

Mobilizing for Defense

- Americans Join the War Effort
 - The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor with the expectation that once America had experienced Japan's power, they would shrink from further conflict
 - But if Americans were trembling it was with rage, not fear
 - Uniting under the battle cry, "Remember Pearl Harbor!" they set out to prove Japan wrong
 - Selective Service and the GI
 - After Pearl Harbor eager young Americans jammed recruiting offices
 - Even the 5 million who volunteered for military service, however, were not enough to face the challenge of an all out war on two global fronts – Europe and the Pacific
 - The 10 million soldiers to meet the armed forces' needs
 - Expanding the military
 - The military's work force needs were so great that the army pushed for the formation of a Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC)
 - Women volunteers would serve in noncombat positions
 - Thought at first they received a salary they did not benefits granted to male soldiers
 - However after thousands of women had enlisted, the US Army dropped the "auxiliary" status and granted WACs full US Army benefits
 - WACs worked as nurses, ambulance drivers, radio operators, electricians and pilots – nearly every duty not involving direct combat
 - Recruiting and discrimination
 - For many minority groups – especially African Americans and Native Americans – war created new dilemmas
 - Restricted to racially segregated neighborhoods and reservations and denied basic citizenship rights, some members of these groups question whether this was their war to fight
 - Dramatic Contributions
 - About one million African Americans also served in the military
 - They lived and worked in segregated units and were limited mostly to noncombat roles
 - After much protest, African Americans did finally see combat beginning in April 1943
 - Some 25,000 Native Americans enlisted in the armed services, too, including 800 women

- A Production Miracle
 - Early in 1942, American newspapers reported the end of the automobile production for private use
 - The last car to roll off an automaker's assembly line was a gray sedan with "victory trim" – that is without chrome-plated parts
 - One more sign that the war would affect almost every aspect of life
 - The Industrial Response
 - Automobile plants had been retooled to produce tanks, planes, boats and command cars
 - Factories were quickly converted to war production
 - Mechanical pencils turned out bomb parts, bedspread manufacturer made mosquito netting, soft-drink company converted from filling bottles with liquids to filling shells with explosives
 - Labor's Contribution
 - 6 million of these new workers were women
 - At first, war industries feared that most women lacked the necessary stamina for factory work and were reluctant to hire them
 - But once women proved they could operate welding torches or riveting guns as well as men employers could not hire enough of them – especially since women earned only about 60% as much as men doing the same job
 - Mobilization of Scientist
 - In 1941, Roosevelt created the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) to bring into the war effort
 - Improvements in radar and sonar were achieved
 - Encouraged the use of pesticides like DDT to fight insects
 - The most significant was the secret development of a new weapons, the atomic bomb
 - Interest in such a weapon began in 1939 after German scientists succeeded in splitting uranium atoms releasing an enormous amount of energy
 - The Manhattan Project became the code name for research work that extended across the country
- The Federal Government Takes Control
 - As war production increased, there were fewer consumer products available for purchase
 - Economic Controls
 - The OPA fought inflation by freezing prices on most goods
 - The government encouraged Americans to use their extra cash to buy war bonds

- The War Production Board (WPB) decided which companies would convert from peacetime to wartime production
- Nationwide drives to collect scrap iron, tin cans, paper, rags, and cooking fat for recycling into war goods
- Rationing
 - OPA set up a system of rationing or establishing fixed allotments of goods deemed essential for the military
 - Households received ration books with coupons to be used for buying such scarce goods as meat, shoes, sugar, coffee and gasoline
 - Gas rationing was particularly hard on those who live in western regions where driving was the only way to get around
 - Most Americans accepted rationing as a personal contribution to the war effort
 - Inevitably some cheated by hoarding scarce goods or by purchasing them through the “black markets” where rationed items could be bought illegally without coupons at inflated prices