

# “Jill Canuck”: CWAC of All Trades, But No “Pistol Packing Momma”

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## Article abstract

Pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, on admet des femmes dans les forces armées canadiennes. Cette incidence a-t-elle amélioré de quelque façon le statut de la femme au pays? C'est la question que se pose l'auteur en examinant quatre aspects du problème. Elle s'attarde d'abord aux circonstances qui ont amené les femmes à faire partie de l'armée, puis, elle s'enquiert des divers postes qu'on leur a offerts de même que des salaires et bénéfices qu'elles en ont retirés, enfin, elle s'interroge sur la place que ces femmes ont occupée dans la hiérarchie militaire.

Il appert donc que la présence féminine dans les forces armées repose sur la coïncidence de deux facteurs: le désir de certains groupes de femmes de servir leur pays d'une part, et, l'insuffisance croissante du personnel masculin d'autre part. Toutefois, admission n'est pas synonyme d'intégration; on admet des femmes dans l'armée, mais, on les affecte à des postes ou ouvrages que l'on considère comme propres à leur sexe : travail de cuisinière, de téléphoniste, de secrétaire ou de commis; ces postes, d'ailleurs, seront toujours moins rémunérés que ceux de leurs homologues masculins, les femmes ne recevant, à travail égal, qu'entre soixante-six à quatre-vingt pour cent du salaire de l'homme.

Cette inégalité est tout aussi manifeste dans la hiérarchie: si haut que soit le poste de commandement qu'une femme détienne, son autorité ne s'applique qu'à la gent féminine et elle est toujours subordonnée à l'homme du même rang. Somme toute, selon l'auteur, la présence de la femme dans les forces armées n'a rien changé aux rôles traditionnels de l'un et l'autre sexe au pays.

## ***“Jill Canuck”: CWAC of All Trades, But No “Pistol Packing Momma”***

**RUTH ROACH PIERSON\***

Patriarchy has survived the industrialization of western society under capitalism. Women as a group have remained subordinate to men as a group. To speak of the subordination of women and the superordination of men reflects the differing relation of women and men to power in the sense of “power over”, of dominance.<sup>1</sup> A power difference is part of the inequality of the male-female relationship under patriarchy: male dominance is the other side of women’s subordination. The enforced economic dependence of many women on male providers has contributed greatly to the perpetuation of that power difference and the survival of patriarchy. So, too, has the restriction of women’s access to arms and the military.

That military or armed might is a kind of power is indisputable. The importance of military power to the state is also widely recognized. Machiavelli pointed to military prowess as the bedrock of political power. Engels and after him Lenin identified the power of the state with the coercive force of the military and the police. Non-military as well as military regimes are ultimately backed up by military power.

Even more deeply rooted in history is the identification of the military with the male of the human species. Throughout most of history, with very few exceptions, the military of any given society has been an exclusively male concern. Resting on that division of labour by sex is a sexual division of attributes which ascribes the military traits of hardness, toughness, action and brute force to masculinity and the non-military traits of softness, fragility, passivity and gentleness to femininity. One might understandably presume that the entrance of women into the military, that masculine institution *par excellence*, would be a

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\*The principal sources for this paper are deposited in Ottawa at the Public Archives of Canada and the Directorate of History, Department of National Defence. In locating these sources I received expert and generous assistance at the Public Archives from Barbara M. Wilson, Military Archivist in the Public Records Division, and Joy Williams, in the National Photography Division, and, at the Directorate of History, D.N.D., from Philip Chaplin, Senior Research Officer. For help with revising various drafts of this paper, I should also like to thank the following friends and colleagues: Suzann Buckley, James Tague, Jane Lewis, Olga Prentice and Eric Sager.

1. Elizabeth Janeway, “On the Power of the Weak”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Autumn 1975), pp. 103-9.

revolutionary step: the admittance of women to a source of power and prestige theretofore a male monopoly.

Women were admitted into the Canadian Army during World War II (and into the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal Canadian Navy, collateral but for the purposes of this study still separate stories). Did the entry of women into the military increase the power of women as a group in Canada? This paper attempts to answer that question by examining the circumstances which gave rise to women's admission to military status, the jobs assigned to members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, their pay and benefits, and the place of the C.W.A.C. in the command structure of the Canadian Army.

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"Canada", C.P. Stacey asserts in his Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, "is an unmilitary community."<sup>2</sup> Military heroes are not the most celebrated Canadians and are not numbered among Canada's Prime Ministers. When necessary, of course, Canadians have fought in wars, for the defence of Canadian soil and of Britain, the seat of the Empire. But in peacetime, the strength of the Canadian military has never been great, military expenditure never large. In the two world wars of this century, opposition to conscription of men for overseas combat service has been so strong, above all among the French-speaking population, as to strain Canada to the point of crisis.<sup>3</sup>

Militarism, then, in the sense of exaltation of military heroes and glorification of heroic death, has not been characteristic of the Canadian spirit. Nonetheless, Canadians took pride in "the outstanding performance of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War" and "between the wars the professional army preserved a distinctive military tradition."<sup>4</sup> Prestige attached to the Canadian Militia Officer's Commission and attendance at Royal Military College was regarded as a sign of membership in Canada's elite.<sup>5</sup> So, although weaker than in some other countries, such as Germany, a link existed in Canada between the military, and power and prestige. Also as elsewhere, Canada's military had been, before World War II, exclusively male, with one exception. That was the Nursing Service of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps<sup>6</sup> and was in keeping with a sexual role division which assigned nurturing roles to women while reserving combatant roles for men. "To fight for one's country, when that fight has been a righteous one, has always been the privilege

2. Colonel C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, Vol. 1: *The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), p. 3.

3. J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977).

4. W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 29, 27.

5. Wallace Clement, *The Canadian Corporate Elite: An Analysis of Economic Power* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1975), pp. 246, 317, 319, 322; Peter C. Newman, *The Canadian Establishment*, Vol. I (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1975), pp. 170, 183, 291.

6. G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canada's Nursing Sisters* (Toronto: Samuel Stevens Hakkert & Company, 1975).

of man . . . exclusively the right of man”, wrote a contributor to *Saturday Night* in January, 1942.<sup>7</sup>

The admission of women besides Nursing Sisters into the Canadian Army during the Second World War was the product of two sets of circumstances. First and foremost was the Army’s need to alleviate manpower shortages. But, as C.P. Stacey rightly argues, the formation of a Canadian Women’s Army Corps was also product of the keen desire of some women to render military service to their country.<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1930’s and early 1940’s, Canada had thousands of women eager to serve in the armed forces. A host of unofficial women’s paramilitary corps sprang up across Canada.<sup>9</sup> Where this military fervour on the part of women cropped up first and grew largest was in British Columbia. There, on 5 October 1938, only days after the Munich Crisis had ended, a group of ten women met in Victoria to found a service club which they hoped would become the first unit of an official “Auxiliary Militia Service of Canada”.<sup>10</sup> Their inspiration was the official women’s auxiliary of the British Army, the Auxiliary Territorial Service, royal warrant for the formation of which had only been granted on 9 September 1938.<sup>11</sup> In the course of 1939, the Victoria service club became the headquarters of an unofficial British Columbia Women’s Service Corps which, under the command of Joan B. (Mrs. Norman R.) Kennedy, expanded to other British Columbian centres until by August, 1940, it could claim twelve hundred active members organized in eleven separate units.<sup>12</sup>

After the outbreak of war, similar women’s volunteer corps were formed in other Canadian cities and towns. The B.C. Women’s Service Corps could take credit for organizing affiliated groups in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Peterborough, and Halifax.<sup>13</sup> According to a rough estimate made at National Defence Headquarters, some 6,700 women were believed to be enrolled in such unofficial corps by early 1941.<sup>14</sup> Rivalling the B.C. Women’s Service Corps in size were the

7. T.G. Jaycocks, “Members of Canadian Women’s Army Corps Release Able Men for Front Line Duty”, *Saturday Night*, 24 January 1942, p. 4.

8. Stacey, p. 124.

9. Precedents for these civilian women’s paramilitary corps can be found in the First World War. See Barbara M. Wilson, *Ontario and the First World War 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents*, Ontario Series of the Champlain Society, No. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. lxxxvi-lxxxviii.

10. Letter of 7 Dec. 1938 to Brigadier J.C. Stewart, D.S.O. (District Staff Officer), M.D. No. 11, Work Point Barracks, Victoria, B.C., from Jean L. (Mrs. Hugo) Rayment, Victoria, B.C. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443.

11. Communicated in British Army Order 199, 27 Sept. 1938. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443.

12. Telegram of 28 Aug. 1940 to Col. J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa, from Mrs. Norman Kennedy, Controller, B.C. Women’s Service Corps. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1.

13. Communication of 11 May 1940 to E.W. Hamber, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, from Joan B. Kennedy, Controller, B.C. Women’s Service Corps. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443.

14. Pencilled note, n.d., but location in file indicates ca. Feb. 1941. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps of Montreal, known as the Canadian Beavers, with "fifteen branches throughout the Maritimes and the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario",<sup>15</sup> and the Canadian Auxiliary Territorial Service (C.A.T.S.) of Toronto, with affiliated detachments as far flung as Saskatoon and Vancouver. French-speaking Canada fostered the *Corps de Réserve National féminine* and the *Réserve canadienne féminine*.<sup>16</sup> In some cities two or more women's volunteer corps competed with one another for recruits.

