



Supplemental Activity Ideas for The War

Displays and Exhibits in the Library

Every Map Contains a Legend: Mapping Your Community's Involvement in the War:

Create a visual map of your community's collective wartime histories and actions. Ask patrons "Where were you during World War II? And your parents? And your grandparents? Tell us about your family." Hang a large map of the world in a central location. Have color-coded labels available for your patrons with a legend delineating what each color signifies (i.e.: red=soldier of war, black= deceased in battle, green=interned for ethnicity, yellow=non-military personnel.) If there were wartime industries/activities particular to your region, you could create a label just for that as well.

WWII Local History Display: Create a display of local newspaper editorials about the war in Europe prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Exhibit WWII posters, photos and memorabilia on the library walls. Photographs could include images of men and women in your community involved in the war effort, and local area war industry buildings and businesses of the time.

Poster and Photo Exhibit of WWII Home Front Posters and Conservation Efforts:

Victory gardens, gas and food rationing, scrap drives and salvage collections helped conserve resources for the war effort. Thousands of posters were created during the war to get the word out about conservation efforts at home. Display images of some of these posters in the library. One resource for these images can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/homefront/conservation.html>

Display of War Letters: Display copies of war letters on the walls of the library. Displays could include letters to soldiers in the field or letters from soldiers to loved ones on the home front.

War Poetry Display: Many have struggled to find words to describe the horrors, ironies, and sadness of war. Poetry is one medium that people have used to try and make sense of the enormity of the experience. Host an exhibit of war poems.

Recipes and Cookbook Display: During the war, The Ministry of Food's Economy Effort included the rationing of food in the U.S. This necessitated the re-writing of many traditional recipe books. A large number of cookbooks were published to provide those at home with meal ideas during the time of food shortages and rationing. Display WWII era recipes and images of cookbook covers on the library walls.

Aircraft and Military Vessels of WWII: Display photos of WWII aircraft and naval vessels.

"Play Ball!" Women in Baseball Exhibit: Baseball is known as America's favorite pastime. During the war, the tradition continued with female players. Display photos and articles about California's Women's WWII era baseball teams.

Publications: As a follow-up to any writing programs that your library hosts, compile a booklet and include some of the poems, writings, and family stories that patrons produced. Include some of the pieces in the library newsletter. Invite people to contribute their stories about the war (life in the states as well as life overseas) to your library newsletter, and display some of the writing on the library walls.

Adult Program and Activity Ideas

Oral History Collection Workshops: This is an opportunity for libraries to spearhead the collection of oral histories and document local community stories of the war years, before they are lost forever. Make your library a place to inspire and instruct on the collection of oral histories, family stories, and stories about life in your town. Use the library website and library displays to highlight Internet resources, and items in your collection, that can be used by those wishing to collect the stories of loved ones, or document their own war time stories. At the completion of your programs, compile people's stories into a booklet, and make it available to library patrons. The stories can also be posted on the library website. Encourage participants to partner with other organizations to gather, collect and preserve their personal, community and family stories of WWII. Three excellent WWII oral history resources are:

- Stories of Service at <http://www.digiclub.org/sofs/>
- The Veterans History Project in the Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/vets/kit.html>
- StoryShare at <http://www.pbs.org>

Host a Memoir Writing Workshop: Host memoir writing workshops to encourage everyone, of all ages and generations, to write down their stories.

WWII Book Discussion Program: Use the bibliographies on our website for ideas. Titles for your program might include fiction or non-fiction books. Consider including titles that explore the home front experience, and what it meant to be a Californian during the war years. You might host a book discussion that focuses on books written by Americans whose stories were overlooked in past discussions of war history. Feature books that tell the stories of women, Japanese Americans, Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, and their experiences during the war.

Contemporary War Book Discussion Program: Organize a book discussion program using books about current war efforts. Since the start of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars some excellent memoirs and non-fiction titles have been published. Discussions can explore the universal themes of war as well as the differences between the current U.S. wars and WWII.

Poetry Evenings/Literature of War: Organize poetry readings that are themed around or inspired by the experiences of war. Partner with veterans groups and senior groups. Identify individuals with a connection to the events of war that would be willing to do some of the readings. To enhance your poetry/spoken word evenings, create a partnership with local venues (coffee shops and book stores). The readings could take place in the coffee shop or bookstore. In addition to poetry you can draw from the many collections of WWII letters, essays and poems, as a source for your spoken word event. You can use these events as an opportunity to create awareness of library programs in the community.

Public Screening of Ken Burn's The War Series: Organize a public screening of The War in your library, with the opportunity for discussion to follow each segment. Identify a speaker or scholar to facilitate the discussion of the series. Partner with a veteran organization or World War II museum to get the word out about the program.

War-Themed Film Series: Using the filmography on our website, create a film night at your library. Consider including documentary films, satires, and dramas. When possible identify a local speaker or scholar to facilitate a discussion after each screening. You may

want to consider partnering with a local cinema. Use these events to promote library programs.

Your Town During the War: Wartime Sacramento, Sunnyvale, Culver City, Shasta -- what was the home front like in your town? To give The War a local perspective, connect with a local historian and host a program about your town during the war. What industries were housed there to support the war effort? What was life like? Who and what in your town was affected by the war? What was different, what remains the same?

Host a Panel Discussion on The War:

"What Did You Do During the War, Grandma?": Host a panel highlighting the role of local women during the war.

"The War at Home": Host a panel to discuss some of the issues that faced your community during the war years and during the years that followed.

