

# Hastings, NE WWII Heritage City

A series of lessons from the [World War II Heritage Cities Lesson Collection](#)

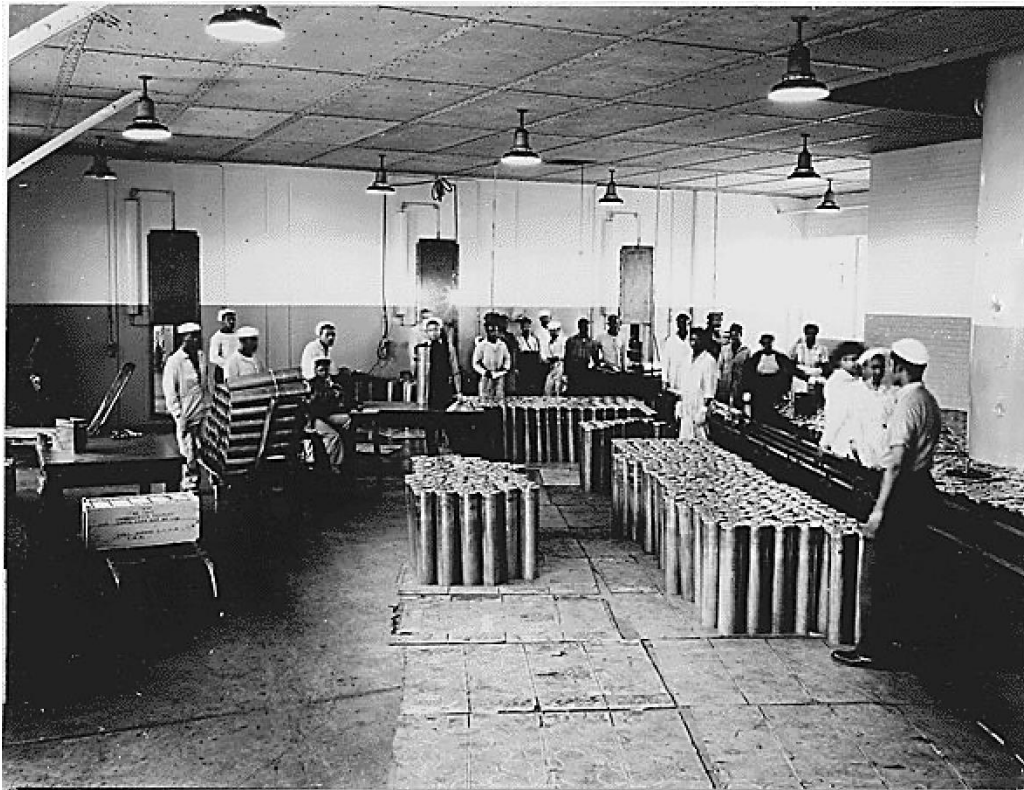


Figure 1: African American enlisted Navy service members on the ammunition load line at the US Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings, Nebraska (Credit: National Archives)

## Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [Hastings, Nebraska](#), designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). Highlights of the first two listed lessons include defense manufacturing and ammunitions storage in Hastings at the Naval Ammunition Depot, with the first sharing increased opportunities for women in work during wartime on the home front. The second lesson shares the service of African Americans at the depot, along with challenges faced in the community. The third lesson shares ways civilians volunteered and contributed to war efforts on the home front, where the fourth allows for comparison among home front cities. All lessons highlight specific contributions but connect to larger themes and understandings of the U.S. home front during wartime. A mix of primary and secondary sources are used, along with photos and media.

## Lessons (with World War II home front topics):

The first three lessons listed can be taught individually or collectively, in any order. The final lesson is to support students in combining learning across the three lessons, and/or comparison to other World War II home front cities in a culminating activity.

### 1. [Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings, Nebraska, World War II Heritage City \(p. 6\)](#)

- War industries
- Defense manufacturing
- Women workers
- African American workers
- Navy
- Service members

### 2. [African American Service and Challenges in Hastings, Nebraska, World War II Heritage City \(p. 17\)](#)

- War industries
- Defense manufacturing
- African American workers
- Navy
- Service members
- Segregation
- Housing

### 3. [Home Front Volunteerism and Contributions in Hastings, Nebraska World War II Heritage City \(p. 29\)](#)

- Civilian volunteerism

- War bonds
  - Material drives
  - Youth involvement
  - Junior Red Cross
4. [Hastings, Nebraska: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 40\)](#)

## Positioning these Lessons in the Curriculum:

The standards listed beneath the lesson links are a collection of standards covered in the lesson collection. The lessons have been aligned to national standards and topics, as well as to the Nebraska Social Studies Standards for United States History. Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

**Time period:** World War II

**Topics:** World War II, women’s history, African American history, workforce migration, science and technology

## United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

*This lesson relates to the following [National Standards for History](#) from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:*

### Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Standard 3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

## Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

*This lesson relates to the following [Curriculum Standards themes for Social Studies](#) from the National Council for the Social Studies:*

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society

- Theme 9: Global Connections

## Relevant Common Core Standards

*These lessons relate to the following [Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies](#) for middle and high school students:*

### Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.2

### Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.4

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.9

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.10

## Nebraska State Standards

### Nebraska's Standards for English Language Arts

The lessons align to and/or contribute to understandings of the following grade 6-12 standards and unlisted sub standards, defined by the Nebraska State Board of Education (as adopted in 2021).

#### Reading Comprehension

Central Ideas and Details [RI.1, RI.2]

Author's Craft [RI.3, RI.4]

Knowledge and Ideas [RI.5, RI.6, RI.7]

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity [RI.8]

#### Vocabulary

Acquisition and Use [V.1]

Context and Connotation [V.2]

## Writing

Production of Writing [W.1, W.2]

Modes of Writing [W.4, W.5, W.6]

## Nebraska Social Studies Standards

The lessons align to and/or contribute to understandings of the following standards and unlisted sub standards, defined by the Nebraska Social Studies Standards (as adopted in 2019).

### United States History (Progressive Era – Present)

#### *Change, Continuity and Context*

HS.4.1 (US) Analyze and evaluate patterns of continuity and change over time in American history.

#### *Multiple Perspectives*

SS HS.4.2 (US) Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of history.

SS HS.4.3 (US) Examine historical events from the perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented groups.

#### *Historical Analysis and Interpretation*

SS HS.4.4 (US) Evaluate sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.

#### *Historical Inquiry and Research*

SS HS.4.5 (US) Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.

*The lesson series was written by Sarah Nestor Lane, an educator and consultant funded by a National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.*

# Lesson 1: Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings, Nebraska, World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Hastings, Nebraska](#), a designated [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about wartime production and the diverse workforce at the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) in Hastings. Students will learn about the purpose and impact of the NAD, along with the diverse employment of service members and civilians. Women, African Americans, and Native Americans were hired locally or migrated to the area to meet employment and service demands. Use [Lesson 2](#) for further learning on African American employment at Hastings NAD and challenges faced in the community.

## Objectives:

1. Explain the purpose of the Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings, Nebraska on the home front and its contributions to the Allied forces.
2. Describe the diversity, and impact of, the civilian and service member workforce on the home front, particularly at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-5 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Nebraska with Hastings marked, and Rosebud, South Dakota for the second reading

## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot and the people who worked there contribute to the war effort during World War II?

### Photos



Figure 2: “Marching to the Movie” - African American sailors at Hastings NAD marching to attend a movie for entertainment; thought to be in 1944. (Credit: National Archives)



### By the numbers: Labor

- Construction on NAD Hastings began in July 1942 and the commissioning was in February 1943. Approximately 100 Native American families had worked on the construction of the NAD, and 5,000 workers were employed.
- Hastings was one of 72 areas designated as a “Group 1” area by the War Manpower Commission in October 1943. Areas that had critical war production operations were labeled as Group 1 when there was not enough labor in the area to meet the demand. Production would be “endangered,” and the area labeled Group 1 until the

labor need was not met. There was also a shortage of labor in industries such as farming.

