

# WW II MOUNTAIN MEMORIES



# HOME FRONT TO THE FRONTLINE

"It was the greatest honor of my life—to serve my country." —Charles McAdams

"War is not glamorous. War is and always has been about Killing and Death."  
—Henry Colton

"I did nothing heroic—each of us just did what we had to do." —Landon Roberts

"A government does not tell me who my enemies are." —Michael Robinson

"This is only the second time I have told this story—once to my grandson when he was bored on a long car trip and now here".  
—George Lamprinakos

"I was anxious. For three years I never knew if I was a bride or a widow."  
—Mary Ellen Wolcott

**E**ach of these people reacted to the war in a unique way; there was no standard response. Charles McAdams grew up in segregated Asheville and served in both the segregated, and later desegregated, Army. Henry Colton was a decorated pilot, but the scar left from the day he was informed of his brother's death and delivering the news to his brother's widow and her three year old son have never left him. Landon Roberts looked for submarines in the Pacific. Rabbi Michael Robinson went on to work in national organizations devoted to peace and reconciliation. George Lamprinakos was 18 years old when he landed in Europe just after the Battle of the Bulge for the infantry push across the frozen landscape of Europe. Mary Ellen Wolcott's husband returned safely to her arms as they began a new life together after the war.

In speaking to folks about the research behind Mountain Memories: Home Front to the Frontline, many replied: "How will you ever get them to open up?" This generation's stoicism has earned them a solid reputation. And, in fact, some were unwilling to talk. One veteran, who did not participate, simply replied: "I've been trying to forget what happened there for over 60 years." Most, however, were very willing, even anxious, to share their experience with us. Many expressed a sincere hope that by telling their story they would help humankind more closely examine the roots of war and seek different solutions. The challenges we all face in our world today echo many of the issues faced by "the Greatest Generation" over 60 years ago. May the wisdom and the sacrifice of our elders inform the future decisions of our students and citizens.

As in the work of the Center for Diversity Education, teaching about WWII offers an excellent opportunity on many core issues of diversity such as xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, the role of women—all of which are intentionally included in WWII Mountain Memories. We look forward to sharing the exhibit with area schools students in grades 6-12.

WWII Mountain Memories was created in cooperation with the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project and the UNCA Special Collections, where these testimonies will be archived for future researchers. While this exhibit used only excerpts from 60 selected interviews, the entire text of the almost 100 interviews will be archived. The Center for Diversity Education wishes to thank both the veterans and civilians who were interviewed for sharing these tender memories along with the 15 volunteers who made this archival record possible.

A PROJECT OF THE CENTER  
FOR DIVERSITY EDUCATION



IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND THE  
VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT



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WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA JEWISH FEDERATION  
DEUTSCH FAMILY FOUNDATION

# WORLDWIDE CLIMATE OF HATRED

Following the defeat of Germany in WWI, the Weimar Republic went into a deep and worsening economic depression. Many millions of people were out of work, resulting in long bread lines. A widespread financial collapse of many nations—including the United States—soon followed.

In Germany, a national election brought to leadership a political party that was grounded on the idea that one race of people was superior to all other races of people. This political party, the National Socialists or the Nazis, under the leadership of Adolph Hitler, contended that White Christian people were superior to all other races—in particular Jews. They also proclaimed the inferiority of Blacks, homosexuals, the mentally and physically handicapped, and the Roma (Gypsies), among others. While the Jewish community made up less than one percent of Germany's population, it became Hitler's main scapegoat.



PHOTO OF ADOLF HITLER FROM CORBIS.COM



WILLIAM PELLEY  
PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY, ASHEVILLE, NC

This hatred was not unique to Germany. Anti-Semitism had been a part of Europe for over a thousand years. Nor was it only a problem in Europe. The United States had its own forms of hatred, including both anti-Semitism and racism. In the 1920s and 1930s the Ku Klux Klan was gaining in power across the south with wide spread intimidation and lynchings. Jim Crow laws, which detailed where Blacks could and could not go, where they could and could not work and go to school, and much more, were in place across the South until the 1960s.

A program known as the American School of Eugenics was begun in the early 1900s. This program assigned a value to those who should have children and those who shouldn't, so as to increase the "purity and superiority of the people." These laws prevented Whites and Blacks from marrying and having children. It also called for the sterilization of certain types of people, often African Americans and

the mentally handicapped. This practice of Eugenics occurred even in our own state. In 2002, the state of North Carolina apologized to the people it had sterilized through a Eugenics program up until the 1970s.

In the 1920s, U.S. industrialist Henry Ford wrote a series of anti-Semitic articles in his newspaper the Dearborn Independent, later compiling them in a book entitled The International Jew: The World's Problem. His longtime support of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party, well documented in a December 20, 1920 New York Times article, resulted in his receiving the Grand Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle in 1938. Ford was the first American, and the fourth person in the world, to receive this award.



WILLIAM PELLEY EDITED A NEWSLETTER CALLED PELLEY'S SILVERSHIRT WEEKLY, IN WHICH HE PUBLISHED MANY OF HIS RACIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC IDEAS.

PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY, ASHEVILLE, NC

In Asheville, William Pelley founded a hate group known as "The Silver Shirts." They marched in local parades down Patton Avenue and distributed their national newspaper from offices next to the train depot in Biltmore Village. By the early 1940s, the organization was defunct as Pelley was convicted of tax evasion by the IRS and sent to prison. Robert Best of Greenville, SC was an outspoken racist and anti-Semite who was forced to leave the United States. He relocated to Germany where he broadcast Nazi propoganda over the radio airwaves. The hatred of these various groups and individuals had already divided the world and threatened to tear it asunder.

On November 9-10, 1938, Kristalnacht targeted the burning of Jewish businesses and synagogues and Hitler and the Nazis went to war with the rest of Europe.



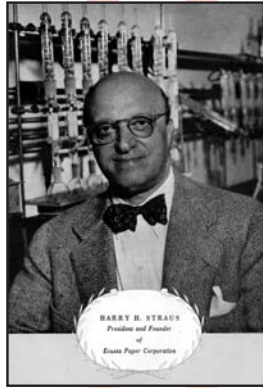
KU KLUX KLAN TRUCK IN A 1925 ASHEVILLE PARADE  
PHOTO BY HERBERT PELTON  
NC COLLECTION, PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY, ASHEVILLE, NC

# IMPACT OF WAR IN EUROPE ON WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

## THE ECUSTA PLANT AND BREVARD

Tobacco is big business in North Carolina, but all of the cigarette paper was produced in Europe prior to 1938. The major tobacco manufacturers were concerned that a war in Europe would disrupt that source and looked for ways to begin paper production in the U.S.

**HARRY STRAUS** developed a new process that could make this high quality paper here in the United States. Using his water process,



HARRY STRAUS BEGAN CONSTRUCTION OF THE ECUSTA PLANT IN 1938, ON THE EVE OF THE WAR IN EUROPE.



THE ECUSTA PLANT, FINANCED IN PART BY MAJOR TOBACCO COMPANIES, PROVIDED A DOMESTIC SOURCE FOR CIGARETTE PAPER AS WELL AS JOBS FOR THE REGION.

and with over \$2 million of financial backing from major cigarette manufacturers, he set up his plant in Brevard, North Carolina, employing over 900 people by 1947. Cigarettes were a part of every weekly supply packet during WWII.

## THE LICHTENFELS FAMILY AND LEIPZIG, GERMANY

The German government began to institutionalize the hatred of certain people in the early 1930s, culminating in the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. These laws stated where Jews could and couldn't go, where they could and couldn't work or go to school, and much more. Many Jews decided to leave as they saw the climate worsening; some emigrated to western North Carolina. **GUS LICHTENFELS**, an immigrant from Leipzig, Germany, came through Asheville in 1914 on his way to Texas and never left. Eventually, he married **EDNA LONG** and operated the Asheville Cotton Mill on River Road. By the 1930s he began to receive letters from his relatives in Leipzig. With the passage of the Nuremberg laws in 1935, Jews were restricted from jobs, schools, and public places. Eventually, the letters began to plead that he sign an affidavit that would allow them to immigrate to America. Over time, he and his wife Edna helped over 30 friends and family members escape Nazi Germany.

**JOSEPH LICHTENFELS** recalls: "I remember that my Mother, Edna, and my sister, Helen, had a large file

drawer where they kept all the forms that had to be filled out for each person. They had to be filled out in multiple copies so they were always typing on carbon paper. Senator Robert Reynolds was very helpful in helping us get so many family members out."

## JOSEPH ALBERS, BAUHAUS AND BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Bauhaus Design was a burgeoning artistic movement in Germany in the 1920s. The philosophy of this movement was founded on the idea that "form follows function." Any decorative technique must complement what the object is used for. Many "traditionalists" objected to this new approach for design, and eventually the Nazi Party outlawed all expressions of this artistic movement, labeling it "degenerative art." The Nazis also targeted Jazz music because African Americans, who they termed an "inferior race," developed it. Many of the leaders in the Bauhaus Movement fled to the United States. Among them were **JOSEPH** and **ANNI ALBERS** who came to western North Carolina to work at Black Mountain College.

Portion of a letter to Henry Allen Moe, Secretary of the Guggenheim Foundation, from John A. Rice, head of the Black Mountain College, concerning Josef Albers: September 27, 1933

"...Now there is one other thing. One of the men whom we want to get is Joseph [sic] Albers, who is a teacher of art in the Dessau Bauhaus, who has been thrown out of his position by the Nazis because of his political opinions. He is not a Jew, but we have been held back from getting him because we feel that it would be unfair to bring a foreigner into the college on the same terms as we ourselves have taken places here, and we have tried to raise enough money to guarantee him around two thousand dollars a year above his room and board."

—Courtesy of the Swannanoa Valley Historical Museum



ANNI AND JOSEF ALBERS AT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE, CA. 1936  
PHOTO BY TED DREIER, COURTESY OF THE JOSEF AND ANNI ALBERS MUSEUM

# PEARL HARBOR

In July 1940, President Roosevelt moved a contingent of the US Naval Fleet to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii as a deterrent to Japanese aggression. The move to war had been building on both the European and Pacific fronts with many nations already engaged, including Britain. The US predicted an imminent attack by the Japanese on mineral rich Southeast Asia, or perhaps the Philippines, but few predicted they could make the long distance to attack the US on home soil.

In the early hours of Sunday December 7, six Japanese aircraft carriers launched over 400 attack airplanes. By 8:00 am they had arrived at Pearl Harbor and opened fire in a devastating surprise attack. Within a short time, five of eight battleships were sunk or sinking with the rest badly damaged. Most of the combat planes were knocked out before they ever got off the ground. Over 2,400 people were killed.

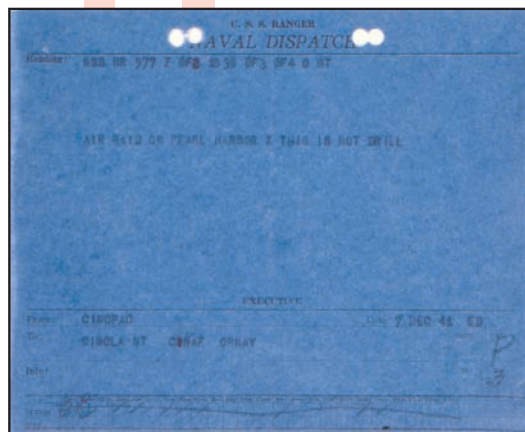
**VERNON BRANSON**, of Asheville, was on the USS Tennessee tied up on "Battleship Row" at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor. It was positioned inboard of the USS West Virginia, aft of the Maryland and Oklahoma, and forward of the Arizona and Vestal.

On this Sunday, Mr. Branson was sitting with others in the mess hall having coffee and reading the comics, while awaiting "colors" when they heard planes overhead. Their first reaction was that the planes were U.S. aircraft on maneuvers. He and the others stepped out through the hatch just in time to see one of the hangers erupt in a huge ball of flames. He still failed to consider

an attack, thinking instead that a U.S. plane on maneuvers had made a terrible mistake. But then he saw the Rising Sun emblem on the Japanese planes and knew they were under attack.

The dive-bombers, torpedo planes and fighters were flying low overhead, dropping bombs and strafing everything in sight. Several of the Tennessee crew were lost to the strafing attacks. Branson was ordered to his battle station, but it became apparent that the broadside guns would not be effective against the low flying attack aircraft. He was ordered below to load ammunition on hoists to be raised through shafts to the guns on top deck. Dressed in a white skivvy shirt and black shorts, he

spent the next 24 hours inside this watertight compartment three decks below the water line. "The air inside our compartment became so fouled with oily smoke from the burning Arizona and the West Virginia that we were ordered to put on gas masks. It was so dark we could not see the ammunition we were loading but did it all by feel." The next day they returned to the top deck to see the Arizona twisted, the West Virginia listing toward the Tennessee, and the Oklahoma only yards away capsized with many of her crew still alive and trapped inside.



NAVAL DISPATCH FROM THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PACIFIC (CINCPAC) ANNOUNCING THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, DECEMBER 7, 1941 FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The next day, December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt addressed the Congress, commenting on "the day that shall live in infamy." The speech was followed by a declaration of war on Germany and Japan.



STREAMING FROM THE SHATTERED FUEL TANKS, OIL TURNED PARTS OF PEARL HARBOR INTO A SEA OF FLAMES, FOLLOWING THE JAPANESE ATTACKS. THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN FROM NEAR THE NAVAL AIR STATION BOAT LANDING. BARELY VISIBLE THROUGH THE SMOKE AREA ARE A DAMAGED U.S. BATTLESHIP AND THE CAPSIZED USS OKLAHOMA. FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



LEFT TO RIGHT: USS WEST VIRGINIA, SEVERELY DAMAGED; USS TENNESSEE, DAMAGED; AND USS ARIZONA, SUNK. VERNON BRANSON WAS ABOARD THE TENNESSEE. FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

# STATE DEPARTMENT INTERNMENT CAMP AT MONTREAT, NC

In 1942 the United States State Department approached the director of the Assembly Inn in Montreat, NC about housing Japanese and German civilians who were technically non-combatant enemies of the United States. On



US STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE ELMER FISK WITH CHILDREN AT THE INTERNMENT CAMP  
E. B. BOWERS COLLECTION, PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTREAT, NC

October 29, 1942 the Assembly Inn became home to 264 Japanese and German civilians, 152 of them children, for the next six months. They were mostly the families of businessmen who worked in Central and South America and were taken into the custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service when the U.S. entered World War II in 1941. The Germans lived on one floor, while the Japanese lived on another. Only rarely were the two groups allowed to interact. The German men were allowed to stay with their families, while the INS soon sent the Japanese men to an internment camp in Texas.

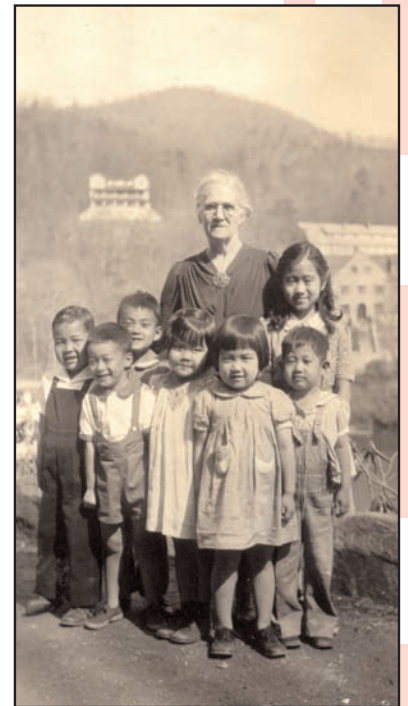
The Assembly Inn, being a service of the Presbyterian Church, sought to treat these internees in the most humane way possible. The staff, including desk clerk **ELIZABETH BARR BOWERS** (whose photographs document this story), took a great interest in the families. The Inn furnished Japanese and

German bibles to all residents, including the two daughters of a Buddhist Priest. As Christmas 1942 approached, the staff asked residents if they wanted Christmas trees. The residents agreed, though according to **ROBERT CAMPBELL ANDERSON'S** 1949 *Story of Montreat from Its Beginning*, at least one German responded, "I know you are the enemy." Presents were presented to the children. One of the most memorable moments for Dr. Anderson, then director of Assembly Inn, was one



A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR ONE OF THE GERMAN GIRLS TO SPEND TIME WITH SOME OF THE JAPANESE WOMEN  
E. B. BOWERS COLLECTION, PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTREAT, NC

evening when the Germans sang Christmas carols on one level and the



ASSEMBLY INN STAFF PERSON MRS. DORSEY WITH JAPANESE CHILDREN AT THE INTERNMENT CAMP  
E. B. BOWERS COLLECTION, PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTREAT, NC

Japanese sang carols on another level. Residents of Black Mountain came out to Montreat and began singing carols outside the Inn. "Immediately the windows of the lobby and sun parlor were thrown open, and the Germans, Japanese, and the young people from Black Mountain engaged heartily in the singing of the same carols" (p. 119).

