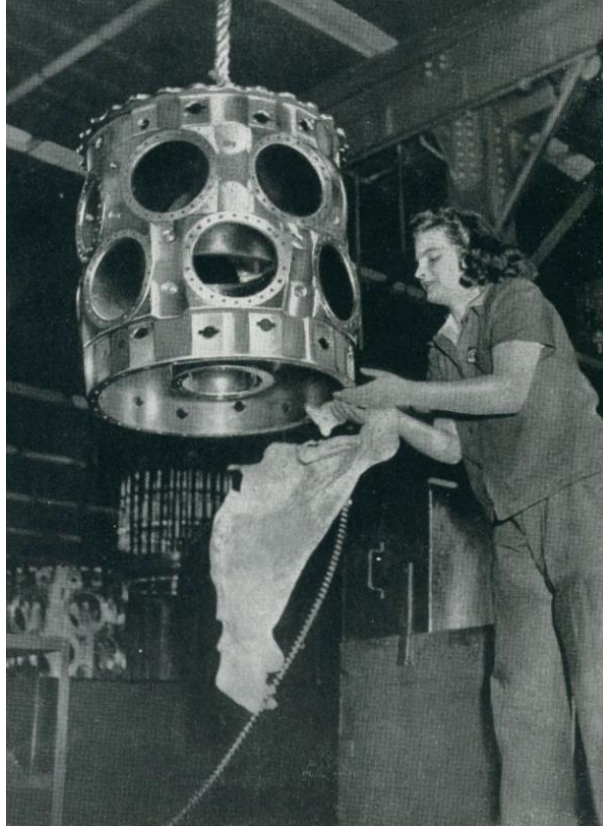


# Yonkers, New York WWII Heritage City

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



*Figure 1: Woman worker at Otis Elevator Company in Yonkers, New York polishing surfaces. Planes were built using materials produced by Otis Elevator Company. (From "War Production" by Otis Elevator Company (1947), Credit: Yonkers Public Library*

## Introduction

The three lessons, along with a culminating fourth lesson, support student understanding of the significance of [Yonkers, New York](#), as a [World War II Heritage City](#). The first lesson explores local industries that contributed to wartime manufacturing—often shifting from peacetime production to the creation of military goods. The second lesson examines education and training programs developed to support home defense and industrial needs. The third lesson highlights civilian involvement on the home front, including youth participation in initiatives such as victory gardens, material drives, and the U.S.O. Throughout the lessons, a variety of primary and secondary sources are used, including photos and data, to deepen historical understanding.

## 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 supports students in summarizing the contributions of Yonkers and supports comparison to other World War II home front cities in a culminating activity.

### 1. [War Manufacturing in Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City \(p. 5\)](#)

- Economic and population growth
- Women in the workforce
- Manufacturing and industry
- Civilian workforce

### 2. [Wartime Training and Education in Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City \(p. 17\)](#)

- Civilian workforce
- Civil Aeronautics Authority
- Women in the workforce
- Trades
- Defense
- Vocational schools

### 3. [Home Front Volunteerism in Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City \(p. 27\)](#)

- Civilian volunteerism
- Victory gardens
- War funds
- Material drives

- Youth contributions
- United Service Organizations (U.S.O.)

#### 4. [Yonkers, New York: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 36\)](#)

## 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 New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework (as of February 2017). Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

**Time period:** World War II

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

### United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

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

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

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

### Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

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

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society
- Theme 9: Global Connections

### Relevant Common Core Standards

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

### Key Ideas and Details

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

### Craft and Structure

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

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

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

## New York State Standards

### New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework

The lessons align to Reading and Writing Standards for Literacy in History / Social Studies, and to the following areas defined by the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework (as of February 2017).

#### Grade 8: History of the United States and New York State II

8.6. World War II: The aggression of the Axis powers threatened United States security and led its entry into World War II. The nature and consequences of warfare during World War II transformed the United States and the global community. . .

#### Grade 10: Global History and Geography II

##### *1914 – Present: Crisis and Achievement in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

10.5 Unresolved Global Conflict (1914-1945): World War I and World War II led to geopolitical changes, human and environmental devastation, and attempts to bring stability and peace.

#### Grade 11: United States History and Government

11.8. World War II (1935 – 1945): The participation of the United States in World War II was a transformative event for the nation and its role in the world.

*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: War Manufacturing in Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson includes readings and photographs to help students understand wartime industry and manufacturing in the area. Students will explore how local manufacturers adapted to meet wartime demands. The lesson also highlights the increasing employment of women in local factories to address labor shortages.

## Objectives:

1. Explain the impact of wartime manufacturing on workforce and industrial development in Yonkers.
2. Describe how local manufacturers contributed to the U.S. and the Allied forces, and how they adapted to do so.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on wartime industries to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-6 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension reading)
3. *Recommended:* Map of New York, with Yonkers marked



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did manufacturing and industry in Yonkers contribute to the war effort on the home front?

## Photos



Figure 2: Miss Alene Demchak, worker at Cameo Curtains, Inc., demonstrates the making of a bomb parachute to three service members who came to speak to employees: Pvt Vintalore, Pvt Busick, and Sgt Mytych. (*The Herald Statesman*, July 29, 1943)



Figure 3: The Cameo Curtain Manufacturing Company won an Army-Navy "E" Production award. (*The Herald Statesman*, March 4, 1944)



Figure 4: A wooden tug boat launched in the Hudson River at the Arther Blair Shipyards in Yonkers. The boats were commissioned by the U.S. Maritime Commission for service in foreign waters. High ranking officers of the armed services and city officials were part of the launch ceremony. (*The Herald Statesman*, August 9, 1943)

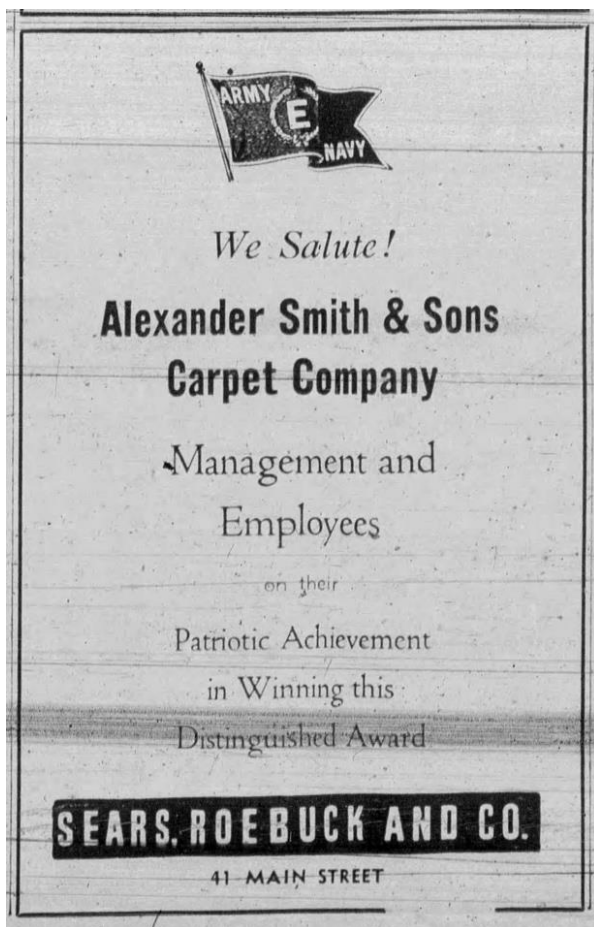


Figure 5: An example of companies congratulating local manufacturers for receiving wartime awards. This shows a Sears, Roebuck and Co. Congratulatory ad to Alexander Smith & Sons Company for their Army-Navy "E" production award. (*The Herald Statesman*, November 22, 1943)

