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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Making the Necessary Sacrifice: The Military's Impact on a City at War, Calgary, 1939-
1945

by

Sarah Kathleen Sewell

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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Abstract

This thesis explores the military's impact on a Canadian community at war. Calgary is the subject of this study because of the unique relationship and history it has with the military. This thesis seeks to examine the Second World War experience of a community whose major contribution to the war was hosting active and reserve personnel of the three armed forces, their families and a significant portion of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Through this study, a greater understanding of the military's impact on the complexities of daily life in a city at war can be understood and placed within the national context.

Preface

When I set out to apply to graduate schools, I sat down with my professor, Dr. Scott Sheffield, to talk about where my research interests lay. Recently graduated and underemployed, I was desperate to go back to school and learn more. My ideas were all over the place, but something that always stood out to me was the Canadian homefront during the Second World War. Beyond the national level, so little has been written about how individual cities understood and survived the war. And as a person who is community minded, I had to know more.

During my year off between my Bachelors and Masters, I took time to read Serge Durflinger's *Fighting From Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec*, mostly during quiet times, while working at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Somehow, amongst all the excitement of working at the Olympics, the story of one town during the Second World War spoke to me. That story also helped me earn a place on the Canadian Battlefields Foundation 2010 Study Tour. Without a doubt, the study tour shaped the historian I am trying to be today. Having studied the Holocaust, the world wars, and German military history at length, I thought I had a good handle on the Second World War in particular and what it meant to the world. Yet, standing on the battlefields, in the Commonwealth War Graves cemeteries, and at the sites of German atrocities against Canadian soldiers, shook me to my very core and made me question why I was doing military history.

It was because of this my studies took a war and society turn. Returning home from my study tour, I knew a community study was best suited towards my research and

education goals. Studying at the University of Calgary with Dr. David Bercuson offered so many opportunities for me and I was surprised to learn so little had been written about Calgary during the Second World War. To me, it was a no-brainer; my West-Coast brain saw Calgary as a cowboy hat wearing garrison town, the perfect subject of study. Moreover, with Dr. Bercuson as a supervisor I was sure I would not stray too far into the world of social history while gaining a strong background in Canadian military history. Finally, Calgary appealed to the horse-lover in me. Yes, I was that crazy girl who dragged her horse to graduate school and managed to train six days a week in Springbank, on top of classes, my Graduate Teaching Assistantships, research and ‘social gatherings’ with my cohort.

This program was a bumpy ride and the thesis that lies ahead was not in my original plans. Yet the evidence that was available in the archives produced what I believe to be an interesting story, which focusses on the military’s impact on a city at war. Other themes have intertwined themselves into this study; however, the military’s impact remains the focus. As such, other themes have been left for examination later. At first, the archives led me to question if there was even a war going on. After going through boxes upon boxes of documents, I found almost no reference to the Second World War or the military in the city. What is worse, the years 1940-1945 were often missing from the records completely. Newspapers became my holy grail allowing me to piece together Calgary from 1939-1945. Indeed, it was not until almost the end of this process that I realized that this is why Calgary’s story was such an important one to tell. I believe it is Calgary’s unremarkable wartime experience that makes it so noteworthy. I expected controversy, riots, and struggle, but found little. That is not to say Calgarians are the

standard by which all others should be judged; instead, it is my belief that Calgary's experience interacting with the military supports the narrative that already exists about Canada's homefront during the Second World War.

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To Rob, Wendy, Mike, and Oliver

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Introduction

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, Calgary's City Council held a special meeting to discuss how the city should react. They declared to the 85,726¹ citizens of Calgary and the country that they were "prepared to do their share and make every necessary sacrifice."² Without the cheering and parading in the streets that accompanied the outbreak of the Great War and with somber acceptance, Calgarians enlisted even before Canada officially declared war. Given their immediate response to the recruiters, it seemed that these Calgarians were indeed prepared to make sacrifices. Their resolve was tested throughout the coming years, as the war intertwined itself into the daily lives of Calgarians. The chief reason for this was the large concentration of military within the city limits.

Since the first decade of the 20th Century, the military's physical presence in urban centres has grown. Armouries, drill halls, and rifle ranges, located often in the heart of Canadian cities acted as "visible symbols of the military's enduring presence in communities across Canada."³ More than this, in these urban centres, the militia was a part of daily life. Through demonstrations, summer camps and parades, civilians and the militia interacted in the streets. In addition, drill halls, often partly funded through civilian initiative, brought civilians and militia closer together, as the community benefited as

¹ "Population Data 1939" (Government of Alberta, n.d.), <http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/documents/ms/population1939.pdf>, accessed June 13, 2012.

² "Council Minutes, 5 September 1939," September 5, 1939, City Council Minutes 1939, City of Calgary Archives.

³ Whitney Lackenbauer, "Partisan Politics, Civic Priorities, and the Urban Militia: Situating the Calgary Armoury, 1907-1917," *Urban History Review* 2, no. 33 (Spring 2005): 45.

well from the recreational spaces.⁴ The experience of the Great War only served to strengthen this connection. Enlistment rates in particular became a source of pride for most Canadian cities. This was no exception in Calgary. As Whitney Lackenbauer explains in his work on base development in Calgary, the city's armoury acted as a physical reminder of war and its place within the community.⁵ Moreover, for the citizens of Calgary, the construction of Currie Barracks, at the time, confirmed, "once and for all that Calgary would be the home of the military in Western Canada."⁶

In fact, without a large war industry in Calgary during the Second World War, the military itself became the industry, employing thousands of Calgarians and influencing how the city operated. Perhaps the most visible military industry in Calgary was the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). With bases, training centres, and airplanes flying almost continuously overhead, the BCATP not only served arguably as the nation's main contribution to the war effort, but also the city's largest contribution. Indeed, City Council was prepared to do whatever was necessary to host a large portion of the air training scheme in the city, as not only did the BCATP help Calgary support a critical part of the war effort, but it also brought Calgary a great deal of financial gain and employed thousands in the city.

Even with City Council's public assurances throughout 1939 to 1941 to do whatever was necessary, problems arose as the municipal government tried to negotiate its own authority. This was because the Dominion government was asserting their power

⁴ Ibid., 46.

⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁶ Whitney Lackenbauer, "The Politics of Contested Space: Military Property Development in Calgary, 1907-1938" (University of Calgary, 1999), 8.

like never before, creating questions about where jurisdictions lay; this had a profound impact on how City Council functioned throughout the war. In addition, in the wake of the announcement of compulsory military training in the summer of 1940, it appeared that Calgarians were prepared to give money to the war effort, but not their sons. It was because while veterans of the Great War were consistently some of the first to try to enlist, many Calgarians still remembered the horrors of the last war with too much clarity to risk it all yet.

Similarly, while the great majority of Calgarians fully supported the war effort, at times it created problems with daily life in the city. For instance, as the BCATP brought increasingly large numbers of men into the city, an acute housing shortage developed. Single soldiers and airmen found homes with relative ease because Calgarians were more than happy to lend a hand to the men in uniform. However, when it came to taking in the wives and children of this new generation of soldiers, Calgarians largely turned their backs on those in need. In the first years of the war, Calgarians did not share a consensus on what their role in the war effort was and therefore divided their attention between questions of how to best house the dependents of the armed forces, support the BCATP and support the War Savings Drives.

All of this changed as casualty lists began rolling in and the reality of war forced itself upon the city of Calgary. After the fall of Hong Kong and the attack on Pearl Harbor, any previously held reservations Calgarians had towards compulsory military service were set aside. Calgarians, along with the rest of Canada, understood that the country was now in total war. Calgarians accordingly voted overwhelmingly in favor of releasing Prime Minister Mackenzie King's government from its promise of no

conscription in April 1942. In addition, Calgarians accepted the intrusion of the war into their daily lives with a renewed enthusiasm, especially after the disastrous Dieppe raid in August 1942. Canadian casualties reached over 3,300 in the raid and in the face of these overwhelming casualty lists, which were a daily feature in the newspapers, Calgarians felt they could hardly complain about their own sacrifices.

