

## WAR RECORD WORK IN IOWA

Iowa people are unanimous in support of every proper and necessary move to assure the triumph of the Allied free nations over the compact of Axis dictatorships. Unity and earnestness prevail and there is total consecration to the needs of a total war.

There is also in every nook and corner of the state an understanding of the importance of having the record kept of all the various and sundry activities of the people, as individuals and as groups, and steps toward having such record preserved at the seat of state government, and because of this fine spirit there is splendid cooperation in the work that is under way. In a sunny corner of the Archives division of the State Historical building is being gathered and catalogued a vast quantity of data, records, manuscripts and other material that will some day be a mine of information for the students and historians of the future. Even now, as the tragic events of the war bear heavily on many hearts, the work being done and results accomplished are of much interest and value.

Because of the totality of the war, practically every person, young or old, is automatically enlisted in the Win the War campaign. There are many organizations helpful in the good cause. There is no community in Iowa that has not responded quickly and almost completely to every call for service. The get-together spirit abounds. Contact has been had with interested persons and organizations in every county, and with the splendid cooperation of the American Legion auxiliary and similar groups, assurance has been secured for the program of completing and preserving all war records. In this fine public service much time and energy is being freely given by officers of clubs and societies, the publishers and editors of newspapers, and those who have official connection with phases of the whole mobilization for victory.

The final history of World War II will have many chapters on civilian activities on the home front. The record of personnel and combat events will automatically

go into the public archives and be printed in public documents; the equally important story of what is done by committees, commissions and individuals, is more likely to be headed for the waste basket. Now is the time to forestall this danger. To that end the war record work includes, among other items, the following:

Information as to all that pertains to organizations engaged in any and every form of help or encouragement to the armed forces, providing entertainment, facilitating correspondence, safeguarding health, maintenance of army morale and home front unity.

Details of the formation of auxiliaries of women to supplement the striking force of military units, and the service of women on the home front, now of vastly greater importance than ever before.

The economic problems—production on farms and in factories, the expansion of industry, management and labor, control of prices, rationing and distribution of food and materials, the dislocation of transportation, taxation and finances.

Publicity, advertising, radio, music, posters, books and magazines, propaganda and censorship, reinforcement of the will to victory, and in general all the related and connected things that are a part of the war effort.

The effort of this department, for and on behalf of the state, to have the record made as complete as possible and to provide for permanent preservation of same, is meeting with a response most gratifying. Much of the material being gathered will not become a part of the state archives until later, but commitments have been made that assure a minimum of loss and a general avoidance of the thoughtless destruction of papers and exhibits.

Of immediate concern to the War Records division is the effort to secure and place in the files the personal record of each and every Iowan making the final sacrifice of life in battle or camp. A questionnaire is sent to the surviving relatives and details secured that will go into the permanent files of the state.

Large display cases in the corridor of the Historical building, show photographs of approximately 750 of these fine young men whose lives have been given for their country, and another case is being rapidly filled.

The files are being expanded with detailed records of Iowans becoming the victims of Axis warfare. Up to the first of May, 1944, this list included about 900 names, which is only a small part of the total of casualties, but with the help of persons in every county the list will be made fairly complete. The field for active and useful work in this line is almost unlimited. In no sense is the work being done by the War Records division intended to displace or duplicate the work being so well done by local historical societies and organizations, but solely to make sure that in the end all available information shall become a part of the public archives and be available to all who are interested.

Iowa is not alone in this work. In a Bulletin issued by the American Association for State and Local History, it is stated that at the close of the first year of American participation in the war, fourteen states had inaugurated similar projects. Others are now taking it up. In some states the work has been sponsored by the councils of defense and other similar organizations, in others by the state university or college or historical societies. Iowa was first to lead off. Some states have gone much further in publication of interesting and helpful material to keep the public fully informed. The association referred to is active in promoting war record work for every state and seeking to direct the same along the lines most useful.

Iowa long ago gained an enviable reputation for thoroughness in archival work, and it is hoped that this high standing will be maintained by carrying on in full and hearty cooperation with everybody, all through this era of turmoil and heart-breaking sacrifice.

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