

T H I N K

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

Women's Reserve, U. S. Coast Guard

FROM the icy sweeps of Alaska to the tropical Hawaiian Islands, trimly clad girls in the dark blue of the Coast Guard SPARS have served since their organization was founded in 1942 to fill the shore posts of men at sea.

The SPARS are members of America's oldest, continuous sea-going service, their popular name having come from the first letters of the Coast Guard motto and translation: *Semper Paratus*—Always Ready. By the end of their second year of service approximately 10,000 women, the authorized strength of the organization, were on active duty, performing 76 different kinds of services.

SPARS trained at the largest Coast Guard training station for men, Manhattan Beach, New York, where they learned highly technical skills in fields ranging from aviation to communications, from storekeeper to cook and baker. SPARS served in Coast Guard shore establishments throughout the United States, holding 26 different ratings. Some of them were salty sounding indeed, SPARS rating as coxswains, yeoman, motor machinist's mates or pharmacist's mates.

SPARS ashore did the jobs of men who fought in all of the seven seas and served on every continent, winning warm praise from the nation's military leaders for their dispatch of duty. Those who had



Above: SPARS are veteran plane fabric repairers at Coast Guard's San Diego air station, making damaged plane wings usable again.

Women's Reserve, U. S. Coast Guard

completed one year's service in the United States were allowed to volunteer for duty in Alaska and Hawaii and many were shipped to those areas to extend their service farther, relieving more shore-based Coast Guardsmen for combat duty afloat.

Communications and radio work were an important phase of their duty. Another field in which SPARS were exceptionally active was aviation, with young women in navy blue working in control towers, instructing fledgling fliers via the Link trainer, and working as parachute riggers and repairers of plane fabrics.

Still others served in naval hospitals as therapists, X-ray technicians, dental technicians or in other skilled work.

Their work as members of the Coast Guard Port Security Command was of major importance during the tense days when great care had to be exercised around such busy harbors as New York City. SPARS laminated identification cards and fingerprinted thousands of civilians who sought to use the harbor.

Yeomen, quick typists and secretaries, helped to keep the clerical side of the Coast Guard running smoothly. Desk jobs ranged from interviewing men for aptitude tests to handling mail.

SPARS were also required to familiarize themselves with weapons.

Ranking woman officer is Capt. Dorothy C. Stratton, Director of the Women's Reserve and formerly dean of women at Purdue University, appointed on November 24, 1942.



CAPT. DOROTHY C. STRATTON
Dir., Women's Reserve, U.S.C.G.



"Semper Paratus" — Always Ready, Coast Guard motto, becomes more than a watchword as these SPARS receive instruction in the operation of a .50 calibre machine gun.