

## War Era Story Project 2012

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Age: 77

I am writing you to provide info as to what I remember about that war. I was living in Trenton, MI, at the time. I was six years old. As a young child hearing my mom and dad relating the news, I became scared, as did many other children.

During the war, we were instructed to replace our curtains in all rooms of the house with dark window shades, which had to be pulled down at dusk. Anyone leaving the house at nighttime had to turn off the lights in the house to prevent any possible foreign aircraft from seeing light below through an open door or window. Not only were we afraid of German bombers reaching our area close to the east coast, but the same security was addressed on the west coast as well.

Our miniature mall area at the edge of downtown was converted to a display of bunkers manned with dummies dressed as soldiers behind wooden machine guns and sand bags. Everywhere you looked, you saw posters warning the people to watch their discussions that might betray the whereabouts of our troops. The city buses were commandeered by the government and replaced by cattle trucks converted to buses with wooden benches for seats. My Grandmother, Victoria Gillis, was the ticket taker on one. The buses were painted a military green.

We had to live with food, gas, tires, leather (for boots), sugar, etc. rationed. My Mother would give me a stamp for sugar and tell me to pinch the stamp between my fingers so as not to lose it and go to Gully's grocery store to get a pound of sugar, which was our ration for the month. We ate our cereal without sugar, and milk was replaced by water to soften the Corn Flakes or Wheaties, Puffed Rice Crispies or Puffed Wheat. We couldn't drive our car due to the gas rationing, so we walked wherever we went.

My Dad, who worked as a post office employee, and several of his friends, joined the Marines. He was 32 years old at the time. He stood in line to enlist and there was one soldier taking the applications. Dad noticed that every man ahead of him who would ask to go into the Navy, Army Air Corps, was told that he was going into the Marine Corps. So when Dad's turn came, he thought, "I'm going to ask for the Marine Corps and maybe they will put me in the Navy or Air Corps." But when he requested to go into the Marines, the recruiter told him, "you got it, you're in the Marines."

When the time came for Dad to ship out to San Diego boot camp, he sent Mom, we four kids and our dog to southern Ohio to a small town called Wellston, where we lived with Mom's mother to wait out the war. I remember the pictures of the atomic bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at our movie house. Dad's letters were often deleted on specific words, i.e. Dad wrote asking about Pearl Gettles who lived across the street from Grandma, and he said it was an "abhorring" day today. Mom worked crossword puzzles and reasoned that Dad was telling her that he was in Pearl Harbor. This was after the destruction. He sent home pictures to us from Guam and aboard ship. One picture showed an airplane crashing into Pacific Ocean.