World War II united America like never before as citizens of all ages and from all walks of life rallied together to overcome the challenges facing the nation. The Home Front played a vital role in these efforts, and students were among many who helped secure the victory of freedom and democracy over tyranny. Students planted and cared for Victory Gardens, saved money to purchase war bonds, helped their families save ration stamps by not wasting food, and participated in scrapping by collecting materials used for production in defense plants. These student contributions to the war effort serve as powerful examples of the impact children can make in their communities through civic engagement and active citizenship. By recognizing these contributions and creating opportunities for today’s students to unite around a common issue, we can empower young people to embrace their role in shaping history.

Inspired by the scrapping efforts of students during World War II, Get in the Scrap! is the Museum’s signature service learning program. It teaches students they have the power to affect positive change in the environment and in their community. While wartime scrapping ensured that allied troops had the supplies and materials to sustain the war effort, today’s students can follow this example to preserve the nation’s natural resources and protect the environment.

Since 2016, over 300 classrooms and 7,000 students across the country have participated in Get in the Scrap! Over the years we have had requests for World War II Home Front and get in the scrap related artifacts to be made accessible to participating schools. The Museum’s partnership with the Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation Service learning program allowed for the addition of the Get in the Scrap! Artifact Trunk to the already impressive lineup of over 25 hands-on classroom activities.

The Get in the Scrap! Artifact Trunk allows your students an opportunity to imagine themselves as young people during World War II. The artifacts enclosed have been carefully selected so that they may experience how fully the war impacted and shaped the lives of students over 70 years ago.

Very Respectfully,

Adam T. Foreman
Student Programs Specialist
The National WWII Museum
Tips for the Get in the Scrap! Artifact Trunk

- Your class gets 25 Get in the Scrap! points for the Artifact Trunk activity!

- Please pay careful attention to how the trunk is packaged and be sure to include all original shipping foam when repacking.

- When not in use, please keep the trunk locked. Unlock using the dial combination listed above.

- When repacking, replace all artifacts in their proper containers and pack them into the footlocker carefully. Please do not force or jam artifacts and take care to arrange them securely.

- Please return used gloves—we recycle!

- Once your class has explored the Get in the Scrap! Artifact Trunk, complete the enclosed evaluation form.

- When you repack the Artifact Trunk, complete the Artifact Inventory and Condition Report and note any damage.

- Please share any images of your students learning with artifacts by using #GetintheScrap or Email: servicelearning@nationalww2museum.org (This helps keep our donors happy and keeps the program free!)

All of these artifacts were donated or purchased with the explicit use for educational programming.
What is An Artifact?

An artifact is an object that has been created or altered by humans from another place or time (or both). As such, it may be irreplaceable.

Artifacts represent the material culture of a place and time. If we analyze, or “read,” artifacts, we can learn about what was occurring when the item was created and used.

Artifacts can be small or large or somewhere in-between. But whatever their sizes, artifacts are the “real deal” of history—not reproductions, fakes, or copies. By handling artifacts, students in a sense travel back in time to experience history.

Artifact reading uses multiple learning styles to capture students’ interest. Reading artifacts involves:

1. Use of multiple senses to manipulate and investigate.
2. Natural curiosity about the unknown nature of an artifact.
3. Tie-ins with prior knowledge about the subject matter (in this case World War II).
4. Forming conclusions about artifacts from their physical attributes.
5. Forming conclusions about a time and place from an artifact’s physical attributes.
6. Developing and exploring emotional connections to the past through physical encounters.
How to Handle Artifacts

Remember: an artifact should be treated with great care and respect.

Each object used in the Get in the Scrap! Artifact Trunk is unique, and will require special treatment, but there are a few basic handling rules students should learn:

1) When handling artifacts, wear gloves. Gloves allow students handle the item but prevent contact with the natural oils of human skin. Each contact with human skin degrades an artifact, especially paper ones.

