Kansas communities contributed to the World War II war effort in many different ways. This postcard image of the “City of Wellington, Kansas,” a Boeing B-29 Superfortress, was made at the airplane’s christening ceremony in December 1944. Representing the residents of Wellington, who raised a total of $685,000 in their Sixth War Loan campaign, and with that money purchased the B-29 for the Army Air Forces, were (left to right) Ellis Carr, Claude Kissick, Mrs. G. J. Roberts, Harley Hyten, Mr. G. J. Roberts, and Martin Gravette.

Truly a community effort, the campaign raised over twenty thousand dollars of the total for the plane’s purchase from Wellington schools, according to an article in the 1945 high school yearbook, the Megaphone. “Observing the third anniversary of Pearl Harbor,” the “City of Wellington” was honored on the afternoon of December 7. “During the ceremony, five Thunderbolts [P-47, fighter aircraft] based at Strother Field [Cowley County] came roaring overhead which added to the celebration and also sent cold chills up and down the onlookers’ backs. High in the clear blue sky, a B-29 Superfortress soared gracefully as it circled the outskirts of the town. Music for the program was furnished by the high school band and members of the vocal department. The schools were dismissed to attend the celebration.”

The economic and environmental implications of B-29 production on the state of Kansas are examined in one of this issues feature articles, “Kansas Bomber: An Environmental History of the B-29 and the Sunflower State.” Historian Chris Rein examines the special historical relationship that Kansans have had to the B-29 while broadening our understanding of the state’s role in creating one of the most destructive weapons in the military’s World War II inventory.
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