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“Bravely and Loyally They Answered the Call”: St. John Ambulance, the Red Cross, and the Patriotic Service of Canadian Women During the Great War¹

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Abstract

During the Great War (1914-1918), thousands of middle-class Canadian women temporarily redirected their activist, feminist energies towards patriotic war relief under the patriarchal constraints of the Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance. Authorized under the authority of the National Relief Committee to oversee all military medical relief efforts, these two male-directed service agencies successfully engaged the emotional commitment and physical energies of a significant segment of Canadian women by employing a gendered patriotic rhetoric encompassing both the maternal ideology of the early women's movement and the militarist spirit of the era. This paper considers the largely unheralded role of civilian women's essential unpaid support for Canada's war effort as an active, emotional, and political undertaking, consciously exploiting traditional nurturant and feminine ideologies to validate their role as maternal patriots. In examining both the print and visual representations of Canadian women as voluntary nurses and Red Cross workers, the paper explores the contradictions between patriotism, feminism, and maternalism. Challenging traditional interpretations of war as a solely masculine endeavour, it recognizes the value of women's unpaid labour to the state, and women's inherent satisfaction in their active, if non-combatant involvement.

Among the most evocative and enduring symbols of the Great War is the Red Cross poster of a white-robed, Madonna-like figure, cradling a miniature wounded soldier to her breast² [see Figure 1]. Heralded as “the Greatest Mother in the World,” the image is cloaked in the mantle of patriotic maternalism. It captured the essence of women's role in the war as a nurturant figure, larger than life, bringing comfort to the sick and wounded “boys,” and providing an essential support for the military medical services. This imagery is still debated among feminist scholars, but during the First World War, the ideology of patriotic maternalism was potent propaganda, frequently employed to elicit the voluntary assistance of women for the war effort.³ Maternalist ideology had been used successfully since the late nineteenth century to engage women's political sensibilities in the quest for the vote, legitimizing their role in the public domain as reformers, missionaries, or social activists.⁴

The conjunction of maternalism with patriotic endeavour was also well established through the example of the International Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), organized during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).⁵ Thus, when the call for patriotic service sounded again on 4 August 1914, Canadian men rushed to enlist. Canadian women were similarly affected by this militarist, imperialist sentiment which had increasingly pervaded the national consciousness since the turn of the century, enhanced by the ideology of a “Holy War.”⁶ Constrained by the gendered expectations that determined their role in war to be distant, supportive, and unofficial, thousands of middle-class Canadian women, eager to find a concrete and viable application for their energies, were able instead to sublimate their desire for an active role by enlisting in what the journalist Mary Macleod Moore characterized as that “great army of women”: the mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts of Canada’s fighting men.⁷

This paper examines the critical role played by these Canadian women volunteers during the Great War who promoted and supported the war effort through their tireless and efficient work for the Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC). Appealing in particular to the patriotic sentiments of Anglo-Protestant women with strong familial ties to Britain, the St. John Ambulance Association (SJAA) and the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS) successfully harnessed the emotional commitment and physical energies of a large segment of Canadian women by employing a gendered, patriotic rhetoric that encompassed both the maternal ideology of the early women’s movement, as well as the militarist spirit of the era. This paper argues that without this essential female support system, the Great War would have been far costlier to the state both in financial and human terms.

Canadian Women and the War

From the outset, under the rhetoric of propaganda, women in the war effort were seen to be “the real supporters and approvers of war”; that war “could never be waged were it not mothered by women.”⁸ Not all middle-class Canadian women of Anglo-Protestant origin were unquestioningly supporters of the war effort. A significant number of women were ardently



Figure 1: The Greatest Mother in the World
 A.E. Foringer (artist)
 July 1918
 Library and Archives Canada 1983-28-1507

activist and pacifist, sadly recognizing the carnage and waste of young lives. Ironically, maternalism remained an essential component of both sides of the debate. Suffrage was a guiding tenet for the leadership of both factions.⁹

Despite the dissent, women's service organizations across Canada responded eagerly to the challenge of war, demonstrating the efficient and effective style of voluntarism that characterized women's wartime activities overall.¹⁰ As Veronica Strong-Boag argues, the Great War "energized and united women as never before."¹¹ The women's associations affiliated with the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) quickly identified patriotic service as a viable means through which to display their political responsibility, temporarily abandoning the quest for the vote in favour of voluntary war service. Nevertheless, they were still required to work within the established guidelines of the newly-created National Relief Committee, a government umbrella organization that gave primary responsibility for medical war relief to the male-directed organizations of the Canadian Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance. Even the IODE, the leading women's patriotic association, was obliged to channel much of its work through the Red Cross network with the President serving as a non-voting member on the CRCS Executive.¹²

Historically, as Cynthia Enloe observes, women camp followers had long provided the essential services of cooking, laundering, and nursing for the mobile armies of pre-industrial wars, tasks that far outweighed their conjugal duties.¹³ The majority of women remained behind to "keep the home-fires burning," helping to ensure the survival of the family farm or business. Although the specific tasks required of women in war evolved with the new demands of mechanized warfare, the spirit of their patriotic support was little altered over time. Women still nursed the sick and wounded, provided the medical supplies and comforts necessary to aid in their recovery, or helped to maintain economic stability with their labour in factories, on farms, and in businesses traditionally staffed by men. As men marched off to war, women fell into line behind, filling the void with a shadow army of workers, both paid and volunteer, thus demonstrating their patriotism in a re-gendered workplace legitimized by war.

Women's efforts, in turn, were encouraged and sustained by a popularized militarist vocabulary that evolved to promote and justify their labours. This equated their non-combatant war services with the heroism of the fighting men, and consequently deprecated the unpatriotic behaviour of any women who did not appear to be "doing their bit." Women who raised funds for one of the many patriotic causes or rolled bandages in Red Cross workrooms were described as making "heroic sacrifices of time and money." Those who worked on the land, or spent long hours in munitions factories, or in other non-traditional employment, were seen to have "carried on valiantly."¹⁴ This new ideology of female militarism described a kind of virtual soldiering, equating women's work on the home front to the work of soldiers in the trenches. The ideology served to justify the new visibility of women as well as the long hours spent away from home in voluntary war activities or in the paid workforce of the munitions factory.

The concept of the "military" woman, however, was both alien and alarming in its challenge to conventional gender roles, as Katie Holmes' study of Australian nurses and sexuality well demonstrates, necessitating the promotion of a new wartime category of maternal patriotism.¹⁵ The image of the maternal patriot was reinforced in both language and visual representation, helping to legitimize the zeal with which young, single women entered the

workplace, dressed in boots and overalls. Their older, married, middle-class sisters, donned uniform-style costumes to devote endless hours to fund-raising and other patriotic projects outside their homes. During the Great War, Canadian women were seen steadfastly to have “rallied to the call,” whatever their age, marital status, or social class, although class largely determined whether their service would be paid or voluntary.¹⁶

Any woman who failed to “stand and be counted,” or who displayed either indifference or a lazy attitude towards her patriotic duty, was soon compared to those “slackers” among the men who risked the white feather of cowardice by avoiding military service.¹⁷ Constructed as a maternalist ideal of female service, women’s patriotism could be seen to have balanced the masculine construction of patriotic duty. The soldier gave his service to the state, defending both nation and Empire, ultimately risking his life in the dual role of citizen and father to protect the vulnerable women and children at home. Despite the burden of societal expectation to perform their designated roles, women also “met the challenge” by supporting the men through their maternal auxiliary services as nurses, labourers, and volunteers.

