Typewriters for Victory:

Patriotic Sacrifice and the Feminization of the Workforce During World War II

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On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the United States Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, killing roughly 2,400 Americans. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and reflecting unhealed wounds from World War I, an isolationist mentality pervaded American culture, fueling a debate over the necessity for US interference in World War II. The attack, however, united Americans behind the pro-war cause, resulting in the immediate declaration of war on Japan.¹ As the war raged on, companies began repurposing their factories to maintain supply lines for the war effort, largely pushing the needs of the individual consumer to the backburner and beckoning in an age of patriotic sacrifice. Companies predicted immense profits from connecting their brand names to this idea. Driven by ads exalting their bravery, Americans on the homefront reveled in the feeling that their actions had some effect on the war overseas.² Meanwhile, the government shipped millions of young American men to the Pacific and Europe, leaving jobs vacant and a shortage of what they believed to be viable workers to fill these vacancies. Although companies displayed an initial hesitancy to admit women into the workforce, they soon began recognizing the need to hire female employees.³ A New York Times article from November of 1943 demonstrated that by that time 4,000,000 women had entered the workforce, a significant increase from the year prior.⁴ Despite this increase, employers worked to advertise these jobs as merely an extension of women's work in the domestic sphere, thus reinforcing traditional gender hierarchies that prioritized the ability of men over women.

¹ Scott Mauer and Craig Shirley, "The Attack on Pearl Harbor United Americans like No Other Event in Our History," *The Washington Post*, December 7, 2016, accessed January 21, 2023,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/12/07/the-attack-on-pearl-harbor-united-americans-like-no-other-event-in-our-history.

² Mark H. Leff, "The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (1991): 1296, https://doi.org/10.2307/2078263.

³ J.E. Trey, "Women in the War Economy: World War II," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 4, no. 3 (1972): 40, 57, https://doi.org/10.1177/048661347200400304.

⁴ "4,000,000 Women Now in War Jobs," The New York Times, November 29, 1942, 46.

Aware of the burgeoning ideal of patriotic sacrifice, industrial companies designed advertisements that highlighted the vital role of each citizen's contributions to the war effort. Additionally, some companies immediately worked to grapple with the increasing necessity for a new workforce by addressing women in their advertising campaigns. However, in an ad published in *LIFE* in October 1942, Royal Typewriters veiled its attempt to do so. The ad features a single image that depicts a well-dressed man, likely a politician, standing on a patriotically-decorated podium, addressing a crowd of typewriters that the advertisers positioned where the citizen-consumer might typically stand. The resulting personification of the typewriters creates a deliberate ambiguity around the gender the ad targets, as the politician could be extending a hand to all citizen-consumers. Thus, it provides them with two critical messages: one expounding the necessity of individual sacrifice that applies to all citizens and one specifically directed at women who will make valuable contributions on the homefront. In extending the visual personification of the typewriters to text, the copywriter uses encouraging language and hypotheticals to craft a patriotic persona around the company. This appeal resonates with those unable to fight yet still eager to support their country on the homefront. As scholar Jordan T. Thomas explains, companies anticipated post-war success from blending "nationalism and consumerism" and, in doing so, portraying the war as "not just as a victory for the United States and freedom, but also a victory for capitalist consumption."⁵ In addition to the metonymic usage of Pearl Harbor in the headline, Royal's slogan that proclaims its typewriters to be "World's Number 1" perfectly encapsulates the company's patriotic appeal by mirroring language that described the United States as an emerging world superpower. In interlacing its success with that of the country, Royal was able to further the profitability of its products

⁵ Jordan T. Thomas, "The Real Winner of the Second World War: Patriotic Consumption and the Formation of a Society of Spin," Electronic Theses and Dissertations (2018), https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/1863

post-war. More specifically, the changing demographics of the workforce indicate that Royal intended to address women impacted by the war. Thus, the ambiguity implied by the personification of the typewriters reflects a broader societal hesitancy about the shifting role of women in the workforce. Through these dual readings, Royal broadens the applicability of their appeal in a time of social, political, and economic turmoil.

