



Minnesota Goes to War: The Home Front During World War II

Dave Kenney

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Brainerd, 1941: The first people began arriving at the depot at about eleven-thirty p.m. The mercury in the thermometer read twenty below zero, and it was still dropping. . . . A few minutes before midnight, the men the crowd had come to see marched into view--eighty-two of them, all dressed in khakis, responding on cue to barked commands. . . . The conductor called "all aboard." The band struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner." The men fell in and marched into the passenger cars. As the crowd surged forward, the men inside the train raced to the windows. . . . Hands reached out and grabbed each other. Final kisses were stolen. The train pulled away, slowly gathering momentum, and disappeared into the night. For many in Company A, 194th Tank Battalion, the part-time National Guardsmen who had trained at Camp Ripley, that was their last look at Brainerd. Their fate and the lives of the people they left behind comprise only one of the stories in this compelling chronicle of Minnesota's war efforts during World War II. Minnesota Goes to War records the state's role in the most significant event of the twentieth century. By telling the poignant stories of those who stayed behind--in support of the men and women overseas--this book is a tribute to the sacrifices made by ordinary people in extraordinary times. With much original research including photographs, letters, and interviews with veterans and their families, author Dave Kenney chronicles the uniquely Minnesotan response to war, from the starvation study at the University of Minnesota to the human centrifuge project at Mayo; from the Minneapolis and St. Paul rival scrap drives to the use of German POW farmhands in northwestern Minnesota; from those who eagerly supported the war to those who protested our nation's involvement. These stories honor Minnesotans who faced the war with equal amounts of determination and dread, courage and fear in places as far away as the Pacific and Europe and as close as our own hometowns. "Minnesota Goes to War is a wonderfully rich, intelligently written, and singularly unique book." -- Joseph A. Amato, author of On Foot: A History of Walking and Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History



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