

NEW YORK WAR STORIES

NEW YORK WAR STORIES puts a personal perspective on World War II not found in many history books or Hollywood movies. With viewer-contributed videos and letters as its centerpiece, this one-hour documentary takes viewers through the trajectory of the war. Veterans and civilians from all over the tri-state area contribute their memories of what The War meant in their homes and towns to tell the emotional story of one of the most important events in world history, a dramatic time for a generation when world events turned local communities upside down and everyone was part of the war effort.

Six decades after the end of the war, childhood memories are vividly recalled in viewer letters that underscore the communal loss of innocence that still resonates in the lives of these men and women: a Western Union delivery boy who recalls the anguished response to his news at neighborhood homes; mothers crying over the ironing; the frightening prospect of losing family and loved ones and the harsh reality of young parents giving their lives too soon for the cause as war heroes; the ration stamps Marcia Lubow of Queens found “irresistible to play with” because she “didn’t realize until much later why those little stamps were so important;” letters written to soldiers as classroom assignments; the blackouts Thomas Fleming, as a child in East Flatbush, innocently enjoyed “because with no lights anywhere we were better able to see the stars.”

NEW YORK WAR STORIES also takes viewers into the mindset of young men just out of high school, whose only knowledge of islands was Coney, Staten and Ellis, introduced to new ones with exotic names like Iwo Jima, whether enlisted or ‘winners’ of the lottery draft. Coming from New York’s melting pot, their ethnic background held new significance in wartime. Arlene Calabrese of Morristown, New Jersey, whose Italian-American father joined the army to fight the enemy Italians, writes in a letter about her immigrant grandparents, “they said (in broken English) ‘my son is fighting for *our* country, the United States of America’.” For Maury Nadjari of Huntington being a Jewish soldier gave him even further motive to fight, recalling, “I wanted to kill the Germans... because I knew how much death they had caused to our people.” Young African-American soldiers like John I. Mulzac of Brooklyn recall their first taste of racial discrimination as the Tuskegee airmen were declined the opportunity to take part in the offensive in the Pacific. On the home front, women like Sophie Sarro of Huntington, who worked as a riveter at Grumman on Long Island and had five brothers serving overseas, describe a new era for women who had never worked outside the home, providing essential support for their fathers, brothers, schoolmates and countrymen. Through their stories and others, the documentary reflects the local impact of the War. Newsreels, newspaper headlines, and archival footage round out this video time capsule spanning from the 1939 World’s Fair to the aftermath of the atomic bomb.

NEW YORK WAR STORIES is made possible by funding from Arrow Electronics, Inc.; The Bank of New York Mellon Corporation; HIP Health Plan of New York; Rosalind P. Walter; and Susan and Elihu Rose. Some of the content of **NEW YORK WAR STORIES** was contributed by viewers and members of WLIW21 and

Thirteen/WNET, and was made possible by the contribution of time and effort from the Friends of Thirteen.

A WLIW New York production. Executive Producer: Roy A. Hammond. Producer/Director/ Writer: Sam Toperoff. For more letters and videos contributed by public television viewers, visit newyorkwarstories.org.