

Sandra Lipton

**She Also Served: Bringing to Light the
Contributions of the Canadian Jewish
Servicewomen of the Second World War**

Writing on Jews in the Canadian forces focuses on the contributions of Jewish men with little or no acknowledgement of the service of Jewish women. Similarly, scholarship on Canadian women in the military forces of the Second World War is virtually silent on Jewish women's contributions, and anthologies of servicewomen's experiences rarely include the accounts of Jewish servicewomen. This article gives voice to the important role played by Jewish women in the Canadian Second World War forces and highlights how the military experience of these Jewish women was uniquely shaped by their gender and ethnicity.

Writing on Jews in the Canadian forces focuses on the contributions of Jewish men with little or no acknowledgement of the important roles played by Canadian Jewish women, aside from sweeping statements that refer to Jewish men and women who served their country during the Second World War. Though stories of a few Canadian Jewish female veterans have been published in local historical society publications, memoirs, and books, no recent scholarship in the field of Canadian Jewish Studies delves deeply into the military experience and contributions of these Jewish Canadian women. Similarly, the fairly extensive writing on Canadian women in the military forces of the Second World War is virtually silent on Jewish women's contributions, and anthologies of servicewomen's experiences rarely include accounts of Jewish servicewomen.¹ Jewish military women are often footnotes in the stories of their brothers' service.² The goal of this article is to utilize the data collected on Jewish female enlistees to begin to fill the gap in research on Canadian Jewish women's military experience, and to give voice to the important role of Jewish women in the Canadian Second World War forces.

Gerald Tulchinsky notes in *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*, that 279 Jewish women were in Canada's armed forces during the Second World War.³ The entry for Canada in the 1947/48 *American Jewish Year Book* parses this number into 151 in the Canadian Women's Army Corp, 13 Nursing Sisters, 97 in the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division, and 18 in the Women's Canadian Royal Naval Service.⁴ How accurate are these numbers? Who were these women? Why did they volunteer for service? What were their roles and experiences in the military?

Exploration of archival material, Jewish community histories, the *Canadian Jewish War Memorial Book of Remembrance*, and other memorial listings, memoirs, newspaper articles, nominal lists, obituaries, oral histories, web sites, as well as secondary material on Canadian women serving in the Second World War has uncovered information for 247 of these servicewomen.⁵ Though the service details for each individual are often fragmentary, taken together this information forms the genesis of a most interesting story of the significant contributions of these volunteer servicewomen, insights into the motivation behind their enlistment, and a glimpse into their experiences in the military. The military service of these Canadian Jewish women was influenced heavily by both their gender and their Jewish religion and ethnicity.

	<u>Next of Kin:</u>
M-11810 - BRICKER, Bernard L. H.Q. 1 Cdn. Div., Central Med. Forces, ITALY.	Louis Bricker, Esq., LAVOY, Alberta.
Pilot Officer Morris Grinstein, R.C.A.F. Station, Lethbridge, Alberta	Mr. & Mrs. Harry Grinstein 220 - 5th Avenue East, Calgary, Alberta.
M-104174, Cpl. Allan Norman Gurevitch, No. 1 C.I.I.U. Canadian Army, Overseas	Mrs. S. Gurevitch 1133 Kensington Road Calgary, Alberta.
M-600250, Eddie Freedman, formerly in the R.C.A.F. (Now Discharged)	Mr. Sol Freedman, 315 - 15th Avenue East, Calgary, Alberta.
Miss Bertha Freedman R.C.A.F. (Women's Division) Montreal, P.Q.	Mr. Sol Freedman, 315 - 15th Avenue East, Calgary, Alberta.
M.602491, Joe Elman, formerly in the Army (Now Discharged)	Mr. L. C. Gown, 230 - 4th Avenue East, Calgary, Alberta. (Stepfather)
M-300 I. Bercovice formerly in the Army (Now Discharged)	Mrs. Fanny Bercovice, 234 - 4th Ave. East Calgary, Alberta.
Sid Friedman is unknown.	
M-58508 Solomon Gurevitch #12 Field Dressing Station, R.C.A.S.C., Canadian Army, Overseas.	Mrs. S. Gurevitch 1133 Kensington Road, CALGARY, Alberta.

Page from lists of names, addresses, regimental numbers and next-of-kin compiled by Calgary lawyer A.I. Shumiatcher. A.I. Shumiatcher Fonds, Glenbow Archives, M 1107, File 55.

Current State of the Literature

In the last thirty years there has been increasing interest in the study of ethnic minority participation (Black, Chinese, Indigenous, Jewish, Mennonite, Ukrainian) in

the Canadian forces during the Second World War, including a few recent texts focused on Indigenous female enlistees.⁶ Scholarship concentrated on Jewish Canadian military history is limited, though, and provides little or no mention of the Canadian Jewish women who served in the Second World War.⁷ Ellin Bessner's forthcoming work *Double Threat: Canadian Jews, the Military, and World War II* will be the first monograph since David Rome's 1947 work *Canadian Jews in World War* to focus on Jewish members of the Canadian Second World War forces, and the only work on Canadian Jews in the Second World War to devote a chapter to Jewish female enlistees.⁸ In Canadian Jewish history more broadly, texts do include sections on the Second World War, but descriptions virtually ignore the military participation of Jewish women.⁹ Tulchinsky's chapter on the Second World War in his book *Canada's Jews* is the sole Canadian Jewish history source to contain a paragraph which focuses on the Jewish female servicewomen, and one of the rare works to mention a servicewoman by name.¹⁰

Elsewhere, Cynthia Toman's study of military nurses in the Second World War, published a decade ago, is the only scholarly work on Canadian women and the military to discuss Jewish women with more than a passing reference. Toman, who included a Jewish nursing sister among her interviewees, indicates that 0.4 percent of the Nursing Sisters were Jewish.¹¹ Her comment that military women have been "relegated to margins and footnotes, if present at all," is particularly accurate for Jewish servicewomen.¹² Additionally, less than a handful of Canadian Jewish female veterans have been profiled in published collections of memoirs and stories.¹³ It is fortunate that the Memory Project and a number of Jewish organizations across Canada had the foresight to collect the names and stories of Jewish veterans, which included women.¹⁴

In 2006 Grace Poulin completed a Master's thesis entitled "*Invisible Women: WWII Aboriginal Servicewomen in Canada.*" Echoing Toman's concern about the lack of scholarship on women in the military, Poulin presents her thesis as the first critical study to delve into the wartime experience of Indigenous women.¹⁵ This call to examine critically and communicate the military history of Canadian servicewomen is especially relevant for research on Canadian Jewish military women, where a virtual lack of scholarship skews our understanding of this important chapter in the history of Canadian Jewish women.

The dearth of writing on Jewish women in the Canadian military may be exacerbated by the reticence of some Jewish servicewomen to discuss their military service. In a 1994 article on her memories of growing up in Medicine Hat, Esther Raber remarks that "several of our young Jewish boys and some girls enlisted in the armed forces."¹⁶ While she articulates in considerable detail her brother's experience overseas, Raber fails to mention her own service.¹⁷ Only a later oral history, conducted by the

Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia, captures extensively her military experience including the mention by name of one Jewish woman from Montreal with whom she served.¹⁸ Furthermore, the “Women at War” entry in the 1995 *Oxford Companion to World War II* suggests that a number of servicewomen hid their military service because of the negative public perception of female soldiers. The author of the entry, Janet Howarth, comments that until recently, servicewomen were reluctant to discuss their military experiences.¹⁹ The public’s perceived lack of interest in hearing their wartime stories may also have been a factor in silencing many of the returning women veterans. Nursing Sister Sarah Lack notes, “I didn’t feel they were interested to know. It bothered me at first but after a few months I too began to live like I used to.”²⁰

Research in this area is hampered additionally by the current limited access to service files, which are the core primary research resource. These records containing valuable military and personal information including enlistment dates, education level, and postings remain outside the public domain until twenty years after the veteran’s death. More of these files will become available to the public, in time. Canadian military historian Jack Granatstein, in an article on ethnic and religious enlistment, called for more research on the make-up of the Canadian forces of the Second World War but cautions that “this information is fragmentary. It can be nothing more until all the personnel records are searched.”²¹ Other primary documents held by Library and Archives Canada, such as the Canadian Jewish Congress War Efforts Department Chaplaincy Records series DA18 and the “Secret War Diary of #3 C.W.A.C. Basic Training Centre” (a source of information regarding leave requests to attend Jewish religious services) may also be rich resources for identifying more names of Jewish female enlistees and information on the Canadian Military’s response to their religious needs.²²

The limited information currently collected for the 247 identified Canadian Jewish servicewomen allows for only a very preliminary analysis of their background, reasons for enlisting, enlistment dates, service roles, and military experience. Enhancement and expansion of the data through future access to the information buried in these primary sources will greatly facilitate more definitive conclusions.