2) Handle with care! It is important to recognize the fragile nature of the artifacts being used. Special care should be taken when artifacts are being taken out of (or put back into) protective covers and boxes. Do not force artifacts out, or back in, to their storage packaging.

3) Once out, artifacts should be handled delicately and supported by both hands. Extra care should be taken when artifacts are being passed between students. This is especially important for paper items such as books, magazines, and advertisements.

PLEASE TURN PAGES CAREFULLY!

4) Artifacts can often be repaired if damaged. When you return your artifact trunk to the Museum, please record any damage to artifacts on the Artifact Inventory and Condition Report.
Leading an Artifact “Reading” Session

The handling of artifacts should always be done with close teacher supervision. Do not allow students free access to the artifacts or trunk.

What is meant by “reading” an artifact? Reading is just a friendly term for analyzing, exploring, and discovering the use and significance of an artifact. Some artifacts are easier to identify while others need more careful examination.

When students “read” an artifact, they become detectives, piecing together clues from what they see, feel, smell, and hear (please, no tasting). They also use past experience and knowledge to compare and contrast, intuit, deduce, and assess the historical use and significance of an artifact.

**GOAL:** Students gain a richer understanding for and appreciation of World War II history by analyzing artifacts.

**RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE:**

1. Define “artifact” for students; introduce artifact trunk by telling students that they will be exploring actual pieces of World War II history.

2. Briefly review the How to Handle Artifacts page and obtain an agreement from students that they will handle each object carefully and respectfully.

3. There are several ways to proceed:

   a. Divide class into small groups and pass out gloves and artifacts. Ask each group to examine their artifact and make a verbal report to the class on what they have. You may wish to use the questions on the following page as a guide. Follow up with the information on each artifact found in the following pages.

   b. Call up students one at a time for each to handle and examine an artifact in front of the entire class. Follow up with the information on each artifact found in the following pages.

   c. Divide the class into small teams. Give each team an artifact to “read.” Have them make a report to the class on their artifact.

   d. If it is not appropriate to let students handle the artifacts, the teacher can handle them, showing the class each one in turn.

   *Remember, students must be wearing gloves if they are handling the artifacts.*
Sample questions to ask for artifact “reading”:

1. **What kind of item do you have?** Some artifacts are self-evident; others may not be so apparent. Look carefully for details.

2. **What materials is it made of?** Be specific. Artifacts may be made of several materials. Try to list them all.

3. **Does it have anything written on it?** English? Other languages? Read what you can on the artifact to learn more about it.

4. **Where did it come from?** Where was it manufactured? Can you tell? How?

5. **How was it used?** This may be the trickiest question. Each artifact is described in the following pages.

6. **Who was it used by?** Soldiers, civilians, etc.

7. **Where was it used?** Continent, climate, country, on a ship, in a plane, etc.

8. **Do we have or use anything similar today?** If so, how is this object the same and how is it different?

9. **Note things that are unique, different, strange, or that you cannot identify or do not understand.**

And, perhaps, the most important question:

10. **What can we learn about World War II from this object?**

This last question is important because it helps us understand history by exploring its material culture. There are many ways to research and analyze history. Reading books and watching documentaries are great ways to learn history. But being able to handle actual pieces of history (primary sources) gives students a unique opportunity to interact with history in a physical, hands-on way.
Artifact Inventory & Repacking Instructions

Each artifact trunk contains between 10 and 15 of the following items. The specific ones are listed on your Artifact Inventory and Condition Report. Please note the way items fit as you unpack.

When repacking, all items should fit snugly against each other, or against the sides of the artifact trunk, so items don’t shift and become damaged in transit. Relock artifact trunk then cushion all sides of box. We have provided you a return shipping label. Contact UPS for shipping.

