

World War II Ration Books

Number	Effective	Qty (Million)	Stamps/book
1	May 1942	190	28
2	Jan 1943	126	192
3	Sep 1943	118 150	288
4	Nov 1943	163	384
5	Un-issued	150	192

RATION BOOK HOLDER

PROPERTY OF _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Vitamin Enriched!

**GARDNER'S
PURITY
BREAD**

*at your
Independent Grocers*



Merchants distributed free holders and housewives kept books of the entire family inside for shopping trips

- The Office of Price Administration (OPA) ran the rationing program
- Sugar was the first commodity rationed and the last (1947) un-rationed
- At peak periods, 3 billion ration stamps printed every day
- 8,000 local rationing boards administered the program to the public
- Most rationing ended August 1945
- The preceding numbered books were needed to get the next numbered book but certain validated stamps in books #1, #2, and #3 were good to 1945
- Books were available from local boards by mail or at public schools
- Each family member received a book and books could be combined for family grocery shopping
- Stamps were validated for a specific effective date and good for a designated period or indefinitely
- Eggs, fresh/frozen fruits and vegetables, grain products, clothing, and fish were NEVER rationed as supplies were adequate



Come on, GIVE!
You've got
your own ration points
for your Carnation!

2 Life Magazine **2**
October 4, 1943

"Once they get *nutrition* points, no self-respecting infants will hold out on *ration* points! Put it to them this way. Now they're on their own, with the ration books Uncle Sam has given them. And a wonderful use for a precious *red point* is a tall can of Carnation."

Carnation urges housewives to buy their brand but you could use your *red points* for any brand of evaporated milk. At times, grocers had only one brand and citizens needing that item did not bother which brand it was.



1

War Ration Book One

Cover Types

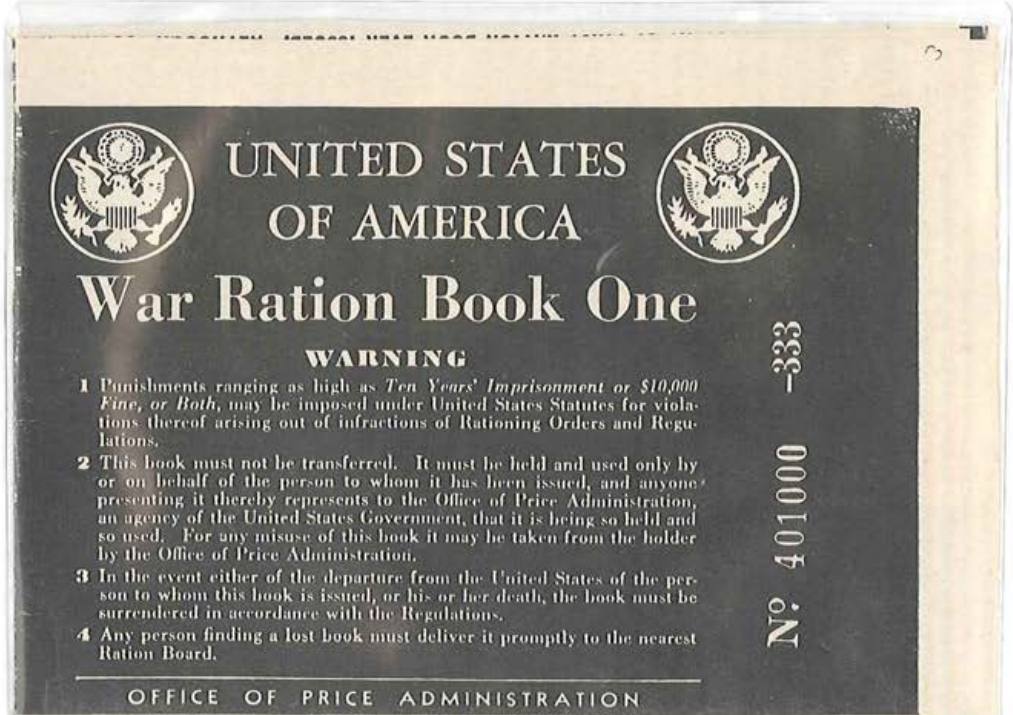
1

(top) These clippings are from *Life Magazine*, May 11, 1942, and give Americans a first glance picture of the new ration book (reduced size Photostat). NOTE: info on use, sources, and Europe comparisons.