Acceptance of Women into the Canadian Military

With Canada’s entry into the Second World War, women lobbied the Canadian government to allow female participation in the Canadian military beyond their role as Nursing Sisters in the Army’s Medical Corps, wherein they had served for over half a century. In 1941 both the Army and the Air Force opened their doors to women with the creation of the Canadian Women’s Army Corps (CWAC) and the Canadian Women’s Auxiliary Air Force, renamed the Royal Canadian Air Force Women’s Divi-

sion (RCAF WD). The Navy followed in 1942 with the establishment of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Services (WRCNS) known as Wrens.²³ These servicewomen, prohibited from direct combat jobs, filled support roles in order to free the men for combat duty. As the war progressed, however, their roles expanded to include a broader range of trades such as operational clerks, classifiers, night-vision testers, switchboard operators, and wireless operators.²⁴ By 1942, due to a pressing manpower shortage, women were sent overseas to relieve men from such duties as laundry work, postal sorting, and clerical jobs, and in 1944 a critical need for stenographers at the front resulted in CWACs being deployed to the rear sections of the theatre of war.²⁵ In 1946, the CWAC, RCAF WD and the WRCNS were disbanded.²⁶

Enlistment Numbers

Jewish servicewomen constituted a very low number of the approximately 50,000 women who served.²⁷ Though enlistment rates were far smaller than those of Jewish men, Jewish women who volunteered served in all branches of the military and held a variety of responsibilities, and many were posted overseas. It is significant that the small community of Medicine Hat, Alberta, with a total Jewish population of only 93 in 1941, had at least five Jewish women serving.²⁸ This participation rate is ten times higher than the general response rate for Canadian women, which was just under 1 percent of the total 1941 female population of Canada.²⁹ The official estimated enrollment number of 279 Jewish female enlistees is actually likely to be a very conservative calculation, lower than real enlistment numbers. The list of 247 names identified to date, though almost equaling the Canadian Jewish Congress figure, includes 52 names not captured in the Congress data, suggesting that a significant number of the Jewish servicewomen have yet to be identified.³⁰

Enlistment Dates

Though enlistment information is limited to a few names, the majority served a minimum of two and a half years. Eva Cossman, Lillian Meltzer, Molly Mickelson, and Evelyn Miller all served from 1942 to 1946.³¹ Esther Mendelson enlisted in 1941 when the military services were opened to women.³² Mimi Freedman, born in Montreal but living in England at the outbreak of the war, joined the London Ambulance Service in 1939 and the CWAC in 1943, serving almost seven years in total.³³

Available service information indicates that Jewish women had responded early to the call for volunteers, many enlisting in 1942. Though definitive enlistment dates are available for only three of the identified servicewomen, additional service information collected for a further 56 names suggests that at least 25 enlisted by 1942 and that the bulk of Jewish enlistees were in service by 1943. But by mid-1943, the Canadian military was trying to reach more Jewish women as indicated by the placement of

four recruiting ads in the August 13, 1943 issue of the *Canadian Jewish Review*, with three of the ads on page three (see image below).³⁴ This was part of the military's effort to attract female volunteers from across Canadian society. More broadly, *Canadian Geographical Journal* published a special issue in 1943 focused on women in the military, and a number of enlistment promotions.³⁵ This major recruitment campaign was initiated not only because of a need for more female enlistments as the war stretched on, but also by a urgent need to counteract the negative public image of military women that had led to a decline in enlistment.³⁶ The minimal data on enlistment dates precludes any conclusions as to whether this campaign increased enlistment among Jewish women.

"I love the Life and the Work"
 ... the typical answer of a C.W.A.C. girl when asked her opinion of service in the Women's Army.



THE NEED IS GREATER NOW!
 Support our boys now fighting in Sicily

Here are a few of the vital C.W.A.C. jobs for which you will have every chance to qualify:

- DRIVER MECHANIC
- TELETYPE
- TELEGRAPHIST
- RADIO OPERATOR
- WIRELESS TECHNICIAN
- DIETITIAN
- DENTAL ASSISTANT
- TAILORESS
- ACCOUNTANT
- STENOGRAPHER
- INSTRUMENT MECHANIC
- MOTOR MECHANIC

C.W.A.C. RECEPTION CENTRE
 1478 Peel St., Montreal.

I would like more information about the C.W.A.C.

Name.....
 Address.....

JOIN THE
C.W.A.C.

Advertisement from *Canadian Jewish Review* August 13, 1943, 2. Image courtesy of Janice Rosen, Archives Director, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

Reasons for Enlisting

While reasons for enlistment varied, for many would-be servicemen and women a strong sense of patriotism, especially reinforced by parents and siblings who had joined the armed forces, was the prime motivator. A 1943 survey of over 1,000 CWACs revealed that almost fifty-eight percent had family serving in the armed forces.³⁷ This ratio is reflected in the significant number of Jewish siblings who are known to have served. CWAC Lillian Meltzer, originally from Saint John, and three of her brothers all enlisted in either the Canadian or American forces.³⁸ For fellow CWAC servicewoman Esther Hurwitz, from a family of thirteen siblings, six of her brothers also served.³⁹ In *Equal to the Challenge: An Anthology of Women's Experiences During World War II*, we learn that the Jewish parents of servicewoman Pearl Klenman were both military volunteers. Her father served in both World Wars and her mother enlisted as a nurse in the First World War, and Klenman joined the military during the Second World War along with her four siblings.⁴⁰ Edith and Ruth Levine from Inverness, Nova Scotia joined the Army Medical Corps and RCAF WD respectively, and their brother Lieutenant John Orrell (Jack) enlisted in the Army in June 1943, though, sadly, he was killed in action one year later in France.⁴¹ Teenagers Goldie Margolis and Pearl Klenman were so keen to follow family members into service that they lied about their ages in order to be accepted into the military.⁴² Estelle Tritt initially chose to enlist in the Army due to an urgent demand for nurses.⁴³ Shortly after she joined, her brother in the Air Force was killed. Though given the opportunity to be released, Tritt responded with "No thanks. When do I go over?"⁴⁴ In a similar vein CWAC Sue Westheimer enlisted after her husband of two years, RCAF pilot officer Michael Jacobs, was killed in a flying accident in 1943.⁴⁵

Parental influence played a role in both encouraging and discouraging enlistment. Airwoman Norda Bennett may have been inspired to join because of her parents' strong involvement in the Jewish community. Both her parents were key leaders whose service included President of the Central Division of Canadian Jewish Congress, and Vice-Chair of the Women's War Efforts Committee of Congress.⁴⁶ Helen Vechsler's father was also very active in the Montreal Jewish community. The managing editor of the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* and an active volunteer for his synagogue, Harry Vechsler was also involved in forming Montreal's United Talmud Torahs, the Y.M.H.A, and Habonim.⁴⁷ Others enlisted despite parents' opposition, for example Esther Raber, and yet others were deterred from volunteering by their parents, such as Helen Diamond.⁴⁸ Gerald Tulchinsky postulates that "strong patriarchal values" resulted in Jewish families being more predisposed to dissuading their daughters from enlisting.⁴⁹

