

THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



ALLIES



**ROOSEVELT**

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the 32nd president of the United States, serving from 1933 to 1945. He led the United States through the Great Depression and World War II. He is best known for his leadership in the Allied forces during the war and for his role in the development of the atomic bomb.



**UNITED STATES**

ROOSEVELT



**CHURCHILL**

Winston Churchill was a British statesman, soldier, and writer. He served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945, leading the country through the war against Nazi Germany. He is known for his powerful speeches and leadership during the war.



**GREAT BRITAIN**

CHURCHILL



**CHIANG KAI-SHEK**

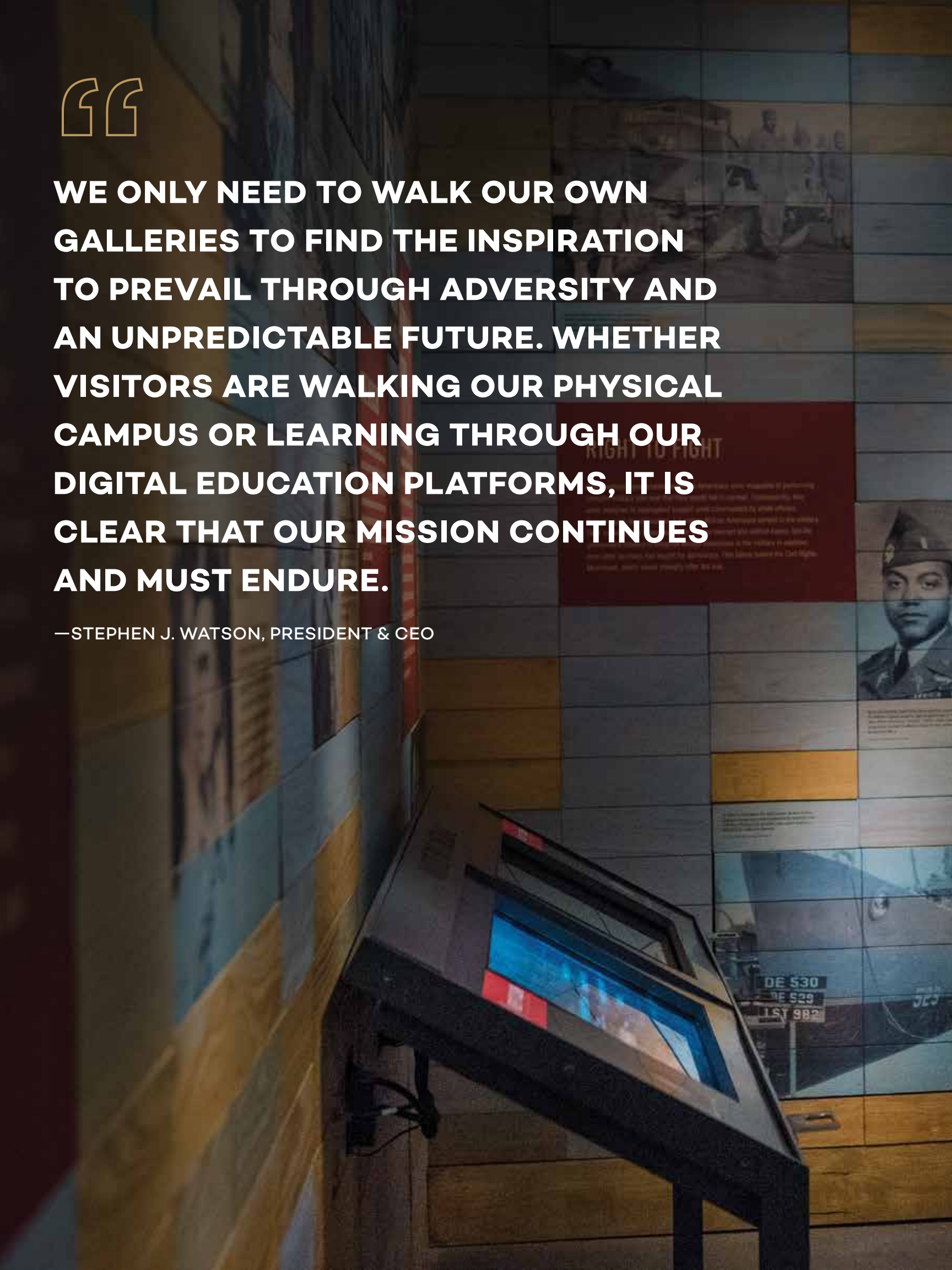
Chiang Kai-shek was the leader of the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China from 1927 to 1975. He led the Nationalist Government during the war against Japan and the Chinese Civil War.

**CHINA**

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**WE ONLY NEED TO WALK OUR OWN GALLERIES TO FIND THE INSPIRATION TO PREVAIL THROUGH ADVERSITY AND AN UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE. WHETHER VISITORS ARE WALKING OUR PHYSICAL CAMPUS OR LEARNING THROUGH OUR DIGITAL EDUCATION PLATFORMS, IT IS CLEAR THAT OUR MISSION CONTINUES AND MUST ENDURE.**

—STEPHEN J. WATSON, PRESIDENT & CEO





Informational display panel with text and a small image of a person in uniform.

The exhibit has been temporarily removed by the Curatorial Department



Small informational text block on the wall.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

1

MISSION

3

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

5

INTRODUCTION

15

IMMERSIVE  
ACCOMMODATIONS

21

LESSER-KNOWN  
STORIES

25

A WIDER AUDIENCE

41

A NEW CHAPTER

45

TWO DECADES  
LATER

51

IN THIS  
TOGETHER

9

IN REMEMBRANCE

11

LETTER FROM  
THE CHAIRMAN OF  
THE BOARD

13

LETTER FROM THE  
PRESIDENT & CEO

29

THEIR MUSEUM

33

LEGACY AND  
MEANING

37

TRUSTED SOURCE

57

PATRIOTS CIRCLE AND  
CHARTER MEMBERSHIP

79

DONORS AND PROGRAM  
SUPPORTERS

91

FINANCIALS

## 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.







Work continued this year on the Bollinger Canopy of Peace, which will become a stunning feature of the Museum's campus and an iconic landmark of the New Orleans skyline upon its completion.

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(1936–2002)

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## HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

Col. Jack Jacobs, USA (Ret.)  
MGen. James Livingston, USMC (Ret.)



Years in the making, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center celebrated its grand opening on December 6, 2019, with several guests, including our Board of Trustees, as well as the WWI Theatre, Inc. Board and donors.

**IN FISCAL YEAR 2020,  
THE MUSEUM DISCOVERED  
NEW WAYS TO SHARE  
STORIES OF THE WWII  
GENERATION AND ENGAGE  
AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE**

# TOP 10

## RANKING

Earned by The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center in *USA Today's* Best New Hotels 2020

# 181,700

## STUDENTS REACHED

Through webinars, virtual field trips, electronic field trip, Microsoft Flipgrid, and Skype sessions

# 221

## STUDENTS ENROLLED

In online Master's degree program and 118 adult learners in continuing education courses through Museum's partnership with Arizona State University

# \$1.7

## MILLION

Contributed by 6,019 Trustees, supporters, and Charter Members to Museum's COVID-19 Response Fund

# 462

## NEW ORAL HISTORIES

Added to Digital Collection along with 5,294 documents and 3,283 photographs

# 6.5

## MILLION VISITS

To Museum website

# 10,000

## VOLUMES

In Madlyn and Paul Hilliard Research Library

# 6.3

## BILLION

Media reach from 5,283 print, broadcast, and online editorial mentions of the Museum



Upon reopening in May 2020, the Museum implemented new safety measures for our guests, including timed tickets, staggered entry to galleries, and disposable styluses for interaction with our exhibits.

# The National WWII Museum's collections are filled with stories of ordinary Americans faced with unexpected circumstances: men, women, and children who rose to the occasion, made sacrifices for the greater good, and harnessed their own strength, resolve, and ingenuity to endure the darkest days of the wartime era and help secure victory.

Since the Museum opened its doors in 2000, these personal stories have been at the core of our mission. And in our 20th anniversary year, as the Museum and world faced the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the words and actions of the WWII generation served as inspiration to carry us through Fiscal Year 2020 with a sense of hope, determination, gratitude, and optimism.

On the heels of our internationally recognized programs in 2019 commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day, The National WWII Museum headed into Fiscal Year 2020 with ambitious plans to open two new additions to the New Orleans campus, expand the reach of our educational programs, and ceremoniously mark the institution's 20th anniversary and the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II—one of the last major milestones to commemorate with WWII veterans. Through this Annual Report, we reflect on how the Museum discovered new ways to share the stories of the WWII generation and advance our mission, even as plans for Fiscal Year 2020 unfolded in unexpected ways.

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe and the City of New Orleans emerged as one of the early epicenters of the US outbreak, the Museum temporarily closed its doors on March 14, 2020, during what is typically one of our busiest seasons. The financial challenges facing the Museum mounted quickly: hundreds of thousands of visitors delayed their travels to the Museum, overseas tours to WWII battlefields were put on

hold for the foreseeable future, the new Higgins Hotel & Conference Center lost its early momentum as tourism grinded to a halt, and plans to bring hundreds of WWII veterans to New Orleans for 75th anniversary of the end of World War II programs became no longer feasible.

Inspired by those whose stories we honor and those whose generous support made it possible to continue our work, the Museum quickly pivoted to live up to our mission in this critical time. The Hall of Democracy, which had just celebrated its grand opening in October 2019, was designed to enable the Museum to reach broader audiences through the WWII Media and Education Center and the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy. Those efforts quickly accelerated.

Within days of the Museum closing, our team of curators, educators, and historians leveraged new technologies, platforms, and the Museum's collection to produce daily digital content for students, teachers, and parents who were adjusting to online learning and for adult learners across the country in search of inspiration. Live webinars, oral history clips, videos, podcasts, and original articles made certain that audiences of all ages could commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II from the safety of their homes. Even the work to collect first-person accounts of WWII veterans continued through Zoom, helping ensure that as many stories as possible could be captured before the WWII generation passes on.

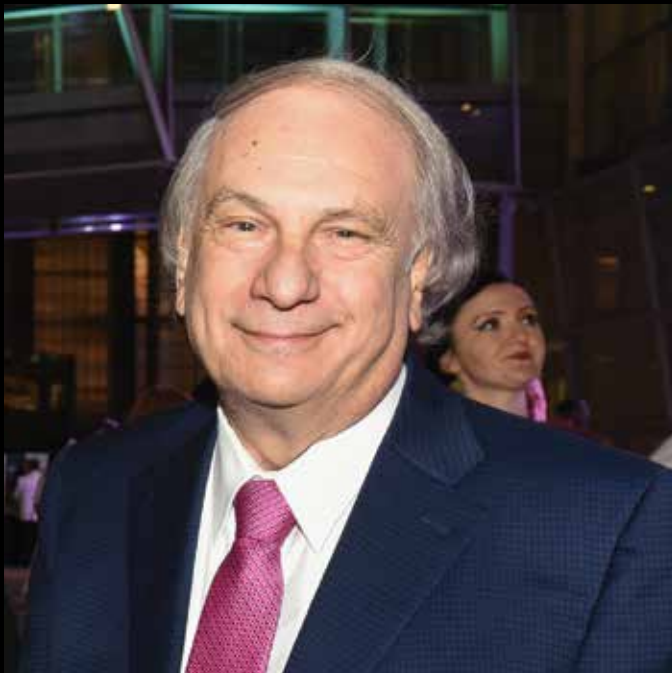
Through it all, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center, which had quickly risen to TripAdvisor's No. 1 hotel in New Orleans after its December 2019 grand opening, remained open, accommodating first-responders working in the city. And with significant safety and cleaning protocols in place, the Museum reopened, fittingly, on Memorial Day 2020 to a limited number of visitors. While the Museum experience looked a bit different—with no crowds in the galleries, timed tickets, facial coverings, and sanitizing stations—the inspirational takeaway became ever more relevant and meaningful.

As Fiscal Year 2020 came to a close, many challenges still lay ahead for The National WWII Museum. However, thanks to our generous supporters, leadership from the Board of Trustees, and resilient staff and volunteers, the signs of a strong recovery and a bright future are evident: from the steady growth of Museum visitors and Higgins Hotel guests, to the progress on the Bollinger Canopy of Peace, and perhaps most poignant of all, the start of new construction on the Liberation Pavilion—the capstone exhibit hall fulfilling the final component of the Museum's mission: what World War II means today.

## THE MUSEUM MOURNS THE PASSING OF FOUR DEAR FRIENDS

This challenging year contained sadness for many, and the Museum was no exception as we mourned the passing of four longtime friends, supporters, and Trustees who played integral roles in the success and growth of the institution.

The Museum is deeply grateful to these four gentlemen for their service to our institution. Their leadership has guided our mission and ensured our continued success in inspiring new generations to honor the lessons of World War II. Their legacies will continue to live on in our galleries and initiatives, but their presence is already very missed.



RAY BRANDT

New Orleans businessman and philanthropist Ray Brandt passed away on November 14, 2019, concluding a life filled with service to the New Orleans community that he greatly adored. Brandt, who built an empire of automobile dealerships in Louisiana and Mississippi, shared his extensive business, accounting, and legal experience with the Museum as a Board Trustee since 2016, and most recently as Board Treasurer. The mission of the Museum meant so much to Brandt, who was a US Army veteran himself. His family's multigenerational dedication to service inspired Brandt and his wife, Jessica, to serve as presenting sponsors of the Museum's Victory Ball, paying tribute to veterans of all eras through the Brandt Family Foundation. His legacy as a respected businessman, community leader, and dear friend remains an inspiration to all of us at the Museum.



RALPH CRUMP

WWII veteran and longtime Museum champion Ralph Crump, who passed away on March 16, 2020, served as a Museum Trustee since 2014. In addition to being active on the Museum's Education & Access and Collections & Exhibits Committees, Crump was an enthusiastic participant in many of our educational programs, regularly attending the annual International Conference on World War II with his wife, Marjorie, and their children, and joining us on several overseas travel programs. During World War II, Crump served in the US Merchant Marines in both the Pacific and Atlantic theaters, with his convoys suffering heavy losses in the Mediterranean, China, Burma, and India theaters. Following the war, he became a successful inventor and business executive, pioneering numerous groundbreaking efforts in medical engineering. His generous spirit and legacy of service lives on in our memories and through the Ralph E. Crump, LTJG, USNR US Merchant Marine Gallery.



#### HERSCHEL ABBOTT

Known for his extensive service to the New Orleans community and his love for Winston Churchill, Herschel Abbott was a fiercely dedicated advocate for the Museum since our early days. He joined the Board in 1996, during the tough journey to building and opening the institution, and served as Chairman from 2011-2013. In the community, the highly respected lawyer served on the Board for approximately 50 organizations and reigned as the 2011 King of Carnival. Before his passing on August 2, 2020, Abbott was involved in nearly every major decision at the Museum and was one of the early champions for expanding the Museum's educational outreach, digital content, and public access beyond the New Orleans campus—leading us to establish a \$10 million fundraising goal to digitize our collection of oral histories, artifacts, and images. It is largely due to his leadership, with the great support of his wife, Anne, that we have ensured not just preservation of the WWII generation's stories, but also access to them by a global audience, which has proved even more critical to our mission this past year.



