

Mac at war: Women's work and education at the Macdonald Institute during the First and Second World Wars

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Abstract

In 1903, the Macdonald Institute opened in Guelph with the stated aim of training rural women in home economics and domestic science. Part of the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC), the school progressed quickly and soon became an invaluable resource for both Canadian and international women. Over the years, the "Mac girls" made their mark on the world, including during the two World Wars. Under the leadership of directors Mary Watson during the First World War, and Olive Cruikshank during part of the Second World War, the Macdonald Institute supported the war effort in several ways. These included adapting curricula to the exigencies of wartime, and sending material overseas. The Macdonald Institute initially remained open during the Second World War, yet in 1941, standard classes ceased for five years as the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) No. 4 Wireless School took control of the Institute's buildings and property. Throughout this period of closure, women arrived to live and attend classes at the Wireless School as part of the RCAF's Women's Division and School of Cookery. Throughout the two World Wars, women associated with the Macdonald Institute and the No. 4 Wireless School, including students, graduates, instructors, and members of the Women's Division, variously involved themselves with the war effort. The activities of the Macdonald Institute, and of the No. 4 Wireless School, afford an opportunity to examine how women's work and education was viewed, deployed, and reallocated throughout the two World Wars.

Keywords: Macdonald Institute; Guelph; Ontario Agricultural College; Royal Canadian Air Force; First World War; Second World War.

Introduction

In the 1860s, universities in the United States began offering courses in home economics (Elias 2008). Home economics focused on practical domestic issues such as finding paid help, and on applying scientific principles to the domestic environment through education in nutrition, textiles, and home management (Crowley 1986; Elias 2008; Stage 1997). At the time, studying home economics was one of the only ways for women to obtain a higher education. Yet the purpose of many of these classes was to make a woman into the "perfect wife" (Elias 2008). Despite being intended to train women for married life, some women used an education in home economics to focus on careers rather than domesticity (Stage 1997).

In 1903, the Macdonald Institute opened in Guelph, with the stated aim of training young rural women in home economics and domestic science. Part of the Ontario

Agriculture College (OAC), the school progressed quickly and was soon an invaluable resource for both Canadian and international women (who variously came from the United States, Great Britain, and South Africa) (Snell 2003). Over the years, the "Mac girls" made their mark on the world, including during the two World Wars. Under the leadership of its directors, Mary Watson (1866-1950) during the First World War and Olive Cruikshank (1858-1948) during part of the Second World War, the Macdonald Institute was variously involved in the war effort. During both wars, this involvement included changing courses by adapting curricula to the realities and exigencies of war, and sending material overseas. The Macdonald Institute initially remained open during the Second World War, but in 1941, classes ceased for five years while the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) No. 4 Wireless School took over its buildings and property

(including the two residences, Macdonald Hall and Watson Hall, the Macdonald Hall Annex), along with some of the OAC. As students left, air force women arrived to live and to attend classes at the No. 4 Wireless School as part of the RCAF's Women's Division and the School of Cookery. Women associated with the Macdonald Institute during the First and Second World Wars, including students, graduates, instructors, and members of the Women's Division, actively contributed to the war effort. The Macdonald Institute's wartime activities provide a window from which to understand how women's work and education was viewed, deployed, and reallocated throughout the two World Wars.

The Macdonald Institute, food conservation, and the First World War

The Macdonald Institute was founded in 1903 by Adelaide Hoodless (1857-1910), with the assistance of James Mills (1879-1904), president of the OAC, and a \$175,000 contribution from Sir William Macdonald (1831-1917). Hoodless had already opened the Ontario Normal School of Domestic Science and Arts in Hamilton when she approached Mills and Macdonald with the idea of creating an institution of higher education in home economics. Some consider Hoodless a pioneer in home economics, while others regard her as an amateur, due to her lack of formal education. Regardless of her limited education, she devoted her life to the cause (Crowley 1986). She promoted home economics through the establishment of schools, participation in organizations supportive of women's education, and through speaking engagements (Crowley 1986). Although she was an advocate of women's higher education, she, along with many of her contemporaries, believed that women ought to be housewives. It is notable that she encouraged women to pursue an education in home economics because her son had died at a young age from drinking contaminated milk (MacDonald 1986). Hoodless held that aside from its general usefulness, women's education could prevent similar tragedies. Although she had fairly restrictive idea of what women could appropriately do with their lives, her efforts opened doors for women to pursue more avenues of professional and educational opportunity than were typically encouraged.