Despite their patriotic responses to rationing, Victory Bond campaigns, conscription, and Air Raid Precaution (A.R.P.) programs, Calgary's wartime experience was not without controversy. The anti-federal government stance of Alberta's Premier, William Aberhart, and his Social Credit government, often undermined Calgary's war effort as well as other Albertan communities. For example, Aberhart refused to support affirmative vote committees throughout the province during the conscription crisis in early 1942 and did not allow a provincial A.R.P. committee to form despite pressure from municipal governments and the citizens of Alberta. This not only caused friction within the province, but also with the Dominion government. Consequently, without the provincial government acting as an intermediary between Calgary's municipal government and the Dominion, Calgary's City Council interacted with the Dominion government with increasing frequency. Conflicts also arose between Calgary and the military regarding the sale of the Traders' Block building and the purchase of land for the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (R.C.N.V.R). Unlike with the BCATP bases, City Council and some key civilians showed that they were not always prepared to make whatever sacrifices were necessary. Yet despite these two large-scale objections to the war effort, Calgarians accepted the increased strain the war effort placed on their daily lives for the remainder of the war without much complaint.

Throughout the war, though to a greater degree in 1944 and 1945, Calgarians took time to envision the post-war world. Fearing a repeat of the social upheaval and economic depression of the previous post-war period, Calgarians actively sought ways to improve the future. Because of this, a moral panic developed not just in Calgary, but across Canada also and delinquency in women and youths was a prime concern. As the perceived threat of air raids lost its hold on the public, Calgary's A.R.P. committee as well as other civilian and military groups took up the cause of eradicating venereal disease (VD) from the population.

During the first years of the war, servicemen were the main concern of military and civilian authorities. However, they soon discovered that the segregation of infected men in hospitals did not work; education and identifying the sources of infection were key to stopping the spread of the disease. And in their search for a 'cure' to the social problem, women became the victims of the moral panic. In particular, a public debate arose concerning what Calgarians believed to be the unfair labelling of waitresses as the primary source of infection. Fears regarding the spread of VD became so great that in 1943 dance halls across the city banned unaccompanied women from their establishments. Indeed, the moral panic that enveloped many during the war was a direct result of the war itself. Many sought to place the blame for the perceived social upheaval on the disruption of the war on the home and family life. This was, many citizens argued, because the war reportedly afforded so many women the opportunity to leave the home and find employment, leaving children to fend for themselves.

Calgary's Second World War experience also sheds light on the complex relationship that existed between municipal governments and the Dominion. For Calgary,

the build-up of the military within the city limits increasingly forced City Council to work directly with the Dominion throughout the war period. The result of these interactions was both positive and negative as demonstrated by base selection for the BCATP and Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (R.C.N.V.R.). Because the BCATP promised to bring economic prosperity and prestige to the city, City Council was quick to ensure no roadblocks lay in front of Calgary receiving a base. Yet, when the Department of National Defence (DND) approached City Council for land to build a new R.C.N.V.R. base in the prestigious Elbow Park neighbourhood, City Council and several prominent residents objected to the proposal. Base development and federal intervention were acceptable to Calgarians as long as they did not interfere with daily life to a degree that outweighed their real and perceived benefits. City Council sought to define lines of jurisdiction to understand where municipal responsibilities ended and federal intervention began. The grey area that existed in jurisdictions became especially troublesome in the area of housing. Without a war industry in the city, Calgary fell outside of the Wartime Housing Limited's jurisdiction and forced City Council and local community groups to deal with a problem many felt was a federal responsibility.

The vast majority of Canadian military history is written on operations and tactics. Social histories of the Second World War are limited, but represent a growing field within the discipline. For example, Jeffrey Keshen's *Saints, Sinners and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War Experience*, represents one of the first social histories of the national homefront during the Second World War. Keshen seeks to address the strains placed on Canada by the war. For instance, he examines the reactions of many Canadians to what

“they perceived as the war’s role in unleashing socially and morally destructive trends.”⁷ By exploring the concept of the ‘good war’ versus ‘bad war’ Keshen concludes that “in large part this was a ‘good war’ for Canada because so many Canadians fretted over and grew determined to prevent their fellow citizens from going ‘bad.’”⁸ By examining the good and not so good social and military history of the national war experience, of both the citizen and soldier, national trends can be compared against local experience, creating a fuller understanding of the Second World War Canadian homefront.

Canadian wartime community studies are similarly limited. Some of the most notable ones concerning the Second World War include Serge Durflinger’s *Fighting From Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec*, Stephen Kimber’s *Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs*, Sylvia Crooks’ *Homefront & Battlefield: Nelson BC in World War II*, and finally James White’s dissertation, “Conscripted City: Halifax and the Second World War.” A greater number of works exist regarding the homefront experience of the Great War. For instance, Robert Rutherford argues in *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada’s Great War* that what Canadians “used to interpret events was often situated close to home, though its referents ... usually were not.”⁹ In addition, Rutherford examines how local experience shaped Canada’s homefront experience. Other important Great War works include, Ian Miller’s *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War*, James Pitsula’s *For All We Have and Are: Regina and the Experience of the Great War*, and Jim Blanchard’s *Winnipeg’s Great War: A City Comes of Age*.

⁷ Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹ Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada’s Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), xiv.

Other studies do exist and vary in quality. In addition, Canadian history graduate programs are producing a number of detailed theses and dissertations on the Canadian homefront during the wars.

Scholarly studies of the military history of Calgary are even more limited. Yet, Calgary's relationship with the military offers important insights into civil-military relations. For instance, Whitney Lackenbauer argues in his work on Calgary that in the city, a "symbiotic civil-military" relationship existed through much of the twentieth century leading many to fondly nickname the city, "Garrison Town" and "Home of the Army of the West."¹⁰ While Lackenbauer notes that the civil-military relationship in the city is more complex than many choose to portray, Calgary's experience during the Second World War, and the military's part in shaping that experience is beneficial to our understanding of Canada at war. Beyond Lackenbauer's studies of base development in Calgary, little has been written about Calgary's military experience beyond regimental histories.¹¹

Therefore, the study of the Canadian homefront during the Second World War still requires further exploration. This thesis seeks to contribute to the historiography by examining the Second World War experience of a community whose major contribution

¹⁰ Lackenbauer, "The Politics of Contested Space: Military Property Development in Calgary, 1907-1938," 1.

¹¹ Lackenbauer, "The Politics of Contested Space: Military Property Development in Calgary, 1907-1938"; Lackenbauer, "Partisan Politics, Civic Priorities, and the Urban Militia: Situating the Calgary Armoury, 1907-1917"; Whitney Lackenbauer, *Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007); Richard Cunniffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki: The Military in Calgary*, vol. 5, Century Calgary Historical Series 3 (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975); Kenneth W Tingley and Provincial Museum of Alberta, *For King and Country: Alberta in the Second World War* (Edmonton, Alberta: Provincial Museum of Alberta., 1995); Dean Oliver, "'My Darlin' Clementine?' Wooing Zombies For \$6.50 a Night: General Service-NRMA Relations in Wartime Calgary," *Canadian Military History* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 46-54.

to the war effort was hosting active and reserve personnel of the three armed forces, their families and a significant portion of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Through this study, it is hoped that a greater understanding of the military's impact on the complexities of daily life in a city at war can be understood and placed within the national context.

Chapter One: “Garrison Town”

The start of the Second World War affected Calgary almost overnight. Within hours of Prime Minister Mackenzie King proclaiming the War Measures Act and the implementation of Defence Scheme No. 3, recruitment for the active service forces began in Calgary with much success. For example, within two hours of recruiting stations opening on 1 September, 200 Calgarians enlisted and reportedly continued at a rate of 200 a day.¹² Enlistments continued at such a high rate that the city’s recreational halls were absent of youth. Alongside veterans of the Great War, many Calgarian youths, as young as fourteen and fifteen years old, told recruiters that they were eighteen years old and wanted to enlist.¹³ By 9 September, after facing long lines and curious onlookers, 853 men had enlisted in Calgary. In a particularly apt description of the future landscape of the city, it was noted, “on fields adjacent to the Calgary Armories, youthful students, newly out of school, clerks, stenographers and accountants, their hands soft with years of sedentary work, are trained side by side with heavy-set lumberjacks, farm hands and miners.”¹⁴

The military’s influence over the city continued throughout the war, in particular with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). In many ways, the military represented both Calgary’s ability to take a more active role in the war effort, through housing servicemen, adopting soldiers, and raising funds for local military initiatives; it

¹² “200 Calgarians Enroll for Service in Two Hours,” *Calgary Herald*, September 2, 1939; “Calgarians Sign For War Service at Rate of 200 Day,” *Calgary Herald*, September 3, 1939.

¹³ “Drama Marks Recruiting at Armories,” *The Albertan*, September 5, 1939.

