

Florida Studies Weekly

State History



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World War II Brings People to Florida

On Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked U.S. ships in Pearl Harbor. The Japanese were upset that the United States was making it hard for them to buy oil. They hoped to destroy so many ships that our Navy would not be able to help fight in the war.

During World War II, Florida became an important training center, a place to ship out soldiers and supplies. Jungle fighters trained in Florida's subtropical regions before shipping out to the South Pacific. Bomber pilots trained at what is now Eglin Air Force Base near Fort Walton Beach. Those same pilots, led by Gen. James Doolittle, led the first air raid on Tokyo. In addition to 250,000 Floridians, many thousands of servicemen and women from all over the country made Florida their temporary home during the war. They liked it so well that many of them moved here with their families to live when the war was over.

What was the result? Well, read the rest of this issue to find out.

General
James
Doolittle

Connections

Recovering the Devastator



Dinosaurs are extinct, woolly mammoths are extinct and Devastators are extinct.

Or we thought they were—the Devastators, that is (still no sign of living dinosaurs). A Devastator was a World War II torpedo bomber, a plane that flew just above the ocean's

surface and dropped torpedoes that would destroy Japanese ships. No one has seen a Devastator since WWII when they were all destroyed in the Battle of Midway.

One day, not long ago, 91-year-old Bill Howland admitted that just before the U.S. joined WWII, he crashed his

Devastator in a training flight just off the coast of California, and no one ever pulled it out. A diver checked, and sure enough—it's still there.

The National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida, is hoping to raise money needed to raise

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Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: SS.4.A.1.1: Analyze primary and secondary resources to identify significant individuals and events throughout Florida history. SS.4.A.1.2: Synthesize information related to Florida history through print and electronic media. SS.4.A.6.1: Describe the economic development of Florida's major industries. SS.4.A.6.3: Describe the contributions of significant individuals to Florida. SS.4.A.7.3: Identify Florida's role in World War II. SS.4.A.9.1: Utilize timelines to sequence key events in Florida history. SS.4.C.2.2: Identify ways citizens work together to influence government and help solve community and state problems. SS.4.G.1.1: Identify physical features of Florida. SS.4.G.1.2: Locate and label cultural features on a Florida map. SS.4.G.1.3: Explain how weather impacts Florida. SS.4.G.1.4: Interpret political and physical maps using map elements (title, compass rose, cardinal directions, intermediate directions, symbols, legend, scale, longitude, latitude).



World War II

World War II

In 1939, countries in Europe and Asia began fighting another great war. Great Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union formed the Allied Powers. They were fighting against Germany, Italy and Japan, which formed the Axis Powers. People referred to the fighting as World War II. For the first few years, the United States was determined to stay out of the war. That changed on Dec. 7, 1941. On that day, Japanese airplanes attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. More than 2,000 Americans were killed, and many ships were sunk. Congress declared war on Japan the next day.

People all over the country began to do their part. Around 250,000 people from Florida served in the war. When the war started, Florida still had a lot of empty land. Most of that land was very flat. Also, Florida's mild weather made our state a great place for soldiers and pilots to train. Florida soon had 172 military bases all over the state.

The World War II Orange Juice Trio

Where would Florida be without orange juice? Most of the world enjoys a glass any time they want, but it couldn't have happened

without three men from Florida.

During World War II, the government asked C. D. Atkins, Louis MacDowell and Ed Moore to figure out a way to get fresh orange juice to the soldiers in Europe who needed more vitamin C. The war ended before they could finish, but shortly after, the first glass of pure orange juice from concentrate was slurped down. Yum! Yum!

This made an enormous difference in Florida's economy (financial atmosphere of a community).

