



REED AT WAR

HOW THE GREATEST GENERATION CHANGED THE COLLEGE AND THE COUNTRY

BY WILL SWARTS '92

**THE WALKING WOUNDED
WAR COMES TO REED:
THE ARMY PRE-
METEOROLOGY
PROGRAM**

CONTINUE >>



More than 250 cadets cycled through Reed in the U.S. Army Air Corps Pre- Meteorology program (AMP) from 1942 to 1944.



REED AT WAR

That Sunday was supposed to be a day of triumph, an epic Reed College prank that would stave off, for a bit, the demands of studying and the looming specter of the world's ample troubles. Just a few hours of innocent collegiate hijinks.

Sophomore Jerry Kelley '44 and several buddies in Eastport had spent weeks rounding up the Doyle Owl, the Eastport Owl, the Quincy Rooster, and another beast of uncertain provenance, possibly from Winch, going as far as sneaking into the home of a day-dodger in Portland and distracting his family while fellow conspirators spirited the purloined fowl out of the basement.

"We had an open house to show them off to the rest of the campus," Kelley recalled in an interview conducted for Reed's Oral History Project. During the ensuing battle—and it was a spirited one, with students rappelling down from the roof to reclaim their trophies—Reed's tiny fight suddenly took backstage to another, more epic conflict.

"Someone came in with the news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed."

The United States' entry into World War II was for Reed College, as it was for the rest of the country, a pivot point in history. It has become an event frozen in memory, fixed in black-and-white newspaper images of oily pillars of smoke rising from shattered ships. It has been played and replayed ever since, with its predictable presidential soundtrack, in a seemingly endless parade of *World at War* episodes and PBS documentaries.

"I do remember it quite vividly," said Charlene Welsh Miller '42 in her oral history interview. "When war was declared—how we were all ushered into the chapel. The president gave his speech about the day of infamy and all that. We really didn't know how to react. It was clearly—it involved our lives quite materially."

That pause in Miller's recollections is a telling one. Her conclusion, emerging amid a wave of 66-year-old memories, illustrates the difficulty of turning lived experiences into living history. Even though there is now broad consensus on the positive narrative of America's role in the Second World War, that process of remembering is still tricky. Many members of the "Greatest Generation," the ones who fought "The Good War," avoid referring to themselves that way. Having read dozens of transcripts from the Reed Oral History Project, and conducted interviews with alumni who were at Reed or at war in the mid-1940s, I have found that, while the individual recollections of these subjects are startlingly detailed, they strongly resist any generalizations about the period's wider implications. I found no shortage of strong opinions about war and violence, politics and policies, Vietnam and Iraq. But these tended not to be couched in reference to World War II and its aftermath.

WAITING FOR WAR

HARRY TURTLEDOVE '42

I remember that when I was in high school, a group of Reed students, seemingly much older than I was—maybe three or four years older—had picketed a German ship on the Portland docks in protest against the Nazis. They were arrested, of course; in those days you didn't do that sort of thing. I was very impressed with their political activity and the like, so I came to Reed. . . .

It was a terribly depressing time, the spring of '40. Because here it was, an exceptionally lovely spring, and yet you knew what was going on elsewhere. The world situation was very, very critical. I remember one of the visitors we had sit in on a political science class was Denis Brogan [professor of American government at the London School of Economics]. . . . I remember he outlined what to us seemed a shocking but preposterous scenario . . . the long-term German-Italian, but primarily German, plan—and Japanese, of course—for world domination. It even included, I remember, South America, which had never occurred to me. That afternoon sticks in my memory: it added to the depression of that time. You suddenly said, "My God. The end of the world as we know it is a very strong possibility." And it was.

Quotes edited and excerpted from Reed's Oral History Project. Research by Lisa Silverman

For those who have lived this history, however, the experience of the war that birthed the American Century *has* provided sage perspective. World War II veteran Fred Rosenbaum '50, who went on to serve with distinction as a brigadier general in the Oregon Air National Guard, summed it up in his oral history interview. "There was no—in very specific terms, there was no anti-war during World War II," he said. "I don't think—you know, this war going on in Iraq now and everything, just about everybody's against that. I am anti-war, but I am for protecting our Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the liberties of this country and its borders. That I would defend. But the stuff that is going on with Iraq and all that sort of thing — I don't think this is in my vocabulary."

Louise Steinman '73, a Los Angeles-based writer who interviewed numerous World War II veterans for her book, *The Souvenir: A Daughter Discovers Her Father's War*, said she finds the memories of the Greatest Generation to be intense and deeply personalized. Five decades of silence are now dissolving away among many veterans and survivors, she said. "I was shocked that for so many of them, it was the biggest experience of their lives, and that it was so completely present for them."

All photos courtesy of Special Collections, Eric V. Hauser Memorial Library

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) > [REED AT WAR](#)

< [BACK](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [NEXT](#) >

REED MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2007



REED AT WAR

The wartime era—from the tense period of overseas suffering before America joined the fight, through the four grim years of “our” war that ended with victory over Germany and Japan, to the sudden and dramatic changes to domestic economy and interpersonal relations that came with peace—was a time of momentous change for Reed and Reedites. The “date which will live in infamy” abruptly settled the campus version of a national debate on the merits of American involvement in what had been, until then, a strictly foreign war. Less than a decade later, tremendous feats of destruction, sacrifice, cruelty, and heroism had wrenched a largely local student population still worn out from the Depression into the swirl of global upheaval. The war sent Reed men (and some women) to the ends of the embattled earth, and left some of them behind in simple soldiers’ graves; the war brought hundreds of young recruits to campus in uniform, and eventually sent waves of veterans to college; and the war opened hitherto-unimagined avenues of professional training and income-earning for women, then sent many of them unceremoniously back into the home to care for their husbands.