¹⁴ “City Recruits Leave Varied Occupations,” *Calgary Herald*, September 9, 1939.

also was the reason for many of the challenges Calgary faced in the daily lives of its citizens and the day to day operations of the city. Calgary's City Council promised to make whatever sacrifice was necessary in the name of the war effort and when it came to supporting the BCATP, they certainly did. With the BCATP promising to be the nation's greatest contribution to the war effort, City Council was not prepared to be left behind. In addition, the economic and financial gains that were available to cities – just coming out of the Depression – with BCATP bases were certainly needed and welcome. Yet when it came to some of the base developments carried out by the Army and Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (R.C.N.V.R.), City Council was not so willing.

The men that enlisted were a new generation of soldier. While the country went to war for primarily the same reason as in 1914, because Britain went to war, unlike in 1914, the men who enlisted were “[Canadian] at heart.”¹⁵ Across Canada, in September 1939, 58,337 men and a few nursing sisters volunteered for service, about the same amount to volunteer in the first five months of the Great War.¹⁶ While the experience of the Great War prevented an enthusiastic response to the start of the Second World War, the tradition of success, especially in the Army, and a feeling of duty, caused so many men to line up to enlist that recruiting officers could not keep up with the rush.

Further, these men also enlisted as Canadians. Already by 1936, the belief that Canada was born on the battlefields of the Great War permeated the national psyche. The unveiling of the Vimy Ridge Memorial on 26 July 1936, attended by 3,000+ Canadians,

¹⁵ “Soldiers of 1939,” *Calgary Herald*, November 11, 1939.

¹⁶ J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 14.

reaffirmed that Vimy stood as “the pinnacle of Canada’s achievements.”¹⁷ Additionally, Calgary’s regiments were present at all the major Great War battles, leaving Calgarians with a strong sense of tradition. Recently, Allister Hain of Wilfrid Laurier University conducted a study for Terry Copp on the make-up of the Calgary Highlanders to understand where these men came from. Hain found that in a sample of twenty-three men who enlisted in September 1939, seventeen were listed as Canadian born and only six listed the United Kingdom as a place of birth.¹⁸

Fighting for their country also led many in Calgary to enlist. For instance, Paul Tomelin of Calgary, Alberta enlisted because he “wanted to contribute to the defence of democracy” and Peter Thomas enlisted as a pharmacist because “I’ve been doing a job that I’m doing here now, I’m doing it for the country.”¹⁹ Amos Wilkins reasoning for enlisting was perhaps more telling of most who enlisted in Calgary:

And don’t ask me why I went because that question is not answerable. It really isn’t. To say I was patriotic – Hell, I didn’t even know how to spell the word at the time ... I guess to some extent, I feel we were conscripted by our conscience. Jack and Joe were going, you know, and maybe I’d better go too. And there were those that hadn’t had a decent job throughout the Depression, and it was an opportunity to get a bit of money and a place to sleep and eat. And after a while, it grew. And we were all caught up in something that was much bigger than we were.²⁰

¹⁷ Geoffrey Hayes et al., *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), 275. & 287.

¹⁸ J. T Copp, *The Brigade: The Fifth Canadian Infantry Brigade in World War II* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2007), 5.

¹⁹ “The Memory Project Archives: Transcript of Interview with Paul Tomelin” (Historica-Dominion Institute), accessed August 29, 2012, <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/230:paul-tomelin/>; “The Memory Project Archives: Transcript of Interview with Peter ‘Pete’ Thomas” (Historica-Dominion Institute), accessed August 29, 2012, <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/747:peter-pete-thomas/>.

²⁰ “The Memory Project Archives: Interview with Amos ‘Wilkie’ Wilkins” (Historica-Dominion Institute), accessed August 29, 2012, <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/1134:amos-wilkie-wilkins/>.

Thus, while there were a variety of reasons for men to enlist in the Second World War, they were not enlisting for Britain, a definite change from the Great War.

The desire to serve their country also drove many men at the start of the Second World War to give up their commissions in militia units that were not being mobilized to serve as Non-Commissioned Officers with the Calgary Highlanders, rather than risk being left behind.²¹ For instance, ten officers and 150 other ranks transferred out of the Calgary Regiment (Tank) to join active service units.²² The Calgary Highlanders was the only Calgary regiment placed on active service in September 1939 and were to be combined with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg and the South Saskatchewan Regiment into the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division.²³ It was not known when 2nd Division would proceed overseas so after mobilization the Calgary Highlanders 1st Battalion remained in Calgary through the winter until brigade training was able to take place. Therefore, with the Calgary Highlanders being the only active service regiment in Calgary, men from Calgary and the surrounding areas flocked to the recruiting stations to serve with them.

Although in the first months of the war there was no shortage of volunteers, finding the equipment and uniforms to outfit the men was a whole other problem. Neglect of the armed forces in the 1920s and 1930s meant that the army was ill prepared for any kind of war. To illustrate, in 1923-24, Canada spent approximately \$1.46 per capita on

²¹ David Jay Bercuson, *Battalion of Heroes: the Calgary Highlanders in World War II* (Calgary; Toronto: Calgary Highlanders Regimental Funds Foundation ; Distributed by Penguin Books, 1994), 13–14.

²² Hugh George Henry Jr., "The Tanks of Dieppe: The History of the Calgary Regiment (Tank), 1939 to August 19, 1942" (University of Victoria, 1992), 29.

²³ Bercuson, *Battalion of heroes*, 13.

defence. In comparison, the United States spent \$6.41 and Britain spent \$23.04.²⁶ When rearmament did begin in the late 1930s, the Canadian government placed a greater focus on the Air Force and Navy as those forces fit better into the idea of limited liability and home defence. Thus, many of Calgary's first soldiers entered the local regiments with remnants of uniforms and equipment of the Great War.

This lack of sufficient equipment also affected training in the city. For example, in October 1939, the Calgary Highlanders received a Bren Gun for training; however, they only could use it for a three week period as it was required to train other units across Canada.²⁷ Again, in January 1940, a single two-pounder anti-tank gun arrived in the city for training purposes. The 23rd Anti-Tank unit of Calgary only had three days to train on the anti-tank gun until it was shipped to Lethbridge.²⁸ As a final example, the Calgary Highlanders were forced to wait until the end of January 1940 to receive their new battledress. Although, when the uniforms finally arrived, there were only enough available for two companies.²⁹

A lack of equipment did not stop the needs of a country at war and shortly before the fall of France, in February 1940, the Calgary Regiment (Tank) finally received orders to mobilize for active service strength as the 14th Army Tank Battalion. Similar to the outbreak of war in September 1939, Calgary's veterans were some of the first to answer the call for the tank regiment. However, many were unable to meet the requirements

²⁶ Bercuson, *Battalion of heroes*, 3.

²⁷ "Highlanders Start Instruction in Use of Bren Gun," *Calgary Herald*, October 13, 1939.

²⁸ "Local Units Will Get New Uniforms Within Week," *Calgary Herald*, January 11, 1940; "23rd Battery R.C.A." (The Glen, January 10, 1940), Box 1 File 257, Calgary Highlanders Regimental Archive; "Around the Armouries," *The Albertan*, January 5, 1940.

²⁹ "Battle Dress Now Available to Highlanders," *Calgary Herald*, January 31, 1940.

because of age and physical condition.³⁰ In addition to the newly formed tank regiment, Military District (M.D.) No. 13 also required 1,756 recruits, particular those with technical training, marking the largest allotment required yet at any one time since the war began. The recruiting office at the Travellers Building remained open twelve hours a day in the hopes that the new quota would be filled.³¹

As the war progressed, both military and civilian authorities sought new ways to increase enlistments. In February 1941, city and military officials held a ‘mammoth’ military parade in connection with a new war savings drive. Over 2000 men took part in the parade, as well as at least a dozen planes that flew over the city in formation to ‘bomb’ the city with leaflets.³² After the parade, several Calgary Highlanders expressed their concern over the lack of applause from spectators. In a letter to the editor, one Calgarian responded to these concerns, arguing that the lack of applause was because many in the crowd still remembered the last war and the sight of all those eager men disturbed them.³³ This event marked part of the peculiar situation many faced because of the war. Calgarians, especially those of the older generations, were not as enthusiastic about the Second World War as they had been for the Great War. Veterans were often the first in line to enlist, yet they understood what war really meant. Volunteerism and

³⁰ “To Mobilize Tank Unit,” *Calgary Herald*, February 13, 1941; “Veterans First To Answer Call For Tank Recruits,” *Calgary Herald*, February 14, 1941; Henry Jr., “The Tanks of Dieppe: The History of the Calgary Regiment (Tank), 1939 to August 19, 1942,” 26–26. The Calgary (Tank) Regiment remained in Calgary, training at the Mewata Armouries until March when they departed for Camp Borden.

