**Women in World War II**

Women were an integral part of World War II. Although they served in many different roles, you can see women behind every American success in World War II. Women served in three different spheres. Some women joined the military, and although none were allowed into combat, they filled other roles, in such organizations as WAVES, WAAC, and WASP. Many women jumped into the jobs that men left behind in the factories. America’s wartime production was gigantic, and this directly impacted the soldiers’ efforts overseas. Some women remained at home, but they served in other capacities: rationing, planting victory gardens, selling war bonds, and training to defend their homes against potential invaders. Whatever the role, women were active in the nation’s wartime life. These new roles also gave women a feeling of independence and pride in their contributions, and this changed the way women viewed themselves even after the war had ended.

**Eileen Hughes**

**How were you involved in the war effort?**

Although I wanted to join WAAC, the women’s branch of the Army, I was too young when I graduated high school. Instead, I volunteered for Civilian Defense and got training for air raids and plane spotting.

**How did the war affect your feeling of safety?**

Since we were on the coast, people feared that submarines would be sent to attack us. We also had to make sure our curtains were closed for blackouts, so enemy planes couldn’t see us. However, we also felt that we wouldn’t really be attacked because the United States was so powerful.

**Did you interact with soldiers at all?**

I volunteered at USO dances, which were held on the weekends. These were an opportunity for soldiers stationed in the area to have fun and relax when they weren’t on duty. Soldiers would also check that you were following curfew and blackout regulations.