

# LESSON PLAN

# Calling All WAACs/WACs

Written by Christine Wuebker



## SUMMARY

World War II created an opportunity for women to step out of their traditional gender roles not only at home but also in the military. Fort Des Moines was the site of the first Women's Army Auxilliary Corps (WAAC) training center in United States Army history, training both enlisted women, and female commissioned officers. This program will use primary source propaganda to explore how and why women were recruited and what this meant for gender roles at the time.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Students will use a series of WAAC/WAC propaganda posters to better understand the role women played in WWII.
- 2 Students will learn how to analyze primary source documents using WWII propaganda posters and brochures.
- 3 Students will take what they learned and create their own modern version (jingle, poster, tweet, Instagram, etc.) of WAAC/WAC propaganda.

## TIME

30 minutes

## IOWA CORE

**SS.8.4.** Independently, evaluate the credibility of primary and secondary sources by determining their relevance and intended use.

**SS.8.13.** Explain the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts. (21st century skills)

**RH.6-8.1.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**RH.6-8.2.** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**RH.6-8.5.** Describe how a text presents information (e.g. sequentially, comparatively, causally).

**RH.6-8.6.** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**RH.6-8.7.** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**RH.6-8.8.** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

**WHST.6-8.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**SS.9-12.4.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.

**SS-US.9-12.14.** Evaluate the impact of gender roles on economic, political, and social life in the U.S.

**SS-US.9-12.25.** Analyze how regional, racial, ethnic and gender perspectives influenced American history and culture.

**RH.9-10.1.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**RH.9-10.2.** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**RH.9-10.5.** Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**WHST.9-10.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**RH.11-12.1.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

**RH.11-12.2.** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**RH.11-12.5.** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

**WHST.11-12.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## RESOURCES

### **“Mine eyes have seen the glory”**

Poster #1: <https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/collection/p17208coll3/id/857>

### **“For your country’s sake today”**

Poster #2: <https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/collection/p17208coll3/id/1154/rec/5>

### **“Which one of these WAC jobs would you like?”**

Poster #3: <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/35522>

### **“Are you a girl with a star spangled heart?”**

Poster #4: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3g01653>

### **“Speed them back – Join the WAAC”**

Poster #5: <https://www.loc.gov/item/90712741>

### **“This is our war...Join the WAAC” Brochure**

Included

### **“Women Power” Brochure**

Included

### **Primary Source Analysis Questions**

Included

## NOTES



## KEY TEACHING POINTS

- 1 Prior to WWII, the role of women was homemaker and caregiver. There were very few “acceptable” jobs for women outside the home, and women were not allowed to serve in the military.
- 2 WWII allowed women to step outside traditional gender roles on the home front and in the military.
- 3 To free up men to fight on the front lines, the government recruited women to fill non-combat roles.
- 4 The government created posters and brochures to recruit women.
- 5 Propaganda was a very important tool used during WWII.
- 6 Primary source analysis

## PROGRAM



### 1. Knowledge Check

Review what was happening in the United States prior to WWII.

The Great Depression was coming to an end and European nations were at war with each other.

Inform student's that during the Great Depression women were relegated to domestic work as homemakers and caregivers, or to jobs viewed as traditionally female – teachers, nurses, domestics (maids), etc. Others were able to branch out but only because companies could pay them less than their male counterparts.

### 2. Lead up to the US entering WWII

Remind the students that the United States did not enter the war immediately. Instead, the United States supported their European Allies by producing supplies needed for the war effort.

Once the country formally joined the fighting going on in Europe and Asia, all citizens were called upon to support the cause.

Men were pulled from their jobs and enlisted in the military leaving large gaps in the workforce that needed to be filled. Many women happily filled those roles.

The military also decided to recruit women into the ranks for the first time.



**DISCUSSION:** Why did the army decide to recruit women to serve for the first time? (Primarily, they realized every woman who could perform non-combat jobs, freed up a male soldier for the front lines.)



### 3. Women are in the Army

Inform students that when women first joined the military, they were not fully recognized as members of the army. Instead, a special organization was created called the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps or WAAC for short.

Later, when women became full members of army, "auxiliary" was dropped to create the Women's Army Corps, or WAC.

The first training center for women in United States army history was located at Fort Des Moines in Iowa.

### 4. It's all about the advertising



**DISCUSSION:** How do you think the military got women to enlist? Why do you think women would want to serve? Why might women NOT want to serve? What challenges might there be in getting women to enlist?

