

## Heroes and Heroines

With war looming high on the horizon, in 1938 the Government introduced conscription, with all men between the ages of 18 and 41 having to register. Decided by officials, their destiny was either **War-Work** or the **Armed Forces**. Most young men were recruited into the armed forces.

The **Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS)** was established in late 1938 serving the British Army in a wide variety of occupations as never before. ATS women served as volunteers until given full military status in July 1941. 300 were at Dunkirk and by September 1941 the ATS has 65,000 members.

The consequences of able bodied men training for military action meant that Britain would be starved of its workforce. Sensing that all the essential services would be prejudiced by lack of workers the **National Service Act** was passed in December 1941 calling up unmarried women aged between the ages of 20 and 30, later extending to married women, with exemptions for pregnancy & small children.

Women could choose to join one of the auxiliary services, the **ATS**, the Women's Royal Navy Service (**WRNS**), the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (**WAAF**), the Women's Transport Service / First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (**FANY**), or the **Women's Land Army** helping in Agriculture. Supplying a wide variety of emergency services at home was the Women's Voluntary Service (**WVS**).

Women were conscripted to work in munitions, tank and aircraft factories, and other key occupations, traditionally seen as 'men's work'. Many had to leave home for the first time to be billeted in towns and cities having the greatest needs but the greatest dangers through enemy activities and low safety standards at work.

By 1943 around 90 % of single and 80 % of married women were in war work.

*"I have to tell the women that I cannot offer them a delightful life" said Mr. Bevin. "They will have to suffer some inconveniences, but I want them to come forward in the spirit of determination to help us through."*

As with many other car manufacturers, **SS Cars Ltd** switched to military production mainly making aircraft components, suffering only one bomb strike. In 1945 the SS name was understandably dropped as the name had become synonymous with the **Schutzstaffel** (*lit' Protection Squadron*) in Nazi Germany.

As production restarted, the pre war cars were named **Jaguar 1½, 2½, or 3½ litre**, manufactured in Coventry by **Jaguar Cars Ltd** with the leaping cat as its Logo.

Ironically, Jaguar Cars at Castle Bromwich is an ex Aircraft Factory complete with Air Ministry styled rainwater down-pipe hoppers and "Listed" fading camouflage.