

Merle Doree Taylor

My name is Merle Doree Taylor and I was born 16th September 1912. Twelve months before war was declared I married a farmer. When war was declared on September 3rd 1939, I was expecting my first child the following February. My second child was born 19 months later in 1941.

My effort during the war was to raise these two children and help my husband on the farm. He was manpowered, however his brother enlisted leaving an increased workload behind on the farm. This lack of labour continued until Italian prisoners of war were released on the farm. The feeding of these men added to my already heavy workload in a house that had no electricity or running water. All cooking was done on a wood fired stove and lamps and refrigerators had to be filled and cleaned daily. Milk had to be separated and butter made. All washing was done by hand with all the water carried in buckets.

Food, clothing and petrol were rationed. Our petrol allowance was 4 gallons per month which enabled us one trip a week to town for our groceries and other purchases. There was a small amount over for emergencies, like a visit to the doctor.

All clothing for the children was made out of recycled adult clothes. I improvised where possible, for example, I made a dressing gown for my husband out of a grey army blanket. Work clothes were patched and mended many times.

We produced our own dairy and meat, however didn't grow vegetables due to lack of water.

During the six years of war we existed, rather than lived, living on an isolated farm without means of visiting friends or relatives.

At the end of the war, a celebration was held in the local town hall to commemorate the occasion. I was asked to sing a solo, Land of Hope and Glory. This I did to an audience of 500 persons. These were my war efforts during World War 2.