



**WORLD WAR TWO
HISTORY CENTER**
Museum and Research Library
Remember, Honor, Educate

JANUARY 2016



MAIL CALL

VOLUME 05 ISSUE 01

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Inside this Issue:

When Did WWII Start?	2
Honoring our Heroes	2
WWIIHC Highlights	3
Know Your Enemy	3
From the Library	4

Return of the Newsletter!

By Erik Runge

It's been a while since we've had a proper newsletter, so a **Mail Call** is long overdue! We're bringing back the quarterly newsletter to keep you up to date on the happenings at the WWII History Center Foundation.

2016 will be the WWII History Center's 10th year in existence. The Center has come quite a long way from its beginnings in 2006. As an organization, we've pro-

gressed from being a monthly meeting of friends, to being a rented room above a bank, to purchasing our own building in downtown El Dorado—a building that we have very nearly paid off! By the end of January, the Foundation will have paid off the loan on our building. By far, this is our biggest achievement to date, and we're very proud of it!

From the start, our mission has been to remember the

War and its participants, honor those who served both at the front and at home and to educate the public about the impact and importance of all aspects of the second World War.

I'm proud to be a part of this museum and helping accomplish its mission. With your help, I look forward to continuing that mission and improving the museum to be a nationally recognized organization.

Building Mortgage Paid Off

By Erik Runge

The last payment on the mortgage of the World War II History Center's building, located in downtown El Dorado, will be made in January 2016. The Board of Directors made the decision to purchase the building for \$50,000 and opened the

doors at this location on September 27, 2008.

Since opening, the building has had major interior renovations, has filled two exhibit rooms and a collections room with artifacts,



It's been a long time since Exhibit Room B looked like this!

has hosted several movie nights and speakers and has a research library overflowing with books—not a bad problem to have!

Moving into this location and utilizing it to its full capability was no small task. Thousands of hours and dollars were donated to make the

building what it is today. The vision and contributions of former Director Allen Cooley, along with countless other members and volunteers brought the Center to where it is today.

We're not done yet—paying off the building was a big step in the right direction, but the WWII History Center will continue to grow and expand. We'll soon outgrow this building and will need to be ready to move to a larger place. The Board of Directors is planning and looking ahead. But in the meantime, it's nice to have a place to call home.

Open: Saturdays 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
except holidays

Phone: (316) 322-8753

Email: contactus@wwiihistorycenter.org

Website: www.wwiihistorycenter.org

Mailing Address:

119 W. Central Ave.
El Dorado, KS 67042

Admission: \$2 per person is suggested

Donations are appreciated and accepted.



Remember, Honor, Educate

WHEN DID WWI START?

By David Cupp



Baltimore News-Post Headline about the sinking of the Panay

As large and complex as World War II was, and with some incomplete knowledge about everything that happened and why, it is understandable that people have different opinions about

events.

Sometimes the more I learn about a subject the less definite my opinion becomes. For example, when did World War II start? I used to think clearly the war started September 1939 when the Germans invaded Poland. As I learned more about the war I discovered that some people felt the war actually started in 1937 with the invasion of China by Japan. These are the two most often cited dates for the start of the war, but there are others.

It is generally agreed that the United States entered World War II on Sunday

December 7th, 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, followed by Germany declaring war on the U.S.

It could be argued that the war with Japan began on another Sunday, Sunday December 12th, 1937—a day when the Japanese attacked and sank the American gunboat USS Panay on the Yangtze river in war torn China. Two U.S. Navy personnel were killed and many more wounded. Japan quickly issued an apology and there was no formal declaration of war.

So what is your opinion on when World War II started?

QUOTABLE QUOTES



“You are always on parade.”

-GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON JR.

HONORING OUR HEROES

By Doug Odom

Wilbur Jackson “Gus” Thomas was born on 29 Oct. 1920, in El Dorado, Kansas. He graduated from El Dorado High School in May 1938. Upon graduation from high school, he enrolled at El Dorado Junior College. While attending Junior College he received training in one of his major passions—becoming a pilot. He graduated from El Dorado Junior College in May of 1941. In September of 1941, he enlisted in the United States Navy and wanted to become a pilot. He was then sent to Basic training in Corpus Christi, TX. Upon completion of Basic Training he was sent to flight training in Miami, Florida where he completed



the program in August 1942. In December 1942, he was sent to Hawaii for Dive Bombing training and in Jan 1943, Gus completed Aerial Combat Training. On 20 February 1943, he was assigned to the United States Marines Corp Air Group 4 and was assigned to the VMF – 213 fighter group for two years in the Pacific Theatre of operations. Then in 1945 to the end of the war he was assigned to the VMF – 124 fighter group in the Pacific Theatre. By the end of the war he was credited with 18.5 kills.