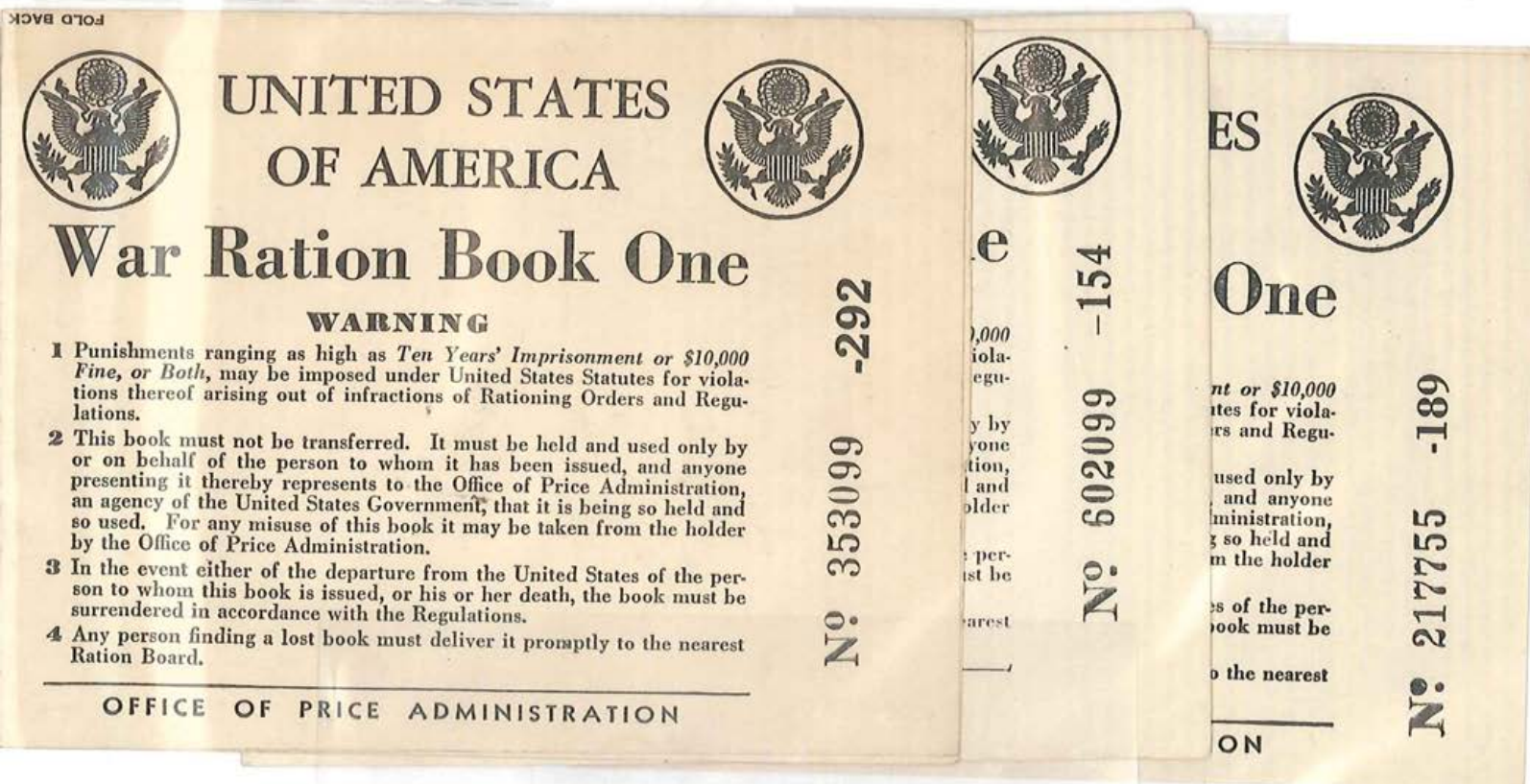
(bottom) Actual books with black serial number 4.5mm high. N in N° = (left) thin 1-mm [w/thick suffix]; (middle) medium 1+mm; and (right) thick 1.5mm.

On May 4, for the first time in its history, the people of the United States lined up inside schoolhouses to register for their first book of rationing coupons. Sugar is the first commodity for which War Ration Book One will be used. All sugar sales stopped April 27. They were resumed May 5 where registration was completed, but only to consumers armed with a war ration book. The fixed ration of half-pound a week per person is half what the sweet-toothed U. S. public normally consumes, but

is almost twice as much as allotments in France and Italy. Commercial users of sugar, such as bakeries, candy and ice-cream manufacturers, received ration books April 28-29, were allotted about 70% normal requirements. The existing sugar shortage which necessitates rationing so that all on the home front may have a fair share, is due to 1) fact that 62% of sugar used in U. S. was imported from Philippines, Hawaii and West Indies; 2) large amounts of sugar are used in manufacture of alcohol for explosives.



FOLD BACK



1

Pane of 28 Stamps

Folded to show left and right halves

1

Used first for sugar, second for coffee (November 29, 1942), and third for shoes (expired February 1943).
Examples: Stamp #12 = 5 lbs of sugar; #25 coffee (1 lb. for 5 weeks ending April 25, 1943); #17 pair shoes
mail order (could be called the *Sears* stamp as they dominated market); and #18 pair shoes retail merchant.

Certificate

This is to Certify that pursuant to the Rationing Orders and Regulations administered by the OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION, an agency of the United States Government,

(Name, Address, and Description of person to whom the book is issued:)

Pitts

(Last name)

Mary

(First name)

Lee

(Middle name)

(Street No. or P. O. Box No.)

(Street or R. F. D.)

Jackson Springs Moore

(City or town)

(County)

N.C.

(State)

Stamps must not be detached except in the presence of the retail



Stamp #19 & #20
Not validated.

OPA redeemed
92% of all the
other stamps.

of Registrar

____ ft. ____ in. ____ lbs. ____ yrs. Sex { Male ☐ Female ☐
 (Height) (Weight) (Color of eyes) (Color of hair) (Age)

has been issued the attached War Ration Stamps this _____ day of _____, 1942, upon the basis of an application signed by himself ☐, herself ☐, or on his or her behalf by his or her husband ☐, wife ☐, father ☐, mother ☐, exception ☐. (Check one.)

____ (Signature)

(Registrar)

Local Board No. _____ County _____ State _____

or, his employee, or person authorized by him to make delivery.



Pane variety at
right has
simulated
perforations

Cover Types

Top Row = 3.5mm BLACK serial numbers with 2mm BLACK suffix

2nd Row = 4.5mm BLACK serial numbers; left has one staple, right two staples

3rd Row = 6mm RED serial numbers; left BLACK suffix, right RED suffix

Bottom Row = 4.5mm RED serial numbers; left narrow (2mm) digits, right wide (3.5mm) digits

25/ 026

DS UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO



Nº 734284 CQ

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO



(Name)

(Street number or rural route)

Nº 375443CN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO

IDENTIFICATION

Watson S. Peck
(Name of person to whom book is issued)

(Street number or rural route)

56 M



OFFICE OF PRICE ADM.

R-123

443CN

576566 AR

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO



(Name)

(Street number or rural route)

999254 CU

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO

IDENTIFICATION

Mrs. Fred T. Miller
(Name of person to whom book is issued)

(Street number or rural route)

59 Female



OFFICE OF PRICE ADM.

