

Campus Life during WWII

Interesting Facts:

- New classes were added to aid the war effort: camouflage, aerodynamics, censorship, first aid and military history
- “Whiz Kids” 1942-1943 basketball team was one of the best in Illini history—students were criticized for attending games and conducting ‘business as usual’
- Enrollment sharply declined after war broke out—12,624 in 1938-1939 down to 5,824 in 1943-1944 (3,429 of which were women)
- 19 University physicists participated in the Manhattan project
- Noyes Laboratory conducted classified wartime research—developing 50 new types of synthetic rubber, work on an anti-malaria drug, field kit for testing water purity, top-secret munitions laboratory (received \$900,000 in federal money), work on a smoke screen to shield ships, methods of applying DDT – a South Farms field was a proving ground, and the east roof of Memorial Stadium was used for fog dispersal experiments
- A controversial experiment was conducted by Harold H. Mitchell, animal science professor - extreme temperatures on mineral and vitamin deficiency. He constructed a climate-controlled chamber in Davenport Hall and recruited a few conscientious objectors to sit in the chamber for 6-8 hours each day. The temperatures and humidity’s would simulate those of the desert and jungle. He demonstrated the need to replenish salt in these conditions.

RECORDS SET BY “WHIZ KIDS” 1942-1943	
TEAM, BIG TEN RECORDS	
Total points, season	755
Total points, single game	92
Baskets, season	325
Baskets, single game	41
PHILIP, BIG TEN RECORDS	
Total points, season	235
Total points, single game	49
Baskets, single game	16
Baskets, season	111
MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS	
First team in 13 years to sweep Big Ten schedule	
First team to win two consecutive titles since 1914	
Total points, two seasons, by Illinois player—Philip, 414	
Locals 3-year Illini record, set by Chuck Carney, 1929-1922	
Largest victory margin in Big Ten history—67	

8 December 1941



January 1942

It is proposed the University change from two 18 week semesters to four 12 week quarters. Professors vote it down 103-75 arguing this schedule would require more work with no pay increase.



April 1942

Kenney Gym and the Gymnasium Annex are converted into living facilities, and the Illini Union ballroom is converted into a mess hall.

Sugar rationing hits campus—fraternities, sororities and independent houses are required to register for their quotas.

Below: Soldiers on campus, 1944 Illio

Summer 1942

Navy opens schools for diesel engine operators and diesel engine officers; operators are housed in men’s residence halls, officers in Busey and Evans; instruction takes place in the West Hall of Memorial Stadium.



December 1942

Gasoline rationing hits causing a staggered winter break departure schedule. Graduate students and seniors leave on day 1, juniors and sophomores on day 2, freshman on day 3.



Above: ASTP students marching through campus, 1944 Illio

February 1943

Four weeks are added to the summer session and the accelerated schedule of three 16 week semesters commences.

Below: Diesel school students studying, 1944 Illio

July 1943

Navy V-12 program commences—faculty begin training medical, dental and engineering officers.

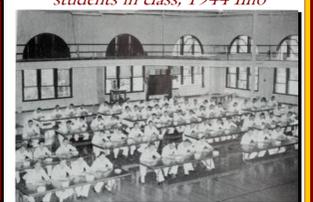
The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) also commences—to train officers in specialized fields—this group of men begin living in fraternity houses.



Below: Navy Signal school students in class, 1944 Illio

Summer 1943

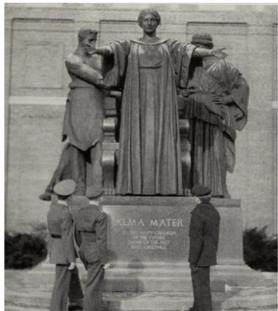
Illini Union cafeteria closes to civilians and opens to ASTP trainees. Students are forced to eat in the often unsanitary campus restaurants. The cafeteria reopened in October 1943, with ASTP men dining in the ice rink.



Post-War:

- Across all University of Illinois campuses : 20,276 Illini served during the war, 738 were killed
- Enrollment skyrocketed: 9,515 by Fall 1945, 12,780 by Spring 1946 (to include 5,794 veterans)
- Campus housing shortage:
 - the Great Hall of Memorial Stadium, Kenney Gym Annex, and the Ice Rink were used to house 1,000; fraternity capacity was increased by 250.
 - University obtained 275 pre-fab houses for veterans and their families. They were placed Stadium Terrace complex west of Memorial Stadium, and Illini Village south and west of Alpha Tau Omega and Sigma Nu houses on Pennsylvania Ave .
 - US War Department allowed 2,000 student veterans to live at Chanute Army Air Base in Rantoul
- University still could not handle the potentially large influx of students, so the Chicago division at Navy Pier (4,000 students) and the Galesburg division (432 students) were created
- University accommodated 28,533 students in Fall 1946 – 18,378 at Urbana (11,200 were veterans)

Right: Soldiers looking up at Alma Mater with Foellinger Auditorium in the background, 1946 Illio



Below: Galesburg campus, 1947 Illio



Above: Navy Pier campus, 1947 Illio

8 May 1945

VE Day—over 3,000 students gather in front of the auditorium for a brief service.

Right: Front cover of the 1944 Illio Victory Edition



15 August 1945

VJ Day—the University celebrates with a two day holiday.



Left: The pages of content from the 1944 Illio. The year’s publication was dubbed the Victory edition and included a dedication to those Illini who served, were still serving, and those who gave their lives.