

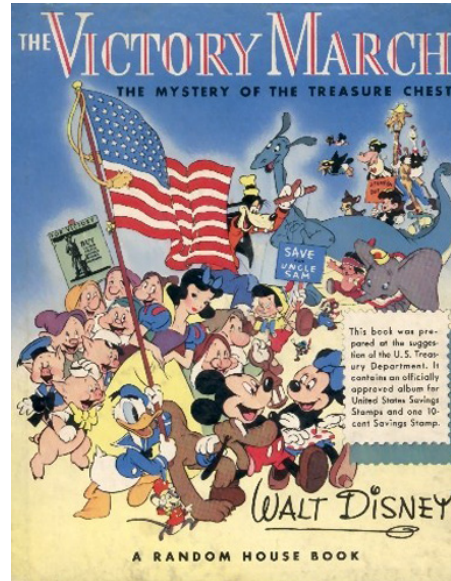
Donald Duck Goes to War – WWII Cartoon Activities



During the war, Hollywood stars, radio personalities, musicians and even cartoon characters joined the war effort. By the 1940s, radio had become a mass medium with almost 80 percent of households owning a radio. Only 7 percent of the airtime on the radio was devoted to news, however, by the end of the war, 25 percent of the airtime was the news. Radio listeners wanted to hear what was happening during the war.

In the 1940s, movies were extremely popular and 90 million Americans (2/3rds of the population) went to the movies every week during the war. Many of the movies and animated shorts quickly had war themes. Newsreels and animated shorts were shown before the feature movie played; cartoon characters sold war bonds, flew planes, built bombs and even fought the enemy. Cartoon films in those years were very much aimed at more than just children. The movies and comic books were important for morale. They made the enemy look ridiculous and allowed the audience to laugh at their own daily lives for a few minutes.

Disney characters gave America entertainment, pride and courage. To support the war effort, Walt Disney Studios, along with others like Warner Brothers Studios, created many war-themed animated shorts during the 1940s. Donald Duck was the most popular Disney character at the time, so he became the main character in many of the Disney war shorts. The studio devoted over 90 percent of its employees to make training and propaganda films. In total, the Disney Studios made some 68 hours of film. Walt Disney and his artists also designed over 1200 insignias that actually appeared on warplanes, trucks, fighter jackets and other military equipment used during the war.



In May 1942, Donald Duck reported for duty in “Donald Gets Drafted.” In a cartoon called “The Spirit of ‘43,” Donald showed Americans why it was important to save money and pay their income taxes on time. “The Spirit of 43” was seen by 26 million Americans, and more than a third of them later admitted they began saving for their taxes partly thanks to Donald. Mickey, Minnie and Pluto were even in a propaganda short that explained how cooking oil could be vital for victory.

In 1984, nearly 50 years after his first war film, the U.S. Army, to show its gratitude for his war efforts, promoted Donald Duck to the rank of sergeant – and then honorably discharged him from the military.

Assignments:

Video links are posted on the class wikispace.

1. Watch the 2 required videos:
 - a. *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1942)
 - b. *The Spirit of '43* (1943)
2. Watch 1 video from the following choices:
 - a. *Donald Gets Drafted* (1942) – Disney
 - b. *Fall Out Fall In* (1943) -- Disney
 - c. *Commando Duck* (1944) – Disney
 - d. *Daffy the Commando* (1943) – Looney Tunes
 - e. *Japoteurs* (1942) – Superman
3. For each cartoon (4 total) complete the following:
 - a. In 4-5 sentences, summarize the video.
 - b. Describe the various locations where the video takes place & any significant objects/things.
 - c. Describe the various main characters in the video and how they are portrayed.
 - d. Describe how the enemy is portrayed (physically, behaviorally, etc.).
 - e. Explain with examples as support: What aspects of the video do you think are accurate? What aspects are exaggerated? What aspects are made up?
 - f. Explain the purpose(s) the animated short & give examples as support.
 - Instructional (teaching and encouraging people to do something)
 - Informational (informing the people of something)
 - g. Explain whether you think the video was entertaining and, at the same time, met its intended purpose.
4. After watching all 3 videos, write ½ page describing which video you like the most. What did you like about it? Why?

