



THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM

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945 Magazine St., New Orleans, LA 70130
 nationalww2museum.org
 504-528-1944 / 877-813-3329

MISSION STATEMENT

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world — why it was fought, how it was won and what it means today — so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

HOURS OF OPERATION

All Museum venues are open seven days a week.
 9:00 AM — 5:00 PM

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Mardi Gras Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day

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ON THE COVER

WWII veterans at the grand opening of the
 Solomon Victory Theater Complex in 2009

From the President



DR. GORDON H. "NICK" MUELLER
 PRESIDENT & CEO

When WWII veteran Louis Zamperini, the Olympic runner whose story became the subject of the book *Unbroken*, visited the Museum in 2011, he recorded an oral history interview and signed copies of the best seller. But over lunch with a handful of Museum staffers, the spry, 90-something war figure spoke less of his own place in history than his dedication to reaching out to those torn by war.

Zamperini kept a busy schedule of traveling and meeting with families who lost someone during WWII, or saw loved ones left deeply wounded and changed by wartime experiences. He confided, "For many of them, the war isn't even over."

This inspiring veteran's visit takes on added importance now that he is no longer with us. Zamperini died in July, five months before the scheduled release of *Unbroken*, directed by Angelina Jolie. We are reminded that Zamperini's generous efforts on behalf of those impacted by war have so much in common with a key part of our Museum's mission.

As we join other organizations in recognizing Veterans Day on November 11, our institution will continue to demonstrate its commitment to American veterans from

all military conflicts, including those who recently served in Afghanistan and Iraq. We share a special concern for those impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder.

Hiring military veterans where we can, we host community job fairs for veterans and cultivate relationships with Wounded Warriors and war-orphan organizations.



LOUIS ZAMPERINI
 WWII VETERAN AT THE MUSEUM

We also offer programming that educates the public on the challenges veterans face. Notably, this has included our 2011 screening of the important HBO documentary *He Has Seen War* and, last year, the local premiere of Jake Runestad's orchestral and choral composition *Dreams of the Fallen*.

We will always honor those who have sacrificed to protect our freedoms, as we seek out ways to enhance their lives. And the Museum will never forget the spouses, children and others who suffered because a beloved servicemember never made it home.

EXPANSION

My Journey to Debut in December



A— Walt (L) and Roland
(R) Ehlers

In June 1944, Walter Ehlers performed actions at Normandy for which he received the Medal of Honor. On June 6, his brother Roland was killed approaching Omaha Beach when his landing craft was hit by mortar fire.

Theirs are just two of the real-life stories that will be featured in an exciting new exhibit experience starting this December. *My Journey* will begin in the Museum's *Train Car Experience*, where guests can choose to follow Walt, Roland, or one of 27 other participants as they begin the journey to war. Working their way through the Museum, visitors will learn how their servicemember or civilian

eyewitness would have factored into the events portrayed in the exhibits. Digitally enhanced "dog tags" and interactive kiosks add detail and unique perspectives throughout, continuing the Museum's tradition of telling the story of WWII in a way that is personal and engaging.

Initially, *My Journey* will encompass exhibits within *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries*, but eventually the technology will be integrated into future exhibits such as *Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries* and a planned Home Front exhibit. As part of that expansion, new stories of individuals will be added for an even richer experience.

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Honoring Our Veterans



A

At The National WWII Museum, the mission to honor those who fought for freedom when the fate of the world hung in the balance is the cornerstone of everything we do. As we preserve their memories and pay homage to their sacrifice, we also honor their legacy by supporting the brave men and women who serve in the military today.

The Museum is proud to have hosted many military retirement and reenlistment ceremonies, veterans' job fairs, and other events. Last year, we offered Museum members an opportunity to provide another kind of support: a collaborative show of gratitude with a very special banner project.

The response was tremendous. We received nearly 5,000 patchwork pieces, each personalized with a heartfelt message of thanks. The pieces were assembled into an 8x10-foot banner and displayed in the Museum. The "Thank You for My Freedom" banner was a moving presence during the Veterans Day week of activities and served as a visual representation of the amazing support of our over 130,000 national members—including nearly 1,000 in the exclusive Patriots Circle.

