CHAPTER III
HOW WAR GARDENS HELPED
Every Gardener Became a Soldier of the Soil

What the “three R’s” mean to preparation for a life of peace, the three M’s become in the conduct of war. These three M’s stand for men, money and munitions. In its broadest sense, the term munitions includes everything needed by an army, and of all an army’s needs the basic and most important is food.

The quantities of food required by our army are huge. Dietitians estimate that the average man needs, daily, food that will furnish 3,500 calories. The United States army ration allows 4,700 calories to each man, and the unusual exertions demanded of our soldiers make it quite necessary that they have this generous allowance of food. With less they might lack that abundant supply of muscular and nervous energy upon which their very lives depend.

Stated in terms of avoirdupois, the United States army ration is slightly in excess of four and a quarter pounds of food a man per diem. Four pounds of food does not seem like a great quantity. It allows each soldier twenty ounces of fresh beef a day, or its equivalent in fresh mutton, bacon, fish, turkey or other meat; eighteen ounces of flour or bread; twenty ounces of potatoes with proportionate amounts of other vege-
THE WAR GARDEN VICTORIOUS

tables; 3.2 ounces of sugar; 2.4 ounces of beans or 1.6 ounces of hominy or rice; and prunes, apples, peaches, jam, milk, coffee, butter, and so forth, in smaller quantities.

When these amounts are multiplied by a million, the total bulks as huge as the Rockies. It means 4,250,000 pounds of food daily, for seven days a week, and for fifty-two weeks each year. To feed an army of 1,000,000 men for one month, according to the quartermaster’s department of the United States army, there are required 973,000 pounds of butter, 1,000,000 cans of corned beef, 1,000,000 cans of corned-beef hash, 2,000,000 cans of beef, 2,400,000 pounds of coffee, 3,000,000 pounds of sugar, 6,000,000 pounds of bacon, 23,000,000 pounds of frozen beef, 37,500,000 pounds of flour, and other articles in proportion.

As the United States raised an army of 4,000,000 men, the quantity of food that had to be provided was four times as great as the amounts named or 3,892,000 pounds of butter, 4,000,000 cans of corned beef, 4,000,000 cans of corned-beef hash, 8,000,000 cans of beef, 9,600,000 pounds of coffee, 12,000,000 pounds of sugar, 24,000,000 pounds of bacon, 92,000,000 pounds of frozen beef, and 150,000,000 pounds of flour, not to mention the “and so forths.” This huge total sufficed to feed our completed army for one month only.

A year’s supply for this completed army required, in round numbers, 46,704,000 pounds of butter, 48,000,000 cans of corned beef, 48,000,000 cans of corned-beef hash, 96,000,000 cans of beef, 115,200,000 pounds
of coffee, 144,000,000 pounds of sugar, 288,000,000 pounds of bacon, 1,104,000,000 pounds of frozen beef, and 1,800,000,000 pounds of flour.

So huge are these figures that to the average person they are meaningless, but that these army demands constituted a terrific drain on our commercial food supplies was evident to everybody. Practically all of this food was food diverted from its accustomed channels. Not an ounce of it went to the feeding of the civilian population which formerly had practically all of it. At the same time, if our allies were to be saved from utter collapse through hunger, and our own country saved from the plight of having to carry on the war single-handed and alone, it was essential that greater quantities of food be sent to Europe than America had ever before exported. After the war ended, and it became necessary, in some measure, to provide for the population of the enemy countries, still larger demands for food for export were to be expected. The very causes that had produced these conditions had, as we have seen, so stripped the farms of men that a food production commensurate with the needs of the situation was an impossibility.

"Those who cultivated the soil could hardly do more than they were doing," said Luther Burbank, a member of the National War Garden Commission, in speaking of the matter. "It was becoming evident that food, which before had been taken as a matter of course, was in reality the foundation of all life, all knowledge, all progress. What could be done? It became
GARDEN OF A CHICAGO AMATEUR

W. E. Babb, a newspaper reporter in the Illinois metropolis, decided in the spring of 1918 that he would give war gardening a trial although he had doubts as to what the results would be. What he accomplished is only partly shown in the picture, for he carried off a first prize of $100. Contrast his orderly looking plot with the weed-covered tract across the road.
necessary to conserve carefully what already had been produced, and then produce more. Agriculture and horticulture had not generally been taught in the schools; the old hit-or-miss plan of farming was all too common; the home garden was neglected and the school garden a novelty. To the call both to conservation and to increased production, the American people have responded nobly. How quickly they have changed their attitude, how splendidly they have made good by adapting themselves to the new conditions! When the war garden movement was started, the problem of food production was on the way to be solved."

Here, then, was the all-impelling, the all-important reason back of the home food production movement. This was the outstanding motive above all others which made the war garden a thing not only to be desired but actually to be demanded. Our allies and the neutrals, as far as possible, as well as our own people and our army, must be fed—this was the cry from the tower-top, this the call of hungry peoples which had to be answered. Our task was Herculean!

