



VETERANS
AND THE
MILITARY
ON STAMPS



Publication 528
July 2003

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Sending a powerful message requires a powerful tool. The mail is one of the most powerful — and easily accessible — communication tools available today. A single postage stamp is the only investment you need.

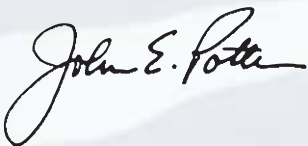
Since the United States Postal Service® started to issue stamps more than 150 years ago, just about every one of them has also carried a message about our shared heritage and the people and events that have helped build our great nation. Over the years, many stamps have commemorated veterans and accomplishments by our military, from colonial days to the present. In fact, the first two stamps issued by the Postal Service™ in 1847 honored two military veterans, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. (Washington's service is well known, of course, and Franklin was a veteran of the Pennsylvania militia.)

This publication presents more than a hundred military veterans and events from the 20th century. During this century, the United States defended the freedom of people around the world. Also during this century, American citizen-soldiers embarked to many foreign countries where they strove and sacrificed to replace tyranny with liberty.

Some of the stamp images displayed here honor the military veterans who have played their part in the unfolding and unending story of defending freedom and democracy. Some images honor the various services — the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. Others depict famous battles — Pearl Harbor, D-Day, and Iwo Jima. Still others show the aircraft or ships that our veterans used in battle. Collectively these images forge one thought: that the American military has always protected — and always will protect — our nation and its people.

Although the postage stamps presented here commemorate specific military veterans and activities, it is through these stamps that the Postal Service honors and celebrates all those who have answered the call of duty, honor, and country. Those who served demonstrated an incomparable love of country. Their commitment and their sacrifice deserve our respect and gratitude.

The United States Postal Service has helped to bind the nation together for more than two centuries. For American men and women who serve our country — whether at home or abroad, whether in the past, the present, or the future — the Postal Service acts as a lifeline to friends and family, keeping them connected to the ones they love, the ones they protect. We have continually evolved to serve a growing nation more efficiently and effectively. And we continue that process today, as we transform ourselves to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



John E. Potter
Postmaster General



U.S. Air Force

Although the Air Force was not established as an independent agency of the Department of Defense until September 18, 1947, the Air Force's lineage dates back to the early 1900s, when the Army Signal Corps established an Aeronautic Division in 1907. In 1911, Congress voted in favor of an appropriation for military aviation. During World War I, air power played an important role, and by the end of World War II, an independent Air Force was inevitable. Today, more than 750,000 active-duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and civilian personnel execute the Air Force's mission "to defend the nation through control and exploitation of air and space." This stamp, issued on the 50th anniversary of the Air Force, depicts four of the Air Force's famous Thunderbirds, its aerial demonstration squadron, flying in diamond formation.

Issued: 1997

Airborne Units in Normandy

On June 6, 1944, more than 20,000 paratroopers of the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the British 6th Airborne Division dropped behind enemy lines to start the long-awaited European invasion. They faced tremendous obstacles: not only were they separated from the main invasion force, but they made their jumps in darkness and bad weather, which caused many landings to be off target and in dangerous locations such as swamps and enemy-occupied areas. Despite high casualties, they completed many of their assignments, such as holding some bridges until reinforcements arrived, destroying other bridges to impede enemy counterattacks, laying mines, capturing German garrisons, and in general disrupting enemy activities. Some troops who could not link up with their units ended up fighting alongside the French Resistance for several months. This stamp depicts a Waco CG-4A that is intact at the landing zone, but most gliders were heavily damaged or destroyed in the operation.



Issued: 1994



Airlift for Our Servicemen

This special \$1.00 airlift stamp was used to send parcels between the United States and servicemen stationed overseas and in Alaska and Hawaii.

Issued: 1968



The American Legion

In September 1919 Congress established the American Legion. Its Constitution states as its purpose:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Today the American Legion has about 3 million members.

Issued: 1969

Arctic Explorations

This stamp commemorates two "world firsts" for the United States: Robert E. Peary and Matthew Henson's arrival at the North Pole in 1909, and the undersea crossing of the North Pole by the SSN *Nautilus* in 1958. The SSN *Nautilus* is also famous for being the world's first nuclear submarine. Decommissioned in 1980, the ship is now open to the public in Groton, Connecticut.

Issued: 1959



Arlington Amphitheater

On the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery is the Memorial Amphitheater, which was dedicated in 1920. It is the site for annual memorial services on Easter, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, and it has also been the site of patriotic meetings and state funerals of famous Americans. Near the Memorial Amphitheater is the Tomb of the Unknowns, which shelters the bodies of unknown servicemen from several American wars in tribute and honor to all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in anonymity.

Issued: 1922



U.S. Army

The American colonies had relied on the militia system for 150 years, but in 1775 the Second Continental Congress authorized the creation of a Continental Army, with George Washington serving as commander in chief. For more than 225 years since then, the U.S. Army has defended the nation — from its days as a new-born republic to its emergence as a world power — and today's Army continues to perform a long list of

missions in support of American foreign policy and in response to domestic needs. This stamp, issued to commemorate the Army's role in the Allied victory in World War II, depicts the land and air forces of the United States Army against the backdrop of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

Issued: 1945

General Henry “Hap” Arnold

A 1907 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Henry Harley “Hap” Arnold's military career spanned two world wars, during which he helped to lead and shape the nation's air forces. One of the country's first military pilots, Arnold served on the Air Service staff during World War I. Between the wars he was a rising star, winning various aeronautical awards and also the Distinguished Flying Cross. During World War II, he was responsible for the air strategy in both Europe and the Pacific, and he was promoted to the five-star rank of General of the Army in 1944. Arnold retired in March 1946, but he returned to service in 1949 when President Truman gave him the first-ever United States commission to the rank of permanent five-star general of the Air Force.

Issued: 1988



Bastogne and the Battle of the Bulge

Fought in the Belgian Ardennes and Luxembourg from December 1944 to January 1945, the Battle of the Bulge refers to the German counteroffensive during what became the largest land battle of World War II. Using the foggy weather as an advantage, the Germans created a dent, or bulge, in Allied lines and threatened to break through and seize Antwerp. In the Belgian town of Bastogne, the U.S. 101st

Airborne Division was surrounded by Germans, but when asked to surrender, General Anthony McAuliffe replied, “Nuts!” His famous response not only baffled the Germans but inspired his troops to hold out until they could be relieved by General Patton's Third Army.

Issued: 1994



Berlin Airlift

This stamp commemorates the 50th anniversary of one of the greatest relief efforts in history: the Berlin Airlift, an 11-month effort to deliver more than two million tons of cargo to Berlin residents. In June 1948, the Soviets, who for a period after World War II had control over the eastern part of Germany, including all but the western portion of Berlin (which was jointly controlled by the U.S., Britain, and France),

suspended all ground travel in and out of the city. American cargo planes, following a detailed flight plan that was designed to allow for landings every 3 minutes, transported powdered milk, flour, coal, and medicine. Although the Soviets ended the blockade in May 1949, the airlift continued until September 30 to ensure that Berliners had a stockpile of supplies.

Issued: 1998

Blinded Veterans

In 1945 a group of World War II veterans who were blinded while in service established the Blinded Veterans Association. The purpose of the BVA, according to a Congressional Charter issued in 1957, is, among other things, “to promote the welfare of blinded veterans so that, notwithstanding their disabilities, they may take their rightful place in the community and work with their fellow citizens toward the creation of a peaceful world.”

Issued: 1981



Bombing Raids in Europe

Between July 1942 and August 1943, Allied forces conducting daylight bombing raids on German targets were experiencing heavy losses — most of which occurred primarily beyond the range of the bomber escort. In the summer of 1943, mass production began of the North American P-51 *Mustang*. Designed in 117 days and fitted with a British Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, the P-51 *Mustang* had a range of almost

1,500 miles and could fly higher and faster than anything else in the air, reaching a top speed of 440 miles per hour at 30,000 feet. By 1944, P-51s escorted B-17s on their bombing runs — not only protecting the bombers and their crews but also destroying German aircraft in the air, on the ground, and in factories — and greatly helped the Allies win the war.

Issued: 1994



General Omar Bradley

Omar Nelson Bradley was born in a log cabin in Missouri in 1893. He graduated from West Point in 1915, “the class the stars fell on,” named so because of how many graduates became generals. Bradley spent World War I stateside, but during World War II, he commanded troops that fought in North Africa, Sicily, Normandy, and Germany. By 1943, Bradley had been involved in decisions that would determine the outcome of the war in Europe.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower considered Bradley indispensable, and by the end of the war, Bradley was considered by many as “America’s foremost battle leader.” He was also beloved by his troops because of his concern for them, and was known as the “GI’s general.” In 1948 Bradley succeeded Eisenhower as Army Chief of Staff, and 18 months later he was promoted to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, followed by a promotion to General of the Army with five stars in 1950. Bradley retired from a distinguished and unparalleled career of military service in 1953.

Issued: 2000

Burma Road

By late May 1942, the Japanese had closed and destroyed the Burma Road, a 700-mile stretch of rugged terrain that was China’s last overland route connecting it with the rest of the world. In late 1943, after Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell had established the China-Burma-India Theatre of Operations, the 3,000 American volunteers who became known as “Merrill’s Marauders” — named after their commander, General Frank Merrill — arrived to disrupt Japanese supply and communications lines and to ensure that the road remained open so that Chinese Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek could receive supplies. The rural jungles of Burma provided some of the worst conditions a soldier could face in wartime. At one point, as many as 75 men were dying per day from malaria, dysentery, and scrub typhus. For the hardships they endured and the victories and accomplishments they recorded, Merrill’s Marauders were awarded the Army’s Distinguished Unit Citation in July 1944.

