

# WWII Foundation Hosts Annual Gala Honoring Veterans, Holocaust Survivors, and the Legacy of the Greatest Generation

*The WWII Foundation's Annual Gala honored veterans and Holocaust survivors, celebrating the 80th anniversary of key events and premiering a new documentary.*

WASHINGTON , DC, UNITED STATES, November 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In an evening filled with reflection, celebration, and heartfelt tributes, [The World War II Foundation](#) held its Annual Gala at the Embassy of France, honoring five World War II veterans, three liberators of concentration camps, and six Holocaust survivors. This year's event coincided with the 80th anniversary of key moments in World War II, highlighting the enduring impact of the Greatest Generation.

The gala featured a powerful keynote address by General Bryan Fenton, Commanding General of [U.S. Special Operations Command](#). In his remarks, General Fenton reflected on the enduring legacy of the OSS, the precursor to modern special operations forces, stating, "We are driven to carry on the legacy of those who came before us. It's our sacred obligation to uphold the values of sacrifice, unity, and unyielding spirit that define the Greatest Generation"



The Senator Bob Dole Leadership Award being presented to D-Day and Battle of the Bulge Veterans and Concentration Camp Liberators

The gala was hosted by Chiké Okonkwo, actor and Board Member of The World War II Foundation. Okonkwo set the tone for the evening with a heartfelt introduction, emphasizing the importance of honoring the Greatest Generation and keeping their stories alive. He guided guests through a program filled with tributes, presentations, and reflections on the legacy of our Greatest Generation and the lessons of World War II.

## Honoring the Legacy of WWII Veterans

The evening included the presentation of the prestigious Senator Bob Dole Leadership Award to three extraordinary WWII veterans who were instrumental in liberating Nazi concentration

camps:

-Irving Locker, who turned 100 this month, played a key role in liberating the Gardelegen concentration camp. His lifelong commitment to educating others about the Holocaust has made him a vital voice in preserving history.

-Andrew "Tim" Kiniry, now 103, served in the 45th Evacuation Hospital and was among the first to reach Buchenwald. His dedication to sharing his story ensures that future generations remember the atrocities of the Holocaust.



Keynote Speaker for The World War II Foundation Gala, General Bryan Fenton--Commanding General, US Special Operations Command

-Harry Miller, who joined the Army at 15, was part of the 740th Tank Battalion that helped liberate Dachau. His service spanned three wars—WWII, Korea, and Vietnam—demonstrating unparalleled dedication to his country

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*Tim Gray, President and Founder of the nonprofit World War II Foundation*

In a moving tribute, Tim Gray, President and Founder of The World War II Foundation, emphasized the urgency of preserving these stories. "The personal stories of our Greatest Generation and the lessons of World War II are not taught in our schools. These legacies are vital in reminding us of the values that can unite us, especially in times of division," said Gray.

During the event, Tim Gray and Paul Clifford, The World War II Foundation Board Chair, presented flags flown over Omaha Beach on the 80th anniversary of D-Day to two D-Day veterans in attendance, Myles Isbell and Arlester

Brown. Additionally, Veterans Last Patrol personally prepared and presented handmade shadow boxes to each honoree, serving as a tribute to their service and sacrifice.

During the evening, Chiké Okonkwo, the Master of Ceremonies, took a moment to recognize the Holocaust survivors in attendance. "To witness these remarkable individuals here with us—80 years after the events of World War II—is a profound testament to the strength of the human spirit," Okonkwo remarked, inviting the audience to give a standing ovation to honor their courage and resilience.

Premiere of Dad's Secret War: France 1944

The evening culminated in the premiere screening of the documentary [Dad's Secret War: France 1944, narrated by Kevin Bacon](#). The film, based on the book *Scholars of Mayhem* by Daniel C. Guiet and Timothy K. Smith, chronicles the covert missions of the American OSS and British SOE in 1944. Attendees were captivated by the film's portrayal of courage, sacrifice, and the hidden heroes who played a critical role in the Allied victory.

The World War II Foundation extends its deepest appreciation to the event's sponsors:



Birthday Cake for Irving Locker (100) and Tim Kiniry (103), WWII Battle of the Bulge Veterans, Concentration Camp Liberators and recipients of the 2024 WWII Foundation Senator Bob Dole Leadership Award

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Their generous support was instrumental in making this evening and the film possible.

In his remarks, Colonel John Fenzel (USA, Ret.), CEO of The World War II Foundation, urged attendees to carry forward the values exemplified by the Greatest Generation. "As we mark the 80th anniversary of pivotal moments in WWII, we are reminded that these stories stand as lessons in resilience, courage, and character that continue to inspire us today," Fenzel said.

John Fenzel

The World War II Foundation

+1 202-351-9131

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