Marching Orders

Name:

Date of Birth:

Date of Mission:

Duty Station (address):

National WWII Reunion
Tribute to a Generation
May 27–30, 2004
The National Mall
Washington, D.C.
When the United States entered World War II in December 1941, life changed for everyone—not only for those who went to fight overseas, but also for those who stayed on the home front.

Your *Marching Orders* will give you a chance to explore some of the changes and challenges of wartime service, on the battlefield and on the home front.

**Directions**

The best way to understand what it was like to live during World War II is to experience some of these changes and challenges yourself. Visit the different activity stations set up in the *Family Activities Pavilion* to learn a little more about life during the war. When you answer the question for an activity, be sure to get your *Marching Orders* stamped so that you can move on to the next activity.

Outstanding service in the military is rewarded with a medal. After you complete three or more of the activities in your *Marching Orders*, proceed to the Honorable Discharge Station to receive your Medal of Recognition for outstanding service in these World War II activities.
Breaking the Code

During World War II, the U.S. military needed to communicate with people many miles away. These messages had to be received quickly, and frequently contained top-secret information. The messages were often written in code so the enemy could not understand them.

It was not only the U.S. military that used secret codes to confuse the enemy, the Axis did too (see Definitions on last page). For the Allies, deciphering the Axis codes became a significant project called “Ultra.” Being able to decode these messages and pass them on to military commanders made a difference in many battles.

The Battle of Midway was one such battle. On the morning of June 4, 1942, while searching for Japanese aircraft carriers in the area, the United States intercepted and decoded a message from the Japanese, very similar to the one on the following page. The information in the message helped the Allies to victory at Midway. This battle was the turning point in the Pacific war.
Use the key posted in the Family Activities Pavilion to decode the message below.

8-23-2-4-10  12-10-8-3-12-16-11
2-16  b-h-b-b  13-3-15-12-11,
16-21-3  1-2-16-16-23-10-11-13-18-8-11,
1-10-2-12-18-4-14  c-d-b
5-10-14-12-10-10-11,  5-18-11-16-2-4-6-10
a-k-b  26-18-23-10-11

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Once the United States entered the war in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt saw the need to ration, or limit, the amount of certain items people could buy. Every family was issued a ration book with specially numbered stamps. These stamps gave permission to purchase rationed items, such as sugar, butter, meat, coffee, and canned foods. Many families planted “Victory Gardens” (like the one you will find outside) so they didn’t have to spend their stamps on canned vegetables. Other goods, including tires and gasoline, were also rationed. Factories needed raw materials to build machinery, so people on the home front recycled metal. Even fat from cooking was used to make explosives, so this was collected too.

Take a look at some of the many items rationed or recycled during World War II at the Rationing Station and learn why they were rationed or recycled.
In the space below, draw or list three items you just could not imagine being without and tell why they were rationed.
During the war, people at home wanted to keep in touch with troops overseas. There was limited space on boats and planes for mail, so the government (borrowing an idea from the British) came up with a way to get as many letters to the troops as possible. People would write their letters on special Victory Mail or V-Mail forms and send them off, just like a letter. However, the Post Office worked with the Armed Forces to take miniature photos of these letters, squeezing 1,500 letters on one roll of film. The film was shipped overseas, then the letters were printed to about one-quarter the original size, and delivered.

Use the V-Mail forms provided to write a letter to someone who served overseas during World War II. Ask them what it was like being in the war, or tell them about life back home.

Turn in your V-Mail so that one of the World War II veterans can answer your mail, or we can post it in the pavilion for a World War II veteran to read.
Dear [Name],

I've checked the following messages to tell you that things around here aren't exciting or just the same, but I'm happy to hear from you.

I'm hoping you're well and happy, thinking of me, coming back soon, reforming, and alive and kicking. Feeling fine and dandy, with thoughts of you. I'm doing fine, too, with a lot of work and the usual stuff.

I'll bet you're working hard, having fun, in the guardhouse.

I hope you get along swell, like your buddies, write soon, and don't do anything I wouldn't do.

Signed,

[V-Mail]
By World War II, airplane technology had come a long way and was involved in every major battle. In warfare, it is essential to tell the difference between a friend and an enemy, so manuals were produced to assist with aircraft recognition training. There were many different forms of recognition training, but memorizing silhouettes of the aircraft was the basis of all training. The idea behind this training was to quickly recognize the plane flying above you.

Look at these airplanes. By using the aircraft spotter poster in the Family Activities Pavilion, try and figure out what types of planes they are and to which countries they belonged.
During the war, automobile production stopped, and factories started making jeeps, trucks, boats, airplanes, tanks, and other military vehicles. World War II brought great changes and improvements in manufacturing, which contributed to the combat success of the U.S. military. The ability to transport personnel and materiel to the battlefront quickly made the difference between victory and defeat.

Look around the Reunion and see what different types of military vehicles you can find. List or draw two on the following page.
Definitions

Allies—The major Allied Powers were France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada, and Australia.

Axis—The major Axis Powers were Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Decipher—figure out, decode.

Honorable Discharge—leaving the military with a satisfactory record.

Marching Orders—orders given to begin a military campaign.

Materiel—supplies and equipment used by a military organization.

Rationing—governmental limits set on purchasing certain types of items.

Warfare—military operations between enemies.
The National World War II Reunion is produced by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in partnership with the American Battle Monuments Commission.