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is different from preserving it. And our first duty is to keep the road of freedom open. It must be done continuously. It is the duty of the whole people to do this. Our next duty (and this, too, is the whole people's) is to broaden the road so that more people can travel it without snarling traffic. To die in these duties is to die for something. . . .

I believe in this war, finally, because I believe in the ultimate vindication of the wisdom of the brotherhood of man. This is not foggy idealism. I think that the growing manifestations of the interdependence of all men is an argument for the wisdom of brotherhood. I think that the shrunk compass of the world is an argument. I think that the talk of united nations and of planned interdependence is an argument.

More immediately, I believe in this war because I believe in America. I believe in what America professes to stand for. Nor is this, I think, whistling in the dark. There are a great many things wrong here. There are only a few men of good will. I do not lose sight of that. I know the inequalities, the outraged hopes and faith, the inbred hate; and I know that there are people who wish merely to lay these by in the closet of the national mind until the crisis is over. But it would be equally foolish for me to lose sight of the advances that are made, the barriers that are leveled, the privileges that grow. Foolish, too, to remain blind to the distinction that exists between simple race prejudice, already growing moribund under the impact of this war, and theories of racial superiority as a basic tenet of a societal system—theories that at bottom are the avowed justification for suppression, defilement and murder.

I will take this that I have here. I will take the democratic theory. The bit of road of freedom that stretches through America is worth fighting to preserve. The very fact that I, a Negro in America, can fight against the evils in America is worth fighting for. This open fighting against the wrongs one hates is the mark and the hope of democratic freedom. I do not underestimate the struggle. I know the learning that must take place, the evils that must be broken, the depths that must be climbed. But I am free to help in doing these things. I count. I am free (though only a little as yet) to pound blows at the huge body of my American world until, like a chastened mother, she gives me nurture with the rest.

4. A Woman Remembers the War (1984)

With millions of men in the armed forces and the nation's factories straining to keep them supplied, women were drawn by the millions into nontraditional jobs. For many of those women, the war represented not simply a bloody conflict of global proportions, but also an unanticipated opportunity for economic freedom and personal growth. In the following selection, one war worker looks back on her experience in a plant in California. What does she remember most and least fondly about her wartime job? What aspects of it challenged her most? What was most fulfilling about it? What were the war's principal effects on her?

⁴From Mark Jonathan Harris, Franklin D. Mitchell, and Steven J. Schecter, *The Homefront: America During World War II*, pp. 126–129. Copyright © 1984. Reprinted by permission of the author.

When the war started I was twenty-six, unmarried, and working as a cosmetics clerk in a drugstore in Los Angeles. I was running the whole department, handling the inventory and all that. It seemed asinine, though, to be selling lipstick when the country was at war. I felt that I was capable of doing something more than that toward the war effort.

There was also a big difference between my salary and those in defense work. I was making something like twenty-two, twenty-four dollars a week in the drugstore. You could earn a much greater amount of money for your labor in defense plants. Also it interested me. There was a certain curiosity about meeting that kind of challenge, and here was an opportunity to do that, for there were more and more openings for women.

So I went to two or three plants and took their tests. And they all told me I had absolutely no mechanical ability. I said, "I don't believe that." So I went to another plant, A.D.E.L. I was interviewed and got the job. This particular plant made the hydraulic-valve system for the B-17. And where did they put women? In the burr room. You sat at a workbench, which was essentially like a picnic table, with a bunch of other women, and you worked grinding and sanding machine parts to make them smooth. That's what you did all day long. It was very mechanical and it was very boring. There were about thirty women in the burr room, and it was like being in a beauty shop every day. I couldn't stand the inane talk. So when they asked me if I would like to work someplace else in the shop, I said I very much would.

They started training me. I went to a blueprint class and learned how to use a micrometer and how to draw tools out of the tool crib and everything else. Then one day they said, "Okay, how would you like to go into the machine shop?"

I said, "Terrific."

And they said, "Now, Adele, it's going to be a real challenge, because you'll be the only woman in the machine shop." I thought to myself, Well, that's going to be fun, all those guys and Adele in the machine shop. So the foreman took me over there. It was a big room, with a high ceiling and fluorescent lights, and it was very noisy. I walked in there, in my overalls, and suddenly all the machines stopped and every guy in the shop just turned around and looked at me. It took, I think, two weeks before anyone even talked to me. The discrimination was indescribable. They wanted to kill me.

