

December 2022

## Ocon at War: the Oconomowoc Home Front During the Second World War

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OCON AT WAR:  
THE OCONOMOWOC HOME FRONT DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by

Erika L. Laabs

A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts  
in History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2022

## ABSTRACT

### OCON AT WAR: THE OCONOMOWOC HOME FRONT DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by

Erika L. Laabs

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2022  
Under the Supervision of Professor Joe A. Austin

This thesis will examine the local home front propaganda in and around Oconomowoc, Wisconsin (Waukesha County) during the Second World War and compare the Oconomowoc area propaganda to Wisconsin overall and to the national experience. Enlistments, war bond sales, USO events, parades, radio programs/speeches, films, music, popular books/comic books, and images, are the main types of “cultural locations” that I am using as propaganda. I have found solid examples of posters and advertisement images from local newspapers that provide a wealth of information about the way fear, love, guilt, and patriotism were used to persuade people to support the war in various ways. I believe this thesis will complement the existing body of work on the World War II home front and will also augment the present knowledge of Wisconsin history.

To build on the scholarship of Wisconsin history, I have analyzed the local home front propaganda in and around Oconomowoc, Wisconsin (Waukesha County) during the Second World War and how it compared to Wisconsin overall and to the national experience. I chose to delve deeper into experiences of local communities rather than nation-wide themes to learn more about every day, mundane life during extraordinary times, and the types of propaganda to which the home front was exposed. The amount of self-sacrifice and teamwork demonstrated during the

war seems unimaginable in our current politically polarized moment and leads to the question, “What did the daily lives of Oconomowoc citizens look like during the Second World War?”

After careful study one can say that nothing radical happened in Oconomowoc during the war; the citizens encountered propaganda in much the same way people did in other towns across the nation. Yet their response was vastly different from that of people who lived in large cities during the war. Without the same level of smaller-town closeness and interconnection, residents of cities like Madison and Milwaukee would not have had the same types of experiences and interactions Oconomowocians did. Home front life in a big city would have afforded some level of anonymity that those who lived in Oconomowoc would never know.

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To

my family:

Cory, Brett, Emma, Sarah,

Felicia, Aubrey, Jess, Baby, Joyce,

Kyle, Logan, and Henry

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFHQ	Allied Force Headquarters
COI	U.S. Office of the Coordinator of Information
CPT	U.S. Army Combat Propaganda Team
FIS	COI Foreign Information Service
G-2	U.S. Army Military Intelligence
INC	Information, News, and Censorship Division/AFHQ
JPWC	U.S. Joint Psychological Warfare Committee
MID/WDGS	Military Intelligence Division/War Department General Staff
MRBC	U.S. Army Mobile Radio Broadcast Company
OCD	U.S. Office of Civil Defense
OFF	U.S. Office of Facts and Figures
OPA	U.S. Office of Price Administration
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
OSI	U.S. Office of Strategic Information
OSS MO	U.S. Office of Strategic Services Morale Operations Branch
OWI	U.S. Office of War Information
PWB	Psychological Warfare Branch
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
VOA	Voice of America
WAC	Women's Army Corps
WWB	Writers' War Board

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Joe Austin, for recognizing my potential to make a contribution worthy of the field of History. We made a deal when he announced his retirement; if I could finish my degree program by December 2022, he would agree to stay on as my advisor and see me through to the end. It was generous of him to continue working with me, and I am truly grateful. The UW-Milwaukee History Department was helpful to me along my journey and I appreciated learning from others who share a passion for history.

An immense thank you to Dr. Jane E. Crisler, who has been a mentor to me since we first met during my undergraduate years. She took the time to really encourage my love for history and guide me along the pathway of higher education and a career in the field. Beyond that, she has continued to be a true friend, not only to me, but also to my family. Dr. Crisler remains a great example of life-long learning. And I perhaps would never have gotten this far, had I not enjoyed my early undergraduate history classes with Dr. Jonathan Kasparek. From the first class I attended of his when I heard him speak the immortal words, “Historians don’t make shit up,” I knew I would fit in. Returning to college after a number of years and being older than everyone in my classes was scary, Dr. Crisler and Dr. Kasparek were tremendously supportive and encouraging – and I thank them very much. Upon learning I was interested in public history, they created the public history program at UW-Waukesha – I became the guinea pig and loved the experience. I gained the courage to go on to graduate school, knowing I had these two brilliant academics in my corner. I had so much help along the way from archivists, library professionals, colleagues, volunteers, and family and friends who tolerated my seemingly-endless babble about World War II history. My family has been influential along my trek to earning a graduate degree – and I owe them all a debt of gratitude. My mom, Joyce, nurtured my interest in history from an

early age, and continues to be my steadfast cheerleader; my sister, Jess, who can be credited for my return to college after giving me her unwanted history textbooks to read in my spare time. My aunt and uncle, Kay and Derwin, who recounted many memories of the past, that I eagerly absorbed like a sponge.

My husband, Cory, has been instrumental in supporting my continued education for as long as I can remember, and always believed in me. His love, understanding, and great sense of humor bolstered me to continue on toward this goal, even when at times, I was ready to give up. My three kids, Brett, Emma, and Sarah have been my inspiration, and I hope they know how immeasurably they help me. Hopefully, they have understood the sacrifices we made were not for nothing, and learned it is never too late to chase your dreams. I began my college career when my oldest was four years old – and now after many detours along the way, and 29 years later, I am at the end of this road. Some of my favorite memories are of us all sitting around the dining room table together doing homework over the years. We share a love of knowledge and education, with one recent college grad and two currently enrolled – I am so infinitely proud of them and I hope they are proud of me. Knowing I had the love and support of my family helped me persevere to reach this long-awaited achievement, and I am so thankful for them. And thanks to our pup, Henry, for the welcome distractions he brings. (*My kids will make fun of me for this.*)

I dedicate this endeavor to the memory of my late father-in-law, Charles. I miss our Saturday morning coffee talks about history and thank you for your encouragement and wisdom. To my late grandmothers, Emma and Ruth, thank you both for teaching me valuable lessons about history. And I cannot leave out our late pup, Maggie, who was also a part of this project – scurrying around the stacks of books in my office – miss you too. Thank you All. I am blessed.

*All art is propaganda. It is universally and inescapably propaganda; sometimes unconsciously, but often deliberately, propaganda. — Upton Sinclair*

*A man who lived in Oconomowoc was asked why he lived there. He replied that he hated limericks, which cannot be written on Oconomowoc. — 1909 Oconomowoc Enterprise*

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **World War II Home Front Oconomowoc/Waukesha County and Propaganda**

This thesis will examine the local home front propaganda in and around Oconomowoc, Wisconsin (Waukesha County) during the Second World War and compare the Oconomowoc area propaganda to Wisconsin overall and to the national experience. Enlistments, war bond sales, USO events, parades, radio programs/speeches, films, music, popular books/comic books, and images, are the main types of “cultural locations” that I am using as propaganda. I have found solid examples of posters and advertisement images from local newspapers that provide a wealth of information about the way fear, love, guilt, and patriotism were used to persuade people to support the war in various ways. I believe this thesis will complement the existing body of work on the World War II home front and will also augment the present knowledge of Wisconsin history.

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This chapter will give insight into historical knowledge in the fields of World War II propaganda and the home front, on the national and local levels. It begins with early scholarship

and continues up to the present noting the trends and changes over time. Then it touches on pertinent Wisconsin history and offers a brief background of Oconomowoc. Lastly, the chapter finishes with a high-level overview of National propaganda, observing the different federal organizations involved and the complexity of the system which was created.

### **Historiography**

Initial scholarship on World War II propaganda was based on a political approach to history, and emphasized the catchy slogans, popular images, and patriotic music of the time. These accounts did not scratch too deeply below the surface. Later historians sought to compare propaganda put out by the U.S., Great Britain, and France, to that produced by Germany and Russia, to examine differences and similarities. Scholars maintained a similar approach to the research of this topic for years.

During the 1970s, scholars began to consider the “how” and “why” behind American propaganda and “who” was leading the organizations responsible. Historian, Allan M. Winkler’s *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945*, mounted an effective introduction to the questions that plagued the new American divisions of propaganda from the start, and the changes that were made between the First World War, and the Second, in terms of propaganda.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Office of War Information (OWI), had to decide what approach would be taken to the presentation of propaganda to the American public, whether to be manipulative or straight forward with information. Not only that, they also had to contend with political differences and competing priorities within the U.S. government. Winkler described how those fundamental issues caused disagreements at all levels of government, especially along political

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1. Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).

party lines. Compromises had to be made in order to move forward at all. Leadership at the OWI and other propaganda offices had to find a balance, as Winkler explained, that could be seen as transparent with the American public, yet not frighten them too much, but still rouse them to action. Winkler's book helps unravel the web of the many federal propaganda offices that were created during the war and how they were interconnected.

Subsequent research considered some of the social components of propaganda history. The 1980s sparked a time historians examined subjects that had hitherto been ignored, such as women, minorities, and children. The work done by Historian, Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II*, investigated how images of women, (like "Rosie the Riveter") that developed during the war years and were shaped by propaganda campaigns aimed at the home front. The campaigns that targeted women sought to show them positive images of what it would be like to work in the war industry. This was an image that was reinforced by celebrities, who helped to glamourize war work and how one could still look lady-like in coveralls and other work uniforms. Honey's book illustrated the joint efforts of government agencies and the media to see that the U.S. economy functioned as smoothly as possible.<sup>2</sup> She highlighted how propagandists added emotion into their messaging (e.g., the use of images that depicted children, wounded men, men in combat, religious symbols), specifically to reach American women on the home front. This account also acknowledged the power propagandists had at their disposal; Honey wrote of propaganda as being "...the greatest aggregate means of mass education and persuasion the world has ever seen."<sup>3</sup>

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2. Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 28.

3. Ibid, 31.

As the 1990s emerged, historical scholarship considered an even wider range of analysis. *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two*, written by Historian George H. Roeder, intersected the fields of political, social, and cultural analysis.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, as the war progressed Roeder argued that the nature of propaganda changed; images and topics that were not allowed early in 1942 were permitted by 1944, as the circumstances of war escalated. When the war began, propagandists were reluctant to show anything considered too graphic for the public at home and censored images on a regular basis. When later on public favor for the war began to wane, propagandists responded by ramping up the carnage they presented to the home front to rouse their support. Roeder's interpretation produced evidence of the complex and strategic planning into when, how, and which images were released to the American home front.

Along the same lens of historical analysis, U. S. Army historian, Clayton Laurie's *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*, navigated the complex litany of propaganda (i.e., psychological warfare, information activities) organizations in operation in the U.S. from 1939 to 1945 but also outlined the various types of people who were involved in these organizations, (e.g., diplomats, academics, journalists, foreign correspondents) and some of the motivations behind their messages.<sup>5</sup> Laurie explored the issue of personal biases, and how they impacted the type of propaganda produced by various organizations, and asserted that isolationists would not send the same type of message to the home front as would those in favor

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4. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).

5. Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996).



of intervention, and explained the reasons why.<sup>6</sup> Interventionists were apt to favor advertisements and articles that stressed the dire circumstances of the poor, innocent children in Europe, suffering at the hands of the enemy, and the need to stop fascism. In other words, outwardly focused. Conversely, Isolationists were apt to keep their messaging focused on the impact to the U.S., what our involvement would do to our service men, our resources, and our interests, etc. (i.e., very inwardly focused).

Some researchers published works that overlapped the schools of historical analysis, blending political, social, cultural, and economic pieces. A solid example of this approach can be found in *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II*, by Robert Fyne, English scholar. This work offered insight into American films created during World War II.<sup>7</sup> The majority of films that came out during the war had one commonality: propaganda (but, it was not the sole genre). With the purpose of generating support for the war effort and raising morale, the topics of the films from this era ran the gamut from stereotypical war stories, to westerns, to comedies, and musicals. All employed devices intended to stir emotions in the viewers and repeated the upbeat messages that America's cause was righteous, and the Allies would win the war to save the world from fascism. Fyne investigated how the different genres were chosen and how filmmakers could convey their propagandic message into any film category. Fyne also considered how films were used as a means of escape, as they could offer their viewers a much-needed respite from the stress and strain of war.

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6. Ibid, 6.

7. Robert Fyne, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II* (Metuchen & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994).

In the new millenium, historians put a novel spin on home front propaganda, in an effort to shed fresh light on subjects previously examined. One such work, *Long Ago and Far Away: Hollywood and the Second World War*, written also by Robert Fyne, produced a unique addition to the existing scholarship of World War II propaganda.<sup>8</sup> This study approached the subject based on examining the breadth of films that have been produced based upon the Second World War in detail, and how the topic remains a popular genre. Fyne reviewed the most well known films about World War II, as well as many lesser known works from 1941 to 2008. The common thread through this book was how war has become romanticized and the hardships and sacrifices made by that generation of Americans has almost reached mythical status. Fyne gathered films that ranged from serious and violent, to silly, to love stories but all with the same theme of World War II. A cultural examination of history connects the films Fyne researched. Fyne, like Roeder, acknowledged the importance and power of visual representations in propaganda. This account introduced examples of film media as propaganda, and methods meant to sway an audience which differed from the use of print media, as was found in Howell's book. Not only did the media differ, but the consumer's perspective was different as well. While print media could be a solitary experience or a small group (e.g., a few people viewing an outdoor poster), films were meant to be a collective experience shared in a group setting. Propagandists knew that and took that vantage point into consideration when creating new messaging.

Historian, David Welch's, *World War II Propaganda: Analyzing the Art of Persuasion During Wartime*, offered a broader range of propaganda than previous accounts, yet also gave

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8. Robert Fyne, *Long Ago and Far Away: Hollywood and the Second World War* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008).

consideration to the motives behind propagandic art and messages.<sup>9</sup> Like scholars who came before him, Welch considered the power images could wield and how that tool was used by all propagandists. Many of the images he selected for this book were created by the national agencies described in the works by, Roeder, Honey, Howell, and Laurie. The images and descriptions affirm that every detail held meaning. From the colors, to the font, to the perspective, the message was carefully crafted by propagandists who wished to convey a specific point to the public. War time propaganda slogans were reviewed and like Roeder's book, Welch placed an emphasis on the control of information that took place during the Second World War and how that control of information thereby was a means to control the public on the home front.

Recent publications give evidence that the study of U.S. World War II home front propaganda will not be going away anytime soon. With renewed interest in this topic, Historian, Thomas Howell, put forward a thorough and comprehensive volume titled, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer's War Board in World War II*.<sup>10</sup> This work examined in great detail the Writer's War Board (WWB) from its inception, who was involved (and why), and struggles the organization faced along the way. Howell organized the complexity of the American propaganda system and made connections to entities mentioned in the study of Roeder and Winkler. Howell discussed who was involved in the WWB and their backgrounds to show how personal biases came into play when making decisions about national propaganda.

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9. David Welch, *World War II Propaganda: Analyzing the Art of Persuasion During Wartime* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2017).

10. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer's War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019).

Research into the national World War II propaganda continues to outpace the local, state, or town levels. Far fewer accounts dive in to examine regional and local propaganda efforts in concert with national trends. The available material on the local level of American home front propaganda historiography follows similar trends found at the national level. Like its national counterparts, local propagandists had complex systems in place to persuade civilians on the home front to attain a desired outcome. Often propaganda that was produced on the national level came down to the local agents who handled disbursement and carried out the day-to-day interactions with the public in the community. While similar in some respects, local propaganda holds unique elements for historians to consider.

Following the trend of the 1970s giving more attention to local history, historians brought out a more personal and social side than what could be shown from the national level. One such work illustrates this point. Richard Pifer's *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars*, presented a narrower focus of Wisconsin's home front.<sup>11</sup> Pifer offered a deep look at the community of La Crosse during both the First and Second World Wars. His analysis compared accounts of people who lived in the area and added valuable personal accounts to the historic record. Like the Stevens' book, Pifer gave a voice to women who were previously voiceless in the oeuvre of World War II scholarship. This work documented details of the rationing system and other domestic home front activities, in line with what Fehring captured in his book and offered new insights into the small-town Wisconsin experience. By homing in on one Wisconsin community, Pifer was able to get into details that other researchers have not. Pifer illuminated the types of public events that were held in the community by the folks on the home

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11. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 215.

front and provided not only examples, but oral histories to supplement his findings. By considering facets of both World War I and World War II side by side in the La Crosse area, Pifer revealed his main argument, that there were more things in common on the home front during the two wars, than there were differences. However, his findings confirmed that the approach to propaganda was different in both world wars, with more of an effort to be transparent during the Second World War, in order to circumvent repeating the criticism from the First World War. Pifer's focus lent consideration to a mix of political, social, economic, and cultural elements happening in La Crosse. Another strong component of *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* were the detailed and personal descriptions of how involved the community was in support of the war effort and first-hand accounts by citizens of La Crosse, and Wisconsin.

Historian Michael E. Stevens' book, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945*, contributed new insightful facts about Wisconsin during the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> Like Fehring, Stevens covered the draft and rationing, and furnished hard data on Wisconsin servicemen, servicewomen, and their families on the home front. The main strengths of this analysis were the first-hand accounts of Wisconsin women who lived during World War II, essentially making it a compilation of intriguing oral histories. The central argument of this book was that women across the years and from varied backgrounds endured a common hardship, and although the women themselves were quite different, their shared experience united them. *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* was a major step towards understanding the Wisconsin home front. It was also valuable for anyone interested in building on women's and gender studies, or the study of

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12. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993).

race in Wisconsin, as it recounted details often left out of historical records, like examples of the war's impact to women's daily personal lives. Stevens exhibited the support system that women created to help each other with child care, shopping, and other household tasks. He also provided new insight into the struggles that mothers of young children faced during the war, such as not being able to find milk, baby clothes, and baby cribs, and how the women worked together to help one another. The interviews spanned women across varied ethnicities, backgrounds, and marital status.

Some scholarship in the mid-late 1990s brought forward an even narrower focus, small town America. Such as the work, *A Town For All Seasons*, by local historians, Mildred E. Babich, Robert J. Higgins, and David L. Smith, produced for the sesquicentennial celebration in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin by the local historical society.<sup>13</sup> Their research was a strong compilation of the town's history from 1844 to 1994, and considered World War II primarily from a focus on accounts of servicemen from the community. Like the Babich book, *Oconomowoc Barons to Bootleggers* by local historians Barbara and David Barquist, examined the history of Oconomowoc and the surrounding areas, touching on the World War II home front within a more expansive local history.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Mildred E. Babich, Robert J. Higgins, and David L. Smith. 1995. *A Town For All Seasons*. Oconomowoc, WI: The Oconomowoc Historical Society. (For more information on the history of Oconomowoc, see this source. It covered a wide range of topics and included maps and photos from the period. The scope is quite broad and provided a well-researched background of the town. It emphasized the culture of the area, with lesser elements of economic and social aspects.)

14. Barbara & David Barquist. 1999. *Oconomowoc Barons to Bootleggers*. Oconomowoc, WI: Leitzke. (More valuable information on Oconomowoc can be found in this source. This book provided a more complete picture of the history of the community, and presented a balanced look from the cultural, social, and economic

The State Committee from Madison, Wisconsin, published a comprehensive overview of Wisconsin in World War II titled, *Wisconsin's Role in World War II: Commemorating The 50th Anniversary of World War II*.<sup>15</sup> With a similar approach to the Fehring work, the authors considered the home front of communities in Wisconsin, but with more of an eye to the southern center of the state, than to the south-east. And like Fehring, the State Committee's scope considered the home front workers in factories and heavy industries of the state. A solid portion of study was centered on servicemen, as was a focus of Babich's, but this volume also included service women. However, the State Committee gave more consideration to the social elements of the home front, as was the case in the Pifer and Stevens review. Fehring, Stevens, Pifer, and the State Committee all communicated valuable information concerning the rationing system in place during World War II. The use of oral histories strengthened the State Committee's research, like was seen in the works by Pifer and Stevens. This account shared insight into examples of Wisconsin home front propaganda that had a correlation to the national propaganda discussed in the scholarship of Roeder and Winkler.

A quite recent addition to the historiography of local home front Wisconsin was *When Milwaukee Went to War: The Homefront During WWII*, by Thomas Fehring, History Committee Chair. This work delivered a robust background of the World War II home front experience in

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perspectives of Oconomowoc. The prevailing message of this account was the long and noteworthy history of the area – the good, the bad, and the in-between.)

15. State Committee, *Wisconsin's Role in World War II: Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of World War II* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, 1995).

Milwaukee, Wisconsin.<sup>16</sup> Working from investigation that came before him, Fehring added focus on economic, cultural, social, and to an extent political facets of this rich history. Fehring's version helped to sort out the draft and rationing systems and how they changed as the war waged on. Fehring also communicated statistical information, and by discussing the manufacturing, manpower, labor organizations, and the home front of Milwaukee, made a unique contribution to advance the fields of World War II and Wisconsin study.<sup>17</sup>

### **Wisconsin History and Oconomowoc in World War II**

The knowledge of Wisconsin history during World War II is strongly rooted in its citizens' military service records complemented by narratives that considered some of the war efforts at home, primarily rationing, war bond drives, and victory gardens. Academics have covered propaganda in broad strokes, and at a high level, without much examination of the local level. Examples of national propaganda slogans and images have oft been studied, but the field of scholarship has not reached down to the local propaganda found in small town Wisconsin during the war.

During the Second World War Wisconsin saw record growth in industry and agriculture, which led to increased employment levels and raised the standard of living and the state's economy. U.S. Census records from 1940 show the populations for the City of Oconomowoc was 4,562, the Town of Oconomowoc was 2,081, Town of Summit 1,617, the Village of Lac LaBelle was 66 for a grand total of 8,326 citizens of this community. This revealed that the

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16. Thomas H. Fehring, *When Milwaukee Went to War: The Homefront During WWII* (Milwaukee: Independent, 2020).

17. Ibid, 123.



percentage of people in military service during World War II who came from Oconomowoc was quite high. Of the roughly 16 million Americans who served in the military during World War II, nearly 320 thousand men and 9 thousand women were from Wisconsin. That was a little over 2 percent of the total number of U.S. service men and women. Of those approximate 329 thousand Wisconsinites who served in the military during World War II, around 3,790 were from Oconomowoc. The Oconomowocians at home found their lives radically altered by the war.

