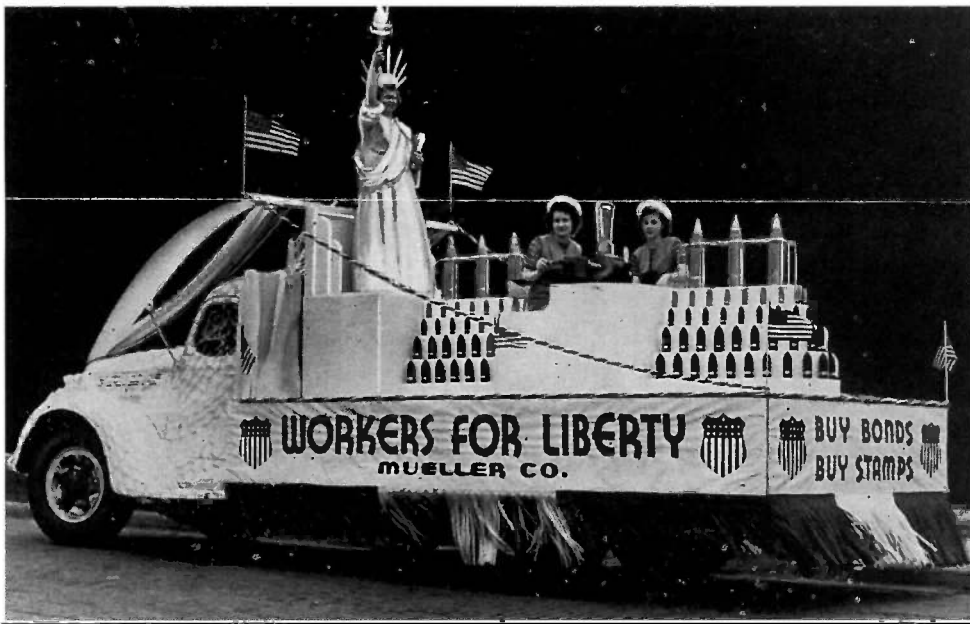




THE MUELLER RECORD

WINTER 2007/08 NEWSLETTER

MUELLER CO. IN WORLD WAR II



The Mueller Co. float participated in the Army Parade in Decatur on May 9, 1943. A crowd of 35,000 viewed the three-mile long parade. Riding on the float were Nellie Fishburn as Miss Liberty, Darlene Trimmer weighing and gauging shot, and Gladys Jenkins burring brass bands on shot.

Mueller Co. became a very different company during World War II with a much different work force producing dramatically different products. The recent PBS television series on the war featuring both the battle front and home front is mirrored by the experiences of Mueller Co. and its family of employees. Production changes were immediate with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. In fact, Mueller Co. was even a little ahead of the game. War planning started when it appeared that hostilities were inevitable. Mueller Co.'s Canadian plant in Sarnia, Ontario made the company acutely aware of the need to prepare for the coming war. Canada, as a part of the British Empire, was already at war and former Mueller Co. employees

Mueller Employees In The Armed Service

MUELLER EMPLOYEES IN SERVICE

Those in military service make sudden and unexpected changes. The list published in the November Mueller Record already calls for revision. Here follows the corrected list of addresses.

DECATUR

ELLIS BLAINE ADAMS, A.S.
Co. 1805 USNTS
Great Lakes, Ill.



THE OFFICIAL CITATION

"For meritorious and distinguished service to their country in its time of need, the Army-Navy Production Award is presented to the men and women of the Mueller Co. By their unflagging spirit of patriotism—by their acceptance of high responsibility—by the skill, industry and devotion they are showing on the production front of the greatest war in history—they are making an enduring contribution not only to the preservation of the United States of America but to the immortality of human freedom itself."

