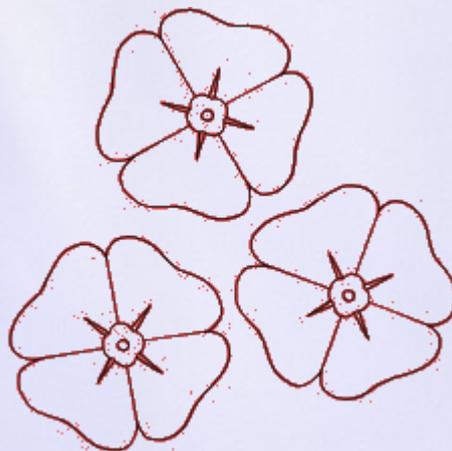


THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN DURING THE TWO MAJOR WARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!



The tribute this year is looking at something slightly different.

The impact WW1 & WW2 had on women in the twentieth century.



INTRODUCTION

Before 1914 a woman's role in the workplace was quite restricted, jobs for women consisted mainly of domestic labour, nursing, teaching, and agriculture if their family owned a small holding.

The 1914 - 1918 war changed the role of women in the workplace forever, as more and more young men volunteered or were conscripted into the armed forces to fight in the war, women were called upon to fill their roles in the factories, mines and many other roles traditionally carried out by the men.

Women were the unsung heroines of the war, keeping the industrial wheels turning and the home fires burning.

The Suffragette

In a display of patriotism, Emmeline Pankhurst [pictured right] instructed the Suffragettes to stop their campaign of violence and support in every way the government and its war effort.

The work done by women in the First World War was to be vital for Britain's war effort.





First Aid Nursing Yeomanry

This organization was founded in 1907, those who joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry were sent to battlefronts in both World War One and World War Two.

The idea was that women who joined would not only be first aid specialists, but would have skills that would allow them to get to casualties on the battlefield itself.

The original members were trained in cavalry work, signaling and camping out.

Members of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry with their ambulances on the Western Front



The 'Right to Work' March

Objections to female participation came from the trade unions. As a result employment of women had not increased significantly before the middle of 1915.

In July 1915, a 'Right to Work' march was organised by the Suffragettes.





The Employment of Women

There was a shortage of shells in 1915, this began to change the situation. Women were taken on to begin work in munitions factories. This came about after the government did a deal with the trade unions known as the Treasury Agreements. The unions agreed to accept female labour in place of men.

They worked in factories.





Numbers Increase

With the introduction of conscription in 1916 led to more women being employed.

Just some of the many jobs women did during WW 1



Women's Police Service, formed in 1917.