No More Staying at Home

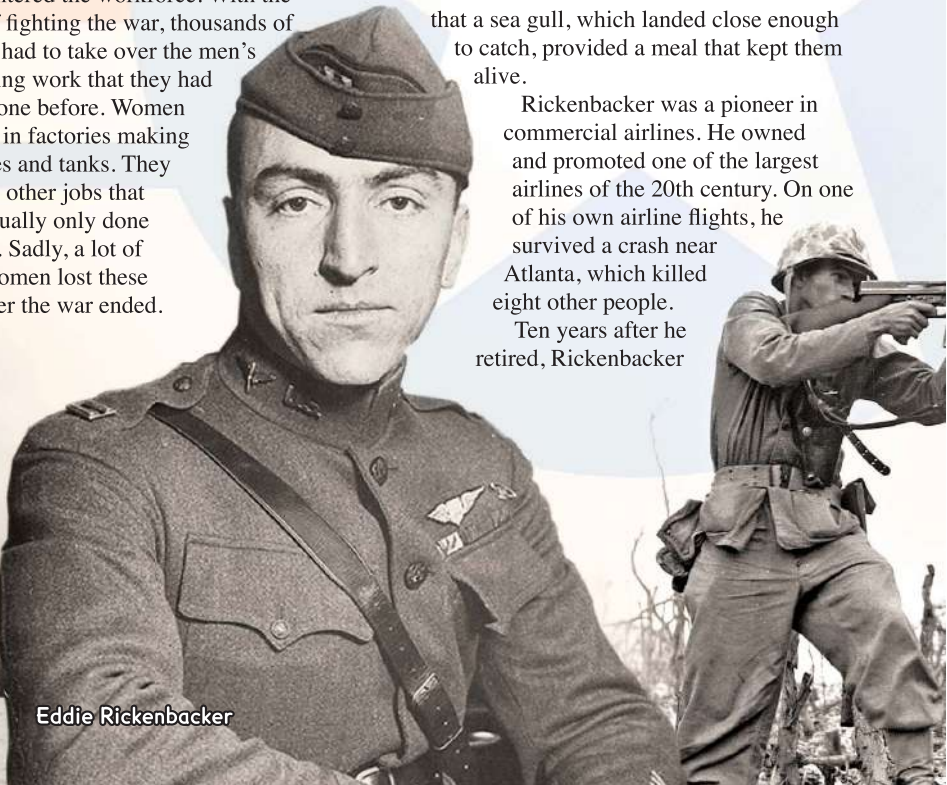
Florida women who had once stayed at home entered the workforce. With the men off fighting the war, thousands of women had to take over the men's jobs doing work that they had never done before. Women worked in factories making airplanes and tanks. They also did other jobs that were usually only done by men. Sadly, a lot of these women lost these jobs after the war ended.

Eddie Rickenbacker

Eddie Rickenbacker was a daring Floridian. He once said, "I've probably cheated the old Grim Reaper (death) more than any other man." As a race car driver, Rickenbacker was almost killed numerous times. Then he became the greatest American pilot in World War I. No other American pilot shot down as many enemy aircraft as Rickenbacker. Later, in World War II, Rickenbacker was on a secret mission with eight other men flying a B-17 bomber across the Pacific Ocean. Their plane disappeared for so long that rescuers gave up the search. After three weeks, Rickenbacker and several others were found floating in shark-infested waters on a rubber raft. He said that a sea gull, which landed close enough to catch, provided a meal that kept them alive.

Rickenbacker was a pioneer in commercial airlines. He owned and promoted one of the largest airlines of the 20th century. On one of his own airline flights, he survived a crash near Atlanta, which killed eight other people.

Ten years after he retired, Rickenbacker



Eddie Rickenbacker

Jack Eckerd: A Great Citizen

American Character

What do you do if you start a drugstore chain that grows to 1,724 stores in five states and eventually is sold to J.C. Penney Co. for \$2.6 billion? Well, if your name is Jack Eckerd, you spend most of your time giving money away.

Eckerd started out as a World War II pilot, but after the war, he started his drugstore in Tampa in 1952. A few years later, he met his wife at the Tampa Gasparilla celebration. Together they built a vast fortune that now occupies most of Mrs. Eckerd's time as she tries to give it away to worthy causes like the YMCA, United Way, and various hospitals and colleges.

Jack Eckerd died in 2004, at the age of 91. Of all his accomplishments, he saw his work in community service as the most important.