- Hastings was the first city in Nebraska to invoke a 48-hour work week in November 1943. This was 8 hours above the typical 40-hour work week, to address the labor needs.
  - In May – July 1944, 3,000 workers came to Hastings to fill labor needs. Hastings still had a labor shortage but moved to the less critical “Group 2” in September 1944. Recruitment stalled when there was not enough housing.
- “Labor Crisis Eases: Hastings Taken out of Group 1 Shortage Division,” *The Hastings Daily Tribune*, September 1, 1944
- By the summer of 1945, 10,000 military and civilian workers were employed at the NAD. At this time, the employment was at its peak. The breakdown was approximately 1,800 enlisted men, 125 officers, and 6,692 civilians. About 15% of workers were African American, and 20% were women.
  - In three years, the population of Hastings had nearly doubled, from 15,500 to some 25,000.



### Quotation to consider:

“It can now be told how the Depot here is ‘passing the ammunition,’” Captain Ashbrook said. It (an 80 carload train of ammunition) was the largest known trainload of ammunition ever to leave for a specific theatre of war (Pacific Front) and left here along the Union Pacific Railroad, requiring several diesel engines to pull it. Due to security reasons, the announcement of such a large supply of ammunition being dispatched had to be withheld.

I wish to congratulate all workers who participated in making the ammunition and those who made the delivery possible,’ Captain Ashbrook stated.”

- Commanding Officer Captain Ashbrook quoted in *The Powder Keg*, U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, July 13, 1945

## Building Background

Prior to reading the primary sources, support students in building context for the location and purpose of the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) in Hastings, Nebraska with a brief paragraph and video hook. You may also choose to use “[Hastings, Nebraska](#),” as a longer background text.

Background: The U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) in Hastings, Nebraska published its own newspaper, “The Powder Keg.” The first reading is from the NAD’s newspaper, which celebrated the progress and development of the NAD within one year of opening. NADs were used in World War II to store and supply ammunition, explosives, and weapons for naval ships and submarines. Their purpose was to ensure that the navy had a constant, reliable source of firepower. Both civilians and service members were employed at the NAD in Hastings.

- a. Video Hook: Watch “[History Moments: Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot](#)” by Nebraska Public Media (1:00).
- b. Video Reflection: Why did the US government select this location? What do you notice in the images, past and present?
- c. Transcript: “June 10, 1942, the navy authorizes forty-five million dollars to build a naval ammunition depot. Land east of Hastings is chosen as the location because of its abundance of electrical power, its location of equal distance between the two coasts, the availability of railroads, and German and Japanese aircraft can’t reach it because they don’t have the range. Construction lasts eighteen months. When completed two thousand buildings are spread over 48,000 acres. At its peak during World War II, forty percent of the U.S. Navy’s weapons and ammunition came from this depot. It employed almost eleven thousand people... a large percent were women, and several hundred workers and sailors were African American. Today, the area is home to many things including: Central Community College-Hastings campus, US Department of AG Meat Animal Research Center, industrial park, and the Nebraska National Guard.”



## Read to Connect

### Reading 1: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: The article has language describing wrongful segregation. African Americans migrated to the region for work during the war and faced discrimination. The following readings use discriminatory historical language and labels. Address stereotypical language and discriminatory terms that are not acceptable for use today with students. [Lesson 2](#) addresses this more thoroughly, although it should also be addressed here.*

*A second article highlighting the NAD’s growth and changes by the second year of opening can be found in [Lesson 4](#).*

## Depot Makes Great Progress During Year

*The Powder Keg*, Feb 22, 1944

One year ago today at 1000, the Flag was raised over Navy property for the first time in the State of Nebraska, and the Naval Ammunition Depot was commissioned. Since that time, the number of officers, enlisted men, and civilian workers on the Depot has increased many times. New buildings have been erected, for production lines, for offices, and for barracks.

### Production Started

Production of ammunition has started; the first shell was loaded from the Depot on 4 July. Several types and sizes of shells are now being loaded at the Depot. Miles of railroad tracks have been laid through the area, and several hundred miles of roads have been laid or improved since the commissioning of the Depot.

### Workers Cared For

Facilities for workers on the Depot have been improved; lunch and locker rooms throughout the area have been provided; ramps have been built from the buildings to the bus stops to protect workers in severe weather.

Busses bring the workers from Hastings to the main gate, and regularly-scheduled busses take the workers from the main gate to their working places on the area. Bus transportation was begun in mid-summer.

### Barracks Built

Barracks for both white and colored sailors have been erected on the area, as well as a temporary dispensary, post office and mess hall since the Depot's commission. Construction of three new barracks to house additional sailors is now underway.

Other additions to the Depot since its commission a year ago are Windswept Park, housing project for leading civilian men on the Depot, and Prairie Village, Navy-sponsored apartments for Negro families.

Homes for Windswept Park were moved from farm on the area; materials used in their reconditioning were reclaimed from farm buildings which had to be wrecked according to regulations.

Other farm buildings were left standing on the area and are now being used for shops, plumbing, sheet metal and lumber shops and lumber sheds were converted from barns, houses and contractors' sheds.

Two schoolhouses were used for shops, and a third was converted into barracks and kennels for the Coast Guardsmen and their K-9 patrol dogs. All branches of the Navy are represented on the Depot; sailors, both white and colored, have duties here; Marines and Coast Guardsmen serve as guards and sentries.

### Questions for Reading 1

1. What was the purpose and importance of Naval Ammunition Depots, like that in Hastings, during the war?
2. Identify Hastings, Nebraska on a map. Why was transportation by railway needed for the Navy to move materials from the NAD?
3. How was the land developed and built on for the NAD?
4. Using “By the numbers,” describe the labor needs in Hastings. Why were they labeled as “Group 1?” What contributed to the need for labor in the area? How did the population change as a result?

### Photos



Figure 3: Group of Sioux families at a bonfire at the naval depot. Families lived in tents and men helped in construction. In plaid mackinaw on the left side is Chief Bordeaux. (The Hastings Daily Tribune, November 26, 1942)



Figure 4: Tent at naval depot area. Left is Chief Bordeaux, center is Ben Spotted Elk, at the rear with the ax is Silas White Buffalo and holding the corner stake is Elias Good Voice. (The Hastings Daily Tribune, November 26, 1942)

## Reading 2: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: Address stereotypical and discriminatory language (i.e., Japs, Warpath) used that are not acceptable for use today, and why. Also, note the date of the article and its topic. Reading 1 provides students context of the purpose of the NAD in Hastings; this article shows a part of the diverse workforce that helped to build the NAD to the milestones it would accomplish for the rest of the war.*

### Sioux Indians on the Warpath Against Japs, Nazis

*The Hastings Daily Tribune, November 26, 1942*

The Sioux Indians from Rosebud, S.D., are on the warpath again. This time they are out to lick the Japs and the Germans, Chief Bordeaux, who heads a band of Sioux that arrived at the Hastings Naval Ammunition depot, said today. Chief Bordeaux believes that he and his braves can do their patriotic duty best by assisting with construction of the naval ammunition depot here.

The Sioux have joined a number of Chippewa Indians who have been working at the depot for some time.

Tuesday night a truck arrived on the grounds, bringing several families of Sioux from South Dakota, 32 in all, along with their tent homes and essential equipment. Men and women

immediately went to work to pitch their tents, preparing to stay for the duration of the construction job.

A large bonfire and lanterns lighted the Indian village area while tents went up and luggage was moved to the homes of the respective families.

With the arrival of the Sioux band this week, naval plant construction officials said that employment of Indians would total 80. Chippewa Indians already on the scene number 50, and 30 men are expected to go to work out of the Sioux families that had just arrived.

## Questions for Reading 2 and Photos

1. Examine the photos. How do they connect to your learning in the text?
2. Using a map, find the distance between Rosebud, South Dakota, and Hastings, Nebraska. Why did the Sioux families travel this distance?
3. What role did the Sioux and Chippewa workers have in the development of the NAD at Hastings?