Women who joined these corps received training in military drill and etiquette and in the jobs they believed women could perform for the armed services. Joan Kennedy could report in May, 1940, that training in the B.C. Women's Service Corps has consisted of "regulation infantry drill" plus

lectures (with as much practical work as facilities would permit) in Anti-Gas Precautions, first aid, transport driving and motor vehicle maintenance, map reading, Army clerical instruction, quartermaster's duties, Army Cooking, visual signalling and de-coding work.<sup>17</sup>

Members had also heard general lectures in hygiene, sanitation, dietetics and nutrition. Some corps went further and put the emphasis on marching in formation, physical drill and rifle practice<sup>18</sup> or, as the Commanding Officer of the Women's Auxiliary Service Patrol of Niagara Falls put it, "musketry".<sup>19</sup> In many instances the specialized army instruction could have come only from men who had military experience. Indeed, leaders of various corps referred with gratitude to the help they had received from "army or ex-army men."<sup>20</sup> On behalf of the British Columbia Women's Service Corps, Joan Kennedy acknowledged "the kind interest and co-operation of the District Officer Commanding Military District No. 11", who had allowed units of her Corps to use "Drill Halls in Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, Vernon and Prince Rupert" and had also "detailed officers and N.C.O.'s to give" to members of her corps "lectures and instruction in drill." In British Columbian towns "where no units of H.M.C. Forces" were stationed, units of Kennedy's Corps had found veterans willing to act as instructors.<sup>21</sup>

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15. Letter of 18 Nov. 1942 to Major-General B.W. Browne, Director General of the Reserve Army, from (Mrs.) Florence Seymour Bell, Chief Commandant, Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps, Montreal. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

16. Letter of 15 Jan. 1943 to Joan Kennedy, Director, C.W.A.C., from Jeanne Thisot, *La Presse*, Montreal. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.S. 54-27-111-1, vol. 2.

17. See note 13.

18. Newspaper clipping, n.d. PAC, RG, 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1.

19. Letter of 7 Oct. 1941 to Deputy Minister, Dept. of National Defence, from Isabel Fraser, Commanding Officer, Women's Auxiliary Service Patrol of Niagara Falls. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

20. Letter of 7 Dec. 1942 to Lt. Col. Joan Kennedy, C.W.A.C., from Mrs. E. Bradbrooke, Lt. Col., Officer Commanding the Saskatchewan Auxiliary Territorial Service, Saskatoon Branch. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-1, vol. 2.

21. See note 13.

Undoubtedly a fascination for things military, as well as the desire to serve King and Country, could account for the emergence of the women's volunteer corps. Organizers and members apparently wanted a share of the respect and authority attaching so conspicuously to the manner and trappings of the military in wartime. The corps leaders assumed military titles of rank, such as colonel, major and captain, and organized themselves into hierarchies of command with appropriate titles for positions in the hierarchy, such as officer commanding or chief commandant, and adjutant. Susceptible to the mystique of the uniform, members of the corps outfitted themselves in military garb, ranging from simple armbands to, when affordable, smartly designed and expensive uniforms of serge or barathea. On various occasions the Department of National Defence considered issuing warnings that it was in violation of the Criminal Code as well as Defence of Canada Regulations for members of unauthorized paramilitary groups to wear uniforms or badges mistakable for those of His Majesty's Forces or to use titles of rank common to those of His Majesty's Forces.<sup>22</sup>

Official recognition which would legitimize their uniforms and titles of rank as well as their activities and service was precisely what the various women's volunteer corps ardently desired. As early as December, 1938, the women of the Victoria service club approached the Department of National Defence with a request that the Department form an official "Auxiliary Militia Service of Canada" and recognize their service club as that Auxiliary's first unit "in connection with coastal defence."<sup>23</sup> At a meeting in February, 1939, the Military Members of Defence Council decided against the proposal on the grounds that any limited funds which might be forthcoming were "more urgently required for other purposes in the interests of the Militia."<sup>24</sup> Undaunted the B.C. Women's Service Corps repeatedly renewed their appeal for recognition, in June, 1939, in September, 1939, shortly before the outbreak of war, and in May, 1940.<sup>25</sup> By then other women's volunteer corps had joined in bombarding the Department of National Defence with pleas for recognition. These were orchestrated into a nation-wide campaign when from 10 October to 5 December 1940 Joan Kennedy and one of her cohorts from the B.C. Women's Service Corps toured Canada to assess the strength of the women's paramilitary movement. Empowered, by the end of the tour, to represent a number of other women's volunteer corps in addition to their own, they presented a brief at Ottawa outlining the extent of

22. Memo. of 21 Aug. 1939 to Organization from Colonel R.J. Orde, Judge Advocate-General; memo. of 6 Sept. 1940 to A.G. from Lt. Col., A.A.G. Org. 1(b); memo. of 18 Nov. 1942 to D. of Admin. from Lt. Col. J.E. MacDermid, A.D. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443; Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1; Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

23. Memorandum on "Auxiliary Militia Service of Canada (for Women)" sent with covering letter of 7 Dec. 1938 (see note 10) requesting that it be forwarded to Ian Mackenzie, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443.

24. Memo. of 22 Feb. 1939 to Deputy Minister from C.G.S. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443.

25. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 6280, file H.Q. 32-1-443.

Canadian women's preparedness to give military service and requesting some commitment from the Department of National Defence.<sup>26</sup>

The pressure for recognition was reaching a crescendo at a time when impending manpower stringencies had already started military authorities thinking seriously about the need for an official women's corps. A memorandum of 28 June 1940 to the Minister of National Defence from the District Officer Commanding Military District No. 2 pointed on the one hand to the increasing difficulty of obtaining "efficient personnel in certain employments in home establishments" and on the other to the "large number of well qualified women volunteers" whose services could be best utilized if they formed "part of a uniformed, officially constituted Corps subject to disciplinary rules and regulations."<sup>27</sup>

A group of inter-related problems, then, faced the Department of National Defence starting at least as early as the summer of 1940 and continuing into the summer of 1941. Although not yet plagued with a general lack of manpower, the Canadian Army confronted shortages of well-qualified male military personnel for specific jobs, clerks and cooks being the most frequently mentioned. Furthermore, with an eye to the future and the increasing demands for combat troops which it would undoubtedly bring, authorities at National Defence Headquarters felt the time had come to consider using female labour to release medically fit men for duty in fighting formations. With the Army definitely able to use female labour, two further questions arose of whether the women to be employed by the Army should be brought under military discipline and whether the creation of an official women's service corps would be the most efficient means of doing so.

By the summer of 1940, the question of use of female labour had become almost academic. Authorities in Military District No. 11 had been using female *voluntary* labour since September, 1939. Having supplied instructors to the B.C. Women's Service Corps, the officers commanding various military units stationed in the province sought the co-operation of these women volunteers after the outbreak of war, as clerks, drivers, and telephone operators.<sup>28</sup> The Canadian Army had also been using *paid* female labour. At National Defence Headquarters and District Headquarters, a considerable number of civilian women were employed as clerks, typists and stenographers, eighty-four holding down permanent civil servant positions, 509 temporary ones.<sup>29</sup>

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26. "Women Eager to Serve", *Victoria Daily Times*, 5 Dec. 1940; letter of 14 Dec. 1940 to Major-General B.W. Browne, A.G., from Joan Kennedy, Controller, B.C. Women's Service Corps. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

27. Memo. of 28 June 1940 to The Secretary, Dept of National Defence, from Brigadier R.O. Alexander, D.O.C., M.D. No. 2, Camp Borden, Ont. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1

28. See note 13. Letter of 15 July 1941 to The Secretary, Dept. of National Defence, from Major-General R.O. Alexander, G.O.C.-in-C. Pacific Command, Headquarters, Esquimalt, B.C. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

29. "Women Clerks with D.N.D. 1st October 1940". PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.

In both cases greater control was the main advantage the Army stood to gain from enrolling women workers and employees under the Department of National Defence.<sup>30</sup> Over the civil servants detailed to it, the Department of National Defence had little control: it could not hire or discharge, regrade, promote or demote them as it deemed fit. It could not move them about from station to station as it deemed necessary. Nor could it compel them to be available for work "on Sundays and holidays, when needed." By turning their female workers and employees into servicewomen, the Department also hoped to get secretaries and file clerks who were fluent in military jargon and who would look upon their work as part of the war effort and not as just a job.<sup>31</sup> Once the value of having women workers in uniform and under military discipline was granted, the Minister of National Defence and his colleagues at National Defence Headquarters were but a step away from the conclusion that an official women's service corps would be the most efficient means to that end. Few alternatives were considered, certainly not the possibility of enlisting women directly into the Canadian Army.

A further question exercising the Department was whether such an authorized women's corps should be built up by open recruitment of individuals or by granting official recognition to the already existing women's volunteer corps and incorporating them as regimental units. On the question of recognition, the Department of National Defence equivocated, as did also the Department of National War Services when it became involved. Authorities in both Departments realized that "to ignore the existence of these unauthorized corps" might be "suicidal", for it was necessary that "the personnel of existing women's [paramilitary] organizations . . . be utilized."<sup>32</sup> These same authorities, however, were on the whole opposed to "recognition". The Adjutant-General gave one reason for the opposition when counseling the Minister of National Defence to refuse the application of a particular Corps in August, 1940:

Recognition of this Corps or any other Corps would at once commit the Department not only to wholesale recognition of existing organizations, but many others which would spring into being, asking for recognition and whose recognition would be difficult to refuse.<sup>33</sup>

Interest in retaining control over the standards to be met by recruits and fear of being deluged by "rival claims for preferment" decided the Department of

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30. The A.G., Major-General Browne, in a memo. of 4 Sept. 1940 to the Minister of National Defence, spoke of "complete control". PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1.

