

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE4103

Broken Hill Munitions Annexe

(1942 - 1946)

Born 19420101, Broken Hill New South Wales Australia

Died 19461231

Summary

The Broken Hill Munitions Annexe opened in 1942 for the manufacture of wartime munitions and employed dozens of Broken Hill women.

Details

Mirroring a trend that took place throughout Australia, unprecedented levels of female participation in the workforce were attained in Broken Hill during World War II. A significant employer of women in wartime was the Munitions Factory that opened in Broken Hill in 1942. In January 1941, members of Broken Hill's peak union body, the Barrier Industrial Council, and of the Unemployed Union organised a demonstration in favour of the establishment of a factory in order to create jobs. The project to build Munitions Factory received the financial support of the Mining Managers' Association on condition that the building be used to house a permanent trade annexe after the war. From September 1941 the site for the building in the Duke of Cornwall Reserve was leased to the Broken Hill Technical College by the mining companies, and building commenced in June of the following year.

In August 1942, a Women's Employment Office was established at the Broken Hill Court House, and married women were also able to register for employment, despite a long-standing and strictly abided union policy that women would not work after marrying. The factory opened in November, employing over 300 women and 80 men to create nose cone assemblies for 25-pound shells. When interviewed by the Barrier Miner newspaper, the manager of the factory, Mr J. L. Mayson, assured its readers that there was "no strain attached to the work" and that the "work standard [was] quite within the reach of an average girl". The women employed were responsible for overseeing the smooth operation of the machinery and for checking the quality of the finished part. Photos of the women at work supervising the munitions machines and on their lunch break in the canteen give a strong impression of the sense of pride, enjoyment and accomplishment that these women would have experience. (see Gallery Tab)

In 1946, the building was handed over to the Technical College and became known as the Broken Hill Technical College Annexe.

Published resources

Book

Some Outstanding Women of Broken Hill and District, Camilleri, Jenny, 2002

Broken Hill: A Pictorial History, Kearns, R.H.B., 1982

Newspaper Article

Manager's Praise for the Broken Hill Ammunition Factory, 1942

Site Exhibition

Unbroken Spirit: Women in Broken Hill, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/bh/bh-home.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Outback Archives, Broken Hill City Library

Minutes of the Broken Hill Technical College Advisory Committee

Author Details

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Digital resources



Title: Munitions Factory Canteen 1944
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Title: Munitions Annexe Canteen c1943
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Title: Canteen-c1943.jpg
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