



Small Town America in World War II: War Stories from Wrightsville, Pennsylvania

Ronald E. Marcello

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Historians acknowledge that World War II touched every man, woman, and child in the United States. In *Small Town America in World War II*, Ronald E. Marcello uses oral history interviews with civilians and veterans to explore how the citizens of Wrightsville, Pennsylvania, responded to the war effort. Located along the western shore of the Susquehanna River in York County, Wrightsville was a transportation hub with various shops, stores, and services as well as industrial plants. Interviews with citizens and veterans are organized in sections on the home front; the North African-Italian, European, and Pacific theatres; stateside military service; and occupation in Germany. Throughout Marcello provides introductions and contextual narrative on World War II as well as annotations for events and military terms. Overseas the citizens of Wrightsville turned into soldiers. An infantryman in the Italian campaign, Alfred Forry, explained, "I was forty-five days on the line wearing the same clothes, but everybody was in the same situation, so you didn't mind the stench and body odors." A veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, Edward Reisinger, remembered, "Replacements had little chance of surviving. They were sent to the front one day, and the next day they were coming back with mattress covers over them. The sergeants never knew the names of these people." Mortar man Donald Peters described the death of a buddy who was hit by artillery shrapnel: "His arm was just hanging on by the skin, and his intestines were hanging out." In the conclusion Marcello examines how the war affected Wrightsville. Did the war bring a return to prosperity? What effects did it have on women? How did wartime trauma affect the returning veterans? In short, did World War II transform Wrightsville and its citizens, or was it the same town after the war?

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