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# INDEX OF INTERVIEWEES

**Paul Andreas** was a sixteen-year-old high school student in Lincoln on December 7, 1941. He became a member of A Company of the 109th Infantry, Twenty-eighth Division. Prior to going overseas, he was a drill sergeant at Camp Walters, Texas, for fourteen months. He served in the Belgian Campaign, Hurtgen Forest, and the Battle of the Bulge before being captured by the Germans in Luxembourg. He was in seven different prisoner of war camps before his release. Andreas now lives in Omaha.

**K. Roy Bailey**, nineteen, was a rural school teacher in Colfax County at the start of the war. Drafted from his classroom, Bailey signed up as a conscientious objector and agreed to serve in the military as long as he was not required to bear arms. He was a medic with Company L, 305th Infantry Regiment, Seventy-seventh Infantry Division in the Okinawan Campaign. The Reverend Bailey currently resides in Lincoln.

**Barc Bayley** was a student in Lincoln throughout the war. He was twelve years old in 1941. He still lives in Lincoln.

**Leonard Bennett**, twenty, joined the army air forces in 1943 and became a fighter pilot in the Tenth Fighter Squadron, Fiftieth Fighter Group in the European Theater of Operations. He flew 101 missions in P-47s. Bennett makes his home in Elgin.

**Lovern Blacksher**, thirty-one, put his welding expertise to use during the war at the Martin Bomber Plant. He welded the special bomb rack for the *Enola Gay*, which dropped the world's first atomic bomb. Blacksher lives in Fairbury today.

**Pauline Blacksher**, twenty-four, was a housewife in Plattsmouth at the start of the war. Seeing the need for war workers, she went to work in the Martin Bomber plant's camouflage department. She also lives in Fairbury.

**Tom Bodie** entered the service as a twenty-two-year-old R.O.T.C. officer soon after his graduation from the University of Nebraska in 1940. He went to the Philippines in June 1941 to serve with the Forty-fifth Infantry Division, Filipino scouts. He was taken prisoner in April 1942. Bodie survived the Bataan Death March and endured seven different Japanese prison camps before his release in August 1945. Bodie resides in Burchard.

**Bob Boyte**, twenty, joined the U.S. Navy in April 1941 and became an F6F Hellcat fighter pilot. He was assigned to the VF80 squadron on the carrier USS *Ticonderoga*, which saw action in the Pacific. Boyte is a Lincoln resident today.

**Sylvia Iwanski Chalupsky**, eighteen, was working at the Nebraska State Bank in Ord when war was declared, and she later worked in Lincoln. Chalupsky and her husband, William, make their home in Burwell.

**William Chalupsky** of Comstock enlisted in December 1940 in the Nebraska National Guard. His unit was eventually transferred from the Thirty-fifth Division to the 197th Infantry and served in the Aleutians. He was twenty-two years old at the start of the war.

**Rose Marie Murphy Christensen** was nine years old and living with her mother and father and five brothers and sisters in Columbus when the war broke out. Christensen now lives in Northglenn, Colorado.

**Marie Curtis**, twenty, was teaching rural school south of Genoa when the war broke out. She was married in April 1942 and for a short time worked in a Portland, Oregon, shipyard with her husband. When he was drafted, she returned to Nebraska and to rural school teaching, and faced the challenges of raising a baby alone. She now lives in Lincoln.

**Harry Dahlstrom** was in Camp Robinson, Arkansas, training with the Nebraska National Guard when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He was a member of Company A of the 110th Quartermaster Regiment, Thirty-fifth Division, and then became commander of the 3473rd Quartermaster Truck Company, an all-black company. This company was in the Luzon invasion in 1944-45. Dahlstrom was twenty-two when the war began. Dahlstrom is a resident of Holdrege.

**Elmer Dasenbrock**, originally from Leigh, Nebraska, was a twenty-one-year-old student at the University of Nebraska when the war broke out. He joined the U.S. Army Air Forces as a member of the 303rd Squadron, 442nd Troop Carrier Squadron. He was a navigator and participated in paratroop drops at D-Day, southern France and Operation Market Garden. These operations also included glider towing and parachute resupply. Dasenbrock is a Lincoln resident.

**Jeanette Meyer Davis**, nineteen, was taking nurse's training at Methodist Hospital in Omaha prior to the war. She joined the army nurse corps and served in England at the 187th General Hospital. Davis makes her home in Lincoln today.

**James Denney**, seventeen, was attending Fairbury Junior College and working as a stringer for the *Omaha World-Herald* when the war began. He enlisted in the army air forces in 1943. He was involved in supplying aerial combat crews headed for overseas duty. He also served with the occupation forces in Europe after the war's end. Denney lives in Omaha.

