

Nature at War

This anthology is the first sustained examination of American involvement in World War II through an environmental lens. World War II was a total and global war that involved the extraction, processing, and use of vast quantities of natural resources. The wartime military-industrial complex, the “Arsenal of Democracy,” experienced tremendous economic growth and technological development, employing resources at a higher intensity than ever before. The war years witnessed transformations in American agriculture; the proliferation of militarized landscapes; the popularization of chemical and pharmaceutical products; a rapid increase in energy consumption and the development of nuclear energy; a remaking of the nation’s transportation networks; a shift in population toward the Sunbelt and the West Coast; a vast expansion in the federal government, in conjunction with industrial firms; and the emergence of environmentalism. World War II represented a quantitative and qualitative leap in resource use, with lasting implications for American government, science, society, health, and ecology.

THOMAS ROBERTSON is Executive Director of the United States Educational Foundation (USEF) Fulbright in Kathmandu, Nepal and the author of *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism* (2012).

RICHARD P. TUCKER is Adjunct Professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan. He is co-editor of four multiauthor books on the environmental history of the two world wars. His previous publications include *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World* (2000).

NICHOLAS B. BREYFOGLE is Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University. He is the author/editor of seven volumes, including *Water History: Readings and Sources* (2020) and *Eurasian Environments: Nature and Ecology in Imperial Russian and Soviet History* (2018). Since 2007 he has been coeditor of *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*.

PETER MANSOOR is the General Raymond E. Mason Jr. Chair of Military History at The Ohio State University. He is the author of three books and co-editor of three volumes, including the award-winning *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941–1945* (1999).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41976-5 — Nature at War

Edited by Thomas B. Robertson , Richard P. Tucker , Nicholas B. Breyfogle , Peter Mansoor

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

Nature at War

American Environments and World War II

Edited by

THOMAS ROBERTSON

US Education Foundation, Nepal

RICHARD P. TUCKER

University of Michigan

NICHOLAS B. BREYFOGLE

The Ohio State University

PETER MANSOOR

The Ohio State University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41976-5 — Nature at War

Edited by Thomas B. Robertson , Richard P. Tucker , Nicholas B. Breyfogle , Peter Mansoor
Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108419765

DOI: 10.1017/9781108304146

© Cambridge University Press 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-41976-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-41207-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Tables and Charts</i>	ix
<i>List of Maps</i>	xi
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Preface: American Environments and World War II</i>	xv
Peter Mansoor	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxi
Introduction: Total War and American Nature	I
<i>Thomas Robertson and Richard P. Tucker</i>	
PART I NEW WEAPONS, NEW SPACES	
1 A War of Mobility: Transportation, American Productive Power, and the Environment during World War II	23
<i>Thomas Robertson and Christopher W. Wells</i>	
2 For Land's Sake: World War II Military Land Acquisition and Alteration	51
<i>Jean Mansavage</i>	
PART II MILITARY MATERIALS I (METALS AND ENERGY)	
3 "Tanks Are Born Underground": Mining and World War II	87
<i>Kent Curtis</i>	
4 Fueling the "American Century": Establishing the US Petroleum Imperative	116
<i>Brian Black</i>	

	PART III MILITARY MATERIALS II (FOODS AND PLANTS)	
5	Soldiers of the Soil: Labor, Nature, and American Agriculture during World War II <i>Kendra Smith-Howard</i>	149
6	When Meals Became Weapons: American Food in World War II <i>Kellen Backer</i>	176
7	From Field to Foxhole: Cigarettes and Soldiers in World War II <i>Joel R. Bius</i>	197
	PART IV NEW LANDSCAPES: CITIES AND COASTS	
8	A Watery Grave? World War II and the Environment on the American Gulf Coast <i>Christopher M. Rein</i>	227
9	World War II and the Urban Environment: Redirecting American Politics in Los Angeles and Beyond <i>Sarah S. Elkind</i>	252
	PART V NEW FRONTIERS: MICROBES, MOLECULES, AND ATOMS	
10	Battling Insects and Infection: American Chemical and Pharmaceutical Expansion during World War II <i>Martha N. Gardner</i>	275
11	Shattered Worlds: Place, Environment, and Militarized Landscapes at the Dawn of Atomic America <i>Ryan H. Edgington</i>	298
	PART VI CONSERVATION	
12	Total War and the Total Environment: World War II and the Shift from Conservation to Environmentalism <i>Thomas Robertson</i>	325
	<i>Index</i>	359

