

ians that was unlike any previous war. After the federal government mobilized Oregon's 41st National Guard Division for duty in the South Pacific, Oregon established the Oregon State Guard for local emergencies. The federal government also recruited a special police unit to patrol Bonneville Dam, and hundreds of civilians in coastal communities organized as volunteer guerrilla forces. The Selective Service System, which Congress narrowly approved in 1940 before the United States entered the war, reduced the military's reliance on volunteers; but thousands of Oregonians enlisted nevertheless. After its mobilization and training in the United States and Australia, the 41st "Sunset" Division, with many troops added from other states, compiled a distinguished wartime record in the South Pacific. The soldiers faced extraordinary challenges fighting against the Japanese in the jungles of New Guinea and other islands, but the stress of combat, fueled by rage about atrocities real and rumored, revealed another side of heroic jungle-fighters portrayed in the American press. The Pacific war was noted for its brutality on both sides, and the 41st Division acquired a reputation for taking no prisoners. In her propaganda broadcasts, Tokyo Rose nicknamed the 41st "The Butchers," and a postwar article written by a former Army officer for the *Saturday Evening Post* gave credence to the charge that "The 41st Didn't Take Prisoners."

The Oregon home front also felt the blows of war. Oregon and California were the only states to experience direct attacks by the Japanese (Hawaii and Alaska were still territories). In 1942, a Japanese submarine ineffectively fired shells at Fort Stevens and launched an airplane that dropped incendiary bombs in the forests near Coos Bay and Cape Blanco, causing minor fire damage. The most devastating incident was caused by an incendiary balloon bomb, one of thousands launched from Japan and borne across the Pacific Ocean by the prevailing winds. Toward the end of the war, in 1945, a mother and several children on a church outing near Bly in southern Oregon died after a child accidentally exploded one of the devices.

Oregon joined other states in experiencing economic, social, and cultural changes in response to wartime and postwar conditions, including massive population shifts, the "baby boom," the GI Bill, suburbia, and greater knowledge of the world abroad. In addition to massive physical destruction and unimaginable loss of life, World War 2 displaced millions of people and introduced a new period of heightened nationalism and a Cold War among the victorious allies. The United States responded to these challenges with a new half-century of military interventions that included major undeclared wars in Korea and Vietnam; numerous military and CIA interventions in the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, and the Balkans; and a smaller regional war against Iraq. Oregonians served in each of these conflicts and added many more names to the state's long list of military casualties. The economic influences on Oregon were more difficult to measure, but these wars introduced periods of political realignment, antiwar protests, and continued rapid growth in population.

While American foreign policy after World War 2 focused on the reconstruction of Europe, the containment of the Soviet Union, and the escalation of nuclear competition, postwar events in Asia confirmed international polarization and the limitations of American foreign policy. The postwar collapse of colonialism and the successful Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949 added to the international turmoil. The Korean War in 1950-1953 shattered American complacency, disrupting the transition to a peacetime economy; and it coincided with another postwar Red Scare and the early stages of the civil rights movement. Fighting in the shadow of World War 3 and for limited goals, soldiers and citizens at home soon grew weary of the conflict. It was a war characterized initially by rapid retreats and advances. When the Chinese Communists (People's Republic of China) joined the North Koreans against the U.S.-led United Nations forces in late 1950, the war entered a new and more dangerous phase of potential escalation. Often fought in mountainous terrain during extremes of winter weather, the war soon became a stalemate and a bloody war of attrition. Ending with only a truce in place, the war cost nearly 35,000 American battle deaths in three years — including hundreds from Oregon — and Korea remained divided.

Typically on the periphery of major national political events, Oregon nevertheless experienced the travails of the Second Red Scare. This anti-communist crusade evolved from wartime tensions with the Soviet Union and gained momentum after 1950 as the political phenomenon of 'McCarthyism'. This movement, which drew its name from Republican senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, reinforced consensus and stifled political dissent during and after the Korean War. Many Oregon politicians were susceptible to the appeal of McCarthyism, but Oregon fell far short of California and Washington in efforts to purge alleged radicals and radicalism from the public schools, government agencies, and colleges. Nevertheless, there were consequences in Oregon. Public school teachers were vulnerable to local pressures, but college campuses in Oregon largely escaped the attempted faculty purges that plagued the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Washington. There were minor exceptions when Oregon State College in Corvallis and Reed College in Portland caused controversies by dismissing professors of having Communist or radical affiliations. The end of the war in Korea and the recovery of the shattered European economies reduced some of the political tensions in the United States, but the conservative influences of the Eisenhower era in the 1950s and the social changes that accompanied the civil rights struggle seeped into Oregon politics as well.

There were other concerns abroad. The American role in Vietnam had its roots in the collapse of European colonialism in Asia and the increasingly volatile Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s. Although there were some similarities with the Korean



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War, there were also marked differences. In large measure, the war in Vietnam was a civil war, and the subtropical weather and jungle terrain were notably different from the wintry and mountainous hell of North Korea. U.S. forces suffered more battle casualties in Vietnam, but over a much longer period of time, and this war also had a different conclusion. North Vietnam and its Viet Cong and Communist allies won the struggle in 1975.