On 28 January 1947, he was killed in a plane crash in El Toro, California. In honor of his service and achievements the El

Dorado Community Airport was named after him.

Upcoming Events:

Date	Event
01/25	Board Meeting @ WWIHC
02/22	Board Meeting @ Alpha 1 Drop Zone
03/05 to 03/06	Chisholm Trail Antique Gun Show @ The Kansas Pavilions
03/28	Board Meeting and Annual Meeting @ WWIHC

Membership Drive

Our membership drive continues! Visit our website to get all the information on becoming a



member of the Foundation!

Building Maintenance

Paying off the mortgage of the building is a big achievement, but building maintenance will always be needed. Three of the largest projects that will be coming up in the next few months is repainting indoor walls, replacing the exhibit room lighting and replacing one of our commercial

air conditioning units. If you think you can help us out in any of these areas (donations of your time, your money or your expertise), please get in touch! A non-profit organization like us is always in need of volunteers!

WWII Reenacting Corps

Did you know that the WWII History Center has its own reenactors? Did you know that those reenactors are looking for recruits? If you're interested in reenacting an American or German soldier, get in touch with us by emailing wwiirc@wwiihistorycenter.org

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."

By Erik Runge

This quote from Sun Tzu's "Art of War" was a hard lesson to learn for American personnel fighting the Germans and Japanese soon after America's entry into the war. It took a while for American to learn about themselves and the enemy they faced. Today, remembering the enemy's capability is important because history will repeat itself lest we forget it.

Today, we're going to take a look at the German *Sturmgeschütz* (assault gun), called the *StuG*, for short. The *StuG* was origi-

nally designed to be an armored infantry support vehicle, following advancing infantry essentially as a mobile pillbox – capable of taking on infantry and light armor very well. When the *Wehrmacht* ran up against the heavy KV and T-34 Soviet tanks, the *StuG*'s 37 mm gun proved to be ineffective. Normally, the *Wehrmacht*'s main battle tank, then the *Panzer Mk III*, would take on enemy armor, but when the new 75 mm Pak 40 gun was found to not fit in the turret of the *Panzer III*, it was installed in the *StuG*. The turretless design accommodated

the new heavier gun very well, and the *StuG* became an effective tank destroyer.

As the War turned against Germany, and as tank losses mounted, the *StuG* more and more filled the role of a main battle tank. The *StuG*, with its low profile, was excellent in defense, but was a poor offensive weapon. It had poor maneuverability and was exposed on its sides and rear because the lack of a turret. Still, the *StuG* was an effective armored fighting vehicle that was used heavily through the entirety of WWII.



StuG III on the Eastern Front (Bundesarchiv)

"If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat."



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El Dorado, KS 67042

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Advertise with us!

If you own a business or work with a non-profit that supports or offers services to military veterans, or you sell patriotic merchandise, you can advertise with us. There is space available on our quarterly newsletter and also our website. Get in touch with us at contactus@wwiihistorycenter.org for rates and more information.

About the World War II History Center

The World War II History Center is a museum and research library dedicated to World War II. The Museum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization operated entirely by volunteers. Contributions, monetary and in-kind, are always welcome and are tax-deductible within the limits prescribed by the law.

FROM THE LIBRARY

By David Cupp

Thanks to generous donations from individuals and organizations we have a very good selection of books about World War II in our library. While some of our titles are the standard ones that you would find in most collections of World War II books, we have others that I don't think you would find in very many other libraries or bookstores. Currently we group the books together by subject matter such as Unit Histories, Combat diaries, Memoirs, Battles, etc. If we have more than one copy of a book, the duplicate goes into our lending library section. These books are available to be checked out by our members. So if you want to do some heavy research or light reading about World War II come spend some time in our library. If you would prefer to take some books home to read during these cold winter days and nights, come browse our lending library for titles that appeal to your interests. Be forewarned you might be overwhelmed by the variety and number of our books!