

Annual Award of Excellence 2019
Third Place

*Women on the Home Front: Gender Roles and IODE
Contributions to the War Effort in Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Breanna Waterman

The Second World War brought about many significant changes in Canada, economically, socially, and politically. The Canadian economy was growing, and the high unemployment rates of the Great Depression declined as the country mobilized for war and created new industries. While hundreds of thousands of Canadians volunteered overseas, including over 16,000 women, those who remained on the home front also stepped up to support those overseas, and Canadian society changed in response. One of the most notable changes was women entering the workforce in positions that had typically been held by men. With large numbers of men volunteering to serve overseas and being removed from the labour force, women were drafted to fill the positions in response to labour shortages. This, however, was not the only way in which women contributed to the war effort on the home front. From home, women knitted items such as sweaters and socks for soldiers, worked their own victory gardens

and community gardens, volunteered collecting scrap metal, and raised money to support the war effort. Women's groups, such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) provided middle to upper-class imperial women with an outlet to perform normative gender roles while contributing significantly to the war effort in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Scholarly studies of the home front during the Second World War have been increasing in popularity among academics and the field of gender studies has expanded significantly. The most influential studies of gender during the Second World War have come from Ruth Roach Pierson and Jennifer Stephen, both of whom research the ways in which the roles of women entering the workforce were manipulated by the public and the government to encourage recruitment and calm the public's uneasiness about women in non-traditional roles. In the groundbreaking study, *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, Pierson analyzes the impact that women in the workforce had on the war effort and how their roles were presented in order to maximize recruitment. Pierson argues that women's work was constructed as a temporary condition necessitated by the war, and not an advancement of women's right to work.¹ Furthermore, she maintains that women's greatest contribution to the war effort was through unpaid labour, both in volunteer groups and within the home, differing from peace time by the fact that this work and its value was now being made public.² Like Pierson, Stephen, in *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947*, recognizes that there was a general understanding across the country that at the end of the war most women would leave the paid labour force, marry, and return to their domestic lives.³ The focus of her study, however, is specifically on how the government responded to the labour shortage and desire to strengthen the war efforts on the home front by instituting a massive recruitment campaign for women.⁴ She analyzes the construction of gender and women's work through government policies and recruitment strategies. While these two studies provide in-depth analysis of the gendering of women and their entrance

¹ Ruth Roach Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All" The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³ Jennifer A. Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 3.

⁴ Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 25.

into the workforce during the war, they only briefly touch on women's volunteer work. Pierson dedicates nearly one chapter to it.⁵

Within the last fifteen years, two other important studies have highlighted the significance of volunteer efforts during the war, but at a local level. Serge Durflinger's 2006 book, *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec*, analyzes the response to the war in Verdun, Quebec and attempts to situate the city's activities within the larger context of the war effort.⁶ Similarly, Jody Perrun reconstructs Winnipeg's war effort and the unity it created in *The Patriotic Consensus: Unity, Morale, and the Second World War in Winnipeg*, acknowledging the contributions made by volunteers and the ways in which Winnipeg volunteers set the stage for volunteerism in the war effort across the country.⁷ Both of these studies work to situate the efforts of a particular community within the larger context of the war effort on the home front. This study will build on this trend by analyzing the efforts of a particular volunteer group, the IODE, in Winnipeg to help gain a better understanding of who, how, and why, people were volunteering for the war effort.

The history of the IODE itself has been written largely by the group and its various members. History was a source of pride for the IODE and they published pamphlets and brochures to inform members and the public about the history of the group and its core values. A pamphlet, published in 1945, outlined the IODE's contribution to the war effort in both the First and Second World Wars and emphasized what the group stood for.⁸ Another brochure was published in 1982 focusing on the early history of the group and its development across the country, again emphasizing the wartime contributions.⁹ One Manitoba chapter, the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter, even

⁵ Pierson, "Women's Emancipation and the Recruitment of Women into the War Effort," in *"They're Still Women After All"*, pp. 22-61.