There was one great difficulty in the road to accomplishment: the problem of common psychology. It is recorded that when God called Moses to lead his fellows forth from Egypt, Moses replied: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharoah, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Even so did the average American regard the appeal made to him to raise food and save the world from starvation. The difficulty was that the average American, like the
deliverer of Israel, lacked imagination. He could not visualize the collective contributions of millions of back-yard and vacant-lot gardens. He was like the little girl, who, when asked to save a slice of bread to help feed the army, replied: “Papa, I don’t see any reason why I should save a slice of bread. It can’t feed an army.” Her father took her down to the harbor in New York City and showed her a great transport at the wharf, waiting for food to carry to Europe. He then told her that if every little schoolgirl in the United States saved a slice of bread a day, their combined savings would fill eight large transports every week. Her blue eyes opened wide as the great truth flashed upon her, and after that she didn’t want to eat anything at all.

In his nursery days, the average American had learned that

Little drops of water, little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land.

Unfortunately, however, that infantile lesson had been put away with other childish things when he became a man. The task the National War Garden Commission set itself was to make the average American feel the full truth, the actual force, of that childhood jingle. The truth—the truth that was to set us free—was striking enough. Among the garden records of the National War Garden Commission is the story of a certain garden in Pennsylvania, which was very much like other American back-yard gardens in many respects.
IN AN ITALIAN GARDEN

In New Haven, Connecticut, the side lawn of a handsome home was converted into a food plot. In addition to growing a lot of vegetables, so delighted was the owner that she said never again would her family be without the pleasure which this experience had given them.
In size it was 40x40 feet. The gardener kept a careful record during one entire year of the quantities of food produced in that garden. His figures are as follows:

Beets—25 bunches
Carrots—2 pecks
Radishes—15 bunches
Rutabagas—64
Early peas—32 quarts (pods)
Potatoes—7 pecks
Cabbage—20 heads
Cauliflower—14 heads
Tomatoes—6 baskets
Bunch beans—2½ pecks
Telephone peas—40 quarts (pods)
Peppers—9 dozen
Cucumbers—100
Celery—450 stalks
Rhubarb—10 bunches
Scallions—12 bunches
Parsley—used freely
Dried beans for winter use—20 quarts
Peaches, from two trees in corner of garden—7 baskets
Lettuce—equivalent of 60 heads
Horseradish—all desired
Onion sets—3 quarts
Onions dried—½ bushel
Pole beans—108 quarts

If this production, such as could be had from any ordinary back-yard garden with good soil, were reduced to pounds and ounces, it would be found that this one yard had yielded considerably more than half a ton of foodstuffs. It is reckoned that there are more than 20,000,000 families in the United States. If every family could have a garden, and each garden could yield half a ton of food, the total annual production would aggregate 10,000,000 tons, or almost twice as much in weight as we normally shipped to Europe in a year in pre-war days. Of course it was not possible for each of our 20,000,000 families to have a garden, but with 45 per cent. of our people living in the country or in small towns, and with such vast areas of vacant lots in the larger cities, it would be entirely possible to have 10,000,000 war gardens. These gardens, could they produce at the rate of this Pennsylvania garden, would yearly supply in weight as much food as before the war we annually shipped to Europe.
Such were the possibilities of garden production that stimulated the National War Garden Commission to maximum effort.

Of course, garden food does not possess, pound for pound, anything like the food value of the concentrated foods sent to our allies and to our armies, but garden food is provender, and it is wholesome food. Peas and beans are great meat-conservers; potatoes, both sweet and white, important cereal-savers; and a little larger bulk of many garden products, such as potatoes, will take the place of a smaller quantity of meat or other concentrated foods. To figure out the exact food values of the total products that might be raised in our gardens is of course both impossible and unnecessary. The point is that millions of pounds of food could be produced right in our own yards and in neighboring vacant lots and that by eating these foods we should so lessen the demand on our commercial supplies that these would be sufficient to meet the heavy demands upon them.

To reach the entire population of the United States, to convince one hundred million people of the necessity of gardening, and to convince them to the point of action, was such a colossal task that the Commission hardly dared to hope for the creation of more than one million war gardens during the first year of its activities. Yet the estimated total was in excess of 3,000,000; and in 1918 a very careful canvass set the number of such gardens at 5,285,000.

What these war gardens actually accomplished to-
IN THE CHAMPION GARDEN CITY

This is a small home garden in Marion, Indiana, which boasts of holding the record in the United States for a city of its size in number of war gardens. With a population of only 29,000 persons, it had 14,087 vegetable plots, or almost one for every two inhabitants. Louis De Wolf, chairman of the War Garden Association there, was very active in the work.
ward feeding the army was shown by a careful estimate as to the amount of food which they added to the nation's larder. This was reckoned in 1918 as having a value of $525,000,000. Taking into consideration equivalent food values, it was figured on a conservative basis that our 1918 war gardens grew food equal in body-building power to the meat ration required by an army of 1,000,000 men for 302 days; the bread ration for 248 days; or the entire ration for 142 days. This wonderful saving of commercial supplies made the war-garden movement eminently worth while from this standpoint alone.

