

National defense became a priority in 1958, with additional funding provided for the Office of Civil & Defense Mobilization (OC&DM) to create a national network of fallout shelters. In factories, schools, department stores and public offices large rooms were stocked with enough food, water, and sanitary supplies to last their occupants two weeks. Selected to shelter large numbers of civilians from radioactive fallout only, these shelters offered no protection from blast effects.



Families were encouraged to construct individual bomb shelters in their homes or backyards, stocked with nonperishable supplies. The OC&DM provided blueprints for affordable bomb shelters, and traveling exhibits toured the country highlighting the ease and affordability of shelter construction.

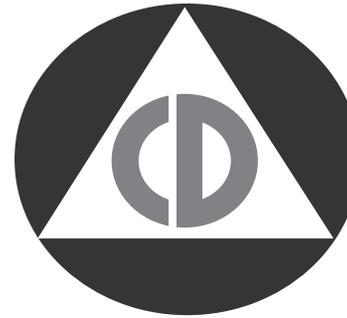


The peak of construction came in 1962 with the Cuban Missile Crisis, when Soviet nuclear missiles were found emplaced just 90 miles from American soil. As the conventional war in Vietnam developed, the threat of atomic bombs faded from public focus, and civil defense program centered to respond to industrial and natural disasters.



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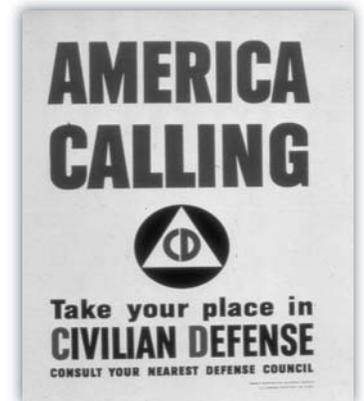
*The Chemical Corps
 &
 Civil Defense*



Development of long-range bombers in the 1930s brought the threat of aerial attack to civilian populations around the world. The “Blitz” on London by the German Luftwaffe, and the decimation of Nankeen, China by the Japanese, showed the defenselessness of cities to air raids. A Chemical Warfare Service liaison officer, having observed London’s devastation firsthand, recommended the United States create a civil defense program modeled after that of the British. Although still at peace, municipal leaders across the United States asked for assistance in preparing their cities against similar threats.

It was the view of the Chemical Warfare Service (CWS) that the military had an inescapable responsibility to protect the American people from theoretical enemy attack. In early 1941 the Adjutant General authorized the CWS to implement their plan to organize, education and train the public in civil defense.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) was established with a significant role in preparing the Zone of Interior (the continental U.S.) for enemy attacks. This represented one of the first times in history that government and civil



agencies worked together for national defense in war. While the military would handle certain aspects of civil defense, like air raid sirens, large area smoke screens, and disposal of unexploded ordinance, civilians would serve as air raid wardens, organize rescue parties, and perform fire fighting services.



Air Raid Wardens plan the defense of Washington, D.C., 1942

After America's entry into World War II the need for an organized civil defense program was immediate. With the loss of the Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor the west coast of the United States was open to Japanese invasion, and the east coast subject to attack by German U-boats.



CD training photo showing use of the "infant protector"

Nine Civil Defense Training Schools were established to meet this demand. Students learned how to identify enemy aircraft, recognize poison gases, and extinguish incendiary bombs. Volunteers in communities across the country, identifiable in their white helmets and brassards, protected their neighborhoods by enforcing blackouts, preventing the enemy from using lights as navigation guides or target identifiers.

In addition, the CWS designed and produced gas masks for infants, children and adults. Distributed by the Office of Civil Defense, this equipment would have protected the American public had poison gas been used by the Axis powers. Before the war's end over 12 million civilian masks had been manufactured and issued to school kids, housewives, and defense plant workers.

Wearing a gas mask was uncomfortable and frightening for most children. To ease this fear, the CWS, in partnership with animator Walt Disney, created the Mickey Mouse™ Gas Mask, hoping to make the experience more enjoyable. Only a small number were made before the threat of attack eased, eliminating further need for a civilian gas mask.



Walt Disney showing mask illustration to Major General William Porter, Chief of the CWS, 1942

By 1943 the United States felt secure enough to close the Civil Defense Training Schools. The program had offered 274 courses and trained over ten thousand students from all 48 states, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and Uruguay.

From 1941 to 1943 the CWS and Office of Civil Defense had operated 9 civil defense training schools, conducted research and

development for civilian protection, prepared and distributed public educational material, issued gas masks, trained firefighters and neighborhood watches, and simulated hundreds of air raids in major cities.

Apart from a few minor incidents mainland America was left unscathed by the war. No longer needed, the Office of Civil Defense faded in importance at the end of World War II.

The detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb in 1949 brought for a public outcry for the revitalization of the civil defense program. The Federal Civil Defense Program (FCDP) was created to distribute information to prepare Americans for a nuclear war. Posters, pamphlets, and instructional films were released. Adults were instructed how to "atomic-proof" their homes, and children taught to "duck and cover" when they saw the flash of a nuclear blast.

As the military established an international chain of early warning radar sites the FCDP created a system of public alert sirens and radio and television emergency broadcast systems. The U.S. Army Chemical Corps provided critical calculations for fallout levels in major cities, and again distributed gas masks. Geiger counters and protective suits were new additions to America's civil defense

