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"MANPOWER" PROBLEMS OF THE WOMEN'S SERVICES
DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. Introductory paragraphs	1
2. Formation	1
3. Replacement of Men	6
4. Overseas Service	7
5. Recruiting Problems	8
6. Wastage	15
7. C.W.A.C. Administrative Overhead	18
8. Conclusion	19
Appendix "A" - Strength Increase	20
Appendix "B" - Strength Decrease	21
Reference Notes	23

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"Manpower" Problems of the Women's Services
During the Second World War

1. This Report discusses, but only in a very general fashion, some of the personnel problems that confronted the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, the Canadian Women's Army Corps and the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division) during the Second World War. Although it has been possible to treat this subject from an inter-service viewpoint, there were definite differences in the manner in which each of the women's services was organized and administered. Moreover, it has proved impossible to obtain exactly comparable statistics. Those appended are merely the best obtainable from War Service Records, Department of Veterans Affairs and the Air Statistical Officer, A.F.H.Q. And, unless otherwise noted, these are the statistics used in the text of this Report.

2. It should further be borne in mind that women doctors and nurses were members of the Medical Services of the Navy, Army or Air Force, rather than their Women's Services. Those serving in the Army belonged to the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and not the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

Formation

3. Women had been employed in various auxiliary capacities during The Great War, 1914-1919 - with the Canadian Corps in France and Belgium; with Canadian troops in the United Kingdom, and in Canada. During 1918 the Militia Council in Ottawa discussed the formation of a Canadian Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (A.H.Q. Report No. 15). No action was taken then, however, nor in the years of peace that followed.

4. Although Women's Corps had been formed for each of the British Services, these had been disbanded after the Great War. However, a certain amount of interest continued. In 1934 this culminated in the creation of a Women's Reserve Sub-committee of the Manpower Sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. In May 1936 this Sub-committee reported against the formation of a reserve of women in peace time but its view was reversed during the winter of 1937-8, when the problem of augmenting the manpower resources of the United Kingdom became a matter of urgency. On 9 Sep 38 Royal Assent was given a scheme to recruit 20,000 women, between the ages of 18 and 50, into Auxiliary Territorial Service companies of varying size; each to be commanded by a woman officer and affiliated to a unit of the Territorial Army. (1) During April 1939 the Admiralty took steps to create a Women's Royal Naval Service. Then, on 28 Jun 39 a Women's Auxiliary Air Force was formed, initially from A.T.S. companies which had been raised for duty with the Royal Air Force. (2) These organizations initially comprised volunteers only and were auxiliaries to, rather than part of the Armed Forces of the

Crown.*

5. The first voluntary, self-designated corps of Canadian women had been formed in Victoria, B.C. during October 1938. Once war broke out in 1939 more Canadian women showed a desire to emulate the example of British women and unofficial corps mushroomed across the country. Among these were the Canadian Red Cross Corps, the Women's Transport Service Corps, the Alberta Women's Service Corps, the Canadian Auxiliary Territorial Service (Ontario), the Women's Voluntary Reserve Corps (Montreal and Quebec), the Saskatchewan Auxiliary Territorials, the Nova Scotia Women's Service Corps and the British Columbia Women's Service Corps (A.H.Q. Report No. 15).

6. Most of these corps applied for official recognition but this was refused. N.D.H.Q. was alive to the fact that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable men for employment as clerks, cooks, mess waiters, canteen workers and the like but, as the Adjutant-General pointed out in a memorandum circulated to the heads of the other branches on 26 Aug 40:

...Owing to the jealous claims which will undoubtedly be put forward by these organizations if given recognition, it will not be possible to utilize these "Corps" as such, either in whole or in part. The establishment of an entirely new Corps with open recruiting will be the only satisfactory method for some time to come (3).

He suggested that the first step would be to recruit women to replace men in Canada as clerks at N.D.H.Q., Military District Headquarters and training establishments and as cooks, canteen helpers and mess waitresses at training centres. Unless temporary female civil servants wished to enrol they would be replaced by women in uniform.

7. Discussing the question on 3 Sep the Military Members of the Defence Council felt that complications would result from the employment of uniformed women as clerks and that enlistment should be restricted to such categories as drivers, cooks, canteen helpers and waitresses. Since it would take at least 12 months to provide a clothing scale similar to that of the A.T.S. it was decided that the Adjutant-General should calculate how many uniformed women could be absorbed, before a recommendation was submitted to the Minister of National Defence. (4)

8. It was not until 1 Oct, however, that District Officers Commanding were instructed to report, by 17 Oct, on the number of soldiers and civil servants under their command that could be replaced by women. (5) When the returns were all in, it was estimated that the Military Districts

*Although having no connection with the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom during the Second World War, thousands of British women served with the Women's Land Army, Mechanized Transport Corps, Air Transport Auxiliary, National Fire Service, Civil Nursing Reserve, Red Cross Society, St. John's Ambulance Brigade, British Legion and the Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence. Although the Women's Transport Corps (F.A.N.Y.) provided Motor Driver Companies for the A.T.S., it also continued its separate existence throughout.

could use 1888 women as replacements, broken down as follows: (6)

clerks, telephone operators etc.	848
cooks	639
officers' mess staff	386
M.T. drivers	15

The Department of National Defence already was employing 593 women as civil servants, of whom 399 were at N.D.H.Q. (7). (By this time, of course, the Navy and Air Force had their own departments and staffs.)

9. During November steps were taken to draft instructions for a Canadian Women's Service Corps, patterned on those of British women's services. (8) In addition to the delays caused by administrative difficulties it was soon realized that far more women would be required for war work in civilian employment. Therefore, on 22 Mar 41, the Adjutant-General proposed that the Department of National War Services "should take on the proposed W.V.S.C. [Women's Volunteer Service Corps] and recognize and organize into one national body the existing organizations". (9) The Army would make demands on National War Services for the women it required: these would wear uniform but need not cease membership in the proposed Women's Volunteer Service Corps.

