



When the first sizable groups of women came to work here at the Laboratory, hard-bitten males made the usual dismal predictions and shook their heads with ominous foreboding. But these same sceptics have long since forgotten their prejudices and now wonder (secretly of course) how the laboratory ever got along without its distaff side.

Nine hundred and fifty-five women are now employed here - practically one third of the entire staff. The majority of them do the quiet, unspectacular jobs involved in keeping the Laboratory wheels running smoothly through the welter of paper work that goes with total war. They're the cute youngsters in baggy sweaters and bobby socks who look after the files efficiently and well; who shoulder bags full of messages and somehow get them delivered to the right people. They're the stenographers and secretaries, the mail sorters and typists, the payroll clerks, the telephone operators and receptionists. Their jobs never get any publicity - but business would be at a standstill without them.

The Laboratory has girls in its so-called glamour jobs too, but they would be the first to tell you that they call for plenty of hard work and that the glamour attached to them is purely in the minds of those who don't have to do them. They're the engineers, - aeronautical, mechanical and electrical, - the artists, draftsmen, laboratory technicians, research experts - the list is endless. And it includes an impressive number of girls whose pert figures and pretty faces belie the implications of their "Mathematician" rating.

And finally, there are the NACA girls who have rolled up their sleeves, laughed at convention, and pitched in to do a man's job. You see them in every section and every department - women in steel masks holding a blue-white welder's flame steady, girls whose toes barely reach the accelerator driving buses and trucks around the field.

Feminine hands set rivets, hold spray guns, work with sheetmetal and do many, many other essential jobs that were formerly men's exclusive territory.

They are from all parts of the country, from all walks of life. A girl whose voice carries the unmistakable stamp of New York works next to another who pronounces her home state "No'th Cahlinah." A tall blonde from Minneapolis and a petite brunette from New Orleans work for the Laboratory while their husbands in khaki are marching across Langley Field. A two carat diamond flashes on one carefully manicured hand as it skips over typewriter keys, but it's no richer in sentiment than the tiny chip on a grubby little finger in the machine shop.

Many a gay smile hides a heavy heart - a heart sick with worry over a husband, son, brother or sweetheart "over there." But the thought that she is helping in some small way to develop the air supremacy needed to bring that boy back sooner helps to ease the pain of separation. And every girl here in the Laboratory does help do just that. It may seem a long way from a filing cabinet to the battlefield, but the little jobs are the horse-shoe nails that can win or lose battles.

The women at NACA range from 17 to 50 in age. Every race and creed is represented. They're as variegated a group as it would be possible to imagine. But one thing binds them together. You can see it in their eyes when they pass Old Glory flying proudly over the field. You can hear it in the ringing pride of their voices when they talk about the new planes developed in this Laboratory. Though they'd probably deny such lofty sentiments, their every action betrays their intense patriotism, their desire to help end this terrible war, and their joy in being able to do their bit to accomplish that end. So we say, here's to the ladies! God bless them.



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