



**SUPPLY
LINE**

Sweetheart Jewellery

Sweetheart jewellery was a symbol of wartime connection and separation. It reminded the wearer of a relative or sweetheart serving in the military. It also let other people know of this connection.

Original



Sweetheart Jewellery © Canadian War Museum

Public Symbols

Although often called sweetheart jewellery, these tokens were given to a range of loved ones and family. While usually worn by women, men would sometimes wear lapel pins indicating a family member in military service.

The popular image of sweetheart jewellery was that it was given by men in the military to women. Some women in military service also gave this type of jewellery.

Jewellery was widely advertised during the Second World War. It was promoted as a way of showing love and of connecting people separated by war. Small and easy to purchase, jewellery could be sent by mail.

Different Designs

Sweetheart jewellery took many different forms, such as pins, brooches, locket, necklaces, bracelets and rings. It might feature military symbols. These would often indicate a loved one's military service.

Patriotic symbols were also popular, and included maple leaves or flags. The examples in the Discovery Box are wartime originals, and each one is different.

Some sweetheart jewellery was mass-produced and could be ordered from catalogues or bought in stores. Some was custom-made by jewellers or artisans. Some was even made by the person giving it. Items such as metal military badges could also be turned into brooches or necklaces.

Materials

Sweetheart jewellery was made of a range of materials – including plastic, which was relatively new at the time. Tin had long been used for inexpensive jewellery, but it was needed for the war effort. As a result, the government prevented its use in jewellery.

There were also limits on using precious metals such as gold and silver at various times during the war, and it could not be used for items such as locket, chains and charms.

To help pay for the war effort, the government imposed a luxury tax on many kinds of jewellery. Despite these limits, jewellery sales increased.

Did You Know?

Other kinds of military-related jewellery were made and sold in wartime. Some was meant for men and women in the armed forces, including rings indicating the service the wearer had joined and identity bracelets engraved with the wearer's name.