Although most of the actual fighting occurred overseas, World War II fundamentally affected the way Americans lived their lives. During the rush to transform the marketplace to fulfill wartime needs, American consumers demonstrated increased patriotic sacrifice to support the war effort. To preface this phenomenon, following Pearl Harbor there was an immediate increase in pro-war sentiment that led to the US's entrance into the war. In fact, Congress voted nearly unanimously for a declaration of war, with only one vote against it in both houses.⁶ Even before the US formally entered the war, Congress, reflecting the general public's fears, hastened to meet munition requirements for defense in case of a rogue attack. At hearings for the military appropriations bill for 1941, the War Department estimated that the military lacked the "anti aircraft guns to defend a single large American city." Facing public outcry, the Ordnance Department drastically increased its efforts.⁷ The attack on Pearl Harbor reinforced the necessity for the Department to do so and reinvigorated the public, with President Franklin D. Roosevelt setting new, seemingly insurmountable, goals for artillery manufacturing.⁸ To fulfill these demands, the Ordnance Department relied heavily on outside firms under contract, which were largely industrial manufacturers that had converted their factories early on in the war.⁹ Aside

⁶ Mauer and Shirley, "Pearl Harbor United Americans."

⁷ Ordnance is generally defined as military supplies which would include weapons, ammunition, combat vehicles, and maintenance tools and equipment. The Ordnance Department is the service of the army that is tasked with procuring these supplies.

⁸ Lida Mayo and Harry C. Thomson, *The Ordnance Department: Procurement and Supply* (US Government Printing Office, 2003), 1.

⁹ Mayo and Thomson, *The Ordnance Department*, 80.

from the monetary value of government contracts, companies were motivated to repurpose their factories because of the sense of patriotism that pervaded American culture during this time.¹⁰ Since the War Advertising Council paid for the vast majority of companies' ads that supported the Allied powers, many companies saw an accessible opportunity to "enhance their brand name" during a time of strife.¹¹ Specifically, companies sought to promote the government agenda of frugality, which included efficiency with goods, recycling materials, obeying ration controls, and purchasing war bonds. An analysis of Northwestern University's World War II poster collection shows that one-third of their ads include some mention of frugality, for the most part advertised as a sacrifice that American consumers could partake in.¹² As homefront civilians were not actively fighting in the war or committing the ultimate sacrifice, Professor Mark Leff argues that the success of these campaigns relied on the companies' ability to manipulate the definition of sacrifice. Thus, by intertwining fairly minor examples of sacrifice with patriotic appeal, advertisers beckoned in a "golden age of homefront sacrifice."¹³

Building on this precedent, Royal infuses its ad with readily evident patriotic appeal. The headline, which reads "A message to the typewriters we sold before Pearl Harbor," reflects a pattern in advertising of using Pearl Harbor as "place for event-type" metonymy, which served to connote the emotions associated with WWII and evoke patriotism in the consumer. In using this type of metonymy, the advertiser can easily access the emotions involved with the event without

¹⁰ Thomas, "The Real Winner of the Second World War," 3

¹¹ Mayo and Thomson, *The Ordnance Department*, 2.

¹² Terrence H. Witkowski, "World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American Consumers," *Journal of Advertising* 32, 1 (2003): 69-82, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4622151. Specifically relating to maintaining supplies of typewriters, the Office of War Information relied heavily on a campaign titled "Forty-Two Keys to Victory" to encourage the public to help fill the typewriter gap. See images at the Library of Congress for pictures captured as part of this campaign: "Forty-Two Keys to Victory," Library of Congress, accessed February 2, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b02988/.

¹³Leff, "Politics of Sacrifice," 1296.

directly drawing on any negative emotions.¹⁴ The imagery on the podium further supports this patriotic persona. The stripes on the poles and stars on the base depict a deconstructed American flag, conflating patriotism with the politician on the podium. Furthermore, the directional movement of the ad suggests that the company wants the viewer to look first at the typewriters, and then at the politician they are "listening to." The man extends his arm back toward the typewriters, drawing attention once more to the product and creating a cyclical pattern. Thus, the company wants the viewer to correlate the typewriters with the sense of patriotism that the man represents.¹⁵ Lastly, by outwardly stating that Royal is fulfilling ordnance, the copywriter supports the narrative that Royal is committed to the war effort. Through these tactics, Royal ties its product to the patriotic war effort in a purposeful attempt to enhance its own persona, an idea that reflects themes of the broader historical moment.