#### MARK RUBIN

Mark Rubin, who joined the Board in 2013, held a deep personal commitment to ensuring the memory of the Holocaust would not be forgotten by future generations. A survivor of the Holocaust himself, Rubin spent his early Czechoslovakian childhood in hiding before being sent to the Terezin concentration camp. As the only Holocaust survivor to serve on the Museum's Board, Rubin has provided valuable insights in the institution's development of its capstone exhibit hall, Liberation Pavilion. He passed away on February 13, 2021, but not before excitedly learning that the Board had approved the pavilion's final content plans. A respected philanthropist and property developer in southern California, Rubin and his wife, Pam, have generously underwritten the pavilion's first-floor Liberation Theater—which will pass on the stories of Holocaust survivors and camp liberators to future generations while serving as a permanent tribute to Rubin's incredible story.



The Museum held a ceremonial groundbreaking for Liberation Pavilion, the final pavilion of our long-term campus expansion plan, on October 17, 2019. When complete, the exhibit hall will explore the closing months of the war and immediate postwar years, linking the war's global effects to our lives today.



A few days after the Museum closed on March 14, 2020, members of the Board of Trustees met to discuss the enormous challenges facing our institution. New Orleans had become an early epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak, and while much was unknown, the Museum braced for millions of dollars in reduced revenue and an extended period of recovery.

As we began discussing a path forward, my predecessor, WWII veteran and 2018-2020 Chairman of the Board Paul Hilliard, shared this powerful quote from Winston Churchill's "Never Give In" commencement address in 1941: "Do not let us speak of darker days: let us speak rather of sterner days. These are not dark days; these are great days—the greatest days our country has ever lived; and we must all thank God that we have been allowed, each of us according to our stations, to play a part in making these days memorable in the history of our country."

In so many ways, having a WWII veteran lead the Board of Trustees during this incredibly difficult time set the tone for the Museum to respond with a spirit of determination, ingenuity, resolve, and hopefulness. We clearly understood the importance and relevance of continuing to advance the Museum's mission at this critical time in world history. Bold decisions were made to continue employing and paying all staff through the Museum's closure, to keep The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center open, and to dramatically increase the Museum's digital outreach to students, teachers, parents, and audiences of all ages.

I am incredibly grateful to Paul and his wife, Madlyn, for their commitment to the Museum's mission and for leading by example. It was not enough for the Hilliards to underwrite both the Madlyn and Paul Hilliard Research Library in the Hall of Democracy and the Madlyn and Paul Hilliard Conference Center in The Higgins Hotel—both exciting new developments that opened mere months before the pandemic. On top of that, the Hilliards also developed a COVID-19 Response Fund in March 2020 and made the first donation, inspiring more than 6,000 supporters to contribute over \$1.7 million to sustain the Museum's operations.

Having started my tenure as Board Chairman on July 1, 2020, I am honored to follow in Paul's footsteps and grateful for the opportunity to help ensure the Museum's strong recovery. Over the past year, the Museum team has worked tirelessly to enhance both onsite and online experiences, paving the way for the institution's rebound and future growth. In New Orleans, the Senator John Alario, Jr. Special Exhibition Hall brings new rotating exhibits on lesser-known topics to visitors, who now have the option to stay across the street at the 1940s-inspired Higgins Hotel & Conference Center. With steel assembly complete on the Bollinger Canopy of Peace, the Museum looks forward to a dedication in late 2021 and is forging ahead with construction on the capstone exhibition hall, Liberation Pavilion, to open in 2022.

Less obvious to visitors is the ongoing work happening inside the new Hall of Democracy, representing the Museum's educational outreach initiatives, which have always been core to the mission but became critically important during the pandemic. Due to the efforts of our historians, curators, and educators, the Museum did not miss a beat in fulfilling our educational mission in Fiscal Year 2020. Every day, new content was produced and shared with our audiences—delivering resources for students, teachers, and parents adjusting to home learning, providing historical context on current events, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, celebrating the Museum's 20th birthday, and sparking inspiration through the firsthand accounts of the WWII generation.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without you—our friends and supporters—who remain committed to our mission, especially during what was a very difficult year for all of us. Your generosity is an inspiration and fuels our efforts to continue finding innovative ways to share the stories of the WWII generation with wider audiences.



Anniversaries have a way of making us pause to reflect on the progress we've made and consider the opportunities and challenges that await us in the future. As we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 20th anniversary of the Museum—all in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Fiscal Year 2020 served as a strong reminder of all that we've been able to build with your support these past two decades and reinforced how important it is to continue expanding and evolving our educational outreach to audiences near and far.

Although the pandemic largely defines our reflections on Fiscal Year 2020, the Museum's accomplishments earlier that year positioned us to endure the challenges of COVID-19, continue serving our audiences, and prepare for a strong recovery. The newly opened Senator John Alario, Jr. Special Exhibition Hall has expanded our ability to delve deeper into WWII-related subjects, starting with *Operation Finale: The Capture & Trial of Adolf Eichmann* and *Ghost Army: The Combat Con Artists of World War II*. The Anne Frank sculpture bench on Founders Plaza, made possible by a gift through the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust, serves as powerful testimony of why World War II was fought and the freedoms we must continue to safeguard today. Nearby, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center provides convenient accommodations for our visitors, especially as leisure travel begins to rebound, and expanded meeting space for hosting educational programs for onsite and online audiences. And of course, the Hall of Democracy offers new high-tech facilities and capabilities to reach worldwide audiences and support students and teachers through distance learning and digital outreach—the focus of our operations during the pandemic and a key part of our future growth.

The 2020 Annual Report celebrates the Museum team's impressive response to the COVID-19 pandemic and our successes during what was arguably the most challenging year for the Museum since opening two decades ago. In addition to

losing millions of dollars in revenue, closing the campus for two months, and ceasing all overseas educational travel tours, the Museum faced a series of obstacles and difficult decisions: reducing its workforce by 35 percent in June 2020, watching daily visitation sometimes fall below 100 people upon reopening, placing PT-305 in storage, and mourning the loss of several beloved Trustees, volunteers, WWII veterans, and friends.

But despite the challenges, the Museum's work continued. Thanks to the leadership of Board Chairman Paul Hilliard and his wife, Madlyn, the COVID-19 Response Fund provided much-needed resources to sustain the institution's operations during our toughest days. Our dedicated staff adjusted to working remotely and discovered new ways to accomplish our mission: from providing supportive resources for teachers adjusting to online learning to conducting Zoom oral history interviews with WWII veterans to producing podcasts and videos commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Construction of the Bollinger Canopy of Peace and Liberation Pavilion forged ahead, as we near completion of the \$400 million *Road to Victory* capital campaign. And our operations team worked tirelessly to implement new protocols to welcome back visitors safely, making it possible for The National WWII Museum to be one of the first major museums in the country to reopen.

This year's Annual Report is a tribute: to our Board of Trustees for their unwavering leadership and personal generosity, to our dedicated staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to adjust our operations and fulfill our mission, to you—our growing number of supporters—who remained committed to our efforts in these tough times. It is also a tribute to WWII veterans, Holocaust survivors, and Home Front workers. Your stories have never been more important to us and continue to inspire us as we look toward the future with hopefulness and determination.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Watson'.



THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM



**ANNE FRANK**  
1929-1945

Made possible through  
The Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust

After Anne Frank had to go into  
secret, her family in Amsterdam in  
a constant competition. She did  
the secret never until August  
the hiding place and they  
were sent to the Bergen  
Bosch concentration camp  
under the name  
and the name

Unveiled on September 12, 2019, this bronze sculpture of Anne Frank was made possible by a generous gift from the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust and developed by StudioEIS—in collaboration with Museum historians. It depicts Anne at 13 years old and includes a quotation from her *Diary of a Young Girl*.



# HIGGINS

HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER



Offering first-class accommodations alongside 1940s art-deco style and wartime artifacts, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center—named after local shipbuilder Andrew Jackson Higgins—allows guests to truly immerse themselves in WWII history, enhancing their visit to the Museum.



## IMMERSIVE ACCOMMODATIONS

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### The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center Opens to Great Enthusiasm and Endures COVID Challenges

The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center made an instant splash when it celebrated its grand opening on December 6, 2019. Hospitality, news, and business publications across the country praised the hotel's carefully curated décor, from the hand-selected artifacts in its public spaces to the 1940s-themed bars and restaurants, to the stately lobby with its towering art deco centerpiece mural. In a glowing review, *Forbes* Senior Contributor Larry Olmstead called The Higgins Hotel "America's first true museum hotel," a trend he predicts will become increasingly dominant as tourists seek out authentic travel experiences.

The project had been years in the making as the Museum pondered the best use for the prime location on the corner of Magazine Street and Andrew Higgins Boulevard. A hotel and conference center offered the greatest potential for furthering the Museum's mission, by serving its overnight visitors with a wholly immersive WWII educational experience, providing expanded space for new conferences and educational programs, and generating financial support for the Museum's endowment. The WWII Theatre, Inc. Board, chaired by Trustee Brandon Berger, led the development efforts, with donors helping to raise some of the early funding by sponsoring the hotel's public spaces, including meeting rooms, hotel suites, and food and beverage outlets, in tribute to their WWII loved ones. Trustee David Nierenberg and his family paved the way by making the first gift to the project and issuing two fundraising challenges to match their contributions.



Brandon Berger, World War II Theatre, Inc. Board Chair, addresses Hotel grand opening attendees. Seated left to right are President & CEO Stephen Watson; Gayle Higgins-Jones, granddaughter of Hotel namesake Andrew Higgins; Madlyn Hilliard, longtime donor and supporter of Madlyn and Paul Hilliard Conference Center; Mark Romig, Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer for New Orleans & Company; and Charles Gremillion, Senior Director of Brand Performance for Hilton.



Museum Trustees Sharon Estill Taylor, PhD, and Sonia A. Pérez enjoy Rosie's on the Roof during grand opening festivities.



Volunteers at The National WWII Museum, including WWII veterans and Holocaust survivors, responded emotionally to the Hotel's grand opening.

The years of preparation and careful attention to detail paid off. Early visitors responded energetically to the new hotel, the first Hilton Curio Collection property in Louisiana. During the first few months of operation, occupancy rates hovered between 70 and 80 percent with The Higgins rising to the top of TripAdvisor's list of highest ranked New Orleans hotels. The property's accolades accumulated quickly as it was named one of *USA Today's* 10 Best New Hotels in 2020—the only New Orleans hotel to make the list—and earned AAA Four Diamond status.

Beyond the unparalleled access to the Museum campus, The Higgins Hotel, named in honor of the New Orleans boatbuilder Andrew Jackson Higgins, enables guests to support The National WWII Museum's educational mission during their New Orleans stay. And with its panoramic rooftop views and WWII-era-themed libations, Rosie's on the Roof quickly became a popular destination for both hotel guests and local happy hour-goers.



Trustee David Nierenberg and his family not only made the first gift to The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center project—they issued two fundraising challenges for donors to match that gift, paving the way for the addition's successful completion.



The Hotel partnered with the Gary Sinise Foundation to provide more than 3,000 meals to frontline healthcare workers and first responders in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Valerie Evans visits the Truman Suite, which is dedicated to her father, Chief Petty Officer Charles F. Voss, thanks to a gift from his sister, Jeri Nims.

In some ways, however, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center's first year was defined by its response to the unforeseen impact that COVID-19 had on the hospitality industry. Drawing inspiration from the generosity and resourcefulness of the WWII generation, the hotel adjusted its operations to remain open throughout the pandemic and played its own role in the community's COVID-19 response and outreach. In partnership with the Gary Sinise Foundation, The Higgins Hotel provided over 3,000 meals in the early weeks of the pandemic to frontline healthcare workers at Southeast

Louisiana Veterans Health Care System, part of the country's most extensive non-profit integrated healthcare system, as well as meals to local first responders.

Despite the adversity of its inaugural year, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center is well-poised and ready to welcome back travelers as they make their return to New Orleans and eager to resume hosting in-person educational programs, such as *Memory Wars: World War II at 75 and Beyond* in September 2021 and the International Conference on World War II in November 2021. General Manager Daniel Rhodes is

enthusiastic about the hotel's future as COVID-19 restrictions recede and leisure travel begins to increase. "As tourism returns and travelers express their desire to visit New Orleans, the Higgins has already seen exciting gains in occupancy from the pandemic lows of the past year. We expect this slow yet steady growth to continue through the end of 2021, as we prepare to welcome even more guests in 2022."



The Museum debuted *Operation Finale: The Capture & Trial of Adolf Eichmann* on October 17, 2019, as the inaugural exhibit in the Museum's newly opened Senator John Alario, Jr. Special Exhibition Hall.



## LESSER-KNOWN STORIES

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### New Expanded Exhibit Hall Brings *Operation Finale* and *Ghost Army* to Visitors

To continue preserving and telling the complete story of World War II, the Museum opened a new temporary exhibit space on the first floor of the Hall of Democracy to further explore some of World War II's lesser-known stories and take a deeper dive into well-known aspects of the war.

In October 2019, Joy and Boysie Bollinger announced that the newly unveiled space in the Hall of Democracy, which they helped support through their \$20 million gift to the Museum in 2015, would be named in honor of their longtime friend, Senator John Alario Jr. In 1973, Bollinger and Alario participated in the Louisiana Constitutional Convention together and formed a strong bond although they represented different political parties at the time. Alario, whose father served in the 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division of the US Army during World War II, devoted 47 years of service to the Louisiana State Legislature, completing his final term in January 2020.

The Museum's Senator John Alario Jr. Special Exhibition Hall stands 16 feet tall and offers 3,764 square feet in which to present major rotating exhibitions on WWII-related subjects not covered in the Museum's permanent exhibits, as well as more in-depth coverage of subjects that are in the permanent exhibits, encouraging both new and repeat visitors. The exhibit hall also provides additional opportunities for Museum programming, educational activities, private receptions, and special events.



From left, *Operation Finale* supporters Marty and Perry Granoff celebrated the exhibit opening with Boysie, center, and Joy Bollinger and Senator John Alario, Jr., whom the Bollingers honored with the naming of the Senator John Alario Jr. Special Exhibition Hall.

The Senator John Alario Jr. Special Exhibition Hall debuted on October 17, 2019, with the opening of *Operation Finale: The Capture & Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, presented by Perry and Marty Granoff and co-produced by Beit Hatfutsot—The Museum of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv, Israel; The Mossad—Israeli Secret Intelligence Service; and the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. The special exhibit followed the trial of the head of the Nazis’ homicidal “Jewish Department,” Adolf Eichmann, who zealously managed the transport of millions of innocent people to death camps and vanished after World War II.

As the Museum’s Assistant Director for Curatorial Services Kim Guise described, the exhibit combined “a classic spy story with an exploration of themes of personal responsibility and the search for justice for the crimes and horrors of the Holocaust. It is a riveting story and has the power to bring viewers, including this one, to tears.” The exhibit incorporated photographs, film, and recently declassified spy artifacts to reveal the dramatic secret history behind the daring abduction and globally broadcast trial of a principal perpetrator of the Final Solution.



Staff Sgt. Stanley Nance, a WWII veteran of the Ghost Army, toured—and enjoyed—the Museum’s *Ghost Army* special exhibit with his family.

