

Women did more than just cook!

Robin Rawlins

Lake Region High School

11th grade Avg./Honors

Directions: Analyze the following documents A-I and answer the guided questions that follow each document. Using the information from these documents and your background knowledge, write an essay discussing the contributions women made during World War I. Include gains made by women and dangers women faced during the war.

Document A: American Propaganda poster from World War I



1. Who is being called to action?
2. Why do you think the artist chose to use Lady Liberty to represent the United States instead of Uncle Sam?

Document B: Establishment of Army and Navy Nurse Corps (From World War One, 30,000 women were there)

In 1901 and 1908, establishment of the Army and Navy Nurse Corps opened the door for women in the military but ever so slightly. It wasn't until the US got involved in WWI that some parts of government got serious about using woman power. As the army stumbled around bureaucratic red tape trying to figure out how to enlist women, the Navy simply ignored the War Department dissenters and quickly recruited women. Nearly 13,000 women enlisted in the Navy and Marine Corps on same status as men and wore uniform blouse with insignia. The Navy's policy was extended to the Coast Guard, but personnel records from WWI contain scarcely any reference to Coast Guard Yeomanettes. A handful of them apparently were employed at the diminutive Coast Guard headquarters building in Washington...The Yeomanettes along with their Navy and Marine Corps Counterparts, were mustered out of service at the end of the war.

1. How did the Navy improve status of women?
2. What happened to that status at the end of the war?

Document C: Photograph from original negative-Campfire girls making bandages for wounded soldiers of France in Chicago, Ill. (Chicago Daily News March 6, 1916)



1. In the background, one can see rules and regulations for making the bandages. Why do you think there would be such rules?
2. How will the bandages be delivered to the soldiers in France?

Document D: Amendment 19. Woman Suffrage (1920) Passed by Congress June 4, 1919. Ratified Aug. 18, 1920.

Clause 1: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex.

Clause 2: Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

1. Was this amendment passed before or after the end of WWI?
2. Do you think women's contributions during WWI helped lead to women's right to vote?

Document E: Picture of women making bullets in a factory during WWI



1. What dangers did women face working in such factories?
2. How did this production help men overseas?

Document F: Glory of Women by Siegfried Sassoon

You loved us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You make us shells. You listen with delight,
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed,
You can't believe that British troops "retire"
When hell's last horror breaks then, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses-blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

1. How does Sassoon portray women's attitude towards the war?
2. According to what you know about women's contributions, is this an accurate account?

Document G: excerpt from *Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women and the Great War*, by Sandra Gilbert (ed. By Marilyn Boxer and Jean Quarteart, Oxford University press 1987)

Even the most conventionally angelic of women's wartime ministrations must have suggested to many members of both sexes that, while men were now invalid and maybe in-valid, their sisters were triumphant survivors and destined inheritors.....A number of texts by men and women alike suggest that the revolutionary socioeconomic transformations wrought by the war's "topsy-turvy" role reversals did bring about a release of a liberation of female anger...

1. What does Ms. Gilbert suggest about the role of men during the war?
2. How did the reversal of roles affect women?

Document H: Women's contribution to the War Effort (Article by Gail Braybon, contemporary author)

There were 2 main dangers to women munitions workers. The 1st was simply from explosions. Obviously, if you are working with all these dangerous materials it is very important to keep all sparks, or possibility of sparks, away from the area. And there were big explosions in various factories around the country, the biggest one being Silvertown and women were killed. It is very difficult to know quite how many women were killed because all this was subject to censorship during the war. There were the immediate dangers of industrial accident and injury, and lesser injuries as well. I mean, women cut their fingers, got grit in their eyes, and experienced noxious fumes from all sorts of processes.

The other really major danger to women-which was very hushed up at the time was from TNT. They absorbed it through their skin and they breathed it in....and even if you didn't die you could be seriously ill for a long time.

1. How did these dangers compare to the dangers men faced in the war in Europe?
2. Why do you think women continued to face these dangers on the homefront?

Document I: Propaganda Poster during WWI



1. What do you think the artist means by "Every Garden a Munition Plant"?
2. Who does the artist imply should plant the victory gardens?