## Photo



Figure 5 Transcript: Five Allison Engaged in war At Depot, Front

It's a vital interest that Thelma Allison of building 107 has in this war.

Only 36 years old, she has three sons in the service, one of them missing in action and another in the South Pacific.

Her oldest son, Lester, 22, is an AMM 1c at the Naval Air Station at Jacksonville, Fla.

Robert, 21, her second son, is a sergeant in the air force, who is reported missing in action on the Asiatic front.

Carl, 19, is an ACC 2c, serving in the South Pacific.

Both Mrs. Allison and her husband, A. J. Allison, are Depot workers. Thelma is a bag lacer, and A. J. is in charge of the carpenter shop at the North Transfer Depot.

The Allison's live at 1003 north Hastings avenue in Hastings.

Figure 5: Mrs. A. J. Allison and her husband worked at the Depot. She as a bag lacer, and he at the carpenter shop. Three of their sons were in the service. February 11, 1944 in *The Powder Keg*.

## Reading 3: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: Address the stereotypical descriptions of women in the text to explain how these are not acceptable today.*

*Background: This source shares an additional unique employment opportunity for women during wartime. On March 16, 1945, The Powder Keg newspaper announced the Woman Counselor Program at the Depot. Seventeen women were selected for Counselor Training conferences from work areas with substantial numbers of female workers. After training, the women became counselors fulltime in the areas of work in which they came from.*

### “Women Counselors Must Be Able to Work Hard, Listen, and Keep Secrets”

*The Hastings Daily, February 19, 1944*

Mary Jackson is the keeper of 100,000 secrets.

As administrative assistant to the head of industrial relations for Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, she trains and heads a staff of more than 100 women counselors. Their job is to show 40,000 women factory workers in nine plants how to mix jobs, matrimony, children, housework and family problems without external or internal combustion.

Doing that job they have forever ruined the legend that women cannot keep a secret. For they hear—and keep—the secrets of 40,000 women and don’t spill one.

#### New Field

‘The work these women are doing opens a whole new field of professional service for women after the war,’ says Mrs. Jackson. ‘Industry is beginning to realize some things about women workers, which point to large employment of women in peace time. Counselling has been used successfully by department stores for some time, but industry did not turn to it until the war forced widespread employment of women. Then something had to be done to help women solve the many personal problems they meet—problems which men don’t meet at all.

‘Often those problems look like little things. But they can play havoc with a woman’s efficiency, and so with the efficiency of her department. A housewife, who is used to washing her breakfast dishes any time before noon, finds it hard to adjust herself to rigid routine. She needs to be taught self-discipline and self-control.

‘The foreman complains that a certain janitress is always sitting down on the job. Actually she is suffering from fatigue because she is tall and her broom is too short – something which the foreman did not have time to notice. . .

### Know the Answers

‘There are a lot of personal home problems to be considered too. Mrs. Smith is worried because she cannot get time to go to the hairdresser and her husband complains about the appearance of her hair. Mrs. Brown is so disturbed about the behavior of her ten-year-old son that it affects her work. A soldier’s bride who expects a baby is unable to find a comfortable apartment. And so it goes. The counselors must know the answers which will help these women solve their problems and function efficiently.’

. . . The counselors also must be carefully chosen. Beauty and glamor queens are off the list because women will not talk to them readily and fully. Mrs. Jackson says the ideal counselor is a woman between 28 and 45, who is used to the discipline of hard work. She must be poised, neat, sympathetic and possessed of enough dignity to command respect. And finally—and forever—she must be able to keep a secret.

### Questions for Reading 3

1. What types of roles were women filling during war on the home front, and why?
2. Why may places such as NAD Hastings develop a women counselor program?
3. How does this text, and the work it describes, both challenge and reinforce, gender norms at the time? Identify examples.

## Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot and the people who worked there contribute to the war effort during World War II?

Additionally, in what ways did the workforce in Hastings evolve due to the labor needs during World War II?

Recommended: Continue with [Lesson 2](#) for a focus on African Americans who worked and served at Hastings NAD and the challenges they faced in the local community.

## Extension

### Prisoner of War Labor

Another way in which local labor needs were met was by using labor from Prisoner of War (POW) camps. The following resources can be used to explore the home front history of POW camps in Nebraska and their role in providing local labor. Hastings held a smaller satellite site of the Atlanta, Nebraska POW camp. POWs supported in nonmilitary labor roles. Students may do further research on the use of POW labor on the home front.

- a. [“Nebraska Historical Marker: Atlanta Prisoner of War Camp”](#) by History Nebraska
- b. Article: [POWs Far From the Battleground](#) by NebraskaStudies.org
- c. Example Marker: [German POW Camp](#), Nebraska State Historical Society

## Additional Reading Resources

- [Hastings Grows . . . and Feels Stress](#) by NebraskaStudies.org
- [The Naval Ammunition Depot](#) by Adams County, Nebraska Historical Society
- [Spencer Park](#) (Housing plans for the increasing population) by Adams County, Nebraska Historical Society

# Lesson 2: African American Service and Challenges in Hastings, Nebraska, World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Hastings, Nebraska](#), a designated [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the contributions of, and challenges faced by, African Americans in Hastings, Nebraska. The first part of the lesson develops students' background knowledge on how African Americans served at US Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) Hastings and challenges they faced. The second part of the lesson uses housing to examine one aspect of the discriminatory challenges faced by the local African American population. Finally, the third reading examines shifting local and national perceptions.

## Objectives:

1. Describe the impact of African American workers and service members on the home front, particularly at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot.
2. Describe housing as an example of discriminatory challenges faced by the local African American community.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 6-9 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended: Map of Nebraska with Hastings marked*



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did African Americans at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot contribute to the war effort and what challenges did they encounter in the local community?

## Photos



Figure 6: "Boarding Navy Bus to Go to Work," 1944?, U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Hastings, Nebraska. (Credit: National Archives).

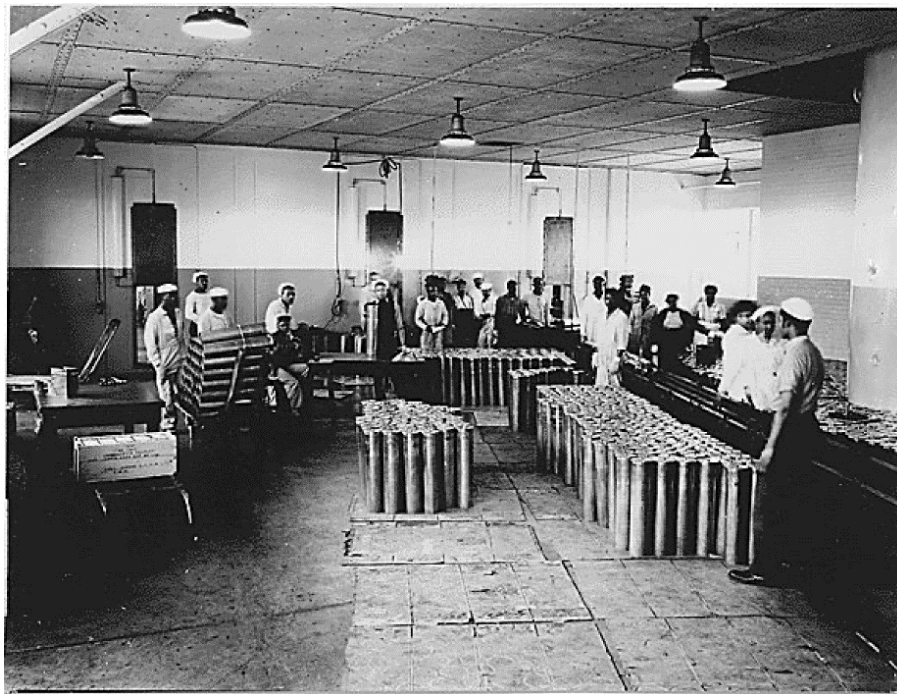


Figure 7: African American enlisted Navy service members on the ammunition load line at the US Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings, Nebraska (Credit: National Archives)



### By the numbers:

- Hastings NAD was the largest of the Navy's inland munitions plants at almost 49,000 acres. It had more than 2,200 buildings.
- The site was built at a cost of about \$71 million, or over \$1.3 billion in today's equivalent.
- The site produced nearly 40% of the Navy's ordnance, or ammunition and equipment, like 16-inch shells.
- 400 African American sailors were stationed at NAD at the end of 1942. Eventually, many more were assigned from the Chicago and Great Lakes region. Approximately 2,000 African American people would live and work in Hastings during wartime.