Women of the Canadian Red Cross

When war was declared, the Canadian Red Cross was confident that women would “muster” their forces as willingly as they had during the South African conflict fifteen years earlier. Then, middle-class, Anglo-Protestant women from regions of Canada with a high concentration of British immigrants had given their full support to the fledgling CRCS just entering its third year of operation in October 1899.¹⁸ In August 1914, the Canadian Red Cross administration correctly surmised that women would readily resume their patriotic efforts in this new imperialist cause, and from the outset, women’s organizations across the country pledged their support.

Recent scholarship emphasizes the degree to which women’s labour in war has frequently been exploited by the military and the state to help sustain the fighting forces. Yet, the degree to which women understood and accepted this reality, using their maternal, nurturant qualities as a vehicle through which to achieve the goal of closer involvement in the war has been largely overlooked. Both Cynthia Enloe’s study of women and the military, and the late John Hutchinson’s history of the International Red Cross, characterized women’s efforts as marginalized and manipulated by the patriarchal, militarist state, which “feminized” patriotism to extract women’s necessary support services for the armed forces as volunteers, workers, or nurses.¹⁹ Meryn Stuart recognizes that despite this exploitative system, Canada’s First World War military nurses consciously satisfied some of their own goals for travel and adventure while achieving a new level of independence not found in civilian nursing practice.²⁰

While volunteers arguably were more exploited for their lack of salary, they did not endure the difficult working conditions of salaried munitions and farm workers. A case can be made for volunteers’ sense of satisfaction in achieving some form of active involvement in the war effort through their voluntary labour. The state and the military unquestionably enjoyed the benefits of the unpaid labour of thousands of Canadian women during the war; however, many women in Red Cross centres experienced unexpected autonomy and a sense of responsibility in new leadership roles. These roles — opportunities not readily available in their

pre-war activities — included acting as St. John Ambulance Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses in military hospitals at home and abroad.

Susan Kingsley Kent argues that women's experience of war was primarily one of "comfort, caring, and giving, as opposed to conflict, violence, and destruction."²¹ The choices open to women were severely circumscribed by societal taboos against women in combat, and even CAMC nursing involved barely more than three thousand qualified Canadian women overall, to the great disappointment of the thousands more who applied for active service abroad.²² Munitions and related war industries, and the vacancies left by absent male workers, ultimately absorbed the paid labour of thousands of Canadian women, particularly from among the working class.²³ Thousands more, even those in full-time waged employment, eagerly donated hours of service to women's patriotic service organizations. The largest war relief organization, and the primary benefactor of this voluntary labour, was the CRCS.

Without the dedication of thousands of women volunteers, the CRCS could never have mounted its massive voluntary war industry so successfully. Near dormant as the war began, with only \$10,000 to its credit, the CRCS was rapidly reconstituted under the authority of the National Relief Committee, and soon evolved into a vital support for the CAMC.²⁴ By the end of the war, the CRCS accounts showed a surplus of \$1,500,000, having collected and distributed more than \$9,000,000 overall by the close of 1919.²⁵ Although judicious administration on the part of the Executive Committee could account for some of this success, the CRCS also credited the zeal and efficiency of its thousands of women volunteers for their fund-raising efforts. Their unparalleled production of medical and hospital supplies also conserved much of the collected funds for other necessary purchases of medicines, hospital construction, and equipment.

Founded in 1896, the CRCS had remained a branch of the British Red Cross until incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1909.²⁶ In these early years, the women had accepted a place on the outer fringes of the CRCS administration, but by 1914 they had gained a more advantageous position on the Red Cross Central Council, achieving a forum for their advice and consultation, if not yet a vote on the Executive Committee. During this time, the CRCS also acquired the invaluable services of Adelaide Plumptre, a *tour-de-force* activist, feminist, and dynamic organizer, possessed of formidable intellect and administrative acumen.²⁷ A British immigrant married to a prominent Toronto cleric, Plumptre already had a hand in several women's organizations in the city, and ushered in a new era of women's practical patriotism during the Great War. Quickly becoming indispensable to the Canadian Red Cross war programme as Superintendent of Supplies and Corresponding Secretary, Plumptre was the first woman appointed to the ten-member Executive Committee.²⁸ Her task was to oversee the purchase and manufacture of materials, medical supplies, and food-stuffs for CAMC and CRCS military hospitals overseas, and help to manage the general fund-raising activities. Within days of her appointment, Plumptre began organizing the essential infrastructure necessary to guarantee a smooth system for the production, collection, and transportation of materials from local Red Cross centres across Canada to their intended destinations in hospitals overseas.²⁹

Adelaide Plumptre also used "the power of the press" to her advantage, and many of the articles, advertisements, and announcements that appeared in local and national papers during the war originated from her desk. Localized Red Cross campaigns, similar to those conducted on university campuses to elicit funds and encourage women undergraduates to

participate in Red Cross programmes, were well orchestrated from CRCS headquarters in Toronto. Plumptre's carefully chosen patriotic exhortations relied heavily on maternalist rhetoric in their appeal to the women's sense of duty, honour, and responsibility in war.

The language of the "military woman" marching "shoulder to shoulder" with her sisters throughout the Empire, was popularized in the commercial press by journalists like Mary Macleod Moore. This was later adopted by Plumptre for the campus papers along with an equal portion of maternalist ideology to reinforce the perceived expectations of a woman undergraduate's wartime duty.³⁰ As Katie Pickles demonstrates, the maternalist construction of women's support for the Imperialist cause had first surfaced during the South African War, largely under the aegis of the IODE. Pickles notes the "strongly gendered distinctions" that were drawn between women's paid and voluntary labour. These donations of time and energy in aid of the sick and wounded were characterized as "fitting" of a woman's part.³¹

In the *McGill Daily*, the women students were characterized as "eager to rally round the Red Cross standard, and equip themselves to do a woman's part in the defence of the Empire."³² This form of gendered militarism was echoed at the University of Toronto in *The Varsity* by a woman student urging her sisters to action in the workrooms, declaring "surely we cannot afford to let the men outdo us in patriotism." She voiced the frustration of many young women that "our fighting is being done for us" despite their desire to "go to the front and share in all the heroic deeds and active work."³³ Sewing and knitting hospital garments comprised a larger portion of Red Cross work expected of university women, apart from monetary contributions and regular fund-raising events. Students were urged to commit several hours per week to the campus workrooms, and were expected to continue these projects in the university residences during evenings and weekends.