This thesis seeks to answer questions about how their lives were altered. How were average citizens of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin persuaded to go along with severe restrictions on goods, services, and other hardships brought on by World War II? How could people be convinced that not only would they see their beloved sons, husbands, sweethearts, and brothers go off to a war from which they might never return, but they should also lend their time and money to numerous causes at the home front to support the war? How much did war propaganda play in their motivations? Were the folks at home acting out of patriotism, out of self-preservation, or doing what needed to be done to help their families and friends? Or perhaps a combination of reasons? How did it feel to be subjected to war news on such a prolific scale and for so many years? While much has been written about World War II and the home front in general, there are fewer accounts of various localities, and even less of Wisconsin, specifically. Oconomowoc or Waukesha County during World War II are not among those few. Home front scholarship thus far tends to focus on generalities; topics such as, women in the workforce, rationing, victory gardens, war bond drives, juvenile delinquency, gold star families, the USO, and patriotism. The intersection of home front and propaganda at the local level has been far less common. We need to consider how national propaganda impacted local propaganda and the daily lives of Oconomowoc citizens.

## National Propaganda

During World War II the U.S. conducted a propaganda campaign against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan on a never-before-seen scale in American history. According to Laurie, “at least seven different federal organizations were involved in operations that were called either propaganda, psychological warfare, or information activities from 1939 to 1945,” which created a complex maze of agencies.<sup>18</sup> Add to that the list of quasi-military, overseas, and local propaganda organizations and the number grows exponentially. U.S. propagandists believed that although they were up against “a grisly, hateful nightmare of a war, the cause was just, and the outcomes were encouraging, as well as sobering.”<sup>19</sup>

The U.S. objective from the start was to not repeat the mistakes made with propaganda during World War I. The term “home front” entered the vernacular during the First World War but was resurrected during the Second World War. Many Americans on the home front felt the information they were given had been too watered-down and did not portray the reality. Propaganda organizations faced harsh criticism of trying to hold back information from the American public. All of this was taken into consideration when planning began for the new approach to propaganda of the Second World War. Photojournalism really took off in the 1940s, as the public yearned for visual information about the war. Printed weeklies such as *Look* and *Life* magazines flourished. Likewise, newspapers brought the war to the home front like never before. Both excelled in the use of visually supported current-event stories about the war. Stories

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18. Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 1.

19. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 4.

and photographs became especially powerful and according to film scholar Robert Sickels, “...went a long way in shaping the public’s sentiments toward the war.”<sup>20</sup>

With the goals to mobilize the population and bring the communication system into closer alignment with the country’s needs, the Office of War Information (OWI) was established. Roosevelt’s executive order of June 1942 established the OWI and charged it with the broad mandate to: “... coordinate the dissemination of war information by all federal agencies and to formulate and carry out, by means of the press, radio and motion pictures, programs designed to facilitate an understanding in the United States and abroad of the progress of the war effort and of the policies, activities, and aims of the Government.”<sup>21</sup> Elmer Davis, a respected news reporter who was opposed to government control of the press, was appointed director of the OWI.<sup>22</sup> At the beginning, the goal of American propagandists was to take the lessons learned in World War I and learn from them. The plan was known as a “strategy of truth,” meaning that the government would keep secret only information that could jeopardize military operations or diplomatic negotiations. Davis proclaimed that the “government would tell the truth because it had nothing to hide, because citizens in a democracy deserved full and accurate explanations of the actions of those governed by their consent, and because the strategy produced results. Telling the truth, and not deceiving and manipulating would build the strongest public support for the

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20. Robert Sickels, *American Popular Culture Through History: The 1940s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 233-234.

21. Louise I. Gerdes, *The 1940s* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 152-153.

22. Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 30.

war effort.”<sup>23</sup> Events and images could be shared with those at home to make the war more tangible and was in keeping with the mission to be further transparent with the public. The propaganda was more open than it had previously been, but it still needed to persuade U.S. citizens to support the war effort.

Early in the war, photographs that were graphic would have been kept in a file, known as the “Chamber of Horrors,” maintained by the newly constructed Pentagon. Despite Davis’s belief that Americans wanted their war news to be “brutally frank,” for nearly two years the photographs that best fit this definition accumulated in this file, whose very existence remained a national secret.<sup>24</sup> By way of example, in an article from the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* in 1941, a photo of the wreckage of a naval transport plane accompanied a short story about Naval aviators killed in action. The image purposely chosen shows a heavily damaged wreck of a plane, but, no bodies, or gore of any kind.<sup>25</sup>

Concurrent to other agencies, President Roosevelt established the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) on June 13, 1942, led by Col. William Donovan. The objective of the OSS differed from the mission of the OWI. Their purpose was to be an add-on to military strategy, a vehicle for planting stories and rumors that would cripple the enemy and enhance the reputation of the United States. The OSS deployed small teams worldwide (primarily in Europe and Asia)

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23. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

24. *Ibid*, 10.

25. “Crash Kills Navy Fliers,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, January 6, 1941, 1.

to conduct clandestine intelligence collection and paramilitary warfare.<sup>26</sup> This was a form of psychological warfare that had to shape, rather than expose the full truth about American prowess and power.<sup>27</sup>

Interagency relations of the many Federal Programs were varied. Laurie argued, “in lieu of guidance from the President, the nation’s leading propagandists, William Donovan of the OSS, and Robert Sherwood and Elmer Davis of the OWI, developed policies and strategies based largely on their personal views of what constituted effective propaganda.”<sup>28</sup> Winkler asserted, “the first struggles over the shape of American propaganda occurred in the Domestic Branch of the new OWI...” where talented men shared the perceived ideological battle as between the forces of good and evil.<sup>29</sup> “The struggles that ensued revolved around the tough questions concerning the nature of propaganda in a democratic society at war.”<sup>30</sup> Many questions revolved around the new “truth propaganda” effort, such as, should it work on its own to interpret basic issues of war and peace for the public at home? Should it play a manipulative role in trying to arouse a lethargic people to support a war? Or should it simply serve as an

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26. Eugene Liptak, *Office of Strategic Services 1942-45*, (New York, NY: Osprey Publishing, 2009). (The OSS was known as the precursor to the CIA.)

27. Louise I. Gerdes, *The 1940s* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 156.

28. Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America’s Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 1. (Robert Sherwood was a renowned playwright and speech writer who became director of the overseas branch of OWI.)

29. Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 38.

30. Ibid.

information channel? As Winkler emphasized, there were no easy answers to these questions, and there were disagreements at all levels of government.<sup>31</sup>

President Roosevelt “attempted to sidestep the controversy over using the media for propaganda purposes by asserting that the OWI would merely disseminate information about government programs in a neutral way.”<sup>32</sup> Many believed the proper route for effective propaganda rested in a truthful and idealistic program that expressed “...clear and egalitarian moral and ethical values for all people everywhere.”<sup>33</sup> Viewpoints differed; the U.S. War Department wanted to keep details of the war from the American people to avoid undermining their confidence in the military, while the OWI believed Americans had a right to know the truth.<sup>34</sup>

Another question that many propagandists were forced to ask themselves was whether or not the president’s beliefs were to provide the central themes for the moral and ethical foundation of American propaganda. The OWI believed it should and felt the objective was to eliminate fascism once and for all.<sup>35</sup> The OSS and the U.S. Army thought otherwise and believed the main objective was a military defeat of the Nazi Wehrmacht. This debate, not surprisingly, ran along party lines as the OWI drew liberals and Democratic New Dealers, while conversely,

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31. Ibid, 39.

32. Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 30.

33. Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America’s Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 5.

34. Louise I. Gerdes, *The 1940s* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 152.

35. Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America’s Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 3.

the OSS drew conservatives and Republicans.<sup>36</sup> Civilian and military leaders would ultimately control agencies that disseminated vastly different forms of propaganda, depending on the school of thought they adhered to. While they may have deployed the same types of media (e.g., radio, print materials, photos, and films) their messages were dissimilar, and yet, they all understood the capability propaganda had to reach their military, diplomatic, and political goals.<sup>37</sup> Winkler explained that top leadership was split from the start and Davis had to make many compromises if his organization (OWI) was to survive.<sup>38</sup> The OWI was called on to take responsibility for putting the main issues before the people of the country and advancing significant solutions to try to stimulate discussion.<sup>39</sup> Davis took seriously his promises “to tell nothing but the truth” and “to see that the American people get just as much of it as genuine considerations of military security will permit.”<sup>40</sup> At the same time, U.S. military leaders recognized that propaganda was a weapon. Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson’s assistant secretary, John J. McCloy, indicated that the Army needed to mobilize for propaganda warfare just as much as it needed to for ground and air warfare.<sup>41</sup> On this much both sides could agree: “America had to fight Nazi propaganda with American propaganda.”<sup>42</sup>

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36. Ibid, 7.

37. Ibid, 2.

38. Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 40.

39. Ibid, 41.

40. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 9.

41. Louise I. Gerdes, *The 1940s* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 136.

42. Ibid.

While Congress mandated strict guidelines and constant scrutiny to the OWI, the Writers' War Board (WWB) created in 1942, quickly earned a reputation as a 'shadowy propaganda organization' partially subsidized by the OWI. The WWB consisted of twenty well-known New York writers who voluntarily collaborated with the OWI but were not subject to the same restrictions. This small group was able to recruit thousands of authors around the United States to help with its work. They prepared and submitted pieces to local and national publishers after the WWB notified them of upcoming topics to use.<sup>43</sup> The WWB was chaired by mystery writer Rex Stout and included primarily political liberals among its ranks. Howell stressed that the WWB's propaganda "...so pervaded the home front that it helped to mold the nation's wartime culture."<sup>44</sup> Leaders thought that propaganda could help the U.S. government control public responses to unsettling wartime phenomena such as rationing, forced separations, housing shortages, strained community services, and overcrowded transportation facilities.<sup>45</sup> The WWB supplied the OSS and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) with contact information on writers who might meet the needs for the propaganda messages they were producing. By the use of propaganda devices such as patriotism and patriotic guilt, the WWB developed into the voice of Americans' consciences subtly whispering, "Your country needs you; do the right thing; be a good citizen; help with the war effort; endure the hardships; work with others for the common good."<sup>46</sup>

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43. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer's War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), ix.

44. *Ibid*, 1.

45. Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 29-30.

46. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer's War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 87.



Before the end of the first year of American involvement in the war, an OWI survey reported that many Americans resented “being treated like babies” and expected the government to recognize that “they can take bad news and want to be treated like full partners.”<sup>47</sup> Roeder explained that proponents of bluntness offered shocking photographs as an antidote to the problems of success. “If in 1942 officials feared that American military setbacks would demoralize the public, in 1943 they feared that victories would lead to overconfidence.”<sup>48</sup> While Davis and the OWI debated the risks of optimism and complacency, Roeder asserted they too were concerned about growing resentment that “the war news is incomplete and sugar coated” which caused officials to consider “increased candor about the war, in the hopes that the realities of war might reduce public skepticism.”<sup>49</sup> By mid-1943 concerns about public complacency came to a head and officials decided to begin to release archived photographs that showed death, but not yet bloody death.<sup>50</sup> Censorship restrictions on images continued to loosen, and not long afterwards, the War Department lifted regulations on civilian photographers on the battlefield, arguing that civilians needed to “understand the ferocity of the struggle and the sacrifices being made on their behalf.”<sup>51</sup> President Roosevelt and Secretary of War Stimson made it clear that in their judgement, the time for loosening restrictions had arrived. Propaganda remained a tightrope

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47. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 101.

48. *Ibid*, 10.

49. *Ibid*, 11.

50. *Ibid*, 1.

51. Robert Sickels, *American Popular Culture Through History: The 1940s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 234.

walk, as on one hand, propagandists wanted to bolster American morale, while on the other hand they wanted the public to continue to do all the things necessary to ensure a U.S. victory.

“During the next two years, as military successes magnified those concerns, government officials and media editors confronted Americans with increasingly vivid depictions of war’s impact.”<sup>52</sup>

These steps were taken to make a distant war seem real to those who were expected to support it from the home front. Hundreds of photos from the “Chamber of Horrors” were reexamined and dozens later released to the public. Chief of Staff George C. Marshall ordered that generals give support to their photographic units and send Washington material that would “vividly portray the dangers, horrors, and grimness of War.”<sup>53</sup> At the close of 1943 and into 1944 the OWI likewise felt they needed to reach the public by “Over-the-Hump Psychology” noting the growing reluctance and selfishness of civilians to make sacrifices proportionate to those made by soldiers. Americans at home were growing weary of war and all the demands it placed on them; people began to grumble about rationing, fell short of meeting war bond quotas, and fewer volunteered to support the war. It was the opinion of OWI leaders that the U.S. public complacency was damaging the war effort.<sup>54</sup> This perceived complacency was the impetus behind propagandists who chose to release increasingly gruesome images and more direct messages. This change in practice proved to be the right course of action at the time. According to Roeder, the released photos had the desired effect, and propagandists seemed to agree that the more gruesome photos that depicted wounded or dead American servicemen became the strongest appeal and made “the

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52. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 1.

53. Ibid, 12.

54. Ibid, 15.

people so mad they dig down deep” and show their support.<sup>55</sup> Without a doubt, it was strategically planned when, how, and which images would be released to the American public.

Strikingly absent from the more graphic images of American wounded was any mention of “psychoneurotic casualties” which remained hidden until 1944, and then only slightly noted. A secret study was conducted by the Office of the Surgeon General which concluded that, “psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel wounds.” This study found that on average, an infantryman could “last” about two hundred days before breaking down. Despite its omission in propaganda, Americans on the home front knew what was happening and understood that a soldier’s breakdown “was neither abnormal nor proof of unwillingness to serve.”<sup>56</sup>

What Americans saw by 1945 was far more revealing and offered a more complex understanding of the war than what they had seen in December 1941. Propaganda officials made changes in response to evolving wartime needs and circumstances, including diminished public tolerance for sanitized images of war. Pictures of American dead were first considered extremely hazardous material for home front morale but would eventually come to be considered the most powerful weapon in their persuasive arsenal.<sup>57</sup> By war’s end, Sickels reasoned that the “...culmination of wartime photojournalism was the shocking series of photographs of the

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55. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 14.

56. *Ibid*, 16.

57. *Ibid*, 25.

German Concentration camps and other wartime horrors.”<sup>58</sup> For the public, photos in this series provided an extra measure of explanation and justification for the American involvement in the war. Roeder opined the American government was right to claim that “the United States did more than any other major combatant to maintain a free press during the war.” When compared to the propaganda policies in Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, Italy, China, and even to a lesser extent Great Britain, U.S. propaganda was significantly more transparent.<sup>59</sup>

American propaganda used national images, symbols, and myths, for instance depictions of America as an innocent giant whose mission was to save war-tired Europe. This myth of innocence, with deep roots in American culture and nationalism prevailed throughout the war.”<sup>60</sup> Graphic depictions of American servicemen portrayed in Christ-like imagery drew on Christian symbols and beliefs that were meant to persuade the public to support the war effort. Propagandists relied on religious beliefs and cultural history to persuade their readers on the home front, with occasional use of guilt and peer pressure as well.<sup>61</sup>

### **A Brief Overview of Waukesha County and Oconomowoc**

Waukesha County, Wisconsin was established in 1846. It was bordered on the east by Milwaukee County, on the west by Jefferson County, to the north by Dodge and Washington

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58. Robert Sickels, *American Popular Culture Through History: The 1940s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 234.

59. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

60. Louise I. Gerdes, *The 1940s* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 138-139.

61. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 32.

Counties, and to the south by Racine and Walworth Counties. At just under 550 square miles, agriculture has always been integral to the county's prosperity. Early on in its inception wheat farming was replaced by the more sustainable dairy farming Wisconsin would come to be known for. Many of the earliest European settlers to this county were from Germany and Scandinavia. By the 1930s industries such as manufacturing and canning had risen in the area, which brought many people from the farms and into the cities for work.

According to census records, by 1940 Waukesha County had a population of 62,744 citizens, making it the third largest county in Wisconsin. Politics in 1940 saw a Republican governor, Julius P. Heil, (coincidentally a German native), followed by another Republican, Walter Samuel Goodland in the subsequent election. Waukesha County was the largest Republican-leaning County in Wisconsin and has been for many years, only having backed Democrats for President in elections four times since 1892. Apart from politics, Waukesha County was known for its water, with a little more than 5 percent of its overall size being a body of water. The north-west corner of the county was known as "Lake Country," which included Oconomowoc.

The name "Oconomowoc" was derived from "Con-no-mo-wauk" from the Potawatomi and Winnebago tribes who first settled the area. The name has various reported meanings. Town legend claims that Charles B. Sheldon, one of the first white settlers to the area, believed the word meant "the river of lakes."<sup>62</sup> Yet French trader, Vieau, father-in-law of fur trader, land speculator, and politician, Solomon Juneau, claimed it meant "waterfall," or "place where the

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62. Mildred E. Babich, Robert J. Higgins, and David L. Smith. 1995. *A Town For All Seasons*. Oconomowoc, WI: The Oconomowoc Historical Society, 11.

river falls.”<sup>63</sup> The first European settlers arrived in 1837, and the city was incorporated in 1875. With twelve lakes in the surrounding area and the arrival of the railroad, the region was soon established as a favorite summer destination of wealthy vacationers from around the Midwest. Businesses too were drawn to the area, notably Pabst Farms, Brownberry Ovens, Oconomowoc Canning Co. (later Stokely USA Inc.), and the Carnation Company all have early roots in the community.<sup>64</sup> This vicinity would later be known as a haven of the “Beer Barons” as the Pabst and Binzel breweries grew to prosperity there, and led to an interesting chapter during Prohibition, when bootleggers operated in the area and even the infamous Al Capone had connections with the region at one time.<sup>65</sup>

Even now, the city retains much of its historic charm with Victorian homes dotting the landscape, many of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In recent years, the city leaders have made an effort to revive the city and attract new blood into the community, and approved many new building projects, not all universally welcomed. A new nickname has in fact emerged for the town, “O-Condo-mo-woc,” due to the recent deluge of new condominiums. Oconomowoc’s population remains tipped to the affluent side, and predominantly white, well-educated, and conservative. The 2022 population was 18,691, and covers approximately 12 square miles, making Oconomowoc the 45<sup>th</sup> largest city in Wisconsin.

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63. Mildred E. Babich, Robert J. Higgins, and David L. Smith. 1995. *A Town For All Seasons*. Oconomowoc, WI: The Oconomowoc Historical Society.

64. Ibid, 12.

65. Barbara & David Barquist. 1999. *Oconomowoc Barons to Bootleggers*. Oconomowoc, WI: Leitzke.

## The Weekly News

Mobilizing citizens on the U.S. home front for war was a broad effort. Newspapers could be used to bolster support at home and raise the morale of those on the home front. Articles that covered the latest war news were a regular element of the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* and *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* even before the U.S. entered the Second World War. Dramatic headlines like “Hitler Nears Dardanelles,” as well as information about our own military gave those on the home front a window to the war.<sup>66</sup> An article published in the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* featured a large photo from November 1941 that showed the crew of a German freighter attempting to abandon ship after they tried to scuttle it when a U.S. Navy boarding party approached. Furthermore, this ship had been disguised as an American ship.<sup>67</sup> This would have been a powerful example to the home front readers of German treachery and American superiority. The sensational headlines only escalated after the attack on Pearl Harbor, with news such as the bold announcement, “CONGRESS DECLARES WAR 33 MINUTES AFTER F.D.R. TALK.”<sup>68</sup> The local newspapers all carried war-related news during the war years, yet pronounced differences are notable between *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* and *The Waukesha Daily Freeman*. While other papers in Wisconsin ran national headlines regularly mixed in with local news on a balanced scale, *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* published far fewer national articles, in favor of a more locally-centered focus. Although more locally-focused, the

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66. Harrison Salisbury, “Hitler Nears Dardanelles,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, March 1, 1941.

67. “Navy Captures Disguised German Boat,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, November 18, 1941.

68. “Congress Declares War 33 Minutes After F.D.R. Talk,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 8, 1941, 1.

Oconomowoc news was still heavily weighted with war-related connections. Every so often however, the Oconomowoc paper published articles that seemed to come from a world before the war, stories of ski championships, regatta sailboat races, and simpler times.

Newspapers were also used to warn the folks at home about dangers: whether it be spies in their midst or black-marketeers. An article in the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* from 1941 warned, “Modern spies are ‘plain people,’ not mysterious looking folks.”<sup>69</sup> This was closely aligned with a propaganda poster message, “loose lips sink ships,” from the War Advertising



Figure 1

Council’s 1942-1945 campaign meant to encourage Americans to be discreet in their communication to prevent restricted information from being leaked to the enemy.<sup>70</sup> (see Fig. 1.)

Other articles ran periodically warning the public to avoid buying anything from the black-market and to adhere to rationing. The newspaper was also used by the Catholic bishops of the United States as well as local church leaders to warn the people on the home front of the evils of Nazism and

Communism, described as the “...two greatest evils extant.”<sup>71</sup> Area churches also published notices in the newspaper to let the public know about various events to be held during the war.

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69. Edward W. Beattie, Jr. and Harry Flory, “Modern Spies Are ‘Plain People’ Not Mysterious Looking Folks,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, January 18, 1941.

70. (Security of War Information - Loose Lips Sink Ships (1942 - 1945), n.d.)

71. “Catholic Bishops Rap Nazism And Communism As The ‘Two Greatest Evils Extant,’” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, November 17, 1941.



## Chapter 2

### Home Front Sacrifices, Area Business, and Local Service Members

Newspapers played an important role in the lives of those on the home front. Citizens relied on the newspaper to present both national and local news and events. Women like Jean Lechnir got their information about the war from the newspapers, who tried to track what her husband was going through and saved articles for a scrapbook. Lechnir declared, “I followed everything, Bill Mauldin’s accounts of what the doughboys were doing...I followed every article in the papers...it kept me busy, kept me thinking, and made me feel closer to him.”<sup>72</sup> Lechnir’s sentiment was undoubtedly shared by others on the home front as well, who sought news of family and friends.

#### A. Rationing

As film scholar Robert Sickels explained, while American GIs were off fighting, civilians back at home found their lives completely changed. Early on in 1941, it was believed that in order for there to be enough food for soldiers and civilians, the populace at home would need to “...tighten its belt and willingly participate in food rationing.” However, just in case people might not be so willing to do so, the government instituted mandatory rationing of anything deemed “essential” to the war effort, including food.<sup>73</sup> Slogans for rationing during World War II

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72. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 120. (Bill Mauldin was a WWII American Army Veteran, Purple Heart recipient, military cartoonist for *Stars and Stripes*, and Pulitzer Prize winner.)

73. Robert Sickels, *American Popular Culture Through History: The 1940s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 99.

included, “Vitamins Will Win the War” and “Vitamins for Victory,” and a popular series that encouraged children to be members of the “Clean Plate Club.”<sup>74</sup>

Numerous consumer goods were all growing scarce by 1942 and prompted President Roosevelt to implement a formal rationing system.<sup>75</sup> Rationing helped ensure that a minimum of necessities would be available for everyone at home and provide enough materials to meet the needs of the war. Tires were the first item to be rationed, followed by gasoline, coffee, sugar, meat, cheese, butter, lard, canned foods, dried fruits, jam, bicycles, fuel oil, clothing, silk and nylon stockings, shoes, and many other items. To conserve rubber and gas, unnecessary driving was discouraged and people resorted to sharing rides with others whenever possible. (see Fig. 2.)



