

Posters

Memo to Roy Stryker
From Ed Roskam
Re: Poster Campaign in Factories

I would like to present to you an idea which came to me as a result of listening to the President's "State of the Nation" speech and also as an answer to an article in the N. Y. Times stating that Production had gone up steeply after Pearl Harbor only to drop off again by now.

I understand that Posters have already been sent into the factories the "Keep 'Em Rolling" type of posters which OEM has produced. Without implying any criticism of these posters from the point of view of design, I feel not only that have been made obsolete by world events, but especially that their effectiveness is reduced by a lack of direct, personal and specific appeal. They do nothing, I fear, to make each individual worker feel that he, Joe Doakes, is personally doing a job which is vital to National Safety, and to the continued life of his friends in the Navy and Army. These, already existing posters are impersonal; They can't help but be — They cover too much territory.

Now, I think there is a way to produce a poster series which does not suffer from these faults, without materially increasing their expense. The series is based on the President's speech and is directed at groups of workers as small as a couple of dozen per factory. The accompanying miniature sketch dummy can serve as an example. It is intended to be produced in sizes somewhere between 15" x 20" and 30" x 40". This particular design is from the AIRCRAFT WORKER SERIES. The bottom Blue panel is the same in all posters, no matter what series. It can be produced once, in a single blue plate. The red 60,000 is the same for the whole Aircraft series, need be produced only one. The black and white cutout varies. It should be produced in off-set or perhaps some cheap gelatin process particularly suited to comparatively small runs. The background of planes will be made here by a paste-up, then photographically duplicated, so that it is available for any shape of cut-out.

The next step is to determine which are the most important categories of workers in aircraft. Let us assume that they turn out to be riveters, engine assembly workers, stamp press operators, etc. etc. The posters can then be varied for each group and sent to the factories in batches containing sever of each category. Thus in the riveters dept. there will be a riveter on the poster; in the Press room, a stamp press

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operator; in the engine assembly a mechanic at work.

The quantity of each produces could be restricted to the demand — as few as a couple of hundred. Yet the main structure of the posters. The expensive color plates would be mass products.

Of course this would require a careful survey of the most important operations to be covered. And, no doubt, we would have to make a good many of these pictures which are not now immediately available from existing files. Of course, these pictures would have to be perfect from the point of view of what the worker is doing. Any wrong detail would cause the poster to back-fire.

The important thing I am trying to put over is a poster series which, instead of dealing in Heroic generalities, would show the worker as he thinks of himself and connect this image with the National War Program. It should induce identification of the individuals with the Nation as a whole.

The same kind of treatment could be given to any other program considered important: Tanks, Guns and Ships.