

WWII Exhibit Overview

This exhibit is housed in 5 rooms on the lower level of the historic Jackson-Weller-Hanner house. Its aim is to tell the stories of area men and women who served during WWII. The displays are set up so people can browse and understand the contribution of each person, even if folks only have a minimal knowledge of WWII. Each room focuses on a different aspect of the war.

- ★ The European room displays artifacts highlighting America's role in the fight to take back most of the continent of Europe from the Nazi forces.
- ★ The Pacific room shows items from navy men and marines who fought the Japanese throughout islands in the tropics.
- ★ The kitchen focuses on the Home Front. Here one gets a feel for the impact of rationing and the different ways civilians at home supported the war effort.
- ★ The Air Corps room spotlights those who trained and flew missions in support of the ground troops. Part of the room allows visitors to investigate different uniforms and gear of the flyers. Another section shows how the barracks may have looked.

Interesting stories & objects you will want to find

- ★ The bullet that brought down Lieutenant John Barden's plane - and the rest of his story!
- ★ The *Stars and Stripes* article & photos of freed concentration camp
- ★ Photos of an experimental tank outfit attached to Patton's 3rd Army and featured on the cover of a *Newsweek* issue during the war
- ★ A massive Nazi flag
- ★ Uniforms of women served as WACs
- ★ A Japanese flag and sword
- ★ Japanese hand grenade and the story about what Earl Wickham did with it after he took it off the Japanese soldier who had just tried to kill him
- ★ K-ration dinner: with tin of cheese, package of graham crackers, caramel, sugar, cigarettes, matches, and gum
- ★ Photos of the devastation in Japan after their surrender
- ★ One of the veterans we hope to have on site many times throughout the time this exhibit is open.



Check out our website:
www.gchgs.org/museum

Open Wednesdays 1-4 P.M.

Special events:

- ★ Open Saturday June 23 - Ag Expo
- ★ July 4, open house & veterans 1-4
 - ★ Gratiot Air Show
- Aug. 24-26 special hours
- ★ Other dates by appointment



Gratiot County Historical Museum
129 W. Center Street
Ithaca, MI 48847
(Across the street from the fire hall.)
email: gchmus@gmail.com

Europe room



Featured stories and items include:

- ★ John Barden, fighter pilot, German POW, marched in "death march"
- ★ Duane Rench, waist gunner on bomber, died aboard plane hit by flak which then collided with another plane and both went down simultaneously
- ★ Floyd Freed, gasoline supply, went ashore on D-Day and fought throughout Europe until the war ended
- ★ Lee Chaffin, drafted from college, drove ammunition trucks in Europe
- ★ Robert Greening, trace his unit across northern Europe on his map
- ★ Robert Tedhams, went ashore on D-Day, repaired tank engines across Europe, participated in Battle of the Bulge
- ★ Huge scrapbook from museum's collection

Pacific room

Featured stories and items include:

- ★ Flegel family, with 4 brothers in the Navy and Marines in WWII, items including Japanese flag & sword
- ★ Bayonets and helmets
- ★ Photos of soldiers and occupation of Pacific Islands
- ★ Letter mailed from same island on same day Enola Gay took off to drop the first atomic bomb
- ★ Japanese hand grenade, model P-38 made from Jap bullets by Earl Wickham
- ★ Knife "Red" Ingalls made from plane parts aboard his aircraft carrier hit by 2 Japanese kamikaze planes
- ★ K-rations, mess kit, photos of Japan after the atom bomb from Jack Ginther
- ★ Ithaca High School yearbooks from WWII years
- ★ Bud Smith's navy blanket . . . ETC!



Air Corps room

- ★ Uniform variations
- ★ Flight/jumpsuit with parachute, sidearm holster, life vest
- ★ Headphone/radio headsets
- ★ Barracks setup complete with cot, footlocker, stools, card game, *Yank* magazine, authentic letters
- ★ Recruiting posters



Homefront (kitchen)

- ★ Photos of Arlene Gearhart's training and service as a nurse in the WAC's
- ★ Blue Star Mother's hat
- ★ WAC uniform and story of Georgiana Peet Miller, WAC served in Africa
- ★ Iron penny
- ★ V-for-victory tie
- ★ Ration books and stamps
- ★ Scrapbook commemorating Roosevelt's death
- ★ Victory garden out the back door

Sitting Room

- ★ Reflect on what you have seen
- ★ Look through other photos and typed memories of Gratiot servicemen
- ★ Service of Wayne Kelly, Drill Instructor