

A Fine and Long Tradition of Community Leadership

PREFACE

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SCOPE

The Topical Research Intern Program provides the opportunity for Servicemembers and DoD civilian employees to work on diversity/equal opportunity projects while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tour, the interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile a review of data or research pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists, supervisors, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resource and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements by the DoD or any of its agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and selected senior officials to aid them in their duties.

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Tradition is defined as the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, etc., from generation to generation especially by word of mouth or practice. (13:1392). There is much to celebrate in the practice of women at work. As Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon state in *America's Working Women*, "Work has always been and continues to be an important part of women's identities and strengths." (2:xxi) So as we celebrate the working traditions of women we are celebrating women themselves.

From precolonial time to the present, women have made significant contributions to labor in America and to the military in particular. This publication will review the history of women at work and examine the parallels in the military as a subculture; it will then examine recurring economic themes and finally focus briefly on the future.

HISTORY

Pre-Colonial Period

The first working women in America were Native American women. Their main occupation was agriculture, which involved tilling the soil, sowing seed, cultivating, and harvesting crops. Because agriculture was important to the tribes, Native American women, while not considered equal to men, had a great deal of influence in the decisions made by the tribal leaders. The greater the importance of agriculture in the tribal economy, the greater the influence of Native American women. (15:3-5) This was evidenced in tribes such as the Iroquois, Navajo, and Pueblo. (2:3)

Native American women were also placed at the front lines of an Indian war party to remind the enemy to spare the helpless. (15:4) Iroquois women could nominate council elders and had a voice in the conduct of war and the establishment of treaties. (15:4)

Colonial Period

1600 - the Revolution

Colonial life was rugged. For almost two hundred years everything a family used or ate was prepared at home under the woman's direction. She grew her own food and wove cloth to make clothes. She manufactured butter, cheese, bread, soap, and candles. (15:12)

Among the earliest occupations for women was innkeeper. Women also ran sawmills, gristmills, drygoods stores, clothing stores, tobacco shops, and general stores. They worked in mills and as barbers. They also ran printing presses. (15:13) In fact it was a woman, Anne Green, who took over the *Maryland Gazette* upon the death of her husband, and became possibly the first person to advance the case for equal pay for equal work. (15:18) Women were doctors and domestic servants. In short, many occupations were open to women in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Interestingly, during this period domestic service was a respected and well-paid occupation and had not lost status until the end of the Revolutionary War.

In her book, *Founding Mothers*, Linda De Pauw describes conditions in colonial America:

War and violence were endemic in colonial America. Mob violence and riots were regular occurrences both in towns and in the countryside. War between English, French, and native Americans raged along the whole North American frontier.... (6:174)

This explains why both men and women were familiar with the use of weapons: not the traditional rifle or musket, but rather axes, hoes, and other tools that could be used as weapons. These are the people who were the local militia prior to the Revolutionary War.

A group of daughters of liberty made up a mob which inspired the boycott of British products. DePauw continues, "When the military conflict began, in April, 1775, it was expected that women would participate. In addition to sporadic mob activities, women saw combat in three roles: as campfollowers, as regular soldiers who disguised their sex, and as irregular fighters on the frontier affiliated with local militia units." (6:179)

Campfollowers continued a tradition that was started during the French and Indian Wars of the 1700s. They were usually respectable married women who had regular assignments as field nurses, cooks, and laundresses, and who received half rations for these duties.

Just as men joined the Continental Army for economic reasons, it was for these same reasons that most women became campfollowers. While Molly Pitcher (Margaret Corbin) is probably the best known campfollower, there were many more women (over one woman to every 15 soldiers) including Martha Washington. (6:184-186)

American women impersonated men to become involved in the Revolutionary Army, while still others became members of local militias, acted as spies, and organized relief efforts, the purpose of which was to make clothing and to deliver it to the Army. (15:46)

In 1780, James Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia, sent Mary Musgrove to the Florida border to open a trading post that was actually a cover for spying on the Spanish during the Wars against Spain. (15:20)

Working women of the colonies played a major role in the Revolution, a partnership role that would not be theirs again until the mid-twentieth century. (15:41)

The Transition 1783 - 1815

During this time America began a gradual shift from a society based on agriculture to one based on machinery. In the years after the Revolutionary War there was also a notable shift from equal recognition of women in the labor force to exclusion and exploitation. Women, Blacks, and Native Americans were excluded from the very freedoms for which the Revolution was fought--the right to vote and the right to own property. Women also began to be excluded from certain professions--particularly medicine and law. (15:51)