Reedites were soldiers, sailors, and bombardiers. They were anxious wives, sisters, and girlfriends of servicemen. They were shipyard workers, secret agents, bureaucrats, women pilots, and relief workers. They were Japanese-American internees, corralled with their families to harsh camps in the inland West. They made maps, charted weather, drove ambulances, guarded POWs, and helped build the atom bomb. They were reluctant draftees and eager volunteers. They were Jews who had fled the Nazis and then went back to fight them, and they were pioneers of American skiing who fought harsh mountain campaigns. They were just like the rest of America, but they passed through Reed during a pivotal time.

The war forced the college to govern itself on an emergency footing and to scramble for financial survival, emerging as a more energized, nationally minded institution of liberal arts higher education. As peace settled back upon the United States, Reed continued to undergo profound transformations, with intellectual tumult, tectonic demographic shifts, intense politics, and an evolving ethos of self-reliant academic focus. What emerged was a singular and single-minded emanation of postwar America.

WAITING FOR WAR

WALLACE T. MACCAFFREY '42

I have a very vivid memory of coming up to the college one morning—I’d come from home. As I walked up toward the student union, there was a large poster hanging on the front of the union—“It May Be God’s Duty. It Is Not Ours.” And this was a reference to entering the war. In other words, most sentiment among the students was strictly anti-war. Keep out. Not our business. That was a strongly prevailing point of view about the war. I remember talking with someone at the time France fell, and he said how much he regretted it. It was a sad story, but, he said, it’s their business, not ours.



Upper left: A wartime ad in the Griffin. Above: Muriel Reichart '46, Betty Havelly '45, and Jay Maling '47 collect books to send to the troops overseas.

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) > [REED AT WAR](#)

< [BACK](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [NEXT](#) >

REED MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2007



REED AT WAR



Professor Rex
Arragon



Professor Charles
McKinley



Professor G.
Bernard Noble

A DEBATE RESOLVED BY DIVE-BOMBERS

As late as the fall of 1941, isolationism was by no means an unfamiliar sentiment on the Reed campus. And the debate was framed in unusually personal terms. A rift between influential faculty members pitted isolationist political science professor Charles McKinley in frequent disputes with pro-interventionists, including political scientist G. Bernard Noble and economics lecturer Frank Munk, who had fled Czechoslovakia with his family in 1939. (Munk was the brother-in-law of Arthur Scott, the noted chemistry professor who served as Reed's president during the latter years of the war; Scott had used his academic connections to help his sister- and brother-in-law get out of Nazi-controlled Europe.)

Whatever their politics, Reed professors labored to keep students abreast of world affairs through classes such as Contemporary Society, and through the International Club, which met at Noble's home and sparked passionate discussions. Students followed the battle lines in the Spanish Civil War on a map in Eliot Hall.

On September 1, 1939, when troops of the Third Reich invaded Poland, the Führer's speech was translated for students who had gathered in the chapel to hear Professor G.R.H. Frederick Peters mock Hitler's "low German," recalled Betty Brockman Martin '41. "They were always translated by our German professors, and the German professors were absolutely disgusted with Hitler's German," she said in her oral history account. "We would ask 'What did he say?' And the professor would say, 'He makes the same speech every time.'"

Art Livermore '40 sat in the chapel and thought hard. "It certainly was a moving experience to hear. Here was a war starting in Europe. I think that everybody, especially the men, was wondering about what this would mean to him. . . . I know that people were concerned that they were going to get drafted."

Economic issues were front and center. Ethel Fahlen Noble '40 saw the internationalist faculty members as more attuned to world events than were the students. "I think the faculty in general was very sympathetic to Britain and France and all of those countries in the cause. And they were quite provoked with the Reed students,

GOING TO WAR

GENNY HALL SMITH '43

A couple of students and I were standing under an archway at one of the dormitories . . . We were standing out there gabbing. Somebody either came down or yelled down and said, "Pearl Harbor has been attacked!" And we said, "Oh, come on!" We didn't believe it. It was so far-fetched from anything we ever imagined would happen. And then, of course, we learned it was true.

FRED R. "DICK" LEWIS '44

These things struck me: One, everybody wanted to call their parents in California or back East. Two, there was no joking. And three, a lot of the upperclassmen were crying, and I was too, after a while. But everybody was outside, because it was a nice clear evening.

HATTIE KAWAHARA COLTON '43

As far as Reed was concerned, there was no change in terms of personal relationships with friends or classmates, both men and women. I knew a lot of the male students; we ate lunch, we chatted and that kind of thing, as well.

And then when Pearl Harbor came, I was home. It was a Sunday. We had the radio on. We knew something was brewing and we were, of course, stunned. . . . And my parents were worried, because they were not citizens. They weren't eligible for citizenship until 1954. Then, of course, they

because the Reed students were not that interested. They felt this was rather an economic battle and that we shouldn't be involved."

"It was a very interesting time and there was a considerable amount of tension in the faculty, particularly in the political science and history departments, because it was two against one in a sense—[Rex] Arragon and [G. Bernard] Noble against Charlie McKinley," said Elizabeth Ann Brown '40. "Charlie McKinley asserted that these two—Arragon had two daughters, and Noble didn't have any children—he [McKinley] had two sons who might have to go to war."