Figure 2

This was also done because of the ban on the production of non-military vehicles during the war. History Committee Chair, Thomas H. Fehring, pointed out that rationing was for everyone, including children, who were issued ration stamps by the local rationing boards. To try to prevent hoarding, the stamps were given expiration dates.<sup>76</sup> President Roosevelt constantly reminded radio audiences that “the battles fought on some remote Pacific island

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74. Ibid, 100.

75. Robert Fyne, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II* (Metuchen & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 114.

76. Thomas H. Fehring, *When Milwaukee Went to War: The Homefront During WWII* (Milwaukee: Independent, 2020), 122.

were first won in the hot steel mills of Pittsburgh...” and that victory depended on numerous sacrifices and inconveniences made on the home front. He urged citizens to all do their part, “from saving bacon fat and collecting newspapers and scrap metal, to rolling bandages, and standing air raid watches.”<sup>77</sup>

The point system of rationing began in January 1943 and was continued for the duration of the war. Under this system, one had a certain number of points to be used for a general category of goods, such as meat or vegetables. Each allotment had to be used by the specified time and could not be rolled over to the following month. Commodities on the shelf carried point values as well as prices. To complicate matters, the ration point value of items fluctuated depending on local supply. The weekly shopping trip became a balancing act of ration point juggling, menu planning, and coping with frustrating shortages. The whole point system was troublesome, but it was also regarded as doing one’s duty to support the boys overseas. “Each ration book contained coupons of varying denomination, and the shopper...would mix and match coupons so as to produce the proper combination to allow purchase of the desired commodities.”<sup>78</sup> Just imagine: when the system went into effect, one million trained volunteers stood by to help stores and shoppers muddle through. The Council of Defense distributed government pamphlets entitled, “Recipes to Match Your Sugar Ration,” to help consumers with rationing, and make wise purchases.<sup>79</sup> Newspapers advised readers to study their grocery lists

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77. Robert Fyne, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II* (Metuchen & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 115.

78. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 117-118.

79. *Ibid.*, 164.

and the point chart before going to the store.<sup>80</sup> Homemakers became very creative with their recipes to adapt to what was available. Some women recalled making many dishes with ground hamburger for their children, rather than a higher grade cut of meat, and quite often eating cereal for dinner because it was so inexpensive. Lechnir recalled a box of cereal cost 50 cents and shared that, "...many, many nights meals were just cereal" for her children and herself.<sup>81</sup>

The black market became a serious concern, so it would seem the ration system chafed some citizens. National publications such as the *Army and Navy Woman*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Blue Circle*, *Popular Comics*, and *Scholastic* warned readers to beware of black-market racketeers and featured stories that described those who made use of the black market as "civilian slackers" and ultimately as thieves.<sup>82</sup> Popular radio crime program *Gang Busters* contributed to spreading the message to stay away from the black marketeers with stories such as one that described racketeers who sold gasoline, were tracked down, and later imprisoned.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise, notices appeared in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* from area grocers that reminded consumers to beware of black-market meat. Civilians who used the black market were seen to be shirking their patriotic duty, because it was publicized that to abide by the rationing system was being a "good American." Of equal contempt were people who hoarded goods.

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80. Ibid, 118.

81. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 83.

82. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer's War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 98.

83. Ibid, 98.

Propaganda posters urged women to “Share and play square” and support the rationing efforts.<sup>84</sup> *Harper’s Bazaar* and the *Reader’s Digest* decried the problems created when shoppers hoarded goods and scolded women for driving up inflation. Articles such as, “Let’s Talk about Inflation” spoke of hoarders in the following way, “this woman is the national nightmare...she buys by the dozens, yawns at inflation...multiplied by the thousands, she is draining the shops, cornering merchandise needed by others...she is a disgrace, the despair of America.” It is of note that this chastisement was aimed squarely at women. This implies women were the primary consumers and therefore thought of as those most likely to hoard goods. Even *Superman* comics got in on the propagandic message and warned high school students of the evils of hoarding.<sup>85</sup> One has to wonder how many students were truly guilty of hoarding to elicit this kind of warning, or were the warnings meant to solicit teens to help convince their parents of the evils of hoarding, or to surveil them perhaps? No articles covering this topic were found in the Oconomowoc paper. This requires further research.

Of course, problems arose and it did not take long for ration coupons to be stolen and counterfeited, and the black market plagued the system throughout the duration of the war. Pifer asserted that two common petty violations of rationing occurred in the La Crosse, Wisconsin area, either due to ignorance or apathy.<sup>86</sup> Citing petty violations suggests that there were not bigger black market issues to report. Was the “plague” just a propaganda tool? Or were other,

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84. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 90.

85. *Ibid*, 100.

86. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 121.

more serious black market problems not reported on, as a way to maintain home front morale? The rationing system led the people at home to face arduous shopping trips that could result in having spent hours in line at a store, only to return home with empty shopping bags. People were asked to “use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.”

Notices appeared regularly on the front page of the local papers to make the public aware of deadlines to register for and collect new war ration books.<sup>87</sup> One recurring column in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* entitled “Ration Guide” pointed out to readers when the sugar ration stamp would expire and when gasoline stamps would be temporarily available.<sup>88</sup> In effort to help the public sort out the complicated system, a whole list was given, by date, of the stamps that would either be expiring or becoming available. Another reminder was printed in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* a few weeks later which announced that local residents needed to apply for the War Ration Book Number Two at the high school gymnasium.<sup>89</sup> A follow-up article ran stating that 3,500 ration books had been issued thus far, and registration had been running smoothly. The article outlined that the entire process was being handled by the high school, and all classes had been abandoned during the week, in order for the students and faculty to work the ration book registration.<sup>90</sup> Canceling classes for the entire high school student body for a whole week signifies the importance of issuing the ration books and how this effort relied on the

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87. “Must Register For War Ration Book One By Jan. 15,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

88. “Ration Guide,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 29, 1943.

89. “Local Residents To Apply at High School Gymnasium,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 19, 1943.

90. “3,500 Ration Books Issued By Thurs. Noon: Registration Going Smoothly at High School Gym,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 26, 1943.

students, faculty, and the school to facilitate the operation. The following week, it was announced that a total of 5,273 ration book number twos had been issued at the Oconomowoc high school.<sup>91</sup>

Marjorie Miley, a high schooler in nearby Manitowoc, Wisconsin during the onset of World War II, provided a first-hand account and described how rationing was implemented in her community: “The superintendent of schools in Manitowoc was the overall chairman for rationing and those of us who were seniors at Lincoln [high school] went out to the various places where rationing books were issued and we were the issuing agents of the ration books. We were trained and we did this for the spring semester for one social studies class and it was interesting.”<sup>92</sup> The use of high schoolers in this capacity served as a means of propaganda, as the more they talked about what they were doing, the more the messages of supporting the rationing system and volunteering were spread. High Schools are key local institutions with a variety of social functions. Having the ration book distribution take place at this local institution added another measure of validation and support for the war effort. Wisconsin high schools and their students were commonly mobilized for war-related duties such as this due to the shortage of labor available on the home front, and perhaps succeeded in generating community engagement and buy-in for the cause.

Rationing was the topic of much discussion at public events in Oconomowoc during the war. One announcement in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* reported that the Chamber of

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91. “Issue 5273 Ration Book Two Here,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 1, 1943.

92. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 101.

Commerce had hosted a propagandic-dinner and discussion where the Wisconsin State Rationing Officer and Assistant Officer presented an “extremely interesting and enlightening outline” of the point rationing system that was going into effect in the next month.<sup>93</sup> One of the speakers presented the history of rationing, its need and purpose, and presented rationing in a favorable light, to gain the support of the local populace. In addition to a number of prominent local businessmen in attendance, the article remarked many women interested in the subject attended as well, evidencing that both genders were concerned with the topic and wanted to learn more.

The Office of Price Administration (OPA) produced a detailed and complex chart which was disseminated to local news outlets across the country and printed in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* in the spring of 1943. Taking up an entire page in the paper, the chart titled the “Official Table of Point Values For Processed Foods,” outlined several types of foods, their weights, and the corresponding ration point values for each.<sup>94</sup> Updates to the rationing system were brought to the public via the local newspaper, almost always found on page one of *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*. One such article was titled, “Rationing of Meat, Butter Starts Mon.” explaining that butter sales were frozen a few days prior and would last until the end of the month.<sup>95</sup> The writer divulged a surprise announcement was issued from the OPA in Washington that the sale of all butter and fats would end at midnight, causing a rush at stores as people attempted to stock up while they could. It seems this information could have led shoppers to

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93. “State Men Explain New Rationing: Point System Outlined at Special C. of C. Dinner,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 19, 1943.

94. “Official Table of Point Values For Processed Foods,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 26, 1943.

95. “Rationing of Meat, Butter Starts Mon.,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 25, 1943.



possibly hoard items, which was contrary to what the public was being asked to do through propaganda.

In time, another type of rationing would impact the citizens of Wisconsin: their telephone use. The Wisconsin Telephone Company ran regular advertisements in 1941 - 1942 in a propaganda campaign that told readers, "The Nation's Needs Come First...you can help," which explained that people on the home front should plan to limit the number of phone calls made over Christmas and to keep their calls brief.<sup>96</sup> Further instructions were given out to the home front to answer the telephone promptly, because "even seconds are important these days," to remind children not to make "needless calls," and not to say hello, as it is "quicker to answer with your name...or telephone number."<sup>97</sup> In mid-1943 the Wisconsin Telephone Company changed their wording slightly in their advertisements and alerted citizens to "please limit your call to 5 minutes...others are waiting." The advertisements clarified that sometimes calls may be interrupted by a long-distance operator asking civilians to make their call short, in order to free up long distance lines at "war-busy" centers.<sup>98</sup> No matter how it was phrased, the burden to civilians was the same. Restrictions were placed on the use of telephones on the home front for the extent of the war. This limitation would have further hindered the home front from being able to communicate with family and friends outside of their locale, at a time when people really needed to turn to one another for support to get through the hardships brought on by war. This

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96. Wisconsin Telephone Company, "The Nation's Needs Come First...you can help," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 24, 1941.

97. Wisconsin Telephone Company, "The TELEPHONE in War-Time," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 15, 1942.

98. Wisconsin Telephone Company, "Please Limit Your Call To 5 MINUTES...Others Are Waiting," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 17, 1943.

too would have impacted folks eager to hear news of loved ones, yet only had a few minutes to do so.

## **B. Area Business**

Wartime propaganda created an opportunity for associating corporate names with patriotism and victory, to make up for the bad feelings created in the Depression of the 1930's.<sup>99</sup> This proves the overlap of advertising and propaganda, and evidences sometimes they are indistinguishable. Advertisers got on board with infusing an emotional appeal to "...rationing, salvage, victory gardens, victory mail, absenteeism, and labor recruitment."<sup>100</sup> Campbells Soup and Coca-Cola ran advertisements in the *Saturday Evening Post*, which emphasized the similarity between the "uniforms" worn by brand-name products and those worn by soldiers. Lucky Strike cigarettes "went to war" by replacing its traditional green package (green dye was needed for military use) with one predominantly white and bore a closer resemblance to the colors of the American flag.<sup>101</sup>

The Office of Defense Transportation (ODT) worked with the WWB to create a persuasive propaganda message to encourage civilians to limit their travel, in order to allow transportation services more space for returning servicemen. Playing on Americans' sympathies, they employed short poems and articles, sometimes laced with a good dose of sarcasm, such as, "Go ahead and travel. Have a fine vacation, that is, ... IF you want to compete for your Pullman

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99. Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 32.

100. Ibid, 34.

101. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 60.

with a wounded soldier just back from France.”<sup>102</sup> Likewise, the Milwaukee Road placed ads in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* reminding patrons to be patient with travel delays, as priority would be given to service men. One such ad used photos of uniformed service members with captions like, “I’ll be seeing my folks tonight” and “I’ve got my sailing orders” while an image of a business man read, “I’ll meet Mr. Smith tomorrow.” Statements like, “War travel gets first choice...that’s why we have to say ‘no’ to old friends sometimes” provided a propagandistic reminder to civilians to accept that their needs came second to those of the war.<sup>103</sup>

Prior to the U.S. entry into World War II, community advertisements ran much the same way as they always had, with a few mentions connected to the war in Europe added in. However, after December 7, 1941 many local businesses employed marketing / propaganda devices that included patriotic messaging, some subtle, some overt. From the first Christmas after the bombing of Pearl Harbor until the last one of the war, messaging that combined Christmas with patriotism was used extensively by a variety of businesses and organizations, appealing to the public’s sense of pride in America. Propagandists tried to tap into deeply held convictions of Americans by linking Christianity and patriotism together to prop up support for the war. The widespread notion of the time was Good American = Good Christian. The war permeated almost every facet of life. One early example from December 1941 was for a local department store, R. A. Tassell, under the caption, “Gifts Americana” stating that more than ever, shoppers should

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102. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer’s War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 95-96.

103. The Milwaukee Road, “War Travel Gets First Choice,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 17, 1943.

buy American when purchasing their Christmas gifts.<sup>104</sup> This begs the question of how successful was this marketing strategy and did it yield more sales / customers than advertisements that did not use a patriotic appeal? This will require further research. Another example was found in the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* when Wern Farms took out an almost full-page ad that combined Christmas greetings with a patriotic “God Bless America” caption.<sup>105</sup> This was similar to an ad ran by the Bank of Oconomowoc, that used not only, “V For Victory” in their holiday greetings, but also “Buy War Bonds” written vertically down the side.<sup>106</sup> This means of advertising was also used by the Waukesha National Bank, which combined the message of Christmas wishes with encouraging readers to give defense bonds or stamps as Christmas gifts.<sup>107</sup> It was not just during the holidays that advertisements would intersect the promotion of War Bond sales, as well as advocating for a business. One such example was a full-page ad that ran in February 1943 for the Wisconsin Gas & Electric Company that featured a large cartoon soldier with the heading, “LET’S ALL FIGHT \*Buy War Bonds,\*” with patriotic stars and stripes along the border.<sup>108</sup> This illuminates that Oconomowoc citizens engaged with this crossover marketing / propaganda for the extent of the war.

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104. R.A. Tassell The Enterprise Dept. Store, “Gifts Americana,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 17, 1941.

105. Wern Farms, “God Bless America,” *Waukesha County Freeman*, December 24, 1941.

106. “V FOR VICTORY,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 1, 1943.

107. Waukesha National Bank, “Give a Gift of Thrift,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 16, 1941.

108. Wisconsin Gas & Electric, “Let’s All Fight: Buy WAR BONDS,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 12, 1943.

During World War II, those who were on the American home front found that patriotic propaganda infiltrated every aspect of their lives. The Riverside Farm Hatchery ran ads that read, “PULLETS like BULLETS Will Help Win This War,” drawing a link between buying their chicks and supporting the war.<sup>109</sup> Local grocer Adashek & Parks used an eye-catching large caption in their full-page advertisement, “Home Defense Order” which claimed they had all a family could need. The ad explained the store had “everything arranged for quick, easy selection,” and furthermore, “Your weekly food order plays an important part in the defense of your home, protecting the health of your family and keeping its members well-fed and happy.”<sup>110</sup> This grocer did market a wide array of items, including not only food and cleaning products, but pre-packaged gift baskets and Christmas trees. Another grocer, Kroger, published ads that featured the image of a uniformed service woman under the banner of “Vitality” and “Victory.” This marketing device stated that “war work demands extra vitality! Kroger’s Clock Bread is Thiron-Enriched [sic.] with energy-vitamins to give you the needed extra vitality!”<sup>111</sup> Merchants like Kroger used imagery and language that connected their products to the war effort in the hopes they would become synonymous in the public opinion. The Waukesha Bank ran an advertisement that proclaimed their depositors were the “Biggest Army in the World” and used an image of their customers in military uniforms.<sup>112</sup> Somehow, even local funeral parlors were

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109. Riverside Farm Hatchery, “PULLETS Like BULLETS Will Help Win This War,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 22, 1943.

110. Adashek & Parks Food Markets, Inc., “Home Defense Order,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 11, 1941.

111. Kroger, “Vitality, Victory,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 27, 1942.

112. Waukesha National Bank, “Biggest Army in the World,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, February 11, 1941.

able to insert patriotism into their advertising. Lyke Funeral Home ran advertisements that proclaimed in large font, “The American Way of Settling Things” as well as, “Every American to His Post, With Funds or Guns!”<sup>113</sup> Likewise, Notbohm Funeral Home ran patriotic ads that depicted a large “V” and “Victory” along with two American flags.<sup>114</sup> It could be said that ads such as this made the association between the ‘American way’ and violence (death). The timing of these propagandic funeral home ads makes evident the aim to reach those who had recently lost loved ones in the war.

Johnsons Seed Store ran a full-page advertisement with the caption in bold font telling readers that, “Uncle Sam Wants 54 Billion Eggs in 1943 – get your share here.”<sup>115</sup> This advertisement tried to convey that although the military required a large number of eggs, citizens at home could still purchase some for themselves at Johnsons. In the months that followed, Johnsons Seed Store ran large ads with the caption, “For Your Victory Garden” advising people to buy Johnsons seeds in bulk for their gardens, and that farmers should call in for orders of farm seeds.<sup>116</sup> This merchant linked the popularity of Victory Gardens to the products they provided and combined their advertising to note this connection, sometimes adding an image of a housewife, for example, relaxing near her Victory Garden. Subsequent ads run by the Johnsons

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113. Lyke Funeral Home, “The American Way of Settling Things,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

114. Notbohm Funeral Home, “Victory - Notbohm Funeral Home,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 24, 1944.

115. Johnsons Seed Store, “Uncle Sam Wants 54 Billion Eggs In 1943,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 5, 1943.

116. Johnsons Seed Store, “For Your Victory Garden,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 18, 1943.

Seed Store changed strategies and started to use coarse images and rougher language disparaging the Japanese army.<sup>117</sup> This tactic was used on occasion too in advertisements for war bonds. Indelicate racial statements frequently reminded home front civilians of the atrocities the Japanese perpetrated on American sailors and soldiers at Pearl Harbor. Propagandists learned swiftly that the quickest way to rile up the public was to remind them of the vicious acts committed against fellow Americans.

Merchants connected their advertisements to the rationing system too. One such example can be found in an advertisement from early 1943 for the local IGA grocery store with the catchy headline, “NO RATIONING of VALUES at IGA!” followed up with, “Food rationing is necessary to ensure our fighting men plenty of nourishment. It results in our being limited in the number of things to sell, but WE STILL HAVE REAL VALUES FOR YOU. Come in ... shop...SAVE!”<sup>118</sup> Another store, the Farmers Exchange, did the same in their advertising. One ad proclaimed in bold print, “WE ARE AFTER YOU! Yes, and at an opportune time too.”<sup>119</sup> It went on to explain that with the rationing of meats, cheeses, oils, etc., shoppers could use their A, B, C, D, E, and F blue ration points now. Subsequent ads from the Farmers Exchange used the clever phrase, “Every Meal Can Have Its GOOD POINTS” with the double meaning of rationing points and good parts of the meal. The ad supported this message with an image of a housewife serving her husband a plate of food, and with a recipe at the top of their large ad for a meal that

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117. Johnsons Seed Store, “You’re Going To Get It TOJO,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 17, 1943.

118. Thompson’s IGA, “No Rationing of Values at IGA!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 19, 1943.

119. Farmers Exchange, “We Are After You!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 25, 1943.

could be made with the rationed foods available to consumers.<sup>120</sup> Other businesses tied their advertising to being “ration free.” Wilets Auto Parts took out an ad with a bold caption, “NEW TUBES For Cars And Trucks RATION FREE All Sizes – Most Are Pre-War Rubber.”<sup>121</sup> Likewise, area shoe store, Frindell & Borkin ran large ads that emphasized, “Ration Free July 10 Through July 29<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>122</sup> Not long afterwards, the local Kroger’s offered, “Point Free Beef” in their weekly advertisements.<sup>123</sup> Late in the war, Cooney Re-Tread Shop ran ads that reasoned, “Peace Rumors...In No Way Promise Any Immediate Relief In the Critical Tire Shortage.”<sup>124</sup> In the hope of attracting patrons, the advertisement proceeded to explain that there was no tire quota for those with “A” ration cards.<sup>125</sup> This announcement evidences how long this type of propaganda continued on the Oconomowoc home front. These also serve to show what a wide range of diverse products and services incorporated the war into their advertising, subjecting residents of Oconomowoc, as elsewhere, to a seemingly endless stream of war-themed content.

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120. Farmers Exchange, “Every Meal Can Have Its Good Points,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 15, 1943.

121. Wilets Auto Parts, “New Tubes,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 13, 1944.

122. Frindell & Borkin Shoe Store, “O.P.A. Odd Lot Release of Women’s and Growing Girls SHOES,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 13, 1944.

123. Kroger’s, “Point Free Beef,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, October 5, 1944.

124. Cooney Re-Tread Shop, “Peace Rumors,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 3, 1945.

125. (The amount of gasoline a person received during World War II depended on whether or not their job was essential to the war effort. Drivers received a windshield sticker and ration coupons for gasoline commensurate to their need. An “A” sticker would have allowed the driver 3 or 4 gallons a week and was given to those with the highest need for their job.)



When the need arose, the newspaper documented a meeting where farmers throughout Waukesha County were asked to increase production of crops to meet war needs. Specific crops were asked for such as potatoes, soy beans, and canning crops. County agents were available to meet with local farmers to discuss tips on increasing production to satisfy this request.<sup>126</sup> A poster from the OWI was published in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* and encouraged civilians on the home front to join the U.S. Crop Corps, with the friendly slogan at the top, “Uncle Sam is tapping you on the shoulder: Will you spend your vacation on the Food Front?” in an effort to make up for the shortage of workers caused by the war.<sup>127</sup> This appeal used an illustration of Uncle Sam with a young man and woman and was aimed primarily at young teens to take up work on local farms.<sup>128</sup> With so many away, and war production at a high, many farmers were left short-handed when it came time to harvest. Reaching out to the public and asking for help by appealing to their patriotism and a touch of guilt in their marketing, the OWI spread their message to the residents of Oconomowoc. A town of its size also would have meant more than likely that readers knew some of the farmers who needed help, adding even more pressure than an appeal such as this in a larger city where people were less known to each other.

