YOUR LOCAL RECRUITING OFFICE

– DRAFT STATUS AND VOLUNTEERING –

A comfortable but misleading myth about Americans' response to the Pearl Harbor attack depicts a massive wave of eligible (and some not yet eligible) men flooding into the service of their choosing. There was, in fact, a surge in enlistments in December 1941 and early 1942. But by and large, young men held back, enjoying a newly prosperous economy, finishing their schooling, or taking up defense work to avoid military service. In some instances, these potential recruits were the sole support for a widowed mother or underage siblings.

Almost all eligible men stood ready to serve if their country called them. During the war years, approximately 16 million Americans—including thousands of female volunteers—joined the service and did their duty. For many, it was a matter of simple patriotism: we'd been attacked, and it was time for payback. Others wanted to see the world, and still others just wanted to join up with their friends from the neighborhood. Some had dreams of derring-do as fighter pilots—perhaps the single most glamorous, and dangerous, of service options. But one thing was certain: the U.S. was fielding armed services composed of (as Frank Capra put it in his *Why We Fight* documentary series) "rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief." This was truly a citizens' military.

Rocco Montanelli: Teachers would talk about the war [in Europe in 1940-41]. Merchant ships being blown out of the water by German submarines. And we would write about it, you know, war in general, when they invaded France. But then we got Pearl Harbor. We all wanted to sign up for the war and fight. Yeah. There were people in high school who couldn't wait. A lot of guys quit school.

Irvin Conover: Well, then, you just wondered – who they were gonna take and how soon?

Muriel Dunlap: You didn't really feel. You said "well, that was it," and he had to go. People didn't object; they were just told to go, and they went.

Everett Weiser: Once they bombed Pearl Harbor, I said, "I can bet you that we're going to be in uniform within less than two years." Of course, you kind of got yourself conditioned that yes, it was going to happen and you might as well make the best of it.

Jerry Beam: Once Pearl Harbor happened you got more young kids in there than you could shake a stick at, 18 years old and stuff.

Rocco Montanelli: The last two years in high school, we had an obstacle course to get us in training for the war. It was good. We had to go through, climb walls, run around the block and all that kind of stuff to keep us in shape.

Harold Noble: Like dummies we volunteered.

Peter Shevchuk: Why volunteer? I was young and foolish, that's all.

Sebastian Hafer: On my 18th birthday I put my name up for voluntary induction as soon as I could and within two weeks I was inducted into the service.

Edward Kennedy: I guess because it was the thing. Everybody else was enlisting, and I just felt like we had to do something.

Basil Crapster: The country had been attacked and most of my generation were people whose fathers had been in the First World War as mine had been. One just sort of assumed that you would go off to war.

Harold Hollenbach: All my friends were starting to go to war, and everybody starts to look at you a little funny, wondering why you aren't in. I sort of felt maybe I ought to go.

Paul Baird: I embarked into my military life with a certain amount of, "Let's go, I've been waiting, I'm ready, put me in that airplane."

Richard Thompson: "Hey, there's a war on and I'm finally going to be part of that." This is what you wanted to do, and hopefully you'll do well, and hopefully you won't get killed.

Larry DeCesare: People were enlisting like crazy, 'cause they thought that was a just war. We were attacked. I got on the subway, went down to Church Street in Lower Manhattan, and I enlisted in the Coast Guard. I didn't even tell my father about it until I got home.

Frank Basehoar: The Army at that particular time was made up of men who were running away from something; usually pregnant girls or something like that.

David Fell: I joined the Marine Corps really to get away from all those long faces those cows had every morning.

Ed Allen, Sr.: No, this isn't a two-year hitch; this is until the government no longer needed your help.

Jack Corbin: A lot of the parents would've rather seen their kid do something else. You know, wait until you were drafted. But that would have been a disgrace.

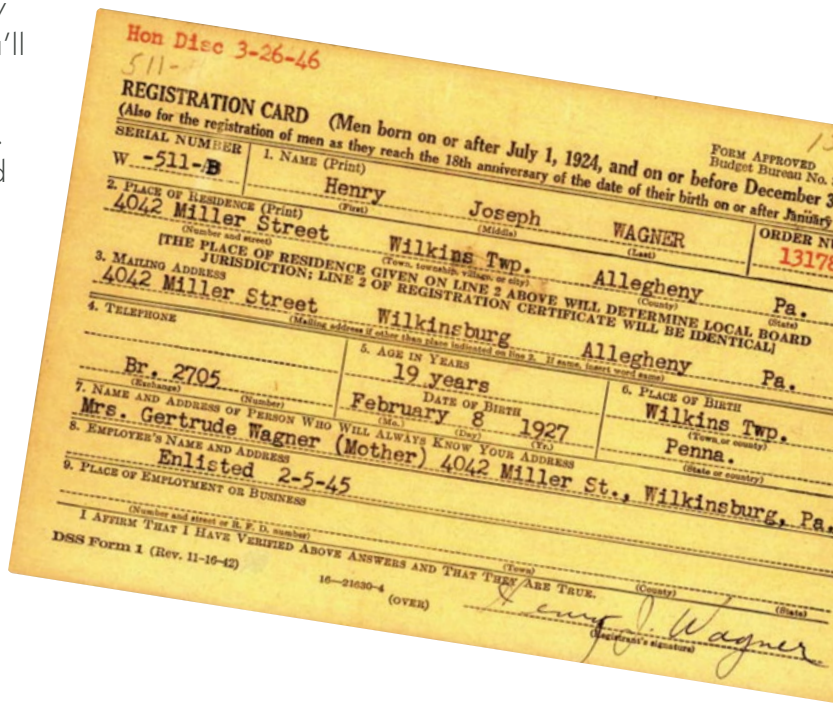
William Albertson: Back in them days, to be referred to as a 4F was like cursing your mother! It just was not acceptable.

Sebastian Hafer: There were darn few 18 year-olds because not everybody by any means, but a lot of people, tried to avoid the draft. And many of them, and I repeat not all of them, used just about any deferment excuse they could cook up. Like they had to operate a farm, or they had a job that was necessary, or they had family they had to care for, all sorts of excuses to avoid the draft.

Raymond "Monk" Spahr: I had gone over earlier and tried to enlist but I wasn't of age and my father wouldn't sign it because he said, "You'll get in this mess anyway, so why hurry it?"

Larry DeCesare: I told my father after I enlisted. He didn't like the idea. He said, "You should have waited; maybe they wouldn't have drafted you." I said, "Pop what are they gonna do, forget about me?"

Burnell Wagner: I said, to my mother "Well, what's the difference if I join now or if I join in a year or two from now." She said, "There's a big difference. You're gonna be here for a year or two. Otherwise, boom! How do you know what's gonna happen? You don't know." [Pause] I guess mommy likes to have her children at home.