Male Reed students had a heightened awareness of the encroaching war. The Selective Service Act of 1940 made it clear what was at stake, and many were vocal in their objections. "There was considerable discussion," recalled Tom Coad '42. "Carl M. Stevens [Class of '42, who later served in the war and returned to Reed to teach economics from 1954 to 1990] at one point promoted the slogan 'God save the king. It may be his duty, it's not ours.'"

December 7 brought the debate to a close.

were issuing all sorts of news items—that submarines were spotted on the Oregon Coast and any time we [could] expect landings by parachute . . . On Monday the 8th, I decided I wasn't going to go to school. So I didn't go . . . because I wasn't sure what it was going to be like out on the street.

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) > [REED AT WAR](#)

< [BACK](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [NEXT](#) >

REED MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2007



REED AT WAR

REEDITES AT WAR

The students sat together in the chapel on that Monday morning, the day after the Japanese attack, mostly quiet, perhaps looking at each other or glancing at the high ceiling, or lost in thought as they looked out the windows at the wintry December sky. The voice of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the only president many of them had known since childhood, rang out from the radio.

"Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."

Though the phrase is part of a larger historical record—it is perhaps the quintessential sound bite of America's march to become a superpower—on that day it was just one among many responses to a new and frightening future.

The ensuing convocation in the chapel stayed with Eleanor May '45, who recalled Professor Barry Cerf leading the gathering. She remembered the scene vividly in a 2001 interview: "I'd been home the day before, and so I already knew about it. But somehow it hadn't struck me until I was in this convocation with most of the student body. I remember bursting into tears and running into that little room. It seems funny, because nobody else was crying. I don't know why I had this thing about it, but anyway, I did."

After the news broke, Ann Stearns Whitehead '44 said, the atmosphere on campus shifted abruptly, and abstract disagreements evaporated almost overnight. "I hadn't paid that much attention to foreign policy and things that were happening. And I don't know that anybody else had a whole lot. It was tremendous discontinuity, because here we were, in the midst of this kind of silly play thing. And then suddenly we were at war. I remember everybody in the commons was singing patriotic songs and the whole atmosphere shifted and the draft suddenly became much more serious."

The day after the big Doyle Owl party and the Japanese attack on the Pacific fleet, Carroll Hendrickson '42 and his cousin, Ames Hendrickson '48, were among the many Reed men who figured they ought to act on their own before the army did it for them.

"My cousin Ames was in Eastport, and they had a big open house that night, December 7," Hendrickson recalled. "The day after Pearl Harbor, December 8, Sam McCall ['42] and I didn't know what the hell to do. We're calling around to the Chinese consul to see if we can drive trucks on the Burma Road. We went to the Royal Canadian Air Force office to see if we could join them. We went to the Merchant Marines. They all said 'no' because of what happened the day before at Pearl Harbor. 'We don't know what the situation will be, so you'll have to bide your time.'" That was the universal response in a country newly at war.



AT WAR

CHARLES JOHN ENGBERG '44 AMP

I did not fit in the normal army life because I did not smoke or drink, and therefore the bars were not for me. I never saw or heard of anyone playing cards. The schedule was so heavy and the consequence of failure was so severe that you were pleased to get all your homework done correctly and turned in on time. Being ruled by the Army Air Corps prevented us from having a normal college experience. Remember, all our time was controlled from the time we got up, through all our daily activities, to bedtime.

M. JEANNE HANSEN GORDNER '46

One of my really good friends had come from Germany. We were having dinner at his house one time. His mother was not Jewish, but her second husband was—a doctor. And at first they were sure that he was not in danger, because "nice" Jews were not going to be badly treated. But at the time of the [1936] Olympics she was down in this parade. She said far off you could hear the roar of drums starting and distant voices

Fred Rosenbaum's motivation for his early military career was both savage and understandable. Rosenbaum, now 81 and battling cancer, fled the Nazi conquest of Vienna in 1938, eventually landing with a small cohort of Jewish refugees in the rough-and-tumble logging town of Aberdeen, Washington. Though he wound up stationed in the Philippines, away from most of the fighting, he volunteered for the army, figuring to be a paratrooper and interpreter.

"I wanted to go to Europe," he said in his oral history. Listening to the interview, one hears a pause, and then Rosenbaum's voice softens. "God—I don't know how to tell you that. I wanted to kill as many Germans as I could get into rifle range. I couldn't wait to get going."



Male students juggled their studies and their draft notices after the U.S. entered the war.

shouting. And it very slowly built up, until they were closer and closer and closer. She said it was so exciting, and she was shouting, "Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!" And she looked down, and here's her little boy going, "Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!" And Hitler went by, and all of a sudden she realized, we have to get out. If I am carried away with this, we are not safe. . . that was really something that was solidified for me. The horror—that terrible horror that war was.

LUCILLE HARRIS PIERCE '43

The thing I remember particularly being incensed about—and a lot of talk about—was when they took all the Japanese people away in Portland [Executive Order 9066, leading to Japanese internment along the West Coast]. I had one friend [Midori Imai Oller '42] who was a student at Reed. And I kept in touch with her. She and her family were, of course, taken over to one of the internment camps [Tule Lake, California]. She had to interrupt her college, and I felt that was very wrong. Some of the kids on campus felt even—most of us didn't think it was right. But a few thought, well, this is wartime, you have to do that sort of thing.