**F. Lowell DeVasure** was a nineteen-year-old student at Dana College at the start of the war. He joined the navy in 1942 and served on the PCE 898, a weather ship in the Philippine Sea. His ship also participated in air-sea rescues for B-29 flights over Japan. DeVasure is a Tekamah resident.

**Dallmont Erickson**, from Elgin, joined the army transportation corps and served as the executive officer and navigator of a 180-foot gasoline tanker, which carried aviation gasoline to combat areas in the European Theater of Operations. Erickson returned to Elgin, where he lives today.

**George Fritton**, seventeen, was a student at Creighton University when the war began. He enlisted in the army air forces in 1942 and became a top turret gunner on an A-20 Havoc bomber in the 410th Bomb Group, 647th Bomb Squadron. He participated in campaigns in northern France, the Rhineland, Ardennes, and the Battle of the Bulge. Fritton is a resident of Albion.

**Mildred Pogue Gardner** was a seventeen-year-old rural school teacher in York County on December 7, 1941. She continued teaching in various schools in Polk County and Seward County. In 1944 she came to Lincoln to attend the University of Nebraska. Gardner still lives in Lincoln.

**Bill Gilgren**, a native of Dalton, lied about his age in order to enlist in the army when he was seventeen. He served as a rifleman with the Third Infantry Division through North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and southern France, before being wounded. Following hospitalization, he was transferred to Company B, 120th Infantry Regiment, Thirtieth Division. Today Gilgren makes his home in Sidney.

**Helen Green**, twenty, was the secretary to the editor and a reporter for the *Fairbury Journal* during the war years. She still lives in Fairbury.

**Paul Gustafson** was only fifteen and living in Polk, Nebraska, at the start of the war. He joined the merchant marine at age seventeen and became a cook. His ship participated in campaigns at New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, and Cebu, Manila, Luzon, and Leyte in the Philippines. Gustafson is a Lincoln resident.

**Grant Hazlett** came to Nebraska as a part of the 103rd Infantry Division. He was assigned to the prisoner of war camp at Atlanta. Hazlett, originally from Iowa, married a Nebraska girl and made the state his home. He now resides in Loomis.

**John Heizer**, a Dalton native, was twenty years old at the start of the war. He served as a mess sergeant in Company I, 318th Infantry, Eightieth Division. Heizer saw action in northern France, Ardennes, the Rhineland, and central Europe. Heizer lives in Sidney.

**Frank Hilsabeck**, twenty-three, was a salesman for the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in McCook prior to joining the army air forces in 1942. He served as an armorer, bomb sight maintenance man, and finally as a tail gunner on the B-17 bomber, *Southern Comfort*. He was a member of the 305th Bomb Group, 364th Squadron. He saw action in eastern Europe and Germany. Hilsabeck is a resident of Holdrege.

**Francis Hiner**, thirty-five, left his job at the Nebraska State Employment Service to work for the U.S. Department of Labor acquiring workers for the Sioux Ordnance Depot in Sidney. Hiner continues to live in Sidney.

**Dorothy Siems Huls**, twenty, was teaching rural school near Beatrice when the war started. She quit teaching to work at Boeing in Wichita as an inspector in the cable department. Huls and her husband, Ralph, reside on the family farm near Cortland.

**Ralph Huls** was farming near Cortland when the war started. The twenty-four-year-old was drafted into the army in 1942 and became a sergeant, serving with occupation forces on Iwo Jima in 1945.

## What Did You Do in the War?

**Jack Jackson**, twenty, was working as a motion picture projectionist in his family's movie theater in Gibbon at the start of the war. He was drafted into the army in 1942 and served with the 564th Field Artillery Battalion, Seventy-first Infantry Division. He was the driver for the battery commander and saw action in Europe. Jackson is a Holdrege resident.

**Marialyse Hager Knobel** was fourteen years old and lived in Fairbury when the war started. Her father had gone to Bremerton, Washington, to work in the shipyards before Pearl Harbor. Knobel had six brothers in the service. She now lives in North Platte.

**Virginia Koehler Knoll** celebrated her eleventh birthday two days after Pearl Harbor was attacked. She spent the war years in her hometown of Geneva. Knoll is a Lincoln resident.

**Betty Busboom Kohl** at seventeen was a high school student in Hastings when the war broke out. She married her high school sweetheart, who was promptly drafted into the service. She accompanied her husband to some of his stateside stops before he went overseas. Kohl now lives in Ogallala.