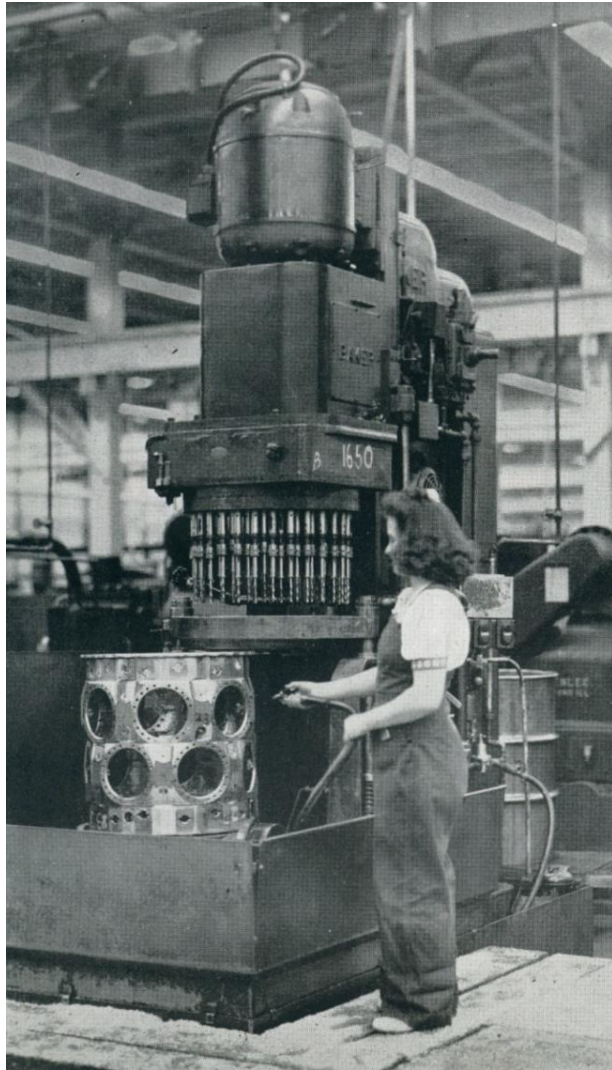


Figure 6: Woman worker cleans equipment at Otis Elevator Company. (From "War Production" by Otis Elevator Company (1947), Credit: Yonkers Public Library)



## By the numbers: Examples of wartime production in Yonkers

- In just a two-week period in June 1940, before the United States officially entered the war, Yonkers plants received a total of \$808,871 in Army and Navy contracts. This included a \$595,005 order placed with the Habirshaw Cable and Wire Company to produce Signal Corps wire and cable for the Navy. Campbell and Sons Hat Factory also received contracts to supply more than 70,000 Army and Navy hats, with the order valued at over \$150,000. ("War Contracts That Come to Yonkers," *The Herald Statesman*, June 26, 1940)

- By September 16, 1942, Cameo Curtains had received government orders for 2,902,000 mattress covers. The cotton material was supplied by the government, and Cameo was responsible solely for the manufacturing.  
(“Cameo Curtains Get Another Big War Order,” *The Herald Statesman*, September 16, 1943)
- Arthur Blair Shipyards, at the Yonkers City Recreation Pier, repaired around 650 cargo vessels and tankers. This was alongside building Seamobiles and converting ships for military use.
- During the war, Alexander Smith and Sons Carpet Mill in Yonkers produced 44 million square yards of canvas duck (a durable fabric used for tents and outdoor military use), 9 million square yards of blankets, and 1,227,242 bunks for troop transport. The company manufactured more than 20,000 duffle bags and sea bags for military use, alongside several other types of items.  
(“Radar Parts Produced at Rug Mill,” *The Herald Statesman*, August 13, 1945)



### Quotations to consider:

“It is cheering to find that Yonkers industries are experiencing a substantial boom in operations, but it is a sorry situation that finds war as the cause of that upswing. Yet, since it is universally agreed that the nation must prepare for its defense against all contingencies, the fact that Yonkers is getting a share of the defense orders makes the nature of the pickup less disheartening.

Since the country must prepare, it is gratifying that the industrial establishments of this city are receiving the recognition they deserve. . . . It looks like a Summer that will send the job and payroll indexes for Yonkers soaring over previous year’s ‘hot weather’ months.”

- “War Contracts That Come to Yonkers,” *The Herald Statesman*, June 26, 1940

“Bernard Rosenberg , vice-president of the concern, told the employees ‘these bomb ‘chutes you’re making soon will be going down in actual combat.’

Nathan Levinson, factory manager, spoke briefly, ‘What has happened at Cameo in the last three years is a cross-section of what is happening [all] over the country,’ he said.

Mrs. Florence Santi, a forewoman, spoke ‘for those of us doing our part on the home front.’”

- “Cameo Curtain Workers Hear 3 War Heroes,” *The Herald Statesman*, July 29, 1943

## Read to Connect

*Background: Before World War II, Yonkers, New York, was an industrial city known for its manufacturing and home to major companies producing textiles, machinery, and consumer goods. The city had a diverse population drawn into the area by job opportunities. As global tensions rose in the late 1930s, industries in Yonkers began to shift toward wartime production, laying the foundation for its vital role in supporting the U.S. war effort. The following is an example of one industry that shifted toward wartime production – the Otis Elevator Company.*

### Reading 1: Newspaper Article

#### Yonkers Helps Build P-47 Thunderbolts

*The Herald Statesman, December 23, 1943*

When an employee of the Otis Elevator Company sees a P-47 Thunderbolt aloft or in a news picture, he proudly says ‘That’s OUR ship, the world’s fastest pursuit plane – and I am helping to make it.’

Otis employees find additional occasion for pride in the fact that some of these Great Thunderbolts are piloted by young men who but recently were among the Otis personnel.

The Yonkers Works Digest, published by and for Otis employees – features pictures of these fighter planes and some interesting information in its current issue.

It discloses that the landing gear retracting cylinder assembly, a hydraulic unit is now in production at the Yonkers Works of Otis for the Republic Aviation Corporation.

This “is easily one of the most important components of that new and deadly fighter plane,” the employees are told. “This long-range, high-altitude plane is reputed to be the most powerful single-engine fighter in the world combining high speed with terrific firepower.”

We learn further detail about what the Otis plant here is doing on this particular wartime production job.

“The employees of the Yonkers Works,” it is explained, “have been entrusted the exacting job of turning out the retracting assembly, the operation of which determines the successful start and completion of a Thunderbolt’s mission against our enemies.

“Present day military aircraft depend largely upon streamlining and elimination of wind resistance to attain the high speeds necessary for military aerial combat.

“Elimination of the wind-resistant factor setup by exposed landing gear is accomplished by causing the wheels to fold into the wings of the plane.

“Our retracting unit must do both jobs quickly and accurately. Before a Thunderbolt can land properly, our retracting unit must drop the landing gear into the full landing position again.”

The story is fascinating because it shows – with a precise example – how Yonkers men and women on the home front are able to help directly the men and women on the fighting fronts.

Production is winning this war. The skill and devotion of Otis employees – and of the employees of all other war plants – are responsible for the production schedules which are vital factors in bringing Victory as early as possible.

Every Otis employee has a right to pride in the Thunderbolt’s efficiency. Indeed every Yonkers resident – equally proud of its war workers – can find a share in that pride and in the production for Victory that is so abundantly in evidence here.

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

1. Otis Elevator company shifted to producing what type of materials for wartime?
2. What was the importance of the items Otis was manufacturing?
3. The use of the units in war was conveyed to the Otis workers in their employee digest, “The Yonkers Works Digest.” Why do you think this information was shared with workers?
4. What are other examples of wartime industry in the area, as described in By the Numbers?
5. Using examples from across Reading 1, Quotations to Consider, and By the Numbers, how was Yonkers involved and impacted by wartime industry? (Continue to add on to this response as you read Reading 2 and 3.)

