



The Last Good War: The Faces and Voices of World War II

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World War II remains one of the most galvanizing and defining events in the history of America. Seemingly overnight, the entire nation unified behind a singular cause. By 1945, the size of the U.S. armed forces had grown from two to twelve million men and women of every color, religion, and creed. Young people from every walk of life were inducted and volunteered. America had quickly and fiercely established itself as a global superpower, and an entire generation's identity was forged, in part, by what many still refer to as the "last good war."

Sixty years later, a young photographer named Thomas Sanders began traveling the country photographing hundreds of World War II veterans. The more he shot, the more he listened, and the more captivated he became by their memories of the war. Veronica Kavass, a writer and interviewer with StoryCorps, joined the project and spent countless hours with these men and women, recording their vivid accounts as Tom recorded their storied faces. "They are a living record of an incredibly historic time," Sanders says. "We have so much to learn from their experiences." He became determined to see that the two million living veterans were celebrated and remembered.

The Last Good War: The Faces and Voices of World War II is a chronicle of courage and hardship, sacrifice and determination. The harsh reality of combat is tempered by tender, poignant moments. The overwhelming anguish of lost brothers-in-arms sits alongside stories of enduring friendships. The war brought Americans in touch with people from all over the world – some they fought and some they fought next to, from the beaches of Normandy to the frozen plains of Russia, the North African deserts and the mountains of Japan. They came, these volunteers and draftees, from everywhere and for every reason: from the young woman pulled from her college and covertly trained to break German submarine codes, to the soldier who stormed Hitler's castle home, these pilots, soldiers, marines, and sailors each provide a unique window into American history.

There are two million veterans still alive today, but with each passing day there are fewer and fewer. The images and memories of these men and woman, collected in these pages, preserve a profound piece of America's history. Their past offers us a lasting and powerful perspective on today's world, and defines the true price of freedom.

This is the story of World War II through the veterans who lived it.

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