³¹ “Intense Recruiting Drive Planned Here,” *Calgary Herald*, February 17, 1941; “Need 1,756 Recruits In District Urgently,” *Calgary Herald*, February 24, 1941; “Alberta Is Canada’s Second Defence Line,” *Calgary Herald*, February 20, 1941.

³² “Complete Plans For Big Military Parade Saturday,” *Calgary Herald*, February 6, 1941.

³³ “‘The Troops Are Appreciated’ From C.W. Jackson,” *Calgary Herald*, February 15, 1941, sec. Letters to the Editor.

patriotism were still highly influential, but Calgarians were not yet ready to give at any cost; therefore, it took a drastic change in the war for Calgarians to alter their views.

Two of the greatest events to change Calgarians' viewpoint on the war, and how much they were willing to give, came first with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, followed by the surrender of the Hong Kong garrison on Christmas Day, 1941. After the Japanese attack, Calgary experienced the highest enlistment rates since France fell in June 1940. On 8 December, thirty-seven men applied to enlist and forty-two attested formally and at least another forty attested the following day.³⁴ In the three-week period following the attack on Pearl Harbor, enlistments reached a new record: 689 applied to join the army, with 208 failing the medical board. The Air Force and Navy also experienced similar interest, with the Navy noting that they were unable to handle the number of applicants they were receiving.³⁵ It seemed that "only now [was] the meaning of war ... really striking home."³⁶ It was the first time in quite a while that M.D. No. 13 not only reached its recruitment quota, but exceeded it with 600 men expected to attest by the end of the month.³⁷

Calgary also experienced intense recruiting drives for the Reserves throughout the war, resulting in the increase of the military presence in daily life in the city. For instance, in April 1942 a recruiting campaign for 2,500 men dominated much of the newspapers. Full-page ads ran side-by-side to articles listing the opportunities available to citizens in

³⁴ "Jap Attack Whips Recruiting to Peak," *Calgary Herald*, December 9, 1941.

³⁵ "Enlistments Here in Three Weeks Establish Record," *Calgary Herald*, December 22, 1941; "More Recruits Due To War," *The Albertan*, December 9, 1941.

³⁶ "More Recruits Due To War."

³⁷ "December Total Nears Record For Recruiting," *Calgary Herald*, December 30, 1941.

the reserves while maintaining their careers.³⁸ To help with recruitment, the *Herald Magazine* ran a special section, "Meet the Reserve." Citizens were informed they could enlist at a recruiting station in the lobby of the *Calgary Herald* and be put into uniform and in the unit of their choice immediately. To combat fears regarding active service, the newspaper emphasized, "when a Reserve unit is mobilized, only those men who voluntarily wish to do so become full-time soldiers."³⁹ The function, the article noted, was to train men for the defence of Canada, enforcing both the perceived Japanese threat in the Pacific, and the ability for a man to do his patriotic duty on the homefront.

However, as the war continued into 1943, finding enough men for the Reserve units became a problem. Again referring to the supposed threat the Japanese posed, the citizens of Calgary were reminded of the potential of British Columbia and Alberta becoming the first line of defence against the Japanese. This perceived threat, while highly unlikely in reality, acted as a way to both engage Calgarians in the war effort and push them into service. The push to recruit new Reservists in March 1943 serves as an excellent example of newspapers working hand in hand with the military and government to place pressure on men to enlist. To illustrate, Brigadier F.M.W. Harvey, officer-commanding M.D. No. 13, informed Calgarians that it was a disgrace that the province could not supply 9,000 men for Reserve Army Units, especially when there were two cities in the province with populations of about 100,000 each. The public was further warned that if British Columbia and Alberta relied on Reserve Army units from the east, a

³⁸ "Units Offer Valuable Training," *Calgary Herald*, April 2, 1942; "Defense Army Needs 5,000 Men Advertisement," *Calgary Herald*, April 2, 1942; "Meet the Reserve," *The Herald Magazine*, April 4, 1942; "Will Recruit Another Week," *The Albertan*, April 1, 1942; "Need 5,000 Men For Alberta Defence Force," *The Albertan*, April 4, 1942; "Members Learn How To Protect Their Homes," *The Albertan*, April 4, 1942.

³⁹ "Meet the Reserve."

potential Japanese attack “could do a tremendous amount of damage,” thus giving Alberta a great responsibility in defending the nation.⁴⁰ Newspapers also helped the military contend against individuals who believed joining the Reserve meant giving up his career. In one particular article, the readers were told, “it is ridiculous to assume that a man in the Reserve will be forced to close up his business or otherwise dislocate his civilian duties to attend.”⁴¹ For the following week, the *Calgary Herald* ran a series of advertisements enforcing the ability of Reservists to keep their jobs. By 29 March, after a weeklong drive, the recruiting drive showed success and 510 men enlisted in Calgary.⁴²

In addition, the military carried out a number of mock invasions and drills throughout the city during the war. These exercises had multiple purposes. First, they offered a training situation for the military to prepare for overseas deployment. Second, they had the dual purpose of promoting recruitment and war savings campaigns. Finally, they allowed the citizens a glimpse into battle they could only imagine.⁴³ Much like the time spent outside of Currie Barracks watching British Commonwealth Training Plan planes land and take off, it offered Calgarians a moment of excitement and a window into the world they were sending their sons, fathers, and brothers into overseas. For example, in conjunction with the 5th Victory Loan Drive in November 1943, 300 soldiers from Currie Barracks participated in a river crossing demonstration that was attended by thousands of citizens.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ “Reserves May Become First Line of Defence,” *Calgary Herald*, March 18, 1943.

⁴¹ “Would Guard Against Canadian Pearl Harbor,” *Calgary Herald*, March 22, 1943.

⁴² “510 Enlist in Reserve Units in Weeks Drive,” *Calgary Herald*, March 29, 1943.

⁴³ Brendan Kelly, “A City Reborn: Patriotism in Saskatoon During the Second World War” (University of Saskatchewan, 2008), 13.

⁴⁴ “Army to Repeat River Crossing Demonstration,” *Calgary Herald*, November 2, 1943.

Enlistment rates continued to fluctuate throughout the war, often influenced by events in the war. For example, the D-Day invasion on 6 June 1944 boosted Air Force enlistment, at an average of fifty percent a day in the immediate aftermath. In contrast, the army recruiting centre did not see similar increases, nor were there applications from home defence troops to go into active service.⁴⁵

Despite Calgary's strong army tradition in the Great War, the city's greatest contribution to the Second World War was undoubtedly in its role of hosting a large portion of the Empire Air Training plan, or, as it would become known, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). The news that Calgary was a potential site for the BCATP was met with much excitement in the city. With the BCATP promising to be Canada's most important contribution to the war, the selection of a field within Calgary's city limits would allow Calgary greater participation in the war effort.

The city was suitable for the training plan for multiple reasons. First, Calgary was already equipped with a modern hanger, landing field and barracks. The geography and climate of the city were also ideal, allowing for training in both mountainous areas and flat, rolling countryside. Finally, Currie Barracks could be turned over to the Air Force quickly as only a squadron of the Lord Strathcona's [Royal Canadian] Regiment and the 8th Field Ambulance were quartered there, both easily moved.⁴⁶ However, despite the presence of an airfield at Currie Barracks and the new municipal airport, a great deal of construction work would be needed before Calgary was ready to take on the BCATP.

⁴⁵ "Invasion Boosts Air Force Recruits," *Calgary Herald*, June 7, 1944.

⁴⁶ "Calgary May Be Key Point In Air Training Scheme," *Calgary Herald*, October 31, 1939.

Despite a growing enthusiasm among civilians and City Council members for the air-training plan, City Council had to overcome some roadblocks. Indeed, several Calgary Aldermen voiced the opinion that Calgary should not place any obstacles in the way of the city becoming a large BCATP training centre. When the Dominion government approached City Council to discuss leasing the Municipal Airport, the city wished to comply, but they felt “Calgary should not be required to pay for the privilege,” as the transfer of the municipal airport would cost the city \$3,669.00 from loss of use.⁴⁷ Councillors noted approximately \$3,000 per year would be lost from lost landing fees as well as an additional \$2,832.36 per year in payments to the Dominion government in for the municipal hangar construction debt. However, City Council would still receive just over \$3,000 from Trans Canada Airlines for hangar accommodation.⁴⁸ Ultimately, City Council agreed to lease the airport because the more important thing was “to have Calgary co-operate with the department of defence and participate in the air training scheme.”⁴⁹

Concerns remained regarding what the growth of the air scheme meant for Calgary. Alderman George Brown argued that Calgary’s “citizens were paying a greater share of war costs than citizens elsewhere, due to the war tax on gas used for domestic consumption.”⁵⁰ It is unclear how true this statement was as there was no accompanying documentation to support what Brown asserted. Brown argued that to make up for the

⁴⁷ “City Authorizes Field Transfer For Air Scheme,” *Calgary Herald*, January 30, 1940; “Commissioners’ Report 29 January 1940,” January 29, 1940, City Council Minutes 1940, City of Calgary Archives; “Calgary ‘Early-Centre’ In Empire Air Scheme,” *The Albertan*, January 20, 1940.

