

Say, what time is it? **IT'S WAR TIME!**

Revisiting the home front, 1941-1945

On Sunday, December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, awakening the sleeping giant that was the United States of America and making a populace that had wanted to stay the hell out of the rest of the world's affairs (while Great



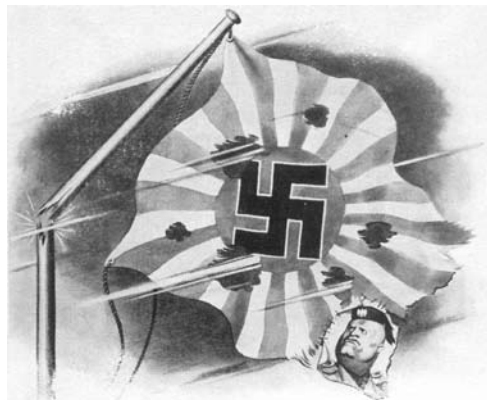
President Franklin D. Roosevelt lead the United States through the hard times of the early 20th Century.

Britain begged for our help in battling the Nazis) eager to go to war, and not half-assed either. We were going to get those bastards, the Japanese as well as the Nazis with the might that was *America!* Able-bodied, red-blooded American men, from their late teens to mid thirties were inducted into the military and sent overseas to fight. American industry, much of it stagnant through the Great Depression, retooled for the new war industry, building everything from armaments to battleships to bombers. America was hell bent for victory!

Unlike more recent wars where Americans could pretty much go about their business completely oblivious, leaving the fighting and worrying to someone else, everyone had a stake in the Second World War; men, women and children. It was embedded in every aspect of popular culture. Americans who weren't fighting it directly on the Pacific and European Fronts helped out at home in many different ways.

People bought war bonds and stamps (and were constantly admonished to do so in the media) as a means of voluntarily lending money to their nation to finance the fight. They also financed it involuntarily by paying higher taxes on their already stretched budgets and dealing with the rationing of food and other necessities. "Our fighting men

come first," they were consistently told, and whatever was left would be divided up so everyone would get their "fair share."



Shooting down a mythical "Jap-Nazi" flag in WWII.

Automobile and tire production was turned over to the war effort so Americans back home had to make due with the cars and tires they had. There were no '42 Fords or '43 De Sotos to buy, and synthetic rubber was only in its earliest stages of development then, so natural rubber was heavily rationed as it was critical for use in the war.

The term "recycling" hadn't yet entered the vernacular but recycling nonetheless got its start in a big way then, as Americans on the home front were encouraged to turn over any scrap metals, old tires, paper, even used cooking greases and fats for the war effort.

It was considered extremely unpatriotic and worse to not happily go along with it all. As Mrs. William S. Dilworth of Winnetka, IL wrote in a letter to *Life* magazine, published in the August 17, 1942 issue, "as a member of



Your Shipping Room May Be a Saboteur's Target!

The threat of home front saboteurs seemed to be all too real possibility in the early months of World War II.