

University of Cincinnati

Date: 10/29/2013

I, Amy Brooks, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Music History.

It is entitled:

"I'm Doin' It for Defense": Messages of American Popular Song to Women during World War II

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**“I’m Doin’ It for Defense”: Messages of American Popular Song to Women during
World War II**

A thesis submitted to the

Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

in the Division of Composition, Musicology, and Theory
of the College-Conservatory of Music

2013

by

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BM, Bob Jones University, 2008

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Abstract

World War II presented many new opportunities for American women. In this time of need, they were called upon to take an active part in the war effort, whether by means of working in a factory, growing a victory garden, or serving as a volunteer for wartime organizations. Women made great strides forward in areas such as the workforce and the military. The American popular song industry promoted these new roles for women. I have compiled over 150 songs from 1940 to 1945 that relate to women's roles during the World War II era. Of these songs, I have chosen a select number of songs that best demonstrate popular culture's attitudes and actions towards women during the war. These songs can be divided into five categories: women in the military, women in the workforce, women's war effort, women's responsibilities to men in uniform, and women in the immediate post-war period. I have studied the representative songs by considering their lyrics to identify the objectives supported by the popular song industry. I took into consideration the venues in which they were presented and how these performances influenced their reception. I also considered the date songs were published and copyrighted, and their correlation to current political events. In this study I analyze the messages of the American popular song genre in order to demonstrate how songwriters promoted a new vision for women's roles and responsibilities during World War II.

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Introduction

“I’m Doin’ It for Defense”

The onset of World War II brought about a significant change in women’s roles. Many new opportunities presented themselves, and in this time of need, American women were called upon to take an active part in the war effort, whether by means of working in a factory, growing a victory garden, or serving as a volunteer for various wartime organizations. Government organizations, such as the War Advertising Council (WAC) and the Office of War Information (OWI), released propaganda directed towards women through the outlets of film, radio, newspaper, poster art, and magazines. Propaganda promoted a “mixture of strength and dependence, competence and vulnerability, [and] egalitarianism and conservatism” for the new roles of wartime women.¹

The popular song industry during World War II strongly advocated for and promoted the new roles for women. I have compiled over 150 songs from 1940 to 1945 that relate to women’s roles during the World War II era.² These songs best demonstrate popular culture’s attitudes about women and can be divided into five categories: women in the military, women in the workforce, women’s war effort, women’s responsibilities to men in uniform, and women in the immediate post-war period. All of these areas saw significant changes in women’s roles and responsibilities. For the first time in United States history, women participated in their own military organizations, and over the course of the war, more than 350,000 women would

¹ Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 7.

² See Appendix for complete list of songs, composers, lyricists, and years of publication.

voluntarily serve in the various military divisions.³ Women were also encouraged to get a factory job. The “Rosie the Riveter” image portrayed working women as strong, patriotic, and proud. Women were also asked to adhere to strict rationing regulations. They were expected to “Use it up, Wear it out, Make it do, Or do without!”⁴ They were also encouraged to write letters to servicemen as well as volunteer their time at canteens, the Red Cross, or any of the numerous organizations that supported the war effort. Then after the war was over, women were expected to leave their jobs and return to their pre-war lives as a homemaker and dutiful wife, because all of this had only been out of necessity “for the duration.”

As a foundation for this study, I have first considered the cultural and gender-specific ideologies of the World War II era beginning with pre-war involvement with support for Great Britain to the end of the war and the return to peacetime. Within these specific ideologies, I surveyed the popular song genre and have analyzed those songs that address the qualities and character of women promoted through wartime propaganda. These songs comprised the basis for my research, and I examined representative songs by studying their lyrics to identify the messages that were being conveyed. I took into consideration the venues in which they were presented and how these performances influenced their reception. The venues in which the songs appear included films, musicals, radio, and live performances in various war effort drives, shows, and concerts. I also considered the date songs were published and copyrighted and their correlation to current political events.

Much literature has been written about women in American society during World War II, but almost without fail these books omit the influence of popular song. The most recognition

³ D’Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 20.

⁴ Donald I. Rogers, *Since You Went Away* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1973), 255.

these vital war songs receive is a passing mention of one or two titles of only the most popular songs. More time is given to the popular sentimental ballads of “boy meets girl and falls in love.” These songs, typically referred to as “slush songs,” were the most requested and most played songs during the war. Film and radio have also received their fair share of scholarly attention. However little attention has been devoted to American popular song. Two books were especially relevant and helpful to my research on popular songs of World War II: John Bush Jones’s *The Songs That Won the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939–1945*,⁵ and William and Nancy Young’s *Music of the World War II Era*.⁶

Jones’s book presents valuable information and insight into American society during the war. His compilation of popular songs during this time is impressive, including many of the lesser-known songs. While Jones provides specific numbers as to the quantity of songs produced on any given subject, he neither lists them all nor cites his information. Examples of this can be seen in such sentences as “Alley, hillbilly, and folk songwriters wrote roughly thirty songs on defense work, making it the second biggest group of home front motivational songs next to the fifty-six promoting War Bonds and Stamps.”⁷ While information like this is useful, the lack of citations quickly becomes frustrating. Jones focuses on a generic selection of popular songs. He includes everything from sentimental ballads to military marches but does not concentrate on women’s roles. Overall, the book’s benefits outweigh the shortcomings, and it has been a helpful resource for my research.

⁵ John Bush Jones, *The Songs That Won the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939–1945* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2006).

⁶ William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *Music of the World War II Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008).

⁷ Jones, 190.

The Youngs' *Music of the World War II Era* is not limited to popular music, but also includes chapters on country music, classical music, and the recording business. Chapter two, entitled "Popular Hits and Standards," provides a year-by-year summary of popular songs from 1940 to 1945. The authors present insights into the workings of the entertainment industry through segments on radio, the American Federation of Musicians recording ban, Hollywood, and Broadway. While the book may not be as specific as Jones's *The Songs That Won the War* or address popular song and women's roles, *Music of the World War II Era* brought to my attention additional factors that affected the popular music industry, such as recordings and V-Discs, radio, and the incorporation of popular song on stage and screen.

Maureen Honey's *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* considers the gender ideology of women during the war.⁸ Honey specifically addresses the images of both middle-class and working-class women. The first chapter of the book, "Creation of the Myth," provides information on government involvement and propaganda as well as popular culture's impact on women. Although she does not address popular song, Honey's book is the most unbiased and informative account of women's status during the war.

The focus of this thesis concerns women's roles during the World War II era. My research encompasses both single and married women on the home front and in the various military divisions. I do not address the various racial issues prevalent at the time, but focus singularly on the status of women. The popular songs I have chosen to study refer to the duties, efforts, and images of women. I do not study the romantic and sentimental "slush songs" of the period, as they are neither a particular representation of women and their involvement in the war effort nor different from such songs during peacetime. I assess the attitudes and actions of

⁸ Honey.

women's war effort through a select and representative sample of popular World War II-era songs.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, women's roles had been presented in a much different light. Women working outside the home were often falsely accused of stealing employment opportunities from men. In pre-war America a married woman's true calling was that of a homemaker, and "the career-oriented wife was a selfish, exploitative neurotic who callously neglected her home for fame and wealth."⁹ Many married and single women did work during the Depression, but in low skill and poor paying areas of employment, such as clerical work, retail, and domestic service. The fields of teaching and nursing were also considered suitable employment for women, though they were paid lower wages than their male counterparts.¹⁰ State and federal legislation placed restrictions on jobs and working hours available to women, as seen in the National Economy Act of 1932, which prohibited more than one family member working for the federal government.¹¹ Legislation such as this sought to promote the man as the family breadwinner and to discourage women from employment. While women in the workforce often times faced discrimination and resentment, they did what was necessary to support themselves or their families and accounted for a quarter of the workforce during the Depression.¹²

In December 1941 a country at war and millions of men enlisting in the military created a workforce shortage that had to be filled. The nation needed the married women it had previously

⁹ Ibid., 70.

¹⁰ Jennifer Barker-Devine, "'Make Do or Do Without': Women during the Great Depression," in *Great Depression: People and Perspectives*, ed. Hamilton Cravens and Peter C. Mancall, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 46.

¹¹ Beth S. Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 38.

¹² Barker-Devine, 46.

told to stay at home and raise their children to leave their homes and take up the jobs their husbands had left behind. This was accomplished through various media outlets, including popular song. Whether it was serving in a women's military division, working a factory job, buying bonds, or writing letters to men overseas, women rose to the challenge in the hour that their country needed them. In the following five chapters I analyze the messages of the American popular song genre in order to demonstrate how songwriters promoted a new vision for women's roles and responsibilities during World War II.

Chapter 1

“Bars on Her Shoulders and Stars in Her Eyes”: Women in Uniform

One of the controversial topics addressed in popular song during the war were women in the military. Women had played a vital role throughout the course of many American wars, but never had there been official government-sanctioned divisions created solely for them. May 1942 saw the creation of the first women’s military division, the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps or WAAC (on July 3, 1943 the “auxiliary” status was dropped and the acronym was shortened to WAC). On May 27, 1942, the first day of recruitment for the WAAC, 13,208 women between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five applied for enlistment.¹ A few months later came the WAVES or the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, the Navy’s auxiliary division for women. By the end of the year The U.S. Coast Guard had SPARS (a contraction of the Coast Guard’s motto “*Semper Paratus*” and the English translation “Always Ready”), and February 1943 saw the formation of the Marines’ Corps Women’s Reserve. Also in 1942 women pilots could join the Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) or the Women’s Flying Training Detachment (WFTD), both of which had accomplished women pilots as directors. In August 1943 the WAFS and the WFTD joined forces and became the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots or WASP. Throughout the course of the war, over 350,000 women would voluntarily serve in the various women’s military divisions.²

¹ “WAAC,” *Life* 12, no. 23 (1942): 26.

² D’Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 20.

“The Woman of the Year”: Positive and Negative Views on Women in the Military

Popular songs dedicated to military women comprise a large number of wartime songs. Most, like “Wait till You See Nellie in a Soldier’s Uniform,” “Bars on Her Shoulders and Stars in Her Eyes,” and “First Class Private Mary Brown,” portray women as feminine and having the desirable qualities of an all-American girl while still serving the military. Other songs, such as “We Oughta Have Girls in the Army” and “He’s Got a WAVE in His Hair and a WAAC on His Hands,” offer a humorous and almost flippant portrayal of women in the armed forces. Some like “The Woman of the Year” and “In Twenty-five Words or Less” focus solely on the patriotic aspect of women serving in the military.

Various films and magazines also featured women in the military. Films on this subject include MGM’s *Keep Your Powder Dry* (1945); *A WAVE, a WAC, and a Marine* (1944); *Ladies Courageous*, a 1944 Universal film about the WAFS; *Tars and Spars* (1946); and the 1944 Paramount picture *Here Come the WAVES*, which starred Bing Crosby and Betty Hutton and featured music by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen. Popular magazines, such as *Ladies Home Journal*, *Time*, and *Life*, all featured articles as well as advertisements for women’s military divisions.

Because of the controversial topic of sanctioned military divisions for women, the media jumped at the chance to weigh in on the subject. The 1942 song “We Oughta Have Girls in the Army” provides a good example of the satire first associated with allowing women in the armed forces. The lyrics speak of women in “satin uniforms” with weapons consisting of “lipstick and powder.” In order to win, the women would have to do only a little kissing. Although the song is amusing, the patronizing and sexist message is that women are unfit for the military. The idea that all women would have to do to win a battle is to wear satin, makeup, and give kisses

suggests that women are ornamental, sexual, and shallow, and therefore are incapable of playing an integral role in the armed forces. The closing line of the song reads that in the end the enemy would end up with a “sweetie on his knee,” which gives the impression that it is a woman’s feminine charm that precludes her from active military duty. Though not nearly as vicious as many of the rumors and accusations that surrounded the formation of the WAAC as well as the cadets personally, the song undermines the idea that women could be useful as soldiers.

Frank Loesser’s 1944 hit “First Class Private Mary Brown” from the Army revue *About Face!* inspired the 1944 musical *P.F.C. Mary Brown: A WAC Musical Revue* with music by Frank Loesser, Hy Zaret, Arthur Altman, and Ruby Jane Douglass.³ This revue was one of the few Broadway offerings during the war that focused on women in the military. Although many of the scenes and dialogue feature humorous aspects of military life, the show was largely supportive of women’s role in the military. It provides a picture of role reversal with women in the military and their husbands supporting the war effort from home, as well as a woman’s desire for liberation as depicted in the musical number “New-Style Bonnet,” in which women trade in their Easter bonnets for the hat of a military uniform.⁴ The underlying message suggests that women are capable, able to take control, and, through their skills, are able to win the respect of the opposite sex.

The show began with the rousing number “Something New Has Been Added,” in which a chorus of WACs sings, “Something new has been added to the Army. / Right along with khaki shirts comes the sight of khaki skirts.” The WACs continue their song with positive messages of how all girls will champion the idea of women in the military. Other numbers in *P.F.C. Mary*

³ Steven Suskin, *Show Tunes: The Songs, Shows, and Careers of Broadway’s Major Composers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 244.

⁴ Albert Wertheim, *Staging the War: American Drama and World War II* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 150.

Brown, such as “In Twenty-five Words or Less” and “The WAC Hymn” depicted the dedication and patriotic feelings of the women. In “Twenty-five Words or Less,” a WAC is asked why she joined and her response is “for the Red, White, and Blue,” as well as a desire to make the world a safer and better place. The women in “The WAC Hymn” declare that they will go anywhere and will “pledge our strength to the land we love” in order to ensure future peace.

The revue’s title number, “First Class Private Mary Brown,” shows the man’s change-of-heart from discontent and disapproval to pride and support. Now women in the military are seen as attractive and desirable. In Loesser’s lyrics a man states that he now believes instead of the official military meanings of PFC (Private First Class) and ASN (Army Serial Number) that “PFC stood for Perfect Feminine Charm” and that “ASN meant an Angel Specially Nice.” The revue came about shortly after the WAAC dropped its auxiliary status to become WAC, an official division of the Army. As an underwriter of the musical, the military was able to use *P.F.C. Mary Brown* to endorse a woman’s place in the service, as well as utilize it as a recruitment tool and a morale booster for those who had already joined.

In May 1944 the comic Army revue *About Face!* featured additional Frank Loesser’s songs. Although this revue focused on comic bits about military life and not on women in the military, it still contained several songs that supported the WACs. The show not only featured Loesser’s hit number “First Class Private Mary Brown” but also showcased another popular song regarding military women called “One Little WAC.” The lyrics tell the story of a woman who joined the WAC, and because of this, a man was released for overseas duty. He then was able to drop a bomb on Berlin, the “bomb that broke Hitler’s back.” This song promotes the idea that the creation of the WAC enabled women to assume noncombatant military jobs, which in turn allowed more men to be released for combatant duty. H.R. 4906, the original bill introduced to

the House of Representatives in 1941, called for twenty-five thousand women to train and utilize their skills for the good of national defense, with the goal of not only releasing military men for combatant service, but also improving the organization and efficiency of running the Army.⁵ In this song, a WAC becomes the heroine and is the reason for the fall of the Axis and the Allies' victory.