Factors in Mollie Mickelson's decision to join the military included boredom with her current job, siblings who had already joined the military, and her desire to con-

tribute to the war effort.⁵⁰ Nursing Sister Freda Swedlove, who held a degree in Public Health Nursing, “got caught up in all the excitement” and enlisted in the Army Medical Corps in 1944, spending her military service at the Ottawa Rideau Military Hospital treating soldiers injured overseas.⁵¹ For Jewish women like Ziona Kaplan, the desire to help defeat Hitler and save European Jewry was also a motivating factor in volunteering for service. In an oral history recording, Kaplan remarks, “Besides knowing of the horror that was going on...I thought maybe I could do a little something.”⁵² Kaplan also saw military service as a way to experience life outside Winnipeg.⁵³ For Roslyn Grey, an anti-Semitic experience spurred her to enlist. As a student at Queen’s University in Kingston during the early years of the war, Grey overheard female students identifying all remaining males at Queen’s “as being Jewish cowards and pacifists.”⁵⁴

During the War the Army recruited medical students both female and male, with female students placed initially in the CWAC and, once graduated, assigned to the Army Medical Corps.⁵⁵ In return for their commitment to service at the conclusion of their residency, the medical students received pay as CWAC privates without any service obligations (excluding the occasional parade).⁵⁶ Despite quotas limiting the number of Jewish medical students, at least two Jewish women were in medical training in Canada in the early 1940s.⁵⁷ Riva Ripstein (McGill University) and Ruth Easser (University of Toronto) both served in the military, finishing their medical training in 1944 and 1945.⁵⁸ For Ruth Easser the end of the war coincided with the completion of her medical training, pre-empting active service in the war effort.⁵⁹

The quest for adventure, determination to support the war effort, a desire to save Jews or family overseas, economic incentives, and an eagerness to join family members already in service were among the various factors leading these young Jewish girls and women to join Canada’s military forces.

Community Response

What was the reaction of the Jewish community to the hundreds of Jewish women from across Canada in their teens, twenties, and thirties, who volunteered for service in the Canadian military forces during the Second World War? While there existed some parental opposition to enlistment, at least one Jewish women’s group expressed pride for their members who joined the military. In the spring of 1943, Doris Bell was honoured for her enlistment in the RCAF WD by her Trail, British Columbia, Hadassah Chapter.⁶⁰ Also, the various Canadian Jewish newspapers contained notices and articles about Jewish servicewomen. The July 23, 1943 *Jewish Western Bulletin* article “Jews in Uniform” highlighted RCAF WD Norda Bennett, and the “Social Notes” sections of the *Canadian Jewish Review* from 1942 to 1946 mentioned a number of Jewish servicewomen.⁶¹

Military Division and Roles

Investigation of readily-available published and archival sources has identified 247 Jewish servicewomen representing all branches of the Canadian armed forces.⁶² While the Canadian Jewish Congress figures cited by David Rome, prominent historian of Canadian Jewry, indicate that the majority of the Jewish women served in the Army (151 in the CWAC and 13 in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps [RCAMC] as Nursing Sisters), recent data reveals a different story, specifically a greater number serving in the Air Force (82 in the RCAF WD and two in the Medical Branch), followed by the Army (45 in the CWAC and 11 in the RCAMC), followed by 12 in the Navy and 95 whose units are unknown.⁶³

Like Jewish servicemen, it appears that women also exhibited a marked preference for the RCAF.⁶⁴ Even if 60 percent of the 95 women whose units are unknown served in the CWAC, current data would likely identify more enlisted women in the Air Force than in any other military division. Perhaps this was because the RCAF was seen as a more desirable place to work, or a more prestigious branch of service, or because a friend or relative had already enlisted there. Mollie Mickelson joined the RCAF WD because “it had more appeal.”⁶⁵ On the other hand, Pearl Klenman volunteered for the Army because her sister asked her to enlist with her.⁶⁶

Details on women’s specific military roles are frequently lacking. Where the *Canadian Jewish War Memorial Book of Remembrance* is the sole source, often the only information provided is a last name and initial, service number, and rank. For the few servicewomen whose trade is known, the roles are varied and include, among others, administrative clerk, classifier, hospital assistant, Kine-Theodolite operator (specialized equipment to test the performance of shells fired from anti-aircraft guns and to help improve performance of anti-aircraft gunners), medical stenographer, military policewoman, motor transport, nursing sister, physiotherapy aide, radio instructor, record keeper, and secretary. Several women also filled leadership roles, including CWAC Eva Greenberg from Winnipeg, who was in charge of the 22 CWACs who formed the 1st Kine-Theodolite detachment at the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Training Centre in Halifax.⁶⁷

A number of Jewish servicewomen were also assigned secret projects. According to her obituary, CWAC Ruth Offstein was in a “top secret military location” doing office work.⁶⁸ Esther Raber from Medicine Hat notes that she was in the RCAF Defense Headquarter working on a top-secret project involving radar.⁶⁹ Fellow Albertan airwoman, Sergeant Mollie Mickelson, was involved with secret confidential material in her 1942-1943 role as secretary to Roy Foss, Commanding Officer of the No. 9 Bombing and Gunnery School in Mont-Joli, Quebec, as well as during her later posting with Captain Foss at No. 4 Group Headquarters in Prince Rupert, BC.⁷⁰ Thea Schatz

from Ottawa was a Leading Wren in the Royal Canadian Navy. A classifier at the British code-breaking station Bletchley Park, Schatz was responsible for monitoring Japanese merchant shipping.⁷¹ Lieutenant Frieda Bindman, who volunteered for the Navy in 1943, completed instruction in wireless telegraphy and then found herself in Ottawa working in the Navy's Signal Division. On one memorable occasion she was responsible for determining the code that would alert not only the allied naval ships but also the troopship *Queen Mary* to the location of a German U-boat.⁷² As one former Wren comments, "most Canadians had no idea just how close those German U-boats got – way up the St. Lawrence."⁷³ Yet another Jewish Wren involved in signals intelligence, Celia Weiser, was a supervisor assigned to the naval radio station Gloucester, located southeast of Ottawa, where she was responsible for the operations at the direction-finding hut.⁷⁴

Experiences as Jews

How did these Jewish women fare in the military? Sources indicate varied experiences of discrimination. Esther Raber highlights an anti-Semitic episode that left her very upset, but describes it as an isolated incident. Near the end of the war, Raber had a civilian friend who was part of a Jewish youth group that had created a petition requesting that the government accept Jewish refugees into Canada. Raber received permission from her supervisor to circulate this petition in the Air Force headquarters where she worked, though one of the other officers exclaimed to her, "I wouldn't sign to have one Jew come into this country." A women officer, seeing Raber in distress, offered comfort and saw to it that the offending officer was reprimanded. The office later apologized to Raber.⁷⁵ Others, such as Sarah Lack and Ziona Kaplan, comment that they did not encounter any anti-Semitism in the armed forces.⁷⁶

The general absence of overt anti-Semitism did not equate to an environment free of racism. Airwoman Tanya Volovnik, when queried about her experience in the Canadian forces, remarked "not that I saw any out-and-out racism, but I still felt it."⁷⁷ Official military selection records for Francis Labensohn use her religion as an aspect of her personal and physical characteristics when she is described as "a short, slight, Jewish girl with dark hair and eyes and shell-rimmed glasses."⁷⁸ In Usher's study of Jewish men in the RCAF he also acknowledges these type of comments in assessments of Jewish male volunteers, but cautions that the use of religion as a character trait appeared in less than 25 percent of the documents examined and with decreasing frequency.⁷⁹ With the general anti-Semitic undertone in the Canadian society as a whole prior to and during the war period, it is not surprising that an undertone of anti-Semitism existed in the military forces.⁸⁰ As Weinfeld notes, "while there were no pogroms, anti-Semitism was pervasive in the political and cultural fabric of Canada in the 30s."⁸¹ Cynthia Toman, in her work on military nursing, highlights that nursing sisters were required to have completed approved nursing

programs, which restricted Jewish participation as many Canadian nursing schools had strict quotas for Jewish women.⁸² In a 1987 article focusing on US servicewomen in the Second World War, D'Ann Campbell observes that while Jewish servicewomen have disclosed discriminatory activity, these oral testaments remain undocumented.⁸³ More research is needed to understand the official Canadian military stance towards racism as well as the actual anti-Semitism exhibited by the Canadian military personnel of the Second World War.