Hon Disc 3-26-46

REGISTRATION CARD (Men born on or after July 1, 1924, and on or before December 3
(Also for the registration of men as they reach the 18th anniversary of the date of their birth on or after January
FORM APPROVED Budget Bureau No.

SERIAL NUMBER W-511-B
1. NAME (Print) Henry (First) Joseph (Middle) WAGNER (Last)
ORDER N 1317
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 4042 Miller Street (Number and street) Wilkins Twp. (Town, township, village, or city) Allegheny (County) Pa. (State)
(THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON LINE 2 ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL)
3. MAILING ADDRESS 4042 Miller Street Wilkinsburg Allegheny Pa.
(Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If none, insert word "none")
4. TELEPHONE Br. 2705 (Exchange) (Number)
5. AGE IN YEARS 19 years DATE OF BIRTH February 8 1927 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)
6. PLACE OF BIRTH Wilkins Twp. (Town or county) Penna. (State or country)
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Gertrude Wagner (Mother) 4042 Miller St., Wilkinsburg, Pa.
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Enlisted 2-5-45
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.
DSS Form 1 (Rev. 11-16-42) 16—21630-4 (OVER)
(Registrant's signature)

Robert Musselman: It was altogether a different war, a different feeling in the country than the Vietnam War. Everybody wanted to do their share as far as World War II was concerned.

Charles Bream: I joined the Navy because there was nobody who could help win this war more than I could. My attitude, my feeling, was of such a nature that nothing was better than for me to get into the Navy, get into this war.

Dexter Kimball: I was gung ho as hell. *"Z'Bam b aba ba bam."*

Henry Zeshonsky: I wanted to get even, so I joined the Marines.

Edward R. Daughaday: At that age it made you right proud to be in a uniform.

Sebastian Hafer: As a youngster you get patriotic and feel it's your duty to get involved.

Harold Noble: I didn't realize I would be, you know, going into combat. I never gave it a thought, or I'd have never volunteered to go.

Marvin Breighner: You think that life is forever, and there's nothing to worry about.

Allen Larson: I was invited. [Laughs] In other words I got drafted.

Dean Snyder: I didn't enlist. I'm not that dumb.

Ray Flickinger: Back then we didn't ask why. You done what they wanted you to do.

Harry Forbes: We were all enthused that we were selected to go. It was just something that everybody did. And when you didn't pass the physical to get in you were feeling really pretty sad.

Joseph Spinner: I would have been devastated if I wasn't able to go and all my buddies were in. Everybody wanted to get in and go overseas and fight.

Winslow Boynton: Getting a draft notice was very disappointing. It makes you sad. 'Cause, your life, in a sense, ends. 'Cause you don't know if you're coming back.

Myron Beatty: It was worse not being a part of it than being part of it. If you weren't [in a military uniform] you felt that you were being a slacker or something. You just had to a be a part of it.

Tom Mulkey: Going into the service was inevitable. It might be sooner or later, but you were gonna go.

Herb Bartell: No question about it, you were going to be drafted when you were 18. So the school set up a date. [Students] completed a school year in a half-year; they had to take extra courses and all of that. So instead of graduating in June, they had a graduation in January, for the guys that were 18 years old and were going to get drafted.

Burnell Wagner: [On receiving his draft notice] I said to myself, "They want our fat asses, fast!"

Everett Weiser: They were drafting almost everyone who could walk a straight line.

Peter Shevchuk: They took me, deaf, dumb, old, and stupid. I don't know. They needed bodies. Volunteering offered more options, and set many future servicemen thinking. At left: Shevchuk, 60th Infantry, 9th Division in Sicily.

Tom Mulkey: There were a lotta people that realized that they were gonna go in and they might as well enlist and have just a little bit of choice about where they would be sent and what they would be doing.

Gilbert Derrenberger: I tried to lie about my age, and they caught me. Said, "You come back in six months." So six months to the day, on my birthday, I was down there. That sergeant was waiting for me, 'cause he knew I was coming back. It wasn't two or three days later that I had my mother and father sign the papers, and we were heading down to Norfolk on the Old Bay Line for basic training.

Myron Beatty: I was going to enlist in the Navy. My mom would have had to sign for me and she was reluctant to do that because she already had two sons in the service and she just didn't want to do that. Yet she knew I was reaching the age. I was seventeen at the time and she wouldn't sign for me; so I waited for the next year and I volunteered.

Gabe Bosso: I had my brother's papers. He was 19 at the time and he was a merchant seaman. And so what I did was, I took his birth certificate and I went in there with it and showed it to them. And I told them that I was 19. I went in and I took the test with the other two guys, and the other two guys failed. [Chuckles]

Paul Vymazal: You were going to be in sooner or later. Navy, Marines, the Coast Guard, whatever you wanted, you would have your choice if you volunteered. If you didn't volunteer, they drafted you; they put you wherever they needed you.

Maynard Barnhart, Jr.: I left high school and went to work at the Martin Marietta Company in Baltimore. We built the TBM-3 and B-26 bombers. I worked there for two years, almost three. I had a 4-A deferment, and I could have stayed out, because I was a foreman in the hydraulic department. In my elementary school class, there were eight of us. By the time I'd begun work at Martin, two had been lost in the war. When I came home, my parents referred to me as a "draft dodger." So I left and joined the Army Air Force.

Charles "Chuck" Lewis: I wanted to join the Marines Corps for months before I went in. I always wanted one of those blue dress uniforms.

Percy Tompkins: When I got downstairs and was leaving the [Selective Service] building, you had to go out through a wide corridor. On each side of the corridor, there was a series of desks all the way down through with the various Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, you name it. They all had a desk and they all tried to get you to sign up as you went down through.

Charles Gardner: You could go in any branch of the service you ever wanted to go into. Well, I had had ROTC training in high school because the schools had it then, and I just didn't feel like I wanted to lay in the mud someplace. So I saw that the guy with a nice white uniform is in the Navy, and I wanted to go there because I'd have a bed to sleep on. So, into the Navy I went.

Robert Flickinger: When I brought the papers home for my parents to sign, they were a little hesitant about signing and I said, "If I volunteer, I can choose my branch of service. If I'm drafted, I have to take what they give me." And that's why I took the Navy. I guess maybe I wanted to be transported around the country rather than march around the country.

Emile Schmidt: I was told that the nice thing about the Navy was that you always had clean sheets. That's true, no foxhole. That was a good life.

Marian Brubaker: [On signing up for the WAVES in November 1944] One of the reasons I picked the Navy or even conceded to go to the recruiting office at all was because I liked their uniforms better than the others. I would rather wear navy blue any time than the godawful Army color. [Laughs]

Larry DeCesare: I didn't want any part of the Army. I didn't want to be in a foxhole in the rain and the snow and the mud.