The same types of ads were run by the Oconomowoc Canning Co. asking for help with the harvests. This local company became quite adept at the use of bold imagery and language in their propagandic advertisements during the war. One example was of a depiction of a fictitious

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126. “Production To Meet War Needs: County Meetings Ask For Increase In Special Crops,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 26, 1943.

127. “Uncle Sam is tapping you on the shoulder!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 17, 1943.

128. Thomas H. Fehring, *When Milwaukee Went to War: The Homefront During WWII* (Milwaukee: Independent, 2020), 113.

uniformed sailor at sea with the caption overhead that read, “SEAMAN JONES WANTS TO TALK TO YOU!” and proceeded to say that because he was a farmer’s son, and survivor of the attack at Pearl Harbor, he had a right to speak to the people of Oconomowoc. This ad tried to make a personal connection with readers by further stating the young sailor had just received a letter from his father, who wrote about a labor shortage for the coming year’s harvest, and Seaman Jones couldn’t understand why everyone back home doesn’t pitch in and help. The Jones character decried “isn’t food just as important to Victory as planes, tanks, and guns?”<sup>129</sup> Another ad of Oconomowoc Canning’s depicted a uniformed soldier holding a rifle with the caption, “IS THIS A TRADE?” and below it read, “I’ll take care of the fighting if you’ll take care of the Food!” This ad not only asked for civilians to help with the coming harvest and canning, but also declared that doing so was everyone’s duty. The appeal was to “every able-bodied man, woman, and child” in the community.<sup>130</sup> As time wore on, the Oconomowoc Canning Co.’s ads became more graphic and combined fear with guilt and stronger peer pressure. One of the more striking ads used the caption, “THERE you’d be forced – HERE you are only asked to help harvest and pack the canning crops,” combined with a powerful image of an armed Nazi soldier looming large over people working in a field.<sup>131</sup> This shocking propaganda message was meant for citizens of Oconomowoc to encounter while reading their weekly newspaper and cause them to be rattled from their security to the harsh realities of war.

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129. Oconomowoc Canning Co., “Seaman Jones Wants To Talk To You!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 15, 1943. (Future research could examine if this or any other business held government contracts during the war.)

130. “IS THIS A TRADE?,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 22, 1943.

131. Oconomowoc Canning Co., “THERE you’d be forced - HERE you are only asked,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 6, 1943.

Advertisements were meant to move readers to take action and were an effective tool of propaganda (and continue to be).

It cannot be overstated that patriotic propaganda during World War II permeated every aspect of the American home front. Civilians were subjected to propaganda in advertisements for all types of products and services for the duration of the war. Housewives who did the grocery shopping and meal preparation for their families would have encountered propaganda in advertising daily and felt the pressure to make do for their families with the more limited means available. At the same time, they were also being asked to contribute their time and energy away from their homes and families to do war work in places like factories, offices, and hospitals. Likewise, men who for one reason or another were not in military service, would have seen propaganda in their daily lives in stark contrast to their pre-war experience. Pressures to repeatedly purchase war bonds by solicitors at home and on the job, as well as to join civil defense organizations, or other such volunteer activities would have been quite different from the paths their lives usually followed and would have been a source of continual stress.

Propaganda did not just reach adults. Small towns afforded kids too occasion to become heartily involved in the war effort at home and they came into regular contact with propaganda. Special activities at school, as well as clubs and other volunteer opportunities became the norm for a generation of youth who experienced growing up in a time completely unlike those who came before them. This generated a sense of excitement and gave them a shared purpose to work towards. Regardless of some of the pre-war duties and responsibilities, the home front during the Second World War was distinct from anything people had known before.

## Local Service Members

Local newspapers and the Associated Press provided war news of what had happened to local servicemen and were faithfully followed by those at home.<sup>132</sup> Almost immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, newspapers began running stories concerning the local military units and anything pertaining to local men in the service. One such front page article was featured on December 8, 1941, entitled, “Waukesha Alert For News Of Local Men” as families of servicemen already stationed overseas were anxious for news of their loved ones.<sup>133</sup> This article was placed prominently in the center of the front page of the *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, directly below the headline reporting that Congress declared war minutes after hearing President Roosevelt’s speech, calling for war. Oconomowoc ran a similar article in their next issue four days later on the front page that read, “Outbreak of War in Pacific Puts Oconomowoc On ‘Alert’” and wrote of parents who awaited news of their sons in the vicinity of the Pacific.<sup>134</sup>

The local news quickly ran a column on the front page entitled, “A Week of– The War,” put out in cooperation with the Office of General Reporter. Somewhat surprisingly, this column gave some information about U.S. troop movement and reports from The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) about the total budget authorized for war purposes.<sup>135</sup> Towns like

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132. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 103.

133. “Waukesha Alert For News Of Local Men,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 8, 1941, 1.

134. “Outbreak of War In Pacific Puts Oconomowoc on ‘Alert,’” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 12, 1941, 1.

135. (A Week of– The War 1942). The total budget authorized for war purposes was over 78 billion dollars in 1942.

Oconomowoc were quick to show visible support for their service members and did so for the duration of the war, by providing a recurrent stream of monetary donations and volunteering for multiple charities, among other things. In mid-December 1941 a prominently placed front-page article was published in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* that proclaimed, “Names, Addresses of All Service Men Wanted At Once...” in order to send them each a Christmas gift from the Mayor’s Committee.<sup>136</sup> Later on, a follow-up article was published that over \$500 had been raised for this purpose.<sup>137</sup> As an illustration of how involved the community appeared to be at the time, collection cans were placed in each of the downtown Oconomowoc stores. Oconomowoc’s size would have contributed to closer neighborhood networks and relationships that spanned the generations. Being called to act to help support your neighbor in a small city like Oconomowoc would have felt more personal than appeals to action made in large cities like Milwaukee or Madison. Networks were formed in large cities as well, but not on the same level as those built in small suburbs.

Regularly ads and articles that concerned enlistments and recruiting were published in the area news. One example was printed in December 1941 which urged young men to enlist in the Navy. The recruiting ad made use of slogans like, “America needs volunteers to keep the light of liberty burning...to safeguard our American shores...to man our new two-ocean Navy” to try attracting volunteers.<sup>138</sup> Complete with patriotic illustrations of the Statue of Liberty and a

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136. “Names, Addresses of All Service Men Wanted At Once...,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 19, 1941, 1.

137. “Oconomowoc Follows Mayor’s Example and Raises Over \$500 For Christmas Gifts For Soldiers,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 26, 1941.

138. “SERVE YOUR COUNTRY: Protect your future, Get in the Navy now!,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 1941.

young, uniformed sailor saluting the reader, military recruiting advertisements like this made a compelling plea to civilians to do their patriotic duty, by tapping in to young men's patriotism and sense of adventure. Appeals that spoke to 'patriotic duty' were a recurring motivational device in nearly all propaganda generated at this time. It is reasonable to believe that this rallying cry would have been a strong motivation to the youth who the recruiters sought to engage for military service. This theme would have been effective too for citizens on the home front of all ages who could get behind it and lend their support, as 'good patriots.' Curiously, a prominent article was publicized in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* that concerned modifications made to the Navy's physical requirements and affirmed that "rejected applicants may re-apply for re-examination" for service.<sup>139</sup> More research into the motives for this relaxation of requirements is needed, but the article provided details that minor conditions, such as hernias and seasonal allergies would no longer bar men from service. An ad for the U.S. Army ran around the same time, under the caption, "Secret Weapon of the U.S.A." and used an image of three young men in uniform smiling with signal lights in the background.<sup>140</sup> Images used for recruiting purposes all shared a common feature regardless of the branch of military: they all deployed positive and somewhat romanticized depictions of youthful, attractive service members. No representations of bloodied, wounded, or scared service men and women would have been beneficial to persuade potential recruits to join up. This manipulation of images was much like the control of information to report the war news back to the home front, and the military carefully censored

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139. "Physical Requirements Are Modified By Navy," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 19, 1941, 1.

140. U.S. Army Recruiting Service, "Secret Weapon of the U.S.A.," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 17, 1941, 3.

images that were thought detrimental to the propagandic goals. (It would be interesting to know what more graphic / negative images would have done to recruiting numbers.)

Not long afterwards, the newspaper ran an article that warned the Army was facing shortages of nurses and asked for immediate volunteers to join the Women's Army Corps (WAC).<sup>141</sup> Of note: for his part in the statewide campaign to recruit members into the WAC, the Mayor of Oconomowoc received a telegram of thanks from the executive director of the WAC.<sup>142</sup> A subsequent ad was published in July 1944 that again concerned the WAC enlistments. Based on the tone of the article, evidently WAC enlistments were down. It began by stating that women were desperately needed to carry out work in the Army that would free men up for active combat service, adding that civilians were needed to carry out production of war needs to ensure those in the Army "will have their America to come back to." But the real meat of this article came in the next few lines: "Women have not responded as they should. To serve one's country is patriotism of the highest order. This country is trailing badly on women in service in relation to other countries. *Are American women softer than those from other countries?*"<sup>143</sup> Accusations such as these were used to stir up guilt, call women to respond, and maybe even use anger to provoke a response. 'Soft' was a highly utilized attribute aimed at women in U.S. advertising of the time and was typically used in a positive manner. The use in this allegation, however, did not and was in direct contrast to propagandic messages that

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141. "Army Faces Shortage of Nurses, Says Woman Major Asking for Immediate Volunteers to Service," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 11, 1941.

142. "Telegram Thanks Mayor For Work In Drive For WAC," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 9, 1943, 1.

143. "WAC ENLISTMENTS," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 6, 1944, 6.

emphasized all of the positive things that women were capable of doing for the war effort. Posters that depicted women doing all types of war production jobs, like Rosie the Riveter, diametrically opposed the message that women were soft. Yet both messages persisted during the war. Not long after the aforementioned WAC article ran, the WAC put forward full-page advertisements with images of smiling attractive young women in WAC uniforms doing various clerical tasks. The caption at the top read, “The Proudest Title In The Army” and further down the page finished with “Good Soldier.”<sup>144</sup> Near this same time the Navy ran similar advertisements aimed at women. One used the heading, “1700 Wisconsin Waves Were Proud to Celebrate Waves 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday. Will You Share Their Pride?”<sup>145</sup> This campaign to shame women into doing more for the war coincided with a campaign propagandists, along with the Surgeon General, promoted for the issues of health, education, security, and morale of male servicemen. In 1944 a campaign to help prevent the spread of venereal disease, which had worsened during the war, was publicized with publications such as, “Know Your Enemy (Blonde, Brunette, or Redhead).”<sup>146</sup> Propaganda messages like the abovementioned evidenced the superiority men held in society at the time and made plain another part of life that women were blamed for. Throughout the war, U.S. propagandists presented contradictory messages of women as capable soldiers, mothers, and patriots, yet they also were depicted as prostitutes and something soldiers should avoid.

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144. U.S. Army, “The Proudest Title in The Army,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 27, 1944.

145. U.S. Navy, “1700 Wisconsin Waves Were Proud,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 3, 1944.

146. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer’s War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 102.



The first U.S. peacetime draft, known as *The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940* (the Act) was passed on September 16, 1940. While the United States was not officially at war yet, many people saw the writing on the wall and believed that the U.S. would eventually be pulled into the war. The Act required all men between the ages of 21 to 45 to register for the draft. As a result, in order to better prepare Wisconsin men for the rigors of war, the *Brown Bill* which restored compulsory military training at the University of Wisconsin, was adopted by the senate in February 1941. It was not unanimously supported, however, and some criticized the action as another step closer to a home guard and “neighbors ‘spying’ on neighbors.”<sup>147</sup>

Announcements of local men preparing to enter the military became a regular feature of the newspapers. On December 11, 1941 a notice was printed that declared military and civil defense service was seeking to register all men between the ages of 18-64.<sup>148</sup> That same day an article ran proclaiming that young men had been rushing to enlist in the U.S. Navy, complete with large photo showing a gathering of young men and a uniformed service man standing nearby.<sup>149</sup> Local papers, like the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* ran ads asking for “Young Men Between 20 and 26” and of “Satisfactory physical condition, unmarried, good moral character” to come to the Elk’s Lodge in Waukesha for information about joining the Army Air Corps.<sup>150</sup>

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147. “Senate Vote Backs Training Bill for U.W.,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, February 11, 1941. (This sort of criticism in the U.S. is ironic, when one considers this was precisely the device encouraged by the Nazis to keep German citizens under control.)

148. “Military And Civil Defense Service To Take Men 18-64,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 11, 1941.

149. “Young Men Rush To Enlist in U.S. Navy,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 11, 1941.

150. “WANTED: Young Men Between 20 and 26 as Aviation Cadets For the Army Air Corps,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, November 16, 1941.

Another article reported 113 recent draftees had been classified by the Waukesha County Selective Service Board for duty.<sup>151</sup> At a later date, an article ran that attested “Large group will take Army physical exams January 15 - one of the largest groups to ever leave this draft board area. Exams to be taken at center in Milwaukee.”<sup>152</sup> When Congress passed a compromise bill in 1941 that made 20 the minimum military age, it made front-page news in Waukesha County.<sup>153</sup> It would be reasonable to suppose that enlistments were regularly publicized not only as a form of propaganda, but also due to the interest held for fellow citizens in the interconnected small community of Oconomowoc. Folks would have known men leaving for the war: friends, family, grocery clerk, altar boy, football hero, son’s best friend, daughter’s boyfriend, gas attendant, paper boy, lifeguard, ski instructor, little league coach. One would not presume this was the same experience in big cities that would not have had the same type of interrelationships. Although it should be noted that other smaller communities within large cities could be close-knit, but their communications would have been different from that of a small town.

Cartoons appeared regularly in newspapers during the war, in small towns and big cities. The recurring syndicated cartoon by Herc Ficklen, “You’re In The Army Now” became a familiar component of the *Waukesha Daily Freeman*. One example from 1941 showed a soldier clamoring to get away from a woman whose car his tank just rear-ended as he said, “Now look,

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151. “113 Draftees Are Classed,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 13, 1941, 1.

152. “Large Group Will Take Army Physical Exams January 15,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

153. “Congress Passes Compromise Bill On 20 As Minimum Military Age,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 19, 1941, 1. (Future research could seek how this bill was received by families in the Oconomowoc area.)

Lady, let's talk this over!"<sup>154</sup> Another installment depicted a captured 'Good Humor' ice cream truck, with a soldier reporting to his superior officer, "Objective captured as ordered, Major..."<sup>155</sup> One could surmise that snippets of humor would have been enjoyed by readers during this stressful period of time.

Initially the draft did not apply to married men – producing a temporary spike in the number of marriages performed, caused by men who hoped to avoid going to war. The aforementioned cartoon strip, "You're in the Army Now" used this theme in an illustration of an Army recruiter telling a groom standing at the altar before his bride-to-be, "Okay, Buddy, suit yourself but with me, you're only signing up for *three* years."<sup>156</sup> The following year an article was published titled, "Two Groups of Selectees Leave Soon" and explained in some detail the status of married men being called to duty. This article helped clarify that men who married after the U.S. declaration of war, were classified by the local board as 'single men' (even if their wives were pregnant or had recently given birth). And furthermore, Selective Service would continue to induct men who became married when their selection to the draft was imminent, as if they were single too.<sup>157</sup> And it was not long before married men without children were included

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154. Herc Ficklen, "You're In The Army Now," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, January 4, 1941. Herc served in the Army from 1940-1945.

155. Herc Ficklen, "You're In The Army Now," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, February 22, 1941.

156. Herc Ficklen, "You're In The Army Now," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, January 4, 1941.

157. "Two Groups Of Selectees Leave Soon," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 11, 1942, 1.

in the draft, (regardless of when they married), and eventually married fathers too became eligible by late 1943.

In late September 1943, *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* ran a front-page article that read, “Order Fathers’ Draft Beginning October 1st.” The article explained that the local draft board office had received regulations on the reclassifying of soldiers from the state selective service headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, adding that some fathers may seek deferments if they met the criteria for either an occupational deferral or one if their absence would cause extreme hardship and privation to their dependents.<sup>158</sup> Understandably, this move provoked a strong reaction. Families across the country were impacted by this change and had to learn how to manage without husbands and fathers at home. Jean Lechnir of Wisconsin recalled having been very upset because her husband was drafted, despite being not only a married man, but also a father of two, with another baby on the way.<sup>159</sup> This unpopular change to the draft system generated all the more reason for propagandists to try to garner more support for the war effort and to keep up the country’s morale. It stands to reason that the move to include married fathers could have also generated anxiety on the home front as a signal of how the war was progressing and how the Allies were faring. If the draft needed to be expanded, was this seen as a sign of the tide turning against the U.S.? Between October 1943 till December 1945, Fehring stated nearly a million fathers were drafted.<sup>160</sup>

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158. “Order Fathers’ Draft Beginning October 1st,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 5, 1943, 1.

159. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 118.

160. Thomas H. Fehring, *When Milwaukee Went to War: The Homefront During WWII* (Milwaukee: Independent, 2020), 112.

Periodically articles ran on the front page announcing the number of men deploying for service, such as one example that announced, “67 Leave Today For Ft. Sheridan; Twenty-four Men From Oconomowoc Included In Group” and listed the men’s names and noted they had already been inducted into the Army.<sup>161</sup> Another such article was published on the front page a month later which stated that 87 men were inducted into the Army, Navy, and Marines. “This was the first group drafted since the draft was brought in to include all branches of the service; heretofore the draft only included Army men” and proceeded to list the men by name according to which branch they were serving.<sup>162</sup> The following month, an article ran stating that 18 local men were leaving for the Army and Navy and listed them by name and also stated that high school seniors were eligible for college training programs through the Army and Navy.<sup>163</sup> At mid-year, *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* declared that 33 were taking the Army-Navy exams at the end of the week, all of which were current Oconomowoc High School senior boys. The article moreover listed them all by name.<sup>164</sup> Articles such as these which listed the local men by name did so, in part, due to the nature of Oconomowoc’s size and population at the time. In a community where citizens were more closely connected than in a large city where the population was largely unknown to each other, giving personal details was the style of the small-town

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161. “67 Leave Today For Ft. Sheridan; Twenty-Four Men From Oconomowoc Included In Group,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 23, 1943.

162. “87 Inducted Into Army, Navy, Marines,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 19, 1943.

163. “18 Leave For Army, Navy Wednesday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 25, 1943, 1.

164. “33 Take Army-Navy Exams Friday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 8, 1943.

newspaper. This close connection could be found too in the society columns and numerous articles about the comings and goings of Oconomowoc residents.

Readers on the home front were met with information that newspaper editors were eager to show, for example, when local men were shipping out, where they were being trained, where they were stationed, and when they came back home. Editors chose which articles to feature, which ones were given prominence in placement, what photos to include, and how frequent a subject was printed. Some theorize that editors did so because of hidden agendas, or to give the appearance of an interested and supportive community. A feature in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* was a recurring column titled, “With The Men In Service” that provided updates on the comings and goings of local service men. Even mentions of local families who received a telegram from their son while stationed overseas would make the local newspaper. One such example was a Mr. and Mrs. Durmford who received a telegram from their son, Harold, stationed in Australia, with season’s greetings to all back home. Other news included would be transfers such as, “Sergeant Boyer has been transferred from California to Fort Knox, KY. He received his promotion to Sergeant last week.”<sup>165</sup> Newspaper editors included the community on personal events such as this, and citizens obliged by submitting their happenings to be published for public consumption. Short blurbs were also printed concerning soldiers home on sick leave or furlough, which typically included the name of the service man and his parents, sometimes even reference to where they lived.<sup>166</sup> Sharing this type of information makes more sense in a small community like Oconomowoc than it would in a large city. As indicated previously, this was a

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165. “With The Men In Service,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

166. “Joe Anderson Home From Fort Leonard Wood,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 11, 1942.

close-knit community and people would have known each other more intimately than residents of a large urban city. People would have known who they were reading about and had a more personal interest in their fellow citizens due to the small population of Oconomowoc. (This was essentially the social media of the day.)

One local hero, Captain Dames, was featured in a front-page newspaper article with ‘his own story’ of his experiences in battle, a moving chronicle of fighting in the jungle and some of the hardships that he and his fellow soldiers endured. This article also posted a large photo of the Captain and announced that he would be speaking at the local high school the following week.<sup>167</sup> Subsequent articles were published about Captain Dames home from battle and sharing his story at fund raisers for War Bond sales. Another noteworthy mention to local people, was one article that confirmed the Waukesha City Attorney had been called up to active duty and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Navy.<sup>168</sup> Articles such as these featured images of soldiers which were used for propaganda purposes alongside reports of and support for local soldiers.

Articles were prominently printed on the front-page describing medals and honors bestowed on local men. One example was an article that told of local man, Ensign J. A. Achten who was awarded the Flying Cross for bravery at the Battle of Midway.<sup>169</sup> In the spring of 1943 an article was published that told readers of two members of the Oconomowoc National Guard

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167. “Captain Dames’ Own Story of New Guinea Battle,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 23, 1943.

168. “Waukesha’s City Attorney Called To Active Duty,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 29, 1943.

169. “Ensign J. A. Achten Gets Flying Cross,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 5, 1943.

that were killed in action, and posthumously awarded Purple Hearts for gallantry in service.<sup>170</sup> Late in 1944 an article was published about a local service man who had just completed his 50<sup>th</sup> long-range bombing mission.<sup>171</sup> In addition to the featured articles of local servicemen that ran on the front page, a regular weekly column titled, “With The Stars and Stripes” ran a range of short notices about local men and women in the armed forces.<sup>172</sup> Notices such as a lieutenant who was awarded the Flying Cross, to a local private who spent a 15-day furlough home in Oconomowoc with family, to local boys serving together in Italy were frequent. This column continued to print short updates for the remainder of the war causing one to wonder if over the course of the war, did this type of news become too routine for readers? Perhaps it became white noise over time. Or was it a point of deep interest to those at home?<sup>173</sup>

In the years of World War II, the front page of *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* became laden with war-related news. The front page is meant for the main stories that will capture the most attention, whether it be of a national scope or a local story. The major story of the day is given the most prominent position and will typically use a large, bold-faced headline to attract readers’ attention. The society page served a different purpose from the front page of the paper. Whereas the front page was reserved for the most impactful, important news that needed to reach the entire community, the society page was much more socially-minded, and would have

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170. “Award Purple Heart To Two Killed In Guinea,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 25, 1943, 1.

171. “Completes 50 Missions,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 2, 1944, 2.

172. “With The Stars and Stripes; Gets Distinguished Flying Cross,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 9, 1943.

173. “With The Stars and Stripes,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, October 5, 1944, 2.



attracted different readership. Some articles about local service members were printed in the society section of the newspaper, a section known for covering the goings-on of citizens, from visits to hospital stays, to parties attended - right down to who wore what.