The campus newspapers indulged in regular cheerleading for these activities, praising the "busy crowd of Red Cross workers, knitting, stitching, rolling bandages," and congratulating faculty wives for their service in overseeing the work. Yet, the students were still reminded that "Every spare minute counts, girls!"³⁴ At a mass rally of women students assembled at the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall in the autumn of 1915, a Red Cross spokeswoman urged everyone to become a fee-paying member. She declared that it was "the duty of every Canadian woman to do the utmost in her power to help Britain win," or risk having to reveal herself "as a shirker when the future generations wish to know what she has done in the memorable years of 1914 and 1915."³⁵ Paraphrasing the recruiting slogan, "What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?" the message was a direct plea to patriotic maternalism. Women were seen to abrogate their patriotic responsibilities if they failed to follow the traditions of voluntary service established by their foremothers, risking the disapproval of their unborn children, and negating their potential role as good mothers. Red Cross work had thus become an essential signifier of the definition of middle-class womanhood for the war generation.³⁶

In March 1917, *The Varsity* reported that women students had donated two thousand hours of Red Cross service over the academic year while being constantly reminded that a few hours a week was "nothing compared to the sacrifices being made at the front."³⁷ In autumn of 1917, however, a new model of campus feminist patriotism began to emerge. The Warden of McGill's Royal Victoria College, Ethel Hurlblatt, an early leader in campus Red Cross work,

noted that the men of the Senior Arts year had all but vanished into the war. She urged women students to fill the void by “maintaining the high standards of work and conduct” associated with the university. Imploring the women to live up to the ideals of those “pioneers of the past” who had paved the way for them in higher education, Hurlblatt cautioned them not to be tempted away by war service, no matter how worthy. She argued instead that women had a duty to complete their education despite constant demands to devote even more time and energy to patriotic service, pleading that “our women students must take courage to work with greater zeal and purpose, and not mind if they make no great showing at present in patriotic work, and if they are unable to raise as much money as they like to do for patriotic purposes. This is their time for preparation.”³⁸

Fearing their talents and abilities could be squandered on traditional patriotic service, Ethel Hurlblatt saw a far greater benefit to the nation if women successfully completed their studies in order to fill the leadership void that would result from the loss of so many educated young men. These sentiments were echoed in *The Varsity* which acknowledged the unrelenting demands on women students, arguing that: “Disciplined academic work and the development of the power of thought can meet the need. . . Academic work is national service.” Regardless, the Red Cross continued to solicit the participation of women students. With gendered messages like “we must not neglect our duty,” in January 1919, *The Varsity* was still reminding women students of their patriotic obligations.³⁹

During four years of war, the Red Cross figured largely in the lives of thousands of Canadian women of all classes, who willingly gave some part of their day to knitting, sewing, rolling bandages, sorting newspapers for hospitals overseas, or packing food parcels for prisoners-of-war. Under the authority of the National Relief Committee, the CRCS took on the mammoth task of collecting and transporting “all war material required” for the relief of men in military hospitals and overseeing “all appeals for funds and expenditures.”⁴⁰ Under the guidance of Adelaide Plumpre, women in provincial branches of the Canadian Red Cross took full responsibility for fund-raising activities as well as the production, collection, packaging, and transport of supplies and comforts. They developed a complex and efficient war industry that was ultimately responsible for supplying all CRCS and CAMC hospitals, and related medical facilities abroad, beyond the basic equipment and supplies funded by the government. They also fulfilled any reasonable request from other Red Cross affiliates overseas.

An adjunct branch of the CRCS was also established in London, one section largely under the guidance of Lady Julia Drummond of Montreal. Socially and politically prominent, and highly influential, Lady Drummond had carefully exploited her position as the widow of one of Canada’s leading financial and political figures prior to the war for the benefit of humanitarian and child-welfare projects.⁴¹ A true representative of the concept of the “maternal feminist,” early in the war, Julia Drummond obtained the authority to establish an Information Bureau within the London headquarters of the CRCS.⁴² Initially funded from her own substantial fortune, Drummond created a system to keep families in Canada informed of the location and condition of men who were hospitalized, missing, or killed. Assisted by two women colleagues, Julia Drummond opened the Bureau in February 1915 in two borrowed rooms of the CRCS London offices. By the end of 1918, she had expanded into much larger

premises to accommodate an estimated one hundred volunteers on site, and some two thousand workers in the field, more than 90% of whom were women.

As the tasks increased, the Bureau was sub-divided into departments, with an Enquiry section continuing to locate missing men, whether they were hospitalized, prisoner, or casualty of war. Bereaved families received details of the death and burial of loved ones, while every hospitalized Canadian soldier was assigned a Visitor who prepared weekly progress reports for the families and brought flowers and gifts on their behalf. The Parcels Department assembled packages of comforts and supplies for patients according to their needs, and the Newspaper Department attempted to obtain home-town newspapers for every man, no matter how small or remote the community. The Drives and Entertainment section arranged days out for ambulatory men at a country house tea, or a concert in the park, often chauffeured by the women volunteers in their own cars.⁴³

One critical responsibility of the Information Bureau was the care of Prisoners-of-War (POWs). Under the Geneva Convention, the Canadian Red Cross was responsible for the well-being of all Canadian POWs.⁴⁴ Initially, regular twice-monthly food parcels, plus other necessary supplies of blankets, clothing, or tobacco were organized and dispatched directly from the Bureau office in London.⁴⁵ As the scope of this responsibility increased, the POW Department became an independent body in 1916 although former Bureau staff continued to administer the programme. During 1918 alone, the POW Department dispatched some six parcels of food each month, each weighing ten pounds, to an estimated twenty-seven hundred prisoners, further arranging for regular bread rations, cigarettes, and other supplies to be dispatched separately.⁴⁶

Under the strictures of war, including censorship, limited military information, and a minimal communications network, the women of the Information Bureau provided an invaluable service for hospitalized or imprisoned men and their families. Journalist Mary Macleod Moore characterized the service as the "Mothering Bureau," and her numerous wartime articles in the Canadian press reflected the maternalist ideology employed to rationalize women's enthusiastic war service, both paid and volunteer.⁴⁷ Kathryn McPherson's study of the memorial erected to honour Canadian military nurses of the Great War argues that the "conventional female imagery reminded the audience of the long tradition of female nurturing that superseded the more recent challenges to gender relations."⁴⁸ As the representatives of absent mothers helping to ease the pain of sons recovering, or dying, in hospitals far from home, these active and very public women patriots conformed to conventional notions of women's expected role behind the scenes.