⁶ Serge Durflinger, *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), p. 6.

⁷ Jody Perrun, *The Patriotic Consensus: Unity, Morale, and the Second World War in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), p. 130.

⁸ "Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire – What it is and What it Does," Pamphlet, 1945, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3.

⁹ "A Brief History of the IODE – 1900-1982," Brochure, 1982, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3.

undertook the project of writing a book on its own history.¹⁰ Despite the prominence of the IODE in Canada during the nineteenth century, only one academic study has been done on the group. Katie Pickles analyzes the female imperialism of the IODE in her 2002 study, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire*.¹¹ Pickles focusses on the long history the IODE has had in Canada and their influence as promoters of colonialism and patriotism. Pickles addresses the contributions of the IODE to the war effort in the Second World War in a short chapter, highlighting the notions of female imperialism that underpinned it.¹² This study situates the efforts of the Canadian Fliers Chapter of the IODE within the larger contexts of the IODE and the war efforts in Winnipeg and Canada while acknowledging the imperial ideologies the IODE maintained, as presented by Pickles.

When Canada declared war on 10 September 1939, approximately 900,000 people were unemployed out of a population of 11 million. In 1939, 17 percent of the labour force was made up of women with one third of them being employed as domestic servants.¹³ The onset of the war, however, quickly rejuvenated the economy and by 1941 there was a labour shortage as thousands of Canadian men volunteered for service overseas. As a result, the government turned their attention to “womanpower” and began actively recruiting women to fill positions vacated by men, despite the work did not fit traditional gender roles. By 1944, the number of women working full-time had doubled, not including women working part-time or on farms.¹⁴ Motivated by economic needs and a sense of patriotic duty, the women entered the workforce with the notion that it was a temporary situation, as was the fighting for the men, necessitated by the war. Their primary commitment was still their home and family, but as the need for workers grew, the pools from which workers could be recruited also expanded to include married women and mothers. The government supported this by introducing income tax reductions for married women entering the workforce and

¹⁰ Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Jon Sigurdsson Chapter, *Veterans of Icelandic Descent, World War II, 1939-1945* (Winnipeg: Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE, 1990).

¹¹ Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹³ Pierson, “*They’re Still Women After All*,” p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

creating the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Scheme to provide support for working mothers with young children.¹⁵

With the large number of women required to fill the positions left behind, the government created the National Selective Service Women's Division (NSSWD) to oversee the massive recruiting campaign and to ensure gendered standards were being met within the workplaces.¹⁶ Charged with safeguarding the moral status of the young single women, the NSSWD used a combination of personnel supervision and a "deeply gendered moral regulator program of industrial welfare" to fulfill its mandate.¹⁷ Because the public feared war work would masculinize women, there was a heightened emphasis on morality and social respectability.¹⁸ The war work was regulated in order to preserve the prized housewives for the end of the war.¹⁹ Health also greatly factored into this, both in terms of the population and society itself, and women who were responsible for maintaining it. A healthy body was a productive body and anything less than maintaining one's health was seen as detrimental to the war effort.²⁰ This included certain standards of health and safety in the workplace. Women's safety in the masculine workplace was a concern of the government and the public, and was addressed in relation to their clothing choices. Clothing that was considered suitable for women in the workplace had to meet both health and safety concerns, but also be appropriately feminine because appearance was considered the "essence of feminine morale."²¹

When single, childless women were no longer enough to fill the quotas of required workers, the government turned to mothers. The WDNA was a fifty-fifty cost sharing agreement with the government that created twenty-eight day nurseries operating in

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸ Helen Smith and Pamela Wakewich, "Regulating Body Boundaries and Health During the Second World War: Nationalist Discourse, Media Representations, and the Experiences of Women War Workers," *Gender and History* 24, no.1 (April 2012): p. 56.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

²¹ Ibid., p. 61.

