

VIDEO SCRIPT

TITLE: The Home Front

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V I S U A L

A U D I O

FADE IN:

Open

Natural sound up and under.

Copy of Thucydide's Peloponesian Wars with ancient Greek illustration.

Narrator: Ever since people first kept written history, war stories have filled books.

Troops at early 20th century train depot.

For Americans, all 20th century wars happened in foreign lands. That meant saying goodbye to soldiers...

Recreation of World War I letter being opened.

and then waiting anxiously for letters, like this one sent from Edward Harris of Armour, South Dakota to his mother.

World War I stills.

Recreation of Harris: "We were downtown yesterday and were given a bath and got clean clothes and we feel fine, for while we are in the front lines, you do not get a chance to take a bath and you get pretty dirty, for you have to live in dugouts and they are not the cleanest place in the world. All the towns in range of the guns are all shot to pieces, nothing but the walls left standing."

World map, with arrows moving from the United States to the war zones.

Narrator: The 20th century opened with American soldiers and sailors fighting in the Spanish American War overseas. In 1917 President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to send United States troops to join a war raging in Europe since 1914.

World War I moving images, and Wilson portrait. Super: World War I, 1917-18.

This was the war Edward Harris fought, along with 32,000 other South Dakota men and women. The war first was called the Great War, and later World War One. President Wilson said

V I S U A L

A U D I O

World War One photo dissolving into two more modern war photos.

America's mission was to help secure democracy in Europe.

Early 20th century South Dakota community scenes, including reservations.

Some called World War One the war to end all wars, but as we'll see, that didn't turn out to be the case.

Aberdeen museum war posters: "U.S. Crop Corps" and "War Traffic Must Come First"

South Dakotans always joined the military in large numbers, with enlistment especially high on our reservations. American Indian service in World War One helped win a struggle for citizenship. In 1919 American Indians veterans who received an honorable military discharge became United States citizens. Five years later, all American Indians were made citizens.

Most war history describes what fighting men and women did in battles. But we shouldn't forget what people did right here in South Dakota—on the home front.

Aberdeen museum "War Bond" poster.

South Dakotans loaned money to the government to pay for wars.

Early 20th century industry.

They stepped into new jobs, doing work previously done by the departed soldiers.

Recreation of a kids' wagon having scrap metal.

They collected materials needed for war—scrap iron, tin, paper, rags, grease, and more. Even young children helped.

Recreation of a letter being written, and the envelope sealed.

Of course, South Dakotans answered the letters that came from war zones, helping keep soldiers in good spirits.

V I S U A L

A U D I O

Any image representing Hutterites.

But they were also some sad home front tales. Not all South Dakotans supported American wars. During World War One, a religious group called the Hutterites opposed the United States' action in Europe. The Hutterites—named for their founder Jakob Hutter—lived in several eastern South Dakota communities where they owned all property together.

Recreation of cattle sale.

In two South Dakota counties, defense councils set up by the governor to organize efforts on the home front, decided the Hutterites should contribute to the war. The defense council seized cattle the Hutterites owned...

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and sold them at auction. Then the council deducted money for war funds and the Red Cross before giving the rest to the Hutterites. The Hutterites were so dismayed that many left South Dakota for Canada.

Early 20th century war bond rally, dissolving to battle scene.

Intolerance and violation of freedoms can happen that way, as citizens rally to support a war. Wise leadership is important on battle fields...

Sioux Falls, World War I era.

and on the home front.

War Memorial, Pierre. Super: World War II, 1941-45.

The United States' biggest 20th century conflict was World War Two. Sixty-five thousand South Dakotans entered military service—joining the Army, National Guard, Marines...

Navy and Coast Guard figures,

Some fought in the air. Army Air Corp bases for

V I S U A L

Pierre.

POP-UP FACT: "DURING WORLD WAR II, SOUTH DAKOTA'S ENLISTMENT RATE LED ALL STATES."

World War II railroad photos. Dissolve to Aberdeen depot, and poster that says "Troop Train—Use Aberdeen Station" at Aberdeen Museum.

Canteen photos. Dissolve to recreated pheasant sandwich.

Navy photos.

Milkweed.

Karen Laumer's food ration book.

A U D I O

training flyers were built at Sioux Falls, Watertown, Mitchell, Pierre, and Rapid City. The one at Rapid City survives today as Ellsworth Air Force Base.

But even more South Dakotans served on the home front. They knew the first battle most soldiers fight is homesickness. Wherever their war destination, most fighting men and women traveled by train during World War Two. So folks in Aberdeen started a canteen in their railroad depot. Canteens were places along the rails where people in military service could relax, eat free food, and enjoy entertainment.

The Aberdeen Canteen stayed open seven days a week, from eight in the morning until midnight or later. It became famous for pheasant sandwiches!

Meanwhile, the United States found it could no longer get material for life jackets from the island of Java, because Java was in the war zone.

But milkweed seed floss proved a good substitute. Life jackets were necessary for sailors and flyers fighting at sea, so South Dakota school children pitched in, helping gather a national total of 14,000 bags of milkweed pods.