For countless numbers of Canadian women, Red Cross war work became their primary outlet for their patriotic expression, transforming the Canadian Red Cross into a war industry as efficiently managed and operated as any munitions factory or armament manufacturer. During the war, the Nova Scotia Red Cross was established by the Local Council of Women in Halifax. It produced more than one million individual articles for military hospitals overseas.⁴⁹ A model of scientific management, its work centre in the dormant Halifax Technical College produced hospital garments on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, hospital supplies on Thursdays and Fridays, and surgical dressings daily. From the \$600,000 collected in fund-raising activities across Nova Scotia, \$400,000 was sent on to CRCS Headquarters in Toronto.⁵⁰ As McPherson argues, such

public evidence of women's administrative capabilities "was legitimized by maternal and domestic signifiers" that served to define their triumphs as the natural outcome of their nurturant qualities.⁵¹ Without the dedication and organizational skills of local leaders, and the vision of women like Plumptre and Drummond, the Canadian Red Cross could never have achieved the vast programme of services and support it provided for the military medical service.

Women of the St. John Ambulance

A form of "representative maternalism" equated the idealization of women's war service to the patriotic efforts of brave soldiers fighting for King and country.⁵² A post-war chronicle of Canadian women's war service espoused this ideology, observing that "[t]rue to the traditions of their sex and true to their inheritance as daughters of the British Empire, Canadian women reported for instant service."⁵³ Although patriotic womanhood was understood as a primarily middle-class, Anglo-Protestant experience, the wartime juxtaposition of patriotism and maternalism offered women of all ages and socio-economic status greater scope for experiences beyond their accustomed roles. The maternalist ideology that gendered patriotic work, paid or voluntary, also presented new opportunities for women's active service in the war.

Only those women qualified for the work of a military nurse, having graduated from an accredited hospital school, were eligible to serve overseas as Nursing Sisters in the CAMC. This distinction was granted to only 3,141 nurses selected to hold the rank of Lieutenant in the CAMC Nursing Service.⁵⁴ For Canadian women, active participation in the war was limited to a surrogate role on the home front. Women worked in the war industries or related employment, and as unpaid volunteers for the Red Cross and in numerous other women's war relief programmes. The St. John Ambulance alone offered civilian Canadian women the opportunity for a more direct involvement in the war under their programme for Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses, known as VADs. By the end of the war, two thousand women served as unpaid Canadian VAD nurses, and although the majority were based in local military convalescent hospitals, some five hundred of Canada's VADs were eventually posted abroad, primarily to British military hospitals.⁵⁵

The majority of the VADs were unmarried, middle-class, Anglo-Protestant women, ranging in age from mid-twenties to early thirties. Many were educated women, some with university degrees, and frequently were found to be employed in one of the "women's occupations" such as teaching or clerical work. A significant number, however, relinquished their waged employment for the opportunity of unpaid VAD service abroad.⁵⁶ Constructing its VAD nurses in the image of well-bred, maternal patriots, the St. John Ambulance created a unique form of active patriotic service for Canadian women as voluntary nurses and ambulance drivers. Although in no sense a feminist organization, the St. John Ambulance unashamedly employed both maternalist ideology and the traditions of the service ethic espoused by the women's movement to promote the VAD programme. As with the Red Cross volunteer, the work of the VAD nurse was legitimized through propaganda and the popular press as a direct service to the state, and in turn equated to "soldiering" for men.

The St. John Ambulance, however, did not set out to create Canada's first female "soldiers," but only to organize a supportive, adjunct group of women nursing volunteers to assist with its men's ambulance corps.⁵⁷ Under the authority of the National Relief committee, the St. John Ambulance Association initially was designated to train and certify new Detachment members, both men and women. The St. John Ambulance Brigade was expected to organize and deploy the VADs only as a domestic resource to augment the military medical services in case of invasion on home soil. With the declaration of war, the men in the Ambulance Divisions were quickly absorbed into the military along with most potential new recruits.⁵⁸ The women nevertheless responded to the prospect of VAD service with unexpected enthusiasm and the balance of the Detachments was soon reversed from predominantly male to overwhelmingly female. The Canadian Voluntary Aid Detachment plan quickly evolved into a woman's volunteer nursing organization, echoing the experience of the much larger sister organization of British Red Cross VADs.⁵⁹

Compared to the average three-year hospital apprenticeship training programme required of qualified Canadian nurses, VAD training was both brief and cursory.⁶⁰ For its part, the St. John Ambulance made no pretence of equating VAD training to that of a graduate nurse, and part of the appeal of VAD nursing was the relative ease with which the qualifications could be acquired. The first step was the completion of two courses offered by St. John Ambulance in First Aid and Home Nursing to qualify as a St. John Ambulance Brigade nursing member.⁶¹ Once accepted into a local Brigade Nursing Division, the VAD recruit was required to attend the regular meetings and practice sessions and participate in the various Brigade community activities and responsibilities; women in full-time employment could participate on weekends and evenings. Some expenditure was required for training and membership, helping to define the socio-economic parameters of VAD service.⁶² Each course involved about twelve hours of instruction and demonstration, generally spread over five or six weeks in weekly two-hour sessions with the expectation of some practical training in local hospitals. The VADs, however, found scant welcome in local civilian hospitals, and Dr. Charles Copp, Director of the VAD programme for St. John Ambulance, later admitted that among those VADs selected for service overseas in military hospitals, some "have not had any hospital experience whatever."⁶³

While the St. John Ambulance did not pretend to transform the VAD into a qualified nurse with a few weeks of training, gender, class, maternalism, and the tradition of women's community service helped to prepare the way for the emergence of volunteer nursing as an ideal form of women's active patriotic service during the Great War. As an extension of women's peacetime public service, VAD service did not challenge the status quo and therefore was seen as an acceptable expression of public patriotic work for young, middle-class women. For those VADs selected, the sacrifice of salaried employment and the comforts of home were easily outweighed by the prospect of active service overseas, an opportunity no other form of women's volunteer patriotic service could provide.

Prior to 1915, before military convalescent hospitals began to spread across the national landscape, the VAD functioned as little more than a glorified cheerleader, distributing candy and cigarettes to departing troops at railway stations and ports. Many trained VADs became restless without a clear purpose and some took the initiative to travel overseas and apply directly to the British Red Cross Joint VAD Committee. They were responsible for placing all

Allied VADs in hospitals abroad, often obtaining a place in a British military hospital. In Canada, by early 1915, the increasing need for the suitable care of returning wounded signalled a new stage in the evolution of the Canadian VAD movement. Former residences and public buildings were rapidly being converted into military convalescent homes where VADs served as “probationers” under the watchful eye of trained graduate nurses.⁶⁴ The identity of the Canadian VAD nurse was becoming more formalized, albeit as a quasi-official rank at the lowest level of the hospital hierarchy. VADs now had direct exposure to sick and wounded soldiers returning from battle. This extended their role as nursing volunteers beyond the ordinary scope of women’s patriotic service, although still far-distanced from the reality of battlefields abroad.

