

**World War Two Non-Fiction Recommended Reading**

J920 / FLE

**Black and white airmen: their true history.**

John Fleischman. 2007. 160 p. (MJS)

**From Booklist** - *Fleischman fleshes out an article originally published in Air & Space Smithsonian about a late-blooming friendship between white bomber pilot Herb Heilbrun and Tuskegee Airman John Leahr with compellingly written war reminiscences, a stinging indictment of the U.S. Army Air Force's discrimination against blacks, and a sometimes-surprising picture of segregation's local realities before and during World War II. Although the two men were both born in 1920, grew up near one another in Cincinnati, and actually flew several missions together, they didn't discover their connections until meeting at a military reunion 50 years later. Adding to the personal story are photos of airplanes and memorabilia, and the book is capped by a startling "picture that makes the story"--a 1928 class photo in which the two stand side-by-side, oblivious to one another. An exemplary annotated, multimedia resource list closes this double portrait, which, though slightly unfocused, is often thrilling and consistently absorbing.*

J355.0082 / NAT

**Count on us: American women in the military.**

Amy Nathan. 2004. 88p. (EM)

**From School Library Journal** - *"You've come a long way, baby," is a phrase that aptly describes the role of American women in the armed forces. In this clearly written, well-organized book, Nathan traces the gains they have made from the Revolutionary War to the present day, including the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Glimpses of each time period are skillfully woven into the text, providing a solid historical overview. Each major war is discussed from the perspective of the female participants of that era, and quotes from individuals, insets with mini biographies, and an abundance of period photographs bring the narrative to life.*

940.5318 / LEV

**Darkness over Denmark: the Danish resistance and the rescue of the Jews.**

Ellen Levine. 2000. 164 p. (MJ)

**From School Library Journal** - *This fascinating account pays homage to the remarkable efforts of the Danish people to smuggle the vast majority of their country's Jewish citizens to safety in Sweden during World War II. Interspersed with the straightforward history are first-person accounts of the war years, mainly based on the author's interviews with Danes who escaped, assisted with escapes, or joined the resistance. These accounts help make these increasingly distant events come alive. The well-chosen black-and-white period photographs and reproductions add to the text, and the cover (a montage with Hitler's face looming over a scene of a burning rail yard and running boy) is particularly striking. The brief biographies of the people interviewed, telling what they did during and after the war, make for touching reading. An excellent history and an inspired complement to Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*.*

940.531773 / OPP

**Dear Miss Breed: true stories of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II and a librarian who made a difference.**

Joanne Oppenheim. 2006. 287 p. (JS)

**From Booklist** - *This passionately written history bears witness to the World War II injustices endured by Japanese Americans, from a vantage point of particular relevance to*

young people. In a poignant introduction, seasoned children's writer Oppenheim explains how her hunt for a former classmate, a Japanese American, serendipitously led her to an Internet profile of San Diego children's librarian Clara Breed, and to a collection of letters written to Breed by her incarcerated Japanese patrons--grateful, illuminating responses to Breed's faithful missives and care packages containing books and other gifts. Although the letters (and interviews with their grown-up authors) form the narrative's bedrock, Oppenheim weaves them into a broader account, amplified by photos, archival materials (including a startlingly racist cartoon by Dr. Seuss), and moving quotations from the later reparation hearings: "I was just 10 years old when I became a 'squint-eyed yellow-bellied Jap.'" Along with the basic facts, Oppenheim urges readers to critically interpret primary sources and identify "governmental doublespeak"; the words "incarceration" or "concentration" are consciously employed here as correctives for softpedaling terminology like "internment" and "relocation." ...This book deserves commendation for its sheer quantity of accessible, exhaustively researched information about a troubling period, more resonant now than ever, when American ideals were compromised by fear and unfortunate racial assumptions.