In another vein, World War II directly necessitated a shift in the demographics of factory workers, culminating in a temporary increase in the number of women in the workforce to fill vacancies left by men fighting abroad. Even though factories were in desperate need of workers, most companies neglected to hire women for months in large part because they believed that women lacked the "strength and aptitude for industrial work."¹⁶ A survey from January 1942 details that at that time employers were only willing to hire women for 29% of their job vacancies. By July 1942, that number had risen to 55%.¹⁷ More targeted statistics from payroll documents at a Ford factory in River Rouge show that between January 1940 and July 1942, no

¹⁴ Nami Arimitsu, "Analyzing the Place for the Event-type Metonymies from the Perspective of Negative Evaluative Factors," Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada 15, no. 2 (2015): 475, doi: 10.1590/1984-639820156138. ¹⁵ In addition, the personification of the typewriters serves to strengthen Royal's persona. Scholars Marjorie Delbaere et al. claim that visual personification offers "an excellent tool for advertisers who seek to build brand personality and create an emotional connection with consumers" (127). As the advertisers successfully create a patriotic persona for Royal, the personification would serve to reinforce this personality.

¹⁶ Laura J. Dresser and Sherrie A. Kossoudji, "Working Class Rosies: Women Industrial Workers during World War II," The Journal of Economic History 52, no. 2 (1992): 431-446, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2123119. ¹⁷ Trey, "Women War Economy," 44.

more than 0.05% of workers were female at any given time. In mid-1943, that number peaked at 16%.¹⁸ Regardless of any initial hesitancy, these statistics both demonstrate a major increase in the number of women working in industrial capacities. These jobs, however, were simply advertised as an extension of women's work in the domestic sphere, reinforcing pre-war gender roles. As scholar J.E. Trey describes, "Women were never allowed to develop a consciousness as 'worker'; even in the factory they were still 'woman."¹⁹ By portraying industrial jobs as domestic tasks, advertisers were not only able to reinforce gender roles, but a gender hierarchy. Propaganda from the Navy embodies this objective. A recruitment poster published in 1943 urged women to join the institution: "Be a Marine, Free a Marine to Fight."²⁰ Men were still seen as superior—they had the capacity to actively fight for victory whereas women took secondary roles on the homefront. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, WWII did not precipitate lasting change in worker demographics. The same survey from the Ford factory in River Rouge details that by December of 1946, women were once again less than 1% of employees.²¹ General hiring practices also reflected this decline.²²

Royals' advertisement uses a visual metaphor and gendered language coupled with the context of World War II to create a call to action to women on the homefront. The company composed the ad of one image that personifies the typewriters by arranging them in a submissive crowd. Since *LIFE* published the ad nearly a year after the US entered the war, it can be inferred

¹⁸ Dresser and Kossoudji, "Working Class Rosies," 434.

¹⁹ Trey, "Women War Economy," 40.

²⁰ "Be a Marine, Free a Marine to Fight," Hennepin County Library Digital Collections,

https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/collection/p17208coll3/id/1225/. Accessed 23 Jan. 2023.

²¹ Dresser and Kossoudji, "Working Class Rosies," 434.

²² Early in the war, almost every state instituted some form of Veteran's Preference Law which maintained that employees who left to fight in the war were merely on leaves of absence and were therefore entitled to their job upon their return. These laws contributed greatly to the displacement of women from these jobs once the war was over. See Steven Lim, "The Effect of Veterans' Reemployment Rights, Veterans Preference Laws, and Protective Labor Laws on the Status of Women Workers in the World War II Period," *Hofstra Labor and Employment Law Journal* 2, 2 (1985): http://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/hlelj/vol2/iss2/3.

that the people serving in clerical roles that would require typewriters were most likely women—thus the typewriters would represent female consumers. However, as Royal is not willing to directly gender the consumer, the ambiguity that the ad creates implies a hesitancy about the increasing role of women in the workplace.²³ Although the copywriter continues the use of personification in the first half of the body copy, they employ it in a different manner. The language used in this portion of the copy mimics the government's traditional narrative of women's role during World War II—women, led by Rosie the Riveter-like figures, heroically stepped in as temporary substitutes for the men who went to fight in the war.²⁴Additionally, a man stands on the podium, physically above the crowd of typewriters. This ad serves to reinforce the gender hierarchy pre-war, mirroring society's attempts to advertise women's changing role as merely an extension of their work in the domestic sphere.²⁵ Both the establishment of a time frame and the re-establishment of the gender hierarchy are consistent with the historical context. This ad successfully devises a call to action for specifically female citizen-consumers on the homefront.