South Dakotans rationed foods during the war—meaning they could use only certain amounts of sugar, meat, and coffee per week. Gasoline and tires were also rationed.

V I S U A L

A U D I O

Igloo stills from World War II.
Dissolve briefly to an Eskimo igloo.

The Army built a base for storing bombs south of Edgemont. Because the strange structures were shaped like Eskimo homes, the base was named Igloo.

Homestake Mill.

Homestake Gold Mine in Lead stopped mining and instead became a factory, turning out parts for grenades and airplanes.

World War II industry.

Changes often meant sacrifice, but in some cases they also meant opportunity.

Women in industry, World War II.

More than ever before, women went to work, filling jobs soldiers left behind.

Spearfish aviators.
(Black Hills State yearbooks of the era).

Women and men alike were students at a flight training school at Spearfish's Black Hills Teachers College prior to World War Two.

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After the war began, several of these women became instructors, because the original flight teachers went to war.

Any South Dakota college scene, pre-World War II.

Spearfish was typical of South Dakota college towns during World War Two, watching schools change from peacetime education...

College scene with men dressed in uniform.

to training aimed at winning the war.

Recreated victory garden.

And everywhere—in city lots and open fields—South Dakotans grew victory gardens, producing food for the war effort.

V I S U A L

A U D I O

1940s agriculture.

What were farmers to do at harvest time, with so many of their usual workers away? Often communities pitched in to organize help.

Photos, South Dakota Magazine article on POWs.

Near Belle Fourche, sugar beet farmers were happy to have labor German prisoners of war provided.

Photos of Fort Meade's POW era.

There were about 1,200 prisoners of war in camps across South Dakota during World War Two. In addition to farm work, prisoners helped control Missouri River erosion.

Any stills representing POWs of the era.

According to an international treaty called the Geneva Convention, signed by the United States and other nations in 1929, prisoners of war were to be treated fairly.

POWs swimming in the Belle Fourche River (South Dakota Magazine)

They were to have the same amount and quality of food as citizens, and free time after their work.

Any World War II combat scene.

United States leaders believed that if enemy soldiers knew they'd be treated fairly, they wouldn't resist capture. That would save the lives of American soldiers.

Poster at Aberdeen Museum: "Enemy Ears Are Listening."

Saving lives—that topped everyone's concerns. Even on the home front South Dakotans were warned to be cautious, to realize they could accidentally reveal information that would help the enemy.

V I S U A L

A U D I O

Map.

Recreated balloons in the sky.

Shots of Moscow, perhaps Soviet
May Day parades.

Korean War photo.

Super: Korean War, 1950-53.

Vietnam War photo.

Super: Vietnam War, 1963-73.

Stills representing South Dakota
missile silos.

And South Dakota wasn't entirely safe from enemy attack during the war. In 1944 and '45, the Japanese military sent six thousand big balloons across the Pacific Ocean toward the United States. The balloons carried bombs and fire-starting devices, but it turned out they weren't very effective weapons. Most dropped along the United States' west coast. A few made it all the way to South Dakota. One exploded over Belle Fourche. A rancher found another on the Cheyenne River Reservation.

World War Two was considered a hot war, full of action. After it ended in 1945, the United States entered a long period of Cold War, a time of worry and preparation for war, but usually no action against an enemy.

The Cold War enemy was the Soviet Union. Americans worried that the Soviets were determined to spread Communism—a form of government where people have few rights—all around the world.

Sometimes the Cold War turned hot. Twenty-six thousand South Dakotans fought communist forces in the Korean War...

and twenty-eight thousand South Dakotans served in the Vietnam War, also against communists. Both Korea and Vietnam are across the Pacific Ocean, in Asia.

But South Dakotans didn't have to go that far to see a key part of the Cold War. All across western South Dakota, hundreds of missiles went into underground silos. The missiles were

V I S U A L

A U D I O

Minute Man missiles.

designed to be fired from the silos, fly through the air to the other side of the world, and hit Soviet targets.

Ellsworth jet at takeoff.

Most South Dakotans were proud to be part of the Cold War defense, but there was also concern the missiles made our state a major target for Soviet weapons. The missiles never flew, and were removed from South Dakota when the Cold War ended toward the 20th century's close, as the Soviet Union broke up.

Map effect, with arrows moving from the U. S. to the Gulf. Super: Gulf War, 1991.

But the Cold War's passing didn't mean the end of 20th century conflicts.

In 1991, five-thousand-six-hundred South Dakotans, plus aircraft from Ellsworth, circled halfway around the globe for action in the Persian Gulf. The region would again be a battlefield for Americans early in the 21st century.

Early 20th century troops.

From the Spanish-American War...

Troops in desert uniforms.

to the Gulf War, much changed in war zones and on the home front.

Railway farewell.

But some things stayed the same—like farewells...

Modern welcome back parade.

joyous returns...

World War Two star and modern yellow ribbon.

hometown signs of support...

V I S U A L

Old handwritten letter dissolves to email.

Close

A U D I O

and eagerly waiting for letters from loved ones far away.

Closing music.