

JOHN FALTER'S MADONA OF RADIO

By Bart Lee, K6VK, CHRS Fellow in History

Women served with honor in the U.S. Navy as WAVES in World War Two. Waves contributed in many capacities including communications.

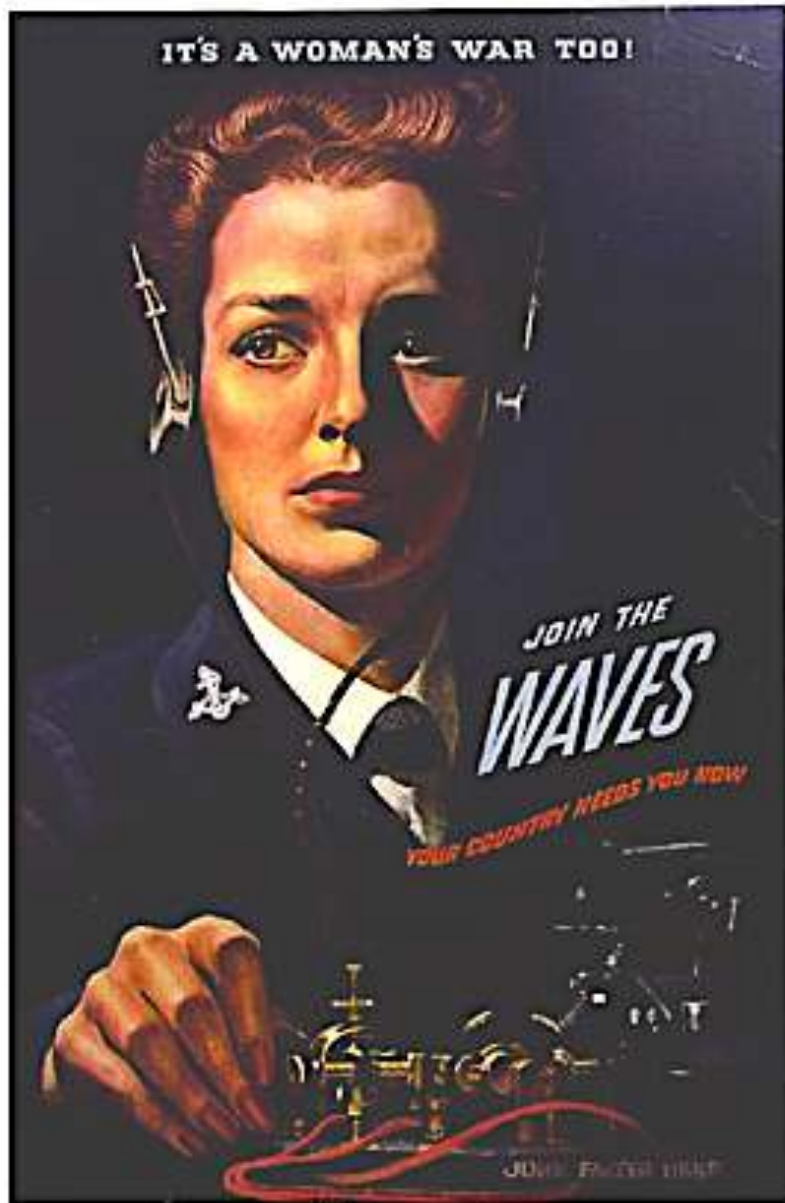


John Philip Falter, a noted commercial artist, painted this WAVE operating a radiotelegraph key (a “bug”). He conveys in her face the intensity, and importance, of this work. Falter signed his name with the suffix “USNR,” for United States Naval Reserve. This painting became a recruiting poster (below).

The wiki says: “WAVES was established on 30 July 1942 as a World War II division of the United States Naval Reserve, that consisted entirely of women.... The name was an acronym for ‘Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service’ (as well as an allusion to ocean waves).”

As an illustrator, particularly in commercial work, John Falter has been accused of a culture bound, indeed sexist view of women. Whatever the cultural conventions

of the times (1940s - 1950s), this painting gives the lie to that canard.



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NAVY RECRUITING STATION OR OFFICE OF NAVAL OFFICER PROCUREMENT

But Post-War, she says, “Here’s a Message from Milwaukee.”



“Here’s a message from Milwaukee”

This thoughtful wife knows that the moment her husband tunes in on Schlitz the reception is good. For Schlitz has a very special *taste* that beer-lovers are changing to with ultra high frequency. Taste Schlitz, yourself. You’ll soon know why—

Schlitz tastes so good to so many people,
it’s first in sales in the U.S.A.

RADIO HEADLINER: “The Halls of Ivy”, with the Ronald Colmans, Wednesdays, NBC.
TELEVISION HIT: “Schlitz Playhouse of Stars”, Fridays, CBS-TV.



© 1952, JOS. SCHLITZ BREWING CO., MILWAUKEE, WIS.

The Beer that made Milwaukee Famous

The California Historical Radio Society (CHRS) had a framed Schlitz beer ad from 1952 on its museum walls. It wasn't the beer, it was the scene. The 1950s wife brings a cold beer into an amateur radio operator husband's radio shack, so he can start out the evening on the radio right. This is widely regarded as a classic ham radio scene.

The wife almost looks like an airline stewardess, but that's just the fashion of the day. The ham sits at the controls of RME receiver with a National NC-170 next to it. He is still wearing his necktie. He's got a Callbook nearby and QSL cards on the wall. These show some DX too. A logbook awaits his first entry of the evening. His call is W3H [something]. His console is impressive, almost phantasmagorical.

The text reads:

“Here's a Message from Milwaukee’ This thoughtful wife knows that the moment her husband tunes in on Schlitz the reception is good. For Schlitz has a very special taste that beer lovers are changing to with ultra high frequency....”

Maybe Falter wrote the 1952 copy too.

John Philip Falter painted this scene for Schlitz. No one has been able to find out if he was a ham. He certainly has a good artistic sense of the gear. Some comment chalks the subservient wife up to sexism, but again, it's just a fashion of the day. Falter's stunning WAVES recruiting poster absolves him of any such (retrospective) sins. (de K6VK)