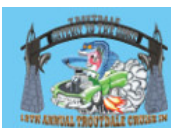


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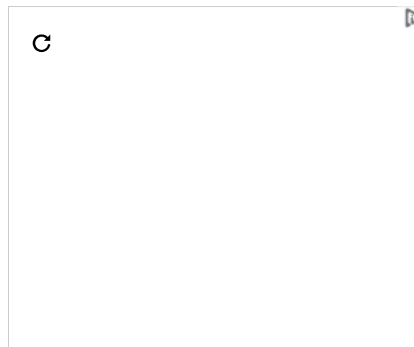
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THUNDER SPECIAL TICKET OFFER

Heslin House highlights the home front

Created on Friday, 26 June 2015 17:00 | Written by [Rob Cullivan](#) |

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World War II exhibit on display through year's end

Want to strike a blow against fascism? Try flicking your cigarette ashes in Benito Mussolini's mouth.

Of course, it's not really his mouth. However, Bassons Dummy Products during World War II had the darkly comic sense to turn the Italian dictator's head into a ceramic ashtray.

The ashtray, owned by Sandy writer and historian Bill Leslie, is among the fascinating items you can find in the Heslin House's World War II Home Front exhibit.

Collectibles include posters calling on folks to buy war bonds, newspapers from the war years, patriotic buttons as well as miniature games designed to be sent to people in the military.

The Heslin House, 60 Main St., Fairview, along with the Zimmerman House, is open the third Saturday every month, and also will be open every Saturday starting July 11 through Aug. 29 from noon to 3 p.m.

The Home Front exhibit will remain on display at the Heslin House through the end of the year and gives viewers a hint of what life was like for Oregonians who lived through history's greatest military conflict, says Twila Mysinger, president of the East County Historical Organization. The group operates both the Heslin House as well as the Zimmerman House, 17111 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

"I wonder if people felt they could ever get away from it," Mysinger says of the war's endless intrusions into day-to-day life, with grim newspaper headlines announcing the latest battles and ration coupons reminding folks of the scarcity of sugar, coffee, meat and gasoline, among other goods. "Yet the folks at home would send cards and small games to their soldiers, and it's fun to see those in this new exhibit."

Leslie, who loaned a portion of his personal collection, adds that the exhibit highlights the war's unifying effect.

"For perhaps the first and the last time, all of America was united in support of a war effort," he says. "Children collected scrap metal and newspapers, and watched for German airplanes over Kansas. Rosie the Riveter showed us that the American woman could find a place in offices and factories. The war changed America in amazing ways."



OUTLOOK PHOTO: JOSH KULLA - Sandy writer William Leslie loaned this Benito Mussolini ashtray to the Home Front exhibit.



OUTLOOK PHOTO: JOSH KULLA - This enemy aircraft spotter dial is among the memorabilia on display in the Heslin House's World War II Home Front exhibit.

Meanwhile, Dodi Davies, vice president of the organization and the exhibit's primary organizer, says she was struck by how books and newspapers being delivered to soldiers overseas were miniaturized in order to save on paper.

"This impressed me because it was a way of keeping soldiers informed as to what was happening back on the home front," she says. "It gave them some sense of normalcy I suppose."

The Oregonian — which Leslie notes was the first paper in the nation to print "Remember Pearl Harbor," on Dec. 9, 1941 — printed miniature eight-page editions for mailing overseas, to keep service members informed about what was happening at home.

Meanwhile, Leslie says folks at home would use special forms called "V-Mail," which was short for "Victory Mail," to write letters to servicemen and women overseas.

The letters would be photographed and then destroyed. The film was shipped overseas, developed, and prints were made for delivery to the serviceman.

"More than 2,575 pounds of letters could be reduced to 45 pounds of film, saving millions of gallons of fuel for the war effort," Leslie says.

If you're interested in seeing this historic exhibit, suggested admission to the Heslin House is \$2. For more information, call 503-261-8078 or email info@echohistory.org.

rcullivan@theoutlookonline.com

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102°F 62°F

