America in World War Two
Oral Histories and Personal Accounts
Overview

Explore this extensive collection to discover the impact of World War Two on the lives of everyday Americans, both at home and abroad.

Through first-hand accounts, personal letters, diaries, photographs, artefacts and military records, experience American operations in the Pacific, the D-Day landings in Europe and the post-war occupation of Germany. Listen as hundreds of people share their memories of military life, prisoner of war camps, and the Home Front in the broad collection of oral history video interviews included within the collection.

These recordings give insight into a wide range of experiences including African American pilots and marines, women who performed a variety of military and civilian roles, Japanese Americans interned in domestic camps, and European survivors of concentration and labour camps.

About the Archive

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that future generations will know the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. Dedicated in 2000 as the National D-Day Museum, it celebrates the American spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifices of the men and women who fought on the battlefront and served on the Home Front.

“The collection focuses on the experience of the individual, the men and women who lived and died in those momentous days. Hats off to Adam Matthew for curating, digitising, and providing this rich resource to the widest possible audience.”

Dr Rob Citino,
Executive Director, Institute for the Study of War and Democracy,
The National WWII Museum
Highlights

- Declassified top secret documents relating to the D-Day landing on Omaha beach
- Illustrated diary of an American prisoner of war in Stalag Luft 3
- Documents and photographs relating to the atomic bombs
- Personal and military documents relating to Mary T. Lynes, the first woman in the Pacific to receive the Soldier's Medal for heroism
- Photographs relating to US medical services in India, Burma and China
- Substantial correspondence of the Beene family; five brothers serving in different service branches, and three sisters on the US Home Front
- Scrapbooks featuring the “Four Hollywood Blondes”, an American roller-skating troupe with the United Service Organizations (USO), on tour throughout the war.

Oral Histories

The hundreds of oral history videos within this collection offer an invaluable insight and demonstrate a wide range of experiences, including:

- A veteran of the famous 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division
- Members of women’s service branches, such as the Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) and Women’s Army Corps (WAC)
- African American service personnel, including Tuskegee Airmen, nurses and marines
- Survivors of concentration camps, the Bataan Death March and prisoners of war
- Cryptography officers, including a Navajo code talker
- American civilians interned in the United States and in the Philippines

Object Gallery

Uniforms and souvenirs as well as military and personal equipment, many of which are viewable in 360-degree rotation.
America in World War Two is an invaluable resource for understanding the experiences and the lasting impact of one of the most significant events in human history.

Key Themes

- Front line experiences, including key campaigns around the world
- Key events such as Pearl Harbor, VE and VJ Day
- Naval warfare and amphibious operations and craft
- Women in the forces
- Medical services and army health
- Civilian life and the Home Front
- Air warfare and strategic bombing
- Enlistment and the draft
- Military training

Material Types

- Oral history videos
- Correspondence including v-mail and greetings cards
- Diaries and journals
- Scrapbooks, albums and photographs
- Ephemera including currency, ration books, theatre programmes and mess tickets
- Artefacts including souvenirs, weapons, medals, uniforms and military equipment
- Training manuals, flight log books, and maps
- Sketches and artwork
- Newspapers and periodicals

“I am thrilled that these oral histories and personal accounts have been digitised so that scholars and teachers around the world can make use of these exceptional primary sources.”

Judy Barrett Litoff, Ph.D., Professor of History, Bryant University

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