



(BOOK 7)

Wartime Farm

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This book, like the BBC2 series of the same name, describes the experiences of the three enactors who lived on a farm for a year under wartime-like conditions and were filmed doing so. By 1939 70% of British food was imported and the Government realised that we could be starved into submission by the action of the enemy against our shipping from abroad, bringing essential supplies into our country.

The book lists the impact made on both the agriculture and domestic areas in the national effort to hugely increase the production of food, by switching from live-stock to arable farming. Thousands of acres of grassland were ploughed up and seeded in season. Many farm workers were called up for military service and P.O.Ws and members of the Women's Land Army were enlisted to take their place. By radio pro-grammes and in street posters, the people were urged to 'DIG FOR VICTORY'.

The book has a splendid time-line that lists World War II military events on one side against some dates on the agriculture and Home Front on the opposite side of the pages. It is a fascinating mix of historical background and practical information. It is impossible in this brief review to do justice to the amount of research obviously done to produce such an excellent book and TV series, covering a vast subject such as the wartime experiences of ordinary people.

Explanation is given of how the wartime population coped with the rationing of food, furniture and clothing, the black-out, air raids and the arrival of huge numbers of foreign troops, especially the American G.I.s who brought colour and glamour to a war-weary people. Men and women were called-up but not always for military duty; some to work as lumber jacks and jills, miners, builders, munitions manufacturers and the National Fire Service etc.

People learned how to 'make-do and mend' and regularly on the radio a food minister would give recipes for wholesome meals. Civilian motor cars were laid up for the duration because precious fuel was needed for military or very special use. This is a book of interesting information and pictures (256 pages) that I can highly recommend.

Monica Tovey

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