SECTION 1

Mobilizing for Defense

MAIN IDEA	WHY IT MATTERS NOW	Terms & Names
Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States mobilized for war.	Military industries in the United States today are a major part of the American economy.	• George Marshall • Women's Auxiliary Army Corp (WAAC) • A. Philip Randolph • Manhattan Project • Office of Price Administration (OPA) • War Production Board (WPB) • rationing

One American's Story

Charles Swanson looked all over his army base for a tape recorder on which to play the tape his wife had sent him for Christmas. "In desperation," he later recalled, "I had it played over the public-address system. It was a little embarrassing to have the whole company hear it, but it made everyone long for home."

A Personal Voice MRS. CHARLES SWANSON

"Merry Christmas, honey. Surprised? I'm so glad I have a chance to say hello to you this way on our first Christmas apart. . . . About our little girl. . . . She is just big enough to fill my heart and strong enough to help Mommy bear this ache of loneliness. . . . Her dearest treasure is her daddy's picture. It's all marked with tiny handprints, and the glass is always cloudy from so much loving and kissing. I'm hoping you'll be listening to this on Christmas Eve, somewhere over there, your heart full of hope, faith and courage, knowing each day will bring that next Christmas together one day nearer."

—quoted in *We Pulled Together . . . and Won!*

▲ Mrs. Charles Swanson and her daughter, Lynne, with a picture of her husband.

As the United States began to mobilize for war, the Swansons, like most Americans, had few illusions as to what lay ahead. It would be a time filled with hard work, hope, sacrifice, and sorrow.

Americans Join the War Effort

The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor with the expectation that once Americans had experienced Japan's power, they would shrink from further conflict. The day after the raid, the *Japan Times* boasted that the United States, now reduced to a third-rate power, was "trembling in her shoes." But if Americans were trembling, it was with rage, not fear. Uniting under the battle cry "Remember Pearl Harbor!" they set out to prove Japan wrong.

SELECTIVE SERVICE AND THE GI After Pearl Harbor, eager young Americans jammed recruiting offices. "I wanted to be a hero, let's face it," admitted Roger Tuttrup. "I was havin' trouble in school. . . . The war'd been goin' on for two years. I didn't wanna miss it. . . . I was an American. I was seventeen."

Even the 5 million who volunteered for military service, however, were not enough to face the challenge of an all-out war on two global fronts—Europe and the Pacific. The Selective Service System expanded the draft and eventually provided another 10 million soldiers to meet the armed forces' needs.

Background
The initials *GI* originally stood for "galvanized iron" but were later reinterpreted as "government issue," meaning uniforms and supplies. In time, the abbreviation came to stand for American soldiers.

▲ **In March 1941, a group of African-American men in New York City enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps. This was the first time the Army Air Corps opened its enlistment to African Americans.**

The volunteers and draftees reported to military bases around the country for eight weeks of basic training. In this short period, seasoned sergeants did their best to turn raw recruits into disciplined, battle-ready GIs.

According to Sergeant Debs Myers, however, there was more to basic training than teaching a recruit how to stand at attention, march in step, handle a rifle, and follow orders.

A PERSONAL VOICE SERGEANT DEBS MYERS

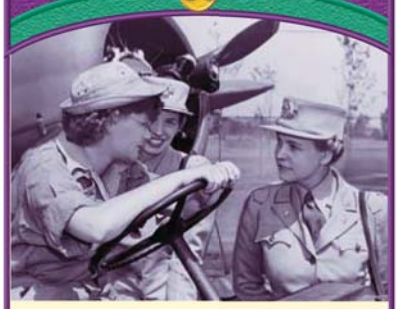
"The civilian went before the Army doctors, took off his clothes, feeling silly; jigged, stooped, squatted, wet into a bottle; became a soldier. He learned how to sleep in the mud, tie a knot, kill a man. He learned the ache of loneliness, the ache of exhaustion, the kinship of misery. He learned that men make the same queasy noises in the morning, feel the same longings at night; that every man is alike and that each man is different."

—quoted in *The GI War: 1941–1945*

EXPANDING THE MILITARY The military's work force needs were so great that Army Chief of Staff General **George Marshall** pushed for the formation of a **Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC).** "There are innumerable duties now being performed by soldiers that can be done better by women," Marshall said in support of a bill to establish the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. Under this bill, women volunteers would serve in noncombat positions.

Despite opposition from some members of Congress who scorned the bill as "the silliest piece of legislation" they had ever seen, the bill establishing the WAAC became law on May 15, 1942. The law gave the WAACs an official status and salary but few of the benefits granted to male soldiers. In July 1943, after thousands of women had enlisted, the U.S. Army dropped the "auxiliary" status, and granted WACs full U.S. Army benefits. WACs worked as nurses, ambulance drivers, radio operators, electricians, and pilots—nearly every duty not involving direct combat.

