

## War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: John J. Voisard

Current home town: Dayton, Ohio

Age: 75

I was just a boy when the war started. I was in kindergarten around 1943, I think. I had no idea what was going on! Mom gave us 10 cents a week and we took that to school and would give that to the teacher. She would stamp a bond book for every 10 cents we brought in. After the book was filled, we would get a \$25.00 savings bond.

Just about everything was rationed, and we used stamps from a ration book that was given to each household to buy things from the grocery store. We also used small red tokens to buy some things. You could not buy cigarettes because they were all being sent overseas for the troops. Dad smoked; he used a little thing you put paper in one end and then filled with tobacco, pushed the lever forward and you had one cigarette. I helped Dad roll a lot of these while we listened to the radio. Dad had a "C" stamp for his ration of gas: about 12 gallons a month, I think. Most of the gas was being used for the war effort. Dad had a 1936 ford.

Dad was also an air raid warden. He had a white helmet (WWI style) and he had a bag he carried around. When the alarm sounded, he would put these things on his shoulder and walk around the neighborhood to make sure that everyone had their blinds pulled. If they didn't, Dad would knock on their door and tell them to pull their blinds shut. We kids – I, age seven and my brother, nine – thought all this was great fun.

My other brother joined the army air corps; he wanted to be a pilot. He was very strong and lifted weights for years before the war started, so the army made him the physical fitness instructor in Texas at some army base, and he did that through the whole war. He was sad at the time, but was glad that he did not have to go do any fighting.

We kids went out with Dad and the Boys Scouts and went door to door to collect metal, paper and anything else for the war effort We did this about once a month. Dad was a Cub Scout leader for the neighborhood. At school, Lincoln school in Dayton Ohio, they would have paper drives. If you collected 25 lbs. of paper, you got to see a cartoon at lunch time in the school auditorium.

We all listen to the news on the radio and read about it in the *Dayton Daily News*. At the University of Dayton, they use to put on mock battles for the home folks to watch. We boys thought that was great fun to watch. We use to play war at home when we were out of school. We did not have a TV, or any electronic games; we made do with what we had: kick the can games, baseball, football, hide and seek, or go on a hike to some place. Me and my brother delivered a weekly newspaper called *The Shopping News* for about 150 houses in the neighborhood. We also cut lawns to make some money to spend.

After the war ended I remember everything got a lot better and a lot of the soldiers all came home.