

## War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Lawrence Forbes  
Current home town: Cleveland, Ohio  
Age: 81

The enclosed stories were published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer in an ongoing series on WWII. I can add that my family had a victory garden, which I helped tend when I got the chance. Also, like the man in the enclosed story, I too found something I hated to turn in: an unloaded German Luger pistol. I talked it over with my pals and we decided to throw it on the scrap truck and let others worry about it.

On Saturdays, I worked from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. When I got home, my mother served supper: sometimes half a can of cream of mushroom soup and a small salad of lettuce, onion and cucumbers (usually from the victory garden), covered in vinegar, plus a bun or donut I brought home (and paid for) from the Spang truck, and maybe a spiced ham sandwich.

As I ate, I listened on the radio to the Chicago Theater of the Air playing operettas, followed by the National Barndance, a flow of classical and folk music which, along with jazz, helped form my musical tastes in the future. Then, after a bath, I was off to blissful sleep until Sunday Mass, at which I sometimes served as an altar boy.

I don't mean to imply it was all work for me. I played sandlot baseball and football, and saw an occasional movie once in a while. My father worked in the Lorain Shipyards, and once, my mother and I went up to Sandusky (and Cedar Point) to meet Dad. All the kids I knew were energetic and worked hard for the war effort, and we usually don't get credit for that.

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**CLASSICAL MUSIC**

*Narrator, singers illuminate Grieg. E5*

# ARTS & LIFE

*Morning / Dear Abby / Television / Bridge*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2007 | SECTION E

THE PLAIN DEALER

## 'WE DID OUR PART'

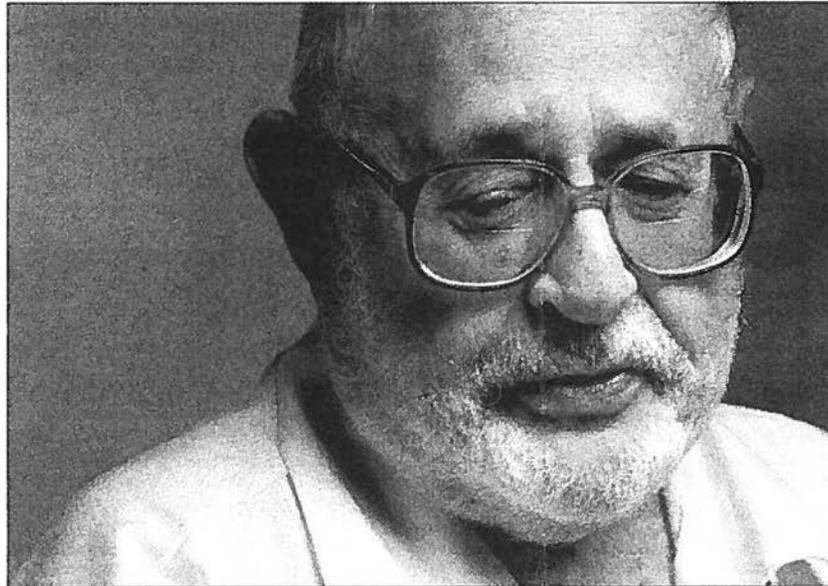
**CLEVELANDERS GLADLY SACRIFICED FOR WAR EFFORT AT HOME, IN BATTLE**

MICHAEL HEATON  
*Plain Dealer Reporter*

With the nation captivated by Ken Burns' "The War" on PBS, we asked readers who had lived through World War II to tell us about their lives in the service and at home. Though the following submissions depict a period of suffering, sacrifice and hardship, they also convey a fondness for a simpler era in which "the right thing" was a clear choice, where patriotism was ingrained and America's role as the righteous leader of the free world was beyond question.

*Arnold Miller*

Miller, 76, of Westlake, attended Glenville High School. He retired as the managing editor of the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram in 1997. Before that, he worked at the Akron Beacon Journal and the Cleveland Press. He is a member of the Cleveland Press



**MUSIC**

Merge restructure after a fine

DONALD ROSE  
*Plain Dealer Music*

Opera Cleveland stated four staff in an effort to take responsibility

At the same time, which works during son as the merger and Lyric will reduce the productions to his son.

The restructuring of the continuing growth era Cleveland board have important changes was announced. The initial tea for Leon Ma

(Nov 18, 2012)

I went to Columbia elementary school on the East Side. We collected metal scrap. The incident that still haunts my memory was when a woman gave us an almost-new bicycle she said was her son's. I assume he was on one of the fighting fronts. Talk about patriotism vs. temptation! I didn't even have a bike, let alone one in such great condition. All my friends had bikes. My dad was an immigrant and he didn't see the necessity for it. In the end, we broke up the bike and added it to the scrap heap.