NOW & THEN



WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

A few weeks after the bill to establish the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) had become law, Oveta Culp Hobby *(shown, far right)*, a Texas newspaper executive and the first director of the WAAC, put out a call for recruits. More than 13,000 women applied on the first day. In all, some 350,000 women served in this and other auxiliary branches during the war.

The WAC remained a separate unit of the army until 1978 when male and female forces were integrated. In 2006, more than 200,000 women served in the United States armed forces.

RECRUITING AND DISCRIMINATION For many minority groups—especially African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans—the war created new dilemmas. Restricted to racially segregated neighborhoods and reservations and denied basic citizenship rights, some members of these groups questioned whether this was their war to fight. "Why die for democracy for some foreign country when we don't even have it here?" asked an editorial in an African-American newspaper. On receiving his draft notice, an African American responded unhappily, "Just carve on my tombstone, 'Here lies a black man killed fighting a yellow man for the protection of a white man.'"

DRAMATIC CONTRIBUTIONS Despite discrimination in the military, more than 300,000 Mexican Americans joined the armed forces. While Mexican Americans in Los Angeles made up only a tenth of the city's population, they suffered a fifth of the city's wartime casualties.

About one million African Americans also served in the military. African-American soldiers lived and worked in segregated units and were limited mostly to noncombat roles. After much protest, African Americans did finally see combat beginning in April 1943.

Asian Americans took part in the struggle as well. More than 13,000 Chinese Americans, or about one of every five adult males, joined the armed forces. In addition, 33,000 Japanese Americans put on uniforms. Of these, several thousand volunteered to serve as spies and interpreters in the Pacific war. "During battles," wrote an admiring officer, "they crawled up close enough to be able to hear [Japanese] officers' commands and to make verbal translations to our soldiers."

Some 25,000 Native Americans enlisted in the armed services, too, including 800 women. Their willingness to serve led *The Saturday Evening Post* to comment, "We would not need the Selective Service if all volunteered like Indians." A

MAIN IDEA

Contrasting

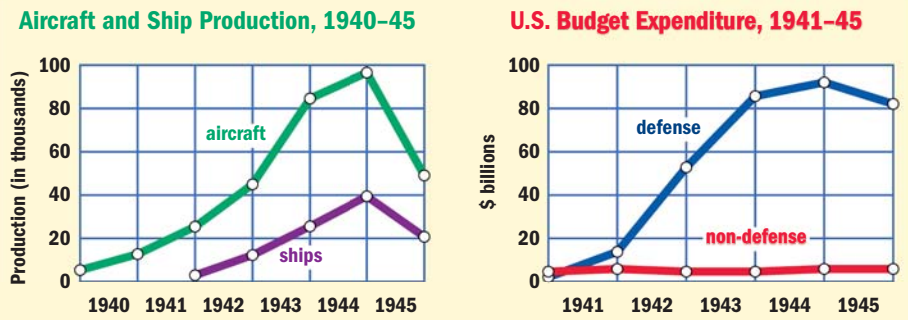
A How did the American response to the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor differ from Japanese expectations?

A Production Miracle

Early in February 1942, American newspapers reported the end of automobile production for private use. The last car to roll off an automaker's assembly line was a gray sedan with "victory trim,"—that is, without chrome-plated parts. This was just one more sign that the war would affect almost every aspect of life.

THE INDUSTRIAL RESPONSE Within weeks of the shutdown in production, the nation's automobile plants had been retooled to produce tanks, planes, boats, and

The Production Miracle



Source: *The Times Atlas of the Second World War*

SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Graphs

1. Study the first graph. In what year did aircraft and ship production reach their highest production levels?
2. How does the second graph help explain how this production miracle was possible?

command cars. They were not alone. Across the nation, factories were quickly converted to war production. A maker of mechanical pencils turned out bomb parts. A bedspread manufacturer made mosquito netting. A soft-drink company converted from filling bottles with liquid to filling shells with explosives.

Meanwhile, shipyards and defense plants expanded with dizzying speed. By the end of 1942, industrialist Henry J. Kaiser had built seven massive new shipyards that turned out Liberty ships (cargo carriers), tankers, troop transports, and "baby" aircraft carriers at an astonishing rate. Late that year, Kaiser invited reporters to Way One in his Richmond, California, shipyard to watch as his workers assembled *Hull 440*, a Liberty ship, in a record-breaking four days. Writer Alyce Mano Kramer described the first day and night of construction.

