

NMAI Lecture Series To Host Talk On 'Women And The Homefront' August 12

NEWPORT, R.I. — The National Museum of American Illustration will host Brian Wallin for his lecture, "Ocean State Women and the Homefront in World War II," on Saturday, August 12, at 1:30 pm. This lecture is open to all and admission is included in museum entrance fee.

The lecture will examine the difficulties and societal changes faced by woman in America (and specifically Rhode Island) during World War II. As men were recruited by the military, women in Rhode Island supported the war effort by joining the workforce, volunteering and enlisting in women's Armed Forces such as the Women's Army Corps (WAC), Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES).

Rhode Island was an arsenal of democracy during the war. It was the site of several major military installations, including Newport Naval Base, the Naval Torpedo Station and Quonset Point Naval Air Station, the Northeast's largest Naval air station. The state was a major manufacturing center of military goods and weapons. Rhode Island's women went to work these plants, including the Walsh-Kaiser shipyard that constructed "Liberty Ships" and small warships.

Some were recruited from local universities to train and replace aircraft engineers who had been deployed at the outbreak of the war. Others volunteered in groups who prepared coastal evacuation routes and air raid procedures, made bandages from discarded cloth, canned fruit for soldiers at

local hospitals and staffed USO Centers around the state.

At the time, illustrators such as Norman Rockwell highlighted the work being done by these women through posters and magazine covers. In Rockwell's September 4, 1943, cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*, he depicts a young woman poised to take on all aspects of the workforce left behind by the men who joined the military. Carrying the tools for more than 30 different trades, "Miss Liberty," exhibited at the NMAI, portrays the essence of women's conviction and dedication to the war effort at home.

The National Museum of American Illustration is at Vernon Court, 492 Bellevue Avenue.

Seating is limited; RSVP at art@americanillustration.org or 401-851-8949, extension 18.



left: "Red Cross Serving The Children Of The World" by Frederick Sands Brunner (1886–1954), 1942, oil on canvas, 45 by 32 inches, signed lower right. *right:* "Miss Liberty" by Norman Rockwell (1894–1978), 1943, oil on canvas, 41 3/4 by 31 1/4 inches, signed lower right. Images courtesy American Illustrators Gallery Archives, New York City.