Figures

1.1	LST carrying innumerable supplies for the US military, Invasion of Cape Gloucester, New Britain, December 24, 1943	<i>page</i> 2
1.2	“Back Them Up with Metal” poster, 1943	16
1.1	“Pour It On” poster 1942	26
2.1	Doolittle Raider training aircraft preparing for short takeoff at Eglin Airfield, March 1942	52
2.2	Naval stores operation in West Florida during the 1920s	54
2.3	Metts lookout tower area of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp located in the Choctawhatchee National Forest, 1934	54
2.4	Main Street in Taylors Creek, a village that was evacuated to create Camp Stewart area, near Hinesville, Georgia, 1941	64
2.5	Aerial view of Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, California, 1962 (left) and 1993 (right)	80
2.6	View looking east of the main entrance gate of Badger Ordnance Works toward the Wisconsin River, May 1942	81
5.1	Dorothea Lange, San Leandro, CA. Watering young plants on a farm in Alameda County, California, prior to evacuation, April 26, 1942	169
5.2	Dorothea Lange, Florin, Sacramento County, California. A soldier and his mother in a strawberry field. May 11, 1942	170
7.1	Tobacco farm, erosion, and cigarette advertising, Person County, NC, 1939	203
7.2	Small tobacco farm with erosion, Person County, NC, 1939	204
7.3	Erosion control work by CCC in Newberry, SC, 1942	208
7.4	Marines at Peleliu smoking cigarette in barren foxhole	212

8.1	Line-up of women welders, including the women's welding champion of Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp., Pascagoula, MS, 1943	240
8.2	A side view of the Roebing Alligator tractor as it moves through a swampy area	242
11.1	Crater left by Trinity Test, 1945	315
12.1	"Ding" Darling, "Speaking of Labor Day", 1939	334
12.2	"Ding" Darling, "The Ascent of Man—Final Stage", 1941	346

Tables and Charts

Tables

2.1	Military personnel strength during World Wars I and II	<i>page</i> 61
2.2	Ownership status of land used by US Military during World War II	62
2.3	Major use of land before purchase by the war and navy departments during World War II	73
3.1	Total percentage of metals used by the United States in World War II	91
4.1	National-regional shares of world primary energy production	118
4.2	Annual production of fuels in the United States, 1926–1950	119
4.3	Annual proved discoveries for United States and PAW districts for indicated year (thousands of barrels)	132
4.4	Daily average production, refinery runs, and requirements in Allied and neutral countries	139
8.1	Liberty ships built on the Gulf Coast	241
8.2	Synthetic rubber production, 1940–1945	245

Charts

4.1	World crude oil production	123
4.2	Petroleum production – world – excluding Axis and Russian areas	130
4.3	War changes in refineries runs – by areas	136
4.4	100-octane aviation fuel – sources of production	138

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41976-5 — Nature at War

Edited by Thomas B. Robertson , Richard P. Tucker , Nicholas B. Breyfogle , Peter Mansoor

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

Maps

2.1	Choctawhatchee National Forest map, 1938	<i>page</i> 53
2.2	Defense map of the United States, November 1940	58
2.3	Major sites of land purchased from private owners by the war and navy departments during World War II	74
4.1	Crude oil and products pipelines constructed, reversed, or enlarged during the emergency war period	135
8.1	Cities and military installations along the American Gulf Coast	229
11.1	World War II-era Manhattan Project sites	304

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41976-5 — Nature at War

Edited by Thomas B. Robertson , Richard P. Tucker , Nicholas B. Breyfogle , Peter Mansoor

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

Contributors

Kellen Backer is Faculty Fellow in the Humanities at Syracuse University. He is the author of “*Food Will Win the War and Write the Peace*”: *World War II and the Making of an American Industrial Food System*.