940.5308996 / MOO

**Fighting for America: Black soldiers – the unsung heroes of World War II.**

Christopher Paul Moore. 2005. (MJS)

**From Booklist** - Moore's painstaking research and personal history (his parents met while serving in the military in World War II) add enormously to this tribute to the contributions of black soldiers during that war. Moore focuses on the reluctance, and even resistance, to send black troops into military service, based on the myth of their incompetence and cowardice. Thus, black soldiers fought the war on two fronts--at home and abroad. When the war effort required the deployment of black troops, they were originally assigned only support roles of preparing roads and getting supplies to advancing troops, but they proved themselves to be brave fighters as their roles evolved into combat. Moore highlights individuals who distinguished themselves in the war, drawing on previously unpublished materials from individual soldiers and black platoons. Moore chronicles the bravery of the troops as well as their struggles for equality at home, where they continued to be treated as second-class citizens. Photos, newspaper clippings, and letters add to the rich portrayal of the heroic service by black soldiers during World War II.

J940.5308 / COO

**Fighting for honor: Japanese Americans and World War II.**

Michael Cooper. 2000. 118 p. (MJS)

**From School Library Journal** - This explanation of the unfair circumstances and incredible heroism of first- and second-generation Japanese Americans during World War II is similar in tone and format to Jerry Stanley's *I Am an American* (Crown, 1994). What distinguishes Cooper's effort is the more extensive, descriptive, and sometimes grisly attention given to these soldiers' contributions to the military conflict in Europe. As an example, the Japanese Americans who served in the 100th/442nd battalion became "the most highly decorated unit in U.S. military history" at a time when most of their families had been forcibly removed from their homes and businesses in Washington, Oregon, and California. Cooper begins with a strong first chapter that establishes the extent of the American prejudice against these citizens and the post-Pearl Harbor hysteria that led to the establishment of the War Relocation Authority. The author then questions why this happened and responds with solid cause and effect examples, utilizing relevant archival photographs of these "barbed wire communities." On the war front, the descriptions of individual acts of bravery in Europe are drawn from first-person accounts and other sources, and while the geography is not introduced well, the battles' objectives, actions, and results are clear.

J940.531 / JOS

**Growing up in World War II: 1941-1945.**

Judith Pinkerton Josephson. 2003. 63 p. (EM)

**From Booklist** - Books in the attractive *Our America* series give today's children an opportunity to understand what childhood and adolescence were like for America's youth in the past. **Growing up in World War II** emphasizes what it was like to live through the war years. The book features evocative black-and-white photographs. The design is pleasing, and footnotes, a selected bibliography bolstered by a list of books and Web sites, and a two-page spread of follow-up activities round out the book.

943.086 / BAR

**Hitler youth: growing up in Hitler's shadow.**

Susan Campbell Bartoletti. 2005. 176 p. (MJS)

**From School Library Journal** - Hitler's plans for the future of Germany relied significantly on its young people, and this excellent history shows how he attempted to carry out his mission with the establishment of the Hitler Youth, or Hitlerjugend, in 1926. With a focus on the years between 1933 and the end of the war in 1945, Bartoletti explains the roles that millions of boys and girls unwittingly played in the horrors of the Third Reich. The book is structured around 12 young individuals and their experiences, which clearly demonstrate how they were victims of leaders who took advantage of their innocence and enthusiasm for evil means. Their stories evolve from patriotic devotion to Hitler and zeal to join, to doubt, confusion, and disillusion. (An epilogue adds a powerful what-became-of-them relevance.) The large period photographs are a primary component and they include Nazi propaganda showing happy and healthy teens as well as the reality of concentration camps and young people with large guns. The final chapter superbly summarizes the weighty significance of this part of the 20th century and challenges young readers to prevent history from repeating itself. Bartoletti lets many of the subjects' words, emotions, and deeds speak for themselves, bringing them together clearly to tell this story unlike anyone else has.