⁴⁸ “City Authorizes Field Transfer For Air Scheme.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

additional costs to the citizens, the Dominion government “should cancel the city’s payments on the [municipal] hangar debt during the period the airport was used by the government.”⁵¹ Negotiations regarding the airport continued well into the spring of 1940. There was some discussion between the Dominion government and Calgary City Council on who would retain management of the airport before the BCATP took it over in September. Calgary did retain management of the airport through the spring and summer and the Dominion government sought permission to enter the site several times to carry out the construction needed for the air training scheme.⁵²

The municipal airport was not the only site in Calgary that the BCATP was interested in during January 1940. As City Council was in talks with the Air Force for the lease of the municipal airport, it was also rumored that the Air Force required the airfield at Currie Barracks. However, local newspapers suggested that M.D. No. 13 officers wished to use Currie Barracks for a permanent training centre for non-permanent militia units. In addition, a new R.C.A.F. headquarters and recruiting station opened on the corner of 12th Avenue and 1st Street East on 31 January.⁵³ Despite the hesitations on the part of City Council and the increasing needs of the Air Force, there was no evidence to suggest that Calgary would not allow its municipal airport to be used. Instead, the issue lay with determining who would incur the operational costs of the airport and other buildings. This was also connected to City Council’s need to define the jurisdictional boundaries of the Dominion and municipality.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² “Letter No. 15 8 May 1940 From V. I. Smart, Deputy Minister of Transport To Mayor,” May 15, 1940, City Council Minutes 1940, City of Calgary Archives.

⁵³ “New R.C.A.F. Headquarters Will Open Here Tomorrow,” *Calgary Herald*, January 30, 1940. Previously the recruiting offices were located in the Examiner Building.

The opening of the wireless school at the Calgary Institute of Technology and Art demonstrated the displacement that occurred in the city because of the military. Already in October 1939, cadet groups throughout the city faced eviction from their training spaces to make way for the growing military presence in the city. For example, unless a new space was found for the Sea Cadets of HMCS *Undaunted*, the group would be forced to disband in October 1939. Fortunately, the group had little to fear because Calgarians were of the opinion, given the current war that the naval cadets should be expanded. Thus, it was unsurprising that the cadets found a home through the Calgary School Board at Victoria Park.⁵⁴ Calgarians believed that there was a great need “for young men who have been trained in the discipline, co-ordination and patriotism inculcated by the cadet corps.”⁵⁵ This would allow boys the chance to do something worthwhile for the war effort.

In addition, the Calgary Institute of Technology and Art was forced to vacate the school by term’s end on 1 May 1940 to make way for a branch of the air training plan. The new Air Force Wireless School brought 1,200 students, adding to the expected 3,500 R.C.A.F. personnel in the city.⁵⁶ Despite this infringement on the Institute’s space, the city announced it would “co-operate [in] every way to facilitate [the] establishment of the air training scheme at Calgary.”⁵⁷ And how could the city not fully co-operate? As unemployment figures were still high, the possibility of the creation 1,200 new jobs was

⁵⁴ “Naval Cadet Training,” *Calgary Herald*, October 3, 1939; “Landlocked Sea Cadets Here Face Disbanding,” *The Albertan*, September 30, 1939; “Sea Cadets Get New Home,” *The Albertan*, October 6, 1939.

⁵⁵ “Respectable Once More,” *Calgary Herald*, October 10, 1939, sec. Editorial.

⁵⁶ “Institute to Be R.C.A.F. Wireless Instruction Centre,” *Calgary Herald*, March 8, 1940; “3,500 Men Here,” *Calgary Herald*, March 8, 1940; “Calgary ‘Tech’ To Be Air School,” *The Albertan*, March 8, 1940.

⁵⁷ “‘Tech’ Ready By July 1 To Train 1,200 Airmen,” *The Albertan*, March 12, 1940.

appealing. Not to mention the financial gains that could be made from the “over 1,000 men in training and 1000 planes in operation, an air equipment depot in East Calgary employing around 1,200 men, and a wireless school located at the Institute of Technology and Art with a personnel of around 1,200 students and instructors.”⁵⁸ Figures such as these were highly motivating factors for City Council. Thus, Calgary sought to negotiate how to balance its need to support the war effort with the understanding that life and business continued in the city regardless of the war and the citizens of Calgary had to adapt to an increasing number of uniformed men in the city.⁵⁹

In October 1940, Calgarians gained even more reason to support the war effort with the opening of the Currie Flying School, No. 2 Service Flying Training School and No. 10 Repair Depot. Calgarians were informed that more air training schools were being “constructed west of the Great Lakes and more money [was] being expended in this area than in the rest of the Dominion.”⁶⁰ In addition, there were reportedly more recruits for the air-training plan in relation to population from the West than elsewhere in the country. However, construction had yet to finish on the barracks accommodation at Currie and in the meantime, Calgarians would be asked to board the men in the South Calgary district adjacent to Currie Barracks, placing strains on the housing conditions in the city, at least temporarily.⁶¹ Over 1000 Calgarians attended the opening ceremonies of No. 3 Service Flying School to watch “exhibitions of formation flying and aerobatics by pilot officers of

⁵⁸ “Institute to Be R.C.A.F. Wireless Instruction Centre”; “3,500 Men Here”; “Calgary ‘Tech’ To Be Air School.”

⁵⁹ “Twenty-First Anniversary of Peace Sees Dominion Marshaling for War,” *Calgary Herald*, November 11, 1939; “All Alberta Will Pay Tribute Saturday,” *Calgary Herald*, November 8, 1939.

⁶⁰ “West Plays Biggest Part in Air Plan,” *Calgary Herald*, October 2, 1940.

⁶¹ “First Airmen Arrive For Currie Flying School,” *Calgary Herald*, October 7, 1940.

the wing, who flew the new two-seater Harvard training planes.”⁶² Watching the pilots of the BCATP learning to fly soon became a popular pastime for many Calgarians and a source of annoyance with planes in the sky all hours of the day.

As R.C.A.F. planes flew over the city, a debate arose among the citizens. Some felt the number of BCATP planes flying over and around the city was becoming a nuisance. This resulted in citizens raising complaints in City Council meetings regarding flight paths over the city led to BCATP planes no longer being able to fly over the city.⁶³ Officers from No. 4 Air Training Command in Regina responded to these concerns, promising that the flight paths would be restricted, except when the wind came from the east because “aircraft are compelled to fly over the city when approaching the aerodrome to land.”⁶⁴ One resident near the Currie airfield was astonished to read in the paper that some people were complaining about R.C.A.F. planes disturbing them. This resident believed that each plane overhead represented one more crew helping “bomb ridden Europe,” and “what manner of selfish security is it that complains at the training of our first line of defence?”⁶⁵ A further Calgarian voiced the opinion that complainers were unpatriotic or “fail to understand the extreme seriousness of the situation.”⁶⁶ This demonstrated that the correlation between disturbances to daily life caused by military

⁶² “Empire’s Airmen Stand Together As Currie Field Officially Opened,” *Calgary Herald*, October 28, 1940.

⁶³ “No More Thrills From Bombers over City,” *Calgary Herald*, January 6, 1941.

⁶⁴ “Letter To City Clerk From Wing Commander For Air Officer Commanding, No. 4 Training Command,” January 8, 1941, Box 326 File 2119, City of Calgary Archives.

⁶⁵ “‘Wake Up, Calgary’ From Resident Near Currie Field,” *Calgary Herald*, January 10, 1941, sec. Letters to the Editor.

⁶⁶ “‘Give Us More Planes’ From Calgarian,” *Calgary Herald*, January 21, 1941, sec. Letters to the Editor.

planes overhead and the City's contribution to the war effort was not fully cemented in the minds of all Calgarians.

