

CHAPTER 7 ~ 1940 – 1949

During World War II, photography advances were mostly on hold for civilian use, yet exploited to unimaginable military applications. Snapshots and studio photos changed very little in the 1940s, most date estimates will come from clothing, props such as cars, and backgrounds. The one exception to the lack of photographic progress was the introduction in 1942 of color print film, the classic Kodachrome film from Kodak. Though it did not become widely available and affordable until well after the war.

To keep the decade in perspective, it should be remembered that U.S. bases at Pearl Harbor were attacked on December 7, 1941. Many photographs in family collections will have some connection to the war. Every soldier or sailor who deployed was surely photographed by

his or her family. Millions of pictures of family, friends, wives, and children were sent to the fighting forces around the world so they would not forget why they were there – not that they actually could.

Most of this era's photographs are easily identified due to still-fresh memories of people and related stories. With military personnel, it is possible to identify uniforms and associate the person with their service. Most important is fully documenting the era's pictures in family collections, so that future generations will not experience the frustration of having a bunch of unidentified family photos.

Identify and document your WWII and all family photographs now! Include full name(s), place, and year.

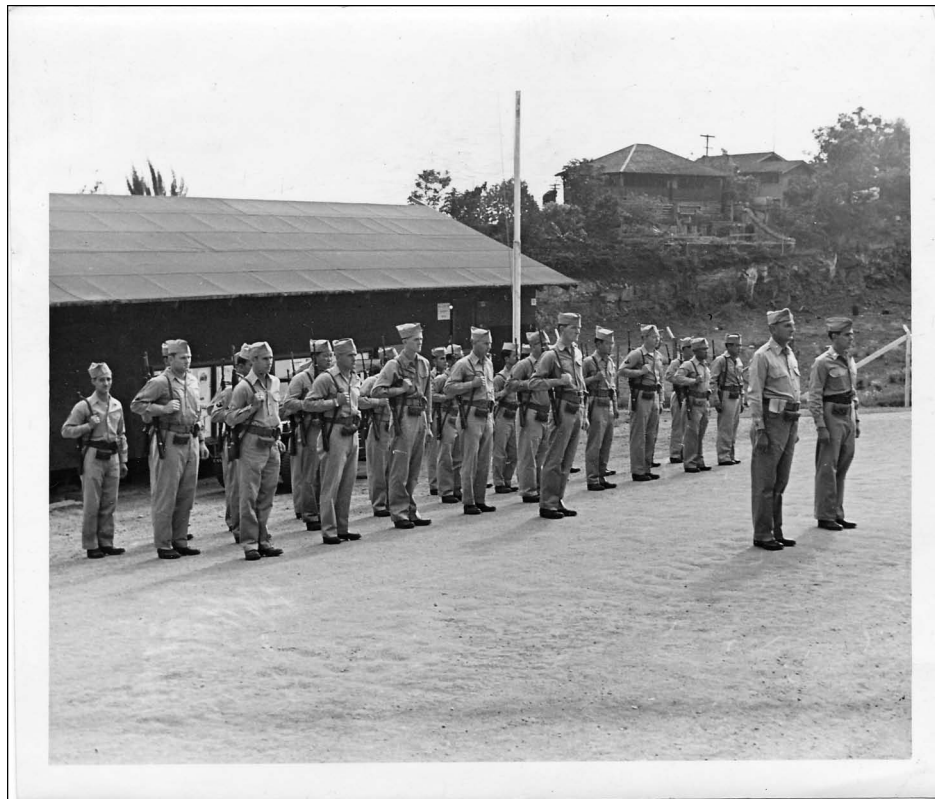


Figure 7-1. Soldiers stationed in Hawaii in 1945.

World War II Era Photographs

It is intuitive to many researchers that people wearing a service uniform were in the military. Yet, there can be errors in dating the uniform, and therefore the photo. Correct uniform identification is crucial. In addition, close inspection can reveal such things as rank (which could narrow the date of the photo) and unit patch identification, again pinpointing location and therefore a time frame.

Uniforms, equipment, and weapons changed noticeably from World War I to the World War II. Some differences, not obvious to the casual observer are important in dating military pictures. All types of dress and equipment cannot be covered here, complete books are dedicated to these studies. However, the following includes some things to look for.

Hats and Caps

Service people always wear a hat, cap, or helmet – it is military tradition, not to mention a regulation.

U.S. World War I Service Hats



Figure 7-2. Common hats worn by U.S. soldiers in WWI.

Variations of the Campaign hat are seen on Spanish-American War soldiers as early as 1898. The Overseas cap was developed so it could be folded and easily stored. The Service cap was worn with a dress uniform.

U.S. World War II Service Hats



Figure 7-3. Typical hats worn by soldiers during WWII.

The Campaign hat disappeared for general use in WWII, though it was typically worn by drill instructors, even today. Note the WWII Garrison cap has a more square profile than its WWI predecessor the Overseas cap.