Most of his efforts were focused on benefiting children because, as he said, "... They're the community's future."



More of Florida's Who's Who of World War II

Florida Facts

Jacqueline Cochran was a cosmetics manufacturer and the founder and director of the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) in World War II.

While serving as the United States Florida senator during WWII, Claude Denson Pepper promoted a legislative action called the Lend-Lease Act to Britain. He also had other legislative accomplishments including provisions for health organizations and numerous laws to aid the elderly of America.

The Mosquito Fleet was organized by the Civil Air Patrol to protect the coasts of Florida during WWII. Thousands of "spotters" (volunteers) were trained to track air activity along the coastline.

Let's Make Some WAVES

During WWII, women who served in the war were called WAVES—Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service.



Jacqueline Cochran (above) and Claude Pepper (left)

TIMELINE

Florida has a population boom,
1940-1950



World War II is fought,
1941-1945



U.S. drops two atomic bombs on Japan,
1945



World War II ends,
1945



The Korean War is fought,
1950-1953



died of a heart attack in 1973.

The Manhattan Project

The Manhattan Project was the code name used for a secret project to develop the atomic bomb. During World War II, scientists in America worked together secretly to create and perfect the atomic bomb. The atomic bomb was then dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing Japan to surrender to the United States.

This was a terrible loss of life. Most historians say that Japan would have kept fighting for a long time if we had not dropped the bomb, and even more people would have died. President Roosevelt died before he had to make the choice to use the bomb, but most experts think that he would have. When Harry S. Truman became president near the end of the war, he also realized that the U.S. needed to use the atomic bomb. It was a decision that changed the world.

Just How Close Did the Germans Get?

Almost all of the fighting in World War II happened in Europe and in the Pacific Ocean.

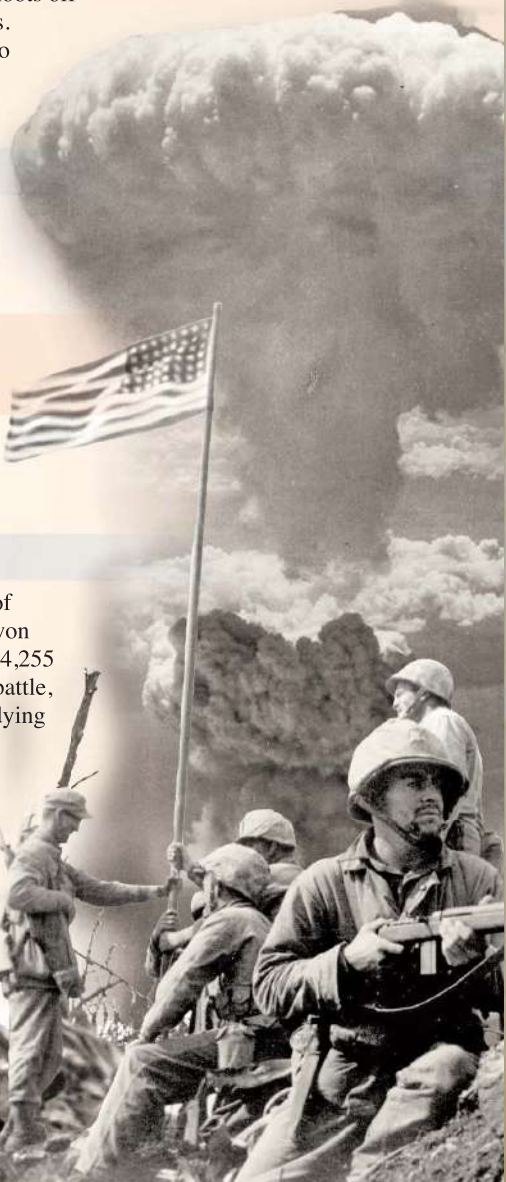
German submarines did get pretty close to Florida, though. They were able to sink 24 ships during the war. People living near Florida's beaches could see many of these ships from their homes. In 1942, German submarines attacked merchant ships near Cape Canaveral, the city where NASA shoots off rockets and satellites.

