

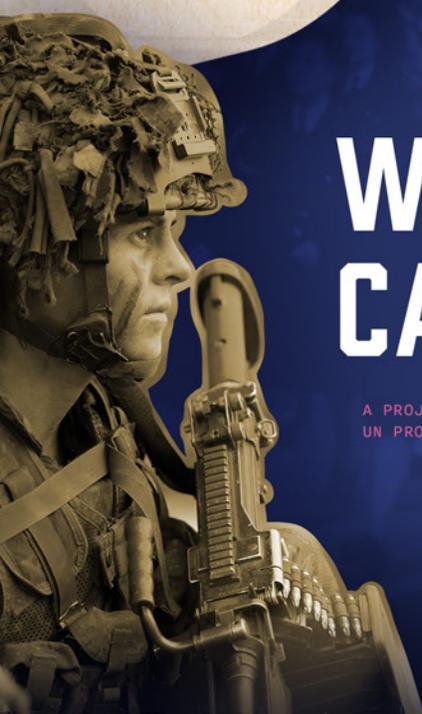


# WOMEN IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY

A PROJECT OF  
UN PROJET DE



RESOURCE KIT



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA  
FINANÇÉ PAR LE GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA

Canada

# MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

This guide includes activities that allow students to explore women's military history in Canada. This guide does not present a comprehensive overview, but offers a selection of stories and perspectives that explore some women's experiences in the Canadian military. These activities are best suited to students who have some contextual knowledge of the time periods and conflicts discussed. You may want to provide students with background information on conflicts relating to the activities. *The Canadian Encyclopedia* is an excellent resource to direct students to for more information.

This kit was produced by the **Memory Project** and **Historica Canada** with the generous support of the Government of Canada. An initiative of Historica Canada, the Memory Project is a volunteer speakers bureau that arranges for veteran and active members of the Canadian Forces to share their stories of military service at schools and community events across the country. Book a speaker at [thememoryproject.com/book-a-speaker/](http://thememoryproject.com/book-a-speaker/). **Historica Canada** offers programs you can use to explore, learn, and reflect on our history, and what it means to be Canadian. Find us online at [HistoricaCanada.ca](http://HistoricaCanada.ca).



◀ **Nurses arrive overseas, France, 1944** (Harold G. Aikman/ Department of National Defense/ Library and Archives Canada/ PA-108174).

## INTRODUCTION

From the women who joined the Canadian Forces during the First World War to the women who serve in all branches of the military today, women have made major contributions to Canada's Armed Forces. This resource kit seeks to engage students in exploring stories from women who have served, and to critically reflect on Canadian women's experiences at war using resources from the Memory Project Archive and *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

Canada has been involved in wars and conflicts throughout its colonial history. Just as the nature of these conflicts has changed over time, so, too, has the nature of women's involvement. While the impact and necessity of women's contributions on the home front are not to be understated, this guide focuses primarily on the experiences of women in the forces.

Canadian women have actively participated in war as part of the Canadian military since the 20th century, from nursing and driving during the First and Second World Wars to today's increasing involvement of women in the regular forces. While the participation rate of women in the Canadian military is not equal to that of men, nor are women equally represented in all trades, much has changed since the earliest days of (partial) inclusion. This guide will share some stories and allow you to explore women's experiences and perspectives over the past century.

## NOTE ON ACCESSIBILITY

Certain activities in this resource kit require advanced listening comprehension skills. When viewing the video resources with language learners, consider enabling subtitles or downloading interview transcripts from the Memory Project's website at: [thememoryproject.com/educational-resources/video/#main-wrap](http://thememoryproject.com/educational-resources/video/#main-wrap).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The following is a list of bilingual research resources to support educators and students. You may want to seek out supplementary resources.

