

"HEROES OF THE BAY"

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>> THIS SPECIAL PRESENTATION WAS PRODUCED IN HIGH DEFINITION BY WEDU, TAMPA, ST. PETERSBURG, SARASOTA.

>> UNIVERSITY VILLAGE OFFERS SENIORS A VARIETY OF ACCOMMODATIONS, INCLUDING APARTMENT HOMES AND VILLAS LOCATED ON 36 ACRES WITH RESORT-LIKE SERVICES AND AMENITIES, WHERE YOU CAN EXPERIENCE MASTERPIECE LIVING, DEDICATED TO WHOLE PERSON WELLNESS, EMPOWERING YOU TO NURTURE YOUR PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL FULFILLMENT.

UNIVERSITY VILLAGE SALUTES WEDU AND OUR VETERANS.

>>Narrator: IN THE 1940s, THE TAMPA BAY AREA WAS A SLEEPY REGION TRYING TO RECOVER FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE DEPRESSION. THEN CAME THE DAY OF INFAMY AND WORLD WAR II.

>> I HAD TO DO WHAT I DID.

THEY DIDN'T COME, THE DRAFT BOARD.

I WAS ONLY 16 AND A HALF AND MY BROTHER WAS 17.

WE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO.

>>Narrator: WOMEN WERE SUDDENLY THRUST INTO NONTRADITIONAL ROLES IN COCKPITS, SHIPYARDS AND ON MILITARY BASES.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

>> THIS WOMAN SAYS TO ME, SHAW, BECAUSE THEY CALL YOU BY YOUR LAST NAME, DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE NAVY OR DON'T YOU? AND I SAID, I WANT TO BE IN THE NAVY.

>>Narrator: BLACK TROOPS TOUGHED IT OUT ALONGSIDE THEIR WHITE COMRADES, BUT RACIAL ISSUES BEGAN TO BOIL TO THE SURFACE IN THE HEAT OF COMBAT.

>> GENERAL ORDER CAME DOWN FROM GENERAL EISENHOWER, ALL BLACK TROOPS, NOW IT'S TIME TO JOIN YOUR WHITE COMRADES TO STEM THIS TIDE.

BEFORE WE WEREN'T GOOD ENOUGH.

>>Narrator: AND WHEN THEY RETURNED HOME, TAMPA BAY, LIKE THEM, HAD BEEN FOREVER CHANGED.

>> YOU JUST DID PLAIN OLD INFANTRY SLOGGING AND FIGHTING. THAT'S NOT PLEASANT.

IT'S DEADLY AND SCARY.

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>>Narrator: WITHIN MONTHS OF THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR ON DECEMBER 7th, 1941, ANOTHER INVASION BY THOUSANDS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL CAME TO THE TAMPA BAY AREA.

RECRUITING STATIONS WERE SET UP ON STREET CORNERS AND MEN AND WOMEN LINED UP TO JOIN.

MILITARY LEADERS NEEDED TO TRAIN MASSIVE NUMBERS AND ALMOST EVERY HOTEL AND APARTMENT BUILDING IN THE AREA WAS TAKEN FOR USE AS BARRACKS.

WHEN THE HOTELS WERE FULL, TROOPS SET UP TENTS IN THE FRONT

YARD OF ST. PETERSBURG'S VINOY HOTEL.

THEY LINED UP EVERY DAY TO GET THEIR MEALS AT THE TRAMOR CAFETERIA.

ARMY AND AIR FORCE PERSONNEL DRILLED IN THE STREETS AND RAISED THE STARS AND STRIPES DAILY IN FRONT OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE IN CLEARWATER.

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>>Narrator: PEOPLE HELD TIN, NEWSPAPER, AND RUBBER DRIVES TO COLLECT VALUABLE RESOURCES TO BE USED FOR THE WAR EFFORT.

EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD WAS FOCUSED ON PREPARING FOR WAR. THE GOOD WEATHER AND CLEAR SKIES OF THE TAMPA BAY AREA MADE THIS AN IDEAL PLACE FOR TRAINING.

TAMPA HAD MacDILL ARMY AIR BASE, LATER MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE.

