

"THE WAR WAS A VERY VIVID PART OF MY LIFE":  
BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the influence of the Second World War on the lives of British Columbia school children. It employs a variety of primary and secondary sources, including interviews with adults who, during 1939-1945, attended school in British Columbia. War time news and propaganda through such means as newspaper, movies, newsreels and radio broadcasts permeated children's lives. War influenced the whole school curriculum and especially led to changes in Social Studies, Physical Education and Industrial Arts. The war also created a wide range of war-related extra curricular activities for children. War also altered the routine of childrens' daily lives. Blackouts, air raid drills, rationing, prosperity, people in uniform, fear of invasion, and loved ones killed overseas all contributed to making life during the Second World War different from the eras that preceded and followed it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I: CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA: PROPAGANDA IN WAR TIME.....	10
CHAPTER II: THE WAR'S EFFECT ON THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL CURRICULUM.....	51
CHAPTER III: EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: CHILDREN WORK FOR THE WAR EFFORT.....	109
CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION: "OUR LIVES WERE TERRIBLY DISLOCATED": THE WAR AND THE LIVES OF CHILDREN.....	157
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	205



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Attendance: Vancouver Technical School: 1939-1945.....	94

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## INTRODUCTION

In September 1939 "hesitantly and without enthusiasm" Canadians again went to war.<sup>1</sup> A generation earlier Canadians had cheered the prospect of war; singing "God Save the King" and "Rule Britannia" as their soldiers paraded through the streets. Their cheers quickly turned to cries of despair; the death lists grew as thousands upon thousands of Canadians were killed. Canadians would not forget the carnage of the First World War as the Second World War raged on for six long years.

Canada was still at peace when Britain and France declared war, 3 September 1939. Beginning on 7 September, a special three day Canadian parliamentary "war session" was held. Mackenzie King stated at this session: "We stand for the defence of Canada; we stand for the co-operation of this country at the side of Great Britain..."<sup>2</sup> King also repeated his March 1939 pledge against conscription for overseas military service. He knew an election would soon be called and his Liberal Party depended on French Canadians for votes. French Canadians had made it quite clear that they had no desire to go to war for Britain. Parliament voted to join the war against Germany and on 10 September 1939, King George VI signed the proclamation.

Once Canada declared war 58,337 men and women enlisted as volunteers. Thousands of Canadians, unemployed during the Great

Depression, looked forward to daily pay, three square meals and a warm uniform. By 1940, the world was shocked; Hitler controlled western Europe and France. The Canadian government, in June 1940, passed a bill known as the National Resources Mobilization Act. It allowed the government the power to mobilize the more than 8,000,000 Canadians over the age of 16 to defend on Canadian soil and in territorial waters. Conscripts, known as the "R" recruits together with volunteers called the "A" recruits went through four months of training in camps across the country. Young men and women were joining up in great numbers, the plan was to train 240,000 Canadians a year. Unemployment virtually disappeared by April of 1941 and every factory in Canada increased production, "the growth in war industry was phenomenal."<sup>3</sup> It seemed as if every man, woman and child was busy and prospering.

Overseas the picture was not as bright for Canadians. Many Canadians lost their lives fighting the Second World War. In 1940 members of the Royal Canadian Air Force flew in the Battle of Britain, and some were killed. In 1941 Japan attacked the Crown Colony of Hong Kong and Canadians fought to defend her. In the summer of 1942, Canadian servicemen left for Dieppe and many lost their lives in "ten hours of unadulterated hell".<sup>4</sup> Canadians continued to fight bravely in many battles including the invasions of North Africa in November 1942; Sicily and Italy in 1943; and D-Day in France in 1944. Canadian troops again suffered losses in the battle of Scheldt near Antwerp, Belgium. By February 1945 the 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade marched through "the Siegfried Line" west of the Rhine river in Germany.<sup>5</sup> In April 1945, when surrender negotiations were under way the

fighting finally ceased and on 7 May the war in Europe was over. Canadian forces were expecting to fight in the Pacific theatre of war but those plans changed. The Pacific war ended on 14 August 1945, shortly after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The role that children played in the Second World War has not received much attention in historical works. The purpose of my thesis is to explore the influence that six years of world conflict had on the school children of British Columbia. British Columbia's children contributed greatly to the war on the home front. Children learned about the war's events from newsreels and from the National Film Board's Canada Carries On and World in Action series. They cheered as their favourite actors fought the hated Nazis and Japanese on the movie screen. They followed the news on the radio and in the newspapers. They sang "God Save the King" and, at school, saluted the Union Jack and pledged their allegiance to Britain and to the King. They studied the war in their classrooms and in their school books and were taught that the ideals of democracy would conquer Nazi tyranny. Many children honed their technical skills in order to serve in the war industries, while others drilled in their school's cadet corps in physical training for the service. They made extra money working, after school and on weekends, in shipyards and factories and contributed to the war effort by purchasing War Savings Stamps. They also raised funds, collected bottles, cans, foil, fat and bones and they worked tirelessly for the Canadian Junior Red Cross.

They experienced the changes that the war brought to their daily lives. They learned not to take things like chocolate and

ice cream for granted as certain foods were rationed and items like toys and bicycles were hard to come by. Many children were forced to look after the household when both parents went to work for the war effort. They were frightened or excited by the air raid drills and the blackouts, they listened to the talk of invasion and tried to understand why their Japanese Canadian friends and neighbours had been taken away. They said goodbye to friends and relatives leaving for overseas service and watched the death lists in the newspapers as they hoped for their safe return. Many of these children never saw their loved ones again and suffered the great loss that the Second World War inflicted.

To learn about children's experiences during the Second World War, I asked adults to tell me what they could remember. Thus, using excerpts from these interviews throughout my thesis I add the dimension of feeling to that part of my narrative derived from traditional sources. As Neil Sutherland argues in his article on employing the memories of adults to recapture their childhoods, "If we are ever to get 'inside' childhood experiences, then we must ask adults to recall how they thought, felt and experienced their growing up."<sup>6</sup> "I remember I was crying", one of the interviewees told me, "I was so afraid of Hitler."<sup>7</sup> Another discussed the bombing of Hiroshima and shared what he remembered feeling at the time: "I had kind of mixed feelings: pride on the one hand of the Canadian involvement, I remember feeling that, I guess two to three days afterward it started to sink in...and saying to myself 'I don't think they should have done it.'"<sup>8</sup>

People remember both unique events and the pattern of

regular activities. They often organize their recollections if these 'recurrent events' into what some describe as 'scripts' or 'schemas'. When people recall the regularities that characterized such activities as going to school, playing a game, or their families' mealtime they remember not each individual trip to school or game or meal but a generalized version, or script, of these events. During the Second World War the daily routine of peoples' life, their scripts, were altered by the constantly changing events of the war. The scripts of typical school days were abruptly changed by the addition of new activities: rolling bandages for the Red Cross; buying War Savings Stamps; marching in the playground, wearing a uniform and carrying a rifle. The memories of the weekly Saturday matinee movies were altered by the addition of the dramatic newsreels showing Canadians at war. Interviewees described, within the framework of the regular scripts of daily life, six years of new experiences. The changes that the war brought altered the pattern of their daily life and were remembered vividly. One interviewee recounted a memory of the war as "the lights on the streets would go out and we would have to pull down the shades at home and on the streetcars."<sup>9</sup> To another, the change was simply "there were some things you could not get and ice cream was among them."<sup>10</sup>

Children cannot always explain how they feel. They are sometimes scared, unsure or simply indifferent. Adults, however, can communicate their remembered feelings more effectively. An adult tells us that "We went down...to try to visit and we saw the Japanese inside the compound. They had strung barbed wire up around the top of the wire fence. We leaned our bikes against the

fence and the Japanese would come over and spit on us." This was a memory described, quite distinctly, by an interviewee. He then continues on and communicated his feelings about this event, sharing an important dimension of his recollection: "We never understood, they were as frightened as we were..."<sup>11</sup> The event is recounted, some might argue, through a haze of other succeeding experiences. That same interviewee may have, over the years, discussed the event with others, listened to opinions from the media, talked to an interned Japanese Canadian, or read books on the subject. His memory has been affected by time and circumstances, the very shape of his recollection may have changed, as he has. Yet the original event occurred once, it was real, and it is still discernible.

At this point one must ask how reliable are these memories, and how indicative of the past are they? The problems with using adult memories of their childhood are twofold: First, "memory is fallible; events may be forgotten or transformed with the passage of time."<sup>12</sup> However vivid some memories are they are not always accurate. Second, memory is influenced by the procedures used to evoke it. When interviewing adults for their childhood experiences, the memories they recount cannot be considered involuntary. They are requested to recall events and must do so under certain circumstances, with an interviewer conducting research and taking notes. A few of the experiences that interviewees narrated to me were fallible; they did not correspond with known facts. A few told stories that sounded well rehearsed. A few did not want to talk about certain things such as the war time black market, and one interviewee, for personal



reasons, did not want to talk much at all.

I interviewed fifteen adults who had attended school in British Columbia during the Second World War. Seven of the interviewees were female and eight were males. Their ages ranged from being in primary grades during the war right through to high school graduates. Five interviewees had grown up in various areas of the west side of Vancouver, three were from the east side, two from the west end and one from the North Shore. One interviewee was from Vancouver Island, and three others were from Oliver, Trail and Nelson respectively. In addition I utilized a selection of excerpts from approximately thirty five interviews conducted for the Canadian Childhood History Project. Although the childhoods of the interviewees differed in locale, class, gender, religiosity and ethnicity, their experiences of the Second World War came together around certain themes.

Interviews were held either in the interviewee's home or office and the average interview lasted two hours. I began an interview with a short explanation of the project and an offer to answer any questions about it. I supported each interview with a written summary of the project. In the interview I was able to refer to a list of topics that I hoped would be covered. I began each interview with this question: "What do you remember about growing up during the Second World War?" The interviewee usually proceeded without further prompting. Once the interview began, and if prompting was necessary I made comments such as: "What do you remember of war work at school?; What forms of media were you exposed to?" This prompting was used only towards the beginning of the interview so as not to influence the interviewee's

"reconstruction of the past."<sup>13</sup> As Sutherland explains from his own experience, the most effective interviews "meant letting silences go on until the interviewee felt the need to fill them...People shift from describing events themselves to their feeling about them."<sup>14</sup>

In what follows I employ these memories to expand on facts and enlighten or inform the reader with a sense of intimacy. To determine the toll that the Second World War took on Canadians, one might examine world or Canadian world history. Another source might be an interviewee recounting his childhood experience or simply, 'one man's history'. Thus the facts drawn from a general history indicate that at the end of the war in Europe 2,204 members of the Canadian Navy were killed in action, 17,101 in the Royal Canadian Air Force and 22,917 in the army.<sup>15</sup> In this context an interviewee explained, "the war did touch all the families in my school. The neighbourhood was drastically touched, a lot of families lost their sons."<sup>16</sup> My thesis therefore considers 'one man's history' within the context of world history.

1. J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War 1939-1945 (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 1.
2. Ibid., 10.
3. Ibid., 36.
4. Ibid., 51 and 53.
5. Ibid., 232.
6. Neil Sutherland, "When You Listen to the Winds of Childhood What Do You Hear?," unpublished, 22.
7. F1013-4/5. As anonymity was guaranteed to all interviewees I assigned a 4 digit code number to each, preceded by F for female and M for male. The numbers following the dash refer to the appropriate pages of my interview notes.
8. M1015-6
9. F1005-1/2
10. M1015-5
11. M1010-3
12. Sutherland, "When You Listen," 5.
13. Ibid., 42.
14. Ibid.
15. J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1975), 420.
16. M1010-6

## CHAPTER I

## CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA: PROPAGANDA IN WAR TIME

To find out about the war the children of British Columbia had only to glance at a newspaper, walk into a movie theatre, or turn on the radio. Information was in abundance, even in the rural areas of the province. One interviewee stated: "All the sources of information were from the media. I think in terms of impact the newsreels were biggest for me, but the newspaper and radio were also there."<sup>1</sup> As wartime is a time of secrecy, a time of crisis, information must be carefully censored. During the Second World War the government kept a watchful eye over the media. News was censored to protect Canadians and their allies and to maintain morale. This was seen as a necessary measure by some, others felt it was pure propaganda. "...The truth about anything was automatically secret", wrote once war correspondent John Steinbeck, "and that to trifle with it was to interfere with the war effort...the public [was] carefully protected from contact with the crazy, hysterical mess."<sup>2</sup>

Sam Keen, in his book about the psychology of enmity, defines propaganda as the product of hatred. Propaganda presents war in such a way as to create the concept of "the enemy". The enemy is the aggressor, the stranger, the barbarian. Propaganda identifies the enemy as one who commits murder and enjoys it, and allows the victim to be justified in killing by strategic

violence.<sup>3</sup> Since Hitler was such a "perfect devil incarnate, a paragon of evil...", it was not hard to use him and all he stood for as the enemy.<sup>4</sup> There is a certain amount of dehumanization that must occur for propaganda to work successfully.

Dehumanization is the process where the enemy is changed from a person into an idea. Propaganda must make our killing seem good, theirs seem bad, to succeed in dehumanization.

Since the beginning of time war has been regarded by many as a heroic and noble act, a contest or game. The Canadian media presented the Second World War to the people as such an act. Bombings and battles of the Allies were depicted as fantastic feats of bravery. Each enemy destroyed was another step towards glorious victory. Scenes of bombings in Britain were swiftly followed by a portrayal of justified Allied retaliation. During the war Prime Minister Mackenzie King made information a priority. He wanted information to be more than "words on war events...to have propaganda as an interpretation of information using different media for the purpose."<sup>5</sup>

What the Canadian people saw, heard and read was carefully censored as morale had to be maintained for six long years. One man recounted "There wasn't much joviality in it. You weren't going off to see the world, it wasn't the kind of propaganda it is today, we were just serving our country. It was taken seriously, but it wasn't depressing either."<sup>6</sup> Citizens had to be inspired to work hard for the war effort, to reach deep into their pockets and, if young and fit enough, join the fighting forces of good. Government propaganda was carefully designed to inspire, warn, goad, and even shame Canadians on the home front.

Clearly as the war progressed the struggle to beat fascism became everyone's fight. In Canada, propaganda simply became the government's handy weapon, which was wielded, in part, by the entertainment industry. Under the control of its Wartime Information Board, [WIB], the government conducted opinion polls, devised poster campaigns, launched Victory Bond drives and tried ceaselessly to convince people of the righteousness of the war.

Many children learned about the war by reading newspapers at home or in school. One fellow recalled "I delivered the paper so I couldn't help but read the front page every day...Once the war was on we read the paper every day."<sup>7</sup> The newspaper headlines told of war, death and hate for the enemy. "Canada is Now in State of War" stated the Vancouver Daily Province on 7 September 1939. Other headlines read "Ten Girls Die as Nazis Bomb Warsaw Camp", and "1000 Passengers of Torpedoed Athenia are Rescued. Many Persons from Vancouver Feared Aboard Sunken Vessel."<sup>8</sup> Cries for victory also came from the newspapers. The News-Herald proclaimed, on 15 August 1945, "WAR ENDS; TODAY IS V-J DAY", together with "Whole Province Goes Wild Over Final Victory."<sup>9</sup> Ross Munro, a famous correspondent with the Canadian Press, commented on his job as a journalist: "I was committed to the war completely and utterly, right from the start. Maybe it was jingoism, chauvinism, and stupidity, but we felt that the Germans were going to wreck this world of ours and that we would have to stop them."<sup>10</sup> One woman stated: "I read the newspaper, read the war news."<sup>11</sup> Another interviewee declared: "the war...was in the newspaper every day."<sup>12</sup> She also recalled the sense of foreboding that came with each headline: "Before the war started

I can remember the tension that came with the headlines...The night that war was declared, everyone was talking in hushed voices." <sup>13</sup>

Newspapers were so keen on war reporting that one interviewee stated: "I remember wondering what on earth they were going to put in the newspaper after the war was over. There were so many pictures and maps and things about the war every day."<sup>14</sup> Later on, along with the pictures, maps and articles, were the sombre, daily 'death lists'. One woman remembered, with sadness: "The war became real for us when we would come home every day and read the announcements in the paper. We read about people being killed."<sup>15</sup> Another interviewee explained "every night we checked the newspaper. It listed those who were missing in action. We checked to see, and sure enough we knew a name."<sup>16</sup> One man explained that when he "started to read the paper more it was always; planes shot down, ships sank, two hundred people killed, always very sad."<sup>17</sup> "It was usually bad news", reflected one woman, when there were "paper boys going through the streets shouting 'Extra! Extra!'"<sup>18</sup>

Pictures and copy were carefully chosen to elicit emotion in readers. One paper announced the beginning of the war by printing a picture of Queen Elizabeth carrying a gas mask over her shoulder.<sup>19</sup> One man remembered his mother seeing "a picture of a dead soldier laying in the snow, my mother was crying and saying that poor boy is dead."<sup>20</sup> Another recalled "Hitler was spoken of...as a mad man or evil. We saw, in the news, his atrocities and it was the same with the Japanese, their prisoner of war camps were horrible and we saw this too."<sup>21</sup> The same

interviewee also described the dehumanizing effect the newspapers could have on its readers. "We began to see the pictures of the war in the news and...the atrocities of Hong Kong, and how our boys were being treated there. Sentiment turned against the Japanese at that time."<sup>22</sup> "I do remember the reports of the Atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki", declared one man, "that was big news. I remember sitting with a newspaper and reading the report of it."<sup>23</sup> Many children saw the pictures in the newspaper as vivid depictions of the war's events. One man explained that when he saw "the profound pictures of the damage...the war's events began to affect me."<sup>24</sup> One woman explained: "I was so afraid of Hitler. I had seen his picture...in the news."<sup>25</sup> Remembering Hiroshima an interviewee declared: "The horror of what they actually had done didn't hit us until we saw the pictures..."<sup>26</sup> "The papers showed pictures of the King and Queen being there after the bombs", recalled one woman who was "very impressed with that."<sup>27</sup>

Motion pictures and newsreels also affected those who saw them, and many did: "Canadian children of these years clearly value motion pictures above all other forms of popular culture."<sup>28</sup> "We learned about the war in the movies", declared one interviewee, "movies were the main source of entertainment. We went to the movies all the time, Saturday matinees."<sup>29</sup> Another fellow recounted "My dad gave me ten cents a week, which was enough to go to a movie. I saw lots of movies...There were usually two shows and in between they had the Movie Tone News, a newsreel...and every kid knew the theme to Movie Tone News."<sup>30</sup> Another "usually went to the movies three times a week, if there



was a new movie, we went to see it."<sup>31</sup> One interviewee described a weekly ritual: "There were two movies, first a cartoon, then the newsreels."<sup>32</sup> Yet another recalled: "When you went to see a film you got a newsreel then a cartoon then the movies."<sup>33</sup>

Children watched and learned about the war from a wide variety of films. Even the more frivolous war movies made the war seem appealing. One interviewee explained: "The movies were very positive, very exciting...Our side was always very positive, it was propaganda."<sup>34</sup> Another woman recalled "thinking it would be fun to be old enough to work in the canteens. I saw that in the movies...Stage Door Canteen."<sup>35</sup> Remembering the superficial wartime films, one man declared "really they were: Ginger Rogers and Abbott and Costello go to war."<sup>36</sup> Another remembered "Abbott and Costello, entertainment along the lighter vein...escapist type ones; Bing Crosby, Bob Hope. They leaned heavily on the entertainment side; happy, upbeat movies." He rationalized this in the context of the time period: "I guess they figured we had enough war all day and we needed a laugh."<sup>37</sup>

Movies also conveyed their message by tugging at the hearts of young and old alike. Film heroes dealt with the war's events with inspirational courage.

This is not only a war of soldiers in uniform, it is a war of the people and it must be fought, not only on the battlefield, but in the cities and in the villages, in the factories and on the farms, in the home and in the heart of every man, woman and child who loves freedom.<sup>38</sup>

This dialogue was spoken in the famous motion picture Mrs. Miniver. This war time film favourite portrayed a woman "coping

so courageously in her suburban London home during the blitz..."<sup>39</sup> Author, Mary Peate wrote about the movies during the war: "[we] couldn't hold back the tears...we girls usually watched war films in silence, the only sounds from us being our ragged sobs and discreet nose-blowing."<sup>40</sup> One interviewee recalled "crying buckets of tears over Mrs. Miniver."<sup>41</sup> One man had a different opinion of these movies: "The movies were all teary movies, Mrs. Miniver, really dreadful movies."<sup>42</sup> Remembering the movies of the war and their messages of patriotism and heroism one woman concluded:

Most movies were: boy meets girl, they get married, and he goes off to war...You never knew if he came back, you were happy that they got married and he went off to war, that was the happy ending. If someone was killed in the war it was never the hero, always the lesser characters...I guess they were trying to keep our spirits up so our heroes were never killed.<sup>43</sup>

More fanciful films, such as The Invaders or The 49th Parallel stimulated the imagination of many children. One woman recalled "we used to pretend that a parachuter [paratrooper] landed in the woods...We would make up all kinds of stories and scare ourselves half to death."<sup>44</sup> Another remembered "most vividly...The Dictator, Charlie Chaplin was Hitler."<sup>45</sup> Movie audiences saw hero films like Captains of the Clouds, The Fighting Sullivans and the powerful In Which we Serve, The latter about men serving on a British Destroyer, which was bombed at sea.<sup>46</sup> One interviewee especially remembered: Thirty Seconds over Tokyo, all the Van Johnson movies."<sup>47</sup> The newsreels also stimulated children's imagination about the war. One man described distinct memories of the many short newsreels he watched:

...black and white shots of airplanes, and the bombs...Virtually all actual footage, scenes of battles, air raids, pictures of world leaders...The latest battle where ever it was, searchlights, bombs falling.<sup>48</sup>

One woman described the powerful influence of newsreels on her imagination: "it was probably the newsreels that caused my terrifying nightmare that the Germans were going to kill us all..."<sup>49</sup>

Most movies produced during the war contained propaganda. The message of the majority of war movies and the newsreels was clear: the enemy, German or Japanese, had to be destroyed. One man remembered "the newsreels...they showed the Germans getting beaten to a pulp...I couldn't figure out why the war lasted so long because we were always beating the Germans, we were never losing."<sup>50</sup> Another recalled "a fair smattering of patriotic stuff. I'm sure the films were heavily edited for propaganda purposes, but we wouldn't have known that at the time."<sup>51</sup> Movies and newsreels depicted Canadians and their allies as heroes fighting overseas and on the home front for victory. Racism was spawned by film propaganda and with racism came hatred. "I remember a newsreel", stated one man, "Ethiopians with their spears and sticks and the Italians with their full war machine material."<sup>52</sup> One woman declared "the movies we saw were so romanticized, making the Germans into such terrible people."<sup>53</sup> A scene from one of those movies remained clear in one interviewee's memory: "German soldiers draining blood from children...and giving it to their wounded soldiers."<sup>54</sup> Journalist, Denny Boyd, wrote that the war "was in the movies, Captain Marvel and Terry and the Pirates and Hop Harrigan were

fighting the Huns and the Nips."<sup>55</sup> Another interviewee described this language of racism and hatred: "Dirty Jap, Rotten Hun...The movies were full of racism, I think that was where we learned a lot of those values..."<sup>56</sup> "I certainly grew up with a dislike for Germans", stated one woman who decided: "I maybe learned that from the Saturday movies."<sup>57</sup> "And of course we had the newsreels", claimed one interviewee, "They were probably quite slanted, all propaganda, but we didn't know it at the time."<sup>58</sup>

Newsreels, in particular, brought the war's events and propaganda into viewers lives. "Lowell Thomas was the announcer", recalled one man, "they kept you updated on the war."<sup>59</sup> One interviewee described a memorable newsreel of "Stalingrad and the obvious destruction and horror of it all."<sup>60</sup> Another had vivid memories of "the Movie Tone News, they showed the King and Queen...visiting bombed areas in Britain. I can remember seeing what tracer bullets looked like for the first time, bright streaks of lights across the sky."<sup>61</sup> "I loved the newsreels", declared one woman, "I saw pictures of the war, the tanks and the soldiers. It was the one way of following the war...The films were all right but the newsreels were very important."<sup>62</sup> "As kids we'd go down to the Orpheum", recounted one man, "the newsreels were very important...I knew what was fantasy and what was real. These newsreels were real."<sup>63</sup>

The National Film Board [NFB], of Canada produced documentaries and newsreels on the war. These films were shown in movie theatres across the country and in mobile theatres that travelled the rural circuit of schools and communities. The

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC], relayed along with other programming; war news, war drama, and inspirational war themes. Audiences of both mediums were captivated by the moving pictures and the radio waves and many were experiencing them for the first time.

During the 1930s the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau was producing silent information films. As the technology of the 1930's advanced, the Bureau's silent films were no longer as effective and consequently the Canadian information services suffered. To remedy this situation the government looked to the director of Britain's General Post Office, John Grierson. In Grierson's advisory report he: "recommended the establishment of a new agency, the NFB, to coordinate and direct all film activities of government departments."<sup>64</sup> Impressed with Grierson's ideas, the Canadian government hired him as their first Government Film Commissioner and the NFB was established in 1939. With the passing of the National Film Act the NFB, was given the power to advise in the production and distribution of newsreels and documentary films that would "interpret Canada to Canadians."<sup>65</sup>

"The first six years, the years of World War II, the years under the guidance of John Grierson, were the formative years for the National Film Board."<sup>66</sup> The NFB was to play a powerful role "in the Canadian and Allied war information effort and,...in education in Canada."<sup>67</sup> Grierson rapidly acquired a staff and started things moving. In the first year the NFB produced thirty films, nine of these were part of the series entitled Canada Carries On. This was one of the NFB's first and most famous

series. Grierson hired Britain's Stuart Legg to produce and direct this series of short films on Canada at war. Grierson and Legg set out to boost Canada's image with Canada Carries On. They achieved this and at the same time made the NFB a familiar name across the country.<sup>68</sup>

Canada Carries On was the principal achievement to the war information field. The series, financed by the Office of Public Information, "form[ed] a sort of cavalcade of Canada at war."<sup>69</sup> A new Canada Carries On newsreel was produced every month. The Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association was confident the series would do well and gave distribution a healthy start. They arranged for the films to be distributed in Canada by Columbia pictures. Over 800 movies theatres received the series and so it was seen regularly by some two and one quarter million Canadians.<sup>70</sup>

While children waited for the main feature they often heard the beat of the drums and knew it was time for "the 'Special Added Attraction'. With a burst of music...Canada Carries On. Pretty soon you stopped fidgeting and found yourself leaning forward in your seat."<sup>71</sup> Reviewed in MacLean's magazine as "worth another look, these swift dynamic little one-reelers: 1,000 feet of drama and human interest packed on celluloid strip barely an inch and a half wide."<sup>72</sup> MacLean's gave a favourable review and indicated that the films were effective because they related the impact of war on people not unlike those in the audience. "What you saw are the little fellows, the men on the street and on the farm, the rank and file of democracy and its real strength."<sup>73</sup> One interviewee remembered: "the Canada

Carries On series, it was like a newsreel but it showed the Canadian reserves training, and army bases in Canada..."<sup>74</sup>

Another woman stated "I can remember the Canada Carries On series."<sup>75</sup> Audiences saw the lady down the street who knitted sweaters for the boys overseas, a familiar young man was shown joining up and speaking from a training camp, a fellow at his lathe, produced munitions for Britain. In essence it was Canadians at war.<sup>76</sup>

The first of this series that captivated Canadian audiences came out in April 1940. Entitled Atlantic Patrol, this film showed Canadian destroyers at sea and "the hardships and thrills of patrol duty, of the searching for mines and submarines."<sup>77</sup> There was Letter From Camp Borden, and Letter from Aldershot, which were described as "pictures to the people from the people."<sup>78</sup> These two films were noted for their close ups of Canadian service men "sending greetings to the folks back home."<sup>79</sup> Also produced in 1940 was the popular Home Front, which portrayed the women of Canada keeping morale up while "organized in united action to serve the troops."<sup>80</sup> This patriotic piece of propaganda encouraged involvement in the war effort by depicting women working with the Red Cross and the Women's auxiliary transport service. It portrayed women teaching in the Air Training Plan, teaching typing to soldiers, sewing wing fabric and working in Active Service Canteen.

