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Women's Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps



LT. COL. RUTH CHENEY
STREETER, *Director, Marine
Corps Women's Reserve.*

LADY LEATHER-NECKS," as the trimly-clad members of the U. S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve were affectionately dubbed, responded to their country's call some 19,000 strong, accomplishing more than 150 different kinds of jobs at more than fifty Marine bases and stations throughout the United States.

Marine aviation made history throughout the war and the Marine Corps, fully aware of the importance of air power as a decisive factor in the conflict, placed almost exactly half of its wo-

men's reserve strength into that field. In aviation the WRs fulfilled a variety of jobs, from desk and clerical work at Marine air stations to many posts in ground aviation and mechanics.

Such varied jobs as logging in planes, observing weather, work in control towers, radio operation, communications and photography were filled by women of the Corps. They learned to overhaul planes, painted and repaired them, and even wielded their might as welders to keep Marine pilots aloft. Many, too, were experts in parachute rigging and testing.

One of the most important jobs filled by women of the Marines was instructing, with WRs teaching leathernecks many phases of aviation from the training of fighter pilots in fixed gunnery to Link trainer instruction, teaching pilots how to "fly blind."

When women entered the Marine Corps, as was the case in other services as well, one of the outstanding needs was to release men from desk jobs for actual combat. Marine women, as a result, took over hundreds of such jobs at every station in the country, working as file clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers and secretaries, accountants, storekeepers, post exchange workers and in other jobs.

A large portion of women Marines were also in motor transport, driving a great variety of motor vehicles and handling overhaul and repair.

Other women were teachers and instructors at boot camp at Camp Lejeune, N. C. Others were company commanders, taking charge of companies of women and managing administrative problems. Still others were rehabilitation workers, communications experts, radio specialists, electricians, clothing experts, cooks and cobblers.

Women Marines were allowed to volunteer for service in Hawaii and a large number sailed for that outpost to relieve men for combat duty in the Pacific.

Organized Feb. 13, 1943, the Women's Reserve was directed by Lt. Col. Ruth Cheney Streeter.

Women in the Marine Corps were authorized to hold the same jobs, ranks and pay as men Marines.

Below: Members of U. S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve do an "Eyes Right" as they pass reviewing stand in parade in New York City.

