Corporal David C. Greene came ashore on Iwo Jima in a Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel, or LCVP on 19 February 1945,” writes Caitlin Bentley. “Today, Greene, along with three Navy and seven other Marine veterans, returned for the first time in 67 years. On an island only four miles in diameter, nearly 28,000 out of the 72,000 American soldiers committed were killed or wounded during 36 days of combat.”

Bentley was one of eight Ohio State students selected for History 698.02, The Veteran Experience in the Pacific War, 1944-45. The study tour, organized by Mershon affiliates Peter Mansoor and Peter Hahn, paired each student with a veteran from World War II combat in the Pacific. The Mershon Center co-sponsored the event, contributing $500 in travel costs for each student.

Working with Mansoor and Hahn was the Greatest Generation Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to honoring the sacrifices of veterans and ensuring that their legacies are recorded and retold to future generations.

“We were introduced to the Greatest Generation Foundation through an acquaintance of Gordon Gee,” said Mansoor, Gen. Raymond E. Mason Chair in Military History. “This one-time trip to the battlefields of the Central Pacific appealed to us on a variety of levels. We had roughly 18 students apply for the course, from which we chose eight to go on the tour. The Greatest Generations Foundation assigned each student to shadow a veteran of the Pacific conflict, and together they explored the battlefields and the veterans’ recollections of their time in uniform.

The tour included stops at Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima, where each student toured the site with his or her assigned combat veteran. Roundtable discussions were held daily, and students blogged about their experiences.

Ohio State students walk in footsteps of World War II veterans in Pacific

Students in History 698.02, The Veteran Experience in the Pacific War, stand on Ason Beach in Guam, where U.S. soldiers landed during World War II. The course, in which students toured World War II Pacific island sites, was taught by Peter Hahn (standing fourth from left) and Peter Mansoor (standing far right). Photo by John Riedy Photography.

Geoffrey Parker, Andreas Dorpalen Professor of History and longtime affiliate of the Mershon Center, has won the internationally renowned A.H. Heineken Prize for History, awarded by the 200-year-old Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The prize is given biennially to recognize international scholars and scientists in five different fields who exemplify the highest levels of accomplishment in their areas. Recipients receive a $150,000 cash award.

“This is the sort of honor that, if it comes at all, only comes once,” Parker said. Although he is the first Ohio State historian to be selected for the prize, Lonnie Thompson won for his work in environmental science in 2002.

The selection committee cited Parker’s “outstanding scholarship on the social, political and military history of Europe between 1500 and 1650, in particular Spain, Phillip II, and the Dutch revolt; for contributions to military history in general; and for research in the role of climate in world history.”
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Find streaming videos and podcasts of events at mershoncenter.osu.edu
See photos of Mershon Center events at picasaweb.google.com/mciss.osu
Event archives can be searched at the Ohio State Knowledge Bank
Thursday, March 29, 2012
Guy-Uriel Charles
Director of the Center on Law, Race, and Politics, Duke University
“Democracy’s Guardian? Understanding the Supreme Court’s Law and Politics Jurisprudence”
3:30 p.m., Barrister Club

Tuesday, April 10, 2012
Alex Keyssar
Matthew W. Stirling Jr. Professor of History and Social Policy, Harvard University
“Why Do We Still Have the Electoral College?”
3:30 p.m., Barrister Club

Monday, April 16, 2012
Rachel Brewster
Assistant Professor of Law, Harvard University
“Remedies, Reputation and Beliefs: Prices and Sanctions in International Economic Law”
3:30 p.m., 120 Mershon Center

Wednesday, April 18, 2012
Alisher Faizullaev
Former Ambassador of Uzbekistan
“Making States Sensible: Ritual, Symbols, and Feeling in Diplomatic Practice”
3:30 p.m., 120 Mershon Center

Thursday, April 19, 2012
Raymond Baker
Professor of International Politics, Trinity College
Noon, 120 Mershon Center

Thursday, April 26, 2012
Morris P. Fiorina
Wendt Family Professor of Political Science, Stanford University
“The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics”
3:30 p.m., Barrister Club

Monday, April 30, 2012
Williamson Murray
Minerva Fellow, Naval War College
“Saddam’s World View: The Iran-Iraq War and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East”
3:30 p.m., 120 Mershon Center

Tuesday, May 1, 2012
Marc Lynch
Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, George Washington University
“The Arab Uprisings”
Noon, 120 Mershon Center

Thursday-Saturday, May 3-5, 2012
Good Works in Central America
Conference organized by Katherine Borland, Department of Comparative Studies
120 Mershon Center

Monday, May 7, 2012
Nancy Rosenblum
Sen. Joseph Clark Professor of Ethics in Politics and Government, Harvard University
“Anti-Politics: The Utopian Turn in Democratic Theory Today”
Noon, 120 Mershon Center

Tuesday, May 8, 2012
Mehdi Khalaji
Senior Fellow, Washington Institute for Near East Policy
“Iranian Islam and Democracy: Paradox of State and Religion”
Noon, 120 Mershon Center

Friday-Saturday, May 18-19, 2012
Tales of Trickery and Endurance: Gender, Performance, and Politics in the Islamic World and Beyond
Conference in honor of Margaret Mills, Professor Emerita, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
120 Mershon Center

For more information and to reserve your spot, please see the Mershon Center web site at mershoncenter.osu.edu
Students unanimously found the tour eye-opening and enriching. At Iwo Jima, Bentley’s veteran David Greene collected sand and rocks from the island for his grandchildren and flew an American flag on the top of Mount Suribachi. But he also gave an interview to Japanese press in which he described how his family hosted Japanese exchange students throughout the 1970s. “This is a man who sincerely appreciates and enjoys the culture and people of a nation with whom he once had been in brutal combat,” Bentley wrote.

Andrew Eskander’s veteran, Sergeant Al Eutsey, also saw combat on Iwo Jima, landing in the first wave of the attack on Green Beach. Under orders to take Hill 362A, Eutsey was hit in the chest with shrapnel from a mortar attack. A corpsman rushed to his aid wrapping the wound with gauze, and he was taken away on a stretcher. While carrying Eutsey, the Marines came under heavy fire, and he was thrown into a ditch. Finally he was evacuated to Guam, where he spent a month recovering before being sent home. Fifty years later, Eutsey met one of his stretcher bearers at a Marine reunion.

Prior to leaving for the tour, which ran from March 9-18, Hahn lectured the students on the diplomatic history of the Pacific War, while Mansoor told them the military history. The group also took a trip to Motts Military Museum in Columbus.

The Mershon Center is establishing a presence on social media, and we invite you to follow along.

Just last week, we launched the new Mershon Center Facebook page. If you have a Facebook account, please help us build a following by “liking” the page, which will act as a medium to share Mershon news and events. The page is being administered by Kyle Flemming and Cathy Becker, whose profiles can be found in the “About” section.

The Mershon Center also has a Twitter page. We try to tweet not only Mershon news and events, but also items from other international relations and foreign policy organizations, blogs, and scholars that may be of interest, as well as relevant posts from around the university. Many high profile international security and foreign policy scholars converse with each other over Twitter, which can serve as a resource for current news and opinion in the field.


Mershon affiliate Randy Schweller, professor of political science, has been selected as a Joan N. Huber Faculty Fellow for 2012-15.

Schweller’s areas of expertise include theories of world politics, international security, and strategic studies. He is author of Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power (Princeton, 2006) and Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest (Columbia, 2008).

Schweller serves on the editorial boards of International Security and Security Studies, the top two journals in the security studies field. He is also a co-editor for a series on Asian Security published by Stanford University Press.