

Broadsheet II:

# PEARL HARBOR: *Galvanizing the Nation*

## RUSH TO JOIN SERVICE HERE CONTINUES

San Franciscans from every walk of life continued to storm army, navy and marine recruiting offices today in the greatest enlistment rush in the city's history.

At Marine Corps headquarters, 500 applications yielded 100 new marines, Lieutenant Colonel Roger W. Peard, in charge of recruiting, reported.

### EVERYONE'S WILLING

"I've never seen such a universal desire to serve," he commented. "That goes for married men, over-age and even cripples, who hoped that the rules had been changed so they might join up."

Navy recruiting headquarters were busy on a 24-hour basis, with applications near the all-time record set during the first 24-hour period after war began, when 220 men were accepted.

### 125 FOR ARMY

At the army recruiting station, 690 Market street, Captain Ben Cherakin reported even bigger crowds on hand today than yesterday, and said 125 had been signed up in the past 24 hours.

The naval reserve and state guard likewise recorded sharp increases in recruiting.

Thousands of Americans enlisted in the armed forces in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and continued to enlist throughout the war. Many others waited for a letter to arrive in their mailbox, instructing them to appear before their local draft board. Those who were exempted from the draft contributed to the war effort on the home front. *The San Francisco Call Bulletin, December 9, 1941*

### First Reactions: Civil Defense

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor. The attack left the American Pacific Fleet shattered. The battleship *Arizona* was sunk and her crew of 1,100 men either burned to death or drowned. Other battleships and combat ships were badly damaged, as were airfields, barracks and docks. In all, the attack left 2,343 American sailors and soldiers dead, 1,272 injured and 876 missing.

Even as the smoke was clearing, Roosevelt addressed Congress to reassure and strengthen the country, calling the

7th of December "a day that shall live in infamy." Outrage over the attack led to quick declarations of war against Japan then Germany. However, despite the accelerated arms production that produced the boom of 1940-41, the U.S. armed services were in no shape to wage war in two separate theaters of operation.

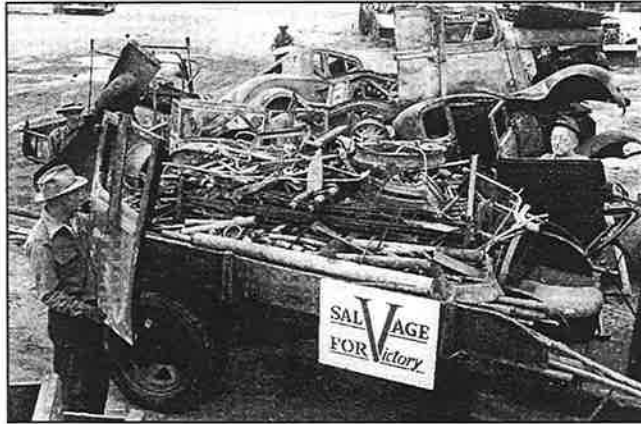
In the days that followed the attack, turmoil bordering on hysteria reigned in the major cities on both coasts. Officials issued dire warnings of possible air attacks by Germany on the East Coast and Japan on the West. Japanese bombers were "sighted" in San Francisco and Seattle. Although all these sightings later proved to be American planes, at the time even General DeWitt of San Francisco said, "I don't think there's any doubt the planes came from an enemy carrier." Blackouts were announced and mobs in Seattle used rocks and bottles to smash lights that had not been turned out. The mobs then turned to looting stores in the area.

Fiorello LaGuardia, mayor of New York, was also the chairman of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), which had been set up before the U.S. officially entered the war. Thousands of citizens had volunteered to be "wardens." Their job was to monitor their neighborhoods to make sure a blackout was in effect. Officials wanted no lights visible from the air that would help enemy planes find targets in American cities. LaGuardia called the OCD "magnificently" organized.

