

Annual Report 2013-2014

The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience

**Department of History
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida**

The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience is dedicated to preserving the history of this conflict. The Institute maintains one of the largest archives at an American university that documents the human dimension of the Second World War. Housed on the Florida State campus in the Bellamy Building, the Institute serves as a resource for scholars, teachers, students, and the general public. The current director, Dr. G. Kurt Piehler is currently writing a monograph that examines the religious life of the American G.I. in World War II.

The past year has been a time of tremendous momentum at the Institute. With the addition of new collections related to nearly every theater of the war, and the start of new digitization efforts, the Institute aims to continually expand its scope and impact in research, teaching, programming, and outreach. Scholarly publications, award-winning graduate research, and public exhibits have been created through work and research at the Institute on World War II, and in the next year, undergraduate students will have increased opportunities to work with and learn about some of the unique collections in our archives.

Research

*The Institute in 2013-2014 acquired many new collections. One of the most significant collections added was the Oliver L. Austin Photographic Collection. Dr. Austin served in the occupation government of Japan in the Natural Resources Section. During his nearly four years in Japan, Austin produced almost 1000 color photographic slides of postwar Japan under reconstruction. The images include rare photographs of Crown Prince Akihito as a child, ordinary Japanese families in Tokyo and the countryside, and Japanese veterans purveying street entertainments.

Dr. Annika Culver of the History Department played an instrumental role in bringing the Austin Collection to the Institute and Florida State University. Dr. Culver is Faculty Consultant for East Asian History and World War II for the Institute. In this capacity, Dr. Culver has overseen the documentation and digitization of the Austin Collection that became available on the Institute's website in June 2014. In Fall 2013, Dr. Culver conducted an extensive oral history with Oliver Austin's son, Tony Austin. During his visit to Florida State, Tony delivered a public lecture and spoke of his role as English language conversation partner with Crown Prince Akihito.

*Dr. John Corrigan of the Religion Department and Professor Piehler has prepared a manuscript based on the Religion and World War II conference sponsored by the Institute in December 2012. "Outside the Foxholes: Religion World War II" is under consideration at Columbia University Press.

*In partnership with Dr. Judy Barrett Litoff of Bryant University, the Institute is organizing an international conference for January 2016 that focus on comparative home fronts in World War II.

*In the fall semester, Emily Swafford, a doctoral student from the University of Chicago and Sarah Myers, a doctoral student from Texas Tech University presented their dissertation research to graduate students and faculty. Both Swafford and Meyers also drew upon Institute's collection for their current research project. In March 2014 Swafford successfully defended her dissertation: "Democracy's Proving Ground: US Military Families in West Germany, 1946-1961." Meyers continues work on her dissertation on the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs).

Teaching

*The Institute Director, Professor Kurt Piehler is also a member of the History Department at Florida State University and teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses. During the fall semester Professor Piehler offered a graduate course focusing on "War and the Nation State" that included both students focusing on World War II, as well as several other periods of study.

*As part of a wider university initiative, Professor Piehler was awarded a summer stipend from the Office of Undergraduate Research at Florida State to develop a new course that encourages critical thinking and analysis on the part of undergraduate students. "The American GI in War and Peace" will be an honors course geared to entering first year students and will involve them directly in the life of the Institute. This course will also undertake a digitization project involving several major institute collections, including the Wayne Coloney papers.

*Jordan Bolan, a first year student at Florida State, completed a one-year internship with the Institute on World War II. Jordan participated in a new program called the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program. Sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research at Florida State University this initiative allowed Jordan to work on several projects for the Institute as well as conduct research for Professor Piehler's book project, "A Religious History of the American G.I."

*Two graduate students completed master's theses under Professor Piehler's direction and drew upon the Institute's collections for their work. Captain Christopher E.J. Sherwood, U.S. Army, completed "Bloodied but Bruised: How the World War II Army at Kasserine Pass Grew up in North Africa" and graduated in December 2013. Captain Sherwood returned to active duty with the Army. Allyson Stanton completed her thesis in April 2014, titled "A Line in the Sand: Defining the Army-Marine Corps Rivalry during World War II." Ms. Stanton will continue in the doctoral program in the History Department.