31. Memo. of 15 Oct. 1940 to A.G. from Brigadier G.G. Anglin, D.O.C., M.D. No. 7, Saint John, N.B.; Memo. of 2 Feb. 1941 to D.A.G. from Lt. Col. H.T. Cock. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vols. 1 & 2.

32. Minutes of Meeting held in the office of the D.A.G.(M), 30 June 1941; Minutes of Meeting of the Cabinet War Committee, 24 June 1941. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 1.

33. Memo. of 12 Aug. 1940 to Ralston from Browne. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1.



National Defence against embracing the existing women's corps, with their rank structure, identity and esprit intact, as the building blocks of an official corps.

But the war effort could not afford to waste the womanpower of those volunteer organizations. A compromise was hit upon. At the formation of the official Canadian Women's Army Corps (13 August 1941), the Department of National War Services, which was initially in charge of recruitment, granted a kind of limited recognition to women's paramilitary organizations as a source of individual recruits for the C.W.A.C. Women's volunteer corps so recognized were regarded as units of "the Women's Auxiliary Service" and, in the first months of the C.W.A.C., a new recruit, if a member of such a women's volunteer corps, was permitted to wear her corps uniform until the C.W.A.C. uniform was issued.<sup>34</sup> But after the value of the women's volunteer corps as a source of recruits had been exhausted, and after recruitment for the C.W.A.C. had been taken out of the hands of the Department of National War Services, the Department of National Defence allowed that limited recognition to lapse. Once again, leaders of women's volunteer corps, whose ranks remained strong even after the departure of all members both willing and qualified to serve in the official women's service,<sup>35</sup> began beseeching the Department of National Defence for recognition, this time as an official reserve corps. Their appeals were in vain.<sup>36</sup>

There was another reason why the Department of National Defence had originally been reluctant to grant official recognition to the women's volunteer corps. In a memorandum of 4 September 1940, the Adjutant-General, Major-General B.W. Browne, had reported to Col. J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence:

It has also been noticed in the various applications received from women's organizations for recognition, that their activities have been concentrated mostly on Rifle shooting, Map Reading, Signalling and not on the particular duties for which they are required.<sup>37</sup>

If the Canadian Army needed women in uniform in World War II, it was not for rifle shooting (nor initially for map reading or signalling). Indeed, it is the division of labour in a modern army between fighting force and support staff

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34. Section IX, para. 133(a), "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1941". PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 1. See also the Prologue to Kathleen Robson Roe, *War Letters from the C.W.A.C.* (Toronto: Kakabeka Publishing Co. Ltd., 1975), p. 1. As one of the earliest volunteers (fifth in M.D. No. 1) Robson entered the C.W.A.C. before uniforms were available. She and her friends, recruited from the Red Cross Voluntary Corps, were allowed to wear their Red Cross uniforms until the C.W.A.C. ones were issued.

35. A survey in early 1943 disclosed that there were still at least ninety women's volunteer corps in existence in Canada, "with a strength of 199 Officers and 6,917 Other Ranks". Memo. of 5 March 1943 to C.G.S. from Major-General H.F.G. Letson, A.G. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-1, vol. 2.

36. Second half of 1942, beginning of 1943. See correspondence in PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2; Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-1, vol. 2.

37. See note 30.

which made the creation of a women's army corps socially conscionable in Canada during the Second World War.

In the past much of the support work for armies had been done by non-military personnel, some of them women. In the case of armies with female camp followers, those women performed labour for the troops as cooks and laundresses as well as mistresses and wives. In the evolution of the modern army, not only the warfare, but also the work involved in administering, maintaining and transporting the combat troops was brought under professional military discipline. In an all-male institution, which the military was, the division between support staff and fighting force could not be sexual, for men served at the blunt as well as at the sharp end.

When during World War II the formation of an official women's corps was under consideration in Canada, the only purpose envisioned for it was to supply female labour to the support staff, not to the fighting force. With the creation of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, the division of labour between support work and combat did not become thereby strictly sexual. As even in wartime the support staff of a modern army comprises a larger proportion of military personnel than does the fighting force, and as the C.W.A.C. at the time of the German surrender constituted only 2.8 per cent of the total strength of the Army,<sup>38</sup> the largest percentage of male soldiers still served behind the lines in non-combatant roles. Nevertheless, there was a fundamental division of labour by sex: between front line combat, from which women were excluded, and support work, to which women were admitted as replacements for some men. Women had penetrated that sacrosanct male preserve, the military, but had not broken the male monopoly on the primary purpose of the military, the provision of an armed fighting force.

Uneasiness at the prospect of women under arms may have led the Adjutant-General, Major-General B.W. Browne, to exaggerate the degree of rifle shooting women's volunteer corps had been concentrating on. Only a few even mentioned it as part of their training. More importantly the largest and best organized of the women's paramilitary groups, such as the B.C. Women's Service Corps, made explicit in their bids for recognition that performance of non-combatant duties was the service they offered.<sup>39</sup> They looked upon their movement as one "to train women to complement the work of the forces."<sup>40</sup> By and large, then, agreement prevailed between the women eager to serve and the authorities at National Defence Headquarters (N.D.H.Q.) on the general purpose of an official women's corps: to replace medically fit men in support jobs in order to release them for duty with forward formations.

In drawing up plans for an official women's corps, the Adjutant-General and his branch at N.D.H.Q., on whom this task mainly fell, also needed to determine in which specific categories of support work the Army could employ uni-

38. Stacey, p. 127.

39. See notes 13 & 23.

40. "Women Eager to Serve", *Victoria Daily Times*, 5 Dec. 1940.

formed women. For opinions on this question an Adjutant-General's secret circular letter of 1 October 1940 canvassed all Officers Commanding Military Districts, the Commandant of Royal Military College, the Commandant of the Ottawa Area, and all Branches and Directorates of National Defence Headquarters. The suggested categories were clerk, telephone operator, cook, cook's helper, officers' and sergeants' mess waiter, canteen helper and possibly M.T. (mechanized transport) driver. The responses are illuminating, not least for the degree to which they sought to hedge round the employment of servicewomen with conditions and qualifications.<sup>41</sup>

One condition agreed upon by all was the provision of suitable and properly segregated accommodation. District Officer Commanding M.D. No. 6 (Halifax) cautioned that "the quartering of women in isolated camps would require careful consideration." Fear of mixing the sexes, "the inadvisability of mixing men and women", even in work situations, was expressed in a number of reports. Some countenanced the use of women as waitresses in officers' messes, but not, for reasons of discipline, in sergeants' messes or as canteen helpers. One reply questioned the use of women as waitresses even in officers' messes. That same report doubted the feasibility of employing women as cooks and cook's helpers, unless "the whole kitchen staff was composed of women."

A number of replies laid down as a condition that the supply of men medically unfit for service abroad be exhausted before women were taken on in any support jobs. Some suggested the further condition that women not take over as clerks, telephone operators, cooks, or even officers' and sergeants' mess waiters and canteen helpers at district depots and training centres where male soldiers needed the opportunity to receive training in these jobs "prior to proceeding overseas."

Concern that men remain in charge furnished another qualification. The report from M.D. No 12 (Regina) allowed that women could be used in all the positions mentioned in the circular letter so long as "certain key positions such as those filled by senior clerks, operators, sergeant cooks etc., . . . continue to be filled by men." District Officer Commanding M.D. No. 13 (Calgary) thought it "practicable to replace clerks by women provided a sufficient number of soldiers are left who will be responsible for the work being done."

The idea of using women as M.T. drivers was granted limited acceptance in every report that considered the question. The consensus was "that women are quite competent" to drive "the lighter motor vehicles", staff cars, ambulances, motorcycles, station wagons, but that "the handling of trucks and heavier vehicles is beyond the strength of the average woman." Some mentioned as further limiting factors "winter driving conditions in Canada", "night driving", and "indifferent roads and great distances." Nor was it recommended that women be used at M.T. drivers at Training Centres, for there one of the primary

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41. The A.G.'s Circular Letter of 1 Oct. 1940 and the replies to it are to be found in PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1.

duties of M.T. drivers was "to train personnel for reinforcements" and it was not felt that women "would prove satisfactory as instructors."

Even when conditions were stipulated, few reports contested the feasibility of using members of a women's corps for clerical duties. Indeed, their urgent desirability was stressed in a number of replies, providing further evidence that there was an already pressing shortage of clerks. Even the Officer Administering the Corps of Military Staff Clerks found it "necessary to report that increasing difficulties are being met in securing competent male stenographers."

Those replies to the Adjutant-General's inquiry indicated the general pattern of employment for women in the C.W.A.C. which would prevail from the Corps' formation in August, 1941, through to the end of the war: the use of women in subordinate service jobs "where the physical strain is not too great" and for the purpose of releasing men "for employment in forward formations and units." The major change would come in the number of occupations for which women would be considered. Some of those canvassed in October, 1940, had already suggested job categories suitable for women beyond the eight mentioned in the A.G.'s letter, chief among them dental assistant, tailoress, and storekeeper. The Acting District Officer Commanding M.D. No. 2 (Toronto) had even predicted rightly that

much of the prima facie objection to employing women on certain duties and in certain places would be overcome and a change in the mental attitude towards women so employed would become apparent if a recognized corps of women were organized.