But, the first practice air raid warnings revealed how inefficient the OCD actually was. Many cities had no sirens, or sirens that emitted only a low "mooooooo" sound that was drowned out by traffic. When Bell Telephone produced a siren, called the Victory Siren, many smaller cities would not buy it because it was so loud it shattered nearby windows and



Office of Civil Defense staff member. The "E" gasoline ration sticker on the car's windshield and the "E" on the license plate, means this vehicle has been designated as an emergency vehicle. *Sacramento Archives & Museum Collection Center*



U.S. entry into the war sparked a flurry of salvage activities. Drives for aluminum and rubber yielded tons of mainly unusable material. Collected paper sat in huge piles and was finally burned. Scrap iron and steel drives were more useful. *Sacramento Archives & Museum Collection Center*

hurt people's ears. Over 1 million people were signed up by the OCD in over 6,000 cities and towns, but there had been so little training and so little coordination between the states that the volunteers had trouble getting anyone to cooperate. A false air raid alert in Los Angeles resulted in hundreds of anti-aircraft guns firing into an empty sky and people being injured by the falling shrapnel.

After a few months the practice air raids, blackouts and dimouts — where everybody kept the lights down — became better organized. Drivers painted the top half of their headlights black so the lights would not shine up into the sky. People volunteered to scan the skies looking for enemy aircraft. Thousands of amateur pilots joined the Civil Air Patrol, which patrolled the waters offshore looking for submarines. And there were many submarines off the Atlantic Coast; in one incident, bathers in Virginia were horrified to see a German submarine sink two supply ships in broad daylight.

Throughout the war the OCD was plagued by a lack of funding and equipment. Precious materials, such as copper, helmets and gas masks went to soldiers overseas before they were allocated to the OCD. And it truth, there was never a serious attack on American soil, though one Japanese pilot

did drop incendiary bombs in Oregon, and submarines did lurk offshore on both coasts. Citizens in the U.S. never had to face the horrors of warfare that people faced in Europe and Asia.

### Volunteers Everywhere

By the middle of 1942, almost 40 percent of the American public were doing volunteer work of some kind. A typical family donated blood, saved scrap metal, ransacked their basement for spare rubber, bought war bonds and collected old newspaper. Millions volunteered for Civil Defense service. Millions more donated their time to the Red Cross, rolling bandages, driving ambulances and manning blood banks and canteens. Roosevelt did everything he could to encourage all citizens to get involved, saying “... there is one front and one battle where everyone in the United States, every man, woman and child is in action. That front is right here at home.”

Teenagers had numerous opportunities to share in the war effort. Boy Scouts volunteered to pose as “victims” — complete with ketchup blood — when towns performed air raid drills. Students put together millions of model airplanes for use by the military. When it was time for the crops to be harvested, there was a severe shortage of labor. Young people and volunteers of all ages helped to harvest the crops. Students sacrificed their precious phonograph records when the military needed the shellac they contained. One eighth grade class in Gary, Indiana kept a record of their contributions to the war effort. A partial list of their activities included selling war stamps, providing daycare, distributing posters, collecting 500,000 pounds of waste paper and collecting library books for servicemen. Even younger children aided the war effort, collecting scrap of all kinds, inspired by posters with such racist slogans as: “Slap the Jap with Scrap.”

All segments of American society made some contribution. After the warship USS Houston was sunk in the Pacific, the citizens of Houston, Texas raised \$50 million to build a new one. Prisoners at San Quentin won a war contract and made anti-submarine nets. Thousands of families gathered clothes and sent them to Great Britain under the “Bundles for Britain” program. The contribution was not always material. Two small towns changed their

name to Lidice after a town of that name in Czechoslovakia was destroyed by the Nazis.

“Victory gardens” sprang up in many backyards. At first, officials in Washington discouraged the practice because they thought the gardens would have a negligible impact on food production. But, Americans liked the idea and the program took off. Soon millions of Americans were growing produce in their backyards. At one point there were nearly 20,000,000 victory gardens. One estimate was that one-third of the fresh produce in the country came from such gardens. That meant more could go overseas to the troops.