As the first televised war, the Vietnam conflict had a dramatic impact on political protests and popular culture in the United States and other countries. Oregon, however, was much less affected by protests than either Washington or California was during the 1960s and 1970s. While Oregonians mourned the hundreds of Oregon service personnel lost in battle in Vietnam, political issues related to the war gained increasing significance in Oregon during the presidencies of Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon. Democratic senator Wayne Morse, long considered a political maverick, was one of only two senators who voted against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution of 1964 (Ernest Gruening of Alaska was the other senator), a major turning point

for American commitment to the Vietnam War. Republican senator Mark Hatfield, who had visited Southeast Asia as a Navy officer during World War 2, took increasingly antiwar positions as the war in Vietnam dragged on. Although Morse lost his bid for re-election in 1968, Hatfield gained increasing support for his principled opposition to the war. Together, these two senators followed a path blazed by Harry Lane in 1917.

At the state level in the 1960s and 1970s, Republican governor Tom McCall pursued a delicate balancing act. He supported the war effort in Vietnam and simultaneously tried to reduce the potential for violent antiwar demonstrations. Dismayed by the antiwar positions of Morse and his fellow Republican and former friend Hatfield, a bitter McCall wrote Lyndon Johnson: "I have supported your policy every step of the way in Southeast Asia." McCall even served Johnson by traveling to South Vietnam as an observer for elections. In Oregon, as elsewhere in the country, public support for the war waned, and demonstrations — particularly in Eugene and Portland — grew in intensity and violence after the summer of 1968. McCall doggedly maintained his support for the military personnel fighting the war; but in the early 1970s, when violent demonstrations erupted at the University of Oregon and in Portland and police responded in kind, the governor grew depressed and felt that he had somehow lost control of his state. He would take solace in environmental issues.

In the decades since the end of the war in Vietnam, Americans have learned much about geography, but have they learned anything about international relations? American troops have served and sometimes died in Lebanon, Panama, Granada, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Most of these conflicts were small; but together, their consequences are great. We have been forced to consider our national purpose in unsettled times and have been exposed to great suffering in other parts of the world. The legacies of war are haunting and permanent. Death, disfigurement, disease and mental illness are among the human costs; and on former battlefields throughout the world, land mines, unexploded shells and bombs, and lingering economic devastation threaten current and future generations. Oregon, too, faces the military detritus of past generations as the toxic plumes of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation seep into the Columbia River and the chemical agents stored at the Umatilla Ordnance Depot threaten the environment and neighboring communities. For decades, farmers on the site of former Camp Adair have plowed up unexploded artillery shells dating from World War 2.

As this brief history of earlier wars suggests, the desire for peace has consistently succumbed to the demands for war. But there is another perspective to consider. Historically, Oregon had few military installations than Washington or California; and Wayne Morse wanted to keep things that way, believing that Oregon would be less vulnerable to the economic vagaries of Congressional politics. Is this relative lack of military installations an indicator of Oregon's exceptionalism? Measured another way, Portland is the headquarters for Mercy Corps International and Northwest Medical Teams International, humanitarian agencies providing emergency aid throughout the world. Do these organizations make Oregon more cosmopolitan and more inclined toward peace? In this context, it can be argued that Oregon's increasing ethnic and racial diversity and the influx of population from other states have broadened our cultural understanding and political interests. Do these factors contribute to Oregon exceptionalism? Perhaps, as Bob Dylan sang, "The answer is blowing in the wind."

Answers to these questions about Oregon's exceptionalism are uncertain, but there is one thing Oregonians must remember. The state is divided in many ways by geography, political and economic factors, social classes, race, and ethnicity. The events of September 11 have created circumstances that could turn those differences into deep fissures or, perhaps, add to our historical understanding and enrich our culture. What will determine our attitudes toward Muslims and Arab Americans? How will we respond to federal policies establishing military tribunals and requesting local police to question aliens and students from other countries? Answers to those questions are also "blowing in the wind."

The 20th century, or what *Life* and *Time* publisher Henry Luce called the "American Century," began with conflicts in Asia and the Pacific Islands and ended with wars in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans. Military units and individuals from Oregon served in each of those wars, and Oregonians are again overseas in a new and unique war. How will we respond to this unfinished chapter in American history? Historians will attempt to reconcile the vivid images and soundbites of television with the historical realities of the past. They must also try to reconcile competing versions of history. While historians seek answers to basic questions, public memory revives and celebrates the past with parades, colorful pageants, commemorations, and solemn memorials. Historians often disagree about the causes and consequences of events; public memory thrives on myths and strives for consensus. How will historians in the future interpret current events, and how will public memory celebrate or memorialize our history? We might view these differing perspectives as a continuing war between versions of history, and we must decide which side to be on.

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