

Teaching Guide: North Carolina Military Women in World War II

Note for Teachers:

This is the Teaching Guide for the NC Military Women in World War II Case Study:
museumofthenewsouth.org/schools/north-carolina-military-women-in-world-war-ii/

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Background Information

Approximately 350,000 women from the United States served in the military during World War II. As early as the American Revolution, women served the military as nurses, cooks, and housekeepers. By the time the United States entered World War II, women served in domestic roles and in the medical field, administration, and aviation. Over 7,000 of these women came from North Carolina. Women were certainly encouraged to join and support the war effort, but they also experienced gender and racial discrimination.

American women were very important in the war effort, at home and abroad. As the demands of war increased, women were strongly encouraged to seek jobs outside of the home. Many women who joined the military served as nurses in the Army working in field and ship hospitals, medical transport planes, and evacuation hospitals. Women were restricted from combat zones; however, many became nurses to help injured men in combat and saved countless lives.

Many Americans did not agree with women serving in the military. Most were concerned about preserving traditional gender roles, where women took care of the home. With America's entrance in the war, it was evident that society's perception of women joining the workforce would have to change. Many women shared accounts of verbal mistreatment by their male counterparts and the community who believed that women did not have the abilities to serve the country as pilots. As more men were deployed, it provided more opportunities for women to train and become qualified, skilled pilots.

In 1942, auxiliary branches of the military for women were created: Women's Army Corps, Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, and Women Airforce Service Pilots. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong supporter of women joining the military, which led to approval of the creation of WAC and WAVES. Within these auxiliary groups, women served as mechanics, in post offices, and with communications and warning systems. These programs were so competitive that less than 2,000 were accepted into WASP. These women were stationed at three military bases in North Carolina: the Asheville Weather Wing Headquarters, Camp Davis Army AirField, and Camp Lejeune.

Women in North Carolina did what they could to assist in the war effort. For example, students at Lenoir-Rhyne College would skip class to help pick cotton when there were labor shortages. Some women dropped out of college to gain employment in factories or join the military. By working in factories, rationing, and opening their homes for boarders, the women of North Carolina remained committed to supporting the war.

While working with male soldiers, the women of WAC, WASP, and WAVES did not receive equal pay and fair treatment. Each auxiliary was segregated, which determined job assignments. The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was an all-black unit of women of WAC. These women worked to expedite the distribution of mail to soldiers overseas during the war. Regardless of their levels of education and experience, women of color were subjected to harsher treatment, longer work hours, and less pay.

The United States government was intentional in selecting North Carolina to build military training camps. From access to land to the climate, North Carolina was deemed the perfect place to establish numerous military bases during World War II. At Camp Davis, women transported targets for anti-aircraft training and delivered planes to other military bases. At the Asheville Weather Wing headquarters, women trained to become pilots. WASPs were trained to fly, manufacture, and assemble planes and deliver supplies. At Camp Lejeune, WAVES performed clerical work and trained to operate the communication systems. Some would also train to become pilots. As the war ended, these programs closed. Initially, the programs were considered to be extensions of the military and without full military benefits. For many, it would take several years to receive full benefits and even recognition for the work they did.

World War II took the women of North Carolina out of the home and placed them at the center of the war effort. Women contributed to the war by rationing, working in factories, and joining the military, all of which allowed the United States to put more money into the war effort, maintain consistent supply lines for soldiers overseas, and train women to eventually serve full time in the military. By the end of WWII, women were serving in every branch of the military, and were assigned to military camps throughout the world. In total, more than six million women took wartime jobs in factories, three million volunteered with the Red Cross, and over 200,000 served in the military. The women of North Carolina contributed significant resources and labor to assist in winning the war, all while paving the way for women to eventually integrate into the military with equal pay and full benefits for their service.

Activity Instructions and Rubrics

Raft Assignment

Students will imagine they are alive during World War II and select one of the roles listed below and write from that perspective. They will use a RAFT format for this writing assignment, so each role has a specific audience, format, and topic to go with it. A grading rubric is included.

General Requirements:

- Typed in Times New Roman style; font size 12; double spaced (except for propaganda poster)
- Minimum length of two paragraphs (except for propaganda poster)
- Can be completed in a Google Document
- Minimum of five glossary words from the case study must be used and highlighted
- Propaganda poster must fit on one full page and have color
- Audio recording for PSA minimum of 30 seconds and maximum of 1 minute
- Standard rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and typing apply
- Must be proofread by someone else

Modification: You can reduce paragraph and vocabulary requirements.

Extension: Have students complete some research on women's involvement in another American military conflict after World War II. They can then create a second RAFT assignment, but they must choose a different role.

