

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

August 26, 2020



THE CENTENNIAL OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT



August 26, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the Women's Suffrage Movement's **GREATEST** victory—women achieving full voting rights following the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

This courageous, 72-year-long political movement was carried out by women and men, working together.

THE ROAD TO RATIFICATION

With little financial, legal, or political power of their own, women fought state by state for their rights as citizens.

To win the right to vote, women circulated countless petitions, gave speeches, published newspapers, and travelled the country to win support. They were frequently ridiculed, harassed, and sometimes attacked by mobs and police.

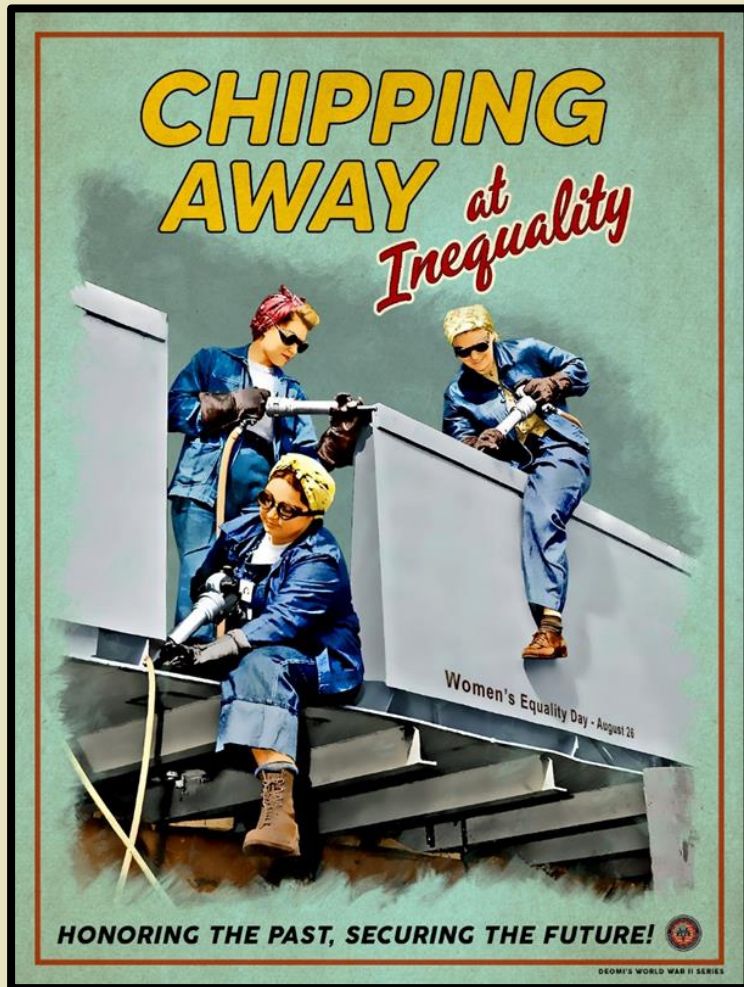
Still they persevered.

THE CENTENNIAL OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

“Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution. Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920.”

—National Archives

POSTER/PRESENTATION



World War II changed the roles of women in the United States and women in turn, helped transform the nation.

This presentation highlights women's contributions during the war effort, the origins of Wonder Woman, and the continuing road towards equality.

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

Women have served in military conflicts since the American Revolution, but World War II was the first time that women served in the military in an official capacity.

Although women's participation in the Armed Forces was not promoted at the beginning of the war, it soon became apparent that their contributions were necessary for the United States to win the war.

Over 350,000 women served proudly in the Armed Forces, during WWII.