10. The Department of National War Services already had been introduced to the problem and, under the aegis of H.R.H. Princess Alice (wife of the Governor-General), proposals had been made to create The Women's Voluntary Services of Canada. Such an organization might establish courses across Canada for various phases of war work, including first aid and home nursing, motor mechanics and A.R.P. (Air Raid Precautions) training, and also serve as a pool for women who wished to be directed to voluntary war work. (10) However, under existing circumstances, the Minister of National War Services questioned the need for such action.

11. On 2 Apr the personnel heads of the three Services discussed the problem. (11) The Navy did not employ large numbers for administrative duties and did not consider, therefore, that it required the services of uniformed women. Should the situation change an organization similar to the Women's Royal Naval Service could be created. Machinery for raising a Canadian Women's Air Service had been prepared and could be implemented should the R.C.A.F. experience a shortage of manpower and consider that the need had arisen. (This exploratory action seems to have been taken following a British request of 24 Feb 41 that either the W.A.A.F. be allowed to recruit personnel in Canada for service with the R.A.F. transferred schools or the R.C.A.F. form its own women's service.) (12) While the Army could usefully employ women there was the more pressing problem of what to do with the large number of low category men then surplus to all known home war requirements. All were agreed, however, that "should the situation change, making it necessary for women to be employed, it is advisable that such Service come entirely under the Navy, Army and Air Force respectively". (13)

12. On 3 Apr the Cabinet War Committee directed that Mr Justice T.C. Davis (Associate Deputy Minister of National War Services) should confer with representatives of the Navy, Army, and Air Force on this problem. (14) His Report, read to the Cabinet War Committee on 9 May, recommended that the Armed Forces should create either a joint service or one apiece. At its next meeting, on 13 May, the Cabinet War Committee decided that the Department of National War Services should provide female auxiliaries for the Armed Forces when requested.

13. On 26 Jun 41 public announcement was made of the Government's decision to form a Canadian Women's Army Corps. On 4 Jul a circular letter was sent to Commands and Military Districts outlining the scope of the proposed corps and requesting a return, by 15 Jul, of the number of C.W.A.C. personnel who could be absorbed as replacements. It was pointed out, however, that:

For the present C.W.A.C. personnel will not be employed as clerks, stenographers or typists at N.D.H.Q. or at District Headquarters, in view of the existing arrangements with the Civil Service Commission*; nor will C.W.A.C. personnel be employed in units of field formations, coast defence or internal security troops. (16)

*A report of a later meeting between the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Mr. C.H. Bland, and the Adjutant-General on 25 Sep 41 read in part as follows:

Mr Bland stated that permanent Civil Servants would not be given leave of absence for the purpose of enrolling in the C.W.A.C., and that temporary employees will be discouraged from joining. He further stated that in his opinion the Department should decide whether they were going to staff their offices with Civil Servants or with C.W.A.C. personnel. He was opposed to the mixing of the two. He stated that considerable dissension now existed in the Civil Service where permission had been granted permanent employees (men) to enlist. Some of these men had been given commissions and were sent back to fill positions which brought them in contact with their old office employees. As commissioned officers they are receiving higher rates of pay and had privileges which were not granted to the Civil Servants. He stated unfortunately this situation could not be prevented in so far as the men were concerned, but they did not want to be faced with the same situation with regard to the women....

In answer to a question as to what type of work he thought C.W.A.C. personnel might be used for, Mr. Bland suggested ambulance drivers, hospital dietitians, "practically any work except typists, stenographers, secretaries, and clerks."

It was agreed, therefore, that C.W.A.C. would not be employed at N.D.H.Q. or any District Office "where same is adjacent to offices employing similar Civil Servants". Not until the summer of 1942, therefore, were members of the C.W.A.C. introduced to N.D.H.Q. (15)

Not until 30 Jul did the Cabinet War Committee approve Mr Ralston's submission and only on 13 Aug did Order in Council P.C. 6289 create a Canadian Women's Army Corps. Although organized on a military basis and under military control and supervision, the C.W.A.C. was not part of the military forces of Canada. This followed British precedent (see para 4). Matron-in-Chief E. Smellie, C.B.E., R.C.A.M.C., was detailed temporarily as Officer Administering in order that a start might be made.

14. By this time the R.C.A.F. had reversed its earlier stand, presumably because of the tightening manpower situation and pressure from the Air Ministry which wanted to employ W.A.A.Fs. at the transferred R.A.F. schools. (A.H.Q. Report No. 67) The Air Ministry offered to lend some women to help set up the new organization and six W.A.A.F. officers were later sent to Canada. (17) Order in Council P.C. 4798 of 2 Jul 41 granted authority for the "formation of a component of the Royal Canadian Air Force to be known as the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force, their function being to release to heavier duties those members of the R.C.A.F. presently employed in administrative, clerical and other comparable types of service employment". Not until 9 Oct were C.W.A.A.F. regulations promulgated by Order in Council P.C. 112/7841 and enlistments started. Unlike the W.A.A.F., the C.W.A.A.F. was an integral part of the R.C.A.F. By Order in Council P.C. 790 of 3 Feb 42 it was redesignated the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division).