R-123

999254CU

395346 BV

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO



(Name)

(Street number)

(City or post office)

ISSUED BY LOCAL BOARD No. 3

(Street address of local board)

By

(Signature)

SIGNATURE

(To be signed by the person to whom this book is issued, or by another person in his behalf)

38104 F

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK TWO

IDENTIFICATION

Douglas K. Lehman
(Name of person to whom book is issued)

(Street number or rural route)

Englewood
(City or post office)

(State)

(Age)

(Sex)

ISSUED BY LOCAL BOARD No. 3

(County)

8 N. Dean St.
(Street address of local board)

By

(Signature of issuing officer)

SIGNATURE

(To be signed by the person to whom this book is issued, or by another person in his behalf)



OFFICE OF PRICE ADM.

R-123

38104F

1943

WARNING

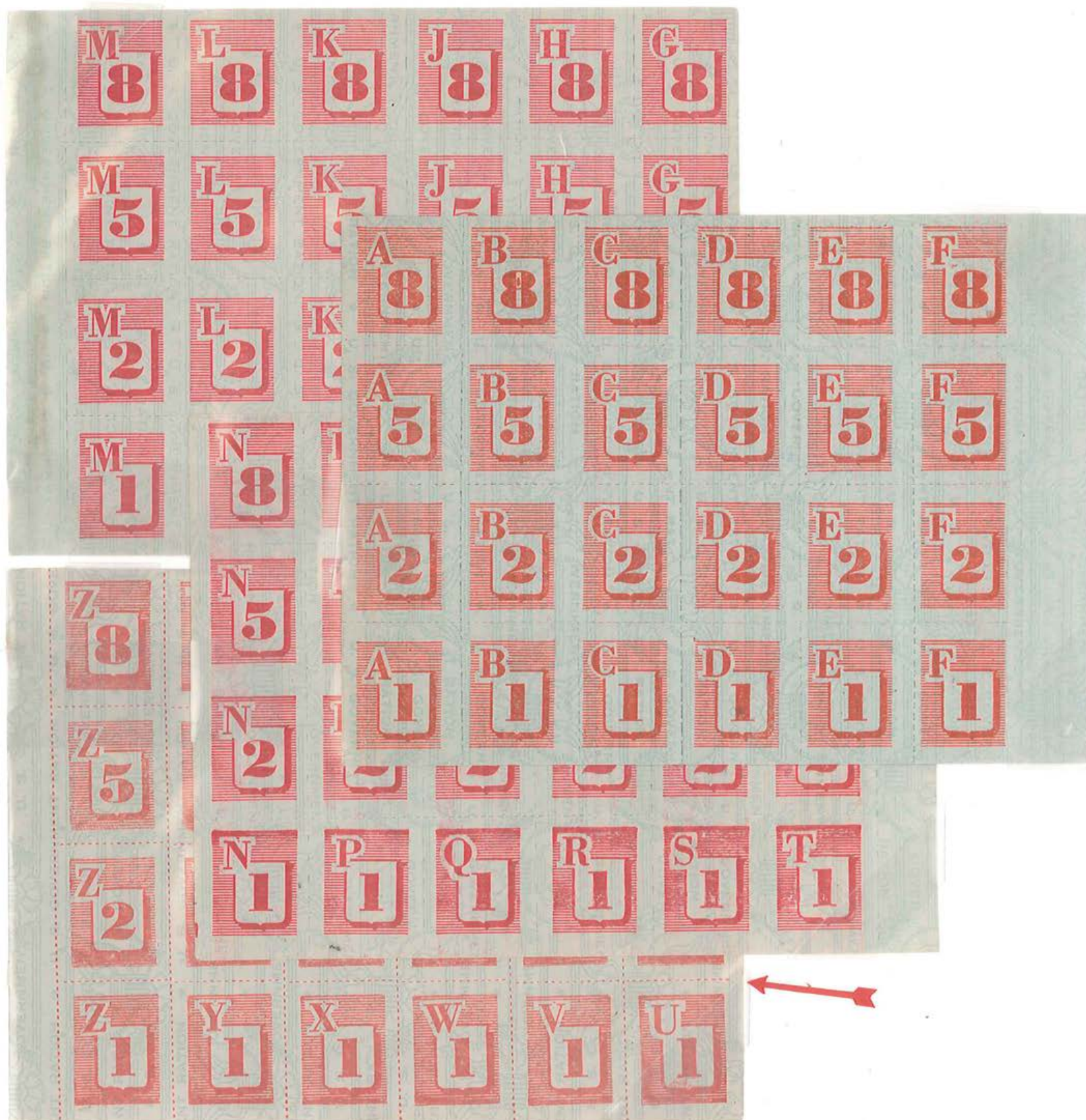
- 1 This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell or give it to any other person or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods for the person to whom it was issued.
 - 2 This book must be returned to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it, if the person to whom it was issued is inducted into the armed services of the United States, or leaves the country for more than 30 days, or dies. The address of the Board appears above.
 - 3 A person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it.
 - 4 PERSONS WHO VIOLATE RATIONING REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO \$10,000 FINE OR IMPRISONMENT, OR BOTH.
- OPA Form No. R-121

- 1 This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell or give it to any other person or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods for the person to whom it was issued.
 - 2 This book must be returned to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it, if the person to whom it was issued is inducted into the armed services of the United States, or leaves the country for more than 30 days, or dies. The address of the Board appears above.
 - 3 A person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it.
 - 4 PERSONS WHO VIOLATE RATIONING REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO \$10,000 FINE OR IMPRISONMENT, OR BOTH.
- OPA Form No. R-121

