

War Era Story Project 2012

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Current home town: Lorain

Age: Not given

The war clouds were moving perilously close. The Nazis With their Blitzkrieg invasions were conquering the countries of Europe. Later came sounds I'll always remember, as newsboys came down our Street shouting, "Extra, Extra, Pearl Harbor attacked. Read all about it!" Our president named this "a day which will live in infamy," and all of our lives were changed forever. Our nation, the Arsenal of Democracy, was now in World War II. On the Homefront, we saw rationing and price controls. Staples of even sugar, coffee, bread and butter were in short supply. There were gas ration cards of A or B or for Doctors, and a few scant others got C cards.

As a young boy, I volunteered in Civil Defense, including being a Messenger running from one Air Raid Warden to another, reporting on the success or failure of blackouts in our neighborhood in Lorain, Ohio, as a safeguard against possible enemy air attacks. Later, closer to war's end, I worked in a steel mill, which produced bomb casings, and the "Big Inch" pipeline.

On the military front, we heard of the frustration, suffering and defeats in the early days of the war. Peace In Our Time, Dunkirk, Bataan, Corregedor, the Death March, D Day, B-17's, Battle of the Bulge, the Holocaust, Iwo Jima, U Boats, Britain's Our Finest Hour, I Shall Return, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Atomic Bomb – all became engraved into our vocabulary of innocence. And, how quickly that had followed the privations we had experienced in the great depression.

The war years were tough, but our people and nation experienced unity and patriotic fervor at its highest peak. We were proud of those in uniforms and of the blue stars in the windows of their homes as they went off to war. Sadly and with reverence, were we to see some of those stars change from blue to gold for those brave ones who made the supreme sacrifice for our country.

As the tide turned and we had the Axis powers on the run, the unimaginable happened: the only President that many of us had ever known during our lives was gone. A full week of funeral music was all that was heard on our radios following his death. What would happen now? Fortunately a common man who said, "the buck stops here," proved the enduring strength of our great democracy, as it transcends endlessly to new leadership.

Sometime in the midst of World War II, I created a series of patriotic posters. These were colored drawings evidently in connection with a school program, and the posters had the following themes: "We can, we will, we must preserve freedom," "You Help Speed Production, Keep 'em Rolling," "Thumbs down with the Axis, Buy War Bonds Today," "Long may they wave (the Flags of the Allies)," "Then comes the total eclipse (of the Rising Sun)," "Keep 'em flying, Speed Production," "Safeguard our Liberty, Join

the Ten Percenters," "Keep 'em crying by constantly buying U.S. Bonds, Stamps," and "On the Home, Production, and War Front, Help back Uncle Sam!"

Our nation, the Allies, and the World enjoyed the celebrations of V-E Day and finally V-J Day. Thank God we were at Peace.