Ontario and Quebec between 1942-1946.²² The day nurseries provided care for 4,000 children while another 2,500 benefitted from hot lunch and before and after school care programs.²³ In order to maintain the idea that women were only in the workforce because of the war, the government was adamant that only mothers employed in essential war work would qualify for the day nursery program.²⁴ Other cities had private or welfare funded day nurseries as well.²⁵

While women entering the workforce had a huge impact on production during the war, their greatest contribution was through unpaid labour in the home and volunteer work.²⁶ Much of the work they conducted, caring for children, preparing food, making clothes, and managing the family budget, were the same activities that they carried out during peace time. The difference, according to Pierson, was that during the war the importance and value of this work was publicized in relation to the war effort.²⁷ Throughout the duration of the war, women at home were expected to respect the limitations of rationing, prevent waste, and save and collect materials that could be recycled for war production. To increase food production, they were encouraged to tend victory gardens and can produce. For many rural and working-class women these were not new ideas, but practices they had undertaken throughout the depression to support their families.²⁸ It was the urban, upper-class women on which these changes had the largest effect.

The earliest volunteer efforts of women in response to the war were organized within the first few months of the war. Winnipeg, the second largest city in western Canada, was a national leader in the mobilization of volunteer services and was vital to the war effort by maintaining the morale of the servicemen, providing distractions and

²² Lisa Pasolli, "'I Ask You Mr. Mitchell, is the Emergency Over?': Debating Day Nurseries in the Second World War," *The Canadian Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (March 2015): p. 2.

²³ Pasolli, "Debating Day Nurseries," p. 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁶ Pierson, "*They're Still Women After All*," p.33.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

relaxation, and organizing materials necessary for manufacturing war supplies.²⁹ Voluntary services also helped to maintain civilian morale by providing opportunities to be involved with the war effort.³⁰ In Winnipeg, the Central Volunteer Bureau (CVB) was established to register and direct volunteers and encourage the formation of new volunteer groups while preventing redundancies.³¹ This became the Women's Volunteer Service Centre of Winnipeg in October, 1941 when the Department of National War Services established the Women's Voluntary Service Division.³² Service Centres were set up in all major cities across Canada to keep a roster of all of the activities, places, and people contributing to the war effort in order to make the dissemination of government information easier.³³ The first Voluntary Registration of Canadian Women was administered locally on 20 September 1939 with 1,800 women volunteering for war and emergency services.³⁴ On 10 October 1939, registration began with the Greater Winnipeg Bureau for the Voluntary Registration of Canadian Women, later the CVB.³⁵ Encouraged by a radio advertisement appealing to all women over the age of sixteen, an initial 7,000 women were registered and matched to volunteer groups and services based on their experience, skills, and training.³⁶

A variety of groups contributed in various ways to the war effort on the home front in Winnipeg. The Red Cross was one of the most active national organizations, instituting blood drives that would be crucial to saving lives on the front lines, while the Canadian Legion was responsible for the sports and entertainment, educational services, and welfare of the dependents of service men.³⁷ A plant in Winnipeg, staffed by volunteers, was responsible for packing Prisoner of War parcels and produced approximately 24,000 parcels each week between 1942-1944.³⁸ The introduction of the

²⁹ Jody Perrun, "The Spirit of Service: Winnipeg's Voluntary War Services During the Second World War," in *Prairie Metropolis*, eds. Esyllt Jones, and Gerald Friesen (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 162.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.162.

³¹ Pierson, "They're Still Women After All," p. 35.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Perrun, "The Spirit of Service," p. 163.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

block organization system for drives is perhaps Winnipeg's greatest contribution to the national voluntary service.³⁹ The block plan functioned to keep housewives aware of pickup schedules and the materials designated for pickup by dividing the city into zones with each block having a captain responsible of informing the other women.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the block captains were also responsible for organizing victory gardens, a canning project, and blood drives.⁴¹ While volunteers across the city came from a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds, the CVB was staffed primarily by wealthy and prominent women in the city.⁴² The IODE was one these many groups that contributed significantly to the voluntary war effort in Winnipeg, but similar to the CVB, the IODE was made up of a particular category of women.