Other songs also championed women's military divisions. Paul Herfurth's "We're the Girls of Uncle Sam" has alternative lyrics that can interchange between the four primary women's military division, the WAVES, WAC, SPARS, and Marines. The same line can read "For we're the WAVES who gave the sailors to Uncle Sam," "the WACS who back the soldiers of Uncle Sam," "the Marines the 'finest ever' for Uncle Sam," or "the SPARS, we're 'always ready' for Uncle Sam." The girls also claim that they will go anywhere to help win the war, which shows their dedication to the armed forces. Frank Loesser's song "Miss America" claims that the new military-style Miss America has the traditional-style Miss America "beat by a mile." Many other World War II songs advocated and praised women serving in the military, including "My Wife's a WAAC," "The WAAC Is a Soldier Too," and "WAVES in Navy Blue."

Although most songs, press articles, and films backed the new military divisions, public opinion was not always so supportive. A slander campaign circulated rumors of loose morals, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and lesbianism, which plagued the beginning years of women's military divisions, especially the Army branch. The early days of the WAAC saw various religious organizations, including the Roman Catholic Church, disapprove of the women's military campaign.⁶ Printed advertisements for recruitment tried to combat the vicious rumors

⁵ Mattie C. Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), 19.

⁶ Ibid., 195.

that had spread by stressing that a girl joining the WAAC “will receive excellent care in every way, enjoy the companionship of other fine women from all over the United States, and lead a wholesome, healthy life under the leadership of understanding, intelligent officers.”⁷ Even Eleanor Roosevelt herself declared in a press conference that the rumors of WAAC misbehavior was the effort of Nazi propagandists trying to hinder the positive results that came from the creation of the WAAC!⁸

One song in particular fueled the many rumors surrounding the women’s corps. Although the song “He’s Got a WAVE in His Hair and a WAAC on His Hands” uses humor to diffuse the message, the implications are clear. The lyrics tell of a womanizing soldier who is a “slave to a WAVE” and “in the sack with a WAC.” His escapades have seemingly caught up with him, and by the end of the song, he “hides from the latest group” and even avoids “alphabet soup.” Songs such as this did nothing to help diffuse the rumors of sexual freedom in the women’s corps. Because some songs referenced military women’s loose lifestyles, parents, husbands, and women themselves disapproved of the corps. Angry wives of husbands released for combatant service because of the WAC and military officers who saw the armed forces as purely a male arena provided some of the harshest rhetoric about women’s corps. One survey reported that 84 percent of servicemen did not want women in the military, and some husbands and boyfriends threatened to divorce their wives or leave the girlfriends if they enlisted.⁹ One WAC in an August 27, 1944 letter from Fort Des Moines, reassured her overseas husband of her faithfulness:

⁷ “Life in the WAAC,” *Life* 14, no. 9 (1943): 79.

⁸ Treadwell, 205.

⁹ Eleanor Roosevelt, June 8, 1943 press conference, quoted in Campbell, 39–40.

“I know what my husband thinks of the WACs. But, Darling, always remember your wife is still your wife. WAC or no WAC and she loves you and you alone.”¹⁰

“Here Come the WAVES”: Hollywood and Women in the Military

Songs in Hollywood films played an integral part in supporting women in the military. One such number was featured in MGM’s 1945 film *Keep Your Powder Dry*, starring Lana Turner, Laraine Day, and Susan Peters. The lyrics of “The WAC Is a Soldier Too” claim that WACs will type, drive trucks, and do whatever they can to replace men while they fight overseas. The content of the film itself tells the story of three women who have joined the WAC, each for a different reason. One joined because her husband is overseas, another joined to try to live up to the expectations of her family, and the last to try to compensate for the vain and frivolous life she had been leading.¹¹ Although like most films, *Keep Your Powder Dry* presents an unrealistic picture of the WAC and uncommon reasons for joining the division, the film does spotlight women in the military and their diligence and capabilities.

The other World War II film that features songs about women in the military is Paramount’s 1944 musical comedy *Here Come the Waves*. Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer composed the songs for the film. The comedy’s star-studded cast included Bing Crosby and Betty Hutton, who single-handedly played the role of twin sisters Rosemary and Susie who feel they need to leave their nightclub jobs to serve in the WAVES. Although comedy rules, the film’s underlying message is that the serious twin, Rosemary, who is able to correctly perform

¹⁰ Pat, letter to her husband Chuck, Aug, 27, 1944, quoted in Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, eds., *Since You Went Away: World War II Letters from American Women on the Home Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 165.

¹¹ Jeanine Basinger, *A Woman’s View: How Hollywood Spoke to Women, 1930–1960* (New York: Knopf, Distributed by Random House, 1993), 478.

her duties and responsibilities in the WAVES, becomes more attractive and desirable to the men in the film than her sister, Susie, who cannot seem to follow the simple rules or perform her duties in the WAVES.¹²

“The Navy Song” and the title number are the two Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer numbers in the film that focus on women in the military. “The Navy Song” promotes recruitment, and the lyrics intertwine assuming duty, joining loved ones, looking “cute,” and helping win the war as all part of the recruitment campaign. One line in this number’s lyrics even suggests that joining the WAVES would help bring enlisted men home. This sentiment was mostly used in the propaganda aimed at getting civilian women into the workforce, building planes, ships, munitions, and other wartime production. Most other songs about women in the military capitalized on the early propaganda strategy that encouraged women to join the armed forces in order to release men for overseas duty. The songs also propagated the misconception that boyfriends would want their girls to join the WAVES and that men in the armed forces would salute and support the WAVES, which was clearly not the opinion of most enlisted men.

The title song in the film, “Here Come the WAVES,” displays a simple and straightforward message. Like most positive depictions of women in the military, the WAVES are presented as dependable and able to get the job done. In this song the WAVES represent their country and prove to the world that they can fulfill their military duties. Here the WAVES assume the role of “the gal behind the guy, behind the gun.” While not used in a film, the song “The Woman of the Year” also promoted the idea that a woman would be behind each soldier by working a wartime job. This phrase was not limited to just military women but was used in government propaganda to encourage civilian women to support the war effort, whether by working in a factory, rationing, or buying war bonds.

¹² Ibid., 92.

A popular number appeared in the film *Here Come the WAVES*: “Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive.” This Johnny Mercer song became the number two seller for the Andrews Sisters and Bing Crosby and was even nominated for an Academy Award in 1945.¹³ Although the song does not mention WAVES, WAC, SPARS, Marines, or any other military organization, the upbeat song proved to be the high point of the film and became immensely popular. The lyrics embody the attitude of all Americans during the war and the dedication, perseverance, and sacrifice it required. The song calls upon the people to “accentuate the positive” and to “eliminate the negative.” The lyrics warn that failure to keep a positive attitude will result in a country in which chaos rules. The song even employs the Biblical stories of Noah and Jonah to illustrate how faith and a positive attitude are ultimately rewarded.

Johnny Mercer composed an additional song for *Here Come the WAVES*: “A Woman’s Work Is Never Done.” Although the song never made it into the film, the lyrics portray the daily routine of a woman in the WAVES. The lyrics describe a typical day, starting with the first bugle call, to eating hash, to performing chores in dungarees with grease on her face. After the last bugle call, she falls exhausted into her bed where she “dreams of Chanel Number Five.” The song continues to praise various women throughout United States history, including Betsy Ross and pioneer women who “held the reins across the open plains.” The song closes by proclaiming “They’ve traded their gingham for braid,” and “They’re filling the bill, and will until they hear the final gun.” Whether a WAC, WAVE, SPAR, or Marine, these women rose to the challenge. They demonstrated resilience and were able to adapt to new situations and complete the tasks required of them, even in the face of resistance to their new roles.

¹³ Barry Day, Robert Kimball, and Miles Kreuger, eds., *The Complete Lyrics of Johnny Mercer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf of Random House, 2009), 144.

“The Song of the Army Nurse Corps”: Women in the Military as Caregivers

The branches of military service excluded from the controversy over women in the military were the nurse corps. The Army Nurse Corps and the Navy Nurse Corps were military divisions that had been established decades before World War II, with the former established in 1901 and the latter in 1908. Nursing was seen as an acceptable profession for women, one that did not encroach on “masculine professions,” as the formation of the WAC, WAVES, and other women’s military divisions did. Although the role of caregiver was accepted as acceptable women’s work, nurses still faced many dangerous situations overseas, especially in the South Pacific. Army and Navy nurses (now termed the “Angels of Bataan”) stationed in the Philippines were captured and held as prisoners of war in internment camps in Manila.

Several World War II films showcased military nurses, such as MGM’s *Cry ‘Havoc’* (1943), a film about the nurses in Bataan, Twentieth Century-Fox’s *To the Shores of Tripoli* (1942), and Paramount’s *So Proudly We Hail* (1943), a film about the experiences of nurses in the Philippines. While Hollywood seemed to jump at the chance to use nurses as inspirational subject matter for films, songwriters did not. A few songs speak of the Red Cross, but rarely do songs feature Army or Navy nurses. The 1944 number “The Song of the Army Nurse Corps,” by Hy Zaret and Lou Singer, is a rare example of a military nurse song. The lyrics speak of the nurses’ bravery, strength, and dedication to their profession. They are willing to go anywhere “at home or on a far off shore” to serve the men fighting for them.

“The WAC Is a Soldier Too”: Women in the Military Post-War

Initially, many Americans disagreed with the formation of women’s military corps, but by the end of the war, their efficiency and dedication had won over the majority of skeptics. In

fact, in the beginning WAACS had been trained for only four different jobs but by the summer of 1943, the WACS were being trained for 155 positions.¹⁴ In spite of gains made by women in the military, the slander campaign along with the common misconceptions took its toll on the recruitment effort of the women's corps. Even with a widespread recruitment campaign, the WAC never came close to reaching its goal of 150,000 women in the corps. A 1943 employment guide encouraged women to "serve your country—join the WAAC! Your decision to join this newest army in the world will open new horizons for you, and you will become an integral part of the country's war effort."¹⁵ Such broad generalizations and optimistic statements were not always the case for women in the military, but nevertheless women made great strides by serving in military capacities that would have been unheard of in peacetime America. While many women did not utilize their military training or skills after the war, in a discharge survey the majority of women felt that they were leaving the military feeling more confident and more disciplined, and that they had achieved positive personal growth.¹⁶ It was not until 1978 that the WAC was disbanded and women were integrated into the Army. The first WAACS of 1942 had been the pioneers who led the way for women in the military, which has resulted in increasing equality for women in the armed forces.

In spite of public opinion, vicious rumors, and bad press concerning women in the military, most songwriters displayed a positive attitude when it came to these divisions. While a few songs did not take the women seriously and made fun of the idea, the majority of songwriters supported women in the armed forces and looked to the greater good of the war effort and the Allied victory. Military women had proven themselves, and in turn, the songs

¹⁴ Treadwell, 192.

¹⁵ Evelyn Steele, *Wartime Opportunities for Women* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1943), 13.

¹⁶ Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 109.

about them championed their cause and spoke of their dedication to their jobs and to their country. In 1943 Lt. Ruby J. Douglas wrote the song “The WAAC Is a Soldier Too,” and by the end of the war no one would dare to disagree.

Chapter 2

“Belt Line Girl”: Women in the Workforce

The onset of World War II abruptly ended the Great Depression and the nation's unemployment problems. A peacetime draft had gone into effect in October 1940, and hundreds of thousands of American men left their jobs to serve their country. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the entrance of the United States into the war, millions more left the workforce to join military service. The effects of men being drafted and enlisting combined with the immediate workforce needed for the production of war commodities opened up new opportunities for women. A large propaganda campaign sought to recruit women into the workforce, and the popular song genre played an important role in this effort.

Popular Imagery of Rosie the Riveter

Propaganda and popular culture sought to romanticize the image of the female factory worker. The most famous example is J. Howard Mill's "We Can Do It" poster from 1942. The Westinghouse Company's War Production Coordinating Committee commissioned the poster and first displayed it February 1942. This image portrays the iconic feminine Rosie, complete with touches of makeup, hair tucked neatly under a red and white handkerchief, and clean blue work uniform. Her sleeves are rolled up and her face is determined with the headline "We Can Do It!" The poster was not initially associated with the "Rosie the Riveter" image but was used to recruit women into the wartime workforce.

A little over a year later, the May 29, 1943 cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* featured Norman Rockwell's version of Rosie the Riveter. This Rosie did not emulate Mill's feminine

Rosie. Rockwell's Rosie exuded more typically masculine qualities. The makeup, neat hair under a bright handkerchief, and delicate features were gone. Instead, her face is smudged with grime, her oversized overalls rolled up at her ankles, and her hair a nest of unruly red curls. She sits in an unladylike position with knees spread far apart, and her riveting gun rests across her lap. Her arms are muscular and powerful, and she is hardworking, proud, and patriotic.

Although today Rosie the Riveter is most associated with these images, Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb first coined the name "Rosie the Riveter" in a popular song they wrote in 1942. The Four Vagabonds recorded the most popular rendition of the piece, which was released in February 1943 and played on *Hit Parade*. The song's lyrics depict Rosie as a patriotic girl who has a good work ethic, is confident and proud of her work, and also supports the war effort by buying war bonds with the money she makes from her wartime job. In his lyrics, Evans depicts Rosie the Riveter as the new All-American girl. She possesses all the qualities that society desired of World War II women. "Rosie the Riveter was almost always portrayed by wartime media as a solitary star who managed her balancing act between job and home with the greatest of ease."¹ The first line of the lyrics refers to Rosie's dedication to her job. Whether rain or shine, or whether she feels like it or not, she is there every day to do her job. Absenteeism was a key problem addressed to women in the workforce. The long hours along with added responsibilities of homemaking and oftentimes child rearing attributed to absentee workers. Women struggled to find childcare, transportation, and even the time to shop for groceries.² Rosie, the ideal image of a women worker, never missed a day on the job. The song also relates that not only is Rosie a dedicated worker, but also that her work is of superb quality. The lyrics

¹ Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 164.

² Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 82–85.

read, “When they gave her a production ‘E,’ she was as proud as a girl could be.” The rating of “E” stood for “Efficiency” and was the highest rating awarded by the U.S. government.³

Evans’s refrain also emphasizes that Rosie has a boyfriend, Charlie, who is in the Marines. This gives Rosie a heterosexual and feminine side. The message being that even though she works hard doing a “man’s job,” Rosie still possesses feminine qualities that make her attractive to her boyfriend. The lyrics read, “Rosie is protecting Charlie, working overtime on the riveting machine.” Not only is Rosie feminine, but she also helps to put together the bombers that will protect her loved one. This idea gives validity and adds importance to the job that Rosie does. Femininity in women workers was often stressed. An article titled “Girls in Uniform” appeared in the July 6, 1942 issue of *Life Magazine*. This article presented women workers as pure glamour: “The woman worker in a war industry in the U.S. has acquired some of the glamour of the man in uniform. In labor’s social scale, she belongs to the elite. At the very top is the girl who works in an airplane factory. She is the glamour girl of 1942.”⁴ Although songs, posters, magazines, and Hollywood films portrayed women in the workforce as glamorous and feminine, actual workers often found that this was not the case. Historian Leila J. Rupp suggests, “Perhaps the glamorizing of war work signified an attempt to ease the transition from the apron-clad housewife of the prewar image to the woman war worker in pants.”⁵ While performing a “man’s job,” women were expected to be feminine. Media equated a “ladylike appearance” with

³ Margaret “Peggy” Hooper, letter to George Hooper, Oct. 2, 1943, quoted in Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, eds., *Since You Went Away* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 177.