During those six months, according to Dr. Anderson, the Assembly Inn "cleared" \$75,000, enough to clear all their debt, put in sidewalks, and still have a substantial capital account.



GERMAN INTERNEES PLAYING CHESS AT THE MONTREAT INTERNMENT CAMP  
E. B. BOWERS COLLECTION, PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTREAT, NC

## ASHEVILLE AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

According to local historian, **LOU HARSHAW**, Buncombe County was awash in office space and housing following the overbuilding of the 1920s and the lean years of the Great Depression. Before and during WWII, the federal government had a big presence in Asheville with a variety of operations, including offices, hospitals, and POW camps.

From May 3, 1943 until January 7, 1946, Asheville was home to the Weather Wing of the Flight Control Command, later known as the Army Air Forces Weather Service. Its offices were located on four floors of the municipal building. The U.S. Army was trying to spread out its headquarters in case of an attack on Washington, DC. According to Lt. Gen. William O. Senter, then commander of the Weather Wing, in a 2002 interview, "I went down to Asheville...and rented that seven-story building on the spot....

I took half of it and [Army Airways Communications System] took over the other half.... They were just trying to get everybody out of Washington and this accomplished it." The

Weather Wing's staff initially consisted of 72 officers and 60 enlisted men from all over the United States. The unmarried soldiers found rooms at the Asheville Apartments on Market Street, while many of the officers moved their families here and bought houses.

The Army also found other uses for

the facility. When war hero **ROBERT MORGAN** (of Memphis Belle fame) came home after piloting the first crew to complete 25 missions over Europe, he was assigned an office in the municipal building to prepare some texts on recommendations for combat flight formations.

With Asheville City Hall rented out to the Federal Government, the City leaders made a deal to put their offices in the Buncombe County Courthouse. Other buildings that hosted the needs of the Federal Governments included the Assembly Inn at Montreat, the Grove Arcade, the Kenilworth Inn, the Grove Park Inn, the Oteen Veterans Hospital, and Moore General Hospital.



THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEASED THE ASHEVILLE MUNICIPAL BUILDING IN AN EFFORT TO MOVE CERTAIN AGENCIES OUT OF WASHINGTON DURING THE WAR.  
FROM THE PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY COLLECTION



PHOTOGRAPH OF COLONEL (LATER GENERAL) WILLIAM OSCAR SENTER, COMMANDER OF THE WEATHER WING FROM 1943-1945 AND 1950-1954

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AIR FORCE WEATHER HISTORY OFFICE



IN 1944, ASHEVILLE HOSTED A WEATHER OFFICER CONFERENCE.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AIR FORCE WEATHER HISTORY OFFICE

## THE MEDIA, GOVERNMENT, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

In times of war, nations seek to galvanize the national identity in order to rally people to the cause. Images in the government and the media link the national identity to friends and family members. Pictures of virtuous looking young men and women accompany pleas to “do your part.” Generally, these posters encourage people in the positive ways they can aid their nation.

Often the effort to rally a nation to war involves demonizing the “enemy.” The “powers that be” polarize the two sides: good and bad, the righteous and the infidel, often the large powerhouse and the smaller underdog. The use of images in the media shapes the citizens’ perceptions of the “other.”

In times of war we see the media work with the government in unifying the people. Images throughout Germany and Nazi Europe used caricatures of the Jewish people and others that were described as “less than human” to sway public opinion. Over and over again, in the newspapers, movie theatres, posters on the streets, and even children’s books and board games, citizens were



THE ARTIST PLAYS UPON RACIAL STEREOTYPES OF THE JAPANESE IN THE AMERICAN PRESS.  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTION



THE ARTIST PLAYS ON RACIAL STEREOTYPES OF JEWS IN THE HUNGARIAN PRESS.  
UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM COLLECTION,  
COURTESY OF ORZAGOS SZECHENYI KONYVTAR, BUDAPEST

taught and encouraged to hate.

As the Japanese swept through the Philippines, they posted flyers announcing what would happen to Filipinos who cooperated with the Americans. Blowing Rock native, Harry Martin, spent time in Saipan. He recalls that citizens were jumping off cliffs and throwing women and children over the edge rather than be captured by U. S. forces. The U. S. tried to counter this propaganda by making announcement over loudspeakers, but for the most part it was unsuccessful.

Even in the United States our enemies were portrayed as stereotypes to underscore their “otherness.” Words represent images in people’s minds. Editors commonly referred to the Japanese as “the Japs,” or “Nips,” and even our allies the Soviets as “the Reds.” The following headlines appeared in the Asheville Citizen and the Asheville Times during the war: “Nips Surprised,” and “POW Camps Described As World Peopled By Little Yellow Men With Clubs.”

## THE NATIONAL ART GALLERY

Western North Carolina's seeming remoteness from the east coast, and particularly from the large cities of the Northeast, is sometimes seen as a plus. The National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, one of the major repositories of the artistic treasures of our nation, opened its doors on March 17, 1941, only nine short months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The directors of the museum were worried from the beginning of what the Axis powers might do to these national treasures if they gained a foothold on US soil. David Finley, director recalled:

"I went to Senator and Mrs. Peter Gerry, who had been friends of mine for many years. I asked, if America should become involved in the war, would they be willing for me to take our most important paintings and sculptures to Biltmore House, in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville, North Carolina. I had been there occasionally when Mrs. Gerry was Mrs. George Vanderbilt and she and her daughter lived at Biltmore House.... They said there was a large vacant room in Biltmore House, where we could store everything as their guests. John Walker, Harry McBride, and I went to Biltmore to get everything in readiness. So when the attack was made on Pearl Harbor, we were prepared; and on New Year's Day 1942, we moved out all of our most important works of art.

We engaged an express car, which was attached to the Southern Railway train to Asheville; and into that car we put the metal vans, which were taken out next morning at Biltmore Station and loaded on trucks to carry them to the Biltmore House. It was a long climb through the park, along winding roads, and up hills covered with ice. The trucks swayed from side to side and in my imagination I could see Raphael's Alba Madonna and all the rest crashing on the road. But we arrived safely; and at Biltmore everything remained in perfect condition until the war ended."

—Excerpted from *A Standard of Excellence*, by David Finley, 1973, Smithsonian Institution Press

Local historian, **LOU HARSHAW**, a college student at the



EVACUATION OF THE ARTWORK FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART TO THE BILTMORE HOUSE.  
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, DC



time, recalls seeing the boxes on her visits to the Biltmore House:

"These big, heavy crates were stacked almost to the ceiling with a little tiny walkway in between. You had to almost turn sideways to get through. They had all the windows blocked off. Though it was not important to me at the time, years later I understood the significance. They were the National Gallery pictures, stored there in case of bombing."



## RECYCLING



POSTER FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTION

metals. One collection spot was in front of the Vance Monument. Underutilized metal products also made their way to scrap metal yards. Asheville even melted down a World War I cannon that had been captured from the Germans and mounted in Pack Square as a memorial to soldiers.

In Asheville, people began to tear up the trolley tracks. Asheville ended trolley service in 1934, and by the beginning of the war most of the tracks had been paved over. By order of the Asheville City Council, 1100 gross tons of metal in the form of trolley rails were sold to the Metals Reserve Company for \$1. A photographer working for the federally funded Office for Emergency Management caught this picture of a man pulling up the tracks in front of Frisbee's Grocery. The text accompanying the



THE CANNON AT THE LEFT OF THE PHOTOGRAPH (IN FRONT OF THE VANCE MONUMENT) WAS A MEMORIAL TO WORLD WAR I SOLDIERS. DURING WWII IT WAS RECYCLED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THAT WAR'S EFFORT. PHOTO COURTESY OF PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY.

The war demonstrated that world powers must have access to natural resources. Prior to 1939 the United States exported a great deal of steel to Japan, an island nation that is particularly poor in natural resources. When Japan's rapid expansion in the Pacific continued unchecked, the U.S. refused to trade with Japan. This caused a steel shortage in Japan.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. dramatically picked up the production of airplanes, ships, tanks, and vehicles, as well as weapons requiring a vast amount of various metals. This led to a scarcity of those metals. To help support this need, people began recycling—the first national effort to do so.

Students were encouraged to bring their scrap metal to the schools to be recycled. **BARBARA LASHLEY**, a Girl Scout at the time, remembers going door to door collecting pots and pans and other



THE NEED FOR SCRAP METAL WAS SO GREAT THAT FOLKS SALVAGED MATERIAL FROM LANDFILLS AND PULLED UP TROLLEY RAILS BURIED UNDER PAVEMENT. THE TRACK BEING PULLED UP HERE RAN ALONG PATTON AVENUE.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

photograph reads: "Buried trolley tracks salvaged to aid war program. Old tracks for new guns. One of the ways many American cities are responding to Uncle Sam's call for scrap is by pulling out abandoned trolley tracks. This apparatus, developed by an Asheville, North Carolina machine shop operator, is being used to tear out the old buried tracks in his city. With three men, the device can remove twenty-five tons of rail per day."

Hendersonville native **SAMMY WILLIAMS'** father owned "the largest scrap collection facility in Henderson County." Mr. Williams describes the process of rounding up scrap metal: "They'd collect it up at the schools, and when they'd get a truckload in they'd bring it here. We'd ship it by railway freight.... The metals like copper, aluminum, brass, radiators—that was shipped by the truckloads to brokers...." Asheville was the central collection point for WNC. The brokerage was the Consolidated Hide and Metal Company located near the French Broad River.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH



WILMA RAY, AGE 5 COURTESY OF JULIA RAY

**M**RS. JULIA RAY, of Asheville, recalls: "The new troops would leave from the front of Courthouse early in the morning. Our community would be organized to meet them there with donuts and coffee—so they would not leave feeling like they were on their own. Our daughter, Wilma, was 5 or so and she wanted to do something to make a contribution. She kept talking to us about it and explaining how she wanted to help. We took a basket and filled it with donuts. She would be with us at 6:00 am to pass the food out to the soldiers."

Just as adults contributed to the war effort through buying war bonds, dealing with rationing, and supporting the soldiers, so too were children. They longed for work that would help, and they found it.

Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops were active in the scrap metal drives. Children would save War Stamps—at 10 cents apiece they were more affordable than War Bonds. Schools would compete to see who could collect the most pounds in iron or raise the most money in war stamps. Children would also make decorations for the Army and Navy hospitals in the areas. Some children were

### There's a Job for Girls in This War, too!



★ When Uncle Sam said, "All Out for Victory," he meant he needed every man, woman, boy, and girl.

There are lots of things the girls can do to help. They can cooperate with their Girl Scout troops in Civilian Defense activities; they can help save paper and other scrap materials; they can buy and sell Defense Stamps and Bonds; they can help with the home work so mothers can have more time for their own Defense work at the Filter Centers or the Red Cross; and then there is that important job of helping themselves prepare for the future.

Even attention to school work is essential and that means a hard look for eyes. Protect them carefully—be sure you have enough of the right kind of light to make seeing easy and comfortable. Eye-strain today may result in serious impairment to health later when Uncle Sam will need you for a most important job. Remember—Sight is Priceless, Proper Light is Cheap!



Your Electric Dealer or a Representative of this company will gladly check your home lighting without obligation.

**CAROLINA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY**

INVEST IN AMERICA — BUY DEFENSE BONDS AND STAMPS

★   ★   ★   ★   ★   ★   ★   ★

THIS CP&L ADVERTISEMENT ENCOURAGED LOCAL GIRLS TO TAKE PART IN THE WAR EFFORT. COURTESY OF GIRL SCOUTS OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA PISGAH COUNCIL ARCHIVES



**GIRL SCOUTS DO THEIR PART**—Members of Girl Scout troop No. 13 of the First Baptist church are shown as they rolled bandages at St. Joseph's hospital. The girls go to the hospital to do this work each Saturday morning, and are accompanied by their assistant leader, Mrs. A. Mack Brown. From left to right, they are: Back row, Ann Parker, Mary Ida Brown, Mrs. Mack Brown, Jannell Lovette, Ann Livingston, and Barbara Lashley; front row, Blanche and Laura McGuire and Anabel Adams. Mrs. Sanford Brown is leader of the troop.

GIRLS SCOUTS OF TROOP 13 DOING THEIR PART COURTESY OF GIRL SCOUTS OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA PISGAH COUNCIL ARCHIVES

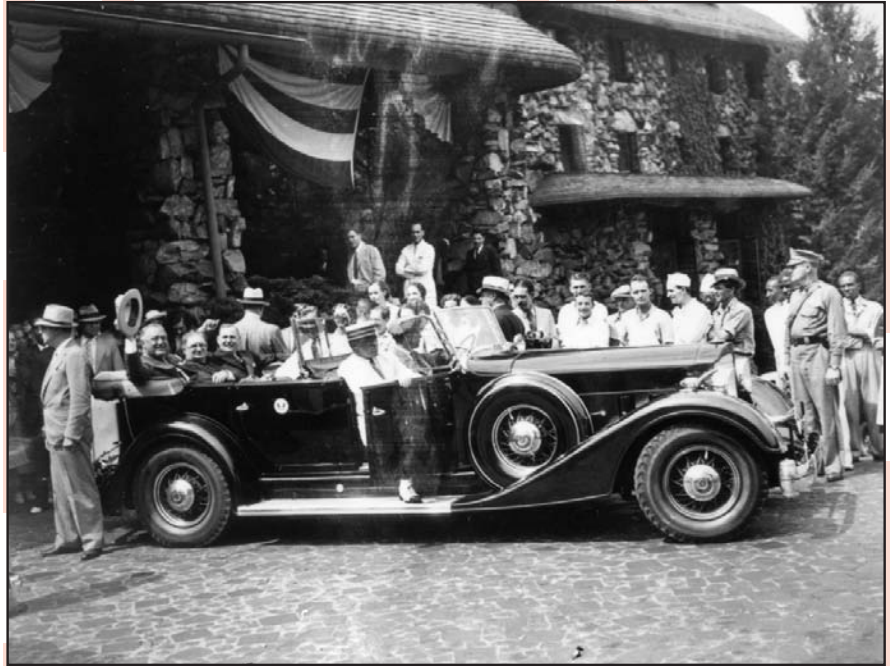
trained to be on the lookout for German and Japanese warplanes and to report them to the Civilian Defense.