15. The fact that the C.W.A.C. was not a component of the Canadian Army had made for difficulties almost from the start. As early as 29 Aug 41 the J.A.G. had suggested that the C.W.A.C. should form part of the Army so that "more effective control and supervision" could be exercised and "uniformity in administration" facilitated. (18) Then there was also the question of whether post-discharge benefits could be given to members of the C.W.A.C. (19) The Minister of National Defence was favourably disposed; but it was not until 13 Mar 42 that Order in Council P.C. 1965 was promulgated, naming the C.W.A.C. a corps of the Active Militia with effect from 1 Mar 42. (20)

16. By the end of 1941 the Royal Canadian Navy had also reversed its attitude and in January 1942 the Admiralty was asked for the loan of two qualified officers. (2) During May three W.R.N.S. officers arrived from the United Kingdom to help Captain Eustace A. Brock, R.C.N.V.R. organize a Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service. On 8 May the Cabinet War Committee gave its approval to the formation of a W.R.C.N.S. Not until 31 Jul, however, was it officially established by Order in Council P.C. 56/6775. Initially the W.R.C.N.S. complement was set at 5350 but was soon increased by 12 per cent to allow for sickness and leave among its personnel. A further increase of 406 to cover those Wrens serving with R.C.N.V.R. Divisions across Canada raised the authorized W.R.C.N.S. complement to 6386. (22) Although the W.R.C.N.S. was not an auxiliary service it tended at the beginning to remain a separate organization, due to the influence of the W.R.N.S. and the fact that R.C.N. officers had no experience in dealing with women and were willing to leave many matters to them. (23) Only by degrees were these misgivings dissipated and the Wrens absorbed into the general scheme of things.

Replacement of Men

17. The C.W.A.C. Regulations approved by Order in Council P.C. 6289 of 13 Aug 41 specified the following employments in which women might serve: accountant, bookkeeper, canteen steward, canteen helper, cleaner, clerk, cook, dental assistant, driver M.T., draughtsman, housemaid (hospital), laboratory assistant, librarian, library assistant, mechanic, messenger, officers' mess steward, radiographer, radio operator, secretary, sewing woman, stenographer, store accountant, storewoman, telephone operator, typist and waitress. At that time it was considered that sufficient fully qualified recruits could be enlisted and that there would be no need to provide trades training. This illusion was soon dispelled, however, and plans were laid for training the more intelligent girls without previous experience. Before the end of 1942 it was decided that C.W.A.C. personnel could be trained to replace men in the following trades: (24)

Medical - Masseur, Laboratory Assistant (Medical), Operating Room Assistant, Radiographer (Medical).

Clerical - Clerk General Duty, Clerk Stenographer, Clerk Accounting, Clerk Personnel Selection.

Cook House - Cook, Hospital Cook.

Dental - Dental Chair Assistant, Dental Technician.

Draughting - Draughtsman.

Automotive - Driver I.C., Driver Mechanic, Motor Mechanic, Fitter.

Signals - Mechanic Radio, Mechanic Wireless Operator (Signals), Operator (Signals) W. & L., Operator S.B. (Telephone).

Storemen - Storeman Technical & Departmental, Storeholder.

Sundry - Armourer, Instrument Mechanic & Repairer, Typewriter Mechanic, Painter & Decorator, Panel Beater & Body Repairman, Shoemaker, Tailor, Textile Refitter, Operator Fire Control, Postal Sorter.

18. As well as serving as company officers and corps training officers, an increasing number of C.W.A.C. officers came to be used as replacements for male officers in static staff appointments in Canada and the United Kingdom.

19. Originally airwomen were employed only in the following trades: clerks (stenographers and general), cooks, equipment assistants, fabric workers, hospital assistants, M.T. drivers (light), standard (messwomen and general duties) and telephone operators. (25) Eventually these eight trades were increased to 65 out of a possible 102 R.C.A.F. trades. (2) The 16 Service Flying Training Schools were the first to receive airwomen replacements, with the first group reporting to No. 1 S.F.T.S. (Uplands, near Ottawa) on 2 Jan 42. After all the S.F.T.Ss. had received their complement of airwomen, members of the R.C.A.F.(W.D.) were posted to Bombing and Gunnery Schools. Although it had been considered originally that the ratio of replacement

might be three to two, in practice it was to work out to one for one in most trades; indeed, in a few instances two airwomen were able to replace three airmen. (27)

20. The first trades in which Wrens replaced male personnel were stenographers, postal clerks, stewards, coders, cooks, M.T. drivers and teletype operators. (28) Only trained personnel were ever recruited as stenographers, hairdressers, librarians, tailoresses and dietitians. Latterly, however, the W.R.C.N.S. had to train its own cooks. Even then, however, it was never possible to recruit sufficient Wrens to relieve all of the 1456 male cooks and 1146 male stewards whom it had been hoped to replace. (29) Training came to be given to women employed in supply, communications, and as sick berth attendants, plotters, photographers, dental assistants, messengers, M.T. drivers, messwomen, switchboard operators, regulators, postal clerks, laundry assistants, classifiers, sailmakers, censors, confidential book correctors and hollerith operators. (30)

Overseas Service

21. The first draft of R.C.A.F. (W.D.) personnel proceeded to the United Kingdom in August 1942. Although approval had been given early in March 1942 for the employment of 150 C.W.A.C. other ranks at the Static Base Laundry which was to be established at Bordon, Hants, it was a C.M.H.Q. telegram of 6 Jun asking for 200 clerks that brought concrete action. The N.D.H.Q. reply of 9 Jun advised that a first draft would be despatched during August. Accommodation had to be obtained, however, and repairs, decoration and alterations made before this could be considered habitable. Not until 5 Nov 42 did the first draft of 104 C.W.A.C. personnel arrive at C.M.H.Q. (C.M.H.Q. Report No. 120). Only late in 1943 did the first draft of W.R.C.N.S. reach the United Kingdom.

22. Reference is made in A.H.Q. Report No. 67 to the fact that the R.C.A.F. was unable to meet all the demands made from overseas for airwomen. In all 117 officers and 1205 airwomen of the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) served in the United Kingdom. But better than 4000 W.A.A.Fs. remained attached to Canadian squadrons and stations. (31)

23. By 31 May 43 there were 513 members of the C.W.A.C. serving in the United Kingdom - 20 officers and 438 other ranks in the London area and one officer and 54 other ranks under Headquarters, Canadian Reinforcement Units. By 31 May 44 the number serving overseas had risen to 988 all ranks, 341 of whom were serving within C.R.U. (the largest party being employed at the Static Base Laundry.)

