

Walter T. Halloran, U.S. Army Motion Picture Cameraman

Walter Halloran, born in 1923 in Chatfield, Minnesota, was witness to the major European campaigns of World War II. He had joined the U.S. Army as a combat cameraman in 1942. He filmed Allied engagements at Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, Remagen, and on through VE Day, providing an enduring record of the lives and legacy of some members of Minnesota's Greatest Generation.

On April 11, 1945, Sgt. Halloran was with the fast-moving 1st U.S. Army Division (165th Signal Photographic Company) near Weimar, Germany. Twenty miles from town, his unit began to hear rumors of a nearby concentration camp. Halloran went on to film the liberation of Buchenwald:

The gates were just opening and we were getting ready to go in. The thing that shocked us the most was the number of incredibly emaciated human beings behind the fence wires. The prisoners were so ill and weak; more than one of them died right on the spot. There were some children ten or twelve years of age.

The sights, sounds and the smells were something that no human being could ever forget.

As hardened as we were by that time—having fought all the way across Europe—to death and dying, this did us in. The ovens. The carts stacked with bodies. The whole scene around there; it is difficult to even talk about.

To this day, he continues to share his story with subsequent generations.

I am getting along in years. I am 83. The younger people seem to really want to know. At my age I am something of a museum exhibit because young people ask these questions. They are not trying to be funny, they are very, very sincere.



We are dying off at a rapid rate. I feel that we were exposed to things that no human being should be exposed to and maybe we have an obligation to share our observations.

—Randal Dietrich, project manager,
Minnesota's Greatest Generation

Share Your Story

"Share Your Story," a section featured on Minnesota's Greatest Generation website at people.mnhs.org/mgg, is an interactive multimedia collection of experiences written by or about Minnesotans. The website includes clear, helpful guidelines for contributing a story as well as the stories themselves, readily searchable by keyword. "Share Your Story" is an enjoyable way to contribute to and learn about Minnesota's rich and diverse past.

Soon, web visitors will also be able to explore the lives and legacy of this generation through short films featuring an innovative blend of interviews, archival film footage, and historic photos. The Society will sponsor workshops and foster community collaborations to help individuals create eight-to-ten-minute films that they can submit for the website. To keep up with new developments, sign up for the "Share Your Story" e-newsletter by emailing randal.dietrich@mnhs.org.



Minnesota's
Greatest
Generation

In 2005 the Minnesota Historical Society launched a long-term project to preserve and present the history of "Minnesota's Greatest Generation," the men and women who grew up during the Great Depression and came of age during World War II. This essay is part of a series that spotlights the experiences of generation members from all walks of life. For more on the MHS project, visit www.mngreatestgeneration.org.



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