INVENTORY
- Box of gloves—we will recycle used gloves between artifact trunk shipments
- Get in the Scrap! artifact trunk teacher’s manual binder

Page/Item:

8) V-mail letter and stationery (3 separate items)
9) War ration book (2 separate items)
10) Wartime high school yearbook
11) Coca-Cola ad (4 separate items)
12) Wartime magazine
13) 1943 MINT penny/1943 circulated penny/modern penny/magnet (4 separate items)
14) Wartime license plate
15) Savings bond stamp book
16) Wooden toy from World War II
17) Meal planning guide
18) Victory canner manual
19) A Job Only A Woman Can Do and What Can I Do Civil Defense
20) Get in the Scrap Matchbook and Post card
21) WORLD WAR II Home Front propaganda poster (reproduction)
22) Animated propaganda films (CD)
23) Office of War Information (OWI) propaganda films (CD)

When you ship, email servicelearning@nationalww2museum.org with the UPS tracking number.
Artifact Description: V-mail Letter and Stationery

V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was created in 1942 to reduce the space and weight required to ship soldiers’ letters home. Soldiers would write their letters on special V-mail stationery—no postage was necessary. The letter was read by a military censor and photographed onto a roll of 16mm microfilm (by the US Army Signal Corps). The microfilm roll would then be flown to the United States, where it was developed and printed out onto 4” x 5” cards. The US Postal Service then delivered these small photographed letters.

Here’s why the system worked: 18,000 letters could be photographed onto one roll of microfilm. That means that 150,000 letters on microfilm would fill just one mail bag. This represents the difference between shipping 2,000 pounds for paper letters and 45 pounds for V-mail film. Because of the space and weight savings of V-mail, it could be flown to the United States instead of sent by ship. This meant that V-mail could often be delivered within 12 days.

510,000,000 (million) V-mails were sent from Europe and the Pacific to the United States between June 1942 and August 1945.

Additional Items of Interest

V-mail reduced any threat of spies using microdots or invisible ink—these would not be readable following the photographing and developing processes.

Drawbacks to V-mail: The addressee would not receive the actual writing. Delivered V-mail was small and often hard to read (about half the size of the original). The V-mail stationery itself was also rather small. Longer letters required sending multiple V-mail forms separately.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. What did this soldier write and what can you learn about him and World War II from it?

2. How important do you think it was for soldiers to communicate with their families and friends?

3. People don’t often write letters today. Compare and contrast the ways we communicate with family and friends today with how it was done during World War II. What are the positive and negative features of these different means of communication?
Once the United States entered war in late 1941, US government, businesses, and farmers had to work together to make the most out of some scarce resources. On the Home Front, all Americans had to make adjustments so that the troops could have what they needed. Rationing meant sacrifices for all.

Rationing limited what people could buy. Sugar rationing took effect in May 1942 with the distribution of Sugar Buying Cards. Coupons were distributed based on family size, and the coupon book allowed the holder to buy a specified amount. Possession of a coupon book, however, did not guarantee that sugar would be available. Honey and molasses often served as substitutes.

Each family was issued a monthly War Ration Book and each stamp allowed the purchase of rationed goods in the quantity and time designated. Red Stamp rationing covered all meats, butter, fat, and oils, and most cheese. Each person was allowed a certain number of points weekly with expiration dates. Blue Stamp rationing covered canned, bottled, and frozen fruits and vegetables, plus juices and dry beans.

**Additional Items of Interest**

Not all food in America was rationed. Canned foods that could be sent overseas to soldiers were rationed at home, but fresh fruits and vegetables grown locally were not rationed.

Rationing could be confusing. Each version of the War Ration Book was different as supplies and demands for different foods and materials changed during the war. In addition to food, rationing encompassed clothing, shoes, gasoline, tires, and fuel oil. Rationing of gas and tires depended on the distance to one’s job.

While life during war meant daily sacrifice, few complained because they knew it was the men and women in uniform who were making the greater sacrifice. A poster released by the US Office of War Information stated simply, “Do with less so they’ll have enough.” Another encouraged Americans to “Be patriotic, sign your country’s pledge to save the food.”