Viewers watched a variety of NFB films, which conveyed a message that war is exciting, dramatic and only for the courageous. Showing "the mobilization of Canada's industry as an answer to Hitler's war machine" was the film Front of Steel.<sup>81</sup>

Wings of Youth a film of the "thrilling story of Canada's young Airmen learning to fight the battle for individual rights with individual skill and daring."<sup>82</sup> Also part of the Canada Carries On series in 1940 were the newsreels Britain at Bay and Squadron 992. The latter was reviewed in MacLean's magazine and applauded as the film that showed "the drama in the lives of the men who operate the balloon barrage over Britain."<sup>83</sup>

Grierson wanted Canadians to feel obliged to give to the war effort. He once instructed one of his film makers "you have to...analyze, to articulate the potential of Canada and make it so compelling that people will want to plunge their hands into their own pockets. Their own pockets. You understand?"<sup>84</sup> To assist the Government with special appeals the NFB, in 1940, made short films called trailers such as Call to a Nation, for the first War Loan and A Personal Duty, for War Savings Certificates.<sup>85</sup> Norman MacLaren had joined the NFB and was producing the first of his successful animated films for Grierson. V for Victory, a short, musical appeal to raise money for the war effort came out in 1941.<sup>86</sup>

War newsreels and documentaries, along with other subject matter, were also being released in 16mm film size to the non-theatrical audiences across the country. In 1940 this responsibility rested with the Canadian Film Committee. Donald Buchanan, the secretary treasurer, "became one pivotal figure in the organization of wartime non-theatrical distribution."<sup>87</sup> In 1941, Buchanan, pooled resources with Grierson of the NFB and Herbert Lash, the Director of Public Information. They planned, on a trial basis, to show films once a month in twenty rural



communities and an equal number of schools across Canada. The projectionists reported that "one half or more of the people in the audience were seeing a sound film for the first time."<sup>88</sup>

These film 'circuits' were incredibly popular. So popular that by January 1942 the NFB sought cooperation from both the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship and the provincial Departments of Education. With that, thirty travelling theatres were organized which reached six hundred rural schools. The circuits enabled audiences of all ages to view films about Canadian agriculture and industry as well as films on the war and its relation to democracy. One area of British Columbia that the circuit reached was Tweedsmuir Park, fifty miles from the nearest railway. Buchanan wrote that shows in this area were very successful and residents of all ages travelled for miles to see the films. He reported that "...a group travelled forty miles by canoe, others anywhere from five to twenty miles, sometimes even on foot."<sup>89</sup> Audiences watched programs seventy to ninety minutes in length which always contained one or two films about the war, often from Canada Carries On series no longer in theatrical circulation.<sup>90</sup> One of the first NFB films on the non-theatrical circuit was On Guard for Thee a film which summarized Canada's role in the first year of the war. It utilized the "hard driving editing style and forceful commentary...characteristic of much of the Board's production during this period."<sup>91</sup> Other films produced in 1941 were The Fight for Liberty, which outlined the course of the war and Tools of War, which described Canadian industry involved in the war effort.<sup>92</sup>

The goal of the film circuits was never ignored. The primary

objective of these programmes was to give people a more complete insight into the war effort. There was a large demand for these films as audiences were most interested in the progress of war and Grierson worked to fill this demand.<sup>93</sup> The war was shown in the documentaries and newsreels which Grierson "referred to as 'shot and shell' films."<sup>94</sup> One of the best of these 'shot and shell' films was Churchill's Island produced in 1941 as part of the Canada Carries On series. It depicted the defence of Britain and was honoured with the first Academy Award for best documentary. The NFB produced the film to reassure audiences that Britain's spirit was strong. People saw the scenes of destruction and listened to the narrator, Lorne Greene, who described the "inner strength...[as] a stubborn calm which iron and steel bombs can never pierce." The film challenged the enemy to "come if you dare!"<sup>95</sup>

Other newsreels in the series that year were: Heroes of the Atlantic; Soldiers All; Wings of a Continent and Battle of Brains.<sup>96</sup> A film which caused quite a stir towards the end of 1941 was War Clouds in the Pacific, also part of Canada Carries On. It showed Canada's efforts in the war and predicted that war would break out between the United States and Japan. It was released in late November 1941, and soon after Japanese sailors bombed Pearl Harbour. For this reason it was also distributed to theatres throughout the United States and earned the NFB a significant amount of money and praise. From this Grierson recognized the possibilities for an international series and in April 1942, The World in Action series was introduced.<sup>97</sup> One of the first films produced was propaganda against the Japanese.

The film was The Mask of Nippon, which "describe[d] the creed behind the fanatic barbarity of the Japanese militarists."<sup>98</sup>

Japanese Canadians were being relocated in 1942 and the fear of an enemy invasion was strong on the west coast of Canada. Also Canadians were concerned about the conscription issue and their government's one billion dollar gift to Britain. The NFB acted accordingly and promoted the ideals of democracy while criticizing totalitarian regimes. Reels of the World in Action Series such as This Is Blitz showed the "terror and devastation wrought in Europe by the Nazi Blitzkrieg."<sup>99</sup> Time magazine praised the film's principle: "to kill the fear of Blitz is to show people just what Blitz is."<sup>100</sup> Another newsreel, Geopolitik - Hitler's Plan for Empire, portrayed Nazi strategy.

The NFB was trying to change the country's image during the war. Canada's image was one of a "producer/banker, not as fighter...the government suffered from this image."<sup>101</sup> Again the NFB responded by showing Canadians as soldiers: in 13th Platoon; Paratroops; Women Are Warriors and Forward Commandos. All, except the latter, were part of Canada Carries On. The World in Action series produced New Soldiers are Tough and soon after the image of Canadians as fighters was fulfilled. This film came out one month before the August 1942 battle in Dieppe.

Many of these war films were the focus of teaching projects created to relate to the film circuit showings. In the Okanagan, students wrote essays about Inside Fighting Russia, A Heritage We Guard, Forward Commandos and Women are Warriors. "The best essays written about these citizenship films...have been printed by the editors of the local weekly newspapers."<sup>102</sup> A child of

fourteen was asked to write about Forward Commandos, a film of the spirit of 'one for all and all for one' which showed actual footage of a Canadian commando raid on German-occupied Norway.<sup>103</sup> She expressed her desire to be a part of the war effort in her essay:

I too can be a Commando...by knitting, by buying War Savings Stamps, by making small sacrifices...by not wasting paper...let us work for victory, that victory which we have been seeking for so long. Only have confidence and we shall win this war."<sup>104</sup>

Communities also took advantage of the film circuits to promote the sale of War Savings Stamps. Some organized dances after the shows. Others sold lunches, gave door prizes, held raffles, all in conjunction with the film show.<sup>105</sup>

With the growing number of schools on the film circuits the NFB had to keep teachers informed of their productions. Annual NFB catalogues were sent to schools across Canada. These notified school teachers of the 16mm film releases, the volunteer projection service and a list of the regional NFB libraries. If teachers joined the NFB circuit they received a monthly program of films and a projectionist with equipment. They also were sent leaflets which described the film, provided a teacher's guide for preparing lessons on the films, and gave hints on discussion topics. It was the projectionist's job to quiz the children on the content of the leaflets prior to the show.<sup>106</sup>

B.C. Teacher magazine reviewed the NFB's 1942 catalogue and recommended the films Health in Wartime and Air Raid Precautions. Teachers were also advised to consider Inside Fighting Russia, part of the World in Action series.<sup>107</sup> This film, revised with a modified commentary for children, explained how Soviet strategy

disrupted Hitler's timetable and changed the course of the war. In this film children could watch "Red Army Troops in action, women cultivating the fields and workers in industry."<sup>108</sup> The B.C. Teacher explained that the NFB's usual policy was to produce educational films on geographical and cultural life in Canada. The magazine concluded that the majority of the films in the NFB catalogue fell into the war information category.<sup>109</sup>

Prime Minister Mackenzie King wrote in his diary his hopes for 1943: "To make the post-war program of social reform and the peace conference, the main subject of appeal."<sup>110</sup> Many of the NFB films that year reflected his wish. The World of Action series produced Tomorrow's World which asked the question: "what will be the state of the postwar world?" It also produced the answer: "Look around you, it is taking place already...Tomorrow's world is here!"<sup>111</sup> Invasion of Europe detailed areas where Allies might invade Europe, and Road to Tokyo, showed Canada's place in Pacific Strategy. Our Northern Neighbour was produced, regarding Russia's role in postwar years. Russia was now an ally and this film was a propaganda piece aimed at "reeducating the public which had felt an almost pathological distrust of Russians."<sup>112</sup> Along with these postwar films were films portraying disturbing, violent warfare. The NFB did not want Canadians to forget that they were still part of a World War. Pincer on Axis Europe showed "'shot and shell' visuals on Rommel's retreating forces", while Train Busters chronicled the Royal Canadian Air Force's tactics as the enemy was "bombed into useless ruins under the bombs of our air fleets."<sup>113</sup> Other 'shot and shell' films that year were Corvette Port Arthur which

showed the sinking of an enemy U-boat. Letter From Overseas was a carefully edited version of Dieppe. Grierson had always demanded truthful depiction of events in his films. Representative of the statement that the first casualty of war is truth,<sup>114</sup> the NFB failed to cover the Dieppe raid of 1942 until a year had passed. In Letter From Overseas the narrator carefully concluded: "and when we sailed away we left the littered beaches to remind the Germans we had punched one hole in Hitler's fortress."<sup>115</sup> The other films produced were propaganda encouraging youth to join up. Films such as So Proudly She Marches, Up From the Ranks and Battle is Their Birthright reminded young men and women that "now your team is waiting."<sup>116</sup>

Towards the end of the war films like Breakthrough, about the Allied landing in Normandy, boasted of "an army...eager to meet and build the future once they had won the war."<sup>117</sup> Other NFB films with this confident air were Target Berlin and Mosquito Squadron which both described how Canada was helping to win the war, as the enemy felt the "sting of the mosquito!"<sup>118</sup> Three more films were made in 1944 to brighten the light at the end of the tunnel. The first, Battle of Europe showed precision bombing techniques by allies, Zero Hour showed allied forces attacking Europe and Fortress Japan looked at preparations for an attack on Japan.<sup>119</sup>

In Wounded in Action, audiences were again reminded of the Russian people in the context of international friendliness. While UNRRA: In the Wake of the Armies showed "Russians emerging from their tent city to rebuild Stalingrad...the film ended with the notion of a more closely interlinked postwar world."<sup>120</sup>

The NFB kept up to date with the wars events right through 1945. Audiences celebrated, along with the NFB, the ending of the war. The titles of the last war films produced speak for themselves. They were Road to the Reich, Guilty Men, Salute to Victory, Jobs For Vets, Now - The Peace and The War is Over.<sup>121</sup>

If there was a radio in their homes or their classrooms, the children of British Columbia could listen and learn about the war. One woman declared "the radio was the main form of communication, hearing about the war."<sup>122</sup> "Listening to the radio was the key event of the night. We had...the nine o'clock news every night" recalled another.<sup>123</sup> When Canada went to war many families purchased radios for the first time while others were tuning in more often than usual. One woman recounted an important day: "My first contact with radio occurred when at the age of four I came in from playing to hear my worried parents tell me that Germany had just invaded Belgium and Holland. My father opened a crate...and brought forth a brand new radio in perfect condition."<sup>124</sup> According to the WIB, during the war years there were radios in 74% of the nation's households.<sup>125</sup> To most Canadian families radio had become a habit and an obsession. One woman remembered: "Our family listened to the news broadcasts on the radio every night..."<sup>126</sup> Another explained "...we listened to the radio daily. Being on an island we didn't have electricity, the radio ran on batteries, so we listened to specific things, it was always the news about the war."<sup>127</sup>

It was for those children in rural areas who lacked electricity and other amenities that the school broadcasting program began. School broadcasts began in British Columbia not

long after 1936, the year the CBC was founded. From 1940 through late 1944, deciding what school children in British Columbia were going to hear was Kenneth Caple's job. Caple, once a school principal, was made director of school broadcasts for CBC. He received a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to produce a report on the benefits of radio broadcasts in rural education. He visited classrooms in the United States which were using radio. With the information from his report he set up, under the Department of Education, a school broadcast system in British Columbia. Caple recalls: "CBC gave us half an hour of radio time from two to two thirty, Monday through Friday. Our job was to find something to fill that time."<sup>128</sup>

Caple introduced two new series: "British Columbia School of the Air", with science programs such as "This Living World". In addition to the current events series: "The Road to Democracy". B.C. Teacher magazine described the purpose of the latter "to make children realize that if men and women are to live democratically they must give up aggression."<sup>129</sup> The series was to trace the development of democracy in history. School children who listened to "The Road to Democracy" series enjoyed such shows as: "Gunpowder for the Queen" and "It's Up to Us", both of which explored wartime issues. This series was immediately followed by "Newscast to Schools".<sup>130</sup> One woman recalled her teacher "used to bring the radio into our classroom...we would listen to the news and to Hitler."<sup>131</sup>

Teachers and students were urged by the B.C. Teacher magazine "to organize Listening Circles and Discussion Groups to hear... 'The Child in Wartime.'"<sup>132</sup> This radio program was



created as: "a special child guidance series...produced by the CBC in the winter of 1941. It was broadcast on Tuesdays at one o'clock to "assure the Canadian child of a normal upbringing in the present world crisis."<sup>133</sup> Programs had titles such as "The Child and His Future" and "The Child and His War Service."<sup>134</sup> Teachers who missed the series were requested to order the published talks in pamphlet form and use them as lesson aids.

The CBC cooperated with the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship and produced a series for the spring of 1942 called "The Birth of Canadian Freedom." This series aired on Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. and was recommended to high school students to "cultivate better citizenship through know[ing] something of those men whose efforts have made possible the freedom we now enjoy."<sup>135</sup> Also in 1942, a second series on citizenship entitled "How Freedom Works", was aired. This was a sequence of lectures on the workings of politics and democracy in a country at war.

In 1942 the CBC held a conference in Ontario to discuss school broadcasting in Canada. The CBC also decided to contact the Department of Education of each province for approval of a national radio education project entitled "Heroes of Canada". Participants decided that one weekly broadcast to schools across Canada was desirable and asked educators to contribute material for this.<sup>136</sup> The shows were built upon political and intellectual themes and incorporated musical and dramatic presentations. After each program there was a ten minute news broadcast designed especially for a child audience.<sup>137</sup>

In the first years the CBC had, for the most part, been

utilizing and imitating American programming. It wasn't until Canada joined the war in 1939 that the CBC began to produce its own news service to suit its wartime needs.<sup>138</sup> In the first year of the war the CBC "carried a total of 931 sustaining programs on the subject of war that took up a total of 199 broadcasting hours."<sup>139</sup> What did most Canadians listen to during the war? One man recalled a variety of programs: "'Ma Perkins'... 'Young Dr. Malone'... Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Charlie MacArthy, and Bob Hope. The serials; Jack Armstrong, 'I Love a Mystery'... and the news broadcasts."<sup>140</sup> The majority of air time was devoted to war talks, followed by news bulletins, news flashes and commentaries. Next were feature broadcasts, musical and variety programs for the war effort, dramatic presentations and sports broadcasts.<sup>141</sup>

Families could listen to news bulletins morning, noon, supper time and late evening. "I remember the radio playing all the time" declared one interviewee.<sup>142</sup> Children soon recognized CBC radio news announcer Lorne Greene as 'the voice of doom'. Aptly named as most of the news he reported during the war was grim. One woman remembered: "we used to come home at lunch and listen to the radio, which was always on. We would keep count of how many planes were shot down, how many were British and how many were German."<sup>143</sup> "Radio programs really held people's interest", explained one man. "As time went by we heard more and more about this battle and that battle, this ship sunk, in the Pacific, in the Atlantic, ships being sunk, men dying, kamikaze pilots, Singapore, the incredible loss of life, 1500 men lost on each ship was normal."<sup>144</sup> Families considered these daily news

casts an important link to the war arena. One fellow remembered "at home we listened to the seven o'clock news broadcast every day. It was the most comprehensive."<sup>145</sup> Another explained that "we heard the news at supper time and then another broadcast around 8:00 p.m." She also recalled the importance of the news: "we couldn't listen to anything frivolous, just the news."<sup>146</sup> One woman described the reserved atmosphere when war news was on: "We listened to the radio every evening. I can remember being shushed every night at 7 o'clock. The news was taken very seriously in our house."<sup>147</sup> It was the same in another interviewee's home: "Dad would say 'don't say a word, the news is coming on!'...we'd have the volume right up to the top, if we even sneezed we'd get yelled at!"<sup>148</sup>

The WIB published what it considered to be the most memorable war time broadcasts. The speeches of Hitler with translated inserts as well as the addresses of Prime Minister Chamberlain ranked first. Also considered most memorable was the opening of the series "Canada at War", "in which prominent Canadians analyzed war aims and objectives unofficially."<sup>149</sup> As well, the feature broadcast the "Canada Marches" series defined the purposes of the regiments and promoted the growth of the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force. This program also transmitted the arrival of Canada's service men overseas.<sup>150</sup> Also rated most memorable was the overseas broadcast in 1939 by the survivors of the *Athenia*. One man vividly recalled the power of this broadcast: "we sat in my parents living room and we listened to the news, it was probably around nine o'clock. The announcer said that the steam ship

Athenia had been sunk by German submarines off the coast of England...I was a young teenager and I remember very clearly the sense of foreboding occupying the adults for the rest of the evening. One of them said 'this is just the beginning of a dreadful war.'"<sup>151</sup> Winnifred Ariel Weir wrote, in her memoirs, about her fear upon hearing the news. "We were appalled to hear the dreadful news that a liner loaded with children had been sunk...the thought of little children afloat in the cold Atlantic...kept me awake for ages."<sup>152</sup>

As the war's events unfolded and were transmitted over the radio they made such an impact on children that many details from broadcasts are remembered to this day. One man remembered listening to the news as a child and it: "was full of war, every broadcast was about the war. I remember...listening to the radio for news on Dieppe...I remember the announcer saying that over one thousand Canadians were shipped over under the cover of darkness and that, unbelievably, a fishing trawler spotted their landing craft and so they were met by gunfire. It was a great loss and we talked about it at home and at school for weeks afterwards."<sup>153</sup> Another recalled "the morning of the attack on Pearl Harbour. I remember hearing the news on the radio."<sup>154</sup> One interviewee declared "we heard about Pearl Harbour on the radio..."<sup>155</sup> Another remembered "Pearl Harbour and President Roosevelt speaking on the radio. There was a kind of darkness in the air."<sup>156</sup> One woman heard the radio announcement of the death of President Roosevelt: "every radio program had it...I felt some kind of personal sense of awe that this man had died, I probably picked it up from the newscaster."<sup>157</sup>

Children not only heard news of war's events but the immediacy of the war was brought into their homes by war correspondents. A.E. Powley, a former CBC war correspondent wrote: "CBC correspondents had been bringing the sounds of war into Canadian's living rooms from December 1939."<sup>158</sup> The CBC knew how to attract listeners. Correspondents gave graphic descriptions which captivated audiences, young and old. Two Canadian war correspondents known for their sensational reports were Matthew Halton and Marcel Ouimet. They "recorded barrages great and small, the talk of tank men over their radios during battle, and the sounds of battle overhead".<sup>159</sup> Those who heard their broadcast of the First Canadian Division's victory in breaking the Gustav Line, would have heard these dramatic words. "The fighting in the streets of the city resembled the antechamber to Hell. The more murderous the battle the harder both sides fought..in a carnival of fury. There was something...heroic and almost superhuman and, at the same time, dark as night"<sup>160</sup>

According to the CBC great care was taken to avoid sensationalism and false emphasis. Yet the CBC also revealed that "sugar coating bad news and over stressing enemy successes [was] equally undesirable."<sup>161</sup> The war correspondents: "always knew that their work would be checked, censored and transmitted according to military rules and timetables...they were subject to the provisions of the War Measures Act."<sup>162</sup> One woman reflected on: "the enormous amount of propaganda. We were brainwashed...We didn't really hear about what was happening to the Jewish people until later on...It wasn't until later that we

really learned about the horrific things that were going on."<sup>163</sup> War's events were embellished or they were censored. This censorship made it difficult to distinguish truth from propaganda. Children often believed what they heard and most knew nothing of censorship laws. War correspondents would report what they saw first hand as the truth but their reports were subject to censorship. "All Canadian reporters at the front were subject to military orders and regulations. As such, they could neither move freely in a combat area nor report any activity unless sanctioned by authority."<sup>164</sup>

Families listened carefully to their radios for news of their relatives on broadcasts from the CBC's overseas news unit in Britain. Two of the programs with such news were "With the Troops" and "English Newsletter to Canada." These also included descriptions of the activities of the many Canadian men and women overseas. The CBC stated that this overseas unit provided material "describing every aspect of life of the Canadian forces in Britain." The CBC admitted that the most popular portion of the show was the personal greetings: "from the boys to their friends and loved ones at home." The Corporation realized that to safeguard "civilian morale...everything possible must be done to maintain a link between the troops overseas and their folks at home."<sup>165</sup>

Overseas units increased the CBC's number of war programs in 1940-1941 to 1,809, and broadcast hours to 595. These numbers then doubled the following year.<sup>166</sup> Contributing to this increase was the British Broadcasting Corporation. It broadcast the Red Cross mercy ship departures, the opening of the Canadian

Red Cross Hospital in England and two popular series which "were typical of the dramatic coverage in war reporting... 'Watchers of the Sky' and 'Bombers Over Germany'".<sup>167</sup> Another very popular service incorporated into the CBC's programming was "Children Calling Home." British children sent to Canada for most of the war were able to talk from the CBC studios in Canada with their parents in the British Broadcasting Corporation studios in London as part of this weekly broadcast.<sup>168</sup> One woman described her sadness when: "I listened to these perfect little voices, with their accents, and tears just started to pour from my eyes."<sup>169</sup>

Radio was also a medium with which to entertain. "The CBC had made a conscious decision to control the number of war broadcasts and maintain a reasonable balance between entertainment programs and the stark brutal facts of war brought to listeners."<sup>170</sup> One man recalled while growing up: "for us, the only enjoyable escape from reality at the time was the radio."<sup>171</sup> Another interviewee explained: "I used to listen to the radio broadcasts. I remember 'Just Mary' which, I think, was out of Vancouver and I listened to 'Sunday School of the Air.'<sup>172</sup> The entertainment on the radio certainly did not ignore the war. The WIB stated that all programs "were concerned with informing the public on rationing, fuel supplies, recruiting and political, social and industrial war matters of national importance."<sup>173</sup> One fellow remembered: "Kate Aitken on the radio, Mother was a great fan of hers she was always advising on the radio, on how to survive the war in various kinds of ways."<sup>174</sup>

Programs were produced to promote the sale of War Savings

Bonds and Victory Bonds. To pique audience interest many popular American and British stars participated: Paul Whiteman; Bob Hope; Gracie Fields; Irving Berlin and Ronald Coleman, were among those who contributed to the Canadian War Bond Broadcasts.<sup>175</sup> In addition there were a number of radio series such as: "Arsenal of Democracy" which described the development of new industries needed for the war. "Talks about Tanks", "Steel Production" and "Guns and Ammunition" urged Canadians to win the war by donating their money and time to help increase production.<sup>176</sup> The objective of the CBC was clearly stated: "in the radio field, as elsewhere, the all absorbing task is to further the war effort."<sup>177</sup>

Radio 'sing alongs' were an important and inspirational way to raise money for the war effort. Canadian radio programs centred on Winston Churchill's motto: 'Give us the tools and we will finish the job', as the theme. Listeners, led by famous names such as child stars the Dionne quintuplets, sang along to "There's a Long Long Trail a Winding" and "There'll Always be an England" amongst other popular tunes.<sup>178</sup> Private sector radio and sponsors were also responsible for morale-building war time singsongs. A notable commercial series was produced entitled "Command Performance" and was narrated by that voice synonymous with war, Lorne Greene. This series entertained listeners by combining music with dramatic sketches about war heroes.<sup>179</sup> Although these programs were meant to inspire and lift spirits, one man remembered that as the war dragged on: "what was once cheers for victory and songs on the radio turned to very very sober reflections and the hope, the anticipation of any good



news."<sup>180</sup>

There were many dramatic programs which represented the war to young Canadian listeners. In the beginning the British Broadcasting Corporation sent over transcriptions of programs which were meant to clarify the war's events for Canadians. These included: "Under the Shadow of the Swastika" and "A Half-Hour with Mr. Jones". A series which would: "meet with considerable approval not only from teachers of English and music but also from the teaching body as a whole" was reviewed in the B.C. Teacher.<sup>181</sup> This very popular series was "Theatre of Freedom" and was broadcast Sunday evenings, beginning in 1941. This program was made, according to the CBC blurb: "for the cause of democracy which is at stake in the World War today."<sup>182</sup> Radio listeners were encouraged by the B.C. Teacher to tune in to shows such as: "This Precious Freedom"; "An Enemy of the People"; and "A British Subject I Was Born".<sup>183</sup>

One of the foremost Canadian radio series was "Carry On, Canada" a weekly drama series which began in 1941 and focused on the adventures of the three military services. One program entitled "Comrade in Arms" encouraged audiences to become faithful fans of one or more units of the Canadian military. One of these, "The Fighting Navy", was very successful as listeners could follow the escapades of their fighting heroes on the mythical destroyer HMCS Missinabi.<sup>184</sup> Children who were fans of the Air Force listened to "L for Lanky" which told war stories set on a fictional bomber. The series also included "The Merchant Navy Show" and Wayne and Shuster were stars of "The Army Show".<sup>185</sup> Saturday Night magazine reviewed the "Carry On,

Canada" series and reported that "people throughout Canada love it. And it's very patriotic." The magazine also stated that "those silly burlesques of Hitler and Mussolini are just too tiresome and absurd...but we must be very wrong about this, because the CBC says this is one of the most popular programs."<sup>186</sup>

Even soap operas revolved around the war. They were produced not only to entertain but with the purpose of telling Canadians how to live their lives during war time. Audiences of all ages followed the trials and tribulations of the characters in "Soldier's Wife" and "John and Judy". The first was about a woman whose husband was stationed overseas as a sergeant in the Hullyvale Rifles, the latter about a couple and their problems with war time regulations. These programs, sponsored by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, "carried a lot of propaganda for the listeners, and the commercials supplied information concerning ration regulations."<sup>187</sup>

To round out the 'on the air' war effort there were also many religious programs and services and inspirational programs of music and writing. The show "The New Canadians" was produced, a series about refugees who had fled Europe for Canada. Also a verse program called "Who's Johnny Canuck?" was aired. In addition to these, a series of fourteen programs entitled "Fly for Freedom" which were recruiting propaganda for the Royal Canadian Air Force.<sup>188</sup>

To some children the radio was simply a tool for entertainment. To most it brought the war right into their classrooms and living rooms. Events of war were changing daily

and many children listened and followed intently. One man remembered: "buying maps to follow the war" and listening to the "current events, Russian events gave me anxiety because of the names on the maps were difficult to read and understand on radio news."<sup>189</sup> They listened and radio shaped their thoughts and their feelings. Many interviewees remembered Mr. Good Evening, "he was a local one, I think he was on CJOR. He would say good evening to all the soldiers."<sup>190</sup> Two men had similar memories of Mr. Good Evening: "he used to say good evening to all those on the ships at sea and in the lighthouses, and we would say 'and in the outhouses!'"<sup>191</sup> Another explained "Mr. Good Evening...He had an awful voice, it took him forever to read the news, if the war wasn't on no one would have listened to him!"<sup>192</sup>

Those who created propaganda knew exactly what they were doing. They felt it was for the good of the country and its citizens. One of John Grierson's objectives was education through film. He viewed education and propaganda as one, and expressed that concept with these words.