Manufacturing was moving from a home-based industry to the factory. In 1814, all four ingredients necessary to the success of the factory system in the United States were present: capital and credit to invest in building and developing factories; a supply of low-cost labor--women and children; water power to substitute for hand power; and machinery, specifically the power loom. (15:53)

During the War of 1812 women continued to masquerade as men. It was during this time that the "first girl marine," Lucy Brewer, served on the USS *Constitution* as George Baker. (9:5)

The West 1800 - 1900

While the industrial revolution was flourishing in the East, many young women chose to move west. During this move, all able-bodied adults in the family worked in some way to assist in the journey, and the work of the women was considered as essential as that of the men. (4:248-249)

The Industrial Revolution 1820 - 1865

From 1820 to 1865, there developed a new economic force, the "Industrial Revolution," which began to transform how Americans worked and lived. (2:39)

The factory system was in competition with plantation slavery and farm/artisan labor for necessary workers, and male laborers were in short supply. (2:39) In order to recruit young women to become factory workers, the factory owners created the boarding house plan where young women could leave the farm and stay in a respectable home while working at the factory. Living in the boarding house created a sisterhood of young women from similar backgrounds with similar interests. Most of these women viewed factory work as temporary employment until they got married. (2:63)

As a result of living in the boarding houses and the creation of a sisterhood, women were able to organize and protest working conditions in the factories. These protests were mainly over money and working hours. (2:68) As a way of controlling the striking workers, the factory owners evicted them from the boarding house when their money ran out. Because these young women had the option of returning to the farm, they could be demanding and vocal. As the supply of available young women to enter the factory labor force dwindled, owners were forced to recruit women from farther away, and since these women could not easily return to their homes the exploitation of their work increased.

Factory owners advertised for entire immigrant families to work in their factories. Because the immigrants were poor and anxious for work they would accept lower wages. These families had a contract with production quotas to meet, and when they did not meet them they were evicted from the slums owned by the factory. (15:78-79)

There are many accounts written about the horrible working conditions in these factories. They were hot and noisy and unsafe for children. Rules were harsh, and there was physical punishment of women. (15:80)

Factory workers started to strike and continued to strike, despite losing every effort. These losses would inevitably cause their wages again to be reduced. Women mill workers struck in 1835 and 1836. Each strike ended in defeat, but these women were

courageous fighters, even while knowing the hardships they would have to endure. (15:82)

Society frowned on women's participation in labor organizations, and the unions also discriminated against the women. Eventually, women were asked to join the National Labor Union by William Sylves to fight for equal pay for equal work. His motive was not to make things better for women but to remove the incentive (lower wages) for employers to hire women and to make men's jobs more secure. (15:161-163) His efforts did, however, focus attention on equal pay for equal work, and women were admitted into two unions. For the most part though, the male-dominated unions were against women workers because they were afraid that women would be used to depress wages and replace men, and they saw the women in the workforce as an erosion of family life as they knew it, and an "unsexing" of women. (2:77)

The recession of 1848, and massive immigration, especially from Ireland, coincided with the introduction of the sewing machine, with which one woman could do the work of six sewing twenty hours a day. This availability of immigrant labor and the competition of women for jobs kept the wages low. In fact, even in 1850, when prices began to rise, factory owners used the availability of more laborers to cut wages even further. Women, then, were required to increase their hours per day to keep their earnings at the same level. (15:102)

In 1858, Dr. William Sanger conducted a survey of 2,000 prostitutes who were in New York City jails. He found that they had worked at a variety of occupations before becoming prostitutes, but the majority of the women were tailoresses, seamstresses, dressmakers, or domestic servants. Of all the occupations, the worst off were the sewers and other factory workers. Destitution, often caused by the low rate of pay in the factories and the poor conditions, was the reason most often presented for becoming a prostitute. (2:113-115) This trend continued almost into the next century. In New York City there were 6,000 prostitutes in 1858 and the number grew to 40,000 by 1890.

