

# The Hidden History of New Jersey at War

The state of New Jersey is often overlooked when it comes to discussing American history, but it has a rich and fascinating history, particularly during times of war. From the American Revolution to World War II, New Jersey played a crucial role in shaping the nation's destiny. In this article, we will explore the hidden history of New Jersey at war, shedding light on its significant contributions and highlighting some lesser-known stories that deserve to be remembered.

## The American Revolution: A Crucial Battlefield

During the American Revolution, New Jersey served as a crucial battleground. Its strategic location between New York City and Philadelphia made it a prime target for both British and American forces. The state witnessed numerous battles, including the pivotal Battle of Trenton in 1776 when George Washington crossed the Delaware River in a daring surprise attack on Hessian troops. This victory boosted morale and turned the tide of the war in favor of the American cause.

Another important event during the revolution was the winter encampment at Jockey Hollow, now part of Morristown National Historical Park. The Continental Army endured extreme hardships during the harsh winter of 1779-1780, yet managed to regroup and emerge stronger. This period is not as widely known as Valley Forge, but it played a vital role in preserving the army and ultimately securing independence.

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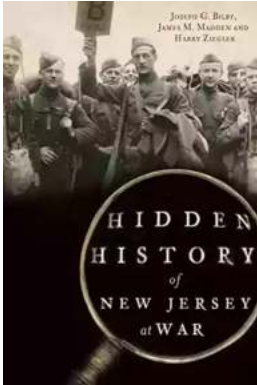
by Joseph G Bilby(Kindle Edition)

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## The Civil War: Supplying the Union

While New Jersey did not experience direct conflict during the Civil War, it played a critical role in supplying the Union Army. The industrial powerhouses of Newark and Paterson produced weapons, ammunition, uniforms, and other supplies needed by the troops. The state also saw an influx of immigrants, many of whom enlisted in the Union Army, contributing significantly to the war effort.

One fascinating aspect of New Jersey's involvement in the Civil War is the Underground Railroad. Despite being a northern state, New Jersey had its share of abolitionists who operated secret routes to help enslaved individuals escape to freedom. These hidden networks, often known as stations, played a crucial role in undermining the institution of slavery and supporting the cause of the Union.

## World War I and II: Industrial Powerhouses

During both World Wars, New Jersey became a major industrial powerhouse, producing significant amounts of war materials. The state's numerous factories manufactured everything from tanks and aircraft to ammunition and uniforms. Companies such as RCA, DuPont, and Ford significantly contributed to the war effort, employing thousands of workers and driving the state's economy.

One lesser-known story from World War II involves coastal defenses. The threat of German U-boats was very real, and New Jersey's coastline was considered a vulnerable target. To protect against potential attacks, massive concrete Army towers were constructed along the coast, equipped with powerful searchlights and artillery. These coastal defenses are now part of a unique historical landscape that provides a glimpse into the state's wartime past.

## **The Cold War: Bunker Secrets**

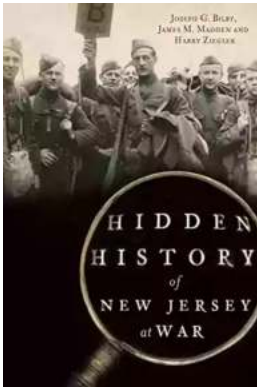
New Jersey's involvement in war did not end with World War II. During the Cold War, the state played a significant role in the defense strategy against potential Soviet aggression. One of the most intriguing aspects of New Jersey's hidden history is the existence of secret bunkers built deep underground. These bunkers housed communication systems, command centers, and were designed to withstand nuclear attacks. Today, some of these structures have been declassified and offer a fascinating glimpse into the state's role in national defense during the tense Cold War era.

## **The Forgotten Heroes: Honoring the Past**

The hidden history of New Jersey at war is a testament to the sacrifices and contributions made by countless individuals who often went unnoticed. It is crucial to remember and honor these forgotten heroes who played a vital role in shaping the nation's destiny. From the soldiers who fought on the front lines to the factory workers and secret operatives, their stories deserve to be preserved and shared.

Visiting historical sites, museums, and memorial parks across New Jersey can provide a deeper understanding of the state's hidden wartime history. Exploring these locations, listening to personal accounts, and engaging with local historians will reveal the fascinating stories of resilience, courage, and innovation that deserve to be celebrated.

, New Jersey's hidden history at war is a testament to the state's crucial role in shaping America's destiny during times of conflict. From pivotal battles during the American Revolution to its contributions during the Civil War, both World Wars, and the Cold War, New Jersey's hidden history is full of captivating stories waiting to be discovered. By celebrating and preserving these lesser-known accounts, we can gain a richer understanding of the state's past and honor the sacrifices made by those who came before us.



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The Garden State has made innumerable contributions to our nation's military history, on both battlefield and homefront, but many of those stories remain hidden within the larger national narrative. Perhaps the most crucial one-day battle of the Revolution was fought in Monmouth County, and New Jersey officers engineered the conquest of California in the Mexican War. During the Civil War, a New Jersey unit was instrumental in saving Washington, D.C., from Confederate capture. In World War II, New Jersey women flocked to war production factories and served in the armed forces, and a West Orange girl helped ferry Spitfire fighters in England. War came home to the coast in 1942 with the sinking of the

SS "Resor" by a German submarine, but the state's citizens reacted by contributing everything they could to the war effort. Uncover these and other stories from New Jersey's hidden wartime history.



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