Go out and ask men to mobilize themselves for the destruction of greed and selfishness. And mean it. Ask them to forget their personal dreams and pleasures and deny themselves for the obliteration of economic anarchy and disorder all over the world. And mean it. Mean it so much that men will know that no power on earth will stop you in your tracks...Tell them that in desperate unity and before God they will give the world a greater leadership, a more humanitarian new order than the thwarted and vengeful people of Germany can be capable of.<sup>193</sup>

One interviewee reflected on being exposed to wartime propaganda as a youth and he stated that he saw:

whatever film the Ministry of Information released to the public. They didn't want people to be demoralized. You realize what that does to a group of people who from 1939 to 1945, either aren't allowed to think, which was a patriotic

militaristic lie, and they don't have any direct corroborative evidence of what was going on. But you have lots of shots of Hitler's atrocities in Russia, and lots of shots of Montgomery's desert tactics released in theatres all over the world."<sup>194</sup>

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## CHAPTER II

## THE WAR'S EFFECT ON THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Teachers during the Second World War had a myriad of changes to manage. They were to educate children in the principles of democracy and promote allegiance to Canada and Britain. Dr. S.R. Laycock wrote in his article on in-service training in the B.C. Teacher that: "As a definite part of their war service all teachers must strive to increase their own efficiency as builders of democratic ideals and habits."<sup>1</sup> Part of G.M. Weir's New Year's message in 1940 was to ask teachers to remain objective when presenting the war in the classroom. Weir, Minister of Education, informed teachers of their role to "be vigilant that no spirit of hatred towards the enemy is fostered...[and] maintain morale."<sup>2</sup> Teachers faced further challenges with changes in the curricula. The Social Studies curriculum was altered to include, amongst other things, the causes and events of the Second World War. The Physical Education curriculum experienced changes with its Provincial Recreation [Pro Rec] program and with the addition of compulsory cadet instruction. The war also necessitated alterations to the Industrial Arts program in that teachers were to train children in the skills necessary for employment in the war industries and the services.

"The war had caused people to realize the place of education

as fundamental to the working of democracy..."<sup>3</sup> This statement was part of a report by H.B. King, Chief Inspector of Provincial schools. In 1940 King attended an assembly in Ottawa to consider the "education for Citizenship in Canada."<sup>4</sup> He reported that an outcome of the meeting was the formation of the Canadian Council for Education in Citizenship. It was decided that the teaching of democratic citizenship was necessary in Canadian classrooms. King claimed that no new curricular materials would need to be developed, the teaching would be effectively achieved "by living the democratic life."<sup>5</sup> He suggested teachers promote democracy in the schools by involving pupils in the planning and sharing of classroom activities and the "recognition of duties and assumption of responsibilities."<sup>6</sup> E.F. Miller explained, in B.C. Teacher of teaching democracy, that students "may be able to give the Churchill-Roosevelt Charter of the Atlantic but if there is no application of these things in the school...it has all been in vain."<sup>7</sup> The real importance of democracy "lies in the manner in which the school is run, or...runs itself."<sup>8</sup>

Marion C. Kinnaird, a teacher in Royal Oak, British Columbia in 1941, wrote to the B.C. Teacher. She wanted to share a successful lesson in democracy which involved grades seven and eight students writing down their ideas on world problems and democratic and totalitarian governments. One student wrote of democracy: "Two heads are better than one."<sup>9</sup> Another wrote "we have the right...whereas totalitarian government gives no rights."<sup>10</sup> Kinnaird claimed that there was a theme which all

the students touched on: "Nazi children could turn on their own mothers and fathers - that...they should be taught to hate us, the British, and taught to lie - and that the Germans could not worship as they pleased."<sup>11</sup> Kinnaird believed that if children could see these differences then they had learned the principles of democracy. They had learned that the democratic way of life was one of "high values, great privileges of toleration, freedom and justice."<sup>12</sup>

"Teachers were to remain objective, they were not to give their personal judgement."<sup>13</sup> This was how one interviewee described her classroom experience. The Department of Education asked the teacher to "exercise the highest measure of objectivity and impartiality, and...not indoctrinate his pupils with his own private views upon controversial questions."<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Social Studies curriculum guide reminded teachers that "while pupils should be taught to appreciate our democratic principles the teacher...should not take advantage of his/her position to "propagandize his own views - political, economic, religious or other."<sup>15</sup> One woman remembered "we had our current events...But even then I don't remember teachers intervening with what we were saying about the news clippings. No opinions were given."<sup>16</sup> Another explained that her grade seven teacher also taught objectivity: "don't believe everything you hear, half of what you read or all of what you see...She was the only one who said anything about news, or the propaganda..."<sup>17</sup>

Neil Sutherland wrote about "...those generally rare occasions when the teacher wandered or was drawn from the subject under discussion...Some told war stories..."<sup>18</sup> There were many

teachers who could not ignore the war and some who could not remain objective. They had relatives or friends in the service, or they had served in the First World War or some had just come back from serving in the Second World War. Most interviewees remembered their teachers and the opinions they expressed about the war. One man carefully defined the situation at his school: "I wouldn't say that my school really promoted the war, I would say that a very positive picture was made of the war."<sup>19</sup> Another interviewee recounted his classroom experience during war time: "Everything was fairly well out in the open. There was really no attempt by my teachers...to shield any of us from it."<sup>20</sup>

Teachers asserted very strong opinions about the war and children listened. "Our teachers had only one point of view", recalled one woman, "they saw nothing else. Hitler had to be stopped."<sup>21</sup> Another interviewee explained "Most of the male teachers at our school were left wing. We were loving Russia all the time."<sup>22</sup> One man recalled the Japanese internment and: "we talked a lot about losing our classmates at school."<sup>23</sup> He also remembered learning racist values "from our...teachers [who] were all afraid and frightened of the Japanese."<sup>24</sup> Another interviewee remembered "hearing in school that the people in Quebec were refusing to fight the war because they were French and not British...There was great animosity amongst us about the French Canadians, we really thought they were traitors."<sup>25</sup> One fellow described the mood at his school: "We could not appreciate the French Canadians at all...[their] way of thinking was unacceptable."<sup>26</sup>



Teachers expressed their war time opinions in a variety of overt ways. One man described "one of the masters confiscating a magazine...It had pictures of the war, they were quite graphic pictures of wounded."<sup>27</sup> Another man remembered his "teacher tried to get us to read the English translation of Mien Kampf."<sup>28</sup> One interviewee recounted a vivid memory; he was "drawing a swastika on a note book, my teacher saw it and dramatically tore it to pieces."<sup>29</sup> Another remembered a classroom discussion, in high school, about the war in which the teacher expressed a definite opinion. "I can remember a teacher of mine discussing the war with us. He said: 'I'm sure you've heard the news about the ships that were sunk and the many lives that were lost.'...and one of the students said: 'of course Dieppe was a disaster, to lose all those soldiers for nothing.' Everything was silent then. My teacher gave us a lecture that day. He said: 'who said it was for nothing?'"<sup>30</sup>

Teachers who had experienced war first hand had a difficult time concealing their personal views about the war. One interviewee described his teacher: "He was in the war and was more conscious of what had gone on."<sup>31</sup> Another explained that her teacher "had been gassed in World War I...and I suppose that made him talk about the war and he was quite concerned about it."<sup>32</sup> "He was quite judgemental about the war", explained one man of his teacher, "but probably because he was a product of World War I."<sup>33</sup> Some teachers went beyond discussing the war objectively to the point of scaring their students. One woman recounted a very memorable and frightening classroom experience: "in grade six and my teacher, who was also the principal of our

school telling us about the war that was coming...He told us that Hitler's plan was to take everything, he said that if Hitler was to bomb Vancouver he would use Quilchena school as a bullseye...it was on top of a hill and therefore a focal point; he really scared the kids and we believed him about the bombing."<sup>34</sup>

The curriculum reflected the emphasis on British patriotism in the schools. When Britain went to war Canada's government was at Britain's side almost instantly. One woman remembered "thinking what audacity people had suggesting that Canada should not declare war immediately."<sup>35</sup> Devotion to Britain and her royalty was promoted and most Canadians felt proud to be supporting her. One interviewee explained "you have to realize you were still a British colony with strong ties to Britain...A very very strong feeling towards the mother country."<sup>36</sup> When Canada went to war the Department of Education realized the need to promote Canada's allegiance. In February 1940, the Council of Public Instruction directed that public school teachers, students in the Provincial Normal Schools and students in teacher training at the University of British Columbia "be required to take an Oath of Allegiance to His Majesty, King George VI., his heirs and successors."<sup>37</sup>

"I remember Empire Day," one interviewee pronounced.<sup>38</sup> Celebrated since 1898, Empire Day "was revived across a country again in the midst of war."<sup>39</sup> The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire [IODE], played a role in promoting Empire Day in the schools. Nancy Sheehan wrote of a booklet the IODE compiled in 1941 for grades 1 through 8, "to inculcate into the minds of

children true patriotism and ideals dear to all Canadians."<sup>40</sup>  
 This booklet included chapters entitled "'The Royal Family';  
 'Royal Residences...'; 'The Monarchy' and 'British  
 Democracy'."<sup>41</sup> Along with Empire Day teachers were asked in  
 1940, by the Department, to assemble their students in front of  
 the "school flag, at least one day a week...when patriotic  
 exercises, including the singing of the National Anthem shall be  
 carried out."<sup>42</sup> One interviewee remembered the flag in her  
 classroom, "we had a Union Jack in our classroom. We used to say,  
 one fleet, one flag, one throne, one empire."<sup>43</sup> Her memory  
 might have been based upon a coloured picture of the Union Jack  
 "courtesy of the Kiwanis Club...beneath which appeared the words:

One Life One Fleet  
 One Flag One Throne  
 Tennyson"<sup>44</sup>

An Enderby school reported that the Union Jack was not saluted  
 but used for another purpose. A school boy created quite a stir  
 when he took down the Union Jack, wrapped it about him like a  
 skirt and proceeded to do the "Hula". The school reported later  
 that, "Harry Hill, the boy that tried the Hula came home,  
 severely wounded...War gave him real knowledge about our  
 flag."<sup>45</sup>

Children sang for Britain when they sang the Canadian  
 anthem. "We had different words to 'O Canada' then" declared one  
 man, "it went: 'O Canada'...and ended, 'at Britain's side we ever  
 betide' or something like that."<sup>46</sup> The Department was firm in  
 its patriotism to British ideals and stated that the teachers'  
 duty was to "endeavour to see that proper ideals of loyalty to  
 our King and Country are instilled in the minds of the

pupils...and that due respect is paid to the flag and British institutions."<sup>47</sup> One woman explained "we sang 'O Canada' at the beginning and 'God Save the King' at the end of absolutely everything."<sup>48</sup> Children sang other patriotic tunes, One woman recalled "all the songs: 'White Cliffs of Dover'."<sup>49</sup> Another interviewee would "stand up and sing: 'There Will Always Be An England'."<sup>50</sup>

Allegiance to the Empire was a topic that many teachers discussed in their classrooms. At school, recalled one interviewee, "war was presented as Rah Rah the Empire."<sup>51</sup> Another explained the patriotic mood: "most of our teachers were of British extraction. Everything Britain did was wonderful...We felt it was a wildly wonderful opportunity to be one with the mother land. If that meant being lemmings and all running off the cliff together then so be it."<sup>52</sup> One woman recalled that the curriculum of her school in Vancouver contained mostly British content. "We learned the history of Britain...from grade seven almost right through. We had very little Canadian History... Canadian government or anything like that."<sup>53</sup> She recalled her teacher explaining "that one day the British empire would cease to exist." Her childlike perception of this was: "All those red places on the map disappearing, impossible!"<sup>54</sup>

The Department portrayed Britain in the school curriculum as a nation with high ideals, struggling for freedom. As compared with the "moral and intellectual collapse of other countries..."<sup>55</sup> The teachers of British Columbia were urged in the Programme of Studies to foster loyalties to Britain: "National unity and safety are preserved by the cherishing of the

ancient loyalties to the throne, to our fellow countrymen, and to our democratic institutions."<sup>56</sup> Books and materials available at the time reflected strong patriotism. B.C. Teacher recommended Canada Speaks to Britain by Sir Charles Roberts, a collection of poems on the war and "Canadian loyalty 'even to the death'."<sup>57</sup> Also recommended was Lift Up Your Hearts by Canon Frederick Scott, a hero of the First World War, which contained poems on the war including one entitled "The Colours of the Flag."<sup>58</sup> Teachers could also order War Plays by Samuel French, published in 1942 in Toronto, and included six plays for children to perform which centred around British characters in war time.<sup>59</sup> One man described the general attitude in school: "We were British subjects, you had that mind set in that you were part of England's population...Canadians... were part of the British army...we were all huddled together under the crown."<sup>60</sup>

Children came to school with questions about the war and the Social Studies class afforded the opportunity to ask them. War was a topic in the homes, the streets, in the news and on the radio and movie screens. Children became involved in the war at school, marching in the cadet corps, raising money, collecting and constructing for the war effort. Many experienced Air Raid sirens and drills, heard about the shelling of Point Estevan or felt the loss of a loved one killed overseas. Nonetheless the topic of war was not mentioned in the formal Social Studies curriculum until the child reached grade nine, and after 1945, grade seven. One man reflected: "I guess what really strikes me is how...there was very little at school that commented on it,

explained it, said anything about it at all."<sup>61</sup>

The classroom teacher decided whether to bring the war into the classroom, especially in the elementary grades. Curricula can be written and prescribed, circulated to schools, read and considered but they are not always implemented. One could assume that in the senior high grades, since students wrote provincial examinations, teachers made sure they taught the prescribed curriculum. Unfortunately it is impossible to examine exactly what went on in the classrooms during the war. One woman, in elementary school at that time remembered "at school there was talk of Hitler...we were told that Hitler was such a bad man, we were really scared of him, scared of his army."<sup>62</sup> The Programme of Studies for the schools of British Columbia introduced elementary pupils in Social Studies to other nations and current events. After 1945 revisions grade seven children considered the effects of the Second World War on their community. Students in senior high school after 1941 considered the aftermath of the First World War and its effect on "the present situation."<sup>63</sup> After the 1944 revisions, seniors studied most aspects of the Second World War.

A committee was formed in 1942 by the Department of Education to incorporate war into the Social Studies curriculum. It was called the Social Studies Revision Committee and its aims were presented in 1943 in the B.C. Teacher magazine. The committee claimed that war could not be shut out of the Social Studies curricula due to an increased interest in current affairs, especially by the boys and girls in grades eleven and twelve.<sup>64</sup> The committee also stated that students "are

thinking more deeply on topics of History...Books on world affairs are being read much more..."<sup>65</sup> As the news of war swept the headlines and occupied radio waves an interest in maps, events and place names became evident in the classroom. Students came to school with their questions and, the committee claimed, an "ignorance of the geography of the world and especially of Europe."<sup>66</sup> Children had "the desire to know more of conditions leading to world conflict."

Although revised in 1941, while the war was raging in Europe, the Programme of Studies for Elementary schools made no mention of the Second World War. The Social Studies program allotted 50 minutes per week in grades 1 and 2 and 80 minutes in grade 3. 120 minutes per week was allotted to Social Studies in grade 4 and 240 minutes per week in grades five and six.<sup>67</sup> One of the aims of the curriculum was that "the activities of the school were to derive their meaning...from their relation to the world outside."<sup>68</sup> The 'world outside' included the war, yet the elementary curriculum of Social Studies did not touch directly on the war at all. For example, grade three pupils studied a unit on the Europeans in which they learned about housing, furniture, toys, food and clothing yet no mention of war and its effect on Europeans was made.<sup>69</sup>

Teachers and pupils were called on by the elementary Social Studies curriculum guide to celebrate "days of a patriotic nature, such as Empire Day, Dominion Day and Douglas Day."<sup>70</sup> A book for this purpose, entitled The Union Jack, was recommended in the B.C. Teacher magazine. This book included a brief history on the formation of the Union Jack, instructions on how to

construct a flag and was seen as useful for certain patriotic holidays such as "...Remembrance Day".<sup>71</sup> One interviewee described a school project: "we knew the Union Jack. We coloured flags, we knew which way was up and which was down."<sup>72</sup>

Recognizing Remembrance Day, the elementary curriculum formally mentioned war for the first time; the First World War.<sup>73</sup>

Teachers were advised that in regards to war "little need or should be said to children of Grades I. to III. Harrowing details are unnecessary and inadvisable, and the story should hinge round the Poppy, the need for money which war leaves behind it, and the idea of grateful remembrance."<sup>74</sup>

Elementary school children were to acquire knowledge through "maps, pictures, magazines, newspapers..."<sup>75</sup> The Programme of Studies suggested to teachers that "magazines, Sunday editions of newspapers...present a wealth of pictorial material."<sup>76</sup> These materials were to supplement the Highroads of History series and the Canadian School Atlas most often used in the elementary Social Studies program.<sup>77</sup> Magazines and newspapers inevitably spoke of the war and if they were incorporated into lesson plans, the topic of war would have been discussed. Newspaper clippings were used in one Social Studies classroom. A woman explained "we would spend the first fifteen minutes of our Social Studies period on the latest news, that started in grade six. We would take turns bringing in news clippings from the paper that interested us. We would have to give a talk about the clipping and then they were put up on the wall."<sup>78</sup> Another recalled "At school...we really saw a lot of pictures of him [Hitler] and of the war..."<sup>79</sup> Another interviewee described a Social Studies



project which involved clipping "a map from the newspaper which would show the battle positions..."<sup>80</sup>

History was being made, children were growing up in some of the most turbulent years the world would experience. One interviewee, in grade five at the time, recalled "our teacher asking us for comments on the war, on a specific event. And we would have to get up and talk about it, about what we thought. I remember the invasion of France in '44...we talked about that in class."<sup>81</sup> One fellow remembered a "map project and we marked the German advance into the Soviet Union."<sup>82</sup> One woman described the level of interest when her "grade school principal emphasized the growing threat posed by Mussolini and Hitler; pupils would egg him on and the current events lesson would last through the math period."<sup>83</sup> Another interviewee criticized the content of the grades four and five Social Studies curriculum for its irrelevance: "...our teachers never really deviated from the curriculum that we had, they stuck to what the day's lesson was. So the whole world was getting shot up and we were studying the cave man!"<sup>84</sup>

' A variety of pertinent books were available for elementary school pupils to bring the topic of war into the classroom. 'In 1941, for example an American publication came out entitled True Picture Magazine. A bi-monthly publication which was touted in B.C Teacher as "the first educational magazine ever published in the popular comic form so attractive to children."<sup>85</sup> The first issue featured "World Hero No. 1, the life of Winston Churchill", and was recommended for young pupils as "a supplement to their history and social science studies."<sup>86</sup> Wonder Book of the Air

was a book about airplanes<sup>87</sup> and We Couldn't Leave Dinah, a story about "children and a horse who defy the Nazis..."<sup>88</sup>,

Explaining the priority of high school Social Studies one man stated: "By the time I got into grade nine, things like English and Social Studies were very important."<sup>89</sup> Social Studies was compulsory, and Junior high children had five periods of Social Studies per week. Senior high students needed to complete fifteen credits for graduation. One of the goals of the high school program was to "develop intelligent, responsible, and socially conscious citizens."<sup>90</sup> In general terms, students were to be able to analyze information and in doing so, develop an interest in and a respect for the democratic principles which governed the British Commonwealth.

The 1945 revised edition of the curriculum brought the Second World War into the Junior high school classroom. Grade seven children were asked to analyze the First World War and "tell of the effect of the Great War on your community, and also of the Second World War." Along with "what post-war plans are being considered for your community to follow the Second World War?"<sup>91</sup> These two activities and the "habit of reading the best books and magazines", formally exposed students to current events.<sup>92</sup> One fellow remembered an effective technique used in his grade seven class: "in our Social Studies class we talked about current events. We used to have a contest every two weeks, a quiz to see who knew the most about current events. That got me reading the newspaper at home, just to pass those tests!"<sup>93</sup>

Magazines and newspapers continued to be used into the high school grades to teach current events. These materials were used

in a variety of ways during the war. Published from 1941 onward, in Toronto, World Affairs was a magazine recommended for use in the Social Studies classroom. A positive review in the B.C. Teacher stated: "Pupils will enjoy the cartoons and will read the short pithy paragraphs with untiring interest."<sup>94</sup> An example of one pithy paragraph was "the cost of killing one enemy soldier has risen from 75 cents in the time of Julius Caesar to over \$50,000 in the present war!"<sup>95</sup> One interviewee explained "we used to clip articles out of Liberty magazine...or Look magazine. In the back of Look were pictures of people wanted for war crimes. We used to cut those out, they were for the back wall. I suppose it was a current events portion of Social Studies."<sup>96</sup> Another man remembered an elaborate class activity which obviously lacked in depth and necessary detail:

In grade eight classroom we had a map of Europe and it was a project for us to mark the position of the forces...It was marked with pins. I think there were flags on the pins and the students did it. I remember thinking the Germans are advancing into Russia and I thought well it's really going to go! I remember wondering how long it would be and taking the width of the country to see how long it would take the Germans to cross...it was silly. There was no discussion of what the war meant. Nothing more than this map. You kept the map up to date if you wanted to.<sup>97</sup>

In grade eight, children studied the First World War independent of the present war.<sup>98</sup> One fellow recounted this discrepancy: "it was amazing that there was no attempt to discuss World War II in the context of World War I."<sup>99</sup> The causes and events of the Second World War were touched upon again in grade nine. Grade nine curriculum considered the aftermath of the First World War, the League of Nations and the post war international problems such as debts and the breakdown of international trade.

Units Two through Six formed the backdrop for the events leading up to the Second World War. These included: "Italy, her Neighbours and the Fascist Dictatorship; Germany, her Neighbours and the Nazi Dictatorship; Russia and the Communist Dictatorship; France and her Colonial Empire; and Japan and her Neighbour."<sup>100</sup> Children considered how various countries were affected by Italy's and Germany's ambitions and policies. They studied the relationships of countries such as Germany and Great Britain, Russia and Japan, Italy and France and others.<sup>101</sup> As if to explain the glaring omissions, the Foreword stated that although printed in 1945, the subject matter was prepared before the outbreak of the Second World War. It read: "Since then nations have crumbled. In the circumstances each teacher will have to use his best judgement in the organization of his Social Studies material..."<sup>102</sup>

Junior high school children studied the required textbooks: A History of Britain by H.B. King, A.L. Burt's The Romance of Canada, Denton and Lord's A World Geography for Canadian Schools and J.M. Dent's Canadian School Atlas.<sup>103</sup> Children could also choose to read Brave Ships of World War II or Up Periscope, both about the Royal Navy. Also published at the time was Animal Reveille about animals in war time<sup>104</sup> and The Nine Days of Wonder, a story about Dunkirk. Saints, Devils and Ordinary Seamen described life in the Royal Canadian Navy.<sup>105</sup> Fictional books recommended for grades seven through nine included Struggle is Our Brother a story of the Russian resistance and Sea Snake about a boy trapped on a Nazi submarine. The Tangled Skein told of the Norwegian resistance while Enemy Brothers was a story of "a Nazi

trained boy [who] returns to his home in England during World War II."<sup>106</sup>

Students fully explored the topic of the Second World War in the senior grades. The importance, to the curriculum, of the topic of war was evident in the introduction to the 1941 Programme of Studies. It was an editorial from the Times entitled "Dunkерque" which stated, "it was the common man of the free countries, rising in all his glory...applying to war the lessons learned...This shining thing in the souls of free men Hitler cannot command, or attain, or conquer. It is the great tradition of Democracy. It is the future. It is victory."<sup>107</sup> The objective of the Social Studies curriculum was based on this editorial: to inspire students "by the spirit to which tribute had been paid in the noble words of the passage quoted above."<sup>108</sup>

Students were, upon graduation, to have a firm understanding of the principles of democracy. The objectives set out for the program included strong anti-war statements. Students should come to realize that "war has proved itself to be a barbarous and generally ineffective method of settling international difficulties."<sup>109</sup> The 1944 revision defined war as "the culmination of a complex of maladjustments (psychological, sociological, political and economic) which one or more of the nations concerned is unwilling or unable to adjust by peaceful means."<sup>110</sup> The topic of propaganda was also included in the senior curriculum. Students considered the different sources of propaganda in advertising, in politics and in education.<sup>111</sup>

The curriculum guide entitled Social Studies V, Bulletin I,

fully outlined "The Two World Wars."<sup>112</sup> This bulletin was produced in 1944 for the senior high grades to replace Units VII and VIII of the 1941 curriculum and was far more relevant to the times.<sup>113</sup> The objectives were to enable students to understand the forces that lead to war; war's destructive effects on humanity and plans made to avert future wars. The curriculum considered psychological aspects of the politically powerful such as an inferiority complex, attitudes of egotism or intolerance, which can lead to a belief in "the master race."<sup>114</sup> The desire for power and dictatorship which can influence one to assemble armed forces for gain. The reaction of other countries to this, be it submission or aggression, may result in war. Other origins taught were; trade rivalry, secret diplomacy, rival alliances, the struggle to maintain the balance of power and the "scramble for backwards countries."<sup>115</sup> Students also learned that peace had a role to play in war. Wars sometimes originated from the "inability of peoples...to make effective their desire for peace."<sup>116</sup> As well as the obsession for peace in a democracy encouraging aggression from others.

With this background information senior high school students proceeded into the section entitled "World War II".<sup>117</sup> In this section the following was analyzed: security, the League of Nations, alliances with France, Belgium, Poland and to Russia's non aggression treaties. Important aspects which led to the Second World War were taught: The Pact of Paris, disarmament and rearmament, tariffs, economic disorder, cultural clashes and racial differences made for a comprehensive curriculum. Also included were international crises leading to conflict and

theatres and developments of war. Canada's contributions to the war effort together with the methods and instruments of warfare were considered along with the direct effects of war.<sup>118</sup> The topic: peace, was studied as the conclusion to the unit on the Second World War. 'Planning for Peace' enabled students to learn about "principles enunciated by leading statesmen [and] plans offered by individuals and organizations."<sup>119</sup> Students were also asked to give their own suggestions in planning for peace, a relevant exercise and the first in the unit formally requesting student input.