In February 1941, the BCATP was drawing spectators to the airfield who sought an evening's entertainment watching the planes take off and land. Calgary Police Chief Constable David Ritchie sought the closure of the highway near Currie Airfield because it was becoming a "ringside parking place... to watch planes taking off and landing at the Currie Airfield."⁶⁷ Despite Ritchie's concerns, the highway remained open and its popularity with the citizens as a prime viewing location continued. From the safety of their city, far from the front lines of Europe, watching the aircrews training was more of a form of entertainment than a true experience of war. Nonetheless, City Council and military officials likely kept the highway open in the hopes of keeping the citizens of Calgary engaged in the war effort because military planes flying overhead were a visible reminder that the city and country were at war. Undoubtedly, these daily reminders of the war helped other facets of the war effort such as Victory Bond Campaigns, rationing and recruitment.

Beyond the BCATP, the army also continued to grow its presence in the city. As the army expanded, their land and building requirements did as well. In October 1939, the city voted to set aside the vacant property at the corner of 8th Avenue and 11th Street West for army recreational purposes. The Department of National Defence (DND) proposed that a hut be built on this land and that it "should be constructed by the department and

⁶⁷ "May Close Highway Near Currie Airfield," *Calgary Herald*, February 14, 1941.

operated by the Salvation Army on a non-profit basis.”⁶⁸ It would not only provide “recreational and concert facilities” but would also “give soldiers means of entertaining relatives and friends.”⁶⁹ The negotiations for this site followed a similar pattern to other DND land and building acquisitions in the city. For example, the DND requested the building be tax exempt, rent free and available for use for the duration of the war and demobilization, which City Council approved.⁷⁰

In almost complete contrast, in August 1942 a controversy arose regarding the DND’s purchase of two of Calgary’s best-known business blocks. The buildings in question were Northern Electric on the corner of 11th Avenue and Centre Street and the Traders Block on First Street between 11th and 12th Avenue. DND planned to use the Traders Block building for the new headquarters of M.D. No. 13 and the Northern Electric building for the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps.⁷¹ While the tenants of these buildings claimed they could not find any other place to go, reportedly the purchase of the Traders Block was a time saving matter for M.D. No. 13 and therefore of greater importance. With their current military offices scattered across the city, valuable time would be saved by having all the offices under one roof. Also, DND would save “a huge amount in annual rentals” with the headquarters in a single building.⁷² Yet when the

⁶⁸ “Council Agrees to Give Vacant Land to Army,” *Calgary Herald*, October 3, 1939.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ “Committee Room, 28 September 1939,” September 28, 1939, City Council Minutes 1939, City of Calgary Archives; “Council Agrees to Give Vacant Land to Army”; “Salvation Army Hut For Soldiers Ratified,” *The Albertan*, October 5, 1939.

⁷¹ “Army Purchases Two Big Business Blocks in City,” *Calgary Herald*, August 5, 1942; “Talk Protesting Sale Of Block To Military,” *The Albertan*, August 6, 1942.

⁷² “Saving in Time Chief Factor in Army Purchase,” *Calgary Herald*, August 6, 1942; “Mayor Urged Army to Erect New Buildings,” *Calgary Herald*, August 6, 1942; “Trader’s Sale Is Protested,” *The Albertan*, August 7, 1942.

current business tenants of the Traders Block were ordered to vacate the building, the Mayor urged the Army to construct new buildings instead, citing two suitable sites near Mewata.

This episode demonstrated Calgary's first large-scale objection to the war effort. Unlike with the BCATP, Victory Loan Drives and rationing, where the motto was "make every necessary sacrifice,"⁷³ the protest made by City Council members and some of the tenants on the sale of these buildings meant that there were some sacrifices that interfered too much with the running of businesses in the city. The lack of new buildings in the city, as a direct result of the construction needs of the military, meant that the sixteen tenants of the Traders Block Building were unable to find suitable spaces to move into. Many of these businesses had occupied the Traders Block Building since just after the Great War. Managers of the businesses affected also argued against the sale because of the loss of connections and goodwill. In protest, a number of the businesses in the Traders Block sent letters of protest to Ottawa and a petition was planned. City Council approached the DND as well, arguing that the sale of the buildings would cost the city \$5,000 per year in lost tax income because they would become federal tax-exempt properties.⁷⁴ Despite these protests, the DND succeeded in buying the properties and paid \$107,330 for the Traders Block and a rumored \$73,500 for the Northern Electric building.⁷⁵

Why the different reactions to the BCATP base development and the sale of these buildings? At the start of the war, the BCATP promised to be Calgary's biggest

⁷³ "Council Minutes, 5 September 1939."

⁷⁴ "Talk Protesting Sale Of Block To Military"; "Trader's Sale Is Protested."

⁷⁵ "Army Purchases Two Big Business Blocks in City."

contribution to the war effort. Even as the idea of a limited war was lost to reality, Calgarians held on to their support of the BCATP because it brought prosperity to the city that far out-weighed any tax losses. The sale of the Traders Block and Northern Electric building represented to - City Council and local businesses - the Dominion government forcing the business centre out of the community. Regardless, the sale of the buildings went through in the name of the war effort. Because the Traders Block and Northern Electric buildings were owned by the Lougheed estate and therefore a private sale, little could be done to stop the sale.

Similarly, in the summer of 1943, the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (R.C.N.V.R.) looked to expand its presence in Calgary. This expansion, much like what had occurred with the DND purchase of the Traders Block and Northern Electric Buildings, was met with controversy from Calgarians. In June 1943, DND contacted the city regarding procuring five acres of land adjoining the Glencoe Club in Elbow Park.⁷⁶ In response, City Council assured DND that they were “sincerely desirous of doing everything in [their] power to assist.”⁷⁷ Despite their purported desire to aid DND, in the case of the R.C.N.V.R. base, this land agreement did not go smoothly. City Council argued that the current zoning in the desired area was for a single-family district and the city would have to amend the zoning bylaw. To do this, City Council informed DND that the proposed amendment would have to be sent to the town planning commission,

“City Council Minutes 1939”, n.d., Microfilm, City of Calgary Archives.

⁷⁶ “City Council Minutes 1943,” 1943, City of Calgary Archives. Commissioners Report June 18, 1943 Letter dated June 3, 1943 From DND

⁷⁷ Ibid. Commissioners Report, Letter June 14, 1943 from Mayor

meaning there would be a delay in when the site would be available.⁷⁸ Instead, City Council proposed a site at the old municipal airport, on 6th Street, between 8th and 16th Avenues North East, noting, “this property is on sewer, water and gas and ... is three short blocks from the street car line.”⁷⁹ When the public learned of the Navy’s formal application for land in Elbow Park, several protests were made by people living in the area.⁸⁰ Similarly, Alderman Starr was reported to say “he thought the people ‘with beautiful homes in Elbow Park should be protected.’”⁸¹ Shortly after, the Navy withdrew its request.

In the end, a site was chosen for the R.C.N.V.R. base outside of Elbow Park. The site selected, approximately fifteen acres, was on the south side of 17th Avenue West at 24th Street. City Council members believed that about “\$200,000 [would] be spent erecting buildings and developing and improving the property,” bringing further revenues into the city.⁸² However, the matter was not completely settled until September 1944 when the DND requested the city to donate, free of charge, the property required for recreational facilities, “and to restrict construction of any adjoining undesirable buildings, to afford additional space for possible extension and to enhance the appearance of the establishment.”⁸³ City Council agreed to the DND’s request, but added that “no re-sale or

⁷⁸ Ibid. Commissioners Report Letter June 14, 1943 from Mayor

⁷⁹ Ibid. Commissioners Report Letter June 14, 1943 from Mayor

⁸⁰ “Navy Asks for Barracks Site in Elbow Park,” *Calgary Herald*, June 11, 1943; “Offer Navy 2 Locations,” *The Albertan*, June 3, 1943. Though protests were mentioned in the newspapers, no concrete reasoning was given for why the residents did not want the R.C.N.V.R. base in the area.

⁸¹ “Naval Barracks Site Decision Postponed,” *Calgary Herald*, June 22, 1943; “Barracks Site Decision Held Up For Two Weeks,” *The Albertan*, June 22, 1943.

