



100 YEARS

Eve in Overalls: women at work in the Second World War

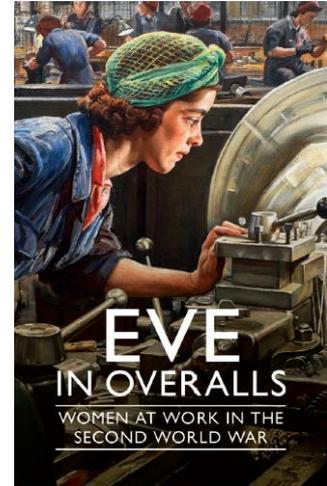
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'Great Britain, defending her freedom, has contracted an immense debt of gratitude to the women.'

Arthur Wauters, author of *Eve in Overalls*



First published during the Second World War (c.1942), *Eve in Overalls* is a facsimile publication that highlights the enormous contribution made by women to the Second World War effort, in an era when such progress was often overlooked. Illustrated with more than 30 black and white photographs and five illustrations, the book sheds light on the varied roles played by more than ten million women in wartime Britain.

Accompanying the original text which was first published under the auspices of the Ministry of Information (c.1942), this latest edition of the book includes a new introduction that contextualises the pamphlet.

The patronising tone used in sections of the original pamphlet can make for shocking reading for readers today. A product of its time, the book views women in the workplace with curiosity and fascination. The style of language used is old-fashioned even for the period, and reflects the fact that women were entering, for the first time, what was very much seen as a man's world.

Commenting on women working in a British anti-aircraft battery, the author praises their "dexterity, method, co-ordination and physical strength," but continues to highlight that "feminine coquetry will never give up all its claims". The author goes on to describe the "halo of sparks" that surround the heads of women at work in munitions factories and assumes their "knowledge of machinery was previously limited no doubt to a bicycle or a sewing-machine".

As a leading expert on the Second World War's Home Front, IWM's Alan Jeffreys, Senior Curator, Second World War and Mid-20th Century, says: "This facsimile is an intriguing primary source that explores how the Second World War was to have a dramatic impact on the lives of women across British society. The author's old-fashioned views make for uncomfortable reading at times but *Eve in Overalls* illustrates the undeniable and vast contribution made by women to the war effort in Britain."

The concept of 'total war,' which was a new phenomenon for men and women alike, generated a colossal demand for labour and by the end of 1941, compulsory conscription of single women was introduced for the first time in British history. This introduction had a major change on the lives of women across society.

Eve in Overalls sheds light on this period of transition and highlights the surprising roles performed by women during the Second World War. In addition to working in factories and in the three services, which included the Auxiliaries Territorial Service (ATS), Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS or Wrens) and

Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), women ran Air Raid Precautions posts and drove ambulances. The book highlights their work in the Women's Timber Corps, nicknamed 'Lumber Jills,' and a small number became secret agents in the Special Operations Executive (SOE), dropping into enemy territory and working as saboteurs, couriers and radio operators. *Eve in Overalls* also covers the work of women on railways, canals and on buses; in fact today's Waterloo Bridge in London was mostly built by women during the Second World War.

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For further information, to request interviews or a review copy of the book, please contact:
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Notes to Editors:

Eve in Overalls will be published on Thursday 14 September 2017; cost £6.99. For further information and to pre-order the book please visit: www.iwmshop.org.uk/product/12283/Eve_in_Overalls

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches attract over 2 million visitors each year. [IWM London](#), our flagship branch, marks the Centenary of the First World War with permanent First World War Galleries and Atrium with iconic large object displays. Our other branches are [IWM North](#), housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; [IWM Duxford](#), a world-renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; [Churchill War Rooms](#), housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser [HMS Belfast](#).

IWM Centenary

2017 marks Imperial War Museums (IWM) centenary. IWM was established while the First World War was still being fought. Since its establishment people have entrusted IWM with their stories of war from 1917 to the present day, in the knowledge it will continue to share these stories with future generations. IWM will commemorate its 100 years through a centenary of stories from its rich collections across its five branches (IWM London, IWM North, IWM Duxford, Churchill War Rooms and HMS *Belfast*).



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First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM is marking the centenary by leading a vibrant, five year programme of cultural activities across the world. 2016 is the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.