Red Stamps

4 panes of 24 stamps

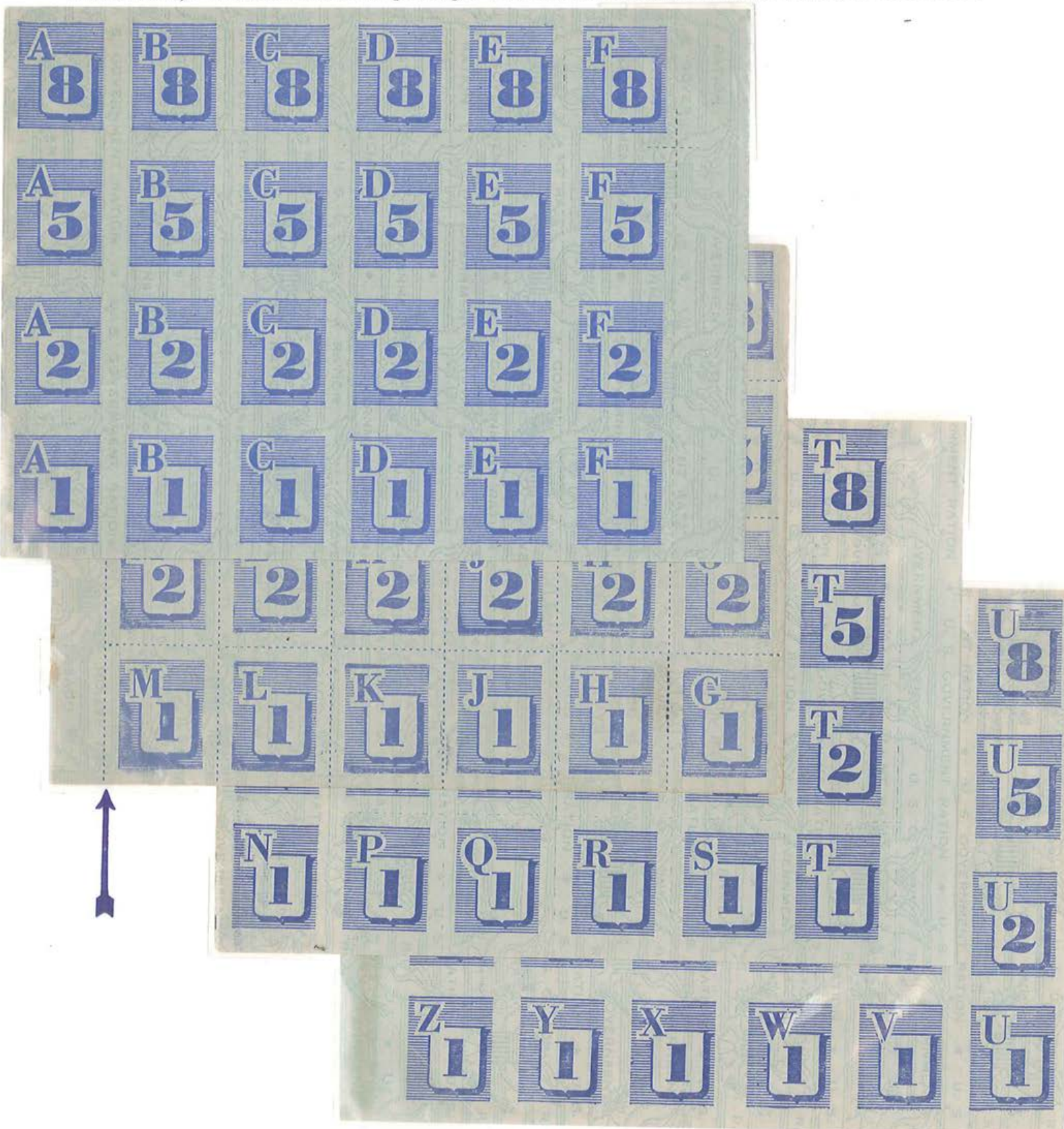
This color allotted 16 points per week for meats, butter, fats, cheese, and canned fish. There are 2 major printing varieties, one without simulated perforations and one with (uncommon, 1 pane shown)



Blue Stamps

4 panes of 24 stamps

Introduces the point system, for example #2 can of peas = 16 points; #2 can grapefruit juice = 4 points (at time of issue). This color allotted 16 points per week for canned fruits & vegetables and processed foods.



3

War Ration Book No. 3

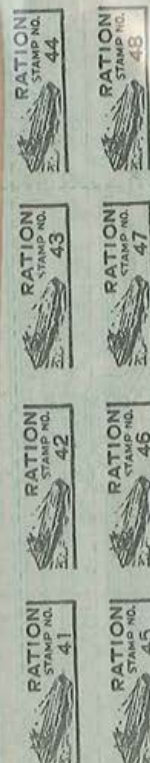
3

Cover Types

Serial Number data, from top to bottom:

- (1) 5.5mm RED, fancy font
- (2) 6mm RED, BLACK suffix
- (3) 4.5mm RED, BLACK suffix
- (4) 4.5mm RED, RED suffix
- (5) 4.5mm BLACK nos.
- (6) 4.5mm BLACK; blind (embossed) "N" to the left of number (scarce)
- (7) ★ (star), used by the BEP on replacement books for those damaged during printing (scarce)
- (8) Some books have serial numbers repeated inside without suffix (uncommon), 6.5mm RED, BLACK suffix & 6mm inside, fancy font

All books lack stamp on cover and use a VALID handstamp. Notation of "book #4" indicates book #4 issued with or shown to get book #3



689462

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

569762 DC

WAR RATION BOOK No. 2 Void if

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

667015 P

WAR RATION BOOK No. 2 Void if

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

838515 CG

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3 Void if altered

Identification of person to whom issued: PRINT IN FULL

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

130390 EX

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3 Void if altered

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

622265 CY

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3 Void if altered

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

834039 CY

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3 Void if altered

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

No 388500

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3 Void if altered

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

689462 EF

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3 Void if altered

Identification of person to whom issued: PRINT IN FULL

(First name)

(Middle name)

(Last name)

Street number or rural route

City or post office

State

AGE

SEX

WEIGHT

HEIGHT

OCCUPATION

SIGNATURE

(Person to whom book is issued. If such person is unable to sign because of age or incapacity, another may sign in his behalf.)

