



Documentary Film Series



Travel through history with the award-winning *Virginians at War* film series, from the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. These films use historical imagery and footage with first-hand accounts to tell the stories of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, and the Global War on Terror.

World War II

SSGT Bill Hulcher: *Virginians at War: WWII - Lawrence "Bill" Hulcher* features Virginian SSGT Bill Hulcher, a B-17 Waist Gunner and Toggler telling the story of his plane being shot down over Europe and his amazing struggle for survival. Hear about SSGT Hulcher's experience being shot down over Czechoslovakia, being marched through Europe under the brutal watch of the Germans, and eventually his liberation and return home to America.

Battle of Midway: *Virginians at War: The Battle of Midway* explores the experience of Virginians that fought in the Battle of Midway in June of 1942. Veterans share their memories of life at sea, the battle, and the significance of damage inflicted on both US and Japanese fleets. Of particular note are the detailed and poignant accounts of the loss of the USS Yorktown and what it meant to those that served upon it. This pivotal clash between the navies of the United States and Japan was a turning point in the war, which saw a decisive American victory that opened up the Pacific Theater for future operations.

Battle of Okinawa: *Virginians at War: Okinawa* explores the experience of Virginians that fought during the critical Battle for Okinawa over three long months in 1945. The small island was a strategic point in the Pacific Theater, as it was within a short flight distance of the home islands of Japan. As such, its Japanese defenders put up a tenacious defense against the Allied sea, air, and land campaign. The result was a long and costly fight, in which over 250,000 combatants were wounded or killed. The Battle for Okinawa served as the Empire of Japan's "Last Stand" before finally surrendering to the Allies at the end of that summer.

Battle of the Bulge: *Virginians at War: Battle of the Bulge*, covers the American experience during the critical Battle of the Bulge that spanned the winter of 1944-1945. Virginia veterans detail their vivid memories of the bold German offensive in December of 1944 and the resulting harrowing, desperate fight during the Allied counterattack. From defending Bastogne, to the Malmady Massacre, to surviving the harsh conditions and intense combat in the Ardennes Forest, Virginians participated in the successful campaign to defeat Hitler's last major offensive, paving the way to eventual victory in Europe.

China-Burma-India: *Virginians at War: China-Burma-India* delves into the oft-untold conflicts that were critical to the success to the American campaign in the Pacific. Hear personal stories from the men and women who fought the Japanese from the Western front of mainland Asia, and their reactions to the dropping of the atomic bomb in August 1945 and returning home.

Homefront: *Virginians at War: WWII Home Front* tells the stories of the men and women who supported the war effort from the American home front. The film begins with stories of Pearl Harbor, and the reactions of family members of those who signed up to serve. The themes of uncertainty, sacrifice, and love define the memories and stories shared. The film also tells stories of WWII era rationing, entertainment, women entering the workforce, and more.

Intelligence: *Virginians at War: Intelligence* looks at the details of American codebreaking and code-developing efforts against the Japanese in World War II, beginning with the failure to collect intelligence prior to the attack at Pearl Harbor. The turning point of the war in the Pacific, the Battle of Midway, is highlighted as a great success for American intelligence efforts.

D-Day: Invasion of Normandy: *Virginians at War: D-Day Normandy* uses veteran interviews and a variety of primary sources to tell the story of the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. The invasion of Normandy was a defining moment in the Second World War, propelling the Allied Powers to victory over Hitler and the Nazis. The film highlights the anxiety of the days before the landing and explains in great personal detail the chaos and loss that followed.

Battle of Iwo Jima: *Virginians at War: WWII - Iwo Jima* addresses the strategic importance of the Japanese-controlled island of Iwo Jima during World War II, and the struggle and sacrifice required to conquer it. World War II Marines and sailors speak about their memories of the days before the battle began, the process of landing on the island, kamikaze pilots, and public understanding of events afterwards including representations in film.