In 1870 the largest group of gainfully employed women in the West were domestic servants; the second largest group were prostitutes. Other occupations included teaching, laundering, needleworking, dressmaking, nursing, and midwifery. Women also ran boardinghouses and hotels, farmed, and worked in mills. (15:255)

Western women played an important role in the economy, and the 1890 census showed a very high percentage (higher than the national average) of professional women (authors, doctors, lawyers, and journalists). Women were also stagecoach drivers, ranchers, and trappers. Calamity Jane was best known for being an Army scout and pony express rider, but she was also a gentle, accomplished nurse. It is said she earned her nickname by warning men not to risk "calamity" by insulting her. (15:257)

Civil War

By late 1862, wartime production of clothing, boots, shoes, saddles, munitions, and supplies for the Army was increasing. More and more women moved to the factories for work. With husbands and sons in the army, they were left with no other means of support, and the rapidly rising cost of living forced others to seek employment. Then the war created thousands of widows who were also looking for work. Consequently, because of the availability of so much cheap labor, wages were lower than they had been. (15:151) The economic situation of women factory workers became so desperate that in February of 1865 the Working Women's Association petitioned President Lincoln to address the issue of low wages and working conditions. (15:153;2:75)

Civil War - Military

It was during the Civil War that nursing became a profession. Florence Nightingale wrote a book on nursing which became the manual for Civil War nurses and emphasized the need for hygiene in hospital practice. In both the North and South, women worked as army nurses on the battlefield and behind the lines, firmly establishing the profession. (15:132-134)

Women also fought as soldiers--estimates say at least four hundred--and also worked as spies, smugglers, cooks and laundresses for the troops. (15:132)

Women on both sides became active on an unparalleled scale, and often the restrictions and social conventions culturally applied to women's activities were not enforced. (9:5-6) Sarah Emma Edmonds (alias Franklin Thompson) and Frances Hook are two women who disguised themselves as men in order to serve as soldiers. (15:137) Other women who were known for their roles in the Civil War are: Anna Carrol, military strategist; Mrs. Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Union spy; Belle Boyd, Confederate spy; Loreta Velasques (alias Confederate Lt. Harry T. Buford), Clara Barton, Union supplier and founder of the American Red Cross, who also was responsible for establishing the first National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia; and Mary Walker, a doctor who gave up her medical practice to become a Union Army nurse (female doctors were not yet acceptable). (9:6-7)

Post Civil War 1865 - 1900

After the Civil War many young women were again forced into the job market by inflation. (15:156) They entered "proper" trades including retail clerk, office worker, and teaching. In each situation employers found that women could do the job as well as men and would work for less. (15:156-161)

During the Depression of 1873-1877, union membership dropped from 300,000 in 1873 to 50,000 in 1878. (15:177) By 1880 the U.S. was dominated by "robber baron"-controlled monopolies, fueled by a seemingly endless supply of cheap immigrant labor. Wages decreased, hours increased, more and more women and children entered the labor market, and industrial accidents increased. The end of the nineteenth century saw higher employer resistance to union organization. (2:195;15:180-182)

As a result of this resistance, unions such as the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor were forced into secrecy. In 1881 this union came out into the open and voted to extend membership to women, and by 1886 there were 192 women's assemblies. It was difficult, however, to organize women.

The Knights of Labor was at its peak in 1886, claiming to have more than 700,000 members. (15:190) It was the first union to reach out to almost all workers: skilled and unskilled, Black and White, men and women.

In 1881 Samuel Gompers, with Adolph Strasser, formed the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. He assured women that their organizations would be accepted equally with those of men. In 1886 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions was reformed into the American Federation of Labor (AFL). On the surface it seemed as if women were accepted in the AFL, but in reality women could do so only if they formed their own locals or paid very high dues. Unions refused to accept women's transfer cards from other local unions, and women were not accepted at union meetings. These meetings were often held at night, usually above a saloon, and often lasted well into the night when women needed to do household chores and when it was dangerous for a woman to travel. When women did participate at these meetings, they often met ridicule, and their efforts were not accepted. (15:199-201)

The labor movement seemed to have little effect on women's working conditions. At the turn of the century women still supplemented the family income by planting vegetable gardens and by raising rabbits and chickens. They took in boarders and did home work, that is, sewing, dressmaking, and laundry. They worked in domestic service as housekeepers and office cleaners. Women still worked in factories and textile mills. They worked in the electric industry and in sweatshops under inhumane conditions. Women worked in steam laundries and in the canning industry. They worked as waitresses and in the artificial flower market. They were meat packers. Women worked in offices; in 1870 they were 4.5 percent of the workers and by 1900 they held 40% of these jobs. They were switchboard operators earning about one half of a man's salary. Women worked in retail stores as saleswomen and stock girls, and their working conditions were not much better than their counterparts in the factory. One example of poor working conditions existed at a large Baltimore store. The store had only one toilet room for 282 women employees and all its customers. The employees were usually limited to five minutes away from their position, and most often, because of distance and lines, found it impossible to return in even twice that time. Women also were required to get a pass to be away from their position from a supervisor (usually a man) and could face embarrassing questions. (15:239-240)