The armed services started a massive propaganda campaign to encourage students to support the war effort in countless ways, including joining the various branches of the military.

### 5. Primary sources



**ACTIVITY:** Explain to the students that they will be dividing into groups and analyzing some of the posters used as propaganda during WWII.

They should think about things such as who created the propaganda, what is the purpose, who is the target audience for the poster, what can we learn about society at the time by examining the poster, and is the poster effective?

After they have been given several minutes to study their posters, they will present what they discovered to the rest of the class.

After each group has presented, discuss what they learned including any similarities between the different posters, any reoccurring themes, anything specific they took away, etc.



### 9. Assignment

Working in groups, pairs, or as individuals, students will create modern WAAC/WAC propaganda. They can create a poster, a tweet, an Instagram post, a radio jingle, a Facebook page, etc. Whatever the students choose, it needs to incorporate the things they learned during the program. Make sure there are a few minutes for each group to share what they created.



### Put it all together.

There should be a few minutes at the end to recap everything discussed during the program from the changing roles of women to analyzing primary sources.

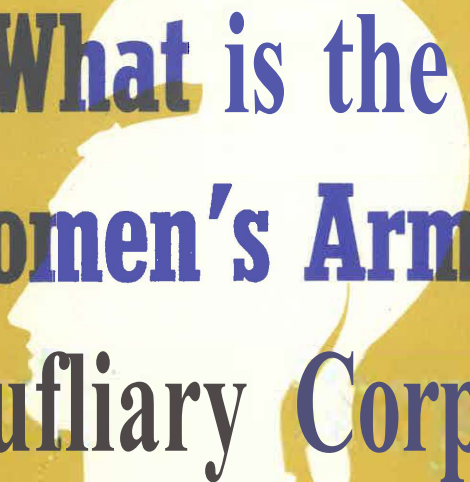
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This is our war...

Join the WAAC



**WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS  
UNITED STATES ARMY**



# What is the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps?

It is a corps of women in military uniform and under military discipline, organized for noncombatant service with the Army. It is the only women's organization, exclusive of the Army Nurse Corps, authorized to serve with the Army. It offers American women, regardless of race, color or creed, an exceptional opportunity for service.

## *How is the WAAC Set Up?*

The organization is along military lines. It includes a director, assistant directors, field directors, first, second and third officers and enrolled members. The enrolled members have the equivalent grades and pay of enlisted men of the Army.

## *What You Will Do in the WAAC*

Women have joined the WAAC in order to take the places of men in noncombatant positions, and release them for front-line duty. The classes of duties to which members of the WAAC are assigned at present include:

Accountants.  
Aircraft Warning Personnel  
Bakers  
Bookkeepers  
Bookkeeping Machine  
Operators  
Cadre Clerks  
Camera Technicians  
Cashiers  
Chauffeurs  
Classification Specialists  
Clerks  
Cooks  
Dispatchers - Motor Vehicles  
Draftsmen  
Librarians  
Machine Record Operators  
Message Center Clerks

Messengers  
Mimeograph Operators  
Musicians  
Photo Laboratory  
Technicians  
Postal Clerks  
Radio Operators  
Radio Repairmen  
Sales Clerks  
Statisticians  
Stenographers  
Stock Record Clerks  
Telegraph Printer Operators  
Telephone Operators  
Teletype Operators  
Truck Drivers  
Typists  
Weather Observers

## *How You Will be Trained in the WAAC*

You will be enrolled as an auxiliary. You will at once be given the basic training which lasts four weeks and consists of Army orientation, drill, physical training, and such subjects as mess management, map reading, and military sanitation. At the

Riding in an Army truck, new auxiliaries arrive at a WAAC training center. They look forward with eagerness to the beginning of their service in this new organization of women.





completion of this training, you will be given a series of aptitude tests to determine what type of work you will be best fitted for in your service with the Army. Based on these tests, you may be sent to a specialist school. These schools include Administration, Motor Transport, Bakers and Cooks, Communications, and Radio. As the Corps expands, other types of specialist training will be added.

The discipline as well as the training of the WAAC is along military lines. As a member of the WAAC you will *be* governed by the Code of Conduct established in WAAC Regulations.