Various books were suggested to complement both topics of war and peace. The latter topic was supplemented with: Young Canada Confers a book which discussed "positive, dynamic post war goals."<sup>120</sup> The United Nations Primer was published in 1945 along with Miniature History of the War which included everything "down to the liberation of Paris."<sup>121</sup> Senior matriculation students taking History 100 also read about the war in the required Europe Since 1914 in its World Setting by F. Lee Benns which was published in 1945 and dedicated five chapters to the Second World War. Also required was Schapiro, Morris and Soward's Civilisation in Europe and the World published in 1938.<sup>122</sup> Rulers of the World dealt with fourteen world leaders and "should find a place in...Senior High School libraries."<sup>123</sup> Canada in World Affairs-The Pre War Years gave students "a better understanding of Canada and the difficulties that must be faced..."<sup>124</sup> Clifford MacFadden's An Atlas of World Review "kept pace with world events as up to August, 1940..."<sup>125</sup> Home Front edited by Richard S. Lambert was reviewed in the B.C. Teacher as "Canada's first book

describing Great Britain at war."<sup>126</sup> Students could read this anthology of intimate letters received by Canadians from Old Country friends and relatives telling of how they faced the war.<sup>127</sup>

Numerous other materials were available to schools to supplement the senior high curriculum. The Social Studies was a magazine recommended because it featured "full length articles on many timely topics..."<sup>128</sup> R.A.F.the Story of a British Fighter Pilot, The R.C.A.F. Overseas, the First Four Years complemented the curriculum.<sup>129</sup> Interested youths could also enjoy the illustrations and descriptions in War Planes of All Nations and Warships Today. Fictional books about the war were also available. Open Fire told of British submarine adventures and mystery writer, Helen McInnes wrote Above Suspicion. This book described a young English couple who go up against the Nazi gestapo.<sup>130</sup>

The role that the war had in the Social Studies curriculum is portrayed in the content of high school examinations. 'In that subject questions on pre war events were included in the 1940 and 1941 examinations, while questions on the war were asked in following years. In the 1940 Senior Matriculation exam, students were asked to: "compare and contrast Hindenburg, Stresemann and Hitler as leaders of the German people."<sup>131</sup> The same exam also asked students to "trace the foreign policy of Japan since 1931..."<sup>132</sup> A University Entrance examination in 1940 asked students for "one of the important causes of the World War" and for "the most popular plank in the Nazi platform..."<sup>133</sup> Later, in 1941, Senior matriculation students were asked to give the



correct date to "Hitler reoccupies the Rhineland"<sup>134</sup> University Entrance examinations that year asked students about the basis of the "success of the Nazi party".<sup>135</sup> The following year's examination paper stated: "Italy is to Mussolini as Germany is to?"<sup>136</sup> Students were asked, in 1943, to discuss the following statement: "Hitler's victories were not so much due to his own strength as they were to the weakness and dissensions of his enemies."<sup>137</sup> They were also asked how the Wartime Prices and Trade Board and wage controls effected the Canadian economy.

After publication of the Supplementary Bulletin in 1944, examination questions about the war increased in number and scope. Senior high school students were asked about the Fascist party, Mussolini, Hitler, Nazi occupation, the political unification of Germany and to compare the Second World War to the Napoleonic Wars. There was also a very detailed question valued out of thirty marks on the German invasion of Poland and subsequent events.<sup>138</sup> An essay question asked "what justification is there for calling the war which began with Germany's attack on Poland in 1939 a World War? Why did it become a World War?"<sup>139</sup> The following year students were to identify quotations such as "I did not hesitate to confront France with the question of war."<sup>140</sup> As well as quotes made by Hitler, Churchill, DeGaulle, Mussolini, Roosevelt and others. Senior Matriculation examination papers in 1945 reflected the topic of peace. Students were asked questions about the Paris Peace Conference, peace settlements, reparations, and the establishment of the United Nations.<sup>141</sup> Essay questions also looked ahead:

"in a reorganized post-war Europe what place will there be, if any, for small nations?" and "give your recommendations for the prevention of future wars."<sup>142</sup>

Students did learn about the war in their Social Studies class: either from the formal curriculum and available books, other supporting materials, or informal class discussions. Social Studies classes were remembered by past students: one man describes the importance of war in his senior year Social Studies class. "Social Studies was the only time we could talk about the war. The entire back wall of the classroom was covered with maps on the war. There were different sections on the back wall: Progress of War; Devastation of the War; Reasons for the War."<sup>143</sup> Another fellow recalled "a teacher of mine discussing the war with us...I believe he was my Social Studies teacher."<sup>144</sup>

With the war Physical Education classes "now had a very ancient and pragmatic objective: the preparation of warriors for the defence of the state."<sup>145</sup> During the Second World War students answered the call: "fitness for service" in their Physical Education classes.<sup>146</sup> Physical Education was a compulsory subject at all grade levels in the British Columbia public schools and the department modified the physical education curriculum to incorporate war-oriented activities. The majority of changes occurred in the popular Pro Rec program. Also the cadet corps became compulsory and high school students began marching around the playing fields in uniform.

In 1934, G.M. Weir, the Minister of Education, created the

Recreational and Physical Education branch in British Columbia. He also published plans for the development of Pro Rec, a public recreation scheme. This program was designed for youths sixteen years and older, it was operated by local agencies and funded by the Provincial government. The objectives of Pro Rec were: "to protect the youths of British Columbia from the degenerating effects caused by enforced idleness, and to build up the morale and character which rest on a good physical base."<sup>147</sup> Pro Rec Centres were established in school gymnasiums where possible. They were also set up in community centres, swimming pools, churches or playing fields. The program began as a "period of organized games [to] be conducted after school hours...for all children, under the direction of chosen teachers at present unemployed."<sup>148</sup> The Pro Rec movement had wide appeal and popularity as it gave jobs to the unemployed and offered youth beneficial activities during after school hours. In five years time the Pro Rec attendances in British Columbia grew from 26,513 in 1934 to 359,761 in 1939.<sup>149</sup> Students participated in activities such as gymnastics, dancing, swimming, tennis, hiking and track and field. Rather than "highly competitive sports and formalized physical exercises."<sup>150</sup>

The war brought changes to the Pro Rec program's objectives and activities. In 1939-40, the Department of Education reported:

Physical Training is one of the greatest agencies of preventive medicine, and the Pro Rec scheme, which has proved beneficial to our people in peace-time will be even more important in war-time. The gymnast of yesterday is the soldier of to-day. The folk-dancing girl is learning ambulance-work, home-nursing, and many other occupations necessary for war.<sup>151</sup>

In 1940-41 "military marching tactics" were added to the Pro Rec

curriculum.<sup>152</sup> In the same year "two thirds of the men's staff and the addition of hundreds of Pro Rec members [who] enlisted in the Active Service..." greatly effected the program.<sup>153</sup> Youths exercised alongside "men in uniform"<sup>154</sup> and were encouraged to put on muscle so as not to be turned down by recruiting officers when the time came.

In the same year the Pro Rec girls program moved out of the school gymnasium and into lecture halls and sewing rooms.<sup>155</sup> Pro Rec members knitted warm woollens for air-raid victims of London.<sup>156</sup> Others organized "displays and concert parties for troops stationed in their districts"<sup>157</sup> and volunteered their energies to the Victory Bond Drives, the Air Supremacy Drive, the Lord Mayor's Fund and the Queen's Canadian Fund for air-raid victims."<sup>158</sup> A Pro Rec Red Cross Unit was formed and First Aid and Air Raid Precaution courses were taught. Students attended lectures on "war-time nutrition" and "Home Nursing"<sup>159</sup> Military marching was integrated into the Keep Fit classes as well as "Women's Industrial Lifting"<sup>160</sup> for women planning to find work in the war time industries.

The curriculum of the Pro Rec program continued to expand to meet the demands of the war. By 1941-42, members were able to practice at a new rifle range in Vancouver which proved popular and was "in constant use every evening."<sup>161</sup> First Aid training was incorporated and classes were led by the Saint John's Ambulance Association.<sup>162</sup> The curriculum for girls expanded to include squad drill and rifle shooting. While the boys curriculum provided military physical training which included activities such as hand-grenade throwing, elementary squad drill and rifle

shooting.<sup>163</sup> Socials and dances, along with mass displays were held to raise money for various war charities. Home nursing, Red Cross, Nutrition, Industrial Lifting, Marching and Air Raid Precaution courses were continued. In the latter, students could now earn status as subwardens.

The topic of health in Physical Education took on an added importance with the examination of the "health and physique of recruits in this war". Physical examinations indicated that "there is still such a large amount of physical deficiency as to cause concern."<sup>164</sup> The executive board of Recreational and Physical Education argued in 1943 that Pro Rec was absolutely necessary due to:

an alarmingly low standard of fitness of some applicants for the armed forces, the apparent increasing need for leadership and guidance of young people, the urgency for physically fit man and woman power, and the desirability of recreational opportunities for people in war industries have crystallized ...the services of this branch.<sup>165</sup>

H.B. King, Chief Inspector of schools, asked Physical Education teachers to heed the advice of military service personnel who had attended a 1944 conference of the American Association for Physical Education and Recreation. They recommended that schools place "more emphasis on developing endurance; the ability to 'take it'; the ability to drive oneself in spite of fatigue, pain, or discomfiture..."<sup>166</sup> They also suggested boys develop skills in falling, dodging, clearing obstacles and war time aquatics. Girls were to develop strength for lifting, pushing and pulling heavy objects.<sup>167</sup> Children could learn the principles of good health from books such as Nutrition and Physical Fitness, Food, Nutrition and Health and Vitamins and Minerals for

Everyone.<sup>168</sup>

In 1944 the province celebrated the success of the Pro Rec program on its ten year anniversary. Courses continued as before with the addition of classes in physical training and posture training for those cadets wishing to improve their skills.<sup>169</sup> In 1945, courses that had been added because of the Second World War were dropped from the program but Pro Rec continued on after the war to provide youths with a variety of recreational training and activities.

In the 1939 school year, the Vancouver School Board explained: "seven years ago Cadet Training was dropped as an optional activity in Vancouver schools...it was the result of a natural revulsion against war as a means of settling national disputes."<sup>170</sup> With the coming of the Second World War, the Board accepted the challenge to make Cadet training a compulsory part of the secondary school curriculum to "impress upon youth that citizenship entails obligations..."<sup>171</sup> The objectives of the school cadets varied from preparing boys from the age of fourteen "to take their place immediately in the Canadian forces when the time comes"<sup>172</sup> to acquiring "attitudes that will be a source of strength in the more personal battle that is life."<sup>173</sup> The Board also stated that the benefits in providing a reservoir of trained personnel out weighed the "militaristic nature of some of the training."<sup>174</sup> Cadet training would "produce the highest type of citizenship and...prove profitable to the country in peace or war."<sup>175</sup> On recollecting his cadet training one man declared "we were told that we may be called upon to serve our country."<sup>176</sup> Another explained its

importance to him was simply "it gave me a sense of belonging and I enjoyed the companionship."<sup>177</sup>

The Second World War began and the Department of Education made cadet training compulsory in all public high schools in the Province. "Yes it was compulsory", stated one interviewee, "you had to be a cadet whether you wanted to or not."<sup>178</sup> "Attendance was compulsory" echoed another.<sup>179</sup> "We all had to be cadets in high school", declared one fellow, "we had no choice about it."<sup>180</sup> In the 1939 school year the number of cadets jumped to 2,564 from 912.<sup>181</sup> In 1940 this number approximately doubled and by 1941 the program was fully operative with 16,672 school children in cadet corps.<sup>182</sup> The Council of Public Instruction in British Columbia ruled that "in all high, superior, and junior high schools, the course in Physical Education for boys from Grade IX to Senior matriculation inclusive shall include the elements of infantry squad and platoon drill without arms as laid down by the Department of National Defense." As well as "in all schools where there are a sufficient number of boys to permit of it, squad drill without arms shall be taught in the Physical Education work of grades VII and VIII."<sup>183</sup> Elementary schools could also participate if they chose to do so.

How to train so many cadets became a problem since the Department required that students be trained under the direction of a qualified instructor which meant a cadet instructor with military qualifications. Many physical education teachers did not have the necessary military qualifications and had to seek training through a three day a week course held over three

months.<sup>184</sup> Teachers could also take a similar course at summer school at the University of British Columbia.<sup>185</sup> Some teachers, upon completion of the course would decide to leave their teaching positions and take their new skills to the service. The Department found that: "The scarcity of male teachers...makes the carrying on of the Cadet Corps very difficult."<sup>186</sup> To teach the young cadets many schools filled newly available teaching positions with World War I veterans. They also employed non commissioned officers or teachers who held a Lieutenant certificate.<sup>187</sup>

At first schools had only Army cadet corps. During the 1940 school year Air Cadets were introduced to British Columbia schools and in 1943 Sea Cadets. One ex-cadet explained "I was in the army cadets and then in the air force cadets."<sup>188</sup> Another recalled: "They had the army cadets and I suppose the Air Force became popular and so they started the Air Force Cadets, I think they had the Navy too."<sup>189</sup> By the 1942 school year there were 2,818 Air Cadets and this number increased each year until 1945.<sup>190</sup> One of the chief objectives in the Air Cadet syllabus of training was "to increase the physical fitness and bearing of the Air Cadet."<sup>191</sup> Air cadet training was "essentially the ground training given to air crew of the Royal Canadian Air Force."<sup>192</sup> 'Students who joined the Air force cadets learned about theory of flight, airmanship, knots and splices, signalling, administration, aircraft recognition, air navigation and in some cases Airframes and aero-engines.<sup>193</sup> Once air cadets had learned these subjects they would complete a Royal Canadian Air Force examination to pass./



In 1942 more subjects were added: "anti-gas, armament, first aid, hygiene and sanitation, mathematics, meteorology and Signals."<sup>194</sup> "In connection with Armament, all squadrons are equipped with .22 Cooney rifles. Rifle shooting is encouraged and conducted with enthusiasm."<sup>195</sup> The Air Cadet League of Canada arranged rifle shooting competitions for cadets to show off their abilities and win prizes of money for their corps. Although these young people were cadets of the Air Force they rarely experienced airplane flight. In 1944, a flight was finally arranged for each cadet in a Royal Canadian Air Force aircraft. In Vancouver, 488 Air Cadets took advantage of this and were very enthusiastic.<sup>196</sup> One ex-Air Cadet confided that he had "joined the Air Force cadets...The Air Force cadets were a little more glamorous than the Army or the Navy cadets."<sup>197</sup>

The school yard became the training ground for future soldiers who were, as one man described "playing at recognizing the war."<sup>198</sup> School children, usually boys, devoted one and one half periods of forty five minutes each per week to cadet training. In addition to these periods, parades were held before and after school hours.<sup>199</sup> All cadets were instructed in such skills as first aid, map and compass reading, taking bearings, Semaphore and Morse, small arms training, Bren gun practice, Lewis gun practice, anti gas drill, battle and ceremonial drill.<sup>200</sup> In some schools girls also participated in cadets. The corps were segregated and the girls' training concentrated on first aid and drill. One woman explained: "I was an air cadet...at Magee. It was part of our physical education, we had cadets once a week. I was a flight officer, we would march and

parade around the fields...I'll never forget calling 'halt' and everyone halted. I was so surprised when they did!"<sup>201</sup> Girls' cadet corps were often labelled with unusual phraseology. At Trapp Technical high school in New Westminster two hundred girls formed "the Techettes."<sup>202</sup> At Magee in Vancouver, they were known as "Cadetettes"<sup>203</sup> Point Grey junior high proved more progressive as both sexes were designated cadets and the school was proud to report that "cadets no longer stands for boys alone...the girls' corps has become fairly proficient in elementary squad drill, both in companies and in battalion."<sup>204</sup>

The key word in all cadet training was efficiency. Young cadets would "earn five credits for efficiency in cadet work...towards the fifteen credits of Free Electives required for University Entrance or High School Graduation."<sup>205</sup> Efficiency in cadet work included a number of factors. Cadets were to pass the annual inspection, pass musketry and signalling tests, and complete the syllabus of training.<sup>206</sup> Called the Advanced Training Syllabus it contained, along with signalling and rifle use, such subjects as "internal combustion engines, model building, fieldcraft, patrolling and scouting, hygiene and sanitation in the field, woodcraft and aeroplane recognition."<sup>207</sup> The syllabus also requested that cadets be smart, alert, polite and mannerly at all times. They were to attend all parades and inspections, take care of their clothing, and uphold a "good record in respect of his conduct and discipline as a cadet and in his general school citizenship."<sup>208</sup>

Efficiency was achieved through discipline. District cadet

officer Major W.R. Critchley, who carried out these ideals in his work of inspecting the corps. "One thousand boys from Kitsilano stood silently at attention to be reviewed by...Major W.R. Critchley at Connaught park. They marched past and performed the general salute and calisthenics."<sup>209</sup> In his report to the British Columbia Cadet Association Major Critchley stated that the Canadian youth must hold "a sincere desire to assist in every possible way in the defence of his home and country."<sup>210</sup> Critchley believed that the most important asset of the cadet training program was "its improvement of mass and individual discipline."<sup>211</sup> He defined discipline as "correct living and thinking, unquestioned obedience to the laws of the country, and the prompt carrying out of orders given by those in authority." Critchley was quick to add that his definition did not mean "slavish obedience such as we find in countries governed by dictators."<sup>212</sup> The habit of obedience was to be carried out off the training field and in school and at home. Other attributes Critchley wished to develop through the Cadet Training program were those of self confidence, leadership and the ability to work for the common good.<sup>213</sup> One Vancouver cadet instructor stated that "our battles are being won on the Cadet Parade grounds." His objectives for his charges was to enable them "to take their place immediately in the Canadian Forces when that time comes."<sup>214</sup> To achieve this he felt it was important to "instill a sense of order, discipline and promptness...loyalty and earnest endeavour."<sup>215</sup>

Many children experienced a change in their family structure during the war. Fathers had joined up while mothers worked in the

essential services. Children often came home to an empty house and the term "door-key kids" became common.<sup>216</sup> With the loss of parental discipline came an increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency. It was no surprise that public approval of compulsory cadet training "was all but universal."<sup>217</sup> Parents made positive "comments upon the improvement in their offspring."<sup>218</sup> One cadet described efficiency in "platooning, you know, looking smart, walking smartly, smart lines in columns and so on. Standing erect, shoulders back, hair short..."<sup>219</sup> Discipline and good posture were emphasized in the weekly cadet drills. As early as 1940 it was reported that "the manners of the boys have improved and a slouchiness of bearing...is disappearing, or has disappeared."<sup>220</sup> These changes were brought about by the regular drills, inspections and the parades cadets participated in. One man explained "what I remember mostly was the marching. Marching all the time to develop discipline I suppose."<sup>221</sup> Instructors of the air cadets witnessed "unruly boys come to respect discipline, listless boys straighten up...and find a new outlet for the best that is in them, and find pride in the teamwork of the squadron."<sup>222</sup>

The conformity of a uniform helped to promote these ideals of discipline and selflessness. The cadet uniform was a symbol of belonging. It was an important part of the ritual and propriety that was the cadet corps. "On cadet day we dressed up in uniform."<sup>223</sup> It was a thrill to many a young boy or girl to don a uniform resembling those worn by the brave members of the Canadian services. In Kimberley, teachers encouraged "the wearing of the cadet uniform as a method of increasing esprit de

corps."<sup>224</sup> The Department of Education did not require that the cadets corps have uniforms. "Local pride, however, may require that a uniform be obtained."<sup>225</sup> Some schools such as one in North Saanich felt uniforms were important enough to organize a dance to raise \$150.00 for the purchase of uniforms "so the boys could parade in full regalia."<sup>226</sup>

Of the memories of past cadets, most were of their uniform. "During the war years one of the main things I remember was dressing up in white shirts and blue slacks..."<sup>227</sup> Another man declared: "In the air cadets you were given the full uniform. It was the same uniform as the Air Force: pants and a tunic, wedge cap, identical to the Air Force, except it was a fairly rough material. Blue, but not as dressy as the Air Force."<sup>228</sup> Another interviewee recalled "we wore blue skirts and white blouses."<sup>229</sup> One man explained the significance of the uniform: "I decided to join the Air Force cadets. In the beginning it was like a mini form of the cadets, then we were issued uniforms."<sup>230</sup> "Just about every boy was a cadet", recalled one woman, "it was very popular to be one, to have a uniform."<sup>231</sup> One cadet's memory of his uniform was not as fond. "The uniforms didn't fit, they were too big or too small, same with the boots."<sup>232</sup> Another interviewee must have been quite a sight. He recounted: "I was a member of the Seaforth cadets. We used to run to catch the interurban...We would be running down the hill in our kilts, hell bent for leather."<sup>233</sup>

Small details of uniforms were recalled as well as the impression they made. Such as markings that displayed one's rank: "if you were an N.C.O...you would turn up for the drill and you

could pin on these stripes, I think they were blue and maroon chevrons."<sup>234</sup> One man recalled that these details had to be attended to right up to the "cap properly perched on your head."<sup>235</sup> The uniform was also used as a device to entice students to join a particular corps. "Some kids joined the Seaforth cadets because they were issued good uniforms."<sup>236</sup> Another explained "the real impressive cadets were the guys who were formally in the Seaforth cadets. They were very sharp. Kids would come from all over the city to join the Seaforth cadet corps."<sup>237</sup> An interviewee once looked forward to the prestige of displaying "chevrons or epaulettes, that would come later, when you joined up."<sup>238</sup>

A Vancouver man stated: "As the war progressed I became more involved in the cadets, there were more activities with the corps."<sup>239</sup> Cadets all over the province busied themselves with a wide variety of corps activities. In Salmon Arm cadets were busy making flags for signalling and preparing for three public parades. In Port Coquitlam cadets built a rifle range of logs and earth. They also raised funds to purchase uniforms "by holding a whist drive, a concert and a tea."<sup>240</sup> Brentwood College cadets learned the practical side of First Aid. They obtained manuals and made bandages and wooden splints to use on their mock wounded.<sup>241</sup> Cadets in Prince George were busy that first year making chevrons from red flannel and dummy rifles in the woodwork shop. Dummy rifles were also made by the cadets in Nelson high school, "maple for stocks and solid iron rods for barrels" were used.<sup>242</sup> Most cadets experienced arms drill with these dummy rifles, as one man explained "we were given wooden rifles and we

paraded around twice a week."<sup>243</sup> Another remembered "we also drilled and we carried these wooden rifles."<sup>244</sup> Boys in Princeton practiced with real rifles in a converted the basement of their school. The cadets at Smithers high school were extremely busy. They canvassed the community to obtain real rifles and then found that with those "interest mounted sky high."<sup>245</sup> They also built butts and a firing platform in the Exhibition Grounds and entered the Royal Military College Inter School Competition. On Friday nights the Smithers cadets also took extra courses and made their own Morse buzzers. At Penticton high school the cadet corps participated in a presentation of "a fierce battle with attacks and counter attacks, and gory combats fought with imaginary bayonets or clubbed rifles."<sup>246</sup>

The formation and growth of the school cadet corps was not without its problems. King George high school found that cadets were dismayed with the dummy rifles and so real ones were brought in. One cadet explained "the third floor of the school was converted into a shooting gallery. We were given old World War I guns, the recoil was so violent we had to stuff sweaters to pad our shoulders...We enjoyed the shooting practice though."<sup>247</sup> Morale was a problem at Kimberley high school as well. The school began a cadet musical band and found that "a heightened interest [was] created."<sup>248</sup> Drill was another important activity that often produced problems. Many schools did not have the facilities for proper drill procedures. The Trail-Tadanac cadets complained of the distance they had to travel to their drill site.<sup>249</sup> Deep snow and cold weather posed a problem for Baron Byng High school in Prince George where cadets used a snow-plowed road for

their drills and were kept "constantly on the move...in zero or sub-zero temperatures."<sup>250</sup> Cold weather was a factor to the cadets at Grand Forks where they felt the importance of drill warranted the construction of a gymnasium on the school grounds.<sup>251</sup> Most interviewees remembered the drill routines. "The official cadets would drill differently from the rest of the school cadets. The rest of the school would be in the white shirt and the multicolored chevrons, marching around being reviewed."<sup>252</sup> One man from Nelson explained, "we used to have parade drill out in the field. Twice a week on Tuesday and Thursdays, it was part of our physical education."<sup>253</sup>

With the seemingly endless drills and marching in all types of weather the spirits of Cadets would undoubtedly lag. To maintain morale, visitors often spoke to school Cadet Corps and praised them for their work. Colonel C. Greer, Director of Cadet Services in Ottawa, addressed Vancouver schools and expressed his belief in them for "giving the lead to all of Canada in cadet training."<sup>254</sup> Squadron Leader Stuart C. Parker gave "an inspiring address to the Boys' and Girls' Air Cadets" of King Edward high school.<sup>255</sup> He encouraged the cadets in their efforts and told them that "if it were not for the Air Force we would now be under the Nazi heel."<sup>256</sup> The valedictorian of Vancouver College school applauded the Cadets as "useful members of the community and worthy citizens of our Dominion."<sup>257</sup> It was reported in their school annual that they had witnessed the Cadet parade and that "we were proud of them that day."<sup>258</sup> Along with pep talks and praise were monetary rewards. On inspection, prizes were awarded to the cadet corps which



displayed an excellent level of efficiency in training activities. Prize money was also awarded for marksmanship and rifle shooting competitions were held each year. Along with the Royal Military College inter-schools competition, cadets competed in the Youth and Empire Competition.<sup>259</sup> In 1943, the Kiwanis club presented the Vancouver cadet regiment with a silk Union Jack. This "flag was given a prominent place at the Empire Rally of Youth service on May 16th..."<sup>260</sup> The Governor General, His Excellency the Earl of Athlone was present at the rally and "took the salute at the March Past of approximately 4000 youth."<sup>261</sup> These parades were considered, by most Cadet instructors to be an exciting event. A time to show off the disciplined Cadets to the community. One King George high school cadet recalled "twice a year we went down to Brockton Oval for a parade."<sup>262</sup>

On 25 October 1945, schools received instructions from the Department of Education which stated that membership in Cadet Corps was changed from a compulsory to a voluntary basis.<sup>263</sup> Looking back on their training, most interviewees had a dubious view of the purpose of the school cadet corps. One fellow declared "cadets were really ludicrous, we were like toy soldiers, children trying to act like grown men"<sup>264</sup> Of marching and inspections another explained "it was like playing, playing at recognizing the war."<sup>265</sup> One man described the training as "playing at soldiers, playing at air men, playing at sea men. It was an exciting game, like an adventure for boys."<sup>266</sup> Another ex-cadet recalled that even when they were issued uniforms "the general tone of the corps was not to take it too seriously."<sup>267</sup> Part of the Cadet corps agenda was to

prepare boys for active service. One man, a sea cadet at school wanted to become a sea cadet in the Navy simply "because of a romantic notion. I always had the dream of going to sea."<sup>268</sup> Once he joined up he found he was ill prepared, "it turned out to be a whole other story...it was on the job training like you wouldn't believe."<sup>269</sup> This 'adventure' for boys pervaded through many of the memories and as one man decided "we never really thought what we were learning had anything to do with the real war."<sup>270</sup>

The need for "workers" with special skills and training caused significant changes to the Industrial or Practical Arts curriculum. Until 1940 younger students had concentrated on building items for home and school. Such as rhythm sticks, yard sticks, various furniture and equipment.<sup>271</sup> Most of the senior Industrial Arts students trained for entry into the mining, farming or forest industries. Then the war began and the need for war machinery and skilled service men increased. The ship building and war munitions industries were booming and students were being lured by the numerous jobs suddenly available after a long economic slump. With the proper training in school students could look forward to employment and independence. F.T. Fairey, Officer in Charge of the Industrial Arts department in British Columbia, recognized the necessity of altering the current program and felt the program had to appeal students by being relevant to war time.

