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The Things Our Fathers Saw: The Untold Stories Of The World War II Generation From Hometown, USA-Voices Of The Pacific Theater



Synopsis

How soon we forget. Or perhaps, we were never told. That is understandable, given what they saw. But, it happened. From the book: "I was talking to a shipmate of mine waiting for the motor launch, and all at once I saw a plane go over our ship. I did not know what it was, but the fellow with me said, 'That's a Jap plane, Jesus!' It went down and dropped a torpedo. Then I saw the Utah turn over. " ~U.S. Navy seaman, Pearl Harbor " Rage is instantaneous. He's looking at me from a crawling position. I didn't shoot him; I went and kicked him in the head. Rage does funny things. After I kicked him, I shot and killed him. " ~Marine veteran, Battle of Guadalcanal " Marched to Camp I at Cabanatuan, a distance of six miles, which is the main prison camp here in the Philippines. Food is scarcer now than anytime so far. Fifty men to a bucket of rice! " ~U.S. Army prisoner of war, Corregidor " They were firing pretty heavily at us...it's rather difficult to fly when you have a rosary in each hand. I took more fellas in with me than I brought home that day, unfortunately. " ~U.S. Navy torpedo bomber pilot, Guadalcanal " I remember it rained like hell that night, and the water was running down the slope into our foxholes. I had to use my helmet to keep bailing out, you know. Lt. Gower called us together. He said, 'I think we're getting hit with a banzai. We're going to have to pull back.' Holy Jesus, there was howling and screaming! They had naked women, with spears, stark naked! " ~U.S. Army veteran, Saipan " So I had a hard... two months, I guess. I kept mostly to myself. I wouldn't talk to people. I tried to figure out what the hell I was going to do when I got home. How was I going to tell my mother this? You know what I mean? " ~Marine veteran, Battle of Okinawa, on finding out he would be blind for life " After 3 years of starvation and brutal treatment, that beautiful symbol of freedom once more flies over our head! Our camp tailor worked all night and finished our first American flag! The blue came from a GI barracks bag, red from a Jap comforter and the white from an Australian bed sheet. When I came out of the barracks and saw those beautiful colors for the first time I felt like crying! " ~U.S. Army prisoner of war, Japan, at war's end " There was a family that lost two sons in World War II. The family got a telegram on a Monday that one of the boys was killed, and that Thursday they got another telegram saying that his brother had been killed. There were about 35 young men from our town who were killed in World War II, and I knew every one of them; most were good friends of mine. " ~U.S. Navy seaman, Tokyo Bay " I hope you'll never have to tell a story like this, when you get to be 87. I hope you'll never have to do it.' ~Marine veteran, Iwo Jima

At the height of World War II, LOOK Magazine profiled a small American community for a series of articles portraying it as the wholesome, patriotic model of life on the home front. Decades later, author Matthew Rozell tracks down over thirty survivors who fought the war in the Pacific, from Pearl

Harbor to the surrender at Tokyo Bay. The book resurrects firsthand accounts of combat and brotherhood, of captivity and redemption, and the aftermath of a war that left no American community unscathed. Here are the stories that the magazine could not tell, from a vanishing generation speaking to America today. It is up to us to remember--for own sakes, as much as theirs.-Featuring over a dozen custom maps and 35 photographs, including never-before published portraits. Extended notes and companion website.

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Customer Reviews

I just finished your book "The Things Our Father'a Saw". It took me only two days to finish it, I just couldn't put it down. I have read more books than I can count about WW 2, I have to say that your book was the best, bar none. Thank you so much for writing this amazing book. I wish I was in to history like I am now when I was in high school in the 80s. I think if you had been my teacher in high school, my life would have been very different . I started my interest in WW2 around the time my grandfather died in 2003. He served on an LST. I never talked to him about any of his experiences and it is my biggest regret in my life. I have instilled in my children about history and what I've read and I can only hope the knowledge lives on in my future decentants. Thank you so much again for passing on this knowledge . I would give anything to sit down with a WW2 vet to hear all that they

would be willing to share . They were the greatest generation and should not be forgotten. I can't thank you enough for this book. This book should be a best seller!!!!

I picked up this book knowing very little about the battle of the Pacific. This book was the best introduction to the topic I could have encountered. What better place to learn about the horrors of war, the specifics of battle than from the young men and women who were there? History is best learned and remembered when it is humanized. Rozell's book does just that. It gives faces and names and stories to some of battles I read about in my high school textbooks. I couldn't tell you much about what I learned from those textbooks, but I could go on and on about the things I learned from this book. I was struck by the young age of these men and women as I read. I was in awe of their courage and honesty. And, ultimately, I was touched by their stories, by the things they said, by the things they saw.

My own father was one of the first to be caught in the first draft. It was called the fish bowl draft. The year was 1939 and he was 19 years old. His time in the service was almost at an end, but then Pearl Harbor happened, and he was in for the duration. He too, was in the Pacific, but to his dying day he would NEVER talk about his experiences in the service. I didn't understand why until I, too, went to Vietnam, and now I understand. My father was a member of The Greatest Generation, and their sacrifices made it a possibility for those who came behind to learn from them and not make the mistakes that brought the world to where it was in their time.

I loved the concept of how this book came about, and am enjoying reading the contributed stories by so many different soldiers. Normally a book focuses on one particular event- but this book covers a multitude of events, from several different veterans who were there. A great addition to anyone's WWII / US History book collections.

I first met the author of this book when I walked into his high school history classroom. He is a passionate educator and his writings truly reflect his desire to create excitement in learning history. Even as a slightly biased reader, I highly recommend this book to anyone. Even if history is not your "thing" you will gain something by reading the experiences told here. I read the book intro to prologue and couldn't get enough. I look forward to more book releases and exploring more of the related stories Mr. Rozell references.

The author has put together stories told by those who participated in the Pacific theater during World War 2. Included are reports from the Pearl Harbor experience, island battles including Peliileu,, Iwo Jima, the Philippines, and the surrender of the Japanese aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Stories from the air corps, army, navy and Marines will not only hold your interest, but will verify the horrors of war.

This book is a fascinating recounting of the personal experiences of a few service members during WW II. Every high school American History class should require this as part of the curriculum. These men and women lived in a time of turmoil that most Americans can't imagine. And they survived to live meaningful and productive lives. They help us understand what it means to be part of the greatest generation.

Matthew Rozell is a phenomenal historian and writer. His interviews gave me new insight when I read the WW II veterans' horrific and brave experiences in battles in the Pacific. My husband is a WW II veteran and he couldn't put the book down until he finished it. His books should be required reading for all students. How fortunate Mr. Rozell's classes are to have such a wonderful and exciting teacher. The maps drawn by Susan Winchell Sweeney really helped clarify battle sites. We look forward to reading his upcoming books on WW II

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