### Reading 2: Newspaper Article

*Background: The Army-Navy "E" Award was an honor given during the war to U.S. companies for excellence in wartime production. It recognized factories and their workers for achieving high standards, such as in the quantity of war materials produced.*

#### Cameo Praised for War Work at E Ceremony

*Program Limited So Staffs Lose Minimum Time – Production Up*

*The Herald Statesman, March 4, 1944*

Its building freshly painted and draped with flags and red, white, and blue bunting, inside and out, Cameo Curtain Manufacturing Corporation, manufacturing subsidiary of Cameo Curtains, Inc., at 45 John Street, yesterday received the Army-Navy 'E' award for exceptional performance on the production front.

The plant is making articles for the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot and for the New York Ordnance, its products including fragmentation bomb parachutes, insect field bars and mosquito bars, mattress covers, sleeping bag linings, Army shorts and mosquito head nets.

The ceremony, limited to half an hour because of the Army's request that as little time from work be lost as possible, was held on the ordinance floor, where parachutes are made. It took place at 3 P.M. about the time the day and night shifts change, that the whole personnel might be present. Each shift lost only 15 minutes, according to a company official.

#### [Raised on Indoor Pole](#)

The 'E' flag, later raised on an (?) pole, was presented by Lieutenant-Colonel William A. Peterson U. S. Army, officer, in-charge of miscellaneous purchases at the Philadelphia Quartermaster Corps, who represented Under-Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson. . .

In presenting the Army-Navy pennant, Lieutenant-Colonel Peterson said: "You have been awarded the coveted 'E' because you have effected a remarkable changeover to vital war work."

The wartime items the plant is making "represent an extreme contrast from the novelty curtains that comprised your peacetime volume," he observed.

#### [Production Expanded](#)

"In 1942 you increased your dollar war volume seven times that of '41 and during the first nine months of 1943, you more than doubled your entire previous year's production. You have constantly evidenced a commendable attitude of cooperation and have met urgent deliveries required for critically needed items."

"The Army-Navy Production 'E' pennant represents the highest award your Government can give for outstanding achievement in industry" Colonel Peterson asserted. "It represents an expression of confidence that you will maintain the high standards you have set and keep the faith that our way of life shall prevail."

Accepting the award, Mr. Levinson answered that, "In our three and one-half years of war work, we have always met our schedules and kept our quality standards high and we do not intend to relax our efforts until this war is won."

“This Army-Navy ‘E’ flag awarded us in recognition of our production achievements is not to become a challenge to us,” he said.

### Mostly Women

“Ours was not an easy task and the rapid progress we made is due to the wholehearted cooperation of our entire organization. It was only through everyone’s intense application to his job that we were able to accomplish what we did.” Mr. Levinson said that 90 percent of the employees are women.

Lieutenant Douglass, presenting the pins, told the plant management and workers: “This is the Army and Navy’s way of saying ‘thanks’ to you for a swell job.”

He gave to a wounded soldier back from the European front, Sergeant Eddie Flynn of New York City, now a patient at Halloran Hospital, Staten Island, the actual pinning on of emblems.

Sergeant Flynn went through the North African and Sicilian invasions, unloading men and material, and was unscratched, but at Palermo, a bomb concussion blew him from his ship and broke his leg in two places.

Resting on his crutches, he gave pins to Mrs. Anna Bloom, who holds the highest seniority standing at the plant; to Mrs. Winifred Gulliver, Miss Rita Scaramuzzo and to company officials. The other employees had received their pins in sealed envelopes which they opened at this time.

### Strive For Star

In introducing Miss De Bernardis for her acceptance speech on behalf of her fellow employees, Mr. Rosenberg pointed out that the firm has an active labor-management committee.

Miss De Bernardis told the audience: “We understand the responsibility that lies in this award and freely shoulder that responsibility. We pledge every man and woman in our Army and Navy that we will keep on attacking on the production front.”

“Six months from now we want a service star on that ‘E’ flag of ours. We’ll do our level best to win that star—and to help win the war!”. . .

The colors were posted by a color guard from Frank A. Rea Post, American Legion. Miss Anna Campagnoli, a forelady of the plant, led the singing of ‘America’ and the National Anthem, and a band provided military music.

A reception followed at the Racquet Club.”

## Questions for Reading 2

1. Why was the ceremony limited to half an hour?
2. What are examples of wartime items Cameo Curtain Manufacturing Corporation switched to producing?
3. How did Colonel Peterson describe the meaning of the “E” pennant?
4. What percentage of workers at Cameo were women? What would have contributed to this high percentage?
5. Company employees received a special “E” pennant pin to wear due to the award. Who provided them these pins? Why do you think they selected this person to present them?

## Reading 3: Newspaper Article

*Note: “Duck” refers to a durable fabric used for tents and outdoor military use.*

### Acclaim For Carpet Mill War Workers

*The Herald Statesman, January 25, 1943*

Employees of the Alexander Smith and Sons Carpet Company will assemble tomorrow afternoon at Nepperhan Avenue and Axminster Street to hear from Army and Navy officers and from the lips of several heroes who have distinguished themselves in the present war – how important is the contribution of carpet mill workers in the war effort and of the tremendous need of such production to speed the day of victory.

Like other Yonkers war industries which have distinguished themselves on the Home Front, the Smith Company’s management and workers are to be singled out – at this Army and Navy Day rally – for official appreciation from both major war services.

It is a fitting acclaim, and one in which the entire city will share generously.

In World War I the great Smith mills geared their operations into the war effort and produced millions of yards of duck, millions of blankets for the Army, Navy, the Red Cross and the Allies.

In World War II the mills once more have converted the operations on a vast scale, till now they are turning out not only duck and blankets but actual armament and other war materials.

The Herald Statesman extends its warmest felicitations to both the mill management and to the thousands of workers, who are to be justly honored at tomorrow’s ceremonies.

## Questions for Reading 3

1. Why was Alexander Smith and Sons Carpet Company being “singled out” at the Army and Navy Day rally?
2. What materials were the company producing for the war effort?
3. Why do you think the author compared the efforts of World War I to World War II?

## Lesson Closing

Across each of the three readings, examples of companies making new materials for wartime were shared. What does this show about the urgency and need for adaptability during the war?

Answer the essential question: How did manufacturing and industry in Yonkers contribute to the war effort on the home front?

## Extension

### Additional Reading

“Woman Welder is Given Job at Habirshaw Cable Plant” (Newspaper Article)

*The Herald Statesman*, July 6, 1942

Believed to be the first woman welder in the city, Miss Ann Del Campo of 38 Purser Place was to begin work in that capacity at 4 P.M. today in the Habirshaw Cable and Wire Corporation plant at the foot of Point Street.

Miss Del Campo, a member of the class of 1934 of Yonkers High School was a waitress before becoming interested in welding work. For four months she attended the Metro Welding Institute at 217-219 Riverdale Avenue and was graduated – the only girl in the class—in the Spring.

She applied at several defense factories in this area and at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but was told there were no welding jobs open to women.

Miss Del Campo then sought the help of City Manager Raymond J. Whitney and Councilman Edith P. Welty, who brought the case to the attention of a woman radio commentator and of Mrs. Charles Poletti, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Results were that a letter from Washington promised a job as a welder in Philadelphia and the new U.S. Shipbuilding Corporation plant at Ludlow offered her a job here.

In the meantime, Miss Del Campo has been working in the shop at Habirshaw and, when officials there learned of her qualifications and the fact that she had passed a shipbuilding test, they offered her a welding job, which she has accepted.