Joel R. Bius is Assistant Professor of National Security Studies and Associate Dean of Education at the Air Command and Staff College. He is the author of *Smoke ‘Em If You Got ‘Em: The Rise and Fall of the Military Cigarette Ration*.

Brian Black is Professor of Environmental Studies and History and Head of the Division of Arts and Humanities at Pennsylvania State University, Altoona. His publications include *Petrolia: The Landscape of America’s First Oil Boom*, *Crude Reality: Petroleum in World History*, and *Gettysburg Contested: 150 Years of Preserving America’s Most Cherished Landscape*.

Kent Curtis is Associate Professor of Environmental History at Ohio State University, Mansfield, and author of *Gambling on Ore: The Nature of Metal Mining in the United States, 1860–1910*.

Ryan H. Edgington is author of *Range Wars: The Environmental Contest for the White Sands Missile Range*.

Sarah S. Elkind is Professor of History at San Diego State University. Her publications include *Bay Cities and Water Politics: The Battle for Resources in Boston and Oakland, 1880–1930*, and *How Local Politics Shape Federal Policy: Business, Power and the Environment in Twentieth Century Los Angeles*.

Martha N. Gardner is Associate Professor of History and Social Sciences at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science.

Jean Mansavage is a historian and Research Branch Chief at the US Air Force Historical Studies Office. She is author of *Natural Defense: U.S. Air Force Origins of the Department of Defense Natural Resources Conservation Program*.

Peter Mansoor is Professor of Military History at Ohio State University. His publications include *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941–1945*, *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq*, and *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War*. He is also the coeditor of *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, *Grand Strategy and Military Alliances*, and *The Culture of Military Organizations*.

Christopher M. Rein is the Managing Editor of Air University Press at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He is the author of *Alabamians in Blue: Freedmen, Unionists, and the Civil War in the Cotton State*, *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II*, and *The North African Air Campaign: US Army Air Forces from El Alamein to Salerno*.

Thomas Robertson is the author of *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism*, and coeditor with Jenny Leigh Smith, *Transplanting Modernity? New Histories of Technology, Development, and Environment*.

Kendra Smith-Howard is Associate Professor of History at the State University of New York, Albany, and author of *Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900*.

Richard P. Tucker is Adjunct Professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan. His publications include *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*.

Christopher W. Wells is Professor of Environmental Studies at Macalester College, author of *Car Country: An Environmental History*, and editor of *Environmental Justice in Postwar America: A Documentary Reader*.

Preface

American Environments and World War II

Peter Mansoor

World War II was the largest and most destructive conflict in human history. It was an existential struggle that pitted irreconcilable political systems and ideologies against one another across the globe in a decade of violence unlike any other. There is little doubt today that the United States had to engage in the fighting, especially after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The conflict was, in the words of historians Allan Millett and Williamson Murray, “a war to be won.”¹ As the world’s largest industrial power, the United States put forth a supreme effort to produce the weapons, munitions, and military formations essential to achieving victory.² When the war finally ended, the finale signaled by atomic mushroom clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, upward of 60 million people had perished in the inferno.³ Of course, the human toll represented only part of the devastation; global environments also suffered greatly. The growth and devastation of World War II significantly changed American landscapes as well. The war created or significantly expanded a number of industries, put land to new uses, spurred urbanization, and left a legacy of pollution that would in time create a new term: superfund site.

¹ Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2000).

