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Von Tom Brokaw

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THE HEARTWARMING *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER
BY THE AUTHOR OF *THE GREATEST GENERATION*

TOM BROKAW

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Produktinformation Verffentlicht am: 2001-07-31Erscheinungsdatum: 2001-07-31File Name:
B000FC1GHY | File size: 67.Mb

Von Tom Brokaw : An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from the Greatest Generation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from the Greatest Generation:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The Many Honorable Dimensions of Sacrifice and CaringVon Donald MitchellThis book brings the dangerous and trouble-

laden world of the 1930s and 1940s to life in a remarkably vivid and compelling way. Almost every letter comes with a photograph or memorabilia that make you realize that many of the servicemen and women were just kids when they moved into their place in history. They wanted to fall in love, marry, and raise a nice family. But first they had to take on incredible risk on land, on the beaches, at sea, and in the air around the world in places that they had never heard of. If they didn't become injured or killed, they knew that it was just a quirk of fate that they did not. Everyone lost family members, friends, buddies, and heroes. If they worked as a medic, they saw more ravaged bodies than we can imagine. Many still bear the pain of their wounds today. Nightmares continue to haunt the dreams of many others. Yet most have spared their families the full horror of that experience. Through Mr. Brokaw's books, we can better imagine some of what it might have been like. My Dad was pretty open about many of his experiences in the Eighth Air Force, but every so often a new one slips out. I suspect that even in these stories we are getting a censored version of what the actual experience was like. Dad did share the number of times that Luftwaffe bombs blew up part of his barracks (while he was sleeping there) and obliterated his sleeping area (when he was away on leave). What he remembered most searingly were the horrors of the shot-up crews returning from bombing runs over Europe (especially when they crashed in a ball of flames) and officers committing suicide by jumping off the top deck of his ship on the way home. As a youngster, I was terribly surprised and thrilled when former president Eisenhower came through our hometown and recognized my father in the crowd at the train station, and called Dad by name and rank. We had no inkling that Dad had met the president. Dad's response was simply that he had met a lot of the top brass, but he never told us any of their names. Our family was lucky. My parents met because of the war, so my life was immeasurably influenced for the better. None of my father or mother's families were killed or physically injured in World War II. One uncle did experience shell shock as a teenager in the Battle of the Bulge, and had to avoid stressful situations for the rest of his life. From this book, I was able to imagine what it was like for families that were not so fortunate. I was surprised to see that many of the veterans and their families had never been back to the battlegrounds and cemeteries. I asked Dad a number of years ago if he wanted to go back. He said he didn't care if he did or not (a typical Greatest Generation answer), but my Mother did. So my wife and I gave them a trip to England as a present. They had a ball, and saw many of the old sights. My Mother said that it seemed to do him a lot of good to see things back in peaceful circumstances. But there was no way that we could persuade him to go to France or Germany on the trip. He gave no reason. I suspect that the pain of the memories of those he had known who had died on bombing runs over that territory would have been too great for him. Since then, I have attended a reunion of Dad's old unit, and was pleasantly surprised to see how much the men care for each other. I don't know of another man my father was ever close to after World War II, but here were dozens he knew well and liked. It was a side of him that I had never seen. This book contains many memories like these. Often written by family members, the introduction then puts letters from the veteran into evidence at the court of history for us to experience. You will be powerfully moved by the stories of sacrifice (whether from being POWs, lack of supplies, discrimination, or the chilling experience being exposed to grave danger), loss (families losing their only child, wives losing husbands after just becoming pregnant, and veterans losing their buddies), and willingness to serve (great efforts to volunteer when too young or too old, to volunteer for tough duty, and trying to help all and sundry). One of the most powerful for me was the description of the horrors of a concentration camp that was considered well kept by the Nazis in order to make a good impression on the Red Cross. Most moving for me was the sense of forgiveness that many veterans felt towards their former enemies. If you know someone who served in World War II (whether a family member or not), I hope you will consider giving them this book and saying "thank you." After a few months have passed, ask them if they will tell you their story. If they will share, why not ask them if they would be willing to let you make copies of old letters and memorabilia so that you can send them to Mr. Brokaw? In this way, we can capture more of what happened then, honor these wonderful people, and pass on their legacy to generations yet unborn. May the best and most important of these memories live forever!

Kurzbeschreibung A seventeen-year-old who enlisted in the army in 1941 writes to describe the Bataan Death March. Other members of the greatest generation describe their war in such historic episodes as Guadalcanal, the D-Day invasion, the Battle of the Bulge, and Midway as well as their life on the home front. In this beautiful American family album of stories, reflections, memorabilia, and photographs, history comes alive and is preserved, in people's own words and through photographs and time lines that commemorate important dates and events. Starting with the Depression and Pearl Harbor, on through the war in Europe and the Pacific, this unusual book preserves a people's rich historical heritage and the legacy of the heroism of a nation. de Tom Brokaw has turned his popular book *The Greatest Generation* into a trilogy. After that first success came *The Greatest Generation Speaks*. Now there's *An Album of Memories*, a collection of letters and photos sent to Brokaw by readers who grew up during the Depression and came of age during World War II. *An Album of Memories* simply overflows with nostalgia. "We were privileged to grow up in a time when honor, truth, loyalty, duty, and patriotism were real and meant something," writes Robert Cromer. Another correspondent, Douglas G. Fish, describes his own wartime experience--and that of many others--with an

elegant simplicity: "I went in the service as a boy and came out a man." There are poignant letters from the dead. One reader submitted this one, sent home in 1942: "Dear Mom, I got your package and Dot's letter today. Boy, the cookies were swell, all the boys send their thanks. Not a one of them was crushed either." Almost exactly a year later, the writer was killed on a bombing run. Another man shares "the last letter my father wrote, three days before he died." It reads: "Tomorrow is D-Day at Iwo Jima--right on Japan's front doorstep--we will go in and lay nets sometime during the assault.... I have faith in God to help us through to victory but am prepared to die for America and face our Lord if He so wills it." The son who sent this letter to Brokaw wasn't even born until after his father had been killed: "I read [this letter] every year on Memorial Day, cry a lot, and think of what a hero he was," he writes. It's hard not to agree with that assessment, and it applies to so many of those who fought bravely in Europe or the Pacific, as well as those who maintained the home front. All of them have their say in this attractive volume. --John J. Miller.com

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