

War Era Story Project 2012

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Current home town: Cincinnati, Ohio

Age: 77

I was seven years old when WWII began. I remember hearing the news on our radio and hearing President Roosevelt speak. I am not sure I really understood the magnitude of what had happened at that time. My father went into the Navy, but he was only in the service a short time. He got a medical discharge and soon returned home.

My uncle was an air raid warden, and I can remember him showing us his equipment: a hard hat and a flashlight is really all I can remember now. I remember the blackouts. All the lights in the city were turned out, and lights from our apartment had to be turned off or you had to have blackout curtains at your window. I remember coming home from the movies one night and I barely got there when all the lights went out. It was a little frightening.

There were shortages on many things, so lots of things were rationed during that time. Gasoline, sugar and shoes are the things that I recall. We had ration stamp books; you needed these stamps in order to buy these items. We occasionally would run out of sugar and would need to borrow some from our aunt who lived close by. I also recall that we bought margarine, which was in a plastic bag. It had a yellow coloring capsule inside and you had to break that and then mix it until it became all yellow. I'm not sure if butter was rationed or not, or if it was too expensive and that's why we bought the "new margarine."

We had drills at school to help us know what we should do in case of an attack. We could also buy savings stamps to help with the war effort. I used to buy these and we had a booklet that we would paste them in. If you got enough stamps, you could buy a savings bond.

One summer I went to Elyria, Ohio to visit my aunt. I went on the train and it was filled with military personnel: men and women in the Army, Navy, and other branches of the service. I think every seat in the train was filled.

My uncle enlisted in the Army when he was about 18. One day, we got a telegram that he had been injured. He was in Europe and had been shot in his leg and was in serious condition. He had surgery and sometime later he returned home to recuperate. He received the purple heart and never returned to active duty again. He passed away at the age of 79.

I remember some of the signs, such as "Loose lips sink ships," and "Uncle Sam wants you." I remember VE Day and VJ day and all the celebrations. It was a time of caring and sharing and our family became very close. Things changed quite a bit after the war. Life went on and people seemed to adjust to the post-war era.