

Directions: Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow.

AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE WAR

When World War II began, many men and women took the traditional view that "a woman's place is in the home," but war needs had vetoed tradition before and they were going to do it again. In the Civil War women worked as clerks, nurses, and even spies. World War I women were used as telephone operators by the Army Signal Corps or as "yeomanette" clerks in the Navy Department. They also worked in defense industries or in volunteer agencies.

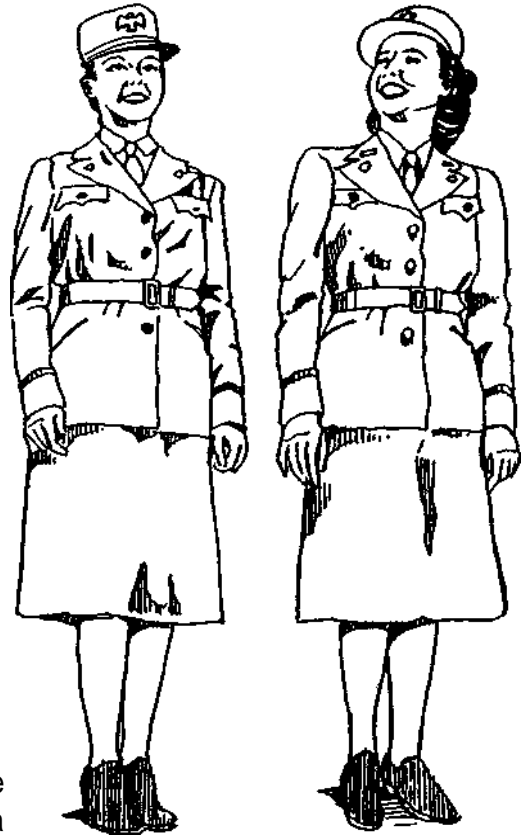
World War II was an even bigger war, and every woman had a husband, son, father, or friend in the armed services. The women wanted to help, and eventually they were doing almost everything except combat duty for their nation. Often ignored or unfairly criticized, they worked long hours, sometimes in dangerous industrial and military jobs.

It was not easy to persuade women to take industrial jobs. Few women had ever worked in a factory, but when "Rosie the Riveter," symbol of this new breed of woman, flexed her muscles, they went

To the nearby aircraft assembly plant or shipyard and applied. There were many problems faced by women working in World War II defense plants that today's woman does not face. (1) Women always wore dresses then, and it was hard to feel feminine or proper in the jeans and coveralls required at work. (2) Housework was very time consuming. There were no microwaves, dishwashers, automatic washing machines and driers, or fast food chains. After hours at work, washing and ironing awaited them at home. (3) The gas shortage made it difficult to get to work, so women wondered if it was acceptable to hitchhike. Emily Post said it was permissible for a lady to hitchhike, but she should use her work badge and not her thumb to signal for a ride. (4) If she had children, a babysitter was needed. Sometimes grandma was available, but often grandma was working too. (5) Male supervisors and co-workers gave them a hard time.

At aircraft assembly plants, women were not accepted at first, but after some experimental hirings at a few factories, many began hiring them. Most plants paid them the usual 60 cents an hour starting wage, but some hired college girls at 75 cents an hour. After a few months with women workers, plant managers said they could run the factory with somewhere between 50 and 85 percent women. By the end of the war, four million women were employed at defense plants. Women knew that these jobs were not permanent and did not expect to be employed in them after the men returned from the war. Still, it was a good learning experience, and it gave many women a feeling of independence they had never had before.

For women whose circumstances did not permit them to do work outside the home, there



Those who served in the Women's Army Corps performed clerical work, parachute rigging, glider instruction, and other valuable tasks

were many volunteer jobs they could take. The American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS) organized courses in auto repair and switchboard operations. They also started salvage drives and prepared surgical dressings. The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) trained women as air raid wardens. The American Red Cross (ARC) provided many kinds of services to men in uniform. The United Services Organization (USO) provided doughnuts and coffee at railroad stations for troop trains and set up dances and entertainment for men in nearby military bases. Women's groups in churches had prayer vigils, sent newspaper clippings, and wrote letters to local servicemen. Families used valuable ration stamps to provide a homecooked Sunday dinner for total strangers in uniform.

All three services used women in uniform. The army version was the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC—later the "Auxiliary" was dropped, and the corps became known as the WACs). By 1943 there were 150,000 WACs, and in 1945, 15,500 were serving overseas. Commanded by Major Oveta Gulp Hobby, the types of jobs performed by WACs included clerical work, processing blood tests, parachute rigging, and glider instruction.

WAVES were commanded by Captain Mildred McAfee, and they were the navy's version of WACs. Their assignments were often the same as WACs, but they also became meteorologists and repaired airplanes. Lieutenant Colonel Ruth Streeter commanded the women marines, often called "Lady Leathernecks." Their work included painting airplanes, electrical work, cooking, and shoe repair. Coast Guard women were called SPARS.

England had women pilots, but in the United States many army officers were reluctant to use them because they were "too high strung." As often happened during the war, practical needs overcame prejudice. General Henry (Hap) Arnold, who headed the army air force, gave approval in 1942 for women to ferry planes from aircraft factories to bases and from one base to another. Some women selected were already licensed pilots, but others had to be trained. Called the WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots), they eventually flew 77 types of planes, including B-24s and B-25s.