In 1903, as the Macdonald Institute opened and the Normal School closed, the Normal School's staff transferred from Hamilton to Guelph. From the start, the Institute had two objectives. First, it sought to train graduates to teach domestic science in public schools. Second, it sought to train women in homemaking in the same way that their male counterparts were trained in agriculture at the OAC. Three programs were created: the Normal course for future teachers, the Home Maker course for future homemakers, and the Housekeeper course for women who hoped for a career in professional housekeeping. The Normal and Housekeeper courses were intended for women who wanted to pursue careers, while the Home Maker course was

intended for those who were to be housewives. Highlighting the ways in which women's education pertained to traditionally feminine roles, The Home Maker course was nicknamed the "ring course," as women sometimes came to find a husband from the OAC.

As war broke out in 1914, the school remained open. Watson believed that by teaching home economics and training students to become teachers, housekeepers, food economy lecturers and demonstrators, country agents, dieticians, members of Voluntary Aid Detachments,¹ and leaders and workers of organizations such as the Red Cross, the Macdonald Institute would contribute to the war effort. Course curricula adapted to the times, emphasizing, for example, food conservation and thrift (Watson 1915). Home nursing courses began to incorporate lectures on war-related concerns and injuries, including bullet wounds and internal haemorrhaging. Moreover, students were strongly encouraged to take the St. John Ambulance certification exam (Ahrens and Montgomery 1914; Snell 2003). Special courses for the wives and daughters of soldiers were planned, including a six-week course on cooking, laundry, home nursing, gardening, and either dairy or poultry work. Promoted by the Great War Veterans' Association, course tuition, board, and lodging cost \$30. Students also supplied former OAC students—who were engaged in combat overseas—with socks, caps, chocolate, tobacco, and other comforts (Ontario Legislative Assembly 1917). The women of the Macdonald Institute offered their services to the Department of Militia and Defence, and provided information to help those in their communities economize (Watson 1915). Additionally, they established a Red Cross Branch, which also sent many items overseas (Snell 2003).

The contributions of the Macdonald Institute's graduates illustrate how women's work was transformed in service of the war effort. Many served in military hospitals as nurses and dieticians, both at home and overseas (Ontario Legislative Assembly 1917; Snell 2003; Watson 1915). Additionally, a number of graduates volunteered or were stationed abroad, mainly in England and France, where they worked in the canteens, hospitals, or with the Canadian Red Cross (Ross 1974; Ontario Legislative Assembly 1919). Others were employed as dieticians, housekeepers and teachers of domestic science in the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment and Soldiers' Settlement Board (Ontario Legislative Assembly 1920; Watson 1915).

Finally, Macdonald Institute faculty and graduates impacted practices of food conservation. Director Mary Watson, who at the time was the only female member of the Canadian Food Board, advised both the provincial and federal governments on food economy and contributed to food conservation pamphlets. Other instructors contributed to bulletins issued by the Food Controller's Office and travelled to give lectures and demonstrations on food conservation. Numerous graduates assisted with food conservation campaigns for the Food Controller's office, or worked at industrial farms (Snell 2003). Students, faculty members, and graduates of the Institute contributed variously to the war

effort, a result both of volunteers' initiative and a governmental willingness to allow women's educational programs to aid in meeting the nation's wartime demands.