*Operation Finale* was followed by the Museum's own curated special exhibit, *Ghost Army: The Combat Con Artists of World War II*, which opened on March 5, 2020, right before the Museum temporarily closed due to COVID-19 and was extended through January 31, 2021. Exclusively sponsored by the E.L. Wiegand Foundation and displayed in the Alario Special Exhibition Hall, the exhibit told the story of the US Army's 23rd Headquarters Special Troops. Activated on January 20, 1944, the "Ghost Army" was the first mobile, multimedia, tactical deception unit in US Army history, and they used visual, sonic, and radio deception to fool German forces during World War II's final year. To bring the story of their deception operations across Europe to life, the exhibit featured artifacts such as artwork, uniforms, a replica of their infamous inflatable tanks, and more. *Ghost Army* will now travel the country on a national tour to reach wider audiences.

These first two exhibits set a perfect tone for those to follow in the new Senator John Alario Jr. Special Exhibition Hall, which is now hosting SOLDIER | ARTIST: *Trench Art in World War II* through January 2022.

The Museum also continues to bring additional temporary exhibits to campus through the Joe W. and Dorothy D. Brown Foundation Special Exhibit Gallery in the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion. In Fiscal Year 2020, the gallery displayed *Remembered Light: Glass Fragments from World War II*, the *McDonald Windows*, a collection of 25 art pieces using shards of glass from damaged and destroyed European churches collected during World War II and is hosting the interactive *Dimensions in Testimony: Liberator Alan Moskin* from USC Shoah Foundation through September 2021.



“Touring the facility was a truly memorable experience because we could viscerally witness the permanent outcome of our grant.”

Foundation benefactor Edwin L. Wiegand (1891-1980) was an inventor and lifelong student. His innovations in developing heating elements continue to be integral to many modern home appliances today and helped make it possible for American soldiers to have access to portable heat and keep their canteens clean with hot water during World War II. Given the E.L. Wiegand Foundation's history and their mission in honoring pioneering accomplishments, it is only fitting that they sponsored the Museum's special traveling exhibition, *Ghost Army: The Combat Con Artists of World War II*.

After hearing about the top-secret 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and their fascinating role in creatively and tactically deceiving the enemy during the final months of World War II, the Foundation found the “amalgamation of genuine artifacts and collaborative efforts appealing” and enthusiastically agreed to be the exhibit's exclusive sponsor both during its New Orleans run and as it travels to institutions across the country.

The Foundation was first introduced to the Museum by Trustee Philip G. Satre and began a longtime partnership with the Museum in 2016 through a grant to establish The Center for Collections & Archives, a new permanent wing for the preservation of the Museum's collection. Thanks to the generous support of The E. L. Wiegand Foundation, the Museum's Center for Collections & Archives, located on the fourth floor of Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, is now outfitted with the proper archival furnishings, fixtures, and equipment needed to serve as a world-class repository for artifacts and an educational hub for researchers. In reflecting on the impact of their support, the Foundation said, “touring the facility was a truly memorable experience because we could viscerally witness the permanent outcome of our grant.”

Their contributions have enhanced the Museum's capacity to collect and preserve artifacts, photographs, personal accounts, and archival materials—which now includes a *Ghost Army* collection curated and donated to the Museum by *Ghost Army* Legacy Project President Rick Beyer.



Located in Hall of Democracy, the Madlyn and Paul Hilliard Research Library supports and facilitates The National WWII Museum's research and education initiatives, providing diverse audiences with access to a growing collection of personal memoirs, oral histories, unit histories, and classic WWII and military literature.



## A WIDER AUDIENCE

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### Hall of Democracy Research and Education Hub Debuts, Fills Critical Need During COVID-19

On October 17, 2019, The National WWII Museum celebrated the grand opening of Hall of Democracy, the latest physical addition to the six-acre New Orleans campus and the new home of the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy and the WWII Media and Education Center. Completing the state-of-the-art facility in Fiscal Year 2020 marked a significant milestone within the Museum's campus expansion plan. And, just five months later, the Hall of Democracy's staff quickly accelerated their digital outreach efforts to sustain the Museum's mission remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hall of Democracy is designed to provide greater access to WWII history and the Museum's programs and collections for students, teachers, academics, museumgoers, and remote audiences. Outfitted with innovative broadcasting and recording technology and prestigious research facilities, it represents the center of the Museum's growing educational outreach and scholarship community. The three-story research and education hub was made possible through the generous support of the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation, the State of Louisiana, Joy and Boysie Bollinger, Madlyn and Paul Hilliard, DSF Charitable Foundation, Will and Karen Osborne, and Ralph E. Crump.

**OCTOBER 17, 2019**

Hall of Democracy Grand Opening Celebration

The new pavilion has significantly expanded the Museum's rotating exhibition gallery space through the Senator John Alario, Jr. Special Exhibition Hall while also providing ample new classroom, library, lecture, and symposium areas. Inside the Madlyn and Paul Hilliard Research Library, scholars and students can find curated materials and personal accounts related to World War II, housed in a world-class 2,141-square-foot library. And as the dedicated home of the Museum's new suite of broadcast and production spaces, the Hall of Democracy's opening signaled an exciting step toward making our educational content more accessible to audiences around the globe and establishing the Museum as the most accessible source for trusted knowledge on the American experience in World War II.

Before the pandemic, initiatives like *The Manhattan Project* Electronic Field Trip presented by The Lupo Family Charitable Fund with additional support from the Dale E. and Janice Davis Johnston Family Foundation explored the facility's early potential. In late 2019, the Museum moved the production of online courses for the master's degree in World War II Studies and continuing education programs in partnership with Arizona State University into the Hall of Democracy, along with the recording and editing of the popular *Service on Celluloid* podcast. During the 2019 International Conference on World War II in New Orleans, the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy used the new

**5 MONTHS LATER**

Accelerated digital outreach efforts remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic

production space to record video segments with esteemed scholars in preparation for the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II commemoration. And student visits to the special exhibition *Operation Finale: The Capture & Trial of Adolf Eichmann* were further supplemented by debriefing lessons in the fully equipped Hall of Democracy classroom.

As the implications of COVID-19 became apparent, the Museum understood the need to pivot to an all-virtual model to continue delivering our mission and draw historical connections to the modern-day crisis. Staff immediately began furnishing homebound audiences with engaging and relevant content—particularly, teachers and parents in need of material to fill their at-home lesson plans. Already in the process of scaling up operations to bring Hall of Democracy entirely online, staff quickly adjusted to meet the moment remotely from their homes. Inspired by the can-do attitude of the WWII generation, Hall of Democracy educators and media professionals mobilized to increase available resources and connect with new and existing followers. Online content production increased by over 200 percent during the first months of the pandemic. During the challenging spring of 2020, staff in departments across the Museum pitched in to produce daily virtual webinars, activities, resources, and articles to inspire hope and perseverance. The digital content shared with our audiences was wide ranging and engaging from oral history video clips and artifact spotlights to 1940s cooking

**200% INCREASE**

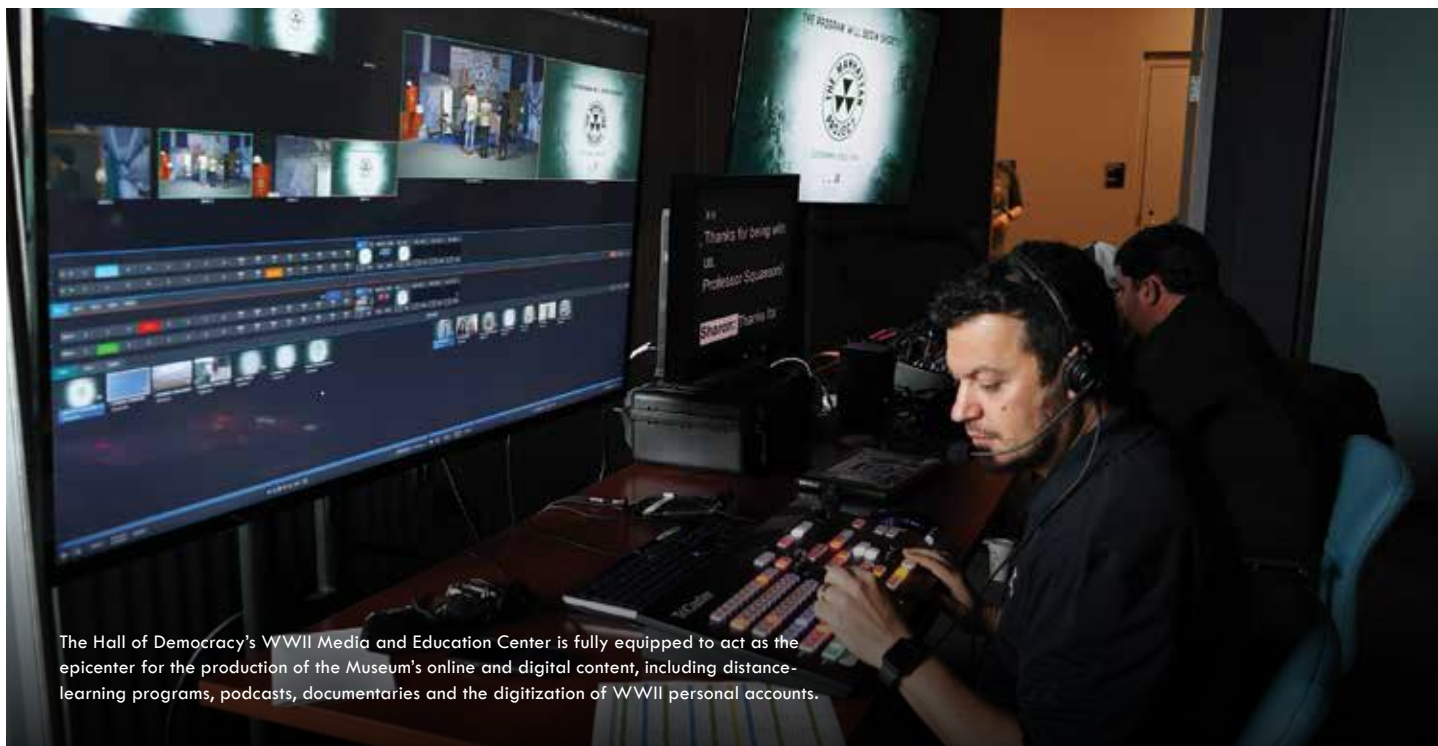
Online content production increased during the first months of the pandemic

demonstrations and wartime-inspired music playlists to an online WWII book club and live webinars from curators, historians, educators, and authors. Through programming partnerships with peer institutions, including the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, and The National WWI Museum, the integrative and connected vision for the Hall of Democracy was realized under circumstances no one could have anticipated. Commemorative ceremonies once held with large crowds in US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center were moved to live streaming from The Karen H. Bechtel and William M. Osborne III Media Auditorium, continuing to safely serve audiences near and far.

Through the generous support of donors and the creativity and resourcefulness of the Museum team, we engaged record numbers of viewers with content exploring the modern parallels between World War II and the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic confirmed the need for a robust, innovative approach to teaching WWII lessons to audiences of all ages, regardless of physical proximity to our campus. Today, the Hall of Democracy positions the Museum staff and community of contributing experts and partners to continue expanding this vital work while serving as one of the country's premier museum research centers and digital content producers.



The Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation made a significant commitment to the Museum in 2017 that was critical to making the Hall of Democracy possible. Pictured, from left, at the grand opening are Museum President & CEO Stephen J. Watson, Valley Foundation Executive Director Mike Desler, Valley Foundation Board Member Barbara LaSalle, Museum President & CEO Emeritus Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller, and Museum Board Chairman Paul Hilliard.



The Hall of Democracy's WWII Media and Education Center is fully equipped to act as the epicenter for the production of the Museum's online and digital content, including distance-learning programs, podcasts, documentaries and the digitization of WWII personal accounts.



Lawrence Brooks, America's oldest living WWII veteran, turned 111 during the pandemic. Although the Museum had to forgo our traditional birthday party, we held a successful card drive that yielded tens of thousands of submissions, and we were able to deliver those to him along with cake, a Victory Belles performance, and even a flyover.



## THEIR MUSEUM

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### Museum Continues Connecting with WWII Veterans at a Distance During the Pandemic

The sacrifices and legacies of the WWII generation, whether on the Home Front or the battlefield, are at the heart of the Museum's mission. One of the most fulfilling aspects of the institution's work is having the opportunity to welcome WWII veterans to campus, collect their personal accounts of the war, and even collaborate with them to share this important history with our audiences.

COVID-19, however, posed a significant threat to the WWII generation and challenged the Museum to find creative ways to honor WWII veterans and continue recording their stories—safely and at a distance.

Inspired by the wartime care packages sent to those deployed overseas, the Museum connected with our friends at the Gary Sinise Foundation to create care packages for more than 550 homebound WWII veterans, mailing them boxes with Gary Sinise Foundation swag—including a note from Sinise himself—alongside carefully selected items from the Museum's store. Additionally, the Sinise Foundation collaborated with The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center to prepare and deliver meals to frontline workers at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home in Reserve, as well as to the VA Medical Center in downtown New Orleans.



Museum historians conducted more than 60 oral history interviews via Zoom during the pandemic, continuing to grow our digital collection of more than 10,000 important personal histories.

As veterans near and far celebrated their milestone birthdays with socially distant drive-by parties and celebratory messages delivered by mail and online, the Museum sent special birthday greetings to dozens of veterans, including several centenarians.

The Museum's annual tradition of hosting a birthday party for New Orleans resident and WWII veteran Lawrence Brooks morphed into a global birthday card writing campaign to mark the 111th birthday of the oldest living WWII veteran in the country. An astounding 21,000+ people from every state and over 20 countries sent birthday cards and other gifts to the Museum.

On Sept. 12, 2020, the bins of cards were delivered to Brooks during a celebratory morning including an outdoor Victory Belles serenade and flyovers from the four-ship Honda Aeroshell Aerobatic Team above his home.

Beyond the cheer that the Museum brought to veterans remotely, progress continued on our efforts to collect and preserve firsthand accounts from the WWII generation. Realizing what a limited window of time we have left to collect these personal stories, our oral historians did not let travel restrictions stop their work. Throughout the pandemic, the Museum's oral historians put aside their luggage and instead conducted more than 60 interviews with members of the WWII generation through Zoom. Thanks to this modified interview process, the Museum continued

to grow its collection of more than 10,000 personal accounts, preserving powerful stories from inspirational individuals such as:

#### Home Front Worker **DR. AGNES MILLER**

Born in Ruston, Louisiana, Dr. Agnes Miller worked for the Douglas Aircraft Company Long Beach Plant in southern California, where C-47 Skytrain cargo and transport aircraft were manufactured. Miller, a Home Front worker, was engaged to a paratrooper who was killed in action on D-Day.

#### US Army Veteran **OLIN PICKENS**

Olin Pickens served in the Army in the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion and took part in combat operations in North Africa. During the battles around Kasserine Pass in February 1943, he was captured when German forces overran his position near Faid Pass. Pickens then spent much of the war as a prisoner of war in Stalag III-B in Furstenberg, Germany, where he endured brutal work conditions, a starvation diet, and terrible weather conditions. While a prisoner, Pickens and another man escaped from Stalag III-B and made it as far as Czechoslovakia before they were discovered and recaptured. Pickens was finally liberated in April 1945 and spent 30 days at Camp Lucky Strike, putting back on some of the 50 pounds he had lost as a prisoner of war.