The IODE is a women's organization that was built on Christian ideology and a desire to promote female imperialism that aimed to provide aid for war relief, immigration, and colonization in the early twentieth century through the philanthropy of its members and in cooperation with a number of other affiliated organizations.⁴³ Still in existence today, IODE was founded in 1900 by Margaret Polson Murray of Montreal and was incorporated as a Canadian women's organization by a special act of Parliament in 1917.⁴⁴ An uneasiness and embarrassment over the early motives and actions of the IODE, promoting racist ideologies that demanded assimilation and colonization, prompted the Order to permanently change their name from the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire to just IODE in 1978.⁴⁵ Although the current IODE has attempted to forget its troubling past, the implications of their work in colonizing Indigenous populations across Canada cannot be ignored. It must be acknowledged that the early work of the IODE focused on creating a hegemonic Anglo-Canadian identity through the support of cultural "progress" and forced assimilation. Pickles, however, argues that despite the problematic ideals of the early IODE, they are also due

³⁹ Jean Bruce, *Back the Attack! Canadian Women During the Second World War – At Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1985), p. 5.

⁴⁰ Perrun, "The Spirit of Service," p. 169.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 177.

⁴³ Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, p. 1.

⁴⁴ "A Brief History of the IODE – 1900-1982," Brochure, 1982, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, pp. 1, 3.

credit for their work in improving the lives of women across the country who were living in a sexist society and were restricted by their gender.⁴⁶ This paper, while acknowledging the racist and imperial ideas that motivated the work of the early IODE, will focus solely on the work the women did in support of the war effort and how it allowed for the performance of normative gender roles at a time when many other women were breaking these norms and entering the paid workforce.

The membership of the IODE was comprised of a select category of women, generally married, British, middle to upper-class women. The economic class of the women played a key role in their ability and desire to volunteer with the IODE. Upper-class women tended to gravitate towards voluntary work because charitable fundraising was a common pastime for women of their social class and they were more likely to have domestics employed in their homes allowing them the free time necessary for such undertakings.⁴⁷ Their economic status was also important to the functioning of the IODE, as a portion of the fundraising came from within the group and there were a number of fees associated with being a member. Every woman listed as a member of the Canadian Fliers Chapter in the minute book was identified as “Mrs.,” whether they were married, widowed, or divorced was not clear. While it appears that many of the women in the IODE were housewives, Pickles notes that the chapters were also made up of a large number of teachers because of the group’s commitment to education.⁴⁸ Because of the imperialistic focus of the group and its dedication to supporting Britain, the ethnicity of potential members played an important role in who was able to join the group. A 1945 pamphlet distributed by the IODE specifies that only women and girls who are British subjects and hold true allegiance to the British Crown may join the Order.⁴⁹ It was not until 1971 that the IODE reached out to other ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians, Italians, and Chinese.⁵⁰ However, the imperialistic mindset of the IODE did not exclude non-British persons from contributing to the work the chapters did. In Winnipeg, Chinese Canadians, who were active volunteers with the Red Cross, also

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁷ Perrun, “The Spirit of Service,” p. 176.

⁴⁸ Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, p. 94.

⁴⁹ “Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire – What it is and What it Does,” Pamphlet, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, 1945. Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3, 5.

⁵⁰ Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, 7.

donated sewn and knitted items to the IODE to be sent overseas.⁵¹ One chapter also stood out in Winnipeg because of the ethnic origins of its members. The Jon Sigurdsson Chapter was established with members of Icelandic descent, and is one of the chapters still in operation today.