Prior to the Second World War, Industrial Arts shops numbering 141, had been established in 54 cities and districts in

British Columbia.<sup>272</sup> The policy of the Department of Education was to encourage young people to become skilled in areas such as Woodwork, Draughting, Metalwork, and Electricity. It was "not the intentions that Industrial Arts in the elementary and junior grades of high schools have any vocational intent, but that it shall assist in promoting growth and development in the pupil."<sup>273</sup> At the elementary level Industrial Arts was known as Practical Arts. Children from grades three and four took courses for sixty minutes per week. Seventy five minutes per week was allotted at the grade five and six level.<sup>274</sup> Practical Arts was also compulsory in all regularly organized junior high schools. Grade seven and eight children attended four periods per week while grade nine students could choose Practical Arts as an option and take two to ten periods per week.<sup>275</sup> Once students entered grade ten they could work towards the fifteen credits required under optional courses for University entrance. They could choose from three areas in the Industrial Arts: Home Economics, Technical Courses, and Commercial Courses.<sup>276</sup>

After the war began the number of Industrial Arts shops increased and the curriculum began to change. In 1939-40 three more cities in British Columbia established 12 more Industrial Arts shops.<sup>277</sup> The Industrial Arts program at Vancouver Technical school "justified its existence, for many branches of the fighting forces, graduation from a technical school has been required"<sup>278</sup> Fairey suggested that senior high students "might be better prepared to undertake short courses which would contribute greatly to the war effort."<sup>279</sup> Fairey also advised that schools adopt specialized classes for war industries along

with preparation for entry into the Royal Canadian Air Force.<sup>280</sup> These classes were adopted during the 1940-41 school year and the number of cities/districts with Industrial arts shops increased again by 61, to a total of 160.<sup>281</sup>

In the 1941-42 school year the demand for war machinery greatly increased and the Provincial war industries were forced to expand their production.<sup>282</sup> Fairey stressed in his annual report that it was important to discourage students from leaving high school early, while they "still have the capacity for further training."<sup>283</sup> Even so high school students were leaving school for the more lucrative work force arena and also to join the services. Vancouver Technical school felt the loss when more than half the students left school for the services and the expanding war industries. Enrolment steadily decreased from 1,316 in 1938 to a mere 626 in 1942. [see Table 1.]<sup>284</sup> One fellow explained "there were lots of jobs to be had down at the shipyards."<sup>285</sup> Fairey also reported the unfortunate loss of teachers who "felt it their duty to join one or the other of the fighting forces or to give their services to war industries."<sup>286</sup> This was the first year since the war that no new shops were opened due to the "lack of competent teachers."<sup>287</sup> Fairey stated that the program had been streamlined to keep up with the demands of war, "courses have been modified with the purpose of speeding up the training, so that boys would be better fitted to serve their country in many ways."<sup>288</sup>

The new War Emergency Training Program had an adverse effect on the Industrial Arts program. Designed for young adults, aged

18-30 years, the classes of the War Emergency training program were being held in Industrial Arts shops and encroached on students' work space. Vancouver Technical school reported in 1943 that it had to share its facilities with 300 soldiers and 400 airmen of the Canadian forces. High school students shared their buildings with these service men and women and with Royal Canadian Air Force tradesmen personnel.<sup>289</sup> Despite the shortage of space, staff and students, the Industrial Arts program succeeded in meeting war time needs. Fairey explained that "The emphasis given to mastery in high school courses is appreciated by war industries...We have had great demands from war industries for boys who have had high-school Industrial Arts training..."<sup>290</sup> Fairey was proud to report that "we were able to render the greatest service."<sup>291</sup> To meet the war's demands: "Courses have been modified with the purpose of speeding up the training, so that boys would be better fitted to serve their country in many ways."<sup>292</sup>

The program continued to have its war time problems when in the 1942-43 school year more teachers left their positions. Fairey declared that not enough importance was being placed on the program by the Department of Education even though the "world cries for people able to do things..."<sup>293</sup> The numbers of cities and districts in the Province with shops dropped to 56 and the number of students dropped to 13,338 from 14,252 in the previous year.<sup>294</sup> Fairey argued that "this is a war of machines and supplies, and that victory will come to the side best able to produce and use equipment of a technical nature."<sup>295</sup> He then concluded that "all we can do is to carry on as best we may until

this conflict is over."<sup>296</sup> Another problem for teachers and students of Industrial Arts arose. Metal, a material needed for course work, was becoming a scarce commodity. Salvaging materials for a project became a necessary part of the curriculum. Students and teachers worked with discarded car parts and "scrap tin-plate..."<sup>297</sup> In some schools "great ingenuity in utilizing scrap metal" was shown.<sup>298</sup>

As changes occurred on the war front, and events indicated the end of the war was near, the Industrial Arts program would once again be affected. Fairey had reported in 1942-43 that "all boys who have taken shop courses for High School Graduation have been able to get jobs in war industry, and the demand has exceeded the supply."<sup>299</sup> These conditions were not too last. By 1943-44, the dramatic increase in skilled workers and production levels finally met the demands for war machinery. Through the War Emergency Training Program the needs of the war industries had been fulfilled. "Upwards of 40,000 people have been trained in British Columbia...and as a result, war plants are now adequately staffed..."<sup>300</sup> This was reflected in the change in available activities in shop class, the curriculum of the Industrial Arts program had served its war time purpose. In 1944 activities moved away from the war industry and students began again to construct items such as "tool kits...library distribution counters, greenhouses and chairs for an auditorium."<sup>301</sup> By 1945 the curriculum was similar to its prewar state, yet the Industrial Arts program continued to benefit from the war. There was an excess of machinery, originally purchased for the war industries, sitting idle. The War Assets Corporation ensured that "education

will be given first chance after the Dominion Government itself"<sup>302</sup> for securing this equipment for the Industrial Arts shops.

The British Columbia Department of Education could not ignore the fact that Canada was at war. "War Duties" were prescribed to teachers by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation which necessitated changes to what was being taught in the classroom. Two 'duties' were encouraged through the discussion of topics such as democracy versus dictatorship, patriotism to the Empire, and through the simple acts of saluting the flag and singing 'God Save the King': "Intelligent loyalty to Canadian democracy must be strengthened" and "the morale of children has to be sustained".<sup>303</sup> The changes to the Social Studies curriculum endeavoured to meet the demand that: "the issues, aims and progress of war must be taught". Through the Pro Rec courses and the inclusion of compulsory cadet instruction an attempt was made to support the 'war duty' that "health and physical efficiency must be maintained". Another 'war duty' was fulfilled when the Industrial Arts program was altered to produce, "workers for war industries and services".<sup>304</sup> Changes precipitated by the Second World War had an effect on the curriculum and therefore on the school children of British Columbia.

Table 1.--Attendance: Vancouver Technical School: 1939-1945.

1939-40	1940-41	1941-42	1942-43	1943-44	1944-45
1,323	1,125	978	626	704	843



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21. F1001-5/6
22. M1012-2
23. M1010-4

24. M1010-8
25. F1001-4
26. M1012-3
27. M1014-8
28. M1010-7
29. M1543-2
30. M1003-4
31. M1014-8
32. F1011-1
33. M1010-7
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50. M2323-3
51. M1002-8
52. M1012-3
53. F1011-4
54. F1011-4
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61. M1015-11
62. F1013-7
63. British Columbia, Department of Education, Programme, (1941), 169.
64. Social Studies Revision Committee, "War and Social Studies," B.C. Teacher 22, no. 8 (May-June 1943): 316.
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69. Ibid., 239.
70. Ibid., 244.
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99. M1015-7
100. British Columbia, Department of Education, Programme, (1945), 249-250.
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103. Ibid., 245.
104. British Columbia, Department of Education, Library Books, 100.
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107. British Columbia, Department of Education, Programme, (1941), 128.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., 129.
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## CHAPTER III

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: CHILDREN WORK FOR THE WAR EFFORT

The school children of British Columbia played a very important part in numerous war work activities. They raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the war effort in a variety of ways. Children bought an incredible number of War Savings Stamps. They became industrious Junior Red Cross members, sewing and knitting for the troops and war refugees. They combed communities accumulating paper, buttons, grease, aluminum, string and clothing. They worked to raise money for the many different war funds. They also sent parcels overseas and some became wardens in the air raid precaution drills. Fighting the war on the home front became a way of life for most children in British Columbia. This chapter will examine school childrens' role in the aforementioned war work.

The Canadian government relied on two sources of revenue during the Second World War: taxation and borrowing. In 1940 the Canadian Institute of International Affairs predicted that the war would cost Canadians \$4 million per day.<sup>1</sup> By 1943 war expenditures reached a peak of \$9 million per day.<sup>2</sup> Greater taxation during the First World War had little effect on the country's deficit. Fearful that high taxation might prove regressive the government decided to rely heavily on borrowing.

The government borrowed approximately one half of its financial requirements during the war.<sup>3</sup> "One of the means of borrowing is by voluntary savings and purchase of war savings certificates."<sup>4</sup> There was also a valid concern that Canadians would have to endure dangerous levels inflation during the war. To avoid this the government carefully regulated consumption through rationing and a fixed a ceiling on prices. They also encouraged the public, with propaganda, to invest in War Savings Certificates and Victory Bonds.

Due to untiring efforts of educators and the omnipresent wartime propaganda, children were swept up into the whirlwind of saving for victory. War Savings Stamps became one of the main methods in which children contributed to the war effort. The National War Finance Committee in Ottawa sold War Savings Stamps for twenty five cents each. The program was inaugurated on May 27, 1940 as a complement to the Victory Loan campaigns. The War Savings certificate program was designed as an "easy way of making small and frequent savings..."<sup>5</sup> Savings Stamps were more popular with children as the twenty five cent cost was more affordable than \$50 for a Victory Bond. The Department of Education stood behind the push to buy War Savings Stamps. Schools could purchase a large quantity of Stamps and in turn children would buy them from their schools. The objective was to fill cards with sixteen Stamps, a value of \$4, the purchase price of a War Savings Certificate. Certificates were issued in amounts that ranged from \$5 up to \$500. They were sold for four-fifths of their face value.<sup>6</sup> Thus if a child purchased a certificate for \$4, it would earn interest and after a period of seven and one



half years would be worth \$5,<sup>7</sup> By the end of 1944, \$317,643,<sup>124</sup> in War Savings Certificates had been purchased.<sup>8</sup> One man remembered "the War Savings Stamps...you put in so much money and you got enough stamps to fill up a certificate."<sup>9</sup> By 1943, British Columbia's school children had raised approximately three quarters of a million dollars from the sale of War Savings Stamps.<sup>10</sup> The money raised through the sale of Stamps went towards the purchase of war machinery and other necessary equipment for Canadian soldiers. Teachers and students were "congratulated on their efforts and were urged to 'Save and Serve' for Victory."<sup>11</sup>

Buying War Savings Stamps became an obligation in the classroom and a necessary part of every schools' war effort. The Department of Education together with the War Savings Service, a branch of the National War Finance Committee, promoted the sale of War Savings Stamps in schools. The Service developed a variety of materials to help teachers keep track of sales and motivate their students. In addition teachers invented a variety of their own methods. They encouraged students to design posters, hold carnivals and house competitions, compete for praise, stars, points and other rewards. Most teachers found that peer pressure proved to be the most effective method thus asking for a contribution became as routine as taking roll call. Through the War Savings Stamps program not only was money raised but the topic of war was brought into the classroom. One woman reflected on what she learned, "they made us aware of the war at school through War Savings Stamps..."<sup>12</sup>

As the war in Europe progressed the Savings Stamps program

went into full swing and teachers were requested and encouraged to interest their pupils in the sale of War Savings Certificates. G.M. Weir, the Minister of Education, "urged [teachers] to give their full and enthusiastic cooperation in the furtherance of the sale of War Savings Stamps to their pupils."<sup>13</sup> One Vancouver principal asked his teachers to "stress the buying of War Savings Stamps. Touch on the importance of this matter many times during the day."<sup>14</sup> Children of all ages were involved, "tell even the small children about the war and adopt various methods to interest children in purchasing War Savings Stamps."<sup>15</sup> A principal recommended inspiring small children to purchase War Savings Stamps by telling "suitable war stories."<sup>16</sup> Children were quickly taught what their job was and most accepted it as their duty to their country. One woman declared "at school we bought War Savings Certificates, they were twenty five cents each and we had to buy one stamp a week, until we had a five dollar book."<sup>17</sup> Another man explained: "we put a lot of time and energy into the War Drives...kids were encouraged to buy War Savings Stamps at twenty five cents each, and War Savings Certificates."<sup>18</sup>

So successful were the schools in raising money through the purchase of War Savings Stamps that the National War Finance Committee formed a School Savings Service Section. One of the aims of the Service was the promotion of the sale of War Savings Stamps and Certificates in Canadian schools. British Columbia's director of the Service, Elizabeth Waller proudly announced that: "the teamwork of the School Savings Service has thus produced enough money to buy two P.B.Y. Patrol Bombers, largest flying

ships built in Canada."19 She admired the students of British Columbia for developing the qualities of self reliance and thrift. She then reminded teachers that along with encouraging sales, their most important job was "helping to mould the minds of our future citizens."20 The future citizens in one junior high reported that through the sales of War Savings Stamps students contributed their time and money: "as a token of gratitude to Canada, their beloved country. They realize they are lucky to be able to fight the hated Nazis..."21

The National War Finance Committee also published a monthly bulletin for schools. This bulletin reported the progress of Stamp sales and in British Columbia was aptly entitled "Forward British Columbia".22 In its 1940 issue, Superintendent of Vancouver schools, H.N. MacCorkindale enlisted students to participate in a National Savings Plan. He announced that "sales centres will be established in schools. It is expected at least 100,000 of British Columbia's 130,000 children will enlist in this war effort."23 The thrust of this publication was that school children were to help fight the war through the purchase of War Savings Stamps. There seemed to be no better place to integrate the program than in the classroom. Enthusiasm was maintained through constant motivation and as one woman explained "we were always encouraged, at school, to buy War Savings Stamps".24

As children became more involved in buying Stamps teachers were faced with the awesome task and pressures of fund raising. Many for the first time, and some in areas where money was scarce. The Service assisted and sent each teacher a ledger book

to record funds. Teachers were asked to keep careful records and report all sales to the provincial headquarters of the School Savings Service. Teachers were also asked to utilize the many posters, stamp folders, bulletins and buttons that the Service created and distributed to schools. One meticulous teacher in Prince Rupert shared his technique for utilizing the Service's materials. He recommended keeping regular accounts and reporting bimonthly to the provincial office. He made regular contributors feel important by rewarding them with the School Savings Service buttons. These children's names would also be recorded on an honour roll of savers which he felt promoted healthy competition.<sup>25</sup>

Teachers shared a variety of ideas and methods which made each Savings Stamp drive a success. "Once a week teachers collected the milk money and during the war, quarters for War Savings Stamps."<sup>26</sup> A Dawson Creek Elementary School teacher described "the importance of buying stamps, from both the patriotic and economical point of view."<sup>27</sup> She recommended her regular practice of asking children for contributions immediately after calling their name on the roll each morning and then recording the amount on the roll. It is not surprising that this teacher boasted a one hundred percent savings record.<sup>28</sup> Money was collected most often on a daily or a weekly basis. One woman described: "Our teacher at school used to begin every Friday morning by going up and down the rows and everyone made their contribution."<sup>29</sup> Although children were not compelled to buy Stamps, the drives were often so coercive that children believed they were obligated. "We had to buy one a week", explained one

interviewee, "you always did, until we had so many to make a book."<sup>30</sup> Another stated: "We brought twenty five cents to school every week for a War Savings Stamp."<sup>31</sup> Yet another recalled "they were twenty five cents each, we paid that every week."<sup>32</sup> The obligation to buy did not end with the school year. "Children were expected to contribute during the summer months as well."<sup>33</sup> Teachers in one Vancouver school were instructed to "give out Savings Stamps booklets for use during the summer."<sup>34</sup>

Most teachers found the direct method of asking children for money was the most effective especially if done on a regular basis and in front of peers. One woman described a simple but effective technique: "Our teacher would make a note of the money and when you had enough to fill a card you got a red star by your name on a chart on the board."<sup>35</sup> Elementary school children in Pouce Coupe were given "frequent short talks on the importance of buying stamps, from both a patriotic and economical point of view."<sup>36</sup> Each morning they were asked for their money and in one year averaged "over two five dollar certificates per pupil."<sup>37</sup> Teachers in a Vancouver elementary school were asked to "urge that every child buy at least one stamp per month."<sup>38</sup> A grade three teacher in her Enderby classroom tuned into the daily radio news report and would write on the board: "What are you doing today to help bring this war to a successful end?"<sup>39</sup> This teacher was proud to state that each child brought in one cent a week, a lot for a "money scarce district".<sup>40</sup> She also designed a "help to win the war money box" to collect children's money and so her pupils heard their coins drop as it was passed

around the room.<sup>41</sup> Some children learned a poem entitled "War Savings" to inspire them:

I had got the habit, and I just couldn't stop,  
So every cent and nickel went drop, drop, drop.  
And soon they were all singing, clink, clank, clee,  
We'll buy another Savings Stamp, just you see...<sup>42</sup>

Every pupil who contributed was "called a war-saver"<sup>43</sup> and teachers urged all school children in British Columbia to recognize "strength in a united effort."<sup>44</sup>

Teachers were warned not to be "squeamish" about telling children that the money they contributed was: "to kill Nazis, or why Nazis must be killed."<sup>45</sup> Teacher, Bruce Mickelburgh, justified his warning in writing to the B.C. Teacher: "In the struggle against the enemies of the people...buying war stamps is one tangible service the children can perform, and in doing so...guarantee hope for the future."<sup>46</sup> Most teachers were not squeamish and this was evident in some of the less than delicate approaches used to promote War Saving Stamps. One teacher explained that her children donated to a "bank" and recorded each deposit in their pass book which they had made in art class. To keep track of the amount saved by each class, a large chart was designed for the central hall of the school. Children who bought War Savings Stamps knew their money went towards war weapons. On this chart: "a Nazi plane at the top is being assaulted by a row of anti-aircraft guns at the bottom; one for each division in the school."<sup>47</sup> Each gun had a movable shell and for every \$10 the shell hit the enemy plane and each hit was represented by a coloured sticker under each gun.<sup>48</sup> Another classroom used a large poster of a setting sun, being obliterated by a numbered

dial. Its caption read: "Setting Japan's Rising Sun with War Savings Stamps."<sup>49</sup> Statistics published to encourage teachers did not mince words: "\$95,000 invested by the pupils in stamps...will keep a Bren or Lewis gun operating 102 hours...pumping lead at Nazis."<sup>50</sup>

To maintain enthusiasm children learned and chanted slogans displayed on War Savings Posters hung in their school's hallways. In North and West Vancouver Stamp drives were integrated into Art classes and "the pupils have come to realize the many ways in which they themselves can assist in winning the war."<sup>51</sup> These methods included "poster contests, display banners", followed by classroom discussions.<sup>52</sup> These school children happily announced that they had purchased over 6,000 dollars worth of War Savings Certificates in 1941. Other creative students utilized current slogans in their posters to send these messages: "Give Till It Hurts", "Suppose Nobody Cared" and "Be a Good Neighbour."<sup>53</sup> Enter a classroom and one might have witnessed energetic children engaged in war work possibly reciting popular expressions for encouragement: "More Savers For Victory"; "If We Lick Enough War Savings Stamps We'll Lick Hitler"; "Let Your War Savings Stamps be Hitler's Seal of Doom" and "Stamp Out Hitler."<sup>54</sup>

As a greater number of schools became involved competition became fierce between districts and within schools to see who could achieve the ideal one hundred percent savings record. The Service introduced a merit award certificate and regular reports were published in the B.C. Teacher magazine, under such headings as: 'More Savers for Victory' and 'Pennies for PBY's.'<sup>55</sup>

Schools such as Argenta and Parksville, listed with one hundred percent pupils saving, were praised with: "children hoard their pennies for War Stamps and think of the boys and girls in Europe before spending money on themselves."<sup>56</sup> Competition inspired teachers to invent a variety of activities to motivate children, some successful, others not so. A student in one class remembered a tedious task: "once a week a different student would be in charge of collecting the money. You really had to supervise them because not all of them wanted to give you their twenty five cents!"<sup>57</sup> Many schools made War Savings Stamp drives part of their house competitions. King Edward high school in Vancouver held "inter house and inter division contests."<sup>58</sup> "We had to buy them", declared one woman from Vancouver Island, "we competed with other schools, they graded schools on the percentage of buyers they had, and there were competitions between classes."<sup>59</sup>

School social events, such as school carnivals, were also a popular way to raise money for the war effort. Children in Nanaimo organized a fun-filled afternoon and charged admission to play: "games of skill, throwing darts, hitting Hitler, etc."<sup>60</sup> Port Alberni school utilized the thematic approach to their annual track meet. The meet featured teams of children with names such as: "'War Savings', 'Red Cross' and 'Cheer For the Soldiers'" and proved very successful.<sup>61</sup> Other social activities that school children arranged were lunch time candy sales, monthly teas, a cartoon magazine created and sold by the Art Club, or a: "weekly pep-talk was given by one of the students, over the P.A." all of which encouraged the sale of War Savings Stamps.<sup>62</sup> One Vancouver high school found their most



successful Stamp Drive events were "the pep shows, film shows and quiz contests."<sup>63</sup>

Exhausting their own funds, children often involved other family members in the Stamp drives. An article in B.C. Teacher magazine suggested that children ask their parents for pennies every night but only with the promise those pennies would be spent on war Stamps.<sup>64</sup> Children were regularly encouraged to organize dances, concerts and school plays and invite family members to attend. Of course the price of admission for these social events was the price of a War Savings Stamp.<sup>65</sup> Not every child's parents agreed with these practices. Imagine the pressure one woman must have felt as she struggled with what her parents believed and what her teacher wished. She received: "no allowance, but twenty five cents an hour to pull weeds. Father was against War Savings Stamps so I could only buy a few of those."<sup>66</sup>

There were those that saved as a family unit. One woman gave from "an allowance and we were to give part of that to buy War Savings Stamps."<sup>67</sup> Another interviewee worked to contribute as "war was a big thing in my family. I was encouraged to give money, to share with the household to give to the war effort, buy wool for stockings. I would make a weekly contribution from my after school jobs, as a delivery boy for Curries and a meat market, to my family."<sup>68</sup> Another recalled: "I had a regular allowance. In Junior High I got one dollar a month, twenty five cents of this had to be put into War Savings Certificates."<sup>69</sup> Other families used the War Stamps to invest in their future. One fellow explained "I was encouraged to buy War Savings Stamps at

home. They were twenty five cents each and I put them into books until there were enough for my dad to turn them into a bond. These bonds went towards my insurance policy. I had a \$5000 insurance policy when I was 16."70

The efforts of school children were often representative of the spirit in their communities. One woman from Windermere proudly declared "with every drive...our district topped its quota."71 The Vernon News announced that local school children were "closely competing with Armstrong and Enderby" and that "Lumby was reported to be the first district...to go over the top."72 School children often went out into their communities to raise funds. One woman recalled going "out on Saturdays to the stores, and standing at the door, and we sold War Savings Stamps."73 Even some movie theatres became involved, children who attended a weekly film for five consecutive Saturdays were awarded a twenty five cent Savings Stamp.74 The church often participated in Stamp drives as well. The Young People's Union of the Zion United Church in Armstrong held a masquerade party for Halloween. The winner of the costume contest received four Savings Stamps.75 In 1942, J.W. Cornett, Vancouver's mayor, praised the Elgan Junior Choir of St. Andrews Wesley United Church for the message of their song entitled "Song of the 'V':

FREEDOM is marching - fall into line,  
 "V" is the symbol - "V" is the sign;  
 Rally the nations - Liberty calls,  
 Liberty triumphs - Tyranny falls.  
 Round the world flash  
 Three dots and a dash;  
 Building a stronghold  
 That nothing can smash.  
 Winging and singing, the bound shall be free,

FREEDOM IS MARCHING TO VICTORY.<sup>76</sup>

This piece was part of a repertoire arranged to further the sale of War Savings Stamps and included "other patriotic songs from the Vancouver Sun's Victory Song Sheet."<sup>77</sup>

These events and many others piqued children's interest in Stamp drives. It was important that no contribution would go unrewarded. The School Savings Service Section held formal award ceremonies which honoured top savers. These rewards were a vital part of the Service's promotional efforts. A group of five Vancouver students went to Sea Island 7 June 1943, for the honour of representing the Service. They christened five fighter planes 'Vancouver I through V' and were given five "beautiful commemorative plaques as a recognition of the good work of the pupils."<sup>78</sup> The Air Force congratulated these school children on raising \$130,332.15 through Stamp sales in 1943. The Service encouraged further sales of War Savings Stamps, and stated that students could look forward to christening five more planes, Vancouver VI through X.<sup>79</sup> The Service also rewarded hard working teachers as well. In 1942, orchids from the School Savings Service were sent to teachers "who have realized the value of War Savings, not only as a war effort, but as a means of instilling in students the democratic spirit of teamwork."<sup>80</sup>

Children's hard work was recognized by their teachers, by principals in school assemblies, in local newspaper articles and sometimes in films. The Stamp savers of John Norquay School were filmed showing how they saved enough money through the purchase of Stamps to buy an outfit for a Corporal. The film was made by a Vancouver teacher and produced by the School Savings Service. It

was designed for British Columbia schools and was entitled No Quarters for Squanderbug.<sup>81</sup> Children were inspired by the film's two slogans "Starve the Squanderbug"<sup>82</sup> and "The Squander Bug's an Axis Pest; He gulps your money down with zest."<sup>83</sup> One school principal rewarded a maple leaf to "each pupil who buys a dollars worth of War Savings Stamps."<sup>84</sup> Another instructed the teachers of one elementary school to display a red, silver or gold star on the classroom door depending on the percentage of students who had purchased Stamps.<sup>85</sup> "The Principal or a visitor would honour the classes which had sold the most War Savings Stamps."<sup>86</sup> One woman remembered that on "every Monday morning our principal gave us a pep talk. He would announce the competition for War Savings Stamps, and how much was to be raised. He would call up someone from the class who had the most contributions each week. When there was enough to buy \$25 or \$50 he would give a presentation for that."<sup>87</sup> In one school the principal decided that "the class obtaining the highest average givings would be allowed to keep the picture 'Wait For Me Daddy' for one month."<sup>88</sup>

Campaigns were monetarily successful and as children worked and saved they learned the value of setting objectives, and being thrifty. War work instilled in them a sense of: "sacrifice and discipline ...to defend this something called freedom."<sup>89</sup> In encouraging children to buy War Savings Stamps teachers were trying to "cultivate the spirit of helping others."<sup>90</sup> Through War Savings Stamps, one school recognized it "has become ever more war conscious as the months have passed...every student had a share in the war, every boy and girl can rightly say 'I've

helped the war effort'."91 Children raised funds for Canada's "fighting forces" who were "still braving cruel hardships, wounds and death. Their fighting needs grow day by day."92 One man knew that not all the War Savings funds were utilized properly. He left high school at sixteen to join the Navy: "At my last days at sea, in 1945, I can remember standing on the deck of the ship. We were told to fire off all live ammunition, I remember saying: 'well there goes ten dollars.' Thinking of the shells we were firing and the cost, there was a physical relationship to all the quarters you put in and what was going over the side of the ship."93