⁴ “Girls in Uniform,” *Life* 13, no. 1 (1942): 41.

⁵ Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 151.

a woman's happiness. An unfeminine woman equaled an unhappy woman.⁶ Femininity was so highly valued that various companies and organizations held charm classes for their female workers to help insure a proper "FQ" (Femininity Quotient).⁷ The article in *Life* cited above also stressed the importance of femininity for women war workers: "Now, at the day's end, her hands may be bruised, there's grease under her nails, her make-up is smudged and her curls out of place. When she checks in the next morning at 6:30 a.m., her hands will be smooth, her nails polished, her make-up and curls in order, for Marguerite is neither drudge nor slavery but the heroine of a new order."⁸

Evans's lyrics of "she's making history, working for victory" reiterate the message that the media presented to women during the war. The idea of responsibility and duty pulled at the patriotic strings of a woman's heart. The messages of propaganda posters, films, and radio programs repeatedly conveyed to women that if they were not doing their wartime job they were essentially killing soldiers overseas. Scenarios like this were played out in OWI (Office of War Information) sanctioned propaganda films, such as *The Hidden Army* where production shortages caused by absenteeism result in women receiving telegrams that their loved ones had died in battle.⁹ While this is an extreme case of propaganda, most media attention was focused on positive images of women workers. They were depicted as "soldiers without guns," "the hidden army," and as workers able to rise to the challenge of "doing a man's job."

⁶ Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 60.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 60–61.

⁸ "Girls in Uniform," 41.

⁹ *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, directed by Connie Field (Berkeley, CA: Clarity Productions, 1980), videocassette.

“On the Swing Shift”: Romanticizing Women in the Workforce

Although new opportunities allowed women to earn wages, many obstacles presented themselves, and women were not always welcomed into some fields of the workforce. Employment areas previously populated by men, such as shipbuilding, transportation, and auto and metal industries, grudgingly accepted women, often times on the condition that they would leave after the war was over.¹⁰ At the outset of the war, many employers were often hesitant to hire women, fearing that they did not possess the skills or strength needed to perform in the workforce, or that the male employees would be distracted from their work by their female counterparts. Male workers often resented women entering their work fields and thought of them as incapable, a distraction, or even as posing a threat to their employment.¹¹ Both Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley discounted the obstacles women faced in the workforce and instead focused on glitz, glamour, and the patriotic duty of having a wartime job. The 1943 MGM film *Swing Shift Maisie* tells the story of a glamorous vaudeville entertainer turn swing-shift worker in an airplane factory. The film features the morale boosting song “There’s a Girl Behind the Boy Behind the Gun.”

Popular songs also addressed women factory workers intent on doing their patriotic duty. Agnes “Sis” Cunningham’s lyrics in “Belt Line Girl,” a popular song recorded by the Almanac Singers, captures the wartime attitude and expectations placed on women in the workforce. The lyrics tell of women workers who fill the jobs left behind by men gone off to war. They are willing to learn to build ships or planes in order to get their men back home. This song places the responsibility to fill “Joe’s” shoes on the “Belt Line Girl.” “The job he left behind” was a

¹⁰ Hartmann, 64.

¹¹ Ibid., 63.

popular phrase used in both song lyrics and on propaganda posters during the war. This phrase expressed the need for women to fulfill their patriotic duty by taking a wartime job. If men were making the sacrifice of fighting over there, the least women could do was take over the jobs they had left behind. Much of this propaganda appealed not just to the broad patriotic duties of Americans, but it personalized the appeal for every woman to take the job of a specific friend or loved one, just as the “Belt Line Girl” took “Joe’s” place.¹² Many women would have been hesitant when faced with the idea of learning the jobs that had been previously held by men. To ease apprehension, propaganda from the OWI compared wartime factory jobs to household chores: welding, to needlework; a sheet of metal, to a length of cloth; a press, to a juicer, and operating a lathe, no more intimidating than using a washing machine.¹³ “Belt Line Girl” also emphasizes that the more women who joined the workforce, the faster the war would end.

For the first time, the call for more women in the workforce included married women. The housewife by day, factory worker by night became the recipient of much public attention. By the end of the war, over three million married women had at some point been part of the workforce.¹⁴ The final line of Cunningham’s lyrics read, “But when a thousand hard working girls step in and take a hand, out roll the tanks, and the planes, and guns, and there’s freedom in the land.” The lyrics link women working with ending the war and freedom for all. This idea embodied the romantic pull of a woman’s patriotic desire for freedom and the return of her husband.

¹² Rupp, 156.

¹³ *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, videocassette.

¹⁴ Hartmann, 78.

A popular song featured in the 1942 Paramount Pictures film *Star Spangled Rhythm* was Johnny Mercer's "On the Swing Shift." The romanticizing of wartime workers in this song depicts the motivation of love rather than patriotism. Mercer's lyrics read, "What care I if they put me in the wing shift? He's nearby painting camouflage." In this song the presence of her man motivates a woman to do whatever work is necessary. The lyrics also claim that this war worker will even work overtime for free because her man is working beside her. This romanticizes the idea promoted by government propaganda that women should take wartime jobs for patriotic motives, not for money. The song contains a dance interlude in which the women and men workers participate in a carefree and lighthearted square dance. While love as motivation for working a factory job worked well for the media and propaganda purposes, the reality was that women took wartime factory jobs more for patriotic reasons and income than for personal reasons.¹⁵

"My Gal's Working at Lockheed," by composer Matt Dennis and lyricist Frank Loesser, impresses upon the listener the viewpoint of a soldier away from his girlfriend. The lyrics tell the story of a girl who worked at an airplane manufacturing plant, building bombers. The plant referenced in this song was located in Burbank, California. The Lockheed plant built thousands of planes including the B-40, the B-17, and the F-9, making it one of the most productive plane factories during WWII. By 1943 Lockheed had employed 13,437 women.¹⁶ Even a young Marilyn Monroe (then Norma Jeane Daugherty) worked in the assembly line of the Radio Plane munitions factory, which was part of the Lockheed plant in Burbank. The lyrics of "My Gal's Working at Lockheed" match the sentiments of contemporary poster propaganda that read

¹⁵ Ibid., 79.

¹⁶ "Employment of Women in California Aircraft Industry, June 1943," WB-B, Reel 21, quoted in Chitose Sato, "Gender and Work in the American Aircraft Industry during World War II," *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 11 (2000): 150.

“Longing won’t bring him back sooner. Get a war job!,” “The more women at work the sooner we win!,” and “Do the job he left behind.” In Loesser’s lyrics, the soldier who is a pilot speaks proudly of his girlfriend who “drove the rivets in my bomb-bay door.” He relates how every time he flies his plane he feels closer to his girl because she helped build it but admits that he used to feel worried when they were apart. Maybe he was worried for her safety or that she would find someone else. Regardless, now that she has a war job, he no longer needs to worry and feels closer to her now more than when they were together. Such propaganda was intended to make women feel like working a factory job was not only patriotic, but also that it would also make their loved ones proud and perhaps bring couples closer together despite their physical separation.

“We’re the Janes that Make the Planes”: Doing a “Man’s Job”

When women began to enter the unknown territory of the workforce, the media paid them much attention. “Women Begin to Take Over Some of Men’s Dirty Jobs,” was one of the section headlines in *Life*’s December 21, 1942 article titled “Manpower.”¹⁷ Photos showed women working for railroads, gas stations, and meatpacking plants. One full-page photo gives the caption, “Jennie Wilson Does a Man’s Job Washing Down a Heavy Beef Carcass at Meat Plant.”¹⁸

Several popular songs also highlighted the masculine aspects of wartime employment. The song “We’re the Janes that Make the Planes” by composer Sidney Miller and lyricist Inez James, and performed in the Universal Pictures 1944 musical film *Sing a Jingle*, demonstrates the advancement of women’s rights through the workforce. One line from the song’s lyrics reads,

¹⁷ “Manpower,” *Life* 13, no. 25 (1942): 27–31.

¹⁸ “Manpower,” photo by Carol Eyerman, 31.

“We’re the girls who clipped our curls and from now on we’re the ones who wear the pants!” These lyrics express the feelings of social and financial freedom that many women experienced as a result of their wartime employment. One married wartime worker wrote in a letter to her overseas husband, “Opened my little checking account too and it’s a grand and a glorious feeling to write a check all your own and not have to ask for one.”¹⁹ Even ladies undergarment ads championed the cause with the ad copy, “There’s a new woman today doing a man’s job.”²⁰ Norman Rockwell’s muscular and grimy “Rosie the Riveter” image personifies this “new woman” who is capable of doing labor that in peacetime would have been considered men’s work.

The popular song sung by Nancy Walker and accompanied by Tommy Dorsey Orchestra in the 1944 MGM film *Broadway Rhythm*, “Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet,” emphasizes masculine rhetoric. The lyrics recount a woman who had worked the swing shift all night and has come home to get some sleep, only to be disturbed by the milkman’s noisy delivery. The lyrics employ colloquial jargon, and the use of slang and improper grammar suggests a man might be speaking. Omitting the subject in sentences, leaving off the final “g” on words ending in “ing,” and using words like “beat down to the sod,” “dig some nod,” “fat tank,” “blast my wig,” and “forty winks” would all be considered a poor use of language, improper for a refined woman, and acceptable language only for a hard-working factory man. In fact, if taken out of the context of the film, one might not even realize that the protagonist is a woman.

A line from the song “Minnie’s in the Money,” which was featured in the 1943 Twentieth Century-Fox comedy *The Gang’s All Here*, speaks of the independence wartime employment was bringing women. The lyrics read, “She hasn’t got a guy who’s got a diamond mine, but she’s

¹⁹ Polly Crow, letter to her husband William Crow, June 12, 1944, quoted in Litoff and Smith, 147.

²⁰ Munsingwear ad, *Life* 15, no. 12 (1943): 60.

a welder on the old assembly line. So bless her, yes, sir, Minnie's in the money." In this song Minnie is able to financially support herself. She does not have a rich man, but she does not need one because of her factory job. Unlike "We're the Janes That Make the Planes" and "Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet," the lyrics here do not represent Minnie with a masculine persona, but rather she plays the masculine role of breadwinner.

Of all the wartime songs that reference women in the workforce, not one promotes the traditional fields of work that women filled in pre-war times. Such "pink collar" jobs included service, clerical, and retail, and were considered low-skill occupations suitable for women. Instead wartime songs promoted the new areas of work for women, mainly the factories where previously men had been the workers. The popular music industry as well as the media ignored traditional "pink collar" jobs during the war years. The idea of mothers and wives building tanks and planes was a more appealing subject matter than the work of teachers or secretaries. The new vocations available to women offered pop culture an outlet to romanticize, as well as to promote, these new roles for women.

The need for women in the workforce also provided an opportunity for the women's rights movement to blossom. For a brief period, women were not expected to stay at home, but were urged to leave their homes for factories in order to help win the war. Propaganda used women in the workforce "as a symbol of the ideal home-front spirit, standing for national unity, dedication to the cause, and stoic pursuit of victory."²¹ The media, including Tin Pan Alley, almost exclusively conveyed a positive outlook on wartime difficulties or used humor to portray the negative aspects. Historian Maureen Honey points out that "popular culture must, to some extent, reflect the assumptions, fantasies, and values of consumers in order to be commercially

²¹ Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 6.

successful.”²² Propaganda in song lyrics, film subjects, or printed articles and advertisements to get women in the workforce was successful because it fed off of the romanticized idea of women in the war effort as well as her patriotic sentiments. Although popular songs, journals, and magazines created glamorous images of women war workers, the reality was that their jobs were often hard, dirty, tiring, and not always welcoming. Women faced opposition from every direction. Husbands, unions, employers, and male co-workers all presented obstacles. The personal hurdles of fatigue, housework, childrearing, and childcare all took their toll on women in the workforce. But even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, by the end of the war over eleven million women had held employment and had proven that they were capable of doing their part to pull a nation through its time of crisis.

²² Ibid., 10.

Chapter 3

“Get Some Cash for Your Trash”: The War Effort on the Home Front

The American people devoted a great deal of time, money, and effort in support of the war. The government expected men, women, and children all to do their part. Buying war bonds, participating in scrap drives, following rationing regulations, and growing victory gardens were all ways in which citizens could support the war effort on the home front. Government propaganda seen on posters, read in print, heard on the radio, and watched in newsreels provided much of the inspiration for the home-front campaign during the war. With men fighting overseas, much of the propaganda was aimed at women. From promoting gardening to condemning hoarding, popular song covered an array of war effort topics.

“Any Bonds Today”: Selling War Bonds

Buying war bonds was one of the most popular and promoted means of supporting the war effort. Ads promoted the sale of bonds and insisted that buying bonds was “security for the future” and that “every dollar you put into War Bonds is *life insurance* for our boys.”¹ Other ads urged citizens to set aside a minimum of 10% of each paycheck for purchasing bonds.² Many factories and companies even gave employees the option of a payroll savings plan in which a certain portion of each paycheck went to the purchase of bonds. By the end of the war, over \$185

¹ “...and You Talk of Sacrifices!,” Vicks ad, *Life* 13, no. 24 (1942): 6.

² “Will You Help Him Come Back Alive?,” Norwich Pharmacal Co. ad, *Life* 14, no. 3 (1943): 18.

billion had been sold in bonds.³ Large companies and corporations bought much of them, but ordinary citizens bought an estimated \$36 billion in bonds.⁴

Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. had been instrumental in orchestrating the bond campaigns. With the cost of the war reaching over \$330 billion, Morgenthau had faced the daunting task of financing the United States' participation in the war. He supported bond rallies, appeared on radio programs devoted to raising bonds, and even sponsored popular songs about war bonds by purchasing their copyrights.⁵ An example of this can be seen on the sheet music of the Dick Uhl and Tom Adair number "Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday" where it reads "Copyright 1942 by Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, Washington D.C.," and no publisher is named. This upbeat song claims that by purchasing bonds "ev'ryone can help to save the nation" and that each person should "take a dime from ev'ry dollar" to put towards buying a savings bond.

One of the most popular songs related to the war effort on the home front was Irving Berlin's "Any Bonds Today?," which was published seven months before Pearl Harbor. Nearly every popular singer of the era performed this song including Bing Crosby, the Andrews Sisters, and even Bugs Bunny in a ninety-second animated promotional shown in theaters.⁶ Maxene Andrews of the Andrews Sisters credited the song's popularity to the fact that it was not

³ William H. Young and Nancy K Young, *Music of the World War II Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 131.