"The Japanese American Experience 1941-1945": Host a panel discussing the experience of Japanese Americans living in your community during the war. If possible, include individuals who were affected by relocation and internment.

WWII Era Music At the Library: Invite local musicians to come and play WWII era music in the library. Some genres to consider are WWII soldier songs, WWII top hits, Big Band Swing, Boogie Woogie, and music of the Victory label.

WWII Themed Dinner and Dance: Partnering with a local veterans group, organize a WWII era dinner and dance. The evening could feature food and music of the time. Display photos and books relating to the war effort. This event could be used as a kick-off or concluding event to your library's oral history collection efforts.

Care Package and Letter Writing for U.S. Military: Hold a care package and letter-writing event focusing on soldiers currently serving in the US Armed Forces. www.anymarine.com is a good starting point for finding out what is needed and where to send it.

WWII Quiz Night: Organize a WWII quiz night in your library. Devise a set of questions about the war and related topics. Invite people to compete in teams, provide some refreshments, and offer small prizes.

Visit Local WWII Historic Sites: Organize a day trip with your teen group, Friends group or library group. California is home to the Rosie the Riveter historic site, and numerous war memorials.

Start Your Very Own Victory Garden (Beginning Vegetable and Herb Growing 101): Whether an apartment dweller, homeowner, city or country resident, there's always some space to grow. After a brief overview of the history behind the term Victory Garden, have the library host a workshop that can offer easy tips on planting in the ground or growing in pots. Provide basic information to get people planting.

All About Spam: Host a Spam Night. Explore the past and present history of the canned meat. The evening could include a spam cooking contest and information about this beloved and sometimes maligned meat. Explore its role as a war era food and its current popularity as a gourmet treat around the world.

Program and Activity Ideas for Teens and Children

Middle School and High School War-Themed Book Discussion Program: Consider hosting a war-themed book discussion for tweens and teens. Create your own program or consider using California Center for the Book's pre-packaged book discussion program entitled "Caught in the Crossfire: Young People and War."

The Aircraft of WWII Model Building Workshop: Host a teen model airplane-building workshop.

Teen Workshop on Collecting Family Stories and Oral History: Assist students in using digital technology—pod casts and blogs—to research and report on WWII stories found in their communities. Have teens map their family's involvement in the war. Photocopy maps of the world and have teens trace their family's locations during the war. Display these in the library. Encourage them to find out how their family has been affected by war. Urge them to talk to their relatives, friends and neighbors about their experiences during WWII and display what they discovered. This information can also be showcased on the library website.

Work with local high school students, museums and veteran's organizations to tape interviews featuring not only World War II veterans, but also the men and women who were "indirectly" involved in the war by building the ships and planes that were manufactured during that time. Encourage teens to talk to parents and grandparents.

Care Package and Letter Writing for U.S. Military: Working with your Teen Council, hold a care package and letter-writing event focusing on soldiers currently serving in the US Armed Forces. www.anymarine.com is a good starting point for finding out what is needed and where to send it.

Partnerships: Involve other members of the community by organizing your programs for children and teens in partnership with schools, community centers, boys and girls clubs, after school programs and the Girl Scouts.

Teen Art Display and Contest: Partner with local high schools and get students in art classes to design their version of a poster for peace or war. This could be a great opportunity to discuss the art and messages of war propaganda posters. Display the artwork in the library.

Volunteerism Programs for Teens: Encourage your teen council to volunteer with an organization that serves veterans, such as senior centers and veteran's homes and organizations. Develop collaborations with veterans groups in your community and find out how teens can help.

Children's Story Time: Reading books about Rosie the Riveter or other individuals who helped the war effort while working on the home front is a great way to introduce the concept of war to young children. Perhaps focus on the role of women during the war and the important contributions that were made on the home front. You could organize a welding or riveting demo in the library hosted by a female welder.

Children's Art Display: Use the bibliography of children's books on our website to introduce children to stories of war. Organize a program in which children can create a diorama, collage, or drawing, featuring images inspired by the book and display the artwork in the library.

Attracting Attention

"Don't Miss The War" Campaign at the Library: Ask local businesses to sponsor the campaign and promote your programs. Ask prominent members of your community to pose for photographs with a copy of The War companion guide or DVD and publish the photos in local newspapers and magazines, on your website, and as posters and fliers.

Involve Your Mayor: Contact your mayor and ask him or her to declare a "WWII Remembrance Day" in your town. Ask your Mayor to bring publicity and other resources to your project.

Partner With Local Radio Station: Partner with your local radio station and encourage them to devote a show to War stories from past to present. This would be a great way to publicize library programs and any oral history or memoir writing workshops the library may be planning.

Partner With Local Business: To enhance your programs create a partnership with local venues (coffee shops and book stores). They may agree to provide refreshments for your discussion programs and, in return, a librarian or scholar could lead a book discussion program, screening, or lecture in the coffee shop or bookstore. You can use this opportunity to create awareness of other library programs as well.

Attracting Teens: To create enthusiasm among teen audiences and to ensure that your programs will appeal to teens, involve them in organizing The War programs, activities and exhibitions, and in developing The War related resources. You might think about focusing your activities for teens during Teen Read Week: October 14-20, 2007.

Use Promotional Materials: Use the customizable flyers and bookmarks that are on the California Center for the Book website to promote local programming for The War series. Use these to encourage people to borrow, read, and discuss books relating to WWII and to encourage your patrons to watch the series, which premieres September 23, 2007.