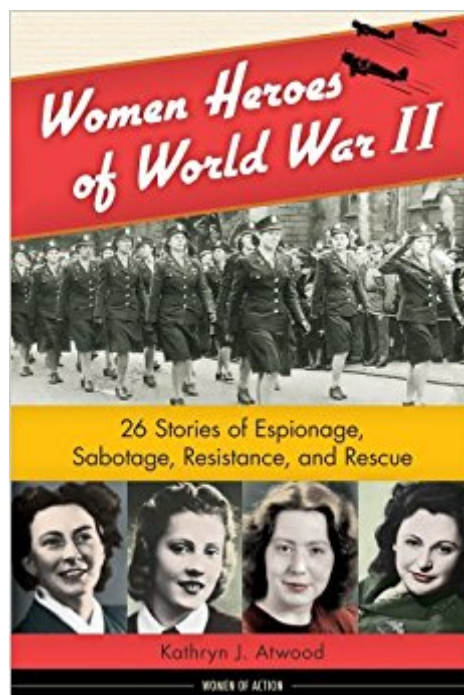


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# Women Heroes Of World War II: 26 Stories Of Espionage, Sabotage, Resistance, And Rescue (Women Of Action)



## Synopsis

An Amelia Bloomer List Recommended Title • A VOYA Nonfiction Honor List Selection • Noor Inayat Khan was the first female radio operator sent into occupied France and transferred crucial messages. Johtje Vos, a Dutch housewife, hid Jews in her home and repeatedly outsmarted the Gestapo. Law student Hannie Schaft became involved in the most dangerous resistance work--sabotage, weapons transference, and assassinations. In these pages, young readers will meet these and many other similarly courageous women and girls who risked their lives to help defeat the Nazis. • Twenty-six engaging and suspense-filled stories unfold from across Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, and the United States, providing an inspiring reminder of women and girls' refusal to sit on the sidelines around the world and throughout history. An overview of World War II and summaries of each country's entrance and involvement in the war provide a framework for better understanding each woman's unique circumstances, and resources for further learning follow each profile. Women Heroes of World War II is an invaluable addition to any student's or history buff's bookshelf.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

“Inspiring accounts of the lives of women—some of them still in their teens—whose courage made a difference in the dark days of World War II.”  
 —Rita Kramer, author of *Flames in the Field: The Story of Four SOE Agents in Occupied France*  
 “Each story has been meticulously researched. . . . This is a great read for students who like adventure or are researching World War II.”  
 —VOYA, *Voices of Youth Advocate* reviews  
 “These stories will restore your faith in the human spirit and encourage us all to remember to do what is right. . . . [A] must read for anyone who has ever asked themselves: ‘What can I do? Can one person really make a difference?’”  
 —Kenneth Koskodan, author of *No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland’s Forces in World War II*  
 “Adds a vital dimension to more traditional titles on the war. It will appeal to browsers seeking adventure tales while also enriching classes in history and women’s studies, and units on war and peace...Recommended”  
 —Library Media Connection  
 “Atwood’s admiration and enthusiasm for her subjects is apparent in these engaging profiles, and readers will likely be inspired to investigate these fascinating women further.”  
 —Kirkus Reviews

Kathryn J. Atwood is an educator and writer who has contributed to *PopMatters.com*; *War, Literature, and the Arts*; *Midwest Book Review*; and *Women’s Independent Press*.

As a World War II history buff, I was intrigued to find a book that centers on the role of women. These “26 Stories of espionage, Sabotage, Resistance, and Rescue” do not disappoint. Atwood details the heroic exploits of women from all over Europe: Germany, Poland, France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, and Great Britain, as well as the United States. Whether famous entertainers like Josephine Baker and Marlene Dietrich or simply ordinary wives, students, teachers, these women step up to take their place in history. Atwood briefly lays out the background history of the war and each country’s particular role before delving into the actual accounts of the women, which is helpful. The photographs and additional information such as speeches also adds a haunting immediacy to the already stirring text. Included are very helpful “Learn More” text boxes which provide the reader with important follow-up information. Also included are a glossary and notes. This is a highly readable and engaging addition to the body of literature for grades 5-12 on this subject. Each account would easily work also as a short read aloud to inspire learning on this important topic. As a school librarian, I am looking forward to using this when my students study the second

World War.