Before every [school] assembly we sang a song that went something like, "Dear Uncle Sam, you are a busy man. But we wanted you to know we are the boys and girls of Columbia School, 620 strong. And from the very start we've tried to do our part to help you win the war." I can still remember all the words.

Larry Forbes

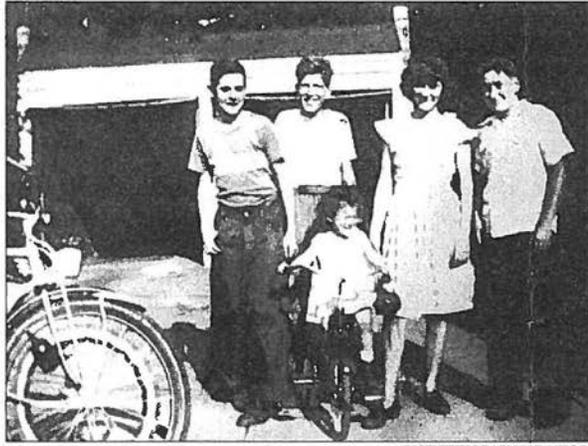
Forbes is 76 years old and grew up in Cleveland. Too young to serve in World War II, he joined the Marines and served in the last year of the Korean War. After his service, he became a photographer and graphic artist. He retired in 1990 and lives in Cleveland.

There is one group not yet as old as the actual participants in the war whose stories are almost never told: the children's crusade of boys and girls who worked the homefront during the war, who took over for those away in the service. I was a nonmilitary civilian soldier on the homefront along with other boys and girls, and we did our part in the effort to win the war.

America was united then (perhaps never to be again), and everyone was proud to share a little bit of glory with the men and women who actually fought in the war. Much has been said about collecting cans, rubber, newspapers, grease and cooking fats; about the rationing of tires and shoes, meats, other food and gasoline; and the homegrown victory gardens that sprouted up in back yards.

We kids took part in innumerable drives, hauling scrap and newspapers to our schoolyards to be loaded onto trucks and carted off to help the war effort. Some of us even helped load the trucks (getting out of school). We also helped in other ways, taking jobs that were vacated by older youngsters who entered the service: grocery and drugstore clerks, grass cutters and messengers and delivery people, railway freight car unloaders and paper boys and girls.

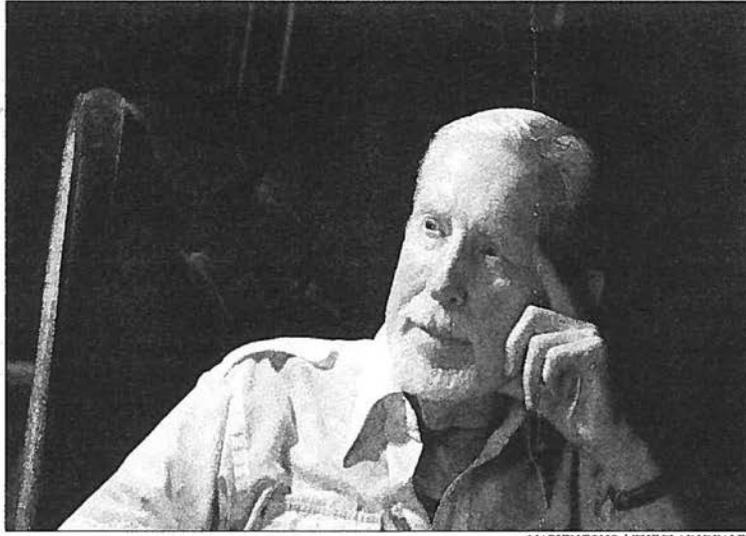
SEE WAR | E4



COURTESY OF ARNOLD MILLER

Arnold Miller of Westlake remembers sacrificing a nearly new Roadmaster bicycle for the scrap metal drive as part of the homefront effort during World War II.

Arnold Miller, left, with friends from his old Glenville neighborhood. The bike in the corner is not the bike that went to the scrap pile.



MARVIN FONG | THE PLAIN DEALER

Larry Forbes said the war effort during World War II was the last time our country was united behind a single cause.

no longer be o season. Several era trustees wh company's boar

Among the c bers losing the dowsky, who jc as executive d ber, before the gural season. : liam Cole, C director of dev come compan added responsi operations.