Occasionally war news would incorporate a heart-warming angle to a local story. An article was published that noted the Oconomowoc Rotary Club sponsored special Mother's Day flowers for local mothers of those in service. The remembrance flowers were delivered by the local Boy Scouts troops the Saturday before Mother's Day.<sup>174</sup> The following year an article ran with a touching story of a reunion in the South Pacific. Two Oconomowoc Army men, who were former neighbors back home, had incredibly found themselves neighbors again on Christmas Day, somewhere in the South Pacific. The news was shared by parents back in Oconomowoc, who learned of this unlikely reunion and reported it to the newspaper.<sup>175</sup>

When service men were discharged and returning home, often full-page articles featuring photographs were published in the local newspapers and other times they were published in a column entitled, "Just Call Me Mister" that presented information on a group of former service members from the area.<sup>176</sup> Sadly, at times notices were printed that told of a local service man who was injured, missing in action, and later, even those who were killed in action, such as one

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174. "Mothers Get Flowers For Mother's Day," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 13, 1943, 1.

175. "Reunion In So. Pacific," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 6, 1944, 1.

176. "Just Call Me Mister," *The Jefferson County Union*, March 1946.

that read, “Captain Dames led company in final attack on Buna, leaving him wounded.”<sup>177, 178</sup> Another notice appeared concerning a plane crash that involved 19 men under the headline, “Brother of Mrs. Carl Winters Is Missing In Action.”<sup>179</sup> And later, a front-page article reported that, “Pfc. Robert Smith and Sgt. Corrigan had been killed.”<sup>180</sup> Tragically, some families were struck with multiple blows, such as one report of Marine Leroy Cleary who was not only killed in action, but was the second war casualty in his family. He was only 22 years old.<sup>181</sup> This news must have hit particularly hard to local readers, as many families were known to one another and the names could likely have been familiar. A large article in the *Oconomowoc* paper in 1943 reported about the local guard company, describing a recent battle in New Guinea and a few local servicemen who were wounded in action, and one who was killed. The article went on to state that the division earned high praise from General Douglas MacArthur. Aptly written, it acknowledged that all of this brought the war very close to home. This article concluded by stating that “we are going to make our boys proud of what we at home are doing” and “we are going to do more in buying bonds, in digging up salvage, in sacrificing as called upon, or whatever it may be.” Phrases like, “what they have done is something we must and will not

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177. “Local Youth Is Missing In Action,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 6, 1944, 1.

178. “Capt. Dames Led Company In Final Attack On Buna; Lt. Kleinschmidt Wounded,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

179. “Brother of Mrs. Carl Winters Is Missing In Action,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 10, 1944, 1.

180. “Pfc. Robert Smith, Sgt. Corrigan Killed,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 28, 1945, 1.

181. “Marine LeRoy Cleary,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 24, 1944, 1. (Later a plaque was erected in Oconomowoc honoring the Cleary’s, as three of the four brothers who served in the military were killed in World War II.)

forget” were used by propagandists in the hopes that the public would have been stirred to action. After reading about local names in battle, it was not surprising that citizens stepped up to support the war effort in many ways.<sup>182</sup> News of war-related deaths were printed in the Oconomowoc newspaper from the beginning of the hostilities but became more frequent as the war progressed over time. The frequency of published death notices seemingly followed the same pattern of propaganda that presented more brutal realism about the war as the years wore on. (Again, this would have likely been done for propaganda and also to be more clear with information.) News such as this was published until there were no more reports to be made concerning men returning home after the war ended.

It is logical to assume that residents of Oconomowoc were inundated with information pertaining to the war. They faced major changes to their lives and their community, like rationing, and encountered comprehensive patriotic marketing. While news of local service men and women serving the country was reported, some of it good, and some terribly bad. Over time, the information received by citizens contained recurring appeals for donations: both monetary and of time. Public propaganda events abound, and Oconomowocians on the home front took part in all sorts: war bond drives, Victory gardens, scrap drives, and civil defense.

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182. “Our Guard Company,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 15, 1943.

### Chapter 3

#### Public Propaganda Events

*Every combat division, every naval task force, every squadron of fighting planes is dependent for its equipment and ammunition and fuel and food...on the American people in civilian clothes in the offices and in the factories and on the farms at home. — President Roosevelt*

National events concerning the war made the headlines in the Oconomowoc newspaper, as they did elsewhere in papers across the country, but were few and far between prior to December 7, 1941. That completely changed thereafter and news of the war was prominently and vigorously promoted for the remainder of the conflict. The *Associated Press* disseminated news stories nationwide to local news outlets, like *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*. One such national story Oconomowocians encountered in December 1941 celebrated that U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland allowed their class of 1942 to graduate early. The article noted that 520 strong “Middies” (nickname for Midshipmen) were able to graduate in 1941 because their program had been shortened to three and a half years due to the war.<sup>183</sup> Another example that was newsworthy to Oconomowoc residents, was an article that ran in late 1943 titled, “Instructions For Teachers, Pupils, Parents On Air Raid.”<sup>184</sup> This article came from the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) in Washington and was shared at the local level to provide important safety information to those on the home front. The information was presented with numbered steps to follow (presumably with the intent to make it an easy-to-read format) in preparation for

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183. “Class of ‘42 Graduates in ’41,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 20, 1941, 1.

184. “Instructions For Teachers, Pupils, Parents On Air Raid,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 16, 1943).

air raid drills. The intention of the article was to better prepare civilians in the event of an emergency and to offer instruction on practical measures families with children could take.

Local events were a means to show patriotism, improve morale, support soldiers on leave, raise funds for war-related needs, spread information by word of mouth, and other elements of propaganda. One such event was promoted in the *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, under the bold heading “AMERICANS!” This event was open to the public to attend and was hosted by the local chapter of the American Legion. The ad described a speech and high school play on “Americanism” was to be held.<sup>185</sup>

### **A. War Bond Drives**

The U.S. Treasury tried to be less coercive with the sale of war bonds than was done previously in the First World War. Bonds provided both a means to finance military operations and lessen the amount of discretionary spending money people had at the same time. The government’s ‘Planned Spending and Saving’ program urged Americans to save their money and use it to purchase war bonds, instead of spending it on consumer goods. Bankers across the country were asked to advertise messages in their local papers like, “Sell newly bought glamour short!” to encourage the public to buy bonds.<sup>186</sup> The sale of small \$25 denomination “E” bonds for \$18.75 was emphasized, in the hopes that they would be more attractive to the average person and thereby encourage purchases. There were seven war bond drives between December 1941 and August 1945, with an eighth at the end of 1945, called the “Victory Loan,” although some

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185. “AMERICANS!,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, January 6, 1941.

186. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer’s War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 101.

residents seemed to recall bond drives as virtually continuous. There was one drive in 1942, two in 1943, three in 1944, and two in 1945. Local movie theaters, newspapers, radio, and special stage appearances were all tools of propaganda and promoted the importance of purchasing war bonds. Bond drives became a means for those at home to be involved and “do” something on behalf of the war. War bond drives continuously stressed the link between war bonds and soldiers, between the ability to purchase weapons and the duty of all Americans to make the necessary money available.<sup>187</sup> One such example was a propaganda poster by artist Robert S. Sloan which depicted a wounded serviceman in combat with the heading, “Doing all you can, brother?”.<sup>188</sup> This illustration stressed the harsh conditions of soldiers and the very real physical dangers they faced, to employ the devices of guilt and patriotism to persuade people to buy war bonds. (see Fig. 3.)

War bonds were not just promoted by national drives, local organizations got together to support the cause as well. Longtime Shorewood resident, Eleanor Schiff recalled her local Wisconsin Jewish community supported the war effort by holding bond drives and sending clothing and food to people overseas.<sup>189</sup> Efforts like these were found across Wisconsin and the nation. Wisconsinite, Anastasia Batikis, of Greek



Figure 3

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187. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 103.

188. Robert S. Sloan, *Doing all you can, brother?* (College Park, MD: The National Archives, 1943). (The U.S. Treasury commissioned Sloan to do a poster for the War Bond campaign and this illustration earned him a Citation for Distinguished Service.)

189. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 95.

descent, was in school during World War II. She recalled selling stamps in her homeroom class and explained once the book of stamps was filled, it could be exchanged for a war bond. She explained junior and senior high school students did this, as well as other things for the home front. High schoolers across Wisconsin participated in activities, for instance, collecting scrap iron, hanging flags in windows, rolling bandages, and inviting servicemen to dinner when they were in town on leave, all common activities for U.S. youth and their families at the time.<sup>190</sup> A young Wisconsin mother during World War II, Rose Kaminski recalled collecting stamps to use for a war bond, stating that it was “exciting.”<sup>191</sup> Batikis added that things at school went on much the same “...as usual except that we did get involved with the stamps and the bonds and doing things for the USO...the Red Cross and letter writing...club activities took on a very patriotic tinge.”<sup>192</sup>

The OWI prepared a pamphlet for local communities to support the Fourth War Loan campaign by making the slogan, “Back the Attack” a ubiquitous presence, stenciling it on sidewalks, sides of buses, walls, delivery trucks, telephone poles, and lampposts. “The agency also encouraged towns to erect a large thermometer on which to register the community’s progress toward its war bond sales goal, construct a ‘war bond house’ where visitors could admire consumer products that would be available once the war was over, and requested all families display an American flag on the first day of the campaign.”<sup>193</sup> The suggestion of a large

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190. Ibid, 106.

191. Ibid, 117.

192. Ibid, 107. (Batikis would later go on and play with the All-American Girls’ Professional Baseball team, the Racine Belles [of Wisconsin], 105.)

193. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 82.

community sign, like the thermometer that illustrated the town's war bond sales was meant to be a visual reminder of the sales goal and how the town was literally measuring up. If built, this type of sign would have provided a public reminder to all who saw it, and (perhaps due to guilt or peer pressure) that they needed to buy war bonds to achieve the goal. Suggesting families display American flags likewise would have produced a public sign and through peer pressure, would have spurred people to comply or be left out, and perhaps ostracized. The prospect of a 'war bond house' was unique but makes perfect sense when considered as a means of propaganda. During a time when the government had prohibited the production of many household goods and shortages of household items were common, being able to view products that would be available after the war was over was meant as an incentive for people to continue supporting the war, in the hope to one day achieve these shiny new and wonderful products.<sup>194</sup> Like war bonds themselves, the 'war bond house' was an example of something that would pay off in the future.

Historian George H. Roeder Jr. discussed how propagandists found it hard to maintain the intensity of patriotic feeling created by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. "When early in 1944 a member of the War Advertising Council visited eighteen cities to see how they responded to the Fourth War Loan campaign, he found that only Cleveland and New Orleans had managed truly striking displays of civic support."<sup>195</sup> As the war dragged on many communities across the country were drained of enthusiasm and needed another approach to

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194. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 80.

195. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 65.



requesting more monetary support. One method selected was to provide more impactful speeches to the home front. The WWB prepared a “Handbook of Speeches” for local use in the fifth war bond drive of 1944, which was later considered one of the best “...bond-selling weapons they ever had.”<sup>196</sup> The success of the fifth war bond drive was an impressive feat considering how many prior bond drives civilians had supported by that time.

Company contests, slick advertising, and sales gimmicks could not replace traditional bond solicitors who conducted door-to-door, desk-to-desk, and machine-to-machine campaigns. Whether at home or on the job, in a small community like Oconomowoc the bond solicitors could find you and most likely, solicit you at both. Author Richard L. Pifer appropriately described it as “subtle, all-enveloping pressure;” people were beseeched to buy bonds to the limit of their abilities.<sup>197</sup> Popular slogans of the time implored citizens to think of the soldiers fighting overseas, and that the best way to protect their beloved families was to purchase more war bonds. The need to purchase war bonds became the incessant drum beat throughout the war, as Americans were subjected to it repeatedly and insidiously, through numerous avenues that intersected their lives. Not only were war bond appeals continuous, but they also became increasingly stark over time, as if the layers were being pulled back until the blunt reality was left for all to see.

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196. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer’s War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 92.

197. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 104.

The WWB helped develop a poster that achieved, “phenomenal success.” Created by Joseph Hirsch, an American Realist painter whose work was often socially oriented, the poster captioned, “Till We Meet Again, Buy War Bonds” displayed an image of a young soldier smiling and waving from the porthole of a U.S. battleship.<sup>198</sup> (see Fig. 4.) Eventually it was turned into a postcard and given for free to servicemen. Howell estimated about 14 million copies of this postcard were printed and reached households across the U.S.<sup>199</sup>

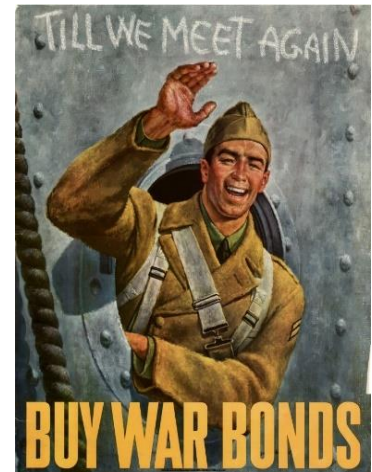


Figure 4

Pifer cautioned to keep in mind that while the war bond drives were happening nationally, so too were numerous other local campaigns for metal, rubber, and paper. Just like the departure of American soldiers touched everyone at home, the war bond drives propagandized that this was a ‘total war,’ meaning it demanded sacrifices of everyone.<sup>200</sup> The cliché slogan ‘Give until it hurts’ aptly described the situation citizens found themselves in. By way of illustration, La Crosse, Wisconsin residents were asked to contribute to separate drives for the YMCA, the Red Cross, the USO, the Knights of Columbus, as well as the War Fund Drive.<sup>201</sup> As with La Crosse residents, Oconomowoc was asked to contribute to War Bond sales,

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198. Joseph Hirsch, *Till We Meet Again, Buy War Bonds*, (Washington, D.C.: UNT Digital Library, affiliated archive of the National Archives, 1942).

199. Thomas Howell, *Soldiers of The Pen: The Writer’s War Board in World War II* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 91.

200. Ibid, 107.

201. Ibid, 105.

Red Cross drives (both blood and monetary), YMCA drives, church drives, paper drives, and scrap metal collections, among others.

Appeals for war bonds grew over time, with almost every month bringing an increased quota for communities to attain. This hunger for funds was never satiated and continued throughout the Second World War; Oconomowoc rose to the challenge again and again. The significance of selling War Bonds was evidenced by the number of full-page advertisements that were published, that told readers a “House to House Canvass” would be taking place in Oconomowoc, while noting the objectives of the drive, the prominent corporate sponsors, and the pitch to “Make Oconomowoc 100%.”<sup>202</sup> A variety of slogans were used to promote the sale of war bonds. At times, a recurring ad was published under the heading, “Guard Your Country...and Your Loved Ones,” which used persuasion and patriotism to try to convey the propagandic message. Readers were told that buying War Bonds would help “safeguard your country, and your life,” sounding not unlike a veiled threat.<sup>203</sup> Again in 1942 War Bond sales went ‘Over the Top’ with the total sold in 12 months having reached \$599,891. Oconomowoc had topped its yearly war bond quota by nearly \$6,000 during 1942.<sup>204</sup> The year 1943 began for

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202. “Oconomowoc’s House to House Canvass,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 15, 1942.

203. “Guard Your Country...and Your Loved Ones,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 19, 1942.

204. “1942 War Bond Sales Go ‘Over The Top’ Here,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

Oconomowocians with a front-page article that urged them to start the new year with a “large purchase of war bonds.”<sup>205</sup>

The propaganda tactics started to ramp up as the war moved into 1943, by using ever more forceful language and imagery. For example, a full-page ad featuring a sad looking little girl depicted with the caption, “This little girl has seen too much” was meant to encourage Oconomowoc residents to make the upcoming bond buying day “the biggest yet.” The advertisement additionally reported the amounts raised in 1942 and emphasized in no uncertain terms that 1943 “must be bigger.”<sup>206</sup> The device of using children in propaganda was similarly used in another ad to implore Oconomowoc citizens to step up and buy war bonds on the front page of the newspaper just before Christmas. The advertisement too showed a large photo of a sad looking little girl but standing next to a Christmas tree while holding a present and looking out a window, with the caption, “But I Want My Daddy.”<sup>207</sup> Appeals such as this were meant to persuade readers by the use of encoded threats to the deeply-held American value of the integrity of family. Another tactic used to spur people to buy war bonds was to feature large front-page headlines in the newspaper with language that disparaged the response to the bond drive, for instance, “Far Below Expectations” and “Ask Greater Concentrated Effort,” essentially attempting to shame people into lending their support.<sup>208</sup>

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205. “Next Wed. Is 13th, Bond Buying Day,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943, 1.

206. “This Little Girl Has Seen Too Much,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

207. “But I Want My Daddy,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 23, 1943, 1.

208. “January 13 Bond Sale Total \$6843: Far Below Expectations; Ask Greater Concentrated Effort,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 15, 1943.

Examination of various appeals over the length of the war gives insight into the cycle of propaganda that was used on the citizens of Oconomowoc. An article from the middle of January 1943 confirmed the bond quota for Oconomowoc for the month was up to \$40,000.<sup>209</sup> This was followed by an article that ran in February stating that Oconomowoc had met and surpassed the quota, with a total of \$41,081 in bond sales.<sup>210</sup> Updates such as these were published regularly by the editor of the Oconomowoc newspaper and would have contributed to pressure placed on the citizenry to meet the bond quotas month after month.

February 1943 saw an article that told readers that Oconomowoc was \$10,000 below the monthly quota for Series 'E' bond sales.<sup>211</sup> But about two weeks later, an article ran that celebrated the bond buying day had hit a new high of \$25,850 raised in a single day.<sup>212</sup> On the heels of this report came an early warning that the April Bond quota would be high and that "Everybody in Waukesha County will have to buy as many bonds as he possibly can during April to meet the \$2,000,000 war loan quota." This quota represented Waukesha County's share of the total \$172,000,000 for the state of Wisconsin during April. Furthermore, it explained that the quota was considerably higher than any previously set for Waukesha County.<sup>213</sup> Monthly

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209. "\$40,000 City's January Bond Quota: Series E Amount Will Be Announced Monthly," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 15, 1943.

210. "January War Bond Sales \$41,081: City Reaches Monthly Quota," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 5, 1943.

211. "Feb. Bond Sales \$30,206," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 5, 1943, 1.

212. "13th Bond Buying Day Hits New High; \$25,850," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 18, 1943, 1.

213. "April Bond Quota High," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 1, 1943, 1.

quotas were set for the drives at the city, county, and state levels by the United States Treasury War Finance Committee.

Some articles promoting the purchase of war bonds went a step further and used guilt and outrage in order to get their message across. A large advertisement from 1943 exclaimed that “Last month Oconomowoc fell short of its share of bonds...What are you going to do about it?” and added an article along the side, which discussed the telegrams families receive that announce the death of a loved one killed in duty, and how that supreme sacrifice compared to the man on the home front who complains he can’t have a second cup of coffee, and about rationing in general.<sup>214</sup> Another such article published a couple months later indicated that the Oconomowoc bond sales did not reach the quota, having only reached \$25,425 of the \$40,000 that was required.<sup>215</sup>

Not long afterwards, an article appeared in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* proclaiming that a staggering quota of \$75,000 was being launched and citizens should expect a canvass of homes starting in the next few days. Solicitations were carried out in Oconomowoc by the War Savings Staff and organized by the local Victory Fund Committee. This drive was the biggest to date in the city’s history and in connection with the national drive to raise 13 billion dollars. “They give their lives - you lend your money” was the oft repeated bond drive battle cry.<sup>216</sup> This was followed up not long after by a full-page ad produced by the Oconomowoc War Bond

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214. “No, It Doesn’t Cost Anything - What About Bond Buying?,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 12, 1943.

215. “March Bond Sale \$25,425,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 8, 1943.

216. “War Loan: Canvass of Homes Starts Tues.; ‘E’ Quota \$75,000,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 8, 1943.

Committee and Oconomowoc Civilian Council of Defense with the caption in bold print that read, “The 2nd War Loan Starts April 12” and below noted, “13 billion dollars must be raised! Oconomowoc’s Quota is \$325,000.” This advertisement used guilt and peer pressure to get its message across, further stating that this quota must be met, and it should be looked upon as every citizens’ job to do because, “Oconomowoc Never Fails!”<sup>217</sup> Status updates were published often, letting people on the home front know how their community and county measured up in the ongoing bond quotas. Whether or not citizens were actually interested in these regular updates remains unanswered and requires further research. Occasionally these articles would include an image meant to sway the readers on an emotional level, like an image of a soldier in a barrage of gunfire, or a nurse tending to an injured serviceman. Images such as those also served to reinforce the harsh circumstances soldiers faced to the people at home. Follow up reports were printed that explained the canvassing of homes and businesses was being conducted by a corps of volunteer workers representing the Treasury Department. This demonstrated an effort to legitimize the solicitation and make citizens feel it was federally ordered to contribute to the purchase of war bonds. This drive was described as being “in an effort to put to work every dollar the civilian population can possibly spare for the financing of the war,” exemplifying the steady pressure that was being placed on the public on the home front.<sup>218</sup>

A short time later brought another article that confirmed the Series ‘E’ bond sales total was \$16,000 short of its \$75,000 quota, yet one week remained in the drive, pressuring the public

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217. “The 2nd War Loan Starts April 12,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 8, 1943.

218. “Oconomowoc’s Second War Loan Drive Gets Off To Fine Start; Canvass This Week,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 15, 1943, 1.

again to dig deep into their pockets and give even more.<sup>219</sup> A subsequent and even more frantic call to action was published that read, “If you haven’t bought yet...Act now” and “We cannot fail – and must do more than just ‘convenient buying’ – We have to really dig...” It further instructed readers to “Go to your bank or post office now!”<sup>220</sup> Was living under this constant pressure to give more and more demoralizing? Were guilt and peer pressure really enough to keep this kind of giving going on and on? In a tight-knit community like Oconomowoc, it would be even more difficult to escape the stress and scrutiny that citizens might have felt under the circumstances, as one could encounter neighbors easily and more people know each other, than typical of people who lived in a large city. How did citizens manage living under such stress?<sup>221</sup> Tension to avoid judgement and gossip in a small town could have been a motivator for some individuals. This constant pressure on the public to mobilize and meet all of the war-related demands could be seen as a form of terrorism. Consider the experience of living in a small town where many folks know one another. A person could not even use financial trouble as an excuse to avoid giving more, as they could very well be known to the local bankers...with access to accounts. These experiences were typical of communities similar to Oconomowoc. In a turn of events, a few months later the headlines read, “City Nearly Doubles Quota In Bond Drive.” The article went on to explain that Oconomowoc had raised a total of \$644,310, almost double the city’s quota of \$325,000, crediting the success to the corps of volunteers who went door-to-door soliciting.