Children in British Columbia spent a portion of their school time working for the Junior Red Cross. These school children were called Juniors and were identified by their Red Cross pin. Along with war work, Juniors memorized their belief and their motto, met representatives of the Red Cross and read the Canadian Red Cross Junior magazine. They were proud of the fact that they were members of the same organization as Princess Elizabeth. A typical Junior's meeting was a busy time of fulfilling the latest request for help. The primary objective during war time was to work to meet the demands for items such as warm clothing, blankets, wooden splints, bandages and of course, money. Juniors learned how to knit and sew and did so with vigour, producing thousands of garments. They conducted a variety of events to raise funds for equipment for Canadian forces and for bombed areas of Britain. One project of the Canadian Juniors was to establish and maintain fourteen British nurseries for the duration of the war. Juniors gave of their time and energies freely. One woman

recalled "it was always for the right cause, we were doing the right thing."<sup>94</sup>

It was in the early 1900's that the leaders of the International Red Cross understood what an important factor the recruitment of children would be to their program. School children were organized for Red Cross work in Ontario in 1899 and in Quebec and Saskatchewan in 1914 and 1915 respectively. These groups were successful as the children worked to help soldiers in the South African and the First World War.<sup>95</sup> A committee was formed to study the possibilities of a Junior Red Cross and reported to the Central Council in February of 1920. It was recognized that the Red Cross could not effectively implement its public health program "unless school pupils were included in its membership."<sup>96</sup> Miss Jean E. Browne was appointed, in 1922, as National Director of Junior Red Cross and editor of the Junior magazine. The concept of a school organization was formed and was called the Junior Red Cross. In 1922, the League of Red Cross Societies' Meeting of the General Council resolved that the:

Junior Red Cross is organized for the purpose of inculcating in the children...the ideal of peace and the practice of service, especially in relation to the care of their health and that of others, the understanding and acceptance of civic responsibility, and the cultivation of a spirit of friendly helpfulness towards other children in all countries.<sup>97</sup>

The cardinal principles for the Junior Red Cross were: the use of the school system and the recognition of the teacher as the leader of Red Cross work in that system.<sup>98</sup> The motto "I serve" was chosen and members were simply called Juniors. With the onset of the Second World War the "Junior's Belief"<sup>99</sup> was published in 1940:

...I believe that our brave soldiers are fighting in far off lands so that other children may go to bed at night without fear. And I believe in the helpful work of the Red Cross... and in the Junior Red Cross to which I hope all the boys and girls throughout the world will soon belong and then everywhere there will be cleanliness, and health and happiness.<sup>100</sup>

Once the war began the objectives of the Junior Red Cross: health, service and international friendliness took on an added dimension. "The Red Cross was the only time we talked about the war" recalled one interviewee.<sup>101</sup> A British Columbia interior school stated that "with the opening of 1940 came an intense desire to be doing definite war work."<sup>102</sup> The representatives sent by the Red Cross to remind school children of the health rules now had an additional message. "The lady would come in from the Red Cross and give us a pep talk", declared one interviewee, "every week she would tell us what was needed, what we should be knitting."<sup>103</sup> As the demand for war work increased so did the encouragement for more Juniors. The Minister of Education, G.M. Weir, addressed a letter to the students and teachers of British Columbia in which he encouraged increased memberships.<sup>104</sup> Membership in British Columbia grew from 30,995 members in 1940, to 42,729 in 1943.<sup>105</sup>

The Canadian Red Cross organization permeated both the curriculum and the lives of British Columbia school children during wartime. Juniors were organized into what were called units. In the elementary schools each classroom was a unit with the teacher as director. In the junior high schools units were formed of club members who appointed their own "officers and conveners, and carr[ied] on a form of democratic self government."<sup>106</sup> With teachers functioning as advisors it was

hoped a sense of self confidence and responsibility would be fostered. Later, with "the outbreak of war the Junior Red Cross...began its penetration of Senior High Schools."<sup>107</sup> At all grade levels the ideal was to have every child in the schools involved as a Junior. These Juniors, through their war work, experienced "in a practical way the expression and development of sound patriotism."<sup>108</sup> Students participated as fervent war workers sewing, knitting, salvaging and selling to support the soldiers who fought the "battle for freedom."<sup>109</sup>

The Red Cross button served as an important symbol of membership. Once a teacher sent in an application her students received Red Cross pins and a subscription to the Canadian Red Cross Junior magazine. Livingstone school in Vancouver reported that "when the pins come they wear them very proudly."<sup>110</sup> One woman explained: "We all got a button we wore, it was a red cross."<sup>111</sup> One fellow recalled "you got a pin which you wore, some kids who wore beanies, wore it on their beanies."<sup>112</sup> When metal became a scarce commodity adherence to the war effort was demonstrated and Juniors were asked to recycle their 1942-43 pins and those were the last ones produced during the Second World War.<sup>113</sup> One interviewee who attended Trail Central school recalled more elaborate attire than the pin: "we had Junior Red Cross and when we went into junior high in 1942 we wore a big red apron that said 'Miss Canada' and blue hats."<sup>114</sup>

Each school with a Junior Red Cross membership received The Canadian Red Cross Junior, a monthly publication designed to inform Juniors of all ages of activities and events and inspire them to uphold the Junior's belief. This large, well designed



magazine with the colourful cover, which usually showed a Red Cross Nurse or a member of the Canadian armed services was considered "one of Canada's most outstanding children's magazines."<sup>115</sup> Feature articles told of war efforts on the part of Juniors nation wide. Letters of thanks from recipients of clothing and other items were published. It also gave advice to teachers who wanted to maintain Junior Red Cross units in their classrooms. Along with various activities it published stories and plays for children to read and enact in class time. Plays such as "Canada's Reply" in which children saluted Britannia and the Red Cross:

When the mighty hand of destruction showers death on helpless thousands, the Red Cross takes the field, and, tender of hand and brave of heart, with its untold works of mercy.  
(Enter the Red Cross Nurses - Salute.)<sup>116</sup>

Even the magazine's advertisements were designed to appeal to children with such slogans as "See and read the picture story of the Dieppe Raid in the new comic style magazine...Canadian Heroes"<sup>117</sup> Or children could order a "36 Piece Commando Set for Boys!"<sup>118</sup>

As the devastation of war increased so did the work load of the Red Cross and consequently the Juniors. The demand for clothing, equipment and funds for servicemen, prisoners and victims of war was great. Infringing on class time seemed a small sacrifice to make. The result was that Juniors were involved with an array of Red Cross war work usually during one classroom period per week. Schools would usually designate the time allotment for clubs for the Junior Red Cross meeting. One woman explained "belonging to the Junior Red Cross, you had to belong,

you had no choice. Every Friday we had Junior Red Cross in the afternoons...it was during school time."<sup>119</sup> Another woman remembered "...we had Red Cross meetings on Wednesday afternoons in the last hour. We would knit most of the time and sometimes we made posters for the Red Cross war effort."<sup>120</sup> At Central Junior High in Victoria staff members sponsored Red Cross sewing and knitting clubs on Tuesdays from 3:00 to 3:45 p.m.<sup>121</sup> The weekly club period at Point Grey junior high became a time to knit for the Junior Red Cross.<sup>122</sup> While one man recalled that when he went to cadets every week "the girls had Red Cross instead. They were always knitting and sewing."<sup>123</sup>

In most schools both boys as well as girls became Juniors and were involved in the Red Cross meetings. Boys were more often salvaging aluminum or paper while girls were knitting or sewing, but some schools were more open minded. One school in Bamberton had only two girls and nine boys and the teacher felt "very proud of their efforts in knitting."<sup>124</sup> Jean E. Browne stated that "many boys learned to knit, although the Junior Red Cross never made that proposal."<sup>125</sup> One fellow recounted his personal dilemma: "for the Junior Red Cross we did knitting in school, learned to knit once a week on Fridays from 11:00 to 12:00. My father was really uptight about knitting in school, especially teaching it to boys. I knitted grey woollen socks for the boys overseas."<sup>126</sup> School children knitted endless miles of wool. Often first raising money to purchase the wool, knitting it, then sending the articles to the Red Cross. Wool was obtained from the Red Cross, then distributed and arrangements were made for experienced knitters to teach the novices.

Juniors found that knitting was one of the main activities during wartime. One woman remembered "...we knitted, we knitted constantly."<sup>127</sup> Of all the clicking knitting needles, one fellow philosophized:

everyone was always knitting. One could assume that the government never gave anyone any socks. People knitted balaclavas, mitts with no fingers. Why everyone had to knit, I don't know. The government gave out wool, you knitted and turned it back in. Maybe because things were wool, one trip through the mud and you had to throw them away!"<sup>128</sup>

Knitting pamphlets and magazines were published by such companies as Lux Laundry soap<sup>129</sup> and Monarch "the makers of Monarch Yarns" which listed "four ideal yarns for Military knitting."<sup>130</sup> The Red Cross Society published "Red Cross Knitting" an illustrated instruction guide that listed "what was desperately needed."<sup>131</sup> It requested members knit everything from socks to rifle mitts, from helmets to amputation covers. The Red Cross also published booklets for "Selected Civilian Knitting Instructions for Women and Children"<sup>132</sup> Knitters could make garments for needy British civilians. Knitting was not only considered a necessary skill but a patriotic one as well. Juniors were inspired by a film the Red Cross made of little Rita from Cranbrook who "with only one perfect arm...is knitting for the Junior Red Cross."<sup>133</sup> Children were often found, in school or at home, knitting service caps, balaclava helmets, seaman's caps and stockings, service socks, scarves, wristlets, fingerless rifle gloves and one finger rifle mitts.<sup>134</sup> One woman explained that duty overcame dislike: "I was not enthusiastic about knitting or crocheting, though during the war I would knit socks."<sup>135</sup> Juniors were often rewarded for their knitting

efforts. A Canadian sailor wrote the Canadian Red Cross Junior magazine to thank the students for the "magnificent gift of winter comforts."<sup>136</sup> A British child wrote in to thank Juniors for the gifts of clothing, "they fit me lovely and I feel so proud to wear clothes all the way from Canada."<sup>137</sup>

Any child who could knit was able to add a square to the popular afghans which were also constructed. Usually these were sent to families in the bombed areas of Britain. One interviewee explained "a lot was done for the war effort in Errington. There was a very active Red Cross...I remember knitting a square that was going into an afghan. I'm not sure where the afghan was sent but my square never made it. It didn't really turn out to be a square!"<sup>138</sup> Kitsilano high school had nineteen Junior Red Cross clubs which met during period six on Fridays. One club, entitled the "Kadet Knitting Korps" made dozens of Air Force socks, scarves and sweaters, while their "Keweva Club" knitted squares for afghans.<sup>139</sup> Shirley Wardhaugh, a grade five student in Vancouver, was so overwhelmed with all the knitting she wrote a poem about it entitled "Knit, Knit, Knit (with apologies to Lord Tennyson)."<sup>140</sup>

Knit, knit, knit

On thy cold grey steel, O Shir!  
And I would that these socks were finished,  
And that they will fit you Sir!

O well for the Seaforth plaid.  
As it swings along its way!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
As he watches for ships on the bay!

And the grey wool socks go on,  
As I knit them row after row:  
For it's all for the boys in the Air Force blue  
That I knit; turn the heel, make the toe.

Knit, knit, knit.  
 On thy cold grey steel, O Shir!  
 And I would that these socks were finished,  
 And that they will fit you Sir!

Teachers searched for ideas on how best to conduct an interesting Junior Red Cross period. The B.C. Teacher magazine suggested that students start with a business meeting. Projects, funds, materials would be discussed. Correspondence from other Red Cross groups or from headquarters would be read.<sup>141</sup> These meetings were usually followed by the main activity. Along with knitting, activities included "producing plays such as those found in the Red Cross magazine."<sup>142</sup> Children also read stories or sang songs from the magazine. They broadcast Red Cross news in mock radio programmes, and invited visitors such as "a military person to tell how Red Cross aids soldiers."<sup>143</sup> Juniors also designed posters, wrote reports, and held discussions or quizzes on topics related to the work of the Red Cross.<sup>144</sup> A teacher from Qualicum described her Junior Red Cross period in which the children turned their sand table into a Red Cross booth to raise funds for the war effort. She reported that the "girls made candy and sewn pot holders while the boys' handwork [was] in the form of teapot stands and scissor holders."<sup>145</sup>

Juniors were employed for a seemingly endless variety of war work activities. One woman, a student in the Peace River district, recalled "I belonged to the Junior Red Cross, we did 'Alice in Wonderland' to raise money for the war."<sup>146</sup> Another remembered "I worked for the Junior Red Cross...we used to sort rivets."<sup>147</sup> The Vancouver School Board praised boys who were

involved in making wooden test tube racks to aid the Junior Red Cross.<sup>148</sup> The Junior Red Cross members of a Victoria high school raised money for the materials and then made over three hundred arm splints. This activity was requested by the Department of National Defence.<sup>149</sup> Other Juniors at Templeton school formed a toy making club and sold their handmade toys. Students from Vernon Elementary made and sold bird houses.<sup>150</sup> Many Juniors remained active on weekends and on summer holidays too. One woman remembered working for the Red Cross: "we would get together early on Saturday mornings and pile into a truck and go around to collect for the salvage drives."<sup>151</sup> While another "joined the Red Cross in the summer as a volunteer 'to win the war' as their slogan went. I would go about in an army jeep or truck...and we picked up the essential service workers."<sup>152</sup>

Juniors experienced the benefits of cooperation and teamwork as they joined together to accomplish various war work tasks. Vernon high school organized a Vernon Junior Red Cross Fair and Juniors worked together growing, picking, canning and selling fruit and vegetables.<sup>153</sup> Seventeen schools in the Peace River district held a Junior Red Cross Health day and Bazaar. Juniors provided articles for sale at the bazaar while "the Royal Canadian Air Force brought in 'revels' from Edmonton for sale."<sup>154</sup> Children from Stuart Wood School in Kamloops put on a tea for Parents' Day and raised money for the Red Cross.<sup>155</sup> While Victoria high school students had a "two night circus from which they cleared the huge sum of \$1,617.60."<sup>156</sup> Members of the Junior Red Cross at North and West Vancouver high schools

worked together in quilting bees to construct large quilts which read "gift of the Canadian Junior Red Cross."<sup>157</sup> While one woman who attended Magee recalled "once a week we would meet and I remember we made a quilt, we sewed letters on it to read 'a gift from the Canadian Red Cross.'"<sup>158</sup>

Children often met during school time in sewing bees. Young Juniors in Victoria made over three hundred handkerchiefs for servicemen.<sup>159</sup> Juniors at Quadra school "hemmed by hand, handkerchiefs and triangular bandages...in the desire to serve."<sup>160</sup> Children in the two Junior Red Cross sewing clubs at Kitsilano high school, called the "Happy Healthy Helpers" and "For the Cause Club" turned in an enormous quantity of gauze and khaki handkerchiefs in one year", as well as "nearly nine hundred face cloths, quilts and many articles of clothing."<sup>161</sup> When, in 1942, the Red Cross took on the project of helping eight War Nurseries in Britain, Juniors throughout British Columbia began sewing. Juniors made hundreds of articles of clothing when they saw the pictures in the Junior magazine and received the letters from these needy "Orphans of the Blitz".<sup>162</sup>

The Juniors helped those overseas to win the war and were known, figuratively, as "the man behind the man behind the gun."<sup>163</sup> Juniors produced an endless stream of garments and raised money to purchase necessary equipment for overseas. One woman remembered "I rolled bandages for the Red Cross and packed boxes to go overseas."<sup>164</sup> Over 40,000 parcels were shipped weekly from Canada to prisoner of war camps while blankets, medical supplies and garments were needed for "those who have lost everything through enemy bombing."<sup>165</sup> The appeal was

strong to "offer comfort and help to the wounded, the dying and the homeless..."<sup>166</sup> One woman from Oliver remembered "...we took pennies to school and put them in little Red Cross containers, at school and in the stores."<sup>167</sup> Again letters of appreciation came from Britain thanking Juniors "for the way in which you are helping us to face this ordeal, when the children of the Empire begin to help one another we can face anything within our power."<sup>168</sup>

Famous members of the Red Cross were used to motivate Juniors. Canadian Juniors were often excited to read letters from their Patroness, Princess Elizabeth. One letter of congratulations, printed on Buckingham Palace letterhead was published on the cover of the March 1943 Canadian Red Cross Junior magazine. Juniors were thanked by the Princess for their gifts of money and clothing. The Princess stated the Canadian Juniors "have set a fine example of living up to their motto" and she was "most proud to be their Patroness."<sup>169</sup> Another "event of great significance in the history of the Junior Red Cross in British Columbia" was the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, the sister of the King and wife of the Governor General. She attended a rally at Point Grey Junior High School in 1944 and when the Princess addressed the Juniors there "was breathless silence while the audience listened to her, and admired and loved her."<sup>170</sup> She expressed her admiration for the magnificent work that the Juniors had maintained fourteen day nurseries in Britain. She then read an announcement from Princess Elizabeth and "the applause that followed this...showed the deep affection of the audience for our royal patron."<sup>171</sup>



School children learned through the Junior Red Cross that the motto 'I serve' meant more than just knitting and sewing. They learned that there were many children in other parts of the world that were suffering from the war's devastation. The Canadian Junior Red Cross magazine asked Juniors "do you ever feel, boys and girls, as if you were sitting in a nice, safe, front seat watching this cruel and dreadful circus called 'WAR'?"<sup>172</sup> The price the Red Cross asked the Juniors to pay for this seat was "a war tax" of hard work on their Junior Red Cross projects.<sup>173</sup> Juniors were to make an important contribution to their country by observing the health rules and serving others. There was no question in the minds of Red Cross officials that Juniors helped definitely in National defence. British Columbia's Director for the Junior Red Cross, Margaret Palmer, proudly told the Vernon News that children in the Junior Red Cross are "citizens of the finest possible calibre; who are learning in their tender years the responsibility as well as the joy of self sacrifice and giving..."<sup>174</sup> Palmer believed that the Junior Red Cross was "a powerful antidote against the insidious poisons of Communist and Nazi propaganda."<sup>175</sup> When the urgent call was sent out, the children of British Columbia were asked to "apply every last ounce of...effort to getting things done. In the name of God and your fellow man, that is your job."<sup>176</sup>

"Give according to your conscience."<sup>177</sup> It seemed that it was not enough for school children to purchase War Savings Stamps and work tirelessly for the Junior Red Cross, children throughout British Columbia were pouring their energies into

countless different funds and projects for the war effort. "Total War and Total Effort" was the title of Mackenzie King's radio broadcast in 1941.<sup>178</sup> War time was to be a time of sacrifice. King was expanding the Navy and the Air Force. He implored Canadians: "the savings of all the citizens of Canada, may well weight the scales on the side of Victory."<sup>179</sup> All of King's 'citizens' included the school children thus schools often developed objectives for their students to meet. One elementary school set its "Four War Aims: good conduct, buying War Savings Stamps, having a Victory garden and bringing salvage."<sup>180</sup> Children also worked for the war effort by buying Victory bonds, raising money for numerous war funds, assembling food packages and even working as Air Raid messengers.

During a Victory Loan campaign in 1943 a bomber roared through Vancouver skies. Amazed children glanced up as thousands of leaflets floated from the sky. They grasped the nearest paper and read: "An aeroplane has dropped this and could just as easily have dropped a BOMB...What does this mean to you? This is YOUR war! Buy Victory Bonds and Invest in Victory!"<sup>181</sup> Schools participated in a variety Victory Loan drives. Municipal Inspectors reported that the "Victory Loan Campaigns received considerable publicity through the schools by means of poster contests, display banners on the school buildings, and classroom discussions."<sup>182</sup> Schools and government were actively involved in the sales of Victory bonds. One man remembered: "walking home from school and the bombers flying overhead and the doors open up and tons of literature comes out advertising Victory Bonds."<sup>183</sup> Another interviewee described the "war bond

shows during the war...seeing Jack Benny appealing for money and Phil Harris. The whole family would go to these things."184 Victory bonds were sold to cover "Canada's over all borrowing needs for war purposes."185 Citizens were asked to "salt away in Victory Bonds money that is now neither patriotic nor profitable to spend."186 The students of Kitsilano High School actively raised funds for Victory Bonds and their school newspaper told of: "\$3,150... presented to a Victory Bond salesman, described by one senior as 'an affable employee of the greatest firm in the world.'"187 One man recounted a campaign at his high school, "a Dutch resistance fighter addressing the whole of the school, describing how he killed a German, this was during one of the war bond drives."188 Campaigns were effective, schools in Vancouver averaged approximately \$25,000 a year in Victory Bond sales.189

School children were ready and willing to help out. The president of student council at Point Grey junior high school declared "whatever was required of us we did cheerfully, for we young people of Canada are determined that we will never face a life of slavery under foreign masters..."190 Point Grey junior high held a successful paper drive and children had: "stiff muscles after ten days of carrying, weighing and packing over 64,000 pounds of paper...and the Point Grey War Chest was swelled by one hundred dollars."191 These students helped raise the total amount of paper collected for Vancouver to an enormous 152,800 pounds.192 Charles Dickens elementary school decided to hold three paper drives per year through house competitions with "all money to go to the war effort."193

School children were found rummaging around in the basements, garages and attics of homes as they participated in salvage drives. "We took all this stuff to school", recalled an interviewee, "there was always some drive going on at our school. We collected, everyone did it."<sup>194</sup> Children began to collect all kinds of items. School children in Vancouver alone collected, in 1942, an incredible 21,700 pounds of rubber, 152,800 pounds of paper, and 60,300 pounds of metal scrap. They also collected socks, books and magazines, buttons and sweaters and sent them to soldiers overseas.<sup>195</sup> Youngsters might have chanted: "a tisket a tasket, Hitler's in his casket"<sup>196</sup> while they scoured their neighbourhoods. One woman explained that there were often rewards for salvage materials, "I remember collecting enough and going to see my first movie which was Fantasia."<sup>197</sup> Awards in some schools consisted of "the principal or a visitor would honour the classes which... collected the most metal paper for the regular salvage drives."<sup>198</sup>

Children set out to collect as much metal as they could lay their hands on. Salvagers soon considered aluminum and tin precious metals. One man remembered: "for the war effort I collected aluminum toothpaste tubes and cigarette foils."<sup>199</sup> Another interviewee explained an odd benefit of smoking: "Kids whose parents smoked had an unfair advantage because there was tin foil on the insides of cigarette packages."<sup>200</sup> The students at Point Grey junior high held a tin can drive in 1942, they called it the "Students 'Can' Axis" drive.<sup>201</sup> One man collected aluminum for dual purposes: "There was a big poster of Hitler, we gathered aluminum and we would all go up to the poster

and we would throw it at Hitler. I did that, scrounged a pot from somewhere."202 Another fellow observed: "conservation and recycling, it's nothing new you know", he recalled collecting "all the tin foil you could get. It was all part of the war effort."203 A woman simply remembered "our class making a giant ball of foil."204 Some children collected aluminum without knowing why: "We brought old pots and pans to school. Maybe they made battleships out of it."205 Author, Wallace Stegner wrote about this race for aluminum: it stemmed from the First World War salvage drives for "tea lead"206, thin sheets of lead that resembled silver paper. All that salvaging may have been to no avail as he described: people tried to turn in their silver papers and the government didn't want it.207

Children often brought fat and bones into school as well. One interviewee stated: "I brought jars of fat to school..."208 Pamphlets were issued by the National Salvage Office. The slogan: "Save Fats and Bones" was explained in illustrated detail. "Every pound of fat saved enables Canada to buy more weapons of war."209 Children read that fat produced glycerine, an ingredient used in high explosive bombs and that bones were sold for the purchase of munitions.210 One woman was aware of her mother's efforts: "she kept a can on the back of her stove for grease, she saved all the grease, which we collected to make munitions."211 Journalist Denny Boyd remembered "we collected...fat from the Sunday roasts."212

Children also donated and collected used clothing and fabric. One school announced that all children were to have "spare material collected on the verandah, that it may be

gathered and sold to the Vancouver War Chest."<sup>213</sup> Many contributions came in bundles and items such as afghans, rugs, scarves, wash-cloths, sweaters, and mitts were made into "V" Bundles: Victory Bundles for Britain.<sup>214</sup> "V" Bundles were very popular with children and in Vancouver an exhibition was organized in the Georgian room at the Hudson's Bay. Displayed were the articles knitted, sewn or woven by school children that were to be included in the "V" Bundles for Britain program. The board also reported that the school children in grades one through nine were delighted to model some of the garments they made for the "V" Bundles in a fashion show at the exhibit.<sup>215</sup> Not all children were as generous, one woman described that when her "mother...told us: 'there are little children dying in London'...I remember going upstairs and searching through and I found my worst pair of socks I had, because I didn't want to give them my good socks!"<sup>216</sup>

A plethora of needy causes existed for these hard working children. Along with salvaging British Columbia children worked to raise money for the Navy League, League of Empire, Poppy Fund and Christmas Hampers the Lord Mayor's Fund, the Air Supremacy Fund, the Navy Week Fund the Evacuated Children's Fund and the King George Fund for Sailors.<sup>217</sup> School children in Armstrong performed "skits, dances, instrumental and vocal solos...the concert netted \$150 for the milk for Britain Fund."<sup>218</sup> Girls in a Vernon school worked on a Penny Parade to raise money for bombed schools in London. A letter was published in the Vernon News to thank the girls as "we need warm clothes as our neighbourhood was badly bombed and many windows are

missing."219 Children also raised money for the popular Spitfire fund and the Princess Elizabeth Fund.220 Certainly one of the youngest to contribute to the latter, was a four year old child. She solemnly walked into a Point Grey school council meeting with all 137 of her pennies to do "her part to help these children in the bombed areas of Britain."221

When the Russians became allies they also became another cause for children to work for. One Vancouver school "urged pupils to bring clean woollen garments for the Russians."222 A colourful pamphlet seen in some schools which read "a valiant ally is calling. Russia needs your help today. Support the Canadian Aid to Russia Fund for Russia and Humanity."223 It described the allied Russians battling Nazis for a free world. It urged Canadians to help fight the battle with contributions. Canadians were asked to donate "warm clothing, blankets, extra foods, seeds and medical supplies to the needy Russian people."224 By February 1943, British Columbia schools raised \$3,920 for the Canadian Aid to Russia Fund.225

School children with green thumbs were encouraged to grow vegetables to sell and turn a profit for the war effort. One man remembered planning his 'Victory Garden' carefully, and not only for the vegetables: "I had a Victory Garden in an open field, I got out there and I got marks for it. I planted things that grew quickly: radishes and onions."226 One teacher described the changes to her school as "part of the sports field has been turned into a vegetable plot, and sturdy cabbages rise over its once velvet lawns."227 To promote these Victory gardens, explained one interviewee, "in most public places there were

posters on the walls that said... 'have you started your Victory Garden Yet?' The government also gave us seeds to encourage us."228 Schools promoted Victory gardens as well. One Vancouver school devised quite a system in which a list of growers names was kept on the black board and teachers and other students were urged to visit the gardens and make garden booklets. House captains were to sponsor gardens and award house points for successful growth and in October a garden exhibit was held.229

Children also assembled food packages to send to soldiers overseas. Items were chosen thoughtfully and often letters or notes were included. One woman explained: "we packed Christmas cakes, sugar and chocolate. Canned salmon was very popular. You never knew exactly where the food was going, we would address it to a depot."230 Students of a high school Guidance classes in one Interior school held three Saturday teas for mothers and friends, the proceeds went to purchasing: "candy and smokes which were sent with notes and old school and city papers...to the men overseas."231 As proof of the spirit of these classes, these students also organized a dance so they could raise money to send Christmas gift parcels overseas. Funds that children raised could be used to order goods from the Agent General for British Columbia in London. The Agent General published pamphlets entitled: "Comforts for British Columbians Serving Overseas". Children could order parcels containing cakes, cigarettes, chocolates and enclose a personal message.232

Children helped put together parcels at home for needy relatives overseas. One woman recalled: "I remember my parents



sending food packages over to our relatives in Britain, we would bake things for them."233 Another woman described how appreciative their recipients were: "I can remember we used to make up parcels to send to friends or family in Britain, we would put things like chocolates or sugar in, things that were hard to get over there. They would write us back, to thank us and tell us they would throw a party as soon as the package arrived, that's how bad it was over there."234 Those who lived overseas were fortunate to have Canadian relatives, one interviewee remembered: "I had an uncle in England, during the war. From 1939 on, mother would start gathering tea and sugar, cocoa and everything and there was always a big huge box sent to him and to her friend in Wales. That went on all through the war, mother sent packages. All the Welsh people did it if they had relations."235 One woman in Oliver recalled "I was very tiny but I remember helping my mother put together packages. Like what we call care packages today...I remember we would hide money in the cocoa tin. We sometimes put warm clothes in the packages. Woollens, wool scarves, gloves, socks, stuff that you could pack tightly, they needed warm things like that."236

Some children contributed to the war effort by becoming messengers in air raid drills. If children had a bike they got involved. One man remembered riding around in Kerrisdale and "a fellow...stopped me on the street while I was riding my bike and asked me to join the A.R.P. [Air Raid Precaution]. Runners had to have a bike."237 After the attack on Pearl Harbour the school boards cooperated fully with the Central Civilian Protection Committee for air raid precaution work.238 School buildings

were surveyed for use as emergency shelters, emergency feeding stations, and emergency hospitals if the need was to arise.<sup>239</sup> Divisional Air Raid Precaution Stations were set up on school grounds. School children became involved in air raid drills as wardens, runners or administering first aid. Children participated in basic training learning what to do in an air raid. Training included First Aid and gas training, while cadets were employed as runners for the Auxiliary Fire Services.<sup>240</sup> This wartime activity was deemed important: "should Vancouver ever be attacked, these [students] though young, may be able to render valuable service."<sup>241</sup> All schools were equipped with fire fighting equipment "in case of incendiary bombs; sand bags, water pails, rakes and shovels."<sup>242</sup> During the war, wrote journalist Denny Boyd, "I was an A.R.P. messenger, me and my bike and my tin helmet. That stood for Air Raid Precaution...We had to go around and make sure nobody had their porch lights on. Each team had a bucket of sand and a bucket of water and a stirrup pump. We were supposed to throw sand and pump the water on the bombs."<sup>243</sup>

War work was considered a necessary activity in a child's daily life. "An outlet for that youthful energy which can, alas, be so easily wasted."<sup>244</sup> "With the zest and enthusiasm characteristic of Canadian youth", wrote W.O. Banfield, the British Columbia Chairman of the Junior Red Cross, "students ...have been ready and anxious...to answer the many calls of wartime through...service work and generous donations..."<sup>245</sup> Children were asked, by their teachers and principals, to think of those living in war torn Europe before thinking of themselves.