### *Your Opportunities for Promotion in the WAAC*

By Executive Order of the President, dated November 20, 1942, the WAAC was authorized an increase to approximately six times its originally established strength. This expansion creates almost unlimited opportunities for advancement of enrolled members who have demonstrated ability to positions of responsibility and authority. These include ratings corresponding to noncommissioned officer grades in the Army, as well as promotion to commissioned rank.

The new auxiliaries are assigned to companies by the personnel officer. Then they go to their quarters, large comfortable barracks, where they will live while they receive their basic training.





## *May You Become an Officer in the WAAC?*

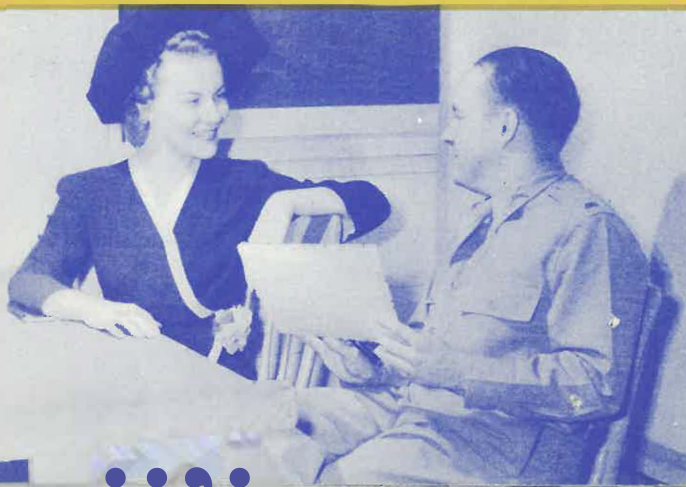
As an enrolled member of the WAAC you will have an equal opportunity to compete for appointment and attendance at Officer Candidate School. All officer candidates are now selected from the ranks of enrolled members.

## *Who May Join the WAAC?*

An applicant must:

- (a) Be a woman citizen of the United States.
- (b) Be between 21 and 44 years of age inclusive.
- (c) Submit satisfactory proof of date of birth and citizenship.
- (d) Have an excellent character.
- (e) Present two character references from responsible business or professional people in her community, not relatives, who are personally acquainted with the applicant's ability.
- (f) Pass a mental alertness test.
- (g) Qualify according to the following height and weight chart:

Each auxiliary is interviewed by a classification officer who records her experience, education and interests. Members of the WAAC are trained in the duties for which they are best fitted.



Height, inches	Weight According to Age Period				
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45
60 .....	114	117	120	123	126
61 .....	117	120'	123	126	129
62 .....	120	123	126	129	132
63 .....	123	126	129	132	135
64 .....	127	130	133	136	139
65 .....	131	134	137	140	143
66 .....	135	138	141	144	147
67 .....	139	142	145	148	151
68 .....	143	146	149	152	155
69 .....	147	150	153	156	159
70 .....	151	154	157	160	163
71 .....	155	158	161	164	167
72 .....	159	162	165	168	171

**Note:** Height and weight to be taken without shoes and with surgical gown or sheet in lieu of dress. Minimum standard for height is five feet, maximum six feet; minimum of weight is 100 pounds.

The new auxiliary receives her first WAAC clothing. These clothes are styled for looks as well as wear, and a smart looking woman will look even smarter in the uniform of the WAAC.





In general, an applicant must be in good health. She must have good sight and good hearing. Her heart must be competent to stand the stress of physical exertion. She must be intelligent enough to understand and execute orders. Decision as to acceptance with respect to physical qualifications will be determined following examination made by Army Medical Examiners.

### *What about Married Women and Mothers of Families?*

If you are married you may enroll in the WAAC, but:

- (a) No woman will be accepted who has anyone financially dependent on her pay as a member of the WAAC.
- (b) No applicant will be accepted for enrollment in the WAAC if she has one or more children under fourteen years of age.

