

Smithsonian Exhibition on World War II Posters Visits Mississippi in Time for July 4th

Reproductions of colorful posters, circulated throughout the United States during World War II to mobilize the nation's support for the overseas war effort, will travel to Meridian, Miss. as part of a Smithsonian tour, hosted by the Memory Tree Foundation, Inc., of Meridian.

"Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-1945" opens on July 4 at the restored historic Meridian Train Depot at 1901 Front Street. Prior to the opening, there will be a reception on July 3 at 6 p.m. "Home front heroes," who have been selected from each of the seven Mississippi communities that have hosted the exhibition, will be acknowledged during a short awards ceremony. There will also be a special guest appearance by the original "Rosie-the-Riveter," Ethel Kelley. Following the reception, a USO show will open to the public at 7:30 p.m.

On July 4, the exhibition will open to the public at 10 a.m. and remain on view until August 31. The admission is free and the hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. The Fourth of July Memory Tree Foundation's "Proud to be an American Parade," held at Bonita Lakes, will begin at 7 p.m. Citizens of all ages are encouraged to participate in this display of American pride on the Nation's birthday. The parade will proceed across the dam down to center stage beside the upper lake, where the Meridian Symphony Orchestra will play 1940s era music before and during patriotic fireworks.

The exhibition – which is designed to serve libraries, historical societies and museums in rural areas – features 25 reproductions of World War II posters from the collections of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, Behring Center.

"Produce for Victory" focuses on the images—displayed in factories, shop windows, schools and other public places around the country—which rallied a nation to take the steps necessary at home to support soldiers in the field. Citizens were instructed to conserve automobile fuel by carpooling, to organize scrap drives and to grow victory gardens to reduce the burden on the nation's farmers growing crops for overseas consumption.

"Produce for Victory" is one of a series of exhibitions circulating nationally as part of [Museum on Main Street](#), a collaborative partnership between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and state humanities councils across the country in cooperation with the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Major funding to date has been provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, and the National Endowment for the

Humanities. Generous support also has been provided by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution's Special Exhibitions Fund and Educational Outreach Fund.

"We are very pleased to be able to bring 'Produce for Victory' to our area," said Barbara Carpenter, director of the Mississippi State Humanities Council. "We hope that it will inspire many to become even more involved in the cultural life of our community in Meridian."

The exhibition, which will also examine regional home front history and honor home front heroes, is augmented by locally lent materials such as ration cards, victory garden cookbooks, plane spotter guides, children's toys and other memorabilia. Collected oral histories will document Meridian's contribution to the war effort.

The Memory Tree Foundation was established in 1998 for people of all ages to encourage pride and patriotism, by preserving the memories of veterans and those who serve, from the American Revolution to the present, allowing the United States to stand firm in the meaning of freedom. For more information, visit www.meridianms.org/Memorytree.

Each year, SITES shares the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside of Washington, D.C. One of the Smithsonian's four National Programs, SITES makes available a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown not only in museums but also wherever people live, work, and play, including libraries, science centers, historical societies, community centers, botanical gardens, schools and shopping malls. In 2002, SITES celebrates 50 years of connecting Americans to their shared cultural heritage.

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