

Featured Artifact: Summer WAC Jacket

<http://historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/resource/?key=4266>

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)



Look at the artifact presented to you. In a few sentences, respond to the following questions:

Describe: Objectively describe the artifact. What do you think it is made of? What does it look like? Does it look old or new? Is it intact, or is it damaged in some way?

Analyze: When, where or how do you think this item was used? What kind of person may have created or used this item? What significance do you think the object held, either for the creator or the user? Do you see words or images on the artifact that connect it to others (besides the creator and user)?

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Share your conclusions with a partner, then discuss the following:

Evaluate : Justify why you came to those conclusions about the artifact. What further questions do you have about the object? Of those questions, which could you solve by observing the object in person and which would you need to solve with research?

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Background Information

During World War II over 150,000 women served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) or Women's Army Corps (WAC). The law authorizing the WAAC was signed by President Franklin Roosevelt in May 1942 and the first WAACs began training in July 1942. In mid-1943, Congress authorized the Women's Army Corps as a full-fledged army organization. All WAACs were either converted to WAC status or discharged. This jacket was worn by Staff Sergeant Margaret C. Frank, WAC, who was assigned to the Eighth Air Force in England as a telephone operator from 1943 to 1945.

After reading and considering the background information, compose a response to the following:

Analyze: Address the following object-specific questions:

- Why was it important that women be permitted to serve in the army?
- How might this decision have led to other opportunities for women in the army?

Synthesize: What does this object tell us about the era in which it was created, or the American experience as a whole? How would you describe the social, economic, or political climate of America during this time? What connections can you make between this object and other things that you have seen, read, or experienced?

Analyze: Address the following era-specific questions:

- What were the causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and how did it reshape the United States' role in world affairs?