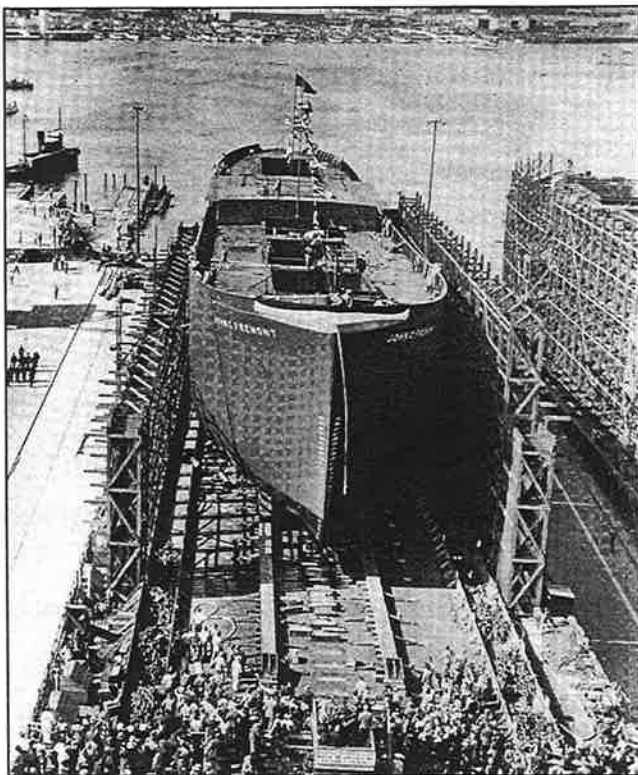
### The War Machine

It was apparent to most people in the U.S. that victory in a highly mechanized war depended on industrial production. If the Allies could outproduce the Axis, then the Allies could probably win. That is what American society set out to do even before they entered the war. The results went far beyond even what the optimists thought was possible.

The buildup began in May 1940, about the same time as the French surrender. Congress appropriated money to be



Various methods were used to encourage children to participate in the war effort. At one point, medals with General Dwight Eisenhower's likeness were offered to children who collected 1,000 pounds of used newspaper. Instead of the promised medal, however, children received a letter explaining that metal shortages had delayed the manufacture of their award. *Presidio Army Museum Photo Collection*



Launching of the Liberty Ship John C. Fremont, 1943. The main purpose of a Liberty Ship was to supply the war theatres. Demand for supply ships began to climb in the 1939-1941 period. During these years, more Merchant Marine sailors (civilian sailors) died from enemy action than soldiers did. In the same period, more Americans died in industrial accidents than died in war action. *Presidio Army Museum Photo Collection*

spent on a weapons buildup. For the next year and a half, large businesses were given lucrative contracts and then left alone to make their own decisions. New factories were built and old factories were retooled for military production. Willow Run, a bomber factory completed by the Ford Motor Company in early 1942, was a mile long and contained 1,600 heavy pieces of machinery. Henry Ford boasted it would produce 1,000 bombers every day; the most it ever produced was about 200 per month.

Production of war materials did increase, but there was waste and inefficiency. Many private industries were reluctant to curtail production of civilian goods. Some government oversight was needed. In January 1942 Roosevelt instituted the War Production Board (WPB) to oversee industrial production and make sure defense needs were met. In March of that year Congress passed the second War Powers Act, which gave the president and the WPB power to regulate industrial production, particularly in the allocation of raw materials. The board was able to order industry to cease making some consumer goods. For instance, no new car models were produced during the war. At times, the board prohibited production of new models of vacuum cleaners and bicycles; they cut back on metal used in toys, furniture, and appliances and halted the production of all new vending machines.

By the end of 1942, 25 percent of all manufacturing was war-related; by the end of 1943 the figure had reached 50 percent. On January 1, 1942, the U. S. surpassed Germany as the world's greatest weapons producer. By 1944 the U.S. was building more war material than the rest of the world combined. Between 1940 and 1945 almost 300,000 planes, 100,000 tanks, 2.5 million trucks and more than 90,000 ships were produced.

Because the U.S. needed to move more than 5 million soldiers overseas and then supply them for battle, building supply and transport ships was crucial. Industries created a plan for building ships on an assembly line model. They were called Liberty Ships. They were not beautiful, but they served their purpose. One Liberty Ship, called the *John Fitch*, was completely finished in one 24-day period.

