Activity Book for all age groups

Women at War

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM
TE MATA TOA
For most of recorded history, women’s involvement in military activities has been in traditional society driven roles. Some cultures were exceptions e.g. around the Mediterranean and Africa certain cultures had definite military roles for women. The Amazons although based on fact may be more myth than real. Some tribes had Warrior Queens – Boudicca in Europe, Joan of Arc in France for example, but it is largely since the Industrial Revolution that women’s role has become more defined. New Zealand women’s involvement has followed largely the same path.

Maori women participated in the defence of Pa, accompanied war parties and sometimes took part in close quarter combat. Women’s speeches often incited men before or during battle inspiring warriors to victory. Maori women fought for and against British Imperial troops during the New Zealand Wars.

During the Boer War 35 New Zealand women served as nurses, a further 20 volunteered as teachers within the concentration camp schools for Boer children. Although arriving just after the end of the war many stayed in South Africa to teach.

During WWI women largely embraced the traditional role of keeping the home fires burning and were encouraged to knit as part of their contribution to the soldier’s comforts. A total of 640 volunteered as nurses, 17 of whom were killed, including 10 who drowned when the hospital ship Marquette sunk.

Initially women were encouraged to be patriotic and supportive of the war effort in WWII, but their desire to serve more actively saw the establishment of separate women’s organisations.

Today’s women, have achieved total integration in the New Zealand Defence Force, including combat trades making it one of the very few defence forces in the world to achieve this goal. Women are on the same pay rate as men, and women officers are on the same promotional cycle as their male counterparts.
Jowett Lieutenant Colonel Vida Eliza

Vida Eliza Jowett was for many years the Dominion President of the Plunket Society and was also a member of the Women’s War Service Auxiliary.

In 1942 she became Chief Commander of the newly formed WAAC. In forming the corps, she had to fight hard against reluctance among many male soldiers to accept women’s involvement in the military.

She was made an OBE in 1944 and although retiring in 1947 she remained commandant of the corps for another six years.

Colonel Jowett’s medal group is among the museums collection. There is also a large portrait of her painted by war artist Peter McIntyre in the collection.

Kain Wing Officer Francis (Kitty)

Kitty Kain was a teacher in Malaya when WWII started.

Returning to New Zealand she became a dietician at Otago University before being appointed superintendent of the newly established Women’s Auxiliary Air Force in 1941.

She selected, organised and supervised the WAAF which by 1943 numbered 3600 women. Impending motherhood led to her relinquishing command in December 1943.
Lady Liverpool (the Governor’s wife) set up a patriotic fund in WWI. Her “Knitting Book” summed up Women’s role during the war.

“For Empire and for Freedom
We all must do our bit
The men go forth to battle
The women wait – and knit”

Trace the integration of New Zealand Women into the Armed Forces through the evolution of uniforms. There are examples of Women’s War Service Auxiliary, Land Army, WAAC, and nurses uniforms on display throughout the galleries of the National Army Museum.
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Home front activities including recipes and money saving hints during WWII

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The Kippenberger Military Archive and Library – National Army Museum

*With Honour, Our Army, Our Nation, Our History*,
By Richard Wolfe
http://www.armymuseum.co.nz
Women were fully integrated into the New Zealand Armed Forces in 1977.

17 nurses were killed on overseas service during WWII.

Women were involved in the Boer War as nurses, teachers, and in fundraising and patriotic drives.

Heni Te Kiri Karamu contributed to the rout of British Forces at Gate Pa in Tauranga in 1864. Later she fought on the British side against the Pai Marire movement at Matata and Te Teko.
1. What do these abbreviations mean:
   - WAAC
   - WAAF
   - WRAC
   - WREN

2. What group of women were known as Tui’s during WWII.

3. Write a paragraph about the roles women had in New Zealand during WWII.

4. What kind of jobs did the “Land Girls” perform during WWII
Open daily 9.00am to 4.30pm  
(Closed Christmas Day)

State Highway One, Waiouru

www.armymuseum.co.nz