"I remember my Girl Scout troop would go door to door collecting aluminum and scrap iron. We would take it to this big bin at Pack Square. People would give us all kinds of metal like car parts and pots and pans—stuff like that. I also remember going with my troop every Saturday morning to St. Joseph's Hospital where we would roll bandages for Bundles for Britain"

—BARBARA LASHLEY SMITH

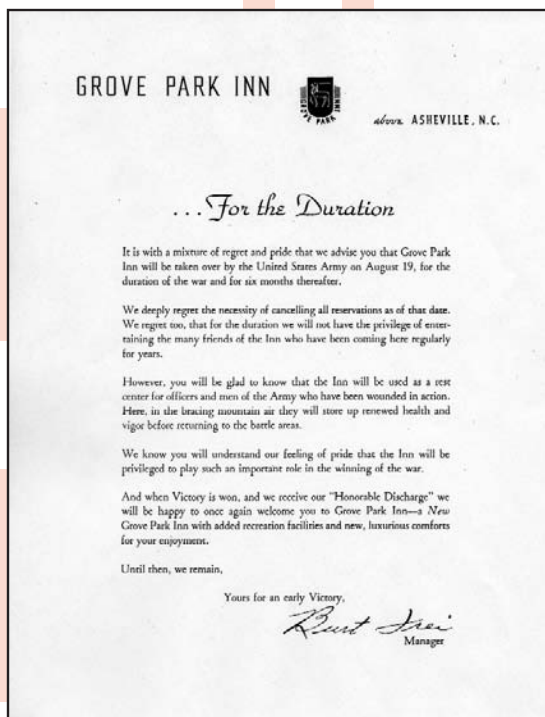
# THE GROVE PARK INN, DIPLOMATS AND PRISONERS OF WAR

At the outbreak of WWII, WNC was already familiar with prisoners of war. During WWI, Hot Springs had been used as a place to hold German civilian sailors. Soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the State Department leased the Grove Park Inn for the relocation and temporary housing of Axis diplomats. During this time, the Inn did not accept any other guests. 242 German, Italian, and Japanese diplomats lived there beginning in May 1942. Guards were placed at all entrances and barbed wire was strung on the perimeter of the property. ALAN NEILSON, age 16 at the time, worked as an elevator operator at the Grove Park Inn. He remembers seeing the laundry of the diplomats and families, including diapers and all manner of clothing items, strung from one end of the Great Hall to the other. Neilson later flew in the Army Air Corps over Europe.



PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT AS A GUEST AT THE GROVE PARK INN DURING THE DEDICATION OF THE GREAT SMOKIES NATIONAL PARK IN 1940 FROM THE GROVE PARK INN HISTORICAL COLLECTION

Following the permanent placement or return of diplomats, the Inn was used first by the Navy and then by the Army as a site for "Rest and Relaxation" (R and R) for returning soldiers and then officers. The Philippine Government, in exile, led by President Manuel Quezon, had its headquarters at the Grove Park Inn for three months in 1944.



LETTER OF APOLOGY TO GUESTS WHOSE RESERVATIONS WERE NECESSARILY CANCELED DUE TO THE HOUSING OF AXIS DIPLOMATS AND THEIR FAMILIES FOLLOWING THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR FROM THE GROVE PARK INN HISTORICAL COLLECTION

Others sites throughout WNC were also used to hold German prisoners of war. Prior to WWII, NC State University operated the Swannanoa 4-H Camp for youth camping. The Federal government took it over in 1942 to house German officers. According to local history, their first duty was to cut out all the understory plants, such as mountain laurel and rhododendron, around their barracks, so they

would not be able to hide during an escape. They spent their time there building an addition to the main building at the camp and accenting it with stonework. As the camp was near Moore General Hospital, it was also used as an officers club for the medical team located there.



SOLDIERS ON "R AND R" ON THE FRONT PORCH OF THE GROVE PARK INN FROM THE GROVE PARK INN HISTORICAL COLLECTION

Many local citizens recall Prisoners of War who worked on local farms, such as Hickory Nut Gap. It is not known where these prisoners were housed.

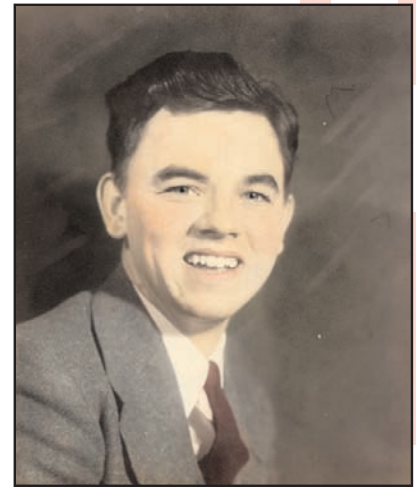
# CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Although World War II unified much of the nation, a number of people objected to war in any situation. Then as now, many of the Conscientious Objectors (COs) refused to fight out of a religious conviction that killing other humans is wrong. This is often not an easy stand to make, particularly in the 1940s. Many folks have a violent reaction to those who refuse to fight.



LETTER RECEIVED BY CHARLES HENDRICKS, ADMITTING HIM TO SERVICE AT BUCK CREEK.  
COURTESY OF CHARLES HENDRICKS

Some COs refused to cooperate with the United States government and were jailed. The late **ARLE BROOKS**, formerly of Celso, refused any service and was imprisoned in Danbury, Connecticut. Upon sentencing him, the judge stated: "I am going to sentence you; it is hard for me to do it, but it is my duty, and I feel like Pontius Pilate. I have got to obey the law..." (American Friends Service Committee, United States of America v. Arle Brooks). During WWII approximately 6000 men were sent to federal prison; two thirds of those were Jehovah's Witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses refuse any allegiance to government entities and are often the first jailed in nations all over the world, including Nazi Germany. Once in prison, COs were threatened by prison administrators, guards, and fellow inmates. Often they spent long periods in total darkness and solitary confinement.



CHARLES HENDRICKS, RESPONDING TO HIS MORAL OPPOSITION TO WAR, CHOSE TO BE SENT TO THE BUCK CREEK SERVICE CAMP.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES HENDRICKS

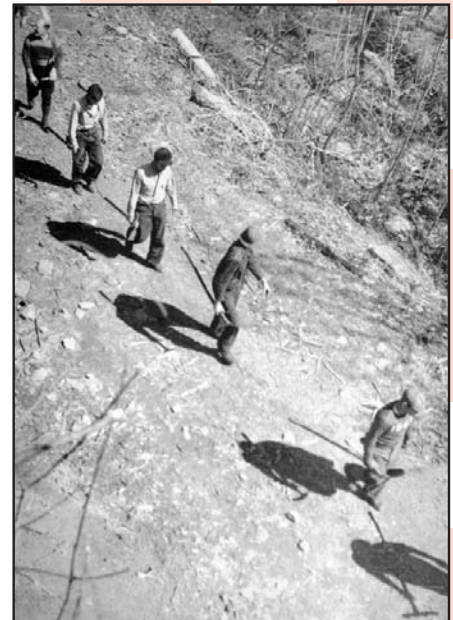
Others chose to participate in alternative or noncombatant service. Some, such as Asheville resident **CLARENCE SCHMIDT**, enlisted in the military, but registered Class I-A-O, meaning he objected to combat duty. Schmidt went on to work in the Panama Canal Zone as a clerk for a Personnel Unit. In regards to how others felt about his stance, he said, "even the local draft board supported me."

**CHARLES HENDRICKS** of Greensboro was raised a Quaker, and when the war began he knew that as a pacifist he could not serve in the military. While his brothers went into noncombatant service (Class I-A-O) as medics, Mr. Hendricks chose to be sent to the Buck Creek Service Camp near Marion, which was operated and funded by the Quaker community. While there, he helped build Crabtree Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway and fought forest fires in the national forests in that area. "I was sympathetic to issues raised by the war and to the need for solving problems, but not by killing people. The government set up these CO camps where I felt like I could serve my country but not kill people. Some of my friends wouldn't even do that and would rather go to

prison—which they did."

Mr. Hendricks arrived at Buck Creek in January 1942 and was

released in 1946 (also serving in a number of other CO camps). When asked how the folks around him felt about his decision, he said that for the most part they were okay, but sometimes people would say things. The mood of the country at war made being a CO an unpopular choice. "But I knew for me it was the right thing to do. One time I went into Marion to buy a bathing suit. When the salesperson asked me where I was stationed I told him I was at Buck Creek. He said 'I don't have anything to sell you.'"



MEN FROM BUCK CREEK SERVICE CAMP RETURNING FROM FIGHTING FIRES IN WESTERN NC.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES FOX,  
COURTESY OF SWATHMORE PEACE COLLEGE.



SIGNS POSTING FIRE CREW ASSIGNMENTS  
PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES FOX,  
COURTESY OF SWATHMORE PEACE COLLEGE

# AMERICAN RED CROSS

The American Red Cross worked to provide relief of all kinds for soldiers. Red Cross packages fed prisoners of war, Red Cross bandages dressed soldiers' wounds, while Red Cross socks, mittens, and afghans warmed soldiers' bodies and hearts. This work took a great deal of money, almost all of it raised in communities across the nation. **LOUIS LIPINSKY**, Asheville businessman, philanthropist, and namesake of the main UNCA auditorium, chaired Buncombe County's Red Cross War Fund Drive from 1942-1945. The



**MAKE GARMENTS FOR GREEK REFUGEES** — Every Thursday Greek women of the community meet in the Red Cross sewing room in the city hall to sew for Greek war refugees. Approximately 30 women meet every week and Miss Mary Brooks Allen, director of the room, says they work so fast it is difficult to keep garments cut out for them to sew. The room is open Thursday from 10 to 5 o'clock with lunch period from 12:30 to 2 o'clock.

entire community stepped in to help: Ivey's department store and Carolina Power & Light sponsored full-page ads in the local newspapers. Area business and local citizens pledged money at a time when many resources were scarce; the area was still feeling the consequences of 12 years of economic depression. Even area schools contributed. By April 1, 1943 the Asheville School's student body had contributed \$340 to the War Fund, while pupils of David Miller Junior High School had contributed \$360.

Some of this money funded the four Asheville Red Cross Production Rooms, one of which was located at David Miller Junior High School. **MRS. HUGH LAMB** ran another Production Room in the old Haywood Road Post Office in West Asheville's Bledsoe Building.



**MRS. HUGH LAMB (ON RIGHT)** WAS THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY RED CROSS'S CHIEF CUTTER DURING THE WAR YEARS AND WAS ONCE DESCRIBED IN THE ASHEVILLE CITIZEN AS HAVING "A GENUINE TALENT FOR HANDLING A PATTERN, A BOLT OF CLOTH AND A PAIR OF SCISSORS."

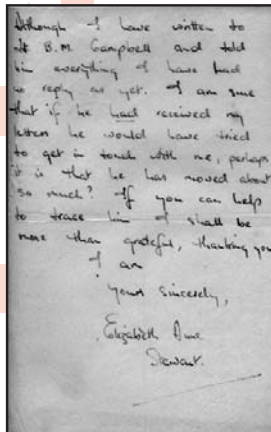
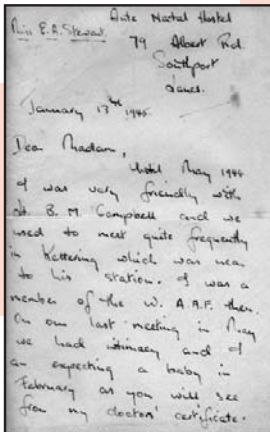
PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF JUNE LAMB

Area schools also participated in the Junior Red Cross. Classes could contribute money (50 cents for elementary classes, \$1 for high school classes) to participate. In 1943 the local Red Cross sought 100% enrollment from area schools. According to the Asheville Citizen of November 13, 1943, "Allen Home and Black Mountain Negro Schools [were the] first to report enrollment of 100%."

Local citizens also stepped forward to provide other services for the Red Cross. **EMILY MEARES**, daughter of **MRS. J.E. MEARES** of Kimberly Avenue, became the Acting Program Director of an American Red Cross Club in Southport, England. The club served as a hostel, entertainment center, and home-away-from-home for soldiers in Britain. Her role called on her at times to lend money to soldiers and even help pregnant British women find their servicemen. She served in this capacity for 2 years.



**SOLDIER SANDERS'S AMERICAN RED CROSS TEAM** LOST THE 1943 ETO TOURNAMENT IN THE QUARTERFINALS. AT SOME POINT, MR. SANDERS (BACK ROW, SECOND FROM RIGHT) DREW GLASSES ON HIMSELF. PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF SOLDIER SANDERS



LETTER RECEIVED BY EMILY MEARES WHILE WORKING WITH THE RED CROSS IN ENGLAND FROM THE EMILY MEARES COLLECTION, BUNCOMBE COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Red Cross Clubs also sponsored sporting events. **SOLDIER SANDERS** of Cherokee played on a Red Cross basketball team while stationed in Great Britain with the Army Air Corps. His team went on to win the Northern Ireland Air Corps Championship in 1943 and went on to represent Ireland at the European Theater of Operations Tournament, which was played at the Royal Albert Hall.

# THE HOLOCAUST

The Nazis targeted certain parts of the European community as scapegoats for the troubles of the nation and the world. Initially, they sought to evict these targeted communities from Germany and the countries they began to occupy. As no nation opened their arms to welcome them, the Nazis were emboldened to implement "The Final Solution." The main goal of "The Final Solution" was the murder of the Jews of Europe. The Nazis eventually killed six million Jews. Also murdered were 300,000 people with mental and physical disabilities, along with tens of thousands Romas (gypsies). Communists, Polish intelligentsia, homosexuals, Blacks and religious dissidents (such as the Jehovah's Witness) were also imprisoned, victimized, and murdered.



WALTER ZIFFER AND FRIEND (WITH STAR OF DAVID ARM BANDS) BEFORE IMPRISONMENT  
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, RAMSEY LIBRARY, UNCA



THE STAR OF DAVID ARMBAND ZIFFER WAS REQUIRED TO WEAR AND WHICH HIS MOTHER EMBROIDERED  
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, RAMSEY LIBRARY, UNCA

Deportations of entire communities of Jews in towns throughout Germany began in 1940 and spread through each newly occupied nation. Families were packed into trains normally reserved for non-human transport without food or water and sent to "camps." There a selection process began. The able-bodied were used as slave labor for the needs of supplying a war effort, making weapons, sewing uniforms, etc. At the selection points, all children appearing under the age of 14 and the elderly or infirmed were immediately murdered along with all mothers accompanied by young children.

Asheville resident **JULES BLUM**, now deceased, grew up in Munkacs, Hungary. He was captured at the age of 17 and badly beaten. Of the selection process he recalled: "I got off the train and saw a man I later knew as Dr. Joseph Mengele in front of a line of people. He was impeccably dressed.... He

saw my [badly beaten] face and asked in German 'Can you run?' When I replied, 'Yes,' he said, 'Run,' and pointed to the left. And I ran." Blum spent the next year in three different slave labor camps before finally being liberated from Mathausen.

**WALTER ZIFFER** of Weaverville, was 12 when the Nazis rolled into Czechoslovakia and set up their offices in his family home. By age 14, he was imprisoned in a series of

slave labor camps, where he worked on building part of the Autobahn, loading bombs, and drilling in sub-zero weather. Starved, beaten and brutalized, he asks: "What does one do after a slavery experience?"

As the allies began to liberate the death camps it was difficult to comprehend what they found. **ERIC WELLISCH**, of Asheville, recalls:

"I was with Patton's Army in the engineering division. We came on Buchenwald two days after it had been liberated. It was a sight I can never forget. First it was the smell, which you could smell far, far away. When I got there I couldn't believe it—piles and piles of skeleton bodies."

By the end of the war the Nazis had murdered over 11 million people in the deportation, slave labor, and death camps.



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE APPROACH TO BUCHENWALD IN APRIL 1945 TAKEN BY AMERICAN GI ERIC WELLISCH  
PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC WELLISCH



PHOTOGRAPH OF JEWS MURDERED IN BUCHENWALD IN APRIL 1945 FROM THE COLLECTION OF ERIC WELLISCH

## FONTANA DAM

To operate a war requires a complex of industries with a predictable supply chain of labor and materials. WWII began the first sustained use of airplanes for attack purposes. Airplanes are made from aluminum, which requires a large amount of electricity to produce. Alcoa, in eastern Tennessee, began producing aluminum with electricity from two dams placed in WNC on the Little Tennessee River. With war looming, there was a call for a third dam to be built through the newly organized Tennessee Valley Authority or TVA. According to Lance Holland in Fontana: A Pocket History of Appalachia:

“Although aluminum production was the primary ‘war effort objective’ and certainly the publicized purpose of the Fontana Dam, TVA would be required to furnish vast amounts of electric power to another super-secret wartime project.... Just west of Knoxville a city of 75,000 people was built surrounded by a high fence—armed guards, some with machine guns, patrolled the perimeter. Inside the fence would be built huge factories. One displaced local observed that ‘Everything in the world goes in there but nothing ever comes out.’”