They learned about the importance of the war effort "in keeping those overseas supplied with food, weapons and munitions...saving the lives of our men...that they may win this war." They were busy workers during those six years: donating, constructing, selling, growing, collecting. They discovered a myriad of ways to raise funds, and were rewarded for their efforts. One woman summed up her work for the war effort simply as "your duty to your country and as a child that meant you saved things and you did without and that was the sacrifice you made."<sup>246</sup>

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## CHAPTER IV

## "OUR LIVES WERE TERRIBLY DISLOCATED":

## THE WAR AND THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

Gradually the war came to permeate the lives of children in British Columbia. Children were affected by the war's events, by the changes, fears and excitements that war brought. Interviewees distinctly remembered the beginning and the end of the Second World War. They listened to and sometimes overheard their parents and teachers talk of war. Some children were included in open discussions about the war's events while others were sheltered from the frightening details. Many children experienced war as a romantic and exciting time, a time for patriotism to the Empire and strong national spirit. Children's thoughts were not always so optimistic as many listened to their parents fears and anxieties about the war. Children had strong memories of particular events such as Pearl Harbour and Dieppe. They watched as interned Japanese families were split up and seemed to disappear and they learned that war caused adults to display emotions such as fear, prejudice and hatred. Children would express these prejudices in their words and actions and even in their games. Children also experienced a time when life's regular routine was interrupted by the sight of war ships and manned guns in Vancouver's harbour, air raid shelters, sirens and blackout

curtains. Daily life was changed by the food shortages and ration coupons as well. Interviewees remembered that their parents and teachers became eagerly involved in the war effort while some discovered that war also meant employment and prosperity in the various war industries or the service. Children said goodbye to relatives who joined up to fight the war and they met service men and women and listened to their experiences. Some children thought about the day they would be old enough to join the forces, while others decided not to wait that long. Some children had to mourn the death of family members and friends who had fought and died overseas.

Within a day of Britain's declaration of war against Germany the way of Canadian life has been altered. The country was calm Sunday - but nobody smiled. It was Labour Day week end...Churches were crowded. Millions sat beside radios from early morning until late night, They heard Mr. Chamberlain, the King, Premier Daladier, Mr. Mackenzie King, and his ministers explain the position of Empire and Canada.<sup>1</sup>

The war for Canada began 10 September 1939, and interviewees had a variety of individual memories about the beginning of the war. One interviewee remembered "we had all gone fishing that weekend and my father saying: 'there's a war on.'"<sup>2</sup> Another woman described the anxiety at home: "I knew the adults were tense and I could feel that. The night that war was declared, everyone was talking in hushed voices."<sup>3</sup> To others it was less momentous. One man recalled "hearing that the war had started while I was eating my breakfast."<sup>4</sup> Those who kept abreast with current events and world news were able to recognize the coming war. "When the war was going on in Europe we knew it was imminent, Canada would become involved", explained one man, "everyone was prepared when war broke out, there was so much rumbling going on."<sup>5</sup> Families



with relatives in Europe became increasingly anxious as the news grew worse. One woman explained "Europeans felt that there was going to be a war. Germany was getting stronger and stronger. They were really frightened of the politics that were going on and they were terrified of Hitler. The German war movement was terribly strong and I suppose my parents feared that war was going to break out at any time."<sup>6</sup> As the German war machine rolled through Europe the news of successive invasions made the threat of a world war more evident. Invasions were recalled by many as signifying the beginning of war. "We had relatives in Budapest and Czechoslovakia and there was terrible fear when Germany invaded Poland...the Germans were so close our relatives were terrified", recalled one woman.<sup>7</sup> One fellow remembered the beginning "...when Germany invaded Norway."<sup>8</sup> Another interviewee described "coming home at lunch hour and hearing the news about the Japanese invasion of China..."<sup>9</sup>

Now that the Second World War had started it became a dominant topic of conversation in many homes. Often children were included in the family's conversations about the war's events. One man recalled, "there would be political discussion over the dinner table and I'd sit and listen to that."<sup>10</sup> A woman remembered that at her dinner time "the children got involved with the adults. There was none of this children eat in the kitchen kind of thing. Children were part of the gathering, so we would hear people talking about the war, and about Hitler."<sup>11</sup> In another home a woman's "brother was very interested in the war. He and my mother used to talk about it all the time. I can remember listening in..."<sup>12</sup> "I remember having dinner", one

woman said when discussing her father, "he talked about the war..."<sup>13</sup> Another remembered growing up in Oliver and attending "family picnics...Hundreds of people would go, and the men would all stand together and they would talk about the war. That was one way to learn about what was going on in the world."<sup>14</sup>

In some homes the war was discussed in a less than straightforward manner. Parents felt it was better to shelter their children from any upsetting news. This attitude often led children to feel indifferent about the war. When one child asked "would we lose the war, momma?" She replied "Oh no, God wouldn't let that happen."<sup>15</sup> With his father stationed in England, one man reflected "we were never worried that he would be killed. My mother never seemed to be concerned...we never thought of it from the point of view that his plane might be attacked."<sup>16</sup> He concluded that he was "really pretty sheltered...A lot of my knowledge of the war came after the war."<sup>17</sup> Many parents, like his, did not want their children to worry. One woman described this idyllic view when on the night before her father left to serve overseas "he talked about the war, he didn't feel it was going to be a real threat."<sup>18</sup> Sharing her feelings about the war she said: "I was never really interested in it. To me it was more a problem for adults to solve...at home the war was something our parents would take care of."<sup>19</sup> Some parents simply did not feel children should be included in their discussions. One interviewee remembered the general lack of topical conversation: "Certainly people did not comment to me about the war's events that much."<sup>20</sup> His impression was that "the war was talked about if adults were there...it was an adult

topic of conversation."<sup>21</sup> He had decided that the war was "way off there, and I can't say that any of it affected our daily life that much...The war seemed to be much a part of the background"<sup>22</sup>

To a number of children the war in Europe and the Orient seemed to be too far away to be real. "It was a romantic feeling about the war, it was so distant, so far away" recounted one man.<sup>23</sup> "It was all very romantic" claimed another, "I was taken in."<sup>24</sup> One interviewee explained that the "war was so far away, it was over in Europe."<sup>25</sup> One fellow remembered his friends joining up "they were so excited, it was a very romantic view of the war."<sup>26</sup> Another man "would define the war as being romantic, unreal, full of expectations, everyone with positive views."<sup>27</sup> "I remember the war was very romanticized" one woman commented, "it was so far away..."<sup>28</sup> Another recalled "for a young girl in those days it was a romantic period. Bands played, and young men marched."<sup>29</sup> One interviewee attributed it to her age: "I think when you are that young you can be frivolous about those kinds of things."<sup>30</sup>

Much of the romantic feeling stemmed from the media's attempts to maintain public morale. Upon reflection one woman related "There was a patriotism that was never generated again, not in Canada."<sup>31</sup> This patriotism upheld the notion that the war "was always for the right cause, we were doing the right thing."<sup>32</sup> One man described war "presented to us as Rah Rah the Empire..."<sup>33</sup> Denny Boyd, a Canadian journalist, recalled that "...everyone was enthusiastic about The Big One. There weren't any peace protesters. Everyone talked about Doing Their

Bit, about Getting Behind The War Effort."<sup>34</sup> "It was quite a time to live..." explained one woman, "...everything you did was war."<sup>35</sup>

The propaganda produced by the Canadian government was full of optimistic promises of victory. One interviewee recalled that "it was always assumed that we would win the war."<sup>36</sup> "On the whole we were always fairly optimistic about the outcome of the war" declared one woman.<sup>37</sup> With promised victory the war was, to some, an exciting and fascinating time to grow up. One man remembered the war as "being a terribly interesting time to live. The types of weapons and guns and as a kid being interested in all these sorts of fascinating things, war weapons, airplanes and all that."<sup>38</sup> He also revealed the fact that "when the Russians joined in the war they presented a whole new genealogy of weapons..."<sup>39</sup> "While the war was on all your thinking, everything you did was centred around the war..." explained one interviewee.<sup>40</sup> Another disclosed: "it was a very vivid part of my life, to me it was the war to end all wars, not World War I."<sup>41</sup> Alan Thomas eloquently explained the aura of excitement during the war years: "...some of us became interested in the problems associated with victory and with peace, and were swept up emotionally in the founding of the United Nations and the other international bodies whose potential captured our imaginations."<sup>42</sup>

Along with the positive propaganda and excitement, the war also caused the powerful fear of the unknown. During family discussions many adults expressed their fears about the war and these fears were passed on to their children. One man remembered

listening in and he "got the impression from over hearing the adults conversations that they were quite scared."<sup>43</sup> Another explained: "My parents felt very threatened by the war because they had three boys."<sup>44</sup> One fellow stated that his "mother had lost her brother in the First World War and so she didn't want us to sign up."<sup>45</sup> One woman's strongest memory was that "the feeling in the area about the war was disgust."<sup>46</sup> Another interviewee remembered his "mother very nervous, concerned about it...As a kid I had this great imagination that anything might happen."<sup>47</sup> Another recalled "being in the house and talking about the situation and the sense of gravity..."<sup>48</sup> Family discussions would often impart the seriousness of war on children. One man explained that when "my parents wanted to move to Kelowna, I thought: wow this is really serious!"<sup>49</sup> Another recounted: "The war was taken very seriously in my family. There wasn't much joviality in it."<sup>50</sup> "My dad joined up in 1940", said one woman, and his friends "would drop by the house in the evenings for news...They all seemed so serious..."<sup>51</sup> The war became a very frightening thing to one woman who remembered listening to adults say that "...Hitler was going to invade the rest of the world, that Hitler and his war machine was coming closer. There was terrible fear in these people."<sup>52</sup> She had a nightmare that night and went "running, screaming and sobbing into the living room: 'I'm so scared of Hitler'...I believed that Hitler was going to come and kill mommy and my sisters and Ginger and the cat and the chickens, everything."<sup>53</sup> Journalist, Trevor Lautens, described the tone of the time as: "Understanding something bad had happened, feeling grown-ups' fear."<sup>54</sup>

Particular, significant events also made the war a very real and frightening experience to many children. Pearl Harbour, the Shelling of Point Estevan, the sinking of the Athenia and Dieppe were recalled by many of the interviewees. One man remarked "All kinds of things told us that war was going on. In terms of vivid awareness...I remember Pearl Harbour..."<sup>55</sup> It was a series of bizarre events that led many to consider the possibility of enemy invasion. In December 1941, the Japanese forces bombed Pearl Harbour. In March 1942, Japanese Canadians were forcibly evacuated from the west coast. In early June 1942, two Aleutian islands were seized and Japanese troops appeared to be advancing on the Alaskan mainland.<sup>56</sup> On 7 June 1942, an American freighter was torpedoed at the mouth of Juan de Fuca Strait. On 20 June a Japanese submarine shelled the lighthouse and radio station at Estevan Point on Vancouver Island.<sup>57</sup> Many remembered these events and the escalating fear of invasion that they caused. One man explained "British Columbia went to war against Japan Sunday a few minutes after the first bombs fell on Honolulu and the Phillipines..."<sup>58</sup> A woman recalled that "the big thing is the memory of Pearl Harbour day..."<sup>59</sup> "I do remember the morning of the attack on Pearl Harbour...and the phone ringing off the hook..." told one interviewee.<sup>60</sup> He also recalled the significance: "It wasn't really until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour...that the war's events began to effect me."<sup>61</sup> Another declared: "...Pearl Harbour I remember most vividly."

Some children remembered exactly where they were at the time. "I remember being on Grouse Mountain on December 7th and

being surprised when I hear what had happened." Recounted one man.<sup>62</sup> Another stated: "I remember where I was that day...I was up Seymour Mountain...we looked down at the city and the whole city was black."<sup>63</sup> The bombing caused many families to worry and talk about invasion. "I remember the day Pearl Harbour was bombed quite clearly, we listened to the broadcast on the radio, and we thought it was all over, that the Japanese would invade Canada next."<sup>64</sup> Another woman said: "I remember Pearl Harbour. Invasion was the big thing, and incendiary bombing. Those were the things we worried about." One man recalled that "they were scared that there would be an invasion...the Japanese were in Pearl Harbour which didn't seem so far away from Vancouver or Victoria..."<sup>65</sup> It was to alter his life considerably: "I remember we moved to Banff in 1942...I was sure it had something to do with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour...A lot of people from Vancouver and Victoria, some that we knew, went to Banff because of the perceived military threat to the coast of B.C."<sup>66</sup>

The shelling of the light house on Point Estevan was a shocking event for British Columbia's citizens. One woman, from Vancouver Island, described that night the air raid sirens wailed: "The night they shelled the lighthouse they sounded the siren in the middle of the night...We weren't really sure if it was a serious drill or not."<sup>67</sup> Others regarded it as a critical event: "I remember when Estevan was shelled. We thought the war was getting closer with the shelling."<sup>68</sup> The shelling also augmented people's fear of invasion "...when the Japanese sub shelled Estevan that was a very big thing which just added to

this fear" remarked one man.<sup>69</sup> Another stated: "...we were always afraid of a Japanese invasion. When Point Estevan was shelled by the Japanese sub, we thought for sure we had been invaded."<sup>70</sup>

The sinking of the Athenia was another momentous event that was well remembered. "It was September 4th, 1939...we sat in my parents living room," explained one man, "and we listened to the news...The announcer said that the steam ship Athenia had been sunk by German submarines off the coast of England."<sup>71</sup> A number of people from British Columbia were on board the Athenia and the event was well publicized and talked about. One woman recalled "when the Athenia sank. That was a more important event than the war itself. One of the girls from St. Mary's church was on it when it went down."<sup>72</sup> Another interviewee remembered the numerous news releases and he said: "There seemed to be more of an uproar over the Athenia than of Canada going to war." He admitted it was important to him because "a teacher from school was on the Athenia."<sup>73</sup> Another fellow nearly lost his classmates, the Kitsilano Band, "that really brought it home to us all. That this war could effect us in Canada, that it was real."<sup>74</sup> The battle at Dieppe, France, was also remembered by some. "I remember... listening to the radio for news on Dieppe...It was a great loss and we talked about it...for weeks afterwards" explained one man.<sup>75</sup> One woman remembered "I never thought of Canadians being at war until all the news of Dieppe."<sup>76</sup>

People were afraid that the war would soon come to Canada. "Everyone became very frightened that we were going to be invaded



by the Japanese", stated one man.<sup>77</sup> He also remembered that invasion was taken very seriously in his home. "People were almost paranoid of being invaded...my parents wanted to move to Kelowna..."<sup>78</sup> One woman recalled "we were expecting the Japanese to attack any time."<sup>79</sup> Another believed "the Japanese were very close to invading us."<sup>80</sup> "We were having Japanese scares..." recounted one interviewee. She said that the minister had visited her family and shared his strong fear of invasion: "...he stated that if the Japanese came over here he would kill himself and his children before he let their filthy hands touch them."<sup>81</sup> One woman concluded that "unless you lived then, you couldn't appreciate how it felt not knowing if someone was out there waiting to bomb you."<sup>82</sup> Other children were not as afraid, some even thought it was an exciting adventure. One fellow commented: "...we certainly never sat around thinking we would be bombed."<sup>83</sup> A woman remarked "We didn't really fear an invasion..."<sup>84</sup> Another remembered that the nearby woods was the agreed meeting place in case of an invasion. "I suppose that we were to hide there in case of an invasion...every plane that flew over, we went ran out to the woods...We weren't really afraid. It was fun for kids...I learned to smoke in the air raid shelter...smoking in these dried out bushes, we didn't need the help of the Japanese to start a fire!"<sup>85</sup>

"We felt danger from Japan once we'd seen the removal of the Japanese", stated one interviewee as he recalled the internment of the Japanese Canadians, "there were two Japanese families in the community and both of them just disappeared."<sup>86</sup> Following the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the internment and relocation of

the people of Japanese heritage in British Columbia was under way. The Government of Canada created the British Columbia Security Commission whose duty it was to evacuate more than 23,000 Japanese Canadians from their homes and means of livelihood. The report issued by the Commission in 1942 stated that "those Japanese known to be dangerous, or to have the slightest subversive tendencies and, therefore, considered to be a potential menace, were at once arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and placed in internment camps."<sup>87</sup> Among those evacuated were approximately 4,000 children of elementary school age.<sup>88</sup> To some children it was as if the Japanese Canadian families in their communities had simply vanished, others were more attentive of the internment. "I guess it was 1942, after Pearl Harbour" remembered one woman, "my friend's grandparents had a grocery store...They were all rounded up, they just disappeared."<sup>89</sup> Another woman remembered "the Japanese just sort of disappearing, but I never understood or wondered why."<sup>90</sup> One fellow described the internment as "Japanese kids in Kitsilano just disappearing. They were being relocated."<sup>91</sup> Another recalled "...two Japanese families in the community and both of them just disappeared."<sup>92</sup> "Japanese just seemed to evaporate, their houses stood empty" explained one woman.<sup>93</sup> Another remembered that "...one day you just didn't see them on the street cars anymore."<sup>94</sup>

Many children clearly remembered the loss of their Japanese Canadian school friends. One man recounted a memorable school day: "...an assembly was called at school. The R.C.M.P. came in and took out all the Japanese kids."<sup>95</sup> He specifically recalled

"a Japanese fellow in our class...was taken away...We talked about it amongst ourselves. We thought it was quite cruel."<sup>96</sup> A woman also remembered one school day "the police came to school and took the Japanese girls out of the school."<sup>97</sup> Another fellow in Kitsilano high school reported "I had a friend at school...his family moved to Kaslo...I, nor my family understood the implications...Why should this happen to them?"<sup>98</sup> There were some children, at that time, who simply accepted the internment. One man declared: "people are hard on the authorities that interned the Japanese, but people were very nervous at the time, and from a security standpoint...it seemed as if there was no choice."<sup>99</sup> He commented on "the general feeling for moving the Japanese out was that it was a good thing."<sup>100</sup> Another interviewee requested "introduce me to a Vancouverite in 1942 who didn't agree that it wasn't the right thing to do."<sup>101</sup> One man felt the lack of understanding was due to "the way the press handled it. If they had done it differently there certainly would have been more sympathy. I don't remember anything that dealt with a question of rights..."<sup>102</sup> One man recalled, as a teen, visiting the internment camp at Hastings Park. They had strung barb wire up around the top of the wire fence...the Japanese would come over and spit on us. We never understood."<sup>103</sup> It was a second visit that helped him understand: "They were as frightened as we were...I remember going in after they had gone...and I saw the mess, it was pretty bad, yes, living conditions were bad, they were in stalls..."<sup>104</sup>

Some children knew that certain measures of the internment were very harsh. An unknown newspaper article stated that:

"...the Japanese were opposed to breaking up of families, but that the commission appeared to be determined to separate the men from their wives and children."<sup>105</sup> One fellow recalled "I was friends with a Japanese fellow at King Ed. He didn't go to the interior but his father did. They divided a number of families. There were mixed marriages...and they would split those up."<sup>106</sup> Families were split up and Japanese Canadians in British Columbia lost most of their real estate and personal belongings. "You can imagine all the people who took advantage of the Japanese internment", stated one interviewee, "they'd say: 'God did I get a good deal, you should see this fish boat'...It was very sad."<sup>107</sup> One man described the conditions "some of the Japanese families had to sell everything...Their fishing boats were confiscated. People bought houses for five to ten cents on the dollar."<sup>108</sup> One woman remembered a "Japanese man gave away his furniture because he knew they would confiscate everything..."<sup>109</sup>

As the Japanese Canadians were interned the possibility of invasion continued to cause anxiety and this fear produced hatred and prejudice. Many children listened as the media and adults referred to the 'yellow peril' as the enemy and as spies. One man explained "there were terms used about them. I remember Fifth Column and Quisling. These were names you called someone who was a spy or a traitor or a collaborator. That's what they were regarded as."<sup>110</sup> Another interviewee described the mood: "Some of the Japanese hid in their houses. They were just as frightened as we were and they were concerned because suddenly there was a lot of racial tension...we learned that they were fifth

columnists, that they would sabotage."<sup>111</sup> "I remember there was a rumour about the grocery store that they found a radio" recounted one man.<sup>112</sup> A woman asked about her friends: "I remember asking what happened. People said they had a radio..."<sup>113</sup> Another recounted: "I remember going into the Japanese market and they were all listening to Radio Tokyo. We thought they were spies in the Japanese market, we all made these sweeping generalizations that anyone with a two way radio were spies."<sup>114</sup>

This prejudice towards the enemy was expressed in children's words and in their actions. One man explained "there was a lot of prejudice in Vancouver...the Japanese were the slant eyed, yellow peril. They were really dreadful, they butchered babies and raped people."<sup>115</sup> These rumours were taken seriously as he explained: "I can also remember being fascinated at how to tell the difference between a Japanese and a Chinese."<sup>116</sup> "I remember the Japanese were more our enemy than the Germans" stated one woman.<sup>117</sup> Another remembered "being scared to death by the wartime anti-Japanese hysteria."<sup>118</sup> One interviewee recalled "whenever we saw Japanese on the streetcars we would look away."<sup>119</sup> Lautens remembered and wrote: "Hatred. Picking it out of the very air, putting aside my peaceful writings...in favour of furious, slashing pictures and fist drawn words about attacks on Germans, Japs - monsters."<sup>120</sup>

Children experienced racist attitudes about the Germans as well as the Japanese. "I certainly grew up with a dislike for Germans" one woman disclosed.<sup>121</sup> Another woman remembered the media made "the Germans into such terrible people. I guess they

were terrible then..."<sup>122</sup> One interviewee explained her father's job as a policeman. "His job was to look up aliens, anyone who was German and had moved into the area in the last ten years. He had to visit them and search their homes for firearms." She also remembered "He had to tell them that they were laid off work...he searched their house."<sup>123</sup> One woman revealed "my father dropped his last name because it was of German background."<sup>124</sup>

Racist attitudes, comprehended or not, were often expressed through play. Children, mostly boys, played war in the play grounds. One man stated that once the war began "...we played a lot more games, war games."<sup>125</sup> Another described the transition made once the war started: "...we were playing 'Cowboys and Indians' at the time and just changed to 'Soldiers and War'.<sup>126</sup> Another interviewee had a similar memory: "It was like 'Cops and Robbers' but 'British and Germans'.<sup>127</sup> He described the games as "pretty elaborate...We would round up prisoners and we played in a field that was riddled with trenches. We dug trenches like crazy, or we'd use branches and boughs and build booby traps."<sup>128</sup> One man remembered his games included racial insults "we used to play 'Kill the Krauts or Japs'...You were the bad guy if you were the Kraut or Jap."<sup>129</sup> Another man played "war games...The Japanese or the Germans were the enemy and someone always had to be the other side. With me it was usually the Japanese were the bad guys."<sup>130</sup> "Playing war was always with the boys" claimed one fellow.<sup>131</sup> 'War' was also a game for some girls as well. One woman remembered "playing Battleships at school."<sup>132</sup> Another recalled: "We played war a lot on the

island...We split into teams and would try to get into enemy territory...We would crawl on our stomachs."<sup>133</sup> One man portrayed the war games very perceptively: "...it was like playing authority. What amazes me now were the fascist overtones...we used to call the guy at the top of the hierarchy 'the fuhrer'..."<sup>134</sup> He explained that the games included "fascist terminology...systems of control, neatness, order, obedience...I think we used to give the Hitler salutes. The implication of an elite group that enforced authority on others, the words and actions signifying it were around us."<sup>135</sup>

Small changes in the harmony of daily life created a feeling of uncertainty and novelty. During the war years Vancouver's inner harbour was bristling with guns, and huge war ships sailed in and out. Air raid shelters were built in the city and surrounding areas. Air raid sirens blared for the practice drills, people placed blackout covers over their windows and car headlights. Some rushed out to the stores and began hoarding certain foods. Gas and liquor were also rationed and bartering with ration coupons became common. These physical changes brought the war into children's lives and made it a more definite and vivid experience.

