



BHC-MSS 0163  
Guide to the World War II Collection  
By Meg Rinn  
October 2021

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Various creators

**Title:** World War II Collection

**Dates:** 1942-1957

**Quantity:** 1.5 linear feet (3 ½ manuscript boxes)

**Abstract:** This artificial collection contains various World War II materials that primarily focus on civilian action defending the home front. This includes material related to the Bridgeport War Council and actions of the Civilian Defense Warning Center, but also photographs and scrapbooks relating to these activities. There is some correspondence from Bridgeport Post staff serving overseas, as well as other information and documentation relating to the local community in the second World War.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Bridgeport History Center

**Biographical History:**

Bridgeport is primarily known for its manufacturing role during World War II. This is thanks to the number of industries that mobilized during the war, including the Bullard Machine Tool Company, Bridgeport Brass, and Sikorsky Aircraft, among many others. The shortage of male workers at these companies also allowed women to work in industry in far greater numbers than they had before.

However, manufacturing was not the sole focus of Bridgeport during the war. Due to all the manufacturing going on in the city, there was reason to see the city as a target, should action ever move towards the east coast of the United States. As a result, Bridgeport actively organized its home front, working with the State of Connecticut's defense council in order to establish means of defense. This is reflected through the work of the governing Bridgeport War Council, which oversaw a number of different divisions within it. Much of this work on the home front is documented in this collection, as well as other World War II collections rising in the Bridgeport History Center.

**Scope and Content note:**

The content of this artificial collection is eclectic, but primarily focuses on civilian action during the second World War. There is some material related to Bridgeport's manufacturing role in the war, but the majority of the material is focused on the home front.

**Arrangement Note:**

Series I, Bridgeport War Council, The Bridgeport War Council was a part of a nationwide effort to have active involvement, ready involvement, and preparation in case of attacks during the Second

World War. These councils were headed by an executive committee which helped to implement state or nationwide edicts (such as limiting lights after dark to ensure that enemy planes had a hard time navigating), as well as organize subgroups within the War Council, such as the Civil Defense Warning Center (see below) and neighborhood block organization. Material has been arranged by minutes, then correspondence, then other material.

Series II, Civil Defense Warning Center, contains correspondence, volunteer schedules, and information for the Civil Defense Warning Center in Bridgeport, a part of a national initiative to be on alert and provide immediate support in case the United States was attacked following the events of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Series III, Buy a Fighter Fund, 1995.28 contains the financial records of contributions from various Bridgeport workers to purchase a Vought-Sikorsky Fighter to be presented to the U.S. Navy. They accomplished this fundraising goal and presented the fighter plane on September 7, 1942.

Series IV, World War II Letters from the Bridgeport Post contains correspondence sent by deployed members of the Bridgeport Post's staff back to the paper. Senders include: Irv Traub, Mike D'Andrea, Fred Schulze, George Jiler, James Schwartz, Will Plain, Aram Tellalien, John Pfriem, Steve Abbey, W.V. Vvarjabedian, Beeman Peet, Harriet Smith, Peter Pavone Jr., Ed Burling, Jim McKeen, Frank Decerbo, and Robert Bruno. Arranged chronologically.

Series V, Misc. Papers contains material that was found in collections on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor cage. War records and those killed in action have been placed first, followed by material related to the Bullard Company, and then pamphlets and other material. Also included is Dorothy Morh's scrapbook of material related to the Volunteer Bureau, a group of Bridgeporters associated with the Community Chest charity.

Series IV is dedicated to photographs. This includes the Schwartz series of photographs which feature civilian activities, along with a set of photographs donated by Chris Wenche of Civilian Defense activities. Series V, Photographs including the Schwartz Collection (1995.04), Civilian Defense photographs (1975.14), additional found in collection

**Administrative information:**

**Provenance:** Contains accession numbers 1974.14 (Bridgeport War Council), 1975.32 (Civil Defense Warning Center), 1995.28 (Buy a Fighter fund), 1995.21 (Letters to the Bridgeport Post), 1995.03 (found in collections), 1995.04 (Schwartz collection), and 1995.14 (donation of Chris Wenche), and 1991.25 (Dorothy Mohr scrapbook).

**Preferred Citation:**

World War II Collection (BHC-MSS 0163), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

**Names and Subject Tracings**

*Personal names*

Schulze, Fred

Decerbo, Frank

*Corporate names*

Bullard Machine Tool Company

Bridgeport Post

Bridgeport War Council  
United States. Council of National Defense. State of Connecticut

*Subject tracings*

### **Detailed box/folder listing**

#### Box 1

##### Series I, Bridgeport War Council

1. Executive committee minutes, 1943-1945
2. Roll and minutes, 1943-1945
3. Roll and minutes, 1953-1945
4. Administrative file, 1943-1945
5. Correspondence, directives, circulars and memoranda, 1942-1945
6. Correspondence regarding stickers, 1943-1944
7. Awards, 1943-1945
8. Block plan, neighborhood service councils, 1942-1943
9. Block plan, undated
10. Membership lists, undated

##### Series II, Civil Defense Warning Center

11. Correspondence, memos, 1942-1943
12. Daily registration, 1942-1943
13. Instructions, 1943

#### Box 2

1. Personnel records, 1942-1943
2. Volunteers, 1943
3. Volunteer schedule, 1941

##### Series III, Buy a Fighter Fund

4. Bank statements, bank book, 1942
5. Correspondence, 1942-1943
6. Framed certificate and canceled checks, 1942

##### Series IV, World War II Letters from the Bridgeport Post

7. Correspondence, undated
8. Correspondence, 1943
9. Correspondence, 1944
10. Correspondence, 1945
11. Correspondence to soldiers from the Post, 1943

##### Series IV, Misc. papers

12. War records of students from Bassick High School, 1943-1945

Box 3

1. Bridgeport boys killed in World War II from City Clerk's files, 1940-1945
2. Bridgeport men, partial list of killed in action, undated
3. Fairfield County partial list of those killed, undated
4. "1942, the year to win or lose", booklet given to Bullard Co. employes, 1942
5. Army Navy "E" award to Bullard Co., August 24, 1942
6. Presentation of Republic P-47 Thunderbolt to Army Air Force by Bullard Co., Oct 13, 1942
7. Correspondences with Bullard Co., 1945
8. Pamphlets, 1943-1945
9. Selective service memos, regulations, etc., 1941-1942
10. Selective service, FBI notices, 1943-1944
11. Selective Service, Hartford, April-Sept. 1941
12. Selective Service, local, 1942
13. Selective service, Washington D.C., 1941
14. Defense housing project #6051 chart, undated
15. Rationing, 1943

Flat file D

Drawer 5, Folder 19: Dorothy Mohr's scrapbook of the Volunteer Bureau, 1940s-1957

Series V, Photographs

Box 4

- 1-44, Schwarz collection of World War II civilian activities and projects
- 45, Civil Defense photographs [1975.14], 1940s, Chris Wesche
- 46, Shanghai police and civilian volunteers engaged in gruesome task of removing bomb victims and debris, undated