### Reading Questions

1. What did Miss Del Campo do before welding? How did she become qualified in welding?
2. What barriers did she face in getting hired?
3. What aided her in finally receiving a job?

# Lesson 2: Wartime Training and Education in Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson builds background on local home front training and education initiatives, starting with those before the United States formally entered the war. These included civilian aviation and developing schools that trained in areas such as aviation mechanics. Building on this are details about training that continued during the war, and then postwar considerations for training and employment. An optional extension reading provides an opportunity to reflect on coordinated efforts across wartime organizations. Readings, data, and photos are included.

## Objectives:

1. Identify examples of wartime training and education programs in Yonkers and describe their purpose.
2. Explain how schools and programs supported home front efforts and impacted education in the postwar period.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on training to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 7-10 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension reading)
3. *Recommended:* Map of New York, with Yonkers marked



## Getting Started: Essential Question

What role did wartime training and education play in supporting the war effort on the home front?

## Photos

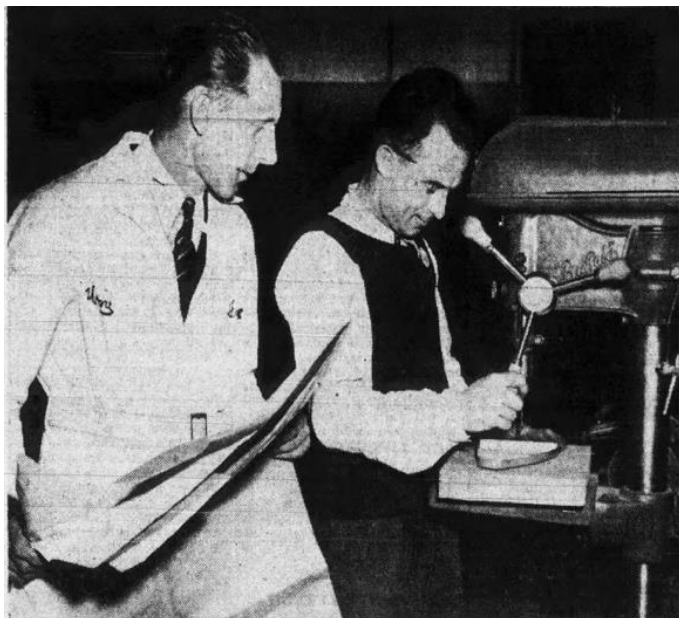


Figure 7: Andrew Murphy (right), a student at the Yonkers National Defense School of Aeronautical Manufacturing, learns drill press technique on a practice piece of aircraft construction material. The pictured instructor is Ernest Hoene of the Brewster Aircraft Company (*The Herald Statesman*, February 25, 1941).

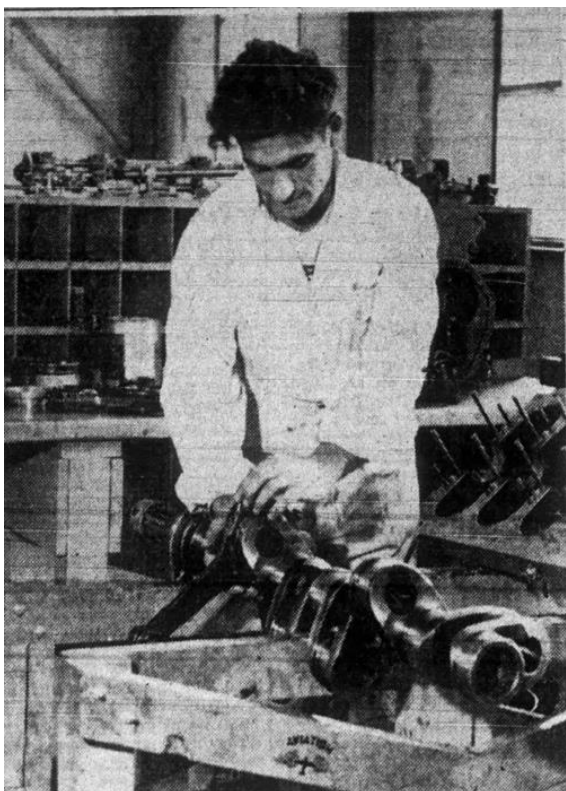


Figure 8: George Tooma, from Yonkers, training with the National Youth Administration in Quoddy Village, Maine, to become an aviation mechanic. He is pictured in an aviation unit laboratory. (*The Herald Statesman*, November 8, 1940).



Figure 9: Rose Panessa, Girls Vocational High School student, is shown using chicken quills to 'set' the hair of a fellow student, Mary Mitrione. Students used quills, as well as toothpicks, to address the scarcity of hair pins due to the war. Students sent their idea to a hairdressing magazine. (*The Herald Statesman*, April 23, 1943).



Figure 10: Yonkers General Hospital had a nurse training program, supporting the need for nurses during wartime. The picture is from a capping ceremony, signifying the students have completed a pre-clinical period and entered Nursing School. (*The Herald Statesman*, January 30, 1943).



### By the numbers:

- At Saunders Trades School, prospective students were given aptitude tests and physical exams as part of the application process. By early December 1940, nearly 900 physical examinations had already been completed.  
(“Defense School Roster Likely to Reach 1,200,” *The Herald Statesman*, December 3, 1940)
- The Yonkers Defense School of Aeronautical Manufacturing was expected to enroll 1,200 students by the time classes began on January 1, 1941, according to a report in *The Herald Statesman* on December 3, 1940.
- The Yonkers Defense School operated on a 24-hour schedule, offering training in three shifts led by 73 instructors. When the school first admitted women, they made up less than 2% of the student body. However, their presence grew rapidly. Within a few months, there were 160 women enrolled, and by 1943, two-thirds of students in the intensive fabrication course were women. Just two months later, women made up 70% of all enrollees.
- Women also received specialized training at the Yonkers Girls Vocational High School. For example, a three-month Power Machine Sewing course taught skills for working with aircraft fabrics.



### Quotation to consider:

“Pending approval of a \$190,000 budget by the State Education Department, the Yonkers National Defense School of Aeronautical Manufacturing will be under partial operation within 10 days . . . A \$90,000 budget for National Defense N.Y.A. training also has been submitted by Dr. Ashley to the State Education Department for operation throughout the city on schedules which will not conflict with regular N.Y.A. projects.

Eighteen different courses will be offered together with related subjects to benefit individuals interested in skilled trades. The N.Y.A. students probably will get about 15 hours a week instruction.

Girls’ Vocational High School, Saunders Trades School, Saunders Annex and the High School of Commerce will house some of the courses, Dr. Ashley said. A nurse’s training course will operate in one of the hospitals.”

- “Air School Will Open in 10 Days,” *The Herald Statesman*, January 3, 1941



## Read to Connect

*Teacher Tip: The first two readings were published prior to the formal entry of the United States into the war. Support students in identifying when the readings were published. Additionally, encourage students to consider the impact of timing in the descriptions from Reading 1 to Reading 3.*

### Reading 1: Newspaper Article

#### The Next Logical Step in Air Advance

*The Herald Statesman, June 25, 1940*

As it considers the report of the committee appointed by County Executive Bleakley urging the establishment of a Westchester County airport, the Board of Supervisors should give careful consideration to an equally important corollary: Establishment of an aviation ground school to train Westchester's share of the pilots and mechanics needed to man the expanding air arms of the Army and Navy in case of war.

The Civil Aeronautics Authority (C.A.A.) is preparing to give training to 45,000 civilian flyers by June 1941, to create a reservoir of pilots who could be given military training if necessary. The program is divided into three phases, the first of which is ground training, and designed to give the student from thirty-five to fifty hours of instruction, qualifying him for a private pilot's rating.

