

# T H I N K

THINK MAGAZINE'S DIARY OF U. S.  
PARTICIPATION IN WORLD WAR II  
(1946)

## Women's Reserve, U. S. Navy

**I**N 500 shore establishments of the United States Fleet, women in navy blue released enough men from non-combatant duty to man all of America's landing craft in two important operations: the Normandy landing on D-Day and the invasion of Saipan.

That dramatic evaluation of the work of the WAVES was made by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, when, on the second anniversary of the founding of the Women's Reserve, he saluted their contribution to the war effort.

Women of the Navy, 87,000 strong at the time of the war's end, took over scores of vital jobs. As seamen they did clerical work, were bookkeepers and typists, acted as operators of business machines and as statistical clerks, were photographers, laboratory technicians, chauffeurs, accountants, linotype operators, and switchboard operators.

They were receptionists and librarians, mechanical draftsmen, artists, ship's service clerks and electrical draftsmen. They printed photographs, ran mimeograph machines and were laundry workers. In short, they filled countless roles which were particularly adapted to women's talent and experience.

In addition, WAVES adapted themselves to warfare in many jobs which had formerly been filled entirely by men. As specialists they learned to repair airplane metalwork and to assemble and service planes and engines. They became aerographer's mates and directed the installation of Naval meteorological observatories ashore, drew weather charts and made weather observations.

WAVES also learned to be radiomen, operating Navy radio equipment and enciphering and deciphering code messages. What is more, they had to know how to adjust and repair radio direction finders and sound equipment. Specialists in gunnery instructed Navy men in aviation free gunnery and anti-aircraft gunnery, and control tower operators directed the

*Below: In civilian life a camera woman, this WAVE attached to the photograph section of the Hydrographic Office interprets photography for maps used in charting waters.*





## Women's Reserve, U. S. Navy

take-offs and landing of planes at Naval air stations.

WAVE seamen were permitted to compete for petty officer ratings in the various specialities and many young women proudly wore eagles and chevrons on their smart blue sleeves to indicate their rating.

Women's Reserve officers, many of them chosen from the ranks of enlisted personnel, had the same rank, pay and privileges as male officers. They handled responsible jobs as administrative assistants, personnel officers, office managers, accountants, chemists, physicists and medical specialists and many served in the fields of communications, disbursing and supply.

WAVES served not only within the continental limits of the United States but in Alaska and Hawaii as well. As the war drew to a close the greatest need for women was in the hospital corps, where highly trained WAVE hospital apprentices and pharmacist's mates were needed to help battle-scarred Navy veterans back to health. They assisted nurses and doctors in the wards, were X-ray and laboratory technicians, cared for medical supplies and filled many other duties.

Created July 30, 1942, the Corps completed more than three years of service while the nation was engaged in war. Its director was Captain Mildred H. McAfee, former president of Wellesley College.



CAPT. MILDRED H. McAFEE, Director of Women's Reserve, U. S. Navy.



*Above: WAVES frequently helped in the training of Navy men. Here one makes animated cartoons to be used as visual aids in preparing men for service.*