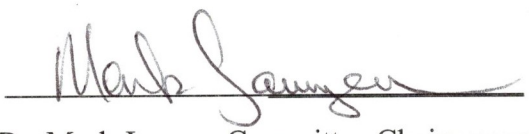
"Civil Defense is YOUR Job!"

American Civil Defense Programs Directed Towards Children

A Thesis Approved for the Department of History & Geography

April 17, 2019

By



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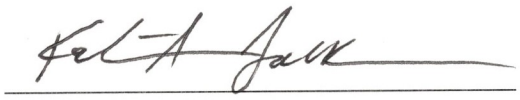

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"Civil Defense is YOUR Job!"

American Civil Defense Programs Directed Towards Children

By

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN MUSEUM STUDIES

University of Central Oklahoma

2019

Abstract

During World War II and the Cold War, Civil Defense agencies needed to get the American people behind their programs. Civil Defense officials used new methods of informing the public while encouraging active participation. To this end, officials saw children as a sly means to improve adult education, since they would tell their parents nearly everything they learned. By teaching the children and teenagers civil defense lessons in entertaining ways, they could comprehend and regurgitate the information. The children would then encourage their parents to be a part of Civil Defense. To appeal to a younger audience, the normal rhetoric of facts on the effects of nuclear war could not be used. Instead, the government needed to find new ways of captivating youth while also instilling vital defense information. By looking at comic books, the identification tag program, Stars for Defense radio show, toys, and games, this thesis will show how the various civil defense agencies recruited the youth of America into their ranks.

The literature on Civil Defense focuses on a shelter-centric approach where the programs related to bomb and fallout shelters take the lead role. The primary objective of this thesis is to highlight the programs instituted by Civil Defense officials in order to appeal to children and teenagers and add them to the larger historiography. The comics allowed students to visualize the roles of civil defense and why preparedness is important in time of war. The identification tags made children and adults feel secure knowing that important information was recorded. Stars for Defense brought music and comedy into the mix by pulling in listeners with their favorite celebrities. Finally, the toys and games put children in the literal shoes, and gas masks, of civil defense officials. These programs found new and interesting methods to accomplish the goal of educating the adult population by keeping children actively engaged in learning about Civil Defense.

Table of Contents

Introduction……..……1

Chapter One: Comic Books……..……15

Chapter Two: Identification Tags ……..…….37

Chapter Three: Stars for Defense…….……...……....55

Chapter Four: Toys and Games…….…..71

Chapter Five: Conclusion……...……...……....83

Bibliography…….……..88

Introduction

On August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union successfully detonated an atomic bomb, thrusting the world into the Cold War. Nuclear war became a viable threat between the United States and the Soviet Union. In response to the test, the United States pushed to initiate new programs to counter the threat of atomic annihilation. Congress enacted the Federal Civil Defense Act on December 1, 1950. This act created the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) who took control of civilian defense preparation in the country. However, the act, with the backing of President Truman, also assigned civil defense responsibility to States and localities rather than the Federal Government.[1] Congress resisted the idea of paying for a comprehensive defense program because it may lead to public dependency on the government. Instead, an adoption of the doctrine of "self-help" meant that individuals needed to be responsible for their own preparedness.[2] Unfortunately, some Americans were suspicious or unconvinced of the threats of nuclear war early in the 1950s.

In order to get the American people behind the civil defense programs, the FCDA needed a method of informing while encouraging active participation. To this end, officials saw children as a sly means to improve adult education, since they would tell their parents nearly everything they learned. By teaching the children and teenagers civil defense lessons in entertaining ways, they could comprehend and regurgitate the information. The children would then encourage their parents to be a part of Civil Defense. To appeal to a younger audience, the normal rhetoric of facts on the effects of nuclear war and informational booklets full of recommended tips to

[1] *Civil Defense and Homeland Security: A Short History of National Preparedness Efforts* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006), 7.
[2] Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties,* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 25.

prepare could not be used. Instead, the government needed to find new ways of captivating youth while also instilling vital defense information. By looking at comic books, the identification tag program, Stars for Defense radio show, toys, and games, this thesis will show how the various civil defense agencies recruited the youth of America into their ranks.

The idea of a decentralized, locally controlled, volunteer based civil defense came from the American effort during World War II. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) on May 20, 1941. The OCD handled civilian protection in a definition that included morale maintenance, promotion of volunteer involvement, nutrition, and physical education. However, it ran into issues concerning whether it should emphasize protective services, typically done by men, or social welfare services, typically undertaken by women.[3] Luckily, this tension within the institution did not hinder the programs developed during the war. It successfully developed concrete defense plans, including air raid drills, black outs, protection services, community involvement, and many more localized programs. After four years, President Harry S. Truman abolished the Office of Civilian Defense on June 4, 1945, believing that the immediate threat of war on United States soil had receded.[4]

Unfortunately, the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States of America pushed Truman to create the Office of Civil Defense Planning in 1948 to organize a plan for a permanent defense agency.[5] This led to the Federal Civil Defense act in 1950 and the creation of the Federal Civil Defense Administration. As the administration rose from the ashes of its predecessor, it began to reinstate some of the programs used during World War II. Unfortunately, these policies could not keep up with the rapid evolution of the military during

[3] *Civil Defense and Homeland Security*, 5-6.
[4] Ibid, 6.
[5] Ibid, 7.

the 1950s. Plans constantly shifted with political and public opinions on how the nation should prepare. This led to several changes in the administration of civil defense during the Cold War.

The Federal Civil Defense Administration lasted until 1958 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower had it changed to the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM). This title change reflected the new ideas of evacuation and having the mobility to move civilians away from a nuclear attack. Developments in atomic weaponry brought hydrogen bombs to the arsenals of both the United States and Soviet Union. The destructive capabilities of these weapons made sheltering in place a poor choice for survival. Therefore, the OCDM focused on evacuation plans for population centers that could now quickly leave via the interstate system, championed by President Eisenhower.

Unfortunately, the idea of evacuation quickly faded with the discovery that nuclear tests create fallout. Fallout is radioactive particles that are carried into the atmosphere after a nuclear explosion and gradually fall back to earth. This radioactive dust releases alpha, beta, and gamma rays until the radioactivity decays. Any human who is subjected to fallout without protective clothing will develop radiation sickness and, depending on the severity, die a gruesome death. Therefore, having people evacuate a city puts them out into the open exposing them to the deadly fallout. In response, the administration changed again in 1961 to the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) under President John F. Kennedy. This is not to be confused with the Office of Civilian Defense from World War II.

The Office of Civil Defense changed the overall role of civil defense in the United States. Instead of the responsibility resting on the states and localities, it became a centralized unit. The OCD began to build fallout shelters across the country and stocked them with the supplies necessary to sustain the inhabitants until the fallout radiation decayed to a level safe for humans.

The fallout shelter became the defining program for civil defense in the United States. Some of the buildings chosen for shelter still have a faded and deteriorating sign hanging outside as the only reminder of the attempts to protect the American people in a nuclear war.

The 1960s brought the Cold War to a head with the Cuban Missile Crisis and its political fallout. The idea of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) began to govern the American defense policies. This is quite evident in the administration of civil defense. After the fallout shelters, there were no new programs instituted to protect civilians. Instead, the entire role of civil defense began a shift to natural disaster preparedness. In 1970, the Office of Civil Defense changed into the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency (DCPA). This, in turn, remained until 1979 when it changed into the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Today, FEMA does not teach what to do in case of a nuclear attack. Instead, for instance in Oklahoma, we learn what to do in case of a tornado. In fact, many of our tornado sirens are old civil defense air raid sirens installed in the 1950s and 60s.

This change from nuclear to natural disaster preparedness brings to question the successfulness of civil defense. With civil defense, the idea of a "successful" program is almost completely abstract. Fortunately, civil defense in the United States did not have a moment in which all the planning and the training could be used. The country escaped attacks on its home front during World War II, after Pearl Harbor, and the Cold War. Thus, the entire administration never had a test of its capabilities. In a sense, its Cold War adaptation succeeded in preparing the nation for the unwelcome idea of a nuclear war. Fortunately, it never succeeded in saving lives, because the country was never endangered.

This argument moved into the historical literature on United States civil defense during the Cold War. The historiography on American civil defense is lacking in sources that focus

solely on the administrations and their programs. This could be attributed to the short time frame between the events and historians of the Cold War. After all, the dissolution of the Soviet Union happened only twenty-seven years ago. Historians began writing on civil defense in the 1960s, but unfortunately the number of scholars is quite small.

Most of the historical research on the topic focuses on a specific program, state, or even locality, within the context of the larger administration. This can be attributed to the disorganized nature of civil defense in the 1950s. Early programs focused on local and state governance and created many different programs designed to cater to a specific demographic. Therefore, a complete history would have to account for the federal, state, then local level of any program instituted by any civil defense administration. Fortunately, with the institution of the Office of Civil Defense, the programs became centralized at the federal level. Thus, historians can now explore a program in its entirety without having to consider the differences across the country.

The historical literature of the 1960s and 1970s tends to reflect the change from an emphasis on nuclear into natural disaster preparedness. As the Office of Civil Defense began to change into the Federal Emergency Management Agency, historians began to write as though they feared that civil defense would be forgotten. *Civil Defense in the Soviet Union* by Leon Goure looks at the Soviet programs. Written in 1962, this is one of the earliest looks at the history of civil defense. Although it does not focus on the United States, it argues that in comparison to the Soviets the United States was much weaker. It even states in the forward that "He (Goure) concludes that it is extremely likely that the Soviet Union has a civil defense much stronger than ours."[6] After all, once the fallout shelter program began, civil defense stopped expanding but

[6] Leon Goure, *Civil Defense in the Soviet Union*, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1962), v.

rather stayed stagnant in their plans. The United States no longer performed drills, education, nor evacuation but the Soviet Union continued all tests and built large community shelters.

This idea of looking at civil defense in a contemporary view continued with Eugene P. Wigner's *Survival and the Bomb: Methods of Civil Defense* published in 1969. Wigner believed that books written before his fell into one of three categories. First came fictionalized stories that depicted war and the futility of civil defense. Second were descriptions of the impact nuclear war would have on people's lives. These, he claims, replace logical analysis with implicit emphasis on social and moral values in order to persuade rather than inform. Finally, the third category consisted of pragmatic discussions of nuclear war, and disregarding the broader issues of civil defense preparation.[7]

Wigner's book is a collection of edited essays. His introduction explains what civil defense is and how if fits into the larger picture, socially and politically. The other entries in the book discuss various big-picture topics, such as medical effects, public opinion, etc. Yet, Wigner falls victim to the history during the centralized 1960s, as all the essays in his book discuss the fallout shelter programs and the ideas of fallout on the public. He fell into a fourth category, discussing the broader issues while disregarding the actual history.

In the 1980s, the literature began to look back on Civil Defense programs and question this reasoning. Historians asked whether the programs were successful, and scrutinized the civil defense schemes. With the final incarnation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the programs of the 1950s and 60s finally received attention, as historians began to reflect on their implications. Thomas J. Kerr's 1983 work *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Bandaid for a Holocaust?*

[7] Eugene Wigner. *Survival and the Bomb: Methods of Civil Defense*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), vii-viii.

questioned the necessity of the programs. As a political science professor, he takes a more political viewpoint in his work. He best sums up his work and the history of civil defense.

> To many, civil defense stands as a symbol of the futility of society's attempt to escape the consequences of its own creations. Unlike other areas of national security policy, civil defense has never attracted widespread support and has encountered constant difficulties in securing political and financial backing. In addition, rapidly evolving military technology has consistently eroded the substance of the program and its credibility in the eyes of the public.[8]

Kerr attempts to explore all the programs of civil defense from 1950 to his present to understand why. Unfortunately, he falls into the shelter-centric approach as well. Even though he starts at 1950, he begins with the earliest shelter program. Throughout the fifties, the civil defense administrations pushed for home shelters. Beyond publishing instructions on how to build one, these were not given much attention until the 1961 public fallout shelters. Therefore, his theories focused on a very specific portion and skipped the other programs of the early fifties. He does give attention to the evacuation plans in the later part of the decade, but this is also written in support of shelters.

In 1985, Paul Boyer wrote the most significant civil defense history, *By the Bombs Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. In his work, Boyer attempts to explain the impact of nuclear weapons on the culture of the United States. He argued that previous cultural histories had overlooked nuclear weapons so much that future historians "would hardly guess that such a thing as nuclear weapons had existed."[9] He begins with the birth of the atomic bomb during World War II. This, in fact takes up the majority of his book. He explores the implications of the bomb on the postwar culture in the United States. Boyer looks

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[8] Thomas J. Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Bandaid for a Holocaust?,* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), III.
[9] Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), xv.

not only examines the American “big stick” ideas about the atomic bomb, but also the moral implications of the bomb.

Boyer discusses the fear in the late 1940s as radiation became a topic of discussion. He pulls popular culture into his discussion with movies, toys, and atomic energy. It is not until the last section of his book that he finally mentions civil defense in the early 1950s. This minor section brings to light a small number of programs instituted by the Federal Civil Defense Administration to help calm the public’s fear of the bomb. This approach to explaining the earliest programs, is then seen repeated by subsequent historians. Nearly every book published after this references Paul Boyer.

In fact, JoAnne Brown’s June 1988 article “"A Is for Atom, B Is for Bomb": Civil Defense in American Public Education, 1948-1963,” published in *The Journal of American History,* uses Boyer’s methodology of looking at the early programs and their impact on the public. She narrows her topic to public education and looks at the various methods by which civil defense reached schoolchildren. She thoroughly assesses various programs, including identification tags, comics, and “duck and cover” drills.[10] This work in the first attempt to look at a specific program in the 1950s.

Nevertheless, Brown’s work falls short due to the logistics of finding enough sources. Since the programs before 1960 were left to the states and localities, a historian must take into consideration as many examples as possible. Without access to digital archives, when one historian wrote about a specific program, it tended to become canon. Therefore, subsequent historians that cite the work do not have the full story, making a partial history seem to be the whole story.

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[10] JoAnne Brown, ""A Is for Atom, B Is for Bomb": Civil Defense in American Public Education, 1948-1963." *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1988): 68-90.

In the 2000s historians began to look at the more specific impact Civil Defense had on culture. Kenneth Rose's *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (2004) looks at the history of the fallout shelter and investigates the cultural implications it had on the United States.[11] His approach is obviously shelter-centric, and he takes this approach to all aspects of civil defense. When looking at the smaller programs of the 1950s, Rose examines only those concerned with shelters. This neglects the many other programs instituted by the administrations to educate the public.

Some historians of the 2000's moved away from the cultural perspective and focused on more specific programs. Jenny Barker-Devine's article ""Mightier than Missiles": The Rhetoric of Civil Defense for Rural American Families, 1950-1970" published in the October 2006 edition of *Agricultural History* focuses on one of the most underrepresented civil defense initiatives. Previous histories focused on the cities with shelters and more influential, and funded, programs. However, rural communities also received attention from civil defense authorities from the very beginning. Barker-Devine put together official government publications and local articles to create the first look at rural communities in the civil defense history.[12]

This new method of looking at smaller communities during the Cold War began to take shape with more historians of this period. Frank Blazich Jr. published "Accelerated Action: The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency and the Cuban Missile Crisis, October-December 1962." in the January 2009 edition of *The North Carolina Historical Review*. His focus on a specific state agency allows for a very detailed account of the history. This article is the first to detail a

[11] Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture,* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 1-13.
[12] Jenny Barker-Devine, ""Mightier than Missiles": The Rhetoric of Civil Defense for Rural American Families, 1950-1970." *Agricultural History* 80, no. 4 (October 2006): 415-35.

specific response to the Cuban Missile Crisis. He shows just how a single agency put their planning into action during the tensest moment in the Cold War.

The 2010s brought about more niche discussions of Civil Defense. Historians now look at the impact on culture of the 1960s, but with a different perspective. Guy Oakes' 2010 work, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* argues that civil defense programs were not meant to protect Americans from the bomb, but rather prepare them to face the Cold War. In his opinion, the culture of the Cold War did not react to the shelters instituted by the civil defense administrations. Instead, he analyzes the moral and institutional history of the first decade of the Cold War.[13] This is a move away from the shelter-centric idea of the 1950s. Oakes focuses on the various tests and preparations instituted at the governmental level.