The Federal Government will assume most of the cost of the training program, paying private flying schools from \$270 to \$290 for each student completing the course.

The Westchester Division of the National Youth Administration has twice offered to establish a ground school with a capacity of 300 students if the Supervisors would provide the \$10,000 needed to operate it. Under the C.A.A. program, it is probable that a training school could be established at little or no cost to the county.

There is every indication that the Supervisors will authorize the building of a modern, adequate airport, probably at Valhalla. Steps to establish a flying school should keep pace with the development of the air facilities this sector so obviously needs.

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

1. Why were home front civil defense initiatives considered important, even in 1940?  
*(Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into the war)*

2. What were other examples of home front training initiatives in Yonkers? (See *Photos, By the Numbers and Quotation to Consider*)
3. How do the numbers (of hours, students, finances) depict urgency and adaptability during wartime? (Consider *Reading 1, By the Numbers, and Quotation to Consider*)

## Reading 2: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: "Otis Elevator Company and the Smith carpet mills" are mentioned in this reading as providing equipment. Use the readings about these companies in [Lesson 1](#) to learn more about their contributions to wartime manufacturing.*

### Air Defense School to Place Men in Jobs, Ankenbrand Says

*Applicants Must Sign Agreement to Accept Work, He Tells Business, Professional Women  
The Herald Statesman, October 23, 1940*

Applicants for the proposed aviation defense school at School Ten will sign agreements permitting the government to assign them to any aviation mechanics job where they are needed after graduation, Dr. W.W. Ankenbrand, school superintendent, disclosed last night in an address to the Business and Professional Women's Club of Yonkers at the Y.M.C.A.

Dr. Ankenbrand said there are vacancies in the aviation industry now for 30,000 mechanics in the state alone and it is expected all graduates of the Yonkers school will be placed. Representatives of airplane schools have already inquired of Yonkers defense school authorities about prospective employees, he told the club.

Speaking on 'Democratic Processes in Education as Applied Locally,' he told the business women that credit for securing a defense school for Yonkers and a \$20,000 equipment appropriation goes to former Mayor William J. Wallin, vice-chancellor of the State Board of Regents.

### Saunders Courses Cited

He said 'lights are burning all night' at Saunders Trades School, where 704 students are studying skilled trades between 5 P.M. and 4 A.M.

He said that since he took office as Superintendent, \$50,000 worth of new equipment has been installed in Saunders and old machinery from Otis Elevator Company and the Smith carpet mills has been secured. Asked if the equipment was adequate, Dr. Ankenbrand replied Saunders is probably as well-equipped as any trades school in the country.

Dr. Ankenbrand declared the Educational Policies Commission has been studying methods of teaching democracy for at least five years so that ‘our boys and girls are being educated for better citizenship.’ . . .

## Questions for Reading 2

1. Why was there increased demand for aviation mechanics?
2. How were training and vocational schools in Yonkers helping meet wartime demands?
3. Why do you think Dr. Ankenbrand also emphasized citizenship education in partnership with technical training? What might this show about the priorities of the time?

## Reading 3: Newspaper Article

### Girls’ Vocational High School Charts Course By Which Students Can Gain Postwar Careers

*The Herald Statesman*, May 8, 1944

By Dr. F.T. Lena, Principal, Girls’ Vocational High School

After this war we shall need better schools than we have now. So will England, so will Italy, and so will all warring nations, including Germany. Most of them know that. They are making plans accordingly wherever possible. And we shall need good schools then more than we needed them before Pearl Harbor.

Just as we cannot win the war without trained soldiers – most of them quite recently educated through Army and Navy vocational and technical schools – we cannot win the peace, we cannot maintain full production of industry and business after the treaty has been signed, and we cannot pay the national debt arising out of the war without a high level of education, particularly technical and vocational education.

Has not the war proved the need for this kind of education? Just how nearer toward victory the Army and Navy would have advanced by now if the personnel had been a trained body of men at the start of the war is of course, impossible to state definitely. What can be said truthfully, and more to the point, is that millions of men and women, immediately after induction into the armed service, began training through the medium of vocational and technical courses.

Am I far off the mark, then, in urging girls to train for peace-time careers through the agency of vocational and technical education?

If the democratic way of life is to be broadened and deepened and, as promised by our leaders, made richer, each young person must be given as good an education – a combination of the general and the vocational – as the Government can provide. . .

The fact that vocational schools at one time or another have trained workers for general and for specific vocations and this is being done here and now on a large scale, is proof that they can continue to do so. War training has brought to light an elaborate list of courses that can be taught effectively and with great profit to students. . .

One of the hard lessons we are learning from the war is that our people have not learned enough about working. They have not learned enough about the thousands of different kinds of skills needed in today's jobs – wartime and peacetime.

They have not learned enough about personal attitudes brought into play in a world that demands that practical things be fashioned quickly and expertly.

If all our nation's high schools had offered in years past the kind of vocational training which a vocational school offers, the need for intensive industrial training of workers brought on by the war would have been far, far less. Would Victory have been achieved in less time?

### Questions for Reading 3

1. Why does the principal argue that better schools will be needed after the war?
2. How did the war prove a need for career and technical education?
3. Why was it critical that women received this training, like at the Girls Vocational School in Yonkers?
4. Consider the principal's question at the end of their writing: "Would Victory have been achieved in less time?" How would you answer this question and why?

### Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: What role did wartime training and education play in supporting the war effort on the home front?

## Extension

### Additional Reading (Newspaper Excerpt)

#### Survey of Men, Machines Planned to Coordinate Defense Activities Here

*Leaders Discuss Unification to Avoid Overlapping of Work*

*The Herald Statesman*, March 4, 1941

#### *Clearing House for Information Proposed as Schools and City Agencies Hold Meeting*

Unification of defense work in Yonkers was the theme of a luncheon meeting attended by interested leaders at the City Club, North Broadway, yesterday.

The session, designed to eliminate duplication of defense program work by various agencies and correlate survey products, was sponsored by the Yonkers Defense Chamber of Commerce and other interested organizations.

Former Children's Court Judge Benjamin W. Moore, Defense Council chairman, and Percy S. Peck, executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, explained it was necessary to expedite the gathering of essential defense program information. They expressed belief coordinated effort on the part of interested agencies would avoid confusion and eliminate repeated interrogation of busy industrial leaders. . .

#### Office to Be Opened

Judge Moore said the Defense Council is seeking funds for establishment of a Yonkers office to correlate defense survey work. He said he hopes to supplement funds appropriated by the County Board of Supervisors with appropriations by the Common Council.

He emphasized the importance of defense preparedness by saying: 'We cannot afford to wait until a bomb falls and leaves a crater six feet deep and 20 feet wide. The nation, the state and the county have seen the need for the gathering of concrete information to bolster our defense program.'

Representatives attending voiced their wholehearted cooperation in the program and pledged the cooperation of their agencies in completing work essential to providing a complete picture of defense materials, manpower and training available in Yonkers.

### Questions for Reading

1. Examples of representatives that attended this meeting included people from the Chamber's defense committee, Chamber of Commerce, Otis Elevator Company,

the local schools, the National Youth Administration, New York employment office, Works Progress Administration, and more. What was the need for bringing together this group of representatives?

2. How would a “complete picture of defense materials, manpower and training available in Yonkers” be helpful to local wartime efforts?
3. If you were leading the group, how would you have tried to coordinate organizations and representatives? (Don’t forget what technology was available at the time!)

# Lesson 3: Home Front Volunteerism in Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Yonkers, New York, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings, statistics, and photos to learn ways that local civilians, including children, volunteered to meet wartime needs on the home front. The readings include information on material and financial donations, a victory garden example, and a local U.S.O. club.

