

# The Passing Of The Torch

By Jim Mueller  
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(NAPSA)—Someone I knew died the other day. I didn't get a chance to say goodbye, but I have thanked him for the life he led as a member of America's Greatest Generation.

He came from an ordinary family that taught traditional values like right from wrong and respect for others. He learned that the measure of a man was in deeds, not words, and that hard work wasn't something to fear. He also learned to take care of his neighbors, so when the world needed our help during World War II, he and 16 million other Americans answered that call to military duty.

World War II was a defining moment for America. We saw the end of the Great Depression and the emergence of the United States as a world leader, but we also witnessed the impact of the war on the home front, and the tremendous resiliency of the American public to overcome all challenges. Women entered the workforce in greater numbers and in nontraditional roles. Families had to ration sugar, coffee, gasoline, and other commodities we now take for granted, and entire communities banded together to recycle rubber and metals.

After the war, the only thing this generation asked for was to be normal again—to wear the current styles, watch the latest movies, and settle down and raise families. Most of them took advantage of



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the GI Bill, whose home loan program created the suburbs, and educational benefits produced the leaders who guided the tremendous era of growth and prosperity our country enjoyed in the second half of the 20th century.

America has been blessed to have had three Greatest Generations: one founded our country, another saved our Union, and the most recent one helped save our world from tyranny.

Fewer than 3.5 million World War II veterans remain, a number that is expected to halve within the next five years. I was able to thank my friend for his service to country before he passed; now I urge all Americans to do likewise. They are living national treasures, and they and their generation deserve our eternal gratitude and remembrance.

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*Note to Editor: Do Not Publish after 8/31/2006.*