Issued: 1991





Byrd Antarctic Expedition II

The second expedition to Antarctica led by Richard E. Byrd (retired Admiral of the U.S. Navy) began in 1933 and ended in 1935. The goals of the second expedition were to determine the extent of the Queen Maud mountains beyond the Ross Ice Shelf, to construct a weather station for meteorological observations, to measure the thickness of the polar plateau, and to conduct biological studies in the Bay of Whales. The 56-member expedition benefited from the use of automotive transportation, including a tractor, two snowmobiles, and three Citroëns modified with skis in place of the front wheels. The first human voices were transmitted from base camp, known as Little America II, on February 1, 1934, and weekly broadcasts followed. Little America also had electrical power for the first time,

allowing members of the expedition to construct and maintain mechanical devices used at camp and in the field — a boon for those living in one of the world's most inhospitable places, where winter offers perpetual darkness and temperatures reach -75° F. The 3-cent stamp was not distributed to Post Offices for public sale; it was used for letters mailed through the Little America Post Office. The 25-cent stamp commemorating Admiral Byrd was released in a series on Antarctic explorers.

Issued: 1933 and 1988



Four Chaplains

“Greater love hath no one than this, than to lay down one's life for friends.” When the troopship USS *Dorchester* was torpedoed in the North Atlantic on February 3, 1943, the four military chaplains on board — Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Father John P. Washington, and Reverends George L. Fox and Clark V. Poling, who had become friends while classmates at the military chaplains school — strove to calm the

troops and offer encouragement as they led them from the battered, darkened hull to the wave-ravaged deck. There, they helped organize the launching of life boats and distribution of life jackets. When the supply of life jackets ran out, the four chaplains removed their own and gave them to others. As the *Dorchester* sank with almost 700 of its 900-plus troops, the four chaplains linked arms, and many around them heard their voices strong in song and supplication, offering strength and support at the hour of greatest need. These four men symbolized for the nation the sacrifices the war required, when citizens of different backgrounds, of nonmilitary professions, became soldiers and sacrificed their lives so that others might live. Chapels at the Pentagon and at West Point have stained glass windows commemorating the four chaplains, and in 1960 Congress posthumously awarded them a special medal — the Four Chaplains' Medal.

Issued: 1948



General Claire Chennault

Claire Lee Chennault was born September 6, 1890, in Texas. Attending universities in Louisiana, Chennault planned to be a teacher, but when World War I began, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, and after being honorably discharged in 1920, he was commissioned a few months later in the Air Service. Chennault became a pilot and formed the “Three Men on the Flying Trapeze” acrobatics team while serving at Maxwell Field in Alabama. After retiring from the Army in 1937, Chennault accepted the task of organizing the Chinese Air Force and training aviators to protect China’s skies from the Japanese. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the formation of the American Volunteer Group in 1941, Chennault recruited the pilots who became known as the “Flying Tigers.” Chennault instructed the airmen in tactics and how to use the strengths of the P-40 *Tomahawk* to fight the Japanese pilots, whose planes were more maneuverable and had a better climb rate. The victories of the Flying Tigers against superior forces were psychologically important (if not immediately strategically so) to the Allied effort in the first dark days of the war. In 1942 Chennault was recalled to active duty, and the Flying Tigers were inducted into the U.S. Army. Chennault remained with the Army in China until 1945, when he retired once again. He spent the next several years helping the Nationalist Chinese cause in China and Taiwan and other Western efforts in Asia.

Issued: 1990

Classic American Aircraft: B-10

In the early 1930s, the Glenn L. Martin Company produced the fastest U.S. bomber of its time along with innovations such as internal bomb storage, retractable landing gear, a rotating gun turret, and enclosed cockpits. The B-10 was replaced by the Boeing B-17 and Douglass B-18 in the late 1930s.

Issued: 1997



Classic American Aircraft: Corsair

The Vought F4U *Corsair* is legendary as the first U.S. single-engine fighter to exceed 400 miles per hour. Believing the nose of the *Corsair* was too long for a carrier landing, the Navy gave the fighters to the Marines, who used them to replace their *Wildcats*. Major Gregory “Pappy” Boyington, one of the top Marine fighter pilots in World War II, demonstrated the full capabilities of the plane. *Corsairs* remained in service until 1965.

Issued: 1997

Classic American Aircraft: Cub

Piper Aircraft Corporation produced over 10,000 of these side-by-side, two-seater planes for use during World War II. The Piper *Cub* earned the nickname “Grasshopper” because it was small and light and could maneuver in tight spots. The primary role of the *Cub* was for observation — to spot enemy troops and artillery — but by 1944, the plane was being fitted with bazooka rockets, enabling it to destroy German tanks.

Issued: 1997





Classic American Aircraft: DC-3

A commercial passenger plane in the 1930s, the DC-3 was tapped for military use as a troop and cargo carrier and renamed the C-47 *Skytrain* (although another popular name for this military transport plane was “Gooney Bird”). C-47s towed gliders and dropped paratroopers behind enemy lines on D-Day. The plane was also used during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and some still fly in many different countries today.

Issued: 1997

Classic American Aircraft: Flying Fortress

The Boeing B-17 *Flying Fortress* is best known for its daylight bombing missions in Europe, but it also saw action in the Pacific Theatre — in fact, several bombers were flying to Hickam Field at the same time as the attack on Pearl Harbor. The B-17 had a range of 1,850 miles, carried a 4,000-pound bomb load and 9 machine guns, and had a maximum speed of 300 miles per hour. Hundreds of these bombers flew in formation over German cities. The bomber earned the name the *Flying Fortress* because of its ability to stay in the air despite heavy damage. In 1943, bomber losses reached an unacceptable point and missions ceased until a long-range fighter escort — the P-51 *Mustang* — became available.

Issued: 1997



Classic American Aircraft: Jenny

The most famous plane from World War I, the Curtiss *Jenny* was a combination of the Curtiss J and N planes and was used mainly for flight training and observation by the U.S. Army. The British also ordered *Jennies*, making the plane the most widely produced up to that time. Not usually armed, the *Jenny* flew at a maximum speed of 75 miles per hour for up to two-and-a-half hours at a time. During the 1920s, *Jennies* flew tens of

thousands of miles in barnstorming shows, giving many Americans the opportunity to see a plane for the first time. When the Postal Service issued America’s first airmail stamps in 1918, the 6-, 16-, and 24-cent stamps featured the Curtiss *Jenny*.

Issued: 1997

Classic American Aircraft: Lightning

Pilots of the Lockheed P-38 *Lightning* shot down more Japanese planes than pilots of any other Allied aircraft. P-38s were also used in the famous mission to intercept and shoot down Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the mastermind behind Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor. In the European Theatre, German troops who suffered attacks by the P-38 nicknamed it “the forked-tail devil.” The Army’s fastest and most heavily armed fighter, the P-38 had one 20mm cannon and four .50 caliber machine guns. The fighter had a range of 500 miles and cruised at speeds around 300 miles per hour. P-38s were also used for photo reconnaissance, as bombers, and for night fighting.

Issued: 1997





Classic American Aircraft: Mustang

Credited as an effective long-range bomber escort, the P-51 *Mustang* was the first fighter to depart bases in England and fly across the German border. Between 1940 and 1945, North American Aviation (NAA) produced over 15,000 *Mustangs* to escort bombers at high-altitudes (*Mustangs* escorted B-29s from Iwo Jima to Japan), to perform photo reconnaissance, and to provide ground support. By the end of World War II, P-51s had destroyed

more enemy aircraft in the air than any other fighter in Europe. The P-51 *Mustang* also flew during the Korean War, and in the air forces of more than 20 countries. A few hundred P-51s exist today, some of which remain airworthy.

Issued: 1997

Classic American Aircraft: Staggerwing

Beech Aircraft Company produced several versions of the *Staggerwing* cabin biplane between 1932 and 1948. The plane earned its name because the upper wing is staggered behind the lower wing. With a top speed of 200 miles per hour, remarkable for its time, the *Staggerwing* also became popular in racing circles. Louise Thaden, the first woman to win the Bendix Trophy Race in 1936, piloted a *Staggerwing*, while other contestants chose to compete using sleeker monoplanes. During World War II, Beech Aircraft Company produced thousands of planes for the Army and Navy to use for transport, communications, photography, and training.

Issued: 1997



Classic American Aircraft: Stearman

Many American aviators trained in this two-seater biplane during World War II. In spite of its obsolete design, over 10,000 *Stearman* airplanes were produced and became known for their rugged construction and reliability. The plane had a range of 505 miles and flew at a cruising speed of 106 miles per hour. After World War II many of these aircraft became crop dusters.

Issued: 1997

Classic American Aircraft: Stratojet

The B-47 *Stratojet*, the world's first swept-wing jet bomber, made its debut in 1947. With six engines, the *Stratojet* achieved speeds of over 550 miles per hour and was capable of flying at 40,000 feet. Just over 2,000 *Stratojets* were built in 1956, most of them by Boeing and the remainder by Douglass and Lockheed Martin. The B-47 served in the U.S. Air Force under General Curtis E. LeMay's Strategic Air Command, and it was used in 1953 for the first in-flight refueling of one jet by another. The last B-47 retired in 1967.

