Home Front
Doing Its Part
For Allied Victory
Part II

"Back the attack, buy War Bonds till it hurts..... and then some."

--- Announcement for buying War Bonds

Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

In Part I of this series, we saw how the radio sponsors got the message across on how the people of the Home Front could do their part in helping the Allied forces. This article will look at the public service announcements that also informed the listeners what to do--- and more importantly, what **NOT** to do.

With radio as a valuable means of communication, the ***War Advertising Council*** was created to inform the radio listeners what was expected of them during the challenging time they lived in. Some of the Council's campaigns weren't very easy, but it was something that had to be done.

One of the Council's very first campaigns concerned ***"Careless Talk"*** (a.k.a. **"Loose Lips Sink Ships"**). Although the Axis powers didn't invade United States soil during the war, that didn't necessarily mean their spies weren't here. In fact, the Axis did have spies in the U.S. (fortunately, the FBI eventually captured them). Their task was to pick up any tidbit of information from an unsuspecting American who talked more than he/she should concerning his/her work at defense plants, letters from relatives at the war, or anything that would help the Axis. The announcer for the ***Careless Talk*** commercials said it best, **"The enemy has big ears, he hopes we have big mouths. Careless Talk Costs Lives."** To the chagrin of the Axis spies, the American people didn't have big mouths--- and the ***Careless Talk*** campaign made sure their yaps were kept in check. Instead of vital military information, the Axis spies heard juicy gossip, dirty jokes, and other uneventful stuff.

When the United States entered the war, money was desperately needed for the making of weapons and military vehicles. In order for the country to have the money, the radio listeners were asked to invest in the country with ***United States War Bonds.*** For the money spent, the listeners received a nice return when the ***Bonds*** mature. It was OK when someone bought 1 ***Bond***, but it definitely didn't stop there. The message on the radio was to buy ***Bonds*** till it hurts. In other words, buy as many ***Bonds*** as the finances would allow. The radio commercials were blunt, demanding, and made the people feel a little guilty. These commercials featured sayings like **"Remember Pearl Harbor,"** and messages about letting them (the troops) down when they need us most. In a nutshell, ***War***

Bonds was an offer nobody could refuse--- that is, if they wanted the Allies to win the war. No matter how many ***Bonds*** were purchased, the commercials were specially designed not to be satisfied. The announcer asked the people to buy even more ***Bonds*** if possible. As if that wasn't enough, the radio performers took a brief time out from their programs to remind the listeners of the latest **"War Loan Drive"** being conducted--- and of course, to buy more ***Bonds*** during that drive.

The rationing of food and gasoline played a big role for the people of the home front. It wasn't exactly popular, but when some people complained, there was a common saying back then that went like this, **"There's a war on!"** For those people who wanted more than his/her share, there was another alternative to rationing--- unfortunately, it was also a shade on the illegal side. This alternative was the infamous Black Market. The ***War Advertising Council*** immediately focused on this problem with a series of commercials discouraging people from buying anything through the Black Market.

The naughty people associated with the Black Market were involved in another campaign the ***War Advertising Council*** conducted. This campaign was to **"Keep Prices Down."** Once again, it didn't exactly spread smiles across the kissers of the people, but it was necessary to keep inflation in check. The announcer of the commercial asked the American consumer to do 7 things to keep prices down. They were:

1.) Buy only what you need.

2.) Pay no more than ceiling prices (stay away from the Black Market)

3.) Support higher taxes

4.) Pay off old debts

5.) Don't ask for more money

6.) Save for the future

7.) Buy more ***War Bonds***

With the exception of #7, the above wasn't very appealing--- but then again, inflation wasn't very appealing, either!

One of the ***War Advertising Council's*** most important campaigns was the ***American Red Cross.*** Its **"War Funds"** were drives for the American people to donate money. The money the ***Red Cross*** received went for training nurses who went to war to help the doctors save lives. The money also went for training the people of the home front to learn first aid, home nursing courses, canteens, motor corps, and nurse's aide. This training was vital, because of the possible dangers of an enemy invasion.

The ***Red Cross*** also asked the people for a different, but extremely vital donation during each War Fund--- blood. Collecting pints of blood for plasma meant the difference

between life and death to a wounded American soldier. Like with ***War Bonds*****,** the commercials made it extremely hard for the people not to donate a pint of blood, because they knew that pint meant life itself.

There were many different campaigns the ***War Advertising Council*** informed the people about on radio. For personal involvement, there were campaigns for ***Civilian Defense*** (people watching the skies for possible air invasion by the enemy), and the recruiting of nurses, WAC's, and WAVES. There were also campaigns for saving and turning in used fat, rubber, paper, metal, and other items.

These are just a few of the many campaigns the ***War Advertising Council*** informed the people about through radio during World War II. When the war ended, the Council and its campaigns didn't. Instead of contributing to the war effort, the campaigns were designed to help people in the United States and the post-war world. Instead of buying ***War Bonds*****,** the announcer asked the people to buy ***Victory Bonds.*** The money would be used to bring the victorious troops home. From there, ***Victory Bonds*** were known as ***Defense Bonds, Security Bonds*****,** and the name we're familiar with today, ***Savings Bonds.*** The ***Red Cross*** continued to ask the people for money and blood for domestic and worldwide emergencies. The ***Civilian Defense*** became the ***Civil Defense*** . Instead of watching enemy planes, the ***CD*** had trained personnel in towns & cities across the United States. Their task was to help people in case of natural disasters.

There was also a noticeable change with the ***War Advertising Council*** itself. Since the war was over, its name was shortened to the ***Advertising Council.*** It continues its good work to this very day with different campaigns not only within the confines of the United States, but worldwide.

The Allied troops were victorious in World War II. It was also a victory every American man, woman, and child could share, because they knew exactly what they had to do--- and did it. It also helped that the U.S. had 2 powerful means of communication that got the word out quickly--- radio and the ***War Advertising Council.***

Author's note: This article is dedicated to the memory of my father, Clyde D. Goodwin, Jr. He proudly served in World War II and was involved as a member (and later as director) of the Lincoln, Maine Civil Defense.

Author's note #2: This article was originally written and completed on February 27, 2001. With the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001, I would also like to dedicate this article to all the men and women who took part in the search and rescue at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania--- and to the memories of those people who lost their lives while trying to save others.