⁴ John Bush Jones, *The Songs That Fought the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939–1945* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2006), 197.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Maxene Andrews and Bill Gilbert, *Over Here, Over There: The Andrews Sisters and the USO Stars in World War II* (Thorndike, ME: Thorndike Press, 1993), 138.

considered “forced government propaganda or a boring attempt at motivating us.”⁷ This song also displays Morgenthau’s name as copyright holder, and the front cover of the sheet music declares it to be the “Theme Song of the National Defense Savings Program.” The lyrics inform Americans that Uncle Sam is coming and they should be ready to “get your savings out” and warn that citizens are unable to prepare for the future unless “you buy a share of freedom today.” Like much World War II propaganda, Berlin’s lyrics suggest that victory will depend on citizens’ dedication and support of the war effort. In this case, not buying bonds will result in the destruction of the United States and the future of freedom. The song calls Uncle Sam “the freedom man,” and a bond is “a share of freedom.” Here the association of buying bonds with freedom gives to the average citizen who was not a soldier fighting overseas a way to contribute to the cause of freedom by buying war bonds.

Lyricists and composers released many popular songs that promoted buying war bonds. Singer Bing Crosby encouraged citizens to buy bonds with his rendition of Frank Loesser’s “The Road to Victory,” as well as Jimmy McHugh and Harold Adamson’s number “Buy a Bond.” Frank Sinatra asked citizens to “do your bit / buy a piece of the peace / for freedom’s sake” in his rendition of Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn’s song “Buy a Piece of the Peace.” Sinatra also sang the Walter Hirsch, Gerald Marks, and Sano Marco number “Dig Down Deep,” which called for everyone to do just that: “Put your hands in your jeans, Mr. Citizen / The land that you love best / Is asking you to invest / With a personal request from Mr. Morgenthau.” Another song, “Buy a Bond Today” by Hal Block, promised full tanks of gas for your car, no more blackouts and air raid warnings, and no more Hirohito, Adolph, or Benito all if you just “buy a bond today.”

⁷ Ibid., 214.

Women played an influential role in buying bonds, but they were even more vital in selling them. Women's organizations, such as the American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS) and the Women's Bond and Stamp Division, were responsible for millions of dollars in bond sales. The Women's Bond and Stamp Division in Denver, Colorado raised nearly five million dollars from 1942 to 1944.⁸ New York units of the AWVS had already sold over five million dollars in bonds by 1942.⁹ Even more successful in the bond drives were the Hollywood stars and famous singers who traveled across the country selling bonds. Kate Smith, renowned for her rendition of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America," is credited with single handedly selling over \$600 million in bonds.¹⁰ Other female stars auctioned off kisses and autographs for the war bond effort. A pair of Betty Grable stockings sold for \$110,000 at one bond drive, while a lock of Veronica Lake's blond hair brought in a bid of \$200,000.¹¹

The government helped to organize various bond campaigns throughout the war. The first major tour was the 1942 Hollywood Victory Caravan, which traveled the country. Hollywood stars such as Bob Hope, Cary Grant, Laurel and Hardy, Bing Crosby, and Claudette Colbert took part in the campaign. Another bond campaign was the Stars Over America, with Bette Davis, Veronica Lake, Hedy Lamarr, Dorothy Lamour, and Ginger Rogers, which raised \$775 million in bond sales.¹² In Indiana actress Carole Lombard sold millions of dollars in bonds before the

⁸ Stan Cohen, *V for Victory: America's Home Front During World War II* (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishers, 1991), 74.

⁹ Weatherford, 233.

¹⁰ Andrews and Gilbert, 142.

¹¹ Gary L. Bloomfield, Stacie L. Shain, and Arlen C. Davidson, *Duty, Honor, Applause: America's Entertainers in World War II* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2004), 120.

¹² Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front during World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 81.

tragic plane crash that claimed her life in January 1942.¹³ German-born Marlene Dietrich, who became a U.S. citizen in 1939 and was known for her strong anti-Nazi views, along with actress Lana Turner, “the sweater girl,” were also instrumental in the sale of war bonds. Turner remembers traveling from city to city, selling war bonds. At each stop excited crowds composed mostly of women met them: a reminder that most men had gone to war.¹⁴

Even in 1945 with the end of the war in sight, the bond drives and the push to invest in them continued unabated. The war had cost over \$330 billion, and the United States Treasury counted on the sale of war bonds to help foot the bill.¹⁵ The Seventh War Loan drive began May 14, 1945 followed by the final Eighth War Loan drive, which lasted from October 29, 1945 to December 8, 1945, exactly four years after the United States had declared war on Japan in response to the attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1945 Bing Crosby joined the U.S. Maritime Training Station Choir to perform the Jimmy McHugh and Harold Adamson number “We’ve Got Another Bond to Buy” in a three-minute movie short promoting bonds. The number also appeared in the documentary short “Hollywood Victory Caravan.” The lyrics remind citizens that even though “you may think the war is won / but we can’t leave the job half done” and “the bonds we bought before / bought the bomb that won the war / but now we’ve got another bond to buy.” In the 1945 theatrical spot “Did You Buy That Bond Today?,” a woman sings, “Got your car and toaster ordered / but did you buy that bond today?” Even though enlisted men were coming home, the aftermath of the war was still evident. The financial cost of the war made it necessary for the government to continue to ask its citizens to buy bonds. When the last proceeds from the

¹³ Bloomfield, Shain, and Davidson, 115.

¹⁴ Ibid., 118.

¹⁵ Jones, *The Songs That Fought the War*, 196.

sale of war bonds were deposited on January 3, 1946, the total was \$185.7 billion, over half of the overall cost of the war.¹⁶

“Junk Ain’t Junk No More”: Scrap Drive Participation

Another way in which American citizens were asked to contribute to the war effort were scrap drives. Scrap tin, iron, paper, and fats all were collected, sold, or donated for the war effort. Across the country, people rummaged through their attics, kitchens, and barns to find old pieces of metal that could be repurposed for the war effort. Many even removed the metal bumpers from their cars and replaced them with temporary wooden ones.¹⁷ Henry Doorly, editor of the *Omaha World Herald*, inspired one of the most successful scrap drives of the war. His idea was a three-week competition in which the county that collected the most pounds of scrap per capita would win \$2,000. The entire state got behind the idea, and the governor even declared a scrap holiday so businesses could close to allow employees to gather scrap. This drive, named “The Nebraska Plan,” was responsible for 135,000,000 pounds of scrap, which equaled just over 103 pounds of scrap per capita.¹⁸

Several popular songs championed the scrap effort. Songs such as “Savin’ All the Tin I Can,” “Junk Ain’t Junk No More,” and “Get Some Cash for Your Trash” all emphasized the importance of turning waste into usable materials for the war effort. The War Production Board sanctioned the number “Junk Ain’t Junk No More” by Austen Croom-Johnson and Allan Kent, and the song became the official theme song for the animated cartoon character Sammy

¹⁶ John Bush Jones, *All-Out for Victory!: Magazine Advertising and the World War II Home Front* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2009), 249, 251.

¹⁷ “Scrap” in “Letters to the Editor,” *Life* 13, no. 17 (1942): 14.

¹⁸ “The Nebraska Plan,” *Life* 13, no. 14 (1942): 12.

Salvage.¹⁹ Thousands of movie-goers across the country listened as Sammy Salvage asked them to “collect today for the U.S.A.” The song lists many of the items that were being sought after in the nation-wide scrap drives, including pots, pans, garbage cans, kettles, old cars, old iron wheels, and even “the shawl that Granny wore.” The end the song promises that “junk’ll win the war.”

Women played an integral role in the collection of household items for scrap drives. They cleaned out their closets, attics, and kitchens to find many worn out or unused items that Uncle Sam could use to make tanks, guns, and ammunition. Even excess cooking fats could be turned in to glycerine for explosives.²⁰ In the song “Scrap Your Fat” by composer Francis J. Burke and lyricist Hughie Prince, “Miss Suzy” wrote to Washington to ask what she could do for the war effort. She received an official note asking her to “scrap your fat. Oh mama won’t you scrap your fat for victory.” One article admonished: “Every drop is valuable. If each housewife saved one tablespoonful a day, one pound a month, we should have gone a long way toward solving the problem. Women are the ones upon whom the success or loss of this battle of the war depends.”²¹ Another article announced, “House cleaning this Spring is giving Mrs. America the opportunity to make a vital contribution to the war program! She can help feed our factories the scrap they need by turning in all the old junk that has been kicking around her house for years.”²² The popular Fats Waller and Ed Kirkby number “Get Some Cash for Your Trash” also encouraged women to find household items to sell to scrap collectors. The lyrics ask, “Will you

¹⁹ Andrews and Gilbert, 159.

²⁰ Jones, *All-Out for Victory!*, 122.

²¹ “Fat in the Right Places,” in *National News of the American Legion Auxiliary* (Indianapolis, IN: American Legion Auxiliary, 1936–1950), 59, quoted in Cohen, *V for Victory*, 86.

²² “Spring House Cleaning 1942: Forward March with the Scrap Brigade,” *Life* 12, no. 19 (1942): 42.

listen to me honey / save up all your iron and tin / get some cash for your trash.” The emphasis of the song is not just that one can get a little cash for their trash, but that everyone needs to save everything that can be used in the war effort. Nothing should be thrown away if it can be put to use for the war. Whether it is pots, pans, newspapers, tin, or “the pilot light behind that draper,” the lyrics stress that nothing should be wasted.

“How Does Your Garden Grow?”: Victory Gardens

Planting victory gardens were another way that civilians got involved in the war effort. Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard first presented the plan in the month of Pearl Harbor—December 1941. Wickard’s plan encouraged Americans to utilize any available green space to plant vegetables, whether it was rooftops, parks, unused lots, farmland, or city squares. Newspapers and magazines published articles on growing gardens, and companies like Green Giant even printed ads explaining “How to Grow Your Own Peas.”²³ Other articles featured every victory garden’s must haves, including peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, beets, carrots, and broccoli, as well as handy garden tools.²⁴ According to one 1943 poll, twenty-one million American families had already planted or were planning a victory garden.²⁵ Women were encouraged to plant victory gardens through popular songs like “Harvey, the Victory Garden Man,” who shouts, “Come on, you cats, Aristocrats, and dig, dig, dig.” Another well-known victory garden number was Hunter Reynolds’s “Get Out and Dig, Dig, Dig.” The lyrics pushed everyone “to dig our way to victory” and “to make ten million gardens grow.” The hour-long

²³ “How to Grow Your Own Peas,” *Life* 14, no. 10 (1943): 37.

²⁴ “Wartime Gardening,” *Life* 14, no. 10 (1943): 63–70.

²⁵ Paul M. Holsinger, ed., *War and American Popular Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 323.

National Farm and Home radio program often featured the song and even proclaimed it the official “Victory Garden Theme.”²⁶ Other popular songs included “We’ve Gotta Dig for Victory,” “How Does Your Garden Grow,” and “Seeds for Victory and Peace.” While most victory garden songs focused on the idea of growing vegetables for home consumption, “Seeds for Victory and Peace” promoted the idea of raising a garden to furnish vegetables for the men “over there”: “We will seed and weed and hoe, / Make our Vict’ry Gardens grow / We will keep the ‘Chow’ a-rolling over there.”

The victory garden campaign did not stop at the planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting of vegetables. Women were expected to can or dehydrate the surplus produce in order to preserve it for later consumption. Magazines published articles explaining how to can foods at proper temperatures in order to avoid dangerous bacteria like Botulism, as well as techniques for drying fruits and vegetables.²⁷ With Uncle Sam requiring half of commercial canned produce for the armed forces, it became a necessity for families to can vegetables to eat during the winter when stores would run low on canned goods.²⁸

“Ration Blues”: The OPA and Rationing

In April 1941 before the United States had officially entered the war, the Office of Price Administration, or the OPA, was formed. Its function was to control prices in an attempt to avoid inflation and to establish the template for any necessary rationing. Throughout the course of the war, the OPA controlled 90 percent of marketable goods and issued various ration books to every

²⁶ Ibid., 323.

²⁷ “Canning,” *Life* 15, no. 8 (1943): 76.

²⁸ “18,000,000 Gardens for Victory,” *Popular Mechanics* 79, no. 5 (1943): 1.

American citizen.²⁹ The OPA placed price ceilings on thousands of products under the rubric of “cost-of-living commodities.”³⁰

The OPA administered the first war-ration book on May 4, 1942, and the first commodity to be rationed was sugar.³¹ The government rationed sugar to a half a pound per person per week, and it could only be sold to those with ration books.³² Coffee rationing began in November 1942. Although the OPA removed coffee from the ration list only eight months later, the impact was enough that newspapers and magazines printed articles on how to make your coffee last. One piece from *Life*’s November 30, 1942 issue suggested several ways to stretch ground coffee. Suggestions include adding chicory, a plant that can be baked and ground to use as an additive; double dripping, a technique that can increase yield by 30 percent; not filling cups to the top; and leveling a tablespoon of grounds instead of using a heaping tablespoon.³³ Adding chicory to coffee was not a new idea. The practice is considered standard in New Orleans where it became popular during the Civil War when the Union troops had blocked the port of New Orleans. Butter rationing began on March 22, 1943, and meat rationing soon followed.³⁴ The weekly amount of meat allowed was approximately two-and-a-half pounds per person, and because of the varying quality of different cuts of meat, the OPA introduced tokens and a point system for

²⁹ Cohen, 78.

³⁰ “Price Ceilings,” *Life* 12, no. 19 (1942): 20.

³¹ “Sugar,” *Life* 12, no. 19 (1942): 22.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ “Coffee Rationing,” *Life* 13, no. 22 (1942): 64–66.

³⁴ William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *World War II and the Postwar Years in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC–CLIO, 2010), 579.

purchasing meat.³⁵ Many cookbooks and newspaper and magazine articles gave women suggestions on how to fix some of the lower quality cuts of meat. One article in *Life* magazine featured nutrition information on the so-called “tidbits” available during the war. These “tidbits” included tripe, heart, liver, brains, kidneys, oxtail, tongue, and sweetbread. Photographs showed dishes of kidney stew, pigs feet and sauerkraut, and pigs ears and noodles, while charts illustrated the daily value percentages of protein, vitamin B, iron, and niacin for the various cuts.³⁶ During the war, Americans could not afford to waste anything in the butchering process.

Restrictions on sugar, meat, and other commodities led to melancholy songs, such as “Duration Blues” and “Ration Blues.” These songs addressed the impact felt on the home front from wartime shortages during a time when “‘make do’ became the American housewife’s slogan.”³⁷ The Johnny Mercer song “Duration Blues” incorporates “blue” notes into the music, but the lyrics use humor in an attempt to lessen the strain and frustrations of rationing and its complicated acronyms. The refrain reads, “For anything and everything / There’s stamps you got to use; / The D’s and G’s are groceries, / and I think the T’s are shoes. / You have to be an FBI man / to figure out all the clues.” The song also addressed the common sight of meat in a can: “There’s Spam, and Wham, and Deviled Ham; And something new called Zoom—/ Just take it home and heat it / To the temperature of the room.” Another song that addressed the woes of rationing was the popular Louis Jordan number “Ration Blues.” This twelve-bar blues asks, “What’s wrong with Uncle Sam? / He’s cut down on my sugar, / now he’s messin’ with my

³⁵ Doris Weatherford, *American Women during World War II: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 374.