In a top-down history, he looks at the government's attempts to control the American public by controlling their emotions. Oakes explores the various causes and explains how the administration calmed the populace using popular media, such as movies. He is also the first historian to look at the public tests conducted by the government. One chapter is dedicated to Operation Alert, which saw entire cities participating in atomic air raid drills. Places like New York City coordinated and "evacuated" the city streets to test and time their preparedness. These tests paired with the messages through popular media, argues Oakes, managed the public's fears and prepared them for the Cold War.[14]

After Oakes, scholars tend to use specific program histories in the context of a larger topic. Richard Graham's 2011 work *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s*

[13] Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*, (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 9.
[14] Ibid, 79-96.

looks at government comics published to disseminate information in a more engaging format. One of his chapters is dedicated to civil defense comics, including *Bert the Turtle* and *Mr. Civil Defense*. Graham argues that "The public's concern is one thing, its interest level another. So, the government publishes accessible, appealing comics to help bridge this gap and teach the public to be prepared!"[15] This is another pioneering work because despite the requisite mention of Bert the Turtle, the civil defense comics are not addressed in other histories. Even this small mention opens the door for more in-depth research into the obscure programs instituted in the fifties.

Unfortunately, the revived interest in civil defense has also brought more commercialized histories such as Eric Swedin's 2011 book *Survive the Bomb: The Radioactive Citizen's Guide to Nuclear Survival*. It is branded as the "ultimate fallout shelter companion" and gives a history of civil defense.[16] Yet, it starts in 1957, skipping the first seven years of civil defense history. It is also very shelter-centric but does at least mention one of the civil defense comics. This type of book, using civil defense sources as a basis, but only existing as a quaint niche item, unfortunately confuses the public on the actual history of civil defense programs.

Finally, the most recent book, Michael Scheibach's *Protecting the Home Front: Women in Civil Defense in the Early Cold War,* printed in 2017, explores women's involvement in civil defense during the early 1950s. Scheibach looks at the entire role of women, from the earliest attempts of civil defense to appeal to them, to the final roles pushed by the administrations. To support his arguments, he includes photographs and civil defense publications to give the reader

[15] Richard Graham, *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s.* (New York: Abrams ComicArts, 2011), 137.
[16] Eric Gottfrid Swedin, *Survive the Bomb: The Radioactive Citizen's Guide to Nuclear Survival*, (Minneapolis: MBI Pub. and Zenith Press, 2011).

a visual representation of the effort civil defense authorities put into overcoming the problems they encountered during World War II with gender roles.[17]

Excluding the histories in the 2010s, monographs that cover civil defense tend to be very general and share the same sources. This is to be expected with the little material available before the accessibility of the internet and countless databases. These histories are generally very shelter-centric, leaving large holes in the history of civil defense. The decentralized nature of early civil defense administrations is to blame for the lack of scholarship. Fortunately, the new interest in the Cold War and the various civil defense programs will, without a doubt inspire new histories in the years to come. In regard to civil defense, the 1950s is an untapped well of interesting and captivating histories.

This thesis will explore the programs of this era designed to target children, in an effort to identify the methodologies and reasoning behind particular initiatives. To calm the fear of nuclear war, civil defense functioned as a social technology of emotion control that taught the public how to manage its anxieties about living under the threat of air raids or nuclear attack. By calming the children, the most vulnerable to fear, Civil Defense authorities calmed the public's uneasiness and used the children to teach their parents the lessons of preparedness.

The chapters follow this order. The first chapter covers the comic books released to promote civil defense. This medium allowed for easy recognition of behaviors in the illustrations and simple instructions with the short text. By using comic books, Civil Defense officials

[17] Michael Scheibach, *Protecting the Home Front: Women in Civil Defense in the Early Cold War,* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2017).

appealed to popular culture in order to present their agenda to children and adults. This section of the thesis demonstrates readers the evolution of comic books and why they changed.

Chapter Two focuses on the identification tag initiatives of the early 1950s. The identification tag programs attempted to calm both parents and children by removing some fears of separation. When conventional air raids and nuclear attack drills became commonplace, the idea of tagging children became a necessity. Various organizations embraced the idea of identification and promoted it within their jurisdiction. The chapter ends with the evolution of the tags from a militaristic beginning to a domestic use item.

Chapter Three focuses on the *Stars for Defense* radio show that brought popular musicians and entertainers together to entertain and teach the American public about civil defense. Children and teenagers could listen to their favorite artist play several songs while also learning vital defense information. The endorsement of celebrities brought another level of authority to Civil Defense programs. Children and adults could tune in, dance, sing, or laugh and learn new methods to get involved in their local Civil Defense agency.

Chapter Four offers a look at the various toys and games created to capitalize on civil defense during World War II and the Cold War. Kits allowed children to dress up and act as air raid wardens, play in blackouts, and spot planes. The board games relate to the same three categories and taught children and adults the basic roles of wardens and taught families the names and silhouettes of real airplanes, both ally and enemy. In the Cold War the toys adjusted to fit the new reality of nuclear energy and atomic war. By playing with these toys, children learned how to use a Geiger counter, operate radar centers, and use Morse code. Toys provided not only entertainment, but also practical information and skills to train children and adults on

how to be productive members of Civil Defense. Lastly, there is a summation of the chapters and the work as a whole. This part of the thesis offers condensed versions of the chapters and their significance.

This work as a whole examines a variety of programs that took form across the country and morphed into different and interesting methods of teaching as state and localities adjusted them for their own purposes. The United States government undertook many projects in order to spread their message of civil defense to the American people. To garner support, they had to win the hearts and minds of all citizens, including the younger generations.

Chapter One: Comic Books

Civil Defense programs tapped into popular culture for new forms that could reach the youth of the civilian population. The United States government investigated the use of popular media of the time in order to disseminate their agenda. Civil Defense officials created comic books that would appeal to younger readers while still teaching the vital necessity of being prepared for a nuclear war. In this way, the young readers were presented with governmental instructions in a manner that was entertaining and unintimidating. Once entertained and interested, Civil Defense officials hoped that children would more readily speak about the subject matter to their friends and family while sharing the source of the information. Comic books, therefore, reflected the important information of the time, popularity of civil defense, and the adjustments made with changing public opinion.

Comic books have been a feature of popular culture in the United States since the late 1930s and have consistently reflected the attitudes, troubles, and trends of the time. Since comic books "follow historical trends so closely, they serve as a literary device that reflects the attitudes of the general population."[18] In the case of civil defense, they also reflect the instructions and behaviors that should be followed. Along with comic books, comic strips were also utilized to showcase desired aspects of behavior. The brief format of comics required the presentation of information in an efficient manner that could entertain the reader and help them retain the information.

Beginning in World War II, the Office of Civilian Defense looked for methods to disseminate their information to the public without adding to the already stressed state of the

[18] Dexter A. Nelson III, "An Analysis of the Enemies of United State Society through the Superhero Narrative from 1940-2015," Master's Thesis, (University of Central Oklahoma, 2016), 3.

country. The war effort took a concerted effort from every citizen to help fight the axis powers. Companies began to sell their products with themes of war used in their advertising. Civil defense officials began to look at different features of popular culture in order to spread their message to children to get them both involved in the war effort but to also present the information in a manner that would be familiar and unintimidating.

The officials looked to popular figures in cartoons and comics to help push their ideas to America's youth. Official government comics used these figures to act as spokespeople (and spokesanimals). They also created their own characters to serve as the mascots for their message. The government attempted to heighten the seriousness of some issues by keeping the comics rooted in reality instead of a fantasy world or parallel universe. They promoted healthy eating habits, proper hygiene, and emergency preparedness by using the comic media as a hook.[19] To cast a wide net, some of the public safety comics were sponsored or coproduced by corporations and associations. These partnerships helped reach new readers, boost distribution numbers, and help underwrite quality production, but it created some strange combinations.[20]

One of the first comic strips to showcase civilian defense roles with children in mind was "Edison Bell and his Junior Air Raid Wardens" published in the first *4Most* comic in November 1941. The strip covered six pages and followed Bell and his pals as they attempt to join Civilian Defense. Since they are young, they are given different duties that support civilian defense and the war effort. These tasks include binding their old comics to send to troops, catching spies, and putting out a fire with homemade milk bottle extinguishers. The strip ends with instructions on

[19] Richard Graham, *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s,* (New York: Abrams ComicArts, 2011), 137.
[20] Ibid.

how to build your own listening post so that you can listen for incoming enemy planes and report them to the local authorities.[21]

This comic strip became quite influential after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. *4Most* comics noted the effectiveness of the instructions to make a listening post in the inside front cover editorial for *4Most* #2. They state that they began to receive requests for more information on how to make an air raid listening post. It is also reported that "one New York City Air Raid Warden telephoned, said that he had actually seen one of these Junior Air Raid Warden posts set up and found it to operate very efficiently."[22] The strip for "Edison Bell" moved up to the second place in the comic book and expanded from seven to twelve pages with more room for defense instructions. The entertaining illustration on how kids could help in their nation's efforts became a popular avenue to promote Civilian Defense.

Following the success of "Edison Bell", *Little Oscar's First Raid* became the first book to be officially authorized by the Office of Civilian Defense. While not technically a comic book, it was the first step into officially sanctioned cartoon characters to teach lessons on civil defense. It was published in early 1942 by Lydia Mead and Oscar Fabrès and sold for 25 cents. It follows Little Oscar and the various tasks he must perform as he goes through an air raid. Every page is color coded to show what should happen; green for good, red for bad. As an example, Oscar is wearing a red suit when he is pushing people to get into an air raid shelter. He is wearing a green suit when he is correctly taking the stairs instead of an elevator during the alarm.[23] Along with

[21] Ray Gill and Harold Delay, *4Most*, (Philadelphia: Novelty Press, 1941), 45-50.
[22] The Editors, *4Most*, (Philadelphia: Novelty Press, 1942), 2.
[23] Lydia Mead and Fabres Oscar, *Little Oscar's First* Raid, (New York: Garden Pub. Co., 1942), 41-42.

the various tasks, the book places Oscar in different situations and shows how he should act accordingly. The text and illustrations are also full of humor to keep the reader entertained.

The book received high praise from Civilian Defense officials and the public alike. The Director of the Office of Civilian Defense, Fiorello H. LaGuardia wrote a letter on January 17, 1942 praising the book for succeeding "in making Oscar Fabrès' character, amusing as he is, in his homely fashion, exemplify the foibles and weakness of our own characters. You may be certain "Oscar" will appeal as much to the grown-ups as he will to the children."[24] The *Chicago Tribune* wrote that "the pictures are VERY funny as well as very instructive, and they teach you in little more than five minutes the fundamentals of what almost 100 pages tell you in *The Air Raid Safety Manual*."[25] The *Oakland Tribune* agreed, stating that "'Little Oscar's First Raid' will amuse and inform both adults and children. Miss Mead's text is based on sound civilian defense instructions and Fabrès' drawings will make the problem clear to the youngest members of your family."[26] The success of officially authorized works prompted the Office of Civilian Defense to venture into more partnerships and publications.

Starting in 1941, the Office of Civilian Defense reached out to Milton Caniff, creator of *Terry and the Pirates* and *Steve Canyon*, to illustrate a comic strip and artwork for official booklets. He was hired by Fiorello LaGuardia to create a strip that "will show how the population should behave in event of emergency."[27] By 1942, his artwork was printed in *What to do in an Air Raid* in various panels with instructions on what steps to take during an air raid. Also printed that year, all of the handbooks for the various Civilian Defense branches contained

[24] Ibid, 3.
[25] "Little Oscar's First Raid," *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 1942.
[26] "Picture Book Way of Instruction," *Oakland Tribune*, April 5, 1942.
[27] "Affable Chap from Miami Valley," *The Journal Herald*, July 9, 1941.

his comic strips on fire protection that covered everything from magnesium bombs to controlling fire with water.[28]

Eat Right to Work and Win, published in late 1942 by the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, was cosponsored and distributed for free by Swift & Company, a meatpacking company. Over 5 million copies were printed and distributed.[29] The comic featured prominent comic strips of the time that were donated by King Features Syndicate and acquainted people with ways of preparing healthful and economical "victory meals".[30] The comic begins with an introduction by James M. Landis, Director of the Office of Civilian Defense and Paul V. McNutt, Director of the Office of Health and Welfare Services, "to Americans, and especially to American housewives."[31]

The introduction explains that "this interesting booklet, financed and produced by Swift & Company and illustrated through the generosity of King Features Syndicate, is entertaining and educational in its approach to better nutrition." It also explains that "the medium through which these groups carry this program to their communities is the nutrition committee of each of OCD's (Office of Civilian Defense) 10,000 local defense councils."[32] The comic then goes into the different characters in their respective strips illustrating their designated objectives. The information in the book details the various food your family needs; proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins, and carbohydrates. It explains that the information in the booklet is important for "America's housewife today" whose job is to "make America the strongest nation on earth."[33]

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[28] *Government Issue,* 142-143.
[29] "Nutrition Book Distributed by Health Service," *The Times,* November 6, 1942.
[30] *Government Issue,* 138.
[31] *Eat Right to Work and Win,* (Chicago: Swift & Company, 1942), 2.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid, 3.

They should plan out their weekly meals based upon the information in the booklet and teach their children the necessity of healthy eating.

While the textual information is geared towards the adult reader, the two panel comics serve as an illustrated example for the children. The *Albuquerque Journal* summed it up by saying "the comics characters will get the attention of the children and help the American housewives in conforming to economical nutrition standards and war-time food habits."[34] The comics start with "Blondie Gets a Sandwich" and shows Dagwood presenting a healthy sandwich full of vitamins and proteins to Blondie. "Henry" gets a box of milk bottles to help his muscles grow strong. "Flash Gordon" explains that his health and vitality comes from eating plenty of meat and other good foods! "Toots and Casper" shows that he actually serves healthy juices in his bar instead of alcohol. "Thimble Theater" stars Popeye at a Victory Garden, where he realizes he has been limiting himself to only spinach when there are many other healthy vegetables. "Tillie the Toiler" shows Tillie bragging about her lack of work in the Victory Garden. "The Phantom" declares that the day always starts right after a good breakfast. "The Little King" reveals that even a King is excited to eat a carrot. Finally, "Bringing Up Father" shows that a healthy meal will give someone pep.[35] Although short, these illustrations take famous icons and show children that they should follow their example.

This comic's popularity became apparent in 1943 as companies began to advertise the slogan, "Eat Right to Work and Win," and the comic to the public. On March 20, 1943, the Delaware Power & Light Co. took out an advertisement to show that copies of the booklet could be picked up from their office. They also state that "war production starts in the kitchen"

[34] "Eat Right," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 7, 1942.
[35] Ibid, 3-13.

showing that their workers could benefit from eating healthier to produce more.[36] Super markets also began using the slogan to promote sales. Acme Super Markets took out an advertisement in the *Canton Independent-Sentinel* with the bold text "**Eat Right to Work and Win**" promoting a sale on fruits and vegetables.[37] As the first comic book released by the Office of Civilian Defense, its success led to more endeavors into the medium.

As the war continued, Civilian Defense officials began to prepare for the possibility of attacks on the continental United States. Air Raid Wardens became more common with frequent air raid drills, especially on the east and west coasts. The wardens became a common sight and symbolized the part of civil defense in the war effort. Reflecting this, the June, 1943 issue of Warner Brothers' Looney Tunes comic, "Merrie Melodies" featured Elmer Fudd, Bugs Bunny, and Porky Pig wearing air raid warden helmets on the cover. Behind them, a poster stresses to buy war bonds.[38] None of the comics within the book are particularly civil defense themed, but the famous characters wearing the helmet shows the awareness of civilian defense in popular culture.

