

President's Message

Andrew E. Masich

As the keystone of the American “Arsenal of Democracy,” Pennsylvania factories worked day and night producing equipment and supplies while Pittsburgh’s men, women, and children earned a reputation for their “can do” spirit that helped win World War II.

In addition to ships, guns, and munitions, our region also played a role in creating one of the most iconic wartime figures—a no-nonsense worker named “Rosie the Riveter.”

In 1943, Westinghouse artist J. Howard Miller developed a poster featuring a Westinghouse Electric worker rolling up her sleeves to help the Allied effort as part of the “We Can Do It” campaign. Miller’s powerful imagery may have even inspired Norman Rockwell to create his own “Rosie the Riveter” for the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*. At the same time, lyrics of a song titled “Rosie the Riveter” were spreading across the country.

Over time, Miller’s “We Can Do It” image and “Rosie the Riveter” merged in the public’s mind. His unforgettable poster of a working woman making a muscle remains a symbol of America’s “We Can Do It” spirit to this day. Meanwhile, millions of real-life “Rosie the Riveters” were entering the workforce for the first time, including 30,000 women working at factories and mills in Pittsburgh.

Beginning April 25, the History Center’s new exhibit *We Can Do It! WWII* will demonstrate Pittsburgh’s and Western Pennsylvania’s role on both the home front and the battlefield during this critical time in world history. So roll up your sleeves, make a muscle, and head down to the History Center to help us thank the greatest generation who reminds us that, working together, “We can do it!”



(TOP) Norman Rockwell portrayed Rosie in a painting that graced the cover of the May 29, 1943, issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*. Some believe this is a satirical take on Miller’s poster while also bearing a striking resemblance to Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel Isaiah. The popularity of Rockwell’s imagery helped cement the image of “Rosie the Riveter” making a muscle.



J. Howard Miller produced dozens of posters for Westinghouse during World War II, including “It’s a Tradition” in 1943 with a female war worker similar to “We Can Do It.”
April Cass.