24. Only in April 1944 had it been agreed at C.M.H.Q. that C.W.A.C. personnel might be employed on the continent in rear areas to conserve the limited number of male tradesmen. Two officers and 10 clerks were posted to the Canadian Section, G.H.Q. 1st Echelon, 21st Army Group, while one officer and 17 other ranks were despatched to Italy late in May to serve at the Canadian Section G.H.Q. 1st Echelon, Allied Armies in Italy. On 17 Jun 44 the Chief of Staff, C.M.H.Q. authorized the posting of members of the C.W.A.C. to the Canadian Section, G.H.Q. 2nd

Echelon, 21st Army Group. (CMHQ Report No. 120) On 31 May 45 there were 84 officers and 1475 other ranks overseas, broken down as follows: (32)

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Other Ranks</u>
U.K.	60	1303
N.W.E.	8	170
"Q" List	16	2
Total	<u>84</u>	<u>1475</u>

25. Initially it had been necessary to borrow British Wrens for the staff of the Commodore Commanding Canadian Ships and Establishments in the United Kingdom (in London) and later for H.M.C.S. Niobe at Greenoch. A first draft of W.R.C.N.S. replacements for the W.R.N.S. employed at the London headquarters arrived late in 1943. Following the arrival of the third W.R.C.N.S. draft at H.M.C.S. Niobe in January 1945, it became possible to return W.R.N.S. personnel borrowed from, and even loan some Canadian Wrens to, the (British) Flag Officer-in-Charge, Greenoch. (33) The remainder of the 503 Canadian Wrens sent overseas were stationed at Londonderry and Plymouth. (34)

26. A total of 568 Wrens served in Newfoundland and about 50 in New York and Washington. (35) On 9 May 45 there were 130 members of the C.W.A.C. serving in the United States. (36) Approximately 740 members of the R.C.A.F.(W.D.) served in Newfoundland, while 86 all ranks were stationed in the United States (Washington, D.C. and Dayton, Ohio). (37)

Recruiting Problems

27. Initially, recruiting for both the C.W.A.C. and C.W.A.A.F. was handled through the Department of National War Services, whose Divisional Registrars endeavoured to meet requisitions from their lists of eligible women, many of whom already belonged to one or other of the unofficial corps in existence. Those considered suitable were requested to report to the appropriate Divisional Registrar with a medical report. (38) C.W.A.C. age limits were 21 to 55 for officers and 21 to 40 for other ranks, while the C.W.A.A.F. required women to be aged 21 to 41. Subsequently, minimum ages were reduced to 18. Applicants had to be physically fit (category "B" for C.W.A.C. and category "A4B" for the C.W.A.A.F. or higher), British subjects, possess a Grade VIII education and be without dependent children. Applicants for the C.W.A.A.F. also had to produce a birth certificate and four names as possible character references. (39) Once a woman reported to either the C.W.A.C. or C.W.A.A.F., however, she lost all contact with the Department of National War Services.

28. Early in September C.W.A.C. officers were appointed to Military Districts 10, 11, 12 and 13 and to the remainder as Matron-in-Chief Elizabeth Shellie completed her inspection tour of the country. (40) A total of 157 recruits had been ordered to report on or before 15 Sep 41. (41) A company and platoon organization was created to administer the personnel. By mid-October demands had been received for 1521 members of the C.W.A.C. (including 19 officers) as replacements. (42) By the end of the year a total of 31 officers and 1225 other ranks had been appointed and enlisted: 15 of the former had,

however, been commissioned from the ranks.

29. The first trade to be opened to C.W.A.A.F. recruiting was that of administrative personnel. Those selected were despatched to Old Havergal College, Toronto, which had been obtained as a combined Manning and Training Depot. Unlike the C.W.A.C., from the outset C.W.A.A.F. recruits were given a four weeks' basic training course. (43) The graduates of this first class were either commissioned or given N.C.O. rank. Enlistments in other trades got under way at the end of November, at a scheduled rate of 150 per week. By the end of 1941 a total of 892 airwomen had been enlisted. During April 1942 the Manning Depot was moved to Rockcliffe Air Station, Ottawa. Later in that year English language courses were instituted to encourage the enlistment of girls who only spoke French.

30. Recruiting through an intermediary agent, the Department of National War Services, did not prove satisfactory. Although the Cabinet War Committee agreed on 15 Jan 42 that the Services should handle their own recruiting, the actual changeover was not made until early spring. It was not until 17 Jul 42, however, that C.W.A.C. recruiting was handed over to the Directorate of Army Recruiting. (44) By this time personnel selection techniques were working in both the Army and R.C.A.F. and it was possible to reject some of the chaff that came with the wheat.

31. Special recruiting publicity was devised to attract women, one slogan used by the R.C.A.F.(W.D.) being "We serve that men may fly". Three precision squads of airwomen were trained for recruiting and publicity purposes and a brass band was formed. The C.W.A.C. organized separate brass and pipe bands for the same purposes.