Indeed, the list of occupations open to women in the C.W.A.C. did grow. The first set of Regulations for the Canadian Women's Army Corps (August 1941) provided for some thirty.<sup>42</sup> In February, 1943, a C.W.A.C. recruiting officer could speak of between forty and fifty occupations for C.W.A.C. personnel.<sup>43</sup> By March, 1945, members of the C.W.A.C. were represented in fifty-five different trade classifications, that is, in fifty-five occupations over and above those not endowed with trades pay.<sup>44</sup> It remained, however, the exception to the rule for CWACs to hold down traditionally male jobs.

It was the introduction of trades training in the latter half of 1942 which extended the number of specialized technical trades open to members of the C.W.A.C. A survey of employment of C.W.A.C. personnel in all Military Districts and Commands in Canada in July and August 1942 had shown that "it comprises mostly clerical workers (stenographers, typists and clerks), cooks, waitresses, storewomen and general duties." The surveyor attributed the "conspicuous absence of demand for technically trained girls" to the lack of trades training for the C.W.A.C.<sup>45</sup>

42. Appendices VI & VII, "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1941".

43. Minutes of National Selective Service Conference, London, Ont., 15, 16, 17 Feb. 1943. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5322, file H.Q.S. 9011-11-5.

44. CWAC TRADESMEN AT 28 MAR 45, Mach Rec 14-4-2, 8 May 45. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5300, file H.Q.S. 8981.

45. Memo. of 19 Aug. 1942 to A.G. from Lt.-Col. J.E. McKenna. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5301, file H.Q.S. 8984.

## JILL CANUCK: CWAC OF ALL TRADES

Even before the results of that survey were in, the successor to B.W. Browne as Adjutant-General, Major-General H.F.G. Letson, in a secret memorandum of 19 July 1942, had proposed advanced trades training for members of the C.W.A.C. in order to widen the employment of women in the Army. Responding to “the large drain that has been made on manpower in this Country for the Armed Services”, Letson advocated extending “the field of employment of women to the fullest extent” and called for employing women “in all places where they have the physical ability to perform the necessary duties.” He even suggested that, as this was already the trend in Great Britain, “women could be used extensively in Anti-Aircraft Artillery, actually manning and firing the guns. . . .” Asked for their opinion, the Master General of the Ordnance, the Quartermaster General and the Chief of the General Staff all concurred in the policy of “women being used in Canada as operational personnel.”<sup>46</sup>

In mid-summer 1942, then, all four Senior Officers at N.D.H.Q. were prepared, owing to manpower shortages, not only to welcome women into a wider range of Army support jobs, but to contemplate using women to operate weapons. At its meeting of 29 July 1942 the Army Council “decided that experimental training should be carried out with a view to [women’s] being eventually employed in the actual handling and firing of anti-aircraft guns.”<sup>47</sup> Although this policy was never implemented, it is worth noting how limited a violation of the taboo against putting women in combat situations was being contemplated: women were being considered for service not with front line combatant units, but only on anti-aircraft batteries involved in coastal home defence. In justifying the policy, the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons undoubtedly would have become crucial, as in this caption to a photograph in *Saturday Night* showing members of the Women’s Home Defence Corps in Britain learning to use service rifles “with a view to gaining admittance to the Home Guard”: “While Britain still believes that use of offensive weapons in warfare is a man’s job and always will be, nevertheless her women are taught how to defend themselves.”<sup>48</sup> Even had CWACs been used on Ack-Ack batteries in Canada, there was no consideration given to extending their basic training to include arms drills. Fighting for one’s country would still have remained an exclusively male activity.

Investigation of the possibility of using women in operational units revealed that “the heaviest demands” throughout Command and District establishments were “for stenographers, typists, cooks and clerks for stores and equipment.” Among those in the A.G.’s Branch investigating the policy, it was felt that the Army “should first of all concentrate on filling the sedentary occupations before

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46. Secret Memorandum of 19 July 1942 to M.G.O., Q.M.G., C.G.S., from A.G. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5301, file H.Q.S. 8984.

47. Extract from Minutes of Meeting of Army Council held 29 July 1942 in Memo. of 1 Aug. 1942 to D.A.G. (A) from W.H.S. Macklin, Brig., for A.G. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5301, file H.Q.S. 8984.

48. *Saturday Night*, 17 October 1942, p. 42.

attempting to place C.W.A.C. in operational duties.”<sup>49</sup> Meeting the demands for womanpower in suitably female jobs took precedence over experimentation. Insofar as CWACs were eventually detailed to operational duties, they were employed with coastal defence units in both Atlantic and Pacific Commands as “operators of predictors and fire control instruments.” Starting in the spring of 1943, C.W.A.C. personnel were trained for service with Anti-Aircraft Regiments as kinetheodolite operators (testing the accuracy of height finders, range finders, anti-aircraft guns, and coastal defence guns) and gun operations room broadcasters and plotter-telephonists.<sup>50</sup> Servicewomen’s participation in operational duties thus circumscribed, C.W.A.C. recruitment literature could still assure the Canadian public that the young woman who enlisted would be serving in a non-combatant role: “No, not actually on the firing line. You do not pull any triggers or throw any hand grenades.” So a C.W.A.C. recruiting pamphlet of 1944 answered the hypothetical question of a prospective C.W.A.C. recruit.<sup>51</sup>

If not to the handling and firing of anti-aircraft guns by women, the A.G.’s secret memorandum of 19 July 1942 did lead to the setting up of a trades training programme for CWACs. This innovation allowed recruitment propaganda to boast of the “many and varied . . . trades at which Canadian Women’s Army Corps personnel are now employed”: thus the caption to a Canadian Army photo of a C.W.A.C. private “operating a home-made bullet separating machine in the Ordnance Salvage Depot at Aurora, Ontario”. Similar in slant was the recruitment line which played up “the more spectacular jobs in the Canadian Women’s Army Corps”, the “unusual and interesting” jobs, such as night vision tester “operating one of the machines that test men’s ability to see in the dark”, or armourer of kinetheodolite operator.<sup>52</sup> “‘Jill’ Canuck Has Become CWAC of All Trades” punned the headline to a March 1944 promotional article in *Saturday Night*.<sup>53</sup>

In actuality, however, even after the general introduction of trades training, the overwhelming majority of trainees were sent on Cooks’ and Clerks’ Courses.<sup>54</sup> Although Drivers’ Courses occupied third place, demand remained greatest for CWACs in occupations which were extensions of housework or

49. Memo. of 10 Sept. 1942 to D.A.G. (A) from D.M. & R.; Memo. of 9 Aug. 1942 to D.A.G. (A) from Colonel H.A.P. Francis, D.M. & R. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5301, file H.Q.S. 8984.

50. A.G.’s Circular Letters of 14 & 20 April 1943 re Selection of C.W.A.C. Plotter-Telephonists, G.O.R. DH, DND, 006.066 (D17). See also DH, DND, 169.009 (D56).

51. *50 Questions and Answers about the CWAC* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1944), p. 1. DH, DND, 156.063 (D2).

52. PAC, National Photography Division, Negatives Z-2506-3, 2 Feb. 1944, Z-1759-1, 7 July 1943, Z-2504-4, 2 Feb. 1944, and Z-3727-(1-15), 5 April 1945.

53. “‘Jill’ Canuck Has Become CWAC of All Trades”, *Saturday Night*, 4 March 1944, p. 4.

54. Secret Circular Letters of 19 Dec. 1942, 20 Jan. 1943, 8 Feb. 1943, 19 Feb. 1943, reporting deployment of C.W.A.C. Other Ranks completing Basic Training. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5301, file H.Q.S. 8984.

which had become female ghettos in the civilian world of employment. Shortly before National Selective Service was to begin assisting with the recruitment of women for the Armed Services (on 22 February 1943), N.S.S. officials were told that the "greatest need in all services" was for "Stenographers, Clerical Help and Cooks."<sup>55</sup>

In greater conformity with the actual demands for female labour in the Army was another recruitment line directed to the less adventuresome. This one emphasized that "it was not a case, in most instances, of women doing men's work in the Services", but rather of servicemen, "prior to enlistment of women", having had to do "women's work".<sup>56</sup> By 1943 the supply of women in volunteer corps who were qualified as well as eager to serve had long been exhausted and it became necessary for Army recruiting officers to aim their appeals at a more recalcitrant audience. A large segment of the Canadian public, including eligible young women and the family and friends who influenced them, disapproved of women joining the forces.<sup>57</sup> One source of this disapproval was the fear that army service would cause a young woman to lose her femininity. The recruitment pitch stressing "women's work" was designed to reassure the potential C.W.A.C. recruit (and her family and friends) that her femininity would not be impaired by joining the Canadian Women's Army Corps. The Army would require her to perform no job unsuitable for women, only jobs which, although previously done by men, were really women's work and hence more suitably performed by women anyway. "If a woman can drive the family car, she can drive a staff car" was an example of the reassurance this recruitment propaganda offered.<sup>58</sup>

The C.W.A.C. never acquired a pattern of employment disturbing to the male-female division of labour in the larger civilian society. On 8 May 1945, a computer study was done of the occupational distribution of all C.W.A.C. other ranks serving in Canada and the United States as of 28 March 1945 (so not including the C.W.A.C. personnel on overseas duty at that time).<sup>59</sup> Almost half (5,729) of the total number of C.W.A.C. other ranks (11,706) were non-tradeswomen, that is, not entitled to draw trades pay. Their occupations included driver (without technical training), laundress, medical orderly, batwoman, canteen helper, waitress, and office orderly (the sole qualification for which was "ability to tolerate sedentary and inactive work, with fairly long periods of nothing whatever do do").<sup>60</sup> Of the 5,977 C.W.A.C. tradeswomen, 3,727 or 62.4 per cent were employed as clerks (there were only 4 "clerks superintending").