Later in the war, Ripley's Believe it or Not promoted Civilian Defense programs in their own unique way. An advertisement for Keystone Portland Cement Company included a one panel comic on the "First American Bomb Shelters." It states that "prehistoric Indians built the cliffside caves in Frijoles Canyon, New Mexico to use as shelters against hostile tribes and, according to military observers, they still afford security against modern air-raid bombing."[39]

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[36] "To Be Healthy Your Family Must Eat the Right Foods," *The News Journal*, March 20, 1943.
[37] "Eat Right to Work and Win," *The Canton Independent-Sentinel*, April 20, 1943.
[38] Leon Schlesinger, *Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies*, (New York: Dell Pub. Co, June 1943), cover.
[39] Keystone Portland Cement Co., "First American Bomb Shelters," Advertisement, *Believe It or Not! Ripley about America!*

The necessity of air raid shelters faded as the war wound to a close on September 2, 1945. The United States of America dropped two atomic bombs, Little Boy and Fat Man, on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively. Even though the war ended, the use of atomic weapons and political tensions brought the United States into conflict with the Soviet Union (USSR). The United States held the edge in diplomatic relations with its nuclear weapons until August 29, 1949 when the Soviet Union successfully tested its first atomic bomb. This prompted the creation of the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) in 1950. They took up the challenge to educate American citizens about the dangers of nuclear war. To teach children, the FCDA decided to again produce comics that would teach children how to survive everything from natural disasters, such as fires, flood, or earthquakes, to an atomic holocaust in an unintimidating format.[40]

The first comic used by civil defense authorities actually predates the creation of the FCDA. In the summer of 1948, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) partnered with General Electric, Westinghouse, and the New York Committee on Atomic Information. Together, they put on a month-long exhibit in New York City's Central Park called "Man and the Atom."[41] The goal of the exhibition was to teach visitors, especially children, the domestic uses of atomic power through nuclear energy. When visitors entered the General Electric exhibit, they received copies of the comic book *Dagwood Splits the Atom*. King Features Syndicate produced the book in consultation with the Atomic Energy Commission. Lieutenant General Leslie R. Groves, wartime commander of the Manhattan Project, chose Dagwood to be the central character.[42] In

[40] Richard Graham, *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s*, 139.
[41] Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 296.
[42] Ibid.

the comic, Mandrake the Magician shrinks Dagwood and Blondie to the size of molecules to explain the wonders of the atom to them while an audience, including Popeye, Maggie, and Jiggs, looks on.[43] It also explains the uses of atoms in medical science, industry, and agriculture.[44] Over 250,000 copies were distributed and its positive reception led General Electric to order several million more.[45]

Following the successful exhibition, *Dagwood Splits the Atom* was reproduced around the country to teach children about the atom. In November of 1948, Austin, Texas schools began showing a film strip of the comic to school children.[46] In May of 1949, The *Tampa Bay Times* supplied senior and junior high schools in Pinellas County, Florida with copies of the book and sold copies to the public for 10 cents.[47] The popular comic even made it into congressional discussion. Representative Eugene J. Keogh of New York praised the comic, stating "We all know how interestingly Dagwood does everything. That he has now turned his talents to explaining in simple language how the atom is split is further to his credit."[48] Once the Federal Civil Defense Administration got ahold of the comic in 1950, they began printing it and distributing it at no cost while attaching their own mark to the cover. For instance, the copy cited in this work has "Ohio Civil Defense Corps" printed on the front cover.

As the Federal Civil Defense Administration attempted to disperse information on nuclear weapons while keeping quiet on the exact details of the weapons, the need for a method of simple but effective dispersion became evident. In 1950, FCDA officials and a National

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Joseph W. Musial, Leslie R. Groves, John R. Dunning, and Louis M. Heil, *Learn How Dagwood Splits the Atom!* (United States: King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1949), 29-31.
[45] Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*, 296.
[46] "Bugs Bunny, Dagwood Spur Study," *Austin American-Statesman*, November 12, 1948.
[47] "So That's How It Works," *Tampa Bay Times*, May 6, 1949.
[48] "Dagwood Splits the Atom, No Less," *Casper Star-Tribune*, July 24, 1949.

Education Association Committee composed of a dozen representatives of public and private schools met at a conference to discuss how to bring the lesson of civil defense to children. During the conference, the idea for duck and cover drill came up and the name struck Howard R. H. Johnson, chief of the Civil Defense Motion Picture branch, "like an atomic flash."[49] After the conference, Archer Productions Inc. undertook the task of creating a pictorialized "duck and cover". Lars Calonius, an animator for Archer, and writer Ray J. Mauer created a character named Bert the Turtle.[50]

Bert is a turtle who ducks into his shell whenever danger is present. The 10-minute animated cartoon contains a catchy song that repeat the lyrics "duck and cover." Archer Productions also created a small comic book called *Bert the Turtle says Duck and Cover* that features the "star of the official U.S. Civil Defense film 'Duck and Cover'."[51] The strategy behind Bert was to have a cartoon animal stand-in soften the blow when a topic was too scary to deal with directly.[52] He successfully managed to bring elementary self-protection against atomic attacks to impressionable grammar school youngsters.[53]

Through reading the comic and watching the cartoon, children are shown that Bert has a shelter on his back into which he snaps whenever he sees danger. The kids are taught to imitate this by finding shelter, if an atomic bomb explodes. This is done by falling to the floor and covering up the head, or to use any other readily available shelter, such as walls, trees, school desks, chairs, or even seats on a bus.[54] This drew criticism, however, from parents who thought

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[49] "U.S. Makes a Funny," *Arizona Republic*, December 16, 1951.
[50] Ibid.
[51] *Bert the Turtle Says Duck and Cover*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), cover.
[52] Richard Graham, *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s*, 139.
[53] "U.S. Makes a Funny."
[54] Ibid.

that the civil defense authorities were "encouraging American youngsters to act like turtles when they should be promoting the valiant instincts of the eagle." But to this, the authorities responded by saying "those who imitate the turtle will have a better chance of staying alive."[55]

Fortunately, the Federal Civil Defense Administration planned for this type of criticism. Rightly so, some Americans were suspicious or unconvinced of the threats of nuclear war early on. To combat this, the cartoons like Bert would hopefully prove to be a sly means to improve adult education. Officials argued that "grammar school youngsters…are at an age when they tell their parents nearly everything they learn. Thus, parents may be reached through them much better than teenagers, who usually never tell what they learn."[56]

The gamble on a cartoon character paid off, as Bert the Turtle soon became the spokesanimal for civil defense. Cities across the country printed and distributed the comic as "duck and cover" drills became the norm. The FCDA spent nearly $20,000 to print three million copies for distribution.[57] By May of 1952, Bert also spread into radio as stations began to run advertisements to entice listeners. Bert became a national star. He even inspired real life counterparts. The Maine Civil Defense Agency adopted a turtle they named Bert as their mascot. Unfortunately, the real-life Bert could not "duck and cover" from the ulcers he ultimately developed that may have contributed to his death.[58] However, the cartoon Bert remained in the public conscience. Even today, he remains an easily recognizable mascot for the Cold War.

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] "Bert the Turtle Makes Debut to Teach Children, Adults Safety Under A-Bomb Attack," *The Morning Call*, February 10, 1952.
[58] "Maine's CD Mascot," *The Paducah Sun*, February 13, 1955.

Despite the popularity of Bert the Turtle, the method of purging all frightening elements and presenting a perverse cheeriness created an unrealistic image for children. The cartoon did entice children to read it, but it wasn't doing enough to show the consequences of an ill prepared America in a nuclear war. Therefore, after Bert, all civil defense comics show humans in roles that either prepare for or deal with nuclear war and natural disasters. This new approach to realism is reflected in the titles.

If an A-Bomb Falls is the first comic released after Bert, in 1951. There is very little information on this comic, even in contemporary newspapers. It would appear that it did not receive the national attention that Bert garnered. The copy cited in this work was distributed by the State of Delaware Department of Civil Defense. Despite being in a comic book format, it takes on a level of instruction that appeals to adults. Indeed, the imagery starts with a meeting of adults discussing what to do in the case of an atomic attack. This is the first comic that explains each step of the process. However, this comic lists many illogical and futile lessons because they did not yet fully understand the aftermath of a nuclear weapon.

It starts by explaining the air raid siren tones and their different meanings. It goes on to show scenes of the fictional Watts family, who "are trained in Civil Defense and always know exactly what to do in the home, in school, at the office, and outdoors."[59] First, the mother as a housewife shows the methods of "fireproof housekeeping" by closing all doors on stoves and keeping waste paper in closed containers. Then, a well-stocked shelter area is detailed with the necessities for survival. These include canned food, batteries, radio, flashlight, sealed water, etc. The housewife should also, if time allows, draw the blinds and drapes, unplug all appliances,

[59] *If an A-Bomb Falls*, (Newark, DE: Department of Civil Defense, 1951), 2.

turn off the gas, and unlock all doors before the bomb goes off. Once these things are done to ensure a safe and tidy house, the housewife should go into the shelter and wait until she hears the all-clear signal.[60]

Mr. Watts is then the subject of proper instructions if caught at work during at attack. If an attack comes without warning, everyone should duck under their desks. If there is a warning, workers should "quickly but calmly" go to a pre-designated shelter area. There, they remain packed with everyone else until they hear the all-clear. The Watts child at school follows the same procedure of quickly moving to the shelter.[61]

Finally, the Watts' son is caught out in the open during the atomic explosion. The authorities do not sugarcoat the prospects. They write "people caught outdoors will probably suffer the greatest casualties."[62] He then dives into a nearby hole and covers his back with a newspaper. The comic then explains the danger of radioactivity from ground and water burst explosions. The radioactive dust that settles must be quickly rinsed off. Luckily, the last panel is the Watts boy washing in the shower, showing that the newspaper must have shielded him from being killed in the nuclear blast.[63] This comic shows the new merging of technical civil defense terminology and instruction with the comic book format in order to appeal and educate.

Comic books soon took on a new level of importance in Civil Defense budgets. In January of 1952, the Tennessee state civil defense director, Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Martin, discussed that the state would get matching funds for "…training manuals and pamphlets, civil defense films, civil defense comic books, fire extinguishers, and other items for training

[60] Ibid, 3-4.
[61] Ibid, 5-6.
[62] Ibid, 6.
[63] Ibid.

wardens…"[64] This shows the level of importance comic books now had, as they were considered equal to films and manuals. However, not everyone saw comic books as a good way to give children information.

Dr. Frederic Wertham, a German psychiatrist, believed that comic books could taint America's youth through their violence and gore. The sudden popularity of horror and crime series in the early 1950s helped support Dr. Wertham's theory. In 1954, Wertham published his controversial book titled *Seduction of the Innocent*. In it, he presented false statistics and misrepresented material to prove his argument that comic books lead to delinquency in children.[65] Wertham's work led to many court cases in the United States on comics, causing great public interest. This negative attention on comics led publishers to organize a group called the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA) to monitor and regulate changes for a comics code in 1954. This organization used their new code to ensure that any comic book without the CMAA's seal would not be sold in stores.[66] Their restrictions and unrealistic expectations caused several publishing companies to go out of business and altered the medium to primarily consist of western and romance stories.[67]

This idea of comics being detrimental to children led many states to enact laws against the books. In Oklahoma, "mayors and municipal governing boards had the power to bring suits to stop the sale or distribution of obscene comic books to youngsters."[68] The definition of "obscene" was completely up to local opinion. The Comics Magazine Association of America's code did draw some lines, however. Some of the rules of the comics code of authority included

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[64] "Defense Leaders Urged to Seek Funds," *The Tennessean*, January 5, 1952.
[65] Dexter A. Nelson III, "An Analysis of the Enemies of United State Society through the Superhero Narrative from 1940-2015," 20.
[66] Ibid, 21.
[67] Ibid.
[68] "Depicting Horror, Violent Crimes," *Elmira Advertiser*, July 11, 1955.

that "scenes of excessive violence shall be prohibited…"[69] This would mean that comics depicting violence in the form of an atomic attack would fall under the field of "obscene." It seems that Civil Defense officials did not care or felt that their message was a necessary violation.

Comic books continued to be published by the government to prepare the citizens for nuclear war. In 1954, Ripley's Believe it or Not, donated their talents just as they had done during World War II. Pat Smith, chief of the Emergency Food Distribution Service of the New York State Department of Agriculture, designed a colored, four-page pamphlet on the necessity of stockpiling food in homes to feed families for up to a week.[70] As a public service, Ripley's supplied the cartoon material and drawings to the book with information on strange historical instances of food and dieting.[71] Working under the supervision of the New York State Civil Defense Commission, the pamphlets were distributed across the state through schools and merchants.[72]

In 1955, while states instituted laws banning violence in comic books, the Maryland Civil Defense Agency partnered with Commercial Comics Inc. to create the most graphic comic produced by civil defense authorities, called *The H-Bomb and You*. Once more, there is very little information on this comic. It begins with a classroom of children watching a film that shows a hydrogen bomb test. One child remarks "…seeing that H-bomb tear apart a make-believe city seemed awfully real!" Their teacher replies "…it might be real someday if we don't build a strong civil defense!"[73] She then gives the children a history of civil defense.

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[69] Les Daniels, *Comix: A History of Comic Books in America,* (New York: Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1971).
[70] "All Around the Towns," *Democrat and Chronicle*, October 6, 1954.
[71] New York State Civil Defense Commission. "Like to Eat Regularly?" Advertisement. *Believe It or Not!*
[72] "All Around the Towns," *Democrat and Chronicle*.
[73] Malcolm W. Ater, *The H-Bomb and You.* (Washington, D.C.: Commercial Comics, Inc., 1955), 2.

Images of explosions and air raids from both World Wars are illustrated across several panels to show the terror and violence that comes if they are not prepared. To instruct the class, a man from their local civil defense office comes to tell them "what you and your family can do to help!"[74] The official explains to the children the probable chances of survival with a chart that shows hydrogen bomb damage if dropped in the center of the city. The chart shows total destruction in three miles, heavy damage in seven miles, and light damage within ten miles. The official then tells the class the various defense methods employed by the United States government but admits that "even with this protection, if World War III comes, enemy planes and missiles will get through to American targets. Loss of life and property damage are sure to be high" so the children must be prepared to deal with the destruction.[75]

The comic ends by explaining just how the children can be prepared. He states that teenagers must have their parent's consent in order to be a help. Teenage boys can do messenger jobs at civil defense posts, assist block wardens in their neighborhood, or help in light rescue work. Girls can work in welfare centers, registration centers, mass feeding lines, and red cross home nursing courses. But most importantly, children can "do a real service by keeping Mother and Dad interested in Civil Defense."[76]

The book also illustrates the roles their parents can perform to prepare for nuclear war. Their mothers can keep home shelters in order, dispose of paper, store purified water, and put out fires. Fathers can volunteer for emergency rescue services, warden service, and they should build a shelter in their basement or yard if they within 15 miles of a target area.[77] Finally, the Civil Defense official explains simple first aid, sirens, and the Conelrad warning system. The back

[74] Ibid, 6.
[75] Ibid, 7-9.
[76] Ibid,12.
[77] Ibid, 13-14.

cover of the comic states "I know that after reading this booklet you will want to contact your local Civil Defense Director." It then lists all counties in Maryland with their respective directors and contact information.[78] This comic book was distributed to Maryland children in Ocean City during meetings to show Civil Defense films, like "Duck and Cover."[79] The detailed illustrations and information show the desire to draw children into their ranks to enlist their parent's support. However, these comics suffered from being regional initiatives lacking a unified approach to civil defense.

The comic books that followed *Duck and Cover* were published locally and did not see country-wide distribution. To remedy this, six years after Bert became the spokesanimal for atomic preparedness, the Federal Civil Defense Administration worked to create a new mascot. They partnered with Al Capp, the creator of the popular comic strip *Li'l Abner*. The mascot he created, Mr. Civil Defense, was revealed on National Civil Defense Week, September 9th to 15th, 1956.[80] The mascot was an anthropomorphized CD logo who is always prepared, aware, and ready to spring into action and save lives. He is also eager to tell the public about various warning signals, civil defense measures, home preparedness, and first aid.[81] The Federal Civil Defense Administration immediately received orders for almost 3,000,000 copies from state, county, and city CD organizations.[82]

The comic titled *Mr. Civil Defense Tells About Natural Disasters* featured Li'l Abner introducing Mr. CD to a group of men who claim that they do not need a civil defense program because they have the "safest, nicest town in the whole U.S.A."[83] To show that even the best

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[78] Ibid,15-16.
[79] "Mrs. Gordy to Speak to Student Council," *The Daily Times*, February 12, 1955.
[80] "New Al Capp Figure Featured in CD Book," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 1956.
[81] Richard Graham, *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s*, 139.
[82] "New Al Capp Figure Featured in CD Book," *The Los Angeles Times*.
[83] Al Capp, *Mr. Civil Defense tells about Natural Disasters!* (New York: Graphic Information Service Inc., 1956), 2.

town is vulnerable, the illustrated panels demonstrate the role that an organized and trained civil defense can play in helping a community struck by natural or man-made disasters until government help arrives. This comic focuses on natural disasters, a flood in this instance, but does so in a way that it could apply to the aftermath of a nuclear attack.

Mr. Civil Defense asks how the people of the town could handle a situation in which people are isolated and trapped, power lines are down, and the hospital's power is disabled. But he assures them, they have nothing to fear if their local civil defense workers are trained and prepared! Mr. Civil Defense states "…organize your local civil defense. By saving your town, you can save your state. And by saving your state, you can save your country."[84] Evacuation centers can be set up, HAM radio operators will deliver messages, the Red Cross and CD Welfare services will feed the homeless, rescue workers will save trapped people, then they rebuild the town.

The comic shows civil defense work without the overtones of nuclear annihilation. This is a change from the previous comics that show the bomb and the fears of it being dropped on American soil. The change indicates that the controversy around comic books in 1954 pushed the Federal Civil Defense Administration to scale back the illustrated violence and fear present in the former comics. However, *Mr. Civil Defense Tells About Natural Disasters* does not completely exclude the threat of nuclear war. Near the end, he reminds the reader that "It might be a flood or an enemy bombing. It might be a tornado or a forest fire. But if you're prepared for **ONE**, you'll be in a better position to stand up to **ANY OF THEM**."[85] He also concludes the book with the new Civil Defense motto "Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow!"[86]

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[84] Ibid, 13.
[85] Ibid, 14.
[86] Ibid, 15.