The Macdonald Institute during the Second World War

The onset of the Second World War also brought changes to the Macdonald Institute's curriculum. The home nursing course, which was mandatory for first-year students, allowed students to qualify for St. John Ambulance certificates, including First Aid and Home Nursing. Second-year students could receive further instruction, including stretcher bearing drills, allowing them to qualify for the St. John Ambulance's Medallion and Pendant (Ontario Agricultural College 1940). First-year courses in food were modified to include budgeting and war nutrition. Food courses were also reorganized to include information on the use home-grown foods and on the planning and preparation of low-cost (yet adequate) diets and meals prepared with army rations (Ontario Agricultural College 1940). In addition to changes in food course curricula, the number of required food courses more than doubled.

Moreover, an entirely new course, the Women's Auxiliary for War Services (WAWS), was created. Overseen by Major Kendall and Lieutenant Livermore, this course consisted of 60 hours of training in military drill, gas mask and air raid precaution drills, rifle range practice, and map and compass reading. Compared to the Institute's activities in during the First World War, WAWS provided women with opportunities more closely related to war work (Examination Papers 1940; Snell 2003; Hachborn and James 1940).

Unlike during the First World War, the Macdonald Institute hosted a number of war-related short courses. In 1940, various courses were available, including a Red Cross Workers' course, which 100 participants attended. The course examined wartime nutrition, foods, and child care. Another general course, with 81 participants, dealt with similar topics. Moreover, 200 women (in numerous sections) enrolled in a course on ambulance driving, which featured discussions of gas engines, batteries, gas defence, electricity, stretcher bearing, first aid, traffic rules, map reading, shooting, and knots (Ontario Agricultural College 1940; Snell 2003).

With the support of the Canadian Medical Association, two wartime emergency courses were organized. One course, open to anyone who wished to enroll, dealt with the care of refugee children (450 women attended) (C.M.A. Approves War-Time Courses 1940). The second course addressed the nutritional problems which affected 70-75% of the Canadian population (Say War Food Hints for All Housewives 1940). Representatives were selected from different communities in the hope that they would share what they learned (Say War Food Hints for All Housewives 1940). The course discussed the health benefits of fruits and vegetables and taught ways

to prepare healthy meals at low cost (Ontario Agricultural College 1940; Say War Food Hints for All Housewives 1940). These new courses were the results of experience. The First World War had demonstrated the consequences of a global conflict, a reality to which the courses during the Second World War were more attuned and better prepared.

The Macdonald Institute was also the site of a number of RCAF chefs' courses in 1940. Men from the Perth Regiment of Hamilton, for example, trained in food and meat preparation. This course, an evening course which ran twice a week, sought to enable cooks to better feed soldiers (Ontario Agricultural College 1940). Fifty military cooks from Military District #1 enrolled in a three-week course on the best use of rations (R.C.A.F. Cookery School 1944; Special Short Course for Chefs in Training Camps 1940). The course included laboratory demonstrations and lectures that dealt with meat cutting; principals of food and nutrition; selection and grade of milk products; eggs and poultry; storage and handling of fruit and vegetables; methods of food preparation and their differential effects on the nutritive benefits of the food; and sanitation and pest control (Ontario Agricultural College 1940; R.C.A.F. Cookery School 1944; Special Short Course for Chefs in Training Camps 1940).

As they had during the First World War, the Macdonald Institute's students sent items overseas, mainly clothing, food, and informational materials. Additionally, they made and sent great numbers of garments and nightgowns for refugees (Girls of Macdonald Institute 1941; Ontario Agricultural College 1940; R.C.A.F. Cookery School 1944; Special Short Course for Chefs in Training Camps 1940; Hachborn and James 1940). Further, they specifically sent 65 fruit cakes and 96 pounds of jam in four-pound tins to the OAC men and Macdonald Institute women stationed overseas (Girls of Macdonald Institute 1941; Ontario Agricultural College 1940). By request, the OAC review,² a student publication, was sent to the OAC graduates overseas (Barry 1941). As part of the extension work³ at the Macdonald Institute, material about the RCAF chef course was compiled and sent to the armed forces and to other RCAF stations (Ontario Agricultural College 1940).

