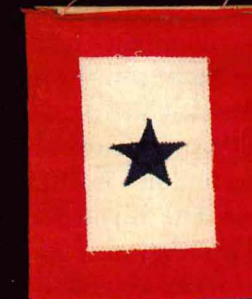


4,000 gold stars on the Memorial's Freedom Wall commemorate the more than 400,000 Americans who gave their lives.

Here we mark the price of freedom



The United States entered the Second World War in 1941 not to conquer, but to liberate a world fast falling to forces of tyranny. The World War II Memorial honors the 16 million who served in uniform, of whom over 400,000 gave their lives. It also honors the many millions who supported the war effort on the home front and celebrates the American spirit, national unity, and victory. It recognizes the price paid by families. The blue star signifying a son or daughter in service (*flag above*) was proudly displayed in windows nationwide. It was all too often replaced by a gold star signifying another casualty of war.

The war that changed the world also changed life at home. After 1945, education expanded through the G.I. Bill. Technology surged as industries retooled for peace. Women's rights and civil rights made new strides toward that great goal: liberty and justice for all.

EISENHOWER, STAR IN WINDOW, PAINTING PLANE WING: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; D-DAY INVASION, MARINES IN SOUTH PACIFIC, BATTLESHIP: NATIONAL ARCHIVES; MEMPHIS BELLE: AIR FORCE, ALTUS AFB, OKLA.; LEIGHTON FAMILY: CORBIS/BETTMAN ARCHIVE; 93RD INFANTRY: HULTON/GETTY ARCHIVES; JOHN W BROWN SHIP: PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP; FLAG: NPS; STARS: RICHARD LATOFF/AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

“The Greatest Generation”

The memorial celebrates a generation of Americans who emerged from the Depression to fight and win the most devastating war in world history. Americans and their allies triumphed over tyranny. An unprecedented unity at home saw the nation become the world’s breadbasket and industrial arsenal. In a spirit of sacrifice, Americans rationed at home and channeled the nation’s might to help restore freedom to millions. The World War II Memorial reminds future generations that we must sometimes sacrifice for causes greater than

ourselves. This war that changed the world was “fought across six of the world’s seven continents and all of its oceans,” British historian John Keegan wrote. “It killed 50 million human beings, left hundreds of millions of others wounded in mind and body . . .” and devastated great parts of the world. After the war, through the innovative Marshall Plan, the United States helped both its allies and former foes rebuild. America continued to play a strong leadership role in world arenas as peacetime life returned.

OUR DEBT TO THE
HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT
WOMEN IN THE SERVICE
OF OUR COUNTRY CAN
NEVER BE REPAID. THEY
HAVE EARNED OUR
UNDYING GRATITUDE.
AMERICA WILL NEVER
FORGET THEIR SACRIFICES.

PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN



Victory in Europe Day, May 8, 1945



All those who served
received the WWII
Victory Medal
(above) that also
adorns the pavilion
floors.

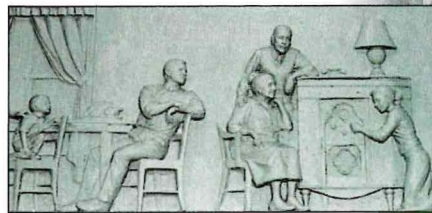


Aboard USS *Missouri*, Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur, Commander of the Allied Powers in the Pacific, signs documents ending the war on September 2, 1945.



Arsenal of Democracy

Wreaths of oak and wheat on each of the memorial’s pillars symbolize the nation’s industrial and agricultural strength, both of which were essential to the success of the global war effort.



A Nation at War On each side of the memorial’s ceremonial entrance on 17th Street, 12 bas-relief sculptures recall scenes of America at war. In this scene a family gathers around its radio to hear President Franklin D. Roosevelt ask Congress for a declaration of war after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands.

Inscriptions at the base of the pavilion fountains mark key battles of the war.

Roll call of the nation: The 56 U.S. states, territories, and District of Columbia that united in a common cause are inscribed on these pillars.

They alternate, to the right and left of the field of stars, based on when they entered the Union. Delaware was the first state.

The Freedom Wall’s 4,000 gold stars commemorate the more than 400,000 Americans who gave their lives in the war.

Lincoln Memorial

Twin Atlantic and Pacific pavilions symbolize a war fought across two oceans.

Building the Memorial In 1993 Congress authorized the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Selected in a na-

tional competition, Friedrich St. Florian designed the memorial. Funded mostly by private donations, it was begun in September 2001 and dedicated on May 29, 2004.

Ideals of Democracy Placing the memorial between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial reflects the importance of World War II in preserving and internationalizing

democratic ideals won under George Washington and defended under Abraham Lincoln. This memorial continues America’s story of striving for freedom and individual rights.

The **World War II Registry** is a database of names of Americans in the war effort in uniform or on the home front. Access it through the memorial website www.wwiimemorial.com to enroll individuals. The website tells more about the memorial project.

About Your Visit An information station is near the memorial. Park rangers are present on site each day except December 25. The memorial may be secured for events celebrating National Independence Day.

The World War II Memorial is one of over 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

More Information

National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, DC 20024-2000
www.nps.gov/nacc

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CELEBRATING PEACE, MACARTHUR ON THE MISSOURI; NATIONAL ARCHIVES; VICTORY MEDAL: AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION (ABMC); MEMORIAL PHOTOS (RICHARD LATOFF); SCULPTURES (R.J. KASKEY); AND RENDERING (JOE MCKENDRY); ABMC