**Raymond Kubie** was playing semi-pro baseball in Minnesota when he joined the service in March 1941. The twenty-four-year-old Herman native served in the Twenty-third Infantry Division in the Southwest and South Pacific, and after a brief return to the states, served with the Sixteenth Armored Infantry Division and Seventy-ninth Infantry Divisions in the European Theater. As an infantry rifleman and squad leader, he participated in campaigns at New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, and in central and northern Europe. Kubie is a resident of Lincoln.

**Mitchell Kumagai**, twenty, an American of Japanese descent from North Platte, went to work at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot and then entered the service and served in Europe with an anti-tank company. Kumagai lives in Lincoln.

**Ken Lewis** of Humphrey, nineteen, was working for the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company when the war started. He joined the army air forces in 1943 as a member of the Sixty-sixth Fighter Squadron, Fifty-seventh Fighter Group, Twelfth Air Force. He was a P-47 Thun-

derbolt pilot and participated in dive bombing and strafing missions in Italy, the northern Apennines, and Po Valley. Lewis makes his home in Hill City, South Dakota.

**Hollis Limprecht** of Lincoln was one day short of his twenty-first birthday when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He was a full-time student at the University of Nebraska and a sportswriter for the *Lincoln Journal*. He was called to active duty in 1943 and served with Company K, Seventh Infantry, Third Infantry Division as a rifle platoon leader. Later he became an intelligence officer and was in charge of the division's weekly newspaper. Limprecht saw action in southern Italy, including the assault on Anzio, and in southern France through Germany to Austria. Limprecht lives in Omaha.

**Leonard Loftis** was thirty when the war broke out and was working on the family farm near Coleridge. He was drafted in 1942 and was a rifleman and truck driver with the 161st Infantry, Twenty-fifth Division. Nicknamed "Pops" by his fellow soldiers, he participated in action at Guadalcanal, New Georgia, and Luzon. Loftis is a Hartington resident.

**Doris Lostroh** was a rural school teacher in District 45, Seward County, during the war years. Lostroh and her husband, Vern, live near Pleasant Dale.

**Vernon Lostroh** was a fifteen-year-old high school student when the war started. He joined the army in April 1945 and served with the 726th Military Police Battalion, Tenth Army, on Okinawa. He was responsible for guarding a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Later, he was transferred to military government in a medical detachment, which was responsible for procuring food and supplies for the civilian population.

**Earl Luff** was vice-president and general manager of Lincoln Steel Works during the war. Lincoln Steel had contracts with the government to make mooring buoys and portable barges. Luff continues to live in Lincoln.

**Floyd Marian** was a sixteen-year-old high school student in Hastings when the war broke out. After working at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot, he joined the army air forces in 1943 and was assigned to the 311th and 310th Ferrying Squadrons. He flew many types of aircraft including the C-47. In the latter part of the war, he was a pilot for VIPs. Marian is a Hastings resident.

**Robert Mathewson**, seventeen, was a high school student in Lincoln on December 7, 1941. He joined the navy in December 1941 and served aboard the USS *Rasher*, a submarine. He participated in the first battle of the Philippine Sea, Iwo Jima, the Luzon invasion, and the Okinawa invasion. Mathewson lives in Lincoln.

**Otis Mattox**, twenty-six, had been a high school principal, teacher, and coach in Unadilla prior to the war. His service in the U.S. Army began with M Company of the Eighty-fifth Infantry Division. He was later transferred to the 503rd Military Police Battalion and served in Europe from July 6, 1944, to mid-October 1945. He saw action at Normandy, central France, the Battle of the Bulge, Rhineland, and Germany. Mattox is a Geneva resident.

**Dean McClymont** was a twenty-year-old student at the University of Nebraska before the war. He had been hired by Boeing Aircraft as a draftsman and worked in Seattle and Wichita. He was called to active duty in March 1943 with the U.S. Army Air Forces. He served as navigator on a B-29 bomber and completed thirty-five missions over Japan. He was a member of the 505th Bomb Group, 313th Bomb Wing, Twentieth Air Force. McClymont makes his home at Loomis.

**Thomas McGrath**, twenty-one, was working as chief clerk for the Union Pacific Railroad stores department in North Platte at the start of the war. He enlisted in the army air forces and became a member of the Ninety-seventh Troop Carrier Squadron. As a flight officer he flew CG4As and British gliders at Normandy, Holland, Bastogne, and Operation Varsity. McGrath lives in Omaha.

**Willard McShane**, twenty-five, was living in Louisville, Nebraska and working for the Ash Grove Cement Company prior to the start of the war. He joined the navy in November 1941 and worked in the ship's office aboard the USS *Hamman*, a destroyer in the Pacific. McShane lives at Plattsmouth.

