

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS ROAD TO VICTORY EXHIBITION

ARRANGED BY EDWARD STEICHEN AND CARL SANDBURG

The entire second floor of the Museum of Modern Art has been rebuilt for the exhibition Road to Victory: A Procession of Photographs of the Nation at War, which opens to the public Thursday, May 21. The exhibition has been assembled and directed by Lieutenant Commander Edward Steichen, U.S.N.R. A running text especially written by Carl Sandburg will express the theme in words and will carry the visitor on from sequence to sequence in a dramatic presentation of this country's mighty resources and the power of its people in their struggle toward victory.

The technical installation has been designed by Herbert Bayer. Although approximately 150 photographs have been used as the basic material, the exhibition is not one of photography in the ordinary sense. Huge, free-standing enlargements, many of them life size or over, are juxtaposed dramatically with one another or with the murals--one of them 12 feet x 40 feet--affixed to the walls.

Commander Steichen, although for more than a generation one of America's most famous photographers, has used none of his own pictures in the exhibition. Nearly ninety per cent of the photographs have been supplied by various departments and agencies of the United States Government, the largest number coming from the Farm Security Administration, the Army Signal Corps, and the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics. Others have come from the Department of the Interior, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, TVA, LIFE Magazine, The Associated Press, International News Service, Acme, and a few individual photographers.

Because it is impossible to give any adequate idea of the exhibition through individual photographs alone, the Museum will not publish a catalog simultaneously with the opening. As soon as possible thereafter, installation photographs will be taken to document the show and a catalog will be published using these photographs with the Sandburg text.

Entering the exhibition the visitor is faced by panels of buffalo and Indians. He then sees the first of the series of murals,

a striking view 12 feet by 16 feet of Bryce Canyon. On the panel above the buffalo is the first block of Sandburg text:

In the beginning was virgin land and America was promises -- and the buffalo by thousands pawed the Great Plains -- and the Red Man gave over to an endless tide of white men in endless numbers with a land hunger and no end to the land they wanted -- over the eastern seaboard through the Appalachians moved this human tide of pioneers and home-seekers -- out among the spreading arteries of the Mississippi waterway system -- out to the Rockies and beyond to the long sunsets of the west coast.

Then follow panels showing a sheep ranch, corn fields, a great field of cattle, wheat fields, farms, prairies, combines, hogs. The next sequence shows farm life from small farms to the big dairies where the cows are milked by electricity. And the Sandburg text:

The earth is alive. The land laughs. The people laugh. And the fat of the land is here.

Next, community life in small towns. Then a sequence devoted to the great American pastime of eating: commuter's breakfast, farm hands at the table, a picnic, workmen at lunch. Huge murals next show the immense Government flood control and power projects--Shasta Dam, Boulder Dam, TVA, Grand Coulee. And from Sandburg:

Power dams, generators, transmission, to water desert farms, to control floods, to bring light and power to homes and factories -- horses, billions of horses, hauling, pounding, boring, drilling, lifting -- electro-dynamic wild horses tamed to help man, locked in concrete, singing through overland wires, the live kilowatts go where man wants them for the day shift or the night gang.

Then the arsenal of war: copper, steel, lead mines; welders, riveters, battleship builders, munitions workers, makers of airplanes.

"The men behind the man behind the gun," they dig out ore from deep down in the dark, they shoot the oil wells, they chase the slag out of copper, steel-driving men they drill and twist deep rock, they hammer steel bars for rifle and cannon, they rivet the steel sheets and sew them tight with steel buttons to meet storms or torpedoes -- listen, they clank and boom the mighty song of steel -- the breath of their assembly lines is in miles of tanks -- their thumbprints are on bombers over five oceans.

Then suddenly a large picture of an America First meeting with excerpts from typical America First slogans:

"IT CAN'T HAPPEN TO US." "WE'VE GOT TWO OCEANS PROTECTING US." "THE UNITED STATES IS NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST DANGER OF INVASION."

The next thing the visitor sees is the most extraordinary photograph of the war--the explosion of the Destroyer Shaw's magazine during the attack on Pearl Harbor--an official U. S. Navy photograph. Standing on the floor in front of and below this picture of the tragic and treacherous event that aroused America is an enlarged photograph

of the Japanese Ambassador, Nomura, and the Japanese Peace Envoy, Kurusu, rocking with laughter. Opposite, looking grimly toward the Pearl Harbor picture, is an old Texas farmer saying, "War -- they asked for it -- now, by the living God, they'll get it."

American troops on a transport, part of the AEF bound for Ireland, followed by a series of dramatic Signal Corps photographs of various Army activities with the Sandburg text:

Country boys, big city lads, home town fellers,
they're in the army now -- behind a jeep instead
of a plow -- engineers bridging a river, chutists
in the sky, skirmishers on the land, troopers on
sea transports -- into sea fog and land smoke --
into the test of fire..... Trouble shooters,
millions stepping along now, millions more on the
way -- killers in khaki riding smoke wagons --
ready for long war or short -- trouble shooters in
the first round-the-world-war.

Then the air force: Army and Navy fighter and bomber formations
with a spectacular enlargement of the famous Navy picture of our
Marshall Island battle:

Smooth and terrible birds of death -- smooth they
fly, terrible their spit of flame, their hammering
cry, "Here's lead in your guts."

Loads of death, tons on tons of annihilation, out
of the sky and down down down on the enemies of
the free world -- killers with wings -- dropping
polished cylinders to let loose tornadoes of hell
and ashes on the hideouts of the "New Order."