Spanish American War

At the beginning of the Spanish American War, the Army was faced with an epidemic of typhoid fever in the camps, and were unsuccessful in their attempts to recruit more than 6,000 men to handle patient care. As a result, the Army was required to recruit women. (9:8) In two months, 1,200 women were recruited to serve in the United States, overseas,

and on the hospital ship, *Relief*. From this group, the Army Nurse Corps was established in 1901 as an auxiliary of the Army, and on May 6, 1908, the Navy followed suit.

World War I

By the end of the nineteenth century, industrialization, urbanization, and mass education had created a more self-sufficient American woman. With the onset of the First World War in Europe, American businesses and industries were training and hiring female clerks, typists, factory workers, telephone operators, and technicians. And by the time the United States entered the war, some of these fields had been almost exclusively taken over by women. As a result of preparing for war, demands for manpower in both the public and private sector increased. Women then went to work in shipyards, steel mills, and aircraft plants. (9:11) During this time there began a racial and ethnic segregation of women's jobs. There were more white-collar jobs for women, but they mostly went to White, English-speaking, high school graduates. Immigrant women, however, were much more likely to find jobs in factories. (2:127)

This period was a time of social, political, and economic reform, and it became known as the Progressive Era. Progressive women advocated women's suffrage, safety in food and drugs, a ban on child labor, and the establishment of the first welfare program. The labor movement contributed to a socialist movement that was joined by many working women and progressive social reformers. After 1917, as a reaction to the various progressive movements, there was a political shift to the right. (2:128-129)

During the Industrial Revolution, American women developed skills that were relevant to the military. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard then began to enlist women to fill critical shortages of clerical personnel. Known as "yeomanettes" or "marinettes," they received full military rank and status. Despite the objections of General John "Black Jack" Pershing, at that time the commander of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe, the Army did not enlist women, but the Army and Navy did establish the Nurse Corps. By the end of World War I, 34,000 women had served in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps and in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Army nurses served in Europe, and also served aboard troop trains and transport ships. Many were decorated; three received the Distinguished Service Cross, a combat medal second only to the Medal of Honor, and twenty three received the Distinguished Service Medal, the highest non-combat award. (3:5;9:10)

1920 - 1940

This period began with the massive anti- "Red" scare that followed WW I, and the accompanying shift from progressivism to conservatism. Although women were given the right to vote during this time, many women considered it as the end, not the means to effect changes in the workplace for better hours, pay, or safer working conditions. Some historians view this as a time of loss or at best a standstill for women, the beginning of a hiatus between waves of feminism. (2:193) In 1920, the feminist movement had reached

its high point when women finally were granted, by Constitutional amendment, the right to vote. (4:477)

There is some evidence that there was a decline in professional women during this period. Some chose to leave the workplace and others chose not to enter it in the first place. Some left because of discrimination, intensified during the depression. Others went home because of low pay or lack of promotion. (4:488) On the positive side during this period there were several developments that changed the situation for working women. New kinds of jobs employed more women; married women entered the work force in increasing numbers, and continue to do so today; and, manufacturers, as a result of their need to open new markets, began to advertise and sell their products to women. (2:193-194)

The Great Depression: 1930

During the Depression, women's jobs declined later and at a less dramatic rate than jobs for men; however, it was the non-paying jobs of women that made the greatest difference to the economy during this period. A woman's skill and ability to make cuts in family expenses, to bring in outside work such as laundry or sewing, or to take in boarders, provided the greatest contribution. (4:521-522)

The New Deal was an emergency relief program initiated by President Roosevelt, which, for the first time, included African-Americans and Latinos, but still discriminated against women and minorities in jobs. During this time, union activities became legalized, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) conducted massive organizing drives. The big unions now understood, possibly for the first time in U.S. history, that this working class included minorities as well as Whites, and although women were not specifically included in these programs, they benefitted through male members and through a more positive image of the working class. (2:194)

