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### The Women's Reserve, U. S. M. C.

LIEUT. KATHERINE P. MCCREADY

The Women Marines have landed. "The situation is well in hand." Eighteen thousand green-clad women are performing their duties in a manner highly acceptable to Marine Corps standards.

Women are not exactly a new idea in the Marine Corps, for on August 12, 1918, Josephus Daniels, then Secretary of the Navy, authorized the enrollment of women for clerical duties in headquarters and other Marine Corps offices to replace men qualified for active field service. Records indicate that 305 women were enrolled during the First World War.

Today Women Marines are occupying 125 different type jobs at 52 Marine shore-posts and stations scattered throughout the country.

The work of the Women Marines can be divided into three parts—self-maintenance and administration, office work, field work.

The first group forms the backbone of the disciplinary and administrative organization. Its members are limited to Colonel Ruth Cheney Streeter, Director, and her staff—procurement personnel, cooks and bakers, women working on the design and distribution of uniforms, school instructors, company officers, graduates of First Sergeants School, and a few women assigned directly to working with troops.

The second group consists of office workers—a typical job being that held by a corporal in the Division of Public Relations who has actually replaced two men, one of whom is now in training as an aerial gunner while the other has been assigned to a combat unit.

The third group of jobs, those "in the field," encompass perhaps the most interesting work done by Women Marines of which the work in aviation is probably the most spectacular. It is here the women are serving on ground crews whose job it is to inspect, repair and maintain our planes in flying condition. They are working as aviation storekeepers and aviation machinist mates. As aerographers, they observe and record weather conditions for the information of pilots. As Link Trainer opera-

tors, they instruct aviators in the principles of instrument flying. As Gunairstructors, they teach pilots and gunners the theory of fixed and free aerial gunnery. They also work as parachute riggers and as control-tower operators.

The responsibility of such positions is obvious.

Since the innovation of the Women's Reserve on February 13, 1943, thousands of Women Marines have emerged with flying colors from the rigorous training courses provided for them. All enlisted personnel, as well as officer candidates, receive indoctrination at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where one entire regimental area has been turned over to them.

During their six weeks' indoctrination, the women's hours of training are similar to those of the men. They are given a stiff period of drill daily, several hours of physical education each week, and lectures on organization of the Marine Corps, map reading, weapons, aerial photography interpretation, chemical warfare, administration, and military customs and courtesies. As a result, in less than eighteen months they have released for combat thousands of fighting Marines who were entrenched in shore-duty jobs.

However, it is not all work for these women of the Marine Corps. They have their churches, parties and dances and enjoy many recreational advantages not available to civilian women. Their pay is the same as that of the men of the Corps, and their food and living conditions, medical care, and special benefits are identical with those of the men.

The Women's Reserve was at first a source of much joking among the men of the Corps. But now, since it has proved its worth, the more experienced men as well as the newest Marine "boots" are unanimous in their appreciation of the services rendered by women who wear the same globe, anchor and eagle emblem as do the men.

They have worked hard during their eighteen months in the Marine Corps. Their motto too is *Semper Fidelis*, meaning "Always Faithful," and they are all living up to those glorious and dignified words. And, in one of the toughest military organizations in the world, they have made their own secure place.