WARNING

This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell it to any other person, or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods in accordance with regulations of the Office of Price Administration. Any person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it. Persons who violate rationing regulations are subject to \$10,000 fine or imprisonment, or both.

LOCAL BOARD ACTION

Issued by

(Local board number)

(Date)

Street address

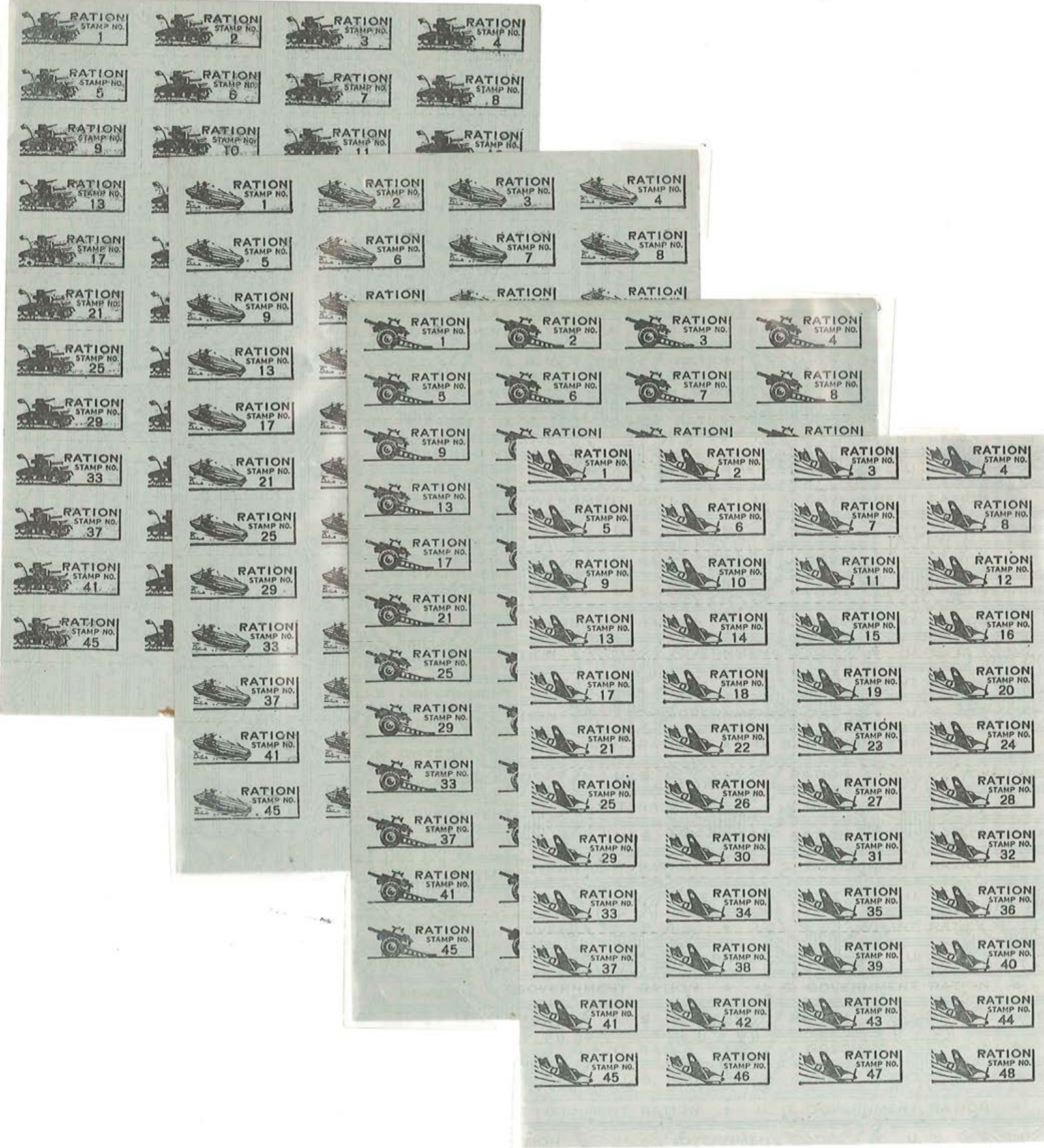
City

State

(Signature of issuing officer)