In the summer of 1916, the request finally came from the British Red Cross for a contingent of Canadian VADs to augment the ever-increasing demand for British nursing personnel. With the departure of this first group of sixty VADs in September 1916 destined for British military hospitals in England and France, the appeal of voluntary nursing experienced a marked upsurge across Canada. Unable to fight “shoulder to shoulder” with the men, Canadian women, as VADs, now at least had a chance to offer direct assistance to hospitalized soldiers within the sound of gunfire. Fully aware that they lacked the qualifications of a military nurse, Canadian VADs saw their role instead as an auxiliary support for the nurses, an extra pair of hands that enabled the qualified woman to be more thorough and efficient in her work.

Regardless of the British military’s confidence in the VAD system, throughout the war, the CAMC firmly resisted the use of VAD nurses in their overseas hospitals, fearing a disruption in the discipline and efficiency of the military hospitals and the undermining of the status of the qualified Canadian military nurses. In order to release more orderlies for active service, the few VADs who were eventually accepted into CAMC hospitals worked only in a non-nursing capacity as support personnel.⁶⁵ By 1918, however, the mounting cost of the care and rehabilitation of invalided soldiers prompted new government interest in training the VADs for massage and physiotherapy work in military hospitals at home and overseas. The VAD programme in Canada was restructured to broaden the scope of VAD work in the military convalescent hospitals as both an economic measure and a guarantee against projected post-war nursing shortages.⁶⁶ This understandably ignited the fears of civilian nursing leaders who envisioned hundreds of veteran VADs transforming their wartime experience into permanent, paid nursing careers. Even more alarming was the prospect of VADs, as casually-trained practitioners, undermining the nurses’ aspirations for professional recognition by reinforcing popular attitudes that still regarded nursing as instinctive “women’s work” rather than a modern, scientific, knowledge-based skill.

The St. John Ambulance was careful to emphasize that VAD training had no professional authority while the popular perception of nursing as a maternal, female attribute worked to the advantage of those women eager to experience a more active role in the war as a VAD. Maternalist ideology emphasized the elements of nurturance and femininity that the VAD represented, enhanced by the basic training provided by St. John Ambulance, and it served as a useful justification for women’s active patriotic service as VAD nurses. Prior to the war, a St. John Ambulance representative promoting the Home Nursing classes paraphrased

Florence Nightingale, observing that although “every woman is a nurse, still every woman is not a skilled nurse.”⁶⁷

The ultimate signifier of legitimacy was the VAD uniform, a public symbol of achievement linking VAD service to the ideologies of public health, social welfare, and patriotic national military service. The Canadian St. John Ambulance VAD uniform was a grey wool dress with white accessories although styles varied with the availability of materials and local preferences. Some detachments adopted the “Sister Dora” cap, reminiscent of a domestic servant, but the more favoured head covering was a triangular white veil of soft cotton lawn similar to that worn by CAMC nurses. Not only was it more comfortable and practical, neatly keeping the hair tied back, but the veil was flattering to almost every face. A Newfoundland VAD, Sibyl Johnson, delightedly described her “saintly” white veils as being “rather pretty and becoming.”⁶⁸ Unfortunately for an Edmonton VAD, Violet Wilson, the veil was “the only attractive thing about the outfit,” finding the rest of the ensemble “unbelievably ugly,” and she covertly broke the rules by having the garments altered to a better fit.⁶⁹ The uniform was intentionally designed to inhibit both individuality and sexuality, but it also engendered a positive new identity for a woman on active patriotic service as a VAD, producing its own tangible rewards. Bessie Hall discovered that her uniform granted her the same discounts in Halifax shops and restaurants offered to men in military dress. Overseas, VADs in London were offered free passage on the buses which the Commandant-in-Chief of the British VAD programme, Katherine Furse observed, made the VADs “feel most warrantably superior to mere civilians in plain clothes.”⁷⁰

The most prominent symbol of wartime VAD nursing was the distinctive red cross in the centre of the white apron bib worn by the British Red Cross VADs. The St. John Ambulance VAD uniform featured only a white, eight-point cross, of the Order of St. John on a black armband. It was the red cross, however, that evolved as a particular wartime icon, becoming a universal symbol for the patriotic service of military nurses and VADs regardless of their affiliation. A 1917 group photograph of the newly-formed St. John Ambulance Calgary VAD Nursing Division prominently displayed the red cross on the apron bibs of the uniforms [see Figure 2]. Although the irregular dimensions of these hand-sewn emblems betrays their unofficial status, they proclaimed the association of Calgary’s VADs with their sisters on active service overseas. They also demonstrated the symbolic power of the “red cross” to signify their communal patriotic service.⁷¹ Over time, the red cross evolved an iconography, favoured by artists and illustrators, denoting the collective pious, patriotic, and maternal image of the war nurse. The ubiquitous image of the military nurse became a potent metaphor as a symbol of



Figure 2: Calgary Nursing Central Division, No. 39 (VAD). Class of 1917.

Glenbow Archives and Museum, Calgary, Alberta NA 2267-4

patriotic womanhood. The uniformed nurse served as a constant public reminder of how reliant wartime society had become on the abilities of women, upsetting the social order of masculine dominance in the public domain.

The Red Cross image of the “Greatest Mother” that epitomized the symbolic role of the nurse was one of countless other visual representations that purposely linked notions of piety, class, patriotism, and maternal duty.⁷² To garner support, artists and photographers produced this propaganda at the behest of governments and war relief organizations. Canadian photographs promoting the St. John Ambulance VAD programme also emphasized the competence and femininity of these volunteers. A photograph of the “Three Shining Lights of Pine Hill Hospital” was testament to the wisdom of the decision allowing VADs access to the wards of the Halifax military hospital despite popular resistance to the idea.⁷³ Evoking the “Mikado’s” “three little maids,” this group exemplifies Victorian notions of innocence and femininity.

The images of Canadian women war workers overseas commissioned by the War Records Office were somewhat less stylized, as evident from photographs of VAD ambulance driver Grace MacPherson. Serving with the Red Cross Convoy at Étapes, Grace was specifically selected to represent Canadian women’s war service abroad. The non-traditional nature of this seemingly glamorous work was aligned more closely to that of the soldier than any other post open to women. Although film and literature have romanticized the idea of VAD drivers skirting the dangers of the battlefields to rescue the fallen, historians argue that this work “remained a male preserve,” with women drivers permitted only to transport men between the ambulance trains, hospitals, and hospital ships.⁷⁴ While hardly a romantic image, Grace projects the natural appeal of a young, healthy, hard-working woman possessed of a rugged elegance rather than a fragile femininity as she changes the tire or cranks the engine of her ambulance.⁷⁵ These photographs helped to reassure Canadians half a world away that young women on war service could retain a “wholesome” femininity even if their war service was more in line with traditional masculine prowess.

