

Terrors and Triumphs

Real People who Triumphed over Adversity



Paul Kessler was born at the start of WWII. When he was five years old, he awoke to screaming. He and his mother ran into the forest to escape the Nazis and hid there for weeks. Their friends, the Hajdak family, bravely agreed to hide them in a dirt hole in the floor of their storage room. Paul and his mother passed the time counting together and telling stories for seven long months until they were liberated.

#czechoslovakia#hiddenchild#hope#texas



Veteran Ron Star lived through the Great Depression. He worked as a boy delivering newspapers, polishing shoes and helping at a grocery store to help support his family. His father left and Ron became the main supporter of his mother and family. During and after World War II, he served in the Pacific theater. After the Allied victory, his job in the Philippines was to help their citizens get their lives back together.

#hero #philippines #wwii #illinois



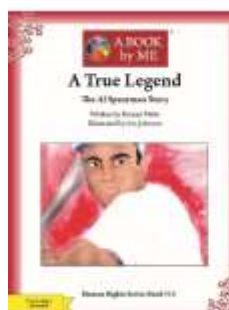
Henry Wood was a small-town boy who was called to serve in Europe during WWII. He experienced digging foxholes and being shot at by snipers during the war. He was wounded and was very proud to have received a Purple Heart. He was also proud that his sister served as a WAVE during the war. Two middle school students interviewed Henry and preserved his story for young readers.

#hero#wwii#patriotism#illinois



Jewish Holocaust survivor Bob Behr from Iowa. Their storytelling is shared as he and his mother were forced from their home in Berlin and taken to a concentration camp. They both survived the horrors of Theresienstadt but sadly, his mother was too weak and sick to immigrate to America with her son.

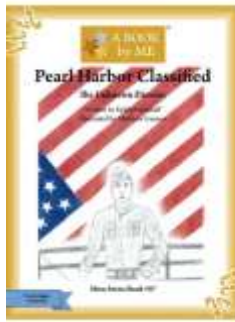
#germany#survivor#theresienstadt#maryland



Al Spearman was very young when his parents went their separate ways. He was raised by a single mother during the Great Depression. Racism and Jim Crow laws forced men of color to form a National Negro League, and Al was asked to join Chicago's team. Decades later, the Chicago White Sox honored his team by wearing replica uniforms during regular season baseball games.

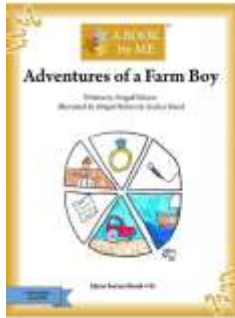
#courage#racism#resilience#illinois





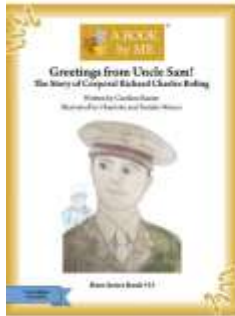
Dean Urick was in college when he heard on the radio that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. After joining the U.S. Navy, his first assignment was in Hawaii at Pearl Harbor. In May of 1944, Dick was working when an explosion knocked him off his feet and the other sailors into the water. Many men died and more were wounded when explosion after explosion rocked the harbor. Americans weren't told what happened since it was decided this had to be kept classified so the Japanese wouldn't learn how much firepower we had.

#honor#westloch#classified#illinois



Charlie Ogle is a farm boy from Illinois who had quite the adventure during WWII. When he first joined the U.S. Navy, he volunteered for the choir since he has a great singing voice. During his training the choir performed in different places raising money for war bonds. He shipped out to the Pacific to support fighting the Japanese. From aboard his ship, Charlie saw the historic signing of the peace treaty between the U.S. and Japan.

#wwii#peacetreaty#navy#illinois



Richard Roling made the best of things when he served all alone on a tropical island near New Guinea during WWII. He served as a weather observer for the United States Army Air Force. He was faithful to do this important job of plotting weather configurations on a map.

#hero#pacifictheater#weather#illinois



Ray was 17 years old when he joined the military and served his country in the Merchant Marines. He worked aboard a supply vessel that brought war equipment and essentials to Allies overseas. He went home and then he was drafted in the Army and sent to Japan as a member of the occupying forces. He saw the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombing sites.

#merchantmarines#patriotism#army#illinois



Some dogs have a special way of capturing our hearts. Jasper, who was found in a dog pound, is no exception. A young author and a young illustrator from the Middle East have told how Jasper became a remarkable service dog for a girl named Kellsey. Jasper learned how to warn her parents when Kellsey was about to have an epileptic seizure. In fact, this pound puppy saved her life! This is an underdog story you will never forget!

#servicedogs#epilepsy#lebanon#illinois