The comic was distributed across the country. In Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania alone, between 8,000 to 10,000 copies were distributed in the schools.[87] During Civil Defense Week, September 9-15, 1956, in Madison, Wisconsin, Rennebohm Drug stores distributed the comics while the schools gave them to all fifth and sixth graders.[88] Its popularity continued to grow and a year later, in September of 1957, Rock Island, Iowa distributed 10,000 copies through their public-school system.[89] This popularity led to yet another partnership with Al Capp and *L'il Abner*.

In 1957, *Operation Survival* was published through the Federal Civil Defense Administration. It featured L'il Abner in the corner of the cover saying "Hi, kids, here's a story about Civil Defense." It also included, in the opposite corner, Mr. Civil Defense with the motto "Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow." But the main two characters on the cover are two children, struggling to get into a boat that is shaped like a rocket, during a flood.[90]

The comic starts with the two children, Jim and Sally, tying up the boat Jim built. Their uncle Harry arrives and shows them colored slides of his travels. One slide is "a town in eastern Europe…a sudden shift of wind sent a forest fire roaring into this town." He tells them that there was a heavy loss of life and property damage that could have been avoided if they had a government prepared for emergency action.[91] During this talk, a storm raging outside of the children's house threatens to break the dam. The children run to pull up the boat, but it breaks free and both children fall into the raging torrent. They make it to the boat and float towards a house on a hill. Once there, they go inside looking for food but find none. Fortunately, they find

[87] "Wednesday," *The Pocono Record*, September 10, 1956.
[88] "Excellent Showing," *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 26, 1956.
[89] "Rock Island Children Get 10,000 CD Books," *The Daily Times*, September 19, 1957.
[90] Al Capp, *Operation Survival!* (New York: Graphic Information Service, Inc., 1957), *cover.*

[91] Ibid, 4.

that the family has a bomb shelter that may have emergency supplies. They find food and fall asleep in the shelter.[92]

In their sleep, Jim dreams of flying in the rocket boat right towards a group of enemy bombers headed straight for town. They land at home and quickly enter their bomb shelter with their parents. While in the shelter, their father explains the danger of nuclear fallout. The comic panels illustrate the size differences in atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs. One illustration also shows a nuclear strike on Washington D.C. that carries fallout to New York City. Luckily for the children, their father shows them illustrations of various civil defense Geiger counters and dosimeters while explaining how they read radioactivity.[93]

When Jim finally wakes up from this very educational dream, the children hear a helicopter that rescues them. The comic then ends almost identically to *Mr. Civil Defense Tells About Natural Disasters* with the children returning to a relocation center and going through all the steps of food, lodging, and clothing until they find their parents and return home. Once home, the children take supplies down to their bomb shelters to "make sure we're prepared!"[94] The comic then ends with a civil defense themed crossword puzzle and a glossary of civil defense words and terms.[95]

Operation Survival received equal popularity to its predecessor. It saw country wide distribution to schools and civil defense offices. In Franklin, Indiana, 800 copies were given to the town's high school students.[96] Likewise, all schoolchildren from grades 5th to 8th in Fair Lawn, New Jersey received a copy of the book.[97] For both of the comics created by Al Capp,

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[92] Ibid, 7-16.
[93] Ibid, 16-21.
[94] Ibid, 22-27.
[95] Ibid, 28-30.
[96] "F.H.S. Campus Notes," *The Franklin Evening Star*, February 28, 1958.
[97] "School Children to get Comics on Civil Defense," *The Record*, September 16, 1958.

they tend to end on an upbeat note that citizens could quickly restore order, reconstruct, and return to their familiar pre-attack lives.[98] The comics' popularity allowed for widespread distribution of official civil defense information, but *Operation Survival* was the last comic published by Civil Defense officials.

The use of comics during World War II ventured into a new medium for the Office of Civilian Defense. The clever integration of official information in a format that would allow even children to understand allowed for greater backing by the American public. Children were employed in the war effort by teaching their parents about civil defense messages. The successful image in the public eye showed itself in uses like the cover of *Merrie Melodies* during the war. Then, when the Soviet Union successfully tested their atomic bomb, the need for simple communication of complicated ideas once again drew upon comic books.

Dagwood Splits the Atom showed that the Federal Civil Defense Administration could use these books to support their own agenda. Bert the Turtle then gave the country a concrete image, a spokesanimal, for civil defense. His popularity mirrored the public opinion of the efforts of civil defense. The local comics that showed the reality of a nuclear war relate to the necessity of teaching horrible truths to children in order for them to convince their parents to take the threat seriously. Finally, with Mr. Civil Defense, the 1954 controversies with comic books seem to have taken a toll on how the government would handle this sensitive subject. Instead of showing atomic war, they showed natural disasters and equated them to an enemy attack.

The clever uses of comic books throughout this span show the ingenuity and drive to pull children into the fold. The art appeals to them through a familiar form and the simple information allows for easy retainability. Unfortunately, since the last official comic saw

[98] Richard Graham, *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s,* 139.

publication in 1957, the books also show the waning support for both comics and civil defense. *Operation Survival* poetically fits both the mission of civil defense and the final attempt to keep civil defense in the public eye through comic books.

Chapter Two: Identification Tags

During the Cold War the United States initiated programs to build up the defense of the country in case of nuclear attack. These programs ranged from releasing informational pamphlets to building public fallout shelters across the country to house the population for several weeks. One of these initiatives was the push for identification tags or "dog tags." Initially aimed at children, these tags gradually transitioned to encompass civilians of all ages. The identification tag initiative evolved from a militaristic to a domestic purpose between 1950 and 1960. The changes and difficulties this initiative underwent caused many controversies, as the United States tried to find a balance between war and peace.

The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) had studied alternate methods of identification, such as fingerprinting, records of dentures, birthmarks and other superficial body marks, and permanent laundry marking of clothing. They found that only the metal tag offered equal advantages of practical simplicity, serviceability and availability at minimum cost to all persons throughout the country.[99] The various methods had been tested at different times in the early 50s but only the identification tags continued on.

The beginnings of the initiative go back to the Second World War. During the war, the German Blitz on England drove the British to establish the Civil Defence agency to protect the civilian population. In the United States, government officials and the public began to fear the possibility of attacks against the U.S. homeland in the event that England fell. Mayor Fiorello La Guardia of New York City wrote a letter to President Roosevelt stating:

[99] *Advisory Bulletin No. 69*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951.

> Please bear in mind that up to this war and never in our history, has the civilian population been exposed to attack. The new technique of war has created the necessity for developing new techniques of civilian defense.[100]

Roosevelt responded to this public concern by creating the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) in 1941. The OCD took on the responsibility of establishing and applying a plan to protect the population from all possibilities of attack. They approached this in part by copying the British plans. Routinely undertaken drills ensured that the public knew the procedures. Air raid drills taught people where to seek shelter. Blackout drills saw coastal cities turning off all lights or putting up dark black curtains in order to not only hide the city from the air but to also conceal ships along the coast from German U-boats.

Among these new drills, plans sprung up to protect children. One of these called for identification tags. Across the country citizens began to worry about what would happen to their children at school or if they got separated from their parents during an attack. The question of how to supply children with tags started coming up in town meetings. Since the program did not receive national organization, the tags varied from town to town. In Los Angeles, California an advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* showed a metal identification plate with "four lines of identification stamped into a strong metal plate and comes complete with leather case and cord to be worn around the neck" for 25 cents.[101] On the opposite side the county, New York City distributed white one inch round plastic discs with linen tape to 300,000 students in the city's public, parochial, and non-profit private schools. The tags bore the names, birthdays, and a school code number of their wearer.[102]

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[100] Elwyn A. Mauck, *Civilian Defense in the United States: 1940-1945,* (Unpublished manuscript by the Historical Officer of the Office of Civilian Defense, July 1946), 55.
[101] "Identification Tag for Children," *The Los Angeles Times,* December 26, 1941.
[102] ACME, "*Just Like the Soldiers,"* April 21, 1942, Photograph in author's possession.

However, when the war ended so too did the role of the Office of Civilian Defense. The programs and tags thankfully never found use and faded away as the world rebuilt. Harry S. Truman, after taking office in 1945, saw this and abolished the OCD.[103] Nevertheless, the development of the atomic bomb opened up the possibility of new risks to the public if the Soviets got the technology to develop their own. In response to increasing tensions with the Soviets, Truman created the Office of Civil Defense Planning in 1948 to organize a plan for a permanent Civil Defense agency.[104]

Truman's fear of Russian nuclear capability came true when the Soviets successfully tested an atomic bomb in August of 1949. The Truman administration soon came under fire from the public because no outline for national disaster existed at the time. To quell the fears of the citizens, the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950 created the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). This agency took charge of creating the plans for the United States in case of atomic attack but Truman believed the responsibility to act on these plans should fall on state and local governments.[105]

The Federal Civil Defense Administration immediately began planning for the worst-case scenario of Soviet nuclear attack. Early ideas drew upon the plans of the Office of Civilian Defense from World War II and with these plans came a reemergence of the dog tag initiative. Primary targets of attack, such as Chicago and New York City, planned for the worst outcomes.[106] As centers of economic wealth, the large cities could afford to assign more funds for Civil Defense.

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[103] *Civil Defense and Homeland Security: A Short History of National Preparedness Efforts* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006), 6.
[104] Ibid., 7.
[105] Ibid., 7.
[106] "Schools in Civil Defense," *The Anniston Star,* September 12, 1951.

The dog tags became a cheap and efficient means of identifying the children in case of an attack. Chicago announced their plan to "provide every Chicagoan with a metal dog tag."[107] These tags bore the wearer's name, address, and possibly their blood type at a cost of 10 cents. The deputy director of the welfare division of the Chicago civil defense organization claimed:

> The wearing of one of these tags will facilitate identification of the seriously injured and children and minimize language difficulties and the problem of handling persons who become hysterical.[108]

The idea of an identification tag soon spread across the country as the need to prepare for an attack became a reality.

As the demand for tags rose, so did companies looking to capitalize on the trend. Published in the Detroit Free Press, an advertisement for a company called Tag-Along read: "Toddlers, school children, teen agers, adults – everyone should carry a "Tag-Along" for easy identification."[109] A tag would have a name, address, and blood type, if known, embossed on it. One could be purchased for only twenty-five cents if mailed to their company in Detroit, Michigan. In response, other groups sought to help as a public service rather than exploit the situation.

The Amvets, a national World War II veterans' organization, began the "biggest dog-tagging program in history" on December 4, 1950.[110] The group worked apart from local Civil Defense authorities but claimed to be doing civil defense work. They produced tags made of "electronically-sealed vinolyte plastic" and boasted that the tags

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[107] "Civil 'Dog Tags' Planned," *The New York Times,* September 29, 1950.
[108] Ibid.
[109] "Identification Tag Only 25¢," *Detroit Free Press,* October 24, 1950.
[110] "Blood-Type Tag Plan Starts in Allentown," *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* November 15, 1950.

were "radiation-resistant."[111] The Amvets planned to give every citizen in the United States a tag. These tags differed from earlier identification tags by being specifically for blood typing. After World War II, the supply of blood dwindled, and at the time of the Amvet plan, available blood went to support the troops fighting in the Korean War. Therefore, by tagging everyone in the country, if an attack came, it would be easy for medical personnel to identify what blood a patient needed and who could donate it. So, upon receiving an Amvet tag, any citizen could report to a blood typing station and have his blood typed determined and notched onto his tag.[112]

The Amvets chose Pennsylvania as the state in which the tag program would begin. The program immediately drew fire from Civil Defense authorities who claimed a lack of enough serum to type every citizen's blood. Medical experts attacked the tagging of citizens claiming it to be "lulling the American public into a false sense of security."[113] Despite this opposition, the Amvets pushed on with their tag program stating: "We are not trying to interfere with Civil Defense. We are trying to help. And we believe this definitely will help."[114] The program successfully continued through January 1951. As the program gained attention, the Amvets began to spread into new venues in order to allow the public to apply for a tag. Three stores in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania distributed request forms to shoppers who had not gotten the papers.[115]

People flocked to the Red Cross in order to donate blood and get their blood typed for their Amvet tag. An article published on February 2, 1951, in the Pittsburgh Press

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[111] Ibid.
[112] "HST Gets Civil Defense 'Dog Tag,'" *The Gaffney Ledger*, November 30, 1950.
[113] "Blood Tag Campaign Dissuaded by Medical Authority," *The Daily Notes*, January 31, 1951.
[114] "Amvets to Push 'Blood Tag' Program," *The Pittsburgh Press*, January 4, 1951.
[115] "Three Stores Plan Booths for Blood Tags," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 26, 1951.

claimed a scene of "blood shed" at the Red Cross as hundreds of citizens flocked to donate.[116] Another article, released on February 3, stated that the program would continue despite Civil Defense criticism, but if the Civil Defense wanted to create their own program the Amvets would be happy to help.[117] Finally, on February 4, Civil Defense authorities, Amvet leaders, and the American Red Cross met. The meeting resulted in a combined effort, as the FCDA finally recognized the success of the program.[118]

After this meeting, blood typing as part of an identification tag took off throughout the United States. New Orleans became one of the first major cities to undertake an identification program. The local government announced that it would have a tag for every elementary and high school student in the city by June 1, 1951.[119] Tags issued in New Orleans differed from the Amvet tags. Opposition had arisen about the tag being made of plastic because it would melt under the heat of an atomic bomb. Therefore, New Orleans children received stainless steel discs the size of military dog tags. A tag held the child's name, address, name of the next-of-kin, and their religion, with a space for blood type to be added later.[120]

Schools were targeted as centers of distribution for identification tags, especially in areas with a high risk of attack. The risk of attack changed the tags to a new level of seriousness as the next-of-kin and religious preference became common, both associated with death notifications and last rites. The tags became a concrete reminder to the public that an enemy attack is possible in their own backyard. Nevertheless, several cities took

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[116] "Hundreds Now Beating Path to Red Cross Blood Bank," *The Pittsburgh Press,* February 2, 1951.
[117] "Amvets Still Stick to Blood Type Plan," *The Kane Republican,* February 3, 1951.
[118] "CD Joins Amvets in blood tag Program," *The Pittsburgh Press,* February 4, 1951.
[119] "New Orleans Pressing Civil Defense Organization," *Clarion-Ledger,* April 1, 1951.
[120] Ibid.

this burden and made good on the promise to tag every child. In New York City, the Board of Education took the helm on distributing tags. Just as it had been done during World War II, all second and third graders in the public, parochial, and private schools received tags. These tags once again included the wearer's name, address, birth date, parent's name, and a school code.[121]

To prepare for the issuing of the tags, New York City officials began reaching out to companies for material. One company took full advantage of this trend to and recognized an opportunity, for every dog tag issued a chain to hold it could be sold. The Bead Chain Manufacturing Co. of Bridgeport, Connecticut, began to issue advertisements directed at teachers and parents. In April 1951, they advertised in the *School Executive*, a journal for superintendents and school boards. The advertisement read "New York City Schools Order Identification Necklaces for all Students." They praise the Board of Education for their "important move to safeguard children." They also mention how their product is kinkless and the Armed Forces have used their product.[122]

On October 11, 1951, the Board of Education began distributing the metal tag to pupils in the second and third grades in the public, private, and parochial schools. The tags resembled "G.I. 'dog tags' and had to be worn at all times.[123] However, parents had the say on whether or not to enforce the wearing of the tag. This caused conflict between the school, civil defense, and the parents. On November 28, 1951, 1,250,000 students underwent an air-raid drill that tested the ID tag program. During the test, "the majority of the school children wore their 'dog tags' but a goodly number did not for various

[121] "Civil Defense 'Dog Tags' to be Given to City Pupils," *The New York Times,* October 10, 1951.
[122] Advertisement for the Bead Chain Mfg. Co., *School Executive*, 70 (April 1951), 99.
[123] "Civil Defense 'Dog Tags' to be Given to City Pupils," *The New York Times,* October 10, 1951.

reasons."[124] Some of the reasons include orders of parents, forgetting them, and one little girl who decided that the tag did not go well with her outfit.[125]

