

## **World War II and Its Effects on Marshall**

By Tasha Beard, Trena Kiger, Tanecia Myles, & Bryan Reed

World War II was a conflict involving every nation of the world in fighting that extended over many parts of the world. There were no less than 56 countries fighting in the war. The axis powers were Germany, Japan, and Italy (until 1943). The allies were Great Britain, United States, Soviet Union, China, France, and Canada. World War II was fast moving and there were many new military developments, such as the use of parachutes, radar, sonar, suicide airplanes, and the atomic bomb. World War II was a tragic time in the world's history. This war caused many people to suffer. It cost 55 million lives and there was material damage of 3 billion dollars.

Women played a bigger part in this war than in any other war. Women served in the Armed Forces as nurses, technicians, and clerks. They also took the place of men in factories and on farms.

There were also many geographic changes because of the war. Maps changed greatly as the Soviet Union annexed territory along its western borders. The map was then redrawn throughout the rest of Europe. Germany and Korea were each divided into Communist and free sections. All of Western Europe and most of the Balkans came under Soviet domination. European colonies in Africa and Asia began demanding independence. There was also a Jewish state called Israel that was carved out of Palestine.

In 1940 the relationship between America and Japan began declining. Franklin D. Roosevelt had stopped the sale of scrap iron and steel to the Japanese. By the winter of 1940-1941 Japan could no longer buy any strategic material in the United States. This meant that the Japanese would have to cut short their policy of conquests in Asia unless they expanded their conquests to acquire the rich resources of the Netherlands. Roosevelt then ordered all Japanese assets in the United States frozen and warned the Japanese about any further advances into Southeast Asia after they moved their way into Southern Indochina. This is reason for the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The attack on Pearl Harbor happened on the morning of Sunday, December 7, 1941. While most of the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii slept, a Japanese naval task force approached undetected through the darkness. From the decks of its aircraft carriers a wave of fighters and bombers, 189 in all, took off and then split into two attack groups. One group bombed the air bases of Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, and Ford Island where the American planes, unaware still, remained on the ground. The other group had started to attack the American fleet; then a second and third group of Japanese planes were sent out against the islands.

In less than two hours the Japanese had destroyed the heart of the American Pacific fleet. Five of the eight battleships were sunk or crippled, all nineteen warships were hit, and 2,086 naval officers and men were killed. The Army lost 237 men, the use of its airbases and a large part of its airforce. On December 8, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan; three days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

When the war began, the United States had one million trained men under arms. Eventually an army of 11,260,000 was raised including 90 divisions of ground forces and 2,340,000 men in the Air Force. The Navy had 4,183,000 men and the Marines 669,000. By 1945 the United States had become the largest naval force ever with 10,562 ships, including 1,258 warships.

In 1942 both Russia and the United States joined to produce one of the largest armies ever. The allies had 220,000 tanks against the axis, which had 50,000 tanks. The allies could not, however, claim the same expertise as the Germans, but they could defeat them by brute force alone.

The United States won the war with the use of the atomic bomb. In 1939 atomic physicists in America were convinced that uranium could be used to create a new source of energy. They feared that the German government would do research and try to develop an instrument that would do a lot of destruction. General Szilard split the first atom; he then had a conversation with Einstein. Einstein sent President Roosevelt a letter telling him about these new findings. Roosevelt then agreed that research should be done on the bomb and a team of scientists was formed to develop it.

The research was called the Manhattan Project and it took place in Los Alamos, New Mexico. This was a highly secret project, which only the President and some government officials knew about. Some of the main people in charge were Leslie Groves, Robert J. Oppenheimer, the scientific director, and Enrico Fermi, an Italian scientist.

When FDR died, Truman took over and the Secretary of War, Timson, informed Truman of the bomb. Truman had five options to choose from, one of which was to drop the bomb. The effect of dropping the bomb was that people as far as two miles away had their skin burnt off, 46 square miles were gone, and 80,000 people died instantly. There were 10,000 people missing, 37,000 seriously injured, and many that would suffer long-term effects such as cancer and birth defects. When we dropped the first bomb, the Japanese failed to surrender. They finally surrendered after we dropped the second bomb August 14, 1945, on what was called VJ day.