... L. Plt 2
Iowa City, Iowa

PVT. HENRY BLANKENBURG 3668888
Co. M. 2nd Regt ORTC
Aberdeen Proving Grounds
Maryland

PFC. JOHN F. BRATCHER 36071215
68th Tank Bn., Co. A
6th Div. A.P.O. 256
Camp Cooke, Calif.

CHARLES LAWRENCE BROWN S 2-C
U.S.N.T.S. Service School Gr. 1
Section F 11-1 Barracks 501-LP
Great Lakes, Ill.

CHARLES N. BROWNLOW S 2-C
U.S.S. Sacramento
% Fleet Postoffice
San Francisco, Calif.

PVT. CARL BUCKWALD 36449388
A.P.O. 26-180th F.A. Bn.
Service Btry.
Camp Campbell, Ky.

HOMER DALE CLONEY S 2-C
U.S.S. Maloy D.E. 791
Receiving Station
Orange, Texas

HOWARD E. COCHRAN, A.S.
USNTS Co. 1028-43 Bks. 15V
Camp Waldron
Farragut, Idaho

PVT. ELDO L. COFFMAN, JR.
ATS. 131 M.C.A.B.
Camp Miramar,
San Diego 45, Calif.

PVT. EDWARD P. COLLINS
75
F... Mo.
PE... 36441948



PVT. JOE DREW 36478230
Med. Det. 2nd
A.P.O. 461, 70th
Camp Adaire, Oregon

CPL. ED. H. DREW 36478230
A.P.O. No. 12574B c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, Calif.

There was time for fun as well. Every Thursday night, Mueller Co. reserved the entire Fairview bowling center for its employee leagues. Bowling had been a popular activity before the war but the teams now had names such as Avengers, Flying Fortresses, Flying Tigers and P-38's. The taking-in of a stray dog (Josephine) at Plant 3 created a great diversion when she provided a litter of 6 puppies in January of 1943. The puppies were auctioned off with the proceeds being made on Josephine's behalf to the War Bond Drive.

The war provided great opportunities for women to enter the workplace in jobs that were never open to them before. Many Mueller lathes, grinders and presses were now operated by women (wives and family members of servicemen receiving hiring preference). Mueller Co. arranged a training program with the Industrial Arts School at Millikin University providing special classes for groups of 50 girls at a time in mechanics, blueprint reading, mathematics, quality control, metallurgy and other industrial skills. The girls were paid regular plant wages while attending classes and acquired vital skills. A few of these women turned this training into careers in the post-war company. Mueller did retain many of the women after the war's end although most happily returned to their traditional roles as homemakers as servicemen returned to fill the jobs.

Mueller Co. actively supported many war efforts, encouraging enlistment in the WACs, urging conservation of goods, hosting classes in cooking with rationed products, sponsoring nursing training and pushing participation in the constant Bond Drives. One cartoon published in the Mueller Record equated cashing in a War Bond with taking the rifle from a soldier's hands while in combat! The constant messages were "produce for the war" and "pay for the war." Mueller Co. president William Everett Mueller addressed the work force in 1942 giving the following admonitions: "Keep fit, do your job efficiently, buy bonds, support relief drives, support the Red Cross with blood and service, conserve, maintain an invincible morale."

Mueller Co. was recognized by the War Department on three occasions for its production efforts. These awards were an important part of an effort to boost morale among home front workers and were given to about 20% of the companies involved based on criteria such as production goals met, employee absenteeism, innovation, and quality. On July 15, 1942, Mueller Co. received the **Army Award for Meritorious Production** by the Chicago Ordnance District. May 27, 1943, brought the prestigious **Army-Navy "E" Production Award** (E for Excellence). Finally, on May 5, 1945, a **Star Award** was added to the Army-Navy "E" Production Award. All of these honors are proudly displayed in the Hieronymus Mueller Museum.