1940 - 1960

World War II

The number of women in the work force rose; wages and the unionization of women increased. Women were given access to a greater variety of jobs for the first time. These occupations included switchwoman, overhead crane operator, lumberjack, drill press operator, and stevedore. Women joined the Women's Land Army and became farmers. War plants paid wages 40 percent higher than in traditional industries. For the first time minority women found their way into the factory. The demographics of the average working woman changed. She was now more often older, married, and a mother. In addition to the visible work performed by women in WW II, women performed invisible work at home by planting gardens, rationing resources, and volunteering for various organizations (2:245)

In spite of these advances some things still did not change. Women continued to receive lower salaries than men (65 percent lower in manufacturing), were denied training and

advancement opportunities, and in some instances union membership was granted only for the duration of the war. One of the reasons for this was that wartime propaganda stressed the temporary nature of women's work. These women left the workforce after WW II, and when they came back they returned to low paying traditional female jobs. (2:246-247)

While the effects of women as workers were short lived after WW II, it challenged women's thinking and it had far reaching impact ultimately contributing to the women's movement of the 60s. (2:245)

Military

During World War II, 300,000 women entered the armed forces. (2:245) Just as in the civilian sector, the role of women in the military was considered to be temporary, as indicated by the designations Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES), and the Coast Guard Women Reserves (SPARS). Again, just as WW II effected the change in the way women thought about civilian work, WW II can be viewed as the turning point in the history of women in the military. Although the vast majority of military women were employed in traditional areas of health care, administration, and communications, they were also found in such military occupations as airplane mechanic, parachute rigger, gunnery instructor, air traffic controller, and naval air navigator. (3:7)

After the war, the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union began to disintegrate and the world saw the beginning of the era known as the "Cold War." The United States became dedicated to the destruction of communism, both at home and abroad. This period became known as the McCarthy Era, named after Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin, who spearheaded Congressional investigations into communism in the media, government, unions, schools, and armed forces. (2:246) McCarthyism also included a reasserting of traditional view of femininity and marriage. There was much emphasis on the part of educators, social workers, psychologists, and journalists to convince women that their place was in their home, rearing children. (2:247)

When the draft ended in 1947, military enlistments were insufficient to maintain strength levels, and the armed forces saw women as an alternate source. Their goal was to institutionalize the role of women into "feminine" occupations, ones they were considered better suited for, and to have a trained nucleus which would make it easier to respond in a national emergency. (3:10) Under the Integration Act of 1948, women were provided regular status, but enlisted women could not exceed 2 percent of the total force and the number of female officers (except nurses) could not be more than 10% of the enlisted women. According to Binkin and Bach in *Women and the Military*, "Though signifying a major breakthrough for women, the 1948 legislation also sowed the seeds of sex discrimination that were to persist for two decades." (3:11) Some of the limitations imposed on women by the act:

- women had to be 21 years of age to join the Armed Forces or 18 with a parent's written consent
- the highest rank a woman could attain was O-5 (lieutenant colonel/ commander), with only one temporary colonel/captain in each women's service, who held that rank for four years, then again became an O-5
- dependent benefits, while the same for the most part, required that the husband's dependency had to be proven, and children were not considered dependents unless the father was deceased or chief support was provided by the mother. (3:11)

By 1949 there were nine women's components of the military--four line components (WACs, WAVES, WAF, and Women Marines), three Nurse Corps (Army, Navy, and Air Force) and two medical specialist corps (Army and Air Force). (9:109)

Korean War

When the Korean War started, the proportion of women in the American military force was less than 1 percent (approximately 22,000), and one third of those women were in the health professions. (9:149) In the meantime an attempt was made to recruit 100,000 women, but these efforts failed due to the lack of interest and the unpopularity of the war. (3:11-12) As a result of the failure to attract women to volunteer for military service during the Korean War, Secretary of Defense George Marshall selected fifty prominent women and formed the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) to advise and assist in meeting the recruiting goals for women volunteers. (9:151) Still the recruiting efforts failed. This failure could be attributed to many factors:

1. Americans were tired of war and wanted to get on with their lives.
2. The recruiting campaign reawakened old accusations of immorality and masculinity as attributes of women who joined the service.
3. The timing of the recruiting push was wrong, as the pace of the war had begun to slacken.
4. There was a high demand for women workers in the civilian labor market.
5. The military could only offer low pay and a low standard of living.
6. The double standard requiring that women meet higher educational, moral, and physical qualifications than men was costly.

