



**LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA**

**Sandra Gioia Treadway**  
*Librarian of Virginia*

## **Library of Virginia Foundation Receives \$315,000 NEH Grant to Digitize World War II Records**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA – The Library of Virginia is excited to be among the recipients of \$33.17 million in grants for 245 humanities projects across the country announced by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) on April 13, 2022.

The Library's project "**War, Remembrance, and the Power of Records: Digitizing the Library of Virginia's WWII Separation Notices**" received a \$315,000 NEH grant through the Library of Virginia Foundation to digitize 250,000 separation notices of WWII-era Virginia service members and make them accessible through community outreach transcription and online searchability. This significant three-year initiative focuses on digitizing the vast collection and then working with a wide array of community groups, family members, school groups and educators, and other individuals to uncover details and fill gaps in the stories of these individuals, potentially making connections and discoveries about the people of this era of history.

**The project is being funded through NEH's [Humanities Collections and Reference Resources](#) grant program and, in part, by NEH's special initiative, [A More Perfect Union](#), which will help Americans commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 by exploring, reflecting on, or telling the stories of our quest for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society throughout our history.**

"We are sincerely grateful for the support and recognition of this collection's national importance by NEH," said Scott Dodson, Executive Director of the Library of Virginia Foundation. "As the Commonwealth of Virginia's oldest institution dedicated to collecting, preserving, and sharing Virginia's history and culture, we are thrilled to make these records accessible and searchable for family members, historians, and the public."

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The Virginia WWII Separation Notices Collection contains approximately 250,000 separation records for men and women in the Armed Forces during WWII who were discharged between 1942 and 1950 (bulk 1944–1946) and indicated on their separation notices that they intended to seek employment in Virginia after their discharge. The separation notices include information on the date and place of birth, physical description, race, marital status, and civilian occupation of each individual. Also included are rank, military organization, date of induction or enlistment, place of entry into service, military occupation, battles and campaigns, decorations and citations, wounds received in action, service outside the continental United States, prior service, total length of service, and reason for separation.

These notices are the 7th and 8th generation carbon copies of the originals that were housed at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri. However, in 1973 the separation notices at the Library became invaluable. On July 12 of that year, a disastrous fire at NPRC destroyed approximately 16 to 18 million official military personnel files. Approximately 80 percent of Army and Army Air Force records for personnel discharged between November 1, 1912, and January 1, 1960, were lost. No duplicate copies of the records that were destroyed in the fire were maintained, nor was a microfilm copy ever produced. Naval personnel records (including Marine and Coast Guard records) were not affected. Due to the fire, the Army and Army Air Force separation notices at the Library may be the only surviving copies.

The WWII separation notices digitization project seeks to add greater online accessibility and awareness of the records of approximately a quarter of a million Virginians who served during WWII and connect them to researchers, genealogists, historians, educators, family members, and the broader public.

"We are honored to be a part of this esteemed group of NEH grantees," said Librarian of Virginia Sandra Gioia Treadway. "The Library's mission is one of service first and foremost to the people of the commonwealth and to those around the world who seek to know and understand Virginia's complex past, present, and future. In 2023, we will celebrate our 200th anniversary, and the WWII separation notice project will be a signature activity that will touch the lives of millions of Virginians."

"NEH is proud to support these exemplary education, media, preservation, research, and infrastructure projects," said NEH Chair Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo). "These 245 projects will expand the horizons of our knowledge of culture and history, lift up humanities organizations working to preserve and tell the stories of local and global communities, and bring high-quality public programs and educational resources directly to the American public."

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### **About the Library of Virginia**

The Library of Virginia is one of the oldest agencies of Virginia government, founded in 1823 to preserve and provide access to the state's incomparable printed and manuscript holdings. Its collection, which has grown steadily through the years, is the most comprehensive resource in the world for the study of Virginia history, culture, and government with over 130 million items in the collections. The Library also engages the public

through in-person and virtual events, education programs, and online resources that reach nearly 4 million individuals each year throughout the commonwealth and beyond. Learn more at [www.lva.virginia.gov](http://www.lva.virginia.gov).

### **About the National Endowment for the Humanities**

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov).

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