³⁶ “Variety Meats,” *Life* 14, no. 2 (1943): 62–64.

³⁷ Campbell, 181.

ham.” The speaker then bemoans the fact that he can only get “forty ounces of any kind of meat,” which has to last for a whole week.

The shortages and rationing on the home front made life difficult for women during the war. Not only did the scarcity of staples, such as sugar, meats, and butter, make cooking a challenge, but also the lack of new kitchen appliances and parts to repair old ones made maintenance difficult and replacement impossible. With the need for war-related materials, production of household appliances ceased. Vacuums, mixers, toasters, coffeemakers, and even can openers became impossible to buy.³⁸ Quality linens and towels also became difficult to find. One woman wrote in a letter to her husband that she found and quietly bought some sheets from a store and that it “felt like someone buying hooch during Prohibition.”³⁹ Posters encouraged citizens to “Use it up, Wear it out, Make it do, Or do without!”⁴⁰ Americans had no choice but to make do and hold on to the hope that it was for only the duration.

Women’s nylon stockings were another scarce commodity during the war. Nylon and silk stockings were recycled and reprocessed into parachutes and towropes for the war. One report stated that within one ninety-day period 626,127 pounds of nylon and silk stockings were collected.⁴¹ The nylon shortage inspired the humorous Fats Waller and George Marion Jr. number “When the Nylons Bloom Again.” The lyrics read, “Now, poor or rich / We’re enduring instead woolens that itch! / Rayons that spread.” Eventually the OPA controlled rayons as well, which resulted in the introduction of new cotton stockings. Another nylon alternative that became popular during the war was make-up for legs. Ads for Gaby leg make-up claimed that it

³⁸ Ibid., 173.

³⁹ Audrey Savell, letter to Kelvin Savell, April 18, 1945, quoted in Litoff and Smith, 170.

⁴⁰ Donald I. Rogers, *Since You Went Away* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1973), 255.

⁴¹ Cohen, 115.

“won’t rub off,” it “looks like silk,” and it is “water proof.”⁴² Some innovative women even drew lines down the backs of their legs to imitate the look of nylon seams.

In addition to nylons, women’s fashions were affected by the war. Because of rationing, fashions changed from the popular Paris styles, which used an excess of material, to more minimalist fashion styles. One ad broadcast, “Fashion forecasts say that wash dresses are going to be tighter-fitting, with shorter skirts and narrower seams to save materials”⁴³ The War Production Board, or WPB, set regulations for the production of civilian clothing, allowing only three-fourths of a yard of fabric for a woman’s dress.⁴⁴ Other restrictions set by the WBP included a maximum circumference of seventy-two inches for the bottom of skirts and dresses, a maximum hem of two inches, and jacket lengths of twenty-five inches.⁴⁵ Gone were the cuffs, ruffles, pleats, and any other ornamental trimming. In addition, women were encouraged to patch, mend, repurpose, or sew their own clothes. The popular number by Sammy Cahn and Sy Oliver “Can’t Get Stuff in Your Cuff” was a shout out to the restrictions placed on clothing production. Recorded by popular artists such as Jimmy Dorsey and the Four Vagabonds, the songs lyrics read, “You can’t get stuff in your cuff / Because you’ve got no cuff to get your stuff in,” and “You can’t get a crease in your pleats / Because you’ve got no pleats to put your crease in.”

While most Americans accepted rationing as a necessary part of the war effort, a black market emerged to fulfill the desire for scarce goods. Meats, shoes, and gasoline were all products that could be bought on the black market. In one instance while investigating ration

⁴² “Stockings You Pour On,” Gaby ad, *Life* 14, no. 22 (1943): 45.

⁴³ “One Shortage You Don’t Have To Put Up With...,” Sanforized ad, *Life* 12, no. 22 (1942): 5.

⁴⁴ Young and Young, *World War II and the Postwar Years in America*, 314.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 314–15.

stickers on cars at the Belmont racetrack, the OPA determined that thirty-eight cars were using gasoline bought on the black market to supplement what their ration stickers allowed.⁴⁶ Another result of rationing was hoarding. The outbreak of hoarding may have stemmed from the Great Depression. Many American's initial reaction to the news of imminent rationing was to hoard. One Gene Carroll and Glenn Row song titled "You're Out of Order, Mrs. Hoarder" railed against hoarding. Some shop owners did their part to try to prevent it. One grocer punctured the vacuum seal on cans of ground coffee in order to discourage hoarding.⁴⁷ Cans with broken seals had to be used within a shorter period of time to avoid going stale.

While black-market purchases and hoarding did occur during wartime, most Americans kept a patriotic spirit and felt it their responsibility and duty to win the war on the home front. War meant sacrifices, and most citizens at home realized the sacrifices they had to make could never compare to the sacrifices of soldiers fighting battles overseas. While some songs may have bemoaned the fact that there were limited quantities of ground coffee, meat, or sugar to be had, the underlying attitude of most popular songs was of encouragement, perseverance, and anticipation of the day when rationing and OPA price ceilings would be just a memory. Songwriter Vick Knight summed it up in his 1943 song "I Love Coffee." The patriotic lyrics declare, "I love coffee, I love tea, / But not as much as I love liberty! / Miss my butter, miss my ham, / But not as much as I'd miss Uncle Sam!" Although civilians were faced with many inconveniences, most realized their hardships were a small price to pay for freedom.

⁴⁶ Andrews and Gilbert, 49.

⁴⁷ "Coffee Rationing," *Life* 13, no. 22 (1942): 70.

Chapter 4

“You Can’t Say No to a Soldier”: A Woman’s Duty

While much of the home front effort, such as rationing, victory gardens, scrap drives, and war jobs, aimed at helping the war effort as a whole, other areas focused specifically on boosting morale of the armed forces. During this period, all forms of media addressed a woman’s responsibilities of showing patriotic support not only for her country, but also for servicemen. Songs encouraged women to write letters to enlisted men, to pray for them, and to volunteer their time at canteens, the Red Cross, or any number of the various organizations that supported the war through direct contact with the armed forces. Another area of servicemen support concentrated on romantic relationships. Many popular songs asked women to be faithful to their men in the military. Others used sexual overtones, instructing women how they should treat the men who were fighting for them. While women did enter many new fields during the war, which were formerly reserved for men, volunteerism on the home front as well as the morale-boosting effort were considered traditional ways for women to serve.¹

“I’ll Be True While You’re Gone”: Depictions of Faithfulness

With millions of men leaving home and their loved ones behind, it is no wonder that a number of popular songs dealt with the wartime occurrence of couples being separated. Even though these romantic-sentimental numbers, or “slush songs,” did not broadcast patriotic messages to rally the troops, they gave the soldiers what they needed to hear. The songs projected images of their lovers’ faithfulness, even when separated by thousands of miles.

¹ Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 123.

Ballads, such as “I’ll Be True While You’re Gone,” “Waiting,” and “My Devotion,” assured the men that their wives and girlfriends back home would remain faithful. The lyrics to “I’ll Be True While You’re Gone” promise “Don’t you worry ’bout me when we’re not together / You can always depend on me till the end, dear, / I’ll be waiting and hoping for your return, dear.” Lyricist Mack Gordon and composer Harry Warren’s popular slush song “You’ll Never Know” was featured in the 1943 Twentieth Century-Fox musical film *Hello, Frisco, Hello*. The song won an Academy Award for Best Original Song, beating “Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There,” and was number one on *Your Hit Parade* for nine weeks.² The sentimental ballad speaks poignantly of a woman’s feelings toward her lover or husband who is overseas: “You went away and my heart went with you, / I speak your name in my every prayer, / If there is some other way to prove that I love you, / I swear I don’t know how.” In another popular sentimental number, “Good Night, Wherever You Are” by Al Hoffman, Dick Robertson, and Frank Weldon, a girl back home sings to her lover, “I’ll be with you, dear, no matter how near or far, / Wherever you are, good night.” Lyricist Roc Hillman and composer Johnny Napton’s “My Devotion” promises “My devotion is not just a sudden emotion / It will be constantly burning / And your love will kindle the flame.”

Although many songs addressed the woman’s position of assuring a soldier of her faithfulness, other numbers address the viewpoint of the soldier on the battlefield asking his lover or wife to stay faithful until his return. The 1943 song “Wait for Me, Mary” is one such example. The lyrics tell the story of a soldier overseas thinking of his girl back home. He writes her a letter pleading for her to wait for him “by the moonlit garden gate, where my heart and I would wait for you.” Another popular number reminding girls at home to stay faithful was

² Roy Hemming, *The Melody Lingers On: The Great Song Writers and Their Movie Musicals* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1986), 138.

“Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree.” The Andrews Sisters performed the number often, and it remained one of their most popular hits throughout the war.³ The lyrics read “Don’t sit under the apple tree / With anyone else than me / Till I come marching home.” Songs such as these reminded women of their expected fidelity. Soldiers leaving their wives and girlfriends behind felt insecure and imagined civilian men were pursuing their girls.⁴ These songs sought to assuage the fear that many men felt at the thought of receiving the dreaded “Dear John letter,” informing them that their lover had found someone else. While the male-dominated field of songwriting produced many popular songs telling women to remain faithful, the subject of male fidelity was never addressed. This double standard is compounded by the stark reality that two out of every three soldiers admitted to illicit relations and the post-war divorce rate more than doubled.⁵

“You Can’t Say No to a Soldier”: Sexual Connotations in Song

While many sentimental songs recounted the faithfulness and devotion of lovers, other songs encouraged a different attitude towards relationships. Songs such as “Girls, Don’t Refuse to Kiss a Soldier,” “I’m Doin’ It for Defense,” and “You Can’t Say No to a Soldier” all promoted sexual relationships with servicemen and even endorsed these actions as a proper patriotic response. The overt sexual connotations in the lyrics to “You Can’t Say No to a Soldier” seemingly offset the messages of faithfulness so prevalent in the slush songs of the era. Here, women are encouraged to be feminine, flirty, and even promiscuous. The lyrics declare that the order of not denying a soldier comes from the “highest authority,” thus insinuating that the order

³ Maxene Andrews and Bill Gilbert, *Over Here, Over There: The Andrews Sisters and the USO Stars in World War II* (Thorndike, ME: Thorndike Press, 1993), 34.

⁴ Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1990), 255.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 255, 260.

is officially sanctioned and that it must be obeyed if a woman wants to be patriotic and to support the war cause. Using phrases such as “be beautiful and dutiful,” “give in if you want him to win,” and “can’t be turned away” present the idea that it is a woman’s responsibility to do what a soldier wants in order to achieve a military victory. Perhaps the most overt line reads, “If he says it’s cold on those submarines, you can knit a sweater, but that’s not what he means.” Another line of lyrics claims that a soldier has “a right to romance” because he is fighting for his country. Now not only is it a woman’s responsibility to “give in,” but also it is the right of the soldier to ask for sexual favors. Along the same lines is the K. Davis number “Girls, Don’t Refuse to Kiss a Soldier”: “Oh girls, don’t refuse to kiss a soldier / for you know that he is fightin’ for your peace.” While this song does not necessarily promote sexual relations as a patriotic duty, it advocates kissing as an appropriate wartime response.

Another popular number asks women to be romantically involved with soldiers as part of their responsibility to support the war effort. “I’m Doin’ It for Defense” promotes sex as a patriotic duty and love has nothing to do with it: “If you touch my lips and you feel me respond, / it’s because I just can’t afford a bond. / I said I’d do my bit. / Sorry boy, but you’re it.” The nonchalant attitude continues as the singer admits, “This ain’t love, this is war.” The woman in this song feels no real attachment or emotional pull to a particular soldier. To her, using her femininity and body is a patriotic duty, nothing more. She is not looking for a relationship or commitment, only a casual fling to boost a soldier’s morale before he ships out to war.

Pinup girls became the ultimate sexual symbol during the war. The most famous pinup girl was Betty Grable, “the Queen of the Pinup Girls,” whose famous swimsuit shot could be found among many GI’s belongings.⁶ Songs such as “Peggy the Pin-up Girl” and “Pretty Sal,

⁶ Jeannie Basinger, *The Star Machine* (New York: Random House, 2007), 515.

What a Gal for Morale” again emphasized the sexual aspects of women and the war. While the pinup girl image was sexual, it was also considered a morale boost for servicemen. The lyrics of “Peggy the Pinup Girl” read that not only is she “the sweetheart of plenty of soldiers, plenty of sailors, thousands of Marines,” but also she is the inspiration for the bombardier who drops bombs on Berlin.

“Mother, Write Your Boy a Letter”: Patriotic Duties and Expectations

The government relied on women back home to keep up the morale of the men overseas. Wives, mothers, sisters, and girlfriends were all called upon to participate in a number of ways that would support both the soldiers and the war effort. While entertainment and volunteer organizations were a popular way to support the war effort, one of the most important ways for women to keep up the morale of their servicemen was to write letters and send photographs and packages to those in the armed forces. War posters read, “Keep ’em smiling with letters” and “Write today and often.” The National Coin Machine Association also joined the letter-writing campaign by placing placards of a sketch by the cartoonist Jerry Costello on coin machines and various modes of public transportation. The sketch featured a crowd of elated servicemen holding letters received from back home with one sad-faced soldier who had not received any mail. The caption read, “Some Boy Forgotten Write to Him Today.”⁷

Many popular songs asked women to write a serviceman a letter, including “Have You Written Him Today?,” “Remember to Write the Boys,” and “Mother Write Your Boy a Letter.” The lyrics of “Mother Write Your Boy a Letter” claim that nothing makes a soldier happier than a letter from back home. The song also gives details on what kind of information the letters should contain. The letters should be positive and uplifting, reading, “the skies back home are

⁷ “Letter Campaign,” *Billboard* 56, no. 5 (1944): 57.

blue.” Even though back on the home front skies were not always blue, women were encouraged to give soldiers the impression that everything was normal back home in order to boost morale. Another song, “If You Don’t Write, You’re Wrong,” seeks to guilt the writer into sending a letter. The lyrics claim that if a soldier doesn’t get a letter, he will feel sorry that he was ever born. While this song seems to more or less be the exception in trying to elicit guilt from the listener, the majority of songs dedicated to the letter-writing campaign evoke a positive spirit and message, and focus on the thought that getting a letter from back home could be the highlight of a soldier’s day and a helpful tool for boosting morale.