² The most comprehensive study of the American political economy during World War II is Paul A. C. Koistinen, *Arsenal of World War II: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1941–1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

³ This is perhaps a low estimate, in as much as 50 million civilians may have perished in China alone. Statistics from the US National World War II museum website, www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/world-wide-deaths.html (accessed July 29, 2019).

Before considering how World War II changed America, it is useful to consider the magnitude of the war effort. World War II was the last great industrial total war, engulfing in its fiery embrace entire peoples, economies, and armed forces. Emerging from the throes of the Great Depression, the US gross domestic product increased from \$97.1 billion in 1939 to \$185.1 billion in 1944.⁴ Expenditures on national defense during this period increased from \$1.7 billion to \$86.3 billion; by 1945, nearly half the economy was engaged in war production.⁵ Manufacturers tripled their output; Ford Motor Company alone produced more durable goods than Italy.⁶ Nothing was impossible with victory at stake. When the War Department asked the president of Chrysler Corporation, K. T. Keller, if his company could make tanks, he immediately responded “Yes,” before adding, “What’s a tank look like?”⁷

The American people made good on President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s desire to make the United States the arsenal of democracy. Between 1939 and 1945, the United States produced 303,695 planes, 10 battleships, 27 fleet carriers, 110 escort carriers, 211 submarines, 907 cruisers/destroyers/destroyer escorts, 82,000 landing craft, 41,000 artillery pieces, 60,973 tanks, 2,400,000 vehicles of all types, 12,500,000 rifles, 41,000,000,000 rounds of ammunition, and 3 atomic bombs.⁸ In the peak war years of 1942–1944, the United States alone produced more combat munitions than all its allies put together and nearly twice as much as the combined Axis powers.⁹ In just one year (1943), the United States produced more tanks than Germany did during the entire war.¹⁰ “I know how you defeated us,” remarked a German prisoner as he marched past

⁴ “Real Gross Domestic Product, Chained (1937) Dollars,” US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, <https://bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=3&isuri=1&c904=1939&c903=7&c906=q&c905=1945&c910=x&c911=0> (accessed July 29, 2019).

⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 195.

⁷ Scott Burgess, “Detroit’s Production Battle to Win World War II,” *Motor Trend*, October 9, 2015, www.motortrend.com/news/detroits-production-battle-to-win-world-war-ii/ (accessed July 29, 2019).

⁸ These numbers vary somewhat with each source, but the general idea is the same – US production during World War II was massive. The numbers quoted are from the National WWII Museum, “By the Numbers: Wartime Production,” www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/wartime-production.html (accessed July 29, 2019).

⁹ Koistinen, *Arsenal of World War II*, 499, table 2.

¹⁰ Alan Gropman, “Industrial Mobilization,” in *The Big “L”: American Logistics in World War II*, ed. Alan Gropman (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1997), 55.

one of the many supply dumps in Normandy. “You piled up the supplies and let them fall on us.”¹¹

The United States was the arsenal for its allies as well – democratic or otherwise. “This is a war of engines and octanes,” Soviet Premier Josef Stalin declared as he rose to toast his allied comrades at a banquet at the Tehran conference in November 1943. “I drink to the American auto industry and the American oil industry.”¹² Stalin was correct on all counts. Through the Lend-Lease program the United States transferred \$46 billion in raw materials, munitions, and weapons to its allies, primarily the British Empire and the Soviet Union.¹³ “Long before American troops had engaged the Germans in large-scale fighting,” President Harry S. Truman reported to Congress in early 1946, “lend-lease tanks and jeeps, communication equipment, rolling stock, planes, guns, and heavy artillery were aiding the defenders of Stalingrad and helping General Montgomery’s Eighth Army hold and repulse the Afrika Korps in Egypt.”¹⁴ Lend-Lease recipients received 45,000 planes, helping the allies to gain and maintain air superiority.¹⁵ The Soviet Union alone received 14,700 planes, 7,000 tanks, 52,000 jeeps, and 375,000 trucks, without which the Red Army would have been sorely pressed to sustain the enormous land offensives that crushed the Wehrmacht in the last two years of the war.¹⁶

