

New Hampshire Circle Of Home And Family

By Judy Perreault
NHCHF

The focus for the June meeting of our local chapter of NHCHF was on the home front in World War II, which many believed was the war to end all wars.

Unresolved issues from World War I, a depression, and expansionist policies in Germany, Italy, and Japan were factors leading up to World War II. The US was drawn into the war with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. This prompted many young men to enlist and not wait to be drafted.

The women's military was also organized at the start of the war. All four branches trained women for home front missions.

Patriotism ran high, and Americans came together as never before to support the war effort. With so many men serving in the military, women entered the workforce in factories, shipyards, and on farms. Rosie the Riveter was a famous poster urging women to join the workforce.

Citizens too old or too young for active service served in other capacities. Civil defense as wardens, plane spotters, and other activities were each a way to contribute. At school, children were urged to collect scrap metal and paper as well as to buy war bonds. War bonds were one of the ways that the war was financed. I remember getting a little booklet that you filled with dimes until you reached \$25, and then you got a war bond.

Many food items and goods were rationed. Books of ration stamps were issued, allowing you to buy only a certain amount of rationed commodities. You weren't supposed to, but everyone swapped stamps. If you didn't have a car, you didn't need gas stamps, so you exchanged them for something you did need.

All waste fat was saved, as was scrap metal, paper, and tin cans. My job was to remove the top and bottom of the can, slip these into the can, and flatten it.

To save on fabric, pants became cuffless, and skirts were shortened. Black-out curtains were required, so no light

was visible at night. Streetlights were a thing of the past, as they could provide a possible bombing target. People got along with flashlights.

War brought great strides in medicine, with many new surgery techniques and medicines being discovered.

For entertainment, people found things to do at or near home, as gas and tires were rationed and hard to come by. My father sold the tires on our car and put it up on blocks in the garage for the duration of the war.

Movies were used as propaganda as well as entertainment. *Bataan, Guadalcanal Diary, Buck Privates, and Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* were some classics. Almost every city had clubs or canteens to provide a place for servicemen to eat and socialize.

After the war was over, it was not an easy adjustment to a peacetime economy. Returning soldiers could not find jobs, as factories were geared to producing goods for the war. Many went to college on the GI Bill.

Women had changed during the war. They were used to working, managing money, and making the decisions. They had a taste of independence and weren't anxious to return to their previous positions.

World War II brought us out of the Depression, but it left us with a huge national debt. One good thing to come out of it was the establishment of the United Nations. It was hoped that this organization could settle disputes before they erupted into global war.

Our NHCHF group, the Halcyon Seekers, really enjoyed this program. We remembered things like bomb shelters, airmail letters, stars in the windows of families that had men in the service – blue for active, gold for deceased – and all of the items we had to do without or find a substitute.

Perhaps you would like to share some of your war memories in the *Beacon*.

Halcyon Seekers do not meet in the summer. There is a state trip to the Remick Museum in Tamworth. For more information about our organization, call 735-5493.

INDIAN MUSEUM FREE TO MILITARY FAMILIES

MKIM press release

The Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum (MKIM) in Warner is one of more than 1,300 museums across America partnering with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Blue Star Families to offer free admission to military personnel and their families this summer from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The complete list of participating museums is available at Arts.gov/BlueStarMuseums.

MKIM Director Shawn Olson said, "American Indians have the highest per capita rate in the nation for military service. In their honor, the museum is proud to host all active duty military personnel and their families again this year. I would have loved a program like this to help keep my children busy and our minds off our soldier when he was on active duty in Iraq a few years ago."

Active military personnel and veterans will also be honored each day at the Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum's 12th Annual Intertribal Powwow on Saturday, July 9, and Sunday, July 10. (See ad on page 22.)

"Blue Star Museums may be the program at the NEA of which I am proudest," said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. "Blue Star Museums recognizes and thanks our military families for all they are doing for our country, and simultaneously begins young people on a path to becoming life-long museum goers."

"Last year, the success of the inaugural year of the Blue Star Museums program showed that partnerships between the nation's museum and military communities are a natural," said Blue Star Families Chairman Kathy Roth-Douquet. "We are thrilled that 300,000 military family members visited our partner museums in the summer of 2010. We hope to exceed that number this year as the military community takes advantage of the rich cultural heritage they defend and protect every day."

This year, more than 1,324 (and counting) museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative, including more than 500 new museums this year.

The program runs from Memo-

rial Day through Labor Day. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their immediate family members (military ID holder and five immediate family members). Active duty military include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, active-duty National Guard, and active-duty Reserve members. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program.

Other NEA programs for the military have included Operation Homecoming; Writing the Wartime Experience; Great American Voices Military Base Tour; and Shakespeare in American Communities Military Base Tour.

Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum

Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum, Education and Cultural Center, is dedicated to connecting people of today with 20,000 years of ongoing Native American cultural expression. The Museum embraces cultural diversity and encourages responsible environmental action based on respect for nature. Through exhibitions and programs, the Museum seeks to challenge and inspire all of us to improve the quality of our lives and our world.

Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect, and empower military families. In addition to morale and empowerment programs, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable. Membership includes military spouses, children, and parents, as well as service members, veterans, and civilians.

To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit BlueStarFam.org.

National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. To join the discussion on how art works, visit Arts.gov.



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