Women in the Military: Postwar Encyclopedia Article

Women in the Military: Postwar

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Women in the Military: Postwar Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Women in the Military: Postwar.....3

Women in the Military: Postwar

The Army Nurse Corps and the Navy Nurse Corps remained active after the war. Injured soldiers still needed care, so the demand for nurses continued. Many women serving in the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) remained uniformed naval personnel after the war. However, like women in the civilian workforce, military women were often forced to accept lesser roles in the postwar period, such as clerical office positions rather than pilots. Nevertheless, a foundation was in place for women's future involvement in the military. On June 12, 1948, Congress passed a bill making the WAC (Women's Army Corps) a permanent branch of the U.S. Army. By 2000, about 10 percent of all military personnel, across all military services, were women.

The Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program provides an example of women's struggle to gain broader acceptance in the military. WASPs filled an important need during the war by ferrying military planes to their destinations. However, in June 1944 Congress defeated a bill that would have attached WASPs to the Army Air Forces. Then in December of that year, as military victory appeared well in hand, Congress ended the WASP program. In the following years the women pilots of World War II started a WASP organization to stay in touch and hold reunions. Many of the pilots moved on to new careers, although some remained in the aviation field. Dora Dougherty, who ferried warplanes during the war and in May 1944 was selected to fly the new B-29 bombers, became an aircraft company official.

The air force, navy, and army did not accept women into pilot training until the 1970s. During the mid-1970s the former WASPs sought formal recognition from Congress that their flights were official military missions that ought to give them war veteran status. Their campaign for recognition proved successful, and 1977 was declared The Year of the WASP. On November 23, 1977, President Jimmy Carter (1924– ; served 1977–81) signed into law a bill that recognized that WASPs had flown on active duty for the U.S. armed forces during the war. All WASPs would receive honorable discharges and veterans' benefits. This recognition led to increased public awareness of the WASPs. A number of museum exhibits about their service were developed, including one at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.