John Susi: Let me tell ya, when I saw combat footage of those guys in New Guinea, I made up my mind that I was not gonna be in the Army. I was not gonna slosh through the mud. So, I asked for the Navy. I was lucky to get it.

David Fell: Why Marines? Being a young kid sitting in the country and you get to see these Marines all dressed up in their greens and blues. They really looked sharp. I made up my mind, "That's where I'm going."

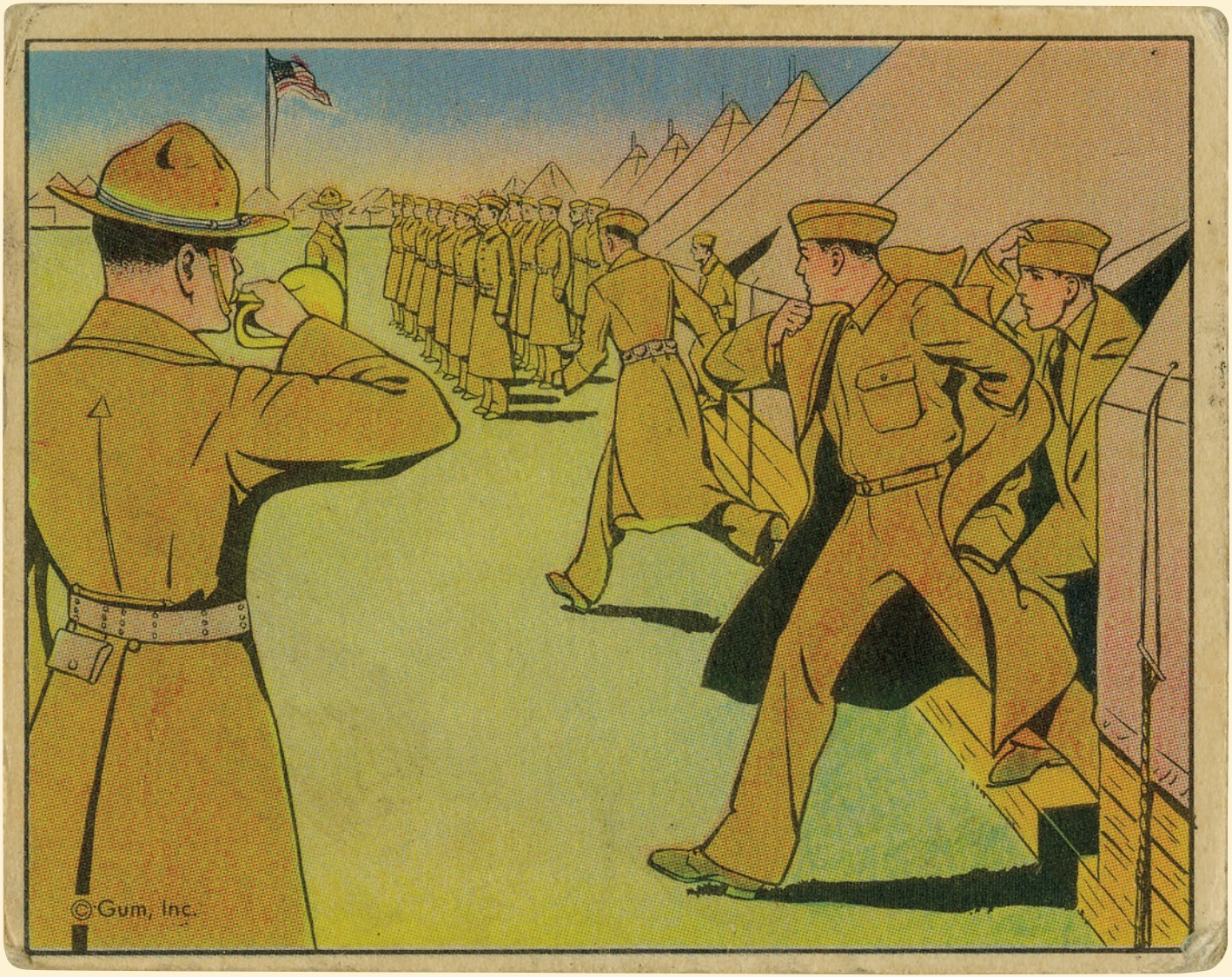
Glen Harner: Dad wanted me to stay on the farm, which was a deferment. But I decided my buddy and I were going into the Marine Corps, and we went to Harrisburg and enlisted. I went right from Harrisburg to Philadelphia, and I called my dad that night. He said, "Where are you?" I said, "The YMCA in Philadelphia." He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "Parris Island." He said, "What's that?" I said I had no idea, and I didn't. But I found out real quick what it was.

Percy Tompkins: [The different services] had a desk and they all tried to get you to sign up as you went down through. Well, behind one desk was this huge banner that said, "Army Engineers." And I said, "Oh." 'Cause I loved driving farm tractors and anything mechanical. I loved that kind of stuff. And I stopped and talked to the guy at this table and he said, "We need heavy equipment operators real bad." And I said, "You've got one." And that's how I ended up in the Engineers.

Lewis Sailhamer: They told me that if you're a volunteer you get what you want in the service. So I said I wanted to go in as a baker, working the kitchen. Well, of course when they processed me they said, "No, you're not going to be a baker, you're going to be a mechanic." I said, "A what?" They said, "You are going to be a mechanic."

Vito Scriptunas: I was walking down the line and the fellow in front of me wanted to go into the Army because he was afraid of water, so he was directed to the Navy. I wanted to go into the Navy, so they sent me to the Army.

Chuck Lewis: They had these cattle car buses that came up from Parris Island, and they picked us up from Yemassee. I remember going across the bridge and onto the island. All these guys are out there picking up trash. They were all yelling, all the way in, "You'll be sorry!" That's all you'd hear all the way into where we were going [for training as a Marine].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– EXAMS, INDUCTION AND TRAINING –

During the Second World War, even the most ardent recruit had to learn to "hurry up and wait." That process started with a physical examination from top to bottom, including every orifice. As many of those interviewed recall, hoped-for assignments did not always work out. Prospective pilots failed eye tests; would-be engineers lacked required mathematical skills; and flat feet kept aspiring riflemen on desk duty.

Aspirations for this or that duty were often adjusted, as sheer serendipity led volunteers and draftees alike into roles they hadn't anticipated. Being able to type was one entrée to office or intelligence work, as was knowing an officer, perhaps through a college connection. Facility with machinery led to mechanics training or heavy-equipment management. Language skills might direct a recruit to a particular theater of the war. But on the whole, where one wound up was a matter of luck and circumstance.

