



#### MARINETTE

Women reservists did clerical and other non-combat work in Marine Corps.



#### WOMAN'S MOTOR CORPS

Skirts worn by this civilian group were daringly high for the period.



#### NAVY NURSE CORPS

Overseas uniform. Most nurses, however, wore civilian clothes out of hospital.



#### SIGNAL CORPS

French-speaking women telephone operators served abroad with Signal Corps.

## Women of Two Wars

**I**F YOUR Great-aunt Agatha should declare she doesn't know what this country is coming to, with women carrying on like soldiers, she must have a pretty short memory. There were quite a few women in uniform in the last war, as may be seen from the above examples—reconstructed for the Post through months of research by Helen Virginia Meyer.

It is true, though, that the number and variety this time are greater. Women's standing in the armed services has gone up—and so have their wardrobes.

Take the Navy Nurse Corps. It was just plain "Nurse" in the last war; they had no military titles. The only official regalia were white ward uniforms and navy-blue capes for hospital duty. Elsewhere they wore their own civilian clothes, although street uniforms were finally issued for identification overseas and, by the armistice, worn by chief nurses in this country as well as abroad. Well, today they have officer's rank, starting out as ensigns. In addition to hospital costumes, there are winter and summer street uniforms for all, sweaters and sundry accessories.

Army nurses have gone through a similar metamorphosis from civilian to commissioned-officer status, beginning at second lieutenant, from mere hospital outfits to dress uniforms and all the fixings. Stylistically, a change is in the works which, as such things go, is positively revolutionary. Did you know that Army nurses have always worn navy blue? Well, they're switching to olive drab, beginning July first overseas and September first in this country.

The new street uniforms of the Army nurses are very similar to those of the Waac, which in turn were patterned after those of the Army men. But the knowing will readily spot certain differences, such as the softer and less-severe design of the nurses' caps.

The Navy Waves and the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, to carry this series of contrasts a bit further, are eligible for officers' commissions—and well-rounded wardrobes—which were beyond the reach of their respective Yeomanette and Marinette predecessors.



#### RED CROSS

The gold shoulder decoration is a lion, denoting service in Italy.

#### NAVY YEOMANETTE

Men were released from shore work by these fore-runners of today's Waves.



#### 1917

Women's uniforms in World War I largely reflected the fashions of the day. Outstanding features: long skirts, loose-fitting lines, high laced shoes, broad-brimmed campaign hats (sometimes with the option of an overseas cap). Insoluble riddle: did women really have sloppier figures in 1917, or was it just the styles that made them seem that way?

In developing the current crop of women's uniforms, the services sought to strike a balance between martial formality and femininity, so a girl could fit into military surroundings, yet not feel irrevocably shorn of all her maidenly graces. To achieve this, they enlisted the aid of accredited designers and stylists—like Mainbocher, who designed the uniforms of the Waves and Spars (Coast Guard). They stressed such disarming objectives as "slenderizing appearance" and "freedom of movement."

On this latter count, the ultimate has probably been reached in a two-piece field slack suit for Army nurses—illustrated on the opposite page—which offers enough freedom of movement for a rodeo rider or a steeplejack.

As an all-round testimonial, the epitome may be this unofficial statement by a recently enrolled Wave. "I made up my mind to join," she said, "when I saw that dress uniform. A good two-piece blue suit is one of the most valuable things a girl can own. I can detach the insignia after the war, and get at least three or four years' good wear out of it."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLIOT CLARKE

#### ARMY NURSE CORPS

Like Navy nurses, they had no military rating. Today they're officers.





#### ARMY NURSE CORPS

Field uniform  
"for service in  
theater of opera-  
tions." Note big  
"cargo" pockets.



#### NAVY NURSE CORPS

All Navy nurses  
now have snappy  
street uniforms,  
starting rank of  
ensign.



#### MARINE CORPS WOMEN'S RESERVE

Model here—  
Louise Stewart—  
happens to be  
bona fide MCWR  
lieutenant.



#### WAFS

(Women's Auxiliary  
Ferrying Squadron)

They have civil-  
service status,  
but get some fly-  
ing suits as Army  
pilots.



#### WAAC

(Women's Army  
Auxiliary Corps)

Uniform of an  
auxiliary—rank  
corresponding to  
private.



#### ARMY NURSE

(Dress Uniform)

Soon this olive  
drab will replace  
the navy blue  
previously worn  
by Army nurses.



#### AWVS

(American Women's  
Voluntary Services)

One of the most  
widely seen non-  
military wom-  
en's uniforms.



#### 1943

Skirts are shorter, hats are trimmer, shoes are low, uniforms are tailored to the lines of the body. Cosmetics in moderation are approved. Uncle Sam has done his durned-est to show that a girl can simultaneously look feminine and military. One similarity with 1917: most uniforms still include shirt with collar and tie.

#### RED CROSS

Field Worker in  
Military and  
Naval Welfare  
Service, for sol-  
diers here and  
abroad.



#### WAVES

(Women Appointed  
for Volunteer Emer-  
gency Service)

Unlike Yeoman-  
ettes, they may  
get commissions.  
This is lieuten-  
ant, j. g.



#### FACTORY GUARD

This uniform is  
unofficial, but  
appropriate  
enough, for all  
that.