Certain military requirements such as Sunday services posed challenges for the Jewish recruits. Mollie Mickelson, in her 1999 oral history, indicates that when she first joined she was forced to go to Sunday services at a Protestant church. After complaints were made, non-Protestants were required only to participate in the march to the church.⁸⁴ It appears that overall the Canadian military was accommodating to the religious needs of its Jewish soldiers. Jewish Chaplains were provided for the Jewish servicewomen and special concessions were made to permit them to attend Jewish religious services.⁸⁵ Ziona Kaplan experienced no issues in taking days off work for Jewish holidays.⁸⁶

With Jewish women forming such a small percentage of the women's forces, they met very few female co-religionists during their service and were very much an invisible minority. This would have been particularly true in the Navy, where there were so few Jewish enlistees. Wren Rosamond Greer, in writing about her Navy experience, totally omits the Jewish Wrens when she describes the religious groups in the Navy as Roman Catholic, Protestants and "Undecideds."⁸⁷ For some Jewish servicewomen, the military was their first experience interacting with non-Jews.⁸⁸

As a very small segment of a much larger non-Jewish population, Jewish enlistees, particularly those from more traditional backgrounds, were faced with challenges in maintaining Jewish practices. While both Ziona Kaplan and Sarah Lack made the decision not to date non-Jewish boys, they had to compromise on their observance of the laws of *kashrut*.⁸⁹ During the war years the numbers of Jewish soldiers stationed at bases in remote Canadian locales provided the opportunity for religious services even in small Canadian communities with no Jewish members. In March 1944, for instance, Shabbat evening services were held at the Chapel of the RCAF station at Patricia Bay, B.C (near Victoria) with a *minyan* and one woman named D. Kates from the RCAF WD.⁹⁰

Overseas Experience

Despite the fact that Canadian servicewomen did not serve on front lines, a number of Jewish military women were stationed overseas close to the front. While current data identifies service locations for only 43 of the 247 names collected, 30 percent (13

of these 43) served in England or Europe. CWAC Mildred Richmond identifies herself as the first Jewish woman to be posted overseas. During her posting as a medical secretary in London, Richmond experienced at least one close call during a German rocket attack.⁹¹ Sarah Lack, one of 64 RCAF nursing sisters posted abroad, served in England from 1941 to 1946.⁹² Her first exposure to nursing injured soldiers was in the orthopedic ward of the RAF hospital in North Allerton, Yorkshire, where “you could count the number of boys who had two arms and two legs in the single digits.”⁹³ In June 1944, the first contingent of CWACs to be sent to Italy included Jewish servicewoman Pte. Goldie Margolis from Camwood, Saskatchewan, and Eve Keller, according to her daughter, served in the CWAC near the front lines as a record-keeper for the troops.⁹⁴

Mimi Freedman was stationed in England, France, Belgium, and Germany, and served in administrative duties and as an interpreter (she spoke French, Dutch, Flemish, and German. It is likely that the M. Freeman in the third image of this article is the same person as Mimi Freedman). Freedman was the only Jewish servicewoman to be decorated in the Second World War.⁹⁵ Shortly after D-Day, she was in Normandy monitoring casualty reports, where she “lived in tents in an apple orchard hearing the continual gun fire.”⁹⁶ Also overseas was Evelyn Miller. In an oral history, Miller’s sister indicates that Miller served in England and Belgium but provides no other details.⁹⁷ Another example is Lillian Meltzer. At age 35, Canadian-born Meltzer took a leave from her job at Metropolitan Life Insurance in New York to serve in the CWAC from 1942 to 1946.⁹⁸ She was deployed overseas in England as the secretary to the Chaplain Samuel Cass.⁹⁹



Corporal M. Freeman
CWAC and Captain
Samuel Cass,
Hanukkah Tilburg,
December 17, 1944.
Photographer:
Ken Bell, Dept. of
National Defence.
Library and Archives
Canada, PA-188717.

Richard Menkis, in his article on Canadian Jewish chaplains and their experiences with Dutch survivors, highlights Chaplain Rabbi Samuel Cass's involvement in the liberation of concentration camps.¹⁰⁰ Images such as the oft-found picture of Corporal M. Freeman CWAC and Chaplain Rabbi Samuel Cass presenting a gift to a Belgian girl at a 1944 Hanukkah celebration in Tilburg (image above), generates questions about the role and experiences of Jewish servicewomen overseas who encountered the liberation of Europe and its aftermath. Glimpses of answers are found in the oral history of Nursing Sister Estelle Tritt. Tritt volunteered for overseas service with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corp and saw active service in France, Belgium, and Holland in 1944 and 1945. Briefed in advance of D-Day, she was put in isolation for six weeks beforehand.¹⁰¹ A few weeks after D-Day she volunteered to provide medical services to the troops in France, including to German prisoners of war. While Tritt does not elaborate on her feelings in treating the German prisoners, she does relate the experience of a fellow Jewish nursing sister who, upon explaining to a German soldier that it was because she was Jewish and could speak Yiddish that she was able to figure out what he was saying, received as a reply, "Oh. The Jews are people?"¹⁰² While in Belgium and Holland she tried to connect with Jewish survivors and joined a group of them for their first Passover seder in many years.¹⁰³ Tritt also assisted people from Canada trying to locate relatives in Europe.¹⁰⁴ Mark Celinscak, in *Distance from the Belsen Heap: Allied Forces and the Liberation of a Nazi Concentration Camp*, notes that the allied soldiers' experience at Bergen-Belsen "brought an immense change in their life – whether it be one of direction, attitude or belief."¹⁰⁵ Tritt's first-hand encounter with Jews' devastation in Europe strengthened her will to follow more Jewish observances and customs.¹⁰⁶

Other Jewish servicewomen such as Mollie Mickelson and Esther Raber indicate in their oral histories that they would have liked the chance to serve overseas, but that they never had the opportunity. Pearl Klenman volunteered for overseas service but was too young, having enlisted at the age of fourteen).¹⁰⁷ Klenman, tall for her age, obtained a false identification card from the post office so that she could meet the age requirement for service.¹⁰⁸ Nursing Sister Freda Swedlove also wanted to serve overseas but acquiesced to her mother's wishes that she not leave Canada.¹⁰⁹

Overseas posting, as well as assignments in Ottawa, also provided women the opportunity to encounter key military and political figures. Thea Shatz was present at the House of Lords for Winston Churchill's homage to Roosevelt upon Roosevelt's death in April 1945, and Reva Lightstone, a Nursing Sister at the No. 17 Canadian General Hospital in England, was introduced to Queen Elizabeth during her tour of the hospital.¹¹⁰ On leave in Paris after VE Day, Estelle Tritt was invited to tea with Madame Pauline Vanier, the wife of Canada's Ambassador to France, Georges Vanier.¹¹¹ Lieutenant Eva Cossman, included in a 1943 tea held in honour of the CWAC at Government House in Ottawa, had the opportunity to meet Princess Alice, wife of

the Earl of Athlone, Governor General of Canada.¹¹² At the end of the war, Jewish Canadian servicemen and women raised funds to honour the memory of their fallen comrades with the purchase of a memorial grove of trees in Palestine; CWAC Lillian Meltzer was selected to present the certificate to Honorable John Percival Montague, Chief of Staff at Canadian Military Headquarters in London, on September 5, 1945.¹¹³