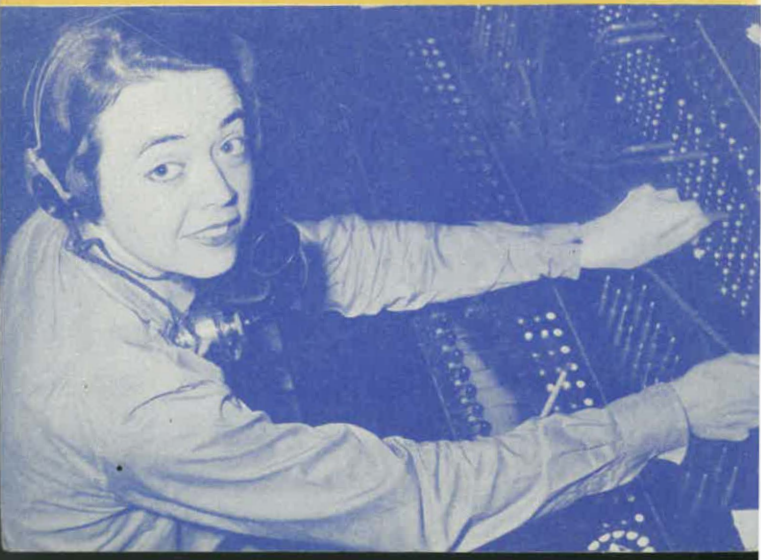
Standing trimly at attention, these members of the WAAC reflect the quality of their training. In their neat, practical uniforms, and with their military bearing, they present an attractive appearance.





↑ The laboratory is an important war front. Here is a member of the WAAC engaged in laboratory work that may add to the sanitary and medical efficiency of our troops.

Members of the WAAC get the message through. After training as telephone, teletype or radio operators, they take their places in the great network of Army communications.



## *May Wives of Men in the Armed Services Join the WAAC?*

If you are the wife of a man in service, you are eligible, subject to the foregoing requirements, for enrollment in the WAAC. Many wives, as well as mothers and sisters of servicemen, are already enrolled in its ranks and thus are finding opportunity to do their part in winning the war.

## *May Students Enroll in the WAAC?*

If you are attending college or business school, and meet the above qualifications, you may enroll in the WAAC. Upon your request, you will be permitted to remain in an inactive status until completion of the current school year or the school course for which you are enrolled, if such course can be completed in less than one year.

## *Length of Service in the WAAC*

Your term of service in the WAAC is for the duration of the war plus a period of not more than six months thereafter.

## *Furloughs for Members of the WAAC*

As a member of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps you are entitled to a total of thirty days' leave, or furlough, per year, provided your services can be spared.

## *Grades and Pay in the WAAC*

As an enrolled member of the WAAC you will receive the monthly pay of your comparable grade in the Army, as follows:

<i>WAAC Grade</i>	<i>Equivalent Army Grade</i>	<i>Pay</i>
First Leader	Master Sergeant and First Sergeant	\$138.00
Technical Leader	Technical Sergeant . . . . .	114.00
Staff Leader	Staff Sergeant . . . . .	96.00
Leader	Sergeant . . . . .	78.00
Junior Leader	Corporal . . . . .	66.00
Auxiliary, 1st Class	Private, 1st Class . . . . .	54.00
Auxiliary	Private . . . . .	50.00





↑ Members of the WAAC enjoy the finest recreational and athletic facilities. Games, calisthenics, and drills keep the women fit for the important duties they are performing.

Preparation of food is an important subject in the WAAC. Here a member learns the cuts of meat that will be used in the next meal served from her company's kitchen.



## *Other Benefits of the WAAC*

You will live in comfortable and attractive quarters, especially planned for women. Each of the WAAC barracks has a pleasant, well-furnished day room where you may enjoy games and music when off duty. Appetizing, well-balanced meals are prepared by women cooks trained in the WAAC. When meals are not furnished, a cash allowance is paid.

Medical and dental services, hospitalization, medicines and other appropriate health services are provided at Government expense for all members of the WAAC.

As a member of the WAAC you are entitled to benefits under the United States Employees' Compensation Act. You will also receive the benefits provided by the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940.

## *Uniforms of the WAAC*

Members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps wear distinctive uniforms, with insignia and accessories, all supplied by the Government. These include summer and winter uniforms, and special clothing for athletics, mechanical work, bakers and cooks, and other duties.

## *Your Service in the WAAC*

As a member of the WAAC you will be enrolled for noncombatant duties. You may be assigned to duty with a WAAC unit, composed of fifty or more members, to wherever the Army is serving at home or abroad.

## *Where You May Join the WAAC*

Go to any United States Army Recruiting and Induction Station. There you may obtain additional information and application blanks for enrollment.

Many WAAC officers are now on duty at Recruiting and Induction Stations. They will tell you how, by releasing a man for front-line service, you can help to win the war- by joining the

**WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS.**





↑ Duties at WAAC training centers are announced by bugle calls. From reveille to taps women are summoned to work, to meals, to play, and finally to sleep, by the WAAC bugler.