940.54 / NEL

**Left for dead: a young man's search for justice for the USS Indianapolis.**

Pete Nelson. 2002. 201 p. (JS)

*It's an unlikely beginning to what became a momentous, history-changing history fair project. Eleven-year-old Hunter Scott was watching Jaws one day when he first heard about the World War II sinking of the USS Indianapolis. Intrigued, he investigated further, and discovered a shocking, heartbreaking story behind what should have been a tale of heroism and patriotism. Torpedoed by a Japanese submarine, the Indianapolis went down in minutes, taking more than 800 sailors with it. Several hundred survived, but only after spending days in the open sea with sharks diminishing their numbers hourly. This is only the beginning of the tragedy, however. In an effort to make an example of the ship's captain, and in order to deflect blame from itself, the U.S. Navy unfairly court-martialed the captain, painfully changing the lives of all the men involved. Basing much of his text on young Hunter Scott's research, author Pete Nelson does a fine job of presenting this story through the eyes of many of the survivors.*

*Old and new photos allow readers to know many of the men of the ship, and personal accounts reveal the horrors of those days in the ocean--and later in the courtroom. A bittersweet ending will leave the reader pensive and deeply moved.*

940.5412 / POT

**Liberators: fighting on two fronts in World War II.**

Lou Potter with William Miles and Nina Rosenbaum. 1992. 303 p.

**From Publishers Weekly** - This work recounts the tragic saga of the 761st Tank Battalion, whose African American personnel trained for two years in the racist

*backwaters of the South, made a major contribution to Gen. George Patton's Third Army in the WW II European campaigns, then returned to the U.S. after the war to find that discrimination against them had grown worse. The 761st's military record is impressive. The battalion fought farther east than any other U.S. unit (but was prevented from making the historic link-up with the Red Army, a ceremony reserved for white troops), and led the way for U.S. forces in the liberation of Jewish survivors at Dachau and Buchenwald. In the saddest irony of all, the authors (all New York City film producers) describe how the African Americans received a warm welcome in England and from German civilians during occupation duty, and as a result were roundly resented by their white comrades in arms.*

940.5475 / FRA

**Medic! How I fought World War II with morphine, sulfa, and iodine swabs.**

Robert "Doc Joe" Franklin. 2006. 151 p. (S)

**From Publishers Weekly** - *This account of Franklin's experiences during WWII brings combat to life. With woefully little training, Franklin was assigned as a medic to the 45th Infantry in June 1943 and spent the next two years assisting wounded soldiers in various military campaigns from Sicily to southern France, learning on the job how to treat wounds. His descriptions of horrific casualties and deaths of both Americans and Germans are vivid, and so are the more human moments. He also tells of confronting racism and anti-Semitism expressed by some U.S. soldiers. The author, now 88, writes that not a night goes by without his thinking of those who died: "The tragedy of war for those who have fought it... is that it never ends."*

796.48 / BAC

**The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936.**

Susan D. Bachrach. 2000. 128 p.

**Horn Book** - *This overview, profusely illustrated with black-and-white photographs, examines the Berlin Olympics from various perspectives and explains how the Nazi government used the event for propaganda, how Jewish athletes from that country were excluded, and how American competitors from minority backgrounds dealt with the dilemma of whether to participate. A selection of color plates concludes the volume.*

940.5317 / ONL

**Only what we could carry: the Japanese internment experience.**

Edited with an introduction by Lawson Fusao Inada. 2000. 439 p. (S)

**From School Library Journal** - *Adult/High School-The editor of this unusual anthology has drawn from a wealth of material: poetry, prose, biography, news accounts, formal government declarations, letters, and autobiography along with photographs, sketches, and cartoons that reflect the tragedy of the internment. Taken as a whole, it conveys the deep anguish felt by Japanese who defined themselves as citizens of the United States and yet lost their rights as citizens during a time of national fear. There are editorials published in both Japanese-American newspapers and local papers of the time. A girl describes the day she voluntarily left her home to gather with hundreds of other Japanese to board trains to unknown destinations. One selection is from the autobiography of George Takei, Star Trek's Mr. Sulu. There are delicate haiku and woodblock prints. The official documents issued by President Roosevelt that instituted the forced internment are also included. Readers will come away from this book with a deep understanding of the times, the sense of betrayal, and the conflicting feelings among the three major groups of Japanese who went through the ordeal. See also **Voices from the Camps: Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II** by Larry Dane Brimner.*