While Royal invited the admission of women into the workforce through the use of patriotic sentiment, its methods are problematic in two ways. First, in evoking Pearl Harbor as the stimulant for their patriotic appeal, Royal uses an event that justified the mistreatment of Japanese-Americans for decades to come. Thomas states that in working to support the war effort, these ads encouraged consumers to "hate the enemy" using language that often

²³ Royal itself followed a major evolution in the gendered aspect of its advertising campaigns. A headline for another one of its ads published in *LIFE* in August of 1942 reads, "Brother, can you spare a typewriter to help win the war?" (see Fig. 1). As the months progressed, the advertisers' gendering of the intended consumer changed. This ad, published in December of that same year, is ambiguous in the gender it aims to address. Later, however, Royal's advertising campaigns had completely changed course. In 1944, an image of a woman dominated the ad, with the phrase "Keep 'em flying, Miss USA" written beneath it (see Fig 2.). This shift serves to accentuate the ambiguity implied by the personification of the typewriters in the intermediate ad.

²⁴ Dresser and Kossoudji, "Working Class Rosies," 431.

²⁵ Trey, "Women War Economy," 40.

emphasized the "racial inferiority of the Japanese."²⁶ Though subtle, Royal's metonymic usage of Pearl Harbor encourages this hatred, as the event is intrinsically tied with anti-Japanese sentiment. Second, since the typewriters can be interpreted to represent the female consumer, by positioning the typewriters in a crowd physically below an empowered man, the company is reinforcing traditional and oppressive gender roles. This phenomenon sets the stage for the near complete reversal of the feminization of the workforce post-war. Thus, Royal's patriotic narrative, while successful in supporting the war effort, is laden with problematic themes that allowed both Asian animosity and the systemic oppression of women for decades to come.

²⁶ Thomas, "The Real Winner of the Second World War," 49

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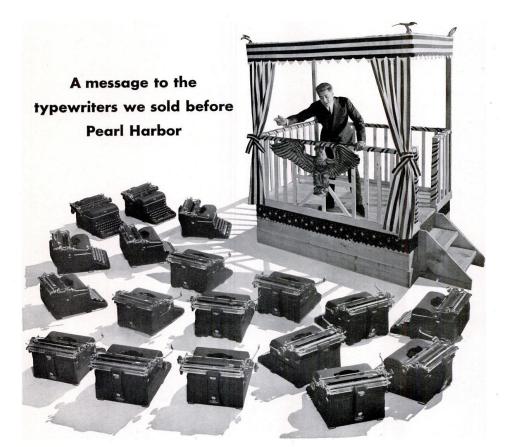
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LISTEN, all you Royal Typewriters we sold before December 7th . . . *you* have a *real job* on your hands! You typewriters *have got to last* until after this war is over! You are a vitally important part of American business and, for a while, there won't be any new machines to replace you! Because we're busy now making ordnance.

That puts it squarely up to *you* to keep right on giving the famous, reliable Royal service. No matter how old you may be today, no matter how long you may have been in use, you *must stay in use* until this war is won!

Of course, we know you can do it! You Royals are just about the most durable typewriters that engineer-ing skill can produce. You are built to last! We spent more than 30 years improving you, strengthening you, making you work more smoothly and easily...and we know you can take it!

Providing, of course, you are given the proper care

and service. And so, on your behalf, we want to conclude with . . .