**Historica Canada Education Portal** – A database showcasing thematic learning tools for educators: [education.historicacanada.ca](http://education.historicacanada.ca)

**The Memory Project Archive** – A collection of firsthand accounts and photographs of veterans: <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/the-memory-project>

**The Canadian Encyclopedia** – An online resource for exploring a wide range of topics in Canadian history. Search for articles by title or keyword: [thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en](http://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en)

**Heritage Minutes** – A collection of bilingual vignettes, each depicting a significant person, event, or story in Canadian history: [historicacanada.ca/heritageminutes](http://historicacanada.ca/heritageminutes)

**The Memory Project Video Resources** – Educational videos produced by the Memory Project including veterans' accounts and more. Available online: <https://www.thememoryproject.com/educational-resources/video/#main-wrap>



▲ **Margaret Brownlee lifting Millie Davis while performing RCAF Women's Division fitness exercises in England, 1943** (Margaret Brownlee/The Memory Project).

▶ **Nursing sisters running against each other in a race on Sports Day at the Manitoba Military Hospital in Tuxedo, MB** (Library and Archives Canada/e002504577).

## ACTIVITY #1

# OVERVIEW: WOMEN IN THE MILITARY THROUGH THE YEARS

1. Read the article [Canadian Women and War](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, and watch [LCol \(retired\) Susan Beharriell's presentation](#) on women in the Canadian military. Conduct a class discussion, considering the following questions:
  - What were some of the different roles women took on in the military throughout the 20th century?
  - In what ways did women taking on jobs traditionally held by men challenge gender roles since joining the forces?
  - What challenges did service women face above and beyond those faced by men?
2. Choose one of the following questions to research, and write an essay exploring the topic:
  - Why were women mobilized? What effect did this mobilization have on the forces and in various conflicts, both on the home front and overseas?
  - How did joining the Canadian Armed Forces change women's rights and expectations in society?

## MODIFICATION

What kind of imagery, messaging, or slogans were used to help mobilize women? What kind of roles were women encouraged to take on? Conduct research to create a propaganda poster to enlist the help of Canadian women during the war effort.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[History of the Armed Forces in Canada](#)  
[Women in the Military](#)

**Nursing Sisters Mowat, McNichol, and Guilbride**  
(Department of National Defense/  
Library and Archives  
Canada/PA-007350).



## ACTIVITY #2

# NURSING DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Watch the [Nursing Sisters Heritage Minute](#) and read the [Edith Monture](#) and [Indigenous Peoples and the First World War](#) articles on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, as well as [Ida Ferguson's](#) Memory Project Archive testimony.

1. Answer the following questions in point form:
  - Who were the Nursing Sisters and why were they important to the war effort? What do you think would have happened if they were not on the front lines during the war?
  - What are some of the barriers to entry that Edith Monture faced as an Indigenous woman? What does this reveal about the circumstances that women and Indigenous people faced at this time?
  - In what ways were Edith and Ida's experiences similar? How did they differ?
  - How did the Nursing Sisters' contributions to the war effort influence the public's perception of women serving in the military?
2. In small groups, share your responses, and discuss changes in society for women that came about because of the First World War.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Canadian Army Medical Corps Nursing Sisters](#)  
[Collection: First World War](#)  
[Nursing Sisters](#)

# FIRST WORLD WAR

During the First World War, women were allowed to join the Canadian Forces for the first time (they had been permitted to enlist with the British Army during the South African War). Women largely took on more traditional roles, and did not actively fight on the front lines. They were involved as nurses, drivers, volunteers, and in taking over the breadwinner roles of their absent spouses on farms and in factories. The First World War also served as a tool to advance women's rights – women gradually won the right to vote in provincial elections beginning in 1916, and the federal vote in 1918.

Of the women who served in the First World War, 2,845 were nurses who served with officer rank in the Canadian Army Medical Corps. They were often called "Nursing Sisters," likely referring to a time when nursing was provided by churches. Despite the name, which would be used to identify them until the end of the Second World War, not all the nurses belonged to a religious order. Nursing Sisters treated and cared for injured soldiers overseas and in Canada.



# SECOND WORLD WAR

Canadian Women's Army Corps Pipe and Brass bands in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, 13 August 1945 (Lt Dan Guravich/Department of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada/PA-115474).