#### Civilian **THOMAS W. GILLETTE** Witness to Pearl Harbor

Thomas W. Gillette is the step-son of Rear Admiral Claude Gillette and lived on base at the Pearl Harbor Navy yard from June 1940 until December 1941. On the morning of December 7, 1941, he witnessed the Japanese attack firsthand from the front yard of his bungalow. On Christmas Eve 1941, Gillette was sent back to the United States mainland with his mother, sister, and all of the other civilian dependents of military personnel on Oahu. Gillette then spent about a year on the United States East Coast before his step-father took command of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard Yard in Washington State. There, Gillette witnessed the restoration of many of the battleships that he had seen damaged during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Thanks to the creativity and determination of the Museum staff and its partners, the Museum was able to maintain special connections with the last living witnesses to this important history—creating long-distance bonds during a challenging time and preserving personal accounts that capture not just the WWII experience but what it was like to recall that history while living through the COVID-19 pandemic.

# GARY SINISE

## ★ FOUNDATION ★

“The Museum brings to life how the undaunted courage of the heroes who fought and won that war made such a pivotal impact, not just on the fabric of our country, but across Europe, the Pacific, and all the world.”

You may know him as the voice of legendary war correspondent Ernie Pyle in the on-campus film *Beyond All Boundaries*. He’s been involved with the Museum since Tom Hanks invited him to be a part of that production in 2009, but Gary Sinise has his own personal connection to the Museum’s mission that goes well beyond playing Lieutenant Dan Taylor in *Forrest Gump*.

“There is nowhere in the country where the weight and the significance of what happened during World War II—the battle between freedom and global tyranny—is felt more powerfully and palpably than at The National WWII Museum,” he said.

Sinise’s uncle, Jack Sinise, served in World War II in the pre-Normandy invasion bombing runs over Nazi-occupied France as a navigator aboard a B-17 Flying Fortress. Wanting to honor that service, Sinise arranged for the Museum to record Jack’s oral history, which is now part of the Museum’s collection. After Jack passed away, Sinise was inspired to start The Gary Sinise Foundation’s Soaring Valor initiative, which has brought more than 850 WWII veterans from across the country to tour the Museum—and has funded an oral historian position at the Museum, making it possible to preserve the stories of these veterans and share them with future generations.

“The Museum brings to life how the undaunted courage of the heroes who fought and won that war made such a pivotal impact, not just on the fabric of our country, but across Europe, the Pacific, and all the world,” Sinise said.

The Gary Sinise Foundation provides educational and inspirational programs

that honor veterans, first responders, their families, and those in need. Over the past year, a key component of the Foundation’s work has been “filling the ‘needs’ gap”—shifting their services to support those on the frontlines of COVID-19.

The Foundation raised more than \$1.4 million for COVID-19 relief, provided first responders with PPE, and served more than 60,000 meals to medical personnel, veterans, and active military across the country. As part of those efforts, they partnered with The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center to serve 3,000 meals to frontline healthcare workers at Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System. And although the Foundation was unable to bring WWII veterans to the Museum in 2020, Sinise and his team came up with a great alternative—mailing them care packages to show our gratitude for their service.

A recipient of the Museum’s highest honor, the American Spirit Award, Sinise has had countless memorable moments with veterans through Soaring Valor and other programs with his Foundation, but one in particular stands out: “While I met Teddy Kirkpatrick in passing at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC, it was at The National WWII Museum that I really got the opportunity to know him. At that first quick meeting in DC, I noticed a patch on his jacket said 379th Bomb Group—the same Bomb Group my Uncle Jack was assigned to during his service in the Army Air Corps as a B-17 Navigator. They very well may have crossed paths all those years ago. Shortly after, Teddy attended Soaring Valor and actually gifted me a flight jacket and hat that I wear proudly in honor of him and my Uncle Jack.”



The year 2020 marked an important milestone—75 years since the end of World War II. Focusing on the legacy of that global conflict, archival photography from the Museum's collection filled billboards in Times Square on V-J Day.



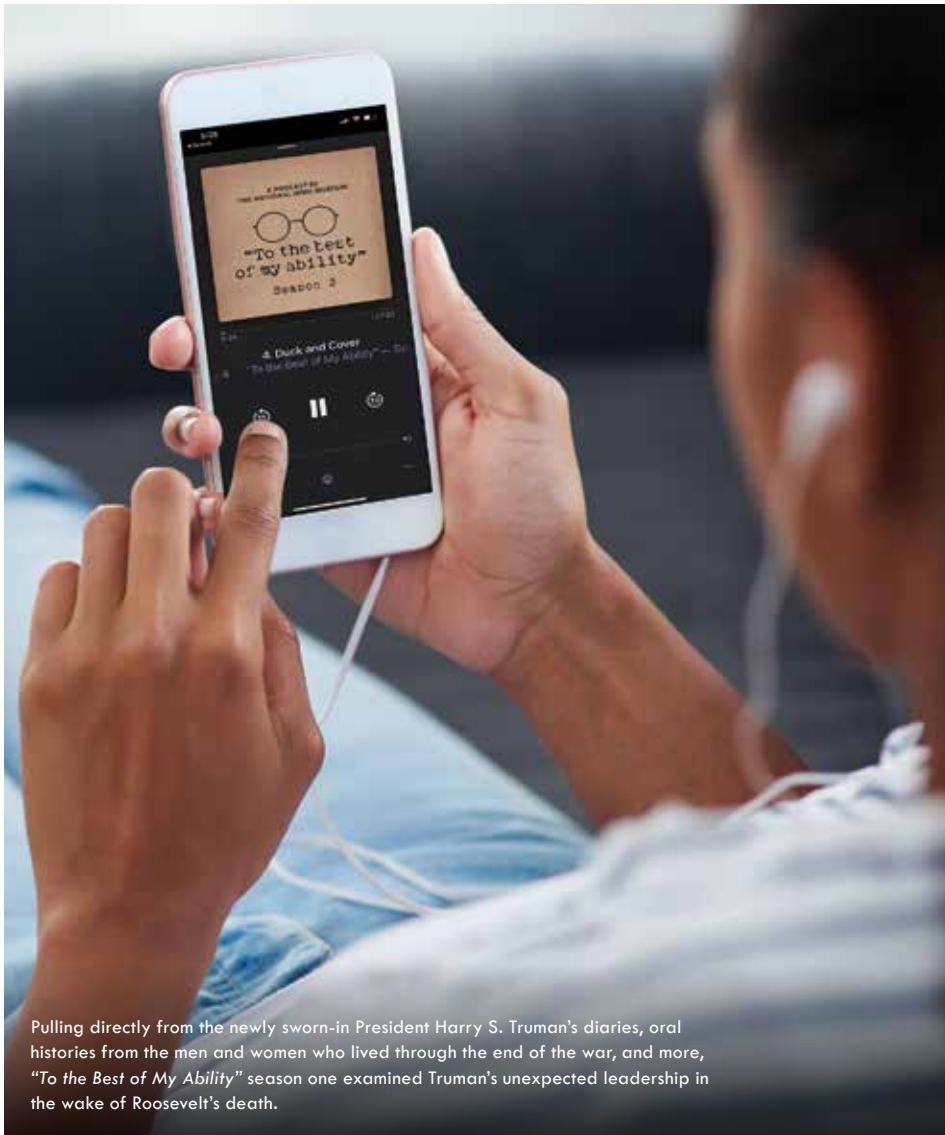
## LEGACY AND MEANING

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### Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II

In 2020, the world marked 75 years after the end of World War II while fighting another global crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a cascading series of logistical, financial, and emotional challenges for our community, which The National WWII Museum met head-on by channeling the WWII generation's resilience and resourcefulness. While the Museum's recognition of this milestone anniversary took a different shape from our original plans, a full slate of commemorative initiatives and digital offerings allowed audiences to reflect on the legacy and meaning of the end of World War II.

While the global health crisis scuttled plans for in-person events, educational travel, and on-campus programming and conferences, it presented an opportunity to activate new Museum resources. Less than a year after opening, the Hall of Democracy maintained a vital role in keeping audiences connected as the new home for the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy and the WWII Media and Education Center. A new podcast, "*To the Best of My Ability*," made possible by the Nierenberg Family, was specifically produced to mark the 75th anniversary of the war's end. The podcast explores the tragedies, triumphs, and difficult choices made by President Harry S. Truman in the wake of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death in 1945. Launched in May 2020, the first two seasons of "*To the Best of My Ability*" have been downloaded more than 30,000 times and listened to in 57 countries.



With support from Bank of America, the teams in the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy, WWII Media and Education Center, and Curatorial Services also produced and promoted 16 new video pieces and 23 live educational webinars focused on the conclusion of the war as well as the impact of the postwar period on modern American life. These programs connected tens of thousands of viewers to a rich array of content, including original articles and special webinars commemorating Victory over Europe Day (V-E Day), including live discussions with WWII veteran and former POW Jim Baynham and Holocaust survivor Peter Somogyi. An online commemoration on September 2, 2020, recognized the 75th anniversary of Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day), and the Museum hosted virtual programs with authors Chris Wallace and Lesley Blume along with releasing video series spotlighting artifacts in *Road to Tokyo*. Two months later, a virtual Veterans Day Commemoration featured a special presentation by WWII and Korean War veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Hiroshi H. Miyamura.

Prior to the pandemic, *The Manhattan Project* Electronic Field Trip presented

Pulling directly from the newly sworn-in President Harry S. Truman's diaries, oral histories from the men and women who lived through the end of the war, and more, "To the Best of My Ability" season one examined Truman's unexpected leadership in the wake of Roosevelt's death.



*The Manhattan Project* and its team have been nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award in the Outstanding Daytime Non-Fiction Special category, alongside nominees like *Girls' Education with Michelle Obama* and *Red Table Talk with Will Smith*.

by The Lupo Family Charitable Fund with additional support from The Dale E. and Janice Davis Johnston Family Foundation took students nationwide on a virtual, interactive journey to discover the science, sites, and stories of the massive WWII undertaking that produced the first nuclear weapons. Airing on February 4, 2020, *The Manhattan Project Electronic Field Trip* reached more than 83,000 students in all 50 states and an additional 12 countries. As one teacher noted, this Museum initiative “explained a very complicated and difficult concept in a way that students could really understand.” In May 2021, *The Manhattan Project Electronic Field Trip* was nominated for a Daytime Emmy in the Outstanding Daytime Non-Fiction Special category. To accompany the live presentation, the Museum team also published a companion classroom guide funded by Boeing with lesson plans, essays, and other curriculum resources for educators related to the Manhattan Project.

Rounding out this collection of robust teaching materials, the Museum’s most recent curriculum guide, *Liberation & Legacy*, was published in July 2019. Featuring lesson plans, overview essays, and curated oral histories on the new postwar world, this resource was funded by the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation with additional support from the Greehey Family Foundation. As the fourth book in the Museum’s series *From the Collection to the Classroom: Teaching History with The National WWII Museum*, the *Liberation & Legacy* guide was designed exclusively for middle and high school students.

And while so many of our commemorations were necessarily adapted into a digital format, the Museum marked the 75th anniversary of the war’s end with some equally impressive real-life moments. A series of V-J Day and Veterans Day 2020 installations on prominent billboards in New York City brought archival photography from the Museum’s collection to life on a grand stage. As joyful images of post-war celebrations filled a modern-day Times Square, the triumphs and sacrifices of three-quarters of a century ago felt especially relevant in light of the difficulties and challenges faced by many Americans throughout the previous year.



## ROBERT AND MARY LUPO

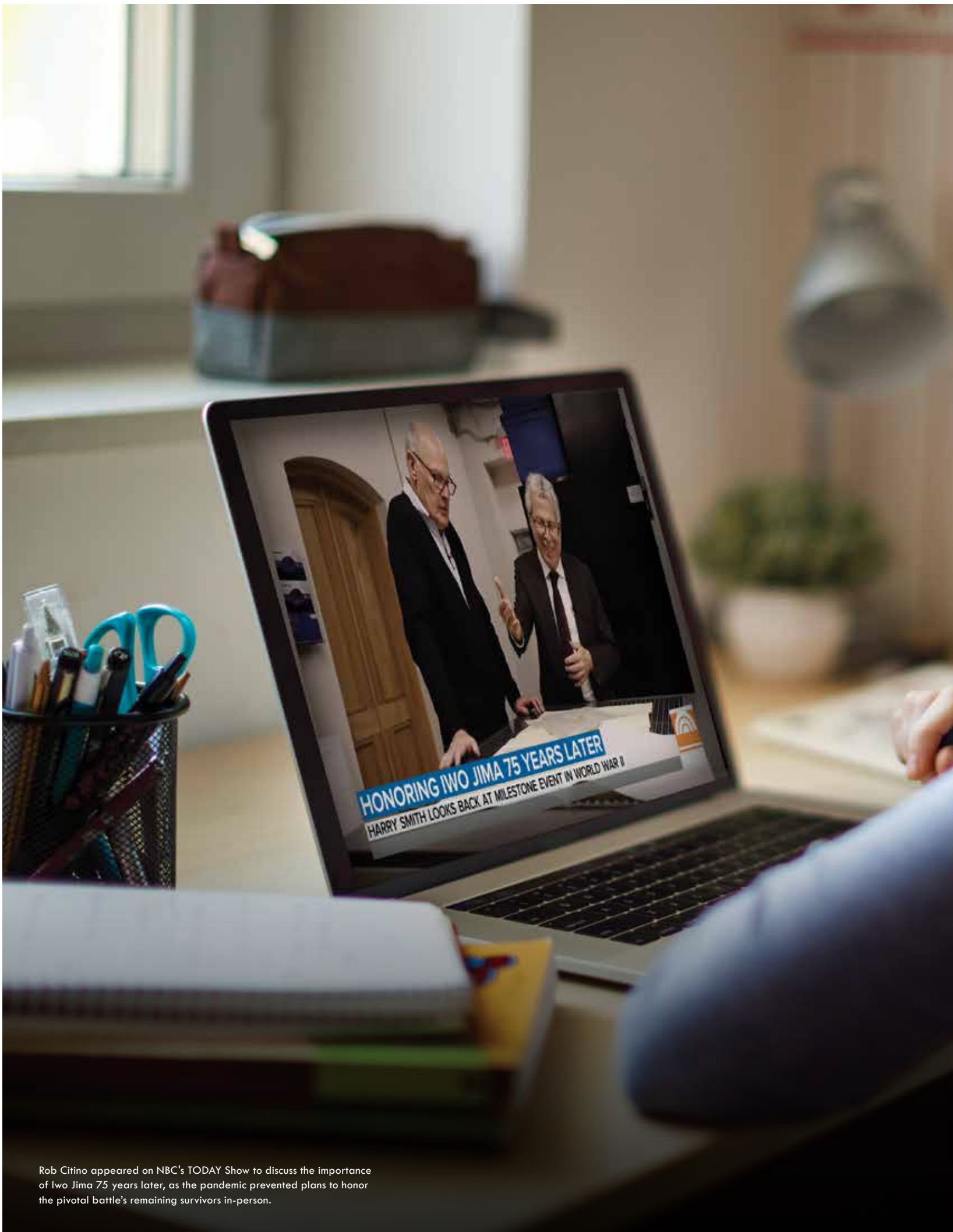
Robert and Mary Lupo have been stalwart supporters of The National WWII Museum since before its doors opened on June 6, 2000. In fact, when asked about his fondest memory of the Museum, Robert Lupo said, “Being at the ribbon cutting of the then D-Day Museum with my dad.”