4 panes of 48 stamps

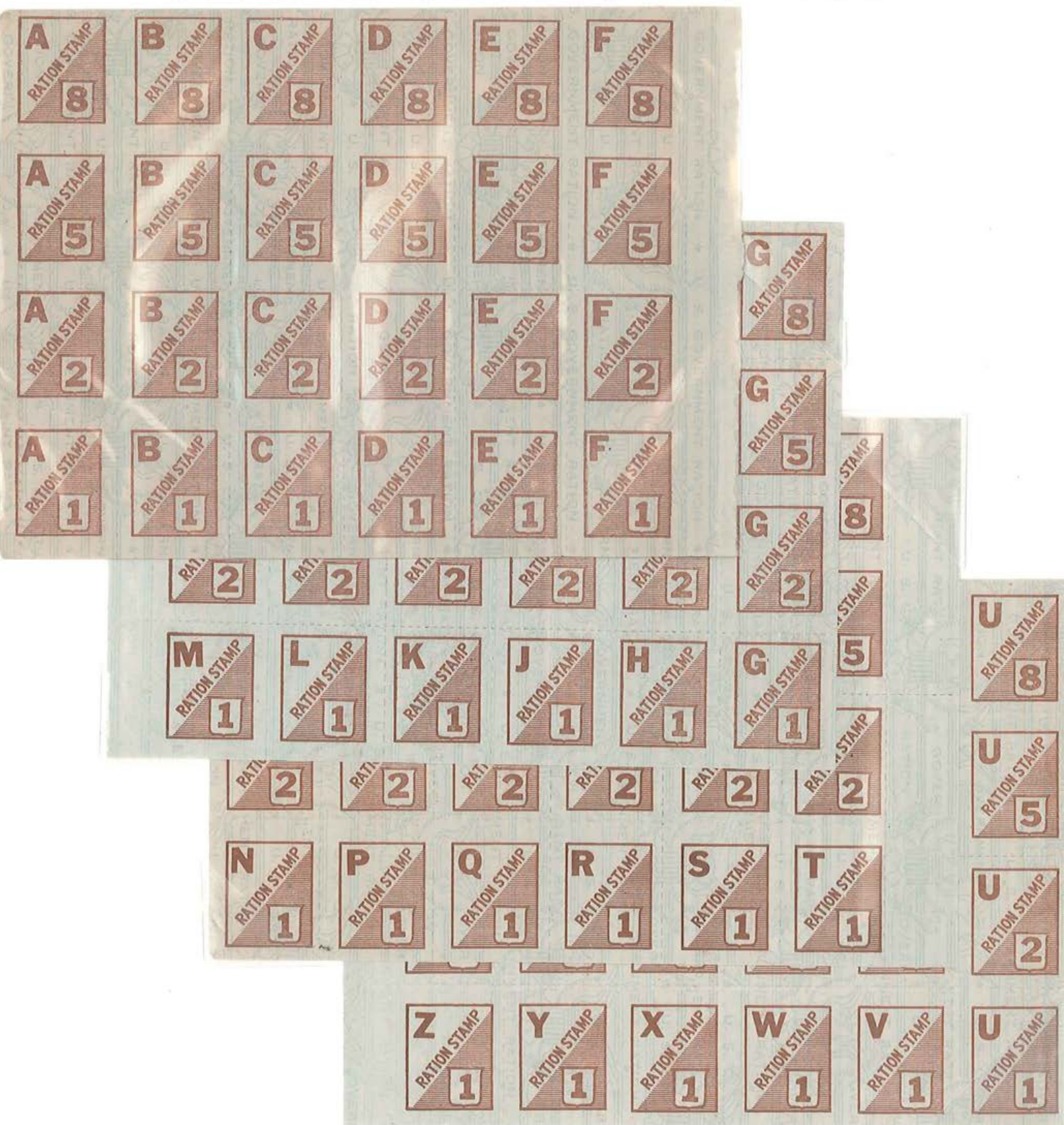
Airplane stamps #1 to #4 were incrementally validated for a pair of shoes with indefinite use. The tank, ship and artillery piece stamps were NEVER validated and usually found intact in all surviving ration books #3.



Brown (Tan) Stamps

4 panes of 24 stamps

Similar to red stamps, OPA validated these stamps for butter, cheese, lards, and fats. Most families used most of these before rationing ended and surviving books usually lack these panes.



3

3-Part Application

3

STUB

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

STUB

WAR RATION BOOK NO. 3 IDENTIFICATION STUB
AFTER COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION, TEAR OFF THIS STUB AND BE SURE
TO KEEP IT UNTIL YOU GET YOUR WAR RATION BOOK NO. 3

Nº 88140 S

Tear Off Here

Tear Off Here

Part 1 = Stub or receipt

Part 2 & 3 = Application to
OPA (Part 3 retained by OPA)Part 2 returned to citizen as
"address label" in window
portion of envelope with books
for entire familyPostage to send application was
either 2¢ or 3¢ depending on
whether mailed within the
same city as the local board

2 CENTS POSTAGE IF MAILED IN

DETROIT, MICH.

3 CENTS POSTAGE ELSEWHERE



OPA Mailing Center

DETROIT, MICH.

2 CENTS POSTAGE IF MAILED IN

BOSTON, MASS.

3 CENTS POSTAGE ELSEWHERE



OPA Mailing Center

BOSTON, MASS.

OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

POSTMASTER—DO NOT FORWARD
 IF UNDELIVERED RETURN TO:
 OPA MAIL CENTER

CHARLESTON, W. VA.

DO NOT FOLD OR TEAR OFF

Name

Virgil William Weber

Mailing
address

303 5th Ave.

(Number)

(Street, R. F. D., or General Delivery)

City or post
office and State

Montgomery W. Va.

Nº 696923 DE

This application

4

862612 EK
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



Nº 265318 DW

OFFICE OF PRICE
ADMINISTRATION

4

466850 BM
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



WAR RATION BOOK FOUR

995410 EB

4

449927 FM

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



4

438727 T
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



4

98130 BS
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



4

389264 CB
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



199671

4

199671 G
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



WAR RATION BOOK FOUR

Issued to

Glenn R. Ward

(Print first, middle, and last names)

Complete address

Rm 10 Petrolia Hotel

Taft California

READ BEFORE SIGNING

In accepting this book I recognize that it remains the property of the United States Government. I will use it only in the manner and for the purposes authorized by the Office of Price Administration.

Void if Altered

Glenn R. Ward

(Signature)

It is a criminal offense to violate rationing regulations.