Despite precautions, enemy action and more subtle dangers threatened all women on overseas war service; many lost

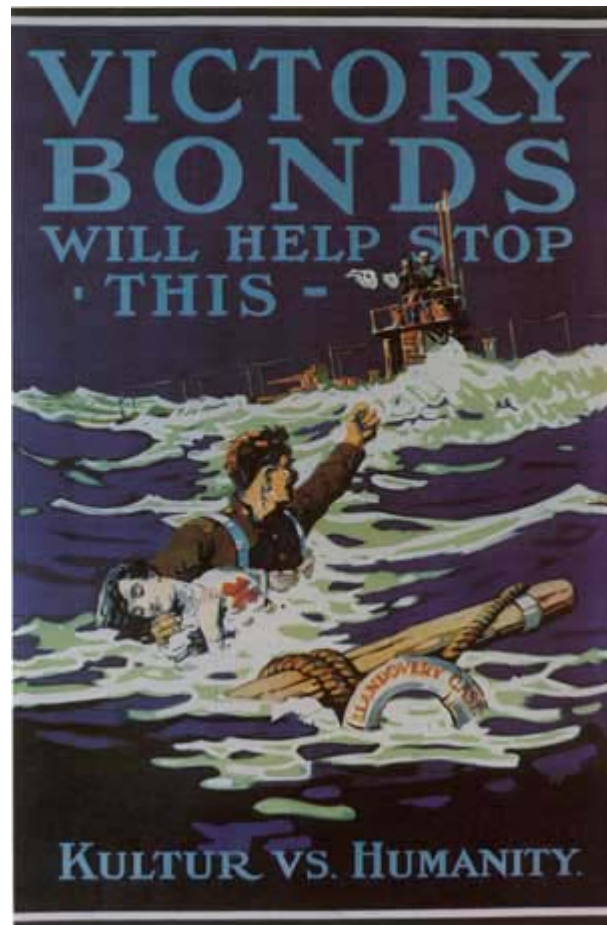


Figure 3: Victory Bonds Will Help Stop This

Unknown Artist

1914-1918

Library and Archives Canada 1983-28-553

their lives as the result of bombing, or the torpedoing of hospital ships, or more frequently succumbed to disease. Six Canadian VADs died on service due to illness or infection, and forty-six CAMC nurses were lost to disease and enemy fire. The torpedoing of a Canadian hospital ship off the Irish coast in June 1918 resulted in the death of fourteen CAMC nurses, and fuelled the fires of propaganda. One dramatic illustration depicted a martyred nurse held afloat in the ocean by a Canadian soldier, defiantly shaking his fist at the cowardly retreating enemy under the caption: "Victory Bonds will Help Stop This!" [See Figure 3]. This nurse, dying like a soldier in the service of her country, was ironically depicted in a Red Cross VAD uniform rather than in a uniform of the CAMC.⁷⁶ Together, the gendered language of war and evocative visual images reinforced the perceptions that equated VAD service with that of the soldier.

Conclusion

In the quarter century prior to the First World War, when both the St. John Ambulance and Red Cross were putting down their early roots in Canadian soil, neither organization envisaged that women's membership would grow beyond an auxiliary, supportive role for the masculine administration of emergency medical relief in time of peace or war. The St. John Ambulance grew steadily over this period, establishing a core network of some twenty-eight Ambulance Divisions in urban industrial centres across Canada but with only a small subsidiary organization of three Nursing Divisions. Following its active participation in the Anglo-Boer War, after 1902, the Canadian Red Cross languished, mandated only for wartime service. From the onset of the Great War, however, the Red Cross demonstrated phenomenal growth, from an almost dormant association of loosely-scattered regional branches to becoming the most active and influential of the Canadian war service organizations.⁷⁷ This resurgence and the ultimate success of the CRCS war programme can be credited largely to the efforts of middle-class women as leaders and administrators in national and regional headquarters across Canada. As well, thousands more from all socio-economic origins eagerly contributed hours of time to organize workrooms, knit, and sew in the brief periods between household duties, or work in the after-hours of their salaried employment.

The gendering of patriotism also enabled the VADs to pursue active service in the identity of a volunteer nurse. As a patriotic endeavour, VAD nursing maintained the aura of military service but it demanded respect for the essentially feminine role of a nurse. This rendered VAD nursing socially acceptable for young women civilian volunteers during the Great War. As Bruce Scates' study of the solitary Australian "sock-knitters" convincingly argues, women patriotic workers at all levels of participation found emotional solace in contributing in some part to the war effort. Scates acknowledges the reality of John Hutchinson's view that organizations like the Red Cross and St. John served "to militarize charity," recognizing also that they also provided opportunities for direct participation in war and prominent public roles not previously available.⁷⁸

The patriotic services of VAD nurses and Red Cross workers were perfectly attuned to that era's conservative notions of women's appropriate war service. The images of women endlessly knitting or of fragile young women with their faces framed by romantic white veils and their uniforms adorned with a symbolic red cross are among the most enduring of the

Great War. The reality of women's Red Cross organization, however, was more sophisticated and far reaching, resulting in the development of a complex, supportive war industry as essential to the war effort as were men and munitions. Likewise, the St. John Ambulance accorded VAD nurses a rare opportunity to experience the reality of the war as close as any civilian woman was permitted. Although rejected by their own military medical establishment, Canada's VADs were valued as an essential support for the Imperial war effort in British hospitals overseas; by the end of the war, the Canadian government came to realize their potential as valuable adjuncts to the military convalescent hospitals. Given the chance to exercise their abilities within the patriarchal constraints of the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance, Canadian women temporarily relinquished their autonomous women's organizations. They employed the maternalist ideologies of nurturing and caring to create a new patriotic sisterhood during the Great War. As one St. John Ambulance observer concluded: "They were by this given the opportunity to serve and bravely and loyally they answered the call."⁷⁹

Notes

1. The author gratefully acknowledges the generous support of this research by the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine through Associated Medical Services, Inc., Toronto.
2. The poster was designed by Alonzo Earl Foringer for the American Red Cross, and adopted by other national Red Cross Societies due to its outstanding success, and was used again during the Second World War. Joseph Darracott, ed., *The First World War in Posters* (Toronto/London: General Publishing/Constable, 1974), Plate 56.
3. Sandra M. Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret R. Higsonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1987), 212; Jane Marcus, "The Asylums of Antaeus. Women, War and Madness: Is there a Feminist Fetishism?" in *The Difference Within: Feminism and Critical Theory*, ed. Elizabeth Meese and Alice Parker (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1989), 64; and Sharon Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), 20.
4. The extensive scholarship on maternalism and women's political activity includes: Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Jane E. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); and Veronica J. Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976).
5. Scholarship on the IODE includes: Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Nancy M. Sheehan, "The IODE, the Schools and World War I," *History of Education Review* 3, no. 1 (1984): 29-44; "Philosophy, Pedagogy and Practice: The IODE and the Schools in Canada, 1900-1945," *Historical Studies in Education* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 370-421; and Marcel M.C. Dirk, "Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and the First World War" (master's thesis, Carleton University, 1987).
6. Alan R. Young, "'We Throw the Torch': Canadian Memorials of the Great War and the Mythology of Heroic Sacrifice," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 24, no. 4 (Winter 1989/90): 5-28.
7. Mary Macleod Moore, *The Maple Leaf's Red Cross: The War Story of the Canadian Red Cross Overseas* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1920).