His dad, Lt. “Commodore” Thomas J. Lupo, flew a TBM Avenger torpedo bomber dubbed the “Bayou Bomber” in the Pacific Theater. During the Invasion of the Philippines in 1944, US landing forces were threatened by a powerful Japanese naval squadron making a surprise attack, and a small American escort group fought them off in a David-and-Goliath battle. During the fight, Commodore Lupo expended all of his weapons on the enemy and then made dummy attack runs to distract the Japanese from other aircraft. In one of these runs, he famously found an empty Coke bottle in his cockpit and threw it at the bridge of an enemy ship. Thanks to a generous gift from the Lupo family in honor of Alvena and “Commodore” Thomas J. Lupo, a TBM Avenger painted with the markings of the aircraft Lupo flew at the Battle off Samar, one of the three naval battles collectively known as the Battle of Leyte Gulf, hangs from the ceiling of the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center.

Both Robert and Thomas served on the Museum’s Board of Trustees, and the Lupo family have been generous donors to a variety of Museum programs and initiatives, including *The Manhattan Project Electronic Field Trip* in February 2020.

“If we do not continue to educate present and future generations,” Robert said, “the importance of the story of World War II will be lost, or worse, corrupted.”

Over the years, Robert has enjoyed working with the Museum team, “from the veteran volunteers to the dedicated and passionate staff and the trustees who give their knowledge, particular expertise, time, and treasure to the Museum’s mission.” Each person, he said, has had a lasting impact on him.



Rob Citino appeared on NBC's TODAY Show to discuss the importance of Iwo Jima 75 years later, as the pandemic prevented plans to honor the pivotal battle's remaining survivors in-person.



## TRUSTED SOURCE

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### Providing Historical Context on Today's Challenges

In our ongoing efforts to become the most accessible and trusted source on WWII knowledge, the Museum's historians, curators, and educators provided historical context on some of the major current events that dominated the news cycle in Fiscal Year 2020—serving as historical experts for national media outlets and producing original content for the Museum's own media channels.

As the country began to feel the impacts of COVID-19, the parallels to life on the Home Front during World War II were made almost immediately. Similar to the dramatic societal changes that Americans faced after the attacks on Pearl Harbor, 2020 saw companies shifting their operations to manufacture much-needed supplies like hand sanitizer, individuals stepping up to run errands for their elderly neighbors and sewing homemade masks, frontline workers in hospitals and nursing homes putting their health on the line to care for their communities, and families across America making the collective sacrifice to stay home and adjust to remote work and school to help curb the spread of the virus.

The Museum's historians were interviewed by *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The New York Times Magazine*, ABC News, and other major outlets to provide historical perspectives on America's response to the current crisis. In March 2020 alone, the Museum netted over 600 placed stories with a reach of nearly 700 million.

"You never come through any events in history unscathed, whether it's good or bad, it leaves an imprint on you. You kind of carry it around with you the rest of your life or the rest of your history as a society," Samuel Zemurray Stone Senior Historian Dr. Rob Citino told ABC News. "I have no doubt that this crisis of 2020 is going to be one that people are going to remember for a long time and will undoubtedly have permanent impact."

The Museum also explored the parallels through its own content such as an Ask the Curator webinar on rationing,

Baking with Rations recipes, and two live webinars hosted with The National WWI Museum in Kansas City exploring the 1918-19 Influenza Pandemic, how the global movements of World War I worsened its effect, and how medical innovations and lessons learned led to saved lives during World War II and today.

As attention turned to the 75th anniversary of Iwo Jima, Victory in Europe (V-E) Day, and Victory in Japan (V-J) Day, the Museum was once again front and center in national news coverage, securing multiple segments on NBC's TODAY Show with Citino and WWII veterans who have traveled on the Museum's educational tours. In addition to contributing to anniversary coverage by *USA Today* and *The New Orleans Advocate | Times-Picayune*, our collection of WWII veteran oral histories also served as great source material for pieces by NBC News and *Newsweek*. And perhaps most poignantly of all, the June issue of *National*

*Geographic* highlighted the "Last Voices of World War II" with a cover image and story of New Orleans native Lawrence Brooks, the oldest WWII veteran in the US whose birthday celebrations have become a Museum tradition, along with a profile of Holocaust survivor Jeannine Burk, a Museum volunteer who passed away in July 2020, shortly after the piece was published.

The summer of 2020 also led to a nationwide conversation about racial injustice and inequality, with the Museum committing to sharing more articles, oral histories, lectures, and educational resources related to the experience of African Americans who fought for the "Double Victory" in World War II against the forces of oppression abroad and racism at home—in addition to the experiences of other ethnicities, women, and LGBTQ individuals.



On February 3, 2020, the Museum held a screening of *Minor Accident of War*, a film based on a poem by Edward Field, who flew 27 missions during World War II and is a significant LGBTQ literary voice. Field, 95, attended the screening and participated in a panel discussion.



Lawrence Brooks on the cover of the June 2020 issue of *National Geographic*. (Image courtesy of National Geographic)

Telling diverse stories of the American experience in World War II has long been important to the Museum, and efforts to enhance the institution's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts accelerated in 2019.



The Museum increased its production of digital content exploring diverse WWII experiences such as those of Japanese American servicemembers serving abroad as their families faced hardship and racial tension at home.

Telling diverse stories of the American experience in World War II has long been important to the Museum, and efforts to enhance the institution's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts accelerated in 2019. In the months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the Museum hosted documentary screenings of *Invisible Warriors: African American Women in World War II* exploring Black Rosie the Riveters, *Minor Accident of War* based on a poem by WWII veteran and significant LGBTQ literary voice Edward Field, and *The Six Triple Eight* on the only all-Black female battalion to serve in Europe.

In summer 2020, the Museum more sharply focused its attention on advancing its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals by reflecting upon our progress, areas of needed improvement, and future initiatives related to the

Museum's content, workplace culture, recruiting and mentoring, staff training, community engagement, and antidiscrimination policies and procedures. A key part of these initiatives included increasing production of content highlighting diverse WWII experiences. In addition to sharing oral history spotlights on Tuskegee Airmen, webinars in summer and fall 2020 explored topics such as the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Japanese American WWII experience, African American servicemembers in World Wars I and II, Women's Airforce Service Pilots, World War II and the early Civil Rights Movement, and the 141st Infantry Battalion, the only all Mexican American Army unit in World War II. Among the Museum's future plans to continue sharing these stories with wider audiences include bringing back *Fighting*

*for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in World War II* traveling exhibit to New Orleans in 2024 as well as curating *Our War Too: Women in Service During WWII* special exhibit to open in 2023.

While the Museum has accomplished much in its short 20 years, the world events of 2020 reinforced the importance of doing more to bring diverse WWII stories to a wider public, of emphasizing that World War II is the legacy of all Americans, and of providing historical context to help audiences understand what World War II means today and its continued impact on our lives.



The National WWII Museum reopened its doors on May 25, 2020—Memorial Day—after having been closed since March 14.

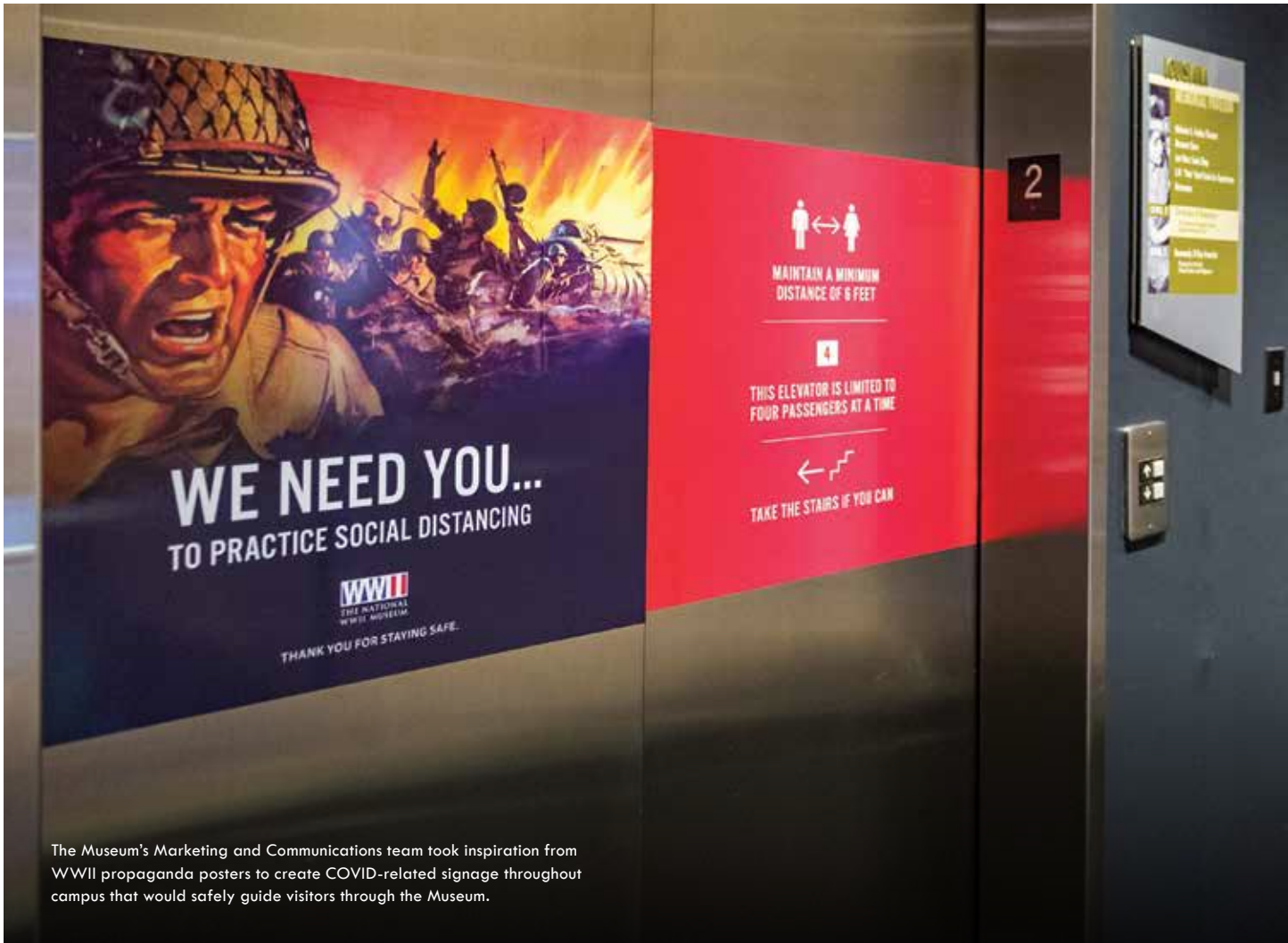


## A NEW CHAPTER

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### Museum Reopening on Memorial Day Showcases Teamwork and Ingenuity

A museum is many things, but most essentially, it is a place for people to gather together to experience information and artifacts of historical, artistic, scientific, and cultural interest firsthand. The National WWII Museum is fortunate to have a terrific collection of online resources, distance learning programming, and digital materials, including thousands of available oral histories and photographs in the Museum's digital collection. However, visiting the Museum in person is an unmatched experience. Whether families are tracing the footsteps of American service members in the *Road to Tokyo* and *Road to Berlin* galleries, gazing up at the warbirds in the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center, or catching a 40s-era show at BB's Stage Door Canteen, the campus brings the lessons and sacrifices of World War II to life in an unforgettable way.



The Museum's Marketing and Communications team took inspiration from WWII propaganda posters to create COVID-related signage throughout campus that would safely guide visitors through the Museum.

When the Museum closed its doors on March 14, 2020, due to the pandemic, the team immediately began working on plans for how we would reopen.

When the Museum closed its doors on March 14, 2020, due to the pandemic, the team immediately began working on plans for how we would reopen, once it was appropriate to do so, in a way that prioritizes the safety of visitors, staff, and volunteers without diminishing the impact of the Museum space.

During the shutdown, the operations team immediately began researching and developing new procedures to meet city, state, and federal guidelines, including maintaining social distancing, enhancing sanitizing and cleaning protocols, implementing mask requirements, and adding hand washing and sanitizing stations. Staff worked tirelessly to gather the necessary safety supplies, including masks, gloves, plexiglass sneeze guards, and disposable stylus pens for interacting with Museum touchscreens. Staff also shifted into high gear to design and produce various resources—both printed and digital—that were needed to reopen



New safety procedures were developed by the Museum based on best practices from the CDC, local and state governments, and the American Alliance of Museums.

safely and maintain social distancing across the six-acre campus. Museum graphic designers took inspiration from WWII-era visuals, including Home Front propaganda posters, in creating signage to encourage social distancing and new protocols. Campus security and facilities team remained on campus throughout the closure, ensuring that the Museum was secure, well maintained, and thoroughly clean. Upon reopening, security officers were also mobilized as gatekeepers, maintaining the proper number of guests in each gallery to avoid crowding and screening employees for COVID-19 symptoms before they entered the campus.

Fittingly, The National WWII Museum reopened its doors to 575 visitors on Monday, May 25, 2020—Memorial Day. Thanks to the great work of our operations and visitor experience teams, we were one of the first museums in the country to open to the public following the

pandemic. The institution's reopening guidelines were carefully developed and reviewed by Museum leaders with the help of more than 20 organizations and peer institutions across the state and country along with the American Alliance of Museums and local health experts. Returning guests and members were limited to 25 percent of the Museum's total capacity to ensure a safe visit for all, and advanced reservations via online ticket purchases were highly recommended. As a symbol of gratitude, free admission was extended to medical professionals and first responders along with active-duty military personnel and their families through Labor Day.

Memorial Day 2020 marked a new chapter in the story of our campus. Reopening on such a significant day was meaningful for all visitors, staff, and volunteers as the Museum continued its annual tradition of honoring fallen military personnel who bravely served on behalf of our country.

While operations continue to look a little different than they did before COVID, the Museum's spirit is as strong as ever. We continue to welcome our visitors back to our world-class exhibit halls and galleries and serve as a place for people to understand and feel America's strengths and values. If anything, the pandemic only reinforced the importance of values like teamwork, ingenuity, optimism, and determination that the Museum has championed since our founding in 2000.



On June 6, 2020, the Museum celebrated two incredible milestones, as the date marked both its 20th anniversary and the 76th anniversary of D-Day.



## TWO DECADES LATER

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### Museum Celebrates 20 Years with Look Toward Future

June 6 is always a special day at The National WWII Museum, and in Fiscal Year 2020, it carried even greater meaning. As the world commemorated the 76th anniversary of D-Day, the largest amphibious invasion in history and a turning point of the war in Europe, the Museum also celebrated the 20th anniversary of its opening as The National D-Day Museum in 2000.

The milestone anniversary provided an opportunity to reflect on the Museum's humble beginnings, the spectacular grand opening celebration and veterans parade in 2000, and its incredible growth over the past two decades into the Congressionally designated National WWII Museum and one of the top-ranked cultural attractions in the world. Against the backdrop of the global pandemic, the commemoration also signified a time to express gratitude for the Museum's ability to endure several challenges (from near-bankruptcies to Hurricane Katrina to the 2008 recession) in its short history, to continue advancing its ambitious plans to reach greater audiences, and to share this journey with passionate supporters past and present who have made it all possible.



After years of fundraising and planning by Founder Stephen Ambrose and Founding President & CEO Emeritus Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller, The National D-Day Museum celebrated its grand opening on June 6, 2000. In the two decades since, it has become The National WWII Museum we know today, evolving to tell the complete story of the American experience in World War II.