Munitions represent only one of the three M's. Money is another. Money makes the army as well as the mare go. The value produced by home gardeners went far to meet the increasing demands for money due to the war. To realize the wonderful financial possibilities of war gardening is almost as difficult as to grasp the possibilities of food production. The products of the little Pennsylvania garden already referred to were worth, according to the records of the gardener, $63.50. That valuation was made at pre-war prices. The same products, in 1918, would have been worth probably half as much again, or close to $100.00. Even if its products were worth only $50.00 that sum would have enabled the gardener to buy, with the money saved by gardening, a Liberty Bond.

Suppose all our war gardens averaged as well, what would be the result? The 5,285,000 gardens of 1918 would have yielded $264,250,000. Actually, the re-
sults were almost double that figure, the estimated value of our war-garden crops for 1918 having been $525,000,000! A half billion dollars! Enough to cover the expenses of the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., and all other similar war-work agencies for a long time; or to build 500 great ships; or to pay for one-twelfth of the fourth Liberty Loan issue!

In thousands of cases his war garden meant to its owner the difference between ability and inability to subscribe to a war loan. There were more than 21,000,000 subscribers to the fourth Liberty Loan. The estimate of war-garden production means that the money saved through war gardening enabled at least one-fourth of these subscribers to become holders of their country’s war-purpose bonds.

Of the three M’s there yet remains the third—men. Just as money saved through gardening can be used for the purchase of bonds instead of food, so labor saved in one field can be shifted to another. Specifically, men released from food handling were free for service elsewhere. And the name of the men so released through war gardening is legion. The products of the little Pennsylvania garden already discussed, weighed in excess of half a ton. Had these products not been raised at home, it would have been necessary to bring their equivalent to the gardener’s home. He has a family of three. Families of three do not buy food in half-ton lots—seldom even in one-hundred-pound lots. To put an equivalent amount of food in his home, therefore, would have required many trips on the part of a
MEDAL IN COMMEMORATION OF THE WAR GARDEN

In recognition of the war time service of the War Garden a commemorative medal was struck by the National War Garden Commission for presentation to the rulers of the United States, England, France, Belgium and Italy. The illustration at the top of this page shows the obverse of this medal. The lower picture is a reproduction of the reverse.
deliveryman, certainly not less than twenty-five. If every war gardener who made enough out of his garden to buy a Liberty Bond also saved his deliveryman twenty-five trips, the total saving of labor was enormous. The number of persons employed, before the war, solely to wait on other persons, was beyond belief. Soon after the United States entered the war, merchants began to face a readjustment of their business. It was estimated that in New York City alone simplification of delivery and clerk systems would release 100,000 men for service in the army. In the aggregate, war gardening aided to an incredible extent in this readjustment.

Nor are these all the benefits conferred by war gardening. Nothing is more essential to success in war than the creation and maintenance of an ardent patriotic spirit. War gardening fostered this spirit by enabling so many individuals not actually in the army to do something tangible in the struggle. Millions of patriots joined the army of the soil because of their deep love for their country, and their desire to help in the hour of need.

Many of the slogans sent ringing throughout the country by the Commission breathed the spirit of America and of democracy. That spirit spoke from the Commission’s posters and other matter. War gardeners were called on by the beautiful figure of Liberty to “Sow the Seeds of Victory.” Another slogan, a clever paraphrase on the title of a famous song, told them to “Keep the Home Soil Turning.” West Virginia started the message: “Food Must Follow the Flag,” which became a household word throughout the United
THE WAR GARDEN VICTORIOUS

States. The Marion (Indiana) War Garden Association placed it squarely up to the home food producers in this fashion: "Earn the Right to Stay at Home—Plant a Garden." The honored title of "Soldier of the Soil" gave the home tiller the feeling that he, too, was performing a service for his country although he was not wearing the uniform; and when he was informed that "Every Garden is a Munition Plant" he knew that he was helping the boys over there to fight their battles, for "The Seeds of Victory Insure the Fruits of Peace." The patriotic spirit is contagious and the war gardener helped mightily to spread it.

Of especial value to the nation in its days of need was the habit of thrift engendered and built up into a common trait by home gardening. Before the war, it is estimated, there were only 300,000 bond-buyers in the United States. More than 21,000,000 people subscribed to the fourth Liberty Loan. The significance of that fact is splendidly summed up in a single sentence by Fred H. Goff, president of the Cleveland Trust Company and a member of the National War Garden Commission. "A nation that saves," says he, "is a nation saved." Truly, war gardening is as full of hidden blessings as the widow's cruse was of oil.
WE HAVE A
War Garden

National War Garden Commission
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE WAR GARDENER'S BOAST
To war gardeners throughout the United States the National War Garden Commission furnished window hangers, printed in green to symbolize growing vegetation. These were proudly displayed in the front windows of several million homes.