During the war there were many people who served in the Armed Forces. Unfortunately we could not get an exact number of how many from the surrounding communities went, however, we did get to interview Verner Adams who was from Marshall and a prisoner of war. Verner was 19 years old when he went to serve in the war; he had not even been out of high school a year. He did not mind to go to the war because his buddies went and he said he was not any different from them. However, none of his friends went to the exact same place he did; they were scattered all over different places. Adams was sent to many camps and places during the war. He started off in the 75th division and was sent to camp Grant up around Chicago. Then he was sent to Fort Leonardwood and there he was in basic training. Next he was sent to Texas and Louisiana on maneuvers, and from there he went to a camp in Kentucky and that is where he left his outfit for the 75th division. Then he went to Maryland and there he was issued a khaki uniform and that meant he was going to the Pacific. He did not want to go to the jungles so he was given an OD outfit, which is a winter wool outfit. He then knew he would be sent to Europe. He was sent to Boston, Massachusetts, and shipped out there. He described it as one of the biggest convoys ever, any direction he looked all he could see were ships. Adams then landed in South Hampton in England and he went through training again. When he left there he went across the channel a

few days after D-Day and joined the 4th infantry. He was a replacement; he went in and replaced men who were wounded or killed. This division had the job of taking over a particular area and then waiting for another outfit to come and take over. They did the same thing again and again until they broke through to the open country so the tanks could take off.



Verner was a Mortar Sergeant in the war. A Mortar Sergeant is a Weapon Sergeant in the 66mm mortar in the Infantry Company on the front line. He was in the weapons platoon in the infantry in the Rifle Company. He was on the front line all the time. Conditions during the war were rough. Adams had to sleep on the ground in a foxhole because there were no beds. He had holes in the bottom of his shoes and no coat or hat. They had no baths and the only clothes they had were the clothes on their backs.



Verner had hard times during the war. The Germans captured Adams on the 20th of December 1944. The Germans overran his company in a battle at the Historic Hat Factory in Luxembourg. After fighting for five days and four nights against a tank, the company finally ran out of ammunition, and survivors were reduced to 20 men. Adams was held prisoner for four months. He was actually held in a prison about one month out of the four; the rest of the time he was marched from one village to another. He was held prisoner for a hundred and twenty days in the dead of winter with nothing to wear but the uniform he had on his back. Verner was not given very much to eat all the time he was held prisoner. All he received a day was a thin slice of black bread, a bowl of grass soup which Verner describes as grass that had been boiled in water, and once in a while, a boiled potato.

Since their food rations were very scant, by the time Adams made it home he had lost almost 100 pounds. The Germans treated the prisoners kind of rough. They were nearly starved to death, were pushed and beaten, and were given no medical care. After four months of being harshly treated, he was finally rescued by the American troops from a barn on April 20, 1945. He doesn't really know what happened during this time because he had passed out. When he woke up, he was in a hospital tent somewhere but did not know where. Then he was sent to France overnight and on to a hospital in England. From there he was sent home on condole sent leave. There is one thing that he remembers from the war and that is to look after yourself, and do not make too good of friends because your friend was liable to get killed.

We also read the book by Charlie Dukes called "Good Morning but the Nightmare Never Ends". We decided to read this book because he was a prisoner of war and went through some really harsh times. Charlie Dukes graduated from Georgetown IL. High School with the class of 1941. He then started to attend college and he finished his freshman year at Indiana University. He started his sophomore year and then began feeling guilty that all his friends were dropping out of school to serve in the war. Charlie decided to enlist in the Regular Army at the age of 19, but it was full so he was put in the Army Reserves until he would be called for active duty. Dukes then wanted to go the Marines, who would not accept him because he was six feet tall and only weighed 130 pounds, so he went to the Army recruiting office where he was accepted. Next he

was put into basic training at Texas which lasted seventeen weeks instead of the normal thirteen weeks. After this training he was sent to the Army Specialized Training Program unit at Fordham University in New York City. At this school he studied physics, chemistry, calculus, history and other courses relating to engineering. He then was transferred into the US Army Engineers. When this school closed, Dukes was sent to the third platoon, Company L, 413th infantry in the 104th Timberwolf division. In this training he had to march so many miles a day in so many hours with 80 pounds of equipment. It did not take him long to realize this was a hard outfit. People had a high opinion of the Timberwolves, which made Dukes feel very special. By being in the Timberwolves, Charlie received five dollars more a month.

After a few more stops he was finally aboard ship and anchored out in New York Harbor. These men had no idea where they were going and this frightened them, but they were also proud because they were serving their country. There were 3,000 men in the 413th infantry aboard the ocean liner. These men had to rise early and stand in line for food, and then they would stand back in line for the second of two meals per day.