Issued: 1997





Classic American Aircraft: Wildcat

The Grumman F4F *Wildcat* was the main fighter for the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps during the first year of World War II. At a maximum speed of 320 miles per hour, the *Wildcat* did not quite match the speed of its Japanese counterpart, the *Zero*, which flew at a top speed of 330 miles per hour. The fighter was better armed, however, with six .50 caliber Browning machine guns and two 100-pound bombs. The *Wildcat* was used extensively in the Pacific, specifically in the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway, and the campaigns for Guadalcanal and other Solomon Islands.

Issued: 1997

U.S. Coast Guard

The U.S. Coast Guard is a military, multi-mission, maritime service. It is a unique federal agency in that it operates within the Department of Homeland Security during peacetime but falls under the direction of the Department of Defense upon declaration of war or when the president directs. In addition to its national defense role as one of the five U.S. Armed Services, the Coast Guard is charged with a broad scope of



regulatory, law-enforcement, humanitarian, and emergency-response duties. On an average day, the men and women of the Coast Guard use ships and aircraft to conduct 109 search-and-rescue cases, save 10 lives, and assist 192 people in distress. Its modern force and command structure ensures that it lives up to its motto: *Semper Paratus*, "Always Ready."

Issued: 1945 and 1965



Jacqueline Cochran

Jacqueline Cochran earned her pilot's license in 1932, marking the beginning of a distinguished career in which she was named the outstanding woman flier in the world 15 times. Appointed Director of Women's Flying Training in the United States in 1942, Cochran trained women pilots to perform noncombat stateside duties. Less than a year later, she joined the general staff of the United States Army Air Forces as Director of Women Pilots. In this important position, she commanded all phases of the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program. Under her expert leadership, more than 1,000 courageous women ferried aircraft, towed targets, and performed other aviation duties while flying more than 60 million miles. (In 1977, WASP members received retroactive military status.) For her service to America in World War II, Cochran received the Distinguished Service Medal in 1945. After the war, Cochran flew in air races and set new flying records. At the time of her death in 1980, she held more international speed, altitude, and distance records than any other person.



Issued: 1996



Code Breaking in World War II

During World War II both the Allied and the Axis powers used secret codes to send information as well as to confuse the enemy. The Germans believed that their Enigma cipher system, which looked similar to a typewriter, created unbreakable codes. However, British mathematicians did break the code, and the ability of the Allies to read German messages remained one of the best-kept secrets of the war. In

the Pacific Theatre, American cryptanalysts broke the Japanese code even before the war began. Perhaps the most famous advantage the U.S. gained from this intelligence was learning of the Japanese plan to attack Midway — armed with this knowledge, U.S. forces were prepared and won an overwhelming victory that helped turn the tide of the war. In contrast to the Allies' success, the Japanese were unable to break the code used by the hundreds of Navajo Indians who, using their native language, served as code talkers for all six U.S. Marine divisions between 1942 and 1945. The code talkers played essential roles in major battles at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Peleliu, and Iwo Jima. The code remained secret for many years after the war, and in 1992 the U.S. government honored the contributions of the Navajo code talkers in a ceremony at the Pentagon.

Issued: 1992

Battle of the Coral Sea

In May 1942, just 5 months after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attempted to capture Port Moresby in New Guinea, hoping to cut Australia out of the war. U.S. Admirals Chester Nimitz and Ernest King agreed to a strategy of attrition, advocating stealth over strength. The Battle of the Coral Sea was an operational and strategic victory for the Allies, who forced the Japanese to withdraw northward after several days of battle.

The U.S. lost the carrier *Lexington*, and the Japanese lost the *Shoho*. This was the first naval battle in history in which opposing ships did not see or fire upon each other — the attacks were carried out by the airplanes from the carriers.

Issued: 1992



General Benjamin O. Davis Sr.

Born and raised in Washington, DC, in the late 1800s, Benjamin O. Davis Sr. served 50 years as an enlisted man and officer in the United States Army. He became the nation's first African-American brigadier general (his son, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., was the leader of the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II and eventually became the nation's second African-American general officer). Davis left Howard University in 1898 after only 1 year to volunteer for the Spanish-American War. He went on to join the regular army and became an officer 2 years later, serving at various times with the 9th, 10th, and 2nd Cavalries, as a professor of military science and tactics at several universities, and on assignments that took him to the Philippines, Liberia, and Europe. During World War II, Davis served in the Inspector General's

Department and was often assigned to the European Theatre of Operations. Davis's military decorations include the Bronze Star and the Distinguished Service Medal, and he was a driving force in the eventual integration of the U.S. armed forces.

Issued: 1997





Desert Shield/Desert Storm

In August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait and seized control of that country. The United Nations Security Council condemned Iraq's invasion and called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces. The invasion triggered a United States response to build a coalition of allies to deter an invasion of Saudi Arabia, free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, and restore Kuwait's legitimate government. The coalition forces, which included half a million American men and



women, succeeded in all of its objectives. The Gulf War stands as a testament to the dedication and spirit of America's military members and their willingness to fight for liberty and justice — anywhere and for anyone. The 29-cent stamp depicts the medal awarded to Gulf War veterans, and the 33-cent stamp is from the Celebrate the Century® Series.

Issued: 1991 and 2000

Disabled Veterans

Americans have been disabled in every conflict in our nation's history. The battles these courageous veterans fought do not stop after they return home — they fight an unending battle to live normal, productive lives on the home front. America owes an unending debt of gratitude to our disabled veterans, and we should never forget their self-sacrificing service to our nation.

Issued: 1970



America's First Peacetime Draft

America's first peacetime draft was instituted with the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which required men between the ages of 21 and 34 to train and serve with the Army for 1 year, after which the men could go home while remaining in the Army's reserve component for 10 years. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Act's original expiration date of May 15, 1945, was extended to the duration of the

war plus 6 months. The Act also established the Selective Service System as an independent federal agency. On October 16, 1940, the date selected for registration, more than 16 million men registered, and between November 1940 and October 1946, over 10 million men entered military service through the Selective Service System. The draft continued, with modifications, during times of peace and conflict until 1973, when the United States converted to an all-voluntary military.

Issued: 1991



General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Dwight D. “Ike” Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II and later became the 34th president of the United States. Born in Texas in 1890 and raised in Kansas, he decided at a young age to be a military officer (even though his mother was a pacifist) and graduated in the middle of his class at West Point in 1915. In the 1930s, Eisenhower served as an aide to General Douglas MacArthur while the latter

was Chief of Staff of the Army and military advisor to the Philippines. When World War II began, General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, selected Eisenhower to serve with him and later gave him command of American forces in the European Theatre. Eisenhower eventually became the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, and from that position, he commanded “Operation Overlord” — the Allied assault on Nazi-occupied Europe — and eventually oversaw the Allied victory on the continent. After the war, Eisenhower served as Army Chief of Staff, president of Columbia University, and supreme commander of NATO before being elected the 34th president in 1952. During his presidency, Eisenhower negotiated the cease-fire that ended the Korean War. In his farewell address to the nation in 1961, he reiterated his belief that a strong military was needed to keep peace, saying, “Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.”

Issued: 1990

U.S. and Soviet Troops at the Elbe River

During the final weeks of World War II, Allied forces streamed into Germany on two fronts with the purpose of dividing the country and preventing German troops from organizing a defense. The strategy of U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, was to capture and destroy remaining German forces; he resisted pressure from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to march on to Berlin. Units from the U.S. 69th Division met up with Soviet troops at the Elbe River on April 25, 1945. From there, Soviet troops marched on to capture Berlin on May 2, just days after Hitler’s suicide. On May 7, in Reims, France, German military leaders surrendered to Eisenhower, effective the following day, May 8 — “V-E Day”! But the camaraderie of the U.S. and Soviet troops forged on the banks of the Elbe was short-lived, as the two allies of World War II soon became entrenched in the Cold War.

Issued: 1995





Explorer II High-Altitude Balloon

On November 11, 1935, Army Air Corps Captains Albert Stevens and Orvil Anderson ascended in *Explorer II* to a height of more than 72,000 feet, a world record that stood for 20 years. Filled with helium, *Explorer II* was almost 200 feet wide and more than 300 feet high. In their 8-hour flight, Stevens and Anderson conducted experiments in meteorology and biology, obtained significant photographic images of the atmosphere and the earth, and demonstrated the potential of high-altitude reconnaissance. More importantly, they withstood travel in a pressurized chamber at extremely high altitudes, thereby paving the way for future manned space flights. This successful flight followed one that they and another officer had made the year before in the hydrogen-filled *Explorer*, which had reached an altitude of more than 60,000 feet but which had burst on its descent, forcing the crew to parachute to safety.

Issued: 1983

Germany Surrenders in World War II

Its defenses breached, its defenders retreating, its cities destroyed by bombardment, its citizens defenseless from the Allied onslaught, its fuhrer dead at his own hands — little remained for the German High Command to do but surrender. However, because of the enmity between them and the Soviets approaching from the east, Admiral Karl Dönitz hoped that he might be able to surrender only to the Allied forces in the west. But General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, demanded an unconditional surrender, and Dönitz realized he would have to capitulate. On May 7, 1945, the Germans surrendered on all fronts, effective the following day. The Third Reich was defeated — well short of its leaders' projected reign of a thousand years, although its horrors will last at least that long.

Issued: 1995



GI Bill

The American Legion is credited with designing the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 — popularly called the "GI Bill" — and pushing the legislation through Congress for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signature. The first legislation of its kind, the GI Bill provided veterans with education and training; home, farm, and business loans; unemployment pay for up to 1 year; and assistance finding jobs. Similar benefits have been granted to veterans of the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars.