In 1940, the Macdonald Institute organized educational exhibits related to the war for the OAC's Farm and Home week. The Institute's contribution to the event mainly concerned clothing and food. At Farm and Home week in 1941, the staff of the Macdonald Institute planned and presented a program on the significance of food, clothing, and domestic problems in times of war. They used a question and answer approach to discuss the need for a balanced diet and canning. They encouraged the use of old clothes and demonstrated how to make children's clothing from adult clothing. A physician, Dr. G. E. Reaman, was invited to discuss problems experienced by children whose fathers were away, emphasising the different stages of childhood and their importance for adult life. Dr. Reaman promoted discipline and argued that children were Canada's future (Diet is Important: Discussion held in Farm/Home week 1941). These exhibits and programs allowed the women of

the Macdonald Institute to reach out to the surrounding community, using their education to prepare others for the home front impacts of war.

While at school, the students involved themselves with the war effort. They formed clubs, military organizations, and made sure to keep informed. Some contributed a column in the OAC Review, providing general information on the war and publishing letters and excerpts from England, along with lists of OAC students who were missing, captured, or had perished in combat overseas (Buchanan and Porter 1943). Twenty-five students were members of the rifle club (Girls of Macdonald Institute 1941). Students started the Voluntary Service Corps, which consisted of 20 hours of military training, 10 hours of map reading and gas mask drill, and four hours of rifle practice, organised with the assistance of the OAC's Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC). The Service Corps had 208 members (Ontario Agricultural College 1940). Macdonald Institute students also joined the Ontario Woman's Land Army, an organization in which women took over farm work while men were overseas (Barry 1941).

Macdonald graduates, moreover, served both at home and abroad. They held a range of ranks in the RCAF's Women's Division, Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS), Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC), Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (CWAMC), and the Canadian Red Cross. They served as Wrens (working at signal towers and navigation stations, both on the east coast of Canada and abroad),⁴ dietitians, nurses, technical officers, and more. Some graduates came back to campus, either to learn a trade or work at the RCAF's School of Cookery and what would soon become the No. 4 Wireless School (Ross 1974). Barbara Rawlinson, a Macdonald Institute graduate and the 5000th RCAF woman recruit, had the honor of being the first to enter the position of standard tradeswomen, a new classification for a member of the Women's Division (5000th Women Recruit Enlists in R.C.A.F. Here 1942; The Buchanan and Porter 1941). What the graduates had learned during their time at the Macdonald Institute afforded them with ways to contribute to the war effort, and to demonstrate the professional usefulness of women's skilled education to a country at war (Ross 1974).

The students, graduates and faculty of the Macdonald Institute sought to assist the war effort in both the First and Second World Wars. While they did so in similar ways during both World Wars, the Second World War saw an increase in the impact they could make. During both World Wars, the curriculum at the institute changed to include budgeting, food conservation, and home nursing. The Second World War, however, also saw the creation of the WAWS. In both World Wars, students were encouraged to obtain St. John Ambulance certifications, with additional certifications available during the Second World War. While the Macdonald Institute ran special courses during both World Wars, there were many more courses—and many more available roles—during the Second World War. Students, graduates, and faculty sent goods overseas during

both wars, particularly food, clothing, and other items for former OAC and Macdonald Institute students stationed abroad. Graduates volunteered and served at home and abroad during both World Wars, particularly as dieticians and nurses. The Second World War, however, afforded more opportunities for women's to be stationed coastally or overseas. The addition of women to many of the auxiliary military organizations in the Second World War allowed more women to formally register, even if many of the positions bore some similarity to the volunteering positions that they held during the First World War. Overall, however, these expanded avenues of involvement suggest that the view of women's work was to some extent changing, coming to be increasingly regarded as a home front counterpart to the total war effort.