32. One problem never satisfactorily dealt with, however, was the question of commissioning direct from civilian life. Subsequently it was realized that many capable women, with experience which would have been invaluable, had been deterred from enlisting by the fact that service in the ranks was a prerequisite. Even though 65 women were granted direct commissions in the C.W.A.C. a report prepared in August 1946 by Lt.-Col. Daisy I. Royal recommended that:

...opportunities for direct appointment of personnel qualified by civilian employment, should be increased. Many well qualified women were prevented from enlisting by reason of uncertainty as to the length of time they would have to serve in the ranks before being commissioned. Some had financial commitments which made it impossible for them to accept service as privates. (45)

The R.C.A.F.(W.D.) did commission 92 officers direct from civilian life, even though an early instruction had specified that "all promotion to officer rank will be from the ranks." (46) Welfare workers, dietitians and librarians were commissioned by the Navy following basic training but again, Capt Adelaide Sinclair in her Report on W.R.C.N.S. recommended that this practice should be extended if the W.R.C.N.S. was ever revived: there was no need to force qualified

women to serve in the ranks and if the average woman of officer calibre was left in the ranks too long she developed a "lower deck attitude". (47)

33. A greater problem was public indifference, or apathy, towards the Women's Services. This was well summed up by the Command Recruiting Officer of Pacific Command in a letter of 10 Mar 43 to the Director of Army Recruiting:

To my mind the great fundamental cause for this is that there has not been created (even after 3 years of war) a general public opinion that women are needed in the Army. Just how folks can be blasted from their complacency, is difficult to know. The recruiting staffs from one end of Canada to the other are making valiant efforts to instil into all, the great seriousness of this war and the individual responsibilities to do something about it, for young and old, men and women, but this conception of the situation has not yet really permeated the hearts and breasts of the general public. Until this is done there will continue lethargy, and enlistments for the C.W.A.C. will continue to be comparatively meagre....

It takes years to make an efficient Officer or N.C.O. The C.W.A.C. has grown rapidly. Their Officers and N.C.O's are very inexperienced. It is marvellous that they have done as well as they have, and that the discipline of the Corps is as good as it is; but there is not yet an esprit de corps formed, and the C.W.A.C. personnel in many cases are not the recruiting media they should be....

There are still many soldiers (men) who resent women in the Forces. Many others do not encourage enlistment. It is difficult to break this down.

Many girls are in good jobs and loath to leave them on account of pay - although when all is taken into consideration the pay is far more than what it seems, but it is difficult to put this over. Increase in C.W.A.C. pay would certainly help enlistment.

If United States citizens were accepted, this would also help enlistment.

There is not a willingness to serve - to sacrifice - to give up accustomed easy life - for army restrictions and discipline. I do feel that the one real reason is, that there is not yet that public opinion throughout the country that women are needed in the Army; and I do think the answer must come from the top. (48)

34. During the spring of 1943 Elliott-Haynes Limited of Toronto and Montreal was employed to conduct a public opinion poll, "An Enquiry into the Attitude of the Canadian Civilian Public towards the Women's Armed Forces."

According to its conclusions, only seven per cent of the adult public felt that the wartime role of women should be in uniform. On the other hand, it was estimated that 150,000 of the 750,000 single women between the ages of 18 and 45 and having Grade VIII education or better "were favourably enough disposed towards the forces that it would be worthwhile to discuss enlistment with them at the present time." (49) English-speaking Canadians were five times as conscious of the need as were their French-speaking compatriots; on all questions asked there had been a clear-cut division between the two. The public felt that adventure and patriotism were the motives inducing girls to enlist. Three specific factors were listed as handicapping recruiting:

- (a) A feeling on the part of the public that the armed forces was an unladylike occupation for women.
- (b) A tendency on the part of young women to cling to the pleasures of civilian life and the luxuries which a civilian job affords, rather than take a chance on entering a somewhat unpredictable existence about which they know little.
- (c) Definite ill-will groups, (service men in particular), who discouraged their women folk from enlisting. (50)

35. Action was taken during 1943 to replace certain items of apparel which were definitely unflattering to any woman's appearance and had hindered recruiting. These included the working dress issued to the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) as summer uniform in 1942, the uniform cap patterned on that worn by the W.A.A.F., and the antiquated style of overshoes furnished members of the C.W.A.C. and known as "glamour boots". However, despite widespread complaints, lisle stockings remained on issue to the Women's Services. Both men and women disliked these and certain naval officers refused to enforce the regulation that they must be worn. (51)

36. The upward revision of pay scales during July 1943 was also of some help. Pay of rank was boosted from two-third's to four-fifth's that of men, and women were given the same rates of trades pay as men. Moreover, married women were now entitled to draw the same separation allowance given to the wives of other servicemen. Equal pay for equal work was not, however, achieved.

37. Early in January 1943 a ruling had been received from American authorities that there was no objection to the enlistment of U.S. citizens in the Canadian Women's Services. (52) There was, however, a snare which the W.R.C.N.S. avoided. (53) Most American applicants were under the age of 20, too young for enlistment in their own forces or to be satisfactory to the C.W.A.C. and R.C.A.F. (W.D.) Accordingly, enlistment of American citizens into the C.W.A.C. was stopped in January 1944 (A.H.Q. Report No. 15). By that time all enlistment into the R.C.A.F. was temporarily suspended.

38. At one time or another all three Services carried on recruiting in Newfoundland. However, accommodation for recruits was unsatisfactory, insufficient women were available to justify the overhead maintained

there and most were of low medical and educational standards, and no provision existed to provide post-discharge benefits to Newfoundlanders. (54) In particular, the Wrens had sought to enlist domestics but found that the other Services had made a prior selection. (55) R.C.A.F.(W.D.) recruiting came to an end on 15 Jan 44, by which time 260 girls had been recruited. (56)

39. The C.W.A.C. adopted the enlistment policy of the Canadian Army Overseas: women aged 18 to 35 who were Canadian by birth, or who had right of domicile or were married to Canadian soldiers might be enlisted in the United Kingdom (C.M.H.Q. Report No. 120). By 30 Jan 45 some 290 women had joined the C.W.A.C. Overseas. (57) The similar policy adopted by the R.C.A.F. resulted in 370 women joining the R.C.A.F.(W.D.) in the United Kingdom. (58)

40. The damage wrought recruiting for the Women's Services by a widespread but spontaneous "whispering campaign" can not be estimated with any degree of accuracy. The danger was recognized as early as the summer of 1942 and steps were taken to impress upon service personnel the need for exemplary conduct when in the public eye. Action also was taken to provide more adequate recreational facilities for uniformed airwomen during their off duty hours. (59)

41. The type of whispering campaign being waged was the subject of a Wartime Information Board Report dated 19 Mar 43. It was estimated that 75 per cent of the rumours being spread to discourage enlistment referred directly to immorality, and many of the remainder indirectly so, such as stories of suicides. The following examples illustrate the problem:

The personnel of the C.W.A.C. is recruited preferably among ladies of easy virtue (September 1942; Province of Quebec).