Manitoba was the second provincial chapter to receive its charter in 1912 and was disbanded in June 2000. Five primary IODE chapters were established in Manitoba in 1905, the first of which was the Prairie Gateway Chapter in Portage la Prairie, focusing on education work involving youth, working with other organizations such as the Cadets, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, and Provincial Reformatory.⁵² This was followed by the Prince Alexander Teck Chapter in Brandon whose main goal was “to provide an urgently needed provincial tuberculosis sanatorium.”⁵³ By 1916 Manitoba was home to fifty-four chapters with over 2,500 members.⁵⁴ In Winnipeg, during the war years, there were fifteen active chapters of the IODE.⁵⁵

The Canadian Fliers Chapter was formed on 11 October 1939 with the name “Canadian Fliers” winning the vote over “Captain Stevenson.” “Happy Landings” was selected as the Chapter’s motto, an early indication of the chapter’s deep commitment to providing aid for the men of the Royal Canadian Air Force.⁵⁶ On 13 November 1939, the inaugural meeting of the chapter was held at the Marlborough Hotel with around seventy women in attendance. It began with the singing of O’ Canada, followed by the presentation of the charter, dedication of the flag, and singing “God Save the King,” and closed with a tea, as many of the following meetings would, giving the women further opportunities for socializing.⁵⁷ The first business meeting of the chapter was held exactly one week later, at the home of Mrs. Kenyon, and two committees were formed that were responsible for the Chapter’s contributions to the war effort.⁵⁸ First was the Ways and Means Committee who were in charge of organizing all of the fundraising

⁵¹ Perrun, “The Spirit of Service,” 179.

⁵² www.iode.ca/iode-in-manitoba.html

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ IODE Fonds Description, Archives of Manitoba.

⁵⁶ “Minutes: October 1939 – Jan. 16, 1945,” IODE Fonds, Canadian Fliers Chapter, Archives of Manitoba, P6181/7, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

activities that would support the expenses of the Chapter, including their war effort work. The second committee formed was the War Work Committee, with Mrs. Robertson as the Convener, which organized the work Chapter members did to directly support the war effort, such as knitting and sewing.⁵⁹ A third advisory committee was formed to confer with the Ladies Auxiliary to the 12th Squadron in order to provide volunteers for their events, but this committee took a back seat in comparison to the Ways and Means and War Work Committees in the amount of support for the war effort.⁶⁰ Other committees were created to organize contributions and subscriptions to the magazine *Echoes*, to support education initiatives and to provide welfare aid to those in need.⁶¹ The work that both the Ways and Means and War Work Committees undertook were restricted to activities that fell within the normative gender roles for women during this time and emphasized feminine attributes while also creating a network of female friendships and support appropriate for their social standing.

The fundraising activities of the Canadian Fliers Chapter were discussed at every monthly meeting, which were held in the rented club room in the Donald Building as of 4 December 1939. A tea and home cooking sale was the first fundraiser held by the Chapter in late November or early December, and raised \$10 for the club.⁶² Many similar fundraisers would be held in the coming years, with the sale of home cooking featured at the majority of fundraisers, not only at the teas. The club's largest fundraiser was an annual dance, hosted in late December. This was followed by an informal fashion show and tea in the Spring, most often held at the Hudson's Bay Company Store downtown.⁶³ Another form of fundraising used by the Canadian Fliers Chapter was the telephone bridge.⁶⁴ The chapter also regularly held candy sales at various theatres in Winnipeg, including the Metropolitan Theatre, Furby and Osborne Theatres, and the Film Exchange, and sold theatre thrift tickets.⁶⁵ On occasion, members of the public also donated money to the Chapter to support their war effort work. In August

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p. 7.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 8, 17.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

of 1940, a number of girls working at Eaton's donated \$13.00 to the club.⁶⁶ Other fundraisers hosted by the club included Sunday concerts, rummage sales, and bridge parties.⁶⁷

