

Women Join the War Efforts

The Call Went Out for Help and Women Answered

As World War II broke out, America's men were called to duty but it became apparent that there might not be enough of them for the scope of the battles to come. In 1941, a bill was introduced to create a women's auxiliary army; Congress approved it a year later. This allowed for women to fulfill desk duties and similar jobs that would free men for combat.

The WAACs (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps) was created soon after the bill's approval; this became the WACs, dropping the 'Auxiliary' when given full military status in 1943. The Navy quickly followed the Army's lead in 1942, creating the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services). In 1943 came the U.S. Coast Guard SPARs (Semper Paratus, Always Ready), and the Army Air Force WAFFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron) re-named to WASPs (Women's Airforce Service Pilots) after militarized. Women also served in both the Army Nurse Corps and the Navy Nurse Corps.

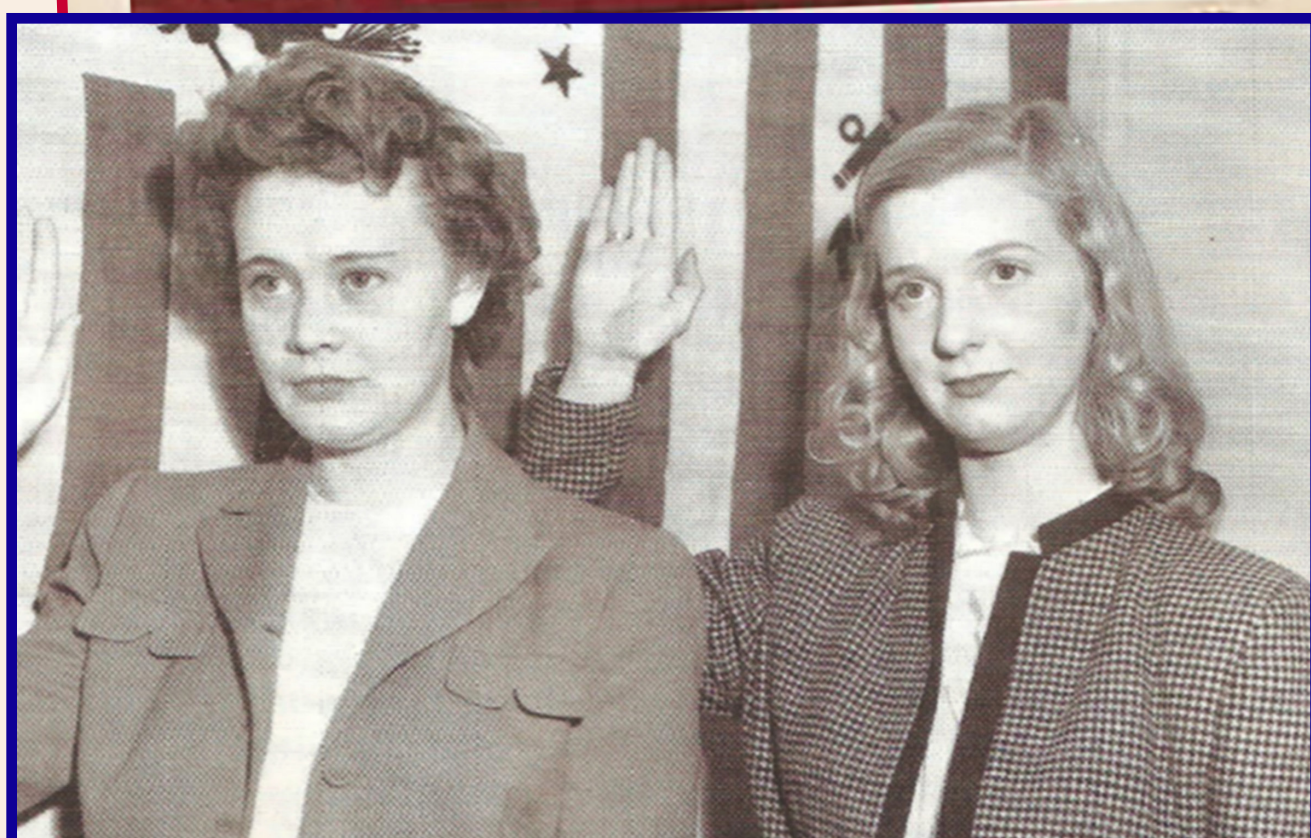
According to the Defense Logistic Agency, the first U.S. women to see combat became POWs when they were captured at the fall of Corregidor in the Philippines in May 1942. They spent their captivity running the camp hospital in Manila. A total of 77 Army/Navy nurses were captured including some of our local women; all survived and were released in January of 1945.

In 1946, Dwight D. Eisenhower acknowledged the importance of these contributions, stating that "Every phase of the record they compiled during the war convinced (him) of the error of (his) first reaction" in doubting women's abilities to serve in such roles. The dedication and sacrifices of women during World War II, both on the front lines and on the home front, were essential to the Allied victory.

In 1948, Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, establishing women as a permanent part of the U.S. military.

Shown here are just a few of the many, many local women who signed up to go to war.

(Below) This is a post-WWII parade that took place in Valley City. The smiling woman proudly carrying the flag is Judy Jungnitsch of rural Valley City who joined the Navy WAVES towards the end of World War II, ready to do her part.



(Above) Delphine Maier of Valley City (right) and fellow ND enlistee Eva Hendrickson are shown being sworn into the U.S. Coast Guard SPARs unit.



(Above) Ruth Amundson of Valley City posed with fellow Navy WAVES; Ruth had three brothers who also served in WWII. (Below) Viola Thompson Mason (left), originally from Norma Township, became the first ND woman to get a commercial flying license (1942). She joined the Army Air Force WASPs in February 1943.



Alice Mennis Hanson of Nome - Navy WAVES



Marjorie Isensee of Valley City - Army Nurse Corps



Marion Lyons Clover of Eckelson - Army WACS



Hazel Lucille Ness of Litchville - Navy WAVES



Mary Widdifield of Leal - Navy WAVES



Elizabeth Kjelland of Valley City - Army WACS



Theresa Baumgartner of Oriska - Army Nurse Corps



Jeanette Hankel of Wimbledon - Navy WAVES



Lois Anderson of Litchville - Navy Nurse Corps



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