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote: "Undoubtedly, there are some women who are leading the same sort of life today that they have always led; but I think they must be having a difficult time finding companionship. For the vast majority of women in this country, life has changed. They are only content if they feel they are contributing something toward the speedier ending of the war and a better chance for their particular men in the world of the future."

1. In what war did women first work as clerks and spies?

2. What were women navy clerks called in World War I?

3. What did Emily Post say about women hitchhiking?

4. What was the usual starting wage?

5. What group taught women how to repair their own cars?

6. What group provided entertainment for servicemen?

7. What were women in the army called?

8. What were women in the navy called?

9. What excuse did air force officers give for not using women pilots?

10 How did Eleanor Roosevelt feel women had changed?

AMERICA'S MINORITIES IN THE WAR

Race relations in the United States were not good when the war began. There was much prejudice and discrimination against "people of color," and some in these groups wondered why they should fight the "white man's war." However, the Nazi racial views and the Japanese treatment of conquered nations made it clear to most minority groups that this was their war too. As boxing champion Joe Louis put it: "America's got lots of problems, but Hitler won't fix them." Minority members knew most Americans looked down on them, so they wanted to prove worthy of equal treatment after the war was over.



Many black troops were recognized for bravery and valor during the war. Minority soldiers began to gain the respect of the white soldiers they served with.

SLACKS (the preferred term of the time) lived in the South or in urban ghettos in the North when the war began, but job opportunities and military service scattered them much more than ever before. In the army blacks served in segregated units, usually under white officers. In 1942 ROTC training programs began at black colleges to train officers, and a flying school for black aviators was started at Tuskegee, Alabama. By the end of the war, over 80 black pilots had won the Distinguished Flying Cross. About 4,000 black women were in the WACs. The navy had only used blacks as cooks and servants before the war, but in 1942 they began training blacks for regular sea duty. A special training base for black sailors was established at the Great Lakes Training Center.

The Marines were slow to admit blacks, but after finding them as good as any men in their uniform, the Corps commander pronounced: "Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period." Blacks in the army were often in labor battalions, but some became engaged in heavy fighting. The 761st Tank Battalion was in the thick of the Battle of the Bulge, and the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion fought in many battles. The Ninety-ninth Air Squadron shot down eight German planes in one day.

When the war began, few defense plants hired blacks, and in 1942 A. Philip Randolph, a black union leader, pressured Roosevelt into signing Executive Order 8802. It required that there be no discrimination in employment of defense workers "because of race, creed, color, or national origin." The Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) was to investigate violations of this order. Still, discrimination continued.

MEXICANS who came across the border to take farm labor jobs were often badly treated, and the FEPC began looking into discrimination. The State Department objected because they feared Latin American nations would turn against the United States. Relations between Mexicans and whites were especially tense in California where those of Mexican ancestry were barred from certain public places. Still, many Mexican-Americans served their nation well during the war.

There were about 600,000 Italian citizens living in America and five million *ITALIAN-AMERICANS* at the beginning of the war. Many of these admired Mussolini before the United States entered the war, but their attitudes changed quickly after Pearl Harbor. The government clamped down on Italians and Germans who were not citizens. They could not travel without permission or own shortwave radios, maps, or guns. These restrictions were lifted in 1942.

Many Americans along the West Coast had long been hostile to the "yellow peril" and used the attack on Pearl Harbor as an excuse to punish their *JAPANESE-AMERICAN* population. Three generations of Japanese descent were in America: *Issei* (those born in Japan) *Nisei* (first generation native-born Americans), and *Sansei* (second generation native-born). To General John DeWitt, commander of West Coast defense, it made no difference whether he was an American citizen or not: "A Jap is a Jap." In the days following Pearl Harbor, over 2,000 Japanese were rounded up, many on ridiculous charges. In January 1942 security zones were established on the West Coast from which enemy aliens were to be removed.

In February 1942 President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized relocation camps. All Japanese-Americans, even if they had sons in the U.S. Army or Navy, were to be sent to camps in seven western states. They were to report to an assembly center; usually a fairground or race track without proper sanitation. Barracks were built for them in barren and isolated locations. One camp in Utah was on a salt flat where the temperature was 130°F in summer, -30°F in winter.

Some of the relocated joined the army, and after training in Wisconsin, fought valiantly in the Italian campaign. A few protested in court against this violation of their rights. Fred Korematsu refused to report for relocation and appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Black wrote the majority decision. He wrote that he had no reason to doubt the loyalty of most Japanese Americans and that relocation was a hardship for them. But he wrote: "Hardships are part of war, and war is an aggregation of hardships... When under conditions of modern war the shores are threatened by hostile forces, the power to protect must be [equal] with the threatened danger."

Justice Roberts wrote: "It is the case of convicting a citizen as a punishment for not submitting to imprisonment in a concentration camp, based on his ancestry, and solely because of his ancestry, without evidence or inquiry concerning his loyalty and good disposition toward the United States." Apologies and damage payments would have to wait until the war.

1. Why did Joe Louis think African-Americans should fight?

2. Where were black aviators trained?

3. What were two black battalions that saw a great deal of battle?

4. What kinds of discrimination were covered by Executive Order 8802?

5. Why was the State Department upset over FEPC investigations into the treatment of Mexican-Americans?

6. What restrictions were put on German and Italian citizens?

7. What was the difference between Issei and Nisei Japanese?

8. What was Executive Order 9066?

9. On what basis did Justice Black approve relocation?

10. What questions did Justice Roberts think should have been asked before relocation was | required?