Because of the economic class to which the women and their husbands or families belonged, a significant portion of the money raised by the club came from within. A popular fundraiser was to have a local business, usually one owned by the husband or family of one of the members, donate a prize and then sell tickets for a draw within the club. One such prize was a model airplane. The tickets cost \$0.10 each or three for \$0.25.⁶⁸ Another draw, held in the spring of 1941, for a suit donated by Tip Top Tailors, raised \$136.00.⁶⁹ All members were required to subscribe to *Echoes*, the IODE magazine, for a cost of \$0.50, and the proceeds went directly to war work.⁷⁰ Over the summer of 1941, the members of the club voted to each pay \$0.50/month instead of hosting fundraising teas.⁷¹ The members were also responsible for each donating \$0.20 toward the rental of the club rooms.⁷²

The money raised by the Ways and Means Committee was spent in a number of ways, with the largest portion going towards the war effort. Activities undertaken by the Chapter reflected acceptable constructions of womanhood during this era in four ways. The first way in which the activities of the group reflected acceptable gender constructions was by partaking in work that was traditionally feminine, such as cooking, knitting, and sewing. Each month the members voted to spend an average of \$25.00 on wool and sewing materials to be used by the War Work Committee, increasing to \$75.00 by the spring of 1941, \$50/month over the summer to be paid all at once.⁷³ While knitting and sewing were traditionally activities done by women within their homes, during the war, rooms were donated for the women to meet and sew or

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 28. They also donated articles of clothing that they had knitted to be added to the next shipment overseas by the Chapter.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 24, 31, 34.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 52, 56.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 53.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 60.

⁷² Ibid., p. 21.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 8, 24, 57.

knit together.⁷⁴ It was also a place where all of the communal materials were stored and used. To encourage sewing and knitting efforts monthly sewing days were organized at the Power Building to make the work a communal and social event.⁷⁵ These efforts produced tangible results. On the first meeting after the Chapter elections of 1941, the War Work Convener, Mrs. Robertson, announced that in 1940 over 1,000 knitted and sewn items had been sent overseas from the Canadian Fliers Chapter alone.⁷⁶ In 1941 over 1,300 items were collected.⁷⁷ Members were also regularly asked to bring items from home to be recycled for the war effort, such as stamps and tinfoil.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the group regularly purchased War Savings Certificates. Throughout the duration, advertising was directed at women on the home front to purchase certificates as a way of both supporting the war and saving for things they might desire for their home, such as a more modern kitchen.⁷⁹ Because of the war conditions, the purchase of the certificates was constructed as an appropriately feminine and patriotic activity. The Canadian Fliers Chapter purchased a number of War Savings Certificates throughout the war, including one for \$50 on 3 March 1941.⁸⁰ These activities performed by the IODE reflected the work appropriate to their gender and highlighted the importance of women's work within the private sphere, bringing it into the public sphere.

A second aspect of the work that the Canadian Fliers Chapter did in support of the war effort that highlighted acceptable gender roles reflected the ideals of motherhood.⁸¹ One of the most obvious ways this can be seen is through the "adoption" of ships. At the request of the Department of Defence, Naval Services, the IODE adopted ships to supply them with amenities and provide letters of support to the servicemen.⁸² The Canadian Fliers Chapter felt that they alone could not support the cost of adopting a ship so they paid a share of \$50 to adopt a ship in cooperation with another Winnipeg

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 47, 50.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 47.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 87.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 38, 56.

⁷⁹ Perrun, *The Patriotic Consensus*, Figure 3.12.

⁸⁰ Minutes: October 1939 – Jan. 16, 1945," p. 50.

⁸¹ Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, 96.

⁸² "Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire – What it is and What it Does," Pamphlet, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, 1945. Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3, 24.