I went into Kathryn Atwood's *Women Heroes of World War II* hoping the experience would leave me with the same fascination I experienced after watching HBO's excellent series *Band of Brothers*. While the book does deliver in that regard, in some ways I feel like I got so much more. Atwood paints vivid stills of her twenty-six heroines, offering up generally their most significant wartime contributions as well as fascinating peeks into each woman's personality. Perhaps my favorite profile is that of Nora Inayat Khan, a petite and quite shy British resistance worker who failed miserably early on but came back to become one of the most fierce and determined women in the book. At one time, the once gentle girl fought violently with the unfortunate Nazi sympathizer sent to arrest her, clawing and scratching him so badly that he could only restrain her by putting a gun to her head. Atwood's writing is straightforward and suitable for all ages, although it's clear that the adventure-style telling of most stories is designed for younger audiences. Some profiles wrap rather quickly, but this seems to be a byproduct of Atwood's desire to keep the book compact more than anything else. Each story could be (and often has been) expanded upon to form entire books of their own. With that in mind, *Women Heroes of World War II* serves as the perfect primer for those seeking a great introduction to women's contributions in WWII. Thankfully, Atwood treats some of the more disturbing outcomes of her heroines with a grace that will allow even more sensitive readers such as myself to continue. Still, some of the stories were so moving or unfortunate that they brought a tear to my eye. It is always difficult to read of broken families, tortures, murders and the like, no matter how gentle the treatment. But Atwood is brilliant in showing that despite the overwhelmingly dark situations these women found themselves in, their character, moral fortitude, and faith made their lives shine so brightly that we can still feel their warmth to this day. Most outcomes are good, however. Each profile brings something new, unexpected, or even near miraculous. I found myself gut-wrenched at times, cheering at others, and sometimes just generally amazed. Atwood has taken my perception of women and their war time contributions from a merely national one to an international one. She skillfully illustrates that women abroad often fought two wars: one against the ruthless Germans, and the other against the sexism so deeply rooted in the culture of that day. Thankfully these wonderful women helped win both wars. In *Women Heroes of World War II*, I feel like I got what could be called a "Band of Sisters."

It's about a group of women not bound by a military brigade or battalion, but by the

greater bond of a common moral code, one that impelled them to help those less fortunate than themselves and to sacrifice everything, even up to their very lives, for the sake of freedom. It is an excellent read.

Today I'm reviewing a book that left me choked with awe, sadness, admiration, and gratitude. I urge you to read *Women Heroes of World War II: 26 Stories of Espionage, Sabotage, Resistance, and Rescue* by Kathryn J. Atwood. About The Book The stories of these women who stood up for right against tyranny are organized by country. Young girls, teenagers, and women risked their lives to fight the Nazis in World War II. In everything they did, they knew that their lives were forfeit, but that didn't deter them. This book is written in such simple language, explaining the historical aspects of World War II -- what country did what and why -- that it's completely accessible for younger readers. Simply and concisely, Kathryn J. Atwood, the author, lays the groundwork for the stories she tells. These are stories that aren't familiar to most, and they are each amazing from the woman radio operator who parachuted into occupied France and transferred crucial messages, the Dutch housewife who hid Jews in her home and was repeatedly interrogated by the Gestapo, a German teenage university student who helped publish an underground newspaper that decried the immoral, heinous acts against humanity. Move Over Charlie's Angels These women did it all: sabotage, weapons transport, and assassinations. They lived with danger every moment of their lives. These girls and women should be praised, memorialized, and honored. They should be held up as icons -- role models for girls today. They were bigger action heroes than the fake Charlie's Angels, Lara Croft, or any of the TV and movie female action heroes which are the female heroes most women look to for examples of bravery. The women in this book were real. They lived. They loved. They gave everything in the name of freedom. *Women Heroes* is well-researched and includes photographs and a bibliography of relevant books, websites, and films. It is available in a Kindle Edition and a Hardcover Edition -- both low-priced. Final Thoughts Gratitude is a feeling or attitude of appreciation or gratefulness in acknowledgment of a benefit received. In this season of Thanksgiving, I am humbled by the sacrifice and bravery of these women, and I am grateful for the benefit received -- freedom.

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