Training threw Americans together in ways they had never imagined. Except for African Americans, who were mostly segregated from whites both at home and abroad, the U.S. military mixed citizens of different ethnicities, education levels, and geography into a democratic fighting force. Northerners were usually surprised—sometimes even shocked—by what they encountered in the Deep South, especially its rural poverty and malignant white-supremacist norms. For some southerners, meanwhile, the Civil War had never ended. Frictions between "Yankees" and "Rebs" sometimes got out of hand.

But the main purpose of training was preparation for service, and in this the military did its job effectively. In some cases, GIs inducted in 1942 did not even make it out of training until the tail end of the war. Some missed the fighting altogether. But whatever the nature of the job, they were fit to serve.

Dr. James Hammet Sr.: I was a 17-year-old, and you're on your own, and you're thrown in with all types of people. You had to accept people for what they are.

Harold Hollenbach: [At the induction center in Allentown, PA] The single men weren't much fazed, but among married men, being torn away from their families, there was a lot of sobbing.

Edward Daughaday described departing on the Old Bay Line from Baltimore, then marching from where he was sworn in at the Post Office, down to the piers.

Edward R. Daughaday: All the parents were there wishing us well. Even my uncle went down. He said, "Boy, I don't have much to give you, but to wish you well." "I got one little token for you," and he handed me a silver dollar. He says, "stick this in your wallet and never spend it and nobody can ever say that you are broke."

Paul Vymazal: The first day you got your shots, all the shots. You got a crew cut haircut, your clothes and then you went to the dentist and checked your teeth and whatever. We got $127 worth of clothes. Two pairs of shoes and dungarees, two sets of undress blues, one set of dress blues, and that was supposed to last you a year. And you got a half dozen socks. For inspection you had to wear your dress blues. At right: soldier getting his gear.

George F. Smith Sr.: They took us to a great big building. Christ, we were running all over everything. They were checking up your ass.

Wilmer Diehl: Seemed that the physical lasted about 15-20 seconds, maybe a little longer. You turn your head this way and you'd cough.

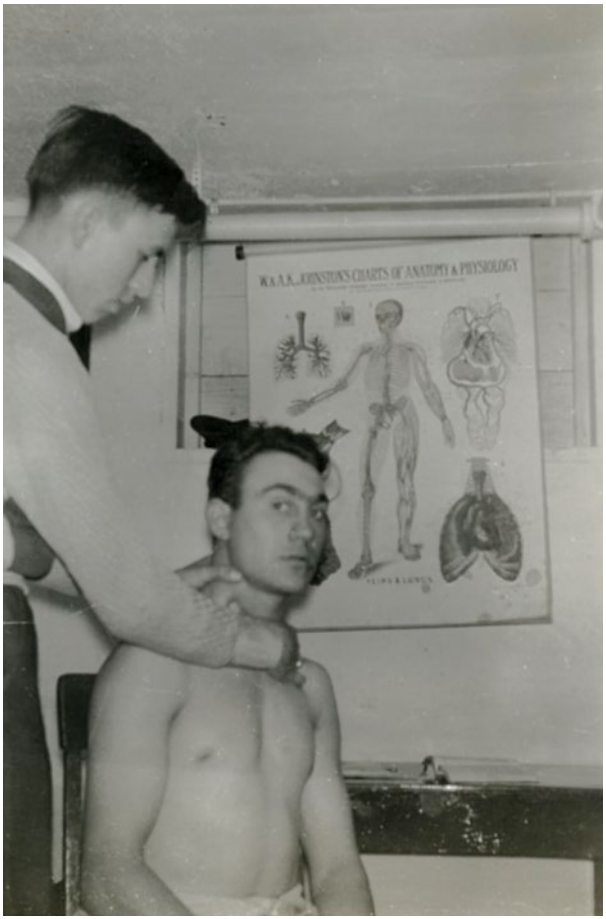
Edward John Baskerville: I had to come down from college [Lehigh University] to go for a physical in Newark. You go through this big line of naked, young men in the armory. All those doctors did various revolting things to us.

William Albertson: The very first question that I can remember is, "Do you like girls?" "Yeah." Then they'd lead right into it and say, "Of course you like girls, and how do you like girls?" Blah blah blah, and "Do you ever think anything about boys?" "No, other than play football with them or fight with them," and that's all.

Charles Gardner: Question: "What's your hobbies?" "Girls." "What do you do in free time?" "Girls." These were the stupid answers I'm giving, and I still missed going to officers' training school by about two points.

Whitfield Bell: I remember the examining officer said, "You're just the person we want: right age, right education, right experience." I said, "Just a minute, how about the physical requirements? How about the eyes?" The examiner said, "Read the chart up there." And I said, "What chart? Where?" "Well," he said "Walk up till you could read the chart." So I walked up. I think if I had stopped anywhere short of twelve feet, I'd have passed. But at twelve feet, I was still going strong. So, I stopped about six feet and I said, "You see what I mean." And he said, "Thank you for your interest in the Naval Reserves."

Richard Thompson: The only way I passed the eye exam was, I saw the eye chart and I memorized four letters, and I said, "Well, that's the best I can do." And they said, "That's good enough."