Even some servicewomen who stayed in Canada were involved in very harrowing tasks, such as airwoman Esther Mendelson. Mendelson was in motor transport, stationed at the bombing and gunnery school in Mont-Joli, Quebec. In her interview recorded as part of The Memory Project, Mendelson describes how “nine times out of ten there were bodies when they [airplanes] crashed. So we had to go to pick up the pieces.”¹¹⁴ Elsewhere, Evelyn Dubinsky also experienced many plane crashes in her station as a hospital assistant at the bombing and gunnery school at Mossbank, Saskatchewan. She was later sent to Calgary to care for wounded soldiers.¹¹⁵ RCAF Women’s Division Section Officer Rose Goodman, from New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, was killed in a flying accident when her plane crashed near Claresholm, Alberta. Goodman was the only Jewish servicewoman to die during the war.¹¹⁶

Though Jews were a small percentage of the total Canadian women in service during the Second World War, the experience of Jewish servicewomen, shaped significantly by their gender and ethnicity, is an important part of the scholarship on the Second World War. These volunteer Jewish servicewomen served across Canada and overseas, supporting and training their fellow servicemen. Though they were restricted to non-combat roles, a number of these women faced directly the war’s impact of death and destruction. The significant military contributions of Canadian Jewish women remain under-examined and under-acknowledged. Foci for important future research include not only Jewish servicewomen’s experiences and contributions during the war, but also the impact of these experiences on their post-war lives. More scholarship is needed to ensure that the experiences of these Jewish women are part of the Canadian Second World War story and that due recognition is given to their military achievements. Tantalizing clues such as “almost all eligible [Jewish] young men and women” of Cornwall, Ontario signed up for service encourage continued effort to uncover more of these nameless women (and men) who served in the military.¹¹⁷ The names and stories collected to date help create a base for future study on how gender and religion framed and moulded the experiences of the Canadian Jewish servicewomen of the Second World War.

1

See Barbara Dundas, *A History of Women in the Canadian Military* (Montreal: Art Global, 2000); Carolyn Gossage, *Greatcoats and Glamour Boots: Canadian Women at War, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2001); Jeffrey A. Keshen, "Women Warriors: 'Exactly on a Par with the Men,'" in *Saints, Sinners and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2004), 173-93; Ruth Roach Pierson, "Canadian Women and Canadian Mobilization During the Second World War," *International Review of Military History* 51 (1982): 181-207; *Canadian Women and the Second World War* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1983), http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/008004/f2/H-37_en.pdf?PHPSES-SID=juh74e5od2m7g0h3vu0ve42c81; "They're Still Women After All": *The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1986); Janice Tyrwhitt, "Alberta Women Went to War Too, Some Just Behind the Front Line," in *The War that United the Province, Alberta In the 20th Century: A Journalistic History of the Province*, ed. Ted Byfield, vol. 8, *Alberta in the 20th Century: A Journalistic History of the Province* (Edmonton: United Western Communications, 2000), 136-57; Donna Zwicker, "Alberta Women Join Up," in *For King and Country: Alberta in the Second World War*, ed. Kenneth W. Tingley (Edmonton, AB: Provincial Museum of Alberta, 1995), 89-106. There are also numerous works more specifically on women in the Canadian Army, Navy, Air Force, and Medical Corps including: W. Hugh Conrod, *Athene Goddess of War: The Canadian Women's Army Corps, Their Story* (Dartmouth, NS: Writing and Editorial Services, 1983); Patricia Daine, "Doing Their Bit: Canada's Air Women of the Second World War," *Atlantic Advocate*, February 1984, 51-53; Rosamond Greer, *The Girls of the King's Navy* (Victoria, BC: Sono Nis Press, 1983); Gerald W. L. Nicholson, *Canada's Nursing Sisters* (Toronto: Hakkert & Company, 1975); Ruth Roach Pierson, "'Jill Canuck': CWAC of All Trades, But No 'Pistol Packing Momma'," *Historical Papers* 13, no. 1 (1978): 106-33; "Ladies or Loose Women: The Canadian Women's Army Corps in World War II," *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 (1979): 245-66; Emilie Anne Plows, "Serving Their Country: The Story of the Wrens, 1942-1946," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, no. 2 (2000): 83-91, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo9/no2/10-plows-eng.asp>; Julie Anne Redstone-Lewis, "The Creation of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service and its Role in Canadian Naval Intelligence

and Communications, 1939-45" (Master's thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 2007), <http://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/45/>; Ruth Weber Russell, *Proudly She Marched: Training Canada's World War II Women in Waterloo Country*, vol. 1, *Canadian Women's Army Corps*, vol. 2, *Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service* (Waterloo, ON: Canadian Federation of University Women, Kitchener Waterloo, 2006); Barbara Winters, "The Wrens of the Second World War: Their Place in the History of Canadian Servicewomen," in *A Nation's Navy: In Quest of Canadian Naval Identity*, ed. Michael L. Hadley, Rob Huebert and Fred W. Crickland (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 280-96.

2

Examples include: mention of "A sister Ruth, served" at the end of the entry for Pilot Officer Norman Kelner in David Rome, ed., *Canadian Jews in World War II*, Part 2, *Casualties* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1947), 42; and Esther Hurwitz is noted as serving in the CWAC in an article on her brother Samuel by Shelly Reuben, "Big Footsteps: Sgt. Samuel Moses Hurwitz," *The Evening Sun*, November 11, 2013. <http://www.evesun.com/news/stories/2013-11-11/18249/Big-Footsteps-Sgt-Samuel-Moses-Hurwitz/>.

3

Gerald Tulchinsky, "Into Battle," in *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 376.

4

David Rome, "Canada," *American Jewish Year Book* 49 (1947-1948): 288. http://www.ajcar-chives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1947_1948_8_BritCommonwealth.pdf

5

The Canadian Jewish War Memorial Book of Remembrance compiled by Oscar Adler and the Canadian Jewish War Memorial Association (Toronto: Canadian Jewish War Memorial Association, 2004), though filled with numerous errors and duplications, was a key resource assisting in the identification of almost 50 percent of the collected names. See <http://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/51511> for a complete list of sources. Data sources have primarily been restricted to those available online or in Calgary. Attempting to identify Jewish servicewomen is fraught with many challenges. Reviewing registers such as the online listing of RCAF WDs that have died (http://www.rcafairwomen.ca/LAST_Post.php)

requires making assumptions, sometimes erroneous, about what is a Jewish name. There is also the difficulty connecting married names to the maiden names under which the military information is found. Furthermore, information is sometimes very fragmentary, as illustrated by the comment on <http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/jewish-vets-honoured-70-years-end-wwii> from M. Goldberg that “my mother served,” or otherwise very minimal as exemplified by the Sylvia Schwartz Jewish military portraits series held by the Ontario Jewish Archives (<http://search.ontariojewisharchives.org/Permalink/descriptions23581>) which contains little more than name and service section. Further information on Jewish female enlistees will likely be identified through examination of the extensive archival holdings of the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, records of the various veterans’ associations and primary documents held by Libraries and Archives Canada and the Canadian War Museum. Fellow Canadian military history researchers Ellin Bessner and Peter Usher have been most helpful in sharing discoveries from the rich resources of the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, and I am particularly indebted to Ellin who has alerted me to a number of Jewish servicewomen. I also very much appreciate the information on Jewish nurses provided by Cynthia Toman, and am very grateful for the research help received from Agi Romer-Segal, Librarian/Archivist, and Roberta Kerr, Archival Consultant at the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, and the assistance via email from Janice Rosen, Archives Director at the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, and Andrew Morrison, Archivist at the Irma and Marvin Penn Archives of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, and Alysa Routtenberg, Archivist at the Jewish Museum and Archives of BC, and Faye Blum, Assistant Archivist at the Ontario Jewish Archives, and Saara Mortensen, Archivist at the Ottawa Jewish Archives, and Katherine Biggs-Craft, Curator at the Saint John Jewish Historical Museum.

