



## *Allegany County Veterans of World War II: Through Their Service*

**Brian T. White**

**Allegany High School Social Studies Seminar Class,  
Allegany County, brianwhite@excite.com, 301-777-8110**

*Allegany County Veterans of World War II: Through Their Service* is an oral history book and film project produced by the Allegany High School Social Studies Seminar Class. Using only primary sources pulled from interviews with veterans, footage from the National Archives, and student research, an exemplary account of local veterans' experiences during World War II was produced.

**Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project?** A need for preservation of local history was met by our project. If we had not documented local World War II veterans' stories, they may have never been heard. We were, as all historians should be, alarmed by the national statistics of 1,500 World War II veterans dying every day. We should take any chance we get to document veterans' stories, especially local veterans. Principally the veterans were helped through our project by being able to tell their stories. Senior citizens frequently live isolated lives and don't have an opportunity to interact with young people. This project set up opportunities for multigenerational dialog. Our local community has also been helped through this project by its history being preserved as well. Also, future researchers will be helped by the over 100 hours of interviews that will be available for research.

**Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives?** Social Studies Seminar is a Research Methods Course. It is used to enhance a student's experience of social issues not usually presented in regular social studies courses.

**Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project?** Reflection is a natural byproduct of our work because a continual cross-generational dialog was established that enables a true appreciation of what the veterans went through.

**Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project?** The students produced the key elements of this entire project. Students interviewed the veterans themselves and researched the various aspects of the project. The book was written entirely by the students, and students laid out the design of the book. Also the movie was put together and edited completely by students.

**Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project?** Our partners in this endeavor were the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 172; the Veterans of Foreign Wars; the American Legion; Mead-Westvaco; and Advertising Art & Design, Inc.

**Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project?** This project is an ongoing effort at Allegany High School to document and preserve elements of our local history. "Through their Service" is the fourth oral history publication by the Social Studies Seminar class.

In terms of the process, we have an established procedure for conducting the interviews, collecting primary resources, and organizing graphics necessary for publication.

**Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project?** The students developed and enhanced many skills while working on this project. Interviewing and research skills were learned or enhanced. Research and writing skills were enhanced greatly. The ability to use technology for the research, writing, graphic design, and film editing was developed.