REED AT WAR

Dorothy Davenhill Hirsch '52, who attended Reed after the war as one of a handful of female veterans, joined the Women's Army Corps (the WACs) while working for the Soil Conservation Service in Portland. She served as a lieutenant at Camp San Luis Obispo, never getting overseas. But the experience has remained vivid for her: "I joined the army first of all to know the experience, and because we were all thoroughly patriotic," she recalled. "Nobody was—there were people who did not wish to serve. But most everybody was, when I say enthusiastic, [they] felt obliged to enter into this war because it was a very important thing in our lives."

Through it all, academic life went on. Deferment programs such as the Army Specialized Training Program and its navy counterparts allowed more than half-a-million college students to accelerate their studies and enter officer training, coming out as so-called "90-day wonders," freshly minted junior officers whose status was sometimes viewed with derision by veteran enlisted men and noncommissioned officers.

These were popular options for many Reed students, and one offshoot—the Army Air Corps Pre-Meteorology program (AMP)—brought uniformed soldiers to campus for an intense stretch of scientific training, a move that helped provide financial support for the school during the lean war years (find online articles about the AMP program at www.reed.edu/reed_magazine/fall2007/).



Cartoon, 1943–44 AMP yearbook

Some Reed graduates went to war as quickly as they could. Many didn't come back. Glenn Ditto '41, who opposed U.S. involvement before Pearl Harbor, was one of the early casualties, as was Navy torpedo bomber pilot Ricky Scholz, whose father, Richard F. Scholz, was president of Reed from 1921 to 1924.

Hendrickson's recollection of "working like hell to finish my thesis" strikes a timeless chord among Reedies. But the fact that he left specific instructions to

the team of cleaning ladies not to disturb the papers strewn around the Winch dorm room he shared with Jack Dudman '42 (who later became a math professor and dean of students)—even though the two of them were about to depart for military training—offers a glimpse of college life during war.

"The men just vanished," recalled Sally Hovey Wriggins '44. A rough estimate has 40 percent of the male student body leaving the campus by late 1942 to early 1943. Departing faculty included Noble, who took leave to chair the regional War Labor Board in Seattle. He joined the State Department in 1946. Munk left in

AT WAR

FRED C. SHORTER '44

I was called up [for the draft] . . . and I remember long conversations with one of the faculty members at Reed, who was trying very hard to persuade me to accept. I said, "I'm just not going. I'm going to do something else with my life." And I had no institutional religious affiliation, like a Jehovah's Witness. I wasn't even a Quaker, though I became one later. So I couldn't beg out through religious belief. It was simply personal conviction. . . . I suppose, being a good Reed fellow, once I had convictions, there was no way to talk me out of them. So I remember the fateful day when I had to respond to the draft call, when I had to go down to the assembly building in Portland. . . . And I said that I wanted 4-F status or alternative service . . . and they said, "Nope. You're going." . . . A couple hours later, they called me in and told me, "You're not fit for service. You're physically unfit. You now have a 4-F" . . . I had some problems on my chest X-ray, which could have been the reason they did it. The other possible reason is that they didn't like to have large numbers of objectors. . . . So I was free as a bird at that point to do it the way I wanted. But I still wanted to get out of college on the early run, just like the other fellows . . . I wanted to go and work with the problems created by the war.

M. JEANNE HANSEN GORDNER '46

1941 to be director of training for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, returning to Reed after the war.

By May 1942, meanwhile, Reed's small number of Japanese American students were gone, many interned with their families under Executive Order 9066. Hattie Kawahara Colton '43, Midori Imai Oller '42, Ruth Nishino Penfold '43, and Gus Tanaka '45 were among the 110,000 ethnic Japanese dispatched to harsh, isolated camps in the inland West. While there were protests in the *Quest*, and visits from professors and friends at the Portland Assembly Center, a converted stockyard that served as a transit point before internal exile, none returned to Reed after their uprooting.



Students sew up sandbags on Canyon Day, 1942–43.

Keezer left for Washington, D.C., in 1942 to become deputy administrator of the Office of Price Administration. Chemistry professor Arthur Scott stepped in as acting president, and along with physics professor A.A. Knowlton, they brought the war to campus in a patriotic and pragmatic move, securing the college a role in the Army Air Corps Pre-Meteorology program. The AMP was an accelerated academic endeavor that brought uniformed troops to the campus, saw the Woodstock Safeway converted to a barracks, and kept the college running nearly around the clock. The program also provided a financial boost that allowed the college to keep functioning.

"The faculty was down to bare bones," M. Jeanne Hansen Gordner '46 said in an interview. But the need to move male students through allowed little respite.

"I had Japanese friends and I thought the whole business of taking the Japanese to camps was a terrible violation of everything we stood for," Wriggins said.

Another wartime departure was far more welcome: the unpopular President Dexter

Army students would march across campus, counting cadence and singing as they marched to classes:

There are fairies in the garden every night
And they sing and they dance in the fair and starry light
When they're sure no one's looking
Then they open every rose

And sprinkle with the dewdrops
How they do it, no one knows

You couldn't hear them singing the second [verse]. Then everyone would roar with laughter in the quad! So I have a pretty good idea what the second verse was about.

GENNY HALL SMITH '43

It was either my senior or junior year when the United States entered the war. A lot of men students left. A number of women students also left, either to—well, they did all kinds of things. There was some recruiting for women to become pilots [Women's Air Service Pilots—WASPs] . . . not combat planes, but to be ferry pilots, to pilot planes back and forth when they needed to. I remember a couple of the people I knew quit school to do that. I remember, at the time, I thought, what a crazy idea. What in the world are they doing that for? Later, I thought, how could I have been so stupid? What an opportunity! To learn to fly! Why was I so stupid?

