

What's a Riveter? Encyclopedia Article

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What's a Riveter?

"Rosie the Riveter" was a government-sponsored artist's creation, a stylized drawing of a female war industry worker. Her image appeared on posters and in magazines across the nation; the government hoped the image would encourage women to join the workforce. Rosie the Riveter wore coveralls, rolled up at the sleeve to show her muscles, and her hair was tied in a scarf to protect it from factory machines. But what exactly did a riveter do?

Riveters assembled thousands of warplanes by joining together all the metal pieces of the aircraft. Riveting was actually a two-person job known as "riveting and bucking." Two women worked together: One woman shot rivets (metal pins with a head on one end used to fasten pieces of metal together) through the metal pieces with a riveting gun while the other flattened or "bucked" the protruding rivet on the other side to hold the pieces together. Thousands of riveting and bucking teams worked in war factories around the country.