In the summer, our members received an invitation to contribute a square to this year's "Salute to Freedom" banner. We're still collecting, so if you haven't returned your tribute, please do so today to ensure

your message is included. The final banner will be displayed at the Museum, with pictures posted on our website. We hope you will add your piece to this year's banner and visit us on November 11 when we come together to say, "Thank you for my freedom."

Learn more about Veterans Day events at myveteransday.org or post on our Facebook page to express your gratitude. And if you yourself are a veteran, thank you for all you have done, and happy Veterans Day.

For more information on where to send your tribute, contact the Membership Department at —

504-528-1944 x 290

EVENTS

Air Power Expo



A— WWII veterans pose with the banner made from individual notes of thanks from our members.

B— An 8th Air Force B-17E comes in for a landing at an airbase in England after attacking targets in Europe in July 1944.

Together with the Commemorative Air Force, the Museum will present the Airpower History Tour at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport this October.

Stephen Watson, executive vice president of the Museum, explains, "We have been able to introduce visitors to aircraft that made up a large portion of the arsenal of democracy. By partnering with the CAF, we are allowing guests to get a close-up view and have a conversation with pilots, restoration crews, and WWII veterans to learn even more about these planes and their role in history."

The Commemorative Air Force is the world's largest collection of vintage military aircraft, with 164 aircraft operated and

cared for by over 10,000 members across 28 states. Among the CAF aircraft collection to appear at the show are the P-51 Mustang, B-17 Flying Fortress, and B-25 Mitchell, along with an assortment of other fighters, trainers, and liaison aircraft.

A major star of the show is one of the rarest WWII bombers in the world: FIFI, the only flying Boeing B-29 Superfortress. The B-29 was designed as a replacement for the older B-17s and B-24s, having the longer range and greater bomb loads necessary for WWII's Pacific theater. But by the early 1970s, FIFI was being used as a missile target at a US Navy Proving Ground. She was rescued and restored by the CAF, and now travels coast to coast attracting large crowds at every stop. Another show

highlight: the Hangar Dance in the airport's newly refurbished terminal, featuring the Victory Big Band and Victory Belles.

The tour will be open to the public October 24–26, 10:00 am–5:00 pm. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults; \$10 for children, seniors, and military; \$75 for the Hangar Dance. Advance tickets are available now, including a \$100 VIP All-Access Pass.

The Airpower History Tour is sponsored in New Orleans by The New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau and Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Smith Lupo.

Find out more or purchase tickets at —

nationalww2museum.org

Mr. and Mrs. James R. Fisher, Sr. Honor Their Family's Service



JAMES "JIM" R. FISHER, SR.
MUSEUM TRUSTEE

In this edition of *V-Mail*, the Museum is proud to highlight two of our greatest supporters, Mr. and Mrs. James R. Fisher, Sr. Together they have generously underwritten the *Air War* gallery in the upcoming *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries* in memory of Mr. Fisher's parents, James J. Fisher, Jr., and Frances D. Fisher.

James "Jim" R. Fisher, a current Museum trustee, was born in Manhattan. His parents, James J. Fisher, Jr., and Frances D. Fisher, then moved the family to Paramus, New Jersey, where Jim attended Bergen Catholic High School and then went on to graduate from Lafayette College.

Jim's father enlisted in the Army Air Forces right after Pearl Harbor and was stationed at Grafton Underwood, a former WWII airfield in England. He was legally blind in one eye but bribed someone to tell him the answers to the eye exam so he could enlist. James Fisher served when the survival rate for airmen was less than 15%, and approximately 80% of crews were either shot down or captured, ending up in prisoner of war camps. Despite the odds

against him, James flew 31 missions in B-17s, primarily as a tail gunner, and was awarded several medals for his service, including the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, Jim's father met Frances, "a conservative Irish girl," and soon thereafter he told her, "I'm going to marry you." Six months later they were married.