The No. 4 Wireless School and the Second World War

*Thus endeth all entries - for some time, we hope. -
If for all time we know it is in the best of causes,
and is of the Lord's doing (Elgie⁵ 1916).*

Nevertheless, on May 30, 1941, the Macdonald Institute temporarily ceased operations as the RCAF took over the Macdonald Institute and parts of the OAC. Although both the OAC's and the Ontario Veterinary College's (OVC) degree courses continued, all courses in home economics ceased for the duration of the war. Although Watson had felt that an education in home economics was war work in itself, the Canadian government did not agree. The closure of the Macdonald Institute indicates that the government viewed that the RCAF's need for military space was of greater importance than the educational work that the Macdonald Institute was doing.

The staff of the Macdonald Institute were assigned to other lines of work. A few, including faculty member Jessie Lambden, stayed at the Institute to work for the School of Cookery (Ontario Agricultural College 1941). Students who had yet to graduate were transferred to the University of Toronto. The closure of Macdonald Institute and the requisition of parts of the OAC was a governmental solution to the expanding needs of the Department of National Defense (Ross 1974). The buildings and land were used to form the RCAF's No. 4 Wireless School, which included the Wireless School, the School of Cookery, the code and cipher section, and a station for radio mechanics. The Macdonald Institute was used primarily for classrooms and cooking laboratories for the Wireless and Cookery Schools. Macdonald Hall housed radio laboratories and quarters for the Women's Division. Watson Hall became the male officers' quarters and the officers' mess. Finally, the Macdonald Hall Annex held the laundry, lounge and officers' quarters for the Women's Division, as well as the headquarters of the School of Cookery (Site Plan 1941).

Despite the temporary closure of the Macdonald Institute, women did not leave campus entirely. In fact, the Royal Canadian Air Force was the first branch of the Canadian military to allow women to join. On July 2, 1941, the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (CWAAF) was created. Women were not considered full members of the RCAF, as indicated by its status as an auxiliary force. Yet, by February of 1942, this changed. The RCAF had concluded that women could form an integral part of the organization and should accordingly be considered full members. Thus, on February 3, 1942, the name changed to the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division. The Women's Division's job was to relieve men from low-level positions, so that they could fly militarily (hence the motto "We Serve that Men may Fly") (Ziegler 1973). When women first joined, there were eight positions available to them. By the end of the war, there were 65 positions (though none of which were combat roles) in which they were eligible to serve. By the time the Women's Division was disbanded at the end of the war, 17,038 women had served.⁶ In this way, the RCAF reallocated women to fill men's working positions, thereby enabling more men to fly. The cessation of home economics education and the increase in women's auxiliary military involvement highlights a shift from the volunteer involvement of the First World War to a process of formal requisition and reallocation.

Members of the Women's Division both trained and worked at the No. 4 Wireless School. Women trained as code and cipher clerks, and worked as transport drivers and Wireless Operators, Ground (WOGS). The No. 4 Wireless School was the only such place to provide training in code and ciphering, and an oath of secrecy had to be sworn by those involved (Airwomen Visit R.C.A.F. Centers 1943; Bryce 2010). Students learned Morse code and telegraph keys, as well as signaling by telegraphy, flags, beams, and lamps (Bryce 2010). WOGS both trained and worked at Wireless Schools. They were also needed on the east coast of Canada and overseas, where their work was to send and receive messages to and from planes (Finest Trade Training and Interesting Jobs Offered to Women Who Join the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) 1943). As Squadron Officer Kathleen O. Walker put it, "it's hard to find girls suited to this type of work, but we need plenty of them" (Finest Trade Training and Interesting Jobs Offered to Women Who Join the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) 1943).

Despite these changes, many of the women who attended the No. 4 Wireless school continued in the vein of the previous Macdonald Institute cohorts. Indeed, like the home economics students, they were typically unmarried women in their late teens and early twenties. Just as like many students and graduates of the Macdonald Institute had married OAC graduates, many airwomen married airmen.

