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Posting: World War II In Windham	Posting 1
Poster: History Fan	
Date: 16 August 2005 11:51 AM	
<p>We just observed the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. That was some years before I was born. Could any of you who remember that era tell us what conditions were like locally? What was rationed? Could you buy meat or dairy products? Did you or anyone you know quit school to join the military? Did any of you work as civilian volunteers to aid the war effort? Was the Pleasant Street armory used for training? Did any of you women go to work so that more men could join the service? Basically, could you tell us what our area was like during that period? Thanks.</p>	
Posting: Re: World War II In Windham	Posting 2
Poster: Janice	
Date: 16 August 2005 12:59 AM	
<p>My dad served in some kind of civilian plane watch service. I'm sorry that I can't give you any details, but it was before I was born, and both my parents have passed away.</p>	
Posting: Re: World War II In Windham	Posting 3
Poster: rd	
Date: 16 August 2005 2:34 PM	
<p>I was 6 years old when WWII ended. But I do remember local airraid wardens having drills at night to ensure everyone pull their shades or turn off their lights. I remember my mother having rationing stamps for certain food items, shoes and gas if I remember correctly. For some reason I do remember the day Germany surrendered and where I was. I also remember a neighbor returning from overseas and he was still wearing his uniform except he had an insignia I believe over his left breast pocket that indicated he was a veteran--referred to as the "ruptured duck". Apparently many of the vets returning continued to wear the uniform with the "duck". Don't know if that helped they get back into the employment scene or not.</p>	
Posting: Re: World War II In Windham	Posting 4
Poster: Kate Fortier	
Date: 16 August 2005 3:10 PM	
<p>My grandfather was born and still lives in the Worcester, MA area, so this isn't really Windham-related ... More a response to Bill's point about the aging of our WWII vets and how our tangible connection to this piece of history is fading.</p> <p>Pompa served in Italy. The most well-known battle he was in was Mount Casino. Several years back, I visited Grammy and Pompa alone just to ask him to tell me whatever he could about his experiences in the war. There are many details he kept to himself ... because they continue to be painful for him and, more than anything, I don't think he ever wanted his children or grandchildren to picture him doing what he had to do as a soldier. But, we talked for hours. He showed me pictures. Told me hair-raising and sometimes hilarious stories. Gave me some of his patches and coins. And Grammy told me about what it was like for her to be back here raising my father alone and providing and receiving support from other wives.</p> <p>Later Grammy hugged me and told me that I was the only one of all the grandchildren who had ever asked Pompa about the war, and how deeply that had touched both of them. I treasure that.</p>	
Posting: Re: World War II In Windham	Posting 5
Poster: Robert Thompson	
Date: 19 August 2005 9:50 AM	
<p>I was 9 yrs. old when WWII started. Someone asked about rationing. Just about everything was rationed during the war. The day the war ended Main Street was a sea of people just juming up & down, clapping etc. Main street was a lot different. As was Union & Jackson St & all the other streets that had buildings torn down. What a shame.</p>	
Posting: Re: World War II In Windham	Posting 6
Poster: Francis "Whitey" Sellars	
Date: 19 August 2005 9:01 PM	
<p>There where alot of food in short supply,such as butter,cheese meats and etc.I stood in line many times at Ames butter store to purchase some butter. Ames butter store was near Bill's No. Seven restaurant on main st. There was a small butcher shop across the street where I lived on Johnston Ave. The owner Bill Bernstein ran it he bought his meats from Swifts meat Co. Bill also did some butchering of his own. He bought live cows and pigs up in lebanon and butchered themhim self, no meat shortage in our house. Gasoline was also rationed. I also remember the top half of auto headlights being painted black. Johnston Ave was a lively little street in them days, Nate Mandell lived across the st and would bring us the best jelly doughnuts, he ran Mandell's bakery on Elm St. Willimantic was known around the world during WW2.I was on a beer party on an island in the Marshall islands. I over heard some sailors asking what was the best liberty town they have ever been in. The answer was dear old Willi, they mentioned almost all the bars in town. The one that stood out the most was the good old hotel hooker. End of story</p>	

Posting: Re: World War II In Windham Posting 7
 Poster: mammabear
 Date: 22 August 2005 12:16 AM

LaBranches Market used to be located where Tony's Pizza is now. I'm not sure when that store first opened.

