

## The war at home

Easily a thousand items are on view in a truly amazing exhibit called "Fighting From the Sidelines: The WWII Home-Front" at Temple Judea Museum in Elkins Park. Whether it's memorabilia about U-boat activity off Atlantic City, ration books, documents, posters, letters, old newspapers, or countless fine points of what total war meant at home, this display tries energetically — and convincingly — to capture it all.

To do this, it's showing for the first time a major collection of wartime ephemera it obtained two years ago from the family of Harry and Adeline Silver of Philadelphia. In doing so, the museum — having staged exhibitions in 2004 and 2008 about immigration — continues its exploration of American identity and experience.

Rather than focus on U.S. military forces fighting to defeat the Nazis and liberate the death camps, this commemorative



**"Blanket of Security,"** a quilt by Sophie Sanders, part of an exhibit at Temple Judea Museum.

show's emphasis is on the massive civil support effort that came to be known as "the Home Front," and on the bravery and sacrifice it demonstrated. (The

museum welcomes additional photos of soldiers' visits home.)

Noteworthy here is the way Temple Judea Museum includes work by living artists in its historical shows, often by commissioning something appropriate and obtaining funding for it. Here, it's the creation by artist Sophie Sanders of a very large wall-hanging, *Blanket of Security*, inspired by the African American quilt makers of Gee's Bend, Ala. Sanders' textile uses military uniforms and insignia to transform "garments of war into a blanket of perseverance, memory and freedom." The rationale for seeking something new to enhance the old is that old documents, no matter how interesting, cannot compete with original art's power to move people. Right on.

Temple Judea Museum at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Old York Road at Township Line Road, Elkins Park. To March 5. Mon.-Thu. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 215-887-2027.