Nation, nutrition, and the School of Cookery

During the Second World War, nutrition became a matter of national interest. Wartime informational campaigns proclaimed that food was equal to munitions in the pursuit of victory (Ontario Agriculture College 1943). From the onset of the war, it was evident that Canadian nutrition was inadequate. Many men were turned down from military duty because they did not meet the medical standards. Numerous nutritional campaigns sought to help solve these problems, which included malnutrition and vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Slogans, for example, included "Eat right, feel right - Canada needs you strong," and "Canada's Faulty Diet is Adolf Hitler's Ally" (Mosby 2014). By the end of the war, Canadians were consuming more of almost every nutrient (Mosby 2014). The activities of the RCAF had a large impact on the changes to Canadians' diets. Among those leading this charge were members of the Women's Division. Beginning in 1940, the Macdonald Institute began to house the School of Cookery. Dr. Hugh Branion, head of the Department of Animal Nutrition at the OAC, had assisted in carrying out the chefs' course and became the head of the RCAF Cookery School (Snell 2003). Jessie Lambden, an instructor at the Macdonald Institute, had aided in the development of the School of Cookery's curriculum. She, along with a few other instructors, stayed on at the School of Cookery even after the closure of the Macdonald Institute (School 'Father' Soon to Retire 1944). After 1941, recruitment for the School of Cookery began in earnest.

The School of Cookery trained RCAF personnel in a six-week course split into 2 three-week sections. The first section was spent in lectures and laboratories, learning the principles of cookery. The second was devoted to planning and testing menus. Lectures included information on sanitation in the kitchen; milk and milk products; the selection, storage and handling of vegetables; bread, bread-making, and cake-making; eggs; pest control; health requirements; and diseases associated with nutritional deficiency. Overall, the course emphasized various ways of preparing food, and the ways in which different types of food preparation could impact nutritional value (Proposed Outline of Work to be Taken [date unknown]). The main objective of the course was to teach the best use of rations (R.C.A.F. Must Travel on its Stomach, Too 1940; Edgar and Yarrow 1940). Officials hoped that the course would promote better health through better nutrition. They also hoped that the course would bring increased interest to the food sector and promote greater respect for those involved in food preparation. Additionally, they hoped that the course would aid in establishing food standards that would continue to be used after the end of the war, enabling better health for all Canadians, especially men (R.C.A.F. Must Travel on its Stomach, Too 1940; Edgar and Yarrow 1940). In addition to the six-week course, there was a specialized eight-week course for hospital cooks (Ziegler 1973). To achieve its

nutritional goals and to relieve men for military positions, the RCAF supported women's involvement.

In encouraging women's involvement, the RCAF actively recruited and trained cooks, employing the language of domesticity. The women of the CWAAF were from the start encouraged to cook, and bringing cooks into the RCAF became a high priority. Such recruiting advertisements (Men Supposed to be Best Cooks, But Soldiers say Mother was Best of All 1943; Ziegler 1973) noted that:

Fancy cooking is not essential...the recruit should have gained, in domestic life, an honest interest in managing a kitchen and feeding a family.

Careful instruction is provided in the one subject which every woman should know thoroughly. Air force cooks will never have any trouble in finding the way to a man's heart through his appreciation of a good meal.

These recruitment campaigns indicate that the RCAF sought to employ in service of the war effort the domestic work typically expected of women (even as home economics courses had been postponed until after the war's end). In the domestic setting, women were expected to prepare food, and in seeking women's involvement, recruitment campaigns accordingly emphasized the military (and marital) value of food preparation.

The School of Cookery housed the only test kitchen in Canada. The test kitchen was created to produce meals that optimized both taste and nutritional value. Women who worked at the test kitchen planned menus and instructed cooks (Women Prepare Fighters' Diet 1943). Additionally, the School of Cookery held one of four nutritional laboratories in Canada. Nutrition laboratories were created to test the nutritive content of rations prepared using different cooking methods. The RCAF used this laboratory to study and prepare nutritionally complete rations. Furthermore, these nutrition laboratories tested the food served at stations to ensure cooking standards were met. In some ways, work at the School of Cookery resembled education in home economics (as the home economics courses that women had studied at the Macdonald Institute covered bodily requirements, the nutritive value of foods, optimal cooking methods and meal planning).