⁸² “City Council Minutes 1944,” 1944, Microfilm, City of Calgary Archives. Commissioners Report 1944 January 21

⁸³ Ibid. Committee Room, 1944 September 12

lease privileges concerning any of the entire property be permitted and that the City Commissioners be authorized and empowered to negotiate with the Department on this basis.”⁸⁴

Calgary witnessed a continued growth in the military presence in the city through the war and quickly became a ‘Garrison Town.’ It is highly unlikely a Calgarian could go a day walking through the streets without seeing some aspect of the military, be it a recruitment poster, military parade, a group of soldiers on leave or a BCATP plane flying overhead. It is unknown whether this daily interaction with the armed forces resulted in a greater war effort on the behalf of Calgarians compared to other non-militarized cities; however, it certainly influenced the way in which Calgarians experienced the war. The growth of the military offered the city economic prosperity and in the case of the BCATP, prestige. However, the opportunities afforded by the military also resulted in challenges. City Council experienced an unprecedented level of federal interaction as a direct result of the military, specifically, in base development. This resulted in City Council re-evaluating what every necessary sacrifice really meant.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Committee Room, 1944 September 12

Chapter Two: “Our City’s Most Vital War Effort”

As a result of the Depression, the growing military presence in the city and the war effort, Calgary experienced an acute housing shortage throughout the Second World War. While all classes were affected by the shortage, servicemen and low and middle income groups felt the most pressure.⁸⁵ In part, this shortage was due to a scarcity in residential building supplies and construction. This first began during the Depression, specifically between 1932 and 1934 and after a small amount of recovery, between 1942 and 1945 in which Canada experienced a second building slump due to wartime-inflicted shortages in skilled labourers and materials.⁸⁶ One of the largest contributing factors to the housing shortage during the war for Calgary was the arrival of both the military and servicemen’s families. Calgary was not unique in this situation, demonstrated by a survey of the local housing, which, carried out by federal authorities, showed “that conditions in Calgary [were] similar to what has been experienced in other centres where there are army and air force concentrations.”⁸⁷ Before May 1944, Canada’s government focused only on the problem of housing war workers, leaving Calgary out of the process. It was not until after May 1944 that the government began to pay attention to servicemen and their families.⁸⁸ Therefore, because Calgary lacked a major war industry, the housing shortage did not fall under the Dominion government’s purview until after D-Day (6 June 1944).

⁸⁵ Jill Wade, “Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947: Canadian Housing Policy at the Crossroads,” *Urban History Review* 15, no. 1 (June 1986): 42.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ “Name Rent Chairman Here; Busy Time Faces Controller,” *Calgary Herald*, December 9, 1940.

⁸⁸ Wade, “Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947: Canadian Housing Policy at the Crossroads,” 44.

Finally, the housing crisis Calgary experienced during the Second World War caused both civilian and municipal groups to seek out federal intervention.⁸⁹

In particular, Mrs. M.R. Goldie, General Secretary of the Y.W.C.A., spoke to a group of women of the Local Council of Women and argued “the people of Calgary are patriotic in their speech, but they’re not willing to be inconvenienced because of the war.”⁹⁰ While this was reminiscent of Calgary’s response to compulsory military training and the jump in marriages in the city (to be discussed in later chapters), Goldie was speaking to the problems soldiers with families were having in finding accommodations in the city. Accommodations were becoming increasingly scarce as the BCATP gained momentum, bringing large numbers of airmen and their families into the city. Goldie, who was responsible for keeping the list of available housing in the city for men on active service, found that the “hospitality of the town did not seem to extend to the wives and children of men in the services.”⁹¹

Indeed, soldiers’ with families often had the hardest time finding housing. It seemed that while Calgarians’ sense of patriotism during war ensured homes for single soldiers and airmen, it did not include housing the wives and children of the men. Families often followed soldiers across the country in the hopes of spending as much time together as possible before the soldier was shipped overseas. Unfortunately, not enough research or evidence exists to understand why families were allowed to follow soldiers. However, in an example of the growing problem, in March 1941, a pair of wives appealed

⁸⁹ Anonymous, “Canadian Mayors on Wartime Housing,” *Monthly Labor Review* 52, no. 5 (May 1941): 1154.

⁹⁰ “Citizens Patriotic Enough In Words But Unwilling To Be Inconvenienced,” *Calgary Herald*, November 22, 1940.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

to the public for support. The houses the families were living in had sold and they would be homeless within a month. The wives hoped “perhaps some patriotic person with a house for sale would rent it to [them] for the duration, or else [they would] have to take a tent and camp.”⁹² Similarly, in August, a soldier and his family were ordered to vacate their home. After contacting twenty-three rental agencies, he had yet to find a home for his family and feared they would end up on the street.⁹³ While these stories shocked the readers of Calgary’s local newspapers, their story, a common one, suggests that shock did not translate into a change of opinion. Families of soldiers continued to have problems finding housing for the duration of the war.

The housing shortage was not just limited to those in the military. With strict restrictions on civilian building to accommodate the construction needs of the military and a growing non-military population, City Council sought a solution to the problem. On 3 March 1941, the Mayor’s office contacted the newly created federal agency, Wartime Housing Limited, seeking information on plans to help with the housing shortage.⁹⁴ Wartime Housing Limited did not respond to the Mayor’s letter until 30 May. The resulting letter informed the Mayor that the city was surveyed, but under the circumstances, “it [appeared] that the housing problem in [their] locality [did] not fall within” the Department of Munitions and Supply, whose authority the Wartime Housing

⁹² “Soldiers’ Wives Seek Homes,” *Calgary Herald*, March 26, 1941, sec. Letters to the Editor.

⁹³ “Order Soldier, Family Must Vacate Premises,” *Calgary Herald*, August 6, 1941.

⁹⁴ “Letter No. 10 To Joseph M. Pigott, President War Time Housing Limited From City of Calgary Mayor’s Office,” March 3, 1941, City Council Minutes 1941, City of Calgary Archives; Kevin Brushett, “Where Will the People Go: Toronto’s Emergency Housing Program and the Limits of Canadian Social Housing Policy, 1944-1957,” *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 3 (March 2007): 378.

Limited ran under.⁹⁵ Wartime Housing Limited answered: “there would usually be adequate housing accommodation in localities such as [Calgary], were it not for the fact that the relatives of Soldiers, Airmen etc., moving into the towns, have taken up all the accommodation.”⁹⁶ Yet again, Calgary was stuck trying to understand where Dominion and municipal jurisdiction began and ended. The housing situation continued to be a major problem throughout the war and as the BCATP grew, so too did the problem.

To illustrate, on 1 September 1941, No. 4 Air Training Command transferred from Regina to Calgary. This transfer meant that 500 to 600 more people would be living in Calgary.⁹⁷ In July, before the transfer took place, the housing committee of the Calgary Board of Trade held a meeting to find a solution to the increased stress the transfer would create on the already strained housing situation. Approximately 160 persons needed accommodation, forty of whom were married and would require houses or apartment suites.⁹⁸ Therefore, the Calgary Board of Trade decided at the meeting that they would make a public appeal for assistance in housing these people through newspapers and radio advertising. Mayor Davison also pledged the City Council’s cooperation and urged Calgary’s “patriotic citizens” to help.⁹⁹ During the transfer, the Y.W.C.A. was used as a clearinghouse to place personnel and handle all offers of accommodation and requests for information.¹⁰⁰ Through the combined efforts of community groups, City Council and military authorities, the transfer of personnel and the headquarters was handled quite

⁹⁵ “Letter No. 20 To Mayor From War Time Housing Limited,” May 30, 1941, City Council Minutes 1941, City of Calgary Archives.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Air Force Facing Housing Problem,” *Calgary Herald*, July 29, 1941.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

successfully. As the commander of No. 4 Air Training Command commented to the Mayor, it was only accomplished “with the utmost co-operation from yourself and the citizens of Calgary.”¹⁰¹ The re-location of No. 4 Air Training Command from Regina to Calgary, and the subsequent successful housing accommodations made demonstrated that, for Calgarians, supporting the BCATP to the best of the city’s ability was a necessary part of the war effort. Additionally, it highlighted the large impact military decisions, such as the transfer of military headquarters, had on the city.

However, after the successful transfer, the housing crisis continued to grow. Many citizens wrote to City Council requesting they be granted permission to have suites in their homes after being approached repeatedly by military personnel seeking accommodations. Indeed, the Dominion government was actively pressuring homeowners across the country to take on tenants to help with the housing shortage.¹⁰² For example, W.J. Ovans who lived within walking distance of Currie Barracks received many enquiries from R.C.A.F. personnel looking for accommodation for their families. Ovans looked to add a terrace to his property, which would contain five separate suites.¹⁰³ Similarly, the Calgary Town Planning Commission received a letter from a homeowner living on 6th Street and 13th Avenue West, remarking that the R.C.A.F. was after the owner to add a basement suite in his house so that he could take in R.C.A.F. and BCATP personnel. Particularly telling of this situation was that this homeowner argued that as a taxpayer, he should have the same opportunity to generate an income through rental

¹⁰¹ “Letter To Mayor Davison From Air Commodore Air Officer Commanding, No. 4 Air Training Command,” September 30, 1941, Box 326 File 2119, City of Calgary Archives.