55. See note 43.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Report: An Enquiry into the Attitude of the Canadian Civilian Public Towards the Women's Armed Forces* (Montreal/Toronto: Elliott-Haynes Ltd., 1943). DH, DND. Other sources of disapproval form the subject of a forthcoming paper.

58. "Suggested Notes for the Guidance of Speakers at the National Selective Service Schools", 9 Feb. 1943, sent out from the Office of Director of Army Recruiting. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5303, file H.Q.S. 8984-2.

59. See note 44.

60. "Specifications for Selection: Tradeswomen and Non-Tradeswomen, C.W.A.C., 1944". PAC, RG 24, Vol. 11, 994.

There follows a large drop before one comes to the 8 per cent who were cooks (470 cooks plus 12 "cooks hospital"). Taken together the two occupations of clerk and cook accounted for just over 70 per cent of the C.W.A.C. tradeswomen on this side of the Atlantic in March, 1945. Almost ninety per cent (88.6) are accounted for if one adds the 6.9 per cent (413) who were storewomen; 4.5 per cent (270) switchboard operators; 2.7 per cent (164) postal sorters; 2.2 per cent (132) dental assistants; and 1.9 per cent drivers with technical training (99 in one classification plus 12 in another). The remaining 11.4 per cent were distributed among the other forty-six trades. Next highest in concentration were keyboard operator (77), fixed wireless operator (69), tailoress (66), bandswoman (66), and nursing orderly (65). There were, by the way, twenty-two kinetheodolite operators. At the low end of the scale could be found such occupations as butcher (7), shoemaker (7), lithographer (2), welder (2), saddler (1), pharmacist (1), and masseur (1). The secretary in uniform was the typical CWAC.

The main purpose of enrolling female workers under the Department of National Defence had been, as already discussed, to make them subject to military discipline and military hours. For many who joined the C.W.A.C., the military regimen, parades, barracks and mess halls, constituted the main change from their civilian work experience. The list of jobs open to C.W.A.C. personnel grew longer without materially changing the general pattern of employment: the use of the overwhelming majority of CWACs in subordinate service jobs identified as women's work in the outside world. Occupationally, the sexual division of labour was carried over from civilian society into military life.

Unequal rates of pay for women in the Canadian Women's Army Corps as compared with the pay for men in the Canadian Army (Active) was another way in which women's subordinate position in the civilian labour market was reflected in military employment. At the time of the formation of the Canadian Women's Army Corps (13 August 1941), basic pay all ranks was set at two-thirds that of men holding equivalent rank in the Canadian Army. On enrollment (later enlistment) in the C.W.A.C., a Volunteer received ninety cents a day ordinary pay while a male recruit received \$1.30. This inequality extended to the officer corps: while a Chief Commander (later regularized to Lieutenant Colonel) in the C.W.A.C. received \$6.70 per day, her male counterpart drew ten dollars.<sup>61</sup> The rationale for this was that, since many female civil servants were expected to join the C.W.A.C. yet the C.W.A.C. was not to be competitive with the Civil Service Commission, C.W.A.C. pay should approximate Civil Service pay for women employees. Deducting expenses born by civil servants for such services provided free of charge in the Army as clothing, food, lodging and medical and dental care, one came up with the resulting computation of two-thirds male pay<sup>62</sup> (which says something perhaps about the low level of pay for women as compared with

61. Stacey, p. 126; Section XII, para. 158. "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1941". Section XII, Para. 182, "Regulations for the Canadian Women's Army Corps, 1942", H.Q. 54-27-111-44. DH, DND, 113.3C1 (D1).

62. "Suggested Rates of Pay Based on Comparative Civil Service Rates", 11 Feb. 1941. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 2.



men in the Civil Service). National Defence Headquarters must have regarded this as a tolerable difference in wage, as there was concern "that it would be against public opinion for [members of a Women's Army Corps] to draw rates of pay considerably lower than men."<sup>63</sup> At the same time the advantages of lower rates of pay were not forgotten. Up to the formation of the C.W.A.C., the intention had been to have no tradesmen's rates of pay paid to members of the women's corps. Planners could thus calculate an "estimated annual saving" of \$18,786 by subtracting the "estimated cost of proposed plan" from the "estimated cost of soldier personnel being replaced by women."<sup>64</sup> In the end trades pay was granted to C.W.A.C. personnel, but on a schedule substantially lower than that for male soldiers with the same grouping in the same trades classification.<sup>65</sup>

Nor were dependents' allowances equal for male and female military personnel. Although early thought on the subject had been to exclude married women from the Service,<sup>66</sup> on its formation the Canadian Women's Army Corps was opened to married as well as unmarried women, provided the woman had "no children under the age of 16 years in the case of boys and 17 years in the case of girls or children above those ages who are suffering from mental or physical infirmity."<sup>67</sup> That proviso eliminated the need for dependents' allowances to children of women in the C.W.A.C. But women in the forces were initially not provided with allowances for any other dependents, be they husbands, mothers, fathers, sisters or brothers. And the woman married to a serviceman who herself joined the Service as officer or volunteer ceased "to be eligible to receive Dependent's allowance paid to her in respect of any member of the Canadian Naval, Military or Air Forces."<sup>68</sup>

The Department of National Defence was mistaken if it thought the inequality of pay and dependents' allowances for women in the Services would go unchallenged. In the civilian labour market, job segregation provided one means for employers to pay female workers less while still acceding to the principle of equal pay for equal work. As the Canadian Women's Army Corps, however, was created to supply soldier replacements to the Army and as the overwhelming majority of CWACs took over clerical jobs which they then performed, as was

63. See note 30.

64. "Statement of Costs—Canadian Women's Army Corps", Appendix "B1", August 1941. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 1.

65. Section XII, para. 183(a), "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1942". There were three levels of trades pay. Depending on the trade and his or her efficiency at the trade, a service person was given a Group "A", Group "B" or Group "C" trades pay rating. The pay at each level, however, was not the same for men and women. Servicemen with a "C" grouping received 25 cents a day additional to basic pay, with a "B" grouping 50 cents, and with an "A" grouping 75 cents. The scale for women was 15, 30 and 50 cents a day extra. See note 43. Also letter of 31 July 1943 to Unemployment Insurance Commission, Ottawa, from Captain T.H. Johnstone, Combined Services Committee. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5303, file H.Q.S. 8984-2.

66. See note 30.

67. Section III, para. 22(e), "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1942".

68. Section XII, para. 190, "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1942".

widely acclaimed, more efficiently than the men they replaced, the inequality of pay and benefits was too glaring to be overlooked. Senior officers of the Women's Services themselves protested against this discrimination.<sup>69</sup> There was also public outcry, spearheaded by the National Council of Women. Responding to petitions and resolutions sent forward from Local and Provincial Councils, the Executive of the National Council in May and again in December, 1942, made representations to the Department of National Defence and to the Prime Minister, urging equal pay for men and women of the Armed Forces and provision of allowances for dependents of women in the Services. At their Fiftieth Annual Meeting and War Conference in Toronto, 16 to 19 June 1943, the National Council of Women found it necessary once again to pass a series of resolutions calling for equality of pay and benefits for servicewomen, including the recommendation "that a woman in the Armed Forces who has been successful in passing the same trade test as a man should be entitled to receive the same rate of pay as that of the man she has replaced."<sup>70</sup>

National Defence Headquarters was aware of the negative effect of unequal pay and benefits on prospective volunteers. While later studies would uncover other inhibiting factors, a survey carried out in July and August of 1942 claimed that "the greatest deterrent to enlistment appears to be the smallness of the basic and trades pay given to C.W.A.C. volunteers."<sup>71</sup> To mitigate this effect the Directorate of Army Recruiting touted the free clothing and excellent medical attention available to all CWACs, as well as the generous leave, free lodgings and plentiful, wholesome food. It also pointed out that the daily pay, though not high, was drawn by the servicewoman even when on sick leave. The general line was that "the actual pay in the Women's Services of the Armed Forces is of small consideration", for "when all other benefits are considered, a girl would have to earn a fairly good salary to have as good a job."<sup>72</sup>

But resistance to female enlistment persisted. To find out why, approval was given for two surveys to be carried out in the first half of 1943.<sup>73</sup> The first, a public opinion survey, was initiated by the Joint Committee on Combined Recruiting Promotion, Women's Services of the Three Armed Forces, and conducted by a commercial research agency. Completed in April, 1943, the report was entitled "An Enquiry into the Attitude of the Canadian Civilian Public Towards the Women's Armed Forces".<sup>74</sup> The second inquiry, conducted and prepared by the Directorate of Army Recruiting in April and May, 1943, was

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69. Reported in Minutes of the Canadian Women's Army Corps Staff Officers Conference, 18 Nov. 1942. DH, DND, 325.059 (D1).