... a message to Royal owners

... a message to Royal owners You who own a Royal have the "World's Number 1 Typewriter." It is sturdy and rugged and strong. BUT... lack of care can shorten its life. However, we have made it easy for you to see that your Royal gets the proper care. Royal's nationwide service organization consists of more than 300 service points where experienced mechanics, trained by Royal, are at your beck and call wherever your Royal type-writer needs expert, efficient service. Your Royal is probably working perfectly at the moment. But remember that "a stitch in time saves

Your Royal is probably working perfectly at the moment. But remember that "a stitch in time saves nine." So why not call your local Royal service man today? He's in your phone book... and a word from you will send him hurrying around to give your ma-chine a Royal Wartime Checkup. It will cost you little now, and may save you much later on.

P. S. Ask your Royal representative about Royal's com-plete line of Carbon Papers and Ribbons, especially de-signed to help your typewriters give you the best possible service.

THE ARMED FORCES NEED TYPEWRITERS!

See how many of your standard machines (made since Jan. 1, 1935) you can spare. Call your nearest Royal branch—we will buy them, affix the Government seal, and pay you the Government's fixed price.



117

Headline: A message to the typewriters we sold before Pearl Harbor

Body Copy 1:

LISTEN, all you Royal Typewriters we sold before December 7th... *you* have a *real job* on your hands! You typewriters *have got to last* until after this war is over! You are a vitally important part of American business and, for a while, there won't be any new machines to replace you! Because we're busy now making ordnance.

That puts it squarely up to *you* to keep right on giving the famous, reliable Royal service. No matter how old you may be today, no matter how long you have been in use, you *must stay in use* until this war is won!

Of course, we know *you can do it*! You Royals are just about the most durable typewriters that engineering skill can produce. You are built to last! We spent more than 30 years improving you, strengthening you, making you work more smoothly and easily... and we know *you can take it*!

Providing, of course, you are given the proper care and service. And so, on your behalf, we want to conclude with

Subheadline: ... a message to Royal owners

Body Copy 2:

You who own a Royal have the "World's Number 1 Typewriter." It is sturdy and rugged and strong. BUT... lack of care can shorten its life.

However, we have made it easy for you to see that *your* Royal gets the proper care. Royal's nationwide service organization consists of more than 500 service points where experienced mechanics, trained by Royal, are at your beck and call whenever your Royal typewriter needs expert, efficient service.

Your Royal is probably working perfectly at the moment. But remember that "a stitch in time saves nine." So why not call your local Royal service man today? He's in your phone book ... and a word from you will send him hurrying around to give your machine a Royal Wartime Checkup. It will cost you little now, and may save you much later on.

P.S. *Ask your Royal representative about Royal's complete line of Carbon Papers and Ribbons, especially designed to help your typewriters give you the best possible service.*

Subheadline 2: THE ARMED FORCES NEED TYPEWRITERS!

Body Copy 3:

See how many of your standard machines (made since Jan. 1, 1933) you can spare. Call your nearest Royal branch — we will buy them, affix the Government seal, and pay you the Government's fixed price.

Slogan:

ROYAL

Morlds Mumber 1

TYPEWRITER

Appendix of Images

Brother, can you spare a typewriter to help win the war?

We're not selling Royal Typewriters today... WE'RE BUYING 'EM!

" E RE DULING EM! The United States Government is in urgent need of 600,000 typewriters—for use by the Army... the Navy... the Air Corps... the Ma-rine Corps.

The corps. These machines are needed for speeding up war production and the movement of supplies-for transmitting orders to troops on land...ships at sea...even to planes in the air. The typed message is the fastest, most reliable means of written communication! Typewriters are essen-tial to Victory!

We can't supply 'em-we're making ordnance. But you can! You, Mr. American Businessman, who have one or several little-used standard ma-chines in your office – or gathering dust in a stockroom – on needing repair – or even rebuild-ing. You can help win the war by selling those machines to Uncle Sam. Not giving, selling!

Here's all you do!