Letter writing was not the only way to show support for the servicemen. Another activity referenced in popular songs was prayer. Songs such as “I’ll Pray for You,” “Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There,” and “Just a Prayer Away” provided comfort and encouragement both to women on the home front and to the men overseas. “Just a Prayer Away” promises happier times with brighter skies and laughing children are just a prayer away. Bing Crosby, Sammy Kaye, and Kate Smith all recorded the number, and it even topped the *Hot Charts* Extras at number six in April 1944.⁸ The lyrics of “I’ll Pray for You” tell of a woman saying goodbye to her soldier who is leaving: “Tho’ I know tonight is the night you leave me and I can’t do much that will help you thru. / So kiss me again and remember that when you’re far away I’ll pray for you.” Herb Magidson and Jimmy McHugh’s “Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There” was featured in the Universal film *Hers to Hold* and sung by Deanna Durbin, who played a airplane factory worker in love with a pilot. She sings the patriotic lyrics: “Say a prayer for the boys over there when they play the Star Spangled Banner / Picture them by the dawn’s early light, and ask the Lord to

⁸ John Bush Jones, *The Songs That Won the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939–1945* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2006), 292.

watch over them each night.” While women may have felt helpless in the face of a second world war, the thought of a higher power watching over their men no doubt provided comfort.

Another topic of home front propaganda was to “zip the lip” on rumors and military secrets. The government understood the risks that could result from rumors being spread during wartime and used propaganda posters to curb such talk. The War Advertising Council used the now infamous phrase “loose lips sink ships” throughout the war on posters and in magazine and newspaper ads to remind citizens that silence would be vital to the war effort.⁹ Many songs performed by popular artists of the day echoed the message of keeping quiet, such as “Zip Your Lip,” “Silence Is Golden,” “Shh, It’s a Military Secret,” and “Shut My Mouth (I Ain’t Talkin’).” Glenn Miller recorded “Shh, It’s a Military Secret,” and it made the *Hot Charts* Extra in May 1942.¹⁰ The lyrics warn “Harm may come just from a slip of the tongue” and caution listeners to be on the lookout for espionage and sabotage, but end with the innocuous line “Let’s just talk about love. / And it’s no military secret that I love you.”

For the first time in American history, women were involved in war production on the home front. They worked in airplane factories, ammunitions factories, and shipyards. All of the production information was considered to be a military secret, and the government wanted to make sure the enemy would not know location of factories or production plans. Because of the sensitivity of such information, the government emphasized the propaganda effort to “Zip the Lip.” One popular song, “A Slip of the Lip (Can Sink a Ship)” echoed the poster propaganda. Mercer Ellington composed the song and Duke Ellington recorded it in 1942. The lyrics caution “the walls have ears / the night has eyes / so lets be wise and trick those nasty, nasty spies.” The

⁹ David M. Kennedy, *The Library of Congress World War II Companion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 809.

¹⁰ Jones, *The Songs That Won the War*, 208.

campaign to “Zip the Lip” ran during the most vital years of the war, from 1942 to 1944, and seems to have been successful as no serious sabotage or espionage incidents occurred.¹¹

“Corns for My Country”: Volunteer Organizations during the War

Outlets for civilians to encourage their men and women in uniform included the Stage Door Canteen, Hollywood Canteen, and the USO centers across the country where troops were entertained with food, music, and dancing. Often stage and screen stars would perform at these locales, and a number of entertainers even traveled overseas on USO tours to perform and boost morale among the troops. Upbeat songs referencing the volunteers for these organizations included “The Hostess in the U.S.O.,” “I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen,” and “The Canteen Bounce.”

The USO (United Service Organizations) was a privately funded, non-profit agency started at the request of President Roosevelt in 1941. The USO had been the result of the joint efforts of the Salvation Army, YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Services, National Travelers Aid Association, and National Jewish Welfare Board.¹² The goal of the USO was “to aid in the war and defense program of the United States and its Allies by serving the religious, spiritual, welfare, and educational needs of the men and women in the armed forces and the war and defense industries of the United States and its Allies in the United States and throughout the world...”¹³ By the end of the war, the USO had performed 293,738 times to over

¹¹ John Bush Jones, *All-out for Victory: Magazine Advertising and the World War II Home Front* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2009), 135.

¹² William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *Music of the World War II Era* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 141.

¹³ Original USO mission statement, *Certificate of Corporations: Constitution and By-laws Jan. 1941—Dec. 1948*, quoted in Lindsley Kimball, President, *Operation USO: Report of the President February 4, 1941—January 9, 1948* (New York: United Service Organizations, 1948), 1.

161,000,000 men and women in the armed forces both in the United States as well as overseas.¹⁴ Over the course of the war, 4,484 men and women in the entertainment industry performed in USO shows, and twenty-eight of them died, mainly in plane crashes, while working for the USO.¹⁵ While entertainment was the goal of USO clubs and many famous singers, comedians, and entertainers played a major role in entertaining servicemen and women, the success of USO clubs depended on the willingness of volunteers to serve as hostesses and dance partners. Women who volunteered had to go through a screening process, adhere to a strict dress code, and complete a training course. The USO clubs were able to provide a relaxed environment and a distraction from the war for men and women in uniform and at the same time provide a safe environment for volunteers to aid in the war effort by providing conversation, companionship, and entertainment for troops.

The Hollywood Canteen on the West Coast and New York's Stage Door Canteen on the East Coast were the two most popular and well-known centers during the war. Many famous actors and singers volunteered at these canteens, such as Marlene Dietrich, Ethel Merman, Lauren Bacall, and the Andrews Sisters. In her book *Over Here, Over There: The Andrews Sisters and the USO Stars in World War II*, Maxene Andrews recalls: "No one simply *performed* at the canteens. You sang or danced or told jokes or played a musical instrument, whatever your specialty was, but you also waited on tables, danced with the guys or gals, and provided a friendly or sympathetic ear whenever the occasion arose in conversation, which was often."¹⁶

Several popular songs referenced these centers, such as "Hollywood Canteen," the Andrews Sisters hit "Corns for My Country," and the Irving Berlin number "I Left My Heart at

¹⁴ Andrews and Gilbert, 32.

¹⁵ Ibid., 122, 254.

¹⁶ Ibid., 84.

the Stage Door Canteen,” which was featured in the Broadway revue *This Is the Army*, which starred American soldiers. The Andrews Sisters performed “Hollywood Canteen” in the 1944 film of the same name. “Hollywood Canteen” is a simple song, inviting soldiers to come to the center, “where G.I. Joes forget the woes of army life routine,” and where “the coffee pot is always hot and are the doughnuts keen.” The Andrews Sisters also performed “Corns for My Country” for the same film, whose cast featured many stars including Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, and Joan Leslie. The comedic “Corns for My Country” recounts a hardworking junior hostess who is getting corns on her feet from all the dancing she is doing at the Hollywood Canteen. Patty Andrews sings, “I’m doin’ my bit down here for Uncle Sam / I’m a patriotic jitterbug, Yeah, yeah that’s what I am.” In contrast to the humor of “Corn’s for My Country,” Irving Berlin’s ballad “I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen” tells the story of a soldier who fell in love with a junior hostess named Eileen. As he is leaving to go back to the army, he makes the heartbreaking statement that a soldier “without a heart has two strikes on him from the start, and my heart’s at the Stage Door Canteen.”

The Red Cross was one of the most popular organizations for civilian volunteers. Over the course of the war, over 3.5 million women volunteered with the Red Cross.¹⁷ They did everything from organizing dances to rolling bandages to drawing blood for blood banks. The Red Cross also sent over seven thousand women overseas to help with the war effort. The “Red Cross Girls” were college educated and had to be at least twenty-five years old to go overseas. Many times these women were very close to the front lines; thus, they were given an honorary

¹⁷ Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers’ War: American Women at Home and at the Front during World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 168.

officer rank with the idea that they would be treated fairly if captured. By the war's end, twenty-nine Red Cross women had died during overseas duty.¹⁸

Irving Berlin's 1941 song "Angels of Mercy" paid homage to the volunteers of the Red Cross. The cover of the sheet music reads, "Written expressly for and dedicated to the American Red Cross." The lyrics read, "Angels of Mercy, They're calling to you, So march with your crosses of red, March where the darkness shuts out the light." Many of the responsibilities associated with volunteering for the Red Cross did not involve actual nursing responsibilities. Most of the seven thousand Red Cross Girls sent overseas were responsible for lifting morale, serving coffee and doughnuts, even near the front lines, and organizing activities for men in uniform. One Red Cross Girl recalls her time overseas: "As we traveled along we passed Nazi tanks and vehicles that had been knocked out and abandoned. In some places the stench of death was nauseating.... We tried to visit four or five different batteries each day, serving the men doughnuts and coffee."¹⁹ While working overseas for the Red Cross proved to be difficult and even dangerous, these women had the opportunity to aid the war effort in a way that most did not. They were able to bring a little piece of home to soldiers at a time when they needed it. Gysella Simon, who worked overseas for the Red Cross, wrote in a letter to a friend back home about how the experience had changed her:

At last, here in this forgotten place, I have found myself. For 5 months I have lived with men preparing for combat. I have eaten with them, laughed with them, cried with them, have shared their fears and anxieties, hardships.... Of course, I have my moments too, but most of the time I feel I am doing a real worthwhile thing and it makes me glow with satisfaction. I should like to share this feeling with every American girl back home.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 167.

¹⁹ Oscar Whitelaw Rexford, *Battlestars and Doughnuts: World War II Clubmobile Experiences of Mary Metcalfe Rexford* (St. Louis, MO: The Patrice Press, 1989), 38–45, quoted in Yellin, 178.

²⁰ Gysella Simon, letter to a friend, May 21, 1944, quoted in Yellin, 181.

These are only a few of the many volunteer organizations that were formed during the war. The government even created the CDVO, the Civilian Defense Volunteer Office, to assign duties to volunteers. The AWVS, the American Women's Voluntary Services, also provided an outlet for women wanting to volunteer. It organized and offered sixteen courses for women to take in order to train for a volunteer job. These included childcare and development, convoy driving, typing, and a radio course. The AWVS official song claims, "We are many thousands strong, We're fighting for our freedom, And our freedom we'll defend."

World War II provided a unique opportunity for American women to step outside the home and the role of homemaker to be a part of something big: the war effort. The conflict fostered a sense of community, and most women were willing to pitch in and do whatever was necessary to preserve freedom. Millions of women across the country volunteered their time and talents, doing their part to win the war. In her 1943 guide to wartime work for women, Evelyn Steele urges women to ask themselves: "What type of work should I choose so that I may free some man or woman, now tied down to home or non-essential work, for work directly contributing to the war effort? If you answer that question satisfactorily and then proceed to act on it, you will yourself become a soldier in the battle for production."²¹

²¹ Evelyn Steele, *Wartime Opportunities for Women* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1943), 152.

Chapter 5

“When the Nylons Bloom Again”: Messages of Hope and Healing

With the end of World War II in sight, 1945 brought many positive songs about lovers reuniting. “I’m Glad I Waited for You,” “Waitin’ for the Train to Come In,” and “We’ll Be Together Again” all express the anticipation of couples seeing each other soon. The close of the war and return of all the servicemen generated significant questions concerning the continuation of certain roles that women had been responsible for during the war. Many sectors of American society expected women to go back to their domestic chores and duties once the war ended. Even popular song lyrics hinted at women returning to their pre-war roles in songs such as “How Will We Get Her Back in the Kitchen (After We’ve Won the War)” and “Sweethearts in Overalls.” Although these songs use humor in relaying their messages, they raised troubling questions as to the future of women in the workforce. In fact, post-World War II roles for women reverted back to a pre-World War II approach, which was in step with the “for-the-duration” campaign heard throughout the war.

“V for Victory”: The End of the War in Sight

One of the most recognizable symbols of the war was the “V.” This symbol represented victory and the hope for war’s end. All across the country, Americans talked of “V-Homes,” “V-Pins,” and “V-Mail.” Posters, songs, and films all used “V” to represent feelings of hope and a promise of peace. “Let’s Keep a ‘V’ in Every Heart” and “‘V for Victory’ Is Our Shield” represent the symbol’s influence on popular songs during the war. Songwriter Jule Styne and lyricist Sammy Cahn’s 1943 song “Vict’ry Polka” exemplifies one of the upbeat messages

presented to the American public throughout the war. This song was featured as the closing number in the 1944 film *Jam Session*. Ann Miller sang and danced to the number as the chorus played the part of women factory workers assembling planes. The lyrics begin “There’s going to be a Hallelujah Day / When the boys have all come home to stay,” and end with “When this lovely dream has all come true, / We’ll be dancing the Vict’ry Polka.” Although the end of the war was still two years away from when the song was first released, the message paralleled the directives that the OWI had given songwriters. The lyrics incorporate such key words as “liberty,” “victory,” and even the “United Nations,” a term first used by Roosevelt in 1942 in reference to the Allied countries.¹ It also addressed the end of specific home front struggles like blackouts, ration books, and separation from loved ones. These elements produced a popular song that proved both patriotic and sympathetic to wartime hardships.

Frank Loesser’s “The Road to Victory” presents a different side of the “V for Victory” slogan. The song was introduced in a 1944 documentary short titled *The Road to Victory*, which supported the Fifth War Loan Drive, the fifth of eight bond drives, which began June 12, 1944 and ended July 8, 1944. The film focuses on how the wartime sacrifices result in happy, prosperous post-war families. The primary aim of the lyrics was to promote buying war bonds, but it also includes many patriotic duties encouraged by the government, including giving blood, writing letters to soldiers overseas, and working a factory job. In this song, victory comes through the actions of those on the home front. Like much of the propaganda during the war, civilians are the ones responsible for the outcome of the war. The film linked abstaining from buying bonds, not getting a wartime job, hoarding, or any other activity seen as detrimental to

¹ Kathleen E. R. Smith, *God Bless America: Tin Pan Alley Goes to War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 62–67.

the war effort to the impediment of victory and even the death of soldiers. But if civilians did their part, they would be setting their country on a sure path to victory.

“Waitin’ for the Train to Come In”: The Men Coming Home

Not only did many popular songs address women remaining faithful to their men overseas, but also many anticipated lovers reuniting at the close of the war. 1942 and 1943 found the majority of popular songs focused on a positive outlook and a patriotic spirit with the hope that the more effort given on the home front would result in the men coming home sooner. With the turn of the war and the slow advancement of the Allies, popular songs in 1944 and 1945 focused on the certain return of the soldiers as well as what life would be like once the war was over. One popular number was the 1945 hit “Waitin’ for the Train to Come In,” with music by songwriter Sunny Skylar and lyrics by radio personality Martin Block. Peggy Lee’s rendition of the song in November of 1945 peaked at number four on the charts. When listening to the recording, Peggy Lee’s vocal timbre gives the song a melancholy touch and a feeling of longing as a woman waits for the return of her man. She has “counted ev’ry minute” and “shed a million teardrops” as she waited for him to come home. The lyrics also speak of how she has put her plans on hold for the war and now that the war is over she is ready to pick up where she left off. The song also illustrates how the pre-war ideologies about women crept back into post-war rhetoric. Instead of a woman demonstrating the strong and independent characteristics emphasized during the war, the woman in “Waitin’ for the Train to Come In” is needy, melancholy, and crying because she misses her man. She also seems to believe that her life cannot really begin until he returns home. She has once again become dependent upon a man.