OPA Form R-145

16-35570-1

War Ration Book Four

4

Cover Types

Serial Number data and Printer, from top to bottom:

- (1) 4.5x2.5mm RED, BLACK suffix, Con F. Curran, St. Louis, MO
- (2) 4.5mm BLACK, (w/Nº) General Manifold & Printing Co., Franklin, PA
- (3) 4.5x3mm RED, BLACK suffix, United Autographic Register Co, Chicago, IL
- (4) 4.75mm RED, RED suffix, Acme Manifold, Tuckahoe, NY
- (5) 5mm RED, BLACK suffix, fancy font, Richter-McCall Corp, Chicago, IL
- (6) 5.5mm RED, BLACK suffix, fancy font, Pacific Manifold Book Co., Los Angeles, CA
- (7) 6.5mm RED, RED suffix, Cosby-Wirth, Minneapolis, MN
- (8) 6.5mm RED, BLACK suffix, American Salesbook Co., Niagara Falls, NY
- (9) Some books have the serial number repeated inside without suffix (uncommon), 6mm RED, BLACK suffix & 6mm inside, fancy font, Sunset-McKee, Oakland, CA

4

Blue & Red Stamps

4

4 panes of 48 stamps (2 wheat & 2 cornucopia designs)

Basically used for the same commodities as Book 2. Ration tokens were introduced February 27, 1944 with this book to serve as change from merchants when stamp point total surrendered exceeded the point value purchased. The tokens worth one point were made of vulcanized fiber and they had no expiration date.



3 of 30 two-letter designs
using 8 letter combinations.
(1 more letter used on blue)

NOTE: All Blue & Red
stamps were validated at
10 points (superseding 1-
2-5-8 face values)

3 of 24 two-letter designs
using 8 letter combinations

4

STAMP DESIGN VARIETIES

For security reasons,
9 printers ↓ were
given minor design
changes for most of
these 3 stamps >

Blue Wheat



Left or right
Seed Hair
Crosses or
Touches
Adjacent seed

Red Cornucopia



Position of
SHINE on
1, 2, or 3
Fruits. (Here
on fruit #2)

Green Torch



3/4 segments
< In flame
1/2 handle flutes
< & location of 1
Position of
< Thumb (degrees)

Pacific ✈
Manifolding Book
Co., Los Angeles,
CA (26 Million)



No crossing of
Seed hairs
(as above)



L #1 crosses
L #2 at top



Shine on fruits 2, 4, & 5
(both printers)



3 segments
2 flutes
Thumb open (90°)



4 segments, 2 flutes
Thumb open (90°)
(as above)

United ✈
Autographic
Register Co.,
Chicago, IL (28M)



L #2 crosses
L #3 at top



L #3 crosses
L #4 at top



Shine on fruits 4 & 5
(both printers)



3 segments
1 flute
Thumb bent (70°)



4 segments, 1 flute
Thumb bent (70°)

American ✈
Salesbook Co.,
Niagara Falls, NY
(37M)



L #4 crosses
L #5 at top



L #5 crosses
#6 at top



Shine on Fruits 2 & 5
(both printers)



3 segments
1 flute-R, thumb
open (90°)



4 segments, 1 flute-R
Thumb open (90°)

Richter-McCall
Corp, Chicago, IL
(20M) ✈



#6 bends left
touches hair



R #5 crosses
#6 at top



Shine on Fruits 2 & 4
(both printers)



3 segments
1 flute, thumb
closed (20°)



4 segments
1 flute, thumb
Closed (20°)

General Manifold
& Printing Co.,
Franklin, PA
(21M) 2



R #4 crosses
R #5 at top



Shine on
Fruit 2



4 segments
1 flute-L, thumb
open (90°)



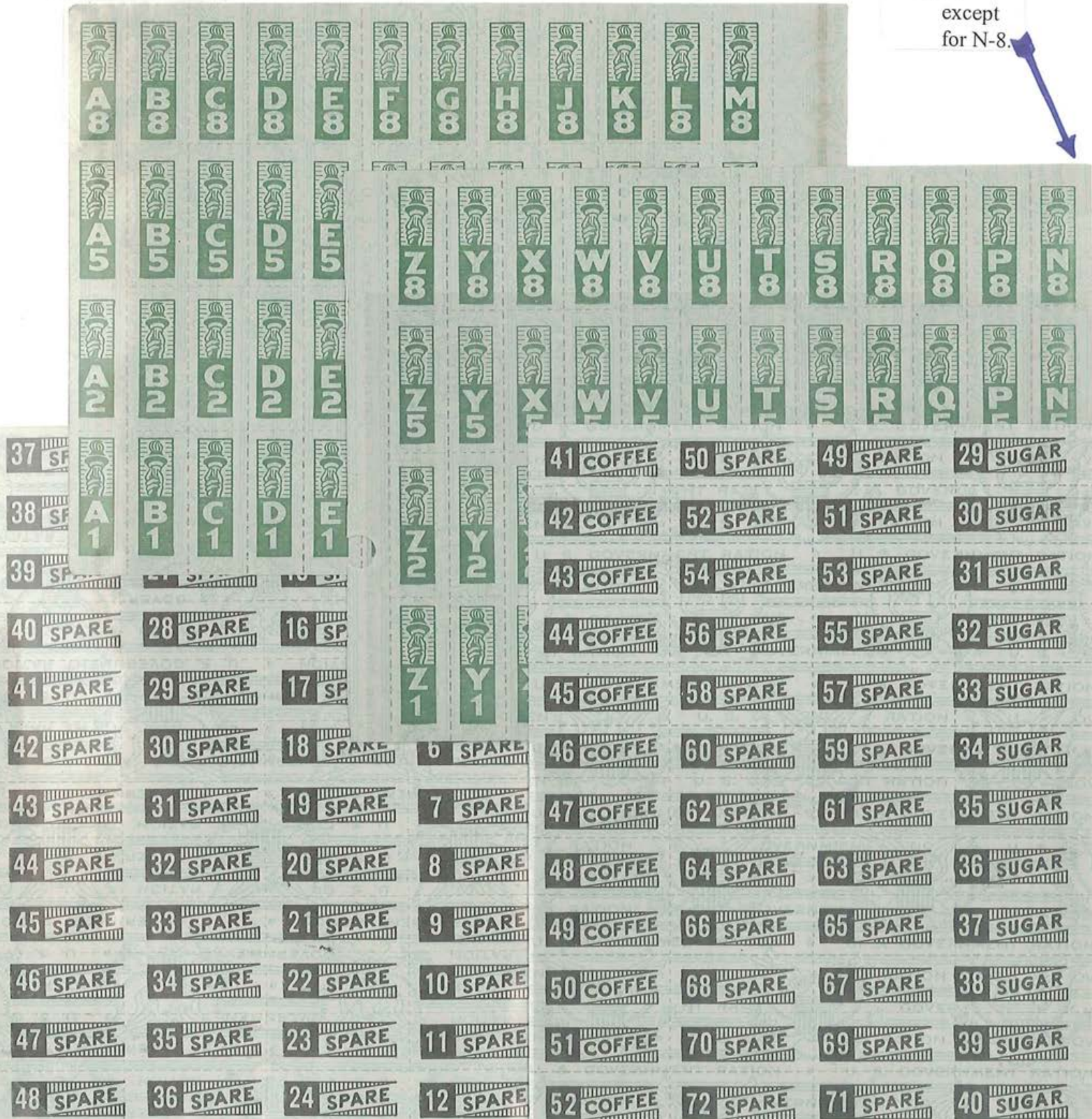
Acme Manifold,
Tuckahoe, NY
(4M)