Consult the list below, of cities in which Royal

CHTER AKBON, OHIO, Ohio Building, 175 South Mein Street ALRANY, Nev YORK, 30 Lodge Street ATLANY, CHORLA, 13429 Hurr Building ATLANYC (TYV, NEW JEBSEY, 1337 Allanite Jeenne BALTINORE, M.S., 1337 Andlinis Street BIMINGUAM, ALABAMA, 1825 First Jeenne, North Chomber of Commerce Building BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, 60 Broad Street BIMMERGIN, CONSERTICT, 30 High Street BIMMERGIN, 102 Second Street BIMMERGIN, 102 Second Street Cana RAFIDS, IOWN YORS, 202 Franklin Street CINCLAD, LINOS, 427 West Randbling CHARLOTT, NORTH CLANDINA, 109-111 West Third Street CINCLAD, LINOS, 427 West Nuth Street CINCLAD, LINOS, 427 West Nuth Street COLUMBA, SOLVIN (2001), 120 Street DALLAS, TEXAS, 522 Sonta Fe Building DAVENORI, ONA, 211 West Fourth Street COLUMBA, SOLVIN (2001), 120 Hourth Street COLUMBA, SOLVIN (2001), 121 Fourth Street DAVENORI, ONA, 211 West Fourth Street DAVENORI, DAVENORI, 211 West Fourth Street DAVENORI, ONA, 211 West Fourth Street DAVENORI, DAVENORI, AND AVENORIA, STREET DAVENORI, OVAN, 211 West Fourth Street DA



branch offices are located. Phone or write the one nearest you. We'll send a representative who will arrange to pay you immediately the fair, fixed. Government purchase price which de-pends solely on the age of your typewriter.

There are just these two provisions: First, it must be a standard (not portable) typewriter, built since January 1, 1935. If you don't know how old your machine is, look at the serial number. If it's a Royal and the number is above

CITIES IN WHICH ROYAL BRANCHES ARE LOCATED

IN WHICH ROYAL BRANCHES ARE LO DETROT, MICHEAN, 229 Grinkold Street FVANNULA, INNNAA, 27 Southesa Second Street FORT WAYE, INDIAN, 918 South Clinton Street GANP RATPO, FORMAN, 213 State Street HARTFOR, CONSTITUT, II, Alsylum Street HOUSTON, TEXAS, 502 Caroline Street HOUSTON, TEXAS, 502 Caroline Street JACKSONYLLE, FLORIDA, 603 Laura Street JACKSONYLLE, FLORIDA, 603 Laura Street KANSAN CH, MISSOLA, JOERS Bild, 1006 Grand Are. KNOXYLLE, TENNESSE, 315 Union Afenue HUTLE ROK, ARK, COMMINIP Bild, 306 W. Third St. LOS ANCLLES, CALIFORDIA, 1031 South Fifth Street MINNAAVALE, AKK, COMMINIP Bild, 306 W. Third St. LOS ANCLLES, CALIFORDIA, 1031 South Fifth Street MINNAAVALE, MINNESONA, 312 Les Street MINNAAVALE, SNINSSEN, 315 Les Mitel MINNEAPOLS, 4500 Broad Street NEW MARK, NEW JEISEN, 530 Broad Street NEW MARK, NEW JEISEN, 530 Broad Street NEW MARK, NEW YORK, 250 Broad Street NEW MILLENSESSE, 510 Denderleic Street NEW MILLENSESSE, 510 Denderleic Street NEW MILLENSESSE, 510 Denderleic Street NEW MILLENSESSE, 510 Broad S

1,715,000, the machine is eligible for sale.

The second provision is that the machine b either of the customary type faces: pica or elite. Most all machines *do*.

Upon purchase of your typewriter, and in your presence, our representative will affix a Govern-ment seal to the machine, reading: "Property of the United States Government." This is your guarantee that your machine will be used to help win the war, not returned to private use.

Don't delay. Act now!

Experts say that the speed with which the American war effort moves in the next few months may decide whether the war will be a short one or a long one.

Here's your chance to help in your country's all-out war effort. Decide which machines you all-out war effort. Decide which machines you can do without-and get in touch with your near-est Royal branch office today i If there's no Royal office in your town, there is an authorized Royal representative. Write your nearest Royal branch if you don't know his name and address. We'll then notify the local representative to call.

* * ROYAL Worlds No.1 TYPEWRITER ** **GOES OFF TO WAR!**

Figure 1, Royal Typewriter, LIFE, 24 Aug. 1942, p. 103.



Figure 2, Royal Typewriter, NARA Still Picture Branch, 1944, National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/its_a_womans_war_too/images_html/v ictory_waits.html.