Issued: 1999



General George W. Goethals

American leaders had long sought a Central American canal that would save merchant and naval vessels from the long, dangerous journey around Cape Horn at the tip of South America. With the nation's interests expanding around the globe, especially after it had acquired Hawaii and the Philippines in 1898, President Theodore Roosevelt negotiated with Columbia to acquire the Panama Canal Zone. In 1907

President Roosevelt appointed George W. Goethals, an 1880 West Point graduate and officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, chairman of the Isthmian Canal Commission as well as chief engineer for the project. Goethals' success in moving earth to join two oceans was considered an engineering marvel — and he did it 6 months ahead of schedule and more than \$20 million under budget! After completing the canal in 1914, Goethals was promoted to the rank of major general and served as governor of the Canal Zone until 1916. This stamp was issued to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal.

Issued: 1939

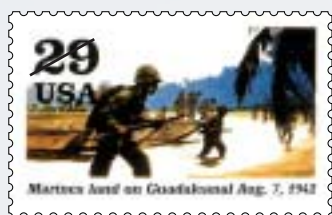


Gold Star Mothers

During World War II, many families displayed a banner with a blue star for each family member serving in the armed forces and a gold star for any member who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the war. Accordingly, the term "gold star mother" referred to any woman who had lost a child in defense of the country. These stamps were issued in

tribute to all those mothers and the sacrifices they and their children had made.

Issued: 1948 and 1993



Battle for Guadalcanal

Despite having been defeated in the ocean battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, Japanese forces still posed a great threat in the South Pacific in the summer of 1942. On the island of Guadalcanal they had created a stronghold from which they could threaten the nearby Allied country of Australia. To blunt their advances, U.S. forces had to attack the heavily fortified island, with its forbidding terrain and jungles teeming with

deadly diseases. On August 7, 1942, the 1st Marine Division began the assault — and the battle for Guadalcanal continued for more than 6 months, involving the Marines, Navy, and Army. Although U.S. forces suffered heavy casualties, they inflicted far more and eventually defeated the Japanese and secured Australia's safety. The Guadalcanal campaign made clear that victory in the Pacific Theatre was possible due to the indomitable fighting spirit and teamwork displayed by the American armed forces.

Issued: 1992



General John L. Hines

Born in West Virginia in 1868, John Leonard Hines graduated from West Point in 1891. During the Spanish-American War, he fought at San Juan Hill and was awarded the Silver Star. Later he served in the Philippines, in Japan, and in the Mexican Punitive Expedition. In World War I, Hines was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism during the Battle of Soissons. He also was the only U.S. commander to lead a regiment, brigade, division, and corps in combat during that war, and received the Distinguished Service Medal for his service. Hines succeeded General John J. Pershing as Chief of Staff of the Army in 1924, serving in that post for 2 years. He retired in 1932, and after his death at age 100, he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Issued: 2000

Hispanic Americans

One out every eight Americans can claim Hispanic origin. Hispanic Americans have a rich cultural history in the United States and a well-earned legacy of service in the United States armed forces. Hispanic-American soldiers have fought in all of our nation's conflicts, and more than three dozen have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Issued: 1984



Honoring Veterans

The U.S. flag is one of the most recognized symbols of freedom in the world. It represents the faithful, selfless service to the nation of all U.S. veterans — in peace and war, in the past and in the present. Today there are nearly 25 million men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces, and this stamp pays tribute to their patriotic dedication and devotion to duty. It also honors the many veterans who continue to serve their country, their fellow veterans, and their communities as members of veterans service organizations.

Issued: 2001

“I Want You”

After war erupted in Europe in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson was able to keep the nation out of hostilities for more than 2 years while maintaining profitable trade relations with Britain. He was even re-elected in 1916 with the isolationist slogan “He Kept Us Out of War.” But during those years, Germany had continued to provoke the United States by sinking ships that cost American lives and cargoes, and in January 1917 Germany declared it would sink all American ships headed for the British Isles. Not long after beginning his second term in office, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany, citing a need “to make the world safe for democracy,” and on April 6, 1917, Congress obliged. The famous recruiting poster depicted on this stamp was illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg, who illustrated 46 works for the war effort. Interestingly, his image of “Uncle Sam” on this poster is actually a self-portrait.

Issued: 1998





Invasion of Italy

When the Allies invaded Italy in September 1943, it marked their return to the European continent for the first time since 1940. The Italian peninsula was part of what British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called “the soft underbelly of Europe,” but the soldiers who slugged through the fierce resistance offered by German forces would not have characterized it so. The invasion of Italy caused the Italian government

to surrender, drove Italy out of the war, opened up and secured the lines of communications and resupply in the Mediterranean Sea, and diverted German forces from the Russian front. The Italian campaign would last 9 months and would be very costly in men and materials, but the battles here proved again the courage and stamina of the Allied armed forces.

Issued: 1993



Battle of Iwo Jima

Iwo Jima, lying 750 miles southeast of Tokyo, was needed both as an auxiliary base for B-29s returning from their bombing raids over Japan and as a base for long-range escort fighters. When the Marines planted the U.S. flag at the top of Mt. Suribachi, the fight for the 5-mile-long island was only just beginning. For 5 weeks during February and March 1945, the Marines had to overcome fanatic resistance from firmly entrenched Japanese, who held what was probably the strongest defensive system American forces encountered during the Pacific war. At Iwo Jima, the Marines suffered the highest casualty rate in their history — one out of three, with more than

6,000 killed and about 20,000 wounded — and almost all of the more than 20,000 Japanese defenders were killed in the battle.

Issued: 1945 and 1995



Japan Surrenders in World War II

On August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered and brought to a close the war in the Pacific. Americans everywhere rejoiced that “V-J Day” had finally come. Americans were especially grateful that the surrender eliminated the need for an invasion of Japan, with its enormous cost in human life and property. From New York to San Francisco, people rushed into the streets to give thanks and to hail the end of “the duration” and the victory of liberty.

Issued: 1995





Lieutenant John F. Kennedy

Before John F. Kennedy became the youngest man and the first Roman Catholic to be elected president of the United States, he served in the South Pacific in World War II as commander of a U.S. Navy motor-torpedo boat, PT-109. One night a Japanese destroyer emerged from the darkness and sliced through his small boat. Two crewmates died, but Kennedy led the other 10 survivors on a swim to an island several miles away, towing the most injured crewmate even though the collision had reinjured his already bad back. For almost a week, Kennedy and his crew tried to find food and water while avoiding detection by the Japanese, and Kennedy exhausted himself seeking friendly islanders or passing U.S. Navy boats. Local island scouts delivered a coconut on which Kennedy had carved a rescue message (he later kept this famous coconut on his desk in the White House), and all the crew were rescued and returned to safety. For his heroism after the accident, the Navy awarded Kennedy the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Medal and promoted him back home as a profile in courage.

Issued: 1964



Korean War

The Korean War — the first major armed clash between Free World and Communist forces — turned the so-called “Cold War” hot, with a divided country’s fight over its borders eventually engaging world powers. However, despite its significance in world history and the sacrifices of those who fought the battles, it is often called “America’s forgotten war.” Many Korean War veterans have considered themselves overlooked and underappreciated, their place in history sandwiched between the sheer magnitude of World War II and the fierce controversies of the Vietnam War. But the recently built Korean War Veterans Memorial on the National Mall and the commemorative events of the war’s 50th anniversary have provided well-deserved and long-overdue recognition for those who answered their country’s call.

Issued: 1985, 1999, and 2003



Battle for Leyte Gulf

The Battle for Leyte Gulf in October 1944 represented the largest naval battle in the Pacific. The Japanese attempted to drive U.S. forces from their posts in the Philippines, which they could use as a base to attack the Japanese home islands. But the battles over several days cost the Japanese Navy most of its remaining warships — including three battleships (one of which was the huge *Musashi*), six heavy and four light cruisers, nine destroyers, and four carriers — and for the rest of the war Japan would not have an effective naval force. Leyte Gulf also witnessed the first use of a new and deadly Japanese weapon — the kamikaze (“divine wind”), a corps of pilots willing to commit suicide by crashing their bomb-laden planes directly into American ships.

Issued: 1994





Liberty Ships

Liberty Ships were the muscle behind the greatest seafight in history, supplying men and materials for the Allied forces scattered around the globe in World War II. These ships could carry almost 9,000 tons of cargo, about the same as 300 railroad boxcars. American shipbuilders greatly increased their capacity during the war and produced more than 2,500 of these vessels, building a ship in as few as 5 days. Although

many Liberty Ships were sunk by enemy action, the sheer number of these aptly named ships, and the courageous actions of their crews and the members of the armed forces that protected them, kept the supplies flowing to where they were needed.

Issued: 1991

General Douglas MacArthur

Douglas MacArthur was a brilliant U.S. Army officer with a legendary military career. General MacArthur, the son of Civil War hero Lieutenant General Arthur MacArthur, was strongly dedicated to country and duty, and was gifted with superior command ability. He graduated from West Point with highest honors, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, and rose to the rank of five-star General of the Army. Best known for his liberation of the Philippines, his acceptance of the Japanese surrender to end World War II, and his daring invasion at Inchon to turn back the Communist advances at the beginning of the Korean War, MacArthur will always be remembered for his patriotic service to our country.



Issued: 1971



U.S. Marine Corps

The United States Marine Corps has been fighting its nation's battles since its founding on November 10, 1775. The Marines still perform their original task of serving as landing forces for the naval fleet, but in more than two centuries of service, the Corps has evolved to take on other tasks too, such as guarding U.S. embassies around the world and functioning as quick-strike forces sent in to hold trouble spots while reinforcements are gathered and deployed. From the Mediterranean in the early 1800s to Mexico City in the 1840s, from the Philippines in the early 1900s to the fields of France in World War I and the Pacific islands in World War II, from Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir in Korea to the rivers and jungles of Vietnam, and from today's battle against terrorism to the crises that will arise tomorrow,

Americans can count on Marines to raise the cry "Semper Paratus!" — *Semper Fidelis*, "Always Faithful" — in defense of their country. This stamp is based on a World War I recruiting poster for the Marines illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg.