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE



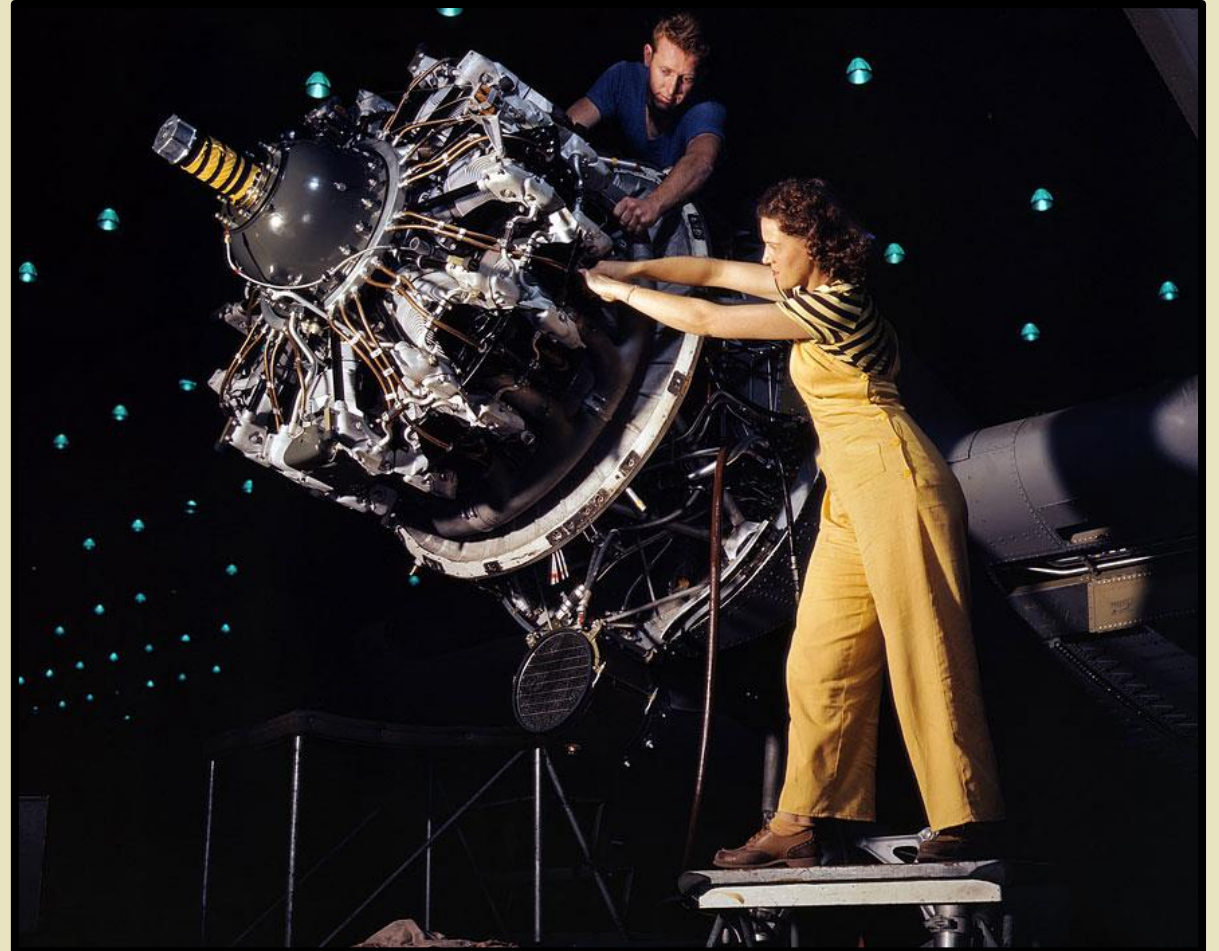
More than seven million women who had not been wage earners before the war joined eleven million women already in the American work force.

Race, class, age, and education, among other factors, limited opportunities for some women while expanding them for others.

EQUITABLE PAY

In 1944, skilled female workers earned an average weekly wage of \$31.21.

Despite federal regulations requiring equitable pay for similar work, their male counterparts in similar positions earned \$54.65 weekly.



SUSAN B. ANTHONY II

In 1944, Susan B. Anthony II, (great-niece of suffragist Susan B. Anthony) contended that women had demonstrated their abilities and deserved “equal pay for equal work, a right grudgingly acceded” them during the war.



As a grinder in the Washington Navy Yard machine shop, Anthony was confident that the war's end would “mark a turning point in women's road to full equality”.

GOVERNMENT FUNDED DAY CARE CENTERS



During the war, the federal government supported a nationwide program of child care centers, intended to boost war production by freeing mothers to work.

After the war, the government removed its support of day-care programs and advised women to return home.

DR. WILLIAM MOULTON MARSTON



In 1941, psychologist and inventor Dr. William Moulton Marston was hired by the creators of DC Comics to create a feminine superhero.

Wonder Woman made her debut in late 1941, bringing a new vision of femininity that combined strength, intelligence, and patriotism.

WONDER WOMAN

Wonder Woman encouraged girls to believe that with hard work and determination, a woman could be as successful as a man.

Young women identified with her patriotism and aspired to emulate her strength and bold 1940s style.

She was an immediate success with an eventual readership of 10 million and appearances in four comic books and a daily newspaper strip.

VICTORY

When the war ended, some women were ready to return to their pre-war domestic lives. However, others who wanted or needed to continue working, found their opportunities were limited as men returned home and the demand for war materials decreased.

Without the war to justify the 'unconventional' work of women, many employers demoted women to lower paying positions, or less secure "pink collar" jobs, or pushed them out of the workforce entirely.

Wartime work proved transformative for many women who embraced the challenge and freedoms. Yet personnel policies at the end of the war, moved men and women back into pre-war gender roles.

WOMEN'S ARMED SERVICE INTEGRATION ACT

Three years after the end of WWII, President Harry Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act (Pub.L. 80-625, 62 Stat. 356, enacted June 12, 1948).

It granted women permanent status in the Regular and Reserve forces of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and the newly-created Air Force.



LEGACY

Women's Equality Day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the many benefits of true equality. Women in public service and government have long served our nation by working to clear barriers, enforce laws, implement new ideas, and change people's attitudes.

We honor the women of WWII. Through their diligence, determination, and sacrifice, they continued to carry the torch the suffragists picked up in their quest for equality.



SUSAN B. ANTHONY



“If I could live another century! I do so want to see the fruition of the work for women in the past century. There is so much yet to be done, I see so many things I would like to do and say, but I must leave it for the younger generation. We old fighters have prepared the way, and it is easier than it was fifty years ago when I first got into the harness. The young blood, fresh with enthusiasm and with all the enlightenment of the twentieth century, must carry on the work.”

—Susan B. Anthony

Original Source: The Democrat and Chronicle, August 28th, 1902; quoted by Lynn Sherr, Failure is Impossible, p. 32

Equal Opportunity Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall



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