



Honors student wins grant to research famed submarine

This year, **Emma Evans**, a talented undergraduate history major from Johnson City, Tennessee, worked on her honors senior thesis on a fascinating topic of war and society. Her research project concerns the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, the *U.S.S. Nautilus*. During the height of the tense Cold War in 1958, the *Nautilus* and its crew made an unprecedented journey under the icecap of the North Pole in response to the technological advances of the Soviet Union. This dramatic mission, dubbed Operation Sunshine by the United States government, was conducted under the leadership of Tennessee native William Robert Anderson.

After Evans first came across the story of the submarine and its captain in the UT Special Collections, she was fascinated with the effect the success of this mission had on the American public's perception of nuclear power. This year, she researched the *Nautilus'* history with the guidance of Center Director Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius.

She received a UT Chancellor's Honors Program Research Grant to fund travel to Groton, Connecticut, where she conducted additional research at the Submarine Force Library and Museum. Evans turned up many valuable primary sources at the archive, including newspaper clippings detailing the response of the public to the *Nautilus'* feat, as well as newsreels and voice recordings discussing the significance of the voyage.

The Submarine Force Library and Museum is also the final docking place of the *U.S.S. Nautilus*, which gave her the rare opportunity to tour the actual object of her research! Evans is now completing her thesis. After graduating from UT, she will attend graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in their School of Library Science with a concentration in archives and records.

We at the center are proud of Evans and glad to welcome her to the scholarly field of war and society studies!



Dear Friends of the Center,

This spring brought great advances, national recognition, and new opportunities for the center. We were awarded a grant from the Library of America through their “World War I and America” program, in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History. This will reinforce our work in commemorating the impact of the First World War, together with the State of Tennessee Great War Commission.

We cosponsored a tremendous lecture on African-American soldiers in World War I, participated in Blount County’s events on the anniversary of the United States declaration of war on Germany, and partnered with the McClung Museum on campus to host a discussion of artifacts of the war, including the preserved uniform of a Knoxville doughboy. Our hosted lectures included a wide range of topics, from the War of 1812 to China in the Second World War, smuggling in the American Civil War, and the Ukraine-Russia conflict today.

Most of all, we rejoice at the successes of students working with the center! In this newsletter, we feature a story about an honors history major (and future archivist) writing a research thesis on the underwater Cold War. Robert Rennie, our center graduate student who incidentally spearheaded our successful Library of America grant, just completed his dissertation on WWI fighter pilots. Our deepest thanks to supporters of the center—your generosity and sharing of our vision make all this possible, and all that we are yet going to do!

- **Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius**, Director



VETERANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT UPDATE



JAMES WELCH

We recently interviewed U.S. Army veteran James Welch, who served in Germany during the post-war occupation following World War II. Welch was born in 1936 in Madison, Indiana, and attended Purdue University for three months before volunteering for service in April of 1956. He completed basic training at Fort Leonard Wood and specialized as

a bulldozer operator in construction engineering with the 94th Engineering Battalion.

Welch’s interview spanned his experiences in Germany, where he worked on construction of airfields for gliders for the nation’s recovering aviation industry. Gliding remained popular in Germany following the war, and it was during this time that Welch met his future wife, Johanna Alma Weber, of Germany. Welch later discharged as an SP-4 and served in the Organized Reserves for four years. He and Johanna married February 8, 1959, in Bennington, Indiana, where he ran a farm.

Welch’s interview is a fascinating glimpse into the lives of those who were too young to serve during the Second World War, but whose experiences were still very much shaped by the aftermath of the conflict.



HENRY FRIBOURG

Seldom do the lives of UT faculty members twist through Europe in the time of Hitler. Professor Emeritus Henry Fribourg, however, is an exception. We recently added his story to the growing collection of oral histories in our archive.

Born in France in 1929, Fribourg experienced Nazi persecution first-hand after Hitler conquered France in 1940. He was dismissed from school because he was Jewish, and he and his family narrowly escaped Nazi capture in January 1942 when they left France bound for the United States. After arriving in the United States, via a stay in Cuba, Fribourg graduated with his PhD from Iowa State University. He enlisted in the United States Army soon after graduating. He joined the U.S. Army Chemical Corps and served during the Korean War. Fribourg worked with the United States military to develop dispersal mechanisms for Agent Orange, the toxic herbicide widely used during the Vietnam War.

Since then, Fribourg enjoyed a 48-year career as a crop scientist at the University of Tennessee while also advocating on behalf of those soldiers whose lives were adversely affected by Agent Orange.

CENTER WINS LIBRARY OF AMERICAN GRANT

We are delighted to announce the recent honor of receiving a “World War I and America Grant.” This programming grant is sponsored by the Library of America and funded by a larger grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our application was spearheaded by graduate assistant and new PhD, Robert Rennie.

This national program was organized to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the entry of the United States in the First World War by supporting local institutions in their work to educate the public and reach out to local veteran organizations. The grant will provide the center with funds to produce a range of public programs, as well as the opportunity to host a traveling exhibition on the First World War. While planning is in its early stages, there will be events to help educate the public about this important conflict and to commemorate United States entry into the war in 1917, as well as the end of the war in 1918.

We will host public lectures and presentations by leading scholars in the field of First World War Studies and reach out to East Tennessee veterans. Be sure to stay in touch with us over the coming months for announcements.

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