Black & Green Stamps

4 panes of 48 stamps (2 torch of liberty & 2 mixed designs)

The black stamps were for coffee, sugar, and other (marked spare). The spare stamps gave the OPA some flexibility and were validated as needed, for example, #31 and #51 for 5 lb sugar effective Jan 16, 1944 and September 2, 1946, respectively. The green Z to N torch of liberty stamp panes were never validated

except
for N-8.



Slogan Panes

Early booklets contained 8 marginal slogans

These are less common and 3 of 8 could not be seen as the panes were pasted together in the margin tab.



5

War Ration Book Five

Un-issued

5

Intended for issue on January 1, 1946 but mostly destroyed since rationing was not needed. This exploded booklet is one of some scarce copies that survived. Designs of a scale of justice, USA shield, Native American, and the Liberty bell. 12 shoe and 12 sugar stamps included.

BUY NO-POINT . . . LOW-POINT

FOODS

FOOD FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM—
SHARE AND PLAY SQUARE

NEVER PAY MORE THAN

OPA CEILING PRICES

IF PRICES GO UP YOUR DOLLARS
WILL BUY LESS

CHECK OPA CEILING PRICES—

EVERY TIME YOU BUY

ALWAYS PAY RATION STAMPS
FOR RATIONED GOODS

RATIONING PROTECTS

YOUR FAIR SHARE

REPORT OVERCHARGES TO
YOUR RATION BOARD



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

CD

1358

5

WAR RATION BOOK FIVE

Issued to _____
(Print first, middle, and last name)

Complete address _____

OPA
Form
R-161

THIS BOOK IS A TRUST FROM THE
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
Sign here.

This Form May Be Reproduced Without Change

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION**APPLICATION FOR
HOME-CANNING SUGAR ALLOWANCE**

Pursuant to Revised Ration Order 3

INSTRUCTIONS

Fill out this application to apply for sugar for home canning. You may apply on this form for yourself and for any other consumer living at your address who authorizes you to apply on his behalf. Mail or take the completed application to your War Price and Rationing Board any time from March 1, 1944, through February 28, 1945.

Each consumer can buy 5 pounds of sugar for home canning by using SUGAR Stamp No. 40 in War Ration Book 4. Not more than 20 pounds of additional sugar per person may be obtained by application to the Board.

ANY SUGAR OBTAINED THROUGH THIS APPLICATION IS FOR HOME CANNING AND PRESERVING ONLY AND MUST NOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.

Estimate your home canning needs carefully and apply only for as much sugar as you are sure that you will need. If you find later that you need more sugar you may apply again. The amount requested for each person should be shown to the nearest 5 lbs. (Ex. 5, 10, 15, or 20).

On the first application ATTACH SPARE STAMP No. 37 FROM THE WAR RATION BOOK 4 OF EACH PERSON FOR WHOM APPLICATION IS MADE. No application will be approved unless those stamps are attached to it, or unless a previous application with the stamps attached is on file.

Any application made subsequent to the first request for any person MUST be made at the same board where his original application was filed.

Have you or any other person applied for sugar for home canning for any of the persons for whom this application is made since February 29, 1944? YES ☐ NO ☐

If answer is "NO", SPARE STAMP No. 37 from the WAR RATION BOOK 4 of each person for whom you apply must be attached to this application.

If answer is "YES", state name of person who made the application.

4



**Example Use
OPA Form R-323**

4



This unused form show how SPARE stamps 37 and 40 could be used after March 1, 1944 to increase SUGAR allowance. Applicant data underneath this explanation.

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE WITHIN HEAVY LINES

BOARD NO.	DATE
COUNTY AND STATE	
DISAPPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> for _____ pounds.	
(Signature of Board Representative.)	

PERSONS FOR WHOM APPLICATION IS MADE (INCLUDING NAME OF PERSON APPLYING)		POUNDS APPLIED FOR (IN MUL- TIPLES OF 5 LBS.)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
TOTAL POUNDS APPLIED FOR,		

ATTACH
IN THIS
SPACE
SPARE
STAMP
NO. 37
FROM THE
WAR
RATION
BOOK 4
OF EACH
PERSON
LISTED

If more space is needed use and sign another copy of this form, but do not repeat any of the names.

A false certification is a criminal offense.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

DATE