German spies also came to Florida at Ponte Vedra. They were close to a naval base just south of Jacksonville. The spies were planning to blow up railroads in order to stop war supplies from being shipped. Thankfully, they were captured before they could do any damage.

WE WON THE WAR!

After four years of fighting, the Allies won the war. There were 4,255 Floridians killed in battle, with another 8,398 dying while in the military during this period. More than 11,700 Floridians were wounded in

battle. Japan was the last of the Axis Powers to give up the fight. They signed the final terms of surrender on board the battleship USS Missouri on Sept. 2, 1945. Floridians breathed a sigh of relief and looked forward to better times.



What do you think about rationing?



During World War II, people couldn't just go to the store and get whatever they wanted. The military needed a lot of supplies to keep fighting, and that meant people at home needed to ration, or limit their amount of, supplies. Families were only allowed to use small amounts of foods like sugar, bread and butter. Rationing also limited things like paper, cloths and gasoline. The government handed out ration cards to keep track of what everyone had bought and used.

Leaders also encouraged people to collect things like food, metal and rubber. During the war, almost everyone came together to help give our troops what they needed. What are some other things you think might have been rationed? How do you think you would have felt if your family had to limit how much food and gas you used? Share your thoughts with a classmate.



10,000 POWs Sent to Florida

Our troops captured many German and Italian soldiers during World War II. Captured soldiers were called prisoners of war, or POWs.

Taking care of them was one problem our country faced.

Almost 400,000 POWs were sent to the United States. Over 10,000 of them came to Florida. Our state was home to over 20 prisoner camps. One of those camps was near Kissimmee, close to where Disney World is today. Another camp was at the Orlando Army Air Base near downtown Orlando. POWs were treated relatively well. They were prisoners but were given food and shelter. Many POWs were put to work in the citrus industry. They helped harvest and pack oranges that were grown in our state.

After the war, POWs were allowed to return home. While many of them did, some chose to stay in the United States and begin a new life in America.