These arrangements led to positive changes in the RCAF's diet. Major changes to the food led to the RCAF being described by the *Globe and Mail* on March 13th, 1944, as one of the best fed organizations worldwide (Beneficial Eating Habits Formed by RCAF Diet 1944). As the Second World War brought with it an increasing emphasis on nutrition, and as nutritive rations became seen as a key ingredient in wartime success, women's domestic work and education were marshalled in service of the war effort.

Officials hoped that the changes in diet would have a lasting effect even after the Second World War's end. Among the effects desired was an overall healthier country due to

improved nutrition and changes in food preparation. Moreover, some held that change in food habits would give women more room to explore and create in menu planning and cooking (Beneficial Eating Habits Formed by RCAF Diet 1944). As with the training in home economics, the RCAF training emphasized nutritional knowledge, expertise, and the positive changes in home life and nutrition that this knowledge could foster after the war had ended (Women Prepare Fighters' Diet 1943). After the exigencies of wartime had passed, women could bring nutritional education into the household.

Conclusion

The Macdonald Institute was founded to give women a chance to educate themselves before they became housewives, but the women at the Institute ended up doing far more. The experience of the First and Second World Wars allowed for changes that encouraged women to take more active roles in their lives. During wartime, the women of the Macdonald Institute contributed in diverse ways to the war effort. Course changes took place to incorporate food conservation, war injuries, and to encourage ambulance certification. Fundraisers were held and materials sent overseas. The graduates of the Macdonald Institute served in a number of war-related positions. Additionally, in the Second World War, courses offered some military training and avenues for auxiliary involvement. The Macdonald Institute closed temporarily, requisitioned by the RCAF for the No. 4 Wireless School. Although many of the Macdonald Institute's students were gone, influential women were not. During its closure, the Macdonald Institute—as the No. 4 Wireless School—began a new life as a place for RCAF women's involvement. The women who attended were in many ways similar to the students who came before them, and the education they received incorporated many of the topics addressed in home economics courses. Their impact on food conservation and preparation is particularly notable. The nutritional emphasis of home economics courses lived on in the School of Cookery, which helped to bring revolutionary changes to the Canadian military diet. The work, education, and recruitment that occurred at the Macdonald Institute (and the No. 4 Wireless School) chronicles the ways in which women's work was viewed, deployed, requisitioned and reallocated. The changes and continuities seen in women's wartime work at the Macdonald Institute during the First and Second World Wars are representative of larger, nationwide trends in viewing women's roles, women's work, and women's relationship to the Canadian war effort.

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Endnotes

1. Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) consisted of women who served with the Red Cross overseas, typically in nursing, cooking, and clerical work.
2. The OAC Review was a student magazine for the Ontario Agricultural College. It dispensed information about campus goings-on, and included a column on the Macdonald Institute. During wartime, the OAC Review also included information about students and graduates involved in the war, and gave lists of those who were missing, captive, and deceased.
3. Extension work at the Macdonald Institute denoted a variety of tasks, including working with the loan collection. The loan collection consisted of materials either compiled at the Institute, or held its library. Specific items could be sent to those (often in rural areas) who requested material on a certain subject. Those who requested material could keep it for a two-week period before sending it back, incurring no cost for doing so.
4. The term Wren, here, is used to denote members of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS), though it is also—and more commonly—applied to members of Great Britain's Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). Wrens often occupied operational roles, both on the east coast of Canada and abroad, sometimes stationed at signal towers and long range navigation (LORAN) stations.
5. Richard H. Elgie was a graduate of OAC who joined the 119th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War. He penned this remark in May of 1916, shortly before he went overseas to fight.
6. There is debate as to whether the Second World War enlarged opportunities for women. Although women worked in a greater variety of positions than they had previously many of the jobs were traditional "women's work," such as cooking. After the war's end, women were expected to go back to their previous domestic roles. Those who remained in their wartime roles were sometimes viewed as having taken men's jobs. Additionally, many women became caretakers to their injured husbands. For related discussion, see Keshen 2004; Pierson 1986; and Stephen 2007.

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