**Fred Merriman**, twenty-eight, served as the chief clerk in the Sherman County Rationing Office during the first part of the war. He then worked in the Office of Price Administration district offices in North Platte and Omaha. Merriman now lives in Lincoln.

**Clarence Mitchell, Jr.**, nineteen, was playing professional baseball for Oklahoma City in the Texas League before he returned to Grand Island to enlist in the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1942. Mitchell became a B-24 bombardier in the 762nd bomb squadron, 460th bomb group, Fifteenth Air Force. He flew forty-three missions over targets in Germany, Austria, northern Italy and Yugoslavia. Mitchell is a resident of Lincoln.

**Millard Musil** spent the war years working on his family's farm near Potter. He was a talented musician and organized various bands which entertained in several Nebraska communities. Musil is a resident of Sidney.

**Vince Ortman** was the head of the mechanical and engineering laboratory at the Martin Bomber Plant in Omaha during the war years. He oversaw modifications of the *Enola Gay*. Ortman continues to live in Omaha.

**Clarence Osborn** of Seward joined the service in January 1941 and became a member of the Fourteenth Cavalry, Second Cavalry Division. Following the dismounting of the horse cavalry, he was assigned to the Thirty-sixth Armored Infantry, Third Armored Division. As a reconnaissance platoon sergeant, he saw action in Normandy, France, the Rhineland, Ardennes, and central Europe. He was one of four brothers in the service, three of whom returned safely. He was twenty-three when the war started. Osborn now lives in Lincoln.

**Robert Osborn**, a native of Bertrand, joined the navy in 1939 and was on the battleship USS *California* in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He was twenty-two. Transferred to the USS *Sumner*, Osborn, a radioman, participated in campaigns at Guadalcanal, Tulagi, New Guinea, Moresby Island, Milne Bay, Ellice Islands, the Battle of the Coral Sea, Kwajalein, Guam, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and the Philippines. Osborn is a past president of the Nebraska chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. He makes his home in Sidney.

**Richard Penry** was a twenty-nine-year-old surgeon working at the Nebraska Ordnance Plant near Mead when the war started. He volunteered for the U.S. Army Medical Corps and served at the 136th Evacuation Hospital in Germany. Dr. Penry lives in Hebron.

## What Did You Do in the War?

**Annabelle Peshek** began working at the Martin Bomber Plant as a chauffeur and clerk typist immediately after the war began. She then enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, later Women's Army Corps, and following officer's training, served as an insurance and bond allotment officer at Fort Lewis, Washington. She was twenty-eight at the start of the war. Peshek is a Lincoln resident.

**Irvin Peterson**, twenty-one, was working as a high school basketball and football coach in Oakland before the war. He joined the navy in 1942 and became an intelligence officer for Communications Unit 40 on the cruiser USS *Boise* in the Seventh Fleet. Peterson died in March 1989.

**Norma Te Selle Prophet** was an eighteen-year-old business school student in Lincoln when the war broke out. She became a civil service employee and worked in Washington, D.C. for two years. She then enlisted in the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service [WAVES] and following training was assigned to the Bureau of Ships in Washington, D.C. She makes her home at Firth.

**Hort Quinn** of Lodgepole enlisted in the army air forces in January 1942. He served as a gunner on a B-24 Liberator bomber. He was a member of the 376th Bomb Group, which was attached to the Ninth, Twelfth, and eventually Fifteenth Air Force. He was one of two members of his crew to survive when his plane went down, and he became a prisoner of war in Germany for the remainder of the war. Quinn still lives at Lodgepole.

**Gerald Reed** was working in a grain elevator in Ellis when war was declared. The twenty-one-year-old joined the navy in 1942 and became a carpenter's mate. He was stationed at the Coco Solo submarine base in Panama and used his carpentry expertise to repair submarines, subchasers, and LSTs. He was eventually transferred to the USS *McKean*, a destroyer, where he was assigned to damage control and fire fighting. Reed lives in Funk.

**Norman and Edward Sellz**, twin brothers from Omaha, enlisted in the army air forces in December 1942 when they were eighteen. They were assigned to the 498th Bomb Group, Seventy-third Bomb Wing, Twentieth Air Force. As B-29 radar operators, they flew in separate aircraft during bombing raids over Japan. Norman Sellz's

plane was shot down April 7, 1945, and he was a prisoner of war until August 29, 1945. He was the only member of his crew to survive. Edward Sellz, who saw his brother's plane go down, completed twenty-five missions before his return to the United States. Edward and Norman Sellz now live in California.