SALLY WRIGGINS '44

My friend Pat Beck ['44] and I got jobs in the shipyards in Oakland, California. We persuaded our parents that if we took a leave from school, we could work in the shipyards and earn a lot of money. She knew Alexander Schneider. . . who was the second violinist of the Budapest String Quartet. We used to go visit him during the intermissions . . . in those days, people dressed to the nines at the

concerts, and they'd come up in their black, elegant clothes. And he would say, "These are my friends from the shipyards." And we'd bare our arms and show the orange paint. So it was a great summer. We had a whale of a time going to concerts. And we had a whale of a time working in the shipyards.

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) > [REED AT WAR](#)

< [BACK](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [NEXT](#) >

REED MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2007



REED AT WAR

CHANGES ON THE HOME FRONT AND BEYOND

The men weren't the only ones on the move. Wriggins and a friend left Reed for the Kaiser shipyards in Oakland, California, for a summer, getting solid wages for putting finishing touches on liberty ships; Dorothy Schumann Stearns '45 did the same in Vancouver, Washington.

The ensuing changes in gender roles had a profound effect for some, including Lu Ann Williams Darling '42. During her junior and senior years she worked part-time as a student intern at the Portland Civil Service Board. By spring 1942, the three male technicians in the office had been drafted and her responsibilities had increased.

Earlier, she had met her future husband, Dick Darling, there. "Like many wartime things, it was not a normal courtship," she said. "We had a few dates, then he had to report. We came to an understanding before he left—in a car near a garbage dump in Southwest Portland. I got engaged by mail, the ring came in an envelope."

They were married in June 1943 in Eliot chapel. Although his service did not involve combat, he contracted a disease in the Philippines that left him with a damaged kidney and extensive cardiovascular problems. Thereafter, he was unable to work for long stretches. He died in 1985.

"He was a war casualty, but not from combat," Darling said. She became a human resources professional to support the family. "I had grown up expecting to be a good wife and support my mate," she said. "Leaving Reed, my goal was to do something better than clerical work. In my senior year, the only job I was offered was statistical clerk at the gas company. So, had it not been for the war and the draft, no lucky break. It was not good for my husband, but it was good for me."

Charlene Welsh Miller '42 married her college sweetheart, Frank Miller '43, and saw him shipped off to the South Pacific as an army medic. Charlene worked at the Willamette shipyards in the medical office, an experience that opened the native Portlander's eyes to the disproportionate share of injuries incurred by recently arrived African American factory workers.

She also experienced the war vicariously through the ruminations of her husband, who died in 2006. The memories remain fresh from his letters home, which she has saved for seven decades. "He was very philosophical," she said. "When he wrote those letters, some were musing on life in general, and some were about life after he came home."

Frank, a dedicated Roman Catholic, wrote these words to his wife on July 8, 1944: "We just heard of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews being shipped to Poland and killed. I have no words for it. It's too hideous to think about it, but we have to think

REED STUDENTS AND GRADUATES KILLED IN WORLD WAR II

Wayne W. Campbell
 Robert W. Carlson
 Phillip H. Carroll Jr.
 Harry F. Chan, AMP
 Warner Clark Jr.
 William L. Dickenson
 Glenn W. Ditto
 Earl M. Erickson
 Jesse H. Flowers Jr., AMP
 Walter A. Ford
 William W. Fordyce
 Richard W. Gill
 Maurice Gourley
 John L. Gullette
 Robert W. Hanna
 Clyde M. Harlow
 Willard P. Hawley, AMP
 George R. Hogshire
 Edwin O. Johnson
 Ralph Keeney
 Robert E. Lucas
 Macgregor Martin
 Vance I. McCormick
 Walter E. McKay
 Bruce A. McKean
 Ned R. McKrill
 John R. Meldrum
 Jack A. Mundell
 George P. Noble
 Gerald E. Phillips
 William C. Powell Jr., AMP
 John T. Quillin
 Ian S. Raeburn
 Richard F. Scholz
 John B. Steven
 Henry E. Shields, AMP
 C. Ulrich Vail
 Harold R. Weinstein

Note: Class years have not been included, since many of those who died in World War II did not graduate and cannot be assigned presumptive graduation years.

These names appear on a memorial plaque in Eliot Hall designed by architect Pietro Belluschi.

about it." He went on to say that "America still isn't free of this disease" of anti-Semitism that impelled "the Nazi madmen" to commit genocide. "Little people stay at home, fix their drinks, bid two hearts, and tell the one about the Jewish businessman."

"That was the time when it dawned on me that we were part of the world and not just part of Portland," Charlene said. "It was a [great change] as far as an awareness of the world and the universe and how it works and why it works."

Another Reedite who dedicated his later years to writing memoirs is Harris Dusenbery '36. Now 93, the Vancouver resident was a 29-year-old father when he enlisted with the 10th Mountain Division, an elite unit that saw savage fighting in Italy's Northern Apennines.

"The fighting, for short periods, was extremely intense, and then you had long periods with nothing to do," he wrote. "When you're actually in combat, it so concentrates your attention, though you're not only concerned about yourself. The rifle squad is a very cohesive unit—they're people you've been living with and are most intimately involved with, and now you're involved in this fight with them."

Memoirist Louise Steinman believes that even now, a lifetime later, war-fighting so divides those who have lived through it from the realm of normal human experience, that Dusenbery's droll recollection that combat "concentrates your attention" may be as close as one can ever get to describing it. "For many veterans who saw combat, it forever separates them from people who haven't," she said. "Nothing is going to change the primacy of that experience, and that sacrifice, and the kind of bonding they went through."