One 1945 song was the hit “My Guy’s Come Back,” an adaptation of a Mel Powell song with lyrics Ray McKinley. Recordings by both Dinah Shore and Benny Goodman made this song a top fifteen hit on the charts in November and December of 1945. This upbeat tune expresses none of the melancholy of “Waitin’ for the Train to Come In.” The girl in this song is done waiting now that her man has come home. The lyrics, however, still convey the idea that she used to be “blue,” but now that her man has come back, her happiness has, too. She also feels that her life will get better now that she has her “feature man.” This idea is paralleled in “Waitin’ for the Train to Come In” when the girl sings that she is waiting for her man to return before her life can really begin. This song reinforces the sentiment that a woman’s happiness is dependent upon a man. It also implies that the couple is rushing off to get married with the lyric, “Tell that preacher man, today is the day.” Many couples had waited to marry until the war had ended. In fact, in 1946 over 2.29 million marriages took place, significantly higher than the wartime high of 1.77 million marriages in 1942, so it is no coincidence that this song ends with the couple on their way to the preacher.²

“When the Nylons Bloom Again”: Sentiments about the Return to Peacetime

Throughout the war, many songs spoke of the “duration blues,” as well as the hope of peace and all the changes that would come with the end of the war. The 1943 song by composer Fats Waller and screenwriter George Marion, Jr., “When the Nylons Bloom Again,” uses humor to describe a woman’s desire for the end of the war and the amenities that peacetime will allow. Twenty-five years later, the musical *Ain’t Misbehavin’* featured the song as well. This comic number spotlights the shortages of nylons for women because of the need for nylon to make

² William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *World War II and the Postwar Years in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 73.

parachutes in wartime production. The lyrics tell of a woman who is longing for the days when salesmen came to her door selling hose. Peacetime for this woman means the return to normalcy with no more rationing or restrictions and the return of her coveted nylons. She will no longer have to deal with the inconveniences of itchy woolens, boring cottons, or cheap rayons that tear.

A role reversal appears in the lyrics towards the end of “When the Nylons Bloom Again.” Most songs about the end of the war and the return of the troops refer to the coming home of the *men* to the *women*. But in this number the roles have been reversed, and the ensuing peacetime will see “the WACS come back to join their men in a world that Mr. Wallace planned.” Although the speaker in this song may come across as petty as she seems to care more about the return of nylons than the tragedy of the war, the end of the song seems to defend women’s position in the workforce and the military. The lyric’s mention of Mr. Wallace refers to the push for world peace championed in Vice President Henry Wallace’s “Century of the Common Man” 1942 speech.³ The speech also influenced cultivated music and was the inspiration for the title of Aaron Copland’s 1942 musical work *Fanfare for the Common Man*.⁴ While the content of “When the Nylons Bloom Again” may appear trite and frivolous, it provided comic relief from the hardships of a country at war while still saluting women’s wartime roles and expressing optimism for future peace.

Decca recorded another song about peacetime on February 23, 1945. Guy Lombardo and Kay Armen performed this tune, titled “Back Home for Keeps.” V-E day was only a couple months away, and soon soldiers would begin to return home to their families and friends. The song gives the comforting promise that even though many things have changed and the world

³ Henry A. Wallace “The Century of the Common Man” (speech, Free World Association, New York, NY, May 8, 1942).

⁴ Elizabeth B. Crist, *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland during the Depression and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 188–89.

may never be the same, the kisses and open arms of his woman reassures the soldier of a return to normalcy. This was the goal of the United States' postwar era: the return of "normalcy." After the hardships and terror of war had ended and the sacrifices of both enlisted and civilian men and women were over, many Americans wanted to attempt to pick up where they had left off and continue their lives. In the lyrics the returning soldier believes his sweetheart will "kiss away the angry years" and "walk the quiet hillside while the world peacefully sleeps." While this sentiment seemed reassuring, the reality is that many men returning from overseas had to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder, which at the time was called "combat fatigue" or "shell shock."⁵ In the postwar years, marriage rates and birth rates soared, but divorce rates also rose. In fact, by 1950 over one million veterans had gotten divorced.⁶

The war had taken a terrible toll on society, and at the same time it had provided the economic boom that propelled the nation out of the Great Depression. The war also laid a foundation for the advancement of Women's Rights and proved that women could rise to the challenge and excel outside the home in the workforce. One wartime poster even boasted the captions "America's Women Have Met The Test!" and "Good Work, Sister. We never figured you could do a man-sized job!" While the large strides made for women's rights during the war were short-lived, seventeen million women stayed in the workforce after the war ended, which was 17 percent more women employed than in 1940.⁷ Songs, films, and war posters all had promoted rationing, war jobs, the military, and the war effort. But as the war drew to an end, all

⁵ Mahmoud Mirzamani, "Trauma: Psychological Aspects," in *Posttraumatic Stress: New Research*, ed. Guida D. Kume, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2006), 64.

⁶ Jane M. Leder, *Thanks for the Memories: Love, Sex, and World War II* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 47.

⁷ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 90–91.

that really mattered was the return of the armed forces and the ensuing peacetime. People across the globe all anticipated the day when the war would be over. The chart topping song “When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World),” by songwriters Bennie Benjamin, Sol Marcus, and Eddie Seiler, aptly described post-war sentiments. The lyrics speak peace, freedom, romance, and a world where a kiss means “hello to love” and not “goodbye.”

“Sweethearts in Overalls”: Only for the Duration?

A key phrase heard throughout the war was “for the duration.” As the war neared its end, women who had done the job “he left behind” were reminded that their job belonged to a soldier who would be coming home. In other words, her mission was nearly complete. She had successfully assembled planes, ships, and bombs for the duration of the war, and now that the men would be coming home, she should willingly give up her job and return to her former role as the homemaker. Of course, there were many mothers and wives who were happy to resume their pre-war roles. They were tired and worn out from their rigorous schedules of long shifts while still cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, and caring for children. The combination of the men coming home and needing jobs as well as the kinds of jobs available to women post-war made the choice easier for many women to return to the role of a housewife.⁸ But there were many women who did not want to give up their jobs and the financial freedom it provided, and the two million women who left the workforce opened up opportunities for those still wanting to work.⁹ For the first time, married women were not dependent upon their husbands for money. When the war ended no longer would the “Minnie’s in the Money” image be promoted. The lighthearted

⁸ Ibid., 91–92.

⁹ Ibid., 91.

lyrics of this song along with the dozens of other wartime songs, posters, and films that had encouraged women to get a job would be no longer needed. In fact, after the war this type of financial independence was frowned upon and was cited as of being the primary factor of divorce. Dr. Marynia F. Farnham, who co-authored the 1947 book *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, catalogued the effects of wartime employment for women in a post-war government funded film:

Catastrophic social forces have propelled American women away from femininity and into careers at terrific cost to themselves and society. Abandoning their feminine role has made women unhappy because it has made them frustrated. It has made children unhappy because they don't have maternal love. And it has made their husbands unhappy because they do not have real women as partners, instead their wives have become their rivals.¹⁰

The 1945 song “How Will We Get Her Back in the Kitchen, After We’ve Won the War” used humor to address women in the workforce. The lyrics read, “How will we stop her fingers from ichin’ to earn that fifty bucks a week or more.” This song addresses many of the fears men expressed after the end of the war. They may have felt that their position as the dominant figure in the house, the breadwinner, was threatened. The lyrics also speak of how she used to wear “satin gowns behind a bedroom screen,” but now she wears “overalls over a milling machine.” Not only did some men feel that their masculinity might be endangered, but also they feared their wife would not be available in an intimate way. While it is true that the divorce rate began to climb in the postwar years, it was not directly linked to women’s wartime employment. Rather, other factors such as hasty marriages before deployment and even shell-shocked husbands unable

¹⁰ *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, directed by Connie Field (Berkeley, CA: Clarity Productions, 1980), videocassette.

to cope and return to civilian life lead to the common causes of divorce, such as adultery, desertion, habitual drunkenness, and “cruel and inhumane treatment.”¹¹

Wartime production layoffs had begun in 1944 and lasted through the war’s end and the return to peacetime production. Over three million women had either been laid off or had voluntarily quit to return to their prewar role as homemakers.¹² The lyrics to “Sweethearts in Overalls,” by songwriters Alfred Eiseman, Buddy Kaye, and Howard Steiner, mention the hopes they imagined for postwar women. The lyrics first speak of a woman “With a smudge on her chin, and a victory grin, / Proudly helping them to win, Over There!” The lyrics take a sudden turn when the war is done: “Some day she’ll settle down, and put on her gingham gown.” The tables had turned, and the propaganda women had heard throughout the war now reversed and now encouraged them to take off their overalls and step back into their aprons.

Historian Karen Anderson suggests that the messages given to women, contrasting masculine traits of strength and perseverance expected in the workplace and feminine traits of fragileness and dependency upon men outside work, resulted in the postwar surrender of much of the ground women had gained during the war.¹³ Lola Weixel, a welder during the war, expressed her feelings on wartime employment in an interview used in the *Rosie the Riveter* documentary. After being laid off towards the end of the war and unable to find employment again, she felt used and exploited by the system: “They prepare women psychologically for whatever role that society feels at that particular point they want her to play.”¹⁴ The Rosie the Riveter image that

¹¹ Alison Clarke-Stewart and Cornelia Brentano, *Divorce: Causes and Consequences* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 7.

¹² Miriam Frank, Marilyn Ziebarth, and Connie Field, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Emeryville, CA: Clarity Education Productions, 1982), 19.

¹³ Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 64.

was heralded in songs, films, and on posters proved to be a temporary one. Rosie had risen to the challenge and fulfilled her patriotic duty, but now she was expected to resume the role of housewife.

¹⁴ *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, videocassette.

Conclusion

Women who stepped up were measured as citizens of the nation, not as women... this was a people's war, and everyone was in it.

—Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby

World War II was a time when citizens of the United States rallied together to preserve their freedom. Men, women, and children were expected to do their part in the war effort. With millions of men in the armed forces, civilian women were called upon to fill the gaps left in the workforce. New areas of employment that had been previously off-limits became available to women. Not only were women encouraged to work in factories assembling planes and munitions, but they were also asked to join the women's military divisions. During the war, a patriotic woman was not the housewife; she was "Rosie the Riveter" or "Sallie WAAC." While women made advances in some areas such as union membership, pay, and labor rights during World War II, they were not seen as a victory for women's rights per se. This progress was seen as necessary for victory but only "for the duration."

Print media, radio, and film played a large role in spreading the propaganda directed towards women during the war. Posters and advertisements in popular magazines showed women that working in a factory, following rationing rules, or joining the WAC was vital to winning the war. Films and popular songs told women that being patriotic was an attractive quality that made them desirable. A study done on occupations of female characters in stories in the *Saturday Evening Post* during the war showed that in the final months of the war from January to July of 1945, 47 percent of stories had women in "atypical" work, such as journalist, servicewoman, factory worker, pilot, taxi driver, engineer, or shipyard worker, while only 20 percent of female characters were in a "typical" occupation such as nurse, housewife, teacher, waitress, or maid, and 33 percent of female characters listed "no occupation." With the end of

the war on September 2, 1946, the same study showed that from August 1945 to March 1946 the percentage of female characters in “atypical” work dropped to 13 percent, female characters in “typical” work increased to 17 percent, and females with no occupation increased to 58 percent.¹

After the war women were expected to return to their role as a housewife, and media outlets were not shy in promoting this reversal. The government began a campaign called the “return to normalcy” where women were encouraged to move aside and allow the men returning home from war take over their “rightful” position in the workforce. After all, propaganda had been clear that women’s newfound positions were to be only “for the duration.” Women studies author Barbara C. Burrell writes: “The post-World War II period was a time of contradictions for women regarding their roles in society. They were encouraged to return to the home and find satisfaction in being wives and mothers.”² Some women found this task difficult after experiencing financial independence during the war. Others had also adjusted to their life of juggling family responsibilities and a job outside the home, and found that going back to being a homemaker did not provide the same satisfaction.

Economist Ferdinand Lundberg and psychiatrist Dr. Marynia F. Farnham, authors of *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, had much to say about women in post-World War II America. Their book was published in 1947 and condemned the effect of the war’s propaganda campaign on women. They considered the women’s military units as “the utmost formal expression of free-flowing penis-envy” and that “women...would do well to recapture those functions in which they have demonstrated superior capacity. Those are, in general, the nurturing functions

¹ Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 99.

² Barbara C. Burrell, *Women and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 8.

centering around the home.”³ Farnham was strongly against women having careers, and her voice was heard in government post-war propaganda films condemning career women. Lundberg and Farnham do admit that there are areas in which women should be allowed to work, such as “biology, psychology, sociology, medicine, pedagogy, philosophy, anthropology, and several other systematic disciplines,” but fields that belong to the “male authority,” “law, mathematics, physics, business, industry, and technology,” should be promoted through government propaganda as unsuitable for women.⁴ In their chapter titled “Ways to a Happier End,” they propose that in order to be happy women must “obtain status and prestige through motherhood.”⁵ While their views may seem reactionary, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* shows the great lengths that some went to in order to “correct” women’s roles in the post-war period.

With the end of the war in 1945 and the imminent return of overseas soldiers, a drastic shift also occurred in popular song. The patriotic fervor that had permeated popular song for the past six years disappeared. The songs that had encouraged women to work in a factory, grow a victory garden, and follow rationing regulations were no longer necessary. The war had been won, and the new goal was the “return to normalcy.” The subject matter of popular songs in 1945 reflected this objective. Billboard’s *Best Selling Retail Records* of 1945 included “My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time” by composer Vic Mizzy and lyricist Manny Curtis, “Sentimental Journey” by songwriters Les Brown and Ben Homer and lyricist Bud Green, “Till the End of Time” by composer Ted Mossman and lyricist Buddy Kaye, and “It’s Been a Long, Long Time” by songwriter Jule Styne and lyricist Sammy Cahn. These songs all portray the

³ Ferdinand Lundberg and Dr. Marynia F. Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 214, 368.

⁴ Ibid., 370.

⁵ Ibid., 370–71.

sentimental side of men returning home and the joy of reuniting with loved ones. The lyrics of the 1945 songs “Waitin’ for the Train to Come In” and “My Guy’s Come Back” depict women as needy and reliant on a man, while the lyrics of “How Will We Get Her Back in the Kitchen, After We’ve Won the War” and the 1943 song “Sweethearts in Overalls” raise concerns about how to get women to return to their pre-war roles of being a housewife after experiencing the financial independence of being breadwinners.

The popular songs of World War II, like much of the war effort propaganda, influenced women only for a short time. Popular song was able to relay the wartime messages quickly and succinctly for the duration before moving on to the issues of post-war America. While women’s advancements during the war were short lived, married women experienced and overcame the difficulties of managing home and work. These experiences laid the groundwork for the second-wave feminism movement, which began in the 1960s and is responsible for many of the rights that women enjoy today.