Issued: 2001



General George C. Marshall

Born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, in 1880, George Catlett Marshall graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1901. Marshall became a highly decorated officer whose military career spanned 44 years and earned him the rank of five-star general. During World War I in France, he helped plan several U.S. campaigns, including the Argonne offensive that led to Germany's surrender. After the war, he served as an aide to General John J. Pershing, who was then the Army Chief of Staff — a position that

Marshall himself would hold throughout World War II. Marshall's planning and leadership was a great driving force behind the success of the Allied forces, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill characterized him as the "true organizer of victory." Not only a soldier but a statesman, Marshall served after the war as the nation's secretary of state. Realizing that the defeated and struggling European nations would need strong economic recovery programs to avoid falling under the control of the Soviet Union, or into chaos and another war, as had happened after the First World War, Marshall successfully developed and implemented an economic assistance plan that came to bear his name, the Marshall Plan. In recognition of these efforts, as well as his efforts in the 1950s to help develop the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and to end the Korean War, Marshall was awarded the 1953 Nobel Peace Prize — the first professional soldier to be so honored.

Issued: 1967

Medal of Honor

For more than four score years after its birth, the United States rarely awarded medals to members of its armed forces for meritorious or gallant actions because, to many people, medals represented a characteristic of European monarchies rather than this nation's democratic republic. But in 1861, after the country was torn asunder, the Union Congress authorized a medal of honor for the Navy and, shortly afterwards, one for the Army. For the next half century, these medals were the only decorations awarded by the United States. In 1918, during World War I, the nation established other awards (such as the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star), and the Medal of Honor was reserved for conspicuous gallantry "above and beyond the call of duty." Over the years, the Navy medal has been awarded to members of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and in the 1960s, the Air Force unveiled its own medal. These medals represent the highest award that the nation can bestow on its fighting men and women, and since these medals were elevated to this preeminent level in 1918, about one thousand members of the U.S. armed forces have received this ultimate honor, many for saving the lives of others while sacrificing their own.

Issued: 1983





Military Medics

By World War II, advances in science and medicine helped to greatly reduce the mortality rates of the wounded. For example, during the Civil War 50 percent of the men admitted to hospitals died, but in World War II that number dropped to 4 percent. While much of this improvement was due to scientific discoveries such as the antibiotic penicillin and the insecticide DDT (which eliminated the lice and

mosquitoes that caused outbreaks of typhus and malaria), some of it was undoubtedly caused by how quickly and how well the wounded were treated on the battlefield and in frontline hospitals. In World War II, medics advanced with attacking troops so they could tend to the wounded and then drag or carry them away from combat, often under enemy fire. Many soldiers considered medics the bravest men on the field, because they faced fire without the means to return it. During the war, women also served as medics and nurses in all branches of the armed forces and in all combat theatres, providing aid and comfort to the wounded while themselves enduring hardships, deprivation, and enemy fire.

Issued: 1993

Battle of Midway

After its successful attacks on Pearl Harbor and its conquest of the Philippines, Japan sought to destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet's aircraft carriers by attacking the strategic American base at Midway Island. But the Japanese would have to overcome several disadvantages. First, U.S. General James Doolittle's raid on Tokyo had greatly increased America's morale. Second, in America's victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea, two Japanese carriers had been damaged enough that they were unavailable for the attack on Midway. Third, and most importantly, the U.S. had broken the Japanese code, knew its entire battle plan, had reinforced the defenses at Midway, and had its carriers waiting for the attack. In the 3-day battle in early June 1942, planes from both sides fought one another in the skies and attacked enemy carriers, some with their planes armed and on deck. U.S. forces under Admiral Chester Nimitz sunk the Japanese carriers *Kaga*, *Soryu*, *Akagi*, and *Hiryu*, as well as many other ships, and forced the rest of the Japanese fleet to retreat. The U.S. lost the carrier *Yorktown*, which just the previous month had been badly damaged in the Battle of the Coral Sea and then repaired in just 2 days so that it could fight again at Midway, where it played an important part in the U.S. victory. The Battle of Midway became a major turning point in the Pacific war because the U.S. Navy severely crippled the Japanese fleet, thereby reducing its power and effectiveness for the remainder of the conflict.

Issued: 1992





U.S. Military Academy

Since 1802 the United States Military Academy at West Point has been committed to developing leaders of America. At the Academy, cadets receive academic, physical, moral-ethical, and military training. More than an institute of higher education, more than the

alma mater for some of the most famous names in American and world history, West Point is the training ground for the men and women who form the foundation of the U.S. Army officer corps — it produces about one-quarter of the Army's new officers each year.

Issued: 1937 and 2002



General William "Billy" Mitchell

General William "Billy" Mitchell was a professional soldier who served as an infantryman in the Spanish-American War and went on to achieve great fame as an outstanding U.S. combat air commander during World War I. He had strong opinions of how America should develop and use its air power, and he believed he proved his theories with dramatic bombing tests in 1921 and 1923, when his airplanes sank several warships. However, when his military superiors dismissed the results and continued to disparage the effects of air power, he publicly criticized them so much that he was court-martialed and found guilty of insubordination, and he soon resigned from active duty. Mitchell died in 1936, but the events of World War II vindicated his ideas on air power, and in 1946 he received a special Congressional Medal of Honor in recognition of his outstanding service and foresight in American military aviation.

Issued: 1999

Second Lieutenant Audie Murphy

Slight in stature but substantial in spirit, Audie Murphy became the most decorated combat soldier in World War II, receiving 28 military medals including the Congressional Medal of Honor. Less than five-and-a-half feet tall and weighing slightly more than 100 pounds, Murphy was rejected by more than one service before being accepted into the infantry. He served in Sicily, Italy, and France, receiving several decorations and promotions for his actions. He earned the Medal of Honor in France in January 1945, when he saved his company by single-handedly fighting off a German tank and infantry attack and then successfully leading his company on a counterattack that secured their position. After the war, Murphy became an actor and starred in 40 films, including *To Hell and Back*, which is based on his memoirs. He died in a plane crash near Roanoke, Virginia, in 1971.

Issued: 2000





National Defense

In 1940, the Postal Service released a *National Defense* series of three stamps to increase the nation's awareness about security threats in many areas including industry, agriculture, education, and health. The stamp shown here used an image of a 90mm antiaircraft gun, one of the nation's latest and most mobile weapons, to focus on the country's need for a strong military.

Issued: 1940

National Guard

The National Guard is the oldest component of the nation's armed forces, tracing its history back to the earliest English colonies in North America. Responsible for their own defense, the colonists drew on English military tradition and organized their able-bodied male citizens into militias. The Guard has served in every United States war and has been called into action



during numerous strikes and riots at home. Today's National Guard continues its historic dual mission — providing the states with units trained and equipped to protect life and property, while providing the nation with units trained, equipped, and ready to defend the United States and its interests around the world.



Issued: 1953 and 1986

U.S. Naval Academy

Since the Naval Academy's founding in 1845, its midshipmen have been characterized by their seamanship, teamwork, and courage. In order to cope with the immense changes that advances in naval architecture, technology, and tactics have brought to maritime warfare, the academy has changed, too, giving midshipmen the state-of-the-art academic and professional training they need to be effective naval officers in their future careers.



Issued: 1937 and 1995



Naval Aviation

From the humble beginnings of taking off and landing on wooden decks jury-rigged on top of cruisers to the truly awesome firepower of today's carrier-based strike aircraft, naval aviation has enjoyed a rich and courageous history. The men and women aviators of the U.S. Navy have proved themselves up to any challenge posed by war and peace. Naval superiority is a fundamental principle of our nation's defense, and

nowhere is that superiority demonstrated more quickly and forcefully than when carriers bearing naval aviators steam across the oceans to combat any erupting crisis.

Issued: 1961

U.S. Navy

The mission of the Navy is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of deterring aggression, winning wars, and maintaining freedom of the seas. Since its beginning in the American Revolution, the U.S. Navy has evolved from a fleet of sail and steam-powered ships to a high-tech fleet with nuclear-powered vessels and supersonic aircraft. The Navy stands eternally vigilant to defend America against her enemies and to aid her friends through the projection of sea power across the world.

Issued: 1945



Battle for New Guinea

The world's second largest island, New Guinea lies just north of Australia and points northwest towards the Philippines. Its strategic location made it essential for both the Japanese and the Allies, so the fight for control of New Guinea was long and arduous — ground fighting began in 1942 and did not end until 1945. Jungle terrain, diseases such as malaria, and rainfall of 300 inches a year proved as

tenacious as any enemy. The two sides traded control for months, but by the spring of 1944 the Allied advance along New Guinea's northern coastline toward the Philippines began to take hold. One decisive operation, codenamed "Reckless," successfully captured a large Japanese supply base at Hollandia, and U.S. "Seabees" quickly turned it into a large Allied base from which they continued their advance.

