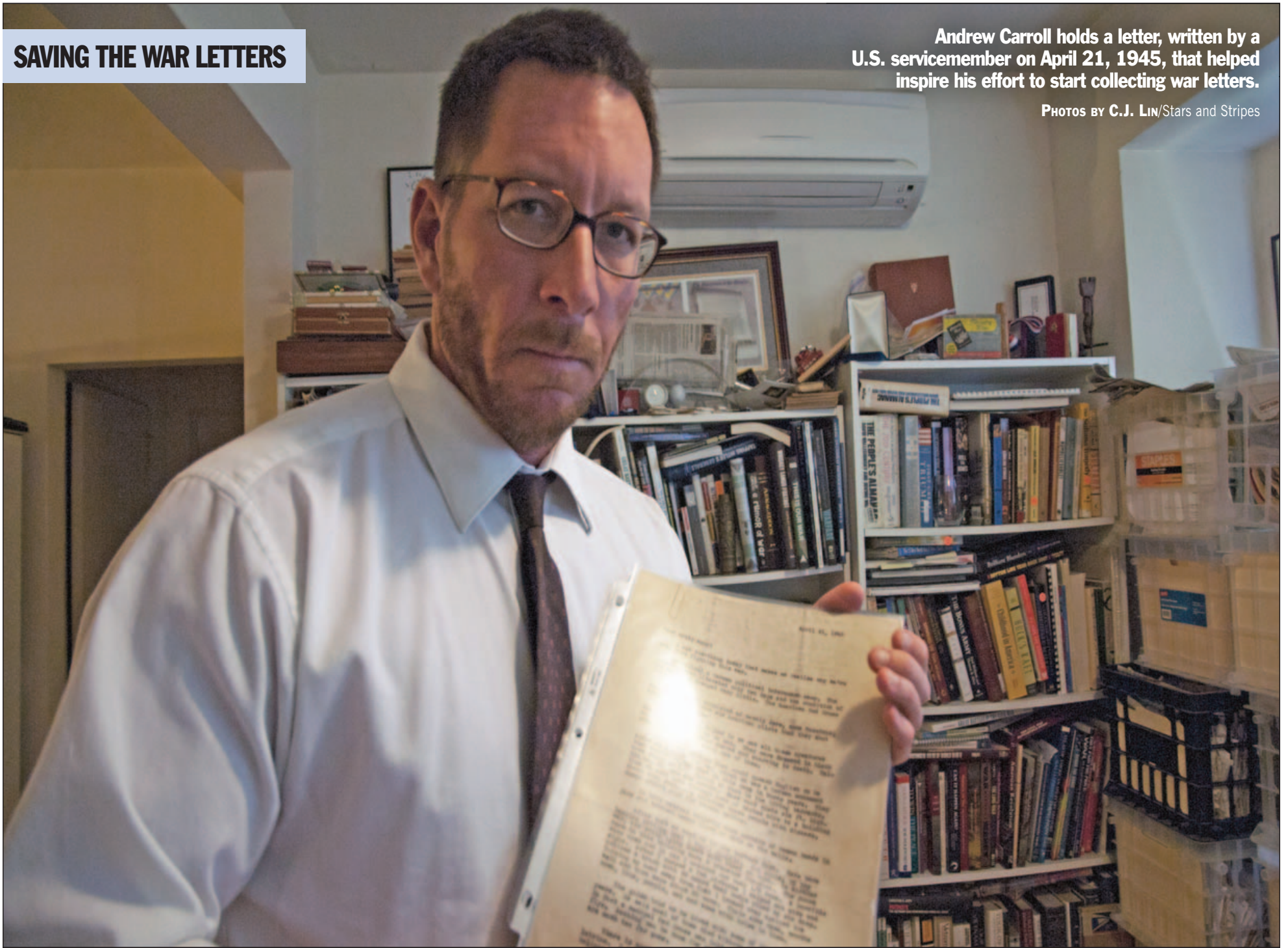


SAVING THE WAR LETTERS

Andrew Carroll holds a letter, written by a U.S. servicemember on April 21, 1945, that helped inspire his effort to start collecting war letters.

PHOTOS BY C.J. LIN/Stars and Stripes



An enduring legacy

Historian aims to honor veterans by preserving their letters

BY CHRIS CARROLL ■ *Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON

In his spare Washington apartment, author and popular historian Andrew Carroll stood over a dining room table, delicately sifting through stacks of letters written by the troops who fought every American war.

They range from Revolutionary War epistles in exacting penmanship to hastily banged-out Iraq War emails, and everything in between. At least one has a bullet hole in it, some are splashed with battlefield mud and blood and others were finished hours before the writers died in combat.

Spurred by a hunger for an unvarnished

history of American warfare written by those who lived it, Carroll has been tracking down, writing about and storing those messages since 1998.

They've been the basis of two best-selling books from which he's donated all profits to veterans charities. He says he plans to continue working with them for the rest of his life as part of his Legacy Project, designed to honor veterans by preserving their correspondence.

What he hasn't always been able to do is take care of the letters the way he believes they deserve.

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