### Quotations to consider: Hear from a Veteran (Media Activity)

Watch this short clip, "[Next Exit – Building Bombs on the Plains](#)," by Nebraska Public Media (5:39) to hear from an African American service member, Willie Tripp, a Yeoman in the US Navy from 1941-1944, who worked at NAD Hastings.

Or you may choose to use this quotation from the video sharing about Tripp's experience in an explosion at the depot:

Narrator: . . .The first (explosion) was on January 27, 1944 . . .

Tripp: They were gaging shells. The shells would come by the conveyer here, and one guy was on that side, and it was two guys on this side here. And we had just got back from break,

. . . And as soon as we got into this building here, we got the first shell made . . . it exploded. It split these two guys on this side in half, and over there, it went right through this guy's stomach.

Narrator: Three men on the Negro Ordnance Battalion were killed. Willie Tripp was there and was seriously wounded.

Tripp: It cut me in the shoulder here. I turned around getting ready to retreat and it got me in the backside here. I understand that the Navy don't [sic] even have any of the explosions documented.

In fact, I wrote to St. Louis to get my medical records, and they don't have me in an explosion. Yesterday it didn't bother me. But, today, in this building here, it brought back memories. . .”



## Read to Connect

### Reading 1: Background Reading

*Teacher Note: This reading is intended to be a brief background reading for students prior to the remaining readings. (Lesson 1) shares more background on the Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings.*

*Address that the text uses the historical label of “Negro” in identifying the battalion. This was a label that was used in the segregated military that is not appropriate for use today.*

*The text addresses segregated USOs. You may wish to connect this to [\(H\)our History Lesson: The USO Serving on the WWII Home Front in Wilmington, NC \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#).*

### African Americans’ Service and Challenges while Stationed at US NAD Hastings

By Sarah Nestor Lane

African American sailors served at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot during World War II. The US government wrongly segregated members of the armed services until 1948 when [Executive Order 9981](#) desegregated the military. Due to segregation, the sailors at the depot worked in the Negro Ordnance Battalion. These sailors did critical, yet dangerous work. They stored, loaded, put together, and sent out naval ammunition, like bombs and shells. The battalion’s job was to ensure the US Navy had the needed ammunition by managing the movement of supplies from storage to ships at sea.

Although the depot had good safety records, there were sometimes accidents. Explosions were the biggest danger for all service members. Although all were at risk, the work of the African American sailors was particularly dangerous. An explosion in the powder room killed three men from the Negro Ordnance Battalion on January 27, 1944.

African Americans in Hastings faced segregation and discrimination in and out of the workplace. Sailors living on base lived in segregated barracks. Housing for African Americans was built in parts of the city next to white housing, despite some protests from locals.

Recreation opportunities were also limited. One common place for service members to enjoy recreation opportunities were United Service Organizations, Inc. (USO) events and facilities. The USO was a project of several organizations that provided welfare and recreation activities. Hastings had two USOs: one was a Service Men's Center, and the other, a USO for African American service members. Entertainment at the segregated USO included comedy, dances, music, and holiday parties.

The city of Hastings also had separate recreation facilities, such as cafes and a parlor. Even with segregation, an extra layer of discrimination was present. The mayor and military officers agreed that only 150 African American sailors could be in town at a time for recreational purposes and were restricted to being on one street. Many African American sailors and civilians went by trucks on Friday to go to North Omaha for more recreation options. Several of these sailors and civilians relocated to North Omaha after the war ended.

### Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, and Quotations to Consider

1. In what ways did African American sailors serve as part of the Negro Ordnance Battalion?
2. What risks and dangers did sailors in the Negro Ordnance Battalion face?
3. What impact did the segregation in Hastings have on sailors' social lives, and how may this have led to relocation after the war?
4. To what extent did the segregation and discrimination faced by African American sailors at Hastings mirror the larger societal issues in the US during World War II?

## Photos



Figure 8: "Cafeteria Lines in Mess Hall at Naval Barracks Area," 1944 (?), U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Hastings, Nebraska. (Credit: National Archives)



Figure 9: "Cafeteria Lines in Mess Hall at Naval Barracks Area," 1944(?), U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Hastings, Nebraska. (Credit: National Archives)

## Reading 2: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Note: This article was published in The Powder Keg, the newspaper for the depot. The following readings use discriminatory historical language and labels. Address stereotypical language and discriminatory terms that are not acceptable for use today.*

*To examine housing issues in Hasting further, use the lesson extension: Advanced Readings on Housing Discrimination. Consider supporting students in reflecting on how housing challenges and segregation in the following text was reflective of discrimination faced across the home front in the United States.*

### “Prairie Village New Project”

The Powder Keg, February 22, 1944

From labor barracks which were about to be torn down because construction workers were moving out of them, clean light and neat apartments have been made for 60 colored families on the Depot. In early autumn when wives and families of Negro enlisted men on

the Depot were having difficulty finding homes in town, the project now known as Prairie Village was begun.

From each of the long barracks, eight 2 and 3-room apartments were built. Colored enlisted men and their wives, who are all Depot workers, may live there rent free. Regular Saturday morning official inspections are made bimonthly by the Commanding Officer, and the home judged the neatest and most attractive wins the right to fly the "E" pennant for the coming fortnight.

In addition to the homes, which have been furnished with much skill and ingenuity by the occupants, a recreation hall has been created at Prairie Village.

Saturday night dances and parties are held every other week in the building, which was also converted from a labor barracks, and which is furnished with juke box and other recreational materials.

Started as an experiment, the Prairie Village project has become so successful that new apartments had to be built. At present, 56 families occupy the apartments, and there is a waiting list of prospective residents.

## Questions for Reading 2

1. What was Prairie Village originally before it was turned into apartments for African American families?
2. Why was the Prairie Village project started?
3. What activities in Prairie Village may have contributed to a sense of community and pride among the residents?

## Reading 3: Newspaper Editorial

*Teacher Tip: The following readings use discriminatory historical language and labels. Address stereotypical language and discriminatory terms that are not acceptable for use today. If you would like to connect students to more information about challenges discussed in this reading, a recommended reading is [James G. Thompson: Originator of the Double V Campaign](#). This can be connected to [\(H\)our History Lesson: African American Contributions on the Home Front in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City](#). For more information on race riots as mentioned in the reading, [\(H\)our History Lesson: The Detroit Race Riot of 1943](#) can be used.*

### Guest Editorial: Racial Problems

*The Hastings Daily Tribune, January 27, 1945*

(Editor's note: Tonight's Guest Editorial is by Dick Williams, secretary of the YMCA.)

According to columnist Drew Pearson, Lieutenant Van T. Barfoot is a Mississippi boy who was never out of his home state before he joined the army. The lieutenant has been awarded the Medal of Honor, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, and he fought with distinction in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Last week, Lieutenant Barfoot was asked by a senator from his home state if he 'had much trouble with the Negroes over there.'

The senator was set back on his heels when the lieutenant drawled: 'Mr. Senator, I found out after I did some fightin' in this war that the colored boys fight just as good as the white boys. I have changed my ideas a lot about colored people since I got into this war, and so have a lot of other boys from the South. We've found the colored boys to be all right.'

Well, lieutenant, a lot of boys from the North have changed their ideas about the colored boys too. When Hastings first heard that colored enlisted men were to be attached to the naval ammunition depot, many credulous and highly imaginative stories were circulated. Clashes and race riots were predicted; according to some people, chaos could not be averted.