Dukes then arrived at the English Channel where there were rumors that they would be on the front lines in just a few days. He knew that he would go into combat someday but he just did not know when. Some of the questions he asked himself were "Will I be able to stand it?" "Will I be wounded?" "Will I be killed?" and "Can I physically and mentally survive the hell that is soon to come?" He says " Never entering my mind was the thought and possibility that I would be taken prisoner. " 'Wounded or killed,' they were part of my vocabulary and were very real to me. 'Prisoner' was not."

Dukes and the other men lived in muddy foxholes and didn't have enough food. These were complaints the men had but never received any attention. These men were lucky to get a mail call even once a week.

Dukes was hit by shrapnel several times. The shrapnel would eat through his uniform down to his bare skin and then it would continue to enter its way deep into his flesh. When winter came about, Charlie was still wearing his original uniform, including the same shoes. There was no other winter clothing issued to him. He had no high-buckled combat boots, no overshoes or rubber boots to ward off the mud and water. He had no raincoat; he did, however, have his heavy overcoat which was completely soaked.

The Germans captured Charlie when he was hit by steel shavings that tore into his hands and legs. He had also fallen face first in mud and had it caked on him about an inch, protecting him from more serious wounds. After fighting off the Germans for a while, he started to feel groggy and does not remember what happened for the next few minutes. During this time he was put into a basement of a coal processing plant. The prisoners were then told to march. They had to march through villages where the Germans lived, and these people would spit and beat on the prisoners.



Dukes had to sleep on the floor with one thin ragged blue blanket and there was little or no heat. All that he was given to eat was a little bowl of grass soup and a few thin slices of black bread.

One morning after being counted, the men were told to get undressed and were made to take an ice-cold shower with little water and no soap. After the shower they had to go into another room and find clothes to put on. After dressing Dukes had to get on a boxcar full of 65-70 men. They were crammed in and had nowhere to sit. One or two men died each day, so they

were piled up along one wall on top of each other. At one time they had to carry out twelve corpses from the boxcar and leave them alongside the railroad tracks.

Charlie was sent to Hohenstein. Besides the soup and the bread, there he also received a few small potatoes. He describes this place as a luxury compared to what he had just left. He stayed in a building that was divided into small rooms with bunks in each room. After a while he started itching real bad, and realized that he had gotten lice from the nasty beds he had been sleeping in. Dukes and the other men tried everything they could to get rid of the lice but could not. Finally so they just gave up and started playing games to see who could catch and smash the most lice in a small amount of time.

During his time as a prisoner Dukes was given job assignments at each camp he was sent to. Some of the jobs he was given to do were very hard for him and the other men because of how weak they were. One of the jobs he had to do was to cut ice cakes with a saw. He had to do this with thin clothing and no gloves. After cutting all the ice cakes, he was then told he had to move these to a building and stack them on top of each other. After this work detail was finished he had to help clean ditches out and move heavy furniture to the basement of what had been an old school building. He was also ordered to do many other jobs that were just as hard as these were. Whenever the prisoners were doing a job that was around food, they took as much as possible without being noticed because if they were caught they would be shot on sight. They would steal anything they could get their hands on such as bread, grain, salt, pepper, or potatoes.

Many of the men, including Charlie, had thought about escaping but only one man was brave enough to really do it. This man escaped late one night while two other men pretended to fight to attract the guards' attention. When the Germans finally realized that the man had escaped, the other men were blamed for it. Their food rations were cut down to less than a full bowl of soup, two and sometimes no potatoes, and less than one loaf of bread per day divided among the group. With the shortened food rations and the long hours of work they were becoming weaker and weaker. Charlie was so hungry that when he saw a rabbit one day while digging a foxhole he decided he had to have it to help him to survive. He began trying to dig the rabbit out. When he finally got hold of it he gave it a karate chop to the back of its head, then twisted it in half and shoved the rear half into his shirt and gave the other half to a friend to shove into his shirt. When they got back to the camp they had to find whatever they could to cook the rabbit in. When they finally cooked it, they had a feast among themselves.

After a time in this camp Charlie found out that the Germans were starting to get scared because the Russians were pushing their way through. There were rumors that these men were extremely

rough. They would shoot on sight, they tore through towns and houses, and they raped any women that they came across. Dukes had a lot to think about. He could either stay at the camp and wait for the Russians and hope they would give him time to explain he was American, or he could go with the Germans who promised to protect the prisoners from the other Germans and help them get to free lines. They decided to go with the Germans because they did not really trust the Russians. However, the Russians finally caught up with them. Charlie and the other men had to talk with the Russians for a while before they finally believed they were Americans, but the Germans were lined up and shot one by one.

