

# The Drop Zone Virtual Museum

## Lost Legacies....



(Pennsylvania State Archives)

**Described as a "transcendental experience," Civil War Veterans meet at Gettysburg in 1913. Tragically few historians were present to record their personal stories. In contrast to the loss of this precious history, The Drop Zone captures the voices of WWII veterans by preserving and sharing this important history through an on-line medium.**

## A Bridge Between Generations

The Drop Zone Virtual Museum, the first of its kind, exists to preserve and share through the Internet the legacies of America's WWII airborne veterans.

Paratroopers and glidermen were the war's elite combat troops, as America's airborne forces spearheaded World War II's most crucial victories. They have left us a compelling legacy.

Through the Internet, we can now hear history as told by the men who have lived it, the men who have made it, in places like Anzio, Normandy, The Bulge, Manila and Corregidor.

The Drop Zone captures the "voices" of the participants through these compelling stories, collecting memories before they are lost to the ages and bridging the gap between the computer age and America's proudest generation. The Drop Zone also houses a substantial archive of unpublished photos, that add a human face to the drama of these stories.

## Creating A New Paradigm

The Drop Zone leverages the power of the Internet. For example, our Virtual Reunion Software, allows us to gather and archive stories from several veterans almost instantaneously. These practices have placed the Drop Zone at the forefront of the next generation of historians.

## Virtual Community

Since our inception, the Drop Zone has been a gathering place for WWII veterans. More than just a static web site, the Drop Zone is a dynamic, living museum that consists of a large virtual community of veterans, historians, family members, and students.

In addition to its civic and historical benefits, the Drop Zone has helped to reunite old friends and uncover the experiences of long lost family members.

## Education

Today's youth have a limited understanding of WWII history. The experiences of the individual soldier are often lost in an educational curriculum made up of stale battle and campaign histories. Now, however, teachers can use the Drop Zone as an interactive teaching tool. E-mail allows students to interact directly with the men who fought the war, to ask questions about the sacrifices of an earlier age and, to listen and learn from the men who have lived through a world war.



(Akune)

*Harry Akune (far right) a Japanese-American who jumped on Corregidor as an interrogator. Akune gathered valuable intelligence that saved lives and shortened the battle.*

## Verification

The Drop Zone understands the importance of disseminating historically accurate information. We help veterans validate and verify all information before it is published in the Museum. We make use of an assortment of unit journals, morning reports, and other primary and secondary source material at our disposal.

[www.thedropzone.org](http://www.thedropzone.org)



(Williams)

*Members of the 509 Parachute Infantry Battalion.*

## Future Projects

Over time, The Drop Zone will expand to include the voices of Korean and Vietnam War airborne veterans.

## Volunteers

The Drop Zone Virtual Museum is made up of a dedicated group of veterans that contribute their time, effort, and stories. Facilitating this effort is a group of highly skilled, unpaid volunteers, led by Patrick O'Donnell, historian and founder of the Drop Zone. He has personally interviewed over 400 WWII airborne veterans. He is a Senior Consultant at Coopers & Lybrand, specializing in Information Technology. Webmasters include Major Shawn Faherty, US Army, and Peter Bostrom, Manager of Technology at the Morino Institute. Several other volunteers including Quentin Fairchild, Sgt. John Peterson, US Army and Carl Fomaris, Esq. also contribute their time.

## Achievements

The Drop Zone has appeared in several national publications such as *USA Today*, *The Stars & Stripes*, and nearly every airborne publication in existence. The Museum has also received many awards including the *USA Today* Hot Site, the History Channel Recommended Site, and The Lycos Top 5% Award.



[www.thedropzone.org](http://www.thedropzone.org)

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