Now after nearly two years of depot operation, we can look back and laugh. That which some thought would be a tremendous problem has proved to be no problem at all. Those of us who know those men stationed at the depot have found them to be no different from any other men in the uniform of the United States Navy. As do other men in the armed service, they come from nearly every walk of life. Among them are lawyers, teachers, farmers, business men, musicians and social workers. Many have college degrees; some have their Masters and PhDs.

When asked to assist on programs, they have given generously of their time. Many colored enlisted men from the navy depot and the Harvard army air field are attending night classes at Hastings College and reports from the college indicate that they are making a real contribution to a better understanding of the race problem. Their willingness to go before church groups and submit themselves to pertinent questions regarding their problems has benefited everyone who participated. Much to our surprise, we have found that many of our fears and conceptions regarding Negroes were entirely unfounded.

We are fighting this war for the minority groups in Europe, but the war has been a challenge to the people of Hastings to see what they can do for the minority groups at home. Because of the navy depot, we did not have to seek the group; it was brought directly to us, broadening our horizons and making us less provincial. Because of this association, the people of Hastings have come to know and respect their fellow Americans with the darker skin who are fighting the same war, under the same flag, wearing the same uniform.

A local business man summed up the situation very neatly recently. At an out of town meeting this man was asked: ‘What are you doing about the Negro problem in Hastings?’

Without a moment’s hesitation he replied: ‘There is no Negro problem in Hastings.’

### Questions for Reading 3

1. Even though Lieutenant Barfoot changed his views about African American soldiers, why do you think segregation in the military and society continued during World War II?
2. The article says people were afraid of race riots or clashes before sailors arrived at the depot. How do these fears reveal the deeper racial tensions and segregation in American society at that time?
3. How did interacting with African American sailors challenge fears and stereotypes held by some people in Hastings? What discrimination still existed despite these interactions?
4. How did World War II, as described in the text, give towns like Hastings a chance to confront racial biases and segregation?
  - a. What factors helped change people’s attitudes?
  - b. How might these experiences have affected postwar race relations, including the civil rights movement?

## Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did African Americans at the Hastings Naval Ammunition Depot contribute to the war effort and what challenges did they encounter in the local community?

## Extension: Advanced Reading on Housing Discrimination

*Teacher Tip: The following readings use discriminatory historical language and labels. Address stereotypical language and discriminatory terms that are not acceptable for use today.*

*There are two parts to the readings in the extension. The separate reading pieces show the housing challenges for African American families and discriminatory opposition stances. You may wish to divide students into two partners or groups to split the readings and share key points to the other group.*

## Part A

### Housing Plan is Opposed

*The Hastings Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1943

With a delegation of more than 30 persons from the northwest part of the city present, the city council, in regular session Monday night, by unanimous vote, went on record as opposing the housing of Negroes in the government trailer camp.

. . . Mayor Roy Carter said 'it seems the rumor is correct' and added that the housing 'is temporary . . . a matter of a few months' until the housing designed for Negro occupancy on the Federal Public Housing Administration project in the southwest part of the city is constructed. It has been approved.

The council recently authorized the extension of the trailer camp project, but some of the council members commented that they understood the trailers were for white occupancy only.

In continued discussion spokesmen commented that the 'Negro people are proud of their color . . . They, too, want their own communities, their own schools, their own recreation . . . We're proud of them and their leaders in the contributions they are making in the war effort . . . They too are faced with problems, being uprooted from their established homes . . . It would seem best if they could be given a community of their own.'

City Attorney J. E. Ray explained that from a legal standpoint there is no action the city can take.

Following the council action, the group adjourned from the council chamber to other offices in the building to sign a petition opposing the housing action. . ."

## Part B: Citizen Response

### Vox Populi

*The Hastings Daily Tribune*, November 1, 1943

To the Editor:

What's the matter with the north siders? Are they afraid they will get a taste of what the south side is going to get?

Oh, we south siders don't care about housing Negroes either, but we haven't put up a fuss. It wouldn't do any good, for one thing.

'All men are created equal.' Not to some folks' ideas we aren't. The north siders are aristocrats, we on the south side are poor white trash! But let me tell you, we are as good as any that ever lived on the north side or any that will ever live there. There are as many loyal American boys serving their country that came from the south side as on the north side of town.

This is war time. This is no time to be sticking our noses in the air and telling our councilmen what they can do and what they cannot do.

What if the rumor is correct? Cannot the people on the north side care for the Negro housing for a short time, when the time is indefinite that they will live in the southeast part of the city? After all, aren't they fighting and working for the same thing in mind that our white boys are working and fighting for? Aren't the white boys and the Negroes fighting side by side over yonder, wherever that may be? Are they quarreling about who will be next to them in the trenches?

'We have old settlers in the north part of town,' say the north siders. Well, one of the oldest settlers in the city of Hastings will be living right across from the Negro housing project, so, you still don't have anything on the south siders.

There now, I feel better. I'm no orator, nor do I make any claims to be a great writer of any kind, but what I have written I know almost every person on the south side feels the same as I do.

Let the north siders put up with what we do for a change. They'll live through it, we always have. What about it, south siders?

A South Side Resident.

## Questions for Readings Part A and Part B

### Part A

1. What was the purpose of the northwest delegation unanimous vote?
2. The project was a Federal Public Housing Administration project. How does this relate to the City Attorney's explanation?
3. An argument against the housing development is the African American community wants to be separate. How did beliefs like this continue to support discrimination and segregation?

## Part B

1. What other socioeconomic and geographic tensions are shared in the letter to the editor?
2. Which motive do you think is stronger for the author of the letter: a) the injustice of segregation or b) the frustration of divisions between the north and south sides of the city? Share details to support your claim.

## Additional Reading Resources

["Discrimination,"](#) article by NebraskaStudies.org

["The Naval Ammunition Depot,"](#) article by Adams County Historical Society

["WWII Temporary Housing: New Kids in Town"](#) article by Adams County Historical Society

# Lesson 3: Home Front Volunteerism and Contributions in Hastings, Nebraska World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Hastings, Nebraska](#), a designated [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the home front contributions of people in Hastings, beyond war manufacturing. People purchased war bonds and participated in [material drives](#). Some Hastings residents also worked in agriculture, providing needed food at home and abroad. Children were involved in war bond and material drives and volunteered in organizations such as the Junior Red Cross.

## Objectives:

1. Describe examples of voluntary, monetary, and agricultural contributions to the home front efforts in Hastings, Nebraska.
2. Identify ways the wartime youth of Hastings contributed to the war effort and their community.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 10-14 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended: Map of Nebraska with Hastings marked*



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did Hastings residents contribute to the war effort and their community in areas such as volunteerism and agriculture?

## Photos



Figure 10: Hastings NAD civilian and service members lined up to buy war bonds at the special Navy Independence Day war bond booth. From *The Powder Keg*, June 23, 1944.



### By the numbers: Volunteerism in Hastings

In Red Cross Board monthly meeting minutes published in *The Hastings Daily Tribune* on February 2, 1944:

- 148 bedside bags were sent to hospitals
- 196 women had registered for a surgical dressings class with a quota of 34, 200 dressings by March 1<sup>st</sup>. 27,000 had already been completed.

For more “by the numbers,” analyze the meaning of numbers within reading 3.



### Quotation to consider:

“The boys are donating their services in the city canvass. Any scrap given to the club members will be sold and funds from the sale will be divided and turned over to the USO and the navy relief fund.

Collected will be such items as heavy and light brass, aluminum, copper pieces and old copper, radiators, rubber, including tires and tubes, scrap iron. Any items, although small, that will help build the urgently needed scrap piles for the war effort will be appreciated.”

- “Ben’s Boys in Salvage Drive,” *The Hastings Daily Tribune*, July 18, 1942. Ben’s Boys was a local boy’s club organization founded by the Ben Sherman store. At this time there were 250 boys as members in the club.