James "didn't talk much about the war until the 1980s, and then he became a lot more forthcoming," his son says. Jim vividly remembers the day his father began to open up. In 1980, Jim was living in Manhattan and had returned home to visit his parents. His mother handed him a letter from a man James had befriended during the war. Jim began to read the letter, the words written from an adult man who had been 12 years old when he met James. Now grown, the man had found James again through the war department. In his letter, Jim learned "how absolutely amazing my father was to his family during the war, bringing them food and other supplies from the base. He wrote, 'I always thought I would see you on the telly running for president.' As soon as my father read the letter, he instantly began to cry and left the room. After that, he became a lot more forthcoming with his WWII stories and experiences."

When Jim was a young boy, his father gave all of his WWII medals to him, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. As kids, Jim and his friends would play "Army" after watching the popular 1960s show *Combat*. He thought that while playing this game he had lost all of his father's medals, and his father then had to write to have all of them reissued. Years later, after Frances had passed away and Jim was moving his dad to a new home, they went through his childhood bedroom. It was then that together they found "all the original medals in the back of my sock drawer. You would have thought he'd be mad after all that, but all he did was laugh."

Donald Miller, author and Presidential Counselor for the Museum, met Jim Fisher through his role as a history professor at Lafayette College, Jim's alma mater. One night the two men were talking and Miller took notice of how much Jim knew about WWII. Jim told him why, and when Miller's book *Masters of the Air* came out, the two spent a lot of time discussing the book and Jim's father's role in the Air War.

Unbeknownst to Jim, Miller tapped Governor Pete Wilson, Museum Trustee and Capital Campaign Committee chair, to call Jim's office. Governor Wilson introduced himself and asked if Jim would consider joining the Museum's Board of Trustees. Without hesitation, he immediately accepted. Upon Jim's first visit to the Museum, he encountered a WWII veteran walking around the campus with his children and his grandchildren. The veteran had on a baseball cap with his unit number, and was wearing his medals proudly. He took his family around the exhibits, talking to them and sharing his stories. You could "just see the pride, despite his age and his difficulty moving

around. That was my favorite memory. It made me wish that my dad could have been here to see the Museum."

Jim has tremendous respect for the WWII generation. He could not imagine doing what they did, especially at such a young age. When he was in his late teens and early 20s, "all I was interested in was having a good time. And here these fellas were saving the world. We just can't thank them enough, which is why I got involved with the Museum. If it wasn't for them, I don't know what the world would have turned out to be. That is why they are called the Greatest Generation, and in my personal opinion, they are."

Jim hopes to inspire others to support The National WWII Museum's mission. "When I first got involved there were six million living WWII veterans. Last statistic I saw said it is now less than two million. By the time we finish the capital campaign, it will be less than one million. That is very sad because the Museum is a monument to this generation. It would be nice to see us finish the expansion before they are all gone."



B

A— Staff Sergeant James J. Fisher, Jr.

B— Fisher with his flight crew

Photos courtesy of James "Jim" Fisher, Sr.

Find out more about the Museum's expansion at —

nationalww2museum.org/expansion

Reflecting on the Japanese American Experience

The Imahara Family



The March 20 opening of our special exhibit *From Barbed Wire to Battlefields: Japanese American Experiences in WWII* was attended by several Japanese American WWII veterans, including Larry Yatsu, Ted Yenari (who has since passed away), and Tokuji “Toke” Yoshihashi. Also in attendance were Walter Imahara, his wife, Sumi, and his sister, Lily Imahara Metz, who saw a very different side of the war.

The Imaharas were imprisoned in the Jerome and Rohwer War Relocation Centers in Arkansas, two of ten American “internment camps” that housed nearly 120,000 individuals of Japanese descent. Poston War Relocation Center in Arizona was one of Sumi Imahara’s childhood homes. Over 60 percent of those imprisoned were American citizens like

the Imaharas, and a large percentage were under age 15.

Walter and Lily were two of nine children born to James and Haruka Imahara. James was born in 1903 in Watsonville, California. In his 20s, he bought 60 acres of farmland and raised fruit trees, poultry, and a growing family. Uprooted by WWII and by Executive Order 9066—which created a Civilian Exclusion Zone and paved the way for the detention and imprisonment of people of Japanese descent—the young family was taken to Fresno Assembly Center and then to War Relocation Centers in Arkansas for the duration of the war.

