



Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II

By Emily Yellin

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Our Mothers' War is an eye-opening and moving portrait of women during World War II, a war that forever transformed the way women participate in American society. Never before has the vast range of women's experiences during this pivotal era been brought together in one book. Now, *Our Mothers' War* re-creates what American women from all walks of life were doing and thinking, on the home front and abroad. These heartwarming and sometimes heartbreaking accounts of the women we have known as mothers, aunts, and grandmothers reveal facets of their lives that have usually remained unmentioned and unappreciated.

Our Mothers' War gives center stage to one of WWII's most essential fighting forces: the women of America, whose extraordinary bravery, strength, and humanity shine through on every page.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

After years of planting Victory gardens, volunteering at USOs and coping with increased home front responsibilities, in early 1945 Yellin's mother quit her desk job at *Reader's Digest* and shipped out to the Pacific Front to join the Red Cross. Wartime manpower shortages were bending gender rules, and many women seized the opportunity to try something different. While feminist historians have analyzed the meaning of their war experience, journalist Yellin takes a more subjective approach. This nonjudgmental, anecdotal account covers the usual range of topics—women in war industries, in volunteer work, in the armed forces, in undercover operations—but Yellin avoids retelling the familiar. Thus, she discusses the experiences of Lena Horne and Julia Child more fully than those of Eleanor Roosevelt, and delves deeper into the anti-Semitic Mothers' Movement and Hawaiian prostitutes walking picket lines than more mainstream organizations like the CIO women's committees. Yellin describes the exclusion of African-American women from most military units and the internment of Japanese-American women, but adds little to present scholarship on minority women's participation. Indeed, since her most original material comes from interviews with relatives, family friends and contacts, the book is strongest on the experiences of educated white women, which were surprisingly diverse. For WAVES director Mildred McAfee—the president of Wellesley College before the war—life in the navy took her out of her "cloister" and thrust her into a world where "women are women and men are men." For others, like Yellin's mother, the war let their genies out of the bottle.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—An exceptionally well-written, exhaustively researched book. During World War II, females were confined to auxiliary roles. Yellin reveals all of the responsibilities held by women, including helping to manufacture aircraft, ships, and other munitions; and, in the process, outproducing all of America's allies and enemies, by far. Readers see war brides who worked hard to maintain the morale of their husbands while surviving long separation, fear, and shortages of virtually everything necessary to support a family. Yellin writes about performers like Betty Grable, who traveled to combat theaters to raise the spirits of soldiers, sailors, and airmen. *Our Mothers' War* is an important book because the role played by women in World War II has been regularly ignored.—Alan Gropman, *National Defense University, Washington, DC*

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From [Booklist](#)

Yellin, motivated by the discovery of a journal her mother kept while serving in the Red Cross in Saipan during World War II, began researching the experiences of a wide cross section of women during the war years. Women from a variety of social, financial, religious, and cultural backgrounds answered the call to serve their families and their country in heretofore unthinkable ways. Proving themselves to be equal partners in the fellowship of the "greatest generation," these wives, daughters, mothers, sisters, and friends forged new identities for themselves while breaking down significant gender barriers for subsequent generations of women. Drawn from letters, diaries, and interviews, these first-person accounts and reminiscences are woven together and placed into historical context by Yellin's unobtrusive narrative. Allowing her subjects' eloquent voices to speak for themselves, she provides a fascinating slice of social history. *Margaret Flanagan*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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The book *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You should use to make your capable more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting tension or having big problem with the subject. If you can make looking at a book *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* to become your habit, you can get a lot more advantages, like add your own personal capable, increase your knowledge about some or all subjects. You may know everything if you like open and read a book *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II*. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science reserve or encyclopedia or other people. So , how do you think about this guide?

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