Issued: 1994



Admiral Chester W. Nimitz

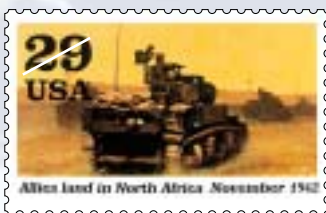
In December 1941, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Chester W. Nimitz became commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which would become the largest naval fleet in history. In the decades leading up to World War II, Nimitz, a 1905 graduate of the Naval Academy, saw extensive duty in the submarine service, and this experience would prove beneficial in the war as his strategic use of submarines would help bring victory. In 1944, he received his fifth star when he was promoted to Fleet Admiral, and on September 2, 1945, Nimitz helped represent the U.S. at the surrender ceremonies aboard the USS *Missouri*. After the war, he served 2 years as Chief of Naval Operations. Nimitz was also instrumental in repairing relations between the U.S. and Japan through his fund-raising efforts to restore the Japanese battleship *Mikasa*, which was the flagship of the Japanese fleet during Japan's victory over Russia in the battle of Tsushima in 1905.

Issued: 1985

Normandy Invasion — D-Day

Allied forces began planning for the invasion of Normandy in the summer of 1942, but it wasn't until January 1944 that General Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed the role of supreme commander of "Operation Overlord." At the time, the German army firmly occupied France, and the Nazi government had access to raw materials and industry. But on June 6, 1944, wielding the greatest armada in military history, Allied forces landed at beaches codenamed Gold, Juno, Sword, Utah, and Omaha. In many zones, landings were difficult, opposition was fierce, and casualties were grave, but by D-Day's end, the Allies had secured a beachhead in Europe — they were not thrown back into the sea, and they began their march to free the continent from tyranny.

Issued: 1994



North Africa Landings

In November 1942, Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower commanded the Allied invasion of North Africa, codenamed "Operation Torch." The invasion was the largest amphibious operation that had yet been attempted in the history of warfare. Once in North Africa, the Allies planned to establish supply routes on Mediterranean and South Atlantic waters, to engage and defeat German General Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and his famed Afrika Corps, and to establish a base from which they could eventually invade southern Europe. The landing was a success, but it would take the Allies 6 months to clear Axis forces from North Africa.

Issued: 1992



Battle of Okinawa

Fought from April to June 1945, Okinawa is known as the “Last Battle,” and it was also the most costly campaign in the Pacific Theatre — more than 10,000 Americans and 100,000 Japanese lost their lives. The Japanese considered Okinawa to be part of their home islands, so they were fanatical in their defense of it. In fact, their stern, sometimes suicidal resistance and the great casualties suffered by the Americans

were factors in President Harry S. Truman’s decision to unleash the atomic bomb in an effort to end the war and prevent similar bloodshed through a long, arduous, and deadly invasion.

Issued: 1995

Paralyzed Veterans

Many members of the armed forces who march off to battle receive paralyzing wounds, and they come back home with shattered legs or withered arms. But their spirits and lives can still be full and strong, especially with the support of the nation they defended with their great sacrifices. Many veterans service organizations, such as the Paralyzed Veterans of America, support research on spinal cord injuries and also provide education and support to veterans on issues such as disability rights and law, health care, accessible architecture, and fitness and leisure activities. Today there are estimated to be 100,000 paralyzed veterans, all of them deserving of our recognition, gratitude, and assistance.

Issued: 1983



General George S. Patton Jr.

He considered himself an ancient warrior, having been reincarnated many times throughout the centuries to fight battles both famous in history and lost to antiquity. When the 20th century required him to fight with a new weapon — the armored tank — General George S. Patton Jr. took to it like a cavalry veteran takes to a horse. In World War II, Patton’s armored divisions swept across North Africa and

then up through Sicily, and once the Allies invaded Europe, Patton and his tanks rambled and raced from France to Germany — engaging more enemy troops, inflicting more casualties, and liberating more towns than any other Allied army. Patton’s demanding, determined discipline and aggressive, attacking attitude earned him the nickname “Old Blood and Guts” from his men, some consternation and criticism from his superiors and the press, but the respect and fear of his enemies, who considered him the most dangerous combat commander they faced. One of his most famous actions occurred in December 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, when his troops rushed through winter storms to relieve the surrounded American forces holding Bastogne. In December 1945, Patton died in Germany as a result of an automobile accident, and he is buried in Hamm, Luxembourg, among the soldiers who fought and died in the Battle of the Bulge.

Issued: 1953





Pearl Harbor

In his famous speech to Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.” Early that Sunday morning, the Empire of Japan unleashed 183 planes from carriers 230 miles north of Oahu, Hawaii. The first wave of surprise attacks hit the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor just before 8:00 a.m., targeting airfields and battleships. A second wave attacked other

ships and shipyard facilities. When the air raid was over by 9:45 a.m., the casualties included more than 2,300 Americans killed, 188 aircraft destroyed, five battleships sunk, and a total of nine light cruisers, destroyers, and smaller vessels lost. However, the Japanese failed to damage any U.S. aircraft carriers, which had not been in the harbor that morning, and those carriers would prove to be the strength behind America’s response in the coming war.

Issued: 1991

Admiral Robert E. Peary & Matthew Henson

At the beginning of the 20th century, one of the world’s last uncharted frontiers was the top of the world — the North Pole. Over the years, hundreds of explorers had tried and failed to reach this goal, many dying in their attempts. Two determined explorers were Robert E. Peary, an officer in the U.S. Navy’s Civil Engineering Corps, and Matthew Henson. Working together over two decades, they made many northward expeditions, and on April 6, 1909, they finally reached the elusive spot where the entire world was at their feet. Peary, as the leader of the expedition, was promoted to the rank of rear admiral. However, recognition for Henson, an African American, would come more slowly, but eventually his role as the most trusted member of Peary’s expedition would be acknowledged. These two friends and companions are now buried next to one another in Arlington National Cemetery, and the Navy has honored each man by naming a ship after him.

Issued: 1986



General John J. Pershing



A legendary figure in the history of the U.S. Army, John J. Pershing was an 1886 graduate of West Point, where he was Senior Cadet Captain. Pershing’s first posts were in the American west in campaigns against Apache and Sioux warriors. He received the nickname “Black Jack” while commanding the famed African-American “Buffalo Soldiers” of the 10th Cavalry, whom he led in western posts and in the Battle of San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War. In the following years, Pershing quelled the rebellion in the Philippines and pursued Pancho Villa in the Punitive

Expedition of 1916. In World War I he was Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Force and was instrumental in securing victory. After the war, the title of “General of the Armies of the United States” was conferred upon Pershing, the only American officer other than George Washington to hold that rank. As he wished, he is buried in Arlington National Cemetery under a simple white headstone — just like the ones used to mark the gravesites of the men he led.

Issued: 1961



Battle for the Philippines

The valiant 5-month defense of the Philippines, conducted from the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor in early 1942, had several important consequences. First, it delayed the Japanese timetable for the conquest of south Asia, causing Japan to expend far more manpower and material resources than anticipated. Second, the determined resistance of General Jonathan M. Wainwright IV and the

U.S. and Philippine armed forces against overwhelming odds became a symbol of hope for the United States in the bleak early days of the war. Finally, after General Wainwright and the Allied troops were forced to surrender to overwhelming odds, the tales of the sufferings they endured on the “Bataan Death March” and as prisoners of war inspired the Allies to honor their sacrifices by vowing to retake the islands. In February 1945, Allied forces attacked the Japanese stronghold of Manila, and Japanese forces contested every building, every block. Fierce combat resulted in high casualties on both sides and also to Filipino civilians, but the Allies recaptured and freed the city on March 3, 1945. To symbolize the honor that the Allies held for the Bataan and Corregidor defenders, General Wainwright, who had been a prisoner of war for more than 3 years, witnessed the Japanese surrender aboard the USS *Missouri*, accepted the surrender of the local Japanese commander of the Philippines, and received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Issued: 1944 and 1995



Fierce fighting frees Manila by March 3, 1945



B-24s hit Ploesti refineries, August 1943

Raid on Ploesti Refineries

During World War II, both the Allied and Axis powers relied heavily on fuel. Allied commanders estimated that the Germans obtained 60 percent of their oil from fields in Ploesti, Romania. In an attack called “Operation Tidal Wave,” more than 175 B-24 *Liberators* flew 1,500 miles to bomb Ploesti’s refineries on August 1, 1943. The bombers inflicted heavy damage upon the refineries, but the cost was high — 54 planes and 532 men were lost in this attack.

Issued: 1993



Prisoners of War and Missing/Killed in Action

The Postal Service has issued two stamps to honor members of the U.S. armed forces who have been prisoners of war, missing in action, or killed in action. The first was issued in 1970 during the Vietnam War, and the second was issued in 1995 to honor POWs and MIAs from all wars fought by the United States, from the American Revolution to the present. There are more than 90,000 American combatants who are unaccounted for from the battles of the 20th century, ranging from more than 100 from the Cold War to almost 80,000 from World War II.

However, as noted on the ID tags depicted on the 1995 stamp, these brave Americans and their great, noble sacrifices are “Never



Forgotten.” The Postal Service also honors these veterans by flying the POW-MIA flag at all facilities in commemoration of Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day, Armed Forces Day, and National POW-MIA Recognition Day.

Issued: 1970 and 1995



Purple Heart

In the American Revolution, General George Washington wanted to reward soldiers who exhibited outstanding valor with a commission or an advance in rank, but the Continental Congress refused these promotions because it lacked the funds to pay for them. Undeterred, General Washington created the Badge of Military Merit, represented by the figure of a heart cut from purple cloth — America’s first military decoration. Although there are few surviving records from that war, at

least three men received the badge, but its use was discontinued or forgotten for more than 150 years. In 1932, as part of the bicentennial commemoration of Washington’s birth, the award was resurrected and renamed the Purple Heart. General Douglas MacArthur, who at the time was the Army Chief of Staff, determined that anyone wounded in combat had performed “meritorious service” and was deserving of this medal.