J940.5426 / NEL

**Quiet hero: the Ira Hayes story.**

S. D. Nelson. 2006. (E)

**From School Library Journal** - Hayes, one of the Marines who struggled to thrust an American flag into a hill on Iwo Jima, became famous as a result of Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning photo. This illustrated biography gives context to a shy man who never wanted to be a hero, tracking his childhood on a Pima Indian reservation, his experiences at an Indian boarding school, his military action in the Pacific, his deep depression following his return home, and his death at age 32. The author glosses over the less savory details of Hayes's later years, but acknowledges his growing problems with alcoholism. The writing is clear and avoids fictionalized thoughts or dialogue. Soft, well-composed acrylic paintings support the text. Nelson cleverly obscures the faces of the soldiers in battle, emphasizing their anonymity, conveying the fact that any one of them could have been in Hayes's position, and underscoring his struggle to accept attention that he believed to be undeserved (...the soldiers who died on Iwo Jima and in other battles were the real heroes). An author's note provides additional details and photographs.

J940.5317 / COO

**Remembering Manzanar: life in a Japanese relocation camp.**

Michael L. Cooper. 2002. 68 p. (EM)

**From Publishers Weekly** - In this incisive companion to *Fighting for Honor: Japanese Americans and World War II*, Cooper examines life in the Manzanar relocation camp in eastern California, where more than 10,000 Japanese Americans were exiled between March 1942 and November 1945. Framing his account with chapters describing his 2001 visit to the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, which attracts former residents and their descendants to the site, the author conveys the lasting effects of and strong sentiments still associated with the government's WWII confinement of American citizens, an act he deems "one of the most serious mistakes in our nation's history." Cooper draws from primary sources, including the records of the War Relocation Authority and microfilm copies of the *Manzanar Free Press*, a biweekly newspaper published in the camp, to compose a clear portrait of residents' living conditions and daily routines. The inclusion of quotes from those who lived at Manzanar gives the book a sense of immediacy as well as a sharp emotional edge. Reinforcing the bitter irony of this experience are such pointed comments as that of a then 12-year-old boy, who asks, "What's the use of studying American history when we're behind barbed wire?" Carefully selected photos (including some by Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams) balance government-sanctioned and unofficial pictures of life in the camp. Visuals and text resolutely portray a painful chapter in America's past.

J331.4 COL

**Rosie the Riveter: women working on the home front in World War II.**

Penny Colman. 1995. 120 p. (EMJ)

**From School Library Journal** - Colman chronicles the drive to get women to enter wartime industries, providing insight into the federal government's propaganda campaign and incentives. She also supplies the facts and figures: many more women than one might suppose had full-time employment before the war, and many continued to work after it, sometimes in positions that were considerably less important and less lucrative. The author also discusses the sexual harassment and racial discrimination women experienced while doing their patriotic duty. The compromises they had to make in order to manage child care and to prove to men on the job that they were their equals are frequently ignored in other historical treatments of the Rosie-the-riveter phenomenon. From Colman's point of view, the experiences of stateside workers led the way to some of the more liberal reforms later in the century, especially for women and minorities. The abundant black-and-white photographs included are a real treat.

J940.53 / KRU

**V is for victory: America remembers World War II.**

Kathleen Krull. 1995. 115p. (JS)

**From School Library Journal** - Colorful pages replete with archival photos, postcards, posters, letters, and memorabilia present a visual and textual scrapbook of the war years. Krull covers the preliminary events, Pearl Harbor, life at home, military service, the Holocaust, weapons, and lasting changes and effects brought about by the war. Chapters are introduced and end with appropriate overviews, but the bulk of the text is comprised of explanatory comments associated with the illustrative material. Some are in boxed inserts of contrasting colors. Individual battles are not discussed. The index is detailed and sufficient to help researchers.

**\* A brief note on the booklist:**

**- All recommended books are available at the in the Lincoln Trail Library system (and most are available at the Urbana Free Library).**

**- I offer some guidelines on age appropriateness for books (both reading level and maturity of the material) as a place to start in finding useful resources. The code for age level is E (Elementary), M (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades), J (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades), and S (High School students). Several of the books on the World War Two booklists that have an "M" rating would also be appropriate for 5<sup>th</sup> graders.**