Longtime Trustee and one of the Museum's most significant champions, Boysie Bollinger, joined Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller, PhD, and Stephen J. Watson on June 6, 2020, to reflect on the Museum's growth and impact over the past 20 years.

Thanks to the generosity of Karen and Leopold Sher, audiences across the country and world tuned in virtually on June 6 to reflect on the legacy of the iconic battle in Normandy.

Nearly a week prior to the anniversaries, the Museum reopened its doors to the public, making it possible to welcome a limited number of visitors to its exhibits and galleries on June 6, 2020. To ensure visitor safety and enable greater participation, all commemorative programs were streamed exclusively online with the Museum's 20th birthday celebration generously supported in honor of WWII veteran and former Trustee Richard Duchossois from his loving children.

The dual commemorations of D-Day and the Museum's birthday included a weeklong calendar of interactive D-Day webinars for students, parents, and lifelong learners, as well as veteran

interviews and oral histories, a virtual performance by the Victory Six orchestra, special discussions with historians, highlights from the Museum's artifact collection, tributes to Museum volunteers and staff, and live segments from the original *D-Day Invasion of Normandy* exhibit. Thanks to the generosity of Karen and Leopold Sher, audiences across the country and world tuned in virtually on June 6 to reflect on the legacy of the iconic battle in Normandy during the Museum's annual Dr. Hal Baumgarten D-Day Commemoration Ceremony.



On the Museum's 20th birthday, longtime executives celebrated with volunteers who have been with the institution since the beginning. Pictured from left are President & CEO Emeritus Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller; Senior Vice President & COO Becky Mackie; Museum volunteers Ronnie Abboud, Joyce Dunn, Gaston Andre, and Al Mipro; and Museum President & CEO Stephen J. Watson.

## What began as a dream for a modest D-Day Museum in 1990 became a reality in 2000 as founder Stephen Ambrose and Mueller, his University of New Orleans colleague, secured the support, funding, and location for what is now known internationally as The National WWII Museum.

June 6 also brought together the Museum's Founding President & CEO Emeritus Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller, PhD, and Boysie Bollinger, longtime Trustee and one of the Museum's biggest champions, for a special live conversation with President & CEO Stephen J. Watson as they looked back at the Museum's 20 years of history, growth, and expansion.

What began as a dream for a modest D-Day Museum in 1990 became a reality in 2000 as founder Stephen Ambrose and Mueller, his University of New Orleans colleague, secured the support, funding, and location for what is now known internationally as The National WWII Museum. Intended by Ambrose to serve as a "love song to democracy," the Museum has now welcomed over 8 million on-site visitors, developed six major pavilions, connected with hundreds of thousands of educators and students around the globe, launched meaningful online and research initiatives, led tour groups to WWII sites across Europe and the Pacific, and hosted

dozens of conferences and countless more public programs. Supporters across the country, including longtime friend and *Beyond All Boundaries* producer and narrator Tom Hanks, shared their congratulations and gratitude for the Museum's accomplishments in preserving and sharing the stories of the WWII generation.

While the Museum's 20th anniversary celebration was bittersweet given the significant impact of the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis, Watson reminded the community that the Museum would face these challenges "with the same unflinching dedication and determination needed to overcome every difficult time in our history."

Despite the unprecedented financial and operational impacts from the pandemic, the Museum toasted to a bright future and celebrated the significant progress made in the past year on the two remaining elements of its campus expansion plan:

the Bollinger Canopy of Peace and Liberation Pavilion. By the end of Fiscal Year 2020, the Museum had completed the steel assembly of the Bollinger Canopy of Peace, made possible through the generosity of Boysie and Joy Bollinger, and was installing the finishing touches such as the fabric panels and lighting with plans for a late 2021 dedication.

Meanwhile, the Museum's team of historians and curators also advanced the content plans for the three-story capstone exhibit hall, Liberation Pavilion, exploring the end of the war, the Holocaust, the postwar years, and the impact that World War II continues to have on our lives today. Their progress along with generous support from the State of Louisiana and several private donors made it possible for the Museum to begin construction in November 2020 with an expected opening in 2022.

In reflecting on how far the Museum has come in 20 years and its ambitious plans for the future, Mueller couldn't help but consider what Ambrose, who died in October 2002, would think of the institution today.

"If he was still alive, he would be bursting with pride and gratitude. I certainly am."



President & CEO Emeritus Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller pictured with Mark Norman, right.

## MARK NORMAN

“When Norman learned several years ago that the Museum was searching for a two-and-a half-ton WWII US Army truck, he generously donated two from his personal collection.”

Mark Norman has been an enthusiastic champion of the Museum's mission since 2000, when he read about the opening of The National D-Day Museum and traveled to New Orleans to sign up as a Member. Since then, Norman has seen the institution's growth firsthand from one pavilion to a six-acre campus that attracts visitors from around the world. For over 20 years, he has supported our endeavors to bring the lessons of the WWII generation to today's audiences while honoring the courage and bravery of WWII veterans.

Norman has supported the Museum's expansion through Membership contributions, artifact donations, and gifts to the Museum's endowment and operations. “I've enjoyed Mark's friendship and support for 21 years,” said President & CEO Emeritus Gordon H. “Nick” Mueller, “and have always appreciated his big heart, modesty, and humility, devotion to our country, and love of this Museum's mission. He is truly one in a million, and we are lucky to have him among our ranks.”

When Norman learned several years ago that the Museum was searching for a two-and-a half-ton WWII US Army truck,

he generously donated two from his personal collection. Tom Czekanski, the Museum's Senior Curator and Restoration Manager, recalled, “He reached out to us when he realized he owned pieces that we needed and delivered two immaculately restored two-and-a-half-ton trucks—real workhorses of World War II.” This donation filled a notable gap in the Museum's collection and is a testament to Norman's commitment to helping new audiences learn and experience unique facets of the war firsthand.

Norman's support of the Museum stems from his belief in the importance of educating future generations on the history of World War II and its lasting effects. While he honors all American WWII veterans through his support, his giving is particularly inspired by William Uphoff, a 20-year-old B-17 pilot who flew 35 missions over Germany before being shot down over Cologne. His fondest memories of the Museum over the years include his friendship with Mueller and a cherished PT-305 ride aboard the Museum's “Sudden Jerk” on Lake Pontchartrain with his son, Tom.



CAMPAIGNS OF COURAGE  
EUROPEAN AND PACIFIC THEATERS



DATE August 11, 2020

PAY TO THE ORDER OF The National WWII Museum \$ 81,629.

*Eighty one thousand, six hundred twenty-nine and 47/100* DOLLARS



*Eric J. Stuart*

The Liberty Road Challenge, organized in cooperation with the Allstate Sugar Bowl Crescent City Classic, raised more than \$80,000 in commemoration of the 76th anniversary of D-Day and the 20th anniversary of the Museum. Pictured from left are Alicia Franck, Museum Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Ricky Thomas, Crescent City Classic Executive Committee Member; Eric Stuart, Crescent City Classic Race Director; and Nathan Huegen, Museum Director of Educational Travel.



## IN THIS TOGETHER

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### Supporters Rally to Continue Advancing Museum's Mission

As the global pandemic's far-reaching effects impacted nearly every aspect of our personal and professional lives, the Museum took on the important responsibility of providing historical insights on the current challenges facing the world. The virus that proved deadly to so many members of our beloved WWII generation, however, also threatened the Museum's capacity to keep their powerful story alive.



Board Chairman Paul Hilliard and his wife, Madlyn, established a COVID-19 Response Fund that raised nearly \$2 million in support of the Museum's operations.

Immediately after COVID-19 forced the closure of the campus in mid-March 2020, the financial challenges facing the Museum became significant and impossible to ignore. As an independent nonprofit, the Museum largely relies on admissions sales, Memberships, and other contributions to support its operations, and subsequently lost several million dollars in revenue during the extended closure. Thanks to generous support from our Members, the leadership of the Museum Board of Trustees, and the dedication of staff and volunteers, the Museum was fortunately in a strong financial position with reserve funds available to address the short-term critical needs.

However, as the severity of the outbreak grew each day, the Museum braced for significant financial challenges during the two-month closure and long after reopening, due to a slow return to tourism and normal operations.

From the outset, though, the Museum was met with the optimism characteristic of the WWII generation. Both immediately and throughout the pandemic, supporters from across the country rallied to not just sustain the Museum's work but in many ways to advance its efforts online.

WWII veteran and Board Chairman Paul Hilliard and his wife, Madlyn, quickly established a COVID-19 Response Fund to support the Museum's operations and personally made the first donation. Many of our closest and most devoted supporters answered the call and followed Hilliard's lead. By now, 6,019 donors and Members across more than 27 states—plus London—have given more than \$1.7 million to advance the Museum's mission during this difficult time, with more than \$950,000 of that total coming from members of the Museum's Board of Trustees. Additionally, extra support came in from across the country through online Museum retail orders, early Membership renewals, brick purchases, and other forms of support.

Additionally, the Allstate Sugar Bowl Crescent City Classic collaborated with the Museum to host the virtual Liberty Road Challenge, commemorating both the 76th anniversary of D-Day and the 20th anniversary of the Museum's opening by recreating the route of Allied troops who liberated France in 1944. Participants were challenged to jog, walk, or cycle the virtual "course" from Sainte-Mere-Eglise to Saint-Malo in France. In all, the proceeds generated from entry fees and merchandise sales generated more than \$80,000 for the Museum.

This generous support went toward not only sustaining our operations, but also keeping all staff employed and paid during the height of the pandemic until there was no option except to make reductions to our team in early June 2020. As seen throughout this Annual Report, the contributions from across the country also made it possible to continue our mission in new and innovative ways with the Museum's educators, curators, and



historians expanding outreach to students, teachers, and parents across the country as they adjusted to online learning.

Despite the unexpected hurdles, the Museum understood its important responsibility to continue our education and preservation efforts—and to provide historical insights on the challenges we were all facing. Thanks to our supporters, while our exhibits were temporarily closed, our work continued online, and we were able to re-open our campus poised for a strong recovery.



## JOHN ELLIOTT

While John M. Elliott (1941-2021) was widely known as a highly successful and well-respected trial attorney, the Museum family remembers him more closely as a true and longtime friend whose enthusiasm for our mission was evident from his first visit. His love of country and respect for its heroic warriors led to a particular affinity for the International Conference on World War II, which he attended annually.

A voracious reader of history and biographies with a focus on military history, Elliott joyfully shepherded friends and family members to the Conference every year since 2013. He could easily be spotted in the audience, frequently wearing a Notre Dame T-shirt, fastidiously taking notes at every panel.

Elliott also loved traveling with the Museum and enjoyed recounting his trips with us to the Mediterranean, Normandy, Germany, and Eastern Europe. He was a favorite of many historians and staff members who were inspired by his knowledgeable passion for history and enjoyed his enthusiastic exchanges of perspectives.

Elliott's genuine kindness toward and admiration for the Museum staff was palpable. He always let us know how much the staff's commitment to the Museum's mission fueled his loyalty and enjoyment. So, when he heard that the COVID-19 Response Fund would benefit employees through payroll support, he didn't hesitate—after all, he considered these employees to be friends he'd made through the years.

The Museum will forever be grateful to Elliott, and we will remember him for his wonderful kindness, endless curiosity, generous spirit, ready smile, and genuine commitment, not just to the Museum's mission, but to its people.

2,996

PARTICIPANTS

Logged more than 588,000 miles in inaugural WWII Liberty Road Challenge, a collaborative effort with the Allstate Sugar Bowl Crescent City Classic that raised more than \$80,000 for The National WWII Museum

3,500+

GUESTS

Viewed *Live from your Living Room* virtual concert and donated nearly \$11,000 to Museum's COVID-19 Response Fund

5,901

CHARTER MEMBERS

Sprang into action by contributing more than \$240,000 through direct mail to the COVID-19 Response Fund

\$1.7

MILLION

Total amount raised to support the Museum through the COVID-19 Response Fund started by WWII veteran and Board Chairman Paul Hilliard and his wife, Madlyn

\$10,000

LOUISIANA CULTURE CARES FUND

Grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities provided support for Museum's COVID-19 emergency relief efforts

\$200,000

CARES ACT GRANT

Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities secured to support the Museum's digital content and programming and increase access to collection materials through digitization and online publishing

# COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND DONORS

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## WWII veteran and Board Chairman Paul Hilliard, and his wife, Madlyn, generously established a COVID-19 Response Fund and personally made the first donation.

When the Museum temporarily closed its doors in March 2020 and financial challenges quickly mounted, WWII veteran and Board Chairman Paul Hilliard, and his wife, Madlyn, generously established a COVID-19 Response Fund and personally made the first donation. The response from the Museum's loyal supporters across the country was remarkable, and we are grateful for the following donors for their contributions, which helped the Museum continue serving students, teachers, and parents when they needed us most, made it possible to take care of our staff, kept the campus safe and functioning properly during the closure, and ultimately prepared the Museum for a strong opening.

In addition to the donors listed, 5,901 Charter Members also responded to COVID-19 Response Fund appeals through the mail, contributing more than \$240,000. In total, the COVID-19 Response Fund raised \$1.7 million to support the Museum during these difficult times.

Richard C. Adkerson Family Foundation  
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Mr. and Mrs. Norman R. Augustine  
Sandra Barley

Ms. Barbara J. Bertovic  
Joy and Boysie Bollinger

Ms. Laura J. Borst

Ms. Shelita G. Bourgeois

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Higgins Marine Services

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Mr. Greg B. Jansky

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Mr. and Mrs. David L. Laxton III

Todd Ricketts and Sylvie Légerè

Sherry and Alan Leventhal Family Foundation

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities

Lupo Family Charitable Fund

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick D. Mahoney

James S. McDonnell Family Foundation and

Mr. and Mrs. James S. McDonnell III

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Gustaf W. McIlhenny Foundation

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Mrs. Cynthia M. Molyneux

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Patricia, David, Elodie, Jacob, and Albanie

Nierenberg

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Joyce and Sidney Pulitzer

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Jennifer and Ted Weggeland

Cherry Whitley

Christine Whitman

Governor and Mrs. Pete Wilson

Mrs. Paula P. Withrow

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon L. Wogan

Miss Stephanie Ziegler

And One Donor Who Wishes to Remain Anonymous

# CHARTER MEMBERS

CONTRIBUTED  
**\$11 MILLION**

**BY 167,632 MEMBERS**

Reflecting back on our incredible growth over the past 20 years, The National WWII Museum would not be where it is today without the long-standing support of its Charter Members from across the country. This past year alone, 167,632 Charter Members played a critical role in ensuring that the Museum was able to continue expanding its educational outreach despite the significant financial and operational challenges brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic. Charter Members' loyalty throughout Fiscal Year 2020 exemplifies their strong commitment to the values of the WWII generation and to the mission of America's WWII Museum.

Combined, Charter Members provided the Museum with more than \$11 million in operating revenue to help fund educational programming and preservation initiatives in Fiscal Year 2020. Even though the majority of our Members reside outside of New Orleans and were also personally affected by the pandemic, many have a deep personal connection to WWII history and are inspired to continue supporting the Museum's efforts to preserve the legacy of the men and women who bravely fought to secure victory in World War II. With the generous support of our Charter Members this past year, the Museum's educators, historians, and curators found new, innovative ways

to share the complete story of *the war that changed the world*, especially as the Museum marked the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.