Official Navy photographs of a destroyer laying a smoke
screen, fleet and plane maneuvers:

Fog gray sea or mist green, sun-silver water or
storm salt and spray, daylight or midnight, two
bells or eight bells, tropic sea or arctic, ant-
arctic or equatorial, the navy knows them all.
Colossal the navy -- and paradoxical -- hairy-
chested and many-armed yet glinting its gun-
barrels with astronomical precision and split-
second timing -- turbine web-feet on the open
sea, submarine fins undersea, plane wings over-
head. Hunting the enemy, slugging, pounding,
blasting. And always chores we got with tenders,
oilers, tugs, smokescreens, with harbor submarine
nets, minelayers, minesweepers, torpedo and depth
bomb -- heavy chores with endless patrols and long
breathing convoys, caravans of the sea. "In the
navy you get every snootful of the sea there is."

The exhibition comes to a final mighty climax with a mural
12 feet x 40 feet, of armed marching men. Against this mural stand
seven panels showing fathers and mothers from different parts of
the country.

America, thy seeds of fate have borne a fruit of
many breeds, many pages of hard work, sorrow and
suffering -- tough strugglers of oaken men --
women of rich torsos -- they live on -- the fathers
and mothers of soldiers, sailors, fliers, farmers,
builders, workers -- their sons and daughters take
over -- tomorrow belongs to the children.

Running Text by Carl Sandburg for Exhibition of
ROAD TO VICTORY: A Procession of Photographs of
the Nation at War

(Opening panel)

In the beginning was virgin land and America was promises -- and
the buffalo by thousands pawed the Great Plains -- and the Red Man
gave over to an endless tide of white men in endless numbers with
a land hunger and no end to the land they wanted -- over the
eastern seaboard through the Appalachians moved this human tide of
pioneers and home-seekers -- out among the spreading arteries of
the Mississippi waterway system -- out to the Rockies and beyond
to the long sunsets of the west coast.

Grain to the skyline and beyond.

Wheat makes bread and bread breaks hunger -- bread is the renewer
of life.

(Farm life)

The earth is alive. The land laughs. The people laugh. And
the fat of the land is here.

Corn on the cob to ham on the hoof.

(for Where we live series)

Many people, many faces, in their homes, their home towns, their
churches, shops, schools where books say their country is "the
last, best hope of earth."

(for series with people eating)

"Hi, big boy, what's cookin'?" "Oh I can sit up and take nour-
ishment -- three squares a day."

(Dams)

Power dams, generators, transmission, to water desert farms, to
control floods, to bring light and power to homes and factories --
horses, billions of horses, hauling, pounding, boring, drilling,
lifting -- electro-dynamic wild horses tamed to help man, locked
in concrete, singing through overland wires, the live kilowatts
go where man wants them for the day shift or the night gang.

(Mines and industrial group)

"The men behind the man behind the gun," they dig out ore from deep down in the dark, they shoot the oil wells, they chase the slag out of copper, steel-driving men they drill and twist deep rock, they hammer steel bars for rifle and cannon, they rivet the steel sheets and sew them tight with steel buttons to meet storms or torpedoes -- listen, they clank and boom the mighty song of steel -- the breath of their assembly lines is in miles of tanks -- their thumbprints are on bombers over five oceans.

(America First meeting and slogans)

"IT CAN'T HAPPEN TO US" -- "WE'VE GOT TWO OCEANS PROTECTING US"
-- "THE UNITED STATES IS NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST DANGER OF INVASION"

(for Pearl Harbor picture)

"December 7, 1941"

(for picture of Jap ambassador)

"Two faces"

(for Texas farmer facing Pearl Harbor)

"War -- they asked for it -- now, by the living God, they'll get it."

Country boys, big city lads, home town fellers, they're in the Army now -- behind a jeep instead of a plow -- engineers bridging a river, chutists in the sky, skirmishers on the land, troopers on sea transports -- into sea fog and land smoke -- into the test of fire..... Trouble shooters, millions stepping along now, millions more on the way -- killers in khaki riding smoke wagons -- ready for long war or short -- trouble shooters in the first round-the-world-war.

(Aviation: Fighter Planes)

Smooth and terrible birds of death -- smooth they fly, terrible their spit of flame, their hammering cry, "Here's lead in your guts."

(Bataan)

BATAAN CORREGIDOR

Silence. Yes, let them have silence. Call the roll of their names and let it go at that. To long sleep and deep silence they have gone. Deep among the never forgotten.

(Aviation: Bombers)

Loads of death, tons on tons of annihilation, out of the sky
and down down down on the enemies of the free world -- killers
with wings -- dropping polished cylinders to let loose tornadoes
of hell and ashes on the hideouts of the "New Order."

(Navy)

Fog gray sea or mist green, sun-silver water or storm salt and
spray, daylight or midnight, two bells or eight bells, tropic sea
or arctic, antarctic or equatorial, the Navy knows them all.
Colossal the Navy -- and paradoxical -- hairy-chested and many-
armed yet glinting its gun-barrels with astronomical precision
and split-second timing -- turbine web-feet on the open sea, sub-
marine fins undersea, plane wings overhead. Hunting the enemy,
slugging, pounding, blasting. And always chores we got with
tenders, oilers, tugs, smokescreens, with harbor submarine nets,
minelayers, minesweepers, torpedo and depth bomb -- heavy chores
with endless patrols and long breathing convoys, caravans of the
sea. "In the Navy you get every snootful of the sea there is."

(Fathers and mothers)

America, thy seeds of fate have borne a fruit of many breeds, many
pages of hard work, sorrow and suffering -- tough strugglers of
oaken men -- women of rich torsos -- they live on -- the fathers
and mothers of soldiers, sailors, fliers, farmers, builders,
workers -- their sons and daughters take over -- tomorrow belongs
to the children.