The Second World War was a defining event in Canadian history, transforming a country on the fringes of global affairs into a critical player in the 20th century's most important struggle. Canada carried out a vital role in the Battle of the Atlantic and the air war over Germany, and contributed forces to campaigns in Western Europe beyond the effort expected of a small nation of only 11 million people. Between 1939 and 1945, more than one million Canadian men and women served full-time in the armed services. More than 43,000 were killed.

During the Second World War, women played a larger role in the war effort. With so many men away serving in the war, many women found employment in jobs and industries previously restricted to men, including in military trades that had been closed to them. Following the organization of the Canadian Women's Army Corps and the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division) in 1941, and the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (familiarily known as the Wrens) the following year, more than 45,000 women entered the wartime forces. They served in clerical, administrative, communication, and other support roles, freeing men for combat roles.



Signallers Marian Wingate and Margaret Little of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service at work in St. John's, Newfoundland, April 1945 (PO Edward W. Dinsmore/Department of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada/PA-128241).

Wrens Margaret Horn, Shirley Shoebottom, and Camilla Balcombe assist Lieutenant E.G. Aust at the tactical table in June 1944 (Library and Archives Canada/PA-108180).



L/Cpl A.W. Hartung with Pipers Flossie Rose (centre) and Mona Michie of the Canadian Women's Army Corps Pipe Band, Zeist, Netherlands, 25 August 1945 (Lt Charles H. Richer/Department of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada/PA-115466).

## ACTIVITY #3

### WOMEN IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

During the Second World War, women were permitted to serve in less traditional roles in the army, navy, and air force, although only in non-combat roles. Originally intended to free up men for fighting, the new policies allowed enlisted women to serve in a variety of roles, such as clerks, stenographers, ambulance drivers, and intelligence analysts. Women on the home front also made important contributions to the war effort, both in their homes and in the workplace.

1. Break into five groups. This is your "expert group."
2. The teacher will assign each group one of the following subjects:
  - Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC)
  - Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (Wrens)
  - Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division)
  - Women on the Home Front
  - Nursing Sisters
3. Using the relevant resources (listed in the [Women in the Canadian Armed Forces Worksheet, page 4](#)), each expert group should complete the table (also in the worksheet) about their assigned topic.
4. Form new groups of five students, making sure each group has at least one "expert" who researched a different women's formation. Each student will identify and explain to the new group that formation's three to five most important contributions to the war effort, and why they were important.
5. Individually, write a newspaper article from the point of view of a journalist explaining how women in the Canadian Armed Forces contributed to the war effort.

#### ACTIVITY #4

## USING ORAL HISTORY AS A PRIMARY SOURCE

1. Split into groups of 5. Each group member will listen to or read one of the following interviews from the [Memory Project Archive](#). Be sure each team member selects a different interview:
  - [Madge Trull](#)
  - [Peggy Lee](#)
  - [Olive Peat](#)
  - [Carol Duffus](#)
  - [Kathleen Wyatt](#)
2. Individually, list three things you learned from hearing them speak directly that you couldn't have learned from a secondary source.
3. Imagine your selected veteran was in your classroom. Think about five questions you would want to ask them about their war experiences.

4. In your group, discuss the following:
  - What role did your selected speaker take on? What were some of the various roles women took on during the war? How might those experiences have contributed to their perspective?
  - What insights do the archive entries give you into some of the work women did during the war?
  - What stood out to you about their service experiences? What similarities did these women share? What was different about their experiences?
  - What skills do you think would have been important to do their jobs?
  - What challenges may these women have faced? How might that shape the stories they shared in their testimonies?

#### ACTIVITY #5

## WRENS AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Still from Record of Service: [Janet Hester Watt](#) (Historica Canada).