### **THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS**

for supporting The National WWII Museum in Fiscal Year 2020 and into the future, as we continue to grow and evolve to ensure that all ages understand the sacrifices made to secure the freedoms we enjoy today.

# PATRIOTS CIRCLE

**CONTRIBUTED**  
**\$3.1 MILLION**

**BY 1,206 MEMBERS**

Among the most loyal supporters of The National WWII Museum, Patriots Circle Members contributed \$3.1 million to the Museum in Fiscal Year 2020—once again exceeding all previous records of giving from Patriots Circle Members.

As the Museum temporarily closed its doors during two of its typically busy months in 2020, Patriots Circle Members' commitment to the Museum took on even greater significance. During the closure and in the months since reopening, Patriots Circle Members' contributions enabled the Museum to continue to stand as a national beacon for inspiration and learning when students, teachers, parents, and audiences of all ages needed us the most.

Through their generous annual support, ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000, Patriots Circle Members made it possible for the Museum to continue its important work of digitizing its massive collections and artifacts; developing new spaces and interactive exhibits on the New Orleans campus; and expanding beyond the Museum walls through our digital content and distance learning programs—engaging students and adult learners worldwide with the lessons and legacies of World War II.

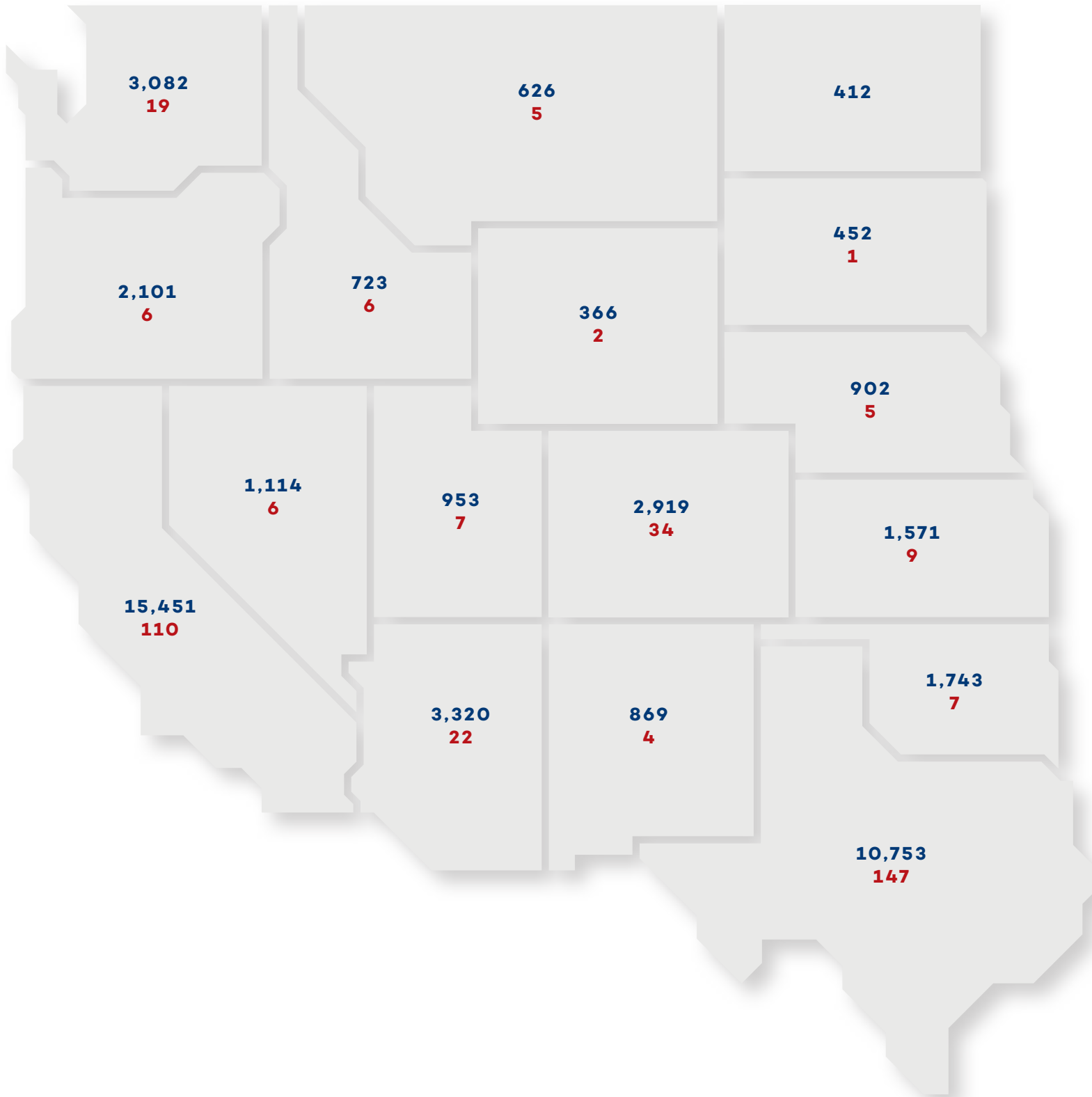
We are grateful to the 1,206 Patriots Circle Members who supported the Museum in Fiscal Year 2020, our greatest time of need. Among this special group are 57 Trustees who are Four-Star Patriots

Circle Members, reflecting their deep commitment to preserve this vital legacy with current and future generations.

### **THANKS TO EACH OF OUR PATRIOTS CIRCLE MEMBERS**

for demonstrating the American spirit in such a profound and meaningful way during this very challenging year. Your annual support will ensure a strong recovery and the continued advancement of the Museum's educational mission.

# MEMBERS NATIONWIDE FUEL THE MUSEUM'S EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH



ALASKA

GUAM

HAWAII

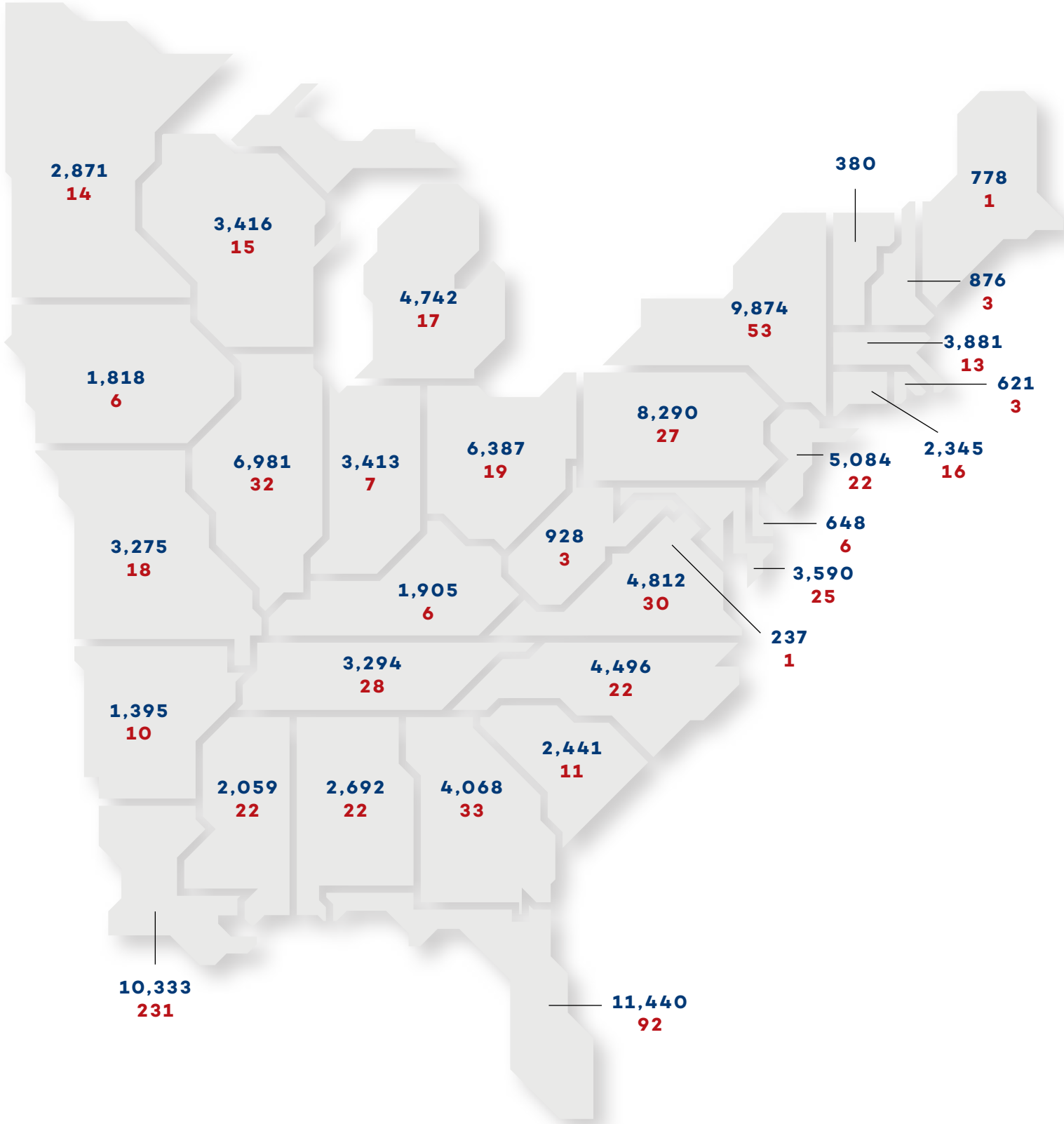
**225**  
**2**

**6**  
**2**

**488**  
**2**

**CHARTER MEMBERS**

**PATRIOTS CIRCLE**



**PUERTO RICO**

**OTHER**

**STATIONED ARMED FORCES**

**34**

**152**  
**2**

**12**

# PATRIOTS CIRCLE DONORS



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Home Front

Johann Stirnimann, WWII Veteran

Joseph L. DeVido, WWII Veteran

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**Charitable Fund**

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Theodore Nierenberg,

WWII Veteran

David Eli Nierenberg,

WWII Veteran

Jay Nierenberg, WWII Veteran

Inge von Gutenberg Nierenberg,

WWII Veteran

John Cambou, WWII Veteran

Mario Cambou, WWII Veteran

Andrew Cambou, WWII Veteran

Clifford Segal, WWII Veteran

Albert Angelo, Sr., WWII

Home Front

Edward Lynch, WWII Veteran

Ira Millstein, WWII Veteran

Morris Dagen, WWII Veteran

**Mr. David Norris**

Robert Patrick King, US Navy,

WWII Veteran

Norman William Norris,

WWII Home Front

**Jane and Ron Olson**

Lester Boyens, WWII Veteran

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**SANDY AND MARGIE VILLERE**

Many years ago, Sandy Villere and his beloved wife, Margie, owned a house on the Mississippi Gulf Coast next door to Stephen Ambrose. Thanks to their friendly neighbor and the Villere family's long legacy of service—dating back to General Jacques Phillippe Villere in the Battle of New Orleans—Sandy and Margie sought to learn more about WWII history and become involved with the Museum being developed by Ambrose and Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller.

After helping support the Museum's opening in 2000, Sandy and Margie, who passed away in January 2020, joined Patriots Circle as two of its earliest Members in March 2004. Since then, they've continued to make generous gifts to the *Road to Victory* Capital Campaign, the Museum's endowment, COVID-19 Response Fund, and other initiatives, totaling more than half a million dollars.

For Sandy, the connection has always been personal. Even at age 7, he understood why his uncle Simon George Chequelin was away in France during World War II. "Here he was risking his life to preserve democracy, and he took time to send me postcards with images of the military in France," Sandy said. "That gesture made quite an impression."

Sandy was 9 years old at camp in North Carolina when the war ended. "Most of us were too young to grasp the gravity and significance of the war," he said. "We went without lots of things but accepted rationing as something we did to help out in the war effort. When the announcement of the end of the war came, the guys at camp started ringing a huge bell with lots of singing and celebrating. What a joy-filled moment that was."

Today, Sandy takes pride in helping preserve his family's legacy of service. "As a sixth-generation New Orleanian, I remain proud to continue my support of the Museum through the Patriots Circle and welcome its continued growth."



## THREE STAR DONOR PROFILE



### TOMMY AND EUGENIA LIND

Tommy and Eugenia Lind of New Orleans have proudly supported the Museum since 2001, first as Charter Members and then upgrading to the Patriots Circle in 2016. “Initially we were unaware of the Patriots Circle,” Tommy said, “but we are happy to have the opportunity to join and become more involved.”

Eugenia grew up in El Paso, Texas, near three military installations during World War II, and she remembers a great presence of men and women in uniform around town during the war years. Her own family contributed to the war effort by volunteering with the American Red Cross. “I remember my mother and aunts rolling gauze bandages and greeting the wounded when they arrived,” Eugenia said. Along with her family helping on the Home Front, two of her uncles served in the Army in Europe and stateside during the war.

For Tommy and Eugenia, being Patriots Circle Members is one of the ways they show their appreciation for the many veterans who so selflessly gave to America by serving their country. During these challenging times, it’s even more important to them that the Museum showcases the history of our country and how it was shaped by World War II. “Everyone, especially younger generations, needs to realize the hardships and horrors of war and understand the sacrifice and toll it puts not only on those in uniform, but also their families and friends waiting on them to return back home,” Tommy said.

Not ones to miss a Museum event, the Linds see the Museum as a jewel right here in their backyard and look forward to a return to in-person programs and events soon.

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## SANDY AND BRENDA ATHERTON

Two Star Patriots Circle Members Humphrey “Sandy” and Brenda Atherton from San Antonio, Texas, first became involved with the Museum through a fellow Patriots Circle Member who invited them to an event several years ago.

“We were instantly impressed as soon as we stepped through the doors,” Brenda said. “The displays and the way the information was presented was very compelling and well researched.”

Both of their fathers served in World War II, along with several family members on each side. “We enjoy visiting the Museum, seeing the new exhibits, and attending the WWII Air, Sea, and Land Festival,” Brenda said. “The Museum is always enhancing and expanding their educational offerings, and finding new ways to honor the Greatest Generation.”

Sandy admits to being the bigger history buff, but both feel strongly about preserving the stories and lessons from the war. The Athertons find positivity in the unity the world displayed in the 1940s by working together to stop the atrocities that led to World War II and ensure they do not happen again. “The events of heroism inspired the next generation of servicemembers, creating everyday heroes for them to look up to,” Sandy said. “Those heroes were their fathers, brothers, uncles, as well as their wives, mothers, and daughters.”

As proud Patriots Circle supporters, Sandy and Brenda often encourage friends to visit the Museum or become involved. “The stories and artifacts that the Museum is preserving are incredible,” Sandy said. “We are beyond thrilled to be a part of the Museum, and we want to see it remain a premier educational institution in perpetuity.”



## FLORENCE UPSON

A passion to learn more about her father’s WWII service led Florence Upson of Littleton, Colorado, to begin supporting the Museum in 2008 and join the Patriots Circle as a One Star Member in 2012. Florence’s father, David Richardson Upson, began his military career in the US Navy in 1938. After assignments in New York and San Francisco, David was serving as navigator on the *USS General M.B. Stewart* transport ship in 1945 when the war ended. As they were passing the Rock of Gibraltar, word came that the Japanese had surrendered.