REED AT WAR

THE G.I. BILL AND THE REVITALIZATION OF REED

In a letter dated August 8, 1945—just a week before Japan formally surrendered, and the day before the United States dropped a second atomic bomb, this one on Nagasaki—Frank Miller wrote that talk of Japan’s capitulation “is slowly culminating in the end of a long tedious war.

“It’s funny to think about the salient features of this war and come to the conclusion of tedious,” he continued, “because it’s so many other things—brutal, terrifying, destructive. Tedious sounds so commonplace, so uninspiring and uneventful. But even for a combat soldier, danger and terror get monotonous after a while. For a guy on a bulldozer, whether he’s piling up shattered stained glass and rubble in a cathedral town or Jap corpses in a rice paddy outside some stinking little tropical village, they all want to get away from the meaningless routine and exchange the simplicities of fear and pain and death and fatigue for a normal, useful, creative existence, where you do something that makes sense and the simple things are love and work and worrying about money, and going home nights. Well, it won’t be long now before a lot of tired G.I.s will get a lift from seeing kids who are not hostile or frightened or starving, just playing in the street making noise.”



An AMP cadet hits the books.

Plenty of those G.I.s made their way to Reed, thanks to the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, more commonly known as the G.I. Bill. Just over half of the 16 million men and women in uniform used tuition benefits to get college educations, something that had once been out of reach for most of the population.

The first three years of peace brought relief, a resumption of normal routines, and an influx of returning veterans who resumed or embarked on their college studies with a fervor that invigorated Reed in a manner students of the period recall fondly.

Moshe Lenske ‘50 had soldiered his way across Europe and helped to seize the last intact bridge over the Rhine, at Remagen, allowing American troops to surge into the heart of Germany. He had also gotten himself smuggled into Buchenwald soon after the liberation.

“I would say—and I’m just generalizing—the G.I.s had seen what life and living up close had been,” Lenske recalled. “They saw destruction and terrible mangling of human bodies. They had things on their mind, of making things better and understanding.” The G.I. Bill, he continued, “increased social mobility in the country big-time, and it gave the U.S. brain power in greater amounts than would have otherwise been possible.”



The caption in the AMP yearbook reads: “PM relaxes with campus girls clad in Reed attire.”

AT WAR'S END

PATRICIA CROCKETT MCCOY '47

[When the war ended] I was not particularly into that, because I had lost my brother, Richard Niles Crockett, in the war. He was with the U.S. Marines; he died on Iwo Jima. And I was wrapped up in that. That, of course, was a terrible thing. So that really occupied my thoughts. I don’t recall any particular reaction at Reed, as far as the ending of the war.

DOROTHY SCHUMANN STEARNS '45

I did not enjoy writing the thesis but, of course, I got it done in record time. It was not long. . . . It was done on exactly the day it was due. On that day [the death of Hitler was announced]. And I was coming to Reed from the bus stop and Madame C. L. M. Pouteau [French professor, 1934–49] was walking across the campus. She was quite a ways away from me and she was

Arthur Leigh arrived as a first-year economics professor in 1945, and by 1946, the first wave of returning soldier students had boosted the student body by about 50 percent. Tuition was now \$500 a term, double the prewar rate. Intellectual activity, he recalled, was running at a vigorous pitch.

"I really enjoyed working with the returned G.I.s," he said. "They were very eager, conscientious guys. They were guys my age and even older, and they became lifelong friends."

Many Reed veterans took to heart the values they'd fought to defend. Ernie Bonyhadi '48, who had gone off to war with high school buddy and fellow Reedite Bill Gittelsohn '48, organized the campus chapter of the American Veterans Committee, a liberal alternative to more conservative organizations such as the American Legion. The Reed group used the slogan "Citizens First, Veterans Second" as it took progressive stands on political issues.

swinging a paper and I was the only person in sight, and she yells at me, "Hitler is dead. The war is over!" It was just an unforgettable memory.

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) > [REED AT WAR](#)

< [BACK](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [NEXT](#) >

REED MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2007



REED AT WAR

Gale Dick '50, who was drafted into the navy in 1944 after graduating from Portland's Roosevelt High School, came home after fixing communications equipment on Guam, and had one of those rare realizations that remains with a person his entire life.

"Once I had gotten to Reed, I immediately realized, almost in one of those blinding flashes of epiphany or something, this is where I personally belonged," he said in his oral history interview. "I remember when we first came to campus, we all met in the chapel—the incoming students. President [Peter H.] Odegard [1945–1948] gave us a pep talk. And I can remember one line from it, which I thought was wonderful, because we wanted to hear this. He said, 'At Reed—although God knows it's not true—we're going to treat you like adults.'"

Lenske recalled the mix of backgrounds feeding off itself in a way that made serious study fun and could also make fun a bit serious. "More people went to college, and they were serious about going to college," he said. "It wasn't just a playboy thing. They were curious. They became good students. And those attitudes transferred or were witnessed by the younger students."

The influx of veterans-turned-students also brought a few less savory aspects of military life to campus. Old Dorm Block became home to an ongoing poker game populated largely by returning vets, many of them budding chemistry students.

"You'd have a class, so you'd get up and have somebody hold your place, and then you'd go off to class, then come back and get your place back at the table," recalled James Robertson '51.