A PERSONAL VOICE ALYCE MANO KRAMER

"At the stroke of 12, Way One exploded into life. Crews of workers, like a champion football team, swarmed into their places in the line. Within 60 seconds, the keel was swinging into position. . . . *Hull 440* was going up. The speed of [production] was unbelievable. At midnight, Saturday, an empty way—at midnight Sunday, a full-grown hull met the eyes of graveyard workers as they came on shift."

—quoted in *Home Front, U.S.A.*

Before the fourth day was up, 25,000 amazed spectators watched as *Hull 440* slid into the water. How could such a ship be built so fast? Kaiser used prefabricated, or factory-made, parts that could be quickly assembled at his shipyards. Equally important were his workers, who worked at record speeds.

LABOR'S CONTRIBUTION When the war began, defense contractors warned the Selective Service System that the nation did not have enough workers to meet both its military and its industrial needs. They were wrong. By 1944, despite the draft, nearly 18 million workers were laboring in war industries, three times as many as in 1941.

More than 6 million of these new workers were women. At first, war industries feared that most women lacked the necessary stamina for factory work and were reluctant to hire them. But once women proved they could operate welding torches or riveting guns as well as men, employers could not hire enough of them—especially since women earned only about 60 percent as much as men doing the same jobs.

During the war, women took many jobs previously held by men. In this 1943 photo, a young woman is seen operating a hand drill in Nashville, Tennessee.

Defense plants also hired more than 2 million minority workers during the war years. Like women, minorities faced strong prejudice at first. Before the war, 75 percent of defense contractors simply refused to hire African Americans, while another 15 percent employed them only in menial jobs. "Negroes will be considered only as janitors," declared the general manager of North American Aviation. "It is the company policy not to employ them as mechanics and aircraft workers." B

MAIN IDEA

Forming Generalizations

B What difficulties did women and minorities face in the wartime work force?

To protest such discrimination both in the military and in industry, **A. Philip Randolph,** president and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the nation's most respected African-American labor leader, organized a march on Washington. Randolph called on African Americans everywhere to come to the capital on July 1, 1941, and to march under the banner "We Loyal Colored Americans Demand the Right to Work and Fight for Our Country."

A. Philip Randolph in 1942.

Fearing that the march might provoke white resentment or violence, President Roosevelt called Randolph to the White House and asked him to back down. "I'm sorry Mr. President," the labor leader said, "the march cannot be called off." Roosevelt then asked, "How many people do you plan to bring?" Randolph replied, "One hundred thousand, Mr. President." Roosevelt was stunned. Even half that number of African-American protesters would be far more than Washington—still a very segregated city—could feed, house, and transport.

In the end it was Roosevelt, not Randolph, who backed down. In return for Randolph's promise to cancel the march, the president issued an executive order calling on employers and labor unions "to provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin."

History Through *Film*

HOLLYWOOD HELPS MOBILIZATION

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, Hollywood churned out war-oriented propaganda films. Heroic movies like *Mission to Moscow* and *Song of Russia* glorified America's new wartime ally, the Soviet Union. On the other hand, "hiss-and-boo" films stirred up hatred against the Nazis. In this way, movies energized people to join the war effort.

As the war dragged on, people grew tired of propaganda and war themes. Hollywood responded with musicals, romances, and other escapist fare designed to take filmgoers away from the grim realities of war, if only for an hour or two.

Moviemakers also turned out informational films. The most important of these films—the *Why We Fight* series—were made by the great director Frank Capra. Capra is shown (*right*) consulting with Colonel Hugh Stewart (commander of the British Army film unit) in a joint effort in the making of *Tunisian Victory*, the first official film record of the campaign that expelled Germany from North Africa.

***Hitler, Beast of Berlin*, produced in 1939, was one of the most popular hiss-and-boo films. Viewing audiences watched in rage as the Nazis conducted one horrible act after another.**

SKILLBUILDER Interpeting Visual Sources

1. How does the image from *Hitler, Beast of Berlin* portray the Nazis?
2. How might audiences have responded to propaganda films?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R23.

MOBILIZATION OF SCIENTISTS That same year, in 1941, Roosevelt created the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) to bring scientists into the war effort. The OSRD spurred improvements in radar and sonar, new technologies for locating submarines underwater. It encouraged the use of pesticides like DDT to fight insects. As a result, U.S. soldiers were probably the first in history to be relatively free from body lice. The OSRD also pushed the development of "miracle drugs," such as penicillin, that saved countless lives on and off the battlefield.