Nurses: *Virginians at War: WWII - Nurses* features amazing, unique stories from World War II nurses who served in both Europe and the Pacific theaters. The film spans from the nurses' time before the war through basic training and their time in battle. The emotional stories highlight similarities between the experiences of American soldiers and the nurses who supported them, through fatigue, chaos, hunger, and eventually, victory.

Pearl Harbor: *Virginians at War: WWII - Pearl Harbor* tells the stories of the Virginians who were living at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii during the Japanese sneak attack of December 7, 1941. The story of the day, from waking up to hearing the beginning of the attack around 0800 and the reactions during the two hour raid, is woven together through a variety of personal accounts. Veterans describe the anxiety and chaos during and following the "day that will live in infamy", as well as the desire to survive.

POW – Germany: *Virginians at War: WWII - POW Germany* uses firsthand accounts and video from World War II to detail the experiences of American prisoners of war in the European Theater. World War II veterans share their harrowing experiences of being shot down, injured, transported to POW camps, and eventually liberated. The film addresses the themes common for prisoners of war, including loneliness, unpredictability, anxiety, and the desire to survive.

POW – Japan: *Virginians at War: WWII - POW Japan* covers the brutal treatment of American prisoners of war in Japanese camps, which by the end of the war had up to a 35% fatality rate. The stories told are those of Virginian soldiers as well as children who were imprisoned. The film describes the horrific conditions American POWs were subjected to and demonstrates the will power and strength it took to survive.

Submarines: *Virginians at War: WWII - Submarines* tells the unique story of Americans in submarines fighting against the Japanese in World War II. Technology is a major focus of the film, while addressing codebreaking, torpedo failures (and successes), and strategy. Discover the conditions of living on a submarine while under attack and losing air, and the innovation that went into surviving the waters of the Pacific.

The USS Birmingham: *Virginians at War: WWII - USS Birmingham* features the sailors who served on the Birmingham, built in Newport News, VA. It traces the Birmingham's movements from Virginia to Africa to the Pacific, island-hopping to Japan. Veterans tell the stories of the chaos of naval battles, lost crewmen, and the dangers associated with traveling the Pacific all the way to the island of Okinawa.

The Korean War

Korea Hill Fights: *Virginians at War: Korean War - Hill Fights* documents the American experience during the Korean War, focusing on the back-and-forth fighting in mountainous regions of the Peninsula. Virginians share their memories of a campaign that was filled with extreme cold that made the simplest tactics nearly impossible. Indecisive engagements, long, hard-fought struggles, and the suffering of both soldiers and the local civilian population marked the campaign to control small portions of land. While seeming futile at times, this “Forgotten War” is also remembered as a necessary stand for American freedom and values by those who endured the fighting.

Korean War's Inchon Landing, Pusan Breakout: *Virginians at War: Korean War's Inchon Landing, Pusan Breakout* covers the basis of the Korean War, the first war ever fought by United Nations forces and a defining conflict of the Cold War. Hear Virginia Veterans describe the beginning of the war and some of its earlier conflicts, the Battle of Inchon and the Battle of Pusan Perimeter, both in 1950. The Battle of Pusan was one of the first engagements of the Korean War, and the Battle of Inchon was an amphibious invasion by the UN forces that led to the successful recapture of Seoul, described by one veteran in the film as the “smartest thing MacArthur ever did.”

Back From the Yalu: *Virginians at War: Korean War - Back from the Yalu* features Virginia Veterans of the Korean War sharing harrowing stories of facing the extreme cold and overwhelming numbers of enemies while fighting a back-and-forth war on the Korean Peninsula. Released on the 70th Anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War, this film reminds us of the desperate nature of a conflict that never truly ended and has become largely known as “The Forgotten War.”

The Vietnam War

Vietnam Air Operations: *Virginians at War: Vietnam War - Vietnam Air Operations* includes personal recollections from veterans of the Vietnam War, with a focus on the revolutionary technology of helicopters and U.S. military air operations. Helicopters represented the difference between life and death for many of those who served in Vietnam. These are their stories.