1. As a class, watch the [Record of Service: Second World War video](#) for a short summary of the events explored in this activity.
2. Read the [Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
3. Watch [Janet Watt's video](#), taking notes as you go. Make sure to answer the following questions:
  - Who were the Wrens, and why were they important to the war effort?
  - Why did Mrs. Watt want to join? What did her parents think of her decision to join the WRCNS?
  - What aspect of serving did she find the most challenging?
  - What were some of the social activities Mrs. Watt engaged in while at HMCS *Cornwallis* (located in Deep Brook, Nova Scotia)?
4. Using Mrs. Watt's testimony and your research, write a letter home or a script of a telephone conversation between her and one of her parents discussing her experience at HMCS *Cornwallis*. Consider what she might include in her correspondence or conversation and what she might omit. What were some things she was tasked with? How did she spend her free time? How did her work affect her daily life?



#### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Read the article [Women in the Military](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. During a class discussion, consider the following questions:

- What were some of the different roles women took on? Compare and contrast the experiences of women on the home front and women in active service.
- In what ways were both forms of service important to the war effort?
- In what ways do you think women taking on jobs traditionally held by men challenged gender roles during the Second World War?
- What challenges do you think service women might have faced above and beyond those faced by men?

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Camp X](#)  
[Collection: Second World War](#)  
[Heritage Minute: Elsie MacGill](#)  
[RCAF Women's Division](#)  
[Record of Service Podcast Episode 1: Codebreakers](#)  
[Veronica Foster](#)

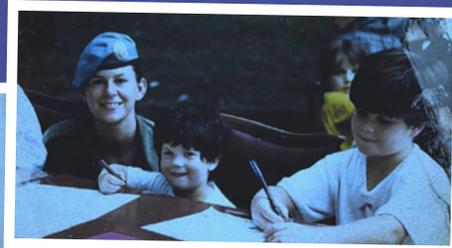
# THE COLD WAR & PEACEKEEPING

The second half of the 20th century may not have seen as many large-scale conflicts as the first half, but the long-running Cold War and Peacekeeping missions kept the Canadian Forces busy. The Cold War refers to the period between the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, during which the world was largely divided into two ideological camps — the United States-led democratic “West” and the Soviet-dominated communist “East.” Each side was deeply suspicious of the other’s motives. In some places, like Korea, the Cold War did turn “hot,” and Canadian soldiers were called upon to help their allies in the southern half of the peninsula. While many countries did try to remain neutral (often referred to as Non-Aligned or Third World countries), the years from the late 1940s on were characterized by tension and the constant threat that the world could devolve into nuclear war. Learn more about the complicated geopolitical circumstances that led to the drawn-out conflict with the [Canada and the Cold War](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

Near the start of the Cold War, in 1951, the reserve elements of all three Canadian military services began to recruit women, as did the regular air force. In 1954–55, the regular army and navy also began to recruit women. In the following decades, there was a growing effort to have the Canadian Forces mirror society, where women were increasingly part of the paid labour force. Political influences, such as the 1971 Royal Commission on the Status of Women and the Canadian Human Rights Commission ruling of 1989, combined with the realization that women were highly effective in non-traditional roles, removed the barriers to full and equal service by women in the Canadian Forces.

One of the avenues that opened for women around this time was peacekeeping, which is the term applied to United Nations military operations in countries affected by conflict. Peacekeepers work to maintain peace and security, protect human rights, and help restore the rule of law. In 1956, Lester B. Pearson, then Canada’s Minister of External Affairs, placed Canada in a leadership role with the United Nations during the Suez Crisis. As a result of Pearson’s leadership in the Crisis and Canada’s role in the UN Emergency Force he helped create, many Canadians consider peacekeeping part of the country’s identity. Peacekeeping would become a key part of Canada’s military portfolio.

Still from *Record of Service: Cold War* (Historica Canada).



Still from *Record of Service: Peace Operations* (Historica Canada).