The most significant achievement of the OSRD, however, was the secret development of a new weapon, the atomic bomb. Interest in such a weapon began in 1939, after German scientists succeeded in splitting uranium atoms, releasing an enormous amount of energy. This news prompted physicist and German refugee Albert Einstein to write a letter to President Roosevelt, warning that the Germans could use their discovery to construct a weapon of enormous destructive power.

MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

C Why did President Roosevelt create the OSRD, and what did it do?

Roosevelt responded by creating an Advisory Committee on Uranium to study the new discovery. In 1941, the committee reported that it would take from three to five years to build an atomic bomb. Hoping to shorten that time, the OSRD set up an intensive program in 1942 to develop a bomb as quickly as possible. Because much of the early research was performed at Columbia University in Manhattan, the **Manhattan Project** became the code name for research work that extended across the country. C

The Federal Government Takes Control

As war production increased, there were fewer consumer products available for purchase. Much factory production was earmarked for the war. With demand increasing and supplies dropping, prices seemed likely to shoot upwards.

ECONOMIC CONTROLS Roosevelt responded to this threat by creating the **Office of Price Administration (OPA).** The OPA fought inflation by freezing prices on most goods. Congress also raised income tax rates and extended the tax to millions of people who had never paid it before. The higher taxes reduced consumer demand on scarce goods by leaving workers with less to spend. In addition,

The Government Takes Control of the Economy, 1942–1945

Agencies and Laws	What the Regulations Did
Office of Price Administration (OPA)	• Fought inflation by freezing wages, prices, and rents • Rationed foods, such as meat, butter, cheese, vegetables, sugar, and coffee
National War Labor Board (NWLB)	• Limited wage increases • Allowed negotiated benefits, such as paid vacation, pensions, and medical insurance • Kept unions stable by forbidding workers to change unions
War Production Board (WPB)	• Rationed fuel and materials vital to the war effort, such as gasoline, heating oil, metals, rubber, and plastics
Department of the Treasury	• Issued war bonds to raise money for the war effort and to fight inflation
Revenue Act of 1942	• Raised the top personal-income tax rate to 88% • Added lower- and middle-income Americans to the income-tax rolls
Smith-Connally Anti-Strike Act (1943)	• Limited the right to strike in industries crucial to the war effort • Gave the president power to take over striking plants

▲ Children of all ages helped with wartime recycling. This 5-year-old boy pounded the pavement in New York City collecting aluminum.

the government encouraged Americans to use their extra cash to buy war bonds. As a result of these measures, inflation remained below 30 percent—about half that of World War I—for the entire period of World War II.

Besides controlling inflation, the government needed to ensure that the armed forces and war industries received the resources they needed to win the war. The **War Production Board (WPB)** assumed that responsibility. The WPB decided which companies would convert from peacetime to wartime production and allocated raw materials to key industries. The WPB also organized drives to collect scrap iron, tin cans, paper, rags, and cooking fat for recycling into war goods. Across America, children scoured attics, cellars, garages, vacant lots, and back alleys, looking for useful junk. During one five-month-long paper drive in Chicago, schoolchildren collected 36 million pounds of old paper—about 65 pounds per child. D

MAIN IDEA

Identifying Problems

D What basic problems were the OPA and WPB created to solve?

RATIONING In addition, the OPA set up a system for **rationing,** or establishing fixed allotments of goods deemed essential for the military. Under this system, households received ration books with coupons to be used for buying such scarce goods as meat, shoes, sugar, coffee, and gasoline. Gas rationing was particularly hard on those who lived in western regions, where driving was the only way to get around. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt sympathized with their complaints. "To tell the people in the West not to use their cars," she observed, "means that these people may never see another soul for weeks and weeks nor have a way of getting a sick person to a doctor."

Most Americans accepted rationing as a personal contribution to the war effort. Workers carpooled or rode bicycles. Families coped with shortages of everything from tires to toys. Inevitably, some cheated by hoarding scarce goods or by purchasing them through the "black market," where rationed items could be bought illegally without coupons at inflated prices.

While people tightened their belts at home, millions of other Americans put their lives on the line in air, sea, and land battles on the other side of the world.

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- George Marshall
- Women's Auxiliary Army Corp (WAAC)
- A. Philip Randolph
- Manhattan Project
- Office of Price Administration (OPA)
- War Production Board (WPB)
- rationing

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES
Re-create the web below on your paper, and fill in ways that America prepared for war.

CRITICAL THINKING

3. ANALYZING EVENTS
How did government regulations impact the lives of civilians?

4. ANALYZING VISUAL SOURCES
What is the message of the World War II poster to the right? Why was this message important?