## Objectives:

1. Identify examples of ways local civilians in Yonkers volunteered and contributed to home front causes.
2. Explain the impact of volunteerism in Yonkers, such as by meeting wartime food needs or improving the morale of service members.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on volunteerism to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 11-13 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of New York, with Yonkers marked



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did Yonkers civilians support the war effort through volunteering and other home front activities?

## Photos

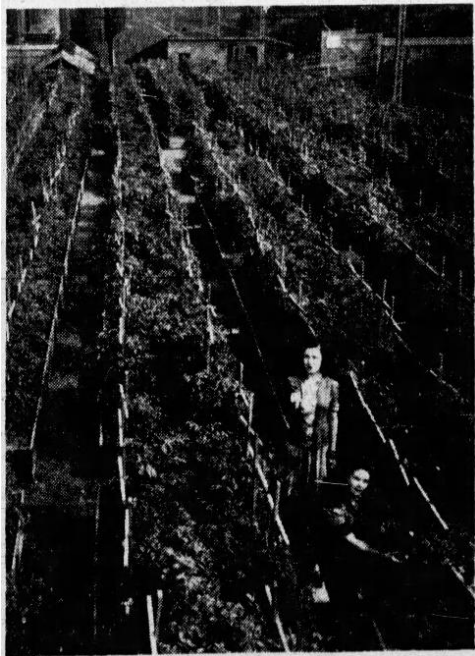


Figure 11: Picture of employees Jeanne Hansbergere and Rita Murphy, who work in the plant office at Refined Syrups and Sugars, Inc., pictured among the tomatoes growing on the roof of the company plant. (This photo is from the article in Reading 1, *The Herald Statesman*, August 4, 1943.)



Figure 12: Students training at the Yonkers Work Center of the National Youth Administration aided the city salvage drive by breaking up large objects to make them easier to move to junk yard scrap piles. Here three men were cutting apart a boiler. (*The Herald Statesman*, October 3, 1942)



Figure 13: “Bumpers for Victory! During World War II scrap drives were a popular way for the residents of Yonkers to contribute to the war effort.” The metal bumpers were replaced with wooden ones. (Mary Hoar Collection)



## By the numbers: Examples of additional Volunteerism and Contributions

### *Military and Defense*

- There was a group of 50 volunteers known as the Yonkers Defense Rangers, who conducted weekly drills to prepare for potential enemy parachute landings and to support military forces in the event of local threats.
- In 1942, Yonkers schoolchildren contributed to military readiness by building 600 model aircraft, representing both United Nations and Axis powers. These 12 full sets of 50 aircraft types were used to help train military personnel in plane recognition and gunnery range estimates.

### *Material Drives and Fundraising Campaigns*

- In 1943, the Women’s Division of the Yonkers Schools-at-War Jeep Campaign announced that local schools had raised enough to sponsor 38 Army jeeps. One school funded 15 jeeps alone, and one school, despite having only 100 students, purchased five jeeps.
- Yonkers residents showed support through war bond drives. Examples include Polish Americans in Yonkers contributing \$70,000 in war bond subscriptions to observe the fourth anniversary of the German invasion of Poland (reported by The

Herald Statesman on October 4, 1943). The Lincoln Park Jewish Center hosted a bond rally to raise \$250,000 in war bonds.

- In 1944 alone, Yonkers residents donated 13,000 tons of scrap metal (more than three times the War Production Board's quota) 7,000 tons of wastepaper, 13,000 tons of textiles, and 60 tons of waste fats.



### Quotation to consider:

“Every day I pass the Alexander Smith and Sons Carpet Shops on my way to and from my office. During recent weeks I have noticed the signs proclaiming the splendid success of the War Bond drive in which the employees of the carpet shops set a goal of \$300,000 with which to buy one bomber and then proceeded to more than double this amount of war bond purchases winding up with \$681,900, enough to buy two bombers plus various other weapons of war. . . .”

- Frinton Will, Director, Yonkers Public Library, quoted in *The Herald Statesman* on June 2, 1943



## Read to Connect

### Reading 1: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: The Girls' Vocational School, mentioned in this text, is also discussed in [Lesson 2](#). This reading can connect across the two lessons for both volunteerism and education on the home front.*

#### School Children's Handiwork for War Relief is Displayed

*The Herald Statesman*, June 17, 1942

The part school children of Yonkers are playing in war relief work is depicted in an exhibition of their handicraft, on display this week in a Fashion Shop show window at 10 Main Street.

Through the Junior Red Cross, a steady stream of articles to be used in hospital war relief is being sent to vital points.

With the cooperation of the teachers, these youngsters have made bath robes, beanies, layettes, sweaters, bed jackets, pajamas, bedroom slippers, hot water bag covers, lap robes and various other articles in the girls' department.

The boys made lamp stands, smoking stands, table lamps, ash trays, lap boards, writing boards, games, etc.

In addition, the schools donated many gifts, such as afghans, breakfast trays, games, book marks and other articles They also contributed all articles for the utility bags, which contain shaving cream, tooth paste, tooth brush, soap, writing materials, diary, jackknife, cards, etc.

Roosevelt said Forton High Schools and the Girls' Vocational School have turned out professional looking garments; Franklin, Hawthorne, Longfellow and Mark Twain Junior High Schools have contributed another large share.

The Catholic Big Sisters' Club and the following grade schools also are 'doing their bit' . . . School Twenty-six last week donated an afghan to the Red Cross, each child in the school having had a part in its making, Mrs. Warren Spooner was informed.

Joan Secord's design was selected for the red, white, and blue afghan contributed by the Good Citizen's Club of the fifth grade of School Five.

Mrs. Arthur G. McKeever, Junior Red Cross production chairman, who is in charge of the display, stressed the great need for these articles and appreciation of Yonkers Chapter for the 'good work our boys and girls are doing.' Original posters in the display were made by Hawthorne Junior High School students.

School Twenty-one donated several miniature, holed checker boards with pegs for checkers, so that the board can be carried in a sailor's or soldier's pocket and games played on shipboard even during a storm, without checkers rolling off the board. Other children collected old clothes and junk and sold them to raise money for articles to be placed in utility bags.

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

1. What are ways school children in Yonkers volunteered and contributed to home front efforts? (*Use examples from across the Reading and By the Numbers*)
2. How do you think the actions of the children contributed to building morale with service members?
3. Describe examples of civilians contributing to military and defense, material drives, and fundraising campaigns. How do you think these contributions contributed to Allied successes? (*Quotation to consider, By the numbers*)

## Reading 2: Newspaper Article

*Background: Refined Syrups and Sugars in Yonkers produced Flo-Sweet Liquid Sugar, which was exempt from rationing and distributed worldwide. 25% of their production was allocated to the Army and Navy. The victory garden described in this reading was so successful that workers tending it were filmed by the U.S. Army Signal Corps. The footage was then shown at Army camps as an example of home front efforts to boost troop morale.*

*Teacher Tip: The author uses unique, descriptive imagery, comparing the victory garden's appearance to Flanders Fields and its crosses. Readers at the time would have known about this location from World War I. It may be helpful to share the background of [Flanders Fields](#) and an image to support the comparison, along with supported reflection on why the author may have chosen this description.*

### Rooftop Victory Garden Raising Tomatoes For Refined Syrups Employees at Riverfront

*The Herald Statesman, August 4, 1943*

While employees of Refined Syrups and Sugars, Inc, process sugar in the waterfront plant here, they're also growing tomatoes – on the roof.

Their goal is 20,000 pounds of tomatoes this summer for employee consumption, and present yields indicate they'll make it.

Each day at the end of every shift, the workers line up and receive their quota of the vegetables, the number depending on the day's 'crop.'