It was also during this time that the military changed its policy and allowed women who married to leave before completion of their contracts. While some remained, most did not. (9:156)

1960s

The sixties was a period of great prosperity and there was increased concern, both popular and governmental, about civil rights and the needs and interests of minorities and women. The Civil Rights movement demanded the attention of the entire country, and

from this movement came many others, including anti-war, educational reform, and the women's liberation movement. The women's movement had the greatest impact on working women, as women became more politically active on behalf of themselves and others, and although more women went into non traditional careers during this time (such as electrician, carpenter, machinist, lawyer, and engineer), the majority were low paying jobs. The report of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Equal Pay Act, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act finally gave women some legal weapons against sex discrimination. (7:77;2:28;5:423)

The 1960s were marked by more women of child bearing age (working mothers) entering the work force, but the majority of women worked out of economic need and women were still clustered in "female" professions. The typical pattern until the late 1960s was for women to work until their first child was born and return to work after their last child started school, or to work part time, but during this period many married and older women also joined the full-time work force. (7:25) Educated, professional women were found in only a small number of occupations. Elementary school teachers made up one third of all the female professional or technical workers. (7:27) As the sixties drew to a close, more and more middle class women felt a sense of "relative deprivation," comparing what they believed they were entitled to and what they could actually achieve under existing social conditions. (7:79)

In 1966, columnist Jack Anderson described women in the military as "typewriter soldiers." (9:175) This description appears to be adequate, resulting from the limitations imposed on women by the Integration Act. During the Kennedy administration the United States saw crises in Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Southeast Asia. As a result, there was an expansion in military focus, but instead of looking toward women to fill the need, the military relied on the draft. Both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson indicated at times they thought there should be more women in the armed forces, and in more important roles, but this was probably just treated as presidential rhetoric. (9:178) Even with the advent of the women's movement, no one looked at military women. Feminists were fighting for equal pay and other benefits that were taken for granted by women in the military. The women military leaders did not question the concept because they often believed in the fundamental rightness of the "second-class status" of women in the military. These women, after all, would not be required to "go to war" like the men. (9:179)

The Service policies of the 1960s mirrored the stereotypical thinking of the 1950s concerning women's roles and their place in society and in the work place. The focus of women's programs was to continue the "elitist" concept, manifested by the double standard in recruitment, assignment, and other policies, and the continuing emphasis on preserving the femininity of members. The focus was on appearance and this carried over into all aspects of programs for women in the military, especially training. (9:179-181) Women no longer held jobs that were open to their counterparts in WW II, and by 1965 women held 70 percent of the clerical and administrative positions. Even clustered in these fields, however, women had come to be a token force.

By the late 1960s, with the passage of critical civil rights legislation, the manpower shortages caused by the war in Vietnam and its unpopularity, and the feminist movement, there was pressure for the armed forces to rethink the role of women in the military. In 1967, President Johnson signed Public Law 90-130, removing the O-5 promotion ceiling for female officers, as well as the 2 percent cap. (9:192-203)

Vietnam

By early in 1966, there were 650 American women, most of them military nurses and civilians, working in Vietnam. A few enlisted women were also sent to Vietnam to act as secretaries to high ranking officers. (9:210) The Army and Air Force had the highest number of women serving in Southeast Asia, mostly nurses. By the end of the war, between 5,000 and 6,000 nurses and medical specialists had seen duty in this combat area, with many others assisting in the evacuation of the sick and wounded or at hospitals in the Pacific area. (9:228) Their service and contribution to the war effort was highly praised and recognized while in Vietnam; however, when they returned they were met with the same negative response from the American public as their male counterparts.

1970 - 1980

Three important laws passed in the 1960s sowed the seeds for the changes in the 1970s and 1980s: The Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1968. In the 1970s three more laws were passed: The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974, and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978. Together these laws had the potential for making a major impact on opportunities for women and minorities; however, the federal government did not make enforcement of these laws a high priority. In fact, sex discrimination was widespread in the federal government, with less than 3 percent of the top paying jobs held by women and three fourths of the female federal workforce clustered in the lowest pay grades. (7:200-202)

More women were now entering nontraditional occupations, and women began to define themselves by their occupations, not just by their family role. (7:203) In 1960 only 3 percent of all professional degrees were awarded to women, but by 1979 24 percent were earned by women. As a result of the antidiscrimination legislation, more women were entering medicine and law; however the majority of the degrees for women were still in "female" professions, such as education or psychology. While women were entering a variety of male-dominated professions, including skilled trades, they were still found clustered in the female professions. Half of all working women were found in only 17 out of 400 occupations and 25 percent of all working women were found in five occupations: secretary, bookkeeper, elementary school teacher, waitress, and retail clerk. In the male-dominated professions, women are usually restricted to lower paying, non-career-enhancing jobs. For example, as doctors they become hospital staff members rather than open a private practice; as lawyers they are concentrated in legal assistance or family law; as college teachers, part time faculty. (7:204-207)