DREW FIELD, WHICH IS NOW TAMPA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

HENDERSON FIELD, WHICH WAS LOCATED NEAR THE CURRENT BUSCH GARDENS.

ST. PETERSBURG HAD PINELLAS ARMY AIRFIELD, NOW ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER AIRPORT.

ALBERT WHITTED FIELD, WHICH WAS USED BY THE NAVY AND COAST GUARD, AS WAS THE BAYBORO HARBOR TRAINING FACILITY.

MULLET KEY WAS USED AS A GUNNERY AND BOMBING RANGE AND IS NOW CALLED FT. DESOTO.

LAKELAND HAD THREE AIRFIELDS FOR TRAINING DURING WORLD WAR II WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO LAKELAND MUNICIPAL

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

AIRPORT.

AND SARASOTA ARMY AIRFIELD SERVED AS AN AUXILIARY BASE FOR  
MacDILL AND BECAME SARASOTA-BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT.

FOR MANY, TAMPA BAY WAS WHERE THEY LEARNED HOW TO FIGHT.

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¶ I GOT A BROTHER IN THE INFANTRY ¶

>>Narrator: PROBABLY NO TAMPA FAMILY HAS SERVED SO WELL AS  
THE SEVEN VILA BROTHERS WHO HAVE FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR II,  
KOREA, VIETNAM AND DESERT STORM.

WILLIE AND JOE VILA OF WEST TAMPA WERE 16 AND 17 WHEN THEY  
ENLISTED IN THE U.S. MARINES JUST THREE WEEKS AFTER THE  
BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOR.

THEY WERE PUMPING GAS IN WEST TAMPA WHEN THEY HEARD ABOUT  
THE JAPANESE ATTACK.

THEN AND THERE, THEY MADE UP THEIR MINDS TO JOIN.

THEY TOLD THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR AGES IN TAMPA AND WERE  
TURNED DOWN.

SO THEY WENT TO ORLANDO, CHANGED THEIR STORY, AND SIGNED UP  
FOR THE MARINES.

>> RIGHT THEN, I SAY, I'M GOING TO QUIT SCHOOL AND I'M GOING  
TO JOIN THE MARINES JUST FOR THE HELL, YOU KNOW?

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT MARINES IS OR NOTHING, BUT WE LIKE IT!

>>Narrator: THEY WERE SHIPPED OFF TO THE PACIFIC WHERE THEY  
PARTICIPATED IN THE FIGHTING AT GUADALCANAL, OKINAWA, AND

NUMEROUS OTHER BATTLES.

THEIR COMMANDING OFFICER, GENERAL CHESTY PULLER, HAD WORDS OF ADVICE AS THEY PREPARED TO INVADE.

>> CHESTY SAY, I'M GONNA TELL YOU THIS AND KEEP IT IN YOUR MIND.

YOU KILL OR BE KILLED BECAUSE THE SON OF A GUN YOU DON'T WANNA KILL, HIS BUDDY'S LOOKING AT YOU AND IS GONNA SHOOT YOU.

>>Narrator: THE INVASION OF GUADALCANAL LEFT JOE SEVERELY WOUNDED.

HE WAS SHIPPED TO A HOSPITAL IN AUSTRALIA, AND IT WOULD BE SIX MONTHS BEFORE WILLIE WAS ABLE TO VISIT HIS BROTHER, NOT KNOWING HIS CONDITION.

>> SO MY BROTHER, WHEN HE CAME, I WAS DRINKING A COKE, A BOTTLE COKE.

THEY USED TO BE A NICKEL.

AND HE SAY, OH, YOU DOING GOOD.

AND HE WAS HAPPY TO SEE ME.

>>Narrator: WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER, BOTH BROTHERS RETURNED TO TAMPA.

WILLIE HOPPED A STREETCAR AT HOWARD AND MAIN AND HEADED BACK HOME.

>> I GOT UP AND I SAID, DO I OWE YOU SOME MONEY?

AND THE GUY SAY, YOU DONE ENOUGH.

YOU DON'T OWE US NOTHING.

ANYTIME YOU SEE ME DRIVING ONE OF THESE STREETCARS, YOU HOP  
IN.

YOU GET A FREE RIDE.

YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH.

