

*Off to War*

*Franklin Countians in World War II*

by Roscoe Barnes III

Burd Street Press (Division of White Mane Publishing Company Inc.)

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## FOREWORD

The Civil War historian's fervent dream is to interview a veteran who stood at Manassas with Jackson "like a stonewall," or advanced with the Virginians during Pickett's Charge, or who came to attention with Maj. Gen. Joshua Chamberlain and watched as the Confederate army's battered remnants laid down their arms and precious flags for the last time. Sadly, it is never to be: the last Civil War veteran died decades ago. We are all, as a nation, poorer for no longer being able to hear these men speak of their role in the war in which Americans were once enemies.

Unbeknownst to those who fought in the Civil War, that war was the great moral conflict of the twentieth century, and it too was a war to save humans from enslavement. Only a few decades from now historians will bemoan the fact that they did not have a chance to interview the World War II veterans before the last died out.

Roscoe Barnes III has written the book I wish I could have written. He has not only recorded these World War II veterans' statements about their roles in the most horrific war ever fought, but he has had the honor to sit face-to-face with the men who—though they deny it—are indeed great American heroes. Roscoe Barnes has thus given a gift to historians not yet born who will dream of talking to a veteran who ducked the burning gasoline from an exploding kamikaze, or who shivered in the cold horror of the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge, or who bled into the black volcanic sand of an island called Iwo Jima.

This book was written about the last generation, for the next, and for the many generations to come after. It is a literary time capsule about World War II and the common man and woman who fought it.

**Mark Nesbitt, Author**

*Ghosts of Gettysburg series*

*35 Days to Gettysburg*

*Rebel Rivers*

*Saber and Scapegoats*