**Questions for Further Inquiry**

1. Think about your favorite foods. Which of them would you be willing to give up if it helped your country win a war? How long would you be willing to make these sacrifices?

2. Families often grew a victory garden to help supplement their rations. What types of food do you think would have been grown in victory gardens at home?
Artifact Description: Wartime High School Yearbook

Yearbooks are about 70 years old, so may be previously damaged and are prone to more wear and tear. Please treat them carefully.

One of the best ways to engage students in history is to let them see something of themselves in the story. This wartime high school yearbook is full of reminders that the students pictured were experiencing a time of war. But they were also average students going to school, joining clubs and sports teams, and attending dances. Let students explore the pages of this yearbook with the following two goals: 1. find examples of how the war intruded on students’ lives and 2. find examples of activities that seem familiar to students today.

Look carefully for details in the artwork, the dedication, and the ads in the back.

Be sure to compare the dress of the teachers and students. Differentiate between the hairstyles, clothing, phone numbers, and language of the period as compared to those of today.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. In what ways did World War II affect these students’ lives? How do American foreign affairs affect your life today?

2. How important is it for people to see something of themselves in the history they study? Do you enjoy studying history more when you see that people like you are included?

3. Imagine future students 65 years from now looking at your yearbooks. What themes, activities, clothing styles, and classes would they recognize? What will be different in the yearbooks of those future students?
Artifact Description: Coca-Cola Advertisement

During World War II, American companies wanted the public to know that they were supporting the war effort. Magazine advertisements frequently made some mention of the war. These included direct connections between their products and victory in World War II, or perhaps just reminded readers to buy war bonds. Many US companies benefitted greatly from wartime government contracts for vehicles, weapons, supplies, food, and equipment. By advertising in popular magazines, they not only informed the public about their products, but ensured that the public saw them as patriotic.

Coca-Cola was one such company. The entry of the United States into the war brought an order in 1941 from company President Robert Woodruff "to see that every man in uniform gets a bottle of Coca-Cola for five cents, wherever he is and whatever it costs the company." On June 29, 1943, General Dwight Eisenhower requested shipment of materials and equipment for 10 bottling plants to North Africa and three million bottles of Coca-Cola for the soldiers. In all, 64 bottling plants were shipped abroad during World War II. The plants were set up as close as possible to combat areas in Europe and the Pacific. More than five billion bottles of Coke were consumed by military service personnel during the war. When the war ended, Coca-Cola had made huge inroads into markets throughout the world, and they also had many loyal customers in returning soldiers.

Additional Items of Interest

Coca-Cola had bottling plants in Germany before the war and therefore had business dealings with the Nazis. Many other US companies did business with Germany, Japan, and Italy in the years before the war. Some even helped these countries to improve their military might, although the incentive was almost always economic and not political. Most if not all of these companies tried to hide or minimize these facts after the war.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. What messages is Coca-Cola trying to send to the readers of the advertisement?
2. How do you think a soldier, sailor, or Marine serving abroad felt about having Coca-Cola available?
3. Wars are often “good for business.” Do you think businesses should profit from war?
Artifact Description: Wartime Magazine

Magazines are over 70 years old, so may be previously damaged, and are prone to more wear and tear, please turn pages carefully.

During World War II, Americans got their war news from radio, newspapers, and newsreels at the movies, and from weekly and monthly magazines. One of the most popular magazines was *TIME*, which began publishing in 1923. *TIME* magazine sent reporters all over the world during World War II to write stories about the war and of the men and women fighting it.

Along with these stories of World War II, *TIME* produced stories of other events happening in the United States and other countries. Popular entertainment, politics, the economy, medicine, and science and technology were all covered. Often these other stories were affected by the war in some way, so they too became "war stories."

Before television and long before the internet, *TIME* magazine held vivid depictions of the war years. Lastly, advertisements in magazines often took on a wartime flavor, with companies highlighting their contributions to the fighting or using wartime themes, images, and messages.