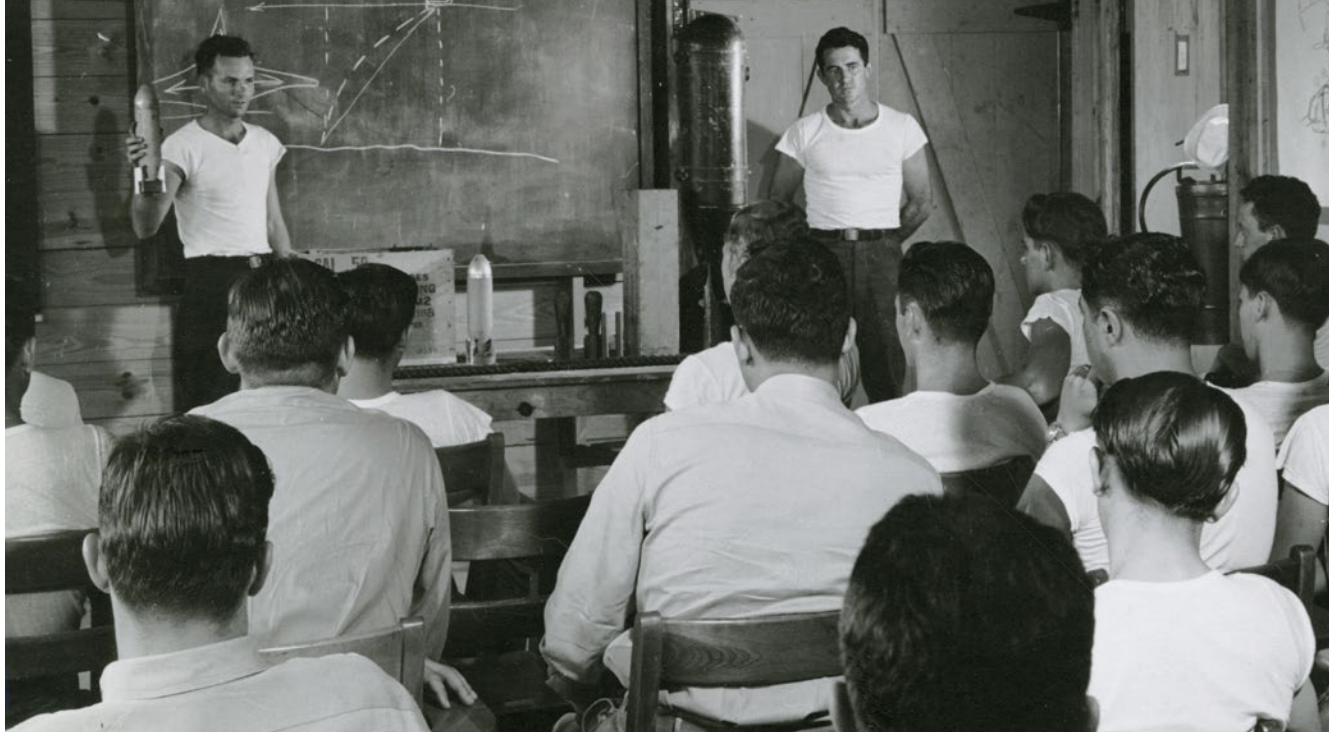


Michael J. Coyle: After Fort Belvoir, I received a special order from the headquarters in Fort Belvoir saying that I was disqualified for overseas service because of poor eyesight. Then two weeks later they came out with a roster of the people who were going overseas and I was included on that.

Elmer Parks: Somebody said that if you eat soap, it would affect your heart rate. So, when you went for your physical [and wanted to be rated 4-F] you ate some soap before you went. Now I heard this. I don't know how they did it. Some people said they had flat feet, you know, you were supposed to march a lot and it was hard to do on crippled feet. Some guys complained of back pain. A 19-year-old with a back ache. Imagine that!

Maurice "Duff" Harsh: I got dressed, lined up, raised my right hand, and got sworn into the Army! Right then and there! When I left that place, I was Private Maurice D. Harsh, 33802612.

Sebastian Hafer: I asked, "What's going on here; why am I being stamped Navy?" And I was told that on the particular day that I was being inducted there was a call from the national military for inductees



into the Navy. The priority at that time was for Navy recruits, and anyone who had a high school education was automatically drafted into the Navy because that was the call for the day.

Sam Curcio: I was a college graduate taking the same tests as guys who never finished eighth grade.

Linwood Reinhart talked about being selected as a medic despite his lack of any prior medical experience.

Linwood Reinhart: How they picked me for that, I don't know. You would think because I said I liked hunting that they would give me a rifle or something to go into combat. No, they put me in the medical field. I didn't have anything [experience] like that.

Jay Gross: Like most things in the Army, "Let's draw a number out of a hat." I swear to God, and they make jokes about this, but it's true. If you were a cook in civilian life, they made you a truck driver, if you were a truck driver, they made you a cook.

Winslow Boynton: So, when I was being inducted, they asked if I have any specialties. I said, "Yeah, radios." So they pulled out a book, asked me questions and [snaps fingers] of course, I could answer them like that. I could tell them before they finished it. He said, "Yeah, you really know your stuff, but" he says, "We need riflemen." Thank goodness, I saw him punch a hole in my card [about radio skills] and that saved my life. Because when I got to Italy, they were shipping everybody out, but me, 'cause that was on my card.

Robert Flickinger: You got into the recruiting end of the United States Navy and a fella said, "What about radio?" I said, "I don't know nothing about radio." He said, "You're a good candidate."

Once inducted, it was off to training camp—who knew where, or for what!

Gerald Duncan: On the first day, before we even got our uniforms, we were sitting in a room with the officer on stage. He said, "You're no longer an individual. You are now a number." He said, "You will do what you're told when you're told, in the way you are told and you won't question."

Ab Rainbow: They don't care what you want. You're going to do things their way. They've got their program, and you just follow their program. You're in no position to tell anybody anything. They tell you.

Chuck Lewis: You mustn't forget the sand fleas at Parris Island. They get in your nose; they get in your ears. They get in there, and they sound like airplanes flying around. Of course, when we were standing at attention with your drill instructor, if you even put a hand up there he would crack it with the billy club. He'd say, "Don't you bother that poor little thing!"

Fred Feiser: "Get on that train!" They never told you where you were going or anything, we were like bunch of monkeys.

Harold Noble: It was taking us, I don't know how long, to get to Mississippi. I remember one guy went berserk on the train while we were going there. I don't know. I guess maybe because he was going into the Army and couldn't take it.

Dale Alwine: Every move in the Army is a mystery trip. "We don't need to tell you where you're going, you'll find out when you get there."

Thomas Miles: You just waited until they shipped you out in a day or two. We were put on a train, and they didn't tell us where we were going. We had no idea where it was, but it was basic training someplace. They were concerned about spies following troop movements, so you got on the train, and it would go out one way, and then it would go someplace else, and then it would come back, it would go out another way.

James Decesare: They discovered there were "too many pilots" and what they were looking for was aerial gunners. So we all became aerial gunners. And we all got shipped out to Kingman [Arizona] Gunnery School.

John Chiocca: You were given dinner at 5 or 6 o'clock, somewhere in there, and then you went back to your room and you studied. And lights out was at 11 and we'd get under the blankets with a flashlight and keep studying because they'd kick you out. If you didn't keep up with the curriculum, you'd get kicked out very quickly. We'd study till 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and then you got up again at 5:30 or 6 and went through it all again.

Sebastian Hafer: We learned in basic training, you never volunteer for anything.

David Fell: When you do go into the Marine Corps, you got a rude awakening. The drill instructors were nasty. [They would say] "God damn, you're in my territory now. I didn't ask you to come down here. You volunteered."

Al Reese remembered learning discipline as a Marine.

Al Reese: They taught you to do it right or don't do it.

Harold Streett: If you got out a step in Marine training, I can guarantee you're gonna get a [smacks with his hands] crack across your legs. You'll never do it a second time after that first hit. And we got hit. And you didn't complain, you just went off and that was it. You tried to stay in step.

