

Representative Stefan rises to speak on behalf of the WASP and all American Women!

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Mr. Chairman, I feel that the women pilots who are now doing such a valuable work for our Army Air Corps should be commended. I hope that nothing be done here to eliminate them and that those women who are now flying transports will not only be retained but be given the rewards to which they are entitled. I have first-hand information as to their great ability, and I resent insinuations that these or other American women have not rendered tremendous service to our Nation. I could give you names of many of these women pilots who have flown combat planes and are continuing to fly these fighting planes and transports from coast to coast. I wish that the war censors could give me permission now to tell you of the individual flights of these wonderful women in delivering fighting planes to our allies from the factories to the coast.

My information is voluminous regarding the ability of these women in flying these monsters of the air through storms and clouds and making safe delivery after thousands of miles of flight. The knowledge of some of these women regarding the reading of maps and the handling of radio and their skill in emergencies are contained in many chapters of thrilling experiences of the Army Air Corps. It will be told more graphically when the war is over. That women are rendering outstanding service should not be denied, but it should be acknowledged again at this time when we are dealing with legislation affecting their future. This dales not detract from the grand service which has been rendered by the instructors referred to in this debate.

It is not only in aviation that our women are helping to win this war, Mr. Chairman. In my duties as a member of the Appropriations Committee it has been part of my work to visit points of embarkation. Army maneuvers, Army camps, air bases, quartermaster depots, ordnance concentrations, engineer concentrations, and other places where our war machine is in action.

Mr. Chairman, I have seen at one place 20,000 pieces of mechanized equipment—jeeps, half-track, tractors, and other machines en route to war—being assembled by American women for transportation to our allies and our own fighting men overseas. I have seen thousands of our women handling every piece of this equipment. I have seen them prepare this equipment for loading on freighters. I have seen them drive this huge equipment and deliver it safely. It has been my privilege to see our women working in our factories where they assemble this machinery. I have seen them help in its construction and have seen them testing and operating it, in order that it become perfect for our fighting men somewhere on the war front. I cannot say too much, Mr. Chairman, for the ability of our women. They have contributed beyond repayment in the time of our crisis.

No matter what this House membership feels about the women in our armed forces, Mr. Chairman, I feel now that we are discussing them I cannot resist in some way championing their cause. We of this Congress have seen the birth of the women of the Army Auxiliary Corps, the marines, the Navy, the Coast Guard, and our other services. They number into the many thousands and they have relieved men so that men could go into the combat services. These women of our services have left colleges, schools, professions, jobs, and homes. Their services are remarkable. Many have left highly paid positions for this patriotic work in the time of our Nation's need. And they are doing work are beyond the expectations of even those who voted against the creation oof their organizations. These and the army of housewives and business and professional women have been a real challenge to our enemies and an inspiration to those who express amazement at the ability and efficiency of American women.

All of our women could not go into the services, Mr. Chairman, but a majority of them are at war whether they are in city or country. What would happen to the great Red Cross organization but for our American women who are doing such a grand volunteer work?

What about our farm women, Mr. Speaker? What would become of our food production program but for our farm women? I have seen them in the fields—the mothers and the daughters on our farms, operating mechanized equipment, tractors, hay rakes, gang-plows, cultivators, mowers, binders, and other machinery, tilling the soil and helping their men to produce the food which is so badly needed to keep our armed forces and our civilian population alive. The food many

hungry people in recaptured lands eat today is the result of the work done by many of the farm women of our Nation. Their men have gone to war, Mr. Chairman, but the American farm women who are not in the armed services or some essential war job are carrying on. They have and they are continuing to demonstrate that American women have answered the call and that they are efficient in whatever work they are called upon to do.

In the homes of America, Mr. Chairman, the fires of hope are burning because the American women are making that hope live. In these few minutes allotted to me I wanted to add my word of homage to American womanhood and give thanks to the Almighty that American men honor and respect our women. For their great service I voice my appreciation and thanks.