8. Wealtha A. Wilson and Ethel T. Raymond, "Canadian Women in the Great War," in *Canada in the Great World War*, vol. 6 (Toronto: United Publishers of Canada, 1921), 176.
9. The literature on women's pacifism of the Great War era includes: Barbara Roberts, "Why Do Women Do Nothing to End the War?": *Canadian Feminist Pacifists and the Great War* (Ottawa: CRIAW, 1985); Ruth Roach Pierson, "Ellen Key: Maternalism and Pacifism," in *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Katherine Arnup, Andrée Levesque, and Ruth Roach Pierson (London: Routledge, 1989), 270-283; and Barbara Roberts, "Women Against War, 1914-1918: Frances Beynon and Laura Hughes," in *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace*, ed. Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham (Toronto: Women's Press, 1989), 48-65.
10. Government of Canada, *Canada's War Effort, 1914-1918* (Ottawa: Government Printer, 1918), 24.
11. Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women*, 290, 292.
12. Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS), "32nd Executive Committee Meeting," in *Minutes of the Executive Committee* (10 September 1914).
13. Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?: The Militarization of Women's Lives* (London: South End Press, 1983): 1-17; Linda Grant De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Pre-History to the Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).
14. Wilson and Raymond, "Canadian Women in the Great War," 177-178.
15. Katie Holmes, "Day Mothers and Night Sisters: World War I Nurses and Sexuality," in *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 43-59. For a discussion of the imagery surrounding patriotic women, see Joan Beaumont, "Whatever Happened to Patriotic Women, 1914-1918" *Australian Historical Studies* 31, no. 115 (October 2000): 273-287.
16. The language of patriotism and militarism was a common propaganda tool used to urge women's active support for the war. See Olive Dent, "How Women Rallied to the Call," in *The War Illustrated: A Pictorial Record of the Conflict of the Nations*, vol. 9, ed. J.A. Hammerton (London: Amalgamated Press, 1918), 111; and J. Castell Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs: 1915* (Toronto: Annual Review Pub. Co., 1916), 418.
17. Nicoletta F. Gullace, "White Feathers and Wounded Men," *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (April 1997): 178-206; and Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London: Longman, 2000), 20-22.
18. Canadian Red Cross Society, *First Report: Canadian Red Cross Society: South African War* (21 October 1899 to 1 June 1902), 49-79.
19. Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?* 4-7; John F. Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity: War and the Rise of the Red Cross* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), 353-354.
20. Meryn Stuart makes this case for military nurses in "War and Peace: Professional Identities and Nurses' Training, 1914-1930," in *Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary perspectives on Women's Professional Work*, ed. Elizabeth Smyth, Sandra Acker, Paula Bourne, and Alison Prentice (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 171-193.
21. Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 73.
22. Jean Gunn, "The Services of Canadian Nurses and Voluntary Aids During the War," *Canadian Nurse* 15, no. 9 (September 1919): 1975; also see Susan Mann, *The War Diary of Claire Gass, 1915-1918* (Montreal/Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000): xix.
23. Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, "Women During the Great War," in *Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930*, ed. Janice Acton, Bonnie Shepard, and Penny Goldsmith (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), 261-307.
24. McKenzie Porter, *To All Men: The Story of the Canadian Red Cross* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960), 37.

25. The remaining surplus at the close of the war was calculated as \$1,566,228.37. CRCS, "169th Executive Meeting," *Minutes of the Executive* (30 December 1918). The final tally for the war, taken in December 1919, was calculated at \$9,073,485.56. CRCS, *The Canadian Red Cross Society: 1914 and After* (CRCS, c.1938).
26. The CRCS was recognized as fully independent in 1927 after the establishment of a permanent peacetime programme in April 1919. Porter, *To All Men*, 36; CRCS, "Report to the 10th International Red Cross Conference on the War Activities of the Canadian Red Cross Society," Box 5, File 5.1, "Women's Activities" (CRCS Archives, Geneva, 1921), 1.
27. Adelaide Mary Plumptre (née Wilson), born in England, 1874, was educated at Somerville College, Oxford. She emigrated to Canada in 1901, taught at Havergal College in Toronto, and married the Rev. Herbert D. Plumptre, who subsequently became Canon of St. Albans and Rector of St. James Cathedrals in Toronto. In 1914, she was 40 years old with two school age children. M & E, "Adelaide Plumptre," in *Canadian Who's Who, Vol. II (1936-37)* (Toronto: The Times Publishing Company, 1937), n.p.
28. Plumptre was appointed Superintendent of Supplies on 24 September 1914, and elected Honorary Corresponding Secretary on 26 March 1915. CRCS, *CRCS Annual Report: 1915*, 24; and CRCS, *Bulletin No. 1*, April 1915, 2. The latter appointment gave her a vote on the Executive Committee.
29. CRCS, "39th Executive Meeting," in *Minutes of the Executive* (13 October 1914).
30. Mary MacLeod Moore, "Women War Workers Overseas," *Canadian Magazine* 52, no. 3 (January 1919), 737.
31. Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 42-44.
32. "Undergrad Society Met on Friday," *The McGill Daily*, 10 October 1914, 2.
33. D.J.F., "Women and the War," *The Varsity*, 6 November 1914, 2.
34. "Faculty Notes: Leuana Society," *Queen's Journal*, 26 November 1914, 5.
35. "Women Inaugurate New Year of War – Time Work," *The Varsity*, 6 October 1915, 1.
36. Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 46.
37. "Report of Patriotic Work Done by Women," *The Varsity*, 14 March 1917, 1.
38. Miss Ethel Hurlblatt, "A Foreword to the Women Students," *McGill Daily*, 6 October 1917, 3.
39. Editorial, "College Women and the Fourth Year of War," *The Varsity*, 11 January 1918, 2; and, "More War Work," 8 January 1919, 2.
40. CRCS, *What the Canadian Red Cross Society is Doing in the Great War: Being an Outline of the Organization and Work of the CRCS* (Toronto: CRCS, 1918), 8.
41. Lady Julia Drummond, née Grace Julia Parker, was the second wife of Sir George Drummond, Senator, businessman, and banker. Born in 1859 in Montreal, and widowed in 1910, her surviving son Guy Melfort Drummond was killed at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915, leaving one infant son. Drummond devoted much of her life to the arts and humanitarian work in Montreal; she was also prominent in the NCWC and an ardent suffrage supporter. She donated substantial funds to the operations of the CRCS Information Bureau during the war. Jeanne M. Wolfe and Grace Strachan, "Practical Idealism: Women in Urban Reform, Julia Drummond and the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association," in *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*, ed. Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), 65-80; Iona K. Carr, *The Canadian Red Cross Information Bureau During the Great War* (CRCS, c. 1920).
42. The literature on maternal feminism includes: Linda Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s–1920s* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1979); and Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993).
43. Carr, *The Canadian Red Cross Information Bureau*, 11, 80-94.
44. CRCS, *What the Canadian Red Cross Society is Doing*, 16-17.
45. Carr, *The Canadian Red Cross Information Bureau*, 51-52.

