

Veterans asked to tell stories

2 dozen who served in WW II will
record history for Collier project

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World War II veterans in Collier County are being asked to answer a final role call.

Local historians are looking for those who belong to what television newsman Tom Brokaw dubbed "The Greatest Generation" to step forward and tell their stories, which will be preserved for future generations.

Two dozen veterans of that last worldwide conflict have been found to tell their stories for the Capture Living History project, said Sandra Arnold, Collier County public information coordinator.

More veterans are being sought, but no one knows exactly how many people who served during World War II live in the county, she said.

According to the federal government, there are 35,000 veterans living in Collier County, but the number isn't divided into which veterans served during which conflicts, Arnold said.

Volunteers will be brought to the county government complex to have their stories recorded.

The recordings and photographs will later be displayed at kiosks at the county museum and at the county's main library.

William "Bill" Blaikie, 89, a Marine Corps fighter pilot and pilot trainer, has been the first, and so far only, World War II veteran to have his story recorded for posterity in the living history program. It is being put together by the Collier County Museum, Veterans Services and county communications department. He also served in the Korean War.

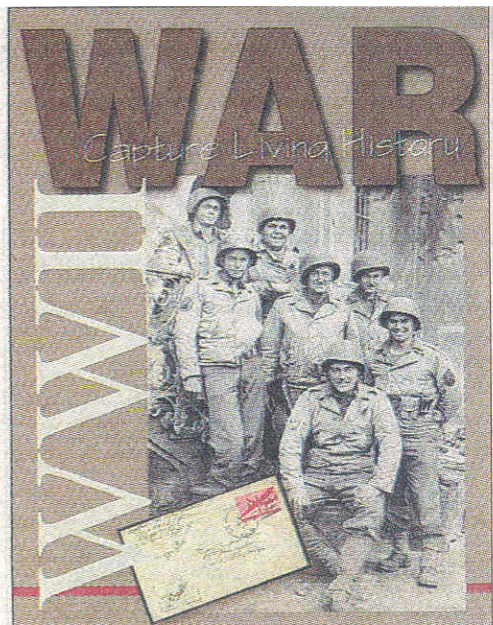
Blaikie said he was driving to his job at Trans World Airlines in Chicago when he heard on the radio that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor.

He decided to enlist and become a fighter pilot because he was already enrolled in the federal government's Civilian Pilot Training Program.

INFORMATION

World War II veterans interested in telling their stories may call Sandra Arnold, Collier County public information coordinator, at 774-8308.

Applications also are available at the county's public information counter on the first floor of the W. Harmon Turner Building, 3301 Tamiami Trail E.



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■ The Capture Living History project