70. PAC, MG 28, I 25, Vols. 83 and 85.

71. See note 45.

72. "Suggested Syllabus for the Instruction of N.S.S. Appointed to Deal with Prospective Recruits to the Women's Services of the Armed Forces", prepared by Directorate of Army Recruiting, Feb. 1943. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5303, file H.Q.S. 8984-2.

73. Minutes of the 89th Meeting of the National Campaign Committee, Ottawa, 22 Feb. 1943. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5303, file H.Q.S. 8984-2.

74. See note 57.

based on the results of the first study, insofar as they pertained to the C.W.A.C., and on "written answers to a questionnaire prepared by N.D.H.Q. in both English and French" and administered to a cross-section of C.W.A.C. other ranks from all C.W.A.C. units. The secret and confidential report of the second enquiry, "Canadian Women's Army Corps: Why Women Join and How They Like It", was ready in July for distribution.<sup>75</sup>

The question of pay figured in both reports. In the first, while only half the respondents offered suggestions on "How Enlistment in Armed Forces Might Be Made More Attractive", 22 per cent of those suggested increasing pay. Of the "young eligible women who considered the idea of joining the forces but later abandoned it", 7 per cent gave "poor pay" as their reason.<sup>76</sup> The second report, "Why Women Join and How They Like It", listed reluctance "to trade good civilian salary for army pay and allowances" as the eighth of ten "Main Reasons Why Women Do Not Enroll". In a list of seven "Main Sources of Dissatisfaction Among C.W.A.C. Women", the report put in fifth place the CWAC grievance that "while they were replacing men they were not given the same pay and allowances. They wanted at least the same trades pay as men. . . ."<sup>77</sup> Although there were other causes for reluctance to join the C.W.A.C.,<sup>78</sup> poor pay and allowances, the two reports left no doubt, could not be ignored.

Nor were they any longer being so. Even before the second report was ready for distribution, authorities at National Defence Headquarters had the pay scale for servicewomen under review. On 24 July 1943 in an address before the House of Commons, Colonel J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, made the official announcement of adjustments in pay and allowances for women in the services. The basic pay of women in the forces was to be raised to 80 per cent of that paid to men in the same rank, the pay increase retroactive to 1 July. In addition servicewomen would henceforward "receive trades pay according to their grouping on the same basis and at the same rates as" servicemen. Furthermore, a woman in the services married to a man in the services would not be prevented in the future from receiving a dependent's (separation) allowance from her husband, provided the woman's total annual income, including the allowance, did not exceed \$2,100. Finally, dependent mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers of servicewomen would now be entitled to claim the same allowances as such dependents of servicemen.<sup>79</sup> The new provisions left two major inequalities outstanding: a 20 per cent discrepancy in basic pay (albeit reduced from 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> per

75. DH, DND, 168.009 (D91). Also PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5303, file H.Q.S. 8984-2.

76. *Report: An Enquiry . . .*, pp. 21, 25. See note 57.

77. "C.W.A.C.: Why Women Join . . .", pp. 13, 15. See note 75.

78. Chief among them the "bad" reputation acquired by the C.W.A.C., which subject I will be exploring in a forthcoming paper.

79. "Canadian Forces—Increases of Pay for Women's Services", 24 July 1943, *Dominion of Canada Official Report of Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. V, 1943 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1944), pp. 5357-8.

cent) and no allowances for dependent husbands or children.<sup>80</sup> Servicewomen's subordinate position in income as well as occupation was thus preserved.

As for the status of the Canadian Women's Army Corps in relation to the Canadian Army, it was at best a stepdaughter of the military. On first formation, the C.W.A.C. was set up as a separate Corps, supplementary to, rather than an integral part of, the Canadian Militia and not subject to military law. The model was the Auxiliary Territorial Service in the United Kingdom. The Order-in-Council (P.C. 6289 of 13 August 1941) which authorized the formation of a Canadian Women's Army Corps stipulated that it would "not be comprised in, or form part of the military Forces of Canada." The women of the Corps were, however, to "be organized on a military basis so that . . . they will be under military control and supervision", as provided in the Regulations for the Canadian Women's Army Corps appended to the Order-in-Council.<sup>81</sup> "The primary role of the Canadian Women's Army Corps" was "to replace Army Personnel in non-combatant activities."<sup>82</sup> Arrangements were made for the Department of National War Services to be in charge of recruitment. Its job was to create "a pool" of prospective soldier replacements on which District Officers Commanding Military Districts would draw to meet their labour demands.<sup>83</sup>

Although one could speak of the organization of the Corps as "broadly similar" to that of the Canadian Army,<sup>84</sup> it was more a case of parallel, but unequal. The Corps had a Headquarters, located at National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, and its own officers: an Officer Administering to command the Corps, C.W.A.C. Staff Officers appointed to each Military District Headquarters, and C.W.A.C. Officers or N.C.O.'s to command C.W.A.C. units. Given the purpose and anticipated size of the Corps, the company was the largest organizational unit provided. Both C.W.A.C. officers and other ranks were carried on strength of C.W.A.C. companies; those "not required for Corps administration" were posted for employment to stationary units of the male Army "to replace men fit for active service."<sup>85</sup>

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80. It might also be argued that the concentration of C.W.A.C. personnel in occupations not entitled to tradespay as well as in trades which carried the lowest level of trades pay, plus the absence of women from the highest military ranks, would have preserved an inequality of income on average between men and women in the Army.

Because the C.W.A.C. as originally established was not "part of the military Forces of Canada", women in the C.W.A.C. were not initially eligible for post-discharge and rehabilitation benefits available to male soldiers. The C.W.A.C.'s incorporation into the Canadian Army in March, 1942, rectified that injustice.

81. Copy of Order-in-Council P.C. 6289, 13 August 1941, in DH, DND, 113.3C1 (D1).

82. Section I, para. 2, "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1941".

83. Memo. of 16 Sept. 1941 to Director of Organization from D.A.G.(M). PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2253, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, fol. 5.

84. *Ibid.*

85. Director-General, C.W.A.C., presumably Col. Margaret Eaton, "Preliminary Historical Narrative, History of the CWAC & Appendices" (n.d., but from internal evidence c. mid 1945), p. 8.

The hierarchy of ranks in the C.W.A.C. was parallel to that of the Army, but truncated—the rank initially crowning the list was the equivalent of Colonel. Because C.W.A.C. was not under military law nor part of the genuine military forces, C.W.A.C. officers were not commissioned and their titles and badges of rank could not be those authorized for use in the military. By adoption from the British A.T.S., the titles for officer ranks in the C.W.A.C. became 2nd Subaltern (the equivalent of 2nd Lieutenant), Subaltern (Lieutenant), Junior Commander (Captain), Senior Commander (Major), Chief Commander (Lieutenant Colonel), and Honorary Controller (Colonel).<sup>86</sup> For badges of rank the French emblem of the *fleur de lys* and the British emblem of the rose were originally considered,<sup>87</sup> but in the end the Canadian symbols of the maple leaf and beaver were chosen, in combinations ranging from one maple leaf for a 2nd Subaltern to one beaver and two maple leaves for an Honorary Controller.<sup>88</sup>

The powers of the C.W.A.C. officers were limited. While on duty with the Army, C.W.A.C. personnel replacing soldiers at military establishments came under the command of the officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of the Army. Furthermore, although Army officers and other ranks did not have the power to place members of the C.W.A.C. under arrest (the C.W.A.C. had its own Provosts, military police, for that), the authority to award punishments to C.W.A.C. personnel was invested in C.W.A.C. officers only in cases involving the lower ranks and minor punishments. Otherwise that power was reserved, not for the Officer Administering the C.W.A.C., but for Senior Officers of the male Army, Station Commanders, District Officers Commanding, the Adjutant-General, or, in the case of dismissal of C.W.A.C. officers, the Minister.<sup>89</sup> The C.W.A.C. may have been governed by its own Regulations, but those had been drawn up by the Adjutant-General and officers of his Branch at N.D.H.Q., in consultation with the Judge Advocate-General, and they provided at many points for the interposition of male Army control and authority over the C.W.A.C. and its members.

The British A.T.S. had provided the model for the separate status of the C.W.A.C. However, by the time the C.W.A.C. was formed, experience had convinced some British military authorities that it would have been better to make the women's corps part of the Army. Although in September, 1940, the Minister of National Defence had been the one to suggest to the Adjutant-General that women's services "could be administered by the Department of National War Services",<sup>90</sup> after a visit to the United Kingdom in November Ralston had swung

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86. Section II, para 9.(a), "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1941".

87. Draft Copy of Regulations and Instructions for the Canadian Women's (Army) Service, 23 June 1941. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 1.

88. See note 85, p. 5; Stacey, p. 125.

89. Section I, para. 6; Section VI, para. 62(a), (b), (c), (d), "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1941".

