

The model for 'Rosie the Riveter' dies at 92

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As the model for Norman Rockwell's "Rosie the Riveter," Mary Doyle Keefe became the symbol of American women working on the home front during World War II.

The 92-year-old died this week at her home in Simsbury, Connecticut.

As a 19-year-old telephone operator, Keefe posed for the famous painting that would become the cover of the Saturday Evening Post on May 29, 1943.



Mary Doyle was the original model for what would become the iconic "Rosie the Riveter"

Although she was petite, Keefe was transformed into the iconic -- and burly -- embodiment of the character by Rockwell.

As American men left for the war front in World War II, they left behind vitally important factory, war production plant and civil service jobs. These were booming industries, thanks to increased demand caused by the war, or positions necessary for daily life, like post office workers. It was quite a predicament, and the U.S. government turned to the War Advertising Council, which implemented a massive national campaign to usher women into the workplace. Known as the "Women in War Jobs" campaign, it is considered even today to be the advertising industry's most successful "recruitment" campaign in the United States. Mary Doyle's image played a huge role in the recruiting success.

"Other than the red hair and my face, Norman Rockwell embellished Rosie's body," Keefe said in a 2012 interview with the Hartford Currant. "I was much smaller than that and did not know how he was going to make me look like that until I saw the finished painting."

Keefe pocketed \$10 for the two mornings of modeling work she did in Arlington, Vermont. Rockwell lived in neighboring West Arlington at the time.

"Rosie the Riveter" is often confused with the more popular image from the same era. The poster shows a woman flexing her arm under the slogan "We Can Do It." It was originally part of a nationwide campaign to sell war bonds, but is not the same character. As time went on though, the "We Can Do It" poster became a more accepted poster for the women at work cause because it connected with more women.

Still, many folks in social media paid tribute to Keefe using the image. Both show the key role women played in the war effort.

Please answer in you "Activities" section. Be sure to answer in *paragraph* form.

- 1) What key role did Mary Doyle play in America's success during World War II?
- 2) Why did America's success in the war hinge largely on the efforts of women back home?
- 3) Why do you think the "We Can Do It" poster connected with more women than the original "Rosie the Riveter" poster.
- 4) Do you know anybody that served or lived during World War II? If so what do you know about them and their involvement? If not do you know anybody now that has served in the military? What did they do?