



Wartime Decatur: 1832-1945 (Images of America)

Dan Guillory

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Decatur has a long history of patriotic service, both on and off the field of battle. Decatur volunteers participated in six major campaigns including the Black Hawk War (1832), the Mexican War (1846-1848), the Civil War (1861-1865), the Spanish-American War (1898), World War I (1917-1918), and World War II (1941-1945). Their record of distinguished service includes the presence of five generals and six Congressional Medal of Honor winners in the Civil War. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the first national veterans' organization, was founded in Decatur immediately after the Civil War. In World War II, soldiers from Decatur served in North Africa, Italy, the Philippines, and Germany. Equally impressive, however, is the tradition of the Decatur Canteen, which served food to transient soldiers from the time of the Civil War onward. Local volunteers rolled bandages, collected food, and recycled bales of paper and heaps of scrap metal. Citizens planted victory gardens and bought war bonds and savings stamps. Wartime Decatur: 1832-1945 documents the vigorous wartime culture based on community involvement and a strong sense of patriotism.



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