The massive increase in wartime production was made possible by the conversion of civilian industry to defense usage and the creation of new plants.¹⁷ US manufacturers built 40 engine and propeller plants between 1940 and 1943, many of them with government funding. Floor space increased from 13 million square feet to more than 167 million square feet in the same period.¹⁸ The most impressive facility was Ford’s Willow

¹¹ Quoted in Barry J. Dysart, “Materialschlacht: The ‘Materiel Battle’ in the European Theater,” in *The Big “L”: American Logistics in World War II*, ed. Alan Gropman (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1997), 339. Material superiority was only one of the reasons behind Allied victory, however. For a discussion of other factors, see Overy, *Why the Allies Won*.

¹² John A. Thompson, *A Sense of Power: The Roots of America’s Global Role* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2015), 197.

¹³ President of the United States, *Twenty-First Report to Congress on Lend-Lease Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), table 2, 14. The figure of \$46 billion is in 1945 dollars, equivalent to \$621 billion in 2017 dollars.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷ Amazingly, civilian consumption in the United States increased slightly during the war, the only nation of the major combatants in which this occurred.

¹⁸ Gropman, “Industrial Mobilization,” 55.

Run, a massive, newly built factory 25 miles west of Detroit that by spring 1944 was churning out a B-24 heavy bomber every hour. With these new facilities came workers, housing, and transportation infrastructure that changed the landscape of suburban America.¹⁹ According to historians Hugh Conway and James Toth, the vast array of newly constructed infrastructure “revised the correlation of American labor, raw material, transport, and electrical power across the land. The result was a far more extensive, cohesive, flexible, and dynamic pattern of production than anything the world had previously known. It revolutionized the capital underpinnings of the American economy not only for the war but also for the peace in the aftermath.”²⁰ But it was not just the economy that would be forever altered; American landscapes would never be the same again.

The Manhattan Project, which by 1945 made the United States the world’s first atomic power, involved laboratories in Chicago and Berkeley, uranium production facilities in Tennessee, plutonium production facilities in Washington, and a laboratory and integration facility in the newly constructed town of Los Alamos, New Mexico. At the height of the effort in June 1944, the Manhattan Engineer District employed nearly 129,000 people, of whom 84,500 were construction workers, 40,500 operated facilities, 1,800 were civil service employees, and 1,800 were military personnel.²¹ The world’s first atomic detonation occurred on US soil on July 16, 1945, at Trinity Site in the Jornada del Muerto Desert near Alamogordo, New Mexico. The explosion of the man-made Plutonium-239 fission device measured 22 kilotons of TNT and broke windows 120 miles distant, while the heat of the blast melted the desert sand and turned it into a green glassy substance christened trinitite. Watching the blast, the scientific leader of the Manhattan Project, Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, recalled a verse from Hindu scripture, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”²² He was correct in more ways than one. Nuclear material can quickly destroy mankind with the

¹⁹ For an examination of how Willow Run changed the greater Detroit area, see Sarah Jo Peterson, *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and Communities at Willow Run* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

²⁰ Hugh Conway and James E. Toth, “Building Victory’s Foundation: Infrastructure,” in *The Big “L”: American Logistics in World War II*, ed. Alan Gropman (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1997), 194.

²¹ Vincent C. Jones, *Manhattan: The Army and the Atomic Bomb* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1985), 344.

²² J. Robert Oppenheimer Oral History, Atomic Archive, www.atomicarchive.com/Movies/Movie8.shtml (accessed July 29, 2019).

explosion of a thousand suns, or it can more quietly destroy life with highly toxic radioactive fallout and pollution of soil and water. The toxic effects of atomic devices were not well understood in 1945; what the military personnel and scientists working on the Manhattan Project did know is the war had to be won, and the atomic bomb was essential to that purpose.