No record of the actual quantity of wartime production is available. Suffice to say, it was significant. Production included 37MM shells, 57MM tank rounds, 105 and 155MM Howitzer shells, 5" Naval shells as well as other large ordnance. Mueller Co. engineered and produced the first 57MM tank rounds capable of penetrating the German tank armor in North Africa. A total of 504 Mueller men and women served in the armed forces during the war. Records don't state the number of casualties but they were many and included Joe Brownback, a great-grandson of Hieronymus Mueller, and Harold T. Smith, the first Decatur employee to die in combat. The Mueller Record routinely published lists of servicemen with their mailing addresses as well as photos and letters sent to the company by those in uniform.

Tom Brokaw has given a name to those who fought on the war fronts and the home front – the Greatest Generation. Most of these great people – our parents and grandparents – are gone now. They won a war with effort and sacrifice that we cannot comprehend today. After that war, they returned to normal lives building a society and economy that made America the envy of the world. We owe them more than can be paid. The Mueller Museum hopes to insure that they are not forgotten.

from Sarnia were fighting and dying. Mueller Co. offered its services in manufacturing and engineering to the War Department in early 1941. Mueller Co. was assigned the task of producing 37MM shot (ammunition) which was in critical supply and was actually given the "go ahead" to begin production on December 1, 1941 – seven days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Munitions were coming off the production line by February, 1942. Plant 3, the former Mueller Co. vitreous ware plant which had been closed in 1932, was reopened to accommodate the new production. Machinery and other necessary equipment were relocated from other plant buildings to the new site in 10 days with the goal that no machine be out of service more than two hours in the process. Work crews and electricians set up each machine as it was manhandled into place and moved on to the next as operators started production on the newly installed equipment. Work crews installed a kitchen and cafeteria as others constructed new loading docks and entrances on the south side of the building. Plant 3 was referred to as "the war plant."

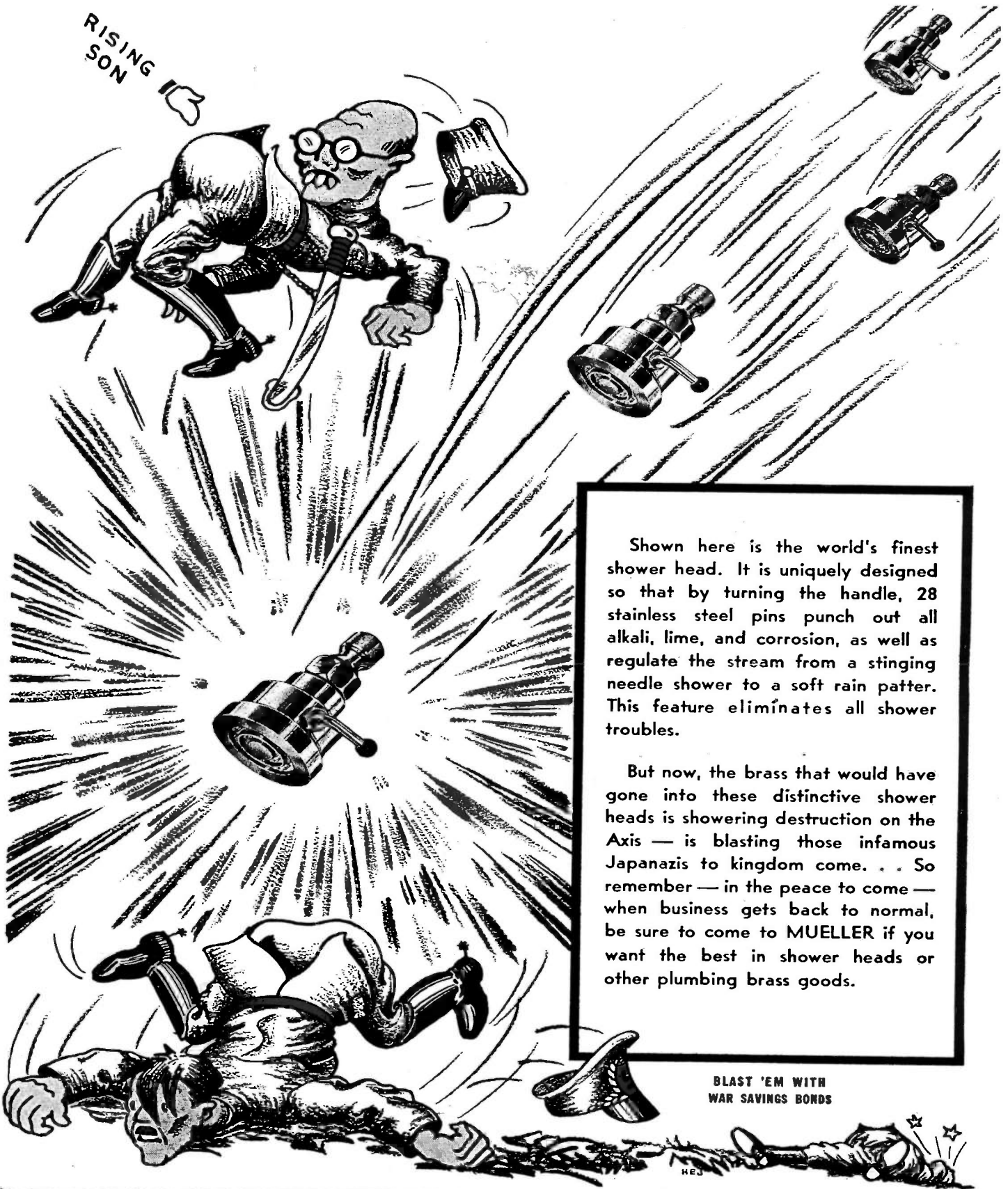
Normal production of plumbing and water distribution products continued at first but gradually fell off as workers and raw materials were diverted to the war effort. Dorthea Toole Babb (retiree, 1935-1950) recalls being reassigned to new work in the war plant cafeteria as her job in the core room fell victim to the new production priorities. Only products needed for emergency repairs to water systems were continued. Otherwise, the main plant turned to the manufacture of valves and regulators for the Navy's shipbuilding program.