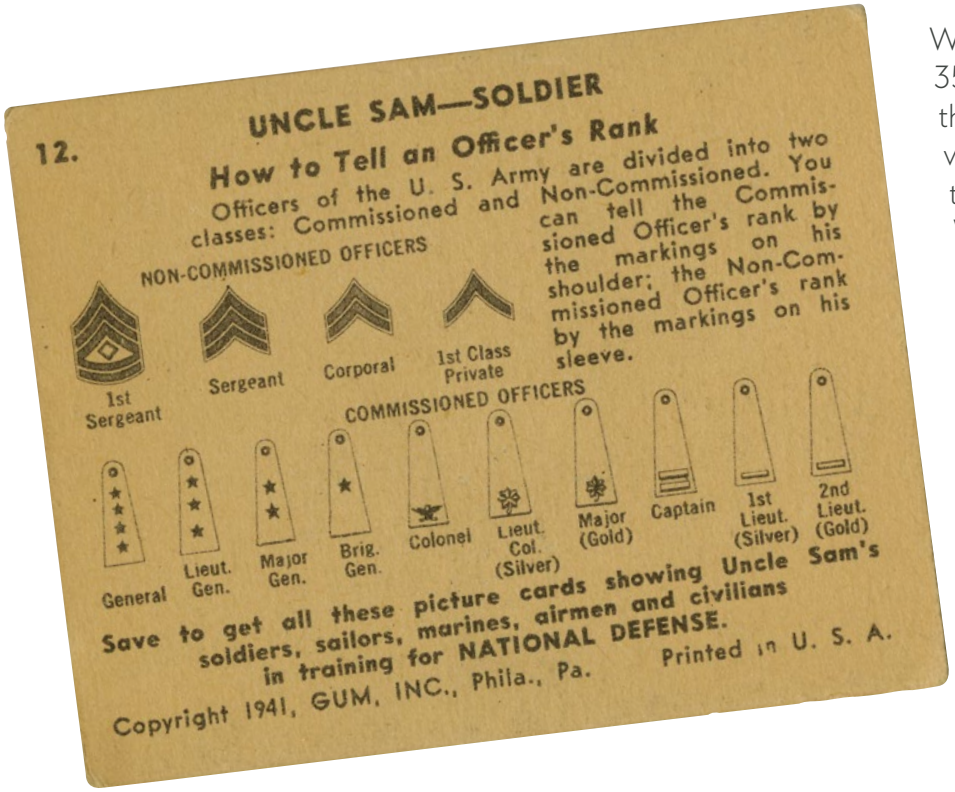
Jerry Beam: In the morning, heh, heh, they called roll. And from then on we done everything on the double. One of them sergeants looked at me and said, "Give me 75 [push-ups]." And you done them. And then, the next day the same thing. And if you didn't feel good that morning, he'd say, "Did you cheat?" "No," and he'd say, "Give me 75 for NOT CHEATING!" The next morning you'd say "Yes." He'd say, "Well, then give me 75 FOR CHEATING!" [Laughs]

Harold Hess: Everyone wore the same kind of clothes, ate at the same time, I mean it was a completely different lifestyle.

Knud Hermansen shared his drill sergeant's training philosophy.

Knud Hermansen: "We can't make you do anything. We can only make you wish you had."

Ray Flickinger: [If his recruits in the 78th division] didn't behave themselves, they went on a 35-mile hike on Sunday with full packs, extra blanket, extra shoes.



When I came back with them off of a 35-mile hike, they learned to behave themselves. We had a lot of city boys who thought they were smarter than us good old country boys. We whipped them into shape.

Knud Hermansen: Officers were God almighty.

Floyd Cook: There's no such thing as privacy in training camp. You forget about privacy.

Saverio Procario: I had made up my mind that I was gonna get through this thing so I learned as much as I could, you know. I didn't goof off.

A soldier reflected on a lesson learned the hard way in training.

Knud Hermansen: You don't salute an officer with a candy bar in your hand!

Frank Myers: You get up about 5:30 as a rule, you'd brush your teeth, clean yourself up, put your clothes on and then you'd go out there and stand in front of the tent. Everything in order. It was generally about eight men and there's a corporal. He checks you over to see what you're wearing and he can make it rough for you. Then of course you go eat and that's always enjoyable.

Dean Snyder: They just run the shit out of you, and teach you how to shoot a gun, and toss a hand grenade and stuff like that.

John Chiocca: No sitting down. You stood up for the entire afternoon. Never had a break. They just keep feeding you with all this information.

Richard Thompson: Road marches, calisthenics, bayonet practice, obstacle courses. Everything was very physically demanding because they were trying to make you tougher.

Gerald Duncan: They had fences on an obstacle course. They had a rope over a plunge, all kinds of stuff like that. There were things that you had to go down, climb over, climb under, go through, whatever it was.

Bernard Sadusky: They had machine guns lined up about that high [gestures to approximately 40 inches off the ground] and maybe ten, twelve guys who were handling the machine guns. You had to belly crawl one hundred yards with barbed wire in front of you and the machine guns running. You'd better not lift up, because you'd get blown apart. I dug right in, just kicked the dirt to the side. All the way on my belly, 'cause them bullets were flying across like that. That is what worried me more than anything.

William Albertson: Basic training involved firearms, drills, military courtesy and discipline, and all that kind of stuff. Just the basic things. At the end of eight weeks, you're asked, "Do you understand what a soldier is supposed to do?"

Philip Coon: The guys, in order to get back to their camp – after having had breakfast – would have to swim this causeway, and do their running, and marching, and swimming, and so forth on up to their camp – and it made them terrific athletes. They taught them there, "You're God – and if anybody tells you different, kill 'em."

Jack Crow: So, one morning, they called us out, and said "We're going on a ten-mile hike today." It was this hot day, we had to start when it was early in the morning. And guess what, "You're gonna carry a 60-pound pack." They had just a backpack that was just filled with rocks. By the time we got five miles out, some of the guys weren't making it. I mean they were just collapsing. So on the way back there were ambulances, picking guys up that had just collapsed and fainted. It was hot, I mean it was miserable.

David Fell: Everything you did was part of the requirement. When you made your bed, it had to be perfect. He'd come in and if it had one wrinkle in it or something like that, you had to make it over again. He would come in there and take a coin and flip it on the bed. If that coin just laid on the bed, it wasn't made up tight enough.

William Railing: Every Saturday we had an inspection. The regimental officers would come around with white gloves on. They'd come into your room, and they'd go over all the windowsills, and if they got any dirt on their gloves, you got a report.

Jack Crow: The second lieutenant was kind of an obnoxious guy. If he was doing the inspection for the room, every room got demerits. One of the best things he ever found—you weren't supposed to have pin-up pictures. That was a no-no. You could have pictures of your family and so forth. And there was one guy who had picture of a pin-up girl and she was pretty close to being nude. Written across the bottom was, "To Paul, with love, Mother." Now you could have a picture of your mother. And that drove the lieutenant nuts.

Jerry Beam: This one guy wouldn't get up in the morning. I'd get up and wake everybody up and head to clean up and he was still sleeping. So one morning, I grabbed his cot and lifted it as high as I could and down he went. From then on, he beat me out [to freshen up in the morning before training commenced].

