**Unit 8: The United States in a Time of Crisis (1929-1945)**

[Topic 5: Teenagers in World War II: The Victory Corps](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=08&topic=05)

Source 6, “Victory Corp: World War II Homefront.”

This Maryland State Archives article gives the reasons and work for the high school Victory Corps.

As Americans became more involved in the escalation of World War II, volunteer organizations began to form. Seeing the need for high school students to become involved, Commissioner of Education John W. Studebaker, on September 25, 1942, upon the recommendation of his advisory Wartime Commission, established the Victory Corps.

The purpose of this student organization was to prepare high school students to aid in the war effort on the homefront and the frontlines.  Both girls and boys from white and African American schools participated.  In order to be a member, a student needed to participate in a physical fitness program, enroll in a war-effort class, and volunteer for at least one extracurricular wartime activity.  Engaging in a physical fitness program was essential because military officials were alarmed by the poor condition of recent enlistments.  At the advent of the war, high school curriculums in Maryland had been altered to accommodate war-effort classes.  By modifying industrial arts and vocational-industrial classes, students could learn about machinery, fundamentals of electricity, radios, canning of food, aeronautics, first aid, and other pertinent topics.

Due to its proximity to Washington, D.C., Maryland had the first three Victory Corps programs: Ellicott City High School in Howard County and Sherwood High School and Montgomery Blair Senior High School, both in Montgomery County.  As the war progressed, 126 of the 145 Maryland county high schools and all of Baltimore City’s high schools had established Victory Corps.

As the war drew to a close, the Victory Corps program was phased out beginning in June of 1944.

**Emerging ESOL / Reader**

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Source 6, “Victory Corp: World War II Homefront.”

This Maryland State Archives article gives the reasons and work for the high school Victory Corps.

**Vocabulary**

* **volunteer –** to work or help without pay
* **commissioner** – a person in charge of part of a government
* **victory –** a win
* **corps –** a group that work together

When World War II started, American people wanted to help. They got together in volunteer groups. John Studebaker was the Commissioner of Education. He saw that high school students could help. He started the high school Victory Corps on September 25, 1942.

1. Why did people get together in volunteer groups?

People got together in volunteer groups because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why was it OK for John Studebaker to say that high school kids could help?

It was OK for John Studebaker to say that high school kids could help because

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3. Is “Victory Corps” a good name for the high school group? Why or why not?

“Victory Corps” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a good name for the high school group because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Intermediate ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 8: The United States in a Time of Crisis (1929-1945)**

[Topic 5: Teenagers in World War II: The Victory Corps](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=08&topic=05)

Source 6, “Victory Corp: World War II Homefront.”

This Maryland State Archives article gives the reasons and work for the high school Victory Corps.

**Vocabulary**

* **war effort –** to work or help without pay
* **front** – the place where soldiers were fighting
* **physical fitness –** keeping your body strong and healthy
* **aeronautics –** the science of flying machines
* **first-aid**- taking care of someone as soon as they get sick or hurt

As World War II got worse, Americans wanted to do something. They got into groups of volunteers. The Commissioner of Education was John W. Studebaker. He saw that high school students could help. He organized them as the Victory Corps on September 25, 1942.

The Victory Corps was to help high school students be part of the war effort at home and at the front. White and African-American schools, boys and girls could be part of it. They had to be part of a physical fitness plan, take a class about war-effort, and volunteer for one or more wartime helping activity away from school. They had to take physical fitness because the army felt that new soldiers were not strong enough. When the war started, high schools in Maryland changed some of their classes about jobs. They added war-effort information about machines, electricity, radios, canned food, aeronautics, first aid and other helping topics.

1. Write one sentence about how the Victory Corps started. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Was the Victory Corps a good idea? Tell why or why not. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How would high school students use war-effort information and special classes?

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**Advanced ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 8: The United States in a Time of Crisis (1929-1945)**

[Topic 5: Teenagers in World War II: The Victory Corps](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=08&topic=05)

Source 6, “Victory Corp: World War II Homefront.”

This Maryland State Archives article gives the reasons and work for the high school Victory Corps.

**Vocabulary**

* **organize** – to get a group of people together for a reason

World War II got worse, and America became more involved, people at home wanted to help. They organized or joined volunteer groups. John W. Studebaker was the Commissioner of Education and saw that high school students could help. He set up the Victory Corps for high school students on September 25, 1942.

The purpose of the group was to help high school students be part of the war-effort at home and at the front. All students - boys, girls, black, white - could participate. They had to be part of a physical fitness program, take a war-effort class, and volunteer in at least one war-effort activity outside of school. The army insisted on physical fitness because new soldiers were not strong enough to fight. When the war started, high schools in Maryland changed some of their classes to include the war-effort. They added information that would help students be ready to contribute to the safety of the country. The classes taught about machines, electricity, radios, canning food, aeronautics, first aid and other important topics.

Maryland is very close to Washington, DC, so it had the first three Victory Corps programs:

1. Ellicott City High School, Howard County
2. Sherwood High School, Montgomery County
3. Montgomery Blair Senior High School, Montgomery County

As the war went on, all of the Baltimore City high schools and 126 Maryland county high schools were part of the Victory Corps program. Only 19 county high schools in Maryland did not participate. In June 1944, the Victory Corps started to close down as the war began to end.

1. What did students have to do to be part of the Victory Corps?

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1. Why did three Maryland high schools get the first Victory Corps programs? What helped them?

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1. Why do you think some Maryland high schools were not part of the Victory Corps?

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| **BONUS** – Make a poster or write an ad encouraging high school students to join the Victory Corps. |