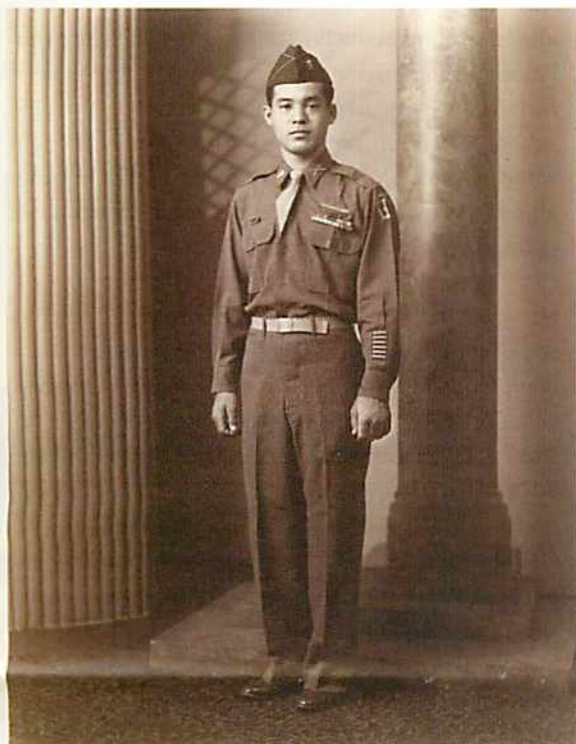
James later moved his family to Louisiana and began a greenhouse nursery, sod farm, and landscaping company now run by his

granddaughter, Wanda Metz Chase. Eight of the Imahara children went on to college. Walter became one of four Imahara men to serve in the US Armed Forces. It was while stationed at an Army base in Germany that he met Sumi—then an English teacher at the American school. The two have been married for over 50 years. After returning to Louisiana, Walter helped run the family business.

James Imahara died in 2000, but not before creating, in his retirement years, hundreds of Japanese calligraphy wood carvings. These wood carvings can be seen at Imahara’s Botanical Garden in St. Francisville, Louisiana, established and run by Walter. The gardens, which contain thousands of azaleas, are open to the public.

From Barbed Wire to Battlefields

Profile — Yeiki Kobashigawa



A— James Imahara with son Walter and granddaughter Wanda, three generations of Imahara's Nursery

B— Yeiki Kobashigawa in 1945

C— Medal of Honor Awarded to Yeiki Kobashigawa

Yeiki Kobashigawa was born in Hilo, Hawaii, to Japanese immigrants. In 1941, he was drafted into the Army, becoming an original member of the 100th Battalion. Kobashigawa served honorably, earning the Distinguished Service Cross.

After the war, Kobashigawa returned to Hawaii, worked for Hawaiian Cement, and raised a family. Then, in 2000, Kobashigawa received word that his Distinguished Service Cross was being upgraded to the Medal of Honor. After an investigation revealed discrimination in the way medals were originally awarded, a total of 21 Asian American veterans, including US Senator Daniel Inouye, received new medals (14 of them posthumously).



Kobashigawa's Medal of Honor citation:

Technical Sergeant Yeiki Kobashigawa distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 2 June 1944, in the vicinity of Lanuvio, Italy. During an attack, Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa's platoon encountered strong enemy resistance from a series of machine guns providing supporting fire. Observing a machine gun nest 50 yards from his position, Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa crawled forward with one of his men, threw a grenade and then charged the enemy with his submachine gun while a fellow soldier provided covering fire. He killed one enemy soldier and captured two prisoners. Meanwhile, Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa and his comrade were fired upon by another machine gun 50 yards ahead. Directing a squad to advance to his first position, Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa again moved forward with a fellow soldier to subdue the second machine gun nest. After throwing grenades into the position, Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa provided close supporting fire while a fellow soldier charged, capturing four prisoners. On the alert for other machine gun nests, Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa discovered four more, and skillfully led a squad in neutralizing two of them. Technical Sergeant Kobashigawa's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.

Kobashigawa's Distinguished Service Cross and Medal of Honor can be seen as part of the exhibit, courtesy of his family.