Frank Basehoar: One day it was raining and the sergeant said we can't shoot in the rain so we had first class gunner's examination. He read out of the Army book. He couldn't pronounce a two-syllable word, really. And I said, and this is true, "If that's not the goddamn worst exhibition of reading I've ever heard in my life!" And his reply was, "You smart son of a bitch, you read!" OK. And I got it. My second mistake was, I'd never read better in my life. And that was completely wrong, because I was on his shit list.

Fred Feiser: In basic training, we had two fellows from Harrisburg, and you could tell they were the kind of kids that when mother said, "Get up! It's time for school!" [Feigns groaning] "Yeah, yeah, yeah." Well, when they came in and blew the whistle, you had three minutes to hit the road out there, and when they called your name, you'd better be there and with clothes on. It was wintertime. These guys, all they put on was their overcoat, over their shorts and jerseys, and they stood out in a pair of shoes! They were so slow, they couldn't get anything else on. They got away with it for three days.

Jerry Beam: I was a sergeant and had charge of a barracks. One Sunday morning, I got a barracks full of guys laying in beds. They started playing poker. It didn't matter to me. Let them out for lunch. Come back, they played until supper time. After supper, they played poker until nine o'clock. Lights out at ten. The next morning, I got the barracks cleaned up, and there they were, again, playing poker.

Howell King: We had to get up and run what they called "The Grinder"[4] in the morning. There was one fellow there who was having a hard time and I said, "Hold on to me." I said, "When we get back near the barracks you need to let go and run yourself, because they're going to give us both heck for me helping you around."

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[4] *The grinder was a large concrete parade ground where recruits learned how to march. One Marine recalled his drill instructor at Parris Island ordering them out of bed and commanding them to "fall in" (assemble in neat orderly rows) on the grinder. Soldiers were required to stomp down very severely on the heels of their boots. "This was not a goose step like the Germans; your knee was bent and then you all dug your heels in together creating a rhythm, and at the same time grinding the heel. We all went through at least one set of heels on our boots in the many, many hours we spent on the grinder. In boot camp we were not allowed to talk to one another, so I think the only people who I heard use the term were the drill sergeants."* Interview with Jim Simpson, Gettysburg, August 2021.

Rocco Montanelli: [An Army draftee] It was just four weeks of running, you know. They showed us how to put on a gas mask. But it was pretty easy because they weren't trying to get rid of us.

David Fell: We had a little snow storm when we were there, the first time in 21 years at Parris Island that it snowed. It was cold, not cold that it would be freezing, but we had maybe an inch and a half or two inches of snow. The drill instructor asked us all to fall out in front of him. He asked, "Anybody cold?" We said, "Yes, sir." The drill instructor said, "Good. Take off your blouse." The blouse was the top jacket we had. "Take it off, throw it on the ground. I'll warm you guys up." For the next 15 minutes, we ran.

Howell King recalled training in upstate New York in winter.

Howell King: Cold as the Devil! Cold! I forget the name of that lake now but we had to go out in long boats and row and you were so cold your rear end would stick to the seats.

David C. Dawson: It was heat rather than cold, and water was a problem. They'd give you a quart of water a day and that was all you had. It was sweaty. I've seen guys begging for water from other guys and stand there crying 'cause they were so thirsty.

Franklin Tenure: For my basic training I was sent to Aniston, Alabama, in July, August, and September, the hottest months of the year. When we took our uniforms off at night and saw it in the morning, the salt from our system had turned the green uniforms white.

Training in the summer heat of Florida could have health consequences.
Paul Lafley refused discharge after a fainting incident.

Paul Lafley: It probably was 115 degrees. I keeled over. I said, "I won't go. I'm going to be alright."

Glen Harner: One time, the sand fleas were so bad that, I didn't think my sergeant was lookin' and I swatted and knocked my helmet off. Well, he kept us marching, kickin' my helmet all over the place. He finally halted us and looked around and said, "There's some dumb SOB can't keep a helmet on his head." I'm the only one standing there with no helmet. A little embarrassing.

Charles Heinbaugh: One of the tests that I'll never forget was at Chapel Hill, in their big swimming pool. We had to swim, and tread water, for three hours—three straight hours without touching anything. For endurance. One trick was to take your pants off, tie the legs together, jump off a big high tower about 20 feet high, hold the pants open to get filled with air, and then land, and then trap the water in there, and then you'd put your chin in the V of your trousers because the air would be up and that was a buoy to help support you.

John Herman: We used to walk around, in school, and we'd talk to each other in Morse Code. Just "deet deet deet deeeet deeeeet deet,"—you know, that kind of stuff, and that probably helped a lot.

William Parkin: They would take us out into the St. James River. We had wooden rifles, not real guns. They'd say, "Okay, jump." We would jump off the boat and wade to shore. Your shoes were filled with water and then you'd go back out into the drill field and march again, and get full of dirt. I guess the idea behind it was to toughen you up.

Dale Alwine: They did a thing they called D-series, I think it was about three weeks, and it was a simulated battle, with two teams. We got unlucky, because a blizzard set in, I think it was early March, high winds and no fires allowed. Eating wasn't so good. You could hardly see ten feet. But we did survive. There was some frostbite. If you didn't know how to take care of yourself, for example, if you were training all day and crawled into the sleeping bag and didn't change the wet socks or what have you, you would have frostbit feet in the morning. None of us have ever forgotten D-series.

Robert Reynolds: [In maneuvers] I was killed and captured five—heck, no, eight, nine times. We all thought it was a joke, and we'd write home about it. You're riding down the road surveying, and all the sudden there's an orange flag. The orange flag means that you've just been hit by a tank gun or something, and a referee would come out with a clipboard and look at it. "What's your outfit?" We'd tell him. "What's your job?" He would look at his watch. Then they'd penalize us. For several hours, we'd just sit there and wait because we were out of the maneuvers. We spent a night in prisoner of war camp, with no food, no john or latrine or anything. I got hit on the boot by a copperhead, I think. There were plenty of snakes around. And mosquitoes. Umpteen million mosquitoes. Poison ivy. We were bombed a couple times by bags of flour, because we were out in front of everybody.

Sam Curcio: Eight minutes into the maneuvers we were killed or captured and we were told to go to such and such a place and the colonel turned around and drove away. The colonel said, "To hell with you. I'm not going to be a casualty eight minutes into the war." The referee was yelling at us but we turned around and drove away. I was killed or captured seven or eight times during the training exercises that week. So I decided that I had to get out of the infantry.

Charles Caldwell: I'm the little yard bird[5] in the back of the platoon with some of the other fellas. The drill instructor heard that. And he halted the platoon and stood in front of me like that. [Sits upright to indicate standing rigid and angry.] And how he ever knew it was me I don't know. [Laughs] He took his hand and boom! [Moves hand in a downward hitting motion] Now there's two little eye slits in the front [of the helmet] where after you become a Marine, after you finish boot camp you can wear the emblem. But for the rest of the day I was looking out through the little hole there. You couldn't reach up and move your helmet. Whatever way he hit it that's where you had to wear it the rest of the day.