90. Memo. of 2 Sept. 1940 to A.G. from Ralston. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2152, file H.Q. 54-27-32-7, vol. 1.

round to favouring their incorporation directly under the Armed Forces.<sup>91</sup> Others at National Defence Headquarters strongly opposed that view, chief among them Brigadier Orville M.M. Kay, Deputy Adjutant-General, and his superior, Major-General B.W. Browne, the then Adjutant-General, who never changed his opinion on the matter.<sup>92</sup> Presumably Browne was against making the C.W.A.C. a part of the Canadian Army out of concern to preserve the masculine exclusiveness and solidarity of the military. He later opposed "the formation of Girl Cadet Corps as a component part of the Royal Canadian Army Cadets" on these grounds: "Bringing girls into the Royal Canadian Army Cadets would alter its status as being purely a boys organization and might very well interfere with its growing popularity."<sup>93</sup>

In the summer of 1941 Ralston had yielded to Browne and Kay. But by the start of the next year the disadvantages of having the C.W.A.C. separate from the Army were seen to be outweighing the advantages: there was growing dissatisfaction with the necessity "to constantly be passing special regulations"<sup>94</sup> and with the Department of National War Services' handling of recruitment.<sup>95</sup> Most importantly, as long as the C.W.A.C. was not "part of the military Forces of Canada", members of the C.W.A.C. would not be eligible for post-discharge and rehabilitation benefits without passage of a particular Order-in-Council for each and every benefit. Much the simpler way, the Chairman of the General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation urged Major-General Browne, would be "if members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps were recognized as members of the forces."<sup>96</sup>

The replacement of Browne as Adjutant-General by Major General H.F.G. Letson early in February, 1942, smoothed the way to incorporating the C.W.A.C. within the Active Army of Canada. The separate status of the C.W.A.C. was abolished by Order-in-Council P.C. 1965 of 13 March 1942 and the Canadian Women's Army Corps was placed on Active Service and under military law as part of the Defence Forces of Canada.<sup>97</sup> Henceforth, C.W.A.C.

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91. Ralston (at Canadian Military Headquarters in London) to C.G. Power, Minister of National Defence for Air, Tel. No. GS 3051, 29 Nov. 1940. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 12,777, file 42/Min. N.D./1. For this reference I am indebted to Steve Harris, graduate student at Duke University, whose thesis is on "The Growth of the Canadian Military Profession".

92. Memo. of 31 Jan. 1942 to Ralston from Browne; memo. of 10 Feb. 1942 to Major-General H.F.G. Letson, A.G., from Ralston. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2253, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 5.

93. Memo. of 8 April 1943 to Letson, A.G., from Browne, Director General of the Reserve Army. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-1, vol. 2.

94. Memo. of 10 Feb. 1942 to Letson from Ralston. See note 92.

95. Memo. of 1 Jan. 1942 to O/A, C.W.A.C., from Col. H. Cock, D. of O. & A. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 3.

96. Letter of 7 Jan. 1942 to A.G. from General H.F. McDonald, Chairman, General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2253, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 4.

97. Copy of Order-in-Council P.C. 1965, 13 March 1942, to be found in DH, DND, 113.3C1 (D1).

volunteers would be “enlisted” and not “enrolled”. C.W.A.C. offers acquired the right to hold commissions, use military titles of rank, and “replace their beaver and maple leaf rank badges with crowns and stars.”<sup>98</sup>

Although the Officer Administering the C.W.A.C. referred to the Corps as having “been absorbed in the Armed Forces of Canada”,<sup>99</sup> the C.W.A.C. remained a segregated Corps, its members retaining a status different from that of male members of the Canadian Army. The term “soldier(s)” was still reserved for male other ranks; the collective term for “all ranks in the C.W.A.C. other than Officers” was “Volunteer(s)”.<sup>100</sup> The degree to which members of the C.W.A.C. came under military law was limited by modifications and exemptions spelled out in the revised C.W.A.C. Regulations of 1942. For instance, the severest penalties (death, penal servitude, imprisonment, detention) were not to be inflicted. Also while members of the C.W.A.C. now had the right to elect trial by court martial and C.W.A.C. officers were eligible to sit as members of courts martial at trials of C.W.A.C. personnel, no C.W.A.C. officer could be appointed President of a Court Martial.<sup>101</sup>

In general, measures were taken to preserve wherever possible the male-female hierarchy of authority. Although the revised C.W.A.C. Regulations of 1942 and a reorganization of C.W.A.C. companies in August, 1943, extended the disciplinary powers of C.W.A.C. Commanding Officers over C.W.A.C. personnel, “Officers of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps” were to “have no powers of punishment over Officers, Warrant Officers and soldiers of other Corps.”<sup>102</sup> Three paragraphs in the revised C.W.A.C. Regulations of 1942 laid down the rules of precedence and command which were to obtain between officers of the C.W.A.C. and officers and other ranks of other Branches and Corps of the Army.

5. Officers, Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers shall rank with Officers, Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers in other branches of the Army according to the dates of their appointments in their respective ranks, but where such appointments bear the same dates, Officers and Other Ranks of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps shall rank junior.
- 6(a) Officers, Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the Army, of Corps other than the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, shall have power of command over personnel of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps who are junior to them by rank, appointment or seniority.
- (b) Officers, Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, shall have power of com-

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98. Circular letter of 9 May 1942 to All C.W.A.C. Staff Officers from Major Joan B. Kennedy, O/A, C.W.A.C. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2253, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 5.

99. *Ibid.*

100. Abbreviations and Definitions, “Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1942”.

101. Section, VI, “Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1942”.

102. G.O. 150 (30 April 1942). PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2253, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 5.

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mand only over Officers and Other Ranks of other Branches of the Army as may from time to time be placed under their command.<sup>103</sup>

In other words, all determinants of rank being equal, the C.W.A.C. officer, non-commissioned officer or private was junior to their male Army counterparts. And while male Army officers and N.C.O.'s always enjoyed power of command over C.W.A.C. personnel junior to them, C.W.A.C. officers and N.C.O.'s could exercise power of command over junior male Army officers or male other ranks only under exceptional circumstances.

The status and power of the Corps Command underwent many changes from the creation of the C.W.A.C. to its dissolution after war's end. To serve as first commander, National Defence Headquarters looked to the Nursing Service of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps for a woman experienced in military affairs and administration and chose Matron-in-Chief Elizabeth Smellie. Her first duty as Officer Administering, C.W.A.C., was to tour every Military District in Canada in search of women qualified to form the initial nucleus of administrative officers and N.C.O.'s for the C.W.A.C. Her recruiting ground was the commandants of "local women's corps" and other leading women in the communities.<sup>104</sup> Appropriately her first selection, recommended as Staff Officer for Military District No. 11, was Joan B. Kennedy, Controller of the B.C. Women's Service Corps, and destined to be Matron Smellie's successor as O/A, C.W.A.C.<sup>105</sup>

If anything, the C.W.A.C.'s incorporation into the Army brought an initial downgrading of Corps Command. In the fall of 1942, C.W.A.C. Corps Headquarters was dissolved, C.W.A.C. administration having been apportioned out among the appropriate Branches and Directorates of N.D.H.Q., and the position of Officer Administering, C.W.A.C., abolished. Lt.-Col. Joan Kennedy was now given the title of Director, C.W.A.C., but the terms of reference of her Directorate were never formally approved. The Corps Headquarters had been "replaced by a Directorate which was never legally authorized", and the Officer Administering, C.W.A.C., "by a Director with little official power."<sup>106</sup>

Corps Command was further eroded in May, 1943, when the unauthorized Directorate was abolished and in place of a Director, C.W.A.C., two Senior Officers' appointments were made, that of Lt.-Col. Joan Kennedy as General Staff Officer Grade 1 in the Directorate of Military Training to advise on all C.W.A.C. training and that of Lt.-Col. Margaret Eaton as Assistant Adjutant-General, C.W.A.C., to coordinate all C.W.A.C. matters handled by the Directorates of the A.G.'s Branch.<sup>107</sup> The C.W.A.C. had thus been left with no official head within its own Corps.

103. Section I, paras. 5, 6(a), 6(b), "Regulations for the C.W.A.C., 1942".

104. A.G.'s Confidential Circular Letter of 4 Aug. 1941. PAC, RG 24, Vol. 2252, file H.Q. 54-27-111-2, vol. 1.

105. See note 85, p. 6.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 5.



But a year later, for reasons of Corps morale, that decapitation was reconsidered. On 28 April 1944 Margaret Eaton was promoted to Acting Colonel and appointed to the new position of Director-General, C.W.A.C.<sup>108</sup> This time the terms of reference of the Director-General, C.W.A.C., were formally authorized: she was "under the Adjutant-General" and "responsible to him for the well-being and efficiency of the C.W.A.C. as a Corps and of its personnel." Nonetheless, although she was to "be consulted by all Branches" on matters of C.W.A.C. policy and administration, and in such matters had direct access to the Minister, the final term specified:

The duties and functions of the Director-General, C.W.A.C., will not alter the responsibility of the various Branches and Directorates of the Army for the training, administration, organization, spiritual and medical care, welfare, accommodation and clothing of the C.W.A.C., subject always however to the obligation to consult the Director-General. . . .