Look for stories about people and places you have heard of.

Look for ads of companies that are still around today. How has the look of their products changed?

**Questions for Further Inquiry**

1. Why do you think companies that made products for the military advertised those facts to the public?

2. Do you think it was OK for magazines to publish stories about entertainment or sports during the war?

3. Today we have instant access to news 24 hours a day. Do you think people are better informed about their world today than they were during World War II?

4. What kind of magazines do we have today similar to *TIME* magazine? What magazines do you read?
On the Home Front, the war affected many aspects of people’s lives, from the big (where they worked, what they ate, what they saw at the movies, etc.) to the small (what they carried in their pockets). This is a penny minted in 1943. It does not have the distinctive copper color of most pennies, because it is not made of copper. It is made of steel. During the war, the need for copper increased greatly. Copper was needed primarily for wiring used in communications and in the building of aircraft. To avoid a copper shortage, the US Department of the Treasury decided in 1943 to mint pennies out of steel, which was not in short supply.

Besides their color and makeup, there is one other interesting characteristic of 1943 pennies: they are attracted to magnets. Try this: hold the magnet over a modern penny. What happens? Now hold the magnet over the 1943 steel penny. What happens?

By 1944, it became apparent that there would not be a copper shortage and the Treasury went back to making pennies out of copper. But many steel pennies are still around. They can be purchased for under a dollar at many coin shops, making it possible to own a very small yet significant piece of World War II history.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. The penny is a small everyday object. Can you think of other everyday objects that were affected by the war?

2. Can you name other common objects that were affected by World War II?

3. Does an artifact have to be big to tell a significant story?
Artifact Description: Wartime License Plate

During World War II, there was a metal shortage. The iron used in making license plates was needed to make ships, tanks, helmets, airplanes, and thousands of other items needed to fight and win the war. Scrap metal drives were a common sight in America during World War II. Children especially helped with this effort, collecting old bed springs, radiators, and pots and pans from their neighbors and hauling them to a central pickup point to be recycled for the war effort.

One method to save metal was to only make a single license plate per car, instead of the usual two plates. And by 1943, instead of issuing a new plate each year, many states’ motor vehicle departments issued only a small metal date tab to be affixed to the old license plate.

Some states even started making plates out of soybean pulp. These soybean plates were like pressboard fiber. They were made by the thousands, but most deteriorated soon after the war. Another problem with these fiberboard soybean plates: goats seem to have liked the taste of them, so they were often found with bites taken out of the plate.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. Recent studies have shown that most of the recycled or scrapped metal that was collected by Americans for the war effort was never used—mostly because it was of inferior quality or because it just wasn’t really needed. But the US government continued to encourage Americans to support scrap drives. Why do you think that is?

2. How important do you think it is that Americans participate in their country’s challenges? Should it be mandatory?

3. Do you recycle? What do you recycle? Why do you recycle?
Financing a global war required huge amounts of money. Lots of large, technologically advanced equipment was produced on a mass scale, not just for the United States, but also for other Allies.

In 1947, after the war, the Treasury Department estimated the cost for World War II at $350 billion. All previous US wars together had only cost $33 billion!

Although the federal public debt grew by a factor of five from 1941–1945, much of the war costs were met by levying taxes on the public, including income, sales, and other kinds. Higher taxes also kept inflation under control. This was important in an era of high employment and wages (even with taxes and increased living costs, household incomes rose).

Federal securities were sold to divert some of those household monies back to the war effort. Federal securities included nonmarketable savings bonds and savings stamps. These could not be transferred, but could be redeemed on demand—meaning the government would pay their value when requested. However, the longer they were held, the more value they would earn. The public was encouraged to buy them during war bond drives, of which there were eight between November 1942 and December 1945 (after the war). During these national fundraising efforts, celebrities, businesses, and government leaders would promote the sales of Savings Bonds and Stamps. Even schools and youth groups sold bonds in their hometowns to help the war effort overseas.