46. Sandra Gwyn, *Tapestry of War: A Private View of Canadians in the Great War* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1992), 168; Carr, *The Canadian Red Cross Information Bureau*, 47-53; and CRCS, *What the Canadian Red Cross Society is Doing*, 17.
47. Moore, *The Maple Leaf's Red Cross*, 69-70.
48. Kathryn McPherson, "Carving Out a Past: The Canadian Nurses' Association War Memorial," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 29, no. 58 (November 1996): 422.
49. Edith J. (Mrs. Charles) Archibald, *Nova Scotia Red Cross During the Great War: Nineteen Fourteen-Eighteen* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Provincial Branch, CRCS, 1920), 83-84.
50. Archibald, *Nova Scotia Red Cross*, 10-13, 30-31.
51. McPherson, "Carving Out a Past," 418.
52. Publications by Mary Macleod Moore include: "Canadian Women War Workers Overseas," *The Canadian Magazine*, January 1919, 737-751; "Canadian Women's War Work in England," *Saturday Night Magazine*, 1 July 1916, 28; and "Canadian Women in the War Zone," *Saturday Night Magazine*, 16 March 1918, 17. Also see Marjory Lang, *Women Who Made the News: Female Journalists in Canada, 1880-1945* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 211, 274.
53. Wilson and Raymond, "Canadian Women in the Great War," 176.
54. The majority of qualified women who applied were not required by the CAMC. Gunn, "The Services of Canadian Nurses and Voluntary Aids During the War," 1975. By the war's end, at least twenty thousand student and graduate nurses were in Canada. Kathryn McPherson, *Beside Matters: The Transformation of Canadian Nursing, 1900-1990* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26.
55. Linda J. Quiney, "Assistant Angels: Canadian Women as Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurses During and After the Great War, 1914-1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of Ottawa, 2002), Chapter 5.
56. Quiney, "Assistant Angels," Chapter 3. At least 194 women are known to have been in waged employment prior to taking on full time VAD service overseas.
57. Originally, the Voluntary Aid plan called for Men's Detachments of fifty-five members to act as emergency ambulance personnel. The Women's Detachments of twenty-three members would assist as nurses and cooks, setting up rest stations and temporary hospital shelters. Militia Department, "Regulation #7," *The Organisation of Voluntary Medical Aid in Canada* (3 March 1914) 53.
58. Invasions by anti-British elements south of the American border were most feared. Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 6; G.W.L. Nicholson, *The White Cross in Canada: A History of St John Ambulance* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1967), 56; and Dr. Charles Copp, "St John's Ambulance Brigade," *Canadian Nurse* 14, no. 7 (July 1918): 1165.
59. Anne Summers, *Angels and Citizens: British Women as Military Nurses, 1854-1914* (London/New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), 253. At least twenty-three thousand British women served as VAD nurses.
60. McPherson, *Beside Matters*, Chapter 2.
61. Militia Council, *The Organization of Voluntary Medical Aid in Canada* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 6.
62. St John Ambulance Brigade, *Annual Report for 1913 of the St John Ambulance Brigade (Overseas) Within the Dominion of Canada* (St John Ambulance Brigade, 1913), 22. Costs averaged about \$2.00 per course.
63. Copp, "The St. John's Ambulance Brigade," 1166.
64. Annmarie Adams, "Borrowed Buildings: Canada's Temporary Hospitals during World War I," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 16, no. 1 (1999): 25-48; Ottawa City Archives (OCA), "Report of the Commandant. Ottawa Women's Voluntary Aid Detachment," *SJAA Records*, MG26 D83, 8 November 1915, 3.

65. Public Records Office (PRO), Kew, #WO222/2134, *Miscellaneous Files, 1914-1918*, Matron E.M. McCarthy, Principal Matron, France, B.E.F., "Report on Work in France of the Canadian Army Medical Corps."
66. Quiney, "Assistant Angels," 288-293.
67. *The Leader* (Regina), 28 January 1911, 10.
68. Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), *Sybil Johnson Papers*, Collection-201, File 2.01.013, "Letter, Christmas Day, 1916 (Tuesday a.m.)."
69. National Archives of Canada (NAC), ACC 1981-0111, "Voice of the Pioneer, "Violet Wilson Interview" (c.1970).
70. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, MG1, vol. 661, no. 8, *McGregor-Miller*, "Bessie Hall to Mother, 2 October 1918; Katherine Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates: The Story of Forty-Five Years, 1875 to 1920* (London: Peter Davies, 1940), 302.
71. Glenbow Museum and Archives (GMA), NA 2267-4, "Calgary Nursing Division #39, Class of 1917" (Photograph).
72. The visual representations of the Great War and women's part are examined in: Diana Condell and Jean Liddiard, *Working for Victory?: Images of Women in the First World War, 1914-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); and Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*, Pictorial Essay, Plates 1-24. Also see Maurice F.V. Doll, *The Poster War: Allied Propaganda Art of the First World War* (Edmonton: Alberta Community Development, 1993).
73. M.S. Hunt, *Nova Scotia's Part in the Great War* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Veteran Pub. Co., 1920), 434. The "Mikado" was produced by W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan in London, March 1885. Also see Archibald, *Nova Scotia Red Cross During the Great War*, 57.
74. Summers, *Angels and Citizens*, 269.
75. Gwyn, *Tapestry of War*, 435-438. These photographs were part of an exhibition of Canadian war images held in London in July 1917. See: Canadian War Museum (CWM), *Grace MacPherson Diaries*, 58A1 21.12, "9 June 1917"; and NAC, PA1315, "Canadian VAD Ambulance Driver with BRCS, Étapes Motor Convoy," *Photograph: Grace MacPherson* (8 June 1917).
76. Desmond Morton and J.L. Granastein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War, 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 200; G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canada's Nursing Sisters* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1975), 94-96; and, Doll, *The Poster War*, 40.
77. G.W.L. Nicholson, *The White Cross in Canada: A History of St. John Ambulance* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1967), 29-32, 35; Quiney, "Assistant Angels," 47-59; and *What the Canadian Red Cross Society is Doing*, 5.
78. Bruce Scates, "The Unknown Sock-Knitter: Voluntary Work, Emotional Labour, Bereavement and the Great War," *Labour History* (Australia) 81 (November 2001): 29-49.
79. Mme. Marie Taschereau, "Home Nursing of Value to Women," *First Aid Magazine* (St. John Ambulance Association), 2, no. 7 (May 1921): 3.