Women were entering skilled craft jobs at the same time the trade was being deskilled or eliminated. For example, in 1973 as a result of an affirmative action agreement, AT&T agreed to train women in its skilled crafts jobs. At that same time, technological advancements were eliminating many of the jobs for which these women were trained, and men as a group showed an increase of almost 14,000 jobs. (7:207)

Politics was another occupation in which women had not made many inroads. They fared best in state legislatures where their numbers increased from 344 female legislators in 1972 to 685 in 1976. (7:209)

1970s--The Military

The 1970s for military women was a period of expansion. This was driven by the conversion to an all-volunteer force, the feminist legislation, and the Congressional debates on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1971, women made up 1.6 percent of the military, and by 1976 this number had increased to 5.2 percent. (3:15) During the 70s policies were changed, including: women were permitted to command mixed-gender units; women could enter aviation training and military academies; policies requiring automatic discharges of pregnant women were eliminated; family entitlements for married women were equalized; and women could be assigned to nontraditional specialties. (3:17)

1980 - 1990

The 80s continued the pattern of the 70s for women in the work force. That is, more women continued to enter the work force (50 million were in the workforce in 1984 compared to 32 million in 1971). Women were close to 44 percent of the work force. (7:195-196) Women's participation in the workforce became continuous; that is, once they became employed they stayed employed even during the child-bearing and child-rearing years.

The majority of women working in the 1980s did so out of economic necessity, without respect to race, and income differences between women based on race declined. Women still clustered in "female" occupations, and although there was some effort to move from those roles to nontraditional jobs, the situation basically stayed the same, especially in the health services industry. In 1982, over 34 percent of all working women were in clerical jobs. (7:204)

Women moved into nontraditional jobs only to find that once there they would be the first to be laid off. In 1981 there were 1,366 women in skilled steel mill jobs, but in the next two years, one-half of the skilled workers were laid off, so most of these women lost their jobs. (7:206;210)

Other issues that affected working women in the 1980s were the decline in the birth rate, health hazards, and sexual harassment.

BIRTH RATE

In the early 1980s the U. S. Government commissioned studies on the effects of the declining birth rate after the baby boomer generation. In a U. S. Department of Labor publication entitled *Opportunity 2000*, eight trends were identified:

1. The number of workers will fall.
2. Average age of workers will rise.
3. More women will be on the job.
4. One third of new workers will be minorities.
5. There will be more immigrants than any time since WWI.
6. Most new jobs will be in services and information.
7. The new jobs will require higher skills.
8. The challenge for business will be immense. (12:3-15)

From these trends the Hudson Institute identified six challenges:

1. Stimulating balanced world growth
2. Accelerating productivity increases in service industries
3. Maintaining the dynamism of an aging workforce
4. Reconciling the conflicting needs of women, work, and families
5. Integrating Black and Hispanic workers fully into the economy
6. Improving the education and skills of all workers (10:105-106)

These trends and challenges sent the message to working women that they were needed in the labor force.

HEALTH HAZARDS

Traditionally women of child bearing age were excluded from jobs where exposure to chemical substances could cause difficulties with reproduction or birth defects in their unborn children. Interestingly, women were not excluded from traditionally female occupations that had the same potentials for risk. For example, nurses in operating rooms exposed to anesthetic gas have a high rate of miscarriage; elementary school teachers are

exposed to German measles; clerical workers are exposed to video display terminals, which may be linked to birth problems; women working in agriculture-related jobs are exposed to pesticides; and even women doing so-called "clean" electronics industry assembly work are exposed to the potentially dangerous substances used to produce microchips. (7:224-227)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment was not even named until the mid-70s, but it was clearly identified as a problem in the 1980s. It often occurs in nontraditional occupations, sometimes as a form of retaliation for invading the male domain, but it also occurs in traditional female occupations such as secretary, nurse, and waitress, apparently as a means of reemphasizing gender roles. For the victims, sexual harassment can cause stress, decreased productivity, loss of time at work, and even job loss. (7:229-231)

THE MILITARY IN THE 1980s

Although the number of women in the military increased dramatically in the early 80s, women were still approximately 10 percent of the total military force, concentrated in traditionally "female" jobs. (9:381) This was due in part to the fact that some still considered women in the military to be temporary, and also in part to disagreement between civilian officials and military leaders. Women often felt isolated in a predominately male organization. The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) served as one of the means through which military women could express their concerns to top officials, and informed the Pentagon of situations such as sexual harassment.