From Barbed Wire to Battlefields: Japanese American Experiences in WWII was made possible through a gift from the Annenberg Foundation with additional support from the Eugenie and Joseph Jones Foundation.

Find out more about the special exhibit at —

barbedwiretobattlefields.org

A Citizen Soldier's Return

The GI Bill of 1944



A

A— William J. Boylhart, Jr. (in uniform) with his father after William's return home from overseas, March 1946. Gift of Robert Millett from the collection of The National WWII Museum.

June 1944 was a time of great military advancement for the Allies: the liberation of Rome, the dramatic Normandy landings, the Saipan offensive in the Pacific, and the Soviet launch of the massive Bagration offensive all took place during that historic month. As the Allies exerted greater pressure against Axis powers, anticipation of the war's end was growing.

To citizen soldiers in the midst of the fighting, survival was the primary daily consideration. But leaders in the US government and military had to consider what sort of country these new veterans would return to, and shape a postwar national program that would give their sacrifices meaning and make their futures prosperous.

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944—nicknamed the "GI Bill of Rights"—introduced earlier that year and passed unanimously by Congress.

Part of the motivation behind the GI Bill was fear that the economy could not absorb large numbers of demobilized soldiers at war's end. The legislation

aimed to control the flow of veterans back into the labor market, offering veterans (no combat experience required) access to university, vocational, and high school education, plus housing and medical benefits while in school. Veterans could also opt for low-interest loans to start their own businesses, or up to one year of unemployment benefits.

However, in 1944 there were already signs that the social changes wrought by the war had created a completely new American environment. Harvard economist Alvin Hansen wrote that year in *The Nation*, "We have suddenly realized this enormous advance in productive capacity. We did not know we had it in 1940." Passed in an energized economy, the GI Bill added fuel for a vast increase in human capital and wealth creation by offering returning veterans the financial means to create better postwar lives. Eight million veterans took advantage of these opportunities in the decade after the war's end, and through greater workforce productivity, the GI Bill lit a tremendous economic expansion that lasted for decades after the war.

The legislation's greatest legacy was the subtle humanistic values it promoted in June 1944. At a time when men and women risked all to defeat totalitarianism, the GI Bill gave individuals the right to determine for themselves the best paths toward their own happiness. For American citizen soldiers, a better future marked by freedom and opportunity was the national promise that awaited them when they returned home.

Article by Dr. Keith Huxen, the Samuel Zemurray Stone Senior Director of History and Research

For more on 70th anniversaries of WWII, visit —

www2m.com

MEMBERSHIP

Join the Patriots Circle on the Road to Berlin

Don't miss your chance to attend the grand opening of our new exhibit, *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries* in the new Campaigns of Courage: European and Pacific Theaters pavilion.

As a Patriots Circle member, you are guaranteed a VIP seat as we cut the ribbon on yet another exciting venue this December.

Patriots Circle members are a key part of grand openings at the Museum, and we hope that tradition will continue and grow with your new membership.

Enroll as a Patriots Circle member before October 24 to receive your exclusive invitation to the grand opening.

As our special guest, you will be among the first to have access to these galleries and the extraordinary festivities that are the hallmark of grand openings at the Museum.

Memberships range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 annually and drive the development of new content at the Museum. Flexible payment options are available.

Invitations will only be sent to active Patriots Circle members.

Call Patriots Circle Coordinator Michael Sistrunk at 504-528-1944 x 433 for information or enroll today online at —

nationalww2museum.org/give

EVENTS

The 2014 International Conference on WWII

1944: Beyond All Boundaries

More than 500 visitors from around the world are expected to attend the 2014 International Conference on WWII, to be hosted by the Museum this December. This year's conference focuses on the momentous year of 1944 in four central themes: *The Global Crusade—Priming the Charge; Beyond All Boundaries—The Barrage; Unintended Consequences—Blowback; Our Own Worst Enemy—Missing the Mark.*

Organizers are busy putting the finishing touches on the event schedule, which is filled with lectures, book talks, meet-and-greet sessions, and other special events. Sessions are led by distinguished scholars, decorated veterans, and award-winning historians, including Rick Atkinson, Joe Balkoski, Antony Beevor, Richard Frank, Jim Hornfischer, Don Miller, Doug Porch, and Gerhard Weinberg. As always, one of the most thrilling aspects of the conference is the presence and participation of the veterans themselves, whose unique stories give each topic a wonderfully human perspective.