Unfortunately, these tags had more problems that would cause mayhem in a real emergency. One teacher reported that children would swap their tags as if they were marbles or cards. One student went to class wearing five different tags.[126] Controversy also followed the identification program in New York City as Clifford McAvoy, American Labor party candidate for President of the Council, claimed it "spread war hysteria."[127] Some groups also felt that the tags had a negative impact on the psychological well-being on the children. On December 7, 1951, the City and Country School sent letters out to some 200 principals, psychologists, pediatricians, and heads of parents groups asking their reactions to the distribution of the identification tags to the children.[128] The principal, Jean W. Murray, explained that they wanted to "secure the emotional and physical well-being of the children" because they were "gravely concerned with the way in which some of the civil defense measures had been put into effect.[129] She added that "in some cases the schools acted hastily without sufficient consideration to the emotional effects which these measures might have."[130] She believed that the tags aroused fear in both children and parents. Even if the tags were assurance of safety, it must be terrifying to children who had not received any tags.[131] The Board of Education continued supplying these tags despite the inquiry but did not make it mandatory for the

[124] "1,250,000 Pupils are Calm in Drill," *The New York Times,* November 29, 1951.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] "Poll Being Taken on Identity Tags," *The New York Times,* December 8, 1951.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.

children to wear them. From 1950-1954, the New York Civil Defense spent $166,869.45 for the "Identification of School Children (1st through 8 grades)." This was broken down into 25 embossing machines, dies, 2,500,000 tag plates, 2,500,000 chains, and 370,795 plates-embossed through a contract.[132]

Atlanta, Georgia followed suit in August as every child in target areas received a dog tag to help in identification after mass evacuations.[133] As states began their own programs, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) began to take a role in regulating the tags. On September 20, 1951, they released their *Advisory Bulletin No. 69* to Civil Defense directors of cities with populations of over 40,000 on the subject of identification tags for civilians.[134] In it, the rules for uniformity are laid down. It also declares that the responsibility for identification falls to the State civil defense agencies. The tags can be best accomplished by attaching them to a chain or bracelet and worn permanently around the neck, wrist, or ankle.[135]

The bulletin also details procurement of the tags through three different options: 1. By States and their local civil defense agencies, which may purchase in bulk for resale or distribution to the public. 2. Directly through manufacturers. 3. By other organizations, industries, and groups which may make bulk purchases for distribution to members or employees, or selected community groups, either through resale or as gifts.[136] It continues by citing the Department of Defense having been consulted as to radioactivity. The FCDA hoped

[132] "N.Y.C. Office of Civil Defense Financial Report for Period from July 10, 1950 to Dec. 31, 1954," NYCD, August 13, 1955.
[133] "Schools in Civil Defense," *The Anniston Star*, September 12, 1951.
[134] *Advisory Bulletin No. 69*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

that the recommended method of identification "will, in all probability, remain serviceable under any or all anticipated attack conditions and be universally applicable."[137]

During this same period, 1950-1953, the entire state of Michigan instituted voluntary blood typing for every citizen. Dr. Albert E. Heustis, state health commissioner, called for universal blood typing as preparation for atomic warfare in July of 1950. He claimed that cities with populations over 100,000 could expect 25 percent to be A-bomb casualties, necessitating 25,000 pints of blood.[138] Therefore, city created a $2,000,000 defense budget with $1,332,000 dedicated to creating a "living blood bank" by blood-typing and dog-tagging 2,500,000 Michigan citizens.[139]

On October 9, Jackson, Michigan became the site for pilot operation of the blood typing program. The test called for typing the blood of 60,000 people in the Jackson area. The test required nurses, Red Cross personnel, volunteer clerks, and the laboratories of two hospitals. The volunteers filled out cards with name, sex, religion, birth date, address, and type of blood of each person. One copy made for the state, one for the local agency, one sent to the dog tag manufacturer, and one for the individual.[140]

The test quickly garnered criticism from the American Medical Association (AMA). The AMA Journal claimed that the blood typing tests were "hazards to the patient" as, they claimed, the tests were "costly and technically inadvisable."[141] If a test was not 100 percent accurate, it would lead to citizens potentially receiving the wrong blood type on their tag and, in an emergency, die if given the wrong blood transfusion.

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[137] Ibid.
[138] "May Do Tag, Blood-Type Entire State," *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, July 7, 1950.
[139] "Big Task Faced by Legislators," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, August 14, 1950.
[140] "Blood Plan Waits Test in Jackson," *Lansing State Journal*, October 8, 1950.
[141] "Scientist Pushes Mass Blood-Typing," *Lansing State Journal*, October 13, 1950.

To this claim, Dr. J. H. Kaump, a Detroit pathologist who served as a consultant to the state civil defense board said: "Who knows it won't work unless it's tried? Never before in the U.S. has there been a mass typing of blood to determine it possible value for emergency use. We want to find out." He also supported the program stating "In time of emergency we don't want to think of having to stop and type 100 blood donors to get 10 of the needed type."[142]

In May of 1951, the state defense council chose slender plastic tags to be issued to the citizen who had their blood typed. The council rejected larger plastic tags, aluminum tags, and zinc-coated steel tags. The tag cost nine cents apiece including the creation of the master record. The council supported this decision by claiming the small plastic tags were the most accurate in reproduction, more acceptable to women, and easier to read. However, they did recognize the main drawback of the plastic being susceptible to heat.[143]

The blood type tags soon began losing their usefulness and viability as they reached the population. Skepticism set in as the faults in the tags became apparent. By June, the tags being issued by the Federal Civil Defense Administration began causing confusion among the civilians. This prompted Dr. Joseph Molnar, city health commissioner, to publish a detailed drawing of the tag in the newspaper.[144] In September, an article ran criticizing the integrity of the tags. The writer of the article, Robert Perrin, suggested carrying the Michigan Civil Defense tag in an asbestos bag. He tested the tag by holding a match to it and watched the tag curl up to the point of endangering the

[142] Ibid.
[143] "Blood Type Tag Chosen," *Lansing State Journal,* May 8, 1951.
[144] "Blood Tags Puzzling to Civilians," *Detroit Free Press,* June 3, 1951.

holder's fingers. The article stated, "Even conservative experts say heat from an atomic blast makes Dante's inferno seem like the North Pole."[145]

A.D. Howells, assistant Civil Defense director in Lansing, responded to this by saying "if there is enough heat to destroy the tag the wearer would not be in need of blood. Chances are that all of the tag would not be destroyed. Since the four blood types are denoted by a different color tag, it would still be possible to know the blood type even if only a part of the tag remained." Howell claimed that they "weighed every point in choosing the plastic tag over a metal tag. People just won't carry metal tags."[146]

The tags had colors coordinating to the three different blood types: Type O; blue, Type A; yellow, Type B; red and Type AB white. The blood type, RH factor, year of birth, name, code number for filing, and religion were printed on the back of the tag. The tag came with a card that stated, "Enclosed is your blood-type card. You may need it as much in civilian accident as in atomic disaster. Carry it on your person at all times." If lost, the tag could be duplicated for 25 cents sent to The Kay-Art Company. The program aimed to type all individuals between the ages of 5 and 65.[147] As of January 1953, Civil Defense officials reported 650,000 people in the Detroit area had been blood-typed and six teams worked in the schools. They claimed that all schoolchildren would receive tags. They also reported that they processed 1,200 tests daily.[148]

Unfortunately, for Michigan's blood type tag program, in 1954, the state Civil Defense agency got "as realistic as a banker thinking about a loan." New officials and legislators began to cut CD funding after comparing their programs to others around the

[145] "Would They Survive an Atomic Attack," *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1951.
[146] Ibid.
[147] "Bloodtyping will Start Here on Monday Morning," *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, October 17, 1951.
[148] "The Alphabet of Blood," *Detroit Free Press*, January 25, 1953.

country. This included the biggest project undertaken, the blood type tags. The program ended with legislators wondering "how many folks in Michigan could dig up their blood-type tag on a month's notice."[149]

In 1952, Indiana jumped aboard the program with zeal. The State Department of Civil Defense aimed to issue every citizen of Indiana an identification tag. Newspapers across the state published order forms for the tags. A cost of 25 cents accompanied by the order form allowed for the Civil Defense headquarters to keep a record of all citizens in case of disaster and distribute the tags. These new tags upgraded from plastic to aluminum in order to withstand the heat of an atomic blast. Also, neither blood typing nor next-of-kin found inclusion on the Indiana tags. Instead, only a name, address, birth date, and religion needed to be filled out.[150] This exclusion made the identification tags less militaristic and more approachable for citizens. By June 18, 1952, the Indiana Civil Defense had sold 62,000 identification tags.[151] The Federal Civil Defense Administration also pushed for families to acquire identification tags. In *Women in Civil Defense* it is stated: "You should get identification tags for each member of your family from the local Civil Defense authorities."[152]

Indiana continued the successful "Operation Identification Tag" into 1953 with 6,000 applications received from city and county schools in April of that year.[153] Other state governments began similar programs that same year as news of Indiana, New York City, and Atlanta's success spread. The Tennessee Civil Defense agency purchased three

[149] "CD Aides Become Realists," *Detroit Free* Press, June 13, 1954.
[150] "State CD Ready with ID Tags," *Brown County Democrat,* April 17, 1952.
[151] "Named Chairman Civil Defense," *The Daily Reporter,* June 18, 1951.
[152] Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Women in Civil Defense,* (Washington, DC: GPO 1952), 6.
[153] "Report Good Response to Tags for School Children," *The Kokomo Tribune,* April 24, 1953.

electrically operated graphotypes to turn out 100 tags an hour. Children received priority but with 700,000 students in the state, officials declared it would take several months before the tags would be available to adults.[154] In San Francisco, children purchased triangular metal tags for 25 cents at the beginning of their school year.[155] Their tags simply included blood type, name, and address.

As the Cold War progressed, tensions with the Soviet Union forced the Federal Civil Defense Administration to change their plans. Evacuation became the new doctrine of defense. If an attack on the United States occurred, families had to evacuate from the cities to rural areas. Dog tags now transitioned from body identification and blood types to a method of reuniting families after an evacuation. Cities around the country began to support tag programs to calm public fears. Kansas City, Missouri's evacuation plan called for dog tags for all grade school children in the Greater Kansas City area.[156]

The FCDA announced to state and local Civil Defense directors on February 24, 1955 that since 1951, with the development of more powerful weapons the need for a more national program had grown, although it represented only a small part of civil defense operations.[157] The programs had been publicly supported in the past, particularly with respect to tagging children, however, the new program's popularity began to lag. The FCDA recognized the local limitations of time and manpower and therefore accepted an offer from the Pet Milk Company to handle mass distribution and promotion of official Civil Defense identification tags as a public service. Distribution of the tags were to be an at-cost operation for the Pet Milk Company. The operation was to begin early in

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[154] "Civil Defense Ready for 'Dog Tags'," *The Tennessean*, May 29, 1953.
[155] Patty S. Reynolds, in discussion with James Gregory, August 26, 2018.
[156] "Civil Defense Identification Tags," *The Kansas City Times*, May 25, 1954.
[157] *Advisory Bulletin No. 181*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955.

April 1955.[158] The dog tags included the prerequisite name and birthday but also brought back the next-of-kin and religious preference.

Supporting the Pet Milk Company's program, the FCDA distributed an information kit containing radio and television announcements, newspaper materials, pamphlets, and bulletin board materials, as well as suggestions for their use. The Pet Milk Company processed requests for the tags at cost (only stipulation being that each request be accompanied by 25 cents and proper identification tag information, written on the back of a Pet Milk product label). The Addressograph Company handled embossing and shipping. The FCDA National Office coordinated the tagging program.[159]

However, this program immediately drew criticism as commercialism from government officials. Representative Joe L. Evins of Tennessee denounced the program as "trying to capitalize on fear and hysteria and to get the support of a government agency for its own profit."[160] By March 20, the Pet Milk Co. answered the cries of outrage by dropping the label requirement and distributed the tags as a public service.[161]

When the Pet Milk Co. dropped the requirement of an accompanying label, Governor Peterson sent a telegram to the Vice President of the Company:

> Have just learned of your withdrawal of the provision that a product label must accompany orders for civil defense identification tags in your forthcoming campaign. Understand you have made this decision in order that there may be no element in campaign which could possibly be misinterpreted as commercializing a civil defense need. As you know, this agency has been convinced from the beginning that your company was undertaking this program primarily as a public service. Your action in thus removing the only detail, which could possibly occasion criticism,

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[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] "Dog Tags," *The Kane Republican,* March 12, 1955, https://www.newspapers.com.
[161] "Civil Defense Tags can be Ordered in Stores in April," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* March 20, 1955, https://www.newspapers.com.

> however unfair, is appreciated. We therefore are glad to cooperate with you.[162]

To further reduce claims of commercialism, the Pet Milk Co. agreed to stamp an FCDA inscription onto the tags.[163] The tags sold at a cost of 25 cents apiece or 20 cents if ordered in a group. Civil Defense officials repeatedly claimed that they had tried to put the program into effect for three years but had been blocked by lack of funds.[164] In Congress, representatives of the FCDA used this program as a chance to request more funding. William MacDougall, secretary of the western regional district of the National Association of County Officials, commented on the program stating:

> The FCDA believes in providing identification tags for Americans. Admittedly this is a good idea, but how, in this mightiest of all nations on the face of the globe, does the Civil Defense Administration provide for this identification, these dog tags? Not through the civil defense organizations or Federal, state, and local governments… The FCDA is even today undertaking this significant part of our civil defense program by accepting the sponsorship of a canned milk company. This true incident is typical of the problems which FCDA must face.[165]

The program became a way to raise funding for defense efforts in a time of military buildup under President Eisenhower. The program had to succeed, but a scared populace needed to be reassured.

Newspapers ran articles on the rising tensions of the Cold War and the destruction that would follow. One article read: "the Department of Civil Defense figures that every citizen is a participant in this war, that we should be tagged for his own and his survivor's

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[162] *Pet Milk Identification Tag Program*, FCDA, March 17, 1955.
[163] "Firm Drops Civil Defense Promotion," *Miami Daily News-Record,* March 29, 1955.
[164] "Identification Tags Will be Available," *Linton Daily Citizen,* April 1, 1955.
[165] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Operations and Policies of the Civil Defense Program: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Civil Defense,* 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, 638.

protection just as the soldiers in the other war were."[166] Therefore, the Civil Defense officials pushed the program in a less militaristic way by urging citizens to obtain and wear a tag for easy identification in case of disaster and such every-day occurrences as lost-children.[167] Another article reads: "Their purpose would be to provide quick identification which would be helpful in case of accident, sudden illness, or emergency, including air attacks."[168] The domestic use of the tags now came first in the justification with the possibility of attack as a second thought.

The new approach seemed to work as schools around the country reported success. In Brazosport, Texas, a record 6,000 students participated in the program.[169] Children across the country became interested in obtaining their own tag. However, in 1956 the Pet Milk Co. no longer sponsored the program so it fell back onto State and local governments. Children sent in forms for their very own tag to the various agencies around the country. In Tennessee, one child sent in his quarter stuck to a piece of cardboard with some bubblegum and a note that read, "sorry, no glew."[170]

In 1958, Eisenhower dissolved the FCDA and established the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, as he believed the United States should focus on its offensive capabilities rather and defensive. Support for the ID tag program dropped significantly as a result. Some state and local governments still worked to get their citizens to wear tags. In Jacksonville, Florida, the local PTA groups supported tags for children. Dorothy Fletcher, a Jacksonville 3rd grader in 1958, recalls receiving her tag in order for her to be

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[166] "'Dog Tags' for Everyone under Civil Defense Plan," *The Iola Register, April 8, 1955.*
[167] "Civil Defense 'Dog Tags' to be Sold," *The Kokomo Tribune,* March 28, 1955.
[168] "'Dog Tags' for Everyone", *The Iola Register*
[169] "Schools Make Record in ID Tag Program," *The Freeport Facts,* October 24, 1955.
[170] "Knickknacks, Amusing Info in Applications for Children," *The Tennessean,* January 1, 1956.

reunited with her family in Hastings, Florida if an evacuation ever occurred.[171] However, the evacuation drills ceased as the policy of Civil Defense turned towards fallout shelters. The few groups that still supported ID tags no longer mentioned attack in their presentations to the public. Instead, the military terms of "air attack" or "nuclear war" became replaced by more domestic terms, like in the Alton Evening Telegraph, which recommended tags in cases of separation due to "tornadoes, fire, flood, or national disaster."[172]

By 1960, the dog tags resembled nothing of their militaristic beginnings. News articles now spoke of tags being used to identify lost pets.[173] The identification tags for humans no longer took the role of identifying next-of-kin but instead listed any ailments a child may have such as diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, or any allergies.[174] Children and their parents no longer needed to fear being a casualty of nuclear war as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) became the doctrine for the remainder of the Cold War. From blood-typing, evacuation, and commercialization, the identification tag initiative evolved from a militaristic to a domestic purpose as the United States overcame the fears of the Cold War and moved towards an age free of looming nuclear war.