chapter in April 1943.⁸³ The largest project that the Chapter contributed to was the nationwide IODE project of purchasing a Bollingbroke Bomber to be presented to the Canadian Government for use in the war. The Canadian Fliers Chapter donated the entire proceeds from a Sunday concert held in June 1940 to the cause.⁸⁴ As representatives of the mothers of the nation, the IODE committed to supporting the government by raising funds and supplying war time necessities. Family matters were also an important part of the IODE's war effort. In October 1940 an appeal was put forth to sponsor a British refugee family and \$10 was set aside each month by the Canadian Fliers Chapter to pay for the family's keep.⁸⁵ Members of the IODE also took on a motherly role for those serving overseas who did not have family to send them care packages. They also sent packages to relatives of the members of the Chapter who were serving overseas.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the ideals of motherhood were exemplified by the importance the IODE placed on caring for children who were victims of the bombings in England. Bags were made by members of the Canadian Fliers Chapter for children overseas with crayons, soap, and scissors in 1941.⁸⁷ Another set of eight bags for children overseas were assembled at a shower hosted in September, 1944.⁸⁸ The IODE exemplified feminine ideals of motherhood through their commitment to the government and "adopting" ships, acting as mothers of the nation, and through their emphasis on supporting children and men in service, acting as caregivers and providing comfort to many.

Thirdly, the Canadian Fliers demonstrated normative gender roles as they were partly responsible for keeping the morale of the soldiers up and providing relaxation and distraction from the horrors of the war. In the Provincial Executive Report of May 1943, the welfare of fighting forces was identified as the number one concern of the IODE.⁸⁹ For the men overseas, the IODE helped to maintain morale by sending care packages and ditty bags, bags containing comforts home and much needed items such

⁸³ Minutes: October 1939 – Jan. 16, 1945, p. 137.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 76.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁸⁹ Pearl B. Leitch, "Provincial Executive Report", *IODE Bulletin*, May 1943, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, P4333/5, 6.

as socks and cigarettes, to members of the Navy. They also donated money to larger, national funds. As of December 1941, the Canadian Fliers committed to donating \$3 per month to the Cigarette Fund.⁹⁰ Any monies left in the War Work Fund at the end of the year would also be donated equally between the Cigarette Fund and other charities such as the Milk For Britain Fund and the Polish Relief Fund.⁹¹ Comforts from home such as these helped to maintain the morale of the men and women serving overseas and were greatly appreciated. Not only did they help keep up the morale of the soldiers overseas through care packages and ditty bags, they also worked to provide care for soldiers on the home front. One way in which they did this was by looking after the YMCA Army Huts at the railway stations.⁹² In particular, they collected donations of books and magazines to supply the libraries. The Canadian Fliers placed so much emphasis on the importance of this project that they created the position of Camp Library Convener in December 1942 to oversee the collection of donations and maintenance of the libraries.⁹³ By May of 1943, 793,370 magazines had been donated by IODE chapters across Manitoba for the entertainment of servicemen staying in Winnipeg.⁹⁴ The Canadian Fliers Chapter further supported servicemen through the YMCA by paying for and advertising a dance in June 1943.⁹⁵ Wounded servicemen returning from the front also received the attention of IODE members. In 1942, the Canadian Fliers established that at least once a week a member would visit wounded soldiers at Deer Lodge Hospital and distribute items such as candy or cigarettes.⁹⁶ Maintaining morale was vital to the war effort and was a responsibility that fell on the women. The IODE readily accepted this and worked to maintain the morale of servicemen on both the home and war fronts.

Lastly, the IODE was committed to helping other women at home and in Britain. They did so by supporting other women and women's groups in Britain such as the Victoria League. At the request of the Municipal Chapter, \$6.00 was sent to the Victoria

⁹⁰ Minutes: October 1939 – Jan. 16, 1945," p. 78.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 80.

⁹² Ibid., p. 108.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 121.

⁹⁴ Leitch, "Provincial Executive Report", , p. 10.

⁹⁵ Minutes: October 1939 – Jan. 16, 1945," p. 144.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

League in London, England for the purchase of three blankets in March, 1940.⁹⁷ After reading an article published in *Echoes* on the work being done by the Victoria League in London and the impact the bombings in London had on their group, losing their leader and most of their equipment, the Canadian Fliers donated another \$200 to victims of the bombing and \$100 to the Victoria League in November, 1941.⁹⁸ They further supported women overseas by packing personal bags to be sent to them. At the same shower where eight children's personal bags were packed, ten women's bags were packed.⁹⁹ The IODE also supported British women and war brides by sending eighty-seven donated wedding dresses to be worn by British service women and Canadian war brides.¹⁰⁰ They further supported Canadian war brides by created and distributing a book, titled *Kith and Kin*, to the war brides in order to help them adjust to life in Canada.¹⁰¹ As a women's group, the IODE was deeply committed to supporting other women, particularly British women, and especially those filling traditional feminine roles, such as wife and mother.