6

For general works on minorities see J.L. Granatstein, “Ethnic and Religious Enlistment in Canada During the Second World War,” *Canadian Jewish Studies* 21 (2013):174-80, <http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/viewFile/39917/36132>; “The Problem of Religion in Canadian Forces Postings Liebmann vs the Minister of National Defence et al.,” *Canadian Military History* 19, no.4

(2010): 68-74, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol19/iss4/8/>; Mathias Joost, “Racism and Enlistment: The Second World War Politics of the Royal Canadian Air Force,” *Canadian Military History* 21, no.1 (2012): 17-34, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1644&context=cmh>. For works on specific ethnic groups (works on Jews in the military are listed in footnote 7) see Janet Davison, “We Shall Remember Canada’s Indians and World War Two,” (Master’s thesis, Trent University, 1992); James Dempsey, “Alberta’s Indians and the Second World War,” in *For King and Country: Alberta in the Second World War*, ed. Kenneth W. Tingley (Edmonton, AB: Provincial Museum of Alberta, 1995), 39-52; Fred Gaffen, *Forgotten Soldiers* (Winnipeg: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2008); P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Craig Leslie Mantle, eds., *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007); Peter Lorenz Neufeld, *Mennonites at War, a Double-Edged Sword: Canadian Mennonites in World War Two* (Deloraine, MB: DTS Publishing, 1997); Thomas M. Prynak, *Maple Leaf and Trident: The Ukrainian Canadians During the Second World War*, Studies in Ethnic and Immigration History (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988); Ted D. Regehr, “Lost Sons: The Canadian Mennonite Soldiers of World War II,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66, no. 4 (1992): 461-80; Noah Rise-man, “The Rise of Indigenous Military History,” *History Compass* 12, no. 12 (2014): 901-11; Scott Sheffield, “Fighting a White Man’s War? First Nations Participation in the Canadian War Effort, 1939-1945,” in *Canada and the Second World War: Essays in Honour of Terry Copp*, eds. Geoffrey Hayes, Mike Bechthold and Matt Symes (Waterloo, ON, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 69-91; Michael D. Stevenson, “The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 7, no. 1 (1996): 205-226, <http://www.erudit.org/revue/jcha/1996/v7/n1/031108ar.pdf>; Simon Theobald, “A False Sense of Equality: The Black Canadian Experiences of the Second World War” (Master’s thesis, University of Ottawa, 2008), <https://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/27791/1/MR48629.PDF>; “Not so Black and White: Black Canadians and the RCAF’s Recruiting Policy During the Second World War,” *Canadian Military History* 21, no. 1 (2015): 35-43, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol21/iss1/4/>; Roy P. Toomey, “Canadian Indians Go to War,” in “Canadian Indians and

the Second World War: The Pivotal Event of the 20th Century for Canadian Indians and the Canadian Indian Policy?" (Master's thesis, University of Northern British Columbia, 2006), 21-51; Marjorie Wong, *The Dragon and the Maple Leaf: Chinese Canadians in World War II* (London, ON, Pirie Publishing, 1994). For works on Aboriginal female enlistees see Judy M. Iseke and Leisa A. Desmoulin, "Critical Events: Métis Servicewomen's WWII Stories with Dorothy Chartrand," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 33, no. 2 (2013): 29-54; Grace Poulin, "Invisible Women: WWII Aboriginal Servicewomen in Canada" (Master's thesis, Trent University, 2006); "Invisible Women: Aboriginal Servicewomen in Canada's Second World War Military," Chap. 6 in *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives*, ed. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Craig Leslie Mantle (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 137-69; Muriel Stanley Venne, ed. *Our Women in Uniform* (Calgary, AB: Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, 2003).

7

Max Bookman, "Canadian Jews in Uniform," in *Canadian Jewish Reference Book and Directory*, ed. Eli Gottesman (Montreal: Jewish Institute of Higher Research of the Central Rabbinical Seminary of Canada, 1963), 111-28; David Rome, ed., *Canadian Jews in World War II*; Stuart E. Rosenberg, "Jews in World War II," in *The Jewish Community in Canada*, vol. 2, *In the Midst of Freedom* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 92-97; Tulchinsky, "Into Battle"; "Canada's Jews at War," in *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998), 204-34; Peter J. Usher, "Jews in the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1940-1945," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 20 (2012): 93-114, <http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/download/36059/34618>; "Removing the Stain: A Jewish Volunteer's Perspective in World War Two," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 23 (2015): 37-67, <http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/viewFile/39928/36142>. Information on Canadian Jewish servicemen is also found in Granatstein, "Ethnic and Religious Enlistment"; Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013), 208-209, 217; Martin Sugarman, *Fighting Back: British Jewry's Military Contribution in the Second World War* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

8

Ellin Bessner, *Double Threat: Canadian Jews, the Military, and World War II* (Toronto: New Jewish Press, in press); Rome, *Canadian Jews in World War II*.

9

See for example: section "Windsor Men Serve" in Jonathan V. Plaut, *Jews of Windsor, 1790-1990: A Historical Chronicle* (Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Group, 2007), 111; Allen Levine notes that "Jewish men and women" enlisted in the Canadian armed forces, but only features male volunteers in his section on the Second World War in Allen Levine, *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Heartland Associates, 2009), 278-289; A Jewish servicewoman is briefly mentioned in Norman Erwin, "The Holocaust, Canadian Jews and Canada's "Good War" Against Nazism," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 24 (2016): 114, <http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/view/39962>.

10

Tulchinsky, "Into Battle," 376.

11

Cynthia Toman, *An Officer and a Lady: Canadian Military Nursing and the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 47.

12

Ibid., 170.

13

Pearl Bordts, "Pearl Bordts née Klenman," in *Equal to the Challenge: An Anthology of Women's Experiences During World War II*, ed. Lisa Banister (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2001), 269-79; Sarah Lack (Cohen) and Ziona Kaplan (Levin) are included in Sharon Chisvin, ed. *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, vol. 7, *Jewish Life and Times* (Winnipeg: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, 1990); Estelle Tritt-Aspler, "Estelle Tritt-Aspler," in *Rare Courage: Veterans of the Second World War Remember*, eds. Rod Mickleburgh and Rudyard Griffiths (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2005), 172-79.

14

The Memory Project, Historica Canada, <http://www.thememoryproject.com/>. See also oral history collections of the various Jewish archives across Canada as well as Congregation Emanu-El of Victoria, BC's *Valour & Duty: Honoring Jewish Veterans of World War II* (Victoria,

BC: Congregation Emanu-El, 2007); Wilfred Shuchat, *The Gate of Heaven: The Story of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim of Montreal 1846-1996* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 139; Cy Torontow, Jewish War Veterans of Canada, Ottawa Post and Ottawa Jewish Historical Society, *There I Was...A Collection of Reminiscences by Members of the Ottawa Jewish Community Who Served in World War II* (Ottawa: Jewish War Veterans of Canada, Ottawa Post, 1999); Tyler Trafford, *Memories on the March: Personal Stories of the Jewish Military Veterans of Southern Alberta* (Calgary: Jewish War Veterans of Canada, Post No. 2, Calgary, Alberta, 2001); Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, "Southern Alberta Jewish Veterans of World War I & II," <http://jhssa.org/profile>.

15

Poulin, "Invisible Women: WWII Aboriginal Servicewomen," ii.

16

Esther Nobleman, "Memories of Medicine Hat," *The Scribe* 14, no. 2 (1994): 39-40. Esther's maiden name is Raber. In the text servicewomen are referred to by their maiden name. Married names (where known) are identified in the footnotes.

17

Ibid.

18

Esther Nobleman, interview by Chelsea Shriver, Vancouver, BC, February 24, 2014, 1971. 001-20.14-02, transcript, Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., <https://archives.jewishmuseum.ca/esther-nobleman>.

19

Janet Howarth, "Women at War," in *Oxford Companion to World War II*, ed. I.C.B. Dear (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1282.

20

Selections from the oral history of Sarah Lack (Cohen) recorded by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada published in Chisvin, *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, 108.

