

## Life in the 1940's



South San Francisco entered the 1940s as a small industrial town of 6,659. A new post office was completed in 1940, and the city established a Parks and Recreation Department in 1941.

### War Effort

World War II brought changes to the town and its' industries. Some industries changed their production for the war effort. Western Pipe and Steel built ships for the duration, and Swift & Company packed meat for the troops overseas. Other industries cut back production because of wartime shortages. The whole town dealt with rationing; coupons were required for meat, sugar, gasoline, tires, and other products. Many of the towns' sons joined the military and served overseas (1600 went to war, approximately 20 were killed).

### Civilian Military Support

Those left behind welcomed visiting military personnel to their homes and to the "Hospitality House" (which featured jitterbugging, card games, badminton, tasty food and good company). Residents signed up for civilian defense duties and blacked out their windows. Liberty Bond Drives supported the war effort, and bonds were sold at the State Movie Theater, at work places, and through the Enterprise Journal Newspaper. Mary Eschelbach received a 1945 award from President Truman for her war efforts.

### Population Increase

By the mid 1940s the towns' population (12,722) had doubled in size. An influx of shipyard workers created a housing shortage. Four government housing projects were built for workers, the largest being Lindenville, housing 4,200 people in 720 units. New subdivisions started to spring up (starting with Paradise Valley in the early 1940s, followed by Parkway Terrace, and spreading to the areas surrounding El Camino Real). Guy F. Atkinson Company built their headquarters here across from Orange Park in 1947 (here to build the international terminal at San Francisco Airport). United Airlines, Southwest Air

and Philippine Air locate their maintenance bases and offices here. Starlight Theater (the worlds' largest drive-in) opened in 1948.

By 1950, South San Francisco population had grown to 19,351, making the 1940s the fastest growth period in the towns' history, and transforming it from a small town to a suburban community.