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CAFETERIA WITH THE SLOGAN “WORK OR FIGHT!” ENCOURAGING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF WORKERS OR THE OPTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

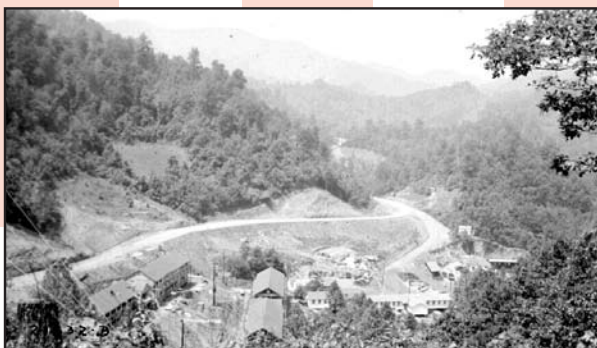
FROM THE TVA COLLECTION IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SCHOOL FOR BLACK STUDENTS IN THE SEGREGATED TOWN OF FONTANA VILLAGE  
FROM THE TVA COLLECTION IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

villages, such as Hazel Creek and Judson, and scattered members of a clan of the Cherokee Nation.

Jobs at Fontana Dam were advertised throughout the nation, bringing families from all over. The government oversaw the construction of churches, stores, recreational facilities, houses, a school with enrollment of 600 students, and two community centers. As was the law of the land, the town of Fontana was segregated. Blacks as well as Whites moved their families to



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BEGINNINGS OF FONTANA VILLAGE IN THE COVES OF GRAHAM COUNTY  
FROM THE TVA COLLECTION IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

By the end of the war Oak Ridge became a familiar name when a small quantity of U-235 was produced and used in the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.

Construction of Fontana Dam began on January 1, 1942. Workers kept the project going 24 hours a day seven days a week until the reservoir began filling on November 7, 1944. The first electricity was generated early in 1945 just 36 months after the project began—half the normal time of completion. An enormous power-generating lake now took the place of a handful of

settler families in a few

isolated portion in the deep coves of WNC to improve their fortune. Separate housing, schools, and community centers were built for both Black and White workers and their families.

### ROAD TO NOWHERE

The disagreement still rages for families who wish to visit the cemetery at Hazel Creek. In the 1940s, when the dam flooded the town of Hazel Creek and others like it, an agreement was reached to build a 30-mile road allowing families to visit the cemetery. Sixty years later the “Road to Nowhere” has not been built due to astronomical costs and negative environmental impact.



BILLBOARD AT FONTANA DAM

FROM THE TVA COLLECTION IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## THE USO

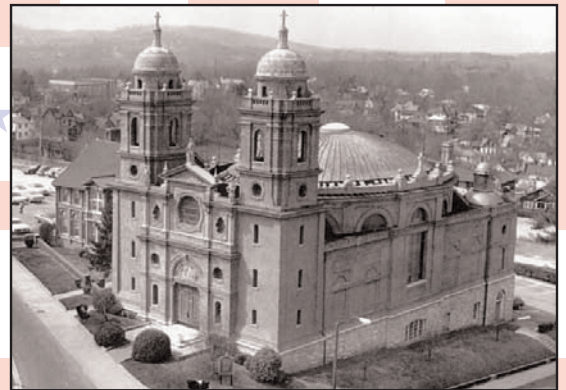
**U**SO (United Service Organizations) Clubs were the social mainstay for servicemen and the community—especially the female community. They were supported with contributions and volunteers in each town and functioned as social clubs where GIs could gather for card playing, visiting, and dancing. In Asheville, USO Clubs operated in a number of locations welcoming WNC natives and visiting soldiers.

**MARGARET ENSLEY** of Asheville, 18 at the time, recalls:

“The YMCA on Woodfin Street in downtown Asheville had weekly USO dances on Saturday nights. Many soldiers came from surrounding military installations in and around Asheville. Camp Croft in Spartanburg was also within traveling distance.

The Laurentine Canteen on the lower floor of St. Lawrence was also a popular gathering place for dances and entertainment.” **LUCILLE GUILKA LAMY**, of Asheville, 16 at the time, remembers:

“In the basement of St. Lawrence Church, which at the time wasn’t even completed down there—they decided to dig it out and cement the floor and what have you and fix it up as a USO canteen, ‘cause in Asheville there was no place for the soldiers to go...so we decided to open the USO canteen, and my mother herself went out and begged all the furniture—lamps, tables, chairs, everything—to furnish the place. And then, of course, the older ladies came in as senior volunteers and the younger girls came in as junior hostesses. Well, to begin with, we all had to bring in refreshments. We didn’t serve meals, but we did serve cake and coffee and sodas and things like that...so each girl each night that she served had a certain amount of food that she had to bring in.”



ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC CHURCH FINISHED THE BASEMENT FOR A USO HEADQUARTERS CALLED THE LAURENTINE CANTEEN. FROM THE PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY COLLECTION



THE YMI OPENED A USO HEADQUARTERS IN ITS SECOND FLOOR SOCIAL HALL. FROM THE UNCA ARCHIVES

Other communities made sure the rest and relaxation needs of the soldiers were attended to. The YMI, a historic community center for the African American community since 1892, opened its USO with the following announcement in the Asheville Citizen on December 4, 1942: “The USO Lounge for Negro servicemen and women, located at the YMI building on Eagle Street, will observe its initial opening this afternoon at 5 o’clock. The Rev. J. M. Cole pastor of St. Mathias Episcopal church will be in charge.”

The Jewish Community Center on Charlotte Street served as the gathering place for soldiers who were stationed at Camp



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER HELD USO ACTIVITIES IN THE SOCIAL HALL FOR SOLDIERS VISITING FROM CAMP CROFT. FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE ASHEVILLE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

Croft in Spartanburg along with local soldiers. **PHYLLIS SULTAN**, Asheville, recalls: “A bunch of people got together where every weekend soldiers were invited—they were bused up. We called

around and got homes that would take them—it was no problem. We had committees who organized programs like dances at the Jewish Community Center.



PHYLLIS SULTAN, SYLVIA PATLA, HELEN MAY, AND DORIS PATLA WITH CAMP CROFT SOLDIERS FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHYLLIS SULTAN

“I remember a few of us who were involved in the programs—Sylvia and Doris Patla, my sister Helen May. Helene Lees was a big organizer. Just as many soldiers as we could house would come up—maybe 20. The host would give them a place to sleep and breakfast—some folks with big houses would take more than one. In this picture there are four of us with Camp Croft soldiers.”



# COMMUNICATION

While today's separated family and friends have numerous ways of instantly talking with those far away, the luxuries of email, satellite phones, and cell phones were unknown to families disrupted by WWII.

For fast, though necessarily short communications, folks might utilize telegrams. These short transmissions were sent via electric impulses over wires. Though this system worked well most of the time, demand was high and access limited. It was also vulnerable to the hazards of warfare, as the wires could easily be taken out by bombs and such. Information of vital importance, such as death notifications, Missing-in-action announcements, and safe arrivals home, were often transmitted via telegram.

Letter writing was the most common method of communicating with friends and loved ones. During the war years many folks kept up correspondence with multiple people, including classmates from schools, friends of the family,

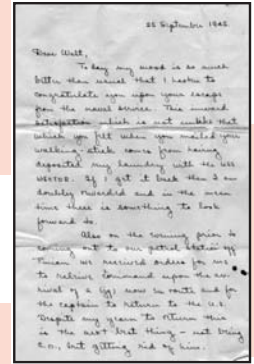
boyfriends and husbands. A number of women reported that when troop convoys were coming through town, students from Lee Edwards High School would stand on the street and wave the soldiers on. The GI's would write their names and addresses on slips of paper and throw them into the crowd. Many of the young women would write to these men throughout the war, even though they previously had never met.

Letters would often take a month or more to make their way across the oceans to their recipients. Troop movements further complicated this system. To help facilitate delivery, and to keep troop locations secret, all members of the armed forces received a post number. This number worked somewhat like an email address. Though the author of a letter might not know the whereabouts of the recipient, the letter somehow got there.

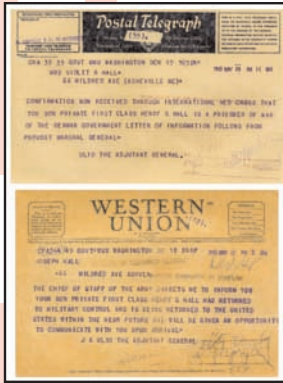
With the magnitude of troop movements, the sheer volume of mail overwhelmed the armed forces. To help manage this, the government issued Victory mail, or V-mail for short. This was a thin piece of paper, 7 by 9 inches, similar to today's airmail stationery. **LUCILLE NEILSON**, who wrote a letter to her husband everyday, wasn't very fond of V-mail: "I didn't like [v-mail]. It was real little.... You didn't feel like you had a letter."

Although the government encouraged people to write the troops in an effort to keep morale high, it frowned on people communicating sensitive, war-related information. For this reason, government officials read and in some cases censored every letter mailed.

Sometimes, the news from the front wasn't good. **ART GREEN** recalls a time when he was 15. The doorbell rang and when he opened the door, "There was an army officer with a telegram for my parents: 'We regret to inform you that your son Robert F. Green has been seriously wounded in action.' I had no idea what it meant. My immediate thought was he's dying." Later, after reconstructing the story with his brother, it turns out that "a Catholic priest came along and gave him last rites," preparing him for death. In fact, he didn't die. But the pain of that moment was poignant. Mr. Green describes it as, "horror—I was just a kid.... It's indelibly in my mind..." even after nearly 60 years.



LETTER FROM LANDON ROBERTS TO A FRIEND  
COURTESY OF LANDON ROBERTS



TELEGRAMS WERE GENERALLY RESERVED FOR VERY IMPORTANT NEWS. MRS. J. L. HALL RECEIVED THESE TELEGRAMS WHILE HER SON GARRISON HALL WAS A POW.  
COURTESY OF BARBARA HALL.

## APO WIVES CLUB

Much of the entertainment organized for folks at home revolved around single women entertaining the troops. Married women had much fewer options for passing the time. As Asheville's **MARY ELLEN WOLCOTT** puts it, there wasn't much to do "if you didn't have a man to take you out." Most of the women didn't have access to cars, or if they did, the fuel rationing prevented them from driving anywhere. Many spent time writing letters to their husbands.

Mrs. Wolcott and several other women she had grown up with formed the APO Wives Club, so named because of the initials for the Army Post Office. Ms. Wolcott, a reporter for the Asheville Citizen, wrote an article on the group, encouraging women to meet together. According to Mrs. Wolcott, the main objective of the club was to offer an outlet to women "strained by war." It also served as an opportunity for women married to servicemen to, in the words of APO Wives Club co-founder Mary Schall, "mostly talk and gossip." The club had between 30-35 members and met monthly for lunch at the Langren Hotel. They would generally have a guest speaker address some issue of concern. They also sponsored a display in the window of Ivey's Department Store, where they would showcase items from various countries that their husbands had mailed home.



V-MAIL WAS THE MILITARY'S METHOD OF DEALING WITH A MASSIVE VOLUME OF MAIL. THE PAPER WAS REDUCED IN SIZE BEFORE BEING SENT OVERSEAS.

COURTESY OF MARY AND HAROLD SCHALL



PHOTOGRAPH OF A MEETING OF THE APO WIVES CLUB. FIRST ROW CENTER IS GENERAL VALDEZ FROM THE PHILIPPINES, WITH MARY ELLEN WOLCOTT TO HIS LEFT AND MARY SCHALL TO HIS RIGHT.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY AND HAROLD SCHALL

## ARMY AIR CORPS

**W**orld War I saw the first military use of the newly invented airplane with World War II refining its precision. The airplane played a critical role in nearly every battle of the war.

By 1942, **ROBERT MORGAN** of Asheville was flying his B-17, the "Memphis Belle," to England, where he took part in the earliest U.S. bombings over Europe against the strong German Luftwaffe. The British were engaged in night bombings whereas the U.S.

decided that precision daylight bombings would be the most effective. But it was also deadly. The attrition rate of troops at that early point in the air campaign reached a staggering 80%. The secret, learned over time, to lessening the losses was to fly in tight formations: "The formation was so tight that at times I had point man to keep their wing over our wing with about five feet between us in height." Morale sagged in these months, as flight crews lost more and more of their friends. Morgan remembers, "we got as much leave as we could." The military brass eventually realized that had to offer crews a goal. "The generals came up with this idea that you finish 25 missions you could go home. That gave us something to shoot at." Morgan's crew was the first to successfully complete 25 missions and accounts that to the importance of teamwork. They returned stateside where they completed what was known as the 26th mission: to take their success to the American people and thank them for their contributions to the war effort including a stop in Asheville. Morgan then signed on to fly B-29s in the Pacific theater, where he completed an additional 26 missions.

**JESSE LEDBETTER** grew up on a dairy farm in Arden. A month before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Ledbetter's father died and Jesse, at the tender age of 19, became responsible for the family farm. But his heart was set on the Army Air Corps. He already held a private pilot's license and by 20 he was both married and a pilot in the Army Air Corp. On July 26, 1944 Ledbetter recalled flying his B-24 over Yugoslavia. Just minutes after one of his gunners shot down two German aircraft, he lost an engine. 20 minutes later he lost another. Ledbetter and crew began to head back to Italy taking an emergency landing on the Isle of Vis with #3 engine going out. "We found that all four main gas tanks were punctured, the right auxiliary tank was punctured and three oil tanks were punctured. There was about 500 holes in the airplane. Our ball gunner was wounded pretty badly, and our radio man was wounded only slightly."

**ROBERT BOLINDER** flew on P-61 Black Widows, which were designed for night fighting. Their first assignment was to defend the British coast, and then later they proceeded to France where they protected front line troops at night. On the first night of the Battle of the Bulge he took off at midnight. As he matter-of-factly reports, "I intercepted a plane that was flying east to west.... We destroyed it." When he returned to his base he found out that he was to fly another mission that night due to "a lot of activity." He took off again at 3 a.m. "That was the most violent hour of flight that I flew...because the sky was full of targets."

**BILL GRIFFIN** grew up in Asheville and became a pilot in the 38th bomb group of the 405 Squadron. While successfully flying over 50 missions, he recalled one mission in particular off the coast of Indo-China. The Japanese Army had secured their anti-aircraft weapons on large mounds of dirt near the airfield. Carefully conserving fuel, the bombers set off for the 400-mile trip from the Philippines to Hainan Island. Each of the 12 planes carried 250 pounds of bombs to each of which was attached a parachute delaying the explosion and allowing the aircraft time to get away from their low flying hits. Griffin was acting as co-pilot as they made the four hour trip to Hainan. He recalls pilot Lt. Max Brown taking the plane low over the runway. Just as they were about to enter the open door of the hanger, Lt. Brown pulled up as Griffin let loose one of the bombs. He recalls seeing the white parachute enter the hanger door before it exploded. By the end of the war, Griffin laments that he alone survived when his other tent mates had died.



ROBERT MORGAN, BACK ROW THIRD FROM LEFT, LED THE CREW OF THE MEMPHIS BELLE ON 25 MISSIONS OVER EUROPE BEFORE GOING ON TO THE PACIFIC, WHERE HE COMPLETED AN ADDITIONAL 26 MISSIONS. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT MORGAN

### THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

The 99th Fighter Squadron were the first African American Pilots to serve in the Army Air Corps. Two other squadrons later joined them. The pilots and crews were called to battle in June, 1943, fighting the enemy in North Africa and the Mediterranean along with "the segregated style of the U.S. Military." Eventually almost 1,000 men were trained as pilots, gunners, navigators and bombardiers with 450 making it into active combat. Initially, the Tuskegee Airmen provided air patrol over the Mediterranean Sea. In April 1944, they began conducting bomber escorts for the 15th Air Force deep into Germany. They held the unprecedented record of escorting 200 missions without a single loss. Sixty-six Tuskegee pilots were killed in action while another 32 were captured and taken as prisoners of war.