Proud of their ability to drill, a company of the WAAC marches smartly down the field. Marching and drilling develop the WAAC standards of precision and smartness. ↓



WAR DEPARTMENT  
Recruiting Publicity Bureau  
Governors Island, New York  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



THIS IS OUR WAR...

To the Addressee:  
If you have a club or other place where women  
assemble, please display this poster. Addi-  
tional copies may be had by writing to the  
RECRUITING PUBLICITY BUREAU  
GOVERNORS ISLAND, NEW YORK



WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS

## What is the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps?

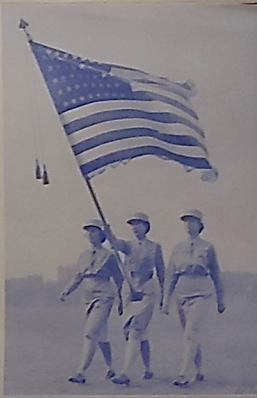
*It is a corps of women in military uniform and under military discipline, organized for noncombatant service with the Army. It is the only women's organization, exclusive of the Army Nurse Corps, authorized to serve with the Army. It offers American women, regardless of race, color or creed, an exceptional opportunity for service.*

American women are meeting the challenge of total war with the same courageous determination that pioneer women showed when this country was a rough, frontier wilderness. Today, in the *Women's Army Auxiliary Corps*, we again can show the world the valiant spirit of American women.

The Army has announced that it needs the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of the Nation for the war effort, and the women of the Nation are responding in thousands by joining the WAAC. There are scores of jobs, from typing to driving, which the Army feels women can do to release the men for combat duty — and all women ask as they sign up is: "Give us a chance to help any way we can!"

So capable have women proved themselves that now, by Executive order, the President authorizes the WAAC to recruit to the full strength of 150,000. This expands the WAAC to six times its original size, and many more women who long to do their share can join the fight for our American way of life. Here is a real opportunity to contribute personally.

OVETA CULP HOBBY, Director, WAAC



# WOMAN POWER

*Back of the fighting front, supporting it with resolute faith, is a valiant force whose spirit reflects the righteous might of our Nation — it is woman power*

Through dreary tedium and fiery blitz alike, British women have stood by their men, doing many tasks from dispatch riding to munitions-testing, from stenography to antiaircraft duty. The brave British, Chinese and Russian women — women of the United Nations — working and fighting alongside their menfolk, have set an example which stirs the hearts of all.

We American women have everything at stake in this war. Our husbands, our sons, our sweethearts, our brothers are facing the hazards of battle. Our homes, our freedom, our way of living, are threatened by the forces of evil and violence.

We American women are determined to do our part to help win this war — and we shall win!

Women in the WAAC are trained in and assigned to a wide range of interesting jobs. If you bring to these jobs previous training or experience, so much the better. Yet if you are utterly unskilled now you still can do an important job for the Army, and when peace comes you will return to civilian life better trained, healthier, more alert and responsible. You may, in fact, be prepared for some of the exciting new careers which are opening up for women.

While in the WAAC you will lead an orderly, healthful life, and enjoy the companionship of other fine women. The adventure of new scenes, new friends, and unusual experiences appeals to many. The pay, with smart uniforms, clothing and all essentials included, is good.

America's woman power can help our country in its hour of crisis — to back up our fighting men with equally unselfish service which will speed the victory and bring them back — safe and soon.

But most of all, women in the WAAC have a deep and satisfying knowledge that they are making a real contribution to victory — that each is doing the work of a soldier so that he may get his chance to fight the enemy with gun, tank or plane.

The WAAC performs many tasks for the United States Army which otherwise a soldier — needed in battle — would have to do. It is a challenge, and a privilege. It offers to alert, intelligent women a glorious opportunity to help win the war.

American soldiers have started an offensive which will not stop until we have won. Every man is needed. And to keep this complex modern army fighting efficiently we need women to do many essential military tasks. This is a great team play and woman power will have an important part in the victory which will belong to all!

*Major General J. A. Utzo*



# Calling All WAACs/WACs

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## PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. Who wrote/created the document?
2. Who is the intended target of the document?
3. What is the purpose of the document?
4. What can we learn about society during the time this document was created?
5. Is the document effective? Why or why not?