“Knowing that they survived the war, my father said the soldiers celebrated all the way back to New York,” Florence said. He was so excited to learn of an official museum to tell the story of World War II and its lessons, as well as to honor those who served. “Based on his enthusiasm, I traveled to New Orleans to visit the Museum, and I was so impressed with the events, facilities, growth plans, and the wonderful people,” she said. “The combination of my father’s interest in the Museum, my interest in WWII history, and that visit attracted me to the Patriots Circle.”

Florence believes that remembering the lessons from World War II is important to avoid repeating history’s mistakes. “Some parallels between then and now suggest we have not learned,” she said. “As we found out before World War II, elected leaders can become dictators if too few citizens take action to check their power.”

While Florence has enjoyed attending the International Conference on World War II in person in New Orleans, she also gained an appreciation for the Museum’s digital outreach during COVID-19. “The live virtual programs were the highlight of so many mornings during the lockdown, and the other content in the daily and weekly emails has been much appreciated as well.”

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Museum supporters can pay tribute to their WWII heroes by purchasing a brick or paver in their honor. These tributes pave the way around and through the Museum campus, reminding all visitors of the service and sacrifice required to win the war against fascism.

(Image by Justen Williams)

# ROAD TO VICTORY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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### The Museum is nearing completion of its \$400 million campus expansion project to quadruple its size.

Through the Road to Victory Capital Campaign, The National WWII Museum will fulfill its mission to tell the entire story of the American experience in World War II: why the war was fought, how it was won, and what it means today.

Thanks to the generous support from Society of the American Spirit donors who have contributed to our capital campaign, the Museum is nearing completion of its \$400 million campus expansion project to quadruple the size of the original Museum and raise endowment funding for future educational programs, research, collections, and exhibitions.

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Museum celebrated three major milestones in the capital campaign with the opening of the Hall of Democracy, the completion of the steel assembly for the Bollinger Canopy of Peace, and the ceremonial groundbreaking of Liberation Pavilion. Through the commitment of Society of the American Spirit donors, the Museum is on track to complete its campus expansion in 2023.

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## WILLIAM AND KAREN OSBORNE

Will and Karen Osborne remember their first visit to The National WWII Museum vividly. “The story of World War II is told with clarity and substance via a fascinating interactive experience, unlike any museum we have seen before,” Will remarked. He and his wife Karen first toured the Museum in 2017 and were amazed by the scale of the campus and collection. This initial trip inspired them to travel with the Museum and later attend the annual International Conference on World War II. “With each connection, our admiration for the Museum and its mission grows, and because of the amount of material collected and rotating special exhibits, each visit is a new experience.”

These unique encounters have led Karen and Will to form lasting friendships at the Museum. Among them, the Osbornes have connected with WWII veteran and former Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Paul Hilliard, who made a moving impression on the couple. As Will remembers, “His warmth and kindness to two strangers on our first trip with the Museum made us feel immediately welcome and among friends. I will never forget standing next to him at the American Cemetery outside of Anzio, Italy, looking over the sea of white crosses marking the graves of American soldiers who gave their lives for an ideal so far away from their home. Our entire group was moved to tears. [Hilliard] quietly said,

‘This is the ultimate expression of American exceptionalism – that these soldiers fought and died not for personal gain, but for the freedom of others who lived thousands of miles away.’”

Both Karen and Will have meaningful personal connections to World War II. Karen’s father served as a P-54 fighter pilot in the Army Air Corps in the European Theater, and Will’s grandfather was a captain in the Medical Corps of Patton’s army in North Africa.

These connections and their love for the Museum community inspired the Osbornes to support the capital campaign by underwriting the Karen H. Bechtel and William M. Osborne III Media Auditorium within the Hall of Democracy. “The story of World War II is one of the ultimate truths that should be told and retold, and our support for this mission could not be more central to our core beliefs. It is an honor to have our names attached to an auditorium where these lessons can go on every day.”

The Osbornes believe that in the shared sacrifice of everyday Americans during World War II, we can observe the very best of our national character. Of their continued support of the Museum and its mission, Will remarked that “This story needs to be told, preserved, and celebrated for generations to come, and The National WWII Museum is the rightful institution to carry that mission.”

# STEPHEN E. AMBROSE LEGACY SOCIETY

## Legacy gifts support our mission to preserve and share the history of the American experience during World War II.

The Stephen E. Ambrose Legacy Society recognizes individuals, couples, and associations who have included The National WWII Museum in their will, trust, life insurance policy, retirement assets, or other estate plans. These legacy gifts support our mission to preserve and share the history of the American experience during World War II. In Fiscal Year 2020, Ambrose Legacy Society membership rose to over 200 supporters, whose generous planned gifts will ensure strong future growth of the Museum's programs and initiatives.

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## JACK GROSS

in memory of Herbert Gross

Jack Gross recalls one of his late father's favorite sayings: "All of the medals on my jacket represent the tears of my wife and mother." Herbert Gross, Jack's father, served as a US Army Air Force Staff Sergeant tail gunner and assistant engineer, fighting in 30 WWII missions against the Japanese, all aboard B-24 heavy bombers.

As a Museum volunteer and supporter, Jack shares the story of his father's service with Museum visitors, along with his knowledge of WWII planes. Since becoming a volunteer and docent in July 2015, Jack has contributed more than 2,490 hours of service. Over the years, he has also compiled his own historical notebooks filled with WWII facts about the planes in the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center, working to create a memorable and educational tour for Museum visitors.

Jack's father endured a 10-day odyssey behind enemy lines in French Indochina, where he contracted Dengue fever and suffered horrific insect bites and shrapnel wounds, among other injuries, before he made his way into China. After discharge in October 1945, he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross and a Purple Heart.

Passionate about preserving the democratic ideals his father fought to preserve during the war, Jack made a planned gift to the Museum through a charitable gift annuity—a gift that pays Jack income for life. Donors of the Stephen E. Ambrose Legacy Society leave gifts in their will, life insurance policies, or other estate plans, which support the Museum's endowment.

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Contributions from our program sponsors made it possible for the Museum to increase understanding of the *war that changed the world*.

The National WWII Museum thanks the following donors, whose support made our exhibits, educational programs, outreach initiatives, and commemorative events possible in Fiscal Year 2020 and beyond. During this pivotal year as we marked the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and dramatically increased our virtual programming to reach the widest audience during the pandemic, these generous individuals and organizations made it possible for the Museum to increase understanding of *the war that changed the world* among people of all ages across the nation.

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# PEOPLES HEALTH

“Bringing good causes and good people together can really inspire and impact lives.”

WWII veteran Bowdre McDowell embodies the inspiration behind Peoples Health’s support of The National WWII Museum. A US Navy code breaker during the war, McDowell began volunteering at the Museum at age 89, and by 92, he had surpassed 1,000 volunteer hours. Peoples Health representatives had the good fortune of meeting McDowell during Volunteer Week and the company later honored him as a Peoples Health Champion.

“The energy and enthusiasm of volunteers remind us that bringing good causes and good people together can really inspire and impact lives—including one’s own,” said Warren Murrell, Peoples Health President and CEO.

Since 2010, Peoples Health has supported various Museum programs and initiatives but is most proud of its contributions to the Museum’s community of volunteers. Since the Museum opened in 2000, its volunteer corps has generously dedicated over one million hours of service. Peoples Health annually honors the corps’ contributions to the Museum and community by sponsoring the annual National Volunteer Week and the Museum’s volunteer holiday celebration.

Peoples Health’s support of the Museum also extends to helping seniors in the community enjoy great experiences, like the Victory Belles virtual concert in 2020 on Veterans Day, which featured songs requested by Peoples Health community partners and tributes to veterans. The concert became the most-watched live-streamed event of the day. Among many other Museum events, Peoples Health has previously sponsored the WWII Air, Sea, and Land Festival and has underwritten special Museum experiences for veterans and their caretakers. Thanks to the generosity of Peoples Health, seniors from the Terrebonne and St. Tammany Councils on Aging, as well as veterans from the St. Charles Council on Aging, have been able to participate in Museum experiences.

“Strengthening the communities we serve is what defines the mission of Peoples Health, and that’s why we are very proud to support the Museum,” said Murrell.

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# SOLOMON VICTORY THEATER SEAT DONORS

Contributions help preserve the stories of World War II for future generations in this one-of-a-kind theater.

The National WWII Museum thanks the following donors for underwriting a seat in the Solomon Victory Theater to honor or remember a family member, personal friend, or organization. An engraved plaque has been permanently affixed to the arm of the purchased seat to recognize their contribution. Such support helps preserve the stories of World War II for future generations in this one-of-a-kind theater. While theaters faced special challenges during the pandemic this past year, since reopening to the public, the Museum has utilized the latest sanitizing and safe distancing protocols to keep the *Beyond All Boundaries* experience open to visitors.

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IHO the 451st Bomb Squadron Men Who Served in WWII

#### Karen and Ron Adams

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For our DAD, Sidney Katz, 8th Air Force 467th  
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**Deborah G. Lindsay**

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- (2) William F. Grosser, USAF
- (3) Robert S. Lindsay, USN
- (4) Forrest Villarrubia, US Marine PTO
- (5) Tom Blakey 1920-2015 D-Day Veteran  
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- (6) Bert Stolier US Marines PTO 2nd Division

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**Dr. and Mrs. Neil Maki****Scott and Kimberly Martin**

IHO R. S. Martin Jr., 4th Marine Div. Kilgore, Tx,  
Thankful Son Scott Martin

**NATALIE CHARACH**

Natalie Charach's husband, Manny, was 18 years old when he joined the 2nd Armored Division, serving as a gunner on a half-track. Manny's six-man crew served together for 16 months. They entered France on D-Day +4, moving ahead of the Army with a special command team to seize Le Bourget airfield, and served in the Battle of the Bulge, driving to the Elbe River in Germany.

"These brave young men remained close as brothers until 2017, when the last buddy (Manny) died," Natalie said.

Natalie, who worked on the Home Front, and her niece Susan Henkin got involved with the Museum as a way to preserve the legacy of Manny's service. Natalie underwrote four Solomon Victory Theater seats in honor of Manny, his two closest crew members, and her mother, Rose Miller, "a real Rosie the Riveter" who worked in a factory building trucks and half-tracks. "My mother would always put a note in the truck blessing the soldiers and telling them to come back home safe and sound," she said. Natalie also chose to sponsor two hotel rooms in The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center in honor of Manny and also a room for the crew, Fitz, Jack, Leo, Bill, and Sid, whose stories are now on display for guests from across the country and beyond.

"We are so thrilled to be able to have their names and photos presented in such beautiful and meaningful ways," Natalie said. "It is an opportunity to keep them alive and always remember their names." Inspired by Natalie's tribute, several family members of Manny's half-track crew have also purchased commemorative bricks honoring their loved ones who served.

**Ben A. Martinez, Jr.**

- (1) IHO Ben A. Martinez, Jr.
- (2) Urban "UB" Martinez
- (3) John William Water
- (4) William J. Wegman
- (5) Jose D. Martinez
- (6) John L. Martinez
- (7) Frank H. Roark, Jr.

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- (2) Samuel Benjamin Lisenbee, Pacific Theater,  
US Marine Corp
- (3) Lee Roy Lisenbee, Pacific Theater,  
US Marine Corp
- (4) L.C. Lisenbee, Pacific Theater,  
US Marine Corp

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- (2) Edward Tipper D-Day 101st Airborne Div

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Down, POW, Dad and Hero Loved By All

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1914-2017

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In Loving Memory of, Byron Johnson, Dear Friend  
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Carwie Solomon"

- (1) Theodore G. Solomon, Sr.
- (2) Doris Carwie Solomon

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IMO her husband



**THERE IS NOWHERE IN THE COUNTRY  
WHERE THE WEIGHT AND THE  
SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT HAPPENED  
DURING WORLD WAR II—THE  
BATTLE BETWEEN FREEDOM AND  
GLOBAL TYRANNY—IS FELT MORE  
POWERFULLY AND PALPABLY THAN  
AT THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM.**

—GARY SINISE

# FINANCIALS

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Cash and Cash Equivalents	61,912,459	67,463,061
Investments	30,043,121	30,495,131
<b>Unconditional promises to give:</b>		
Capital Campaign, net of allowances	19,146,448	16,799,122
Endowment, net of allowances	2,137,660	2,285,698
Other, net of allowances	1,341,204	1,676,102
Notes Receivable	4,834,474	4,634,670
Retail Stores Inventory	1,174,184	891,120
Other Assets	4,384,264	6,210,206
Property and Equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	264,626,342	246,603,582
Collections	13,153,510	13,106,884
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>402,753,666</b>	<b>390,165,576</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable Trade	962,602	2,548,078
Construction Accounts Payable	3,330,571	5,852,137
Accrued Expenses	2,957,591	5,829,444
Liability on interest rate swap agreement	2,693,140	—
Deferred Revenue	3,903,563	4,007,484
Line of Credit, Construction	51,803,493	40,242,415
Paycheck Protection Act Notes Payable	4,356,000	—
Hilton Development Incentive Note	1,300,000	—
Notes Payable	11,130,058	11,977,064
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>82,437,018</b>	<b>70,456,622</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Net Assets without donor restrictions</b>		
Designated	37,175,876	42,519,028
Undesignated	234,075,244	231,707,331
Total Net Assets without donor restrictions	271,251,120	274,226,359
Net Assets with donor restrictions	49,065,528	45,482,595
Total Net Assets	320,316,648	319,708,954
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>402,753,666</b>	<b>390,165,576</b>

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2020 TOTALS	2019 TOTALS
Grants	1,210,772	6,744,634	7,955,406	10,963,619
<b>Contributions:</b>				
Capital Campaign	147,420	11,160,246	11,307,666	22,507,649
Endowment	—	154,434	154,434	2,364,535
Other	3,995,741	334,898	4,330,639	5,159,156
Memberships	11,523,338	—	11,523,338	9,903,130
Admissions	13,137,896	—	13,137,896	20,006,821
Facilities and Property Rental	1,270,058	—	1,270,058	1,926,678
Hotel Operating Revenue	5,395,781	—	5,395,781	—
Sponsored Events and Conferences	7,565,639	723,230	8,288,869	27,646,206
Retail Store	3,031,928	—	3,031,928	4,139,703
Investment Income (loss)	(671,643)	666,704	(4,939)	3,967,176
Sponsorships	103,466	—	103,466	206,442
Miscellaneous	1,114,088	—	1,114,088	1,153,838
Net Assets released from restrictions	16,201,213	(16,201,213)	—	—
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>	<b>64,025,697</b>	<b>3,582,933</b>	<b>67,608,630</b>	<b>109,944,953</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Program	54,550,779	—	54,550,779	59,415,275
General and Administrative	6,459,803	—	6,459,803	5,888,569
Fundraising	3,297,194	—	3,297,194	4,192,648
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>64,307,776</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>64,307,776</b>	<b>69,496,492</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>				
Change in net assets before interest rate swap agreement	(282,079)	3,582,933	3,300,854	40,448,461
Change in liability on interest rate swap agreement	(2,693,140)	—	(2,693,140)	—
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(2,975,219)</b>	<b>3,582,933</b>	<b>607,714</b>	<b>40,448,461</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>				
Beginning of year	274,226,359	45,482,595	319,708,954	279,260,493
End of year	271,251,120	49,065,528	320,316,648	319,708,954



A cheering crowd of American civilians celebrates news of Japan's unconditional surrender with flags, ticker tape, and confetti. United States, September 1945.

SHOP 78

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White Rose Tea

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WWII MUSEUM  
NEW ORLEANS

