



SECRETS & SPIES

RESEARCH PROJECT

OAK RIDGE & OTHER SECRETS

IN WWII TENNESSEE

**MU
SEA
UM**
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
MARITIME MUSEUM

Blog by Station Camp High School, Tennessee, USA

Books- How we're doing research

Facing a research project of this caliber was a daunting task to all of us. We had an idea of what we would need to research, but not much outside of that. So, we decided to have a few meetings to brainstorm methodology and material for research. We decided to go to many places from libraries to museums to find information on secrecy during the conflict. When we began researching secrets about Tennessee, our group had to broaden our horizons; we needed more research. We looked at testimonies, manuscripts, biographies, and maps. One of the books we came across was too imposing for one person to handle and so we split it into three parts. One person from the group would take the book for a week and look through it and then discuss at the next meeting. In addition to "book club," we went to a lot of places that had a lot of potential for information. Our group would often go to libraries and Museums searching and asking for any research available. We found some very interesting and brave individuals while researching. Through our exploration, we uncovered many interesting tales about Tennessee's deepest secrets.

Pictures-Examined photos (1st hand historical documents):

During our time as a group we have done meticulous research and searched for many images and documents about spies and espionage during World War 2. For one of our meetings we met at the Nashville Public library and checked out books and documents about spies during the time. Our most important finds while we were there were not the documents, they were the pictures. These, we had to examine by gloved hands while being carefully watched. Examining the pictures gave us a closer look into what really happened and immersed us into the time period. Reading about the time is one thing, but to experience it through another's eyes is what makes it real. Out of the numerous amounts of pictures we searched through, we only found a few about what we truly needed. We found pictures of military aircraft along with aerial pictures of other enemy military bases. We also found pictures of American troops scattered in China. Overall looking through the pictures in the Nashville Public Library archives, gave our group a deeper and better understanding of secrets and spies during World War II.

Trip to Hendersonville Public Library:

Even though the Nashville Public Library has many useful resources, it's location made it harder to visit for regular research. So instead, we often went to our local Hendersonville Public Library -- which was easier to access. When we went to the library, we first utilized the librarians for their help (turns out they're there for more than just telling you to be quiet). They helped us locate books that specifically related to Tennessee's involvement in WWII. Then, we narrowed down our topics to the spies and secrets and sorted through which books related to that topic. While a few members of the group combed through the books for pertinent information, the others would look at online resources. All in all, the library was a vital tool for our project. Not only for the information it had, but also for being a place that we really came together as a group.

How we brainstormed our intro video:

Making our intro video was definitely one of the more unique memories we've made throughout this project. When we first started thinking about ideas for the video, we were swapping through different ideas for what felt like an hour. Looking back on it, it seems ironic because our first video ended up being entirely different than our final product. While we were making our videos, we ran into a lot of difficulties. We chose our initial spot in our auditorium (because we liked the background) but unfortunately, the band was practicing next door thus we decided to change locations. Eventually we discovered a part of the school that most of us didn't know about, and it happened to be perfect for recording our video. After bringing all our props to our new recording spot, we began recording and after many, many attempts, we finally finished.

However, the next day we found out that the video was lost completely. So unfortunately, we ended up making an entirely different video to make up for the last one. The second video was just as fun to record as the first one, with laughs all the way through, and also had it's a fair amount of bloopers. We had learned a lot from filming the first video, so that the second filming went a lot smoother. Overall, making these intro videos are definitely memories we won't be forgetting soon.

How we felt coming into this project and navigating through history - Intro to group:

Each of us might have had a different feeling coming into this group. Overall it was a feeling of excitement and honor that Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Faires chose only five students, and they just happened to be us. As upcoming seniors, we have a big year ahead of us filled with events and ending chapters to stories we've built through our high school years. Coming into this group, some of us knew each other, some of us were complete strangers.

Yet through all of our research days and helping each other navigate through history, we've created a bond that all of us are lucky enough to have going into our senior year. We're such a diverse group from different backgrounds, whether that be family or school related. We've all grown up in different ways, places, and experiences creating a group of students that hold a view like none other. We've been given this amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do something that we will all be proud of. We know our names will be immortalized with this project. It's a lot of hard work ahead, but with the skills Mr. Taylor has instilled in us, we're prepared and excited for the task at hand.



The students and their teachers also visited the nuclear reactor in Tennessee. Their research focussed on Oak Ridge, a secret city in Tennessee that helped build the atomic bombs of WWII. Through the WAPIP75 program, a few months later they visited Hiroshima, where one of those bombs was dropped on 6 August 1945.