The Purple Heart was originally an Army medal, but in World War II President Franklin D. Roosevelt extended it to all the armed forces. Although President Kennedy extended it to civilians serving with the military and President Reagan extended it to victims of international terrorist attacks, in 1998 legislation once again reserved the Purple Heart only for members of the U.S. armed forces.

Issued: 1982 and 2003





Red Ball Express

When the Allied forces broke out from the Normandy beachhead and started the drive across France in the summer of 1944, they required massive supplies to keep up the advance. The problem, though, was how to transport those supplies — the French railroads were inoperative, and air drops were insufficient. That's when the “Red Ball Express” took its trucks to the roads. Adopting the name for fast

railroad freight, the Red Ball Express, engineered mostly by African-American enlisted men, ran supplies around the clock, regardless of weather, road conditions, and enemy attacks. At night they drove “blind” — headlights were kept off to avoid enemy airstrikes on the convoys. Drivers were supposed to adhere to a 25-mile-per-hour speed limit, but to meet the expectations of generals such as George Patton and the needs of frontline troops, the Express often traveled at higher speeds. During its run from August to November 1944, the Red Ball Express transported almost half a million tons of ammunition, food, fuel, and other needed supplies.

Issued: 1994



Armed Forces Reserve

The members of the Armed Forces Reserve stand ready to support and defend the nation in times of crisis, whether foreign or domestic. Some reservists have full-time active-duty positions, but most reservists spend the majority of their days as civilians while also

spending considerable time training and working in the military so that they will be prepared if called upon when trouble strikes. Whether in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, or Navy, they are an integral part of the nation's defense system. The stamp honoring all the Armed Forces Reserve was issued in 1955, and a stamp honoring the 50th anniversary of the Marine Corps Reserve was issued in 1966.

Issued: 1955 and 1966



Returning Veterans

“Get ready for the Jubilee, Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll give the hero three times three, Hurrah! Hurrah!” Imagine the joy that filled the streets when America's men and women returned home after World War II. Imagine the pride and honor and respect that marched inside those uniforms, knowing that they had contributed to tyranny's defeat, to liberty's victory. Imagine the relief felt not only by the veterans themselves but by

parents, spouses, family, friends, and neighbors because these warriors had been spared in battle. And imagine too these elations tinged with sorrow in remembrance of those who could not return home, who rested forever with the undying gratitude of a thankful nation. Tomorrow's task would be starting life back home — this day was reserved for celebrating just being back home.

Issued: 1995





USS Reuben James

The USS *Reuben James* was the first U.S. Navy ship sunk during hostile action in World War II. Named for a Navy seaman who was wounded while serving with Stephen Decatur in Tripoli in 1804, the *Reuben James* was a four-stack destroyer commissioned on September 24, 1920. During its career it served in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific, and Caribbean. In March 1941, it joined the convoy escort force protecting war material sent to Britain, and in October of that year, a German U-boat torpedoed and sunk it, killing almost two-thirds of its crew. The sinking of the ship inspired folksinger Woody Guthrie to write the ballad “Reuben James” to honor its crew, Americans of various and diverse backgrounds who gave their lives in the fight against fascism.

Issued: 1991

Captain Eddie Rickenbacker

Known as “America’s Ace of Aces” for being the most successful U.S. combat pilot in World War I, Eddie Rickenbacker was credited with downing 26 enemy planes. Born Edward Rickenbacher in Ohio in 1890 (he eventually changed the spelling of his last name by replacing the “h” with a “k”), he had been a champion race car driver before the war, once setting a world speed record of 134 miles per hour. Despite his great financial success in that sport, he volunteered for the Army in 1917 and was assigned as a chauffeur to the general staff in France, but with some assistance from the famed aerialist Billy Mitchell, he became a pilot assigned to the 94th Aero Squadron. In about 6 months of combat, “Captain Eddie” had more than a hundred aerial engagements with the enemy. On September 25, 1918, the same day he took command of the squadron, he single-handedly battled seven planes, downing two and dispersing the other five. For that encounter, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and the French Croix de Guerre. Rickenbacker’s service even extended to World War II, when he served the War Department as an inspector and advisor. While on a trip to see General Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific, the plane he was on crashed into the ocean, and he led several companions in a 3-week struggle for survival against sea, sharks, sunburn, and starvation. Due largely to his efforts, all but one survived the ordeal.

Issued: 1995





Rome and Paris Liberated

Although the Allies had invaded Italy in September 1943, it would take 9 months of difficult fighting before they could overcome the German defenses and complete the campaign. On June 4, 1944, the Allies marched into Rome, which became the first of the major European capital cities to be freed from Axis rule. This setback for the Germans was compounded just 2 days later when the Allies stormed ashore in

Normandy to commence the invasion of Western Europe. Then on August 25, 1944, after advancing inland, the Allies marched victoriously through the streets of Paris. In less than 2 months, the Allies had liberated the Eternal City and the City of Lights. Troops marching down the wide thoroughfares in the tumultuous victory parades received the wild cheers of newly freed citizens, but they knew that ultimate victory would not be complete until they liberated one more capital — Berlin.

Issued: 1994

Battle for Saipan

During World War II, the American strategy in the western Pacific was based on the premise that the Japanese would never surrender and would fight to the end, and this was the case on the island of Saipan. Indeed, rather than surrender during the intense combat that resulted in heavy losses on both sides, Japanese soldiers positioned in well-defended caves and bunkers chose to detonate grenades, killing



themselves and the American soldiers attempting to capture them. Clearing these caves and securing the island became a gruesome task, as little more than 2,000 of the more than 30,000 Japanese soldiers allowed themselves to become prisoners. Another tragedy on Saipan was that many civilians, convinced by Japanese propaganda that Americans would commit atrocities, chose to jump 800 feet to their deaths off Laderan Banadaro, which became known as “Suicide Cliff.” The efforts of American and Saipanese using loudspeakers to convince those citizens that their freedom was at hand went unheeded.

Issued: 1994



Sicily Campaign

In January 1943 at the Casablanca Conference, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, along with their top generals, decided that capturing Sicily was essential to an assault on Italy. Codenamed “Operation Husky,” more than 2,500 American, British, and Canadian vessels invaded Sicily the night of July 9–10, 1943. After 38 days of fighting, during which the tanks of

U.S. General George Patton and British General Bernard Montgomery raced to Palermo, Syracuse, and Messina, the Italians surrendered, leading to the invasion of Italy in September and Mussolini’s loss of power after 21 years of tyranny.

Issued: 1993



General Joseph Stilwell

A Florida native, Joseph Stilwell graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1904. To some he was known as “Vinegar Joe” because, by his own admission, he could be demanding and impatient. But to his troops he was affectionately known as “Uncle Joe,” because he cared deeply about their welfare and willingly endured the same hardships that they faced. His great reputation comes from his World War II service in the China-Burma-India Theatre of Operations, which many considered the hardest job in the war. In 1942, when Japanese advances and dwindling supplies forced him to retreat from Burma, he led more than a hundred members of his command through almost 150 miles of jungles, rivers, and mountains to safety in India. After building up his forces, he returned the next year and opened up the Burma Road, which allowed supplies to reach Chinese General Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalists fighting alongside the Allies. Stilwell’s efforts and success in this campaign significantly led to the Allied victory.

Issued: 2000

Submarine Centennial: Gato Class

Gato-class submarines, along with those of the later *Balao* class, were the backbone of the U.S. Navy’s undersea ships during World War II. Although submarines comprised only 2 percent of the U.S. fleet, they are credited with sinking about a third of Japan’s naval ships and more than half of its merchant marine, and they also served in the blockade that kept Japan from receiving materials necessary to the war effort. Casualties to the U.S. fleet numbered more than 50 subs and 3,500 submariners. The USS *Gato*, which as the first submarine in its class gave the class its name, received 13 battle stars and the Presidential Unit Citation for its World War II service. This vessel is depicted in the 2000 submarine centennial series, and the 29-cent stamp was issued in 1994 as part of the World War II series.

Issued: 1994 and 2000



Submarine Centennial: USS Holland

The U.S. Navy purchased its first operational submarine from Irish immigrant John P. Holland, who is considered the father of the modern submarine for designing a craft that could operate effectively whether submerged or surfaced. Bearing its originator’s name, the USS *Holland* (SS-1) was deployed on October 12, 1900. At only 53.8 feet long and with a 10.7-foot beam, the sub provided no accommodations for eating and sleeping, and a day at sea in a gasoline-powered sub offered the crew both discomfort and hazards such as battery explosions. Nevertheless, the *Holland* was the prototype for the next 50 years of submarines. With this one small vessel, the U.S. Navy commenced its era of undersea warships and began a century — and more — of success.

Issued: 2000



Submarine Centennial: Los Angeles Class

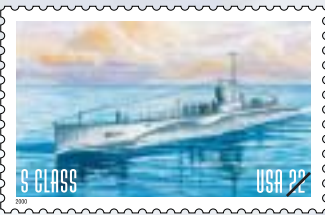
Nuclear-powered *Los Angeles*-class submarines are used for antisubmarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mining, and search and rescue missions. The first *Los Angeles*-class sub was commissioned in 1976 and the latest in 1996. The sub's top speed and the exact depth that it is capable of reaching are classified. During the Gulf War, nine *Los Angeles*-class submarines were deployed, and two launched *Tomahawk* missiles.