**Tom Sherman**, of Peru, became a reconnaissance sergeant for the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which was attached to several different divisions, including the Third, Forty-fifth, and Thirty-sixth Infantry Divisions. The 636th participated in landings at Anzio and southern France. Sherman lives near Marquette.

**Charles Slagle**, originally from Shubert, was a twenty-three-year-old student on December 7, 1941. He joined the army air forces in 1942 and was assigned to the 392nd Bomb Group, 576th Bomb Squadron. He served as an air crew member on B-24 flights and was shot down on his tenth mission on a raid over Berlin. Slagle spent 416 days as a prisoner of war. He lives in Omaha.

**Lorena Smith**, twenty-seven, was a housewife in Hastings during the war. She now lives in Holdrege.

**Geraldine George Sorensen** was eight years old on December 7, 1941, and lived with her parents on their ranch near Bartlett. The family moved to Grand Island when her father became a brand inspector for the Nebraska State Brand Commission. She had one brother in the navy during the war. Sorensen divides her time between the family farm at Shelton and a home in Columbus.

**Helen Winter Stauffer** was a nineteen-year-old student at Colorado Women's College in Denver when war was declared. After graduation, she returned to Grand Island and worked at the Cornhusker Ordnance Plant in the blueprint department. Eventually, she joined the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service [WAVES] and taught aerial gunnery at Alameda Naval Air Station. She now lives in Kearney.

**Paul Thompson**, originally of Cozad, was nineteen and a student at the Boeing School of Aeronautics in Oakland, California, when the war started. He enlisted in the army air forces and served as a navigator in the 331 Troop Carrier Squadron. He participated in several major airborne missions, including Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge. Thompson continues to live in Cozad.

**Judy Green Tyrell**, from Hastings, went to Fort Lewis, Washington, in the early days of the war and served as a U.S. Army hostess and later supervisor of the service clubs at Fort Lewis. At the war's end, she worked in service clubs in Germany and Okinawa. Tyrell lives in Hastings.

**John Underdown** came to Nebraska from Michigan to serve as a supply and purchasing officer for the Sioux Ordnance Depot in Sidney. He was a member of Company I of the Eighty-first Regiment, Fifth Armored Division. Underdown was twenty-nine at the start of the war. He returned to Sidney after the war, and continues to live there.

**Juanita Stocker Upton**, fourteen, was living with her family in Fairbury at the war's outset. Two of her brothers served in the military, while another brother worked in an airplane plant in California. Upton helped her father and uncle with their filling station. She now lives at Twin Falls, Idaho.

**Keith Vail** was twenty-seven years old at the start of the war and worked as a filling station attendant and at a retail tire outlet in Lincoln. He joined the navy in December 1941 and because of prior experience working in a mortuary, became a hospitalman first class, assisting surgeons in operations and manning first aid and emergency rooms. He was in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Vail lives in Lincoln.

**Willard Waldo** was county extension agent for Cass County during the war. He was instrumental in getting a prisoner of war camp located at Weeping Water. Waldo lives near DeWitt.

**Patricia Black Walgreen** was a high school student in Fullerton when the war started. After high school she joined the Cadet Nurse Corps training program in Hastings at Mary Lanning Hospital. She was fourteen at the start of the war. She now lives in Osceola.

**Donald Weber**, an Arlington native, was twenty when Pearl Harbor was bombed. He joined the army in 1942 and served with the 381st Field Artillery Battalion, 102nd Infantry Division, Ninth Army, as a battery clerk for the service battery in the battalion headquarters in Europe. Weber is an Omaha resident.

**Carroll Wilson** was a loan officer in North Platte prior to his enlistment in the navy, where he achieved the rating of pharmacist's mate first class. He was stationed on a patrol craft — PC1186 — during most of his service. He was twenty-eight when the war began. Wilson continues to live in North Platte.

**Lawrence Youngman** was a correspondent for the *Omaha World-Herald* during the war, responsible for covering Nebraskans and Iowans in the European Theater of Operations. Youngman is an Omaha resident.

**John Zimola** enlisted in the navy before the war broke out. Originally from Wahoo, he served as a firecontrolman first class on the heavy cruiser, USS *Louisville*. His ship provided fire support for landings in the Marshall, Gilbert, and Aleutian islands and at Saipan, Palau, the Philippines, and Okinawa. His ship was hit twice by kamikazes at Luzon and once at Okinawa. He was twenty years old at the start of the war. Zimola lives in Fremont.

Martin Caffrey, Jr., Faye James, Wanda Mowry, James Murphy, Lois Jurene Meter Odell, Betty Safarik Spilger, Mary Ann Dreesen Voss, and Frederick Walters were not interviewed in person. The quotes attributed to them were taken from questionnaires each completed.