



Women in the Second World War

A woman motorcycle messenger from
The ATS



Photo of ATS uniform Service Dress Jacket



Women could choose to work in industry or join one of the auxiliary services – the **Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS)**, the **Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF)** or the **Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS)**.

By December 1941, all able women were conscripted into industries and auxiliary services.

Conscription is a law that means if you can fight then you must fight for your country. When British armed forces need people to fight in a war but there aren't enough volunteers, it means people legally must fight and there were penalties if you refused.

The ATS was formed in 1938 and over 250,000 women served in it.

At first the only jobs were cooks, clerks (administrators) and orderlies. Some women were drivers or store women.

An orderly is someone who works in a hospital but does not care for patients but cleans and helps with the organisation.

As time progressed there were more and more roles for women in the ATS, including some women serving in anti-aircraft batteries. Having more women employed in industry and service allowed men to be relieved to go away and fight on the front lines.

Women also volunteered for The Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) Civil Defence, the Fire Service and Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA.) Nursing roles were served by the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry or by volunteering in military nursing.



The Second World War 1939-1945

Age- KS2/Secondary School/S1-3

Topic- Women in the War

Activities

- 1) Make a poster encouraging women to join the ATS and add details of their various roles.



- 2) What kind of factory work did women do in World War 2?

(Look at the display about Sheila Dalgleish and the ICI Powfoot Factory and the map showing MOD Eastgriggs and Longtown.)



- 3) What rank of women would wear the ATS Service Dress Jacket?

(Look at the ATS Service Dress Jacket in The Devil's Porridge Museum.)



- 4) Draw the ATS cap badge shown on the display
- 5) What roles do women have in the military today? Does this differ from in World War 2?