

“WOMEN IN THE MILITARY”

Willing – Able - Essential

Women in the Military Lesson Plans

Recommended Level: **High School**

Time Required: **2 Days**

Introduction

These lesson plans accompany the video, *Women in the Military*. This is an excellent video recounting women’s step by step journey to acquire their full rights in the military while contributing their full support and devotion to their country. Beginning with the Revolutionary War, women’s roles in our military engagement are covered up to present day in Iraq and Afghanistan. Photographs and re-enactments bring the Revolution and Civil War to life. From the Spanish American War through World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, to Iraqi Freedom, primary sources including photographs, movies, and interviews are used to recount these times.

The most valuable of all resources, the interviews of the women who experienced these times in recent history, gives the students information on how women kept their spirit and patriotism alive as they served their country and strove for equal rights.

Women in the Military may be used as a lesson on women’s rights and women’s contributions to our country at war. It is also a wonderful resource for Women’s History Month. It captures the culture of the times concerning women’s roles in society as well as in the military. The lesson plans and viewing of the film are prepared to take two class periods. See five day lesson plan for other activities

There are two choices for Day 2:

1. Discussion of the movie using focus questions.
2. Discussion and debate on women in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan based on a series on National Public Radio.

Materials

- Video – *Women in the Military*
- Textbook
- Internet resources



Unit Goals:

The student will:

1. Review the topic of women's rights from colonial times to the passing of the 19th Amendment.
2. View *Women in the Military* to have an understanding of women's contributions to the service of our country and their desire for equal rights.
3. If possible, have a member of one of the services come in to speak to the students about the benefits of joining the military.

Day 1

Aim:

1. Participate in a simulation where the girls are excluded from a school activity so that they can experience their rights being violated and cast as inferior to boys.
2. Review women's rights from colonial times to 19th Amendment.
3. Examine important events and leaders in the early movement for women's rights: Anthony and Stanton.
4. Discuss Alice Paul's methods using website for primary sources such as pictures and stories.
5. Preview focus questions.

Procedure:

1. Make an announcement to the class that girls are to be excluded from field day, or intramural sports, or varsity sports this year (or another activity that would arouse opposition). Reasons – girls are too susceptible to injury, too slow, not as physically strong, can't compete on the same level or anything else to get them going. Lead them into a discussion of how they can resolve this situation – talk to principal; write a petition and get signatures, sit-in, etc.
2. Introduce lesson that women have had problems with equality throughout our history. Brainstorm with students on the history of women's rights, starting with colonial times up to passage of the 19th Amendment.
3. Using text, review the accomplishments of the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.
4. Describe how the movement strengthened under Alice Paul during and after WWI that finally ends in the 19th Amendment to the Constitution allowing women to vote.

Describe the process that Paul and her associates went through to get the amendment passed. Discuss why the power to vote is so important in our society.

- a. Parades, protests, picketing the White House, hunger strike.
 - b. The website <http://www.alicepaul.org>, has excellent primary sources on Alice Paul, as well as pictures of the suffragette movement.
5. Explain to students that they will be studying women's role in the military and their devotion to service in spite of not having equal rights.
 6. Preview focus questions. Stress to students to pay careful attention to remarks and commentaries by our veterans.
 7. Introduce video by explaining to the students that they will be studying how women in the military served their country while striving for equal rights from the Revolutionary War through WW II. Their deeds and struggles will be brought to life through photographs, re-enactments, movies, documentaries and interviews of the women who served and pushed for equal rights. Watch Part 1 of the video (31 minutes).

Assessment: Do Part 1 of focus questions.

Day 2

Aim:

1. Continue watching video explaining to the students that they will be studying how women in the military served their country while striving for equal rights from the Cold War to present day in Iraq and Afghanistan.
2. Watch *Women in the Military*, Part 2 (28 minutes).
3. Through video, the students will see the value of primary sources.

Procedure:

1. Continue watching video explaining to the students that they will be studying how women in the military served their country while striving for equal rights from the Cold War to present day in Iraq and Afghanistan.
2. The students will work in pairs to complete focus questions.
3. Discuss answers as a class.



Student Handout #1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus Questions Part 1

1. The fact that women moved with the army for survival purposes implies what about the status of women in colonial times?

2. Describe how the role of women increased during the Civil War.

3. Why did Dr. Mary E. Walker dress like a man?

4. The main role for women in the Spanish American war was _____
5. Women served officially for the first time in _____
6. During WWII, barriers were shattered for women in the military. Why?

7. Dr. Martha Putney experiences discrimination in the military. What was her reaction?

8. Describe the dangerous duties of the “fly girls”

9. Dorothy Beavers Pecoro witnessed evidence of Nazi medical experiments in the concentration camps. Describe her experience.

10. Nurses’ duties expanded during WW II. To what other places could nurses be assigned?

11. What were women's attitudes toward their service during these early years?



Student Handout #2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus Questions Part 2

1. Why were women turned off by the military after Korea?

2. What improvements in medical care enabled more soldiers to be saved during the Vietnam War?

3. Research the term “Operation Dust Off” in Vietnam.

4. “We never had a funeral. We never had a wake. We had a body bag.” What point was Diane Carlson Evans making for nurses during war time?

5. How did the women’s rights movement in the 1970’s affect women’s roles in the military?

6. Describe Captain Dorothy Watkin’s views on why she is serving in the military today?

7. How do women in the military see their role today?

8. What are the values of these interviews and eyewitness accounts from our veterans?

ANSWERS:

Handout #1

1. That they depended on men for survival and had no means of their own to support themselves and their children.
2. Women's roles more organized: nurses in hospitals, battlefields; women's groups supplied bandages, linens and supplies.
3. To be more accepted as a surgeon.
4. Nurses
5. World War I
6. Needed them. So many men needed to fight on two fronts, that women were needed to take their place.
7. She was asked to go to the back of the train. Her response was defiance. She stood in the middle where the trains were attached rather than go to the back of the train.
8. Fly planes place to place, did test flights, flew plans so anti-aircraft gunners could shooting.
9. She recounted how the doctor at the camp bragged about the experiments he did on camp inmates.
10. Flights, ships, field hospitals.
11. Answers may vary: devotion to duty, desire to serve, patriotism

ANSWERS:Handout #2

1. Services had restrictive rules: can't serve if you have children; can't ask to not be deployed if you have children; emphasis was on how you looked instead of your ability.
2. Rapid evacuation by helicopter, plenty of blood, medical advances, antibiotics.
3. Term used to rescue wounded veterans by helicopter in Vietnam.
4. They never had the time to grieve; nor any closure for those who died.
5. All restrictions for women lifted except in active combat; needed women once the draft was gone; joined the academies and ROTC in colleges.
6. If people are serving, she wants to do her part, too.
7. Answers will vary: being a member of a team; fulfilling a mission; race, gender doesn't matter; serving our country; accepted equally; opportunities to serve and advance.
8. Answers will vary: accuracy, reliable, hear attitudes as well as facts.