>>Narrator: TAMPA'S VILA BROTHERS PARK WAS NAMED IN THEIR  
HONOR, AND A MONUMENT WAS ERECTED ON AUGUST 3rd, 2007, FOR  
THESE AUTHENTIC HEROES FROM THE BAY.

>>Narrator: CAPTAIN RALPH STYLES OF SARASOTA GRADUATED FROM  
THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY IN 1933.

HE HUNTED GERMAN AND JAPANESE SUBS DURING WORLD WAR II.

HE WAS STATIONED AT PEARL HARBOR ON THE MORNING OF THE  
JAPANESE ATTACK AND WAS JUST ABOUT TO REPORT FOR HIS SUNDAY  
MORNING DUTY.

>> AND I WAS IN UNIFORM AND EATING BREAKFAST AND LOOKING  
OUT, AND I SAW THIS PLANE COME IN AND JUST DIVE AND GO DOWN  
INTO THE WATER.

EVERYBODY KNEW THE JAPANESE WERE GOING TO ATTACK, BUT IT WAS  
AN EXCEPTIONAL FEAT THAT THEY HAD IN THOSE DAYS GETTING  
ACROSS THE PACIFIC UNDETECTED.

>>Narrator: RALPH STYLES EVENTUALLY WENT ON TO BECOME THE  
COMMANDER OF ALL U.S. SUBMARINE ACTIVITY ON THE WEST COAST  
AND SERVED ON THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

>> FOR THE 52 AMERICAN SUBMARINES LOST IN WORLD WAR II ...

>>Narrator: EACH NIGHT AT SUNSET AT HIS HOME ON SIESTA KEY,  
HE CONDUCTS A FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY TO HONOR U.S.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

VETERANS OF ALL WARS.

>>Narrator: EVERYBODY IN THE BAY AREA WAS DOING SOMETHING FOR THE WAR EFFORT.

ABLE-BODIED MEN WHO COULDN'T GET INTO THE ARMED FORCES FORMED HOME GUARD UNITS.

THE MEMBERS OF COMPANY B, 5th BATTALION, STOOD GUARD IN FRONT OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS ON TAMPA'S DAVIS ISLANDS.

NIGHTLY BLACKOUTS ALONG FLORIDA'S COASTAL CITIES WERE ENFORCED TO GUARD AGAINST ATTACKS FROM ENEMY AIRCRAFT AND SUBMARINES.

ST. PETERSBURG AND MOST COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN FLORIDA KEPT A TIGHT WATCH.

GERMAN U-BOATS SUNK SHIPS OFF FLORIDA'S EAST COAST LIKE THIS TANKER NEAR HOBE SOUND.

MacDILL AND DREW AIRFIELDS IN TAMPA WERE THE TWO MAJOR MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE BAY AREA.

IN ADDITION TO BEING AIRFIELDS, BOTH MacDILL AND DREW FIELDS BRIEFLY HOUSED GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR.

HOLLYWOOD CAME TO TAMPA DURING THE WAR TO FILM TWO MOVIES.

"AIR FORCE" DIRECTED BY LEGENDARY FILMMAKER HOWARD HAWKS WAS FILMED NEAR DREW FIELD AND OTHER LOCATIONS.

MUCH OF THE AREA WAS STILL PINE AND PALMETTO, MAKING IT IDEAL FOR SHOWING THE PACIFIC THEATER.

WHEN THE HOLLYWOOD BOMBERS WITH JAPANESE MARKINGS FLEW OVER THE GULF, THEY NEGLECTED TO TELL COASTAL GUNNERS WHO FIRED

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

ON THE PLANES.

FORTUNATELY, IN THIS CASE, THEY MISSED.

>> HISTORIANS SAY THAT THE INVASION OF NORMANDY WAS THE TURNING EVENT IN WORLD HISTORY.

WE NEVER THOUGHT IT WAS A TURNING EVENT IN WORLD HISTORY.

WE JUST THOUGHT IT WAS A STINKIN' INVASION THAT WE HAD TO DO, AND WE WANTED TO GET IT DONE.

>>Narrator: D-DAY, THE NORMANDY INVASION TO LIBERATE FRANCE AND ULTIMATELY THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, WAS ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT BATTLE OF WORLD WAR II.