**GEORGE B. GREENLEE, JR.**, brother of local resident **JULIA RAY**, graduated from the Tuskegee Institute as a pilot in the 332 Fighter Squadron with the Tuskegee Airmen.



JESSE LEDBETTER POINTS TO WHERE HE FLEW HIS MOST MEMORABLE MISSION. PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSE LEDBETTER



BOB BOLINDER FLYING HIS P-61 DOUBLE TROUBLE PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT BOLINDER

## PRISONERS OF WAR—PACIFIC THEATER

At the onset of the war, before the Pacific naval fleet had recovered from the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, General MacArthur and several thousand troops worked to secure the Pacific peninsula of Bataan. Here US engineers, Sylv's **WALTER MIDDLETON** among them, began building airports. But in February 1942, MacArthur, on Roosevelt's orders, left his troops and proceeded to Australia, ostensibly to strengthen it against Japanese attack.

Robbinsville native **WAYNE CARRINGER**, at the time a staff sergeant with the 27th Bomb Group in the Army Air Corps, was stationed on Bataan and remembers that all their supplies, including their aircraft, were diverted to MacArthur's troops in Australia. Carringer remembers: "we had to eat monkeys or whatever we could to survive on... We were scavengers." As Japanese forces made an aggressive assault in the Pacific, US forces on Bataan were trapped without support and on half rations. Middleton's company was one of the last to leave the front lines: "our water-cooled machine guns were...glowing that night, and the water in the tanks was bubbling."



GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR (ON RIGHT) AND HIS REPLACEMENT AS COMMANDER OF TROOPS ON THE BATAAN PENINSULA LT. GEN. JONATHAN WAINWRIGHT. PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

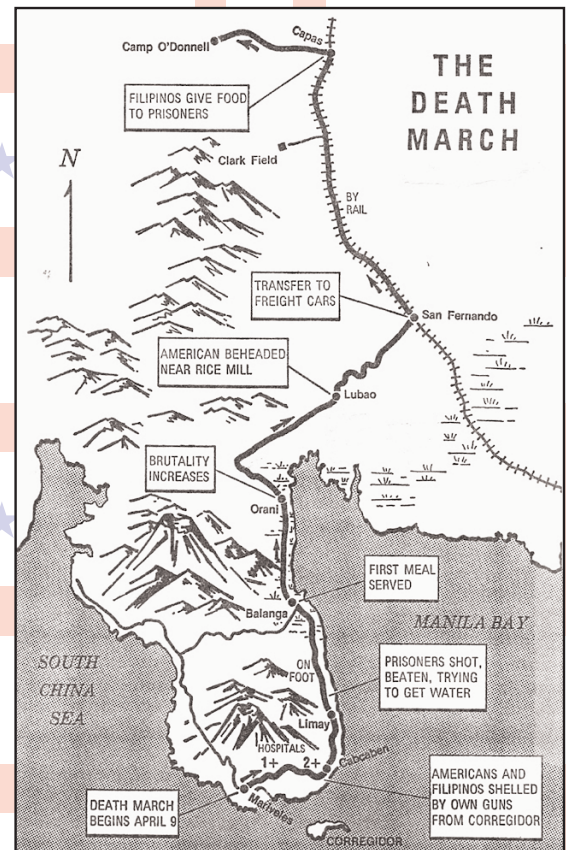


WALTER MIDDLETON (AT RIGHT) AND ANOTHER EX-POW CELEBRATING THEIR BIRTHDAY AT MOORE GENERAL HOSPITAL DURING THEIR FIRST YEAR BACK IN THE US PHOTO COURTESY OF WALTER MIDDLETON

Ultimately, Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright

surrendered to the Japanese. Victorious, they forced the 70,000 prisoners, both U.S. and Philippine forces, to march in searing heat nearly 60 miles. "The Japanese wouldn't give us food or water, and water was available with those artesian wells along the road, and if people would break for those, they'd kill 'em," according to Carringer. As Middleton recollects, "I was on (the road) eight days, maybe ten, I'm not sure because...you couldn't keep track of time." At the end of the march the Japanese loaded the prisoners onto trains to an internment camp. As Mr. Carringer puts it, "The train ride was box cars packed full of men with standing room only, and if one fell, there wasn't no way to help him." Mr. Middleton "got pushed back into a corner, and there was a crack in the old wooden box car there, and that helped me a lot, because it wasn't long till about all the oxygen that was in that boxcar was used up." They walked the final 8 miles to Camp O'Donnell. All of this they accomplished on scant food or water, and after months of being fed only half and quarter rations. The atrocities along this route were countless. Only 54,000 survived the long journey to the camp, which came to be known as the Bataan Death March.

Because of the crowded conditions and scarce food and water, Camp O'Donnell became, as Mr. Carringer put it, "a death factory." Malaria swept through the camps killing **JACOB CORNSILK**, a member of the Cherokee nation from Graham County, and infecting Mr. Carringer. At his first opportunity left Camp O'Donnell to salvage American equipment for the Japanese. He spent the latter part of the war working in a mine in Japan. Mr. Middleton spent several trying years working in a factory in Japanese-occupied Manchuria before the war ended.



THE ROUTE OF THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH. IT STARTED AT MARIVELES AT THE TIP OF THE BATAAN PENINSULA AND WENT 65 MILES TO THE RAIL HEAD AT SAN FERNANDO WHERE THE PRISONERS WERE CRAMMED INTO METAL BOXCARS FOR THE JOURNEY TO CAMP O'DONNELL.

HANK COWAN, BATAAN: A SURVIVOR'S MEMOIR, BELLA VISTA PRESS

# PRISONERS OF WAR—EUROPEAN THEATER

Over 200 of Western NC's troops suffered as prisoners of war. Most of the prisoners during the war were members of the Army Air Corps. Attrition among flight crews in 1942 was near 80%. As Asheville native son **ROBERT MORGAN** put it, "We'd sit down to breakfast in the morning with ten and come back with two...." Part of this was due to the tight flight formations and the relative inexperience of American pilots, who faced a highly skilled Luftwaffe, the German air force. Later, Allied forces flew combat missions over Germany comprised of thousands of planes. Statistically, the numbers were against the flight crews.



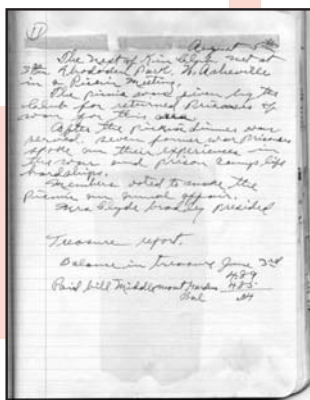
THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER ROLAND SARGENT (ON RIGHT) AND HIS CREW BAILED OUT OF THEIR AIRPLANE AND WERE TAKEN IN BY THE BELGIUM UNDERGROUND, WHO LOANED THEM THE CLOTHES THEY ARE WEARING.

COURTESY OF ROLAND SARGENT

Several graduates of Lee Edwards High School had a most remarkable class reunion in, of all places, Stalag Luft 3, a German POW camp in what is now Sagan, Poland. **BILL BRADLEY**, the pilot of a B-17, **JOE DAVIS**, the navigator of a B-24, and **G.L. LESLIE**, the navigator of a B-24, were "all good friends" back in high school. In camp, they kept each other going. Conditions in the camp were often quite poor, though according to Leslie, "we had more food than the average German." Among G.L. Leslie's most vivid memories of his time as a POW was being one of 10,000 allied officers on a forced march in January 1945. As the Soviets approached the Germans emptied the camps, relocating further within Germany. Leslie remembers walking for 10 days in the snow, exhausted from the cold and lack of food. Despite his hardships he refused to put down a major burden—a phonograph that he somehow obtained in the camps.

**ROLAND SARGENT**, now living in Asheville, was also on that march. He had been the pilot of a B-17 when he was shot down over Belgium. He managed to land in the field of some sympathetic farmers who handed him over to the Belgian

Underground. They equipped him with false identity papers and put him and 10 other fliers on a train to Paris. At Guardes Norde he was stopped and questioned by the Gestapo. He was taken to a prison where, since he had no military identification, he was told "You'll be treated as a spy and probably be shot." He later discovered that most people who entered this prison died there. Later, due to information the International Red Cross provided to the Luftwaffe, he was able to clear up his identity and proceed to Stalag Luft 3.



MINUTES FROM THE FINAL MEETING OF THE NEXT OF KIN CLUB, A SUPPORT GROUP FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF POWS AND SOLDIERS MISSING IN ACTION

COURTESY OF BARBARA HALL

## NEXT OF KIN CLUB

As the war dragged on and more servicemen were taken prisoner, families at home felt a need to form support groups. Several West Asheville women got together to found such a group. On September 8, 1944 the Next of Kin Club assembled for an organizational meeting at the Langren hotel in downtown Asheville. At that meeting Mrs. Clyde W. Bradley, mother of Lt. Clyde Bradley, Jr., was elected president; Mrs. G.L. Leslie, mother of Lt. Grover Leslie, was made first vice-president; and Mrs. J. L. Hall, mother of Pfc. Garrison Hall, was named treasurer. The group met monthly at the Langren, lending support to each other. Typically, if a POW were nominated for an award the military would present the award to a parent. The Next of Kin Club often hosted these ceremonies. Much of their budget was spent in sending flowers to the families of servicemen missing in action.

Mrs. Hall kept a detailed scrapbook, containing not only the organization's minutes, but also hundreds of articles relating to POWs. The contrast of the entries is remarkable. The minutes themselves are very formal and rather impersonal. Next to these, she pasted heart-wrenching stories of soldiers lost, atrocities committed, and servicemen returning. Scrapbook courtesy of Barbara Hall.



SERVICE PHOTOGRAPH OF G.L. LESLIE  
COURTESY OF G.L. LESLIE



ALL POWS WERE QUESTIONED UPON THEIR CAPTURE. G. L. LESLIE COMPLETED THIS CASUALTY REPORT WHILE STILL IN THE HOSPITAL WITH INJURIES SUFFERED IN HIS PLANE CRASH. COURTESY G. L. LESLIE

While blanket bombing over Germany, **SOLDIER SANDERS** of Sallisaw, OK, a member of the Western Band of the Cherokee Nation, was shot down over Magdeburg, Germany. He and the other 9 crewmembers on the B-17 safely landed, though angry German farmers immediately killed the radio operator. Soldier and the eight other crewmen were rounded up and eventually sent to Stalag Luft 2. His wife, Kay, recalls receiving a letter a month later that he was missing in action. A month after that she got a letter stating that her husband was a POW. A month after that she received a short letter from Soldier through the Red Cross. He explained that he escaped while being transferred to another camp and met up with an advanced team of Patton's Army.

# INTELLIGENCE

In any war, the need for information is critical to the success of the mission. Enemy messages must be decoded. Troop movements must be observed. Secret meetings must be revealed.

**MARIE COLTON** graduated from Chapel Hill as a Spanish major and was recruited to be a part of the Civilian Signal Corps stationed in Washington, D. C. During the war, she translated documents coded from Spanish that came through Madrid to the Axis powers. These messages were coded into numbers on a strip of paper. For a while the code seemed to fit, but then it suddenly it no longer seemed to work. She noted this in a report. Colton relates: "The next day a picture appeared on my desk. You could see this man's hairy hands holding what was the new code. Someone else must have taken the picture." From her casual note, someone had "acquired" the new code and delivered it to her.

**BETTY CACCABELLE** grew up in Spartanburg, SC. After Pearl Harbor she joined the Navy and was assigned to Washington, D.C. where she worked on code breaking. All the women working on the code were assigned to one barrack, and worked round the clock in three rotating shifts. Their work consisted of taking words and, based on frequency of common characters, trying to piece together how the code was structured. Caccavelle took an oath of secrecy, where she swore not to divulge anything about her work to anyone (including their fellow workers) until the government released her from that oath. This did not occur until many years after the end of the war. They were also informed of the possibility of sabotage and were instructed to eat whatever paper they could if someone broke in to their office.



HENRY BAKER AS A CADET AT THE CITADEL  
COURTESY OF HENRY BAKER

Several other local folks also did Intelligence work during the war. **MORRIS FOX**, who moved to Asheville with his hometown bride Ruth Schandler, worked in Cryptanalysis in the Navy and was also stationed in Washington, D.C. He worked to break the Japanese code. **HARRY MARTIN**, originally of Blowing Rock, was assigned to the Army Air Corps. His job was to photograph bombing damage and military sites in preparation for bombing runs.

**HENRY BAKER**, of Asheville, had recently graduated from the Citadel when he became part of a unit formed in 1943 called the Alamo Scouts. This reconnaissance and raiding unit was the beginning of the Special Forces Units. The Scout teams infiltrated the Japanese occupied Philippine islands by submarine, gathering intelligence as they went. In one mission to rescue General Romulo's wife and son, who were left on the island behind enemy lines, Baker's unit had to build an airstrip where a cub plane could land. "We set up signals and were able to evacuate the son, wife and brother. There was no room for me. I had to walk out. It took six or seven days and I traveled at night."

**JOHN ROSENTHAL**, now of Asheville, was a refugee from Germany before the war and spoke excellent German. He was assigned to the German Intelligence Unit with the Army. His initial job was to translate newspapers to gauge the mood of the people. Later, his job was to pinpoint where V-1 and V-2 assaults were originating. By tracing the trajectory of the bombs back down the line from the impact, they could determine where the rockets were being launched. On the devastation of the buzz bombs, he recalled,

"Antwerp was hit 174 out of 175 days. These bombs would come in without notice. You could hear the V-1s make a noise like a motorcycle times ten and then suddenly something would explode. One time I was walking down to the main square. There was a theatre called the Rex where a V-2 had just exploded. It knocked off the front of the theatre where the screen was, killing all the people. The soldiers and their dates in the balcony were all still there—covered with white dust—like wax figures. They were all dead." Almost 500 people, many of them Allied soldiers, were killed in that attack.



V-1'S AND V-2'S ON DISPLAY IN ANTWERP, BELGIUM AFTER THE WAR  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN ROSENTHAL



MARIE COLTON WITH HUSBAND HENRY UPON HIS RETURN FROM EUROPE PHOTO COURTESY OF HENRY AND MARIE COLTON



JOHN ROSENTHAL IN NICE, FRANCE. JOHN PASSED THROUGH ASHEVILLE ON THE TRAIN ON HIS WAY FROM CAMP CROFT IN 1943. HE WAS STRUCK BY ITS BEAUTY. IT TOOK HIM ALMOST 40 YEARS TO BE ABLE TO RETURN FOR RETIREMENT. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN ROSENTHAL

## INFANTRY

Although the early bombing campaigns destroyed some of the Axis ability to make war, the infantry led the thrust into Europe. As technologically advanced as the military had become, combat troops were still needed. George Hilbert, of Black Mountain, remembers being trained when he was only 18: "They had me handling dynamite. I couldn't have a bb gun or a bike as a kid." These young men had to grow up fast. D-Day, June 6, 1944, saw troops finally land on the beaches of Normandy, France. 5,000 ships bore down on the coast of France. By day's end, 150,000 Allied troops held the coast. Another 2,500 were dead.