## Read to Connect

### Reading 1: Background Reading and Article

*Student Background Reading: The U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) in Hastings, Nebraska published its own newspaper, The Powder Keg. The following article highlighted the development within one year of the opening of the NAD. For more information on the NAD, refer to [Lesson 1](#).*

### Navy’s Independence Day War Bond Campaign Ready to Go

*D-Day for Civilians to Spur Invasion—Large Sales Expected*

*The Powder Keg, June 23, 1944*

Navy’s Independence Day war bond campaign is swinging into high gear. Spurred by the knowledge that the drive must be made a success if Independence Day is to be celebrated in true fashion, Depot personnel will begin their purchases tomorrow.

The high cost of invasion means that three times as much money must be invested in bonds during the drive as was put forth in any of the previous war bond drives.

Depot personnel, both civilian and military, have contributed heavily to past campaigns; their support in this gigantic effort will be forthcoming.

All bond sales after 24 June will be counted in the Independence Day campaign of July 1-8.

Workers who would rather stay on the job full time than take time to go out to a central location to purchase bonds will find that bond-buying has been made easy for them in this campaign.

In each department or building a group chairman is on the job to solicit each employee, accept his bond money, make out orders for bonds, and deliver the bonds to their purchasers the following day. All extra bonds are made out on the Depot to make prompt delivery possible.

‘While we cannot take part in the actual fighting, we can justify the confidence our fighting men have in us by sending them the necessary arms and equipment through purchase of war bonds,’ one of the group chairmen said in a meeting to plan for the Navy’s Independence Day war bond campaign on the Depot.

‘My son is in the invasion; the money I earn from making ammunition for him I’m putting in bonds to buy other equipment for him. When his bonds mature after’s he’s out of the armed service, he’ll have a nest-egg to start on. I’m buying bonds!’ he said.

...

### Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. What was the purpose of the war bond campaign?
2. How was the process of buying war bonds made easier for workers?
3. How did the statement about a father buying bonds for his son’s future strengthen the campaign’s message?
4. How did war bond campaigns involve everyday citizens in the war effort? How did this elevate the importance of the connection between the home front and the military?

### Photos



Figure 11: Pupils of the local Morton School with parts of their scrap drive collection. *The Hastings Daily Tribune*, October 19, 1942.



**ATTENTION KIDDIES**  
Attend Your Very Own  
**WAR BOND PREMIERE**

Fight by Your Heroes' Side by Selling or Buying a War Bond. By doing so you will be among the lucky boys and girls who will have the privilege of attending the —

**SCHOOL'S OUT**  
**WAR BOND PREMIERE**

— absolutely FREE. The swell featured attraction which you will see is —

**“Outlaws of the Desert”**  
With HOPALONG CASSIDY  
● Plus ●  
“BLUNDER BELOW”  
Popeye Cartoon

**State and Strand**  
Theaters  
Thurs., Morning July 6th,  
10 a. m.

Join the Fighting Fifth Army of  
Bond Selling Boys and Girls!

**ALL YOU HAVE  
TO DO IS...**

**BUY A BOND • OR SELL ONE TO SOMEBODY**

Figure 12: A poster for children advertising selling war bonds to be able to join a free movie premiere, “Outlaws of the Desert” and a Popeye Cartoon. States “All you have to do is... buy a bond or sell one to somebody.”

Transcript for Figure 12:

ATTENTION KIDDIES

Attend Your Very Own

WAR BOND PREMIERE

Fight by Your Heroes' Side by Selling or  
Buying a War Bond. By doing so you will  
Be among the lucky boys and girls who  
Will have the privilege of attending the –

SCHOOL'S OUT

WAR BOND PREMIERE

Absolutely FREE. The swell featured attraction which you will see is

“OUTLAWS OF THE DESERT”

With HOPALONG CASSIDY

Plus

“BLUNDER BELOW”

Popeye Cartoon

State and Strand

Theaters

Thurs., Morning July 6th,

10 a. m.

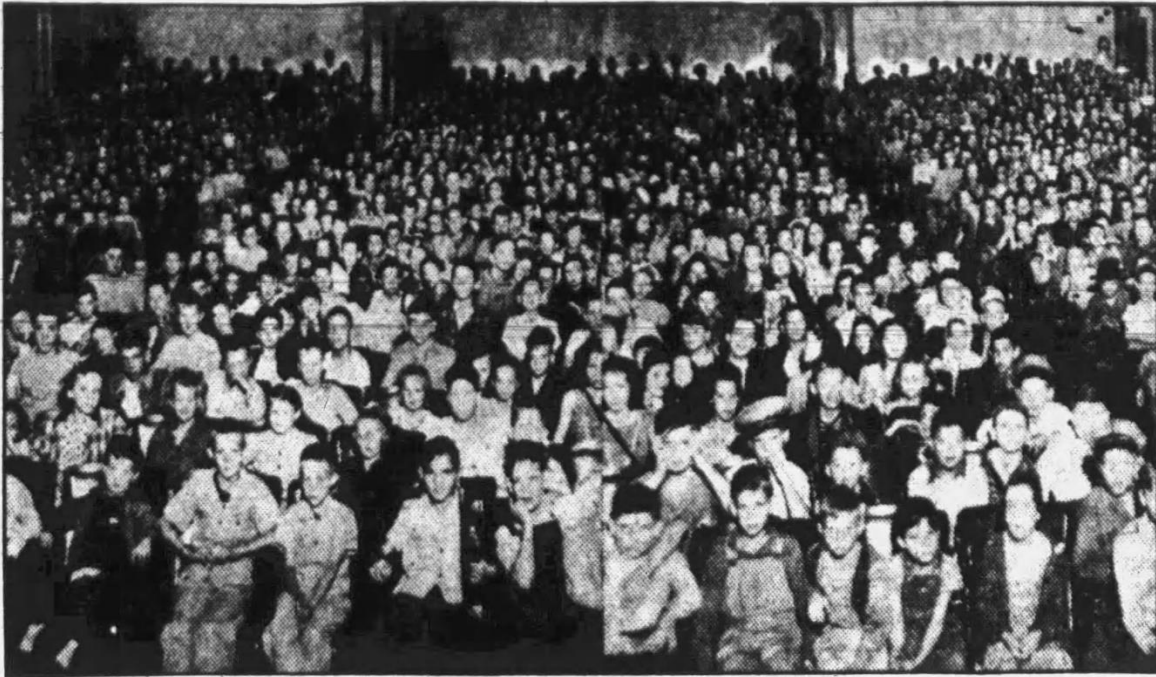
Join the Fighting Fifth Army of

Bond Selling Boys and Girls!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS...

BUY A BOND OR SELL ONE TO SOMEBODY

## Hastings Youngsters Back Bond Drive



Here are some of the 1,200 Hastings boys and girls, 6 to 16, who packed the Rivoli theater Thursday to receive their instructions and see selected short subjects before entering the Fifth War Loan Drive. Youngsters selling bonds will receive tickets to their own premiere scheduled for next Thursday morning at the State and Strand theaters.

Figure 13: A picture of some of the 1,200 Hastings children, aged 6 to 16 to get instructions for the Fifth War Loan Drive. For selling bonds children got to attend a movie premiere. From *The Hastings Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1944.

### Reading 2: Newspaper Article

*Background: The Hastings Junior Red Cross engaged in several service projects. Projects included Christmas boxes for service men, raising money for ping pong tables and furnishings at the Harvard Army Airfield (in Harvard, Nebraska), and making hospital kit bags. The Junior Red Cross also made gift boxes to send to children in war-stricken countries overseas. These packages contained crayons, pencils, paper, and other education materials.*

### French School Girl Writes Letter of Gratitude to Junior Red Cross

*The Hastings Daily Tribune*, November 15, 1944

Out of the heart of a French school girl has come the answer to the doubts of any child, or parent, about the good done with the contributions of Junior Red Cross members.