21

Granatstein, *Ethnic and Religious Enlistment*,

177.

22

Russell, *Proudly She Marched*, 1:50. "The Secret Diary" is held by Libraries and Archives Canada.

23

Pierson, *Canadian Women and the Second World War*, 5.

24

Pierson, "Canadian Women and Canadian Mobilization," 186-88; Winters, "The Wrens," 284.

25

Abey. M.E., "The Canadian Women's Army Corps Overseas," *Historical Officer Canadian Military Headquarters Report*, no. 120 (Ottawa: National Defence Headquarters 1944), 5-6. <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/rep-rap/cmhqrd-draqmc-eng.asp?txt-Type=2&Rfid=120>.

26

Pierson, *Canadian Women and the Second World War*, 22.

27

Ibid., 8

28

Population figures for Medicine Hat are taken from Louis Rosenberg, "Special Supplement for Period 1951-54," *The Jewish Population of Canada: A Statistical Summary from 1851-1947* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1947), table 5, "Jewish Communities With Jewish Population Exceeding 100 in Canadian Towns and Cities With Total Population Exceeding 5,000 in 1941 and 1951, Proportion of Total Population Jewish and Percentage Increase or Decrease, 1941-1951", 6. The Jewish servicewomen from Medicine Hat are: Annette Freedman, S. Freedman, Esther Raber (Nobleman) and sisters Esther (Penny) and Rose Schecter.

29

The 1941 Census of Canada gives the total Female population as 5, 606,119. See *Census of Canada* (1941), vol. 14, table 20 "Population by Birthplace, Racial Origin and Sex for Provinces Territories, Rural and Urban," 334.

30

The Canadian Jewish War Memorial Book

of Remembrance was primarily compiled from Canadian Jewish Congress's listings of servicewomen. Therefore any names omitted from the *Book of Remembrance* are ones not likely identified by Congress. Thus, it is anticipated that the total service number for Jewish women is actually much higher than 279. In addition, a number of Canadian Jewish women served in the American Armed Forces including Molly Carnat, Ruth Levy (Stoehr) and Leah Waterman (Kellog).

31

Dates for Eva Cossman (Berry) are identified from reports in the *Canadian Jewish Review* September 18, 1942, 2 (<http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/mcc-cjr-17657/page-2>) and March 1, 1946, 2. (<http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/mcc-cjr-15217/page-2>). The Canadian Jewish Heritage Network provides dates for Lillian Meltzer (Schoen) (http://www.cjhn.ca/en/permalink/ge_nealogy96880), dates for Molly Mickelson (Klein) are reported in her oral history at the Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia, and Evelyn Miller's pay book held by the Military Museums Library and Archives, Calgary identifies her term of service.

32

Enlistment dates for Esther Mendelson (Mager) are found in "Esther Mager," Ontario Jewish Archives, <http://search.ontariojewisharchives.org/Permalink/accessions24435>.

33

Rome, *Canadian Jews in World War II*, Part 1, *Decorations*, 69.

34

Canadian Jewish Review, August 13, 1943, 2-3, <http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/mcc-cjr-17108/page-3>

35

Willa Walker, Margaret Easton, and Adelaide Sinclair, "Canadian Women on Active Service," *Canadian Geographical Journal* 27, no. 6 (1943): 264-93.

36

Pierson, *Canadian Women and the Second World War*, 7-8.

37

Conrod, *Athene Goddess of War*, 120.

38

Reference to Lillian Meltzer (Shoen) in "Our

Jewish Veterans: Remembering Those Who Served," *Zikaron: Saint John Jewish Historical Museum* 31, no. 2 (2015): 7.

39

Reuben, "Big Footsteps."

40

Bordts, "Pearl Bordts née Klenman," 271-72.

41

"Nominal List," Cape Bretoners in World War Two, <https://sites.google.com/site/nominal-list/>

42

"Goldie Katherine Lehmann (Margolis)," *Winnipeg Free Press* July 28, 2012, http://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-193347/Goldie_Lehmann; Bordts, "Pearl Bordts Née Klenman," 271-72.

43

Tritt-Aspler, "Estelle Tritt-Aspler," 172.

44

Ibid.

45

Information on Sue Westheimer (Jacobs/Ransohoff) provided by Ellin Bessner.

46

Information on Norda Bennett (Berlin) obtained from "Jews in Uniform," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, July 23, 1943, 2. <http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/jwb-50075/page-2>.

47

"Harry Vechsler Passes Away in 57th Year," *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, May 27, 1949, 2. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2Q0AJrNhS-QC&-dat=19490527&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

48

Regarding Raber, Nobleman, interview. Regarding Diamond, Selections from the oral history of Helen Diamond (Kahane) recorded by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada published in Chisvin, *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, 19.

49

Tulchinsky, "Into Battle," 376.

50

Mollie Klein (Mickelson), interview by Jean

Gerber, Vancouver B.C., October 8, 1999, A. 1971.1.001-19.99-23-1, Digital copy. JHSBC Oral History Collection, Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

51

"Freda Lithwick," in Torontow, *There I Was*, 54.-55.

52

Selections from the oral history of Ziona Kaplan (Levin) recorded by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada published in Chisvin, *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, 91.

53

Ziona Kaplan (Levin), summary of interview by Stuart Carroll, June 2, 1986, Media #375, The Irma and Marvin Penn Archives of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

54

Judith McKenzie, *Pauline Jewett: A Passion for Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 31.

55

Mary Kinnear, *In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 63; Elise Corbet, *Frontiers of Medicine: A History of Medical Education and Research at the University of Alberta* (Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 2000), 56-59. Corbet notes on page 57 that the University of Alberta Medical Faculty Council directed the Admissions Committee to favour male students in good physical condition who wanted to serve in the military.

56

Kinnear, *In Subordination*, 63; Mary Kay O'Neil, *The Unsung Psychoanalyst: The Quiet Influence of Ruth Easser* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 29.

57

W.P.J. Millar, "'We wanted our children should have it better': Jewish Medical Students at the University of Toronto, 1910-51," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 11 no. 1 (2000): 112, <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/jcha/2000-v11-n1-jcha1007/031133ar.pdf>; Medical School quotas are noted in Irving Abella and David Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982), 264.

58

Riva Ripstein (Soicher) is included in the list of Shaar Hashomayim congregants who served in the Second World War, see Shuchat, *The Gate of Heaven*, 139. Date of graduation was obtained from "Deaths," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 171 no. 1 (July 2004): 103, <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/171/1/103.full.pdf+html>. For information on Ruth Easser see O'Neil, *The Unsung Psychoanalyst*, 26.

59

O'Neil, *The Unsung Psychoanalyst*, 29. Ruth finished her officers training in 1946. Given the option to either leave or continue in the military, she opted to retire.

60

"Trail Chapter Hadassah Has Active Season," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, April 2, 1943, 3. <http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/jwb-50106/page-3>.

61

See for example "Social Notes – Montreal," *Canadian Jewish Review*, September 21, 1945, 3.

62

A spreadsheet of the information collected on Jewish servicewomen is available from Sandra Lipton, "Jewish Women in the Canadian Military Forces of the Second World War," (2017). <http://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/51511>. Future consultation of resources held by Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian War Museum, various Veterans' associations and the archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress should significantly enhance data collection.

63

Rome, "Canada," 288.

64

See Usher, "Jews in the Royal Canadian Air Force," 93-95.

65

Mollie Mickelson Klein, summary of interview by Cyril Leonoff, June 15, 1978, A.1971.001-19.78-01, summary and digital copy, JHSBC Oral History Collection, Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

66

Bordts, "Pearl Bordts née Klenman," 271.

67

Conrod, *Athene Goddess of War*, 142.

68

"Ruth Florence Levi (Offstein)," *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 26, 2006. http://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-113574/Levi_Ruth

69

Nobleman, interview; Cyril Edel Leonoff, *Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls: The Jewish Communities in British Columbia and the Yukon* (Victoria, BC: Sono Nis Press, 1978) 177.