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219. “Series E Bond Total Short \$16,000 of \$75,000 Quota,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 22, 1943, 1.

220. “THEY GIVE THEIR LIVES...YOU LEND YOUR MONEY!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 22, 1943.

221. (Future research into hospital records and the society pages of Oconomowoc would be valuable to learn if anything was mentioned during the war of people who had needed some care due to “nervous conditions,” or people who moved away or traveled to stay with out of town family in the hope, perhaps, to escape the vast pressures of the time.)



Evidently the last week of the drive, the sales skyrocketed, as the final push was on, for which the War Bond Committee expressed its gratitude “to all involved.”<sup>222</sup> The success of this canvass appeal causes one to wonder how heavy-handed the door-to-door solicitations were and what was typically said (or done) to the public to persuade them to buy. And were there consequences for those who did not agree to buy bonds (formal or informal)?

With seemingly no end to the solicitations, each new month brought advertisements with messages like, “And We Are Not Forgetting That This Is a New Month With a New Quota to Meet!” featuring a cartoon illustration of an angry-looking man putting money into a bomb that read, “Bonds for more bombs for Tokio [sic.]” With ever more harsh terms, this ad inquired, “What is your answer to our fliers murdered in Tokio [sic.]?” This solicitation was aptly described in the ad as, “Bond buying is no one-time event, but a parade that will not end until the war is over!”<sup>223</sup> This phrase lends itself to imagery that readers would have been able to visualize and relate to, since parades were commonplace in small towns. Propagandists chose words like “parade” in the hope that the people reading their message would be more likely to relate to, remember, and follow along with the purpose of the message. Other advertisements for War Bonds used racist images of Japanese and German soldiers with xenophobic remarks to generate

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222. “City Nearly Doubles Quota In Bond Drive,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 6, 1943, 1. (It would also be noteworthy to conduct further research into who served as members of the War Bond Committee and what kind of power did they hold in the community. Politicians and pastors would have been a more formidable team than a couple of young housewives.)

223. “TODAY IS THE 13th - BOND BUYING DAY!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 13, 1943.

support for more sales.<sup>224</sup> Propagandists learned from the First World War that demonizing the “other” was a highly effective method of persuading people and generating support for a desired outcome. Every image that was used to portray the enemy as less-than human, monstrous, or animalistic, helped to spread the message that the enemies of the U.S. were different from Americans, therefore justifying their treatment and our hatred, and by the same token, explaining their hatred of us. Each drive of war bonds brought with it a string of advertisements petitioning the public to buy more and give again to the war effort. One ad used a depiction of the American flag waving with bombs bursting in the distance and the caption, “Back The Attack, Buy More Bonds” with the accompanying message that bond sales to date were less than one third of the city’s quota.<sup>225</sup>

One compelling advertisement for war bonds used a novel approach, and pressed citizens “Will you write a letter to a P.O.W.?,” stating that when you sit down to write a soldier, perhaps you can explain to him why you didn’t contribute to the bond drive. It also featured a disturbing image of a soldier being held captive. The message concluded with the line, “You’ve Done Your



Figure 5

Bit - Now Do Your Best!”<sup>226</sup> This ad featured a new element however. It noted for the first time that civilians could boost their bond buying through a payroll savings plan. This

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224. “JAPS EXECUTE DOOLITTLE MEN,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 13, 1943.

225. “\$155,901.00 Bond Sales To Date; Less Than One Third of Area Quota,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 22, 1943, 1.

226. “Letter to a P.O.W.,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 22, 1943.

same propaganda slogan was used repeatedly with varying depictions in advertisements during the war, such as one example that portrayed Uncle Sam speaking to a man and woman. (see Fig. 5.) The propagandic message hidden behind this wording seemed to imply that doing your bit was seen as not doing enough. Occasionally the advertisements for war bonds included not only statements made to Oconomowoc but surrounding areas as well. One ad featured bold print that pronounced, “EVERY CITIZEN in the City of Oconomowoc, Town of Oconomowoc, Town of Summit, Town of Delafield is challenged by these third war loan figures.” At the time of printing, only \$155,901.75 of \$468,200 had been raised. Not surprisingly the words, “WE MUST NOT FAIL” ran along the bottom of the ad in bold uppercase lettering.<sup>227</sup> This wording implies a warning of collective disaster, rather than speaking to individuals, and also tapped in to small-town community pride, peer pressure, and reputational risk as motivators to comply.

Anniversary dates brought special advertisements for the sale of war bonds. On the second anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, an emotional appeal featured an image of a wounded U.S. soldier with the caption, “They don’t want your tears” and added there was a very special reason to buy bonds before December 7.<sup>228</sup> Drawing the connection closer to home, the ad also mentioned honoring Wisconsin’s 32nd Division. By noting the Wisconsin Division specifically, the propagandists strengthened their emotional appeal and reinforced the local connection to the war. Civilians in Waukesha County were more vested in news of the Wisconsin Division than news of far-off battles with unknown groups, for some of the same reasons previously enumerated. Residents of a small community like Oconomowoc may well

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227. “EVERY CITIZEN in the City of Oconomowoc, Town of Oconomowoc, Town of Summit...,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 23, 1943.

228. “They Don’t Want Your Tears,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 18, 1943.

have known others who served in the Wisconsin Division and therefore been more important to them than things with which they did not personally connect. Combined with this was a small image of a nurse reminding housewives to save fats, explaining that sulpha ointments made with glycerin derived from salvaged kitchen fats were used to treat wounds to prevent infection. Appeals like this targeted women on the home front and stressed the connection with healing, which was meant to tap into the maternal, nurturing ideals of women on the home front.<sup>229</sup>

While the newspaper constantly ran reports of whether or not the community was meeting its quota, occasionally articles ran that called attention to the good the youth in their community was doing to support the war. One such example ran in early 1942 and reported that war bond stamp sales had taken an upswing in the high school. Evidently, stamps in “twenty-five cent denominations proved to be most popular with high school pupils.” An Oconomowoc class, Mr. Melneke’s, set a record among the other home room classes in having bought \$15.00 worth of stamps in three days.<sup>230</sup> Another noted that “High School Students” bought war bonds and stamps, and rallied to the call to “go all out for the war effort,” and four local high school classes boosted the local sales by \$3,676.80!<sup>231</sup> The number of articles written about young people from Oconomowoc evidenced the editor’s choice to include them often.

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229.(The use of maternal instincts in propaganda and politics was done not only in the U.S. For a look at how the subject was conducted in Nazi Germany during WWII see, “Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics,” by Claudia Koonz.)

230. “Stamp Sales Take An Upward Swing In High School,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 19, 1942.

231. “High School Students Buy Bonds, Stamps,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 27, 1944, 1.

When the fourth war loan campaign began, the imagery and language used in the advertisements grew more coarse, revealing the increasingly violent appeals for the war bonds program. Oconomowoc followed national trends and employed an ever-rising level of alarm in the war bond ads, including more brutal imagery, although it responded in close-knit-community ways. The first war bond ad that Oconomowoc ran in 1944 used a large photograph that nearly took up half of a page, and showed several bloodied and wounded servicemen laying on makeshift cots looking abjectly miserable, and ran the caption, “Pin-up picture for the man who ‘can’t afford’ to buy an extra war bond...” The ad continued by telling readers, “You’ve heard people say, ‘I can’t afford to buy an extra War Bond’ Perhaps you’ve said it yourself...without realizing what a ridiculous thing it is to say to men who are dying.” It ends its message with this, “Sounds like more than you ‘can afford?’ Well, young soldiers can’t afford to die, either...yet they do it when called upon.”<sup>232</sup> The message put forward by the propagandists was quite harsh, seemingly implying that non-givers were responsible for the death of U.S. soldiers. Also of note, “the other” isn’t in this ad, it is purely U.S.-based, both soldiers and givers. It appears that the propagandists might have thought that sympathy for the U.S. soldiers was more persuasive at that point than fear of the enemy. Perhaps it contributed to the drive’s success, because a short time afterwards, a headline proclaimed that Oconomowoc was over the quota for the fourth war loan by \$31,000.<sup>233</sup> Ads that ran later in the war would sometimes use a large map of Europe in their solicitations to buy war bonds, with ghastly messages like, “How much does it cost to move

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232. “Pin-up Picture for the man who ‘can’t afford’ to buy an extra war bond,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 31, 1944.

233. “Oconomowoc Area Is Over the Top By \$31,000 In Fourth War Loan,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 17, 1944, 1.

a pin?” It explained that each move of a pin on the map was “mighty expensive business...cost is high in dollars...and the cost is high in men.”<sup>234</sup>

Cartoons were commonly featured in the newspaper as a means to generate support for the sale of war bonds. One example ran in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* showed Uncle Sam at a cash register with an airplane flying out from the top, which read, “A bond for you...a bomber for Uncle Sam.”<sup>235</sup> This type of visual representation stressed the connection between civilians purchasing war bonds and the materials and equipment that could be bought to support the military. The message this sent was two-fold, conversely, if you did not support the war and purchase war bonds, you were taking needed equipment away from U.S. soldiers. A person living in a small community might have known a higher number of folks who were serving in the military, because the town was more tight-knit, as opposed to a large city where citizens could live comparatively anonymously. Propagandists would have understood these differences and catered their messages to their audiences accordingly. Another advertisement that was regularly published in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* used a well-known likeness as propaganda to sell war bonds. The image of Uncle Sam pointing his finger at the reader, popularized during the First World War, made a comeback and was used again to motivate people to action. Instead of the usual phrase, “I want you” this ad used the caption, “I want... Fighting Dollars” to call Americans to give of their money to be used for the purchase of guns, planes, and ships.<sup>236</sup> By

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234. Oconomowoc War Finance Committee, “How much does it cost to move a pin?,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 28, 1944.

235. “Ringin’ ‘Em Up,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 23, 1943.

236. “I want ... FIGHTING DOLLARS,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 19, 1942.

echoing the familiar recruiting poster from the past, this method of propaganda intended their readers to feel a sense of nostalgia and take action to help support the current war.

As mentioned before, a tactic that was used to grab the readers' attention were images that the people could relate to. One such image ran in July of 1944 depicting a man, woman, and little boy all dressed in overalls and holding a farm implement, while the U.S. flag waved in the background, imploring citizens to buy more war bonds and "Back the Attack."<sup>237</sup> Another example was an ad that ran during the fifth war loan drive and used a bold caption, "YOUR INVASION" with an image that made the perspective look almost like the viewer was standing on the battlefield, along with the general in the foreground and other figures in the background.<sup>238</sup> Just a week later a follow-up article ran in the paper, that announced, "Area Surpasses Fifth War Loan Quota By Over \$10,000."<sup>239</sup> Later advertisements switched gears to use illustrations of soldiers reuniting with their families. Language like, "Back from the business of killing – to the business of living!" was chosen to make a strong impression on readers.<sup>240</sup> The momentum of selling war bonds continued into the sixth war loan drive. A front-page article published late in 1944 attested that the "Oconomowoc Area Quota Is \$476,000," the largest sum yet to be required of the area.<sup>241</sup> Messages that concerned the bond quotas (in Oconomowoc)

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237. "Back the Attack!," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 6, 1944, 1.

238. Oconomowoc War Finance Committee, Oconomowoc Civilian Defense Council, "YOUR INVASION," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 20, 1944.

239. "Area Surpasses Fifth War Loan Quota By Over \$10,000," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 27, 1944, 1.

240. Republic Steel, "Back to Elm Street, U.S.A.," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 17, 1944.

241. "Oconomowoc Area Quota Is \$476,000 In Sixth War Loan," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 2, 1944, 1.

seemed to repeat a propaganda cycle of stating ‘not enough raised’ and ‘surpassed the quota’ every month. How did this appear to readers? One wonders if it was ever called in to question, or simply accepted.

## **B. Red Cross Drives**

Only a few days into America’s official entry to war, the Waukesha Municipal Defense Council began to run repeated full-page advertisements that stressed, “America Calls You! To help swell the Red Cross \$50,000,000 war chest...When they give all, our best is too little, give generously for our boys.”<sup>242</sup> The language chosen for the ad was pretty blunt, considering the U.S had just joined the war. Making a familial connection referring to the service men as “our boys” was a commonly used propaganda device to garner strong support from the home front. At other times, the Red Cross used emotionally moving images to try and persuade those on the home front to give. To give an example, a picture of a uniformed nurse with Uncle Sam standing behind her, as she holds her arms out imploringly to the reader.<sup>243</sup> Civilians in Waukesha County were inundated with solicitations from the Red Cross, as were those in communities across the United States. Some messages were gentle, others more direct. A large advertisement in the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* bade citizens to support the Red Cross nation-wide drive by donating, “at least one-half day’s pay” [for each employed person].<sup>244</sup>

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242. Waukesha Municipal Defense Council, “America Calls You!,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 16, 1941.

243. Red Cross, “Red Cross Call to Service,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 18, 1941, 1.

244. “Red Cross Call To Service,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 18, 1941, 1.



During the Christmas season of 1941, an article was published in the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* that brought a message to readers titled simply, “Santa Is Eclipsed.” The article explained that a local seven-year-old girl and her four-year-old twin sisters had been saving up to purchase Christmas gifts, but instead of spending it, they all agreed to donate their treasure to the Waukesha County Red Cross, 151 pennies and 90 cents in nickels and dimes.<sup>245</sup> The elements of propaganda in this story were not very subtle, again using children as a means to shame adults by calling attention to their unselfish actions. This article, while appearing on the surface to be a heartwarming holiday story actually revealed how insidious the war had become, as it occupied even the most innocent of American things, children at Christmas. It can also be said that this article was a commentary on how dire the circumstances were for the country, as if to say even young children’s savings needed to be contributed to the war. This was similar to the attention and praise the high schoolers (previously mentioned) received for buying war bond stamps. It would not be the last time children were used in propaganda. The Waukesha County Red Cross boasted of the successful drive for the 1941 emergency fund in an article reporting they already met the quota and were on pace to double it by the time all the donations were finished.<sup>246</sup>

Mentions of war-related drives in Oconomowoc began with regularity in December 1941, with a front-page headline that ran just after Christmas that announced, “Oconomowoc To Conduct One Day Drive ...to Raise \$2000 For Red Cross.”<sup>247</sup> It was not long before the push to support the Red Cross became more pressing and insistent, despite the early goal of being less

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245. “Santa Is Eclipsed,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 20, 1941.

246. Red Cross, “Red Cross Drive Soars Way Over The Top Here,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 23, 1941.

247. “Oconomowoc To Conduct One Day Drive Next Tuesday To Raise \$2000 For Red Cross,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 26, 1941, pg. 1.

aggressive with propaganda than was carried out during the First World War. This drive was the earliest door-to-door solicitation carried out in Oconomowoc for this purpose, but not the last. Predictably, the article noted a blurb about it being everyone's duty to support this drive, trying to use patriotism to spur citizens to action. It too read that the organizers were "Confident the goal will be met," placing pressure on the readers to comply.<sup>248</sup> Following the 1941 drive the newspaper reported that the city's Red Cross drive had gone 'Over the Top,' a term that was used repeatedly to describe the outcome of the drives.<sup>249</sup>

Another large advertisement began with a call to action for 250 volunteers to donate blood, and tried to persuade readers with the statement, "your pint of blood may save the life of an American boy on one of the far flung battle fronts of the world." This ad also deployed a patriotic reminder by a mention of Pearl Harbor to further inspire the community.<sup>250</sup> The Oconomowoc Civilian Defense Council ran articles repeatedly letting citizens know what the Red Cross was doing and how they could help. One such article in January 1943 made it known that a group would be meeting for sewing, and as was typical, mentioned the people active in the group by name.<sup>251</sup> This was a small-town way of using peer pressure with a touch of guilt to try to get people to join future events, and embraced by numerous organizations during the course of the war. The Red Cross deployed a range of tactics to generate support and worked in

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248. Ibid.

249. "City Going 'Over The Top' In Red Cross Drive," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 2, 1942, 1.

250. The Red Cross, "More Volunteers to Donate Blood are Urgently Needed," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 22, 1942.

251. "Red Cross Sewing Unit Meets Tuesday," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 8, 1943.

conjunction with *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* editor, who published their articles frequently on the front page with both prominent placement and language that stressed a sense of urgency. One such Red Cross article stressed that the need for surgical workers in the area was “very great.”<sup>252</sup> As usual in propaganda, specific wording was chosen intended to grab the readers’ attention.

A month later, the Red Cross ran a full-page ad that announced the Blood Donor Mobile Unit would be in Oconomowoc the following week and lobbied for 480 volunteers to donate one-pint of blood each. Furthermore, the ad indicated that only 359 were registered up to that point. This same ad had an additional message, telling readers that “Salvage must not be forgotten” and included a list of the items being collected as vital.<sup>253</sup> A follow-up article was printed a couple of weeks later that noted approximately 520 men and women had answered the call and donated blood, a response which the Red Cross noted was very gratifying. It also noted that additional days were being added for the mobile unit to be in the area for donations and declared, “The Unit will be here to take blood from this volunteer civilian army which is doing this as part of its job on the home front.”<sup>254</sup> This collection being surpassed seemed evocative of the language used to describe the War Bond drives, (i.e., the propaganda cycle of desperation and then rousing success).

In the spring of 1943, Oconomowoc’s Red Cross drive launched with the quota set at \$3,575, citing demands for funds at unprecedented highs. An article in the paper confirmed that

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252. The Red Cross, “Red Cross Surgical Workers Are Needed,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 15, 1943.

253. The Red Cross, “The Red Cross Blood Donor Mobile Unit: Will Be In Oconomowoc,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 19, 1943.

254. “Large Number Answers Call For Blood Donors,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 26, 1943, 1.

teams for city and township door-to-door solicitations were being organized as part of a national drive and further explaining that the solicitation would be “on the basis of each citizen contributing as much as his circumstances permit in recognition of the need.”<sup>255</sup> How did Oconomowocians manage the constant torrent of petitions to “give the maximum?” It would be reasonable to assume that if a citizen was to give the maximum to the Red Cross drive, and then was solicited to give the maximum to the war bond sales drive, “the maximum” would be untenable for most folks to do repeatedly, without going into default or debt. If the later appeals published in 1945 are any indication, it does not appear that the solicitors felt the need to make any significant changes to their wording, as it continued for the remainder of the war.

A short time later, an article ran that cheered, “Red Cross Roll Call Gets Fine Support; Contributions over twice as much as last drive.” The article went on to say that workers have expressed “gratification with the way they have been received in Oconomowoc homes.” Everywhere they were met with “willing contributors, who gave generously.”<sup>256</sup> This begs the question, if they had been met with obstinance and anger, would that have been reported? Just as with War Bond drives, periodic updates were published in the newspaper concerning the Red Cross drives. As an illustration, one a few weeks later remarked the Red Cross drive was over the top, with a total of \$4,087, with one rural district still unreported.<sup>257</sup> Much praise was given to all who donated money as well as all who donated their time to help with the drive. This praise

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255. “Oconomowoc’s Red Cross Drive Launched; Quota \$3,575,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 5, 1943.

256. “Red Cross Roll Call Gets Fine Support: Contributions Over Twice As Much As Last Drive,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 11, 1943, 1.

257. “Red Cross Drive Goes Over Top; Total \$4,087,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 25, 1943, 1.

could have been intended as a reward for those readers who sought community recognition for their ‘sacrifices,’ yet it also could have been sincere appreciation to the citizens for the generous donations. A third option presents itself: the praise could have been written by the very same people who either donated time or money (or both) and wanted to pat themselves on the back in a public manner. More inquiry would be needed to answer this question, but in a small town, it would not be the first time something like that was done.

A report was published in late spring of 1943 that Waukesha County had surpassed its quota and raised \$43,945.21 for the Red Cross War Fund. It proceeded to break out each community’s portion, and Oconomowoc placed a respectable second to the larger city of Waukesha that took first place. Oconomowoc raised \$4,706.70 in support of the county-wide drive. The article further proclaimed that the county chapter would receive a certificate of merit for exceeding its quota in the war fund.<sup>258</sup>

In addition to monetary collections and blood drives, the Red Cross participated in other activities in the community. One such example reported that 62 Red Cross home nursing certificates were awarded to Oconomowoc women and high school girls after completing the required training. Furthermore, it noted who was in attendance and who the chairwoman was for the committee, always making the readers aware of those involved.<sup>259</sup> Another activity the area Red Cross promoted took place late in the year with the announcement that Oconomowoc joined the County-wide and State-wide Red Cross drive collecting clothing, shoes, and blankets for

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258. “County Subscribed \$43,945.21 To Red Cross War Fund,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 13, 1943, 1.

259. “Sixty-two Get Home Nursing Certificates: Two Groups Complete Red Cross Course Here,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 29, 1943.

Russians in need.<sup>260</sup> The initial article was followed by a full-page advertisement stating that, “Millions of Russian Men, Women, and Children” are in dire need of clothing to protect themselves from the harsh Russian winter. An emotional and guilt-laden appeal to the citizens on the home front, this ad went on to read, “Better an empty hanger in your closet than a shivering Russian child,”<sup>261</sup> (more propaganda featuring children). This type of appeal would have made more sense in a small affluent community like Oconomowoc, because more of its citizens could readily afford to donate things from their closets, than it would have in a more populated, urban city where the citizenry averaged a more modest income. Oftentimes people who live in small communities like Oconomowoc like to out-do their neighbors in terms of charity, and propaganda appeals such as this were well suited to call citizens to measure themselves against each other under the guise of “patriotism.”

Numerous ads were printed in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* for Red Cross blood drives and fund-raising events as the war progressed. A seemingly endless procession of requests: the blood donor mobile unit, quotas, advertisements with images of nurses looking angelic and patriotic, besieged Oconomowoc citizens. The New Year 1944 was heralded with a full-page ad that read, “Send Your Blood To War” and “512 Volunteers Needed to save wounded men.” Below that it was noted that, “This is the largest quota ever given the Oconomowoc area. All cannot be soldiers, but we can give our blood for life-saving plasma.”<sup>262</sup> It is unknown for certain

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260. “City Joins in Drive For Clothing For Russians November 18, 19,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 11, 1943, 1.

261. “WANTED! Clothes, Shoes, Blankets,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 11, 1943.