Another conference highlight is sure to be the first-person accounts, notably the "Oral History Showcases" set to precede most sessions. Additionally this year, the Museum has organized a special session that is sure to be quite memorable: "D-Day in Their Own Words: An International

Veterans' Panel" brings together WWII veterans to talk about their experiences on June 6, 1944—including former allies and adversaries. American, British, Canadian, and German veterans will be represented, sharing their personal stories from both sides of the Atlantic Wall. In addition to the panel discussion, these veterans will be available to interact with the attendees throughout the weekend.

Over the years, the International Conference has become known as a marquee event for historians, scholars, and aficionados of WWII, selling out quickly and talked about long after the last session adjourns. All of us at the Museum are honored to be able to host so many veterans and enthusiasts this year as we mark the fourth installment in our 70th Anniversary Conference Series.

New to this year's offerings, guests can join us for a pre-conference, one-day symposium on D-Day. Presented by *World War II Magazine* and the Weider History Group, only a few spaces remain for this exclusive event.

Presented by Tawani Foundation in association with Pritzker Military Museum & Library, with additional support from *World War II Magazine* and Weider History Group.



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For more information and to register for the 2014 International Conference, visit —

ww2conference.com

Museum Hosts Louisiana History Day Students

Vichy France, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, the formation of the Motion Picture Association of America, and the Cristero War are just a few of the topics researched by Louisiana students for the 2014 National History Day Contest.

On April 12, 250 middle and high school students—the top performers from five regional contests held throughout Louisiana—displayed their original exhibits, documentaries, live performances, websites, and research papers at The National WWII Museum in hopes of advancing to the National Contest.

The theme of the contest, “Rights and Responsibilities in History,” inspired projects focused on civil rights, labor struggles, the US Constitution, and

international relations. Each student’s project was reviewed by a panel of judges, and students were granted 15 minutes to answer questions related to their research process.

The top two entries in each category were selected to represent Louisiana at the National History Day Contest at the University of Maryland in June. One project team was also invited to display its exhibit on Vichy France at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Kudos to all the participants for the truly impressive work they completed.

The 2014 Louisiana History Day Contests are generously supported by the Union Pacific Foundation with additional support by CenturyLink.



A— Sixty-five students will represent Louisiana at the National History Day Contest in College Park, Maryland.

B— Students from John Dibert Community School prepare for their match.

C— Sarah Potts explains her exhibit on the history of copyright laws to the judges.

Robotics Challenge Combines History, Sci-Tech, and Fun



B

Middle school students from across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas converged on the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center on May 10 for the Museum's second annual Robotics Challenge. Working together over a period of four months, teams designed, built, and programmed an autonomous robot using the LEGO® MINDSTORMS® robotics platform.

Presented with D-Day-related challenges, teams scored points on the WWII-themed playing field when their robots completed missions like deciphering an encrypted message, avoiding beach obstacles, unloading soldiers from a Higgins boat, and delivering airborne troops to the drop zone. In addition to building a robot, each

team completed a research project in which they designed a device to improve the safety of troops landing on Omaha and Utah beaches. Teams built a model of their device, wrote a government proposal, and filmed a promotional video.

The *Grand Champion Award* was presented to The Tiger Techs from Florida Avenue Elementary—the team that embodied the spirit of innovation and teamwork by excelling in all areas of the Challenge, including robot design, robot performance, and the research project.

Robot Performance Awards were presented to the highest-scoring teams in the robot missions: Teams competed in two matches, and their highest score was considered.

Project Awards honored teams for designing an innovative and effective device, and communicating clearly through a cohesive presentation. Teams recognized for robot design utilized outstanding engineering design and a well-planned strategy to produce an efficient, effective and reliable robot.

Judges' Awards were presented to teams deserving special recognition from the judges.

