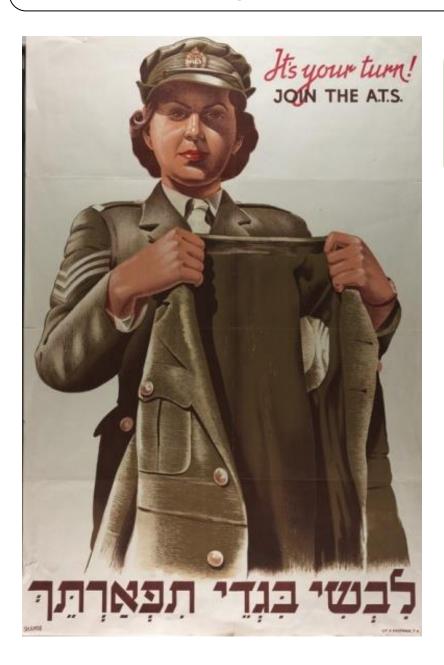In this week's Parashah of Pinchas, we read of the daughters of Tzelaphchad who are fighting with Moshe for equal rights for women. This week's NLI resource features a recruitment poster for the A.T.S. aimed at attracting more women into the forces.

Kerem School

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YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU!

This recruitment poster for the A.T.S. (Auxiliary Territorial Service) was placed in numerous locations around Israel during World War II. The poster is written in English, although it includes a three-word quote from the Book of Isaiah "לְבְשִׁי בִּגְדֵי תִפְאַרְתֵּךְ" which also appears in Lecha Dodi. Translated, it means "Dress yourself in your beautiful clothes".

The picture shows a female officer, distinguished by the ranking stripes on her uniform's sleeves, holding out an army greatcoat. The suggestion, reinforced by the English, is that she is welcoming a new recruit to the army, and inviting her to don the uniform of the unit.

The A.T.S. was the women's branch of the British Army during the Second World War. Whilst thousands of Jewish men living in the settlements joined the British Army during this time period, an agreement had to be reached with the Council of Women's Organisations before the enlistment of any women took place. Training camps were situated in Israel whilst the women were then sent to a number of locations across the Middle East and even parts of Europe as the war drew to a close.

The Haganah later made use of much of the training that these women had received and the first five commanding officers of the CHEN (Women's Corps) passed through the ranks of the A.T.S.

THE A.T.S.

Between 1939 and 1946, at the request of the Jewish Agency, thirty thousand men in Palestine volunteered for the British Army. The British authorities agreed to also enlist women into the forces with the first 60 women enlisting on January 25 1942, to be trained as officers for the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service). Women for the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) were drafted on May 25, 1943.

Considerable effort was invested in a large-scale recruitment drive, which turned out to be successful. Women of all walks of life and age groups, married and single, joined up. In some cases, both husband and wife joined. Some were illiterate and some were highly educated and a great many were recent young immigrants.

Uniforms of the ATS were all khaki, from underwear to tights, shirts, battle dress and skirts. Only the drivers wore trousers. The ATS were employed in a great number of tasks. They did not carry arms, but worked in arms and ammunition depots and repaired various kinds of arms. Many were drivers of heavy trucks, buses, staff cars and ambulances. They drove convoys into the desert, often under aerial bombardment. Some were nursing orderlies, some were clerks and switchboard operators, some folded parachutes, some coded and decoded cables and some operated radar stations. The WAAF also worked in aerial photography, meteorological services, spare parts, plotting and in the operation rooms.

Do your bit – join the A·T·S

Activities:

Something to discuss

Look at the NLI picture overleaf. Do you think this was an effective way to encourage women to join the ATS?

- What jobs did the women do?
- How did they help the men that were fighting?
- How did they support the stability of the country?

Imagine that it is 1942 and you have to prepare a poem or song to boost the morale of women working by saying why their work is so valuable. Share your ideas.

To read more about the background to the ATS posters:

Try to make your own 'beautifully dressed' female soldier using plant pots and string as per the picture:

Look at the NLI poster then design your own poster encouraging women to join the ATS.

-Consider what would be the advantages of enrolling.
-Try to present the job in a positive light.
-Think about the things women may have enjoyed about their wartime jobs.
-What sort of reasons might they have had for choosing a particular job?