

## AGAINST THE DARKNESS



All life was lived with blackouts, even funny cartoons like the popular Bugs Bunny had blackouts—in Technicolor.

It was all taken very seriously at first, and oddly enough, lootings and muggings were non-existent. It sounds weird to say it, given the situation—dark nights perfect for robbery or muggings—but it was not.

There was never a minute during World War II that lacked people ready to spring into action. Near airfields, volunteer pilots even helped patrol the skies. Air Raid activities and blackouts were taken most seriously along coastal cities and towns, especially Hawaii. But, unfortunately, during the first months of war, the Eastern Seaboard, which needed it most, did not impose blackouts on a strict hourly basis. Against the darkness of the night, places like Atlantic City's Boardwalk, New York's Broadway, Miami Beach—great metropolis of people and bright lights—stood out vividly for miles and for many miles out from sea.

With dark of night, daring U-boat captains who ventured close to the coast found beautiful silhouettes of tanker and merchant ships moving slowly and calmly in the waters against lighted city-backdrops. There was not enough radar to go around, nor enough patrol ships. It was made worse by the stance taken by Adm. King that allowed helpless ships to sail from American ports, unescorted till they joined convoys in midocean. The German U-boats in 1942 just picked off the sitting targets and enjoyed their year of glory torpedoing allied oil tankers and merchants. It was a very cold world, full of hardship and sorrow. Those commanders and crews that returned to Germany were made heroes.

Approximately 116 merchant ships were sunk in the Atlantic in the first six months of 1942. Overall, 834 thousand tons accounted for June alone, namely 173

All windows had to be completely covered. No trace of light was seen, not a flashlight or even a lighted cigarette.

### Food For Thought

You are told it is a good thing to have a small Victory Garden, can your vegetables and store them in your house. Then, the dirty trick of food rationing pops up, and you are supposed to declare every single little edible you have, so that the rationing board would be able to deduct your food stamps. Farmers who were good at victory gardening and canning were in a sense penalized for having so much, and would get less stamps than the guy who did not bother with Victory Gardens. Hmmm, something is screwy here.