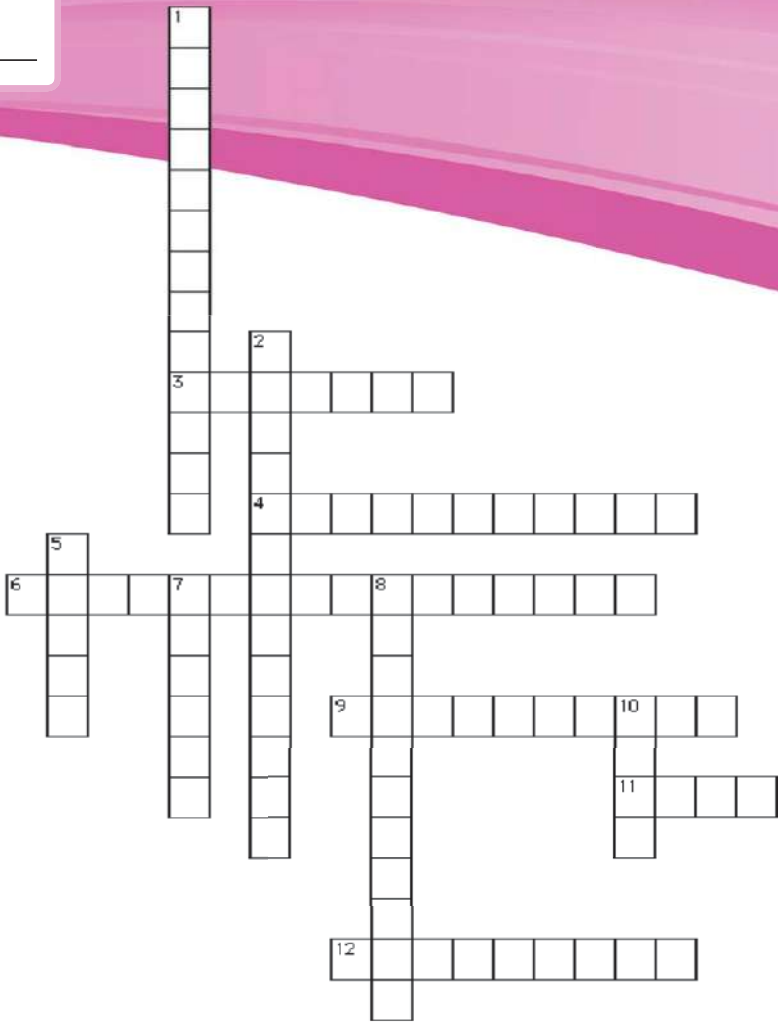
Name _____

ACROSS

- 3. financial atmosphere of a community
- 4. where Japan signed the final terms of surrender for World War II
- 6. the code name of the secret project to develop the atomic bomb
- 9. death
- 11. Women's Air Force Service Pilots
- 12. general who led the first air raid on Tokyo

DOWN

- 1. city where NASA launches space ships
- 2. organized by the Civil Air Patrol to protect the coast of Florida during World War II
- 5. Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service
- 7. countries that fought on the American side
- 8. the place where Japanese airplanes bombed the United States on Dec. 7, 1941
- 10. prisoners of War



World War II

Imagine that you own a factory in Florida during World War II. With most of the men away fighting the war, you need to hire women to do jobs they have never done before. Write a help-wanted advertisement explaining to women why they should come and work for you. Before you begin to write, think about why the women should come work for you. Now write to explain why the women should come work for you.

Let's Write



Never, never, never, give up.

—Winston Churchill

COMMITMENT
Pass It On.
VALUES.COM

Gulf and Hamilton Counties

Gulf County: C'mon down to "The Tip," also known as St. Joe Peninsula on the shore in Gulf County. It looks like a fishhook on the map. That works well, because here you can fish, boat, gather scallops or just wade into the gentle surf of the Gulf of Mexico, the namesake of this county. Talk about nature's playground—miles of water and sand! Even dogs are welcome. The county seat, Port St. Joe, is where Florida's Constitution was written. If you like sweets, you'd enjoy a visit to Smiley Apiaries. Is this a place for funny monkeys? No! It's a honey processing company. (Apiaries are places where bees are kept.) This Gulf County company

makes honey from the white tupelo trees that grow here, with a lot of help from the bees of course. Sweet!
Hamilton County: Here's a geography trivia-lover's dream: Have you ever heard of a peninsula inside of a peninsula? Hamilton County is one, bordered by the Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers. Does the name Withlacoochee sound familiar? You might be thinking, Hey wait! I thought the Withlacoochee River was around Citrus County. Well, Florida has two different rivers with the same name. True story. But there's more. Hamilton even has a disappearing river, the Alapaha. Sometimes it flows underground for

Florida Counties

several miles, leaving nothing but a sandy riverbed. This county is a great place to fish and enjoy the beauty of the Florida outdoors. Jasper is the county seat here.



Recovering the Devastator

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a plane that's been buried in more than 600 feet of ocean for more than 70 years. And that's no easy task. Since there is no Devastator on display anywhere in the world, though, it's a worthy cause.
What's that? You live in Florida? Well, don't waste any time! Get down to the National Naval Aviation Museum and see what else they have. There's an Imax theater, combat flight simulator, historical displays and planes—more planes than you can imagine, of every size, shape and era.
Maybe by the time you get there, you'll be able to see the only U.S. Navy Devastator on display in the whole world!

- 1. What caused the United States to enter World War II?
- 2. Which country was the last to surrender to the Allied Powers in World War II?
- 3. What was the Manhattan Project?
- 4. How did U.S. women help in the World War II war effort?
- 5. Who was Eddie Rickenbacker?
- 6. Who was Jacqueline Cochran?
- 7. Who are the WAVES?
- 8. Who was the Mosquito Fleet?
- 9. Who was Jack Eckerd and how was he a model for citizenship?
- 10. Describe how the Prisoners of War (POWs) were treated in Florida.

Think & Review