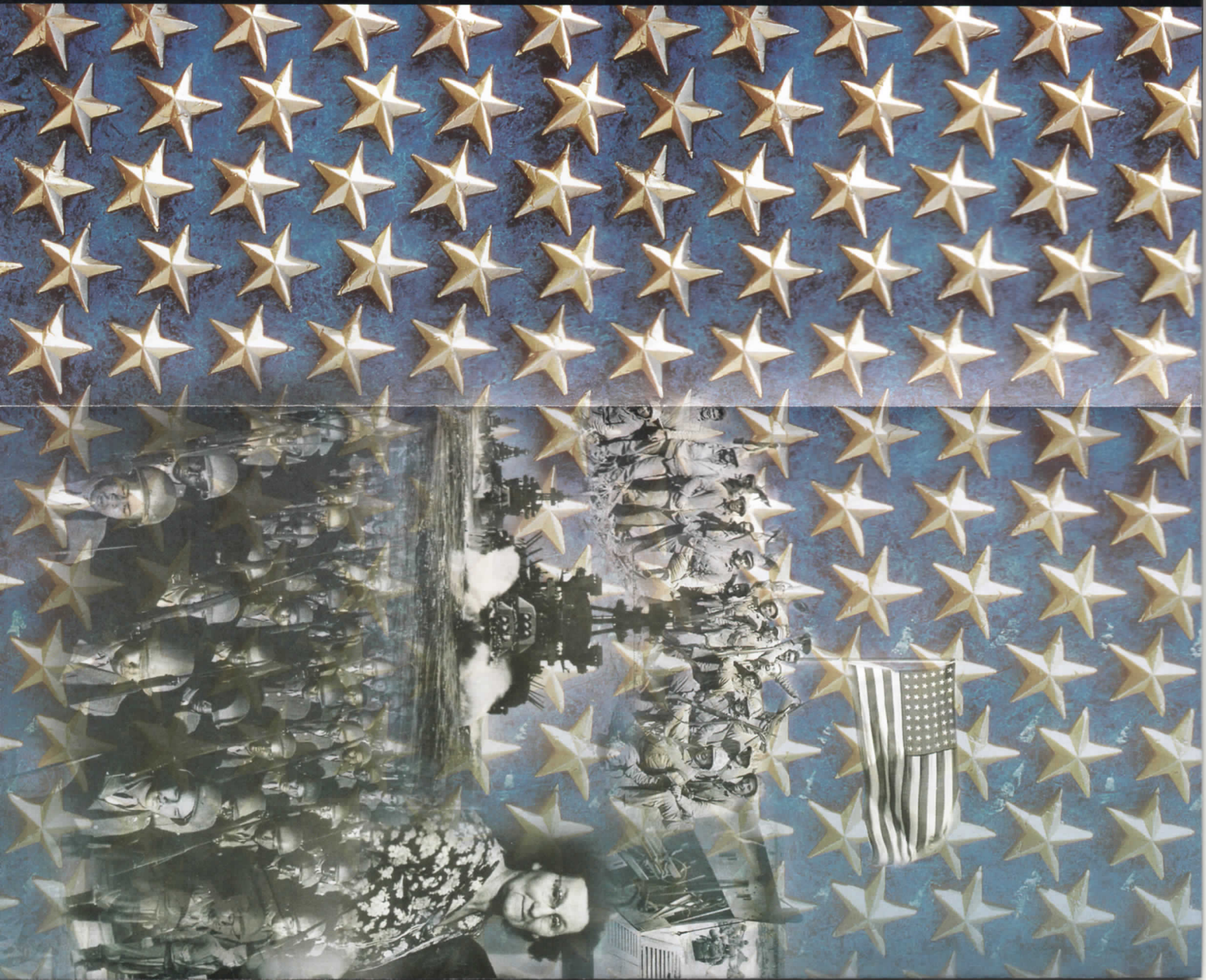


# World War II Memorial

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Washington, D.C.



# 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

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

## “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.



### Arsenal of Democracy

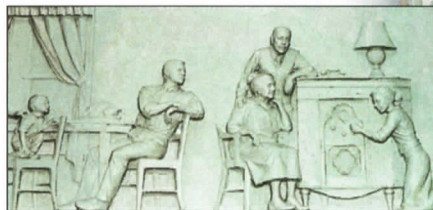
Wreaths of oak and wheat on each of the memorial’s pillars symbolize the nation’s industrial and agricultural strength, both of which were essential to the success of the global war effort.

*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, right and left of stars, based on the order they entered the war. Delaware was the first state.*

*Lincoln M.*



**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.

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

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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.

to the  
the field  
when  
Union.  
the first

The Freedom Wall's  
4,000 gold stars com-  
memorate the more  
than 400,000 Ameri-  
cans who gave their  
lives in the war.

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

memorial



The **World War II Registry** is a data-  
base of names of Americans in the  
war effort in uniform or on the home  
front. Access it through the memorial  
website [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://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](http://www.nps.gov/nacc)

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**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 con-  
tinues America's story of striving for  
freedom and individual rights.

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