In 1939, the Department of National Defence instructed the military to install and man the guns at three sites in Vancouver Harbour, on Yorke Island, Ferguson Point, Point Grey and Narrows North.<sup>136</sup> "The defences of Vancouver had a political as well as a practical function: they were there to reassure the public."<sup>137</sup> Searchlights arrived in the winter of 1941-42 along with an examination gun installed at Point Atkinson and two more

in Steveston. One man remembered "Certain areas were suddenly out of bounds...this was when they built the reinforcements at Stanley Park and Wreck Beach...and the guns at Point Atkinson."<sup>138</sup> For youthful entertainment, he also recalled: "We used to go down to English Bay and watch them lob shells into the water."<sup>139</sup> Another man described "a great place to play...where the old Expo site is. It's hard to believe that they were launching ships down in that area during the war."<sup>140</sup> One interviewee "had a great interest in the liners that had been turned into war ships..." He also remembered the secrecy that surrounded these vessels. "They weren't allowed to announce what was in the harbour, but you heard all about it."<sup>141</sup> Another explained: "You weren't allowed to take pictures of the area or of the ships, if you did they wouldn't develop them. They were making Baby Flat Tops..."<sup>142</sup> Imagine a young boys excitement as he "went down to see...the Queen Mary...this great grey thing, it wouldn't fit under the bridge."<sup>143</sup> Another described the same event: "I can remember in 1942, on a Sunday morning, the Queen Mary was in English Bay and everyone went down to see it. It was painted grey and I couldn't believe the size of it. It had come to pick up about 10,000 troops. It was this totally grey monstrous thing!"<sup>144</sup>

In 1942, the Vancouver School Board explained that it "cooperated fully with the Central Civilian Protection Committee in air raid precautions [A.R.P.] work."<sup>145</sup> An interviewee, in high school during the war, recounted "we had an assembly at school that morning. Some man in a uniform, I'm not sure if he was military or police, explained to us about the blackouts,



about bombers flying overhead and air raids, general security."<sup>146</sup> Children watched films, prepared by the Visual Education Department, on "ways and means of properly handling incendiary bombs."<sup>147</sup> Children trained with equipment from fire departments such as "pails, sand bags, rakes and shovels." One woman recalled "we had sandbags in the house, although I don't know what good they would have been, and a bucket of water."<sup>148</sup> Another explained "We had oil lamps, extra food and blankets...in case of attack."<sup>149</sup> One man described the air raid drills at his school: "we went to the basement of the school, it was sort of fun but serious too."<sup>150</sup> Another interviewee remembered "there were air raid drills at school, we would get under our desks."<sup>151</sup> "The whole community was involved in the drills after Pearl Harbour" recalled one woman from Vancouver Island. "We were to go to the school...when the siren sounded."<sup>152</sup> An interviewee from Trail recalled the "Air Raid Police [Air Raid Precaution] shacks...They kept gas masks and things in them. So if something did happen you were prepared."<sup>153</sup> Many children practised with the use of respirators. One man described his experience with a gas mask: "I do remember being given a gas mask at school...putting them on, and it was very hard to breathe. We kept them in a khaki box with a handle."<sup>154</sup> Throughout the North Shore, reported William Gray the Municipal Inspector, "Every child in the area was shown how to put on and use a gas respirator..."<sup>155</sup> One woman remembered "carrying my gas mask during these drills."<sup>156</sup> Another enjoyed "handing out...gas masks, for practice drills if we were ever attacked...For us it was fun in a way, something more social to do than school

work."<sup>157</sup> One fellow, unimpressed by all preparatory activity, said "nothing much happened in our school during the war, just dumb things like the bomb drills and the A.R.P. drills."<sup>158</sup> Another student, quite young at the time, regarded the drills much more seriously: "Sirens still bother me, my stomach tightens even now when I hear sirens. The school siren especially made my stomach turn."<sup>159</sup> A happier occasion was related by another interviewee: "I remember the air raid sirens going off to announce the end of the war."<sup>160</sup>

All of the interviewees remembered the blackouts, to some it was an unnerving event, while other children accepted it as a part of life in wartime. Vancouver had its first trial blackout on 22 May 1941, from 10:00 to 10:15 p.m.<sup>161</sup> Most blackouts took place soon after Pearl Harbour. "It was after Pearl Harbour that the blackout screens went up..." recounted one interviewee.<sup>162</sup> "I can remember the blackouts, that was when we were expecting the Japanese to attack any time."<sup>163</sup> Air Raid Wardens would patrol neighbourhoods to enforce blackout regulations. "The Air Raid Police [Air Raid Precaution] would come around and check for any light showing in your windows", explained one man.<sup>164</sup> On 10 December 1941, The Vancouver News Herald asked citizens to

Get home as soon as possible tonight - and stay there...There must be no light escaping from your home and it is your responsibility to test your own blackout precautions. Your headlights must be blinded except for a vertical slit...Tail lights must be blinded except for a small disc in the centre.<sup>165</sup>

One interviewee explained: "We were having Japanese scares. When the alarm went off we had to cover our windows...The lights on

cars were to be blacked out, the street lights went out."<sup>166</sup> Another revealed "...we had to black out the windows. Everyone became frightened that we were going to be invaded by the Japanese."<sup>167</sup> "I can remember two blackouts...that made us believe that the Japanese were very close to invading us" remembered one woman.<sup>168</sup> Another described the "weird, strange environment" and the belief that "it was a real threat."<sup>169</sup> One interviewee had a different opinion of the blackouts: "We didn't take them very seriously, it was kind of an adventure."<sup>170</sup> "We weren't really scared of the air raid sirens" declared one woman from Vancouver Island, "it was exciting...It added an extra thrill to it."<sup>171</sup> Another woman from the Interior region "didn't really fear an invasion although ...the smelter produced lead. They painted the windows of the smelter black."<sup>172</sup> An interviewee from the same area claimed "it was quite exciting, I don't think we were ever very concerned."<sup>173</sup> Other children experienced more practical reactions. One fellow recounted: "We shut our curtains in one room of the house, turned on the lights and sat in there!"<sup>174</sup> Another remembered "When they declared a blackout everyone would rush outside to see what it was like with no lights on. We would go up to the bend on Alma road...there was a nice view from up there."<sup>175</sup>

Mobilization of Canada's resources for war and the fight against inflation necessitated price control, rationing and foreign exchange control. The Wartime Information Board explained that the "coupon system of rationing was established in Canada in order to ensure that the goods which are scarce will be fairly distributed."<sup>176</sup> The first ration books came out in September,

1942. During various phases of the war sugar, meat, tea and coffee, gasoline and liquor were rationed. British Columbian's began "food hoarding" in 1939.<sup>177</sup> Sugar was a particular concern and "many woman were seen with handy men in tow, lugging 100 pound sacks..."<sup>178</sup> Foreign exchange controls had reduced the amounts of California imports of winter fruits and vegetables and so households needed large quantities of sugar for canning the essentials. When the announcement was made that sugar would be rationed there was a 'run'on sugar.<sup>179</sup> The government later made an exception of "special seasonal allowances to housewives for canning."<sup>180</sup> "My mother went out right away" claimed one interviewee, "and bought 100 pounds of sugar, a great big bag of sugar."<sup>181</sup> One woman explained "come canning season we would need lots of sugar."<sup>182</sup> Another described her duty of dividing the precious commodity with her siblings. "I took three glass jars and painted our names on them with nail polish. We divided the sugar into three and that was what we had for the week."<sup>183</sup>

There was a certain amount of excitement if something was in stock. "There were days when we heard the candy was in" recounted one man, "you ran to the store, because it didn't last long."<sup>184</sup> One woman related "...when we heard a shipment of nylons were coming in we'd send someone down to line up for us."<sup>185</sup> One man boasted about his job perks: "I went to work for Safeway on the weekends. It was a good job, partly because I had access to things like meat and coffee."<sup>186</sup> Another interviewee described her father trading his home made honey for chocolate bars and said: "It was all very exciting!"<sup>187</sup>

Bartering was an accepted method of procuring certain

rationed goods. One man recalled "...all the women in the neighbourhood would...barter or exchange...Coupons were very much like money."<sup>188</sup> Another explained, "my parents often traded their liquor coupons for chocolate."<sup>189</sup> "We used to always change our sugar coupons for somebody's butter coupons" one woman recalled.<sup>190</sup> Another told of her predicament: "We ran out of liquor at my sister's wedding. I can remember going around to all the neighbour's weeks beforehand and borrowing their coupons to buy liquor for the wedding. Certain foods became powerful bargaining tools as one woman recounted "the doctor and the pharmacist would come to my dad for his honey. In exchange we got medical care and prescriptions."<sup>191</sup>

The important things in a child's life were hard to find during the war years. "You certainly couldn't buy toys or any of those things in the stores" declared one man, "It was hard to buy anything. My bike was third hand...they did away with lead toy soldiers."<sup>192</sup> Another interviewee reported "I couldn't get new ice skates. My mother traded her liquor coupons for my skates."<sup>193</sup> One fellow remembered such American publications as "the Big Little books...we couldn't get access to these anymore."<sup>194</sup> Another recalled a British children's magazine: "Chips and Crackers, you couldn't get it any more once the war started."<sup>195</sup> Most children didn't seem to mind the shortages. One man declared "...you just made do with what you had."<sup>196</sup> Another interviewee seriously explained "as a child...you did without and that was the sacrifice you made."<sup>197</sup> One interviewee remembered taking full advantage of the rationing, "a couple of us sold our roller skates to our school principal...I

guess he had kids and you couldn't get skates...So my friend and I became war profiteers, we brought in our old skates which were rusty as all get out!"<sup>198</sup>

Much of the aura of excitement that surrounded the war years in British Columbia came from the growing number of people volunteering their energies for the war effort. Children watched as their parents and others became involved in new activities to win the war on the home front. Many interviewees remembered busy parents and the flurry of activity that ensued with the war years. "Most people had some relative; father, son, cousin, etc., involved with the war effort" told one.<sup>199</sup> "My mother was involved, she used to dish out ration books" another explained.<sup>200</sup> Life at home was altered for one woman because her "mother worked at the United Services centre, she was always bringing home service men, boys really, from Australia and Yorkshire."<sup>201</sup> She remembered "Wally from the Air Force, he stayed with us and then he was killed over Burma...Stanley, who loved music...There was quite a steady flow of people, quite a socialization, meeting people from all over the Commonwealth."<sup>202</sup>

More often the volunteer work was as simple as one woman's mother who "did lots of knitting for the war effort."<sup>203</sup> One interviewee remembered "My father served in a paramilitary outfit, a group called the Frontiersmen...[he] also joined the Reserves during the war...It's hard to imagine him now packing a rifle dressed in his full army gear."<sup>204</sup> One woman recalled with pride "My mother ...trained in first aid...also drills and parade. She wore a blue outfit with silver

buttons...and she learned how to repair a car."<sup>205</sup> Others remembered their parents working busily for the Red Cross. "My mother worked for the Red Cross and I can remember helping her roll bandages."<sup>206</sup> "My mom was in the Red Cross, she did volunteer work for the Canadian Legion, making bandages, that sort of thing."<sup>207</sup> One woman claimed that she grew up wearing "...big bandages that my mother learned how to make for the Red Cross."<sup>208</sup> To another "the war had a greater impact on me because my family members were all involved in some way, father was playing soldier with the reserves, mother worked for the Red Cross...I remember father started a Victory Garden, that's what he called it."<sup>209</sup>

Paying jobs became more plentiful and men, women and, less frequently, children made money working for the war effort. Prosperity became the norm for many in the first time in years. People who had wanted for lack of employment and money through the depression embraced the war and the jobs it provided. One fellow recalled that "as a listener to the adults I learned that there was great unemployment. The country was coming out of a terrible depression, and they used to say that: 'the one good thing about the war is we're getting jobs'. People were building ships right here in Vancouver. There were defense efforts, particularly on the coast...For the first time in quite a while there was prosperity."<sup>210</sup> A woman recounted that "there were a lot more jobs...because of the war."<sup>211</sup> Another explained that: "People had money in their pockets once again. Those not in uniforms had jobs...The war effort brought a crazy kind of prosperity."<sup>212</sup> Yet another described the atmosphere: "It was a

prosperous time but it was very turbulent too."<sup>213</sup>

"The battle dress of Canadian women ranges from house dresses and business suits to overalls and service uniforms", reported the Wartime Information Board.<sup>214</sup> During the war women entered the work force in droves, many for the first time and the female bread winner became a more prevalent role model. A description of the female work force, entitled "It's a Women's World Too!", was written in an issue of the Wallace Shipbuilder: "The first women came into North and South Burrard in September, 1942...[women] went to work in hard hats and coveralls...By Spring, 1944, some 1,000 women, in all three Yards, were helping to build our ships."<sup>215</sup> The Wartime Information Board reported that by 1943 there were 1,152,000 women over 14 years of age employed in Canadian industries, 255,000 of these were employed in the war industries. The Board also reported that 58,710 women were members of the armed services.<sup>216</sup>

The movement of women out of the home and into the work force had many different effects, some minor and some more significant. "I can remember the women working in the shipyards, down where the Bayshore hotel is. We weren't allowed to ride the streetcars at shift changes, there were so many of them, they all wore kerchiefs in their hair."<sup>217</sup> An interviewee remembered having a girlfriend who "was a riveter, like Rosie the Riveter, except she was Eve the riveter...I also had girlfriends who worked at the Burrard ship building company."<sup>218</sup> Another recalled knowing "of girls who worked in the munitions factory, they really liked having their own money, their independence...Women built the Liberty ships down in False



Creek."<sup>219</sup>

Whole communities were effected by these working men and women. One man recalled "the war created jobs and money broke down the need for community life and mutual support."<sup>220</sup> In the town of Trail, remembered another, "...three hundred women...had taken over the jobs that the men had left when they joined up."<sup>221</sup> Some children were affected in a more personal manner. One man described the lack of parental discipline once his mother started working: "I wasn't allowed to go to these movies but my mother had a job for the federal government."<sup>222</sup> He also explained that most children "always went home for lunch, certainly I didn't" and that "mother was never there after school, to her it was a great boon and it freed me from parental supervision."<sup>223</sup> Going home for lunch to an empty home was remembered by one: "My mother worked in a smelter...So I was virtually on my own once the war started. I thought I'd never open another can of Campbell's soup."<sup>224</sup> The war was not seen by all as a blessing of prosperity. One man disclosed "there were a lot of people who, if there hadn't been a war wouldn't have gotten the education they did, or gotten the jobs they did. But just as many of them said: 'if it hadn't been for the war I wouldn't have lost my brother.'"<sup>225</sup>

Children joined the work force as well. As the labour shortage intensified, governments began to ease legislative restriction on child labour.<sup>226</sup> One man remembered "A lot of kids left school to work in the ship yards..."<sup>227</sup> Some tried to balance both school and work. One man explained that the late shift in the shipyard was interfering with his school work until

"I moved to the machine shop...and worked after school four hours a day, which was better, I stopped falling asleep in class all the time."<sup>228</sup> Another recalled his brother "working one summer in a munitions plant, at age sixteen." The coastline of British Columbia had suddenly changed. "In Burrard Inlet there were a lot of ship building industries", remembered one interviewee.<sup>229</sup> "People were building ships right here in Vancouver" another declared.<sup>230</sup> "There was a Boeing plant on Sea Island...an air force base where Vanier park is now, also the armories at Beatty street" recalled one woman.<sup>231</sup> William Gray, Municipal Inspector of North Shore schools, stated in 1942: "During the past year ship building has made a phenomenal growth on the North Shore."<sup>232</sup> One man described the abundance of jobs: "...kids could get jobs easily. It was not very difficult to get an after school job, the war made it easy in that sense."<sup>233</sup>

The war became a reality to many children the day their father, their brother or someone they knew signed up. Fighting the war in the Canadian services was presented by government propaganda as a way to earn money and an education while helping our allies to victory. One woman recalled that the war "didn't seem relevant then, until my brother joined the air force."<sup>234</sup> Some children feared for their loved ones. One woman described her "strongest memory of the war was when my brother joined the Air Force...we were excited but afraid for him."<sup>235</sup> Another remembered the war as being very stressful as she "knew her brother would eventually go to war. I was terrified that something would happen to [him]."<sup>236</sup> Another remembered his parent's fear as he had one brother "...in the Air Force. My

oldest brother was in the Navy...My parents made me promise I wouldn't join up."<sup>237</sup> To some the service was remembered as a beneficial experience. One woman declared that for her brother who "hated school, he really loathed it. He probably would have dropped out...it really was the war that saved him."<sup>238</sup> One man stated: "my uncles, who never did a damn thing in civilian life, became colonels in the service."<sup>239</sup> Another interviewee had joined up and regarded the service as "a growing up experience, a very rich experience."<sup>240</sup> For others life in the service was not a positive experience. One man's brother "was an Air Force pilot, an instructor..."he ended up a nervous wreck; he flew sixty missions on Mosquitoes and he flew on D-Day."<sup>241</sup>

Children corresponded with their relatives and learned about the war and life in the service through these letters. It was not uncommon for children to excitedly open a letter only to find that it "looked as if someone had been playing paper dolls", declared one man.<sup>242</sup> Secrecy was important and any information about the war's events was carefully censored from, among other things, family letters. One woman clearly recalled her relatives in Europe would write "in very general terms about the war. They would be reprimanded for giving any details...they censored everything."<sup>243</sup> Another woman received "quite a few letters" from her brother and "they were censored, they would actually cut bits out of the letter before we got it."<sup>244</sup> Even so, censored letters were well received. One man enjoyed his father's frequent letters: "I was always interested in what he was doing, what was going on" he recalled.<sup>245</sup> "Happy Birthday" one serviceman wrote home. It was a "secret signal, it meant he was coming home" one

woman explained.<sup>246</sup> Another declared that while the war was on "...we were always anxious for any news from the old country."<sup>247</sup> Letters were a life line between children and their family at war. "My father joined the army" one man recalled. "He was stationed in England and later, Gibraltar. He wrote letters home quite often."<sup>248</sup> One woman talked of her brother: "When he did go to war I wrote him one air letter a day..."<sup>249</sup>

Visiting on leave, or home from the war, service men and women shared their war stories with young and captivated listeners. Children learned about serving in the forces when they met and talked with those in uniform. One fellow remembered his "cousin in the U.S. Marines...we would see him occasionally. His stories were always very good..."<sup>250</sup> A woman's brother in law returned from the war and told her of men in a prisoner of war camp who "were walking skeletons, it was the most horrible thing he had seen in the war."<sup>251</sup> One interviewee described his meeting "whole troops of airmen with accents you could cut with a knife."<sup>252</sup> Cross-cultural meetings were remembered by one who met "men from New Zealand, Australia, Englishmen, all over really."<sup>253</sup> Another told of "a baby sitter, her boyfriend was an American sailor who came to visit. He'd tell us things, he'd be back on leave and spin yarns for us, we kids loved it."<sup>254</sup> Children also met servicemen through their parents. One remembered listening to his mother's friend "a major from a prison camp...he would tell us of the Germans who had tried to escape."<sup>255</sup> One woman met officers when her parents entertained: "We always had people over, officers over to the

house."<sup>256</sup> In the smaller communities people relied on word of mouth for news of the war. An Oliver resident, recalled hearing "about what was going on in the world. Often someone had heard from a relative and he would talk about that, or someone was coming back, that's how you found out."<sup>257</sup> One man remembered a first-hand account from a friend who "came back early...and he told me he was glad to be back."<sup>258</sup>

Many children looked forward to joining the service. Those who thought of joining did so for their own personal reasons. Some were tired of school, they lied about their age and joined up early. Some didn't want to be known as "zombies", to others it was their duty to their country. "I remember conscription, and those who hadn't signed up were called zombies", explained one woman.<sup>259</sup> One interviewee joined the navy because "of a romantic notion. I always had the dream of going to sea, I guess being in Vancouver and being on the sea."<sup>260</sup> "The boys would be impatient to join up" explained one woman. "They thought it would be quite prestigious to join."<sup>261</sup> Another recalled that "one of our neighbour friends basically dropped out of school and joined the Navy."<sup>262</sup> One woman remembered her boyfriend: "...he had left school early and joined up."<sup>263</sup>

Most interviewees were too young to join up, even so, some disregarded age limitations. "They would lie about their age." One man described his senior high class "decreasing in numbers as the boys signed up."<sup>264</sup> Another said her "brother quit school, grade twelve to enlist..."<sup>265</sup> There were others who lied for different reasons, as one man remembered: "There was one boy in my senior matric class who intentionally flunked out every year

so that he wouldn't have to sign up."<sup>266</sup> The service presented an alternative for those children to whom school was difficult or irrelevant. One interviewee left school at sixteen to join up. He reasoned: "I guess it was a question of relevance, what was relevant at the time? And the war was relevant."<sup>267</sup> A woman remembered the boys who "signed up before they finished school, but they weren't very good students to begin with."<sup>268</sup>

Many interviewees had decided, for one reason or another, that when they turned eighteen they would enlist or volunteer. One man stated: "During the war I felt jealous because I was too young to go to war with my friends...All my friends, all my buddies, even the girls had joined up."<sup>269</sup> He also recalled that once he was old enough "in '45 I joined up for the Pacific war, it was against my parents wishes and they were very upset."<sup>270</sup> "I wanted to be in the Navy, it was an assumption, come eighteen you joined" remembered one man.<sup>271</sup> Another declared "When you turned eighteen it was automatic, you joined up...That was it, it was assumed that was what you would do when you were eighteen."<sup>272</sup>

Others were encouraged to join up. One man remembered "the tone of discussing the need for servicemen was one of excitement: join up and learn a new trade, have new experiences, all very positive."<sup>273</sup> Another recalled "there was no conscription when war broke out, but we were certainly encouraged to join."<sup>274</sup> Encouragement came in other forms as "...those who hadn't signed up" one woman remarked, "were called zombies."<sup>275</sup> Some children were quite taken with the image of those in the service. One woman "wanted to go into the forces and wear the uniform. I

remember the women in uniform, they looked very nice. I was quite interested in the army..."<sup>276</sup> Another explained that her "best friend and I both wanted to be WRENS [Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service]. The uniform was better than the others..."<sup>277</sup> Others were more practical: "I was going to get forty eight dollars a month and, of course, all the food you could eat."<sup>278</sup> Another man stated realistically: "you weren't going off to see the world...we were just serving our country."<sup>279</sup> Alan M. Thomas wrote about adolescents in wartime: they "were the centre of attention, for understandable reasons. They faced the possibility of being killed, of not having the chance of growing any older."<sup>280</sup>

With the Second World war came the inevitability of the deaths of those fighting overseas. Many of British Columbia's children experienced the loss of a friend or a family member because of the war. To some the war became tangible when people that they knew were killed. A woman explained that it "greatly affected us, to know someone who had died."<sup>281</sup> Another declared that "it wasn't until a few of the boys we knew were killed that we really began to take it seriously."<sup>282</sup> "A friend's brother was killed" explained one woman, "I remember taking it more seriously then."<sup>283</sup> One woman, in grade nine when the war began, recalled "the first death, a boy from school who had been a rear gunner."<sup>284</sup> Many children experienced the death of friends or acquaintances. One interviewee "had a friend...an evacuee, when she was old enough she went back to England to enlist, but a torpedo hit the ship and she never made it."<sup>285</sup> One woman remembered "a boy from our school was shot down in his

plane and we really were shocked and very upset about it."<sup>286</sup> Remembering his sister's boyfriend, one interviewee explained, "Melvin was killed so early in the war, it was a terrible loss and I suppose it really sobered us all up."<sup>287</sup> He also told about the older boys he watched play basketball. They went to war and one "was shot down over Singapore" and the other "died in an army battle over in France. That really had an impact on myself..."<sup>288</sup> So much of an impact that he decided "to pursue University rather than signing up."<sup>289</sup> When the numbers of dead began to increase, so did concern for those overseas. A woman recalled the anxiety after her brother joined up. "We used to watch for the telegraph boy, when we saw him it was usually bad news...I remember being upset that my brother was away...always watching for the telegraph boy."<sup>290</sup> The deaths of family members were the most difficult for children to endure. As one woman maintained: "For the people who lost sons, they were the ones really affected."<sup>291</sup> Another woman recounted that her brother "was taken prisoner in Holland. He was shot trying to escape."<sup>292</sup> Remembering his community, one man stated: "The neighbourhood was drastically touched. A lot of families lost their sons."<sup>293</sup> Children who lost a sibling realized that their parents would never recover. One woman remembered that when her brother was "shot for trying to escape. My mother took to her bed and died four years later."<sup>294</sup> Recounting his brother's death, one interviewee declared: "In 1943 my brother was killed...It was very sad when my brother died...My mother and father were never the same after that. None of us were. They never got over it, especially my mother."<sup>295</sup> As more people were reported dead



what was once one man's jealousy "I felt left out of the picture...All my friends...had joined up."<sup>296</sup> Turned to the realization that: "We were the privileged ones who stayed behind."<sup>297</sup>

The end of the war finally came after six long years and British Columbia's young and old joined in the celebrations. The European war ended on 8 May 1945, Victory in Europe, [VE Day]. Followed by Victory over Japan, [VJ Day], 15 August that same year. Both VE Day and VJ Day were very distinct days in most interviewee's minds. The two days were full of excitement and celebration. One man described VE Day: "we dropped everything and rushed out onto the street, it was total massive excitement, arms waving, people screaming and shouting, shaking hands, very exciting day and it went on all night."<sup>298</sup> Another man described "the mobs in the street...shouting and hollering..."<sup>299</sup> One woman recalled "VJ Day in the summer...the cars on the road were honking, and the drivers were shouting." Some children were thrilled, not because the war was ending, but because they were given a day off school. One interviewee remembered the excitement at her school: "...everyone was very excited. A lot of kids played hookey that day...everyone was celebrating."<sup>300</sup> Another recalled "VE Day, we got the afternoon off from school."<sup>301</sup> One man considered: "I think the next day the school was closed."<sup>302</sup> Another declared: "I remember VE Day because they gave us the day off at school and all the kids were excited about that."<sup>303</sup> Most remembered the end of the war as a happy time. One man remarked that "it seemed like we were entering a new and wonderful world where all our problems would be solved."<sup>304</sup>

Another interviewee was relieved that "the war was over...on my eighteenth birthday, to the day. Otherwise I would have joined up...it was over, the pressure was off."<sup>305</sup> Another described the "sense of relief and release" that he felt.<sup>306</sup> "We were just all so glad that it was over" explained one woman, "and the men were coming home."<sup>307</sup> To other children the end of the war was not a victory but a time of destruction. One interviewee stated: "I do remember the reports of the atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki...An enormous amount of destruction...saying to myself: 'I don't think they should have done it.'"<sup>308</sup> Another recalled the day "the bomb was dropped. We knew it would all be over soon..."<sup>309</sup> "I remember the two bombs being dropped" recounted one interviewee.<sup>310</sup> She described the reaction: "Everyone talked about these bombs. Some people said it was the beginning of the end. They would quote passages from the bible and say it was all over, the end of the world."<sup>311</sup> Children inevitably matured by the end of the Second World War. Alan Thomas explained: "the generation whose adolescence ended at almost exactly the same moment as the adolescence of the world...Hiroshima...seems as good a definition of the end of adolescence as it is possible to find."<sup>312</sup>

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