**Additional Items of Interest**

The Eighth Drive—also known as the Victory Drive—was held from October 29 to December 31, 1945. The war was over, but the government still needed to pay for the materials they had purchased from American manufacturers for the war effort.

**Questions for Further Inquiry**

1. What denominations were the stamps of World War II? What levels of stamps do you think the US government should sell today?

2. Savings bonds and stamps accrued value over the years. A twenty-five dollar savings bond from 1945 was worth $111.45 40 years later. Why might some people cash theirs early?
Artifact Description: **WORLD WAR II Era Wooden Toy**

Children have always enjoyed toy transportation models such as toy trains or trucks. The same was true for American children during World War II, though their toys might have included vehicles their relatives were using to help fight the war, such as jeeps or tanks.

One notable difference between then and now was the composition of these toys. Metal was in short supply during the war. The expense needed to mine and refine it was prohibitive. Also, the metal that was available was needed to produce the real airplanes and tanks needed to fight a global war.

Formulation of plastic was in its infancy. Even though the United States was an oil-exporting country at the time, scientists and engineers had not developed the industrial capacity to convert petroleum into plastics suitable for toys. Wood, especially pine, was used instead.

Although bright primary colors, particularly red and yellow, aided toy sales before the war, many toys were painted in American military olive drab. Even toys that were still painted in bright colors might have a military tie-in during World War II—a time when “We’re all in this together” was part of everyday life, even for kids!

**Additional Items of Interest**

World War II was also a time when many small toy companies flourished as prewar woodworkers turned their hands (and lathes) to producing quality toys.

It is important to consider the childhood experiences of children in other areas of the world affected by World War II. Many had no toys at all, and had to use their imaginations to play, even as the war was raging all around them.

**Questions for Further Inquiry**

1. What age do you think this toy was designed for? Would you be inclined to play with this toy? What if it was your only toy?

2. If this was your toy, would you rather have it colored military olive drab or a bright primary color? Why?
More than 12 million men and women served in the US Armed Forces during World War II, and each one of these service members needed to be fed. Additionally, the United States provided provisions for its allies in Europe. The US Home Front produced the food for these soldiers. This demand resulted in massive increases in food production within the United States. In some areas, the government began issuing goals and quotas for food production. From March 1941 to February 1943, the government sent nine billion pounds of food to service members and European allies; beef and butter combined accounted for 53.1 million pounds of this.

Despite the increase in production, the country could not produce enough food to feed U.S. allies, and those serving in the military; while those on the Home Front consumed food at the rate they had become accustomed. To account for this, the government began rationing staple products on the Home Front, namely wheat, butter, lard, sugar, bacon, beef, mutton, and pork. To reduce the usage of rationed foods and still produce healthy meals, public organizations such as the Home Economics Institute and Health for Victory Clubs began publishing meal-planning guides and recipe books that complied with ration requirements.

These booklets listed the products being rationed and offered plans for how to comply with these regulations, such as encouraging families to have at least one meatless day a week. Some of the guides explained the dangers of buying food on the black market, which some citizens did in an effort to get around food rationing. Most importantly, these booklets provided recipes and meal plans that accounted for rationing and food shortages, yet still gave families the nutrients essential to a healthy lifestyle. Often, these booklets provided the information in a fun, lighthearted manner.

**Questions for Further Inquiry**

1. A common slogan from this time was, “Let food fight for freedom.” What do you think they meant by this?
2. Do you help cook at home? What ingredients do you find most recipes require? Do you ever have to use substitute ingredients? How does this affect the food you’re making?
3. Why do you think people on the Home Front presented this information the way they did? What benefit do you think making wartime cooking a communal experience had for the people on the Home Front? The war in general?
After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States entered the war, it became vital that those serving overseas received all the supplies they needed to win the war. This resulted in massive increases in the production of everything from weapons to food. Over nine billion pounds of food would be sent to Europe in the first two years of US involvement in the war. Despite this growth in production, the government still needed to institute rationing laws throughout the country to accommodate the food needs of those in the military. The rationing of supplies and the need to avoid waste on the Home Front resulted in people in the United States searching to find ways to adapt to these challenges.