E.A. (ANDY) ANDREWS'S SERVICE PHOTOGRAPH  
COURTESY OF ANDY ANDREWS

Black Mountain's **ERNEST "ANDY" ANDREWS** was there. He remembers clearly the convoy, ships "as far as you could see to the east or west." He was to be part of the third wave, landing on the beach around sunset. They were not able to make this goal due to the number of dead on the beach. The deck officer at the time commented, "You're not going in until enough guys are killed." He still remembers the fear, the adrenaline, the unknown: "Courage doesn't replace fear, but it's the mastery of fear," he comments. "I heard no talking at all, except the guy next to me repeated the Lord's Prayer about thirty times." Because of the rough seas, men dropping from the ships to the landing craft fell overboard, never to be seen again. Others crouched in the bottom of the boat vomiting. At one point the craft came suddenly to a stop. The coxswain let the ramp down to unload, but Andrews's captain pulled out a pistol: "No son, that's a little sandbar. Back this thing up and hit it full speed." Andrews considers himself "lucky;" rather than meeting machine gun fire, his troops only met artillery fire. He says, "the idea was speed. Get in the water, get to the beach, and get past the beach as far as you can." Though they ended up landing in the early morning of June 7, their machine guns—"too heavy to land with"—didn't arrive on the beach until midday. During the landing

they picked up guns from among the dead. Andrews distinctly remembers thinking: "What in the world am I doing here?"

His mission was to "find Germans and eliminate them." As they moved forward, past the concrete bunkers that had been taken by earlier waves, the troops with Andrews found smoldering campfires. He thought, "Man, let's go. We got these guys on the run." The fighting soon entered hedgerow country, "which was a devastating thing," slowing dramatically the advance. Often Germans would have gunmen planted among the hedgerows, wreaking havoc on Allied troops. Six days after the initial invasion, Andrews was hit in the mouth with a bullet. A rash developed that spread rapidly. One week later he was in the hospital. When he returned, he joined his outfit, walking from "Normandy to Czechoslovakia."

By December the winter had set in. The weather was incredibly cold. Many soldiers didn't have clothes suited to the climate. George Hilbert remembers that time as "the coldest I've been in my life." Andy Andrews lost a glove as he hurriedly left a foxhole one day. By just about dark that night, his hand was frozen: "I did not want to go to the hospital." Many troops suffered from frostbite. It was in the numbing cold and December quiet that Hitler launched his advance in the Ardennes, what has come to be known as the Battle of the Bulge.



WORKERS AT THE DAVE STEEL COMPANY DANCE AT THE AWARD CEREMONY FOR RECEIVING THE "E" AWARD FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
COURTESY OF DAVE STEEL ARCHIVES



MEN OF THE 7TH DIVISION USING FLAME THROWERS TO SMOKE OUT JAPANESE FROM A BLOCK HOUSE ON KWAJALEIN ISLAND, WHILE OTHERS WAIT WITH RIFLES READY IN CASE SOLDIERS COME OUT, FEBRUARY 4, 1944  
PHOTO FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### DAVE STEEL

During the war, many American businesses retooled their factories for war production. Such was the case at Asheville's Dave Steel. They made parts for the landing ships, LST-325's, that were used for beach landings in Normandy, Italy, Tripoli, and the Philippines. "We had trucks running all the time. As soon as we completed one [section] the truck was on the road" to take it to Charleston, SC, where the ship was assembled. In 1944 Dave Steel was awarded the "E" (for excellence) Award, which was observed with ceremonies in Charleston and Asheville.

## INFANTRY

On December 11, 1944, **RUEBEN TAYLOR** of Cherokee, NC received orders to proceed to the front in Holland. He recalls the sub zero weather, the deep snow, the fir forests and many fallen fellow soldiers. He and his peers would select bombed out craters to serve as their foxholes, "an old Indian trick." During this time, while returning from patrol, he was shot in the knee by a sniper. Within days he was patched up and sent back to the front, where the Battle of the Bulge was now roaring.



O.E. STARNES, JR IN GERMANY IN 1945  
PHOTO COURTESY OF O.E. STARNES

Asheville native **O.E. STARNES, JR.** was a light machine gunner in the 103rd Infantry. As he made his way across Europe on foot he had no contact with German civilians "except when we ran out of food." This was a frequent problem, as they often outran their supplies. They would "pick up a few leaves of cabbage" and when they could come across it loaves of brown bread. At times, they would commandeer houses, basically throwing the civilians out. "On May the second we were going through this little town and we got fired on. We were pinned down. My machine gun was the only one in the position to return fire.... I was bringing some ammunition back up to my gun and a sniper saw me ducking in doorways... A bullet went through my helmet and took out a bunch of hair and skin." The injury wasn't severe; within days Starnes returned to his troop, but as the war was drawing to an end that was the last action he saw.



RUEBEN TAYLOR IN UNIFORM  
COURTESY OF RUEBEN TAYLOR

**GEORGE LAMPRINAKOS** grew up in Asheville. His father prevented him from enlisting until he was 18, but he then proceeded to the swamps of Mississippi for most of his training. He suspected that his unit was to be assigned to the Pacific, but in December 1944 they were sent to La Havre, France. He landed

there in sub-zero weather on January 21. His unit was heading across southern Germany, formerly the center of the industrial complex, but now a devastated, heavily bombed and almost deserted area. Later, he encountered plenty of artillery and deeply recalls the hardship of war through the eyes of an 18 year old. They were racing the Russians to the Enns River, arriving just ahead of them and billeting in a castle. "I can see it like yesterday. We got up there in the turret of the castle and as far as we could see up the

road was a line of German soldiers all coming to us to be captured. The last thing they wanted to do was be captured by the Russians. We set up a way to organize them—no fences, just guards. They weren't going to run away."



GEORGE LAMPRINAKOS'S SERVICE  
PHOTOGRAPH  
COURTESY OF GEORGE LAMPRINAKOS



A U.S. INFANTRY ANTI-TANK CREW FIRES ON NAZIS WHO MACHINE-GUNNED THEIR VEHICLE, SOMEWHERE IN HOLLAND PHOTO BY W. F. STICKLE, NOVEMBER 4, 1944 FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**BOB ROBERTS** of Arden was with Patton's army in Europe. After VE-Day he was stationed in the Philippines, where combat got quite heavy. Japanese troops were hiding out in caves. "We had flame throwers we'd shoot up into the entrance of those caves.... I thought, 'this is going to take a long time with an enemy that death just doesn't mean anything to him.'" When he first heard of the atomic bomb, "I thought that was just our propaganda. We couldn't have anything that bad."

## THE NAVY

**C**LIFFORD LONGCOY, of Black Mountain enlisted at the age of 17: "I saw the flag waving...We took aptitude tests and I was sent to the Naval Station at Key West for anti-sub warfare training. I was designated as a Sonar Man—used to detect enemy subs. The reason I was selected...I studied classical violin and could hear high-pitched sounds." Submarines became critical and deadly weapons during the war.

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor the Japanese began to invade and occupy islands throughout the Pacific, including the Philippines, New Guinea, Guam, Kai and thousands of others. Once occupied, they imprisoned all Allied citizens. To make a push on the Japanese homeland, the Allies would have to remove the Japanese from each of these defensive positions.



THE BOAT THAT CARRIED RALPH LEWIS AS IT WAS HIT BY A KAMIKAZE AND EXPLODED. THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM A DISTANT SHIP JUST AS THE PLANE EXPLODED.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF RALPH LEWIS

**RALPH LEWIS** recalls the day his boat was hit by an incoming kamikaze, Japanese for "divine wind." He was supervising the artillery fire of several attacking Japanese aircraft. One particular plane had been hit and began to fall across the deck of the ship. Lewis, 21 at the time, could see the pilot just before the plane exploded. The explosion caused the captain to order the crew to abandon ship. Lewis was in the water several hours before being rescued. Others were not so lucky. The kamikazes were eight times more effective than conventional attack methods, killing thousands of servicemen.

The morning of March 19, 1945 the USS Franklin suffered an air strike. One Japanese bomber landed two deadly hits, one on the fore deck and one on the flight deck. Because the crew had been arming aircraft that morning the gas lines were open, resulting in a "tremendous fire." At the time, Black Mountain's **WALTER H. KREAMER** and several other officers were at breakfast. "The first thing we did was to wet napkins and put them over our faces and got under the tables. After about a minute we thought: 'this is ridiculous. What are we doing hiding out?'" On the way to the bridge he was hit by blasts of flame. When he arrived at the flight deck he found 100 men "frozen stiff—this was the first time they saw action." He found a radio, and raised a transmitter, in an attempt to call for help. Because he held the transmitter in the air, he was not able to take cover and was strafed. He points out, "They missed me, fortunately." That night the Japanese sent 40 bombers to finish off the Cincinnati. Planes from other carriers, in part responding to Kreamer's radio transmissions, shot them down. For his actions on that day, Walter H. Kreamer was awarded the Navy Cross.

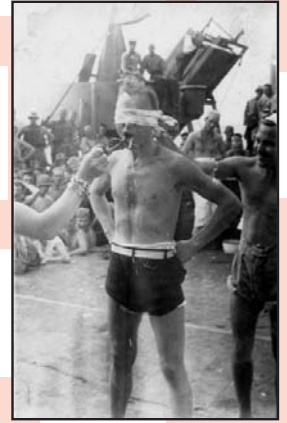
**LANDON ROBERTS**, of Marshall, NC, was a commissioned officer and the oldest in his company by the time he was 22. He recalls one particular mission in the Taara Islands when he and 20 men went to take the island of Minuti from the Japanese. "We got to within a quarter of a mile of the beach I hit a reef and we were stuck. We saw some natives come around the end of the island...in outrigger canoes. When they got to us they said 'No Jappy—all Jappies dead.'



GENE PARKS WAS PART OF THE INITIAL OCCUPATION OF JAPAN.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF GENE PARKS

Apparently, they had taken care of them with knives. We stayed on the beach that night. The next day we went out and got the Lord Governor General ashore and had a meeting with about 6,000 natives on the island. As I remember, they stood in two long rows, like Jesus in Jerusalem, and laid palm fronds across the sand as we walked across them. The women only wore grass skirts. The elders of the island convened, and we explained what had happened in the world since the Japanese had taken their island in 1942."

Black Mountain's **JOHN GALBREATH**, a former Navy chaplain was stationed in the Pacific and was part of the occupying force in Japan at the end of the war. "Our regiment spread out over the Kyushu Island in southern Japan, destroying weapons. I am absolutely convinced that had it not been for the atomic bomb the war would not have ended." He related a story told to him by a friend on visiting Japan: "A former Japanese soldier approached him and said 'I want you to thank the American people for dropping that bomb. Without the bomb the war would not have ended. I was a kamikaze pilot and my name was about to come up. You saved my life.'"



TO ALLEVIATE THE TEDIUM AND TENSION OF TRAVERSING SOMETIMES-HOSTILE OCEANS, SAILORS OFTEN COMMITTED HI JINX ON THE HIGH SEAS. HERE BILL GAUNT IS PUT THROUGH HIS PACES AS THE SHIP CROSSES THE INTERNATIONAL DATELINE.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY JEAN GAUNT

The bushido codes informed the behavior of the samurai warrior in Japan; honor, courage, loyalty, self-sacrifice, reverence for the Emperor, and contempt for defeat were its principles. Major John Forquer in The Kamikaze Warrior writes: "[Vice Admiral Onishi, Commander of Japan's First Air Fleet] believed the airplanes should be used as an extension of the warrior spirit...and he believed the 'kamikaze' tactic would provide the time for Japan to rebuild its forces [after the fall of Saipan]...." Oshido asked "What greater glory can there be for a warrior to give his life for the Emperor and the country?" Following his recruitment campaign over 7,000 pilots enlisted to nose-dive their planes into Allied ships, dying in the process.



## QUARtermasters

**SID SCHOCHET**, of Asheville was 22 when he was drafted. He recalls that his large feet made it difficult for the army to find a pair of boots to fit so they had to be special ordered. By the time his shoes arrived, his boot camp outfit had been shipped out. With experience in retail from his family's store on Patton Avenue, The Star, Sid was placed in Quartermaster School and eventually sent to Columbus, Ohio. From this centralized site, huge warehouses filled with clothing, blankets, kitchen equipment and more awaited the requisitioning of Quartermasters throughout the world. Sid recalls: "You could sort of tell when a big operation, such as D-Day, was about to happen. Certain supplies would be ordered well in advance. The supplies would go out as quickly as we got them in. There were only officers at Columbus. All the labor was done by German prisoners of war."

**FREDERICK LITTLEJOHN** of Asheville found himself in Leige, Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge guarding the supplies for the entire invasion. "The supply dump was stacked up along a Boulevard for five miles with a fence all around it. I remember that it was so cold that icicles were hanging from my helmet. But the night time was not so bad—we stayed in a Catholic School."



K RATIONS COURTESY OF THE QUARtermasters MUSEUM

A long-standing axiom states: "An army travels on its stomach." Food certainly fueled the war effort and presented a number of logistical problems throughout the war. Troops did not always have easy access to mess halls. Particularly as ground troops moved into enemy territory, they moved further away from their supplies. Taking this into consideration, the army developed the "C" ration in 1938. This consisted of canned meat and vegetables, crackers, sugars, and instant coffee and weighed nearly six pounds. Besides being heavy, the cans often would rust and the labels fell off easily, leaving their contents a mystery. In 1944, the army developed the "K" ration, designed specifically to be lightweight.

**RUEBEN TAYLOR** of Cherokee remembers eating "K" rations day after day for nearly 73 days, eating hot meals only every once in a while, as the kitchen was at least a mile behind his location. **HAROLD SCHAILL**, while stationed in the South Pacific, remembers being low on food and extremely hungry when he came across a case of lamb tongue. He tried some, but when he offered it to the other officers, no one would eat it. Others, like **DAVE MIDDLETON**, were lucky enough to have opportunity to fish. As the executive officer of a 136-foot ship patrolling the Pacific, he had the responsibility for spending the food allowance. "We always had lines off the stern," he recalls, cutting down on the food bill

substantially.

Others had the liberty of choosing where to eat. **KENNI TH CULBRETH** of Asheville was stationed on Guam. With naval, army, and marine bases, he had many choices for dinner. "There was also an army-air force hospital where we could visit 'sick friends.' This was the best place to visit, now they had the good chow, even fresh vegetables...." **HARRY MARTIN** was equally fortunate. He was not attached to a particular unit and moved around a great deal. He would listen closely to conversations about where the best food was being served. If he heard that a certain mess had fresh eggs that morning, he made a point of eating there.

To many cigarettes were as important as food. Not only were they a key ingredient in the "K" rations, they also served as a form of currency. **JOHN CRESS**, now of Asheville, recalls the carton of cigarettes he received each week as part of his rations: "You could get two cartons if you took one of the lower brands, such as Raleighs. Lucky Strikes were popular. When we found out we were going down to Australia, we rounded up all the cigarettes that no one wanted.... We had a large bag filled with cigarettes, as we knew it was valuable merchandise. We didn't have any money—only a bag of cigarettes and a bottle of whiskey when we went on R and R." The military even named camps in France after cigarettes, including Camp Lucky, Camp Pall Mall, Camp Phillip Morris, and Camp Twenty Grand.

**ALLEN SHER** of Asheville was a Sergeant who was often assigned "vegetable duty." He recalls going through the Suez Canal on his birthday in 1945: "I had to peel fifty pounds of onions. I ran up from the galley to the top deck and looked to



SID SCHOCHET MET HIS FUTURE WIFE MARY WHILE TRAINING IN VIRGINIA. ONCE HE WAS ASSIGNED TO COLUMBUS, OHIO THEY MARRIED AND BEGAN THEIR LIFE TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WAR.  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF SID SCHOCHET

# ENGINEERS

## RACE RELATIONS IN THE MILITARY

"Of course when we went to Fort Bragg it was a segregated base with a street right down the middle - blacks on one side, whites on the other. When I came back to Fort Bragg after the war I woke up in the morning and there were blacks and whites all mixed up in the same barrack. Sometimes our worst enemies in Europe were our own troops. If we went to a bar or something, some white soldiers, especially if they were from the Deep South, expected it to be the way it was back home. But things we did here did not go over there. The worst experience I had was in Camp Craven Louisiana. There the white soldiers told the German prisoners of war we were guarding that they did not have to follow our orders because we were Black... I thought, "Why fight? If I am not good enough, why fight?"—George Gash, Hendersonville.