[171] Dorothy Fletcher, interview with author, September 16, 2016.
[172] "ID Discs are still Available," *Alton Evening Telegraph,* July 8, 1959.
[173] "Now That We Think of it, Dog Tag Has Drawbacks," *Arizona Republic,* August 2, 1961.
[174] "Students Get CD Tags for Blood Types," *The Sunday Herald,* March 31, 1963.

Chapter Three: Stars for Defense

In the 1950s and 1960s, the threat of nuclear war had seeped into every aspect of daily life in the United States. Civil Defense programs took many forms in order to reach all aspects of the civilian population. The dangers of a war with Russia needed to be stated so that every citizen would understand why they must be prepared and support their government. To accomplish the enormous task, various methods were employed to fully disseminate the information. One such method was through radio broadcasts titled "Stars for Defense." This program brought popular musicians and entertainers together to amuse and teach the American public about civil defense. Children and adults could tune in, dance, sing, or laugh while learning new ways to get involved in their local Civil Defense agency. By resembling a typical entertainment program, people began to familiarize themselves with it and tune in regularly for their weekly dose of defense information.

"Stars for Defense" was broadcast from October 7, 1956 until April 9, 1967 on various public radio stations across the country. The weekly, fifteen-minute show featured popular singers performing their hits, comedians, and famous public figures interspersed with civil defense information. Typically, a government official would impart civil defense advice between the songs. However, despite being on the air for so long, the successfulness of this program has garnered a negative view from contemporary historians. Arnold Ringstad, in his paper simply titled "Stars for Defense," claims:

> that the failure of "Stars for Defense" to sway the American public's opinions on civil defense can be traced to its failure to resolve the two major tensions at its core: that between the cheery music segments and the bleak civil defense

> messages, and that between the show's embedded commercialism and its ostensible service to the public interest.[175]

But I argue that the program did not fail. Instead it served its purpose, although sometimes disjunct in application. By looking at the methodology of creating a national radio program, the actual shows, and the actual application of the program, I will demonstrate that the program succeeded in its attempt to reinforce Civil Defense rhetoric to the public by enticing American youths to listening to their favorite artists while absorbing vital defense information.

Civil Defense officials began using radio shows as a means of information distribution beginning in 1951. An advisory bulletin from June 20, 1951 reveals that 2,900 radio stations in the country publicized Civil Defense. This publicity took two main forms, script kits and shows.[176] The very first script kit sent out to these radio stations was titled "This is Civil Defense" in 1951. This included several different "episodes" that covered various themes informing the public of the vital part Civil Defense plays in their everyday lives, as well as preparing them for survival against enemy attack. The series of 13 weekly, 15-minute transcribed shows related how civil defense workers serve in emergencies like natural disasters, train wrecks, or plane crashes. It also explained phases of Civil Defense work such as the training of women volunteers, the warden service, evacuation, fallout, and the preparation of shelters and reception areas.[177]

There were also smaller radio shows sent out in the early 1950s. In 1951, the Federal Civil Defense Administration circulated a radio script for a show titled "Firefighting for Householders." It corresponded with National Fire Prevention Week from October 7 to 13. In

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[175]Arnold Ringstad, *Stars for Defense,* (University of Minnesota, 2011), 4.
[176] Advisory Bulletin No. 49, Government Printing Office, June 20, 1951.
[177] "Civil Defense Goes on Air," *Beatrice Daily Sun,* December 11, 1955.

this script, the announcer first discusses the need to be prepared for an atomic attack, with a character named Mr. Civil Defense. Mr. Civil Defense then introduces a local firefighter to discuss the need for fire prevention. Throughout their dialogue, the firefighter speaks to fire safety in everyday life, while Mr. Civil Defense ensures that the reality of the atomic bomb causing fires is not overlooked.[178] In 1956, "Listen Carefully" aired, discussing the need for CONELRAD, a method of emergency broadcasting to the public, in the event of enemy attack during the Cold War.

The radio shows did not always have to come from the top tiers of the administration. Local directors could create their own shows based upon their ability and their resources. One such example comes from Middlesex County, New Jersey. The RADCHEM director, Dr. Maclean Babcock, created a radio show based on an attack on New York City. The RADCHEM branch of Civil Defense dealt with radiation and the impact of fallout after an attack. In his show, Dr. Babcock explains the details of fallout and radiation to his volunteers. He then teaches them about the equipment he uses, such as dosimeters, and how they detect radiation. The end of his show then goes on to say that "rad-chem monitoring is the first step that must be taken by your Civil Defense organization to protect the civilian population in time of atomic war."[179]

The Civil Defense messages were not completely exclusive to radio shows. Celebrities were also given scripts for 30-second messages to play before or after their song. In particular, Rosalind Paige recorded messages for M-G-M Records. Her first message says:

> This is Rosalind Paige taking a thirty second break before my next recording spins. Time enough to make the suggestion that Civil Defense is something you family ought to be doing something about. Civil Defense family action means training to save lives in a

[178] "Firefighting for Householders", Government Printing Office, 1951, in authors possession.
[179] "RADCHEM Radio Show", Dr. Maclean Babcock, in authors possession.

> natural disaster – to save lives in the event of enemy attack. You and your family are Civil Defense – only you can make it work. Now here's that M-G-M recording.[180]

The second message states:

> This is Rosalind Paige taking a thirty second break after that M-G-M recording of mine. Time enough to make the suggestion that you make Civil Defense a part of your family's daily routine. You should know that there are many things they can do to make each of our homes safer should natural disaster or an enemy attack ever strike. Preparing now for a Civil Defense emergency may be our greatest deterrent to war. You can help through Civil Defense.[181]

By 1961, the Office of Civil Defense produced seven radio programs that they distributed across the country. This included "Stars for Defense," "Entertainment USA," and "Startime USA," the latter two being the same message and material as "Stars for Defense," but aired by ABC and CBS, respectively. "Sounds to Alert Americans" comprised one-minute and 20-second spots that covered home shelters and home preparedness. "Stars International" covered home preparedness and home shelters. American Women in Radio and Television was a broadcast copy that went to 3000 women broadcasters and discussed home shelters. Finally, announcement kits of varying lengths went out to radio stations that covered shelters and home preparedness. However, with all these various programs, "Stars for Defense" stood out as being the most backed program with the most funding and longest broadcasting run.

The program "Stars for Defense" did not originate with the idea of Civil Defense in mind. Instead, the program originally ran in 1952 for the Office of Price Stabilization under the same name. For this program, 13 "nationally famous stars had volunteered their talent as a public service for a series of radio programs…sponsored by the agency as a part of its public-information program."[182] Many of the stars who volunteered their time later appeared on the

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[180] "Radio Copy", Federal Civil Defense Administration, in authors possession.
[181] Ibid.
[182] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Senate Record*, March 12, 1952, 2144.

Civil Defense version of the show. The programs lasted 15 minutes and were given to radio stations throughout the country that wished to broadcast them as a public service, meaning the government did not pay for air time.

The Office of Price Stabilization stated that their intention for the program was to "help inform the public about inflation and about price stabilization and its relation to the defense effort."[183] The programs were not meant to "bring about a new control act or to keep the agency in existence." The Office also stated that they understood "it would be most improper and illegal to use Federal funds in a propaganda campaign for or against any congressional legislation."[184] These records only aired during 1952 but they inspired the Civil Defense version, as it is identical.

To create the Civil Defense version of the program, the show was separated into stages of production. In a correspondence between Arnold Ringstad and Betty Johnson, one of the many singers who participated on the show, she recalled recording her spoken lines with Jay Jackson at Gotham Studios in Manhattan, New York City. Letters from Harold Kirn, director of the Civil Defense Radio-TV Division, confirms that Gotham Recording Studios housed the bulk of the recording process.[185] Another letter, dated August 7, 1963 from Harald Kirn to Fred Hertz at Gotham requested that the theme music for the show be re-recorded due to his preference for the "new Gotham sound."[186]

After recording her dialogue at Gotham Studios, Betty Johnson recalled going to a larger studio to record her songs with Ray Bloch and his orchestra. "Ray wrote the arrangements and

[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Harald Kirn to Diane Brooks, August 25, 1961.
[186] Harald Kirn to Fred Hertz, August 7, 1963.

chose the men in the orchestra. All top-notch musicians." She enjoyed doing "Stars for Defense" "because the arrangements were different from what [she] was recording for the record companies"[187] Another artist from the show, Jill Corey, recalled that rather than merely advancing her career, she felt that appearing on the show "was her privilege and duty as a citizen to contribute whatever she could to the series, which could help the nation in times of an emergency."[188]

As mentioned before, the show contained scripted conversations between the performer and Ray Bloch or Jay Jackson. Ringstad believes that "based on the difference in tone and style, the banter between Jay Jackson and the performers was likely written separately from the civil defense information."[189] This theory is confirmed by listening to some of the records that have a celebrity asking questions about Civil Defense. Some have Jay Jackson asking the official questions, and some simply play a recording from a speech given by the official. They are not consistent and show that the message is tailored around either the availability of the official or the message that is to be played.

The Civil Defense messages were approved ahead of time by the Public Affairs department of Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense and the Office of Civil Defense as seen in a memo from September 12, 1961.[190] It would seem that the conversation with the performers did not fall under as much scrutiny as they adjusted their language to fit with the official message of the record.

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[187] Betty Johnson, in discussion with Arnold Ringstad, January 5, 2011.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Arnold Ringstad, 11.
[190] Richard Rasmussen to Lee Schooler, September 12, 1961.

Once the recording of the program finished, various companies handled pressing, labeling, and distribution of the vinyl transcriptions. Columbia Records, Capitol Records, and Allied Record Manufacturing Company were all involved with "Stars for Defense."[191] In correspondence between Harald Kirn and these corporations he explained the specific details necessary to print the program. In a January 24, 1963 letter to Capitol Records, Kirn gives new specifications for record labels: "The labels, as you will notice, are 4-½" rather than the usual 4". The new copy will be straight-line, silver on red background. Print 400 of each side -- a total of 800 labels -- on Clean-Stik paper or equivalent pressure-sensitive stock. Please send me a sample label to OK before the quantity is printed."[192] Kirn also dictated other changes in the labels, such as the color. In a letter dated October 6, 1961, he complains to Columbia Records that he asked for the labels to be "silver print on red background" however they were printed "blue print on white."[193] These details seem insignificant since Kirn himself pointed out in a December 28, 1961 letter that Stars for Defense program discs, after the programs have been aired, "can be destroyed."[194] But, all aspects needed to fit the Civil Defense image that the show portrayed, even if the public would not see it.

Once pressed and labeled, the vinyl transcriptions were sent to radio stations across the country. Stations needed only to write in to the Office of Civil Defense and request to be placed on the list. Once on the list, stations would receive shipments in sets of six programs every six weeks. One record contained two weeks' worth of shows, one per side.[195] The records were purchased by the Office of Civil Defense on a quarterly basis, in 13-week segments and provided

[191] Ibid, 12.
[192] Ibid, 12.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Harald Kirn to Roy Hill, January 16, 1963.

free to stations. As of the autumn of 1961, production and distribution for each of these segments cost about $40,000.[196] This cost reveals that Civil Defense officials saw the program as a worthy investment to fund it for so long at a high cost. The cost had a purpose, however, since the show's content needed to be able to compete with other entertainment options.

After being distributed across the country, the shows played weekly in whatever timeslot the radio station provided. Listening to the shows reveals a host of patterns that change depending on the central theme of the show. Arnold Ringstad believes that these patterns show tensions at the show's core.

> The first being the sharply divided nature of the show, one part being a lighthearted musical entertainment program, and the other part being humorless, dry, information on how to survive nuclear war. The second tension, lesser but still significant, is between the commercial and promotional aspects of the show (the performer plugging their latest record or film) and the status of "Stars for Defense" as a public service program, played on time donated by radio stations for the public good.[197]

However, this tension is not necessarily a problem, but simply the nature of Civil Defense. It is simply not possible to entertain and teach about the real dangers of nuclear war. Civil Dense officials understood that there needed to be a divide in the way information was presented to the public. Lighthearted entertainment drew in the public's attention then the dry information was given to them in a short discussion before more entertainment eased their fears away from the idea of nuclear annihilation.

The show format changed very little during its run from 1956 to 1967. Because it remained so consistent, a breakdown of a typical episode will be useful to the understand the

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[196] Richard Rasmussen to Lee Schooler, September 12, 1961.
[197] Arnold Ringstad, 3.

program. Each episode begins with a voiceover in which that week's star introduces themselves and explains that fifteen minutes of music and vital civil defense advice will follow. The introduction concludes with "So stand by, America, here's your Stars for Defense." The theme music then begins to play an instrumental version of "The Civil Defense March (Heads Up America)," written in 1957 by Sammy Cahn and Paul Weston. Unfortunately, there is no information on what played for the introduction of the records in 1956. These early records are very scarce and not archivally available.

Announcer Jay Jackson then formally announces the show as the theme music continues to play, introducing himself, Ray Bloch and his Orchestra, and the star. He then goes on to say that the show is presented by the station as a public service, in cooperation with Civil Defense. Jackson tells the audience which authority figure will stop by later in the program to share official advice on whatever program Civil Defense is promoting. Finally, he turns to the star, who is in the studio with him, to begin the music portion of the program. [198]

After a few moments of in-studio banter, the star performs their first song. Following the song is another quick bit of conversation between Jackson and the star, leading into their second performance. When the song is over, Jackson introduces the civil defense expert for that week, who speaks for a minute or two about a specific Civil Defense topic. Jackson then makes a quick transition to another song, typically played by Ray Bloch and his Orchestra. Then, the star will usually sing one more of their songs, concluding the music segment of the show.[199]

Immediately following the last song, the instrumental theme music kicks in again, and Jay Jackson re-states the public service nature of the show and thanks the week's star.

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[198] Ringstad,9.
[199] Ibid.

Occasionally, the star will speak once more, reinforcing the Civil Defense messages stated earlier in the show. Finally, Jackson signs off and invites the listener to "join us next week, for some more good music by Ray Bloch and his Orchestra, and another famous star, on Stars for Defense."[200]

Arnold Ringstad explains that the show's dialogue features recurring elements and themes that seem to be indicative of the show's rhetorical stance.[201] These include a reinforcement by the performer of the program's prestige, the positioning of Civil Defense as an "American tradition," promotion of the performer's latest projects, and the use of humor during the music portion of the show.[202]

Many of the singers on "Stars for Defense," when speaking to host Jay Jackson in the beginning of the show, make reference to the fact that the program is prestigious. In one of her episodes, Jill Corey explains that "I've always been a steady Stars for Defense listener. And a visit to the show is more than just fun. It's an honor." Similarly, Georgia Gibb notes that "Stars for Defense is my idea of a really important program." Johnny Nash goes even further, painting the show as a cultural institution of note: "You know, a visit to Stars for Defense is quite an honor for a young performer. And, an invitation to return kind of makes a fellow feel he's... well, he's made it."[203] On one record, Helen Forrest states that "As I travel around the country, I have heard Stars for Defense quite often. The messages are really important, and the music is always tops."[204]

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[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid, 15.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Johnny Mathis, "Program No. 202," Stars for Defense, Office of Civil & Defense Mobilization, August 14, 1960.
[204] Helen Forrest, "Program No. 197," Stars for Defense, Office of Civil & Defense Mobilization, July 10, 1960.

Occasionally, at the end of the show, the week's star would chime in on the Civil Defense topic mentioned in that program. Ringstad noticed that Johnny Nash and Jill Corey both directly address the listeners as "friends" while imploring them to follow the civil defense advice. Evelyn Knight and Georgia Gibb encourage listeners to enroll in first aid courses and write for home shelter information. Jaye P. Morgan directly endorses the message on her episode when she says, "Friends, I think these words from the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization are well-chosen."[205] Helen Forrest ends her program with a reminder to stop by the local Civil Defense office to pick up the latest information on home preparedness.[206]

In several of the episodes, mention is made of repeat appearances on the show. Some celebrities performed on the show once, while others performed multiple times. Obviously, the long run of the show would necessitate repeat guests. Ringstad noticed that this is put into the rhetoric on at least one occasion. When Jay Jackson welcomes Johnny Nash back for a return visit, he says "It's good to have you with us once again... your career has taken quite a stride forward since that last visit. And the way things are going, I expect we'll be enjoying your presence on Stars for Defense many times in the years to come."[207] Thus, Jackson implies that the show, and consequently Civil Defense, is a long-term prospect. This rhetoric spreads into many episodes to provide a reassurance of the Civil Defense activities.

In one of the broadcasts from the week of Christmas, the need for defense is repeated with a special emphasis on the constant awareness demanded by the nuclear age. "But during Christmas, as throughout each day of the year, Civil Defense preparedness remains a vital part of

[205] Ringstad, 16.
[206] Helen Forrest.
[207] Ringstad, 16.

our lives."[208] Even during the happy, entertaining portions of the show, the ever-present danger remains a theme in the program.