Campus Day during the war: Bill Fordyce (killed in action), Margaret Sprinkle Newton '44, Karen Vedvei Atiyeh '47, Mary Jarvie Gourley '46, and sailor friends.

was] the outcome of the quota system for Jews and for women that still existed in Eastern colleges. And once that quota was passed, forget it. No matter how good you were. This was also true in some California schools. So I understood why a number of the students at Reed were from those backgrounds. How else would we get people coming all the way to Oregon from New York?"

George Joseph '51 was too young to fight and transferred to Reed in 1949 after a checkered path that included stops at six schools. His first impressions of the college of that era would

Several postwar students recalled efforts by President Odegard and his successor, Ernest B. MacNaughton (1945-52), to curb the cardsharpping, if only because veterans' benefits might not stretch far enough to cover the consequences of a busted flush.

Reed also never adopted the de facto quota system that kept the number of Jewish students small at many other elite colleges. This added to Reed's appeal among a nationwide pool of prospective students.

The practical effects weren't lost on Robert Fernea '54, who later rose to prominence in the field of Middle Eastern studies. "We had a lot of Jewish students, [which

resonate with many who have followed his path. "Talk was what you did at Reed," he recalled. "You talked at lunch, you talked at breakfast, you talked at dinner, you talked in the evening. You had a lot of reading to do. But you talked very little about trivia or what we would have thought of as trivia. We talked about important things; we had important fish to fry.

"When I first came to Reed," Joseph continued, "I recognized it was what I'd been looking for. I had enrolled in or attended five or six different colleges by the time I came to Reed. I was looking for something, and I knew I'd found it," he said, recalling his first conversation with Dorothy Johansen '33, a longtime history professor and chronicler of Reed's early history. "You can't sum up love. You just know it. Things happen and you know they've happened and that was one of them. I found Reed and stopped looking. I've been to other schools. I've taught at other schools. I've gone to other schools. Before and since. There's just no place like Reed College."

Of the hundreds of Reed students who went to war or trained for war in the pre-meteorology program, 38 didn't come back. Their names are listed in the entrance to Eliot Hall, where they still get noticed, Betty Brockman Martin recalled in a 2002 oral history interview.

"You know, the one time I was back at Reed," she said, "I saw the plaque—isn't it just in the entrance to Eliot Hall? 'The World War II fallen.' And I looked at it and I thought, I knew all of those young men and they were the cream of the crop. And it was really hard and sad to see that."



REED AT WAR

THE WALKING WOUNDED

Returning servicemen attending Reed on the G.I. Bill resembled their fellow veterans in many respects, in that they rarely spoke of their experiences and wanted, like the rest of the country, to get on with their lives and realize the promise of a peacetime society. But some Reedite veterans bore deep scars from the war, both physical and emotional, and in an environment where keeping pace with the academic regimen was difficult for even the best-adjusted young mind, it could be especially tough for returning soldiers.

On one occasion, though, the response of the Reed community to war's trauma made national headlines. "Shelley by Moonlight," as the episode was called, was a quirky, compassionate show of support for a young man damaged by war.

In 1947, Reed student Thomas Kelly '48, a tennis ace and veteran of the bitter sideshow fight with Japanese forces in Alaska's Aleutian Islands in 1943, haunted the campus as one of those psychiatric casualties. In his peripatetic wanderings he was rarely without a book in hand, and one night he was rousted by Portland police.

George Joseph '51 recalled the scene in an oral history interview: "This young man, under stress, would get extremely nervous, almost to the point of fainting. Well, he was standing there, under the lamp, reading. The police car stopped, and a policeman yelled to him to come to the car. He just went into spaz. The police threw him into the back of the car and took him down to the police station. Put him in jail. God. For reading Shelley by moonlight—street lamp, actually."

It hardly seemed fair, recalled June Anderson '49. "The police stopped him because they thought he was drunk. So they took him into the city and put him in the drunk tank overnight. And he hadn't had anything to drink. So a bunch of students, in a night or two, decided to stage a protest, and a lot of people went out and started reading Shelley by moonlight as a group."

Mort Rosenblum '49 snapped a photo, and the story made the pages of *Time* magazine.

But offbeat solidarity didn't disguise the very real toll of war on some Reed students. Alice Moss '52 recalled an active dating life at Reed, sometimes with older students. "They didn't talk about their war experiences, really," she said. "I guess I just considered it normal."

Fred Rosenbaum '50 recalled several severely wounded veterans, and others for whom the brisk pace of school was sometimes too much. "A lot of faculty members did not have that time," he said. "But we all had to cope with it. Some [students] had bad experiences. Some had horrible experiences. Some of them were just happy to be back at school and let it go."

Rosenbaum, who did not see combat, recalled that political science professor Frank Munk, a pre-war refugee from Czechoslovakia, was among the most compassionate. Munk "had an appreciation for the men and women who came back from the war," said Rosenbaum. "Munk would have all the time in the world to listen to what the problem was."

Most of Rosenbaum's fellow vets made it through Reed in spite of their traumas and demons, he said. "They had a difficult time, but they crossed the bridge and they went on with it: get the hell out of here and get on to work, or med school, or law school, or whatever they wanted to do."



By Will Swarts '92

Reed's closest link to the Second World War involved hundreds of men with their heads in the clouds. In mid-1942, the college secured a place in the U.S. Army Air Corps Pre-Meteorology program (AMP), bringing 268 college students-turned-soldiers to campus for a one-year academic stint even more rigorous than Reed's peacetime requirements. Marching, math, and military discipline became part of Reed's routine to a degree never seen before or since.