RETIRED U.S. CONGRESSMAN SAM GIBBONS OF TAMPA WAS AN ARMY CAPTAIN IN THE 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION PARATROOPERS.

HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST ALLIED TROOPS TO PARACHUTE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT INTO NORMANDY EIGHT HOURS BEFORE THE D-DAY GROUND INVASION.

HE AND HIS MEN USED CLICKING DEVICES TO LOCATE EACH OTHER ON THE GROUND.

THE 24-YEAR-OLD ARMY CAPTAIN AND SENIOR OFFICER GATHERED HIS MEN AND IMMEDIATELY LIBERATED A FRENCH TOWN.

>> IN NORMANDY, WE DIDN'T LAND BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES.

WE JUST LANDED RIGHT ON TOP OF THEM.

WE LANDED BEHIND THE BEACHES, BUT THERE WERE PLENTY OF GERMANS BACK THERE WHERE WE WERE.

>>Narrator: GIBBONS AND HIS MEN SECURED THREE MILES OF THE MAIN SUPPLY HIGHWAY ON D-DAY, KEEPING THE ROADS OPEN FOR

GROUND FORCES.

LATER IN THE WAR, HE FOUGHT IN DEEP SNOW AND BITTER TEMPERATURES AT THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE WHERE HE SPENT CHRISTMAS OF 1944 BOMBARDED AND SURROUNDED UNTIL GENERAL PATTON'S THIRD ARMY BROKE THROUGH.

EVENTUALLY, HE WAS PART OF THE ASSAULT ON HITLER'S HEADQUARTERS AT BERCHTESGADEN, ALSO CALLED EAGLE'S NEST. SERVING IN GENERAL PATTON'S THIRD ARMY, SECOND LIEUTENANT JOHN GERMANY OF PLANT CITY WAS ALSO AMONG THE FIRST GROUND TROOPS TO CAPTURE HITLER'S MOUNTAIN RETREAT AND HEADQUARTERS.

SECOND LIEUTENANT GERMANY HAD A FRONT-ROW SEAT IN WITNESSING SOME OF THE WORST PARTS OF HITLER'S EXTERMINATION CAMPAIGN. HE HELPED LIBERATE PRISONERS FROM A CONCENTRATION CAMP IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

>> THE BODIES WERE STILL THERE.

THE OVENS WERE STILL WARM.

AND WHEN WE LIBERATED IT, THE ONES THAT COULD WALK WENT AFTER THE GUARDS AND TRIED TO SHOVE THEM IN THE OVEN THEMSELVES.

>>Narrator: TAMPA'S TERRY LYLE WAS A COLLEGE STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN 1941.

AFTER THE JAPANESE BOMBED PEARL HARBOR, HE ENLISTED IN THE ARMY AND SERVED IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA UNTIL THE END OF WORLD WAR II.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT WAS MULE PACKER BASIC TRAINING, USEFUL FOR FIGHTING IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ITALY AND AUSTRIA.

>> IN ORDER TO BE A MULE PACKER, SO TO SPEAK, YOU HAD TO BE OVER 5'10" AND HAVE GOOD ARCHES BECAUSE YOU HAD TO LIFT 75-MILLIMETER HOWITZERS UP ONTO THE MULE'S BACK.

IT WAS A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE FOR OL' CITY BOY.

>>Narrator: ST. PETERSBURG'S GUS STAVROS SERVED AS A CORPORAL IN PATTON'S THIRD ARMY MARCHING ACROSS WESTERN EUROPE AND DRIVING BACK HITLER'S GERMAN FORCES.

HE SERVED THROUGH THREE CAMPAIGNS IN NORTHERN FRANCE, THE ARDENNES AND THE RHINELAND.

HE LANDED ON UTAH BEACH 50 DAYS AFTER D-DAY, AND DURING THE BATTLE OF NENNIG IN FRANCE, FACED A GERMAN ATTACK IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING.

>> WE WERE TOLD ON THIS DATE, JANUARY THE 19th, AFTER BEING SURROUNDED FOR ABOUT FIVE OR SIX DAYS WITHOUT ANY FOOD OR ANY HELP AT ALL, WE WERE THERE, 36 MEN IN THIS OPEN AREA. WE WERE TOLD THAT AT 4:00 IN THE MORNING ON JANUARY 19th, WE WOULD BE HIT BY 400 OF THE ENEMY.

