



Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

200 SE 4th Street, Abilene, KS 7410-2900
<http://eisenhower.archives.gov>

NEWS RELEASE

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National Archives-Central Plains Region Exhibit on View at the Eisenhower Library

The National Archives-Central Plains Region has created a temporary photo exhibit entitled, **WOWs!: Women Ordnance Workers of the Cornhusker Ordnance Plant** which features 45 photographs, as well as selected posters from World War II, and is displayed on the second floor gallery of the Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas, through June 30, 2006.

During World War II, over three million women worked in war plants across the United States. Working women were vital to the war effort, as the loss of men to military service left a workforce shortage in many areas. The U.S. Government launched a major public relations campaign to encourage women to work. The use of an invented character ---“Rosie the Riveter”---on a brightly colored poster was a powerful propaganda piece.

The Cornhusker Ordnance Plant (COP) located in Grand Island, Nebraska, was one of 60 ammunition plants built across the United States during World War II by the U.S. Army. The plant was responsible for building bombs and artillery shells. Construction of the COP began in March 1942, and was completed only six months later. On November 11, 1942, workers on Bomb Line Three of the COP operated by the Quaker Oats (Q.O.) Ordnance Corporation celebrated Armistice Day by completing the first bomb to come from a production line at the plant. While employment figures vary over time, generally over fifty percent of the production employees were women. On September 26, 1944, the Q.O. Ordnance Corporation, operators of the COP received notification that the plant had been awarded the Army Navy “E” Award for excellence in the production of war material. Production at the plant ceased on August 14, 1945.

The photo exhibit depicts the type of work women did at the COP. The images presented represent a handful of the actual number taken and preserved at the National Archives and Records Administration-Central Plains Region in Kansas City, Missouri. While Many of the photographs were taken by the COP as “staged” publicity shots, there are numerous views which capture the women simply doing their jobs. It is in these photographs one can truly sense the mixture of monotony, danger, and pride experienced by the women on a daily basis.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library is one of twelve Presidential libraries operated by the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. The Library is open daily from 9 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. and closed only Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day. A small fee is charged at the museum building only on the Eisenhower Center campus. All other buildings, including the Library where the new exhibit is on display, are free. For more information, call the Library at 785-263-6700 or toll free 1 877 RING IKE.