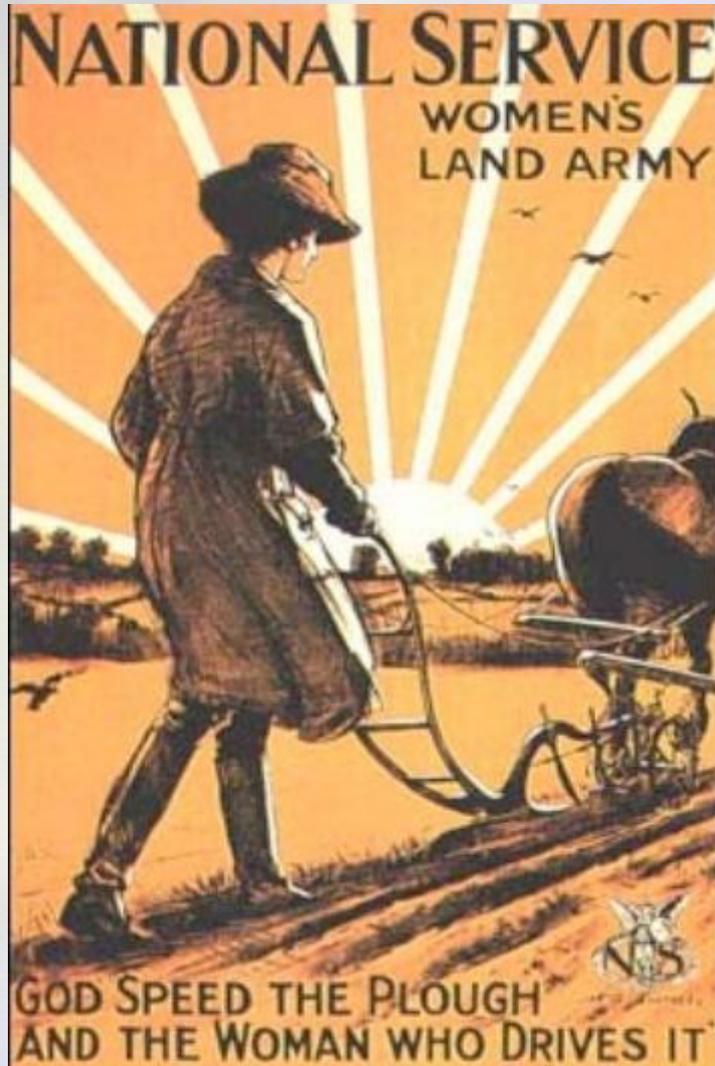
Conductor on a London Bus.



Railway Workers.



Post Women.



Recruitment Posters

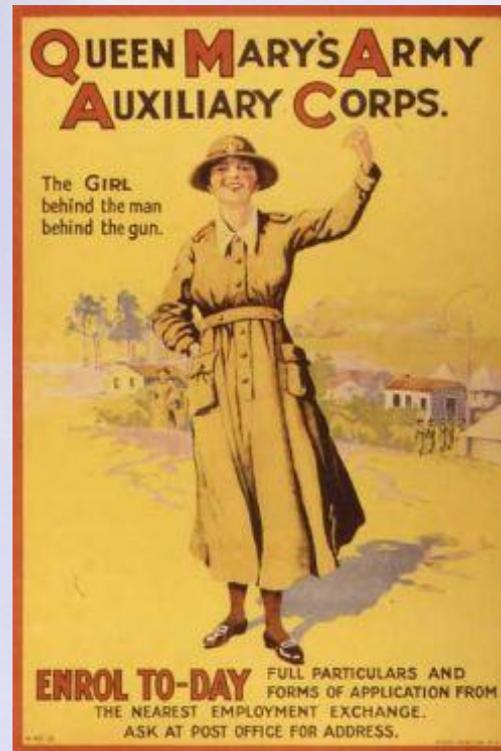
The Board of Agriculture organised the Land Army during the Great War, starting activities in 1915. Towards the end of 1917 there were over 250,000 - 260,000 women working as farm labourers, with 20,000 in the land army itself.

The government wanted women to get more involved in the production of food and do their part to support the war effort.

This was the beginning of the Women's Land Army. Many traditional farmers were against this so the board of trade sent agricultural organisers to speak with farmers to encourage them to accept women's work on the farms.



EVERY FIT WOMAN
CAN RELEASE A FIT MAN
JOIN THE
**WOMEN'S ARMY
AUXILIARY CORPS**
TO-DAY
FOR WORK WITH THE FORCES EITHER AT HOME OR ABROAD
FOR ALL INFORMATION & ADVICE WRITE TO OR APPLY AT
NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE
THE ADDRESS CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN



The Women's Army

In January 1917, the government announced the establishment of a new voluntary service, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC). The plan was for these women to serve as clerks, telephonists, waitresses, cooks, and as instructors in the use of gas masks. It was decided that women would not be allowed to hold commissions and so that those in charge were given the ranks of controller and administrator. In the UK, many women joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, which later became known as Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps.

Women in the WAAC were not given full military status. The women enrolled rather than enlisted and were punished for breaches of discipline by civil rather than military courts.

