

Life on the Home Front during
World War 2
On the Isle of Man



Zivilgefangenen-Lager. Knockaloe I o M.

The Second world war was not a huge surprise for the Isle of Man if you had the good fortune of hindsight, there was several indicators that it was going to affect the Isle of Man before the announcement of the beginning of World War 2, the TT of June 1939 was dominated by German teams trying to get a propaganda win for Adolf Hitler, the Islands only Territorial Army was pulled up for permanent action on the 24th August 1939 and the Navy took some of the Isle of Man Steam Packet ships with all but the engineers replaced by Navy Personnel due to their knowledge of the ships.

Different people had different experiences of World War 2 on the Isle of Man, Men between the ages of 18 and 41 were called up for Army Service, some men who had import roles on the Island were made exempt such as bakers, farmers, medical personnel and engineers, Women often filled the roles of the men who had been called to war to fill in the shortfall.

There was a difference on the Isle of Man for women during World War 2 compared to world War one, that being for the first time womens who were between the ages of 20 & 30 who had no children and who were unmarried or widowed were called up to play their part, in roles such as the Women's Royal Navy which included cooks, wireless telegraphers, radar plotters and electricians. The Auxiliary Territorial Service These roles focused on no combat roles such as driving and Administration services. The Women's Auxiliary Air Force These roles were specialised for women who could be engineers, mechanics, fitters and electricians for planes which would be used in the War. Many of these women were sent of the Isle of Man to fulfill these roles, which was met by a lot of criticism from people on the Isle of man, who believed women shouldnt have been sent of the Island to fill these roles, which tynwald agreed with and

decided women would only be sent to the mainland if they had offered themselves to go or they had refused to do work on the Isle of Man which was of national importance.

The Manx women's land Army was quick to train women up to become farmers, they were given 'uniform' 3 shirts, 2 pairs of dungarees, an oilskin or waterproof coat, 1 pair of shoes, 6 pairs of stockings and a hat. These women were sent to knockaloe beg farm where they got 6 weeks of training and then were tested on milking and dairy work, poultry care, and tractor driving whilst being given training on other aspects of general farm life. Some of these women were sent to certain farms, where others formed mobile units and travelled around the island to where they were needed.

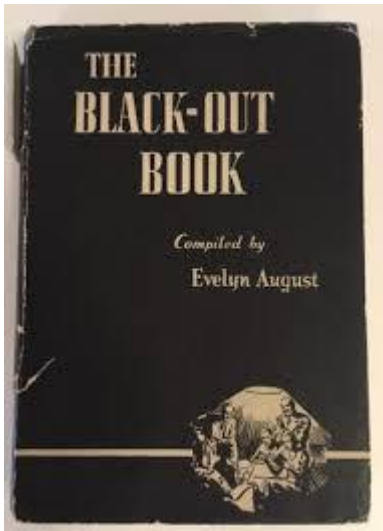
World War 2 on the Isle of Man was a very difficult place to be as a child, although the island was never purposefully bombed many german fighter planes would drop bombs over the Isle of Man to lighten their planes load especially if their planes were damaged. There was rations, black outs which would have been very scary for children, many things were made to try and help children through the war to keep them occupied and to try and keep them from being scared, a war time edition of monopoly was introduced with wooden pieces and a spinner instead of a dice and a book called the black out book was published which was filled with family amusement, entertainment and activities which would be used during black outs.

Rations were not only made to food but also clothing during 1941 and 1949 clothing was rationed so the government brought out a slogan of 'make do and mend' to encourage people to make and fix their own clothes. Food rations were brought in due to the lack of labour and the ships being blocked from docking, many things were replaced with an alternative

which would last longer than their fresh counterparts such as dried egg and milk which was in a powder form. A book was published called the Stork wartime cookery book, which was filled with recipes that helped families make the most of what they had, as meat, dairy and tinned foods were all rationed many of these recipes used lentils and potatoes and replaced the rationed items with other ingredients. These were known as 'mock' recipes.

There were a number of training bases on the Isle of Man all to train men who were in the age bracket to be sent to war, many men came from the mainland to also train at these camps they were based at Jurby & Andreas (RAF training camps) and Douglas (Naval training camps) HMS Valkyrie on Douglas head provided training to both male & female mechanics with boarding houses provided for them along Douglas Promenade and HMS St. George an on shore training camp for boys aged 15-16. Recruits were housed in a holiday camp and did lessons in Ballakermeen high school doing lessons such as maths, magnetism, navigation, electricity and further electricity, naval history and english.

The Isle of man played a big part in world war 2 for such a small Island, the whole community pulled together, many doing job roles they never thought they would have to undertake. Children grew up with nothing to call their own but were happy with what they had and spent many dark nights in bomb shelters, but still pulled themselves together to help their parents when they needed it, women got their hands dirty and kept the Islands agricultural and farming businesses alive and men put their lives on the line to fight for their country. And in 1945 we came out the end of the war a proud Manx nation.



Black out book



Isle of Man rations Book



powdered milk and eggs



Stork recipe book



World War 2 Monopoly



Land army uniform



HMS Valkyrie (Douglas Head)



Plaque marking site of HMS St.

Georges naval camp.

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Research from

- Google
- Manx National Heritage
- Google Images.