When physics department head A.A. Knowlton got Reed into one of the many military-academic hybrid programs that sprung up as the armed services prepared for a long campaign to beat the Japanese back across the Pacific and retake Europe, he secured vital financial support for the college and filled classrooms that had been emptied by an exodus of students and faculty. Reed, along with a dozen other schools including Haverford, Carleton, and the University of Oregon, would take students with some college experience and put them through a program condensing two years of math and physics coursework into one, then send graduates on for advanced meteorological training, AMP veteran Harry Bernat '44 wrote in his **history of the program** at Reed.

Knowlton described the genesis of the program in 1944 in *Reed College Notes*, explaining that meteorology "requires an extensive and intensive knowledge for the very difficult basic subjects of hydrodynamics and thermodynamics. For the mastery of these subjects a mastery of mathematics approximately as extensive as that acquired in the years of college work is required."

Just as the Army Air Corps was able to mobilize civilian aircraft production on a grand scale, it was also able to bring diverse corners of the academy into lockstep with its planning needs for a war of indeterminate duration. After the AMP graduated its last of nine "flights" of soldier-students in February 1944, they were scattered far and wide, from Manipur, India, to Harvard University. But the program also achieved another, less explicit goal, said Lyle Jones '44, a Reed

student who entered the AMP after completing his first semester as a regular Reed student in 1942.

"It was one of dozens of programs the Army had that was really to protect kids from going right off to war," he said, adding, "it's really only in the last decade that I've learned this interesting aspect of history." It's Jones' belief that Harry Hopkins, President Franklin Roosevelt's chief policy adviser, wanted to prepare for both a long war and a triumphant peace, and so tried to protect college-age males from being immediately sent into war in combat by establishing a network of programs at U.S. colleges.



"Keep them in uniform, but in a holding pattern," is how Jones described it. "They made us privates, and they kept us studying, but it was partially designed not to replicate the problems that European countries were having—losing whole generations or large portions of generations of promising kids."

Jones was steered to the program by Victor Rosenbaum, a Reed math professor who, along with Knowlton and other faculty members, told some Reed students about the new opportunity to enlist in a field of their choice, rather than simply getting swept along by the mass mobilization that put 16 million men and women in uniform by 1945. "It was a little like a draft deferment, except that in this case we were all [enlisted military personnel]," Jones said in his Reed Oral History interview. "But we were certainly fortunate to be in educational settings rather than on the front line."

Jones freely admits military discipline wasn't for him, and that as a prior Reed student, he made the most of his social connections on a campus whose male student population was nearly gone. He'd had to defer entry to Reed for a year to work, and he'd savored his first semester with gusto, hanging out with roommate Robert Chambers, a boogie-woogie pianist whose chops far outpaced his academic performance. After basic training at Fort Lewis, near Tacoma, he returned to Reed in uniform.

That meant Army hours—early morning wake-ups and bed checks in the Safeway market on Woodstock Boulevard that had been hurriedly converted into a barracks—as well as morning marching drills on the front lawn. Operating on a separate schedule, the AMP troops did sports in the morning and classes until late in the day. The long runs suited Charles J. Engberg '44 just fine. "I didn't realize how hard it was—I just did the work and thought nothing of it," he said.

The nine AMP flights that passed through Reed during the war were commanded by Lt. E.G. Frohberg, whose portrait in the program's yearbook shows a fortyish, balding man who wouldn't look out of place behind a desk in a law firm or a bank. The military administrators had considerable power over the AMP cadets. Bernat, who worked tirelessly to track down the surviving members of the group in the 1980s, wrote that 67 soldier-students flunked out of the program or were removed for disciplinary reasons—a burn rate of one in five.

Female Reed students from 1943-44 recall the AMP trainees, for whom they hosted a couple of dances. But they say for the most part, the military group stayed separate.

"They were present, and I often had to 'shush' them in the library, but I didn't make any friends with them," said Dorothy Schumann Stearns '45 in an oral history interview. "I was still working in the library and on Sunday afternoons they would make tremendous noise and I was trying to get them to shut up and it didn't go over very well." For Sally Hovey Wriggins '44, the AMPs just didn't fit in very well. "Reed had a lot of different kinds of people," she said in an oral history interview. "Pre-meteorologists tended to be a little more square, as opposed to Reed at that time."

Engberg's recollections jibe with that. As one of eight children in a family from Racine, Wisconsin, that had been devastated by the Great Depression, he struggled to move from a job as an elevator operator to a trainee electrician and finally get a year of college at the Illinois Institute of Technology under his belt as the draft loomed. He said he had no idea where Reed was, but that the setting and the social aspects of college life didn't make much of a difference to him.



Still, Engberg enjoyed the academic rigors, and said he'd have come back to finish a Reed degree if he hadn't suffered severe injuries in a jeep accident in Manipur, India, as he helped wind down the massive aerial supply operation over "The Hump" that kept Nationalist Chinese troops in guns, bullets, and uniforms.

But the diligence of Engberg and the other trainees wound up having little bearing on their wartime experience. The AMP was eventually ended when war planners realized they were training far more meteorologists than they needed. About 100 of the Reed participants went for advanced communications training at Yale and other locales. About 30 stuck with weather duty and did additional training at Harvard. Another cohort went to the Army Specialized Training Program, which turned college-educated men into junior officers. When that program was discontinued, those Reed PMs headed for the infantry. Five died in the Second World War.



[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) > [REED AT WAR](#)

< [BACK](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [NEXT](#) >

REED MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2007