## ACTIVITY #6

### WOMEN IN THE COLD WAR ERA

1. As a class, watch [Record of Service: Cold War](#) and [Record of Service: Peace Operations](#) and take notes about the conflicts.
2. Divide the class into two groups. Each group will watch one Memory Project video: [Record of Service: Major \(retired\) Sandra Perron](#) (English subtitles available), or [Submarine Hunters: Canada and the Cuban Missile Crisis](#), and focus on the testimony of Able Wren (retired) Gwen Settle. Each group will watch the assigned interview and take point-form notes about the following:
  - What were the goals of the mission the interviewee served in?
  - Were the above goals achieved? How, or why not?
  - What motivated the interviewee to serve?
  - What challenges did the interviewee face overseas? What was most rewarding for them?
  - Highlight any other details that seem important.
3. Split from your group into pairs. Each partner should have watched a different video. Share what you learned from the interview you watched with your partner. Discuss your findings with your partner, comparing what you learned from the interview and what information you found most important to share. What similarities exist between the stories? What obstacles or challenges are common to the women? What do their experiences reveal about how women were treated in the Forces at the time?

## MODIFICATION

Watch one of the above interviews. Create a T-chart, and on one side list positive experiences that the service woman had, and on the other list challenges that the service woman faced.

Still from *Record of Service: Master Corporal (retired) Francine Paquette* (Historica Canada).



## ACTIVITY #7

### REPERCUSSIONS OF THE COLD WAR

As a class, watch the video testimony of [Master Corporal \(retired\) Francine Paquette](#) (English subtitles available). Answer the following questions:

- What enemies are mentioned? How do you know who an enemy is? What kind of engagement did she have with the enemy?
- The Cold War involved the constant threat of nuclear war. How did the experience of being constantly under threat during that time affect Francine’s transition to civilian life?

As a class, have a discussion and create a chart with similarities and differences between soldiers serving in a “hot” war compared with those serving in the Cold War.

## ACTIVITY #8

# FACING DISCRIMINATION IN THE MILITARY

As a class, listen to the [Codebreakers Record of Service podcast episode](#) and then watch [LCol \(retired\) Susan Beharriell's testimony](#) on the trials and tribulations she faced as the first female intelligence officer in the Air Force, and take notes on the challenges and experiences these women faced.

1. In pairs, create a table with one side labelled "Codebreakers" and the other "Susan Beharriell." Decide on the criteria you will use to compare their experiences. These can include topics like what were the conflicts at their time of service, what was the role of women in the military, or what were the expectations from their fellow service men. List as many similarities and differences as you can.
2. Using the testimonies you heard, as well as other stories from women in the [Memory Project Archive](#), complete your chart. See below for additional resources.
3. Share the similarities and differences you recorded with another pair. What surprised you?
4. What were three of the greatest challenges women faced? What were some of their motivations to join the forces? Did the women who joined the forces have similar qualities that led them to be successful in the military? Was there a particular event that prompted an influx of women enlisting? Are there similar events happening today? What kinds of societal shifts, if any, have occurred as a result of women becoming more involved in the military?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Watch the [Michelle Douglas video](#) about her experience during the 2SLGBTQ+ purge, and read [her article](#) as well as the [Cold War Purge](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. What does this reveal about barriers that people face in the military? Do these kinds of issues persist today? What does this reveal about the issues women have faced (and continue to face) in the military today?



▲ Michelle Douglas (Historica Canada).



▲ Major Sandra Perron in the crew commander's hatch of an APC during a patrol on her Anti-Armour Course, CFB Gagetown, fall 1994 (Sandra Perron).

▶ Janet Watt in Toronto, 1945 (Janet Watt/The Memory Project).



## ACTIVITY #9

# CHANGING ATTITUDES?

[Janet Watt](#) served during the Second World War. [Major \(retired\) Sandra Perron](#) (English subtitles available) served in the Canadian Army in the late 1980s and early 1990s and was deployed to Bosnia and Croatia. Watch their two testimonies to start this activity.