The Museum's robotics program is sponsored by AT&T, Chevron, and Entergy New Orleans with additional support from the Bruce J. Heim Foundation and Crystal Clear Imaging.



C

Find out more about this and other educational opportunities at —

nationalww2museum.org/learn

Captain T. Moffatt Burriss and the Waal River Crossing

September 20, 1944 — As the green light flashed on in his C-47, paratrooper T. Moffatt Burriss jumped from its door, noticing the large area of green grass that was his drop zone below. Captain Burriss, Commander of I Company, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, had jumped once before into combat at Sicily, fought through Italy, and survived weeks of near-constant combat at Anzio. He was now part of the largest airborne operation ever mounted: Operation Market Garden.

On the ground, Burriss realized his company had made a perfect jump, landing a few feet from their assembly point. He recalled thinking, "Maybe we will be home by Christmas!" Things went downhill from there.

The bridge at Nijmegen, the major objective for the 82nd, would prove difficult to capture. Burriss recalled, "The major bridge across the Waal River was held by German SS troops and Tiger Tanks . . . we didn't have the right kind of weapons with us to fight armor . . . so we were having a hard time." Well-armed Waffen SS troops held the bridge, forcing the Allies to approach from both the north and south to capture it.

It was decided that elements of the 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment would cross the swift-flowing Waal in boats and attack the enemy along the northern bank. "When the boats arrived on the British trucks, we were horrified," Burriss recalled. "They were folding, canvas boats you wouldn't want to cross a swimming pool in." Worse, the boats were not available until that afternoon, so Burriss and his fellow paratroopers would cross the Waal River in open view of the enemy in broad daylight.

The boats were loaded into the water, two engineers per boat to steer. As soon as they hit the open water, they came under heavy fire from the Germans on the other side of the river. Burriss recalled, "As we started across, men were slumping in my boat, and the engineer that was steering it, I saw his wrist turn red and he said, 'Captain, take the rudder, I've been hit.' As I reached over to take the rudder he caught a 20mm high explosive round in the head. It blew his head completely off and I was covered with his blood and brains and caught shrapnel in my side . . . his shoulders went over into the water and the current turned the boat upstream, so I had to dump him overboard to get the boat straightened up."

The Germans directed everything they could at the approaching GIs—machine-gun fire, 20mm gunfire, and artillery. Burriss remembered, "The water actually looked like a hailstorm was hitting it. Little spouts of water were shooting up in the air. Men were slumping in the boats. There were supposed to be 17 paddles per boat, but there were only 5 on average. They said paddle with your rifle butts."



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Wounded, Burriss continued to lead his men into the fight. The wounded and those surprisingly unscathed charged forward in an attack against the machine guns ahead. With coordinated effort, the guns were knocked out and the American troops proceeded under heavy fire across a mile of open pasture to the dike. Burriss ordered his men to toss their grenades over to knock out the remaining German troops. After an earth-shaking explosion, the very German gunners that had just attempted to slaughter the paratroopers began to stand up. Burriss recalled—

B



"I didn't know if they were giving up, whether they had grenades behind their backs or what. At that time, none of us even hesitated about shooting them. They had, just 30 seconds before that, been mowing our men down.

We were in a frenzy, you might say almost out of control."

A— T. Moffatt Burriss as a Lieutenant standing in the door of a C-47.

B— Captain T. Moffatt Burriss and his "stick" loading the C-47 for Operation Market Garden. Burriss is standing 4th from the right holding a Thompson Submachine Gun.



A

After securing the dike and the road that ran along top of it, the men of H and I Companies formed up as best they could and headed to the northern end of the railroad bridge and the main highway bridge. Intense fighting occurred into the night. Despite extreme losses to the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the daring maneuver to cross the Waal had been a success. In reflection, Burriss noted, "I guess you could say that was the closest I came to believing that I might not make it."

T. Moffatt Burriss remained in combat through the end of the war. His story will be featured in the upcoming galleries *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries* in the Campaigns of Courage pavilion opening this December. He was interviewed in Columbia, South Carolina, on December 9, 2013 by Historian/Curator Tommy Lofton.

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