262. “Send Your Blood To War: 512 Volunteers Needed,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 30, 1943.

whether or not the populace took the appeals personally by this point in the war, but there remains evidence that propagandists were still trying to tap into personal feelings. One thing is for certain, the requests did not slow down over the course of the war. Occasionally the local Red Cross would publish announcements asking the citizens for help with other additional tasks, like one that ran early in 1944 which stated they were in need of knitters for charity projects, and the name of a local woman to call if interested.<sup>263</sup>

The Red Cross was quite active in Oconomowoc during World War II and did a lot of good for the community over the course of the war years. The financial support they raised was a significant amount to help support the war effort, and doubtless the substantial amount of blood they collected was a life-saving difference for many. The other events that were sponsored by or assisted by the Red Cross made valuable contributions to not only Oconomowoc, but to communities elsewhere, including Russia. The opportunities to join worthwhile causes and help the war effort in a communal way was also a highly valued contribution the Red Cross made at that time. It brought people together with a shared sense of purpose and itself became a propagandic device that encouraged patriotism.

### **C. Victory Gardens**

In an effort to supplement the foods being rationed, in December 1941 the Secretary of Agriculture, Claude R. Wickard, encouraged people to plant their own gardens to provide bountiful fresh vegetables, later known as “Victory Gardens.” Sickels explained that although vegetables were not rationed, for whatever reason, “...growing victory gardens was probably the most successful home front program” of World War II. They were grown everywhere, in

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263. “Red Cross Needs Knitters,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 27, 1944, 1.

backyards, vacant lots, and local parks.<sup>264</sup> The Boy Scouts had the motto, “Food for Freedom” and worked to grow victory gardens too. Pifer explained that city and county officials contributed civic land for this purpose.<sup>265</sup> People on the home front who started Victory Gardens grew vegetables that could be enjoyed fresh or canned for later consumption.<sup>266</sup> Jean Lechnir recalled “Everything was rationed when you come right down to it, anything that was worthwhile...my grandfather had a big garden too...so that kept me going, and we canned everything we could get our hands on.”<sup>267</sup>



Figure 6

Bear in mind, canning is a hot, messy, time-consuming, labor-intensive undertaking, (one that would have required some persuasion / motivation to do). (see Fig. 6.) Grace Bracker of Wisconsin told of participating in a canning bee at the church one night, and they gave it all to the hospital. She also recalled feeling guilty for having so many vegetables while people in Europe were starving, and even sent food boxes to Britain, as others also did at the time.<sup>268</sup> This required getting creative with packaging prior to shipping. Local farm overseer, Ben Perkins, wrote to his employer, actor Alfred Lunt, (overseas at the time) of a

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264. Robert Sickels, *American Popular Culture Through History: The 1940s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 103.

265. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 124.

266. Michael E. Stevens, *Women Remember the War 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1993), 80.

267. *Ibid*, 83.

268. *Ibid*, 90.



recent shipment of food he sent to him in England by rail and emphasized that he was sorry to hear about the eggs last time, and added, “We tried a different method of packing them in this container.”<sup>269</sup> Trial and error would have been required in packing and shipping, and much food was undoubtedly lost in the process.

Victory gardens were successful not only because they provided additional food during this national crisis, but also because they provided a much-needed distraction and a way to feel personally involved in the war. Most everyone wanted to show their support for the war and certainly kept quiet if they did not, for fear of harsh judgement from their neighbors. Gardening provided an outlet for people young and old to contribute in their own small way. This was an added benefit of sending food and supplies overseas too, as it helped people on the home front feel personally involved by lending assistance to others.

The Boy and Girl Scouts served as a ready pool of workers available to post advertising placards and conduct canvasses whenever the need arose in states across the United States. The Scouts had the motto, “Food for Freedom” and worked to grow victory gardens. City and county officials contributed land for this purpose.<sup>270</sup> Early in December 1941, the local Girl Scout

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269. Ben Perkins, *Ben Perkins letter to Alfred Lunt* (Genesee Depot, WI: WHS, December 19, 1942). (Alfred Lunt and his wife, Lynn Fontanne were respected theatre actors who had a summer home in Genesee Depot, Wisconsin [about 15 miles from Oconomowoc] where they later retired. For more information about their involvement in World War II see, “The Farm At Ten Chimneys: A Closer Look at the Home of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne,” by Erika L. Laabs, at: [Wisconsin magazine of history: Volume 98, number 2, winter 2014-2015 - Wisconsin Magazine of History Archives - Wisconsin Historical Society Online Collections \(wisconsinhistory.org\).](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Archives/Volume98/number2/winter2014-2015))

270. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 124.

council shared their plan to devote their work to national defense projects.<sup>271</sup> The following year, another article was published that outlined the defense work area Girl Scout troops were taking part in. Tasks such as collecting tin foil and other waste materials, as well as helping with the Victory Book campaign were well suited to scouting projects. The councilwoman who wrote the article reminded girls not to “look for the glamorous tasks in this war but rather ... stay behind the lines and do the little jobs well.”<sup>272</sup> This directive makes one wonder if girls had complained about the projects they were being given and what they perhaps had wanted to do instead, that was more “glamorous.” [Older girls may have imagined they would be dancing with soldiers at the service club but were instead told to collect tin.]

Oconomowoc started promoting Victory gardens in February 1943. A large notice printed on the front page of *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* at that time proclaimed that Oconomowoc was launching a Victory Garden campaign and printed below, an application was provided for folks to fill out and mail in to City Hall if interested in using a plowed plot of land for this purpose. In addition to the individual’s name, the application asked for the number of family members, and the approximate size of plot desired.<sup>273</sup> Under this plan, the city would plow the gardens and have them available for use by those who wished to use them. Subsequent articles were run alerting citizens that additional land was made available for Victory Gardens and to send in their applications to the City Clerk’s office. This was part of a nation-wide campaign to have more

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271. “Girl Scout Council Plans Increase Of Girl Scouting Scope For Work In National Defense Projects,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 11, 1941.

272. “Girl Scout Defense Work Is Outlined,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 19, 1942.

273. “Oconomowoc Launching Victory Garden Campaign This Year,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 26, 1943, 1.

than 18 million home Victory Gardens. The article attested that “officials in Washington point out that every pound of food that a resident of town or city is able to raise in a Victory Garden...is a pound of food that goes to war.”<sup>274</sup> Later articles provided updates to the community that the garden plots had been plowed and the Parks Board was in the process of assigning plots to applicants. Also, plans were being made to hold a Victory Garden Show that fall, giving local gardeners an opportunity to display some of the produce they grew over the summer.<sup>275</sup>

The La Belle Garden Club announced it would discuss Victory Gardens at their upcoming meeting in the spring of 1943. The article conveyed that the members had decided to open up the meeting to friends and anyone interested in this topic. The discussion was to include the subjects of vitamins in the garden and the best types of vegetable seeds available.<sup>276</sup> By summer, it was made known that over 200 new Victory Gardens had been planted that year. And the same article added that plans were underway to hold a series of contests for Victory gardeners.<sup>277</sup>

Occasionally cartoons ran that mentioned Victory Gardens. One such cartoon commentary featured in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* had the caption, “Time To Do Some

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274. “Additional Land Made Available Here For 1943 Victory Gardens,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 11, 1943, 1.

275. “Oconomowoc Planting ‘V’ Gardens Now,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 6, 1943, 1. (The Parks Board was in charge of the Victory Garden project in Oconomowoc.)

276. “Garden Club Will Discuss Victory Gardens April 2,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 18, 1943, 1.

277. “Over 200 New Victory Gardens; Plan Contest,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 13, 1943, 1.

Weeding.” The illustration depicted a man working in what was labeled as a ‘Government Victory Garden’ with the words, “Millions wasted on non-essentials” written subtly among the corn stalks.<sup>278</sup> Further research would be needed to uncover the intended message. It stands out as a rare example of discontent in a flood of information that purported to support the war.

The Victory Gardens in Oconomowoc also provided a social gathering place for neighbors to come together, work for the same cause, and be able to support one another in the process. It is reasonable to assume given the size of Oconomowoc and the tight-knit population that the shared public Victory gardens became a place to socialize, as well as garden. In this social setting, peer pressure would have been implicit as evidenced by the Victory Garden Show and the Victory Garden Contest that was later held. Did the Victory Gardens contribute food to the home front? Absolutely. Did they also raise the morale of the citizens and encourage participation? One would believe so, yes. And the gardens also would have presented opportunities to show off to your neighbors, and perhaps engage folks to join, in order to maintain their good reputation in the community.

#### **D. Miscellaneous Events (Oconomowoc Civilian Defense Council, Paper Drives, Boy Scouts, Scrap Metal Drives, Chamber of Commerce, Recruiting Events)**

Like newspapers across the U.S. during World War II, *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* and the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* regularly featured information about a variety of war-related news, such as, speeches to be given at the high school, special radio broadcasts, scrap drives, recruiting events, and Chamber of Commerce activities. Less than two weeks after the U.S. entered the war, *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* notified readers that a Local Defense Council had been

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278. “Time To Do Some Weeding,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 24, 1943.

established and urged citizens to register for civilian work.<sup>279</sup> The issue further explained that committees were being coordinated in Oconomowoc and Summit.<sup>280</sup> It was announced in the beginning of January 1942 that the Oconomowoc Chamber of Commerce would host a speaker to discuss civilian defense work. This article further explained that the speaker was Milwaukee Fireman, Edward E. Wischer, head of instruction and training, chief drill master, and assistant chief engineer, who was in charge of civilian defense work for the State of Wisconsin.<sup>281</sup> A few weeks afterwards, *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* reported that 229 people had registered for Civilian Defense, yet more would be needed to reach the city's quota of 400.<sup>282</sup> Later on in the year it was announced that Civilian Defense courses would be held four days a week at area schools and the community hall. Citizens who had volunteered to be part of the Civilian Defense in Oconomowoc had to attend classes to be trained in Red Cross First Aid. Instructors and air raid wardens would first receive training in Waukesha and would then, in turn, teach classes at the local venues to volunteers. It is noteworthy that trainings were often held at the Oconomowoc High School and that the instruction was conducted by Army officers and members of the

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279. "Local Defense Council Set Up; Urges All Citizens To Register For Civilian Work," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 19, 1941, 1.

280. "Towns Set Up Defense Committees," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 19, 1941.

281. "Chamber Will Meet Next Wed.: Speaker Will Discuss Civilian Defense Work," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 9, 1942, 1. (Edward E. Wischer would go on to be Milwaukee's Fire Chief in 1947. It seems impressive that a man of this rank would come and speak at a Chamber dinner in Oconomowoc.)

282. "229 Persons Registered For Civilian Defense," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 16, 1942, 1.

American Legion.<sup>283</sup> Oconomowoc residents were notified through the paper that additional training was going to be offered to civilians on the use of rifles for defense at a six-week course in town.<sup>284</sup> More research is needed to learn who participated in this training.

Civil defense announcements were steadily printed in the local newspaper throughout the war years. In mid-1942 an article with bold typeface ran that outlined the thirteen sections of the Oconomowoc Common Council's ordinance regarding blackouts. This was produced in an easy-to-read format and even instructed readers to cut the article out and post it for reference.<sup>285</sup> *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* printed a front-page headline that read, "All Civilian Defense Workers To Meet Tonight" that explained instructions would be given to Civilian Defense workers at the city hall.<sup>286</sup> A year later an article was published entitled, "Blackout Scheduled For Oconomowoc, Waukesha County 9:30 - 10:00 p.m. Tuesday" with an accompanying article that specified, "What To Do During Blackout."<sup>287</sup> This event was managed by the Civilian Defense Corps and was approved by the U.S. Army for four Wisconsin counties (Waukesha, Racine,

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283. "First Aid Classes Will Start Tuesday: Civilian Defense Courses to Be Four Days a Week," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 27, 1942, 1.

284. "Civilian Rifle Classes Will Begin April 1," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 27, 1942. (Research is ongoing to determine who attended and why this was important to Oconomowoc. Was there a perceived threat to the area, or was the Civilian Defense a means to keep civilians busy?)

285. "An Ordinance Relating to National Defense and Public Safety Welfare During the War Emergency," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 4, 1942.

286. "All Civilian Defense Workers To Meet Tonight," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 11, 1942, 1.

287. "Blackout Scheduled For Oconomowoc 9:30 - 10:00 p.m., Tuesday," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 12, 1943, 1.

Kenosha, and Rock), all to be conducted at the same time. Detailed instructions accompanied the notice to provide easy to follow steps for civilians on the home front to reference.

Programs supporting the war were often held at the Oconomowoc High School. One well-attended event was a program honoring Captain Dames and the rest of the Oconomowoc National Guard Company, with over 1,000 people in attendance.<sup>288</sup> Other speakers were invited to elementary schools in Oconomowoc. For instance, an article ran about a talk that local serviceman Private Radtke had given recently to a group of school children at Summit School. The article confirmed the talk was “enjoyed by his listeners.”<sup>289</sup> Some special events were held to generate support for war bond sales. Notable radio personality and television announcer Johnnie Olson hosted a special evening program to entertain and sell war bonds. Olson brought his WTMJ [Milwaukee] popular radio variety show “Rumpus Room” to the stage of the Oconomowoc High School auditorium in March 1943.<sup>290</sup> This event raised approximately \$16 thousand from in-person and phone-in pledges to add to the bond drive.

The local paper, the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* promoted a patriotic broadcast to raise support for the American Greek Relief Association, claiming to be “The Most Elaborate Radio Presentation of All Time.”<sup>291</sup> Other recurring radio programs held interviews with area

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288. “Large Attendance At Program For Dames,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 5, 1943.

289. “Pvt. Radtke Gives Talk At School,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 12, 1943.

290. “Rumpus Room, War Bond Broadcast To Originate Here Mar. 9,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 26, 1943.

291. “American Greek Relief Association,” *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, February 10, 1941.

servicemen. A local Captain recently returned from combat was interviewed on Milwaukee radio station WTMJ and noted that he would be appearing at a local Rotary Club meeting the following week.<sup>292</sup> Events such as this appeared on the front page of *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* on a regular basis.

Appeals to save waste paper began to emerge as early as December 12, 1941 in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, which declared paper as a vitally important material.<sup>293</sup> It did not take long before a call was made to conserve “all materials” in Oconomowoc, with the earliest mention in January 1942. Yet at that time, they were really only focused on the collection of metal and waste paper.<sup>294</sup> Many advertisements concerning various collections printed during the Second World War featured the Scouts. A full-page ad in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* sponsored by the Oconomowoc Cubs and Boy Scouts with the heading, “We Thank You!” had an image of a smiling Boy Scout, thanking the public for supporting their recent wastepaper salvage collection, where they gathered an impressive 18 tons in all.<sup>295</sup> This ad also served as propaganda to notify residents that another collection would be starting up again the following month. Later the same year, the Boy Scouts ran another full-page ad in the newspaper

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292. “Capt. Dames Will Be On Radio Program Tuesday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 23, 1943.

293. “Ask Citizens To Save All Waste Paper,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 12, 1941, 1.

294. “Move Starts To Conserve All Materials,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 9, 1942, 1.

295. “We Thank You!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 20, 1944.



announcing a “City-Wide Waste Paper Collection” to be held for one day only, rain or shine.<sup>296</sup> This ad featured a large photo in the center of the page showing a woman handing over a tall stack of papers to three young scouts. One unique part of this ad was the inclusion of an illustration that explained step-by-step how to prepare waste paper for collection. It is also noteworthy to point out that propagandists only used representations of women contributing to the paper drive. Similarly at the end of 1945 full-page ads ran under the heading, “The War Is Over But...There Is Still A Critical Shortage of Waste-Paper.”<sup>297</sup> The need for paper was tremendous during the Second World War, as the military used paper for thousands of items, including draft cards, cartridge boxes, daily work plans, and boxes for first aid supplies, to name a few. The Boy Scouts were instrumental in a successful collection effort in 1942, but when that was exhausted, subsequent drives in 1944 and 1945 were held to make up for the ongoing shortage. General Eisenhower himself sponsored the national drive in 1945, during which the Boy Scouts collected over three hundred-thousand tons of waste paper!<sup>298</sup>

New Year’s Eve brought news of special benefit parties over the war years. One attested that the Waukesha Service Club’s New Year’s Eve party funds would go to support national defense work.<sup>299</sup> Another article declared a New Year’s party was going to be held at the

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296. Boy Scouts of America, Potawatomi Area Council, “City-Wide Waste Paper Collection,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 26, 1944.

297. Boy Scouts of America, Potawatomi Area Council, “The War Is Over But...,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 1, 1945.

298. “World War II Sustainability,” *International Scouting Museum*, accessed 2022, [worldscoutingmuseum.org/WWII.shtml](http://worldscoutingmuseum.org/WWII.shtml).

299. “Service Club Announces New Year’s Eve Party Funds Will Go to Help In National Defense Work,” *Waukesha Dail Freeman*, December 22, 1941.

Oconomowoc armory, with proceeds going to the American Legion.<sup>300</sup> Other local dances were also advertised and made some reference of a connection to the war effort.

A 'Victory' book drive was held in Oconomowoc, similar to those being sponsored by Federal propaganda organizations across the nation. The newspaper article requested the public donate books for men in the armed forces, and that they were trying to collect as many as possible.<sup>301</sup> By getting the readers to think of soldiers and sailors reading their donated books, it made the collection more personal, and therefore, harder to ignore.

Oconomowoc civilians were frequently reminded to save their tin cans. One article let the public know that a tin can collection would be taking place later that week and who they could call to schedule a pick up at their homes. It used strong words like, "grave shortage" and "urgent need" to attempt to get people to respond.<sup>302</sup> Another account printed in early 1943 acknowledged that the following amounts had been collected during the past two months: scrap iron – 11,390 pounds; scrap rubber – 5,435 pounds; rags – 3,892 pounds; scrap paper – 13,149 pounds; and waste fats – 943 pounds.<sup>303</sup> A subsequent article ran that used the words, "Need for them is critical" when describing that tin cans should still be saved.<sup>304</sup> A few months later

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300. "Benefit Party," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 1, 1943.

301. "Ask Help of All In Victory Book Drive," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 23, 1943.

302. "Arrange To Collect Tin Cans In Homes Here: Will Be Stored In City Building Until Shipment," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 29, 1943.

303. "Give Report In Salvage Collections: Metal, Rubber, Paper, Waste Fats Turned in Recently," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 19, 1943.

304. "Save Tin Cans - Need for Them Is Critical," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 18, 1943, 1.

another article ran that reported the scrap drive figures collected to date, and furthermore to “Ask Housewives [to] Remember Salvage Drive This Month.”<sup>305</sup> Oftentimes *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* printed full-page advertisements that petitioned civilians to save salvage items as well as buy war bonds. One compelling ad featured an image of Uncle Sam holding what appeared to be scrap materials with the slogan, “Remember Salvage...Plus Bonds To Win The War!”<sup>306</sup> This ad strove to remind readers that salvage collection was not just a one-time thing, but a continuous need. Of note, along the bottom of the advertisement, a list of the sponsors was printed, enabling readers to see which citizens and businesses were involved, (and which ones were not), again applying peer pressure to garner support. Listing the participants’ names would not have made the same impact in a large city as it would have in a small town such as Oconomowoc, where so many people were known to one another. While some advertisements used a patriotic pitch to their appeal to save scrap materials, others used a direct confrontational tone such as, “Let us ask you squarely, Mrs. Oconomowoc Housewife - Just what are you doing in salvaging kitchen fats and tin cans?.”<sup>307</sup> Propagandists further chastised readers with headlines like “Oconomowoc’s Record Is Not Good on Waste Fat and Tin Can Salvage!” and “This Message Is a Call to Respond!”<sup>308</sup> By calling out Oconomowoc housewives, propagandists placed the (potential) blame squarely at their feet. Periodic reports were printed in the paper of

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305. “Give Figures On March Scrap Drive,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 15, 1943, 1.

306. “Remember...Salvage...Plus Bonds To Win The War!,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 27, 1943.

307. “Let Me Ask You Squarely, Mrs. Oconomowoc Housewife,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 17, 1943.

308. *Ibid.*

how salvage collections were coming along in Oconomowoc. One report was accompanied by a photograph of a local man with his two sons captioned, “Dad and the Boys Get in the Scrap.”<sup>309</sup> Note that the father and sons were depicted in a positive light, unlike many negative portrayals of women. Oconomowocians encountered persistent ads like this in the newspapers for the duration of the war.

Terrific pressure to collect scrap metal was placed on the individuals at home. Civilians would have come in regular contact with incessant calls to action printed in the newspapers and would not have escaped anyone’s notice. One large advertisement ran towards the end of 1943 declared a “Victory Scrap Bank Campaign” was in progress, to collect metal in order to make shells, tanks, boats, guns, and planes. With the posted national quota set at 15 million tons, and Wisconsin’s quota of 519 thousand tons, it is no wonder the ad also urged, “Dig Up Every Piece of Metal Scrap - No Matter How Little.”<sup>310</sup> While this phrase ‘to dig up’ was often referenced in scrap metal drives, it does not appear that individuals dug in the ground, but folks did dig into local dump sites, old buildings, overgrown brush on the edges of farm fields, basements, garages, and a plethora of other locations to collect scrap metal.

The YMCA also participated in events to support the war effort. One article in the paper advised that a special letter was being sent to all Waukesha County YMCA members who were

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309. “Dad and the Boys Get in the Scrap,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 15, 1943.

310. “VICTORY SCRAP BANK CAMPAIGN,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, October 6, 1943.

in the service. The article stated the purpose of which was to share some local news with “the boys overseas, as well as spread Christian influence to those far from home.”<sup>311</sup>

Harvest-time required the community of Oconomowoc to pull together to make up for the shortage of workers away at war, and manage harvesting crops as needed. The need was especially great since farm production had increased to keep up with the demands of the war. Many worked to gather volunteers to help with harvesting, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Farm Harvest Corps, Oconomowoc Canning Co., and others. Much like the advertisements that were placed by the Oconomowoc Canning Co., the Chamber of Commerce urged citizens to join the Farm Harvest Corps.<sup>312</sup> Harvesting events brought many people together to help meet the needs of local farmers. In the following months, repeated articles were published asking for more volunteers to lend their support. One article that ran in the summer of 1943 made a desperate appeal for help with harvesting, indicating that there were nowhere near enough volunteers to handle the job. It was further explained that volunteers need not work full-time, and that part-time help would be acceptable as well, stating they would accommodate “business and professional men who can devote a few hours a day to farm work after their business hours.” The Chamber of Commerce would pay volunteers 40 cents per hour, with a minimum to be paid of \$1.00. The article further warned that in other communities where crops were in danger of not being harvested in time, whole towns have shut down businesses to enable employees to help

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311. “County YMCA News,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 29, 1943.