70

Klein, interview by Cyril Leonoff.

71

"Thea Ginsburg," in Torontow, *There I Was*, 27. Thea's maiden name was Schatz.

72

Nathan M. Greenfield, "Standing in for a Man: The Wrens Freed Navy Men for Active Duty," *Maclean's Magazine*, August 26, 2002, 44. See also Redstone-Lewis, "The Creation of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service," 88-90 for detailed discussion of Frieda Bindman (Dougherty)'s service and the Navy list of November 1944 for information on her rank and service location: http://www.navaland-militarymuseum.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Navy_List_1944_November_400dpi.pdf

73

Gossage, *Greatcoats and Glamour Boots: Canadian Women at War, 1939-1945*, 236.

74

Jerry Proc, "Gloucester," Radio Communications and Signals Intelligence in the Royal Canadian Navy. <http://jproc.ca/rrp/rrp2/glo.html>.

75

Nobleman, interview.

76

Chisvin, *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, 75.

77

Tanya Sklar, interview by Bertha Gold, Calgary, Alberta, November 23, 1999, transcript, Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, Calgary, Alberta. Tanya's maiden name was Volovnik.

78

Frances Labensohn (Binder)'s Attestation Papers (Genealogy package). Copy received from the family.

79

Usher, "Jews in the Royal Canadian Air Force," 99-101.

80

See Irving Abella, "Antisemitism in Canada in the Interwar Years," in *The Jews of North America*, ed. Moses Rischin (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1987), 235-46; "The Dark Years: 1930-45," Chap. 8 in *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1999), 179-207;

81

Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many*; Antoine Burgard and Rebecca Margolis, eds. "None is Too Many and Beyond: New Research on Canada and the Jews During the 1930s -1940s," Special issue, *Canadian Jewish Studies* 24 (2016); Alan Davies, *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992); Ira Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism in Canada* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015); David Rome, *Clouds in the Thirties: On Antisemitism in Canada 1929-1939* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1977); Gerald, "Antisemitism from the Twenties to the Forties" in *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddard, 1998), 172-203.

Weinfeld, Morton. "Louis Rosenberg and the Origins of the Socio-Demographic Study of Jews in Canada," in *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993*, ed. Sergio DellaPergola and Judith Even (Jerusalem: The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1997), 43. <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/10829>.

82

Toman, *An Officer and a Lady*, 47.

83

D'Ann Campbell, "Women in Uniform: The World War II Experiment," *Military Affairs* 51, no. 3 (1987): 138.

84

Klein, interview by Jean Gerber. Apparently in the Navy there was lack of awareness of the regulation that Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, and others were exempted

from attending the Church of England service. See Rosamond Greer, *The Girls of the King's Navy*, 92 n2.

85

Laurel Halladay, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Soldiers and Artists': Canadian Military Entertainers, 1939-1946" (Master's thesis, University of Calgary, 2000), 42-43, <http://dspace.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/40464r>; Russell, *Proudly She Marched*, 1:50.

86

Chisvin, *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, 75.

87

Greer, *The Girls of the King's Navy*, 90.

88

Ziona Kaplan (Levin), Summary of Interview.

89

Chisvin, *Women's Voices: Personal Reflections*, 75-76.

90

"Sabbath Services Held by Jewish Personnel at Patricia Bay, B.C.," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, March 3, 1944, 3, <http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/jwb-50059/page-3>.

91

No Greater Honour: A Record of Canadian Jewish Military Service, VHS (Toronto: Jewish War Veterans of Canada, 1987). Mildred Richmond is the only Jewish servicewomen included in this video.

92

For statistics on number of nursing sisters in England see Major William March, "RCAF Nursing Sisters," *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 1, no. 2 (2012): 45, http://airforceapp.forces.gc.ca/CFAWC/eLibrary/Journal/2012-Vol1/Iss1-Winter/Sections/07-RCAF_Nursing_Sisters_e.pdf; Sarah Lack (Cohen), Summary of interview by Stuart Carroll, July 7, 1986, media #398, The Irma and Marvin Penn Archives of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

93

Sarah Lack (Cohen), Summary of interview.

94

Regarding Margolis, Conrod, *Athene Goddess*

of War, 182; Bill Boss, "Ottawa Man Assigns Duties to First C.W.A.C.'s in Italy," *The Ottawa Journal* June 23, 1944, 2. Regarding Keller, letter noting that Eve Daniels served submitted by her daughter: Leslie Kinrys, "Remembering Women Vets," *The Canadian Jewish News*, November 20, 2014, <http://www.cjnews.com/perspectives/letters/week-nov-20-2014>.

95

Rome, *Canadian Jews in World War II*, Part 1, *Decorations*, 69.

96

Ibid.

97

Ethel Allman interview by Bertha Gold, Calgary, Alberta, December 2001, transcript, Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, Calgary, Alberta. Summary available: Ethel Allman, "Israel Miller and Daughter Ethel Allman: A Jewish Family's Life as Alberta Pioneers," *Discovery: The Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta* 19, no. 1 (2009): 2, <http://www.jhssa.org/Discovery-Feb2009.pdf>.

98

"Obituaries," *Evening Times Globe*, August 30, 1994. Reprinted in Saint John Jewish Museum Synagogue Records: Schoen, Lillian (Meltzer) <http://www.cjhn.ca/en/explore.aspx?q=-schoen+lillian>

99

"Our Jewish Veterans: Remembering Those Who Served," 7.

100

Richard Menkis, "'But You Can't See the Fear That People Lived Through': Canadian Jewish Chaplains and Canadian Encounters with Dutch Survivors, 1944-1945," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 60, no. 1-2 (2008): 25-50, http://americanjewisharchives.org/publications/journal/PDF/2008_60_01_02_menkis.pdf.

101

Tritt-Aspler, "Estelle Tritt-Aspler," 174.

102

Ibid., 175.

103

Ibid., 177.

104

Ibid., 178-79.

105

Mark Celinscak, *Distance from the Belsen Heap: Allied Forces and the Liberation of a Nazi Concentration Camp* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 193.

106

Tritt-Aspler, "Estelle Tritt-Aspler," 177.

107

Bordts, "Pearl Bordts née Klenman," 274.

108

Ibid., 271-72.

109

Freda Swedlove Lithwick Fonds, Ottawa Jewish Archives, <http://www.cjhn.ca/en/permalink/cjhn80366>

110

"Thea Ginsburg," in Torontow, *There I Was*, 27-28; Information on Reva Lightstone (Wolf) is found in "Happy Reunion as Kin Meet in London," *The YMHA Beacon*, June 14, 1945, 7, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=H6myOybQgeYC&dat=19450614&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

111

Estelle Tritt Aspler, interview by Cynthia Toman, August 13, 2001. Transcript provided by Cynthia Toman. Original tape is at the Canadian War Museum.

112

"Social Notes-Montreal," *Canadian Jewish Review*, August 6, 1943, 3, <http://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/mcc-cjr-17117/page-3>

113

"Memorial to Jewish Canadians," *Colborne Express*, September 27, 1945, 2, <http://vitacollections.ca/cramahelibrary/2841333/page/4>. Another image of this presentation is available at <http://www.beeldbankwo2.nl/cgi-bin/frsiserver.dll/medium/145044-med.jpg?frskey=145044>.

114

Veteran Stories: Esther Mager, The Memory Project, <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/1119:esther-mager/>

115

"Evelyn Dubinsky," in Torontow, *There I Was*, 25.

116

Jack Switzer, "Jewish Airwoman Dies in 1943 Alberta Air Crash," *Discovery: The Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta* 14, no. 2 (2004): 3. <http://jhssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/JHSSA-June-2004-4.0.pdf>

117

Ontario Jewish Archives, "Cornwall," Ontario's Small Jewish Communities, <http://www.ontariojewisharchives.org/exhibits/osjc/communities/cornwall/index.html>.