

BLACKOUTS, BOND DRIVES, AND D-DAY

A VERMONT HOME-FRONT GLOSSARY

If you were a boy or girl in Vermont during World War II, what would it be like? In some ways, your life would be the same as today — you'd go to school, you'd have to help out around the house — but in many ways, your life would be very different.

Your father, uncles, and older brothers would probably be in the armed services. If they were home, they might be working in defense factories. Your mother and older sisters might be working there, too.

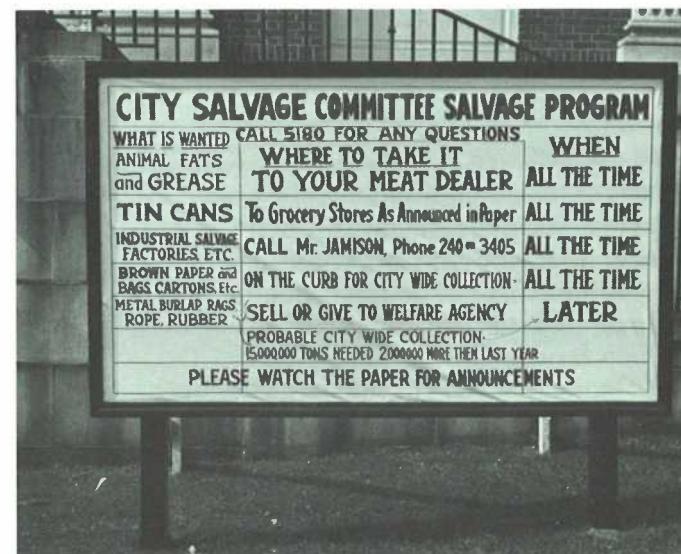
This would mean that you'd be on your own a lot. To find out about the war, you'd listen to the radio or read the newspapers. There was no TV. At the movies, each show would start with a newsreel of how the war was going all around the world. Many of your meals would be meatless and you would not have much sugar. You might help your mother save cooking fat or rummage through your attic or garage for scrap metal and rubber. If your family had a car, they'd

drive it less. Tires and gasoline were rationed, so you'd walk or carpool a lot. Even bike tires were rationed.

At school, there would be few men teachers. You might be let out early some days to help farmers harvest crops. Your school would have contests with other schools to see which could sell the most bonds or find the most old cars for scrap. If you were in Boy or Girl Scouts, 4-H, or any other club, you'd be helping with blackout drills, bandage rolling, and war bond drives. Everywhere you went you'd see posters encouraging you to cooperate with rationing or warning you not to speak out loud about where your father or uncle was fighting, because German or Japanese spies might hear. You might get to see your favorite sports hero or movie star touring the state to sell war bonds. And always, you'd hear people talking about the war. Some words and phrases would be new to you.



At Burlington's victory store, you could buy furniture, household goods, and war bonds. Photo by L. L. McAllister, Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Vermont Library.



Compare this World War II salvage effort in Burlington with recycling in your community today. Which is more successful and why? Courtesy of the James V. Detore Photo Collection, Special Collections, University of Vermont Library.

Air Raid Drill - People were afraid that Germany or Japan would bomb the United States. Towns practiced putting lights out, fighting fires, and taking care of the injured, so they would be ready for an enemy air raid.

D-Day - The code name for the Allied landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944. This battle, the largest amphibious landing in history, began the defeat of Germany and Italy.

Eight-Hour Orphan - With a father in the service and a mother working in a defense plant, many kids were left alone to fend for themselves. Some people said the “orphans” were not getting enough adult supervision.

The Four Freedoms - In the early days of the war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a speech in which he defined what Americans were fighting for – freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. He contrasted the American way of life with that of the German, Japanese, and Italian dictatorships. Illustrator Norman Rockwell of Arlington portrayed the four freedoms in paintings based on life in Vermont.



GI - Government Issue was stamped on military equipment and became a nickname for the American soldier, as in G.I. Joe.

High School Victory Corps - With many men in the service, farmers needed help to get their crops in. High school students were organized to help with chores and the harvest.

Nisei - American citizens of Japanese descent. More than 70,000 Nisei and other Japanese-Americans were held in relocation camps in America during the war. They were not spies. Their crime was that their parents had come from Japan.

Someone suggested that Japanese-Americans might be used to help on Vermont farms, but Governor Wills and the Vermont Farm Labor Committee voted against this.

Refugee - Many Europeans fled their countries for the safety of America before and during the war. The Von Trapps are a well-known family of singers from Austria, who fled their homeland to settle in Stowe.

Victory Garden - Vermonters planted victory gardens, growing their own vegetables so that canned food could go to the troops. People were awarded certificates for growing lots of food and canning it for later use.

Victory Shop - Victory shops were stores run to make money to give to the war effort. People donated items to sell. This was also a place to buy war bonds.

The word “victory” was used to label all sorts of products and actions that were helping to win the war. It summed up what everyone was working for.

War Bride - Many couples rushed to get married so they could spend time together before the man was sent overseas. Women who married servicemen from out-of-town were called war brides. A National Guard contingent from Brooklyn, New York, was stationed at Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester before shipping out. Many Vermont women went out with and married these New York soldiers.