

Congressman 
Rahm Emanuel

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Emanuel, Students Begin Interviewing WWII Veterans
Event Kicks off Interviews for Chicago World War II Veterans Oral History Anthology

CHICAGO, IL—U.S. Representative Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) officially kicked off the Chicago World War II Veterans Oral History Anthology when he interviewed two WWII veterans at St. Paul's House & Health Care Center. Student interviewers from Northeastern Illinois University and Wilbur Wright College were on hand to gather biographical data on the other veterans present.

Emanuel told the veterans, "As Memorial Day approaches and we prepare to dedicate the National World War II Memorial in our nation's capital, on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for your contribution to the Chicago World War II Veterans Anthology, and for your service and commitment to our great nation."

Emanuel interviewed two Chicago WWII veterans, Peter Callegari, U.S. Navy (Retired) and Ed Waytula, U.S. Army (Retired) as the first two participants of the project's oral histories. Northeastern Illinois University student Tom Dawson videotaped the interviews.

"Both Mr. Callegari and Mr. Waytula served at pivotal times during WWII, and their experiences served as the perfect beginning to the anthology," Emanuel continued.

Mr. Peter Callegari served in the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, and was on duty when it was bombed by the Japanese. Mr. Callegari later fought at Midway. Emanuel said, "Mr. Callegari was at the event that marks the start of the war for the United States, so it is particularly fitting that he is one of the first interviews for the anthology."

Mr. Ed Waytula served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Mr. Waytula was decorated with a certificate of merit for his assistance in opening supply lines. His role in assembling communications equipment was critical in the delivery of important information up the chain of command to General Patton and troops throughout the European theater. Today, Ed is a volunteer service officer for the veterans in St. Paul's. "Without Mr. Waytula's ingenuity, critical supplies would not have made it," Emanuel said.

At the event, Emanuel presented the World War II veterans who live at St. Paul's with a Congressional Record statement honoring their service. "It is my honor and privilege to pay tribute to the each of St. Paul's World War II veterans – and their families – who proudly wore the uniform of their country, endured the rigors of the war, and fought for our liberty and the freedom of future generations of Americans," Emanuel said.

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The Chicago World War II Veterans Oral History Anthology will equip high school and college students with audio recorders, notepads and cameras to record the wartime stories of the “greatest generation” over the next few months. Based on those recordings, a video will be developed that encapsulates these stories. Congressman Emanuel will submit a copy of the video and other documentation to the American Folklife Center of the U.S. Library of Congress where the anthology will become a permanent part of the Library’s Veterans History project. Area schools will also receive a copy of the video. Video screenings will begin in Chicago area schools, culminating in a Veterans Day celebration.

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