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"We had th ning the comp Friday. "But w with five pro venues with a stretch. We ar couldn't afford rector of Jeff's (

In addition Ryder's posts, the education be filled. Anoth be determined,

# WAR

FROM E1

## Greater Clevelanders gladly sacrificed

My father worked in the shipyards of the Great Lakes and my mother rented out rooms to a few of the people who flocked to the city for work in the mills and factories. I worked, too, starting at the age of 11 as a runner on a Spang Bakery truck whose drivers had to cover more territory because of drivers in the service. I worked 25 to 30

hours a week after school and all day Saturday hauling a huge basket of bread and coffee cakes to people who put the Spang sign in their window signaling they needed something. Unfortunately, my route had a lot of apartment houses and I had to trudge up several flights with that heavy basket to reach my customers. For this I got \$5 a week.

On the practical side, though, this and the rent money helped us buy and eventually pay for our own house. This, at least in those days, was the American way — hard work brought rewards.



COURTESY OF LARRY FORBES

Larry Forbes as a child in Hough. He worked as a runner for a Spang Bakery bread truck for \$5 a week.

### Harry A. Shelman

Shelman, 88, is the author of the self-published memoir, "A Marine Remembers." After the war, Shelman managed a store and then drove a truck for Railway Express. He retired in 1976 and lives in Lakewood.

My first platoon (in the Pacific Theater) was moved to some ridges to the southeast of the airfield. This involved clearing new firing lines, digging new foxholes and stringing barbed wire below. Machine gun nests were placed so that their fire would crisscross the southeast of the airfield. This involved clearing new firing lines, digging new foxholes and stringing barbed wire below. Machine gun nests were placed so that their fire would crisscross the southeast of the airfield. This involved clearing new firing lines, digging new foxholes and stringing barbed wire below. Machine gun nests were placed so that their fire would crisscross the southeast of the airfield.

The necessity for one to two

stints of night-guard duty ruined chances for a full night's sleep. A working wristwatch was rare so it was hard to tell if the man on guard moved the watch ahead to make his tour shorter. The last man to stand guard had to pull double duty. Sleepiness was no excuse for not remembering the password. Most passwords contained U's, allegedly because Japanese couldn't pronounce them.

With nightfall everyone was extra quiet so it didn't take much noise to rouse one from sleep. When someone started to snore the guard would put his life in jeopardy by poking his feet to wake him and then jumping back quickly. The danger was that everyone slept with his hands grasping his rifle and you could rest assured the safety catch was off.

Everyone was adept at lighting their cigarette under a poncho without exposing glare. The steel helmet was held in front while taking a drag inside of it.

In combat zones, the troops as well as the enemy learned early on to be quiet. As I moved cautiously along, it was usually only a few birds scolding me for disturbing their domain. Then abruptly I would be showered with twigs, leaves, bark and machine gun bullets from an enemy. That's the moment of truth. It can't be called bravery ... it just boiled down to the fact there isn't time for fear ... tiredness disappears with gunfire. Call it training, adrenaline or whatever. Survival kicks in — the job gets done and it's one of the reasons why we won the war.

### Walter Hernandez

Hernandez, 82, was an Army infantryman who spent 11

months in the Pacific. He was wounded by mortar fire and spent 23 months in an Army hospital. After the war, he worked as a welder and lead burner for a metal supply business. He is retired and lives in Cleveland.

Back in 1944, my sister worked at a war plant in Cleveland and made friends with an older Polish woman. They got on a streetcar for home. They sat behind two young girls in their 20s who were speaking Polish. All of a sudden the elderly Polish woman started beating the two younger women with her purse. They ran to the back of the car.

The older lady told my sister that one of the younger girls had told her friend that she hoped the war lasted another five years — that way she could save enough money to buy a home. The elderly woman had two sons in the service. Our brother was already in Italy and I was at Fort Lewis in Seattle ready to ship out to the Pacific. When the young girls got off the streetcar they were booed by the other passengers.

### Elaine Harris Green

Green lives in Mayfield Heights.

During the war, my family and I had a wonderful victory garden. We grew all kinds of vegetables. I also had a victory garden at my school. It seemed like everyone was involved in some way during this war. One of my jobs at home was to flatten cans for war production. There were no frozen foods then. Gasoline and sugar were rationed. We had stamps. Most families had one automobile. People used buses and streetcars and walked. There was no I-90, no I-271 or I-480.

current new out where th on. There we home; then made scrubs servicemen in the hospital sang patrioti ters to relati the world. United States

**Audrey Dvo**  
Dvorak, 73, recently retri with two gra substitute te High School Heights.

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To reach this Pl

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