Guided Reading Level: U

Genre: Informational

Text Features: table of contents, photographs, captions, primary sources, sidebars, subheadings, biographies, glossary, index

Lesson Objective: Social Studies
Students will be able to describe individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes in women's role in the military.

Essential Question
What role did women play in the armed forces during World War II?

Lesson Objective: ELA
Students will use multiple-meaning words for developing vocabulary, improving reading fluency, and for strengthening comprehension.

Background Knowledge
Briefly discuss the topic of women's participation in the armed forces during World War II, the first war in which women served officially. Tier Two and Three vocabulary from the book is listed below. Consider previewing selected vocabulary based upon the needs of your students before they read the text.

Vocabulary
artillery (p. 32)
blitzkrieg (p. 6)
cavalry (p. 14)
cryptographers (p. 24)
dictator (p. 5)
nomenclature (p. 20)
patriotism (p. 8)
platoon (p. 17)
shrapnel (p. 38)

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World War II Women in Uniform

by: Martha Sias Purcell

Why This Text?

Women from the United States have served their country during wartime dating back to the Revolutionary War. Students may not be aware, however, of the extent of their involvement and of the important role they played in World War II. This text explains why women were admitted into the armed forces in World War II, the varied duties they performed in all branches of the military, how they gradually gained full military status, and how they underwent boot camp and other training for a variety of jobs. The book also tells why their corps were disbanded after World War II and how, soon after, they were granted a permanent place in the armed forces.

Preparing to Read

Point out that this book is nonfiction, based on facts, real events, and real people. Ask a volunteer to read the book's title, *World War II Women in Uniform*. Encourage students to share what they know about the role of women in the armed services during World War II. Do not confirm or contradict their responses. Then have them turn to the table of contents on page 3. Remind them that a table of contents gives the general topic and subject matter of each chapter and provides clues about the organization of the book. Invite students to speculate about the topic of each chapter. Ask them for their input about the book's organization based on the table of contents. (The page suggests a chronological organization with several topics covered in detail.)

Reading Informational Text

Ask students to read the book independently. After students finish, ask them whether anything surprised them about the book. Invite them to share their ideas about why so many women wanted to serve in the armed forces. *What were the greatest frustrations of women in the armed services during that time?* (Possible answers: inadequate equipment and uniforms, long periods of isolation, limited recreational activities, WASPs did not have insurance or benefits, and the struggle for equality) *What gave them the greatest pride? How did women change the armed forces?* (Possible answers: the Women's Armed Services Act, establishment of Women's Air Force, nurses saving many lives, learning new skills such as flying aircraft, working in a factory, and serving their country)

Connect and Respond

1. *What were the five corps that women served in during World War II?* (They served in WACs, WAVES, WASPs, SPARs, and Women Marines.)

2. *Why did Congress pass the Women's Armed Services Act, giving women a permanent place in the military?* (Possible responses: Women had demonstrated their determination and great value to the United States Armed Forces during the war. Their efforts showed that women deserved the same status and the same right to serve as men.)

3. *How did most people view women in the military, once the war was over? Find textual evidence to support your answer.* (p. 43; "Most people felt women in the military had only been a successful 'social experiment,' an answer to an emergency need for more troops. Now that the war was over, women were no longer needed in the military.")

Multiple-Meaning Words

Point out to students that many words have multiple meanings; the meaning depends on how the word is used. Invite students to tell the common meaning of the word *fire*. (Possible response: a blaze or flame caused by burning) Have students turn to page 7, and ask a volunteer to read paragraph 1. Ask, *What is the meaning of the word* fire *in the second sentence?* (It means "the shooting of guns or other weapons.") Have partners work together to come up with the common meanings of the following words and then determine the meanings used in the sentence on each of the following pages: *hose,* paragraph 1, page 21; *branch,* paragraph 2, page 27. Encourage students to pay attention to context so they can determine the correct meaning of each multiple-meaning word. If time permits, ask them to find additional multiple-meaning words in the text.