Margaret Eaton must have won the respect and confidence of National Defence Headquarters to have been elevated at thirty-one to the position of Director-General, C.W.A.C. The ultimately consultative nature of her powers was not inferior to those held by the heads of other Army Corps, such as the Service Corps or the Corps of Military Staff Clerks. Indeed, in one respect, her position carried a privilege beyond that granted even to the Director-General of Medical Services: direct access to the Minister as well as to the Adjutant-General.<sup>109</sup> Nonetheless, there was one important difference. Her male counterparts were of the same gender as the Senior Officers over them, while overarching the C.W.A.C. at every point was a higher authority exercised by members of the opposite sex. And those higher positions were closed to all Army women, excluded or exempted as they were from field training and segregated, except for the Nursing Sisters and female doctors of the Medical Corps, in the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

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The coincidence of groups of women eager to serve and an Army short of men gave rise to the possibility of admitting women into the Canadian military in World War II. The creation of the Canadian Women's Army Corps was heralded as a history-making event in recruitment propaganda and promotional news stories.<sup>110</sup> Women who joined the C.W.A.C. during the Second World War were understandably impressed by the novelty of the enterprise and deservedly proud

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108. Minutes of 143rd Meeting of the Officers Selection, Promotion, Reclassification and Disposal Board, 28 April 1944. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5257, file H.Q.C. 8686-4.
109. Memo. of 12 May 1944 to the Minister from A.G., initialled by J.L. Ralston, n.d. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5257, file H.Q.C. 8686-4. Interview with Margaret Eaton Dunn, London, England, 9 May 1978.
110. "Canada's Women Make History", caption to Canadian Army Photo on cover of *The Rally Magazine*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 1943). DH, DND, 156.009 (D3).

of their service to Canada's war effort.<sup>111</sup> But scrutinized closely, in retrospect, the Canadian Army's admission of women can be seen to have been cautious, gradual, and carefully contained.

Kept separate from the Army on first formation, the Canadian Women's Army Corps, even after its incorporation within the Army, remained a segregated Corps, its functions supplementary, its proportion of over-all Army strength peripheral. Men and women inside and outside the Army were wary of challenges to the established division of labour by sex and the patriarchal hierarchy of authority. There is evidence of fear of female masculinization and, if not of fear of male feminization, at least of a general concern lest the division of traits by sex break down. Although the Army took the big step of admitting women to its ranks, it did not venture far in the direction of upsetting the established sexual division of labour and authority. Insofar as it did, the war emergency, exigent but temporary, provided justification.<sup>112</sup>

The paramount purpose of the C.W.A.C. remained from beginning to end to supply a pool of subordinate labour under military discipline as replacements for men needed for more important Army duties. The subordination of women in the civilian labour market carried over into the military employment of women: the concentration of women in jobs drawing lower pay, requiring less skill, and involving less exercise of authority or control.<sup>113</sup> Only servicewomen's lower pay and benefits were contested by organized protest, with some positive effect. No protest was mounted against the assignment of the vast majority of CWACs to subordinate service jobs identified as women's work in civilian life. On the contrary, the fact that women were needed by the Army principally to do "women's work" had facilitated acceptance of the idea of a women's corps in the first place and was later used to make female enlistment palatable to a dubious public. In February, 1943, the Directorate of Army Recruiting could assure the Canadian public that "women are needed and wanted to release men from trades that women can do—that is why women are, for the first time in Canada's history, part of the active fighting force."<sup>114</sup>

111. Robson Roe, see note 34; Phylis Bowman, *We Skirted the War!* (Prince Rupert, B.C.: P. Bowman, 1975); conversation on 13 March 1978 with Mrs. Alice Sorby, formerly Deputy Director, C.W.A.C., at Canadian Military Headquarters, London England.

112. Jaycocks, see note 7; "A Tribute to the Canadian Women's Army Corps from His Excellency, the Governor General of Canada", inside cover of *CWAC Digest: Facts About the C.W.A.C.* DH, DND, 156.063 (D1).

Women's increased participation in the paid civilian labour force during World War II was justified on identical grounds. See Ruth Pierson, "Women's Emancipation and the Recruitment of Women into the Canadian Labour Force in World War II", in the Canadian Historical Association's *Historical Papers 1976/Communications Historiques*, pp. 141-74, and in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, S.M. Trofimenkoff and A. Prentice, eds., (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp. 125-45.

113. Heidi Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex", *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Part 2 (Spring 1976), pp. 152-3.

114. See note 58.

This assurance meant not only that servicewomen were needed mainly as clerks and cooks; it also meant they were not needed for combatant duties. It is true that the High Command at N.D.H.Q. in mid summer, 1942, seriously contemplated using women to “man” anti-aircraft artillery guns, but the idea was abandoned in the face of more urgent demands for female labour in traditional women’s occupations. As it was, the Army did not have to breach the barrier against using women in combat, the division, deeply sanctioned by society, between man the protector/aggressor and woman the protected/victim. No “Pistol Packing Mommas”,<sup>115</sup> members of the C.W.A.C. remained safely assigned to non-combatant duties. The largest proportion of male soldiers in the Canadian Army in World War II also served safely in support and rear echelon positions. They, however, whether holding down a desk job or driving a supply truck, had all been put through training in combat duty and the bearing and firing of arms. Although the C.W.A.C. could boast of at least one crack shot with a rifle, Captain Jean I. Rayment (one of the founders of the Victoria service club), members of the C.W.A.C. could take up rifle shooting and target practice with small arms only as a recreational activity.<sup>116</sup> A spokesman for the Directorate of Army Recruiting could announce in 1943, “I would protest in no uncertain manner should anyone dare to call, or even think of, our Canadian women in uniform as Amazons. . . .”<sup>117</sup>

Exclusion from combat duty and the official bearing of arms remained the most salient feature of women’s Army service in World War II, whether in the C.W.A.C. or the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, the only other Army Corps which women were eligible to join.

The armed might of the military is not wielded by the rank and file soldier, but by the high military command. The ordinary infantryman or artillery man is not by virtue of his bearing arms in a position of power within the Army. On the contrary, he is in a position to be used as cannon fodder by the high command, who do exercise the power and whose power consists in the aggregate of men and material at their disposal. Members of the C.W.A.C. were exempted from use as cannon fodder. That exemption was protective in intent. The taking of life was seen as incompatible with woman’s role as bearer of life. Women were protected from having to kill in combat and, on the whole, Canadian servicewomen were protected from being killed in combat. But that protective exemption precluded the rise of female officers to positions of high command in the Army as a whole. Furthermore, arms bearing duty, despite the risk of maiming and death it carries,

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115. “No ‘pistol packing momma’, this, only a member of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps ‘looking over’ the war equipment used by her brothers on active service overseas. . . .” Caption to Canadian Army Photo showing CWAC Corporal sitting astride the barrel of an artillery piece in an armaments show in Ottawa in May, 1944. PAC, National Photography Division, Negative Z-2766-6.

116. PAC, National Photography Division, Negative Z-972-1, 11 Nov. 1942, and Negative Z-2611-1, “C.W.A.C. Recreation—Firing on Indoor Range”, 10 March 1944.

117. “Notes for the Assistance of Speakers at School for N.S.S. Employment Office Personnel”, Feb. 1943. PAC, RG 24, Reel No. C-5303, file H.Q.S. 8984-2.

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bestows authority and an aura of power on the officially armed over the officially unarmed. Hence, the wholesale exclusion of women from arms bearing meant the retention of an at least symbolic authority and power by the male sex as a whole over the female sex as a whole. Neither the inauguration of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, then, nor its incorporation within the Army brought an increase in power to women as a group in Canada. Women officers rose to positions of limited authority over subordinate female officers and female other ranks, but the higher command of the Army remained closed to women, and the male monopoly on the armed might of the state, unbroken. Women's admittance to the Army in World War II had not brought about a change in the distribution of power between the sexes in Canada.

The following abbreviations have been used:

A.G.	Adjutant-General	G.O.C.-in-C.	General Officer
A.T.S.	Auxiliary Territorial Service	G.O.R.	Commanding-in-Chief Gun Operations Room
C.G.S.	Chief of the General Staff	M.D.	Military District
C.W.A.C.	Canadian Women's Army Corps	M.G.O.	Master General of the Ordnance
CWAC's	Members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps	N.D.H.Q.	National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa
D.A.G.	Deputy Adjutant-General	N.S.S.	National Selective Service
DH, DND	Directorate of History, Department of National Defence	O/A, C.W.A.C.	Officer Administering, Canadian Women's Army Corps
D.O.C.	District Officer Commanding	PAC	Public Archives of Canada
G.O.	General Order	Q.M.G.	Quartermaster General

### Résumé

Pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, on admet des femmes dans les forces armées canadiennes. Cette incidence a-t-elle amélioré de quelque façon le statut de la femme au pays? C'est la question que se pose l'auteur en examinant quatre aspects du problème. Elle s'attarde d'abord aux circonstances qui ont amené les femmes à faire partie de l'armée, puis, elle s'enquiert des divers postes qu'on leur a offerts de même que des salaires et bénéfices qu'elles en ont retirés, enfin, elle s'interroge sur la place que ces femmes ont occupée dans la hiérarchie militaire.

Il appert donc que la présence féminine dans les forces armées repose sur la coïncidence de deux facteurs: le désir de certains groupes de femmes de servir leur pays d'une part, et, l'insuffisance croissante du personnel masculin d'autre part. Toutefois, admission n'est pas synonyme d'intégration; on admet des femmes dans l'armée, mais, on les affecte à des postes ou ouvrages que l'on considère comme propres à leur sexe: travail de cuisinière, de téléphoniste, de secrétaire ou

de commis; ces postes, d'ailleurs, seront toujours moins rémunérés que ceux de leurs homologues masculins, les femmes ne recevant, à travail égal, qu'entre soixante-six à quatre-vingt pour cent du salaire de l'homme.

Cette inégalité est tout aussi manifeste dans la hiérarchie: si haut que soit le poste de commande qu'une femme détienne, son autorité ne s'applique qu'à la gent féminine et elle est toujours subordonnée à l'homme du même rang. Somme toute, selon l'auteur, la présence de la femme dans les forces armées n'a rien changé aux rôles traditionnels de l'un et l'autre sexe au pays.