**G**EORGE GASH of Hendersonville enlisted in the Army as soon as he got out of high school. As he said of the Engineers "Our motto was first ones in; last ones out. I trained to operate a bulldozer. We crossed over at La Havre, France soon after D-Day. Our job was keeping up with the Army. We built bridges, laid railroad track and sometimes built airstrips. The shooting was going on all around us. The guy behind you—at your side—he held your life in his hands. And his in yours."

**ROBERT SECHLER** grew up in Asheville, signing up with the army in 1941. He was assigned to the 95th Combat Engineering Battalion. He recalls a particular day in December 1944 when his unit was trying to get a pontoon bridge across the Saar River, 3 miles into Germany: "You defend your own land more fiercely than someone else's." The engineers were in a vulnerable open position so a unit was called in to set up a cover of smoke to hide their activities.

These smoke units were a part of many of these operations and were largely outfitted by Black soldiers nicknamed "Smokey Joes." The bridge was about two-thirds across the 50-foot river when the wind shifted and exposed their position. Quickly, the almost-complete bridge was destroyed as heavy enemy fire rained down on the men. Sechler was senior officer and ordered the men to evacuate. As he was checking to make sure they had not

left any wounded, "an instinct told me to dive into a hole. When I woke up I was covered with mud and my left side was paralyzed. But I was luckier than most and now have 70% use of my arm."

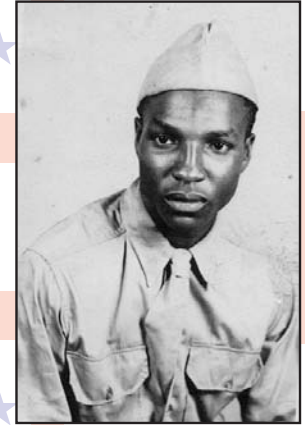


ERIC WELLISCH WAS WITH THE ENGINEERS SEEN HERE WITH PONTOONS FOR THE BRIDGES HIS UNIT WAS INSTALLING. PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC WELLISCH



THE ENKA PLANT FROM THE ENKA COLLECTION AT PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

**LYONS HAMBLEN**, originally from eastern Tennessee but now living in Hendersonville, recalled another episode with a smoke unit. He was part of the 137th Infantry, which landed in France shortly after D-Day. "The troops pushed nearer to the German border, and we saw thousands of planes fly over in a big push. The Ground Forces set up smoke screens to mark troop movements. The only problem was the wind came up and blew the smoke screen over the American troops. The planes, in 'friendly fire' dropped some bombs on the allied soldiers."



SERVICE PORTRAIT OF GEORGE GASH PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE GASH

## AMERICAN ENKA STRIKE

On February 8, 1945 a disagreement between the union workers of Local #2598 of the United Textile Workers, AFL and the American Enka Corporation led to a strike. The company was unwilling to offer workers paid lunches or to pay higher wages for less desirable shifts, such as night shifts. Enka manufactured rayon for tires, which the military needed critically as the troops rapidly advanced through Europe.

Lt. Col. Paul Hines, chief of the labor branch of the U.S. Army Command, appealed to workers to return to work: "Every hour of the production of the rayon cord used in tires that is lost at Enka means a loss of about 150 to 200 tires that are badly needed just now...On one highway in France we are chewing up 5000 tires a day..."

By February 19, 1945 the government could no longer afford to stand by. At 5:00 pm the War Department took over the American Enka Corporation by an executive order of President Franklin Roosevelt. Col. Curtis G. Pratt assumed the responsibilities of running the plant stating:

"We must get this plant into production and do it as quickly as possible...the army is already more than 600,000 tires short of its requirements... We are at a critical point in this war. Our forces are driving ahead on all fronts."

## THE RED BALL EXPRESS

**W**WII was the first war where the movement of petroleum was at least as essential as the movement of food and water. From August 25 to November, 1944 the Quartermasters moved over 500,000 tons of supplies principally gasoline in an operation known as the Red Ball Express (an old railroad term meaning “priority freight”). The trucks held “Jerry Cans” full of gasoline to operate the jeeps, trucks and tanks—without which the assault was stalled. One way “Loop Runs” were established and the roads were barricaded to all but the “Red Ball Express” trucks. Protocols were set for the almost 6,000 vehicles making 750 mile return trips. The need for tires went from 29,000 to 55,000 in September. Drivers, many of whom were young boys who had never driven before, were going 24 hours a day. The drivers were told to travel in convoys of 5 stopping every hour to rest.

These protocols quickly evaporated as the need for the supplies increased. Many drivers recall dangerous driving speeds and days of no sleep to get the supplies where they were needed. Drivers drove with helmets and a machine gun on the seat and placed sand bags in the floor of their cabs to protect them from landmines.



SOLDIERS LOAD A “DEUCE-AND-A-HALF” WITH JERRY CANS  
FROM THE QUARTERMASTER ARCHIVES



CHARLES MCADAMS IN HIS ARMY PHOTO  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF  
CHARLES MCADAMS

As the military was a segregated army, the Red Ball Express was run by 80% African Americans. These soldiers were prohibited from combat until the last few months of the war and were therefore disproportionately represented in both Quartermaster and Engineer Corps. **CHARLES MCADAMS**, of Asheville, was 18 when he joined the Army. He had been an employee of Biltmore Hardware and was familiar with ordering, stocking, and selling of goods so that working with the Quartermasters made sense. He was assigned to the trucking division. Once in Europe he drove a “deuce-and-a-half” (two-and-a-half ton vehicle) with supplies for the front line. Of the driving he recalls the difficulty of no sleep or food and the constant danger of being shot at. “It was no pleasure trip. We had a job to do and we did it.” On his return to Asheville on January 1, 1946 he recalls—“I married Bertha just a few days later.

“It wasn’t until MacArthur’s forces reached Luzon [in the Philippines]...that the need arose in the Pacific for long distance, overland hauling facilities.... The Japanese had left the Philippine railway in ruin. Rolling stock was either destroyed by our bombing or scuttled by the retreating enemy. Bridges and road beds were wrecked.” The highway transportation division or the Red Ball Express began to supply many needs. “In addition to troop supplies vast amounts of food and emergency medical supplies were urgently needed for liberated internees at Santo Tomas and New Bilibid Prison and for the starving civilians in the city.” Having to run convoy routes over rough, narrow roads frequently threatened by Japanese snipers and raiding parties, the Red Ball Express was there: “The firstest with the mostest.” —Major James Deerin, January 1946, from the Quartermaster Review.



CORPORAL CHARLES H. JOHNSON OF THE 783RD MILITARY POLICE BATTALION,  
WAVES ON A ‘RED BALL EXPRESS’ MOTOR CONVOY RUSHING PRIORITY  
MATERIEL TO THE FORWARD AREAS IN FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 5, 1944.  
PHOTO FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## NURSES IN THE MILITARY



WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS (WACS) NURSES ARRIVING AT MOORE GENERAL HOSPITAL IN OTEEN  
 PHOTO FROM THE BALL COLLECTION, RAMSEY LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNCA

**B**uncombe County was a regional center for wounded soldiers. The VA medical center at the time was known as Oteen Hospital. Moore General Hospital was located in Swannanoa on the current campus of the Juvenile Evaluation Center. The Navy acquired the Kenilworth Inn for use as a hospital. Further down the road, the Lake Lure Inn became a rehabilitation center for veterans who were wounded in spirit.

The medical services that were provided at these centers marked a real opportunity for women throughout the states. Nursing was one of the few fields open to women and this opportunity for advancement and adventure sent young women all over the world—just as it did young men. Over 350,000 women joined the

military, many of them serving as nurses either in the Army or the Navy.

**BERTHA MOORE**, now living in Black Mountain, was at the onset of the war a recent graduate from John Hopkins who had joined the army as a nurse. She was initially classified a private, quite an insult given the level of her training. Moore was sent to the deserts of North Africa, where she often worked 12 hours shifts. Things were exciting and new and work was mixed with swimming and parties.” The soldiers, she remembers, “loved us like mothers and sisters.” When her unit, the 59th Evac was moved to Sicily, the war intensified for them. Fighting in Europe was heavy and so were the casualties. Once she was part of a group sent by ship to France to pick up wounded and was in surgery the entire return trip

**DR. LEWIS RATHBUN** of Asheville did a tour of duty as a ship’s doctor in the Pacific, even though his training was in obstetrics. In 1944, he was sent back to the U.S. where he served as an Ob/Gyn on a base in Atlanta. He recalled that when a servicewoman became pregnant and was not married she had two choices. If she told anyone she would be sent home and was not allowed to serve in the military. This was seen as a disgrace at the time. Often times a woman would choose to conceal the pregnancy, come to him for delivery, and then put the child up for adoption, allowing her to stay in the military.

**EMILY WODNIAK** of Chicago (now Emily Rogers of Black Mountain), enlisted at the age of 29, and was commissioned as an officer on December 5, 1942 and assigned to Pearl where she served as a Ward Supervisor. She recalls her work as “easy. We had hospital corpsman who did all the work,” though her shifts were at times as long as 12 hours. She spent her time off-duty riding bicycles or at the private beach and cottage reserved for Pearl Nurses. She remembers those 18 months as “the best years of my life.” When asked why, she quickly responds, “lots of men, lots of officers, and we had quite a few dances. I loved to dance.”



EMILY WODNIAK, ON THE LEFT, AND A FRIEND OFFERING THEIR VERSION OF A HULA DANCE, WHILE STATIONED AT PEARL HARBOR.  
 PHOTO COURTESY OF EMILY ROGERS



MARGARET ENSLEY OFTEN SANG AT MOORE GENERAL HOSPITAL FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF SOLDIERS.  
 PHOTO COURTESY OF MARGARET ENSLEY

Other women had experiences in these military hospitals as well. Local resident, **PHYLLIS SULTAN**, recalls volunteering at the hospital with the Red Cross doing unskilled labor and relieving nurses for other work. Margaret Rose Ensley entertained many soldiers and recalls **MOORE GENERAL** this way: “The wounded were brought in a special hospital train and unloaded directly into the hospital... a party was planned for their arrival and USO girls were called. You always wore your prettiest long dress and a smile on your face. Sometimes it was hard to smile when you saw their wounds and agony. At the dances you talked to them and danced with them if they felt up to it. If I was asked to sing, I took their song requests.”

# THE MARINE CORPS

The Marine Corps, by design, is equipped to fight on land and on water and as such had a strong presence in the South Pacific where much of the fighting was on islands.

## THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA

**LEONARD LLOYD** of Robbinsville, now deceased, was part of a battalion that landed on Iwo Jima on the morning of Feb. 19, 1945. "We crawled out of our bunks at 3:00 AM. The Navy treated us to a wonderful [hot] breakfast of steak and eggs—the last for 17 days. By boat my men headed for Red Beach, and the Japanese guns opened up on us... Shells were landing all around the boat. Very few words were spoken among the men and myself.... The [black sand] beach was covered with the dead. Parts of bodies were scattered through the beach area, as well as wrecked landing craft.... We had to go through a Japanese anti-tank mine field and into heavy enemy machine guns to capture one airfield on the island.... A few days later I looked back toward Mount Suribachi and saw a flag on top of the mountain...hard to tell whether it was 'Old Glory' or the 'Rising Sun.' It became evident that it was our flag when we stopped receiving Japanese shellfire in our lines. The flag I saw became the most famous WWII picture, taken by Joe Rosenthal." Sometime later, as Lloyd's group was attacking a hill, he suffered injuries:

"Suddenly almost half of the hill we were attacking blew up, raining large volcanic rock down on our attacking force. I had been hit by machine-gun fire and covered with volcanic rock up to my head. Later they found 500 pounds of bombs in a cave along with ammunition, blowing a hole 45 feet deep. The explosion and machine gun fire left me with both of my legs broken, the lining of my mouth ripped away, and other wounds. Our losses in the Battle of Iwo Jima are said to have been over 29,000 Marines and Navy personnel. My battalion suffered 95% casualties among officers and 98% in enlisted ranks. 22,000 Japanese died for their so-called emperor. I survived on Iwo Jima for 16 days. Iwo was the bloodiest battle in the history of the Marine Corps."

## THE BATTLE OF GUADACANAL

**ROBERT YOUNGDEER** grew up in Cherokee and went on to be the chief of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. As a Marine in Guadalcanal, he was part of the defense of Bloody Ridge, which came under incessant attack by the Japanese. "On Sept. 13, 1942 we came under sniper fire. It sounded like twigs falling off and then someone would be down. I stood up to help a friend and then everything went black. When I came to I remember the mosquitoes (which were real bad) and being told I had been hit under my nose and the bullet came out my right ear. I was breathing through my neck...they got me back to the field hospital at the beach and later onto a hospital ship. When I got on to the ship I saw a nurse and the next person was my brother. He had been bayoneted and was also going home."

### MONTFORD POINT AT CAMP LEJEUNE

In 1942, the Marine Corps built a third training facility at Camp Lejeune in eastern North Carolina. At the southern end, they provided the first training facility for Black marines. Over 20,000 soldiers were trained for WWII at Montford Point. Robert

Youngdeer, of Cherokee, was one of the first officers to work with the new recruits when he took 250 of them for Guard Duty training to Oklahoma in 1943. Black Marines of the 8th Ammunition Company landed at Iwo Jima in the second and third waves, fighting bravely to take Mount Surabachi.



THE RAISING OF THE AMERICAN FLAG ON MOUNT SURABACHI, IWO JIMA

PHOTO BY JOE ROSENTHAL



BLACK MOUNTAIN'S JOHN GALBREATH, A NAVY CHAPLAIN, WAS AT IWO JIMA AND CAN BE SEEN HERE (IN CENTER OF PHOTO) MINISTERING TO THE WOUNDED.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN GALBREATH

World War II also saw the entrance of women into the Marine Corps. **VIRGINIA ZIMMERMAN** (now Smathers of Arden) entered the USMC in 1943 and became a film projectionist at Camp Lejeune. She and a group of women operated the movie cameras that entertained the men stationed at Lejeune.



VIRGINIA ZIMMERMAN WAS A MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S MARINES. SHE AND HER FELLOW MARINES "ON THEIR WAY TO BED" AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NC

PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA SMATHERS

# ATOMIC WARFARE

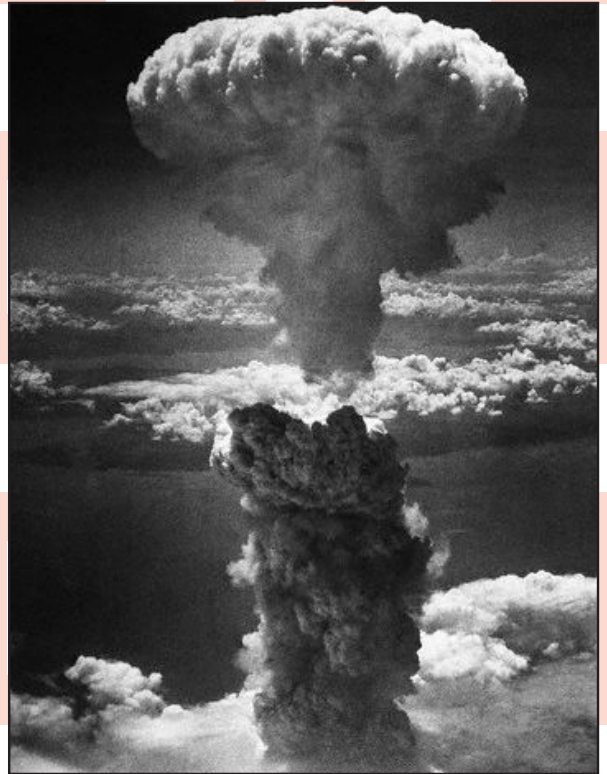
Throughout the war, the United States had been stealthily working on a secret weapon—the atomic bomb. Led under the scientific direction of Robert Oppenheimer and the military direction of Major Gen. Leslie R. Groves, the atomic bomb packed the punch of the equivalent of over 20,000 tons of TNT. The federal government spent an estimated \$2 billion developing this weapon. Scientists and workers were so compartmentalized and under such strict orders of secrecy that few knew what they were developing. The bombs were made primarily in Oak Ridge, TN and Richland, WA. According to Joe Wing, who answered questions for an eager public in an August 16, 1945 newspaper article, these sites were selected “because they were remote and near large electrical supplies.”