NC Military Women in WWII: RAFT Assignment

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Local Newspaper Reporter	Readers in North Carolina	Article	The attack on Pearl Harbor just happened, and the nation is stunned. Men are mobilizing for war and there are rumors about women being offered jobs in the military. You are to report on why women are needed to serve in the military, what types of jobs will be available, and what the qualifications to join are. Don't forget to create a name for your newspaper and have a headline on your topic.
Propagandist	Women	Poster	You have been hired to convince women to join the workforce (either military or factory work) to help with the war effort.
Member of WASP	Your family	Letter	You signed up and have been accepted into the training program, WASP. You are honored to be serving your country, but the work is difficult and women are not really welcomed by the male soldiers. Write a letter home, sharing your experience so far. Give details about your daily routine.
Radio Personality	United Nations	Public Service Announcement	You will do a voice recording, encouraging the community to do their part on the home front. Remind everyone to recycle, keep rationing, create victory gardens, and do all they can to support America's soldiers at war. Include a typed transcript of your PSA.
Articheet	North Carolinians	Historical Marker	You have been tasked with honoring the women of North Carolina who served during World War II (WASP, WAVES, WAC). You must design a historical marker that celebrates the contributions of these women. Include brief information about the group, what they did, and where in North Carolina the marker will be placed (county/city). Search the following terms to see examples of NC historical markers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fort Bragg Historical Marker - Blue Star Memorial Marker - Women Marines Historical Marker

NC Military Women in WWII: RAFT Rubric

Content

5	3	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Writing takes the point of view (POV) of the selected role, the audience is obvious, and the format is clearly followed -Topic is maintained throughout the assignment -All required vocabulary has been used and highlighted -Propaganda poster takes up a full page and uses color -PSA is between 30 seconds and 1 minute in length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Writing mostly takes the POV of the selected role, the audience is somewhat clear, and the format is somewhat followed -Topic is mostly maintained throughout the assignment -All required vocabulary has been used, but not highlighted -Propaganda poster takes up most of a page and has some color -PSA is close to between 30 seconds and 1 minute in length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Writing somewhat takes the POV of the selected role, audience is somewhat clear, and format was somewhat followed -Topic is somewhat maintained throughout the assignment -All required vocabulary has been not been used, and is not highlighted -Propaganda poster is not a full page and/or uses very little color -PSA length is much less or more than time length requirements

NC Military Women in WWII: RAFT Rubric

Writing

5	3	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Who proofread your work is listed -Rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and typing have been followed -Two paragraphs have been written where required and font and spacing guidelines followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Who proofread your work is listed -Rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and typing have been mostly followed -One paragraph has been written (where length is required) and font and spacing guidelines mostly followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Who proofread your work is not listed -Rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and typing have been somewhat followed -Less than one paragraph has been written (where length is required) and font and spacing guidelines not followed

Propaganda Poster

Students will create a propaganda poster encouraging more women to join one of the auxiliary branches of World War II: WAC, WAVES, WAAC, WASP, etc. They can do an online search to see examples of World War II propaganda posters aimed at women. A grading rubric is included.

General Requirements:

- Explain how women joining the organization will help the war effort
- Use persuasive propaganda techniques (if unsure they can easily do an online search for techniques or have a propaganda lesson beforehand)
- Use a slogan or important phrase (for example, the famous Uncle Sam poster: "I Want You for U.S. Army!")
- Use color
- Hand drawn or created digitally

Modification: Have students analyze an existing World War II women's recruitment poster using a tool such as the Poster Analysis Worksheet found on the National Archives' website.

Extension: Set up a class discussion using a model of your choice where half of the students are advocating for women joining the military in World War II and half are advocating against it. Remind students that they should imagine themselves in the World War II era and use what they have learned from the case study and any additional research they had to do.

NC Military Women in WWII: Propaganda Poster Rubric

	8	6	4	2	0
Content	Product fully relates to the content and shows understanding of the content.	Product relates to most of the content and shows understanding of that content	Product relates to part of the content and shows understanding of that content	Product relates to part of the content but doesn't show understanding of that content	Product does not relate to the content
	4	3	2	1	0
Drawing	Drawing is detailed, neat, colorful, and relates to the content of the page	Drawing is somewhat detailed, neat, colorful, and relates to the content of the page	Drawing is not detailed, neat, colorful, or does not relate to the content of the page	Drawing is messy or without detail and/or color and does not relate to the content of the page.	There is not enough of a drawing to grade
Use of Propaganda	Use of persuasion and a slogan is evident and shows the information in a positive or negative light	Attempts to use persuasion and a slogan, and the information is shown to be positive or negative	Attempted the use of persuasion and a slogan, but the information is seen in both a positive and negative light	Attempted to use persuasion and a slogan, but it was done incorrectly	No persuasion or viewpoint is evident
Spelling and Grammar	No spelling or grammar mistakes	A couple of spelling or grammar mistakes	Several spelling or grammar mistakes	Due to the amount of spelling or grammar mistakes, the product is near unreadable	There is no writing on the poster
Grade	/20				

Student Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify the contributions of North Carolina women during World War II.
2. Students will be able to analyze primary sources and make connections to today.
3. Students will be able to evaluate the impact of World War II on the economic, political, social, and military roles of different groups in North Carolina, including women and minorities.
4. Students will be able to establish connections to the history of the Civil Rights and Women's movements of the mid-20th century.

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

8.E.1.3 Distinguish the role women, indigenous groups, and racial minorities have played in contributing to the economic prosperity of North Carolina in terms of equity, equality, and mobility.

8.H.2.3 Explain how the experiences and achievements of women, minorities, indigenous, and marginalized groups have contributed to the development of North Carolina and the nation over time.

8.H.1.4 Explain how recovery, resistance, and resilience to inequities, injustices, discrimination, prejudice, and bias have shaped the history of North Carolina and the nation.