From a France devastated by war, Suzanne Reyel wrote this letter to the members of the Junior Red Cross whose pennies have eased some of the misery of her life:

‘Dear Benefactors and Benefactresses: I am deeply moved by the sincere devotion that you are showing towards poor France, wounded and terrified by the war. Your goodness has brought joy to the school children, innocent victims of irreparable disaster. Good Americans with great and noble hearts, I love you with all my heart.

All the children, large and small, find the milk that you sent us very good, and while the little French children drink this milk, I often think of all the good work of these distributions.

I sincerely thank you for all that you have done for me and for my little comrades.’

This letter came in its original form in a fine, dignified handwriting, on the cross-ruled paper used by the French schools.

### Questions for Reading 2 and Photos

1. Examine the photos of the war bond poster directed to youth, the youth at the movie theater, and scrap drive. How are these examples of the government mobilizing youth?
2. Who wrote the letter to the Junior Red Cross members?
3. How did Suzanne describe the impact of the Junior Red Cross's donations on the French school children?
4. How may reading a letter like this at the time have motivated others to volunteer for the Junior Red Cross or other organizations?

## Photo



Figure 14: Ed G. Portz and his son Billy are shown with their chicken house built of salvage lumber. Revenue from egg sales brought in \$791 for the Portz family in 10 months. From *The Hastings Daily Tribune*, October 23, 1942.

### Reading 3: Newspaper Article

*Background: Hastings, Nebraska is in Adams County, Nebraska. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) was a New Deal era program to restore agricultural growth and prices. It was established from the Agricultural Adjustment Act (May 1933). The term “farrow” refers to giving birth to a litter of piglets.*

#### Farmers Plan to Push Production on Vital Crops

*Central Nebraska Should Share in Substantial Increase in Feeds and Livestock for Army, Civilian Needs*

*The Hastings Daily Tribune, March 29, 1943*

Farmers in Adams County, the region and the state do not intend to let such handicaps as labor and machinery shortages stop them from upping their production during the 1943 war year.

They are not only planning on raising more grain and feed but they plan to increase meat dairy and poultry production, enterprises that take a lot of work and attention. Farm operators have indicated their intentions to step up operations in the farm plan checkups taken throughout the state and the nation by AAA community committeemen.

Adams County farmers for example, expect to more than double production of pork, a big item on the military man's menu. Results of the intention survey, completed so far on 1,054 Adams County farms, covering 164,451 acres of land, reveal that these operators plan to farrow 4,208 sows this spring, compared to the 1,649 farrowed last spring, an increase of 155 percent. They intent to farrow 1,837 next fall, more than double the 896 farrowed during the fall of 1942.

#### Raise More Chickens

These families this spring will raise 241,920 chickens, an increase of 32 percent over the 182,259 raised the previous year. They plan to keep 125,119 hens for laying, or 24 percent more than the 100,320 kept during the past winter.

They will milk more cows this year, increasing butter and cheese production. The number of cows on the 1,054 farms, about half of the county total, is being increased from 4,158 to 4,571. Sheep production is being expanded.

To support the program for increasing output of the concentrated and vital foods, the feeds program is also being expanded. Corn acreage is being jumped from 30,894 to 41,378 acres. Barley and oats acreages are larger for this year. There is also an increase scheduled for the sorghums, the insurance crops against adverse weather in this region. Acreage of the high protein crop, alfalfa, is being expanded. The only decreases shown are in rye and summer fallow.

#### Larger Wheat Acreage

The wheat acreage this year is also larger – 37,841 acres last year, compare to 41,378 acres this year. The planned barley acreage is 19,735, compared to 17,338. The oats acreage for '41 is 12,848, compared to the 10,683 last year.

The operators also plan some increase in the production of garden truck and potatoes.

Expansion of livestock and poultry production on such a scale is going to result in long hours, but the farmers intend to get the job done, community committeemen report.

### Questions for Reading 3

1. What was the main goal of farmers in Adams County for the 1943 war year? What challenges did they face to meet this goal?
2. How did surveys, like the intention survey, help farmers in their production planning?
3. Evaluate the significance of the farmers' commitment to increasing production during the war. How might their efforts have influenced the local economy and community in Adams County? How did the efforts impact food supplies at home and abroad?

### Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did Hastings residents contribute to the war effort and their community in areas such as volunteerism and agriculture?

# Lesson 4: Hastings, Nebraska: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Hastings, Nebraska](#), a designated [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, readings, an optional review text and media activity, and a culminating project. The first reading shares connections to the Naval Ammunition Depot. The second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. The media activity includes documentary videos that can be used to review or learn more about the role of Hastings during the war and its impact on the city today. The culminating project contributes to learners' understandings of the city as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine lesson themes from the three other lessons in the Hastings, Nebraska collection. This is to summarize the city's contributions and encourage connections to the overall U.S. home front efforts.

## Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Describe the impact of the Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings to the Allied efforts.
- b. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of diverse Hastings civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts.
- c. Describe the service contributions and challenges faced by African American sailors and civilians in Hastings.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Hastings and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 15-17 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, & media activity links
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 18 at end of lesson, for reference)

- Create Comparison Matrices for your students to use. To compare two cities, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows. Label the left column Theme/Topic and the other columns City 1 and City 2. For a Comparison Matrix for three cities simply add an additional column.
- Create two Single-Point Rubrics to assist students' self-assessment. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting teacher-selected standards. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting objectives.
- For the rubric on standards, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improvement," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Standard)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Standard." Leave the first and third columns blank. In each row of the second column identify a Standard and indicate a space for noting the evidence for meeting the standard. Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column.
- For the rubric on objectives, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improving toward Objective," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Objective)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Objective." Leave the first and third columns blank. In the four rows of the second column identify these four objectives:
  - a. Describe the impact of the Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings to the Allied efforts.
  - b. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of diverse Hastings civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts.
  - c. Describe the service contributions and challenges faced by African American sailors and civilians in Hastings.
  - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Hastings and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column. See the last photo of this lesson for reference.

## Getting Started: Essential Question

Why was Hastings chosen as an American World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

## Photos



Figure 15: "Working Conditions of Navy Enlisted and Civilian Personnel. Boarding Navy Bus to Go to Work," Hastings NAD, thought to be 1944. (Credit: National Archives)

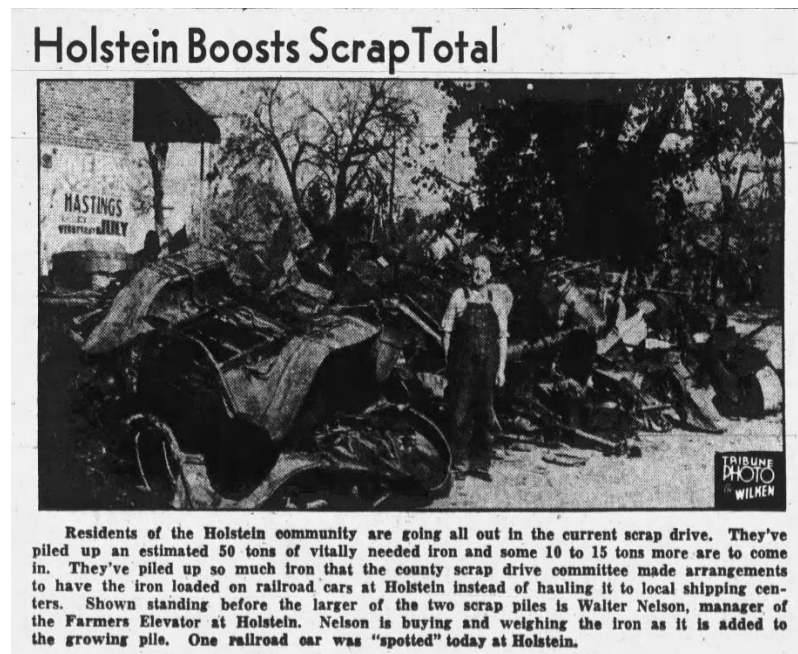


Figure 16: "Holstein Boosts Scrap Total." Holstein is a village by Hastings and part of Adam County. The caption shares they collected an estimated 50 tons of scrap, with 10 to 15 tons more expected. The Hastings Daily Tribune, October 13, 1942.