AND JUST LIKE CLOCKWORK AT 4:00 IN THE MORNING, THERE WERE 400 GERMANS WHO ATTACKED THIS 36 MEN IN OUR PLATOON.

SO 14 HOURS LATER, THE REMAINING 200 GERMANS SURRENDERED.

>>Narrator: STAVROS WAS ONE OF FIVE MEN CHOSEN TO ESCORT THE GERMAN PRISONERS.

WITHIN SECONDS, THE GROUP WAS HIT BY A MORTAR SHELL KILLING

ONE AND WOUNDING THREE OF THE AMERICANS, INCLUDING STAVROS.  
HE WAS TAKEN TO A MASH UNIT, SENT TO ENGLAND AND TO SEVERAL  
HOSPITALS IN THE STATES.

>> I WAS WOUNDED JUST BEFORE MY 20th BIRTHDAY.

THE CAPTAIN SAID YOU'VE DONE ALL YOU CAN FOR YOUR COUNTRY,  
NOW YOUR COUNTRY WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU FOR THE FEW YEARS YOU  
HAVE LEFT IN YOUR LIFE.

THAT WAS 62 YEARS AGO.

¶ WE'RE GOING TO TAKE HITLER DOWN ¶

>>Narrator: THROUGHOUT WORLD WAR II, THE ARMED FORCES WERE  
SEGREGATED.

BLACK TROOPS WERE SEPARATED FROM WHITE TROOPS.

ARMY CORPORAL MOSES DARBY OF TAMPA HELPED SUPPLY ALLIED  
FORCES IN EUROPE DURING THE NORMANDY INVASION, THE BATTLE OF  
THE BULGE AND OTHER FIERCE FIGHTING.

BLACK SERVICEMEN IN THE FAMOUS "RED BALL" EXPRESS KEPT  
TRUCKS AND SUPPLIES COMING 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A  
WEEK.

THE ALL BLACK 761st TANK BATTALION WAS VITAL IN HELPING  
GENERAL PATTON PUSH BACK THE GERMANS AT THE BATTLE OF THE  
BULGE.

>> PATTON SENT FOR THEM, ESPECIALLY FOR HIMSELF.

SEE, A LOT OF PEOPLE, PATTON DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH A LOT OF  
THESE OTHER GENERALS, BUT HE WAS A GOOD SOLDIER.

PUT IT THAT WAY.

IF HE WANTED TO WIN A WAR, HE GONNA FIGHT IT HIS WAY.

>>Narrator: TAMPA'S CHARLES JOHNSON SERVED IN THE ARMY AND  
FOUGHT GERMAN FORCES IN ITALY.

ONE DAY HIS INFANTRY UNIT WAS ORDERED TO CONTACT THE ENEMY  
SO THE ALLIES COULD DETERMINE THEIR LOCATION.

WHEN THEY DID, BOTH SIDES STARTED SHOOTING.

>> I NEVER WILL FORGET, I WAS ON THE FRONT LINE, AND WE WENT  
INTO A HOUSE.

AND THE HOUSE WAS BUILT WHERE YOU COULD GO STRAIGHT THROUGH.  
FRONT DOOR TO THE BACK DOOR.

AND TWO OF US WE WENT STRAIGHT THROUGH AND WENT OUT THE BACK  
DOOR.

AND THEY HIT THAT HOUSE ABOUT FIVE TIMES WITH SHELLS.

THEY THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO STAY IN THERE.

THAT SAVED OUR LIVES RIGHT THERE.

THE LATE NASBY WYNN OF SARASOTA WAS ONE OF 994 BLACK PILOTS  
WHO MADE AVIATION HISTORY TRAINING AT TUSKEGEE AIRFIELD IN  
ALABAMA DURING WORLD WAR II.

A SEGREGATED MILITARY HAD RARELY ALLOWED BLACKS TO FLY  
AIRCRAFT, BUT THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN SERVED WITH HONOR IN RAIDS  
OVER EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA.