My attitude was, "Okay, you bastards, I'm going to prove to you I can do anything you can do, and maybe better than some of you." And that's exactly the way it turned out. I used to do the rework on the pieces that the guy on the shift before me had screwed up. I finally got assigned to nothing but rework.

Later they taught me to run an automatic screwing machine. It's a big mother, and it took a lot of strength just to throw that thing into gear. They probably thought I wasn't going to be able to do it. But I was determined to succeed. As a matter of fact, I developed the most fantastic biceps from throwing that machine into gear. Even today I still have a little of that muscle left.

Anyway, eventually some of the men became very friendly, particularly the older ones, the ones in their late forties or fifties. They were journeymen tool and die makers and were so skilled that they could work anywhere at very high salaries. They were sort of fatherly, protective. They weren't threatened by me. The younger men, I think, were.

Our plant was an open shop, and the International Association of Machinists was trying to unionize the workers. I joined them and worked to try to get the union in the plant. I proselytized for the union during lunch hour, and I had a big altercation with the management over that. The employers and my lead man and foreman called me into the office and said, "We have a right to fire you."

I said, "On what basis? I work as well or better than anybody else in the shop except the journeymen."

They said, "No, not because of that. Because you're talking for the union on company property. You're not allowed to do that."

I said, "Well, that's just too bad, because I can't get off the grounds here. You won't allow us to leave the grounds during lunch hour. And you don't pay me for my lunch hour, so that time doesn't belong to you, so you can't tell me what to do." And they backed down.

I had one experience at the plant that really made me work for the union. One day while I was burring I had an accident and ripped some cartilage out of my hand. It wasn't serious, but it looked kind of messy. They had to take me over to the industrial hospital to get my hand sutured. I came back and couldn't work for a day or two because my hand was all bandaged. It wasn't serious, but it was awkward. When I got my paycheck, I saw that they had docked me for time that I was in the industrial hospital. When I saw that I was really mad.

It's ironic that when the union finally got into the plant, they had me transferred out. They were anxious to get rid of me because after we got them in I went to a few meetings and complained about it being a Jim Crow union. So they arranged for me to have a higher rating instead of a worker's rating. This allowed me to make twenty-five cents an hour more, and I got transferred to another plant. By this time I was married. When I became pregnant I worked for about three months more, then I quit.

For me defense work was the beginning of my emancipation as a woman. For the first time in my life I found out that I could do something with my hands besides bake a pie. I found out that I had manual dexterity and the mentality to read blueprints and gauges, and to be inquisitive enough about things to develop skills other than the conventional roles that women had at that time. I had the consciousness-raising experience of being the only woman in this machine shop and having the mantle of challenge laid down by the men, which stimulated my competitiveness and forced me to prove myself. This, plus working in the union, gave me a lot of self-confidence.

B. The Second-Front Controversy

1. Eisenhower Urges the Earliest Possible Second Front (1942)

The German "blitzkrieg" invasion of the Soviet Union was six months old by the time the United States entered World War II in December 1941, and by that date the Soviets had already suffered hundreds of thousands of casualties. From the outset, the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, emphasized that what he most urgently needed from his British and American allies was for them to open a second front in Western Europe that would

¹Eisenhower, Dwight D., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years, Vol. I*, p. 151, copyright © 1970 The Johns Hopkins University Press.

years, followed by subsequent disturbances in Beaumont and Harle . . . The rapid succession of these violent and destructive riots, com as they did in the midst of the greatest war in which America participated, profoundly shocked the American people. . . .

Out of this . . . activity came a host of conferences, institutes, p grams, and studies, constituting in the aggregate an enormous amo of energy and effort. Much of this activity was sporadic and unintegra and will doubtless lapse now that the war is over. But it was l activity which accounts for the fact that few racial disturbances w recorded in 1944 . . . or 1945. Interest in racial minorities, moreov has continued to increase.

. . . Forced to deal with the realities of the problem, if only on emergency wartime basis, the American people have begun to through some of the myths and fallacies which have long enshrou their thinking about racial issues.

24.6 Women and Wartime Mobilization

Susan M. Hartmann

The war not only opened up employment opportunities for women, it v tually forced them to enter the work force. As a result, several million fe male workers took jobs for the first time, often in defense industries wh hours were long and wages relatively high. These working women had special problems. As in the past, they encountered discrimination in unions; and those who were mothers with husbands away at war had to worry about maintaining a home, obtaining enough food and other nece sities, and caring for their children—at the end of their long working da In this selection from her book *The Home Front and Beyond*, historian Susi Hartmann points out that social attitudes toward women in the work fo changed only gradually—and partially—during the war. Still, most histc ans agree that these years marked a turning point. Though attitudes abc working women were slow to change, the economic opportunities open them expanded significantly during and after the war.