Jack Crow: The sergeant says "You, you, you and you." It was the first guys he saw and I was one of them. "You're on guard duty tonight." [Groans] So, I think it was four hours, eight to midnight in the winter. It was cold. The funniest thing was we didn't know what we were supposed to be guarding.

Myron Beatty: Weapons training was rather intense, I will say that. It was like battle conditions that we were training under. They were using live ammunition and everything for our training.

Winslow Boynton: We had all the weaponry. Doggone mines. I hated the idea of planting mines. They were bad stuff.

Burnell Wagner: They'd teach ya how to blow up a small vehicle, even blow up a tank as far as that goes, how to barricade the roads, put nitrous sparks up trees and set it off, and let them fall across the roads and everything, how to dig a tank trap. A million different things.

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[5] *A yard bird is a soldier assigned to a menial task or restricted to a limited area as a disciplinary measure; an untrained or inept enlisted man.*

Thomas Miles: At the gunnery school you had to learn the 50-caliber machine gun. One of the tests that you had to go through was they blindfolded you after you learned it and you had to be able to put it together. Then you shot at stationary targets, with the 50-caliber machine gun. You had to pass that, you had to get a certain score. Next thing was moving targets. We were on the back of a truck and you passed a series of towers. As you passed each tower, they shot out a clay pigeon, and they were going in different directions.

Harry Forbes: You'd be out at the skeet range, and they put you in a truck up on top and you'd go around in a circle and the wires would shoot the skeet. It was just a lot of fun. I didn't know where I was going or what was going to happen. I was having fun at the moment.

Edward R. Daughaday: Lights out at 10 o'clock at night. I guarantee you, I did not mind that because you were so damn tired.

Not everything went as planned.

Sebastian Hafer: There is no operation bigger than the Army. So things are bound to go wrong.

John Gale: My bunkmate couldn't resist picking up a souvenir, so he picked up a 4-millimeter anti-tank projectile. Obviously, it had not exploded, and he kept it. So that night in the barracks he was showing me this prize, this 40-millimeter shell, and he was shaking it, and said, "See, there's nothing wrong with it. It's dead." He was banging it on the supports that hold up our bunks, the wooden supports. The next day was the Marines Corps' birthday. We fell out. Falling out means that when you're in unit you know exactly where you're supposed to stand. And all the sergeant has to do is find an empty place instead of going through this whole rigmarole. So we were filling our spaces and this fellow who had the dud decided he would play bomber. He dropped it and it went off. I was about eight, maybe twelve feet from that explosion. It was a big explosion, but I did not feel any injury. I still carry around a piece of shrapnel in my lung and it chewed up one of my legs; blew his foot off.

Jack Cuthbert: We just started training and we didn't know what the hell we were doing to tell you the truth. We didn't have any weapons, we were incredibly understaffed, we'd practice with a broomstick – that was supposed to be an anti-tank gun. To simulate a tank, they'd take a half-ton truck and put a big sign on the side that said 'tank' and the rifles that we had were from the First World War.

Dale Alwine: [On training for the 10th Mountain Division] We didn't know a ski from a snowshoe, and had to be taught everything.

John Susi: They pushed things pretty fast.

Russell Blank: We didn't get much real training, I think we spent more of the time cleaning barracks and getting things in shape than we did training. When I was in the Navy I never handled a rifle or shot a gun. One day they took us to a swimming pool. We had to jump off the high diving board into the pool and if we swam across the pool you were a swimmer and that was it.

Jack Locher: One time I was navigating the tow ship down over the Gulf of Mexico and apparently one of the gunners thought we were hostile. They put a 50-caliber slug through one of the engines, knocking out the oil system. We lost that engine and immediately called the flight off. When we got to Mobile Air Force Base, we found that a couple other slugs hit us, too. So I used to say that my only World War II combat was over the Gulf of Mexico, shot down on a practice mission. [Laughs]

Soldiers' reflections on their training experience suggested that this was no army of automatons.

Edward R. Daughaday: Basic training was hard, but it was good. I weighed 200 lbs. when I left high school. When I finished basic training I weighed 175 and what was left was all muscle.

Sebastian Hafer: In wartime, the training is more intense. It's certainly not clean work. It's sweaty, exerting and tough. You slop around in the mud and you shiver in the cold and you sleep on the hard ground, it's just not a comfortable life. But you know, I'm not complaining. It's what you expect.

Arthur Lasher: It was a whole new experience because you met people from all over the United States. You had people of different ethnic backgrounds, and it was sort of a mixing thing. We trained together and we got to trust each other and depend upon each other. That was one really good thing that came out of being in service—we had respect for different kinds of people, you know.

Anthony Chupalio: They fed us a lot of propaganda, lots of pictures of the war, how the enemy tortured people and were killing people. They showed you pictures that really made you angry. They got you to the point where you really couldn't wait to get over there and kill these guys to get even.

John Gale: I don't know if the term "brainwash" was in effect then, but you know I tell people that I went into Parris Island a Boy Scout and came out a killer. [Laughs]

Sebastian Hafer: They were trying to get you through as fast as they could. Overseas there was a great demand for replacements. A year and a half into the war, virtually all of the military units had been deployed, all the military units were already placed where they were needed, most of them overseas. What was needed was replacements to replace those who became casualties either by death or injuries, or health, or age.

Myron Beatty: Draftees were being trained in the infantry to replace all the casualties that they were suffering during the winter of '44 in Belgium and Germany. We knew it was bad, but we found out later just how bad it was.

Ab Rainbow: We went up to this sunrise field, and I studied the books that showed us about the airplane. Luckily I did, because when I went down to sit on the flight line the next morning, the officer came up and said, "OK fella, get out your handkerchief and cover your eyes." "What's this all about?" "I want you to point out where the airspeed indicator is."

Vito Scriptunas: [On his training to be a ball turret gunner on a B-17] We had cameras, instead of bullets, and our training area was at the Grand Canyon. So fighter planes would come in, in attack formation, and we would line them up with our cameras. Then we'd go up and we had tracer bullets. They were coded bullets, a different color for each turret. And those people towing that target were taking their life into their hands. We were supposedly shooting at the targets, but some of the men were shooting at the plane. They'd bring the target back and you'd look at it to see how many times you'd hit it or you didn't.

Ab Rainbow: You didn't want to fail, because you knew if you failed, they would send you to the infantry, and you were never going to get to fly.

Paul Baird: I'm sure we all had the realization that what we're being trained for is getting closer and closer. Some fellas were already beginning to come apart psychologically, knowing that there was not much separating us now from real harm.

Members of the 10th Mountain Division of the US Army training at Camp Hale, Colorado, 1943.