>> AND I FEEL GOOD THAT I WAS PART OF IT, THAT I NOT ONLY  
PARTICIPATED IN DOING SOMETHING TO EQUALIZE THE HATE, WE  
WERE NORMAL.

WE WERE HUMAN BEINGS.

WE WERE JUST AS ANY OTHER.

>>Narrator: IT'S BEEN SAID THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN FACED TWO WARS, ONE AGAINST AN ENEMY OVERSEAS AND ONE AGAINST BIGOTRY AT HOME.

IN MARCH OF 2007, THE TUSKEGEE PILOTS WERE AWARDED LONG OVERDUE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS FOR THEIR BRAVE DUTY IN SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY.

TAMPA'S BRAULIO ALONSO WAS AMONG THE FIRST MEN TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE ARMY FOR A SIX-MONTH STINT IN OCTOBER OF 1941.

AFTER THE BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOR IN DECEMBER OF THAT YEAR, THOSE SIX MONTHS TURNED INTO FOUR YEARS.

CAPTAIN ALONSO JOINED THE 328th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION WITH WHICH HE SERVED IN NORTH AFRICA AND ITALY.

HE WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN THE LIBERATION OF ROME.

HE REMEMBERS A MOMENT OF GERMAN SURRENDER AT THE END OF A BATTLE.

>> THE BLACK TROOPS WERE BROUGHT IN.

AND THE GERMANS, MAYBE OVER A 150 OR MORE, SURRENDERED TO THE BLACK TROOPS.

I WAS AMAZED.

REALLY THOUGHT IT WAS GREAT.

AND ALL OF OUR PEOPLE THERE THOUGHT IT WAS GREAT.

>>Narrator: THE WARTIME EFFORT PUMPED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND HELPED PULL TAMPA BAY RESIDENTS

OUT OF THE HARDSHIPS OF THE DEPRESSION.

MUCH OF THE LABOR FOR THE U.S. WAR MACHINE WAS SUPPLIED BY WOMEN.

NOWHERE WAS THAT MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE TAMPA SHIPYARDS. TAMPA SHIP BUILDING COULDN'T HIRE ENOUGH PEOPLE AND WENT FROM EMPLOYING 1350 IN 1940 TO OVER 16,000 IN 1944.

WOMEN PILOTS SERVED DURING THE WAR IN TWO GROUPS, THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY FERRYING SQUADRON AND THE WOMEN AIR SERVICE PILOTS OR WASPS.

WHEN THE WAR BEGAN, ST. PETERSBURG'S FRANCES STAVROS VOLUNTEERED FOR THE NAVY WAVES WHICH STOOD FOR WOMEN ACCEPTED FOR VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICE.

AT THE JACKSONVILLE NAVAL AIR STATION, FRANCES SERVED AS A LIBRARIAN IN THE AVIATION SUPPLY OFFICER'S SCHOOL.

ALL HER MALE FAMILY MEMBERS AND COUSINS WERE SERVING IN THE MILITARY, BUT WHEN SHE TOLD HER FAMILY SHE WANTED TO ENLIST, NOT ALL WERE PLEASED.

>> EVERYBODY WAS AGAINST IT, EXCEPT MY FATHER.

I TOLD MY DAD I WAS GOING TO GO ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

I HAD MADE UP MY MIND THAT WE WERE NEEDED, AND I FELT THAT IT WAS -- I HAD TO GO.

>>Narrator: TAMPA'S EVELYN JOHNSON WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BLACK WOMEN TO SERVE IN THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS OR WACS. HER ALL BLACK UNIT SERVED IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE SORTING THE ALL-IMPORTANT MAIL SENT TO THE TROOPS.

SHE FOUND THE EUROPEANS MUCH MORE ACCEPTING OF BLACKS THAN AMERICANS.

>> WE WERE TREATED ROYALLY IN FRANCE ANYWHERE WE WENT.

THERE WAS NEVER ANY SHOW OF DISLIKE OF OUR SKIN.

WELL, THE FEELING WAS I JUST COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WHITE AMERICA COULD NOT TREAT US THE SAME AS THE WHITE EUROPEANS DID.

¶ I'M WAITING FOR MY LIFE TO BEGIN ¶

¶ WAITING FOR THE TRAIN TO COME IN ¶

>>Narrator: VICTORY IN EUROPE OVER GERMANY OCCURRED ON MAY 8th, 1945.