CWACS and Airwomen are now being supplied by their Medical Officers with prophylactics for the prevention of venereal disease (October 1942; Train from Toronto to Barrie).

Over 18% of the women have become pregnant since joining (October 1942; Toronto).

Conditions in camps where girls are stationed are bad and men are allowed to mix with the girls. An Inspector of Camps said that in camps east of Winnipeg, when the lights are turned on girls were not only on the beds but under the beds with soldiers and airmen (December 1942; Winnipeg).

I was thinking of renting my spare room when I was warned not to take a member of the Women's Army Corps because they all had syphilis (December 1942; Westmount, Quebec).

The Government has set aside a special building for Air Force and Army Women to give birth to their illegitimate children (December 1942; Winnipeg). (60)

This Report went on to state that:

The frequency, persistence and wide distribution of these rumours suggest a strongly entrenched

prejudice against the Women's Services, particularly in view of the fact that the rumours are directed against the personnel themselves. We have many rumours about the regular Armed Forces but these usually show the servicemen, not as delinquent but as the victim of neglect or bungling in high places. It is rare for us to receive material reflecting upon the conduct of the enlisted men themselves. (61)

42. Even the mere suggestion of immorality was enough to create strong opposition to enlistment on the part of fathers and brothers. Unfortunately this view was shared by members of the Armed Forces, whose opinion was taken as decisive by those back home. The following statements appeared in letters written by servicemen stationed in Canada:

The first W.D.'s to join were girls from the Red Light districts so you can see there is much in what you people say - For instance, in one case 37 CWAC's landed at Esquimalt and 28 were pregnant.

Don't join the CWAAF's or the CWAC's. I know you were thinking of it but take my word for it and keep out of them.... I haven't met a fellow yet in the Air Force who hasn't advised his sister to keep out of them. (62)

43. Innovation really was what was resented: these women wore uniform thus marking themselves off from their sisters, and had demonstrated that they could protect and look after themselves, without parental or family interference. Down through the ages the common attack against women who departed from the "norm" had been based on immorality. This Wartime Information Board Report pointed out that some of the recruiting publicity had been ill-advised, since the "shoulder to shoulder slogan" suggested that women were "mixed up with men". Again, the girls photographed in uniform were almost too beautiful to be true and drew the jealousy of less attractive women, particularly those married to servicemen. Finally:

Paradoxically, some of these stories are probably the result of the service women's high standard of conduct. It is unfortunately true that the ignorant soldier who has tried to "make" a CWAC and been repulsed may take his revenge by blackening the character of the whole corps. No action to remedy this situation, however, seems to be indicated. (63)

44. Time, in fact, was the only real solution to the problem. Just as women had been accepted as actresses, nurses and voters, and ceased to be abused for smoking, wearing slacks and riding bicycles, so would they be accepted as members of the Armed Forces. In the meanwhile, amelioration could be obtained by playing up the spirit of sacrifice and emphasizing that women of all nations were working to win the war.

45. The R.C.A.F. issued constructive publicity to counter newspaper articles unfavourable to servicewomen; poor publicity in newspapers was checked and stopped;

rumours were checked back to their source by the R.C.A.F. service police and R.C.M.P. (64) Disciplinary action was taken when the source was found to be service personnel, while civilians were either cautioned or charged under the Defence of Canada Regulations. (65) The R.C.A.F. also instituted an educational campaign to make airwomen proud of their role. After the problem had been discussed with the Director of Public Relations (Army) at N.D.H.Q. the Adjutant-General gave his approval on 30 Jul 43 for similar action to be taken by the C.W.A.C. (66) In order that members of local women's organizations could observe the girls at close quarters and gain a more accurate picture of service life and environment, all three Services held periodic "open house" in barracks.

46. Due to the fact that this "whispering" campaign had reached its worst only a few months after the W.R.C.N.S. had been organized, the Wrens were spared most of these headaches. (67) Again, once it was possible for the W.R.C.N.S. to create the impression that not every girl was acceptable and thus manage to establish a waiting list of applicants (except for the domestic categories which were always difficult to fill), it was possible to pick and choose the small monthly requirement. Good accommodation and living conditions were provided, supervised by special "Quarters Officers" (copied from the W.R.N.S.), to ensure that the better type of girl enticed into a blue uniform was kept there. An envious recruiting officer for the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) in Winnipeg saw the W.R.C.N.S. set-up as follows:

...it is believed that the secret of success in Navy recruiting is atmosphere, with a capital "A". In the first place, in Winnipeg at least, their "ship" is in an attractive residential part of the City, with sentries on guard, for it is also a Training Centre similar to our Manning Depots. The W.R.C.N.S. staff have ideal working conditions, with which even the best of our offices cannot compare. Although the girls live out, they have on the "Chippewa" a comfortable, well-equipped lounge with their own canteen. Adjacent are private lockers, showers and washrooms. The decorating throughout the ship is most restful and attractive. A prospective recruit "boarding" the H.M.C.S. Chippewa to enquire about enlistment in the Navy sees and feels so much Navy activity while she is there that her enthusiasm mounts momentarily.