All this production was for one purpose: to win the war. Doing so required more than just weapons, however. The United States would organize and train 89 ground divisions, 243 air combat groups, and a two-ocean navy that at its peak numbered 6,768 vessels. These forces needed vast areas for posts, camps, bases, and training areas, soldiers often building their facilities as they organized and trained for combat.²³ Armies maneuvered in Louisiana, Tennessee, the Carolinas, and at the Desert Training Center in California. The legacy structure of military forts across the West was soon overwhelmed by the expansion and creation of huge bases such as Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Knox, Kentucky; and Camp Hood, Texas. Military activity changed the landscape in many ways, and although some of this base structure was downsized or closed after 1945, much of it remained to house US armed forces during and after the Cold War.²⁴

The United States was not just the arsenal of democracy; it was also the granary of democracy. American farmers ramped up production for the war effort, assisted by generous government policy that allowed prices for foodstuffs and livestock to rise by as much as 100 percent, while subsidies encouraged production of essential war products, such as cotton and tobacco.²⁵ Americans supported the war effort by rationing, recycling, and building “Victory Gardens” to ease the burden on the agricultural industry to feed both the nation and its armed forces. The success of American agriculture was so complete that by the end of the war in 1945 American farmers were feeding the people of every major ally *and*

²³ For an examination of the mobilization and training of US infantry divisions in the US Army during World War II, see Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941–1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), chs. 2 and 3.

²⁴ Ironically, the devotion of land to military purposes, which has staved off the march of suburbia and agribusiness, has been a boon to some endangered species, such as the desert tortoise in Fort Irwin, California, and the red cockaded woodpecker in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

²⁵ Millett and Murray, *A War to Be Won*, 529. Given the fact that most GIs smoked, the designation of tobacco as a critical agricultural product is not as strange as it appears on its face.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41976-5 — Nature at War

Edited by Thomas B. Robertson , Richard P. Tucker , Nicholas B. Breyfogle , Peter Mansoor
Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

conquered enemy except China.²⁶ The war accelerated the industrialization of American agriculture, in the process turning a land of family farms into one of vast conglomerates run by an increasingly narrow percentage of the population.

World War II, then, was a milestone in the economic and environmental history of the United States. The former story has been well researched; the latter history largely remains to be written. The intent of this collection of essays, the result of a conference sponsored by the Mershon Center for International Security Studies in February 2016 on the campus of The Ohio State University, is to fill some of the gaps in the environmental history of the United States during World War II. The editors and authors present this work in the hope that it will shed light on the vast changes to American landscapes during World War II – a war that had to be won, but that continues to shape modern America in profound ways.

²⁶ For a comprehensive perspective on the role of agriculture and food in World War II, see Lizzie Collingham, *Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York: Penguin, 2012).

Acknowledgments

This volume began as a series of papers presented at the conference “The Nature of War: American Environments and World War II,” at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at The Ohio State University, February 25–27, 2016. During the conference, we realized there was a fascinating new story to tell, and so we set about revising the papers and fashioning them into a volume that would explain how World War II shaped the American environment as we experience it today. The editors would like to thank the following organizations for their generous funding of the conference and book: the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, the Society for Military History, The Ohio State University Department of History, and the Sustainable and Resilient Economy Discovery Theme at Ohio State. In addition to those scholars whose chapters appear in this volume, we would also like to recognize the other participants who made the conference so very productive and exciting: Charles Closmann, Anastasia Day, Roger Lotchin, Derek Lee Nelson, Chris Otter, and Sam White. We would also like to acknowledge: Steven Blalock and Kyle McCray from the Mershon Center, whose tireless organization and budget support made the conference possible; Mark Sokolsky for his excellent editorial assistance; the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions; and last but certainly not least Debbie Gershenowitz and her excellent team at Cambridge University Press.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41976-5 — Nature at War

Edited by Thomas B. Robertson , Richard P. Tucker , Nicholas B. Breyfogle , Peter Mansoor

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)