1. What are the similarities between Mrs. Watt's and Major (retired) Perron's experiences in service? How did their experiences differ from each other, and which challenges did they share? What factors do you think contributed to the differences in their experiences? List as many things as you can.
2. How does the historical context (the nature of the times) differ when comparing the two periods? How might this have affected the women's experiences? Consider factors such as contemporary global events, women's rights movements, public opinion on the role of women, Canadian civilian awareness, and support of the country's military involvement, etc.
3. In what ways are both Mrs. Watt and Major (retired) Perron trailblazers in their field? How did their experiences pave the way for future generations of Canadian service women? What do they demonstrate about women's contributions in service?
4. Discuss your answers as a class or in small groups.
  - Think about challenges women may have had to face in the military. How did their experiences differ from the experiences of modern women in the military? What challenges have remained?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Canada and Peacekeeping](#)  
[Canada and the Cold War](#)  
[Canadian Women in the Cold War Navy](#)  
[Peacekeeping Timeline](#)  
[Sandra Perron \(Primary Source\)](#)

OS Kris Correa and MS Sharon Slenders during escort duties in the Gulf of Oman, 2003 (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/MCpl Frank Hudec).



## GULF WAR

The First Gulf War, or Persian Gulf War, started in August 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait with a force of 100,000 soldiers. Shortly thereafter, Canada deployed its warships as part of a coalition led by the United States. The warships were part of a naval blockade called Operation Desert Shield. In January 1991, Iraq ignored the deadline for withdrawal issued by the United Nations. At this point, the coalition switched to Operation Desert Storm and began launching air strikes. These were Canada's first air-to-surface strikes since the Korean War.

The Gulf War ended on February 28, 1991, though Saddam Hussein remained in power until the Second Gulf War. More than 4,000 Canadians served during the six-month conflict and marked the first instance where Canadian women served in active combat roles.

### ACTIVITY #10

## WOMEN IN COMBAT

### Canada and the Gulf War: In Their Own Words

explores the Gulf War experiences for four Canadian soldiers, including LCol (retired) Susan Beharriell, who was the first female intelligence officer in the Air Force.

1. Watch the [Gulf War video](#) and read the [Persian Gulf War, 1990-91](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
2. As a class, discuss the following questions:
  - The Gulf War was the first war where Canadian women took on active combat roles. What kind of reaction do you think other members of the military had?
  - How do you think society at large reacted to women taking on combat roles?
  - Combat during the Gulf War looked more like it does today than how it did in the First and Second World Wars. How do you think this influenced the decision to allow women into combat roles?
  - During the span of the Gulf War, Canadian troops were also involved in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Haiti. How do you think the day-to-day roles of troops in peacekeeping missions might have differed from the troops deployed in the war? (Refer to the section on the Cold War and Peacekeeping for more resources.)



▲ Still from *Canada and the Gulf War: In their own words* (Jessie Durham/Historica Canada).



▲ **Soldiers during a Remembrance Day ceremony, 2010** (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/Cpl Roxanne Shewchuk).

# AFGHANISTAN



▲ **Captain Nichola Goddard (DND/CAF).**

The war in Afghanistan was Canada's longest, and its first significant combat engagement since the Korean War. After the September 11, 2001, terror attacks on the United States, Canada joined an international coalition to fight the al-Qaeda terrorist network and the Taliban regime that sheltered it in Afghanistan. More than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the campaign. The war killed 158 Canadian soldiers, including **Captain Nichola Goddard**, the first female member of the Canadian Armed Forces to be killed in

combat. Although the Taliban were removed from power and the al-Qaeda network was disrupted, Canada and its allies failed to destroy either group, or to secure and stabilize Afghanistan.



▲ **Major Susan French speaks with Captain Janaya Hansen at the ABP Headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2012** (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/MCpl Marc-Andre Gaudreault).



▲ **Corporal Melissa Paquet of the Royal Canadian Dragoons takes stock of canon rounds for an armoured vehicle, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2005** (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/Cpl Dan Shouinard).

**Captain Sarah Keller** (Historica Canada).



## ACTIVITY #11

# WOMEN IN COMBAT ROLES

**CONTENT WARNING** Please note that the following video deals with loss, violence, and conflict, which can be sensitive topics for students. Educators are encouraged to watch the video before assigning.