Outreach

*The Ringling Museum of Art exhibit "Witness to War" drew heavily upon the Institute's extensive holdings of photography. This exhibit ran from June 21-October 27, 2013 and featured the works of six official combat photographers. Institute Director Piehler delivered a gallery talk to an audience of over 75 on July 11, 2013 at Ringling, which is located in Sarasota, Florida.

*Upon the invitation of the Director of the FSU Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute began planning for an exhibit that will open on February 13, 2015 and run through the end of March 2015. Piehler received a competitive Arts and Humanities Program Enhancement Grant, Council on Research and Creativity from Florida State University to defray the costs of an exhibition catalogue.

*The Institute hosted three lectures on campus. Dr. Scott Bennett of Georgian Court University delivered the annual fall lecture on “How Jewish Radical Pacifist Igal Roodenko Opposed and Resisted World War II. Dr. Bennett holds a master’s in history from Florida State University and is a past president of the Peace History Society. During Dr. Bennett’s visit he made a presentation to Professor Piehler’s graduate research seminar and also spoke to special seminar of undergraduate seminar. On February 18, 2014, Dr. Serge Durflinger of the University of Ottawa delivered the Spring Lecture on the theme, “Remembering the Second World War in Canada.” As part of Dr. Durflinger’s visit, he spoke to special seminars for both undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Barak Kushner of the University of Cambridge delivered a special guest lecture, “Men to Devils and Devils to Men: Japanese War Crimes and Cold War Sino-Japanese Relations (1945-1965)”. Dr. Annika Culver arranged for Dr. Kushner’s visit to Florida State and he delivered the lecture on April 8, 2014.

*The Institute’s annual Veterans Day Program was held in New York City in conjunction with Fordham University Press, featuring presentations by Judy Barrett Litoff of Bryant University (Rhode Island) and Peter Dunbar. Professor Litoff described her efforts to uncover the story of women’s experiences in World War II through personal correspondence. Mr. Dunbar, a distinguished attorney and public servant, spoke of his effort to uncover his father’s World War II service with the U.S. Marines and his experiences writing **They Were the Black Sheep: Marine Fighting Squadron VMF-214 and the Battle of the Solomon Islands** (University Press of Florida).

*The Pearl Harbor Day program in Sarasota, Florida featured the award-winning historian Dr. John Whiteclay Chambers II of Rutgers University. In a program co-sponsored by World War II veteran Harold Ronson, Professor Piehler spoke on latest trends in scholarship related to World War II.

*Professor Piehler spoke this past year to several civic groups, including the Old Timer’s Club, June 17, 2013, the Cosmos Club, May 12, 2014, and the Thomasville chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on May 21, 2014.

SUPPORT

The Institute receives significant support of from Florida State University, including the salaries of the director and staff. Funds from the University also meet some of the basic office expenses of the Institute, including telephones, postage, and supplies. Private contributions and endowments play a crucial role in allowing the Institute to organize public lectures and conferences, host visiting scholars, and undertake new initiatives to encourage the study and preservation of the history of World War II.

The Institute wants to acknowledge the support it receives from the following permanent endowments:

Duane and Betty Bohnstedt 460th Bomb Group (H) Collection
Harold Baumgarten and Samuel M. Gibbons Endowed Fund for World War II
Harold and Kay Ronson Endowment
George and Marian Langford Endowment in History
Pearl Tyner Endowment for the World War II Institute
TBUF Memorial Endowment Graduate Fellowship
TBUF Memorial Endowment Acquisition Fund
Rintels Professorship of the Humanity at the Institute for World War II

We want to recognize the following individuals who donated one thousand dollars or more in 2013-2014 (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014) to the Institute:

Dr. Max Oppenheimer, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Skip Sack
Stephen M. Slepín, Esq.

We also want to recognize the following individuals for their financial gifts to the Institute in 2013-14 (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014):

George R. Bowers
Kevin M. Dougherty
Wayne Daum, M.D.
Julio Fonseca
Dr. Marc G. Gertz and Dr. Sally C. Gertz
Lila Fredenburg
Dot Jean Green
Lt. Colonel and Mrs. Gerald A. Sands
R. A. Simler
De Witt L. Sumners
Dorothy D. Whittle

We regret in advance any omission in our annual report and please bring it to the attention of the Institute Director, G. Kurt Piehler at kpiehler@fsu.edu.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Piehler
Director & Associate Professor of History
Institute on World War II and the Human Experience
Department of History
Florida State University

30 September 2014