The men knew they had to make it to the Elbe River where the American lines were. They just had to figure out how they were going to survive with no food. There were many days when Dukes and the other men with him had to search through German houses that had been ransacked and abandoned but they found very little food and clothing. When they were lucky, they found a pig or some other kind of animal that they could eat. There were many mornings when they woke up with guns in their faces held by Russians. Then they had to identify themselves as Americans or else they would have been shot on sight. When the Russians found the prisoners, they were sent to different places that promised to help them get to American lines. When sent to these camps, the men usually left and went on their own because they did not trust the Russians very much. After leaving one Russian camp, Charlie made it to what he thought was the American side of the Elbe River but it was really the Russian side. Charlie had to wait for about a day before he was allowed to cross over to the America side as the Americans sent over Russian hostages. When he finally made it across, he was sent to a hospital where they cleaned him up, cut his hair, burned his clothes, and shaved his beard to get rid of the bedbugs, lice, and fleas. They also fed him a good meal even though he could not eat that much because of the condition his stomach was in. After being transferred from the hospital, Dukes ended up in London. While he was in London, he scrounged around for food and tried to get money any way he could. Eventually he was caught and court martialed for being absent without leave for 43 days. Charlie's punishment was to clean dishes for 10-12 hours a day. After this punishment was over, they decided Charlie had been through enough so he was put on a ship and sent back to the United States. When he arrived in the United States, he was reunited with his family four months after the war was over. He was able to spend Christmas with his family for the first time in three years.

Not only were there hard times in Europe during the war, there were also hard times in Clark County and the surrounding communities. Our group interviewed Violet Beard to find out about what was happening around here during the war. Violet was seventeen and a senior at Paris High School when the war started. Most of the boys from her high school went to serve in the war, but there were a few boys who were still around because they were farmers.

Because the war was going on, food had to be rationed. This affected many people who depended on the stamps. There was a food rationing board and people were issued stamps like a coupon book. Some food like meat, coffee, or sugar was very hard to get. Stamps were allotted by the number of people in each family, so people had to watch how they used their stamps. If someone happened to lose their stamp book they would have to reapply, but it was very hard to get it replaced. Violet lived on a farm so her family had their own milk, meat, and eggs, and were not really affected by the rationing.

Mrs. Beard said that gasoline was rationed like food. Motorists had to have coupons or they could only get a few gallons of gas. A record was kept of each purchase. People really had to watch their miles. They did not want to go anywhere they did not really have to because they wanted to preserve gas.

The thing Violet remembers most of all was how hard nylon stockings were to get. She remembers that women stood in long lines just to buy a pair of nylon stockings. When Violet did not have a pair of nylon stockings, she and her friends put makeup on their legs. It looked just like nylon stockings except there were no seams but nobody really noticed.

Mrs. Beard also remembers the Victory Tax. She does not remember too much about it, just that nobody liked it because it took a lot of money out of his or her paycheck. She says even though nobody really liked the tax they were willing to pay because they wanted to do something for the war.

During the war women wanted to help out also, so there were groups called the WAVES and the WAC. Women who were in the WAVES worked for the Navy, and women in the WAC worked for the Army Corps. These women did paperwork, served as nurses, and helped out many other ways. Violet's mother, however, would not allow her to join the WAVES, so she worked for the Selective Service Office where they sent the boys off. Violet and her sister both had jobs, and so they decided to move out on their own because their father had different work hours and they had to save gas. If the girls went anywhere, they had to walk or ride their bikes because at that time not many kids had their own car.

Violet and her sister had very few activities. There was a dance called the Knights of Columbus about once a month. This dance was called a round dance and included square dancing and social dancing. The girls would dance with other girls because there were not many boys available. There was also a club called Real Youth. This club was for the people who were too old for 4-H. This group was made up of girls and the boys who were farmers. They would gather together once a month.

When the war was over, Violet did not know immediately because she was in a Real Youth camp. She says she felt bad because she missed all of the shouting but she was glad the war was over. Mrs. Beard remembers good and bad times from the war. The good times were when someone wrote and said he was coming home for a few days. She also remembers how the boys looked, walking around in their uniforms; their families were so proud of them. But there was also a lot of sadness. Mrs. Beard appreciated the fact that they were not fighting in our country and blowing up everything we had.

World War II caused many hardships and many lives were lost. We thank the people who talked to us about this time even though we know it was hard. We learned that these people had to go through many hardships but did everything they could to overcome it and we look up to them for that.