

Dickinson's War Products

During the Second World War, the firm John Dickinson and Co. Ltd. converted their various mill sites into factories for manufacturing a whole variety of products for the war effort. Among the most ingenious items produced were petrol tanks for long-range fighters and bombers made of paper, which could be jettisoned after use. It enabled these aircraft to travel much longer distances without the need to refuel.

Dickinson's also made 'window' - special strips of foil, which were dropped by aircraft to confuse enemy radar. They also made fuel pumps for aircraft, cardboard boxes for gas masks, blackout paper and a variety of munitions.

Many women were drafted into the factories to help make these vital products. In December 1941, national service was introduced for all unmarried women between the ages of 20 and 30. By mid 1943, 90% of single women and 80% of married women were employed in the armed forces or in industry.



Munitions exhibition. On top of the boxes, just below the sign, can be seen a mortar bomb of which six million were assembled. (DACHT : 62.12.19)

Women packing up the 'window' mixture: metal foil and paper strips dropped by aircraft to confuse enemy radar. Around 3,000 tons were laminated, cut and packed by war workers. (DACHT : 62.12.10)



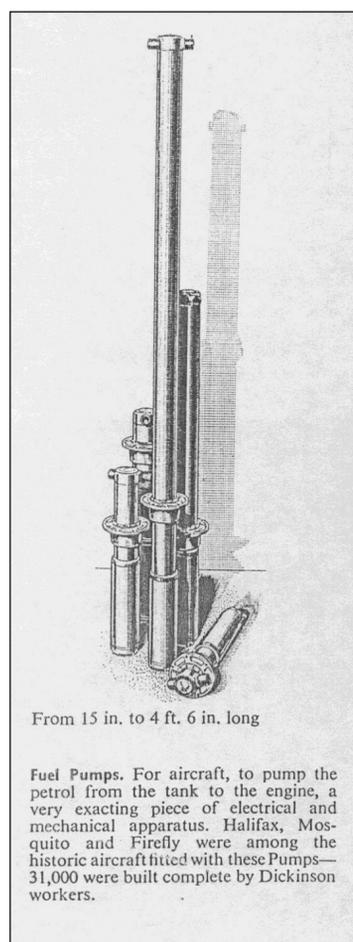
More than 10,000 petrol tanks for aircraft were supplied in various sizes. (DACHT : 62.12.16)

A Dickinson fuel tank attached to a P-51 on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Ohio.



Advertisement featuring some of the products made at Dickinson's, including gummed blackout tape, and window glass substitute made at Home Park Mills. (DACHT : 62.12.20)

These containers were made from paper and were designed to carry munitions. This one is now housed at the Museum Store, Berkhamsted. (DACHT : 271)



Women at work on the petrol tanks for aircraft. The 90 gallon cylindrical tanks were for American 'Thunderbolts' and 'Mustangs'; canoe-shaped ones were used by 'Mosquitoes'. (DACHT : 62.12.4)

A factory pass for Miss Culverhouse, dated 1943. (DACHT : 1391.2)

Recognition of the work carried out by Dickinson's employees.