The Second World War brought about many changes in Canada and required significant contributions on the home front in order to win the war. Thousands of women were mobilized to enter the paid workforce for the duration of the war but the most significant way that women contributed to the war effort on the home front was through voluntary efforts. Winnipeg was instrumental in the organization of voluntary services and provided an example that the rest of the country followed. The IODE presented an opportunity for a very specific set of women, British, married, and belonging to the upper-class, to get involved in the war effort. The numerous ways in which members contributed to the war effort reflected the normative gender roles for women at the time, both in their fundraising efforts and specific war work. For fundraising, the Canadian Fliers Chapter held events such as dances, teas, and fashion shows, that often included the sale of home cooking, relying on traditionally feminine activities. The war work performed by the Chapter also reflected feminine ideals by completing women's work such as knitting and sewing, but moving it from the private

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 76.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁰⁰ "A Brief History of the IODE – 1900-1982," Brochure, 1982, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3, 1., Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, 103.

¹⁰¹ Minutes: October 1939 – Jan. 16, 1945," p. 197.

sphere to the public. Furthermore, they emphasized the role motherhood played in the war effort in supporting the government and looking after soldiers and children. They also took on the feminine roles of maintaining morale and supporting other women. While the activities of the IODE during the Second World War reflected acceptable constructions of gender, they were also underpinned by imperialist motives and racist ideologies. The work that the IODE undertook in Winnipeg and across the country contributed significantly to the Canadian war effort.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

“A Brief History of the IODE – 1900-1982,” Brochure, 1982. IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3.

“Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire – What it is and What it Does,” Pamphlet, IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba, 1945. Archives of Manitoba, P4333/3.

Leitch, Pearl B. “Provincial Executive Report,” *IODE Bulletin*, 1943. IODE Fonds, Provincial Chapter of Manitoba. Archives of Manitoba, P4333/5.

“Minutes: October 1939 – January 16th, 1945”. IODE Fonds, Canadian Fliers Chapter. Archives of Manitoba, P6181/7.

Secondary Sources:

Bruce, Jean. *Back the Attack: Canadian Women During the Second World War, at Home and*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1979.

Durflinger, Serge. *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006.

Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. Jon Sigurdsson Chapter. *Veterans of Icelandic Descent, World War II, 1939-1945*. Winnipeg: Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE, 1990.

Pasolli, Lisa. ““I ask you, Mr. Mitchell, is the emergency over?”: Debating Day Nurseries in the Second World War,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (March 2015):1-31, <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

Pickles, Katie. *Female Imperialism and National Identity: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002

Perrun, Jody. *The Patriotic Consensus: Unity, Morale, and the Second World War in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014.

Perrun, Jody. “The Spirit of Service: Winnipeg’s Voluntary War Services During the Second World War” in *Prairie Metropolis: New Essays on Winnipeg Social History* eds. Esyllt Jones, and Gerald Friesen. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009.

Pierson, Ruth Roach. *They're Still Women After All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986.

Smith, Helen E., and Pamela Wakewich. "Regulating Body Boundaries and Health during the Second World War: Nationalist Discourse, Media Representations and the Experiences of Canadian Women War Workers." *Gender and History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 56-73, <https://doi-org.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2011.01668.x>.

Stephen, Jennifer Anne. *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Veterans Affairs Canada, and Depository Services Program. *Canada Remembers: Women on the Home Front*. Charlottetown, P.E.I.: Veterans Affairs Canada, 2011.