312. “Plan Harvest Corps Here This Year: C. of C. to Organize Volunteer Workers For Farms,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, March 18, 1943, 1.

with the harvest.<sup>313</sup> This rousing call to action would have made citizens take notice as to the reality of the circumstances, for if crops weren't harvested in time, they could rot or freeze in the fields. With volunteers being listed by name in the paper too, an element of peer pressure and shame would have been felt by readers, compelling many to act. Some months later an article ran in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* that told of boys who answered an emergency call to help harvest squash before the coming frost, at Phyper's local farm. A call was placed to the high school on a Monday morning and that same afternoon 100 boys had volunteered and gone to work at the farm.<sup>314</sup> This response demonstrates a selfless act to pull together in a small community when needed during the exigencies of war.

Advertisements for movies were regularly featured in the entertainment section of the local newspaper during the war years, many of which had a war-related theme. Ads in Oconomowoc ran for films such as "The Navy Comes Through" and "No Greater Sin" which were being shown at the local Strand Theatre.<sup>315</sup> One of the most patriotic films of the time was promoted with a large advertisement that announced, "Yankee Doodle Dandy starring James Cagney" with a depiction of Cagney wearing a jaunty top hat of stars and stripes.<sup>316</sup> Another notable film from that time was shown at the La Belle Theatre in town, titled "Star Spangled

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313. "Need Many Volunteers For Farm Harvesting," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 27, 1943.

314. "100 H.S. Boys Help To Harvest Squash At Phypers Farm," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 23, 1943, 1. (Newspaper articles show the Oconomowoc High School, its students, and staff contributed to support the war effort on the home front throughout the duration of the conflict.)

315. Strand Theatre, "The Navy Comes Through," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 1943.

316. "The Best Musical Ever," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, February 12, 1943.

Rhythm” and according to the ad, featured a cast of “43 stars, 7 hit songs, and a million laughs.”<sup>317</sup> However, war-themed movies were not the only genre released during World War II. Many other films were musicals like, “Holiday Inn,” “Meet Me In St. Louis,” “The Bells of St. Mary’s,” dramas like, “My Friend Flicka,” and horror such as “The Body Snatcher” were all released during the war. Theaters would also hold special events that coincided with supporting the war. Of note, an article ran in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise* that stated local theaters were making a special Red Cross Collection for the week. This overlap of theater event and Red Cross was a nation-wide movement. For an entire seven days, theaters across the country were taking a special collection at each of their programs to benefit the Red Cross. Interestingly, the article noted participation in this special fund was “completely voluntary,” leaving one to observe the other funds / drives may not have been thought of as voluntary.<sup>318</sup>

Oconomowoc hosted military recruitment events from time to time. One such occurrence planned for the Community Hall was promoted in *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, described as a rally for those interested in joining the Navy or the U.S. Coast Guard Women’s Reserve. Labelled as an opportunity to meet with local recruiters, the event included viewing a film depicting a day-in-the-life of a Navy man and a series of Navy action pictures.<sup>319</sup> Along a similar theme, an article ran that let the public know that Navy recruiters would be in town every

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317. La Belle Theatre, “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 1, 1943.

318. “Theaters Making Special Red Cross Collection for Week,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 1, 1943.

319. “Plan Navy Rally Here Fri. April 30,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 15, 1943, 1.

Friday.<sup>320</sup> A similar event was held at the Oconomowoc Rotary Club featuring guest speaker, Petty Officer, First Class Bahr, who was from the Navy recruiting office in Milwaukee. His purpose was to outline plans for a “Navy Day Rally” to be held in Oconomowoc, to recruit and promote the Navy to the community.<sup>321</sup>

When Memorial Day arrived, the people of Oconomowoc celebrated in grand style with ceremonies at the city’s band shell on the shore of Lac La Belle and at the nearby La Belle Cemetery. While patriotic, observances like this were also tools of propaganda. An article described the planned festivities and the multiple organizations involved in the event namely, the Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Boy and Girl Scouts, Civilian Defense Corps, Victory Corps,<sup>322</sup> the Legion Band, VFW Auxiliary, and the Blue Star Mothers, among others.<sup>323</sup> The festivities would honor the war dead of this nation, as well as those involved in the current war, and noted the day would take on special significance. Amidst the current struggle, Oconomowoc still urged their citizens to buy a poppy in remembrance of the veterans. The committee avowed, “Many demands are made of our time and our pocketbooks, but we must remember that service to the Veterans of World War I and World War II is our major objective.”<sup>324</sup> Patriotic and

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320. “Navy Will Recruit Here Every Friday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 15, 1943, 1.

321. “Navy Man Is Speaker At Rotary,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, April 22, 1943, 1.

322. (The Victory Corps began in the fall of 1942 and was a nation-wide organization for high school students to provide them training for future war service after graduation and active participation in their community’s war effort while still in school.), [vintagekidstuff.com/high-school-victory-corps](http://vintagekidstuff.com/high-school-victory-corps).

323. “City Will Observe Memorial Day With Program Sunday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 27, 1943, 1.

324. “Buy a Poppy Saturday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, May 27, 1943, 1.



propagandic festivities were also held in observation of July 4<sup>th</sup> in Oconomowoc. A full-page ad with an eagle pictured at the top read, “1776 \* Fourth Of July \* 1942: One Hundred And Sixty Years Of Freedom ... and once again we’re fighting to keep AMERICA free.” It also outlined the planned program of celebrations and gave examples of regular citizens doing their part to support the war, complete with a list of the sponsors and the ubiquitous message, “Buy U.S. War Bonds / Stamps.”<sup>325</sup>

The Blue Star Mothers of America published a notice that a chapter was to be formed in Oconomowoc and asked that all mothers of the community who qualify for membership take part so that, “Oconomowoc may have a good representation in the association.” Any mother or foster mother who had a son serving in the armed forces or honorably discharged would have been eligible for membership.<sup>326</sup> The following summer, Oconomowoc sought approval to be admitted into the official State Guard unit, which was organized after the National Guard was called to active duty. A group of local men had been gathering and drilling in preparation of possible admittance for several months preceding this announcement. The State Guard was limited to available resources, but after a visit by the Adjutant-General, Oconomowoc was conferred their own Home Guard unit.<sup>327</sup>

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325. “1776 \* Fourth Of July \* 1942: One Hundred And Sixty Years Of Freedom,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, July 3, 1942.

326. “Blue Star Mothers’ Organizer To Be Here Wednesday,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 11, 1942.

327. “Adj. General Confers On Home Guard,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 19, 1943. (A deeper look into this unit would be beneficial to round out the Oconomowoc home front understanding.)

In the fall of 1943, the Waukesha County Historical Society ran an article in conjunction with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin asking citizens to help document the war and save materials for posterity.<sup>328</sup> The State Civilian Defense Committee had asked historical societies across the state to “gather together, compile and keep records of the historical happenings of the present emergency, especially those of local importance.”<sup>329</sup> The article went on to say that items like small photographs, letters from servicemen, newspaper clippings, committee work, etc. were wanted, and provided the names of several individuals who were responsible for gathering the items from the community.

A group of Oconomowoc women got together and formed the Service Center Organization, with the goal of creating a space for service men and women to use while on furlough, or just passing through town. The chairwoman had spent some time in USO centers with her son who served in the Navy, and became inspired, wanting to bring the same to Oconomowoc. The newspaper article added that a space for this purpose was made available in the town’s City Hall, and any donations would be appreciated.<sup>330</sup> Not long after, an article ran announcing the Servicemen’s Center opening and an invitation to all those in service at home on leave or furlough. Many local women were volunteering their time to serve as attendants in the

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328. (A similar collection was started by the Wisconsin Historical Society during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, marketed as “Collecting History as it Happens.” See [COVID-19 Journal Project | Wisconsin Historical Society \(wisconsinhistory.org\)](https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/COVID-19-Journal-Project) for further information.)

329. “History Society Wants War History Material,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 26, 1943, 1. (Preliminary research has not yielded any records of such a collection, and will need further investigation as to whether or not these materials were accessioned at the WCHS.)

330. “Plan To Open Service Center At City Hall,” *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, October 26, 1943.

clubroom, with the hours of operation being from 10 am to 10 pm. Activities, for example, cards, pool, listening to the radio, reading current magazines, or writing letters had all been planned and provided for by the Service Center Organization.<sup>331</sup>

The Oconomowoc American Legion Band was featured in an article on their plans to give three concerts at Camp McCoy, (a distance of about 140 miles from Oconomowoc), for all who were stationed there.<sup>332</sup> A few months later another article ran that commented 46 members of the Oconomowoc American Legion Band had again traveled to Camp McCoy and gave a concert. It further remarked that the band concert was well received by attendees at the camp.<sup>333</sup> American Legion concerts given at Camp McCoy were jointly beneficial to those attendees stationed at the base, for those who participated in the band, and for propagandists. Band concerts at military bases during the war would have been a shot in the arm for generating renewed patriotism and a propagandists' dream.

Collections for Christmas gifts for servicemen in Oconomowoc began in December 1941. Not only did the drive ask for monetary donations, but also "Smokes for Our Boys," and as the article explained, six large barrels were placed on the streets with the goal to "Fill 'em up."<sup>334</sup> Every subsequent year of the war when the holidays came, more peer pressure was exerted to

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331. "Servicemen's Center Open 10 a.m.10 p.m.," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 18, 1943.

332. "Band To Entertain At Camp McCoy Aug. 15," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 5, 1943, 1.

333. "46 Make Trip To Camp McCoy," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 11, 1943, 1.

334. "Remember Boys In Service This Christmas," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 12, 1941, 1.

prevail upon Oconomowoc residents to give gifts to send to service men and women from the community. One persuasive article used a large front-page headline to grab readers' attention, then cleverly used the question, "Will You Have A Part In This?," explaining that when local men and women in service open their gifts from Oconomowoc, would you be included?<sup>335</sup> This particular Christmas fund had a goal of \$1,000. It was also at this time that the Salvation Army announced it would be having a separate drive for social welfare work in Wisconsin.<sup>336</sup> The following January an article ran under the heading, "Servicemen Say Thanks For Gifts."<sup>337</sup> It remarked that servicemen and women stationed in northern Ireland, Africa, the Mediterranean area, Army camps, and Naval bases all sent their letters of appreciation back home to Oconomowoc. Excerpts of a few of those letters were printed as well. Another year a solicitation was printed, again raising \$1,000 for service gifts. It used persuasive language throughout, for instance, "The money is needed at once," and "This is a personal invitation to you," ending with "You can't spell vicTory with an absent 'T.'"<sup>338</sup> A short time later the newspaper ran a follow-up article that observed, "Soldier Gift Fund Now \$1080; Donations Still Accepted" and was soon

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335. "Hundreds of Gifts on Their Way To Oconomowoc Men, Women in Service," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, October 21, 1943, 1.

336. "Salvation Army Will Have Drive," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, December 9, 1943, 1.

337. "Servicemen Say Thanks For Gifts," *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, January 6, 1944, 1.

338. "Your Contribution For Service Gifts," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 24, 1944, 10. (Note: It was during this year that the newspaper in Oconomowoc changed its name from "The Oconomowoc Enterprise," to just "Oconomowoc Enterprise," which is what is reflected in the subsequent citations and not a misprint.)

followed by an ad that divulged the, “Soldier Gift Fund Now Totals \$1342.”<sup>339, 340</sup> This culminated with an article that thanked supporters with a “Well Done” caption and high praise for those who participated. It ended with the proud statement, “Again we say, Oconomowoc never has failed in any heart appeal and this is no exception.”<sup>341</sup>

A tremendous amount of giving and self-sacrifice characterizes this period in American history as the abovementioned information on Oconomowoc illustrated. People worked together for a common cause and successfully accomplished much good that supported the war in one way or another. Creative ideas came forward, such as the establishment of the community center for service men and women to use while home on leave, the use of vacant lots to raise Victory gardens, fund-raising programs in person and on the radio, not to mention all of the different types of scrap that were saved and collected over the length of the war. National and local propaganda contributed to a community-wide effort to: follow rationing, volunteer work, and donate funds for war drives helped the small community of Oconomowoc weather the challenges they faced brought on by war.

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339. “Soldier Gift Fund Now \$1080; Donations Still Accepted,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 7, 1944, 1.

340. “Soldier Gift Fund Now Totals \$1342,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 14, 1944, 1.

341. C.W. Brown, “Well Done,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 14, 1944.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

On December 9, 1941 President Roosevelt stated over the radio that, “every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking in our American history.”<sup>342</sup> During the Second World War, the United States came together for a common cause like never before.

As the war years drew to a close, people on the home front in Oconomowoc still encountered war-related propaganda on a daily basis. Local businesses continued to use patriotic themes in their advertising, such as one published by Lyke Funeral Home in the fall of 1945 with the caption, “There She Stands...Liberty!” with a full-page image of the Statue of Liberty and a rousing paragraph extolling the success of the American people.<sup>343</sup> It would be reasonable to assume the plan to link business with victory was a successful propaganda device. The practice was wide-spread and continued over the length of the war years, which shows businesses were not deterred from continuing to use patriotic marketing. It can also be said that business was rehabilitated through war propaganda in World War II, from its previous depression-era low public esteem. Following ‘Victory in Japan Day,’ or V-J Day, as it came to be called, the Oconomowoc news was still heavily linked to the war, and many articles detailed how various committees and efforts would be winding down, such as the announcement that the Ration Board

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342. George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 43.

343. Lyke Funeral Home, “There She Stands...Liberty!,” *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, August 16, 1945.

would soon close.<sup>344</sup> One article ran that fall of 1945 on a petition circulating to build a new club house for the American Legion in order to accommodate "...the 500 Oconomowoc veterans of World War II who will be returning to Oconomowoc in ever increasing numbers from now on."<sup>345</sup> It appeared the plan was unanimously supported and not long after, plans were drawn up for the future building project. The last war-related advertisement found in the *Oconomowoc Enterprise* was put out by the Oconomowoc War Bond Committee in November of 1945, a full-page ad with an illustration across the top of a wounded soldier being escorted by fellow servicemen and below a caption that read, "We haven't forgotten this boy...have you?". It included the frequently-heard call, "Let's ALL Meet Our Quotas In The Victory Loan - Oconomowoc Area Quota Is \$300,000," and as usual the sponsors were noticeably listed too.<sup>346</sup>

The home front propaganda in Wisconsin and in Oconomowoc were quite typical of the national efforts and were in line with what was seen across Waukesha County and other small towns across America. Many citizens of Oconomowoc were proud to support the Second World War and did what they could from the home front. Not only did they give of their men to serve in the military, and aside from rationing, but they also held events, donated money and blood, and volunteered their time in ways that was typical of the state and the nation. Individuals from every walk of life contributed to the success of the home front war effort, while Wisconsin overall

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344. "Ration Board Will Close Friday, Oct. 5," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, October 4, 1945.

345. "City Council Approves Lease of Land Tract to Legion Post For Club House Construction," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, September 8, 1945.

346. Oconomowoc War Bond Committee, "We haven't forgotten this boy...have you?," *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, November 1, 1945.

benefited from the contributed knowledge from the University of Wisconsin and Camp McCoy to help educate and train men for military duty.<sup>347, 348</sup>

All Americans who lived during World War II had their own personal experience from that time, and while different, there were many commonalities that people shared during this time of national crisis. Oconomowoc's population endured the same heartbreak, deprivation, stress, joy, fear, exhaustion, and worry as did countless communities across the U.S. and was not unique from other small towns. The closeness of the citizenry and the daily interaction they shared meant that the war was never far from their minds. One would go to shop at the market and run into several people known to each other and converse; mail a package at the post office and have a conversation with the clerk and fellow customers; attend church, and listen to a sermon that spoke of prayers for the soldiers, and more conversation on the way to the door; go to work and talk with coworkers about contributions to the war; and even listening to the radio in the evening there would be news of the war, or a special performance benefit airing for the war effort. The citizens of Oconomowoc, like other small towns, would have been literally surrounded by elements of the war that encroached on their daily lives in every way imaginable.

Oconomowoc residents stepped up to the meet challenge of rationing during the war, as they did again during the COVID -19 pandemic of 2020. Significant occurrences from World War II were again echoed during the recent pandemic. At both times in history, citizens of Oconomowoc encountered stores with empty shelves, frustrating shopping trips, and going

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347. "Senate Vote Backs Training Bill for U.W.," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, February 11, 1941.

348. Richard L. Pifer, *Total War on the Home Front: La Crosse, Wisconsin and the World Wars* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976).



without a number of things they were used to having. It was interesting to compare the warnings against hoarding during WWII and the hoarding that occurred again during the pandemic. Propagandists of World War II encouraged women to grow Victory gardens to make up the deficit of what was not available in stores, and to can their produce for preservation. The popularity of home gardens surged again during the pandemic, with more stores advertising seeds and gardening tools. With so many people suddenly at home in 2020, the opportunity to garden was taken advantage of, likewise, to make up for what could not be purchased. While once more, canning became something that families did to store the food they had grown, as stores sold out of canning equipment and YouTube ‘how to’ videos saw a spike in the number of instructional tutorials about canning that were created and viewed. Communities like Oconomowoc are rather well suited for these activities, as a majority of its residents had ample space to take up gardening, even if just a small patio container garden.

The challenges of COVID saw a return to practices like conservation, frugality, and thrift once again become the smart things to do, whilst people resorted to habits that had not been used since the Second World War. The 2020 reemergence of repurposing items and making things last marketed as the ‘nouveau’ trend to follow, would have been all too familiar to those who lived through World War II. Following local trends seems to be something small towns excel at. As stated earlier, the attempt to keep up with one’s neighbor is a very real thing that is still found in small communities, and certainly continues in Oconomowoc. This sense of competition stems from peer pressure and when individuals are known to so many in the area, they tend to follow along with whatever movement is promoted widely, rather than rock the boat of popular opinion.

Area businesses jumped on the bandwagon to support World War II and did again over the course of the pandemic. As was seen during the war, when advertisements began to slowly

incorporate war-themes in their promotions and continued to escalate as the war dragged on, this pattern was followed again in 2020. Over time, citizens became accustomed to seeing advertisements that made reference to the pandemic, and if an ad did not, it stuck out as somehow ‘wrong.’ Small-town gossip played a big role in both conflicts too. As aforementioned, people working together in Victory gardens or running into each other at the local store spread hearsay information of the war and on occasion, perpetuated untruths (whether knowingly or unintentionally) until they were accepted as gospel. Likewise, rumors abounded in Oconomowoc about COVID-19. If citizens only relied on propagandic advertisements and rumor during the pandemic, they would have indeed come to different conclusions than those with first-hand knowledge. This cycle of misinformation was frustrating for those who accepted the science behind the medical information also being presented to the public, or those who lived through themselves or a loved one experiencing the dreadful disease. This was likely the case during World War II as doubtless some believed rumors while those who had first-hand experience knew better. Myths and gossip would not swirl around a large city as quickly and broadly as was possible in a small community like Oconomowoc.

Praise for those serving in the war was a regular feature of *The Oconomowoc Enterprise*, and while deservedly so for the great risks they took, it was also a means of propaganda. Likewise, this type of propaganda was repeated when ‘essential workers’ became the buzz word and signs abounded in recognition of the dangers healthcare workers and others faced during the pandemic. It is hard to describe, but the town took on a new and otherworldly feel at times in 2020, and one can hazard to guess Oconomowoc also seemed that way at times to residents during 1941-1945. The selfless work carried out by soldiers, healthcare workers, and more should not be diminished even though it became synonymous with propaganda at times,

nevertheless, individuals did put themselves in harm's way in the service of others. Neither of these examples were exclusive to Oconomowoc and were repeated in small communities across the U.S. and one could daresay across the world.

Oconomowoc published articles during the war that gave updates on the polio pandemic that was sweeping the nation as well. Parents kept their children inside for the summer in hopes to avoid contracting the paralyzing disease, and public areas like beaches were kept closed. Newspapers showed images of iron lungs lined up in hospitals with only children's heads poking out. A nationwide panic took hold and many doctors did not know a lot about how to combat and prevent the disease. This was eerily like the COVID-19 pandemic that brought fear and questions to a new generation of Oconomowocians. News that reported when polio had caused the schools in Oconomowoc to close during the Second World War gave a chilling preview of what was to come during the pandemic school closures of 2020-2021. Also similar between the two pandemics were makeshift temporary treatment facilities, quarantines, face masks, avoiding large crowds, an emphasis on cleanliness, and managing fears amidst a politically-charged nation.

Oconomowoc's size and conservative majority made the community respond well to the demands of World War II and propaganda efforts were proven to be effective. Yet these same factors contributed to the town not complying well with COVID-related restrictions and the propaganda of the time. Unlike a big city, where herd-mentality, rumors, and peer pressure can be slower to take root, a city the size of Oconomowoc was the perfect environment for hosting all of the elements that came together to make successful World War II war bond drives, and yet stark refusal to support mandatory mask wearing and school closures in 2020. The propaganda itself when compared side-by-side was different. During World War II the propagandic

messaging stressed the need for people to pull together and be united against a common enemy. But during the COVID-19 pandemic the messaging was aimed at the actions of the individual. Propaganda presented steps that each person could do to help prevent the spread of the pandemic, but rarely, if ever mentioned how the country could unite. Rather than facing the disease as the shared enemy, it almost resorted to each individual citizen as a potential enemy and a threat to your families and yourself. Overall, COVID was an isolating experience, which was shared simultaneously with others across the globe. However, people did come together during both struggles to accomplish great things and help each other during times of unprecedented need and uncertainty.

What remains to be seen is a means to reconcile the incredible lengths that the U.S. went to in celebration and remembrance of the lost lives in World War II, when more than twice that number of U.S. lives were lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. When World War II ended after four years, Americans celebrated as if it was a public holiday. Yet in less than two years, over one million Americans have died from COVID and our nation has not truly mourned. World War II presented obvious enemies in the Nazi and Japanese military to direct our hatred and animosity towards, but the pandemic offered scientific explanations and drove fear against your fellow men and women into the public. Instead of pulling together to fight and win, we ran away from each other and are losing.<sup>349</sup>

After careful study one can say that nothing radical happened in Oconomowoc during the war; the citizens encountered propaganda in much the same way people did in other towns across

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349. (The divide between those who follow scientific evidence and those who support the rights of self-determination remains vast. [This is an especially personal topic to the author, who lost her father-in-law suddenly to COVID in 2021.]

the nation. Yet their response was vastly different from that of people who lived in large cities during the war. Without the same level of closeness and interconnection, residents of cities like Madison and Milwaukee would not have had the same types of experiences and interactions Oconomowocians did. Home front life in a big city would have afforded some level of anonymity that those who lived in Oconomowoc would never know. This is not to say one is better or worse, just different. More like a family with their ups and downs, the small, interconnected community of Oconomowoc came through, hopefully wiser for what the future may bring.

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