Posting: Re: World War II In Windham Posting 8
 Poster: William Brainard
 Date: 25 June 2006 8:19 PM

The war saw the highway finished to the Mass. line in Union.

Posting: Re: World War II In Windham Posting 9
 Poster: John Tormey
 Date: 26 June 2006 12:14 AM

My brother was associated with the C.A.P. (Civilian Air Patrol). He attended classes where they gave him cards with silhouettes of enemy aircraft and friendly aircraft. I thought that was pretty cool. He was always checking the skies and would know exactly what was flying overhead -- and there were a lot of planes flying over the Willimantic-Mansfield area.

When we had night air raids my brother would drive around Conantville on his bike and check to see that all houses were in total blackout. If he saw light he'd alert the homeowner to knock it off. He wore a helmet, and carried a filtered flashlight. It gave him credibility. The mill whistle blasted the air raid alert and sounded again for the all clear.

Schools conducted air raid drills which were pretty scary at the time. We'd leave the building and proceed to a "safe zone." Yeah. Right.

Also, the Windham Municipal Airport in Mansfield was used by the Coast Guard planes (Grumman Avengers?) as a testing area for their "skip bombing" techniques. We lived on a hill in Conantville and had a great view of them dropping their "eggs." Sometimes they'd practice "dog fights" overhead. I went fishing in the river above the 'pumping station" in Mansfield about ten years ago and spotted some empty bomb casings still lying around in the woods there. Check it out.

Rationing. Folks had stickers on their windshields (A or B come to mind) which told the gas station guys how much fuel they were allowed depending on their jobs as related to the "war effort." Tires were rationed also. Sugar, nylons -- forget it. Folks had Victory Gardens, trying to raise as much of their own food as possible.

Scouts went around on scrap paper drives, scrap metal drives.

In Willimantic there was a drop off point for tin foil balls. Folks saved it up and brought it in. It was used by our Air Force to drop shredded foil around our bombers to mess up enemy radar.

Whenever we kids wanted something we couldn't have, we'd hear the same old phrase from our parents: "after the war -- after the war." Man, I couldn't wait. And by that time the war ended I didn't want it anymore anyway.

Lots more, but I'm tired now.
 jt

Posting: Re: World War II In Windham Posting 10
 Poster: William Brainard
 Date: 28 June 2006 6:28 AM

My parents were newlyweds with dad working the third shift and Mother working first shift. They would greet each other passing in their cars coming and going. Dad was at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford and Mother worked at Arrow Hart and Hennigan in Hartford. This went on for a couple years till my dad went in the navy. They commuted from Ashford up by the Union line and the highway was just one lane then. They shopped in Sturbridge and Springfield. My oldest brother was born at Windham Hospital though Tom was born at Stafford Hospital. My parents sold their Ashford farm in 1947 because the new Ashford Elementary School was some 12 miles from their home.

Posting: Re: World War II In Windham Posting 11
 Poster: chas barrett
 Date: 5 August 2006 12:02 AM

WWII Memories.....

I remember the day the "JAPS" surrendered....in August 1945. I wasn't even in school yet , but I remember it. I was pulling my American Flyer wagon down Mountain Street and all of a sudden lots of sirens and whistles started blowing...car horns were beeping everywhere. Pandemonium prevailed !

Mr Miller, who became the local Willimantic fire chief, came out of his home on Mountain Street and said to me: "Hey kid, the Japs have surrendered...the War is over"

I ran back to our place on Plesant St. and my mom, Marjorie Barrett drove me and my lil brother Jim to The Capitol Theatre, that my dad Russ ran for Warner Studios.. Main St was filled with people...I was so small I was buried in the crowds..what a day that was.

Posting: Re: World War II In Windham Posting 12

Poster: William Brainard
Date: 5 August 2006 8:57 PM

You certainly have marvelous memories, Charles! Thanks for sharing them; it's always a treat when you post!