Canning the fruits and vegetables they grew in their victory gardens became one way people on the Home Front could overcome the rationing of food. Canning food allowed it to last longer, which in turn cut down on wasted food. Realizing the need for and effectiveness of canning, the government began a propaganda campaign encouraging people to “can all you can,” so that both civilians on the Home Front and service members overseas would have sufficient diets. In 1943 alone, the people of the United States canned 4.3 billion jars of food.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. Have you ever canned food yourself? Why is it important for those on the Home Front to can and help preserve food?
2. What does the phrase “the pressure canner is now a weapon of war,” used in American propaganda during the war, mean to you?
3. Why do you think the United States placed such a large emphasis on proper diets for both the people on the Home Front and overseas?
World War II impacted nearly every aspect of home life. Rationing throughout the country required families to sacrifice for the war effort. World War II also changed the type of work available for women. Women have always worked outside the home but never before in the numbers or with the same impact as they did in World War II. With men fighting worldwide, women were called to take their place on the production lines across the United States.

Demands for labor in manufacturing, war industry, and civil defense, did not change the demand for women in their home and family lives. This pamphlet, produced by the Salvage Division, War Production Board, engages families, lead by women, in the war effort by explaining how waste fat, rationing, and conservation can shorten the war.

In addition to a rapidly changing woman’s role on the Home Front, the United States Office of Civil Defense issued handbooks that suggested roles for specific occupations, roles for farmers, industrial and tradesmen, even children and home life.

Production of these informational handbooks and pamphlets were an important function of government agencies in order to educate the civilian population on the Home Front how to adapt to rationing, labor shortages, and defense regulations during the war years.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. If you were a woman during World War II how would you feel being called to work in war industry, maintain their home, and contribute to Civilian Defense?

2. Examine the What Can I Do Civil Defense handbook. What types of suggestions were they making for occupations like clergymen, teachers, and librarians?
World War II inspired government, civilians, private business, children, and families on the Home Front to contribute in some way to the war effort. Common objects like a match book and postcard were often used to be a constant reminder to citizens that “We’re all in this together.”

Thousands of household objects, common products, and even celebrations like Mardi Gras or community events were rebranded to show a companies or individual’s patriotism and commitment to the American war effort.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. Would seeing common objects like a postcard or matchbook remind you to do your part?

2. While you explore the Get in the Scrap! Artifact Trunk, what other objects do you see being branded or advertised to highlight patriotism and commitment?
The term propaganda frequently carries a negative connotation, producing thoughts of grotesque portrayals of enemy nations or peoples. However, propaganda simply refers to information used to promote a particular point of view. During World War II, propaganda came in many forms, which will be explored here.

**Propaganda Posters**

[Note: This artifact is a reproduction]

Note: Original World War II propaganda posters are highly sought pieces of art. Rarity and cost restrictions require the Museum to use reproductions.

While frequently distributed in films, most commonly during World War II people used posters to distribute propaganda. While the Office of War Information (OWI) created a large amount of the propaganda posters during the war, similarly to the animated propaganda films discussed earlier, many private corporations created propaganda as well.

Since a propaganda poster cannot engage its consumer through dramatic music or effects, it instead uses striking imagery and quick, simple-yet-powerful words or phrases to convey its messages. The propaganda posters created aimed to raise awareness of rationing and scrapping efforts, to deter people from “careless talk” that could endanger the lives of service members overseas, and assure people that their efforts on the Home Front had an important impact on the war effort. Other propaganda images created by the OWI or the military itself aimed to dehumanize the enemy by using racial slurs, portraying them as monsters, villains, or pests who harmed innocent people. No matter what they portrayed, all these images aimed to aid the war effort in one form or another.

