RESEARCH QUESTION:

• What effect did WWII have on baseball?
• How did baseball effect WWII?
  • Baseball stars sent overseas
  • Military baseball overseas
  • Prisoner of War baseball
Baseball was in “golden years”, attendance and popularity at an all-time high.

WWII threatened to destroy baseball in America.

President Roosevelt wrote a letter to the baseball commissioner.

The American morale needed baseball.
BASEBALL STARS TURNED SOLDIERS

• 500 Major League players including:
• Minor Leagues went from 40 leagues to 12
• I gained the utmost respect for the “greatest generation”
MILITARY BASEBALL

• Over 100 official military games and countless pick-up games
• Morale booster
• Kept soldiers out of trouble
• Training
POW BASEBALL

- 130,000 soldiers and 19,000 civilians held prisoner during WWII
- Baseball prevented learned helplessness, gave hope
- YMCA and Red Cross collected and distributed commercial-quality gear to prisoners
- Softball-style game
- Make-shift fields
- Stalag Luft I
- Stalag Luft III—Pinnacle of POW Baseball
MIS-X division provided escape and evade equipment disguised as baseball equipment
- Baseball cards with maps
- Baseballs with radios
- Buttons with compasses
- Baseball was diversion for digging
- Provided a different form of hope
CONCLUSION

• Germans targeted baseball diamonds with bombs
• Japanese mocked the heroes of baseball
• Private John E. Stevens: “Baseball is a part of the American way of life. Remove it and you remove something from the lives of American citizens, soldiers, and sailors
• Just as Superman embodies the sacrifice, strength and hope that Americans value, baseball did the same during the 1940’s