A Brookings Institute study in 1977 addressed the demographics of women in the military and, noting the effects of the dwindling birth rate and the prevailing economic trends, advocated maximum utilization of women in the armed forces. (3:105) By 1982, there was a dramatic shift in the view of women in the military. No longer were the primary considerations "how many women should be in the military" and "should women be in combat," but how best to use women in the military and how to provide career opportunities for women while they were still excluded from combat. (9:396) The Brookings Institute advised the Department of Defense to set up an experimental program that would allow women to voluntarily apply for positions in combat units. The Services could then determine how many women would volunteer for such assignments, and then examine the effect on unit performance. (3:110)

THE MILITARY OF THE 1990s

One issue still prevalent in the 1990s is sexual harassment. The Defense Manpower Data Center has conducted two extensive studies of sexual harassment in the military. In their 1988 study, 64 percent of the military women surveyed reported incidents of unwanted sexual attention (most frequently sexual teasing, jokes, and remarks or suggestive looks and gestures). In the 1995 study, this figure had dropped to 55 percent. (1:9) Though this

is a significant and unprecedented decline, the DoD is pursuing a "zero tolerance" policy for sexual harassment, and it remains an item of continuing concern. (1:38)

PERSIAN GULF

Desert Shield was the first major U.S. military deployment since Vietnam and the largest deployment of military women in U.S. history. During the entire period of Desert Storm, the combat support units with women (Army, Navy, and Air Force) were seen to perform their missions well even when under direct fire. (9:463) The DoD Interim Report to Congress on the conduct of war stated that "women played a vital role in the theater of operations." (9:470)

MajGen Jeanne Holm, in *Women in the Military* (1992) stated:

Undoubtedly the future of women's participation in national defense for the balance of this century and beyond will be heavily influenced by the lessons taken from the Persian Gulf War. The one clear lesson that should be taken from this experience is that American men and women are capable of serving side-by-side as professionals in a combat zone, doing whatever they are trained to do, with a lot of courage and pride in a job well done. (9:471)

In 1992, the Roper Organization published the results of their poll, "Attitudes Regarding the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces: The Public Perspective." It clearly indicated "the public's belief that women should be assigned to military combat roles (except those involving direct, ground, hand-to-hand combat)." This finding largely is seen as a result of the performance of the 41,000 female servicemembers who served in the Persian Gulf. On TV, Americans saw women doing much the same kind of work, and facing the same dangers, as men. And then, when five women were killed and two were prisoners of war, it called into question the "protection" of women, "for their own good," as an issue. (8:6-7) On April 28, 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin announced that women would no longer be excluded from combat ships or aircraft, and on January 13, 1994, he did away with the "at risk" rule that kept women from serving in units likely to see combat. (11:369)

CONCLUSION

George Santayana in *The Life of Reason* states "Those that cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." (14) Through the study of women in the workforce we have seen periods when men and women worked side by side with mutual respect toward a common goal--the Colonial period, the settling of the West, and World War II. We also have seen periods when women were exploited and/or discriminated against--the Industrial Revolution and after World War II. When there was a sufficient pool of available labor, women were exploited and pressed into gender-oriented career roles. When the labor pool did not have a large enough source of workers to draw from, women were welcomed into the workforce as equal players. Let us hope we will learn from the past and make women full and equal partners in our future.

Barbara Wertheimer in *We Were There* sums it up:

The working women of America are moving toward full participation for the first time. In the past, home responsibilities kept us from being active even when we had a union, and isolated us from each other. Our role at home, however, released men to take part in their labor union organizations and to run for political office. Now we seek a partnership role on the job, in the home, in those same labor unions, in politics. We make no predictions about how long this will take to achieve, nor do we know how women, as they win the opportunity to influence policy, will utilize their new power. But as we chart our way, point by point, we are committed to the belief that in our long journey to equality we will one day reach our goal. Our look to the past has shown where we came from and how far we have come. Surely we will continue to draw strength from those women who went before, knowing that for nearly four hundred years of America's history women have been part of the story. From the beginning we were there. (15:376)

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