

# WORLD WAR II NEW JERSEY

The purpose of this program is to let your students experience the sorts of items they would see on the home front during World War II, and make general conclusions about what the items demonstrate about that time period, including by not limited to:

- Rationing, saving, conserving, and reusing was not just a reality, it was considered a civic duty.
- Men left to fight overseas, which allowed women to step into their jobs in factories, companies, and assembly lines.
- Women also replaced men in non-combatant home front military positions in the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. They received equal pay and benefits.
- Attack by air and sea was a reality for Americans. Many citizens trained as Air Raid Wardens and other Civil Defense positions. Some children carried gas masks.

## **WWII jacket of Francis X Phair, enlisted in 1941**

Francis Xavier Phair (1919 – 2001) Born in Hoboken, New Jersey, Francis enlisted in the Army in June 1941. He was a Private First Class. During the war, he worked in Intelligence. He was responsible for gathering and delivering information to the higher officials of the US Army (including the famous General Patton). He was one of the first soldiers to learn that the war was officially over, but couldn't share it until was officially announced by the government. In 2002, Francis was posthumously awarded a Distinguished Service Medal.

## **Child's Gas Mask, 194-**

Americans feared attacks from the air and seas. Gas masks like these were issued to children in the event of such an attack, and many children were expected to carry them at all times (hence the bag and the strap). Sometimes, the gas masks were made in bright colors so they would be less frightening. This one, however, is the standard U.S. Government issued khaki.

## **War ration wallet, 1942**

Rationing was widespread during the war, including sugar, coffee, meat, and butter! This particular wallet and ration book were owned by Florence Clara Neglia in Rutherford, New Jersey.

## **Fuel oil ration coupons, 1944**

Food wasn't the only thing rationed during the war! Gas and oil were also rationed, as demonstrated by these ration coupons.

### **War Ration Book No. 3, 1943**

Unlike the book in the Florence's war ration wallet, this book still has its tickets.

### **Postcard of soldier drills in Princeton, New Jersey, 19-**

The sight of uniformed men performing drills and exercises was common, especially with the number of military bases stationed in New Jersey like Camp Kilmer, Fort Dix, Fort Monmouth, Fort Hancock and others! Atlantic City was transformed into a huge hub of military training and operations, earning it the nickname "Camp Boardwalk."

### **United States Treasury 3<sup>rd</sup> War Loan pamphlet, 1943**

American citizens were encouraged to do their part during the war, and purchasing war bonds was a way to do this. The option to purchase in small denominations meant that every citizen could do his or her part, including young children.

### **Victory Garden magazine ad, 1943**

Victory Gardens were personal gardens citizens tended during the war to counter the food rationing. 40% of all vegetable consumed on the home front came from these humble little plots.

### **The Homefront: Second Line of Defense pamphlet, 19-**

This pamphlet is obviously intended for women, who were primarily the heads of household in war time. The message to conserve, do your part, and find resources when other things are scarce was a common one.

Other homefront initiatives included scrap metal collection, blood donations, planting Victory Gardens, buying war bonds, volunteering or working at local and state civil defense organizations, and collecting paper that was later turned into blood plasma boxes. Women also knitted scarves, mittens, hats and gloves for soldiers. A small comfort, but a very welcome one!

### **General Electric advertisement, 1942**

As men went overseas to fight, they left huge gaps in the workforce. So women headed to the factories and businesses to work jobs that men had vacated. Many of these jobs involved working in assembly lines. This is where the famous "Rosie the Riveter" image comes from. WWII gave women independence and opportunities that had never existed before, and forever changed the social dynamic of domestic America.

### **WAAC officer recruitment advertisement, *Look* magazine 1942**

WAAC stands for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. It was established in 1942. In 1943, the "auxiliary" part was dropped and the name was shortened to WAC. Amazingly, women in WAC could be fully commissioned officers, which included equal the pay and benefits to the male soldiers. After meeting certain recruitment criteria, women in WAC went through basic training like any soldier, and then were assigned wherever they were needed on the home front.

The women of WAC were commissioned to replace men in non-combat positions, freeing the men to fight overseas. WAC did clerical jobs, drove jeeps and trucks, and were hospital technicians. They were radio and control tower operators, stenographers, recruiters, mechanics, lab technicians, and rifle repairmen.

### **WAVES officer recruitment pamphlet, 1943**

WAVES stand for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service in Navy. The WAVES were the Navy equivalent of the Army WACs. They were official soldiers and officers, earning equal pay to the men. Like WAC, they did not serve overseas - they replaced the men on the home front. After completing basic training, they served as nurses, clerks, and repairmen.

In addition to WAVES and WAC, there were the WASPs (Women's Air Force Service Pilots), SPARs (Coast Guard), and the Women's Marine Corps Reserve (who received the full Marine training – even combat skills – even though they were not allowed in combat situations).

### **Citizens Defense Corps, Air Raid Warden certification and insignia, 1944**

"Civil Defense" was a blanket term for any activity designed to ensure home front readiness. Working in a factory, collecting scrap, putting together care packages for soldiers, or joining a volunteer organization all made a difference during WWII.

### **Civil Defense Air Raid Warden arm band, 19-**

Air Raid Wardens would sometimes wear armbands like these to identify themselves. This particular armband was manufactured in Garfield, NJ.

### **American Red Cross blood donor card, 1944**

The American Red Cross is a volunteer organization that dates back to 1881. During WWII, the Red Cross organized blood drives, rolled bandages, and made care packages for troops overseas. Unlike the women's branches of the military, some members of the Red Cross went overseas and served in hospitals and medical tents on the front lines of the war.

**Letter to sweetheart from Alden W. Smith, 1944**

Letters were a lifeline to soldiers overseas, far away from their families, children, and loved ones. Often, soldiers would describe their lives and activities, giving us an intimate look at life during wartime.

**Draft letter, Harry Dale Leazenby, 1945**

In 1940, men between the ages of 21 and 45 were required to register for the draft lottery. As the war progressed, the age range was expanded and men were inducted to serve, as demonstrated by this letter. By the end of WWII, 50 million men between the ages of 18 and 45 had registered for the draft, and 10 million had been inducted.