MY DAD BROKE THE NEWS ON CBS RADIO.

>> 4:25 EASTERN WARTIME, BOB HITE REPORTING. IN A LITTLE OVER AN HOUR AND A HALF, THE LAST GERMAN FORCES IN EUROPE WILL LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS AND THE FIGHTING WILL BE OFFICIALLY OVER.

THE END OF NEARLY SIX YEARS OF WAR FOR MANY ALLIED TROOPS.

>>Narrator: ON AUGUST 6th AND 9th, 1945, THE U.S.

DROPPED ATOMIC BOMBS ON THE JAPANESE CITIES OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI.

FACED WITH THIS POWERFUL NEW WEAPON, JAPANESE LEADERS

ANNOUNCED THEIR TOTAL SURRENDER ON AUGUST 15th.

WORLD WAR II WAS OVER.

JUBILATION SWEEPED THE NATION AND THE BAY AREA.

SOLDIERS LINED UP OUTSIDE THE OFFICES OF THE ST. PETERSBURG

TIMES TO READ THE NEWS.

NAVY NURSES HELD UP COPIES OF PAPERS SHOWING THE BEGINNING AND ENDING OF THE WAR.

IN TAMPA, CITIZENS CROWDED FRANKLIN STREET, YBOR CITY, AND WEST TAMPA AND BLEW OFF STEAM INTO THE EARLY MORNING HOURS. WORLD WAR II WAS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN TAMPA BAY HISTORY.

ITS AFTERMATH BROUGHT NEW PROSPERITY, AND HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW RESIDENTS CHOSE TO LIVE THE FLORIDA LIFESTYLE.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN INTEGRATED THE ARMED FORCES, AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT BEGAN CHALLENGING RACIST LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

THE END OF WORLD WAR II GAVE PEOPLE A CHANCE FOR A NEW BEGINNING, A NEW START IN A TAMPA BAY AREA THAT WAS FOREVER CHANGED.

>> I NEVER IN MY LIFE SEEN PEOPLE SO NICE TO SERVICEMEN, ESPECIALLY TO THE MARINES.

WE WERE WOUNDED, AND THEY TREATED US SO GOOD.

THEY WOULD BRING ME PIE.

A WHOLE PIE!

THEY WOULD BRING ME EVERYTHING THEY HAD.

IT MAKE ME CRY.

GEESH.

>> IT'S BEEN A VERY GOOD LIFE.

THERE'S BEEN DOWN PERIODS, BUT THE UP PERIODS HAVE WAY

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

OUTWEIGHED THE DOWN.

AND I CONTRIBUTE 60 TO 70 PERCENT TO MY BEING A TUSKEGEE  
AIRMAN.

>> WAR IS NOT NICE.

IT'S NOT RIGHT.

IT'S WRONG.

IT'S NECESSARY AT TIMES, AS IT WAS IN WORLD WAR II WITH A  
MAN WHO WANTED TO CONQUER THE WORLD.

BUT THOSE WHO SERVED, WE SHOULD APPRECIATE THEM AND THANK  
THEM AND BLESS THEM.

>>Narrator: AMERICA AND HER ALLIES, OF COURSE, EVENTUALLY  
WON THE WAR, BUT AT A TERRIBLE COST.

OVER 400,000 AMERICANS, 3,000 OF THEM FLORIDIANS, DIED  
DURING WORLD WAR II.

MANY WHO SURVIVED ARE NOW BURIED HERE AT THE FLORIDA  
NATIONAL CEMETERY IN BUSHNELL AND MORE ARE BEING INTERRED  
EVERY DAY.

WE'VE SEEN AND HEARD FROM SOME OF THE VETERANS OF THE BAY  
AREA, AND TO A PERSON THEY ALL AGREE, IT'S THEIR COMRADES  
WHO DIDN'T COME BACK WHO ARE THE TRUE "HEROES OF THE BAY."

¶ GOD BLESS AMERICA

MY HOME SWEET HOME ¶¶

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ACCOMMODATIONS, INCLUDING APARTMENT HOMES AND VILLAS LOCATED  
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