

Canadian Servicewomen and the Second World War

*“We Serve That
Men May Fight”*

In 1940, the Canadian military realized it had a manpower shortage. It decided to put more women in uniform to serve in support positions, freeing up men for active service.

Canadian women served in a wide variety of roles - drivers, cooks, clerks, mechanics, signallers, military intelligence personnel, just to name a few - in the Royal Canadian Navy, the Army, and the Royal Canadian Air Force.

By the end of the war, 50,000 Canadian women had enlisted, with thousands serving overseas.

Women did not receive equal pay or benefits for their service, which was protested by the National Council of Women. When this slowed recruitment, the Department of National Defence increased pay to 80% of what men were paid - a fact that many women continued to resent.