Consider:

1. *How attitudes toward working women during the Depression (see Do 22.5) compare with attitudes during World War II;*
2. *The impact on family life of wartime employment patterns;*
3. *The overall impact of the war years on the status of American womer*

The material deprivation, the economic discrimination and the psychological discouragement experienced by women during the Depression made the Second World War all the more important in improving their lives and status. Because the nation mobilized for war required the active support of every member, the media continuously made women aware of their importance, not alone as mothers, wives and homemakers, but also as workers, citizens, and even as soldiers. As their value in extrafamilial roles increased in the public consciousness, women also benefited from real opportunities to earn income, to enter new employment fields, and to perform in a wide variety of areas that had hitherto been reserved for men.

Although the popular ideology that women's primary role was in the home survived the war both in public discourse and in the beliefs of most women, the military crisis did create an ideological climate supportive of women's movement into the public realm. In the first place, the public depiction of the war as a struggle for freedom and democracy provided symbols for women to enlist in their own cause. Moreover, where the Depression had encouraged public criticism of women workers, the labor shortage of the war years necessitated appeals by government and employers for women to take jobs. The need for female labor lent a new legitimacy to the woman worker and made government, employers, and labor unions more willing to consider the needs of women. Finally, wartime propaganda enhanced the importance of women as citizens and assigned them significant public responsibilities. . . .

Women's employment grew in every occupational field but that of domestic service. Their most spectacular gains, however, were in factory work, particularly in those industries producing defense materials where their numbers mushroomed by 460 percent. . . .

Women enjoyed higher incomes in the war economy as their wages in industry increased both absolutely and in relation to men's. Female gains were highest in war manufacturing, where they worked in formerly male jobs, but their earnings also rose in industries where women were traditionally concentrated, as well as in office work and in service industries. The general labor shortage elevated women's earnings, but of greatest importance were the opportunities for women to work in jobs where rates were historically higher. In addition, women, though not to the same extent as men, worked longer hours during the war, and government and union equal pay policies, while never systematically applied, helped to raise women's income. . . .

Public awareness of women's real and potential contributions to national goals was manifested in legislative action which chipped away at some of the legal and civil disabilities suffered by women. Four

state legislatures enacted equal pay laws during the war, and several others removed their bans against women jurors. In direct contrast to attitudes and practices during the Depression, a number of states passed laws protecting married women from discrimination in employment. In addition, for the first time Congress seriously considered an equal pay bill and an equal rights amendment to the Constitution. . . .

Less apparent at the time were the limitations placed upon women's aspirations by the very agencies that were encouraging women to assume larger functions outside the home. The nation desperately needed the services of women during the war, but it was equally resolutely attached to the traditional sexual order. Indeed, as war brought social dislocation of an inordinate degree, the institution of the family with wife and mother at its core took on even more significance. Americans adjusted to women's new prominence in the public realm because that position was defined in terms which denied the erosion of cherished social norms.

The public discourse on women's new wartime roles established three conditions which set limits on social change. The first was that women were replacing men in the world outside the home only "for the duration." . . . The second condition was that women would retain their "femininity" even as they performed masculine duties. Photographs of women war workers emphasized glamour, and advertising copy assured readers that beneath the overalls and grease stains there remained a true woman, feminine in appearance and behavior. Finally, the media emphasized the eternal feminine motivations behind women's willingness to step out of customary roles. Patriotic motives were not ignored; but also highlighted was women's determination to serve their families albeit in novel ways. In the public image, women took war jobs to bring their men home more quickly and to help make the world a more secure place for their children. . . .

That many of the crisis-induced changes in women's lives were reversed by the end of the 1940s does not cancel out the importance of World War II in altering sex roles. The contradiction between women's behavior and deeply entrenched social beliefs had never been greater, and the resolution of that disharmony failed to return women to the status quo ante bellum. Although those conventional standards survived . . . women's behavior in the public realm had undergone considerable change and would continue to develop in altered patterns.

24.7 The Returning Hero: Contrasting Images

Norman Rockwell

The way soldiers returning from a war are viewed provides a good indication of the public's attitude toward that war. American artist Norman Rockwell (see Doc. 23.5), whose cover illustrations for the popular *Saturday*