#### Women at Work

One dominant image of the World War II home front is a poster of a woman dressed in overalls, with her hair tied under a handkerchief. She is making a fist and a confident proclamation under the woman reads, "We can do it." This woman is Rosie the Riveter. She symbolized the achievement of millions of women who found, in the crisis of war, unexpected opportunities to change the American concept of what women could achieve. And there really was a Rosie. Her full name was Rose Will Munroe.

In 1939, over 10 million women were working; by 1943 the number had grown to 14 million. Many of those new jobs were in industries such as auto and airplane production, which had been formerly closed to them. At first some plant managers doubted that women could do these more physically demanding types of labor, but the women soon changed their minds. They worked in coal mines and steel mills; as lumberjacks and taxi drivers; assembled artillery shells and riveted and welded airplanes and ships.

At the peak of women's employment, as many as 17 million women were working, and they made up one-third of



Labor shortages and increased production in war-related industries resulted in employment opportunities previously unavailable to women and other minorities. The women pictured here are welders. *Library of Congress*

the work force. Women were employed in almost every aspect of the war effort; they constructed most of the airplanes that bombed the Germans and the Japanese. Although equal pay for equal work was the policy of the government agencies overseeing the war effort, women virtually never got equal pay and they were rarely promoted to supervisory jobs. Furthermore, as the end of the war neared, both industry and labor leaders viewed women workers with some alarm: with the imminent homecoming of over 10 million men, how willingly would the women leave their jobs?

### A Nation on the Move

During the war years, Americans were literally on the move as never before in their history. Sixteen million Americans left their hometowns to join the armed services, whether they served stateside or overseas. Another 15 million moved: some followed family members in the service, while approximately 11 million moved to get jobs in the wartime economy.

Although it is difficult to generalize about all this frantic motion, certain patterns did emerge. The migration began in farm states and poor rural areas and converged on urban centers — particularly the Detroit area because of the automobile factories, and the West Coast because of the airplane and shipbuilding industries that were centered there. Poor whites from the Appalachian areas of West Virginia through Kentucky, migrated to Chicago and Detroit, the industrial cities of the Midwest. Farmers from the Great Plains moved to the West Coast. Southern Blacks and Southern tenant farmers went to manufacturing areas in the North and shipbuilding and oilfields in the South. In all cases, people were making more money than they ever had before.

All this moving put a tremendous strain on housing and other essential services. People lived in basement rooms, chicken coops, tents and cars. Families crowded into one-room apartments. Landlords were able to collect sky-high rents for garages and ramshackle houses.

Another effect of all this motion was that the U.S. was more ethnically and culturally mixed than ever before. Poor white hill people were suddenly living in large cities; rural blacks and whites had to adjust to life in different



Wartime America was a country on the move. Transportation centers, like this bus station in Columbus, Georgia, were jammed with both civilians and soldiers. Military personnel got preference over civilians. *Library of Congress*

geographical regions of the country. People migrated to gain economic opportunity, but in the process they lost the stability of long-standing communities.

Racial tensions were heightened as ethnic groups that were accustomed to being separated were now thrown together, both at work and in new communities that were built. There were bloody race riots in Detroit, Mobile and many other places. And, while most communities welcomed the influx of money that new workers brought, they often despised them for economic, cultural or racial reasons and referred to them as “hillbillies” and “low-lives.”

Dislocations and changes in workforce dynamics had an especially negative influence on children and teenagers. Experienced teachers found they could make far more money in war factories, so the supply of good teachers dried up. High schools meant for 1,200 students often had double or triple that figure. Truancy rates skyrocketed; over 1 million

teenagers dropped out of high school in 1943. With millions of people in the army and mothers with children working in factories, young children were left alone much of the day — “eight-hour orphans” they were called. Children played unsupervised or were left for hours at a time in movie theaters. Both the accident rate and the death rate climbed for young people of all ages. Juvenile crime also increased, as did teenage promiscuity. It is not that people did not know or care about these problems, they did. But, America had a war to win and that took precedence.