1. Watch **Captain Sarah Keller's video testimony** and take notes about Captain Keller's military experience. While watching the video, take notes on the following:
  - How did Captain Keller's family react to her joining the military? How do you think your family would react if you joined the military? How might their reactions differ?
  - What inspired Captain Keller to join the military, and what expectations do you think she had for her role?
  - What challenges did Captain Keller and her team face in Afghanistan? How may her expectations have compared with the reality of her experience as she served?
  - What has Captain Keller done in the military since leaving Afghanistan? What kinds of skills do you think were required of her in her more recent deployments, and how do you think they compare to the skills she used in Afghanistan?
  - What does Remembrance mean to Captain Keller and how does this relate to her reasons for serving and her experiences?
  - Did Captain Keller's testimony impact how you understand conflict and Remembrance? Why or why not?
2. Imagine that you are the journalist who conducted this video interview. Write a short newspaper article expanding on your response to one of the above questions. Make sure to give a brief overview of Captain Keller's service, and address why her experience is significant.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Choose one of the veteran profiles featured earlier in this kit and write a comparative essay. In what ways are Captain Sarah Keller's experiences similar to and different from the experiences of Canadian service women who served in earlier conflicts?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**9/11 and Canada**  
**Canada and the War in Afghanistan**

# THE FORCES TODAY

The role of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) today is to defend Canada's security, interests, and values, and to contribute to international peace and security. During the early- to mid-2010s, the recruitment of women stagnated, and women left their positions at a slightly higher rate than men. In response, the CAF established recruitment and retention strategies that sought to increase the number of female personnel by one per cent annually, with a goal of reaching 25 per cent representation by 2026. By February 2020, women made up 16 per cent of CAF personnel.

Today, women in the Canadian Forces fill all roles men have traditionally occupied. Women's participation rates in the Canadian military are still lower than men's, and women are not represented equally across the field, but much has changed since the 1950s, when women were first permitted to serve in peacetime. Equal opportunity exists, and the numbers of women taking advantage of that opportunity continues to grow.



▲ Lt Marie-Pierre Dion at a ceremony unveiling a new monument dedicated to the Canadians who fought and died during the Second World War, in Chambois, France, 4 June 2019 (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/MCpl PJ Letourneau).

## ACTIVITY #12

### WOMEN IN THE MILITARY TODAY

1. Divide into small groups to work collaboratively. In your group, pick an element of the modern CAF (e.g., Navy, Reserves, Intelligence) to trace women's participation. Do some research to learn about the history and current state of your chosen area. Search [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) for related resources, click on links within the article(s) you read, and use supplementary resources (such as government websites).
  - Take notes on significant developments, people, and events while researching.
  - If available, read related [Memory Project Archive](#) profiles.
2. Using the notes from your research, develop a timeline of important developments in the involvement of women in your chosen area, from women's first involvement to the present. If you don't know specifics, look at important events that occurred during your time frame and create a broad overview.
  - Add important historical information from your research to the timeline that connects to women's involvement.
3. Make a posterboard display of your timeline and share with the class.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

After completing the timeline, write a page summarizing the development of women's involvement in your chosen area, and include a reflection on the current standing of women in this area considering the challenges they face today.



▲ MCpl Johanna Flawn gathers photograph intelligence to help build maritime situational awareness in the Mediterranean Sea, 30 August 2019 (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/Cpl Braden Trudeau).

## ACTIVITY #13

### THE CANADIAN RANGERS

One of the most gender-diverse parts of today's Canadian Forces is the Canadian Rangers, a unique component of the Army Reserves. About 5,000 Canadian Rangers, many of whom are Indigenous, live in more than 200 remote, isolated, and coastal communities. More than 20% of Rangers are women. They provide the army with experienced eyes and ears on the ground to support national security and public safety in these areas.