Visible from the Buena Vista Avenue and from the New York Central trains running alongside the plant, the tomato 'patch' looks like a 'Flanders Field,' its tall wooden 'crosses' holding the vines in place, towering above the roof ledge.

#### All Very Proud of Garden

Officials and employees of the company are 'very proud' of the employees' Victory Garden.

A long white sign with the legend 'Hudson Valley Products, Employees Victory Garden, 20,000 pounds of tomatoes' is spread across the side of the warehouse.

The garden caused considerable consternation recently but passed a 'great crisis.'

For several weeks the plants were flourishing, then the gardeners noticed some of them were wilting. Five specialists were called in from the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research and held consultations. Their 'prescriptions' were followed and the plants recovered.

The next near tragedy was the freak electric storms recently. The plans weathered them, however, with only a few tomatoes bruised by hailstones.

But they have been spared the plague of Japanese beetles. 'Maybe it's too high for them to fly,' one official said.

### Harvest Already Begun

Distribution of the first crops began last week and to date nearly 300 pounds have been given away. 'We're all getting our vitamins,' Thomas M. Brown, vice-president in charge of production, said yesterday.

'Nearly everyone eats a tomato at lunchtime,' he said.

'We had the idea of starting a Victory Garden last winter,' he explained.

'Food was getting scarcer and it looked as though vegetables were going to be very expensive. We took it up with the employees and they were in favor.

'We started out about February growing tomatoes from seeds.

'For the next couple of months we had tomatoes growing in nearly every window of the office,' he commented with a smile.

### Took Earth to Rooftops

'We had tried to get a piece of land nearby for the garden, but we couldn't find suitable soil.'

The company bought the earth and fertilizer and lumber and the employees, on their own tie, built the boxes and started the garden on the roof of a warehouse.

The initial investment was 1,000 plants.

Commenting on the interest of the employees in the project, Mr. Brown said 'there have been some heated controversies on treatment of the plants.'

'Some of our workers have some horticultural experience and differ on which twig should be pulled or broken when a vine isn't coming along all right,' he recalled.

The tomatoes were the 'experiment' of the company's venture in Victory Gardening. A few cabbages also were started but attention is concentrated on the tomatoes.

'With the first attempts a success, we may go in for a more varied Victory Garden next year,' he added.

## Questions for Reading 2

1. Why do you think the author compared the garden visually to Flanders Fields? How might this have connected to readers?
2. Who provided the materials for the garden? Who built and tended the garden?
3. How does this victory garden example show local dedication to home front causes?

## Reading 3: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: Share about the background of the U.S.O. during the war: The United Service Organizations, Inc. (U.S.O.) was founded in February 1941 as a joint charitable organization to serve active-duty service members at home and abroad. They operated clubs and facilities for service members and provided mobile entertainment and services.*

*Also, you may look to compare this text to U.S.O. efforts in other cities on the home front, such as in [Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida](#), and [Wilmington, North Carolina](#).*

### City Wins Friends as U.S.O. Entertains Service Men

*The Herald Statesman, May 10, 1943*

Editor's Note – This is one of a series of occasional articles about the Yonkers War Council's volunteer services, written by Mrs. Rose Englander, a War Council volunteer.

By the time this war is over there will be thousands of servicemen who do NOT go around asking that old, silly question, "What are Yonkers?" They are the boys, hailing from Maine to Texas, from Sweden to Free France, who've been warmheartedly entertained at the Yonkers U.S.O. And they know that Yonkers 'are' very nice to soldiers, sailors, merchant marines and all the other lads fighting the Axis.

Every afternoon and evening they flock to the U.S.O. Center at 73 South Broadway to be danced with by junior hostesses, fed by senior hostesses, sung to by talented home-towners. They play ping pong and chess, browse around the book shelves, and often have a pet book presented to them outright, to be taken away, read and passed on to a buddy. Everything's for the boys.

Civilians passing the center do not realize that the erstwhile shop which is rapidly developing into a cozy reception room leads to such a large space in back. Snack bar, little tables and chairs, two ping pong tables, dance floor and band stand all fit in there. Eventually, when Camp Shanks at Orangeburg, N.Y. is full up with its expected complement of soldiers, Yonkers may find it needs a still larger U.S.O. than it now has.

The boys – American, Allied and neutral – come from the boats that dock in the river, from over-crowded New York – and even from Yonkers. Hometown boys on furlough like to wander down to the center. And, in increasing numbers, soldiers are coming from Shanks, now that there’s a bus schedule from camp to the Yonkers Ferry. One bus leaves Shanks at 5:30 PM and another at 6:30, and the homing bus picks them up on the Alpine side around midnight. They have a good time in what is gradually becoming their adopted town . . .

Recently the ferry captain came to his boss, full of curiosity and puzzlement.

‘What’s that thing the soldiers are singing and dancing on the boat these nights?’ he asked. ‘Something about putting my right foot out, and putting it in and giving it a shake and turning about—’

The answer came back at him right in the rhythm that’s so popular with young folks today.

They’re doing the Hokey Pokey – that’s what it’s all about.

Yes, a service man learns the Hokey Pokey in five minutes at the U.S.O. and has a lot of fun with it evermore. A cross between a kid’s game and a square dance, it’s all the rage. . .

So many people here are glad to do what they can. The carpenters’ union built the dance floor, the electrical workers did the wiring, and the painters’ union prettied up the walls. Father O’Brien of Holy Rosary Church presented the radio-phonograph, to which the youth folks dance on week nights. And so it goes, a bit here, a bit there, and the boys have a comfortable haven from 3 to 11, several days a week.

. . . Yonkers folks, who would like to help, can always contribute tasty snacks, games and such equipment.

Anybody got something for the boys?

### Questions for Reading 3

1. Why does the author say service members will no longer ask the “silly” question: “What are Yonkers?”
2. What are examples of recreation that were provided by the local U.S.O.?
3. How do you think the U.S.O. impacted service members’ morale on the home front?
4. How may this article have encouraged local civilians to contribute or volunteer?

## Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did Yonkers civilians support the war effort through volunteering and other home front activities?

# Lesson 4: Yonkers, New York: 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 in [Yonkers, New York](#) designated as a [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, readings and a culminating project. The first reading connects to a highlight of wartime industry and manufacturing in Yonkers. The second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. The culminating project contributes to learners' understandings of the city as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine lesson themes from the three other lessons in the Yonkers lesson [collection](#). This is to summarize the city's contributions and encourage connections to the overall U.S. home front efforts.

## Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Describe World War II home front defense manufacturing in Yonkers and describe the impact to the Allied efforts.
- b. Explain the role of education and training in Yonkers to support defense and industry efforts.
- c. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of civilians in Yonkers civilians to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Yonkers and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 14-17 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 18 at end of lesson, for reference)
  - Create Comparison Matrices for your students to use. To compare two cities, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows. Label the left

column Theme/Topic and the other columns City 1 and City 2. For a Comparison Matrix for three cities simply add an additional column.

- Create two Single-Point Rubrics to assist students' self-assessment. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting teacher-selected standards. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting objectives.
- For the rubric on standards, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improvement," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Standard)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Standard." Leave the first and third columns blank. In each row of the second column identify a Standard and indicate a space for noting the evidence for meeting the standard. Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column.
- For the rubric on objectives, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improving toward Objective," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Objective)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Objective." Leave the first and third columns blank. In the four rows of the second column identify these four objectives:
  - a. Describe World War II home front defense manufacturing in Yonkers and describe the impact to the Allied efforts.
  - b. Explain the role of education and training in Yonkers to support defense and industry efforts.
  - c. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of civilians in Yonkers civilians to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
  - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Yonkers and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

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



## Getting Started: Essential Question

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

## Photos



Figure 14: Aerial of buildings owned by the Otis Elevator Company in Yonkers. Railroad tracks, ships in port, and the Hudson River are also in view. The Company contributed to wartime manufacturing. (Source: New York State Archives, Aerial photographic prints and negatives of New York State sites, 1941-1957, B1598-99. Box 8, no. 65.)