With this, Ringstad sees a problem in the radio program promoting the performers, because it is supposed to be a "public service."[209] It is often done broadly, as when Jay Jackson introduces a performer as "star of nightclubs, recordings, radio, and TV, the very charming Miss Jill Corey."[210] Sometimes it is emphasized, such as when Jay Jackson explains to the listeners that "a short while back, at New York's famous Waldorf Astoria, musical history was made and attendance records were broken by Dick Haymes and Fran Jeffries."[211] Sometimes he promotes upcoming movie starring Johnny Nash, or remarks with Evelyn Knight "Say, I know you've come out with a brand new record since we saw you last."[212] Ringstad claims that when the program brings commercial considerations to the forefront, the show resembles a typical music entertainment program, causing the sharp transitions to civil defense information more stark.[213] However, this is a redeeming factor of the show, by resembling a typical entertainment program, people began to familiarize themselves with it and tune in regularly. This then increases the group that receives the Civil Defense information.

Furthermore, in each show, the producers attempt to bolster the credibility of "Stars for Defense" by presenting Civil Defense as an "American tradition." In one episode with Jill Corey, his closing speech begins with "For the past fifteen minutes, you've been listening to Stars for Defense, a transcribed program dedicated to the American tradition, Civil Defense..." and ends

[208] The Merrill Staton Voices, "Program No. 273," Stars for Defense, Office of Civil Defense, December 24, 1961.
[209] Ringstad, 17.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.

with "Civil defense starts with you. It's an American tradition."[214] This is a common tactic used by Civil Defense officials when appealing to the nation's patriotism, called "conventionalization" by Guy Oakes in his book, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture.*[215] This comparison of atomic-age realities with more familiar dangers, or traditions, is used to show that Civil Defense is nothing new, but rather an extension of the American way of life.

Finally, the Civil Defense messages of "Stars for Defense" are largely presented by various figures within the Civil Defense administration, while some are just endorsed by the featured celebrity. Leo A Hoegh, Director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, is one of the most common speakers. He speaks on various topics, such as shelter from fallout, evacuation, Civil Defense for farmers, first aid, and fallout patterns. A memo, dated September 7, 1961, shows the desired breakdown for the show, "Approx. 50 percent home shelter -- other 50 percent on general state of preparedness."[216] This information, as mentioned earlier, is sometimes specifically recorded for the show or recorded elsewhere and simply placed into the program. For the most part, as a transition, Jay Jackson poses simple, factual queries, such as "Just what can radioactive fallout do to us?"[217]

Arnold Ringstad believes that the key tension in "Stars for Defense*"* between the lighthearted music show and sober Civil Defense information shows a failure to produce both a highly entertaining program and a source of critical advice on nuclear war. He states that these disparate goals resulted in a show which keeps those elements at a distance from each other. He

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[214] Ibid, 18.
[215] Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War* Culture, (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 52.
[216] Dorothy Koester to Richard Rasmussen, September 7, 1961.
[217] Johnny Mathis, "Program No. 202," Stars for Defense, Office of Civil & Defense Mobilization, August 14, 1960.

continues that the tensions of "Stars for Defense" speak to another dilemma for the Civil Defense program as a whole. The American people opted for the lighthearted entertainment over the apocalyptic warnings of nuclear war causing Civil Defense to never fully catch on with the public.[218] However, this is not the case. Civil Defense did not fail, it served its purpose to prepare the public for a nuclear war. So too, did Stars for Defense succeed at its goal to inform the public. This is easily demonstrated by looking at the episode's application.

The show reached millions of Americans through radio stations across the country. By 1963, "2600 of the country's 3600 stations" carried the program.[219] The program played on the stations for free, and the stations determined when to play it. Some stations played it only once a week, some, as in a memo dated April 15, 1963, opted to play several programs a week.[220] One memo arguing for the continuation of Stars for Defense explained that the show, along with "Entertainment USA" and "Startime USA," resulted in donated time valued at $4-½ million annually.[221] For scale, that represents a savings of over twenty-five times the annual cost of producing "Stars for Defense."[222] Therefore, the show represented a gain for the government and for radio stations as they could disseminate Civil Defense messages relatively cheaply and secure a listener base.

The program's success shows in Betty Johnson's correspondence with Arnold Ringstad as she mentions: "It was a popular program and all radio stations were required to play them. I am sure it added an interest to my singing career."[223] The show also received attention overseas

[218] Ringstad, 25.
[219] Harald Kirn to Deputy Director, October 5, 1963.
[220] Harald Kirn to Claude Abbott, April 15, 1963.
[221] Richard Rasmussen to Lee Schooler, September 12, 1961.
[222] Ringstad, 13.
[223] Betty Johnson, in discussion with Arnold Ringstad, January 5, 2011.

to the troops serving in Spain. On November 3, 1961, the U.S. Air Force Overseas Network requested to play the program. However, Harald Kirn writes that "Stars for Defense, besides being an effective vehicle for Civil Defense information, is also considered a successful and entertaining series. (Assuming that the base broadcasts also reach the public) I question the advisability, however, of programming civil defense information not applicable outside the United States." He suggests that "the programs be taped and edited by your staff to cut out approximately 1 ½ minutes of civil defense material," to play only the entertainment portion.[224]

On December 30, 1963, Harald Kirn responded to an employee suggestion that "Stars for Defense" be played in the center court of the Pentagon. Kirn explained that, although the shows "are a combination of good musical entertainment and Civil Defense information," the reverberation in the courtyard would make the message inaudible. He also remarks that "There is also a suggestion of the 'big brother' booming out a message on Civil Defense."[225] Ringstad states that this implies that the messages only become propagandistic when played out loud in public, but not when played over the radio.[226] However, the show is just governmental information for the public. Kirn is simply making a joke, it would be redundant to play a government message for those in the Pentagon that released of the information.

The methodology of creating a national radio program, the actual shows, and the actual application of the program, show that the program succeeded in its intended goal. The creation of each program demonstrates the commitment the Civil Defense agency had in making an entertaining show. New celebrities, new scripts, and fresh jokes and banter each week kept Stars for Defense lively and attractive to viewers during a time of increased competition from

[224] Harald Kirn to AFRS Zaragoza, November 3, 1961.
[225] Harald Kirn to Frances Scott, December 30, 1963.
[226] Ringstad, 14.

television. The attention to detail, down to the label, show the constant standard of the show. The shows themselves bring a new approach to each topic allowing the distribution of civil defense rhetoric in a manner that is friendly and approachable.

As mentioned before, Johnny Nash and Jill Corey both directly address the listeners as "friends." This gives the audience reassurance and they are more open to receiving the information given to them. This corresponds with psychologist Ernest Dichter's motivational research theory: "When the consumer feels that the advertiser speaks to him as a friend … the consumer will relax and tend to accept the recommendation."[227] The programs provide an easy template to distribute sensitive information that could otherwise encounter resistance. Discussion about nuclear war and the horrific impact it would have are much easier to absorb if you are enjoying the experience, especially for children and teenagers. If they did enjoy the experience, they could get their parents to also listen in every week and learn the civil defense information.

In conclusion, the widespread popularity of the program showcases a success in its main objective. Civil Defense found a medium that could successfully distribute sensitive information to the American public while providing an enjoyable experience. Its high cost and attention to details made the show's content able to compete with other entertainment options. The program's eleven years on the air show that its popularity remained high through the height of the Cold War and allowed millions of Americans to participate in Civil Defense.

[227] Dichter, Ernest (1966), "How Word-of-Mouth Advertising Works," Harvard Business Review, 44 (November/December), 147–66.

Chapter Four: Toys and Games

Through World War II and the Cold War, Civil Defense officials constantly looked for efficient means to reach children. They found toys and games to be very effective in reaching children without boring them with facts on the war. Since children enjoyed the toys and found excitement in receiving a new one, this medium allowed for an easy and accessible means of steering public opinion toward supporting civil defense. The format of toys and games gave children the ability to "defend" the home front through playing. This, in turn, pushed parents to recognize Civil Defense in another aspect of their lives as their children played and pretended that an enemy was invading the country in their own living room. The toys themselves follow the trend in popularity of civil defense from a popular beginning to a decline in sales and public support.

During World War II, the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) began instituting blackouts at night on the coasts of the United States. To move goods to Europe, American ships would travel at night to avoid detection by German U-boats. The Germans learned that if their submarines traveled near the American cities, the silhouette of a ship could be made out when they moved in front of the bright lights. To counter this, blackouts required all lights to be turned off at night so that the Germans could not see any American ships. During these, all windows were shuttered or covered with thick blackout curtains. All lights then had to be turned off with very little light allowed inside. Outside, all streetlights were also turned off and cars had special blackout head- and tail-lights to keep light to a minimum. To go outside during the night, people needed to wear reflective clothing or articles to avoid any incident with the dim lights of an automobile. Since little can be done in total darkness, government officials looked for methods that would keep people entertained while still supporting the blackouts.

The Lone Ranger had his adventures broadcast through radios across the county beginning in 1933. The Ranger, his horse Silver, and companion Tonto captivated audience with their travels through the American West fighting lawlessness. The show gained a loyal following of children and adults that made up at least half the audience. It became so popular that the Mutual Broadcasting System picked it up on May 2, 1942.[228] This popularity led to many collaborations with other brands and organizations. In 1941, the Lone Ranger teamed with Kix cereal to give out Lone Ranger "blackout" safety belts. These belts could be obtained for 10 cents and 1 Kix package top.[229] The belt was made of reflective material, making it safer for children outside during a blackout.

The partnership between the Lone Ranger, Kix, and Civilian Defense continued in 1942 with the *Lone Ranger Blackout Kit*. Children could tune in to the Lone Ranger's radio show for details on how to receive their kit.[230] They could also buy special Kix packages that had Air Raid Precautions on the back. Once the children obtained their kit, they received several items to wear and to use to show everyone their involvement in the Lone Ranger Victory Corps. The envelope contained a small pin showing the Lone Ranger and the 'V' for victory to show membership in the corps. As a blackout kit it also contained items made from a "mystery material" that glows in the dark. This includes a headband that reads "Lone Ranger Volunteers" and a similarly designed sticker that also glows in the dark. It also contained the pledge of allegiance that would also glow and could "be pinned on the wall above your bed." Finally, it contained several pieces of the glow in the dark material and instructions as to how to use it.

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[228] John Dunning, *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio*, (Oxford University Press, 1998), 404.
[229] "Lone Ranger 'Blackout' Safety Belt," *The Post-Crescent*, November 13, 1941.
[230] "The Lone Ranger Blackout Kit,' *The Akron Beacon Journal*, September 16, 1942.

The instructions state that the kit will "not only afford you endless hours of fun and instructive entertainment but can prove helpful when practice or real air raids come." The booklet further instructs children to cut out patriotic insignia and to show their loyalty by wearing or hanging them in the window. Children could also use the glow in the dark material in their family's air raid room or shelter. They should "suggest that all important items in the room be marked with blackout material…" One poignant suggestion points out the need to use the blackout material for games since "games played in the dark will not only lessen among the younger children any fear of the dark but will help pass the time away."[231] Once a child ran out of material, they could simply order more from Kix.

Following the *Lone Ranger Blackout Kit*, more companies began to create their own kits. The Vernon Company created the *Blackout Kit* in 1942. Their kit contained "hundreds of uses" for the "wonder material" that could glow in the dark. This kit could be used for fun and for utility by placing the material on tools or items needed in a blackout. The box contained several rolls amounting to 400 square feet of the material with a booklet that contained designs and shapes that could be traced and cutout.[232] This kit contained designs for all the Civilian Defense insignias to be worn on a cap or uniform. The advertisements claimed that the kit would be practical in blackouts and great for games at a party. After the Vernon Company, others made similar kits, such as the *Junior Blackout Kit* and the *Deluxe Blackout Kit*.[233] All of these kits were stocked in department stores across the country and were advertised heavily during the Christmas season from 1942-1943.

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[231] *Volunteers Luminous Blackout Kit Official Instructions*, Kix, November 1942.
[232] "Blackout Kit," *The Decatur Daily Review*, November 22, 1942.
[233] "Don't Miss These Big Values," *Abilene Reporter-News*, December 15, 1943.

The kits became a success as parents searched for toys that could make blackouts easier and more entertaining for their children. The idea of a kit inspired other avenues of for toy companies. The same year, 1942, the country saw a rise in the popularity of Junior Air Raid Warden kits. These kits were tied to Civilian Defense to varying degrees as the companies all took different approaches to their toys. The first variation was the *Junior Air Raid Warden Raincoat Set*. The olive drab raincoat has a simple Junior Air Raid Warden emblem on the sleeve and sold out in some stores.[234] In March 1942, the Hassenfield Bros, now known as Hasbro, released the first *Junior Air Raid Warden Kit*. It was advertised with the following;

> Here's a sensational new toy that will provide long hours of instructive fun for boys and girls! All children have to take a real part in civilian defense…and playing with this set will help them understand their responsibilities, make them quick to respond and cooperate in the event of actual air raids and blackouts![235]

The kit contained a badge, whistle, cardboard helmet, cardboard gas mask, arm band, first-aid kit, and notebook.[236] The instructions in the kit tell the children that since they are now Junior Air Raid Wardens they need to "get on the job." They must meet all the people in their house, fill in the forms provided in reference to these people, and give them instructions to follow in a blackout or air raid.[237] The set was also advertised as an "educational toy and provides the child with excellent background training in case of an emergency."[238]

After the first kit, several others became available on the market. They all follow the basic items found in the Hassenfeld kit. Boys-D-Lite produced a kit with a brimmed fabric cap, satchel, felt patch, toy gas mask, whistle, and armband. Another kit, called *Air Raid Warden*

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[234] "Junior Air Raid Warden Raincoat Set," *The Indianapolis News*, March 19, 1942.
[235] "First at A&S in the U.S.A.," *Daily News,* March 22, 1942.
[236] "Be the First in Your District," *The Dayton Herald*, April 17, 1942.
[237] *Junior Air Raid Warden Kit*, Hassenfeld Bros., Inc, 1942.
[238] "Junior Air Raid Warden Kit," *The Indianapolis Star,* August 14, 1942.

Junior contained a helmet, gas mask, whistle, armband, and many documents like street plans, building forms, and residence forms to report damage from bombings or gas attacks. There were also bandages and gauze pads for first aid.

To go along with these sets, the later part of 1942 saw new coats and helmets come to the consumer market. The outfit began to "take the country by storm! It's new, it's practical!"[239] The insignia on the coat glowed in the dark. The blackout searchlight and whistle worked "just like those used by grownups.[240] The accompanying booklet had official instructions for an emergency. Finally, the fabric was durable and rain resistant. The entire ensemble made for an irresistible toy and in fact they made their way onto some children's letters to Santa in December 1942. One young girl named Marilyn Cash asked for a blackout kit while a boy named Buck Giles asked for a junior air raid warden kit.[241]

At the end of 1942, the kits began to fade in popularity and board games rose to dominance in toy advertisements. This first board game to find popularity in the 1942 Christmas season was created by Toy Creations Inc. called *Spot-a-Plane*. It even garnered the tag "Give Spot-A-Plane, Christmas is in the air."[242] It was promoted as "an exciting game that combines skill and chance. The whole family will get in on it to bring down enemy planes and win citations."[243] The game used the idea of the aircraft warning service and included a chart with forty-eight allied and enemy planes in silhouette with their correct names. Paired with this chart the game attempted to teach "all citizens, together with the uniformed men, to become familiar

[239] "Junior Air Raid Warden," *The Sheboygan Press*, September 24, 1942.
[240] Ibid.
[241] "Letters to Santa Claus," *The Gaffney Ledger*, December 22, 1942.
[242] "Cited for Fun," *The Baltimore Sun*, December 16, 1942.
[243] Ibid.

with the identification of every type of aircraft, both friendly and hostile."[244] This goal drew the attention and approval of the U.S. Army and the Navy Air Forces, further promoting the types of activities the civilian population should familiarize themselves with in order to engage it.

Despite the decline in blackout and air raid warden kits, in 1943 the Leo Hart Co., Inc., created the official *Junior Aircraft Warning Service Kit*. It contained thirty-two photos of military planes, an airplane identification chart, altitude height finder, flight direction indicator, observer's handbook and report book, armband, membership card, and observation post sign.[245] The objective of the kit was to have children go outside and set up their own observation post giving them "the opportunity of gaining practical experience so that when [they] reach the proper age, [they] will be qualified to become a full-fledged member of the regular Aircraft Warning Service."[246] The children play by doing exactly as the adults are doing in an official capacity. With use of the kit and the Spot-a-Plane game, a child could now be equally skilled in airplane identification as any adult working for Civilian Defense.