She can overlook the huge drill hall through glass walls. Everything she sees is ship-shape and spotless, and by the time she leaves the place she is so enthusiastic she cannot and would not consider any other Service. In short, if the writer were a civilian considering enlistment in one of the three Services, the atmosphere of H.M.C.S. Chippewa would "sell" her immediately. This kind of advertising cannot be equalled. (68)

47. When all was said and done, however, the following women donned a uniform during 1943: (69)

	<u>W.R.C.N.S.</u>	<u>C.W.A.C.</u>	<u>R.C.A.F. (W.D.)</u>
January	403	831	713
February	346	856	817
March	412	945	763
April	485	830	647
May	486	643	463
June	369	618	506
July	295	616	571
August	278	712	695
September	295	677	900
October	223	575	783
November	140	444	587
December	20	140	349
	<u>3752</u>	<u>7887</u>	<u>7794</u>

48. By the end of 1943 R.C.A.F. expansion came to an end. 15 Jan 44 saw the R.C.A.F.(W.D.) reach a peak strength of 15,147 all ranks. Only 15 officers and 417 airwomen donned a uniform during the first seven months of that year, after which there was no further recruiting until January 1945. In 1945 only 8 officers and 38 airwomen were taken on strength prior to 6 May.

49. C.W.A.C. demands remained constant, however, and 3420 women joined during 1944. A further 1593 all ranks put on a uniform in 1945 prior to the end of the war with Japan. Outstanding demands were met, although the C.W.A.C. could have utilized the services of a greater number of women.

50. W.R.C.N.S. continued recruiting throughout 1944, with 1876 women being accepted. On 1 Apr 44 the W.R.C.N.S. had been 94 officers and 1681 Wrens short of complement so instructions had been given to enlist as many as possible until the end of June, thereafter 150 monthly. (70) In practice, this quota was not strictly adhered to since the Wrens were short of messwomen and wardroom attendants. (71) A further 193 women were enlisted during January 1945 and 46 in February, before recruiting came to an end. Peak strength had, however, been 5893. (72)

Wastage

51. Wastage in the Women's Services was a serious matter. The average young woman suffered quite a shock when she entered the community existence of life in barracks, devoid of privacy and the niceties which she had been brought up to expect. Her uniform further suggested loss of individuality. Finally, and particularly in the case of the C.W.A.C., a number of undesirable girls managed to enlist during the early months. Personnel selection procedures had not yet been introduced and, in short, the Women's Services initially encountered the same pitfalls that their male counterparts had been plagued with since 1939. The previously mentioned Report by Lt.-Col. Daisy I. Royal, concluded that:

...During the past five years women have proved that they could endure hard work and physical discomfort where it was necessary but this condition over a prolonged period is not to be desired nor is it necessary.

Where consideration was given to the provision of comfortable and attractive quarters, good meals and an opportunity for beneficial spare-time activity, the standards of morale and efficiency were noticeably higher. Through experience and training, CWAC Officers came to realize the importance of these things. (73)

52. In the medical section of the Report compiled by the R.C.A.F.(W.D.), Squadron Officer J.F. Davey concluded that:

As far as can be determined, the same problems and factors contributing to them have been encountered in all the women's services, and the Women's Division is probably no worse and not very much better than any of the others. We would have done well, in the early stages, to have learned and profited by the experience of Women's Services older than our own, rather than arriving at similar conclusions as a result of our own experience. However, this has never been considered necessary and therefore not authorized. (74)

53. The major reasons for discharge were neuropsychiatric illnesses, pregnancy (among both married and unmarried women), and general unsuitability. Since the three Women's Services did not discharge their personnel under the same headings, exact comparison is impossible. However, the extent of the discharge problem is evident from the following table:

	<u>W.R.C.N.S.</u>	<u>C.W.A.C.</u>	<u>R.C.A.F.(W.D.)</u>
1941	0	40	6
1942	7	502	334
1943	233	2258	1058
1944	536	3310	2263
1945 (May)	307	1121	2103
	<u>1083</u>	<u>7231</u>	<u>5764</u>

The C.W.A.C. listed 90 deserters, many of whom undoubtedly were American girls who became dissatisfied with Army life (see para 37). Another 42 were discharged from the C.W.A.C. for misconduct, while 105 left to join other Forces. (75) The R.C.A.F.(W.D.) claimed only six deserters.

54. The R.C.A.F. found that neuropsychiatric illnesses were the greatest cause of medical discharge among both men and women. The percentage rate was as follows: (76)

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
1942	29.7	40.2
1943	34.0	44.2
1944	44.9	58.7

The difficulty of making a satisfactory adjustment to service life also was manifested by the fact that, on the average, airwomen had a 30 per cent higher incidence of non-effective strength due to illnesses. However, women tended to remain in hospital for a shorter period than men. (77)

The C.W.A.C. also considered this a serious situation: according to Volume II of the Official History of the Canadian Medical Services 1939-1945, some 1849 of the 3450 members of the C.W.A.C. retired or discharged on medical grounds were for mental and nervous disorders. (78) The same source states that 28 of the 159 Wrens discharged on medical grounds were for these complaints. (79)

55. Pregnancy can conveniently be divided into that of unmarried and married women. The second group also may be divided into those who were pregnant upon enlistment (40 per cent of the pregnant airwomen in 1942 but only nine per cent in 1943) and those who became pregnant later. (80) Marriage was not, in itself, grounds for discharge. Unhappiness and disciplinary trouble resulted in certain instances when discharge was not granted and it is possible that pregnancy may have been induced in a number of cases to facilitate discharge. Moreover, pregnancy was not given as a reason for discharge, with the result that it is impossible to obtain accurate statistics. This was done primarily to protect unmarried women, who were given medical help and financial assistance by the Department of Pensions and National Health (later Department of Veterans Affairs).

