

World War II Arroyo Grande (Military)

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On December 7, 1941, war came to Arroyo Grande when two local sailors were killed on the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor. People from the small farm town, on the central coast of California, were thrust into great circumstances and quickly answered the call for action. A local storekeeper's son won the Silver Star after he brought his flaming B-17 safely back to base. A valley farmworker served with the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, composed of soldiers of Japanese descent. Chinese guerrillas commanded by Mao Zedong---the future Chairman Mao--threw a birthday party for an Arroyo Grande soldier serving in military intelligence. At home, community groups like the Arroyo Grande Women's Club brought packed lunches for their Japanese American neighbors on the morning they were forced to leave for the internment camps and may have been the turning point in welcoming them home again at war's end. Local author Jim Gregory grew up here and brings to life the sorrows and triumphs of a dramatic period in local history.

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