Between January 1917 and the Armistice over 57,000 women served in the WAAC.



W.R.N.S.

The Women's Royal Naval Service was formed in November 1917. The Admiralty restricted the WRNS to 3,000 women who were only allowed to do "shore service" mainly domestic work. They became cleaners, cooks and waitresses. The number eventually doubled, with Wrens doing many different jobs for which women had been thought unsuitable.

There were two classes of Wren, "Immobile" who were only prepared to work near their home and "Mobile" who would serve anywhere.

The original WRNS only existed for 24 months but was reformed in April 1939.



W.R.A.F

W.A.A.F

A Women's Royal Air Force had existed from 1918 to 1920. The original intent of the was to provide female mechanics in order to free up men for service in World War I.

However, the organization saw huge enrolment, with women volunteering for positions as drivers and mechanics and filling other wartime needs.

The WAAF was created on 28 June 1939, absorbing the forty-eight RAF companies of the Auxiliary Territorial Service which had been formed since 1938. Conscription of women did not begin until 1941. It only applied to those between 20 and 30 years of age and they had the choice of the auxiliary services or factory work.

The End of the First World War

For millions of women, the end of the war meant returning to the lives they had known before. Although not everything was the same. February 1918 the British government passed the Representation of the People Act, which enfranchised all men and began the process of enfranchising women.

Votes were given to women over the age of 30 who were either householders or married to householders. This gave around 8 million women the right to vote. Later in the year, women were given the right to be elected to Parliament. It took another ten years before women were given the vote on an equal footing with men.

Women may have had the vote, but they didn't all manage to keep their jobs. Men returning from the front needed to work and women were expected to step aside. However, women had tasted freedom and their expectations, along with their hemlines, rose throughout the 1920s. There was no going back.

WORLD WAR II

Again women played a vital part in the country's success in World War II



The Women's Land Army (WLA) was re-formed in July 1939.

Their work was vital as once again many of the men were being called up into the military.



Women of the
Women's Land
Army

Evacuation

Young mothers with young children were evacuated from the cities considered to be in danger. In all, 3.5 million children were evacuated though many went with a teacher. As young children were normally taught by females, many of those who went with the children were women. The fact that women were seen to be the people who taught the youngest was something that had been going on for years.



Factory Work

There were many women who decided that they would work in a factory. They worked in all manner of production ranging from making ammunition to uniforms to aeroplanes. Hours were long and some women had to move to where the factories were. Those who moved away were paid more.



Women In The Emergency Services

Women were conscripted into the emergency services, they were fighting fires, driving ambulances, manning first aid stations and there were some who were conscripted into the police force.

Right:

Princess Elizabeth our current Queen became involved and served as an ambulance driver.



From the age of 17 Women could volunteer to work in the armed forces in an auxiliary role, The ATS for the army. The WAAF for the RAF and The WRNS for the Royal Navy.

At this time women were not expected to fight on the front line but they played a massive supporting role for the troops who were.

A woman's role was restricted to secretarial work, catering and nursing, in the early days of the war but later women were trained to bear arms in case they were required to fight and ladies were test flying aircraft and taking up posts usually filled by males freeing the men to fight for their country.

Left: Female Test Pilots

Britain's Unsung Hero's

The second World War in Europe ended in May 1945. At this time there were 460,000 women in the military and over 6.5 million in civilian war work. Without their contribution, our war effort would have been severely weakened and it is probable that we would not have been able to fight to our greatest might without the input from women.

Ironically, in Nazi Germany, Hitler had forbidden German women to work in German weapons factories as he felt that a woman's place was at home. His most senior industry advisor, Albert Speer, pleaded with Hitler to let him use German female workers but right up to the end, Hitler refused. Hitler was happy for captured foreign women to work as slaves in his war factories but not German. Many of these slave workers, male and female, deliberately sabotaged the work that they did - so in their own way they helped the war effort of the Allies.