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Appendix: Index of World War II Popular Songs Pertaining to Women

- “Ac-cen-tchu-ate the Positive,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1944.
- “An Angel in White,” music and lyrics by Ricky Serras, 1943.
- “Angels of Mercy,” music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, 1942.
- “Any Bonds Today?,” music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, 1941.
- “Arms for the Love of America,” music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, 1941.
- “A.W.V.S. Marching Song,” music and lyrics by Mercedes Welcker-Jordan, 1942.
- “Back Home for Keeps,” music and lyrics by Bob Russell and Carmen Lombardo, 1945.
- “Bars on Her Shoulders and Stars in Her Eyes,” music by Al Stillman, lyrics by Pvt. Charley Murray and Pvt. Kurt Kasznar, 1942.
- “Belt Line Girl,” music and lyrics by Agnes “Sis” Cunningham, 1942.
- “The Boy I Left Behind,” music by Jules Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn, 1945.
- “Buy a Bond,” music by Jimmy McHugh, lyrics by Harold Adamson, 1945.
- “Buy a Bond Today” music and lyrics by Hal Block, 1944.
- “Buy a Piece of the Peace,” music by Jules Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn, 1945.
- “Can’t Get Stuff in Your Cuff,” music by Sy Oliver, lyrics by Sammy Cahn, 1943.
- “The Canteen Bounce,” music by Johnny Fortis, lyrics by Max Spickol, 1943.
- “Corns for My Country,” music and lyrics by Jean Barry, Leah Worth, and Dick Charles, 1944.
- “Dear God, Watch Over Joe,” music and lyrics by Jenny Lou Carson, 1944.
- “Dig Down Deep,” music and lyrics by Walter Hirsch, Gerald Marks, and Sano Marco, 1942.
- “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree,” music by Sam H. Stept, lyrics by Lew Brown and Charlie Tobias, 1942.
- “Duration Blues,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1944.
- “Ev’rybody Ev’ry Payday,” music by Dick Uhl, lyrics by Tom Adair, 1942.

“Fighting on the Home Front WINS,” music and lyrics by Kay Swift, 1943.

“First Class Private Mary Brown,” music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1944.

“For the Duration,” music and lyrics by Neva Raymor and Charles McCollister, 1943.

“Get Out and Dig, Dig, Dig,” music and lyrics by Hunter Reynolds, 1943.

“Get Some Cash for Your Trash,” music by Fats Waller, lyrics by Ed Kirkby, 1942.

“The Girl behind the Boy behind the Gun,” music by Vic Mizzy, lyrics by Albert F. Miller, 1942.

“The Girl of the Year is a SPAR,” music and lyrics by Vi Brummer, 1943.

“Girls, Don’t Refuse to Kiss a Soldier,” music and lyrics by K. Davis, 1943.

“Good Night, Wherever You Are,” music and lyrics by Al Hoffman, Dick Robertson, and Frank Weldon, 1944.

“Have You Written Him Today?,” music by Ruth Cleary, lyrics by Eddie DeLange, 1944.

“He Went to Work in the Morning (She Went to Work in the Night),” music by Ben Oakland, lyrics by L. Wolfe Gilbert, 1944.

“Here Come the WAVES,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1944.

“Here Comes the Navy,” music by Jaromir Vejvoda, lyrics by Lt. Commander P. Oakes, 1943.

“He’s Got a WAVE in His Hair and a WAAC on His Hands,” music and lyrics by Hughie Prince and Sonny Burke, 1943.

“Hollywood Canteen,” music by M. K. Jerome, lyrics by Ted Koehler, 1944.

“The Hostess in the U.S.O.,” music and lyrics by Abel Baer and Cliff Hess, 1943.

“How Does Your Garden Grow,” music by Jimmy Van Heusen, lyrics by Johnny Burke, 1944.

“How Will We Get Her Back in the Kitchen (After We’ve Won the War),” music and lyrics by Zeb Carver and Jack Rollin, 1945.

“I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen,” music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, 1942.

“I Love Coffee,” music and lyrics by Vick Knight, 1943.

“I Paid My Income Tax Today,” music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, 1942.

“I Wanna Dance with a Sailor,” music and lyrics by Ira Schuster, Paul Cunningham, and Leonard Whitcup, 1942.

“I Wanna Marry a Bombardier,” music by Leonard Whitcup, lyrics by David Mack, 1942.

“If You Don’t Write, You’re Wrong,” music and lyrics by Olive Krieger, 1943.

“I’ll Be True While You’re Gone,” music and lyrics by Gene Autry and Fred Rose, 1941.

“I’ll Pray for You,” music by Arthur Altman, lyrics by Kim Gannon, 1942.

“I’m Doin’ It for Defense,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1942.

“I’m Glad I Waited for You,” music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn, 1945.

“In Twenty-five Words or Less,” music and lyrics by Ruby Jane Douglass, Frank Loesser, Hy Zaret, and Arthur Altman, 1944.

“I’ve Got Four New Tires,” music by Jessie Greer, lyrics by Alex Gerber, 1942.

“Jumpin’ with a G.I. Gal,” music and lyrics by Nelson Cogane, Edgar Battle, and Ira Schuster, 1943.

“Junk Ain’t Junk No More,” music and lyrics by Austen Croom-Johnson and Allan Kent, 1942.

“Just a Prayer Away” music by David Kapp, lyrics by Charles Tobias, 1944.

“Keep ’Em Flying,” music and lyrics by Bill Coleman, 1942.

“Keep ’Em Laughing,” music and lyrics by Sylvia Fine, 1942.

“Keep ’Em Smiling,” music by Milton Ager, lyrics by Billy Rose, 1942.

“Kiss the Boys Goodbye,” music by Victor Schertzinger, lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1941.

“Knittin’ for Britain,” music and lyrics by Dick Stanford, Jack Millrich, and Harry Jentes, 1941.

“Knock Me a Kiss,” music by Mike Jackson, lyrics by Andy Razaf, 1942.

“The Lady’s on the Job,” music and lyrics by Harold Rome, 1943.

“Let’s All Say a Prayer Tonight,” music and lyrics by Steve Nelson, 1943.

“Let’s Keep a ‘V’ in Every Heart,” music and lyrics by Al Lewis, Vincent Rose, and Larry Stock, 1941.

“The Mamas with the Moo-Lah,” music by Sammy Fain, lyrics by Jack Yellen, 1942.

“May I Never Love Again,” music and lyrics by Jack Erickson and Sano Marco, 1941.

“Milkman Keep Those Bottles Quiet,” music by Gene De Paul, lyrics by Don Raye, 1944.

“Minnie’s in the Money,” music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Leo Robin, 1943.

“Miss America,” music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1945.

“Mommy, Please Stay Home with Me,” music and lyrics by Eddy Arnold, Wally Fowler, and Graydon J. Hall, 1943.

“Mother Write Your Boy a Letter,” music and lyrics by Capt. Clitus M. Wickens, 1943.

“My Devotion,” music and lyrics by Roc Hillman and Johnny Napton, 1942.

“My Gal’s Working at Lockheed,” music by Matt Dennis, lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1944.

“My Guy’s Come Back,” music by Mel Powell, lyrics by Ray McKinley, 1945.

“My Wife’s a W.A.A.C.,” music by Jules Styne, lyrics by Kim Gannon, 1943.

“The Navy Song,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1944.

“The Navy’s Women in Blue,” music and lyrics by Mary Monett, 1943.

“New-Style Bonnet,” music and lyrics by Ruby Jane Douglass, Frank Loesser, Hy Zaret, and Arthur Altman, 1944.

“On That Old Production Line,” music and lyrics by Harold Rome, 1943.

“On the Old Assembly Line,” music and lyrics by Ray Henderson and Bud Green, 1942.

“On the Swing Shift,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1942.

“One Little WAC,” music by Eddie Dunstedter, lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1944.

“Peggy the Pin-up Girl,” music and lyrics by Ray Evans and John Jacob Loeb, 1943.

“Pretty Sal, What a Gal for Morale,” music and lyrics by Lou Shelley, Bobby Kroll, and Bette Cannon, 1943.

“Ration Blues,” music and lyrics by Louis Jordan, Collenane Clark, and Antonio Casey, 1943.

“Remember to Write the Boys,” music and lyrics by Sunny Skylar and Henry H. Tobias, 1942.

“The Road to Victory,” music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1944.

“Rose Ann of Charing Cross,” music by Mabel Wayne, lyrics by Kermit Goell, 1942.

“Rosie the Riveter,” music and lyrics by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb, 1942.

“Sally Don’t You Grieve,” music and lyrics by Woody Guthrie, 1944.

“Sally WAAC,” music and lyrics by Lt. Ruby Jane Douglass, 1943.

“Save the American Way,” music by Edwin Franko Goldman, lyrics by Richard Litton, 1942.

“Savin’ All the Tin I Can,” music and lyrics by Justin Herman and Dudley Wilkinson, 1943.

“Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There,” music by Jimmy McHugh, lyrics by Herb Magdison, 1943.

“Scrap Your Fat,” music by Francis J. Burke, lyrics by Hughie Prince, 1943.

“Seeds for Victory and Peace,” music by Frederic Fay Swift, lyrics by Bessie M. Drew, 1944.

“Send a Great Big Salami to Your Boyfriend in the Army,” music and lyrics by Mack Gussow and Thomas Hearon, 1943.

“Shake Hands with Your Air-Raid Warden,” music by Gerald Marks, lyrics by Irving Caesar, 1942.

“She’s in the Army Now,” music and lyrics by the King’s Jesters and Jack Foy, 1943.

“Shh, It’s a Military Secret,” music and lyrics by Alan Courtney, Earl Allvine, and Walter Bishop, 1942.

“Shut My Mouth (I Ain’t Talkin’),” music and lyrics by Frances Faye, Ruthe Bryer, and Roslyn Hershenson, 1942.

“Silence Is Golden,” music by Glenn Rowell, lyrics by Gene Carroll, 1942.

“Since Kitten’s Knittin’ Mittens,” music and lyrics by Jack Meskill and Ernie Burnett, 1941.

“Sing and Fight for America,” music by Henry Cane, lyrics by Mark Minkus, 1943.

“A Slip of the Lip (Can Sink a Ship),” music and lyrics by Luther Henderson and Mercer Ellington, 1942.

“A Soldier Dreams of You Tonight,” music by Cliff Friend, lyrics by Al Dubin, 1942.

“Something for the Boys,” music and lyrics by Cole Porter, 1943.

“Something New Has Been Added,” music and lyrics by Ruby Jane Douglass, Frank Loesser, Hy Zaret, and Arthur Altman, 1944.

“Song of the Army Nurse Corps,” music by Lou Singer, lyrics by Pvt. Hy Zaret, 1944.

“Song of the O.C.D.,” music by Peter De Rose, lyrics by May Singhi Breen, 1943.

“Song of the WAC,” music by Arthur Altman, lyrics by Pvt. Hy Zaret, 1944.

“The Spirit of the U.S.O.,” music and lyrics by Wolcott D. Street, Prescott S. Bush, and Albert Godlis, 1942.

“Stand Behind the Boys,” music by Bob Carleton, lyrics by Helen Taylor Caton, 1943.

“Stand by the Navy,” music by Daniel Wolf, lyrics by Louise Richardson Dodd, 1943.

“Stick to Your Knittin’ Kitten,” music by Vic Mizzy, lyrics by Wanda Faulknere, 1944.

“Sweethearts in Overalls,” music and lyrics by Alfred Eiseman, Buddy Kaye, and Howard Steiner, 1943.

“That Star-Spangled Baby of Mine,” music by Renee Dietrich Wright, lyrics by James S. Donohue, 1941.

“There’s a Girl behind the Boy behind the Gun,” music and lyrics by Lennie Hayton and Mary C. McCall, Jr., 1943.

“They’re All Miss Americas Now,” music by Frank Worth, lyrics by Jack Frost, 1943.

“Tillie the Toiler,” music by Vincent Lopez, lyrics by Sunny Skylar, 1942.

“True Blue and Always Ready,” music Marlon Ohlson, lyrics by Margaret Bristol, 1944.

“The Union Maid,” music and lyrics by Woody Guthrie, 1940.

“‘V for Victory’ Is Our Shield,” music by Henry Kane, lyrics by Mark Minkus, 1943.

“Vict’ry Polka,” music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn, 1943.

“Volunteer for Victory,” music and lyrics by Johnny Graham, 1942.

“The WAAC Is a Soldier Too,” music and lyrics by Lt. Ruby J. Douglas, 1943.

“The WAC Hymn,” music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1944.

“Wait for Me, Mary,” music by Nat Simon and Charles Tobias, lyrics by Harry Tobias, 1943.

“Wait Until the Girls Get in the Army, Boys,” music and lyrics by Al Goodhart and Kay Twomey, 1942.

“Wait Till You See Nellie in a Soldier’s Uniform,” music and lyrics by Charlie McCord, Franklin Rockwell, and Tommy Jordan, 1942.

“Waitin’ for the Train to Come In,” music and lyrics by Sunny Skylar and Martin Block, 1945.

“Waiting,” music and lyrics by Harold Lawrence, Jay Milton, and Carl Ravazza, 1944.

“WAVES in Navy Blue,” music by Jack Dolph, lyrics by Fred Waring, 1943.

“WAVES of the Navy,” music by Elizabeth K. Ender, lyrics by Betty St. Clair, 1943.

“We Oughta Have the Girls (in the Army),” music by Bob Byron, lyrics by Douglas D. Ballin, 1942.

“We’ll Be Together Again,” music by Carl T. Fischer, lyrics by Frankie Laine, 1945.

“We’re the Girls of Uncle Sam,” music and lyrics by Paul Herfurth, 1944.

“We’re the Janes that Make the Planes,” music by Sidney Miller, lyrics by Inez James, 1944.

“We’ve Got Another Bond to Buy,” music by Jimmy McHugh, lyrics by Harold Adamson, 1945.

“We’ve Gotta Dig for Victory,” music by Ernest Gold, lyrics by Leonore Glasne, 1944.

“When He Comes Home,” music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1944.

“When My Man Comes Home,” music and lyrics by Buddy Johnson, 1944.

“When the Boys Come Home,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by E. Y. Harburg, 1944.

“When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World),” music and lyrics by Eddie Seiler, Sol Marcus, and Bennie Benjamin, 1943.

“When the Nylons Bloom Again,” music by Fats Waller, lyrics by George Marion, Jr., 1943.

“Wherever You Are,” music and lyrics by Cliff Friend and Charlie Tobias, 1942.

“The Woman of the Year,” music and lyrics by Ann Ronell, 1942.

“A Woman’s Work Is Never Done,” music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer, 1944.

“Wonder When My Baby’s Coming Home,” music by Arthur Kent, lyrics by Kermit Goell, 1942.

“You Can’t Say No to a Soldier,” music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Mack Gordon, 1942.

“You Can’t Win this War through Love,” music by Henry Cane, lyrics by Mark Minkus, 1942.

“You’d Be So Nice to Come Home to,” music and lyrics by Cole Porter, 1943.

“You’ll Never Know,” music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Mack Gordon, 1943.

“You’re Good for My Morale,” music by Jay Gorney, lyrics by Henry Myers and Edward Eliscu, 1943.

“You’re My Little Pin-up Girl,” music by James Monaco, lyrics by Mack Gordo, 1944.

“You’re Out of Order, Mrs. Hoarder,” music and lyrics by Gene Carroll and Glenn Row, 1942.

“Zip Your Lip,” music by Herman Ruby, lyrics by Lew Pollack, 1942.