On August 6, 1945 the US B-29 Enola Gay dropped the first of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima, Japan. Asheville’s **LONDON ROBERTS**,

a Navy lieutenant, was stationed in the Pacific:

“I went down (to the airfield) and watched them load the atomic bomb...to see

them put the “Little Boy” in the belly of that ship. We had been told that it might be a dud or set off a chain of events that would go around the world. It was nighttime...about 2:00 AM, so it could fly at dark and bomb in the morning.”



MUSHROOM CLOUD LOOMING OVER NAGASAKI, JAPAN, AUGUST 9, 1945  
PHOTO FROM CORBIS.COM



CENTER OF THE BOMBSITE IN NAGASAKI, JAPAN, 1946. MUCH OF THE DEVASTATED CITY HAD ALREADY BEEN REBUILT.

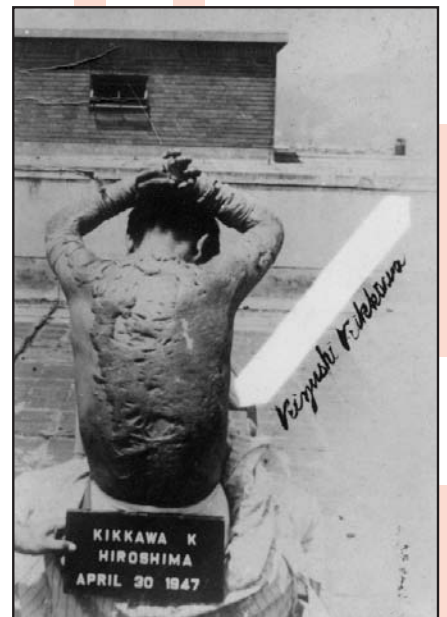
PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNE LAMB

Three days later, the United States dropped the second atomic bomb, this time on Nagasaki, Japan. Robbinsville native **WAYNE CARRINGER** was at the time a POW working in a mine in Omuta, Japan, just a few miles from Nagasaki. “There wasn’t much air activity, and the ground shook, and we saw the mushroom in the air...the fallout...was on the ocean as far as your vision could see.” By year’s end, over 210,000 had died due to the effects of the two bombs.



WEST ASHEVILLE’S JUNE LAMB EN ROUTE TO JAPAN TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC FALLOUT, OCTOBER 9, 1950  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNE LAMB

Asheville native **JUNE LAMB** received medical training as part of her service in the WAVES, “Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service.” In the fall of 1950 she traveled to Japan as an X-ray technician for the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. She worked on a longitudinal study examining the long-term effects of radiation exposure. While she found the fire and flash burns of the people and the destruction of the city obvious, the Japanese “...welcomed our being there. I kept saying to myself that that would not have happened if they had taken over our country.” Complications brought about by the radioactive fallout have continued to take lives every year since 1945.



THE FLASH OF THE EXPLOSION OF THE ATOMIC BOMB HEATED THE SURROUNDING AIR, LEADING TO BURNS ON ANYONE IN THE VICINITY. THIS MAN’S BACK IS A TESTAMENT TO THE INTENSITY OF THAT HEAT. HIROSHIMA, 1946. PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNE LAMB

# LIFE IN EUROPE AFTER THE WAR

## DENAZIFACATION

Once the war was over in May 1945, a great rebuilding began across Germany and all of Europe. Until that point the leadership had been in the hands of the Nazi party that had brought such a ruinous end to an entire continent. The Allies feared that giving power to hire, rebuild, educate, and fund to the Nazis would only lead to another war.

So began the search for folks who had done their jobs each day but not been enthusiastic supporters of Hitler. This program was called Denazification. It had many departments in the military, schools,

businesses and financial markets of Germany. Soldiers and non-military personnel were given the jobs of locating and interrogating Germans in large and small towns and determining the extent of their involvement with Nazis. Where this was warranted, they were sent to Nuremberg for war crimes. Where their efforts were perfunctory, they were given responsibilities to get the nation back in business.



AS PART OF THE MARSHALL PLAN, THE ALLIED FORCES TOOK THE LEADERSHIP IN REBUILDING THE DESTRUCTION WROUGHT BY THE WAR. THIS GERMAN CITY, LIKE MANY OTHER CITIES ACROSS EUROPE, WAS LEVELLED BY CONSTANT BOMBING. PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC WELLISCH

### LEGACIES OF THE WAR: FOREIGN AID AND THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

In 1947, with the vast destruction and crushing debt of the war weighing heavily on Europe, General George Marshall suggested the possibility of foreign aid. Thus was born the European Recovery Program, commonly referred to as the Marshall Plan, an unprecedented program to rebuild nations destroyed by war. Although Spain, Finland, and the communist nations refused help, 16 other European nations had, by 1951 when the program ended, received over \$13 billion in aid and another \$1 billion in low-interest loans. The Marshall Plan was also extended to Japan, not just to rebuild that nation that was utterly decimated by years of war, but also to keep it out of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

Japan, along with the European nations, responded exceptionally well to the Marshall Plan. By following this example, the government of Japan continued to subsidize Japanese industry, promoting an economy devoted to peace rather than war. Experts readily attribute the success of Japan's economy to this relationship. In reflecting on the climate of Japan following the war, June Lamb, a witness to the Japanese reconstruction, cited the Japanese people's willingness "to be rid of their military-industrial complex."

The United States, on the other hand, with its preeminence of power firmly established and its economy in full swing due to the war effort, had become the world's largest producer of weaponry. Nearly 20 years later, Dwight D. Eisenhower, once the Supreme Allied Commander and chief planner of D-Day, upon leaving the office of the President of the United States issued a dire warning:

"Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry... But now...we annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.... Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together."

Asheville attorney **KARL STRAUS**, a German immigrant to the U.S. in the 1930s, spoke excellent German. At the end of the war he was assigned to the U.S. Treasury Department in the Division for Financial Intelligence. His job was to visit towns and villages and determine who had not enthusiastically supported the Nazi party and therefore could responsibly run the banks, tax collection, and custom divisions in each area. Through cross-referencing of party lists, interviews, and interrogation, he and his staff were able to effectively install responsible government in many areas. He recalls: "General Patton ran the 3rd Army in Bavaria. He made it public that he did not want denazification. 'If I can find someone to run the government then, by God, I want them to do it—I don't care about their background.' Nuremberg had lots of Nazis running the government because Patton did not care.... In the end, Patton war fired by Truman in part because of his attitude."

ade	JH, abbr. of <u>Jugendherberge</u> , f. youth hostel.
-	
-	<u>Judenbergriff</u> , m. legal definition of a Jew [given in the law of April 7, 1933 (RGBl. I, p. 175) and in executive decrees.]
abine, of pro-	<u>Judenfrage, Institut der NSDAP zur Erforschung der</u> Party Institute to study the Jewish Problem [established in 1939 in Frankfurt a. M. by taking over previous Jewish institutions. A special division of the <u>Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands</u> exists for the same purpose.]
own	<u>Judenrenosse</u> , m. Jewish proselyte, friend of Jews, philo-Semite.
pr-	
less	<u>Judensölding</u> , m. mercenary in the pay of Jews [Nazi propaganda slogan for liberals, democrats and Germans who stood firmly for the Weimar Republic.]
p	<u>Judenstämming</u> , m. descendant of Jews.
	<u>Judiz</u> , f. (= juristische Urteilsfähigkeit) judgment (in law).

THE U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT'S DIVISION FOR FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPED A DICTIONARY OF WORDS USED BY THE NAZIS DURING THE WAR. THIS HELPED INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS INTERROGATING SUSPECTED WAR CRIMINALS.

COURTESY OF KARL STRAUS

## LIFE IN EUROPE AFTER THE WAR

### GRAVES REGISTRATION

**D**uring the war, as soldiers died they were placed in graves close to where they had fallen. Following the war, the U.S. government offered to return each soldier to his hometown to be reburied with his family. Some families requested that this be done. Locally, **JESSE RAY, SR.**, owner of Jesse Ray Funeral Home went to Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, and England to perform this service for thousands of families.



JESSE RAY, SR. IN ENGLAND IN 1945  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIA RAY

His wife, **JULIA**, ran the family business while he was gone. She recalls: "While he was in England he was given the opportunity to live off base. He stayed with the Andrews family. He often said to me 'you have no idea how hard life has been for these folks.' Long after the war, there was still only electricity certain times of day; many items were in short supply. Because Jesse could shop at the PX (Post Exchange), the Andrews family was able to secure things that most British families could not. Jesse was gone for one year and during that time he only came across one grave from Asheville, which he made sure was carefully returned home."



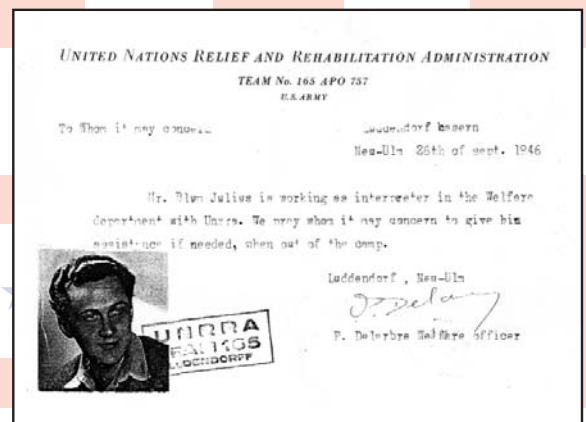
JESSE RAY, SR. IN THE 1940S  
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JULIA RAY

### DISPLACED PERSON'S CAMPS

All across Europe there were thousands of refugees who were wandering across the landscape looking for family with no home to return to. Many of these were death and slave labor camp survivors. Entire villages and families had been wiped out. Often when survivors did return home they found their houses taken over by neighbors who would beat and sometimes even kill them. The U.S. and the other Allies set up Displaced Persons Camps—DP camps. In these places refugees could be fed, clothed and systematically sent to a new home. The U.S., South America, and Israel were the primary destinations for these folks.

**JULIUS BLUM**, after his liberation from Mathausen Slave Labor Camp on May 14, 1945, eventually made his way to Leipheim Displaced Person's Camp. There the United Nations Relief Agency hired him to help in their efforts to find homes for the refugees. In one mission, Jules went to Hungary where he managed to move an entire orphanage of Jewish children to Israel.

**RICHARD JEWETT** commanded an Engineer's regiment at the end of the war. He was charged with building temporary facilities for the U.S. Army within Germany. While there he witnessed many of the difficulties that faced dislocated people. One episode he feels never received the attention that it deserved was the Soviet Red Army's treatment of displaced Russians, some of whom the Nazis had brought to Germany for slave labor. Stalin ruled the Soviet Union with an iron fist and sought to control the perceptions of his people. Returning Soviets would have brought fresh ideas home—something that threatened Stalin. At the Potsdam Conference, the Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin convinced Roosevelt and Churchill to repatriate all Soviet citizenry—including those who fought for the Nazis and those who were slaves to the Nazi regime. This meant delivering refugees to an unwelcoming home. "As I was driving around each day to the construction that I was doing I would drive by the railroad station. Each morning I would see groups of displaced persons being escorted down to the railroad station by MPs. Each day I found...about half of each group coming up to the railroad station would kill themselves rather than go back to Russia. Later we found out that Stalin would have most of them shot and the rest of them sent to Siberia." Of the repatriated Soviets, only an estimated 15% were allowed to return directly to their homes.



THIS IDENTIFICATION CARD ALLOWED JULES BLUM TO MOVE AROUND EUROPE AS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AGENCY.  
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## RESUMING LIFE IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Once the war was over, first in Europe in May 1945 and three months later in the Pacific, the soldiers and their sweethearts were anxious to return to the business of living: pursuing an education, landing a job, and raising a family. The return of the veterans—mostly ages 19-25—sparked a number of trends that still shape our nation and our world today.

### THE GI BILL

Sweeping legislation was passed that paid for the education of hundreds of thousands of returning veterans along with loans for homes. **ALAN NEILSON** used the GI Bill to go to North Carolina State University. He and his wife, Lucille, recall the hurriedly constructed housing for the newlywed veterans and the fun the young couples had together. They struggled to make it to the end of each month on the tiny allotments. More than once Lucille would say, "If the check doesn't come tomorrow I am going to call Daddy." Alan would generally reply, "Wait one more day." Sure enough it would arrive—for the two of them and most families on the street.



ALAN NEILSON AND LUCILLE ROBERTS GOT MARRIED SOON AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE SERVICE. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAN AND LUCILLE NEILSON

### WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

During the war, women had stepped into jobs that previously would have been unheard of. Women drove trucks, flew airplanes, built battle ships and much more. Prior to the war, women accounted for 20% of the workforce. That figure rose to 34% during the war but only half of those women remained in the work force after the war ended.

**MARGARET ENSLEY** at age 18 was the first woman to work as a laboratory technician at the Asheville based Southern Dairies National Products with Sealtest. Later she was promoted to a supervisory position. She recalls: "I liked my job and my men. They treated me as their sister. Since I was tiny, they would never let me fill my test bottle from the heavy sulfuric acid jug. They taught me how to roll a ten-gallon milk can and how to scrub the milk stone... I even picked up a few very choice words of profanity from them, which I still use on the proper occasion today."

As the war was winding down, the armed forces scheduled the return of the soldiers in stages. Many women were delighted to go back to the work of a home and raising a family. Others felt they deserved respect and the continued access to good jobs because of their contributions to the war effort.

**BEULAH KING**, of Asheville, grew up on a farm in Minnesota. She recalls the advertisements in the farming

community aimed at young women who were known to have powerful upper body strength from farm work. She and thousands of other women went to California and worked in the airline industry—many of them wielding drills. She recalls that while she was at Ryan's Manufacturing in San Diego one of her jobs was to put in the "pilots relief." This was a cylinder attached to the floor of the airplane that allowed pilots to urinate during flight. Retuning soldiers expressed their gratitude for her war effort. But in 1944, the men began to come back from the war and take over the positions of women. She recollected the difficulty of trying to train the men. "They did not want me to teach them anything" despite her skill and years of experience at welding.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF SEGREGATION

By the end of the war there were over 1.2 million African American servicemen and women in the armed forces compared to 4,000 in 1941. Having paid the same price for freedom as every other American, they reiterated their demand that they be treated as equal citizens and redoubled their efforts to see that day come. Their actions started the beginnings of the modern day Civil Rights movement.

**BARNEY GRAY**, age 20, recalls his discharge from Ft. Smith, Arkansas: "We had all these medals and badges on our uniforms. But back in the U.S., it was just the same. I walked into the bus station and was going to buy me a ticket to Virginia. I did not look for signs. I thought all that was settled now. The guy at the counter said, 'Now look, Nigger, your damn place is next door. Now get!'...I went next door and there were the signs I had not noticed before "white only" and "colored." I was hungry but couldn't go to the restaurant on the other side: 'whites only' the sign said. A lady said, "I'll help you" and got me a ham sandwich. Then I went on the bus and sat right behind the driver. He stood up and put his hand on the seat 'Don't you ever park your black ass here again or I'll kick the living daylight out of you.'"



BARNIE GRAY IN UNIFORM PHOTO COURTESY OF BARNIE GRAY

### HOPES AND DREAMS

Many GI s talked about what they were going to do when they got home—that dream often times kept them going. **HARRY POPKIN** and his two younger brothers, of Georgia, were stationed all over the world but would write to one another. During their years in the service they hatched a plan. "If we survive this, let's start a summer camp." After the war they and their wives scraped together all their funds and borrowed the rest and eventually established Camp Blue Star in Hendersonville.