56. The prevalence of pregnancy among the Women's Services was, however, slightly less than in civilian life for the group aged 20 to 24. In 1941 there were 11.7 illegitimate births per 1000 single women of these ages in Canada. Highest incidence in the Women's Services were among the lowest age group, those with the lowest educational standard and those working as domestics and on general duties. (81) The Director of the W.R.C.N.S. suggested that:

The rate was generally lower in the urban centres, but in the isolated bases it varied very much. It was noticeably low in those bases where the C.O. and the Unit Officer recognized that isolation, lack of outside diversion and such conditions were potentially dangerous, and made adequate efforts to minimize them with diversion and strict discipline. (82)

57. The R.C.A.F. medical staff considered that alcohol was a factor in "a surprisingly small number of cases". (83) It was suggested that insufficient attention had been given to sex education since, up to the end of 1944, one out of every 19 airwomen had become pregnant or contracted venereal disease. Numerically speaking, however, V.D. was never a problem in the R.C.A.F.(W.D.). Summing up, Squadron Officer J.F. Davey wrote:

...at least some of the situations which have resulted in Women's Division problems on stations, in an increased amount of neuropsychiatric upsets or sex delinquency could have been prevented by Women's Division officers who had a better understanding of the responsibilities of their jobs and a better knowledge of the women serving under them.

Better selection and training of Women's officers and closer liaison between Women's Division officers and station medical officers might have prevented some of our wastage for the above reasons. (84)

58. The Report by Lt.-Col. Daisy I. Royal included the following paragraphs:

...It cannot be over-emphasized, however, that where CWAC Officers and NCOs are expected to act as personnel officers for female personnel, special and careful training is needed. Experience of the last 5 years has proved the need for instruction in woman management, welfare, medical education and the tendency has been to stress this training more and more. Lack of such training in early service proved a great handicap to many of our original officers....

While unquestionably there are many vacancies in establishments which can be competently filled by female personnel, it is essential that those in charge of recruiting realize the necessity for careful selection of recruits for a Women's Corps. Army life is harder for women to take than it is for men, and emotional stability and fairly high intelligence are essential. Experience has shown that the bulk of disciplinary cases were among the general duty types. A similar situation existed with the incidence of VD and illegitimate pregnancy. Lack of careful selection cost the Government a great deal of money, with little return in work carried out. The effect of having bad types in barracks was upsetting to the remainder of the personnel, and proved a deterrent to the more desirable type of would-be recruit. (85)

C.W.A.C. Administrative Overhead

59. The W.R.C.N.S. and R.C.A.F.(W.D.) were an integral part of the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force respectively and thus escaped one of the problems faced by the C.W.A.C. as a distinct corps of the Canadian Army.

60. As far as possible, since the object was to replace men with women in certain employments, all personnel of the Navy and Air Force were administered, trained and controlled under regulations designed for males. Women unit officers were the commanding officer's adviser on female matters, however, and did possess the right of direct access to him.

61. During the latter part of 1942 it became obvious that the system of C.W.A.C. companies was awkward and unwieldy, since personnel were carried on company establishments and covered off vacancies in their "employing units". The Chief of the General Staff was not favourably impressed with the remedies advanced by the Adjutant-General and in a memorandum of 26 Jan 43 suggested that the obvious solution was that adopted earlier by the A.T.S. (86) Only on 5 Jun 43 was such a policy approved by the Military Members of the Army Council, however, and a number of details still remained to be ironed out before a circular letter could be issued by the Adjutant-General's Branch on 26 Aug 43. (87)

62. Effective 1 Sep 43, personnel employed with other than C.W.A.C. units would be struck off strength their respective C.W.A.C. company and taken on strength by the

employing unit. They would then be attached back to the C.W.A.C. company for administration, inclusive of pay and discipline and, where applicable, for rations and quarters. The only officers and other ranks remaining on the strength of C.W.A.C. companies would be their administrative staffs, newly enlisted personnel and others specially posted. Similarly, C.W.A.C. officers employed on other than C.W.A.C. duties would be carried on the "corps list" and "seconded" to the employing unit; where expedient they would be attached to C.W.A.C. companies for administration. (88)

63. An investigation conducted in Canada during January 1945 disclosed, however, that C.W.A.C. administration still was top-heavy and uneconomical. A strength return of 12 Dec 44 revealed that only 215 officers and 7566 other ranks of the total 566 officers and 11,576 other ranks actually were replacing men. And 2311 all ranks on depot and unit staffs were required to administer these 7781 replacements. The remainder were on draft, in training, awaiting discharge or non-effectives. (89) In a memorandum of 20 Jan 45 the Chairman of the War Establishment Investigation Committee suggested to the Director of Staff Duties that C.W.A.C. replacement personnel should be carried on the strength of employing units for all purposes and C.W.A.C. administrative units disbanded: a C.W.A.C. sergeant could be added to all units employing more than 15 C.W.A.Cs. (an officer and sergeant to those employing more than 50) to assist the unit commanding officer with disciplinary and welfare problems. (90) It was too late to introduce another major reorganization but an experiment along this line was conducted with No. 19 Administrative Unit, C.W.A.C. at No. 2 District Depot, Toronto from 14 Jan 46 to 29 Apr 46, and deemed to have been successful. (91)

64. The same problem had presented itself to the Canadian Army Overseas and had been complicated by the fact that members of the C.W.A.C. were counted against the "manpower ceiling". (92) Although women could replace an equal number of men in the trades open to them overseas there were, in many instances, soldiers with lowered medical categories already overseas who could perform the same work.

Conclusion

65. Demobilization was not achieved rapidly. Although the C.W.A.C. was reduced to nil strength during October 1946 it was December before the last three Wrens returned to civilian life. Ten members of the R.C.A.F.(W.D.) were released early in 1947 but the remaining six stayed in the R.C.A.F. as messing officers.

66. This report was written by J.M. Hitsman. It was read in draft by Mrs. D.B. (formerly Captain) Adelaide Sinclair, wartime Director of the W.R.C.N.S., and Miss (formerly Wing Officer) W.M. Taylor, sometime Senior W.D. Staff Officer at A.F.H.Q., both of whom provided very helpful comments and additional information. The draft was also read by the three senior officers in the Department of National Defence presently concerned with Women's Services - Lieutenant(W) M.E. MacDonald (Navy), Major M. Evis (Army) and Squadron Leader S.I. Evans (R.C.A.F.).

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