



THE STARS & STRIPES.

THE UNION. "IT MUST AND SHALL BE PRESERVED"

VOL. 1. BLOOMFIELD, MO., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1861.

N. 1.

The small town of Bloomfield, Missouri was a busy place during the Civil War. Union and Confederate forces exchanged control of the town over twenty times between November 1861 and September 1864. On November 9, 1861, under orders from Brigadier General Ulysses Grant, soldiers of the 11th, 18th and 29th Illinois Regiments set up camp in the town. About ten of the three thousand troops had backgrounds in the newspaper business. They requisitioned the printing press of the *Bloomfield Herald* and created the first newspaper for soldiers, by soldiers, which they called *The Stars and Stripes*. Today, the Stars and Stripes Museum/Library Association is in Bloomfield and has the original 1861 issue on display.

Stars and Stripes newspaper made its next appearance during World War I. General John J. Pershing wanted a newspaper written by servicemen for the soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) of the United States Army in Europe. Seventy-one eight-page weekly editions were published between February 8, 1918 and June 13, 1919. The newspaper's mission was to strengthen the morale of the troops and to promote unity within the American forces, which were spread far and wide across the Western Front. The newspaper, which sold out its first edition of a thousand copies, was popular with soldiers. Many of the reporters and illustrators were veterans of the newspaper business or took the skills they had developed into the business upon their return from duty. *Stars and Stripes* may have been designated as the "official newspaper of the AEF," but from the start operated under the principles of the First Amendment. This complete editorial independence earned the respect and confidence of the soldiers it served.

Stars and Stripes began being published again during World War II. As before, the staff was composed of veteran reporters or some who would return to become important journalists. With U.S. forces spread across many different operating theaters during World War II, dozens of editions of the newspaper were printed. At one time, there were as many as 25 publishing locations in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific. Some of these were assembled and printed very close to the different fronts in order to get the latest information to the most troops.

World War II ended but it was decided that *Stars and Stripes* would continue as long as troops were stationed abroad. The newspaper has been published continuously in Europe since 1942 and in the Pacific since 1945. Today, Stars and Stripes maintains news bureaus around the world including Europe, Pacific and the Middle East to provide first-hand reporting on events. Reporters have been with troops in Korea, Vietnam, throughout the Cold War, in Kosovo and Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries. On any given day, the total average daily audience for *Stars and Stripes* news and information can exceed 1.0 million.

This unique newspaper began in Missouri. Learn more about its roots at the National Stars and Stripes Museum and Library, www.starsandstripesmuseumlibrary.org, in Bloomfield. This non-profit educational institution is dedicated to collecting, documenting, and preserving materials related to the creation and continued history of the *Stars and Stripes* military newspaper. The museum and library seek to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the newspaper's role in American and world history.

Newspaper Connections: *Stars and Stripes* newspaper operates under the principles of the First Amendment. Reimagine it being written by people not operating under "freedom of press."