The same year, the Milton Bradley Co. created games specifically using Civilian Defense themes and information. Their game *Air Raid Warden* had two to four players play as wardens and reflected the activities of actual air raid wardens. Players roll the dice and move their Wardens around the board. Per their catalogue:

> "It represents the air raid wardens' homes and their activities in getting people in their sections to safety when sirens start wailing. Thrilling experiences, running into impassable bombed areas, unexploded bombs, add to the game's excitement until the "all clear" sounds and the wardens get back to their stations… The playing board shows a section of city or town which might be anybody's home

[244] *Spot-a-Plane Game Instructions*, (NY: Toy Creations, Inc., 1942), cover.
[245] *Junior Aircraft Warning Service*, (NY: Leo Hart Co., Inc., 1943), cover.
[246] Ibid, 1.

> neighborhood, with familiar types of homes and stores and public places. Each player has four "wardens" to get to the scenes of emergencies and home again."[247]

The cards used in the game represent various aspects and roles of civilian defense. The instruction on the cards are paired with the corresponding insignia of the Office of Civilian Defense branch. For instance, the "Return One Warden to Starting Point" is paired with the rescue squad's insignia.

Milton Bradley Co. also released their game *Blackout* in 1943. The cover features an American city under attack with enemy planes avoiding antiaircraft fire. This exciting idea does not correlate into this board game, however. The objective of this game is more suited for the work of an actual air raid warden. The board is divided into four sections of a brightly lit metropolis. To win the game a player must be the first to blackout their section of the city by covering its squares with black cardboard chips.[248] This game takes the monotonous and sometimes annoying job of ensuring that all your neighbors turn off their lights into a fun activity that "holds high tension from start to finish of play."[249]

As the war continued, the toys specifically related to Civilian Defense became less frequent. The final example from World War II is a paper doll made by the Samuel Lowe Company in 1944.[250] The doll is from a set of eight books featuring *Victory Girls in Uniform* with wardrobe and uniform cutouts. Each booklet contained two girls and four outfits to be cutout and placed onto the characters. One of the girls in an Air Raid Warden named Sara and she has two uniforms. This is the first toy specifically made for young girls that show women in Civilian Defense roles during World War II.

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[247] *The Games of Milton Bradley Co. for the Year 1943*, (Springfield, MA: Milton Bradley Co., 1943), 5.
[248] Ibid, 7.
[249] Ibid.
[250] "Ayres Toyland," *The Indianapolis News*, October 24, 1944.

After the war and the dissolution of the Office of Civilian Defense, the United States government had a large amount of obsolete surplus civil defense equipment including noncombatant gas masks and helmets. Almost 1 million gas masks were offered to law enforcement agencies while 275 million were purchased by wholesalers to sell as toys.[251] The masks given to police departments across the country proved to be unsuccessful in protecting the officers from tear gas during a standoff.[252] Since the masks could not afford protection from modern gases in peacetime, police departments did not rush to acquire the surplus.

The masks sold as toys, however, became very popular. The advertisement claimed that "every 'red blooded' boy will want one."[253] The big shatter-proof goggles and air intake-exhaust valves make the mask fun and useful too. One advertisement warns children not to be surprised if their Dad borrows the mask to clean out the furnace or sands the floor.[254] The canvas bag that holds the mask can also have practical uses as a lunch box or book bag.

Children flocked to the stores to buy the new toys. To appeal to parents, some advertisements pushed mothers to use the chemical filler in the mask to remove food odors in the refrigerator while allowing the kids to play with the mask. The popularity was so great that the first offering of 2.5 million masks sold out almost as quickly as the hit the stores.[255] Along with the masks, the helmets began to be sold at ten cents each.[256] In October 1946, children in Des Moines, Iowa found that together, the mask and helmet made wonderful Halloween costumes. The news article summed up the strange sight with "once, the expressions of young faces peering

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[251] "1,000,000 Gas Masks Offered U.S. Police," *The Atlanta Constitution*, March 24, 1946.
[252] "Wife Slayer Kills Self After Battles," *The Press Democrat*, February 12, 1946.
[253] Stark's, "Greatest Toy Sensation in Years," Advertisement. *Playthings*, February, 1946, 180.
[254] "Boys Look! A New Toy!" *Angola Herald*, March 15, 1946.
[255] "Useful Gas Masks Cheap," *Detroit Free Press*, April 6, 1946.
[256] "Children Only War Assets Buyers," *The Herald-News*, July 24, 1946.

out from gas masks like these might have been ones of terror. Now the masks and helmets, originally the property of the Des Moines office of civilian defense, provide fun for youngsters…"[257] Despite the fun activities children partook in with the mask and ignoring the fact that World War II saw many games related to Civilian Defense, controversy quickly rose against the gas mask toys.

The Science Service published an article on April 4, 1946 that argued against allowing children to play with the toys. They argued that while the U.S. Government was busy demilitarizing German and Japanese youth, they have lost sight of teaching American children about a peaceful living. They argued that by playing with a gas mask manufactured for the Office of Civilian Defense the children are learning to fear an imaginary enemy that would attack with poison gas. They also learn that war is imminent and gas masks may protect them from atomic missiles, rockets, and biological warfare.[258] Their argument relies on the fear that children will not learn correct defensive techniques for the atomic age, but as the 1950s brought the Federal Civil Defense Administration, new toys were made to teach a new generation.

The birth of the atomic age brought new technology that spawned new toys. Geiger counters became common with uranium mining in the late 1940s and Civil Defense agencies acquired them for use in all drills to detect radiation. In 1955, Bell Products released their *Deluxe Atomic Geiger Counter.* The toy was advertised for young uranium prospectors. The battery powered toy won acclaim at the National Toy Show in 1955.[259] It could would make noise when in contact with ferrous metals (iron and alloys with iron) and the electro-magnetic earphone would buzz while the needle swung on the dial as an intensity meter. The kit included stock

[257] "Gas Masks Find Use Here," *Des Moines Tribune*, October 29, 1946.
[258] "Education for Peace?" *The Gazette and Daily*, April 4, 1946.
[259] "Toy of the Week," *The Racine Journal-Times Sunday Bulletin*, September 4, 1955.

certificates, prospectus mining license, claim stake, and registration card.[260] The toy was the same yellow color as the official Civil Defense Geiger counters and worked in the same way. Like the toys in World War II, children could now learn how to operate the tools they need when they grow up and joined Civil Defense.

In 1956, the Product Miniature Company launched their *Civil Defense Radar Center*. The toy comes with a Civil Defense center, a radar set, a map to locate planes, a screen to detect aircraft, and an identification chart of planes.[261] Advertisements boasted there is "fascinating action every minute – action that makes sense to 8- to 14-year-old-children who are vitally interested in science-fiction and Civil Defense. All the exciting, necessary operations and information are here – to spot planes as they zoom across the lighted scope, to alert cities by alarm and telegraph message, and to plot defense and attack."[262]

Children play with the toy by pressing the scope lever to light up the Radarscope. The antenna on top then begins to rotate "sweeping the sky in all directions."[263] If the airplane that appears when turning a red knob on the front is friendly, the child must choose an airport and type Morse code on the telegraph key in order to land the plane safely. If the plane that appears is a foe, the children sounds the alarm switch to sound a warning and marks nearby airports to be on alert. It can even be played by two children at once, with one being the Operator that gives instruction while the other is an Assistant Operator that follows through.[264] This teaching of

[260] Ibid.
[261] "Like a Real Radar Center," *The Capital Times,* November 22, 1956.
[262] Product Miniature Company, Inc., "Motor Driven Electronic Toy!" Advertisement, *Toys and Novelties*, May, 1956, 17.
[263] *Radar Center Operator's Handbook*, (Milwaukee: Product Miniature Company, Inc., 1956), 1.
[264] Ibid, 2.

Morse code and the basics of radar detection further prepare children for roles in Civil Defense and shows parents the jobs that can be done to help the defense effort.

Unfortunately, the Radar Center became an analogy to the popularity of Civil Defense. An article titled "No Demand for CD" ran in the Montgomery Advertiser in July 1956 and slammed Macy's in New York for carrying the toy. The article claimed that due to the public indifference to the 36-hour Civil Defense alert undertaken that month, they predicted an unenthusiastic response to the toy. "If the kiddies go for it, it will only be because of its exaggerated gadgetry and not, as in the case of the electric train, a consumer demand passed from father to son." To the authors of the article, the "inescapable conclusion to be drawn from reports of citizen apathy across the country is that the average American has simply closed his mind to the possibility of atomic attack."[265]

This negative reaction towards Civil Defense toys echoes the overall decline in public opinion and participation in the late 1950s because of the stagnant state of the Cold War. Without any immediate threats or major public programs, there was no consumer base for toys based on an organization they deemed unnecessary. However, the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 changed public opinion on Civil Defense. The country rushed to prepare for a nuclear war that they had stopped caring about. President John F. Kennedy announced the fallout shelter program and the need for families to be prepared. The Office of Civil Defense published more booklets on home shelters and instructions on how to cope with a nuclear attack. As civil defense and fallout shelters came back into the public eye, companies once again took advantage of the situation to market their toys.

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[265] "No Demand for CD,' *The Montgomery Advertiser*, July 24, 1956.

The Louis Marx and Company produced dollhouses from the 1920s into the 1970s. These metal lithographed dollhouses came with plastic furniture to simulate the average home.[266] At the end of 1962, they briefly sold a model of a colonial metal house boasting a "conversation piece design [that] has its own fallout shelter!"[267] The fallout shelter has first aid supplies, an air ventilator, food rations, a radio, fire extinguisher, and other essential items needed for any home shelter. The furniture included with the house had seats, table, and sink for the shelter. Any young girl could now play as if she had her own fallout shelter. This also could have led to asking her parents why they did not have a shelter like her dollhouse. Fortunately for parents, that model was not produced very long, but with its disappearance from shelves, so too did the toys related to Civil Defense.

Through both World War II and the Cold War, these Civil Defense toys and games played an important role in reaching children with the skills and knowledge they needed to be involved in and teach their parents about civil defense. The enjoyment gained from playing with these various items allowed for an easy and accessible means of turning public opinion towards supporting Civil Defense. The new format of toys and games gave children the ability to "defend" their home through playing. This, in turn, pushed parents to recognize Civil Defense in another aspect of their lives as their children played and taught them the information learned from the toys and games. Unfortunately, the toys themselves followed the trend in popularity of civil defense from a popular beginning to a decline in sales and public support until the public forgot about these interesting and historic pieces of entertainment.

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[266] Constance Eileen King, *Encyclopedia of Toys*, (Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1986), 188.
[267] Louis Marx and Company, "Colonial Metal House has Fallout Shelter," Advertisement. *Sears*, Christmas 1962, 384.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Civil Defense agencies have attempted to gain public support in order to protect the country from a nuclear war. Through the 1950s, the agencies adapted many new programs in order to reach as many people in the public as possible. In order to reach the adult population, they used established clever methods in which children could be both taught civil defense information while also retaining and sharing it with their parents. By reaching out to children, civil defense also added to their future ranks by creating fun experiences that trained the kids in official techniques and methodologies. The United States needed a way to calm the fears of children facing both conventional and nuclear war. By calming them, the parents benefitted by taking part and also learned about what they can do to help the civil defense efforts.

Tthe first major program that Civil Defense authorities initiated took a popular medium and used it to disseminate vital defense information. The characters in the comics books prepared for any attack on the Homefront and taught others how they could help. Edison Bell and his Junior Air Raid Wardens showed children how they and their parents could actively engage in Civilian Defense. Little Oscar showed the correct way to act during an air raid. Dagwood, Popeye, and the others from King Features Syndicate taught children and housewives the benefits in eating healthily, preparing meals, and planting victory gardens. The depiction of Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig as air raid wardens shows the public presence the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) had by 1943. But the dissolution of the OCD ended the program as the world moved into the atomic age.

The new threat of nuclear weapons brought new challenges and fears that needed to be calmed. Comics again became an easy method of releasing information to both children and

adults. Dagwood split the atom and explained the science behind nuclear power. Bert the Turtle taught the public how to protect themselves from an atomic blast. *If an A-Bomb Falls* and *The H-Bomb and You* taught the reality of a nation without a strong civil defense. Finally, Mr. Civil Defense found much less threatening way to convey the correct actions taken by civil defense officials in an emergency. By using comic books, children would read the material, show it to their parents, and help keep them interested in Civil Defense.

Identification tag programs attempted to calm both parents and children by removing some fears of separation. In World War II, the tags served the purpose to identify any lost children and gave parents a peace of mind if their child ever found themselves separated in an air raid. Once conventional air raids were replaced by nuclear weapons, the idea of tagging children again became a necessity. The first tags by the Amvets set up the system used by the Civil Defense agencies. Once government officials saw the value of the tags, supplying them to the children of major cities became a priority. Children found the tags to be wonderful items, but they often traded their tags or gave them to a significant other. This did not deter other state agencies from instituting identification tag programs in their jurisdictions. However, this proved to be a small contribution to the nation as not all states participated in supplying the tags. In 1955, when the Pet Milk Co. offered to aid with distribution of the tags, the entire country now had the opportunity to obtain tags for the entire family. Unfortunately, after only a year, that collaboration fell apart and the tags began to fade away. While they were in the public conscience the tags gave children the comfort in knowing they would be safe if lost and allowed parents to take part in Civil Defense by purchasing a tag of their own.

The Stars for Defense radio show brought popular musicians and entertainers together to entertain and teach the American public about Civil Defense. Children and teenagers could listen

to their favorite artist play several songs while also learning vital defense information. The endorsement of celebrities brought another level of authority to Civil Defense programs. Just like today, celebrities could shape public opinion by simply backing something. The fact that celebrities willingly backed civil defense messages as a public service showed that they believed in the information that was played in the middle of their sets. The long run of the show stands as a testament to its popularity and support given to the show by government officials. Children and adults could tune in, dance, sing, or laugh and learn new methods to get involved in their local Civil Defense agency.

Finally, various toys and games were created to capitalize on civil defense during World War II and the Cold War. The kits allowed children to dress up and act as air raid wardens, play in blackouts, and spot planes. As junior wardens, they were given the basic documents and information to teach their parents and neighbors about civil defense. The blackout kits brought entertainment and intrigue to a sometimes annoying or scary exercise. The aircraft warning service kit taught children all the necessary skills for a job in the actual warning service. By using these kits, children could play and learn enough information to rival the adults. The board games relate to the same three categories. *Air Raid Warden* taught children and adults the basic roles of wardens and the emblems of the other branches in the Office of Civilian Defense. *Blackout* made the task of turning out all the lights in an area a fun activity. *Spot-a-Plane* taught families the names and silhouettes of real airplanes, both ally and enemy. These games and kits taught children and adults the basics of civilian defense and allowed them an easy path into working in an official capacity.

Once the Cold War broke out, the toys adjusted to fit the new reality of nuclear energy and atomic war. The Deluxe Geiger counter taught children the basic method of using the tool. It

also taught them the basics of nuclear energy with information on uranium. It was even the same color as the official government model so any child could understand and show their parents the how Geiger counters work. The Civil Defense Radar Center taught many lessons to American children. By playing with this toy, children learned how radar centers operate, the shapes of various aircraft, and Morse code. This information would likely be relayed to parents who could see the role Civil Defense played in protecting the country from a Soviet attack. Finally, the Marx dollhouse showed the new reality after the Cuban Missile Crisis. A home with a fallout shelter should be the norm in order to protect your family. Children that played with this house could then bring to attention the lack of such a shelter in their own home. These toys provided not only entertainment, but also practical information and skills to train children and adults on how to be productive members of Civil Defense.

The primary objective of this thesis is to highlight the programs instituted by Civil Defense officials in order to appeal to children and teenagers. These young Americans took the information home and taught their parents in order to make them active members or at least supporters of civil defense efforts. These programs taught children through entertaining and creative methods so that it did not feel like a lecture in a classroom. The comics allowed students to visualize the roles of civil defense and why preparedness is important in time of war. The identification tags made children and adults feel secure knowing that important information was recorded and available in the case of an attack that could cause families to become separated. Stars for Defense brought music and comedy into the mix by pulling in listeners with their favorite celebrities. The celebrity endorsements of the various messages played during shows brought new authority and attention to vital defense information. Families learned about the latest civil defense news while listening to their favorite artists. Finally, the toys and games put

children in the literal shoes, and gas masks, of civil defense officials. Children learned basic skills and methods used by officials to protect the country. The kits and games taught children and adults in World War II about different aspects of Civilian Defense and how easy it was to be a part of the effort. During the Cold War, the Geiger counter, Radar Center, and fallout shelter dollhouse brought the new reality of nuclear war to the living rooms of American families. These programs found new and interesting methods to accomplish the goal of educating the adult population by keeping children actively engaged in learning about Civil Defense.

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