Language Arts Activity

Encourage students to ask questions about a text before, during, and after reading.

- Invite them to suggest some before-reading questions. Point out that some questions might begin: "I wonder what I will learn about…", "What does the author want me to think about…."

- During reading, they can ask additional reflection questions. Invite them to suggest some reflection questions that begin: "This photograph is interesting. I wonder what…"; "This topic is interesting. Where can I find more information about it?"

- Continue this process with after-reading questions. Point out that asking questions is an effective way to stay focused and to remember what they read.

Explain that another way to generate questions is to turn a title or subtitle into a question, such as: "How were women in the military treated during World War II? (title) What kind of uniforms did the women in the military wear? (p. 20) In what ways did women in the military have to tough it out? (p. 25) What part did the Women Marines play in the war effort? (p. 34) If time permits, encourage students to exchange and answer their questions.

Primary Source Activity

With students, do a quick survey of photographs in the book. Ask them whether the photographs helped them to understand women's role in the military during World War II. Ask, *Which photographs did you find most helpful? interesting? surprising?*

Support English Learning
Pair English learners with native English speakers to complete Social Studies Activity 2.

Provide the following events for students to use for the timeline activity: Women's Armed Forces Act is signed; the U.S. Coast Guard opened for women recruits; the first WAVES stepped ashore for duty in Hawaii; Women's Army Auxiliary Corp is established; and the WAFS and the WFTD merged to form the WASP. Students will use the text to find the correlating dates and organize the events in chronological order to form a timeline.

Provide the following sentence frames for students to use in the Multiple-Meaning Words section of the lesson:

The women learned to _____ a weapon.

The _____ burned down the entire apartment building.

The firemen used a _____ to put out the blaze.

Women wore _____, a suit, hat, blouse, and tie as a military uniform.

The _____ was full of bright red leaves.

The WAVES were the women's organization for the Navy's _____ of the U.S. military.

Word Bank: fire, hose, branch

Provide students with the photograph of Frances Hook, also known as Private Frank Miller (see Primary Source), of various Illinois Civil War infantry regiments. Then read the information provided at the Library of Congress about the subject: "Photograph shows identified soldier who was discovered to be a woman when she was wounded at the Battle of Fredericktown, Missouri. Afterwards, she enlisted in another regiment and was captured at Florence, Alabama, and imprisoned in Atlanta where again she was discovered to be a woman." Discuss why she disguised herself. (Possible answer: Women were not allowed to enlist in the military at that time.) *What possibly motivated her to serve in the war?* (Possible answers: She believed in equality for all. She wanted to fight for the cause of abolition.) *Why do you think she returned to the military after being arrested?* (Possible answers: She believed in her cause. She was brave.)

Social Studies Activities

Activity 1
Have students imagine that they will name a school hallway after a woman or a group of women for heroic efforts during World War II. Draw a correlation to streets, parks, or schools that have been named after influential people. Ask students to make nominations. Encourage discussion about the contribution of each candidate. Invite students to create "hall signs" to commemorate their choices. Hall signs must be neat and include a name, a simple illustration, and a brief dedication, such as "in honor of her bravery in the Women's Air Force Service Pilots."

Activity 2
Have students work with partners to develop a list of dates relevant to women's role in the military during World War II and after. Students will use the text as a resource for this activity. Students should list five to seven dates and events. Have students use this list to create a timeline of *Important Events in Women's Role in the U.S. Military 1940 and Beyond*. Students may illustrate their timelines to mark specific events. Encourage students to share their timelines.

Materials/Resources Needed
paper
cardboard
pencils
crayons
watercolors
index cards

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Frances Hook, also known as Private Frank Miller, Frank Henderson, and Frank Fuller of Co. G, 90th Illinois Infantry Regiment, 33rd Illinois Infantry Regiment, and 11th Illinois Infantry Regiment in uniform
Source: Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division