Figure 15: Jay Delaney, Jr., from Yonkers, training with the National Youth Administration in Quoddy Village, Maine. In the picture he is drafting a naval unit. (*The Herald Statesman*, November 8, 1940).



Figure 16: Women workers inspect Lawrance crank cases for Army specifications at Otis Harrison Works. (From “War Production” by Otis Elevator Company (1947), Credit: Yonkers Public Library)



Figure 17: U.S. Army Hospital ships, such as the St. Olaf, pictured, were equipped with Otis Marine Elevators, manufactured in Yonkers, to move bed patients from deck to deck. They also made elevator equipment for military hospitals. (From “War Production” by Otis Elevator Company (1947), Credit: Yonkers Public Library)

 **Quotations to consider:**

“I believe there is a deeper and more impelling reason. There is scarcely a person working in this yard who does not have either a son a brother or a close relative in the armed forces of the United States and the thought that we are doing our part on the Home Front is the driving force in producing these ships so that our boys may be provided with everything they need to carry on to win this war. . .

As a citizen of Yonkers for many years, it has been a source of great personal satisfaction to know that the Blair shipyard has been able to give so many jobs to so many of my fellow townsmen, and it is our sincere hope to be able to continue in this business long after the war is over.”

- Arthur G. Blair, President of Blair Shipyards, at the launch of a wooden tug boat, commissioned by the United States Maritime Commission. Quoted in *The Herald Statesman*, “Second Wooden Tug Launched With Ceremonies At Blair Yard,” September 7, 1943

“Are you saving your newspapers, magazines and flattened cardboard – each in a separate bundle- for this life-saving purpose? School children in Yonkers will collect them tomorrow. They will carry the bundles to the school yards. Think of this: Putting less meat in the kettle, saving tin and fat and metal. THAT’S the stuff to win a war! Listen, though, one item more. If you’d bring the Axis ruin, how’s your PAPER salvage doin’?”

- “Paper Needed,” *The Herald Statesman*, January 17, 1944

“A Yonkers Victory Volunteer reports that, as she was doing her duration weekly job of selling War Savings Stamps in front of RKO Proctor’s Theater, a woman customer bought two dollars worth of ten-cent stamps – twenty of them.

‘Now,’ said the woman, ‘will you lick them for me to put in my stamp book? Because licking them makes me sick.’

The volunteer, who admitted glue is one of her least favorite dishes, did the job – all twenty. Anything to help win the war, y’know!”

- "Town Talk," *The Herald Statesman*, November 29, 1943



### By the numbers:

- More than 20,000 Yonkers men and women left the city to service in the Armed Forces. This created a need for workers in home front industries, including increasing the number of women employed in wartime work.
- An additional over 20,000 people in Yonkers worked in local war plants and shipyards.
- During the war, the Yonkers Office of Civilian Defense registered over 12,000 volunteers. There was widespread community involvement in the home front war effort in Yonkers.

## Reading 1: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: The following reading provides a connection to the impact of manufacturing in Yonkers on the war efforts and successes by Allied Troops. Additional examples of industry, including more details on Otis Elevator Company (mentioned in the reading) are included in [Lesson 1](#).*

### Made-In Yonkers Victory Pipeline

*The Herald Statesman, May 29, 1945*

Many miracles of war production in Yonkers factories are still to be told – and may not be told till hostilities are over – but few of them will rival the disclosure that it was here that one of the war’s most important and imaginative implements was fashioned.

Because of the cooperation of five Yonkers companies, because of the tremendous know-how of Habirshaw Cable and Wire Corporation and its three hundred and fifty employees in a specially-built plant, it was possible for the Allies to pump a million gallons of gasoline a day across the English Channel to fuel the invasion of Europe and ultimate Victory on the Continent.

No wonder the Nazis were puzzled, flabbergasted and so roundly defeated! Their U-boats were hunting the tankers which bore the very lifeblood of modern war. They could find no tankers.

How were they to know – or even to suspect – that gasoline was rushing across below the Channel currents, in a network of hollow cables swiftly and painstakingly and secretly produced here in Yonkers?

Even now the Channel fuel line – which is called ‘Operation Pluto’ among the British – is serving the Continent and bringing gasoline to all sections of occupied territory, releasing tankers for the war on the Japanese. By auxiliary pipelines, the myriad airfields from which our aircraft operate in Europe have been and still are supplied direct from the British Isles.

This is what we civilians have contributed to our fighting men and women over there – and it is no secret that there are many, many more items fashioned here in Yonkers which are helping them tremendously, but details of which cannot yet be revealed.

Here indeed was an ingenious and daring thing – a huge coil of hollow cable – able to withstand the tremendous pressures inside and cut, the heavy Channel currents, the corroding salt water – built in Yonkers in a single piece forty miles long and weighing ten million pounds, transported across the ocean with another thirty-mile long section, reeled

on gigantic bobbins like thread on a spool, and then laid across the widest part of the Channel – all without the enemy knowing anything about it.

This engineering miracle is credited in its inspiration to Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, but its translation from an idea into a quickly-produced weapon of war is something for which credit goes largely to Yonkers.

Working in close cooperation with Colonel A.K. Eaton of the Army Engineers were Wylie Brown, president of the great Phelps Dodge Copper Products Corporation, and Earle A. Mitchell, works manager of the Habirshaw Cable and Wire Corporation, who gave on-the-spot direction and supervision during the hustling months of actual production.

Otis Elevator Company and New York Engineering Company tossed in their copious experience and competency with that of Habirshaw. Yonkers contractors, Kraft and Murphy, expedited the construction work on the site of the old National Sugar Refinery, with steel trusses and towers rapidly provided by another Yonkers firm, Levine Brothers Iron Works. All these talents were efficiently meshed for the greatest submarine cable-manufacturing job in all history.

We have seen the terrors of rocket bombs and jet planes and long-range rockets. We have coped with the . . . maniacs in planes and on the ground in the Japanese theater.

But nowhere in this or any other war has there been a strategic weapon more deadly and far-reaching in its inevitable crash toward Victory than was this Yonkers-made cable, carrying a million gallons of gasoline a day to the fronts. Yonkers has written history – here at home – by its handiwork. The whole city can well be proud.

### Questions for Reading 1 and Quotations to Consider

1. What did Habirshaw Cable and Wire Corporation develop? How was this critical to successes of the Allies?
2. What are other local companies that supported this work?
3. Why do you think the author shared about this example with readers in Yonkers?
4. How did Yonker's ability to produce a wide range of wartime products demonstrate its importance as a home front city?
5. How do the Quotations to Consider show morale and motivations on the home front during wartime?
6. How did home front contributions, both paid and volunteer, in Yonkers support the US and the Allies? Consider both information from this text and from past lessons.

## 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, By the Numbers, and Photos

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. What contributed to the growth in industry in Yonkers? How did this impact employment opportunities in the area?
3. Why do you think Yonkers 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 Yonkers lessons.

4. 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 World War II home front defense manufacturing in Yonkers and describe the impact to the Allied efforts.
- b. Explain the role of education and training in Yonkers to support defense and industry efforts.
- c. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of civilians in Yonkers civilians to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Yonkers and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

### Mastery products should be:

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

Note: Depending on time and scope, the comparison of Yonkers, New York 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
	<b>Standard:</b> _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	<b>Standard:</b> _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	<b>Standard:</b> _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	<b>Standard:</b> _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
<b>Points</b>		

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

## Acknowledgment

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.