Many companies created propaganda ads and posters, in addition to the OWI. Walt Disney Productions, for instance, published propaganda posters with images of Donald Duck telling consumers to buy war bonds. Even Nestlé chocolate worked to use propaganda and the patriotism produced by the war effort to sell even more of their chocolates, by branding themselves as the food that helped take care of the men and women overseas.

No matter the form it took, propaganda had a prominent place in American society during World War II.
In times of conflict, it becomes essential that every person and industry contribute to the war effort in whatever way possible. During World War II, some helped by producing food for the community or for those fighting overseas. Families contributed by rationing their intake of certain products such as sugar, meat, gasoline, and rubber. Other large corporations that still exist today, such as the Walt Disney Company, Warner Bros., and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, aided the war effort by producing animated films for families.

Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, these major production corporations joined the war effort. They produced animated short films with the intention of boosting morale and keeping the American people mindful of the war. These films, *Scrap Happy Daffy* by Warner Bros., *Gandy Goose: Scrap for Victory* by Terrytoons from New Rochelle, New York, and *Barney Bear’s Victory Garden* by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer taught the people of the United States about important tasks such as scrapping and victory gardens in a fun way that made it easy for younger audiences to understand. However, these companies also produced propaganda films that showed heroic American cartoons defeating caricature-like, incompetent Axis leaders. Disney even produced a training video for the Army on how to operate an antitank rifle. These companies continued producing films like these throughout the course of the war.

Despite the fact they didn’t produce weapons, equipment, or food, film companies such as Warner Bros., Disney, and MGM still contributed to the war effort by boosting morale and helping to make the complexities of contributing to the war effort simpler to understand.
During World War II, every nation involved in the conflict, including the United States, used propaganda to promote the war effort. Some US propaganda was lighthearted, such as the cartoons produced by Warner Bros. and MGM mentioned before. Other propaganda did however use racist or violent imagery in attempts to dehumanize the enemy.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt instituted the Office of War Information (OWI) as a composite of several other government agencies in June 1942 under Executive Order 9182. The OWI became the official producer of propaganda for the US government during the war years. It aimed to create and distribute news coverage of the fighting overseas and the activities on the Home Front. While the safety video for women in the workforce was not produced by the OWI, the office did produce films similar to this one. Additionally, both OWI and the animated propaganda mentioned above were often played in movie theaters before the film started.

President Roosevelt knew from the beginning of the war that being able to produce and efficiently distribute propaganda would be a vital part of the war effort on the Home Front, and he accomplished this task through the OWI.

Questions for Further Inquiry

1. What’s your favorite modern animated movie? Why? Are there lessons you can learn from it?
2. Why do you think these studios chose to use animated cartoons instead of live actors for these films?
3. Do you think the production studios made the war seem childish by portraying it as a cartoon? Do you think this could have helped or hurt the war effort?
4. What is different between the animated propaganda and the OWI propaganda?
5. Do you think the two types of propaganda were designed for the same purpose? What do you think each one was designed to do?
6. Who do you think the audience for the OWI propaganda was?
7. Which type of propaganda do you think was most effective? Which version would make you want to buy certain products or contribute more to the war effort?
8. Do you think it is right for a government to make enemy nations and their people seem evil or like monsters?
9. What do you think of the constant United States use of propaganda during the war?
The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world – why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today – so that future generations will know the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. Dedicated in 2000 as The National D-Day Museum and now designated by Congress as America’s National WWII Museum, it celebrates the American spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage, and sacrifices of the men and women who fought on the battlefront and served on the Home Front. The 2018 TripAdvisor Travelers’ Choice™ awards ranks the Museum No. 8 in the world and No. 3 in the nation.

Find more classroom resources from The National WWII Museum

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