Other Mueller plants joined in the war effort. Persh Griffith (retiree, 1940-1982) left Decatur three days after Pearl Harbor to help set up production and additional shifts at the Chattanooga plant where 105MM artillery shells were produced during the war. He stayed at that job until he enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1943. He left behind his new bride, Maxine (retiree, 1942-1982), who returned to Decatur and worked in the reception area of Plant 3 where visitors and workers were screened for security during the war.



The plants worked 3 shifts, seven days a week – equipment was in short supply and the production was vital. Employees were generally happy to have the work, having just experienced the Great Depression, but of even greater importance was a sense of making a direct and significant contribution to the war effort. Morale among the workers was high. Bond drives were an important activity with over 90% of the work force participating. Letter writing to servicemen was encouraged with letters from former Mueller workers, now in the service, posted on factory bulletin boards. Packages were sent from the company to servicemen with every former employee getting a Christmas parcel. Persh Griffith recalls that each Christmas his box from the company included a \$1000 Savings Bond. This was in addition to savings accounts the company established for each worker who entered the service. Many returning Mueller servicemen bought homes with the money set aside by the company during the war.

RISING
SON



Shown here is the world's finest shower head. It is uniquely designed so that by turning the handle, 28 stainless steel pins punch out all alkali, lime, and corrosion, as well as regulate the stream from a stinging needle shower to a soft rain patter. This feature eliminates all shower troubles.

But now, the brass that would have gone into these distinctive shower heads is showering destruction on the Axis — is blasting those infamous Japanazis to kingdom come. . . So remember — in the peace to come — when business gets back to normal, be sure to come to MUELLER if you want the best in shower heads or other plumbing brass goods.

BLAST 'EM WITH
WAR SAVINGS BONDS

MUELLER CO. ★★ DECATUR, ILL.