



TRUMAN
LIBRARY
INSTITUTE

WWII ★ 70



CONTACT: SUSAN MEDLER
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

816.268.8245; 816.550.2864
susanmedler@gmail.com
TrumanLibraryInstitute.org

7 0 T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

O F T H E E N D O F W W I I

SPECIAL EXHIBITION

TILL WE MEET AGAIN: THE GREATEST GENERATION IN WAR AND PEACE

April 4, 2015 – January 3, 2016 | Harry S. Truman Library and Museum

Included with Museum Admission; Members Free



COMPLETE MEDIA KIT

An all-new exhibition takes America back to the tumultuous year of 1945 to share the epic struggle of world leaders and everyday men and women who found the strength and courage to accomplish the extraordinary.

News reels, fireside chats, and personal letters and diary entries offer visitors a you-are-there experience, while iconic artifacts and documents highlight the major events of 1945, including the death of FDR, Truman's unexpected rise to the presidency, the Allied victory in Europe, the horrific battles in the Pacific, and the ultimate surrender of Japan.

Many of the artifacts in the exhibition have rarely if ever been on display. Two historic documents – surrender papers signed by Germany in May 1945 and by Japan three months later – are being borrowed for limited display from the National Archives in Washington.

Spread over 3,000 square feet, the exhibition will tell the story of the final days on the battlefield, the peace-making process and how America tried to find its bearing as soldiers returned home to an uncertain future. In the middle of it all a new and untested President Truman made decisions that would set the course of world history.

"On one hand, it's a broad-based exhibition about everyone dealing with the war experience as soldiers or doing their bit at home in the defense industry," Truman Library curator Clay Bauske said. "On the other, it's very intimate and personal, with individual stories."

At any given time, only one or two percent of the Truman Library's collection of artifacts is on display, Bauske said. Special exhibitions provide a venue for some of those items to be seen. One artifact – which hasn't been displayed for more than 20 years – is a prayer book and spoon an American soldier had in his pocket when shot by a German sniper while in a foxhole.

"The bullet went through and he was still wounded but those two pieces probably kept him from being killed," Bauske said.

A unique artifact from the Pacific conflict will be the green safety plug that was used to keep the atomic bomb from detonating accidentally before it could be dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. An electronics officer removed the plug before arming the bomb and he donated it to the Truman Library.

Earlier, when the atomic bomb got its final test, President Truman was at the Potsdam Conference in Germany to negotiate the terms for the end of the war with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

"He has these very interesting diary entries where he had mentioned to Joseph Stalin that he had a new weapon," Bauske said.

Many other diary entries by Truman and letters he wrote to his wife Bess Truman about his experiences will also be on display.

The last section of the exhibition, entitled "America in a New World," will be about the challenges facing Truman and the United States in reverting to a peace-time economy as the soldiers returned home. The founding of the United Nations will also be explored in the exhibition. Truman did not want the U.S to retreat from the world stage as it did after WWI, Bauske said.

Following one of the most devastating chapters in human history, Americans – and the unlikely president – must ask, "Where do we go from here?" This dramatic exhibition reminds us that the monumental story of World War II also is the story of every American family, and that the challenges faced by the "Greatest Generation" must be answered by the next great generation.

Some of the hundreds of documents and artifacts in the exhibition will include:

- A map of Japan and the Pacific region that Presidents Roosevelt and Truman used in the White House map room
- The first American flags to fly above Berlin after the defeat of Germany and above Tripoli after the capture of North Africa in 1943
- A portrait of President Truman by an Austrian prisoner of war
- Correspondence between Truman and foreign leaders, including Winston Churchill
- Personal correspondence of Herman Goering, German Reichsminister of Aviation
- A signed copy of Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, given to one of his deputies