

Building the Military

The Selective Service Act

law required all young men between 21 and 30 to register for the military draft.

Women's Contributions to the Military Not subject to the draft. More than 30,000 served as volunteers in the U.S. Army & U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. Performed clerical work - filing papers, sending & receiving telegraph messages as members of the U.S. Navy & U.S. Marine Corps.

A Diverse Military Force

1 in 5 recruits were immigrants or children of immigrants. Native Americans were not citizens so they were not subject to the draft.

African Americans in the Service

380,000 African Americans served during the war. Opportunities were restricted by segregation & widespread racism. W.E.B. Du Bois urged African American support of the war.

Only 10% saw combat, most confined to non-combat units - unloading ships, working in kitchens, or constructing barracks.

Shaping Public Opinion

The Committee on Public Information effective propaganda tool. Recruited 75,000 "Four-Minute Men" to deliver brief patriotic speeches at places like movie theaters & ball parks. Also, enlisted artists to produce pro-war cartoons & posters.

Liberty Bonds issued by the gov't to help finance the war.

Suppressing Criticism Espionage Act of 1917 & Sedition Act of 1918 authorities closed newspaper & jailed individuals for expressing antiwar views.

Anti-German Hysteria U.S. citizens shunned, harassed and even assaulted German Americans who might have once been their friends. Many schools stopped teaching German.

Supporting the War Effort

How did the U.S. prepare for a war with Europe?

Mobilize

Managing the War Effort

Managing Food Supplies Herbert Hoover chosen to head the new Food Administration. Job was to assure adequate food supplies for both civilians & troops. Urged Americans to conserve valuable food resources → "Wheatless Mondays", "Meatless Tuesday" & started "victory gardens."

The War Industries Board War increased demands on American industries. War Industries Board was set up to oversee the shift to war production. Told industries what to produce, how much to charge, & how to use scarce resources.

Finding Workers labor shortages millions of men joined the war & a steep drop in immigration → women took roles previously denied to them & 500,000 African Americans left the rural south to work in factories in the Midwest & Northeast.