Tet Offensive, 1968: *Virginians at War: Vietnam War - The Tet Offensive* explores the experience of Virginians that fought during the critical Tet Offensive in 1968, a turning point of the Vietnam War. Launched by the North Vietnamese Army on 30 January, the coordinated attack against thirteen different provincial capitals throughout South Vietnam took Americans and South Vietnamese by surprise. The result was a costly, long campaign that ended in a hard-fought military victory for the United States and South Vietnamese. However, the outcome of the campaign had a significantly negative impact on support for the war in the United States, from which the nation would not fully recover.

50 Years Beyond - The Vietnam Veteran Experience: In the Virginia War Memorial's 2023 exhibition, *50 Years Beyond: The Vietnam Veteran Experience*, Army veteran and videographer Pamela Vines captured emotional moments from Virginia's Vietnam veterans as they shared their personal recollections of their time in the war and the fifty years since coming home. Some funny, some sad, some touching, and all memorable, this film attempts to capture the changing perspectives surrounding this conflict.

The Cold War

The Cold War: *Virginians at War: The Cold War* covers the beginning of the Cold War with the Berlin Blockade in the late 1940s, the use of submarines and intelligence collection for both the United States and Soviet Union. Get a more in-depth view of the lives of US service members during the high-tension era of the Cold War through interviews and personal stories from those who lived it.

The Cuban Missile Crisis: *Virginians at War: Cuban Missile Crisis* details the 1962 event, described as the “most dangerous moment in human history.” Using firsthand accounts from United States veterans who were serving during this time, the film highlights the tension and fear that defined the Cuban Missile Crisis. See the day by day progression of the Crisis, from the first sightings of Soviet missiles in Cuba and the American response to the conclusion 13 days later as the world escaped the “brink of World War III.”

The Missing Chapter – Saigon to Desert Storm: *The Missing Chapter: Saigon to Desert Storm* explains how the United States military recovered from Vietnam to face down the Soviet Union, win the Cold War, and achieve decisive victory in the Persian Gulf War. A story filled with new technologies, weapons, doctrine and the memories of Cold Warriors who refused to give up and worked tirelessly over two decades to produce the most powerful military on earth.

The Global War on Terrorism

A New Century, A New War: *A New Century, A New War* presents the memories and emotions surrounding the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Global War on Terrorism as experienced by Virginian veterans and family members. This 30 minute film addresses the questions: what happened on 9/11 and why were military service members sent to Afghanistan and Iraq in response? Through vivid memories, veterans explain what 9/11 meant to them, for the country, and what the wars that followed have meant for all of us.

[Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003-04:](#) Hear firsthand accounts of Virginians discussing the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the start of the War on Terrorism. This film covers the invasion of Iraq and the shifting perception of the war over time, as well as the day-to-day experience of American soldiers in the Middle East. This film is intended to help students who did not experience 9/11 firsthand gain a better understanding of the events that day and the start of the War on Terrorism. It works to explain the unique issues of modern warfare and military training, and the concept of counterinsurgency.

[One Week in October:](#) In October of 1983, US Military personnel served as peacekeepers in Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War, and as rescuers on the Caribbean Island of Grenada. Two very different conflicts with two very different results. In observance of the 40th Anniversary of these two, all but forgotten, military engagements, veterans share the personal stories of their ONE WEEK IN OCTOBER.

Miscellaneous

[Lives Worth Knowing: The Virginia War Memorial:](#) Welcome to the Virginia War Memorial. As we approach the 75th anniversary of this special place of remembrance, we invite you to hear from our staffers, veterans, family members, and supporters about what the Memorial means to them.

[BG Anna Mae Hays:](#) Virginians at War: BG Anna Mae Hays tells the story of the U.S. military's first female General who served as a nurse during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The film highlights the important role of women during war and throughout the military.

[Known But to God - The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier:](#) The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in Arlington National Cemetery, is a historic monument dedicated to deceased U.S. service members whose remains have not been identified. In this film, we invite you to learn more about the history of the Tomb and how our nation strives to remember all Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice.