

Springfield, Massachusetts, WWII Heritage City

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



Figure 1: Postcard with caption “Armory Water Shops., Ordnance Dept., U.S. Army, Springfield, Mass.” Published by The Springfield News Company Tichnor Bros. Inc., Boston, Mass., [between 1930–1945]. Credit: Digital Commonwealth – Massachusetts Collection Online.

Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City](#). The first lesson examines the role and impact of the Springfield Armory in arms production. The lesson includes oral histories from women ordnance workers and connects to some of the experiences of African American workers there. The second lesson connects to local military training and service, such as United States Army Air Corps training at Springfield College. The third lesson describes the impact of local women who worked as nurses, including training and recruitment efforts through the Cadet Nurse Corps. 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 is 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 guides students in summarizing the contributions of Springfield, Massachusetts, and leads into a comparison with other World War II home front cities as a culminating activity.

1. [The Springfield Armory and Wartime Production in Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City \(p.5\)](#)

- Springfield Armory
- Civilian workforce
- Women in the workforce
- War manufacturing and industry
- African Americans in the workforce

2. [Military Training and Presence in Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City \(p. 21\)](#)

- Armed forces
- Training and recruitment
- Army Air Corps
- Navy training programs
- WAVES

3. [Wartime Nursing and Hospitals in Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City \(p. 33\)](#)

- Nursing
- Cadet Nurse Corps
- Naval hospital

- Labor shortages
- Women in the workforce

[4. Springfield, Massachusetts: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 44\)](#)

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 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework (as of 2018). Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

Time period: World War II

Topics: World War II, women's 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

Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework Standards

The lessons align to standards within the following areas as defined by the Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework (as of 2018).

Grades 6-8 Reading Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas: History and Social Science [RCHA-H]

Grades 6-8 Writing Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas [WCA]

High School United States History II

High School United States World History II

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: The Springfield Armory and Wartime Production in Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Springfield, Massachusetts](#), [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the wartime impact of the production of arms at the Springfield Armory. The readings share about the role of the Armory and provide oral history perspectives from women who worked there as ordnance workers. The photos, an oral history, and the extension reading also connect to the history of African American workers who worked at the Armory.

Objectives:

1. Describe the importance of the Springfield Armory in wartime defense manufacturing.
2. Explain the roles of women who worked there, connecting to unique perspectives found within oral histories.
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 reading)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Massachusetts, with Springfield marked



Getting Started: Essential Question

How were the Springfield Armory and the civilians working there important to the war effort on the home front?

Photos



Figure 2: 3915-SA- Caption: "Stocking Shop Operations, May 17, 1943," Photo courtesy of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site.



Figure 3: 4089-SA- Caption: "Negro worker at barrel grinding machine (Charles H. Hills), August 4, 1943." Photo courtesy of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site.



Figure 4: Priscilla Bryant, a high school student who also worked at the Springfield Armory. In the photo she is putting spaces on M1 rifle clips. Photo courtesy of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site.



Figure 5: 4729-SA- Caption: "Snackery - Building 103 - Eating Lunch at Benches, September 12, 1944." Photo courtesy of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site.



By the numbers:

- The Springfield Armory employed a workforce of over 7,500 during the war.
- At its peak, 1,300 [M1 Garand Rifles](#) were produced per shift, or 164 per hour. Over 3.1 million M1 rifles were manufactured by the end of the war.
- At its peak wartime employment, approximately 43% of positions at Springfield Armory were held by women, due to men entering the armed forces.
- In the year 1943 alone, there were about 800 African Americans hired to work at the Armory, including 500 women. About 8 percent were local, with many migrating to the area for wartime opportunities. *(From Richard Colton in The Springfield Republican, February 16, 2014)*



Quotation to consider:

“I do remember when I was interviewed that he wrote on my application something like good dexterity because of small hands, which I had very small hands. They put me on precision jobs. . . .

The first job I had was working like at a long table - a long wooden table, putting triggers together and assembling them by hand. This was when they were still doing it by hand. . . .

And that’s when Johnny, the blind man, worked next to me, and I think I was more friendly with him than most of them. And I’d walk him to the men’s room because he couldn’t see to get there, and things like that, and I’d wait for him outside. And we’d have lunch together. And if I got behind in my assembly, he’d - and he was done with his - he was a very fast worker for a blind man - he’d help me with my work, my assembly. . . .

I guess things were slowing down because I guess the war was coming to an end. I enjoyed working there and they would have me working in the packing room. You’d take the rifles off the conveyer belt as it came around and there was like an open end of the gun and you inserted a little grease packet into the stock of the gun and then place it in a green sheet then place it in the wooden case. . . .

- Edna Theresa (Quaglia) Condino, in an [oral history](#) recorded on November 16, 1983 from the Springfield Armory National Historic Site



Read to Connect

Teacher Note: A brief background before Reading 1 provides context on the Springfield Armory for students. The three readings are oral histories to share perspectives from [Women Ordnance Workers](#) who worked at the Armory during World War II. The extension reading (a newspaper article excerpt) can be used to learn more about African American workers, including women, at the Armory. The extension discusses discrimination claims at the Armory, which was integrated during a time of nationwide discrimination and segregation. For additional readings on the history and culture of the Springfield Armory can be found at [Springfield Armory National Historic Site: History and Culture](#).

For supporting students in analyzing oral histories, you can use the “[Talking with the Past #2: Oral History](#)” video from the National Park Service to learn about analyzing oral histories as primary sources.

Reading 1: Oral History

Background: The Springfield Armory was the first armory established in the United States. It began producing muskets in 1794 under the authority of George Washington and was created so that the new government could manufacture its own weapons rather than relying heavily on foreign allies.

Over time, the Armory’s production and continual improvements in manufacturing methods supported efforts for each major war, including World War II. It functioned not only as a manufacturing center but also as a storage facility, serving as a traditional armory, arsenal, and magazine.

The Armory closed in 1968, with nearly two hundred years of continuous rifle and musket production. It reopened in 1978 as the [Springfield Armory National Historic Site](#). Today, the main arsenal building at the historic site houses the world’s largest collection of small arms.

Oral History Excerpts: Lillian LaBranch Duffy

Lillian LaBranch Duffy was interviewed for an [oral history](#) by Barbara Higgins Aubrey, a Park Technician at Springfield Armory National Historic Site, on September 29, 1983.

Lillian LaBranch Duffy (LD): . . . 1941, of course, was Pearl Harbor. I was working downtown and I just wanted to do something. So, I never gave the WACS [[Women’s Army Corps](#)] a thought or anything like that, and then they said, why don’t you go to the Springfield Armory; they’re hiring like crazy over there. So, I went up and I got a job right away. I worked, went in the stocking department, and I started working the next week.

Barbara Higgins Aubrey (BHA): Did you know anybody already who was working up there?

LD: No, no I didn't. I didn't, I did it so quick. After I got up there a little while, I knew a few people.

BHA: Did you live in Springfield?

LD: Yes I did.

BHA: Right in town?

LD: Right on Federal Street.

BHA: Right close.

LD: Yes it was.

BHA: Easy to get to work.

LD: We used to work seven days a week, I did. You didn't have to work Sunday or Saturday, but I used to go to the machine shop and work in the oil up there to here! (laughing) But I didn't mind, I mean, I, what the heck, I wasn't doing too much anyways. So, I enjoyed it; I really enjoyed it.

BHA: When you came up to get hired did they have any tests or anything?

LD: Nope. No tests. My first job was filling stain, you know, the gun stocks that came back. They had holes in them and whatever. We had to sand them and fill them with this wood plastic and then stain them over. Oh, we used to find notes in those and everything else, you know, the soldiers used to stick in the gun stock. Yeah, it [was] real interesting. That was fun . . . Then I went on to the machines after that. But I enjoyed it.

BHA: Who did the . . . were you given any training for any of your work?

LD: No, that was very simple, somebody showed you. Then I went over on the lathes where they turn the gun stocks after they come out of the kilns. It's just a matter of putting them in right. Taking them from the cart and setting them in this big machine and it turns them. So, that was easy, but I had my eye on that big router machine. No woman had ever run that, but I got acquainted, we called him Chief and I used to go over and talk to him a lot. I'd get him, you know, 'Let me try it a little bit.'

But he couldn't; he let me try it without a gun stock in there because the gun stock had to be like 1000s of an inch for tolerance, I mean. But anyways, I got so you had to . . . when you started it was this kind of an angle (motioning with her hands) and you turn it and make it that kind. So we did two cuts on the top and then turn it right clean around and do two on the bottom. It was really a man's job, but I wanted that so bad.

BHA: Why would you say it was a man's job?

LD: Well, because all that heavy turning and everything. Then you had to keep up with the conveyer. But anyways, he knew I wanted to do that so bad, so he, he taught me. I was the only one there who did it. . . .

BHA: Were there any other women in the [stocking] section at all?

LD: Oh yeah. Running the smaller machines. There were like four aisles, you know, each machine did a certain cut on the gun stock. But mine was the only one that did the four [cuts]. Four lines of those. I used to relieve sometimes on those, but once I got that job, that was for me.

BHA: Did you like that?

LD: Oh! I liked that. I really did.

BHA: How long did you stay on that?

LD: Um, I must have been on that a year and a half, two years.

BHA: What were your hours?

LD: Seven to three.

BHA: Seven to three.

LD: And then they started the second shift, three to eleven. I worked that for a while and then they started the eleven to seven and I worked that for a while.

BHA: Did you take turns a lot or did you just take it for a while?

LD: What, the machine?

BHA: No, the hours.

LD: Oh, no, no. They asked me that I go on and show some of the girls some of the machines, and I said sure. So, I worked those two shifts and then I went back on days again. Steady on that machine until I got laid-off, you know, with the rest of them. Not all, most of them. It was in August of '45.

BHA: They just laid everybody off?

LD: Um, three quarters, I'd say, three quarters. Of course the fellas were coming home then, you know, and going back to work.

BHA: So, the women had to leave to make room?

LD: Oh yes. Of course I was glad the war was over. Who wasn't?

BHA: Oh yes.

LD: But, I did miss my job.

BHA: In other words, you'd like to have stayed on the job?

LD: Oh, I would have liked that, yeah. Strictly men on those jobs.

BHA: But as far as you could see, you could do the job alright?

LD: Yes. I must have because, in fact, Chief, he used to gauge the gun stocks after I got through with them. Boy, they had to be right, because the old mechanism set in there and if it was off, they wouldn't fit. So, it had to be right.

BHA: So, you would have liked it, staying on with the men after they got back?

LD: Oh no! No, no. I just enjoyed working. . . .

Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, Quotation to Consider, and Photos

1. What type of work did Duffy do at the Springfield Armory? What skills did she have to learn?
2. Why might Duffy describe certain jobs as ones for men, and how does her own experience complicate that idea?
3. What happened to many women workers at the end of the war, including Duffy?

By the Numbers, Quotation to Consider, and Photos

4. *By the Numbers*: How do these numbers from the Springfield Armory show its importance to wartime production?
5. *Quotation to Consider*: What surprises you or interests you about Condino's remembrances? How does this show a unique perspective on working at the Armory? [Note: Read more about defense workers with disabilities in this article series from the National Park Service - [Series: Disability and the World War II Home Front.](#)]
6. *Photos*: What type of activities are taking place? How do the photos build on, or connect to, your learning about the Springfield Armory so far?

Reading 2: Oral History

Note: Alice Carroll McDonald was one of the high school students who worked at the Springfield Armory and was also among its African American workers. The Armory was integrated, and in her interview, she does not mention experiencing racial discrimination or tension. However, a February 25, 1944 article in The Springfield Republican reported a complaint of discrimination at the Armory, though this claim was challenged by both the Armory union and other workers. An excerpt from this article is included in the extension (additional readings) for reference.

Oral History Excerpts: Alice Carroll McDonald

Alice Carroll McDonald was interviewed for an [oral history](#) by Barbara Higgins Aubrey, a Park Technician at Springfield Armory National Historic Site, on May 9, 1994.

. . . Barbara Higgins Aubrey (BHA): How did you happen to apply to the Armory for work?

Alice Carroll McDonald (AM): I believe, through the school system. I think that's how it started.

BHA: Were you alone when you went over, or was there a friend with you?

AM: When I left Tech at twenty minutes of three every day, I had a friend, Bunny, and we walked out Spring and up Pearl Street hill and into the back gate of the Armory. Then when I got in, I had three other girlfriends very close to me.

BHA: Where did you work when you were in the Armory?

AM: On the part-time basis, it was building 20, which is up on Pearl Street. Third floor, building 20.

BHA: And what was that work?

AM: A little machine, or lathe I shaved little pieces for the rifle. Piece work, it was wonderful.

BHA: How many were in your section?

AM: It was a big section, a whole floor.

BHA: How are you trained for the work? Who showed you how to do it?

AM: There was a supervisor who showed us how to use the machine. Once or twice a man would come along if there was a change in the format, to set it up and show you how to run it.

BHA: When you were working full time, did you bring your own lunch, or did you go to the cafeteria?

AM: I brought my lunch every day but one. I treated myself once a week to the cafeteria. I found (lunch break was 20-25 minutes) by the time you got to the area, it was almost time to come back. So if you went to the cafeteria, that took twice as long through the line. So most of the time, I brought my lunch.

BHA: What kind of things did they have in the Cafeteria?

AM: The thing that I remember most is baked macaroni and cheese, which I loved. Whatever else they had I don't remember. Grinders, ice cream.

BHA: Do you remember what you were paid?

AM: No, not exactly, but I said it was piece work, and I can remember one week I made 39 dollars and change. It (was) a tremendous amount of money for a kid in High School. My father couldn't get over it.

BHA: So you went there (the Armory) in '44?

AM: All of my twelfth grade I worked (the piece work). . . .

BHA: What was the morale and the attitude of the employees? Were you vividly aware of World War II?

AM: Oh, no. We were in there working hard to make the parts and to make the money. I'm so ashamed to say that it was [not] uppermost in our minds, we didn't hear much about the war. I didn't. . . .

BHA: Were the women about your age or were they older?

AM: Older. I'll tell you the truth, the only reason I got the eleven to seven shift was because my mother was working the same shift. She's the one who woke me up and dragged me to work. I found it very difficult to operate that shift.

BHA: How long had she (mother) been working there?

AM: Maybe a year prior to my going there.

BHA: How did she happen to go there? Was it because of work opportunity?

AM: Work opportunity. She was originally a domestic [worker], then this came along which was a gold mine. So, she took it and worked until it phased out. . .

BHA: How did you travel to the armory?

AM: Walked. Orleans Street and the Armory were very close. The gate where I had to enter on Magazine was very close. I was to work in five minutes, and back home in five minutes.

BHA: Did you ever get involved in the recreational activities of other workers?

AM: No.

BHA: Were you proud of working at the Armory? Was it a good thing to do in the City?

AM: It was a good thing to do, yes. I was especially proud because out of my church, there were five young people who worked there (Armory). There were some adults, but not the young kids. They were all doing other things. Very few were from my church, which at the time was all we had; Church and your job, Church and your job. Church was the center. . . .

BHA: What were the conditions like in the Armory when you worked there? Was it clean, or noisy?

AM: I didn't find it offensive at all. It was clean, the noise didn't bother me. When I worked full time, I worked on a little bench, and all up around me were those big [broaches](#) that you have to climb up a flight of stairs to work. They were loud and noisy, but it didn't seem to bother me. . . .

Questions for Reading 2

1. What type of work did McDonald do as a high schooler at the Armory?
2. Why did McDonald think she got the eleven to seven shift?
3. How does she describe her daily routines and the working conditions at the Armory?
4. How does McDonald's statement that she was not very aware of the war compare to other common narratives from the time?

Reading 3: Oral History

Oral History Excerpts: Mary Urekew Grant Mulcahy

Mary Urekew Grant Mulcahy was interviewed for an [oral history](#) by Barbara Higgins Aubrey, a Park Technician at Springfield Armory National Historic Site, on August 16, 1983.

Barbara Higgins Aubrey (BHA): So you went to the Armory in 1940? That would have been right after you graduated from the High School of Commerce? How did you pick the Armory? . . .

Mary Urekew Grant Mulcahy (MUGM): . . . Jobs were scarce so I [was] asking for applications for the Armory – but you had to take a civil service test then. I took the civil

service test and passed. I wanted to be in the office, but there was no openings – so I thought if I got into the shops then later on I could find an opening. The Garand Rifle – the machines weren't quite ready at that time. The Springfield rifle machines were being disassembled, so in the process of waiting for the Garand machines to be perfected and assembled, we had to sit in the die-casting building across the road – the Watershops pond is the part where I worked – and we sat in an attic in a hot summer, re-oiling gun barrels – the Springfield Rifle gun barrel – sticking the rods with oily rags [through the barrels] – and after we finished packing them, they weren't ready, so they said, re-oil them. So we went over and over again – I think we did it three times.

They assigned me to a threading machine, there were three threading machines and had to go around fixing gun barrels. I had dexterity evidently, and speed and curiosity. Because you had to be perfect on seeing whether the threads were being correctly cut. When the blades start getting dull they make burrs and I observed it. The fellas were going into service and they were getting lack of machine adjusters. So the foreman approached me one day and asked me if I would like to be a machine adjuster – and I said whoa – talk about women's liberation.

I was the first one [woman machine operator] had to write government to get rating. [Women] couldn't use a man's rate – had to go through government [channels] to get rate description job and pay [for] Machine Adjuster and Set-Up.

BHA: Were other women machine adjusters or set-up?

MUGM: There were women running small machines like – little broaches and small reaming – very few women [were] running giant machines – gradually they came in later – rifling machines.

Approaching men was the most difficult thing – older men working there. Whitey – his name was White, we called him Whitey. We got attached to each other [on the job training]. I have a sense of humor and I think I can approach people diplomatically and he would take me around for eight months – all I did was follow him around – and if he would adjust the machine I'd have to observe, but then gradually he would say, 'Okay, Mary, you do it.'

[The men said] 'She was a machine operator, she's not going to touch my machine.' They would say, 'Tell her to get the hell outta here! I'm not having no woman touch my machine.'

They were on piece work. I had to adjust it properly – time was very [important]. It was very difficult – they wouldn't let me go near it, but after joking with them I'd say, 'Just five minutes – if its all right I won't come back. If it isn't I'll come back.'

They had a new building go up. They put me in charge of twenty girls on the line. They were broaching machines, threading machines, short rifling machine, holing machine . . .

You see we were getting in green (new) people. They were for money and piece work and not realizing how important that piece work gun barrel [was]. It could jam out in the field with the soldier in the service. That was the part that we had to stress. So when they came in, we told them how important [their work was] – it was your brother out there. Well that’s the way I approached it and the foreman thought that was an excellent way. . . .

. . . I got my father, who was an immigrant from Austria—my parents come from Austria, couldn’t speak very good English, my father got his citizenship papers but my mother died before she got her—and my father, I got him in as a maintenance man. But he worked at the Hill Plant. . . . My father had to clean out the machines about three times a day because of the steel chips. And he’d get steel chip slivers all in his fingers. Well you could wear gloves, but there were so many that they would slip through the gloves. Oh there were bushels of chips. And I would get steel chips too, so we’d come home at night, I’d take his out, he’d take mine out- with tweezers.

During the crisis of the war we had to work ten hours a day for ten weeks. I think it was in ’42. That was when the fuel shortage, everything was short and they needed guns, more guns. It was almost mandated that we had to work ten hour a day for ten weeks, seven day weeks. That was a hard one, that was during the crises of the war. . . .

After the war was over they just dismissed all the women. All the women were released from the Armory after the war was over. . . .

... I would have [continued working at the Armory if they hadn’t asked everybody to leave.] Because I love working on, I’m adaptable to machines, I’ve always been.

Questions for Reading 3

1. Why do you think Mulcahy compares her movement to machine adjuster as “women’s liberation”?
2. What challenges did Mulcahy face when working with male coworkers, and how did she respond?
3. What details in her narrative reflect some of the difficult conditions and pressures of wartime production?
4. *Compare to Reading 2:* How does Mulcahy’s description that workers were taught to think about the impact of their work on soldiers compare to McDonald’s remembrance that the war was not “uppermost” in her mind?

- a. How does this show an example of different home front perspectives and motivations?
- b. What worker motivations may have been the most amplified in publications at the time? (*Hint: Think about the role of patriotic narratives on the home front.*)

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How were the Springfield Armory and the civilians working there important to the war effort on the home front?

Additional questions:

What barriers and opportunities for women were similar or different across the oral histories?

How are oral histories helpful for understanding perspectives from the home front? What are some of their limitations?

Would you have been interested in doing wartime work at the Springfield Armory if you lived in the area during this time? Why or why not?

Extension

Additional Reading: Newspaper Article Excerpt

Note: The following reading uses historical language that is inappropriate for use today.

'Race' Charges at Armory to Be Heard Sat.

Lawyer to Represent Negro Minister's Wife in Meeting with Officials

The Springfield Republican, February 25, 1944

Charges of unfair treatment of Negroes at Springfield Armory will be aired at a hearing scheduled at the plant tomorrow afternoon, Rev M.N. Ward, Negro minister who charged yesterday his wife and other Negroes had been victims of discrimination, said today.

Att Irwin T. Dortch of Boston will represent Mrs. Ward and other Negroes, who have complained of unfair treatment, in presenting their cases to Armory officers, Mr. Ward said.

Charges Denied

Meanwhile, the minister's charges brought denials of unfair treatment from other Negroes employed at the Armory and from the Armory union, lodge 431, American Federation of

Government Employees, AFL, which issues a statement today backing up Armory officers. .

..

The entire issue of discrimination against Negro workers at the Armory appeared to hinge today on the question of transfers from piecework to day work, involving cuts in pay, as a result of changes in production requirements at the plant.

Indications that complaints against treatment of Negroes at the hands of Armory supervisory employees are not new came today from one Negro girl employee, who refused use of her name, but said that one white forelady had been discharged several weeks ago because of her attitude toward Negro women under her supervision. . . .

Two Negro employees at the Armory, Daniel J. Fultz and Arthur A. Fletcher, today issued statements criticizing Mr. Ward's stand and upholding Springfield Armory officials.

'Misunderstandings' Admitted

Both acknowledged that there may be 'misunderstandings' and friction between Negroes and white foremen, but said that general Armory policy did not allow room for discrimination. The two have been employed at the Armory for some time, and said that they had received the same opportunities for promotion as white coworkers.

'There are machine operators, checkers, truck drivers, platers, time keepers, yes and even a foreman, that are colored, working at the Armory,' Fultz said.

Hitting at Mr. Ward and other Negro leaders who have entered the fight against discrimination, Fultz said that 'I think if these so called civic leaders of the colored people of Springfield would stop and think before they use the word discrimination, they would be doing more good as far as harmony and working conditions go for the colored people.'

No Racial Basis

He said that 'misunderstandings and arguments' which might arise at the Springfield Armory do not have a racial basis.

Negroes are not 'the only ones who have misunderstandings with the bosses,' Fletcher said, bearing out Fultz's contentions. The statement from the Springfield Armory union follows:

'We have been asked for our expression on alleged discrimination at Springfield Armory. In our capacity as the only nationally affiliated labor group at Springfield Armory, we have had to consider most of the employee grievances for the past several years.

We are glad to report that at no time in our records have we ever been approached because of even supposed discrimination because of color. The case of Mrs. Ward was never

brought to our attention by Mrs. Ward or anyone else. Our first knowledge of any such charge came from the newspaper story, and we have not had occasion to investigate this particular complaint.

But, based on past history, we do not believe that color enters into any changes made.

Better Positions

Negroes of Springfield have been aware for years that they could obtain better positions at Springfield Armory than they could anywhere else in this area. Before the labor shortage, Springfield Armory was almost the only industrial plant employing large numbers of Negro people and they have always been welcomed into our AFGE [union] organization and have received the same protection and services as accorded any other members. . . .

Questions for Extension Reading

1. What reasons are given for why some workers believed discrimination was or was not occurring?
2. How did different groups respond to the accusations?
3. Why might some workers defend the Armory while others raise concerns?
4. How might wartime labor needs have shaped both opportunities and tensions for African American workers?

Additional Resources

[“Places of World War II History in Springfield, MA”](#) (National Park Service)

[Springfield Armory National Historic Site](#) (National Park Service)

[Springfield Armory: National Historic Site](#) – Historic publications archives (National Park Service)

[Springfield Armory National Historic Site: History and Culture](#) (National Park Service)

[The Springfield Armory: Historic Background](#), Report by Todd Jones, Historic Preservation Specialist, Federal Emergency Management Agency, October 2011 (Springfield-ma.gov)

[Springfield Armory: The Best Battle Implement Ever Devised](#) (National Park Service)

Lesson 2: Military Training and Presence in Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the role of military training and recruitment in the area. A background reading shares overall details, and then two primary source readings connect specifically to the Army Air Corps training at Springfield College and a WAVES recruitment story. An optional extension activity provides the opportunity to view footage of cadets training at the local college.

Objectives:

1. Describe the military training and presence in Springfield, and how this supported wartime defense goals.
2. Explain how local colleges and career and training pathways in the armed services were shaped by wartime demands.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 6-11 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Massachusetts, with Springfield marked



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did the military presence and training in Springfield support the war effort?

Photos



Figure 6: "Arrival of 323rd College Training Detachment at Springfield College." The soldiers just arrived on campus in the picture and are walking to their dormitory at Springfield College. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.

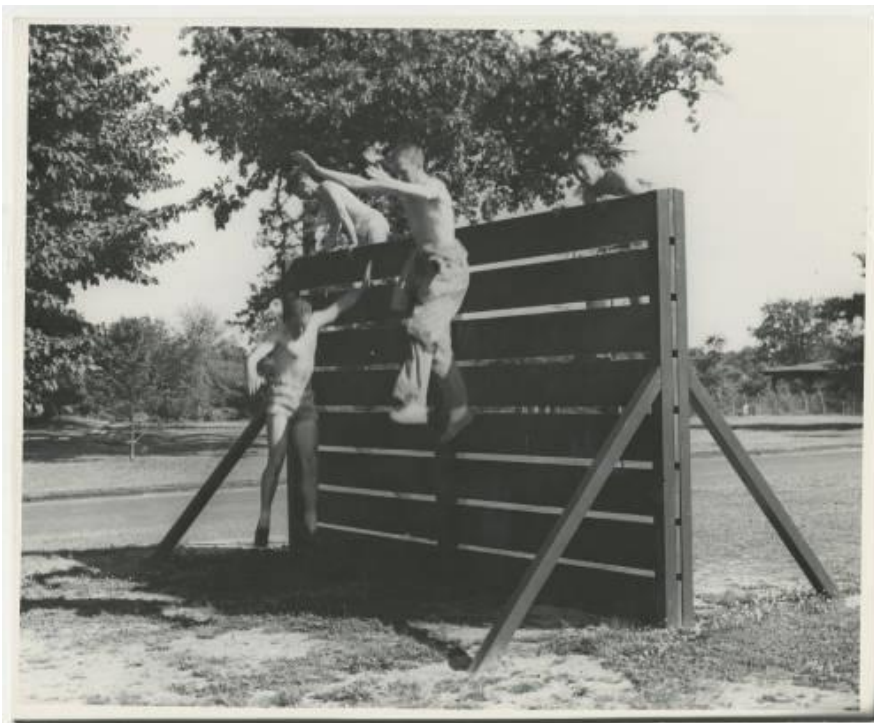


Figure 7: "Army Air Corps on the Commando Course (ca. 1943)." Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 8: "Soldier Jumping into McCurdy Pool." The pool was located in Springfield College's Judd Gymnasium. 1942. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 9: Thanksgiving Dinner for the Army Air Corps at Springfield College in 1943. The soldiers stand at attention by a table in the cafeteria on the campus of Springfield College. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 10: Army Air Corps in formation in 1943 on a field on the campus of Springfield College. The base drum has "Springfield College." Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



By the numbers: The Naval V-7 Program

- When the V-7 program was announced on June 26, 1940, the goal was to train 36,000 Naval officers for entry into the war.
- By March 1941, the Navy only had 18,000 officers.
- A local announcement shared that the Navy's goal for V-7 enlistments in May 1941 was 4900 new junior officers out of coming classes, including 265 recruits from Springfield. Many of these recruits came from Springfield College.
- V-7 recruits had to have two years of college credit and be between the ages of 20-28. The training lasted four months after college.



Quotations to consider:

"In March 1943 Springfield College was selected by the U.S. Army as one of the American Colleges in which Air Corps Aviation students would be given preliminary training to prepare them for a pre-flight course if they could qualify as aviation cadets.

Two weeks later as several hundred young soldiers arrived and the 323rd College Training Detachment was activated, the peaceful campus bordering Lake Massasoit was

transformed into the appearance of an Army post and resounded to the rhythmic thump of marching men.”

- “Marching Men on the Campus film (reel 3), 1943, Springfield College Archives and Special Collections (*See the extension activity to view this reel and others.*)

“Dr. Harold Seashore, acting director of admissions at Springfield College, attended the regional meeting called by the Navy at Yale University last week to discuss this plan and he reported widespread interest among the colleges. The only changes necessary in the Springfield College curriculum to co-operate with the naval plan are additional courses in mathematics and physics in order that all students may fit them into their schedules.”

- “V-1 Plan for Underclassmen Starts at SC,” *Springfield Evening Union*, April 15, 1942



Read to Connect

Teacher Note: This background text shows ways that military recruitment and training were present in Springfield. This overview also prepares students for Reading 2, which examines how Springfield College adapted to the arrival of the first 500 United States Army Air Corps cadets. The background focuses on local training programs and institutions. Additional information about nursing training in the area can be found in Lesson 3.

Reading 1: Background Text

Military Presence and Training in Springfield, Massachusetts During World War II

By Sarah Nestor Lane

During World War II, cities like Springfield, Massachusetts supported military recruitment, training, and the morale of local service members. Local colleges, hospitals, and civic organizations contributed to the war effort, helping to prepare men and women for military service while also supporting those already in uniform.

Recruitment and Military Presence

Local Springfield colleges played a key role in military recruitment. Institutions such as the American International College and Springfield College hosted recruitment events designed to quickly identify and prepare educated candidates for service. For example, in April 1942, the two colleges held a Naval Aviation recruitment session. About 115 men attended and 40 submitted applications. Applicants were between 19 and 26 years old and

had completed at least one year of college. After interviews, physical exams, and presentations by Navy aviators, 25 men were accepted into the program.

Younger students also became involved through the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), which offered aviation ground school courses to high school juniors and seniors. These programs prepared students for future military aviation service and supported recruitment efforts.

Women were visible in local military roles as well. Members of [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service \(WAVES\)](#) attended classes at Springfield College, while [Women's Army Corps \(WACs, originally WAACs\)](#) served in local recruiting offices and at nearby military installations like Westover Field.

The city also supported service members socially to build morale. A local United Service Organizations (USO) club, dedicated in 1943, provided recreation and connection for service members. Community dances and events brought together civilians and military personnel. For example, a large ball in May 1943 included local WAVES and WACs, Army Air Corps trainees from Springfield College, and military police stationed at the Eastern States Exposition grounds.

Training Programs in Springfield

Springfield College was involved in military training programs. These programs allowed students to combine education with preparation for military service. The U.S. Navy operated and recruited for several college training initiatives at Springfield College, like the V-1, V-5, and V-7 programs. The V-1 Program was a general officer training program for college students preparing for Navy service. The V-5 Program focused specifically on training future naval aviators. The V-7 Program (Midshipmen School) prepared college graduates to become Navy officers.

These programs often accelerated students' education and they could graduate early once they had met minimum academic requirements. In March 1943, local newspapers reported that college sports teams had been significantly reduced as many senior athletes graduated early to join the Navy through the V-7 program.

Flight training was also offered at both American International College and Springfield College. However, participation came with expectations. Even by October 1940, prior to the United States' formal entry into the war, students enrolling in free flight training courses were required to pledge that they would apply for military flight training and service.

Medical training was another critical area. Hospitals across the region, including Springfield's Mercy Hospital, participated in the United States [Cadet Nurse Corps](#), a federal program established in 1943 to address the wartime nursing shortage. In exchange for

subsidized education, nurses committed to serving in essential civilian or military roles after graduation.

Army Air Corps Training at Springfield College

The United States Army Air Corps also had training in Springfield during the war. This training was not equally available to all. Due to segregation in the military, African American service members in the Army Air Corps were excluded from white military training programs at institutions like Springfield College. They were sent to the [Tuskegee Institute](#) for training and became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. The segregation of the armed forces changed only after [Executive Order 9981](#), which mandated the desegregation of the armed forces in 1948.

In March 1943, a small group of Air Corps officers arrived at Springfield College with just over a week to prepare for the college's training operation. On April 1, approximately 500 cadets had arrived, showing the rapid pace of wartime mobilization. The sudden influx required significant adjustments, such as in housing and dining. For example, in Thanksgiving 1943, the college reportedly served more than 500 pounds of turkey to accommodate the trainees alone.

Springfield College was one of only two institutions in the country, along with the University of Iowa, selected to help develop physical fitness standards for Air Corps trainees. Dr. Leonard A. Larson, the director of health and physical education at the college, traveled to Washington, D.C., to learn about the purpose and goals of the tests. He then worked on trialing these tests on campus.

The 323rd College Training Detachment became a visible part of the local community. Cadets marched in Springfield's 1943 Independence Day parade alongside a drum and bugle corps made up of soldiers, using instruments donated or loaned by local residents. The detachment also hosted an open house where the public could observe military training demonstrations.

The federal government provided Springfield College with \$90,000 to upgrade facilities for Air Corps training after the college's selection in March 1943. However, by spring 1944, the program was discontinued as military training needs shifted.

Soon after, the college transitioned into a new role. It signed a contract with the U.S. Navy to operate a Naval Special Hospital. With an additional \$75,000 in federal funding, campus buildings were converted for medical use. Alumni Hall became the hospital itself, while former dormitories were used for administration and housing for nurses and WAVES. The hospital began receiving patients in September 1944 and could accommodate up to 500 service members.

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

1. What role did colleges like Springfield College and American International College play in military recruitment?
2. How did the Civil Air Patrol support recruitment efforts?
3. What were the Navy V-1, V-5, and V-7 programs designed to do?
4. How did Springfield College support education and training on the homefront?
5. *By the Numbers*: What was the purpose of the V-7 program, and how were the recruitment efforts connected to Springfield?
6. *Quotations to Consider*: How do these excerpts describe the changes on campus at Springfield College due to the Army and Navy's presence?

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Teacher Note: You can help your students compare the experience at Springfield College to examples of military training at other higher education institutions on the homefront. Other Heritage Cities who have examples of this include [Tempe, Arizona](#) (Lesson 1) and [Johnson County and Warrensburg, Missouri](#) (Lesson 2). You may also use the lesson "[The Tuskegee Airmen: Training and Stateside Experiences \(Teaching with Historic Places\)](#)" for students to learn about training in the US Army Air Corps for African American service members at the Tuskegee Institute.

Army Air Corps To Send 500 to SC This Month

Preparations Being Made at College to Shelter and Feed Cadets

The Springfield Republican, March 13, 1943

Five hundred army air corps cadets will be converging on Springfield College before the first of April to start a five-months' course of intensive training, Dr. Ernest M. Best, college president, announced late last night.

Although a formal contract from the government has not been received, Dr. Best reported that communications from official sources at Boston and Washington indicate the local college had been approved by army officers following an inspection of the campus facilities last Saturday. These officers made it clear that a contingent of 500 cadets must be prepared for before April 1.

Preparations Begin

Faculty members and administrative officers, assisted by battalions of students, yesterday began evacuation of all rooms in Alumni hall, the newest and largest dormitory, which will

be used by the newcomers. The changeover will embrace moving of laboratories and classrooms and even some offices.

Dr. Best does not anticipate the new training program will interfere materially with the regular student body or courses which will be carried on as usual. There may be some cases where consolidation or adjustments will have to be made, but the college plans, he said, to continue its regular curriculum for the spring and summer terms under the accelerated plan on which it has been operating for the past year which will offer to boys under 18 the usual sound liberal arts foundation to prepare them for induction into any branch of the services, with particular stress placed on mathematics, physics and chemistry. All courses now being offered for part-time students working for additional degrees will go forward without interference, he declared.

The sudden influx of 500 cadets poses many major problems which the entire college personnel is working on, Dr. Best related. Many members of the faculty will teach courses other than those they usually have and in addition he estimated that some 15 or 20 instructors will have to be added to the full-time faculty to handle the student load. According to Dr. Best, members of the regular faculty prepared for such a happening several weeks ago by indicating additional subjects required in the army training program which they are qualified to teach.

Old Dorm for Regulars

All regular students possible will be housed in the building affectionately known on the campus as the 'Old Dorm.' The two top floors of this building are still in use as a dormitory, but the first and second floors have long been given over to administrative offices and classrooms. It is planned to give over most of the second floor to dormitory rooms again to provide the greatest possible student capacity to the building without major alterations for which there is no time. Two houses on the campus known as Doggett hall and 'The Cottage' will be used as usual for dormitory purposes, but Dr. Best said last night that if the student body returns to the campus as expected on Monday for the spring term, a number of them may have to live off campus in nearby homes.

The feeding of the 500 cadets in addition to the regular student body – even though the latter is naturally greatly reduced by war conditions – will be done in the college cafeteria in Woods Hall through expanded facilities, he said. A very large room on the second floor now used as a classroom – the largest on the campus – will be converted into a third dining hall and facilities provided there for the serving of the floor. College authorities believe that these changes and additions to the kitchen equipment, will permit feeding the entire cadet body at one sitting.

Dr. Best said that from conversations with military officials he had reason to believe that the preliminary air training of the cadets both on ground and dual flying was to be given by Harry Hermann, local pilot and flying instructor, at some nearby airport. The college will be responsible for all training of the boys, he said, except for this and military drill, which will be in the hands of the officers who will accompany them.

Questions for Reading 2 and Photos

1. What was the approximate time between the announcement of the training program and the cadets' arrival? What does this rapid preparation show you about urgency during wartime?
2. What changes did the college make to prepare for the arrival of the cadets?
3. What responsibilities did the college have in training the cadets compared to the military?
4. What challenges might the college have faced in balancing civilian education with military training on the same campus?
5. If you were a college student in Springfield in 1943, how might the war have impacted your education, career choices, or daily life? Connect to details from Readings 1 and 2.
6. *Photos:* Are these photos typical college campus scenes? How do the details in the photos connect to the Readings so far? *[Check out the extension activity to watch footage of the cadets on campus!]*

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Miss Sydell in Naval Service

The Springfield Girl Hopes to Enter WAVES Radio Field
Springfield Evening Union, March 3, 1943

Miss Lillian Adelson Sydell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sydell of Chestnut Street, is one of the latest additions to the fast growing number of enlisted WAVES from Springfield. She was sworn into the naval service on Monday at the Women's Reserve office in Boston.

Miss Sydell is really happy about the fact that she is now a WAVE and ready to do a full-sized job for the United States in the place the Navy chooses to place her. If Lillian has any say in the matter, she will take up radio, a field that is not only interesting, but the thing of the future, according to the young Springfield WAVE.

Prior to enlisting in the WAVES she has been active as a volunteer in the city's branch of the American Red Cross and USO activities. She has also been doing a good job of knitting for



Figure 11: A U.S. Navy photo published in *The Springfield Evening Union*, March 3, 1943, alongside Reading 3.

the Yanks overseas and will continue this whenever she has a spare moment. Besides all these activities she found time to help out in the home while her mother participated in the Air Warden service.

Being an only child she thinks it vitally important that she be 'smart' by doing a good work in the WAVES. She readily explained to naval recruiters that she had no brothers to be on the line of action so she chose to do her bit to help out the boys at the front. Several of Miss Sydell's friends have already enlisted in the WAVES and are now in training schools throughout the country. At present she is awaiting assignment from the Navy Department to her place of training.

Other girls from this area, between the age of 20 and 36, may get in on the 'smart list' if they apply to the Navy Recruiting Station here for enlistment. Women are accepted as WAVES either married or single. When married they must not have children under 18 years of age or be married to a man in the naval service.

The local Navy Recruiting Station is open daily between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. to interview applicants for the WAVES. A good slogan for the month of March in Springfield, according to Navy recruiters would be, 'Join the WAVES and Prove How Smart you ARE.'

Questions for Reading 3

1. How did Sydell volunteer for the war effort prior to enlisting in the WAVES?
2. What reasons did Sydell give for joining the WAVES?
3. In what ways does this article act as recruitment or propaganda for the WAVES program?
4. How might having a local recruiting station and military recruiters in Springfield influence women's decisions to enlist?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did the military presence and training in Springfield support the war effort?

Additional reflection question: Do you think the local presence of the military and training impacted daily life in Springfield? Why or why not, and in what ways, if so?

Extension

Exploring Springfield College Campus Film Reels

The Archives and Special Collections at Springfield College has digitized, colorized campus film reels of the Army Air Corps cadets on campus. The following can be used to watch with students to take notes on what they observe and to connect to the readings.

[Marching Men on the Campus film \(reel 1\), 1943](#) (12:18)

[Marching Men on the Campus film \(reel 2\), 1943](#) (16:39)

[Marching Men on the Campus film \(reel 3\), 1943](#) (7:50)

[Marching Men on the Campus film \(reel 4\), 1943](#) (7:13)

Lesson 3: Wartime Nursing and Hospitals in Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Springfield, Massachusetts, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson provides readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the role of nursing training and recruitment in Springfield. This includes the Cadet Nurse Corps training at local hospitals to meet wartime demands on the home front and abroad. Springfield College was also the site of a Naval Hospital that had nursing staff.

Objectives:

1. Explain how the Cadet Nurse Corps aimed to meet the wartime demand for nurses and how hospitals in Springfield supported the training.
2. Describe the roles and impact of cadet nurses and nurses in Springfield during the war.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 12-18 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of Massachusetts with Springfield marked



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did nursing and training at local hospitals help meet wartime needs on the home front and overseas?

Photos



Figure 12: Postcard with caption "Mercy Hospital, Springfield, Mass." Published by The Springfield News Company. Credit: Digital Commonwealth – Massachusetts Collection Online.



Figure 13: "Cadet Nurses Receive Caps" from the Springfield Daily News on June 24, 1944. The two nurses receiving their caps are twins Constance and Carolyne Grasso who entered the Cadet Nurse Corps at Springfield hospital in January 1944. Placing the caps are Ethel Erickson and Gertrude Wieland, senior nursing students who entered the school prior to the cadet corps being established.



Figure 14: “Be a Cadet Nurse. The girl with a future!” Caption below image reads “A lifetime education free for high school graduates who qualify. For information write or call Greater Boston Nursing Council, U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps., 261 Franklin St., Liberty 8515, Boston 10, Massachusetts.” From the U.S. Public Health Service. Credit: Boston Public Library, Digital Commonwealth – Massachusetts Collection Online.



By the numbers: The Cadet Nurse Corps Nationwide

- Over \$150 million in federal funds was invested into the Cadet Nurse Corps program when it was signed into law on July 1, 1943. Funding provided scholarships and stipends to the students and was used to upgrade facilities at nursing schools.
- The funding was provided to all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, and all nursing schools. 21 African American nursing schools benefited, along with 38 programs that were integrated.

- Because of this, 3,000 nurses of color were able to join the Cadet Nurse Corps, and an estimated 200 Japanese American women joined the Corps as well.
- Nationally, there were more than 180,000 student nurses in the Cadet Nurse Corps serving 2,000 hospitals by the end of the war.
- Surgeon General Thomas Parran testified to the House of Military Affairs in February 1945 that about 80% of nurses at hospitals nationwide were student nurses replacing graduated nurses.



Quotations to consider:

“A total of 123 trained nurses are now serving in either the army or navy nurse corps from the Springfield area. . . Mercy hospital has 44 nurses represented in the army and eight in the navy. . . while Springfield hospital has 27 graduates in the army and 23 in the navy nurse corps. Wesson Memorial hospital has four nurses in the army nurse corps.”

- Mrs. George Burke, chairman of the Springfield Red Cross nurse recruitment committee, quoted in *The Springfield Republican* on September 3, 1943 [Note: *These were the numbers at the time. The Cadet Nurse Corps had been signed into law only two months prior.*]

“Will you—appeal to every nurse’s aide in your community to hold the line? Tell her she has received valuable training, that hospitals and patients alike have learned to depend on her, that the shortage of nursing personnel and other personnel is still acute, that as casualties overseas mount, and as hospitals abroad and at home require more skilled nursing care for more of the wounded, the way for her to serve best is to continue doing the work for which she has been trained – and if possible work longer hours.

Then will you try to recruit more nurses’ aides? Thousands of women have not yet seriously considered the service they could render in this way.”

- Mrs. Douglas V. Wallace, chairman of the Nurse’s Aide Corps of the Springfield Chapter, American Red Cross, quoted in *The Springfield Evening Union* on August 25, 1944



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

Teacher Note: The article "[Cadet Nurse Corps](#)" from the National Park Service can be used as a background text to this reading.

120 Girls Join Nurse Corps At Hospitals Here

84 Cadets Enrolled in Course at Springfield Training School

The Springfield Republican, June 15, 1944

A corps of 84 cadet nurses is now in training at Springfield hospital school of nursing, Miss Daphne Corbett, director of students, reported today.

As a result of recruiting for the corps and the admission of three new classes a year instead of two, enrollment in the nursing school has doubled in the past two years, Miss Corbett said.

The cadet nurses receive their training at government expense, and are given a monthly allowance in addition. At the time they enroll in the corps, they are required to promise to remain in the nursing field for the duration.

The majority of the 84 cadets at Springfield hospital are still in the pre-cadet classification. Those who have completed nine months of their 30-month training have been advanced to the rank of junior cadets. There are no advanced or senior cadets in Springfield.

38 at Mercy

In addition to the 84 cadets at Springfield hospital, 38 have been enrolled in the newest class at Mercy hospital, bringing to more than 120 the total number of girls now training under the program in the city.

The cadet nurse program was started by the government in an effort to increase the depleted ranks of nurses for duty in hospitals, industrial plants and public health services on the home front, and to meet heavy demands for additional nurses from the armed services.

Cadets are allowed to choose, when they complete training, the type of nursing service they will enter. The Greater Springfield Council for Nursing Service in Wartime, which has directed the placement of graduate nurses in places where they will be needed most, has been in charge of the program of recruiting cadet nurses in Springfield.

Campaign Gets Results

With government estimates that one out of every nine girls now graduating from high school must enter the nursing profession if wartime demands are to be met, the council and the nursing schools have waged a campaign in the high schools that has resulted in increased enrollments in both local nursing schools and in a heavy flood of applications from girls still in high school.

The next class of nursing students will enter Springfield hospital in September, and applications for admission are heavy, both from girls eager to enroll in the cadet nurse corps and from those who are entering as regular students.

Girls do not have to become cadet nurses before they enter training, it was pointed out. They can make the decision to sign up with the corps after they have started their courses.

The cadets receive regular nursing education, but at the expense of the government.

While official uniforms have been selected for girls enrolled as cadet nurses, those in Springfield have not yet received them, Miss Corbett said. The uniforms can be worn whenever the girls want to wear them, according to regulations, but wearing them is not compulsory. They will probably not make their appearance in Springfield until mid-July.

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

1. At the time of the article, how many cadet nurses were training at both Springfield and Mercy Hospitals?
2. What were the requirements of the Cadet Nurse Corps?
3. How does the statistic of “one out of every nine girls” connect to the nursing labor shortage? Why was it important for the government to invest in nursing during wartime?
4. *By the Numbers*: Describe the overall impact of the federal funding of the Cadet Nurse Corps on meeting wartime needs and providing opportunities to women.
5. *Quotations to Consider*: Why do you think Wallace was appealing to women only for nurse’s aides? How is this reflective of both gender norms and home front labor shortages at the time?
6. *Photos*: What do you notice and wonder about the photos? What details on the Cadet Nurse Corps poster might have been appealing to women at the time?

Photos: Naval Hospital at Springfield College



Figure 15: US Naval Hospital Staff at Springfield College on October 1, 1944. Five of the twelve staff members pictured are women. They worked as WAVES, nurses, and in administration at the hospital. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 16: "Mrs. Mildred Emery, College Nurse at Springfield College" during the time of the Naval Hospital on the Springfield College campus. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 17: A nurse making beds at the US Naval special hospital at Springfield College. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 18: A soldier receiving treatment from a nurse at the Naval Hospital. The hospital was opened in 1944 and remained open postwar until the summer of 1946. This photo was taken in February 1946. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Teacher Note: [Lesson 2](#) of this Springfield lesson series shares more background about the role of military training and the army and navy presence at Springfield College during the war. The Naval Hospital was launched in 1944 following the end of the Army Air Corps training taking place there. This reading points to the idea that the military trained nurses not only for overseas assignments, but also military hospitals on the home front. The article also mentions corpsmen working at the hospital. During the war, Navy hospital corpsmen provided medical care in naval hospitals by assisting doctors and nurses, treating patients, administering medications, changing bandages, and helping manage hospital operations. Many corpsmen also served in combat zones with the Marine Corps.

Full Hospital Force on Duty

Capt. Riordan Announces 262 Patients at College

The Springfield Evening Union, October 12, 1944

Full complement of nurses and corpsmen are now on duty at the United States Naval Hospital, at Springfield College, with 12 nurses stationed there and 75 corpsmen. Patients now number 262 and are all that will be received until construction work on the campus has been completed. It will be two months according to Capt. John F. Riordan, commanding officer, before the full 500 patients which the hospital is due to receive, will be assigned there.

Stating that construction work on the buildings is progressing rapidly, Capt. Riordan this morning said, however, that it would be impossible to bring the hospital up to full strength until 'the contractors got out from underfoot.' Construction still underway on the Old Dorm where administrative offices will be located, makes it impossible to handle the necessary clerical work which would be involved with 500 patients.

During the month in which the hospital has been in operation, 10 of the original patients have been discharged. Capt. Riordan said that he anticipates about 40 percent of all patients will be given medical discharges from the Navy and the remaining 60 percent will be returned to duty.

Commenting on Scuttlebut, the campus pet, formerly known as G.I., when the Army Air Corps trainees occupied the campus, Capt. Riordan said, 'That dog used to be a friend of mine. Now he ignores me. He has too many friends now to devote any attentions to me though during the summer before the boys arrived, he and I were pals.'

Questions for Reading 2 and Photos

1. Where was the United States Naval Hospital located?
2. Why was the hospital not yet operating at full capacity at the time of the article?
3. How is the Naval Hospital an example of the quick tempo of home front development and transformation by the military?
4. Using the Reading and Photos, how do you think nurses and [WAVES](#) supported the operations of the hospital?
5. Why might the newspaper include both serious updates alongside the story of the dog? (*Hint: Consider the role of publications in sharing news and building morale.*)

Reading 3: Opinion Piece from Newspaper

More Nurses?

Springfield Evening Union, January 23, 1945

The present need is for many more trained nurses in the armed forces. Whether Congress will decide that they should be drafted is a question. The consensus in Washington seems to be that no nurses draft legislation will go through, for a time at least. The chief objection is that it is discriminatory, in that it aims to force one group or class or profession into the service, while applying force to no other.

The Cadet Nurse Corps was designed to enroll a large force of student nurses in the established hospital training schools all over the country. Several thousands of fine young women already are members of this organization, which has a stepped-up program designed to produce qualified nurses in 30 months. This cuts six months from the normal training period. A cadet nurse receives her board and clothes, plus some of the necessary supplies, and is paid \$15 a month. Now it is argued in some quarters that if she were paid \$50 or even more, there would be no difficulty in enrolling twice as many young women as are in the Corps at present.

Girls who enroll in the Cadet Nurse Corps assure themselves of a bright future, for they are learning an excellent profession. They are sacrificing something of their present for the satisfaction of earning a bright future. But many young women simply cannot afford to enlist. They must have more than \$15 a month. And the temptation is great to enter a war plant, and earn twice or three times, in one week, the salary a cadet nurse receives in a month.

All this discussion is of no help in solving the current pressing need for nurses, of course. But if we are to need many more nurses three years hence, perhaps these ideas are worth consideration.

Questions for Reading 3

1. Why does the author say there was opposition to drafting nurses into military service?
2. How did the Cadet Nurse Corps attempt to solve the nursing shortage?
3. Why does the author think higher pay might have increased enrollment in the Cadet Nurse Corps? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
4. How does this opinion piece connect to other economic and social issues on the home front?
5. Consider the wartime opportunities available to women in nursing, war industry jobs, and military service. Which option would have been most appealing to you, and why?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did nursing and training at local hospitals help meet wartime needs on the home front and overseas?

Additional Resources

[“Alumni Hall Provides a Strong Background of Rich History,”](#) from The Springfield Student (2015)

[“Cadet Nurse Corps”](#) (National Park Service)

[“Creating the Cadet Nurse Corps for World War II,”](#) by Alexandra Lord (2016), Smithsonian National Museum of American History

[“Military Nurses During World War II”](#) (National Park Service)

[“Nurses are needed; the U. S. Cadet nurse corps, U. S. Public health service offers girls an extraordinary opportunity for a free professional nursing education . . .”](#) from the United States Office of War Information (1944), archived by the Library of Congress

[“Places of World War II History in Springfield, MA”](#) (National Park Service)

Lesson 4: Springfield, Massachusetts: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Springfield, Massachusetts](#) designated as a [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photos, readings and a culminating project. The first reading shares about the Springfield Armory but connects to larger home front topics of labor shortages, wartime manufacturing, and women taking on new roles. The second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. The culminating project supports learners in exploring and sharing information about Springfield, Massachusetts as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine themes from the other lessons in the [collection](#). This is to summarize the city's contributions and encourage connections to overall home front efforts.

Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Describe the impact of the Springfield Armory and wartime production in Springfield.
- b. Explain the wartime contributions of women in Springfield – in areas such as nursing, military service, and manufacturing at the Armory.
- c. Describe the role of Springfield in supporting home front training efforts, including for the military and nursing.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences between Springfield and other Heritage city(s) or World War II home front(s).

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 19-24 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 25 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 Springfield Armory and wartime production in Springfield.
 - b. Explain the wartime contributions of women in Springfield – in areas such as nursing, military service, and manufacturing at the Armory.
 - c. Describe the role of Springfield in supporting home front training efforts, including for the military and nursing.
 - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences between Springfield and other Heritage city(s) or 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 Springfield chosen as a World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities to and differences from other home front cities?

Photos



Figure 19: "Springfield Armory, home of the Garand rifle." The sign above the rifles on display also reads "Skilled Craftsmanship since 1794." Photo by Leslie R. Jones (Leslie Jones Collection, Boston Public Library). Photo courtesy of the Family of Leslie R. Jones.



Figure 20: "Springfield Armory, home of the Garand rifle." A worker works on rifle assembly. Photo by Leslie R. Jones (Leslie Jones Collection, Boston Public Library). Photo courtesy of the Family of Leslie R. Jones.

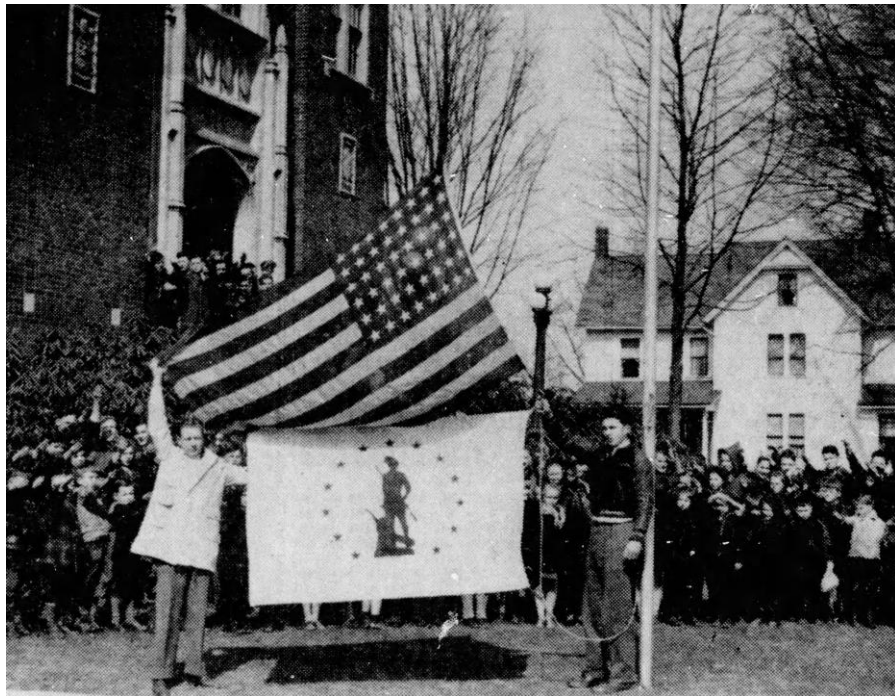


Figure 21: A Minute-Man flag raised at the St. Thomas School in West Springfield. It was the first school in Massachusetts to fly the flag, with 95% of the children at the school having purchased war savings bonds and stamps. *The Springfield Republican*, March 22, 1943.

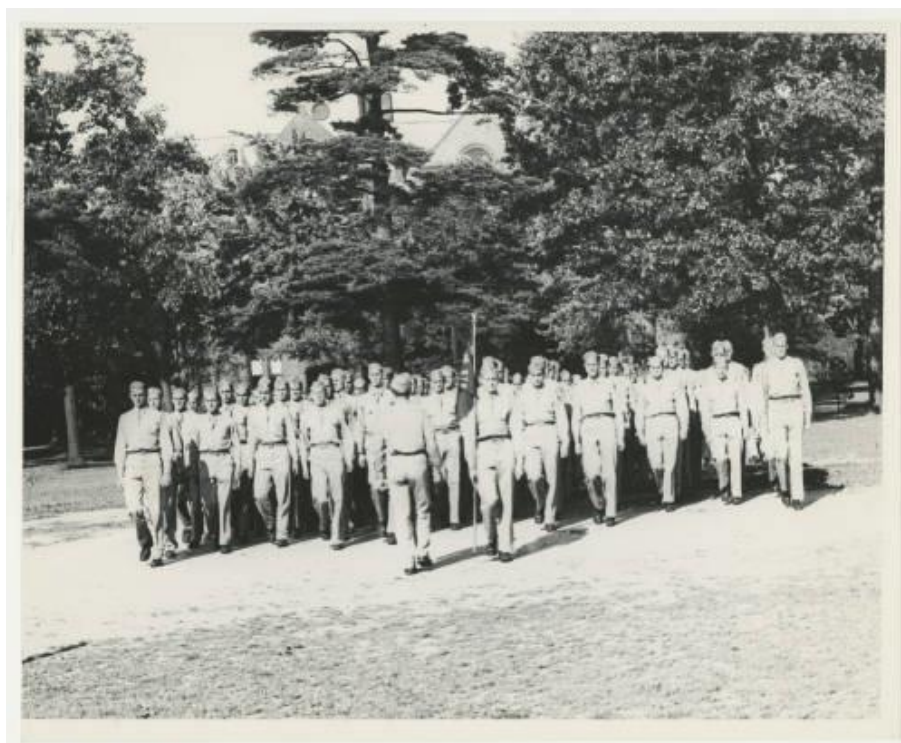


Figure 22: "Soldiers marching in formation." July 1943. Army Air Corps trainees marching in formation on the campus of Springfield College. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 23: "Newly arrived patients in front of Woods Hall." October 1944. The photo shows new patients, mostly Navy Sailors, on the campus of Springfield College and appeared in a college story about the Naval Hospital on campus. Courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections.



Figure 24: "Future Service Nurses." The photo shows cadet nurses from Mercy and Springfield Hospitals at a Red Cross nurse recruiting event at the Museum of Fine Arts auditorium. The Springfield Daily Republican, February 23, 1945.



By the numbers: Other examples of wartime industries in Springfield

- The Indian Motorcycle Company received a \$500,000 motorcycle order in December 1940. At this point it had 500 employees and manufactured motorcycles for not only

the United States but also countries such as Canada, the Netherlands, and Thailand.

- American Bosch had 7000 employees across its Springfield, Massachusetts and Providence, Rhode Island plants. The company produced military and naval aviation equipment. It increased monthly production from 600 magnetos (a type of generator used in planes) to a peak of 54,000 complete magnetos and spare parts.
- Westinghouse Electric, a company that produced commercial refrigeration, coolers, and other electric devices, received a \$944,000 contract to produce bomb fuses for the army, as reported in January 1941.
- The Milton Bradley Company cut its board game line from 410 to 150 titles, and created game kits for soldiers, along with supporting production of a joint used in the landing gear of fighter planes. Game kits for soldiers brought in \$2 million alone in revenue for the company.

Reading 1: Newspaper Article Excerpts

Teacher Tip: Reading A and B are to help students recognize broader home front patterns during the war that connect to the [Springfield Armory](#). The readings relate to labor shortages, wartime manufacturing, and women taking on new roles. The texts highlight larger ideas on how the war reshaped everyday life, work, and gender roles on the home front.

Part A: Springfield Teachers Win Praise From Executives for Their Work in War Plants

Largest Number Employed at Armory During Their Summer Vacation and Say They Enjoyed the Experience

The Springfield Daily Republican, September 19, 1943

By Mary Linda Belfant

From teacher's desk to work bench, laboratory or inspector's job: This transition to soldiers of production was made during the past summer by more than 75 instructors in the Springfield public schools. They found employment in every war plant in the city, with the largest number, almost 30, working at Springfield Armory. They were joined there, at Westinghouse, Milton Bradley, Stevens Arms, American Bosch, Perkins Machine and Gear, Van Norman Machine tool, and in other plants by more teachers from Westfield, Agawam, Florence, Northampton and practically every other Western Massachusetts community. Two young women teachers came from Vermont and a man from North Carolina. Other

men and women went from the classroom to local stores and offices to help relieve the manpower shortage.

Definite figures are lacking as to the total number of local teachers who worked in war industries this summer. Many registered through the Trade school placement bureau, some through the Bureau of Adult Education and Placement of the public school system, and others found their jobs through the assistance of friends already employed. But even if the conservative estimate of 75 is accepted, their contribution in man hours toward the war program is impressive. All worked full shifts for periods ranging from six to nine weeks, the majority as learners so that the financial return was definitely secondary.

Praised by Executives

Executives at the Armory and in the other war plants agree that the teachers have made a fine contribution. They were reluctant to see them leave when classes began once more after the long summer recess. They welcomed the decision of several of the men teachers to continue at least for a time to work a half shift at the Armory and at other plants where this arrangement is possible. They would be glad to have the women remain on the same terms, but for many of them the school schedule is too demanding to permit an additional 24 hours weekly.

The men and women, who worked side by side with their children's teachers, through the hot summer days and nights at the Armory and in other plants, are also wholehearted in their praise.

'We thought the teachers would put on airs,' one woman said, 'but they were just as friendly and nice as they could be. One of the teachers in my department worked so hard she made us all hurry to keep up with her.'

For the teachers themselves, especially the women, many of whom have never worked outside the classroom, it has been a broadening experience. With no exceptions, they plan to return next summer if the need still exists. The women teachers went into the Armory and other war plants against the advice of well-meaning friends who warned them [of the] factory.

All the women teachers agree that their friends' fears were in vain. They found that they were not only able to work in a factory but that they enjoyed the companionship of their fellow workers.

'None of the men and women I worked with was uncooperative,' one of the women teachers commented. 'I had a bench job, and the other teacher and I in the room liked working with the men and women regularly employed there. The men especially seemed to

get quite a kick out of having teachers working with them. I remember one very hot day Joe, who worked at the bench next to me, got up to turn the electric fan more in my direction.

”Turn it your way, Joe,” I urged. “You look so hot.”

“No, no,” Joe replied, moving the fan so that I’d get cooled off as much as possible, “our teachers must be comfortable.”

Part B: Springfield Housewives Take Part-Time War Work All in Day’s Stride

Women Arrange Home Schedules and Join the Production Line on the ‘Apron Shift’

The Springfield Daily Republican, November 7, 1943

By Madeline Ball

Housewives who add a split shift of work in a war factory to their daily job of homemaking stand out as a peculiar phenomenon of World War 2. Mother has become so geared up to the war effort that you can even find her working on Garand rifles on a four-hour trick between baby’s mealtimes. Women’s knack – some call it fault – of doing several things at once, which is the essence of a housekeeper’s job, finally comes to roost on the battle line. As a ‘soldier of production’ the housewife finds she can add half a day’s work in a war plant to the family wash, housecleaning, cooking and child care and take it in her stride. Numbers of Springfield women are doing it – and many say they love it.

If your neighbor mysteriously disappears from her usual haunts of an afternoon, if she doesn’t drop in to call as she used to or isn’t available for the movies, like as not she’s gone to work at Springfield Armory’s 3-7 p.m. shift. Or if your customary evening bridge game is broken up because a fourth player is missing, look for the culprit at a milling machine or inspection bench. She’s doing duty on the 7-11 shift and finds helping to create a gun for a soldier boy to fire a most satisfying way to spend those evening hours, especially if hubby is on the all-night shift . . .

Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, and Photos

Part A:

1. Why were teachers needed in war plants during the summer? How did this experience differ from their usual jobs?
2. How does the article describe the relationship between teachers and other workers?

Part B:

3. What does the idea of the “apron shift” show about expectations for women at the time?
4. Why does the article describe these women as “soldiers of production”?
5. What can be inferred about the impact of war on daily life for families, and women in particular? What additional challenges might the women have faced?

Part A and B:

6. How would these articles have been used as wartime propaganda? Consider the author’s tone and details.
7. How do both articles show major home front patterns in Springfield during the war? Connect the identified topics to details in the text. (Ex. labor shortages, wartime manufacturing, changing roles of women)
8. *By the Numbers:* What do these statistics show about how industries in Springfield shifted to meet wartime demands?
9. *Photos:* Describe how each photo connects to Springfield’s designation as a Heritage City. What other types of photos might you include to share about the city’s wartime efforts and [places that contributed](#)?
10. How did home front employment and training in Springfield support the US and the Allies? Consider both information from this text and from past lessons.



Quotations to consider:

“ . . . Many people have been served eviction notices after they were ordered to move from their homes for one reason or another, because they could not find new places in which to move.

Reason for many of the families wanting to move is that in many cases their rent has been raised considerably and they cannot afford to pay sharply increased rentals, the realtor said. . . . The realtor said he knew of one case in which one family’s inability to find an adequate home to which to move is holding back four other families. Two of them have been served eviction writs because they have stayed in the property beyond the expiration date of legal notices to move. . . He said the lack of housing is becoming so serious that real estate owners may yet have to make apartments in the basements of many blocks and that many families would have to move in with others, doubling up because of the lack of separate home units.”

- “Gain in Eviction Orders Indicates Acute Housing Shortage in Springfield,” *The Springfield Republican*, July 31, 1941

“Social agencies know of families of six living in one room. . . The situation is especially severe for families with children and many families have been separated because of their inability to find housing. The shortage extends all the way up the economic scale, high rent housing being almost as scarce as low rent houses. . . .

Undoubtedly the Negroes in Springfield as a group suffer more acutely from the housing situation than the average of the general population. Facilities for recreation and informal education of Negroes are also more meager and inadequate than for the average population.”

- “War Strain Hitting Mental, Physical Health of Local People, Study Group Finds,” *Springfield Evening Union*, June 8, 1942

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 2 and Quotations to Consider

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. What contributed to the growth and development of Springfield?
3. *Quotations to Consider:* a) How do these describe the impact of housing shortages on families in Springfield? b) What do these suggest about inequality during the housing crisis, particularly for African American families?
4. Why do you think Springfield was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Connect details from the bill and evidence from the first reading, and/or other readings from the lessons.
5. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

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 Springfield Armory and wartime production in Springfield.
- b. Explain the wartime contributions of women in Springfield – in areas such as nursing, military service, and manufacturing at the Armory.
- c. Describe the role of Springfield in supporting home front training efforts, including for the military and nursing.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences between Springfield and other Heritage city(s) or 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 Springfield, Massachusetts 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 25: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

Acknowledgment

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