1. Watch the [video](#) on the Canadian Rangers and read the [Canadian Rangers article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Answer the following questions:
  - What sort of operations do the Rangers perform? How do these differ from other branches of the army? How are they similar?
  - What cultural values are important to Sgt. Tsannie in her work as a Ranger? Why do you think these values are important, and how are they reflected in her work?
2. Make a list of three values that are important in your classroom or in your culture.
  - How do you use them in your everyday life?
  - If you were a Ranger in your own community, how would these values inform the way you do your job, the way the command structure works, and the way you communicate with others in your community while you served?
3. Share your responses in small groups, discussing the similarities and differences between your answers and taking notes.
4. Return to your responses to the questions at the beginning of this activity. Write a short article on one element of the Canadian Rangers you came upon in the video or the article (e.g., organizational structure, responsibilities). Use notes taken from your small group discussion to expand your initial response. You may wish to do additional research while writing your article, using sources such as CBC News or the Government of Canada website.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Canadian Arctic Sovereignty](#)  
[Canadian Armed Forces](#)

## COMMEMORATION

Many museum exhibits share history in a way that emphasizes the experiences and roles of men, distorting our perception of history. Imagine your class is responsible for a new exhibit that highlights the experiences of a diverse range of women who have contributed to the Canadian Forces. Create a collaborative museum exhibit exploring the significance of women's contributions to Canada's military.

1. Working as a pair or small group, choose a woman or group of women from the [Memory Project Archive](#) to research.
2. Note your findings in the [Museum Panel Graphic Organizer](#), available on the [Education Portal](#).
3. Begin your research on [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) or the [Dictionary of Canadian Biography](#), and use other sources.
4. Assess the significance of the woman or women you researched. Justify their inclusion in a museum exhibit. A person can acquire historical significance if they can be linked to larger trends and stories that reveal something important about the past.
5. Create a descriptive museum panel on a poster or digital platform, including the following:
  - A brief description of the woman or group of women
  - An explanation of what they reveal about life at the time
  - An argument about their significance in Canada's history
  - Images that illustrate your perspective, if available
6. Present the panel to the class, and together create a collaborative museum gallery.



▶ The Canadian Rangers set up a temporary encampment using double-walled McPherson tents on Sherard Osborn Island while on Arctic patrol during Operation NUNALIVUT on April 14, 2013 (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/Cpl Aydyn Neifer).



▶ Canadian Ranger Donna Geddes assembles a komatik (wooden toboggan) that will be used by a patrol in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, 2011 (DND/CAF/Combat Camera/WO Eric Jolin).

## BOOK A SPEAKER

The [Memory Project Speakers Bureau](#) is available year-round for both school and community groups, and for audiences of all ages. Our volunteer speakers have a diverse range of experiences from the front lines during the Second World War, Korean War, Gulf War, and the war in Afghanistan, to top-secret intelligence gathering during the Cold War, to peacekeeping missions around the world, and more. Their personal experiences can add nuance to a history or social studies class and create opportunities for more open conversations about Canada's military and its role at home and abroad.

Request a speaker now through the Memory Project website: [thememoryproject.com/book-a-speaker](http://thememoryproject.com/book-a-speaker).

### TEACHER TIP

Be sure to communicate with your speaker to ensure that they know what to expect from the visit. Obtain permission in advance of the visit if you plan to record the speaker.

1. Once a speaker has been scheduled, as a class, come up with a list of interview questions to ask your speaker during their visit. You may want to use the [Host a Speaker Kit](#) to help formulate your questions.
2. During the visit, record interesting quotes, ask questions, and note key information to include in your project.
3. Based on the answers to your questions, work individually to create a news article or as a group to create a mini documentary or a podcast (if the speaker grants prearranged consent) about their experience. Make sure your documentary includes the following:
  - Where and when did they serve?
  - Why did they serve?
  - What is their branch of service?
  - Which experiences did you find interesting?
  - What was something surprising you learned?
  - Is listening to oral history important? Why?
  - How has listening to oral history shaped your view of the conflict or event that was discussed?

### TEACHER TIP

See the [Oral History Podcast Resource Kit](#) to expand this activity even further!

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