Figure 17: Postcard of the Navy Ammunition Depot, Hastings, Nebraska, designed from a Hastings Daily Tribune photo. Date unknown.



### Quotation to consider:

“When in this country’s service we work for not only our own benefit, but for the benefit of our children and their children as well. All of us, however, cannot serve the country on battlefields today, where truth, liberty and human rights are at stake.

But every one of us can render an effective service to our country on the home front. It takes only good will, willingness to work and a love for work. The spirit of the folk at home is definitely reflected in the morale of our own forces at the front. If those who are risking their lives for us ever have reason to believe we are letting them down, their every thought and act will be gravely affected.

Civilians cannot win the war alone, but they can lose it.

By buying war bonds, we are enlightening the enormous task of our fighting boys and supplying them with necessary equipment and ammunition. Better equipped men and plenty of ammunition mean closer victory. The sooner the enemy will be defeated, the sooner our sons, brothers, fathers and sweethearts will come home.

February 15 is the last day to participate in the Fourth Loan Drive. Buy bonds and let our fighting men see that we back home are doing our duty, too.”

- James A. Truhlar, in “Civilians Cannot Win the War But They Could Lose It,” *The Powder Keg*, February 11, 1944

## Reading 1: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Background: This reading describes the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) and its accomplishments two years after its opening. An optional question encourages students to compare this reading to [Reading 1](#) in the first lesson, as that reading shares the milestones from its one-year anniversary. The Powder Keg, publisher of both articles, was the newspaper produced at and for those in the NAD community.*

### Second Year of Production Ended

*The Powder Keg* (U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot), July 6, 1945

Two years ago Wednesday, 4 July, the first shell was loaded on the Depot; one shift in one department got underway.

Today thousands of pounds of ammunition of all types are going out from the Depot every single day.

Twenty-three men worked that first day a year ago to get out the first NAD loaded shells as their part of the Independence Day anniversary. Today nearly 6,000 men and women work day and night actually loading ammunition for all battle fronts.

Ammunition production to date totals tens of millions of pounds every month on the Depot; with additional personnel, the production total could be raised to even greater heights. Civilian men and women do their share, but to offset the lack of civilian manpower, enlisted men are working all shifts in various activities on the Depot.

Entire daily output of one department on the Depot, totaling tens of thousands of individual pieces, is used up by one battleship in ten minutes of battle.

The need for ammunition rises almost monthly as new quotas for ammunition are set and new types of arms are perfected.

These workers know the importance of their ammunition jobs, but they also know the tremendous need for bonds so they are celebrating this anniversary by buying thousands of dollars worth of bonds in this last Navy extra-bond drive; they're not only producing ammunition to blast the [Japanese]- they're buying the guns—through War Bonds as well!

## Questions for Reading 1 and Quotation to Consider

1. In the “quotation to consider,” what reasons does Truhlar give for buying war bonds?
2. In Reading 1, what is the significance of the numbers twenty-three and 6,000? How does this reflect the demand and changes in employment in the area?
3. What was the importance of the ammunition from the NAD?
4. How did home front contributions in Hastings support the US and the Allies?  
Consider both information from this text and from past lessons.
5. How do the photos in this lesson show some of the contributions of the home front in Hastings? What contributions have you learned of that are not pictured? (You may also use photos from [Lesson 3](#).)
6. Optional: Compare this reading to [Reading 1](#) in the first lesson. How were the descriptions of achievements of the NAD similar and different from the first to second anniversary of opening?

## Reading 2: Heritage City Designation

**Excerpt from:** “[House Report 115-998](#), “*To Direct the Secretary of the Interior to Annually Designate at Least One City in The United States as An ‘American World War II Heritage City,’ and for other purposes*” (October 30, 2018)

“ . . .PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 6118 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an “American World War II Heritage City”.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On December 7, 1941, military forces of the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Fleet and ground bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, one day after what President Roosevelt referred to as, “a date which will live in infamy,” the United States declared war against the Empire of Japan. Three days later, on December 11, 1941, Japan's ally, Germany, declared war on the United States. Sixteen million Americans, mostly young working-age men, served in the military during World War II, out of an overall United States population of 113 million.

While an unprecedented number of Americans served in World War II, the country drastically increased its war production on the home front, serving not only the needs of the armed forces of the United States but her allies as well--in what President Franklin Roosevelt called “The Arsenal of Democracy.” The combination of millions serving in the

military, during a period of necessary and drastic increases in production, led to significant social changes on the American home front.

The World War II period resulted in the largest number of people migrating within the United States in the history of the country. Individuals and families relocated to industrial centers for good paying jobs out of a sense of patriotic duty. Many industrial centers became “boomtowns,” growing at phenomenal rates. One example, the City of Richmond, California, grew from a population of under 24,000 to over 100,000 during the war. . . .”

### Questions for Reading 1 and 2, Photos

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. Why do you think Hastings was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Connect details from the bill and the first reading.
3. Using details from this and past lessons, would you consider Hastings a “boomtown”? Why or why not?
4. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

## Optional Media Review Activity

The following videos, in whole or clips, can be used as optional activities to review concepts from across the Hastings lessons. An additional resource for exploration is a contemporary visitor guide brochure. They provide meaningful connections to local voices and media preserving history today.

1. **Video:** [“Building Bombs on the Plains”](#) (2:46) from NebraskaStudies.org can be used to quickly review and connect to the purpose of the NAD in Hastings, and the diverse employees engaged in work there.
2. **Brochure:** [NAD: Hastings, Nebraska](#) by Visit Hastings, Nebraska. What types of buildings were located at the NAD? How is the land that was once the NAD used today? (This brochure can also be used as student inspiration for creating the mastery product.)
3. **Documentary:** [“Bunker University”](#) (1:12:33), a documentary made by Central Community College Nebraska in 2022 outlines the history of the Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD). It shares in detail the history of the people and the land, its time as the NAD, and connections to preserving its history and education today.

## Culminating Activity/Mastery Product

To demonstrate student understanding, support students in creating a final product that meets the following objectives:

- a. Describe the impact of the Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings to the Allied efforts.
- b. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of diverse Hastings civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts.
- c. Describe the service contributions and challenges faced by African American sailors and civilians in Hastings.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Hastings and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

### Mastery products should be:

- . . . **student-led**; Students work as individuals or in collaborative groups.
- . . . **student-directed**: Students are offered a variety of choices for product type.
- . . . **student-organized**; Teacher facilitates by providing students with the comparison matrices and/or resource links from throughout the series of lessons.
- . . . **student-assessed**; Teacher supports student self-assessment and reflection by providing students single-point rubrics to assess for meeting standards and/or lesson objectives.

Note: Depending on time and scope, the comparison of Hastings, Nebraska to another WWII Heritage or home front city(s) within the mastery product (objectives) may be omitted. However, comparing cities is recommended, as it connects students to a deeper understanding of the WWII home front.

### Examples of mastery product choices include, but are not limited to:

- **Written**: Letter (opinion or informative), essay, poem, narratives, biography, articles, class book or children's book, speech or debate (then presented orally), blog / website, plaque or historical displays, pamphlets or rack cards
- **Graphic Organizers**: timeline, flowcharts, mind or concept content maps, Venn diagrams, comparison matrices, posters
- **Artistic Expression**: song, dance, theater (ex. skits), 3-D models, dioramas, photo journal, stamp and coin designs, visual art, architecture/building or monument, museum design

- **Media design and creation:** podcast, historical markers, social media content, interactive virtual maps or tours, infographics, video, comic strips or graphics, game design, slideshows, digital scrapbook

Please view the [NPS Heritage cities lesson collection](#) for information and resources on other cities.

### Single-Point Rubric

Areas for Improvement	Proficient (Meeting Standard)	Areas of Exceeding Standard
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
Points		

Figure 18: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

### Acknowledgment

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