The colored piping on the Garrison cap represents the branch of the army. Blue was infantry, red artillery, and green for armor. There were many other color designations for over twenty other branches. In addition to piping on caps, these colors can be seen on braided cords or other trim. A key note about military uniforms is that every item on them represents something. This can be helpful in discovering more about the person wearing them.

Hats came in different colors, the most common were green or tan; preference for style was usually left to the wearer.



Figure 7-4. Two Army Generals with different style caps.

Battle Helmets

U.S. helmets changed significantly from World War I to World War II. The *doughboy* helmet, of English and French design, was used in World War I. The M1 helmet 25 years later, provided greater protection to the wearer.

U.S. Army Helmets



Figure 7-5. U.S. Soldier helmets.

Uniforms

Except for news or combat footage, most photographs of service men and women are formal or family photos while they were on leave or training. Cameras were not practical on the battlefields, though pictures from base camps or non-combat areas may be found.

Formal portraits, especially if the uniform shows no rank or unit assignment, were most likely taken upon graduation from basic training.

Figure 7-6 is of two brothers who both entered service in 1944; one in the Army, the other in the Navy. The left photo is standard Army issue, the Navy uniform is dark blue, a white version was worn in warmer climates.

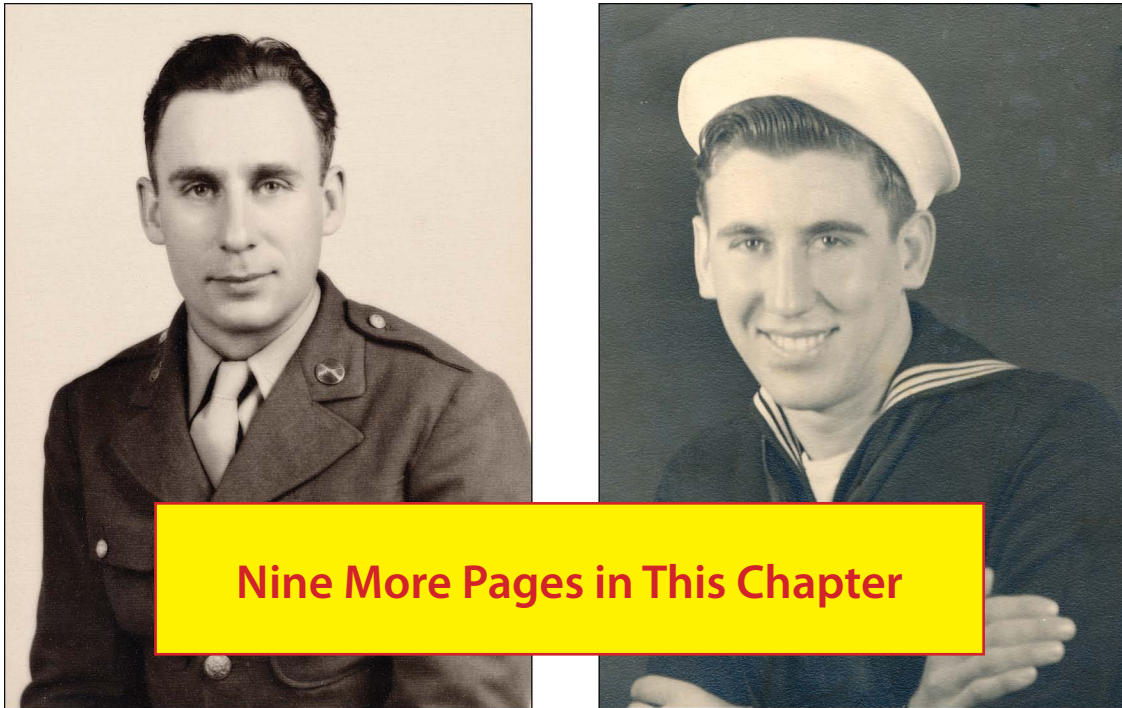


Figure 7-6. 1944 Basic training photographs of two brothers, one in the Army and the other in the Navy.



Figure 7-7. This is the actual uniform worn by the above soldier upon return to the U.S. mainland in 1946.

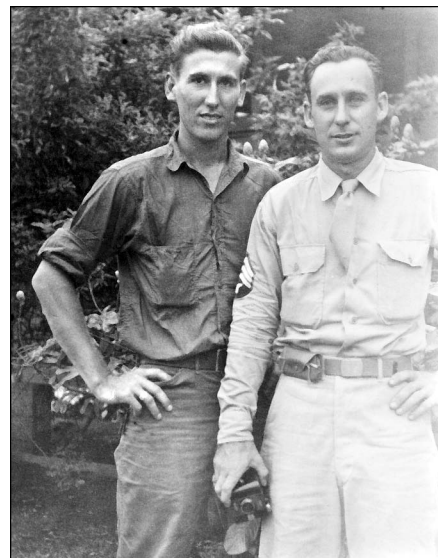


Figure 7-8. The same brothers met in Hawaii in 1945.