Issued: 2000

Submarine Centennial: Ohio Class

First commissioned in 1981, *Ohio*-class submarines are nuclear-powered and virtually undetectable. Moving through the water quietly at 20–25 knots submerged and armed with 24 *Trident* ballistic missiles and four torpedoes, these subs act as a strategic deterrent — from whatever ocean they are patrolling, their missiles are capable of reaching any place on any continent in the world.

Issued: 2000



Submarine Centennial: S Class

Originally built shortly after World War I, S-class submarines were not designed for the type of combat in which they participated in World War II. Nevertheless, when pressed into service, these subs sank 14 Japanese ships while patrolling the Pacific. In August 1942, the sub pictured in this stamp, the USS S-44, sank the *Kako*, the largest Japanese warship sunk by an American sub to that date.

Issued: 2000

Supersonic Flight

On October 14, 1947, Captain Charles E. Yeager became the first person to fly an aircraft faster than the speed of sound when he piloted the rocket-powered Bell X-1, nicknamed “Glamorous Glennis” after his wife, past Mach 1 — a speed of 700 miles per hour. The sonic boom first heard that day heralded a new era in aviation. During the coming years, Yeager, who had flown more than 60 combat missions during World War II and would later fly more than a hundred in Vietnam, would become one of the world's most famous test pilots while breaking many more aviation records and advancing to the rank of general in the Air Force.

Issued: 1997





Battle of Tarawa

Of all the difficult landings in World War II, the battle of Tarawa was very likely the most deadly. For 2 years, the Japanese had heavily fortified the atoll, the site of a small but strategic airstrip. To compound the difficulties of the assault, the landing craft were stopped short of the beach by coral reefs, so the attacking Marines had to wade a quarter mile, under withering fire, through water that sometimes reached up to

their necks. After reaching the beach and moving forward by inches during 4 days of fighting, the Marines secured the island, having sacrificed more than a thousand lives and more than twice that many wounded. Almost all of the more than 4,000 Japanese soldiers defended the island to their deaths.

Issued: 1993

Raid on Tokyo

After Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt insisted that the war be carried to the homelands of Japan, both as retribution for the attack on Pearl Harbor and as encouragement to Americans. On April 18, 1942, with Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle leading the attack, 16 B-25 bombers departed the USS *Hornet*, flew just above the ocean and trees to avoid enemy detection, and bombed several military and industrial targets in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Kobe. Because the B-25s could not carry enough fuel to return to the *Hornet*, the crews had to try to reach the safety of Allied territory — 15 planes crashed or were ditched over China, and one flew north and landed in the Soviet Union. During this daring mission involving 80 airmen, four were killed and eight were captured by the Japanese — three of those were executed and one died in captivity. But America had struck a surprising and symbolic blow, one that lifted the country's hopes and strengthened resolve for the tasks ahead.



Issued: 1992



Captain Harry S. Truman

Before he became the 33rd president of the United States, Harry Truman served his country as a captain in the U.S. Army field artillery in France during World War I, seeing frontline service from September 1918 until the armistice. When he took office after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, he became commander in chief of forces fighting two disabled but not yet defeated foes. Because of his experience in “The Great War,” he knew intimately the suffering of soldiers under fire, and one of his greatest concerns as a wartime president was to conclude the hostilities as quickly and effectively as possible while sparing as many men as he could. To end the war in the Pacific, he made one of the most crucial decisions in history — the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. When the

Japanese surrendered soon afterwards, the invasion of Japan's home islands was averted, and some historians estimate that the lives of a million American soldiers, and ten million Japanese soldiers and civilians, were saved. President Truman is also remembered for his 1948 Executive Order integrating America's armed forces.

Issued: 1973



Battle Against German U-Boats

President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed that the war with Hitler would be won or lost at sea. Britain had been fighting the Germans in the Battle of the Atlantic since 1939, and when the United States entered World War II in December 1941, it began fighting German U-boats in the eastern coastal waters of the Atlantic Ocean. During 1941 and 1942, Admiral

Karl Dönitz's U-boats were effective in destroying Allied shipping and almost won the war for Germany. The Allies, however, began building new cargo ships — named Liberty Ships — faster than U-boats could sink them. In December 1942 the British broke the Triton cipher code that Dönitz used to communicate with his ships, and in 1943 the operational life of a U-boat decreased from 1 year to 3 months.

Issued: 1993

Veterans Administration

The United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans of any nation in the world. The establishment of the Veterans Administration (VA) came in 1930 when Congress authorized the president to “consolidate and coordinate Government activities affecting war veterans.” The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) was established as a cabinet-level position on March 15, 1989. Its mission is to serve America’s veterans and their families with dignity and compassion and be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials. The DVA promotes the health, welfare, and dignity of all veterans in recognition of their service to our nation.



Issued: 1980



Veterans of World War I

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, almost five million veterans served in the American armed forces during World War I. The cause they fought for was probably best summed up in a speech to Congress by President Woodrow Wilson:

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.

But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts — for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.

Issued: 1985



Veterans of World War II

World War II was the largest and most destructive war in history and included gigantic struggles in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the far-flung islands of the Pacific. The war strained the world's economy and left many countries on the edge of collapse. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs counts more than 16 million veterans who served in the American armed forces during World War II. These valiant veterans helped save the world from being dominated by those whose ideologies were incompatible with the enduring values of individual self-worth, liberty, and equality.

Issued: 1946

VFW 75th Anniversary

The nation's oldest major veterans organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been a voice for our nation's veterans for more than a century. To America and the world, the letters "VFW" symbolize volunteerism and community service. Its membership is comprised of U.S. service members who have earned an overseas campaign or expeditionary medal. Some of the most famous members have included notable veterans like Alvin York, Audie Murphy, John Glenn, and U.S. presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and George H. W. Bush.

Issued: 1974



Vietnam War and Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Green Berets, B-52s, helicopter gunships, POWs, MIAs: One of the most controversial wars in American history, the Vietnam War burned unforgettable images into the American consciousness. The sacrifices made by the more than 2 million American men and women who served in Vietnam will never be forgotten. Their dedication to duty and selfless service paved the way for future Americans to enjoy the freedoms and liberties they fought so hard to protect. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors all these men and women and provides a place for remembrance, recognition, and

reconciliation. The Memorial's Wall of Names was dedicated in 1982, the Three Servicemen Statue was dedicated in 1984, and the Vietnam Women's Memorial was dedicated in 1993.

Issued: 1979, 1984, 1999, and 2000





Women in the Military

Nearly 2 million women have served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard with dedication, courage, and patriotism in times of conflict and peace. They have served in each of our nation's conflicts from the American Revolution to the present. From a small beginning with their roles limited to support, women have proved that they are capable of handling today's complex assignments. Currently, each branch of military service offers careers and untold opportunities for women. The 1997 stamp was issued at the dedication of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.



Issued: 1952, 1968, and 1997

World War I: Victory

World War I is regarded as the first “total war” because the combatants devoted all their resources — military, industrial, and human — on a scale never before thought possible. Sixty-five million men and women took part in the war, and historians estimate that as many as 10 million men lost their lives while another 20 million were wounded. World War I resulted in a radical reshaping of the political map of Europe and left much of Europe in severe economic hardship. The haunting memory of the “Great War,” though, is neither its staggering loss of human life nor its failure to be “the war to end all wars,” but that the seeds for the even more horrific Second World War were sown in the treaties that brought it to a close.



Issued: 1919

World War II: Win the War

Issued on Independence Day 1942, the “Win the War” stamp reflected America's resolve to fight to victory in World War II. This image of an eagle with its wings shaped in a “V” for “Victory” and surrounded by 13 stars, representing the original 13 colonies that won the American Revolution, became a popular symbol in World War II. When the Postal Service released stamps commemorating events of the 1940s in its Celebrate the Century® series, it was fitting that the first stamp depicted World War II because the



war was certainly the major event of that decade — and many consider it the major event of the entire century. This stamp depicts Uncle Sam planting the United States flag and pointing the way to victory. And indeed, with resolve, sacrifice, and determination, America's military forces, supported by the nation's citizens at home, strode forward to triumph and helped give the world a new birth of freedom.

Issued: 1942 and 1999



“Willie & Joe”

World War II cartoonist Bill Mauldin brought knowing smiles to the boys at the front with his famous sketches of “Willie and Joe.” Bedraggled, dirty, weary, but wise, Mauldin’s characters epitomized the American GI’s experiences in combat. Although his portrayals might have raised the ire of some generals, they raised spirits and laughter among everyday soldiers. Mauldin used a stark, ironic tone

to try and interpret the infantryman’s life in World War II to other soldiers and to people at home in America. Mauldin’s brilliant cartoon style, his wit, and his deep understanding of human character not only won him a Pulitzer Prize in 1945 but captured for all time the life of the World War II American GI and the dirt, absurdity, chaos, pathos, and heroism contained in all wars.

Issued: 1993

Sergeant Alvin York

Like the larger-than-life frontier heroes of the country’s younger years, Alvin York came from the hills of Tennessee to answer the call of his country in 1917. Although a deeply devout young man who was conflicted by the killing that war entailed, he realized that the good of mankind required great sacrifices. In France’s Argonne Forest on October 8, 1918, York almost single-handedly saved his battalion and ensured its continued advance by eliminating several enemy machine gun nests and capturing 132 prisoners. For this heroic action, he became the most decorated soldier of World War I, receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor and France’s Croix de Guerre. After the war, he refused offers to capitalize on his celebrity and instead devoted himself to helping the people in his county and state obtain more educational opportunities, better roads, and other civic improvements. When war came again in the 1940s, York gave many public speeches that passionately and effectively advocated continuing the fight for democracy.



Issued: 2000

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Publication 528 / July 2003
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