¹⁰² Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 81.

¹⁰³ “Letter to Town Planning Commission From W.J. Ovans,” January 26, 1942, Town Planning Commission, Box 8 File 50, City of Calgary Archives.

income as others on his street.¹⁰⁴ These examples demonstrate both the intense need for accommodation for military, and in particular, R.C.A.F. and BCATP, personnel, and Calgary citizens' desire to help, but also, profit from the housing shortage.

Various organizations in Calgary also sought to find solutions to the housing problem, even if they were only temporary fixes. As early as 1940, the Y.W.C.A. recommended to City Council that Lougheed House, at the time occupied by the Home Service School, be used for housing Air Force Personnel and their dependents. Specifically, they argued that Lougheed House was “most eminently suited to play its part in our city’s most vital war effort—the housing of the dependents of the men who are engaged in the defence of our empire.”¹⁰⁵ The Y.W.C.A. noted that it would be willing to staff, finance and run the house, “as an additional contribution to Calgary’s war effort.”¹⁰⁶ Two years later in August and September 1942, the situation was still not resolved, as Air Force and other military personnel were not the only ones looking for housing and space at Lougheed House. City Council received six other applications for space at Lougheed House from M.D. No. 13, Canadian Red Cross Society and Co-ordinating Council for Auxiliary War Services.¹⁰⁷ The Lougheed property was also under consideration for a hostel for active duty soldiers because men coming to the city on leave had difficulties finding temporary accommodations.¹⁰⁸ A Sub-Committee was formed by City Council to

¹⁰⁴ “City Clerk’s Correspondence, Letter To City Clerk From McKeoron,” June 22, 1944, City Clerk’s Department Fonds, Box 349 File 2274, City of Calgary Archives.

¹⁰⁵ “Letter No. 21 To City Council From Calgary Y.W.C.A.,” November 12, 1940, City Council Minutes 1940, City of Calgary Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ “Committee Room 2. Re Rental of Lougheed Residence Property,” August 27, 1942, City Council Minutes 1942, City of Calgary Archives.

¹⁰⁸ “Want Lougheed Home As Soldiers Hostel,” *Calgary Herald*, August 27, 1942.

consider all the applications, noting, “all of these organizations are urgently in need of accommodation such as the Lougheed home affords.”¹⁰⁹ After some deliberation, the Subcommittee recommended M.D. No. 13 be given first consideration because members of the Canadian Women’s Auxiliary Corps were billeted in homes and boarding homes across the city. In addition, City Council awarded the basement to the Red Cross to use as a blood donor clinic.¹¹⁰

The critical housing situation, fueled by the growing military presence in the city also affected the health care available to Calgarians. Due to increasingly poor housing conditions, more expectant mothers were heading to hospitals to give birth than in previous years. This caused extreme overcrowding in the maternity wards. For instance, in March 1943 alone, seventy-nine women were rejected from the hospital because a lack of space. By the end of the first week of April, a further twenty women were forced to find another location to give birth. To combat the situation, some doctors and hospital officials were considering allowing women who had normal births only to stay in the hospital for six or seven days rather than the normal eleven days.¹¹¹

The difficult conditions that existed during the war also presented a problem for the post war period for military personnel and their dependents. By the end of the war, Wartime Housing Limited built 18,300 housing structures across the country, although “critics argued [this] was less than half of what was needed in its first year of operations

¹⁰⁹ “Committee Room 1942 September 3,” September 3, 1942, City Council Minutes 1942, City of Calgary Archives.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ “News From Home,” *The Albertan*, April 9, 1943; “Trying To Figure Way To Give Stork Room,” *The Albertan*, April 9, 1943.

alone.”¹¹² With a reported 848 houses unfinished in Calgary by the end of 1944, there was a great concern that servicemen’s wives were still unable to find accommodation for their families.¹¹³ As the City Commissioner pointed out in a letter to J.L. Ilesley, Minister of Finance, there was a feeling of resentment and even hostility from the returning personnel of the active services that they received only the left over accommodation or no accommodation at all. Often these men were open with their resentment, stating, “they found and risked their lives for Canada and all the promises of a better Canada, better living conditions in Canada means only for them, a struggle to get shelter.”¹¹⁴ City Council did approach the Dominion government for help with the housing situation. As a result, Wartime Housing Limited and Department of Munitions and Supply conducted a study of Calgary in the spring of 1941, but concluded that Calgary did not fall into their jurisdiction. This was because, Wartime Housing Limited pointed out, “there would usually be adequate housing accommodation in localities such as yours, were it not for the fact that the relatives of Soldiers, Airmen etc., moving into the towns, have taken up all the accommodation.”¹¹⁵

Similarly, the Women’s Voluntary Services appealed to City Council to step in and help servicemen’s wives, in particular, British war brides. The group took it upon

¹¹² Brushett, “Where Will the People Go: Toronto’s Emergency Housing Program and the Limits of Canadian Social Housing Policy, 1944-1957,” 378.

¹¹³ “Letter To Commissioner V.A. Newhall From Manager J.W. Russell,” March 9, 1945, City Council Minutes 1945, City of Calgary Archives; “Council Chamber Letter No. 6 To J.L. Ilesley, Minister of Finance From City Commissioner,” March 19, 1945, City Council Minutes 1945, City of Calgary Archives.

¹¹⁴ “Council Chamber Letter No. 6 To J.L. Ilesley, Minister of Finance From City Commissioner”; Brushett, “Where Will the People Go: Toronto’s Emergency Housing Program and the Limits of Canadian Social Housing Policy, 1944-1957,” 379.

¹¹⁵ “Letter No. To Mayor Davison From War Time Housing Limited,” May 30, 1941, City Council Minutes 1941, City of Calgary Archives.

themselves to make calls in to British war brides and found almost in every case requests for housing assistance. To demonstrate the growing problem, the Women's Voluntary Services cited an example of a women "who is living with her child and five other people in a two roomed attic."¹¹⁶ The group also noted that over the past year, at the Servicemen's Centre, canteen hostesses were asked repeatedly for aid in finding housing. These hostesses were only able to direct the men to the Y.W.C.A's Rooms Registry or the newspaper listings. While they did not keep a record of these requests, conservative estimates cited over a hundred requests a month, "at a Centre which at no time, has offered anything resembling housing service."¹¹⁷

A review of Calgary's housing situation in May 1945 showed that the city needed over two thousand homes by the end of the year. C.C. Walley, the Winnipeg official of Wartime Housing Limited, noted that by Christmas, Calgary could expect approximately 700 newly married citizens from armed forces seeking accommodation in the coming year.¹¹⁸ To combat the post-war housing situation further, the Commissioner suggested the Dominion government retain the grounds and buildings of No. 2 Wireless School, slated for closure on 31 March 1945 and convert them into temporary housing. Municipalities across the country facing extreme housing shortages also looked to federal buildings such as barracks for conversion to temporary housing. Because of pressures from municipal governments, social service organizations and veterans groups, federal building transfers were carried out across the country. For example, in Edmonton,

¹¹⁶ "Letter to City Commissioner From Women's Voluntary Services, Calgary," March 7, 1945, City Council Minutes 1945, City of Calgary Archives.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ "To Ask Wartime Housing To Provide 400 Homes," *The Albertan*, May 26, 1945.

veterans and their families moved into temporary housing in the former barracks of the American soldiers building the Alaskan highway. In Quebec City, 120 families moved into the former German POW camp located on the Plains of Abraham and in Vancouver, almost 1000 veterans and their families moved into the Seaforth Armouries, Little Mountain and Acadia Camps on the University of British Columbia campus.¹¹⁹

Therefore, Calgary was not in a unique situation. City Council's request to use the No. 2 Wireless School as temporary housing followed national trends. Additionally, the school was deemed a suitable location by City Council because of its location and proximity to streetcar service and provision shops.¹²⁰ The Women's Voluntary Services group also urged the use of No. 2 Wireless School as an emergency housing measure, "while only an emergency measure, and probably inadequate as to the accommodation needed, appears to be essential if conditions of discomfort, misery and epidemic are to be avoided."¹²¹ Similarly, Calgary's Real Estate Board also wrote to City Council urging the city to make use of the military buildings throughout the city, recently vacated by Army and Air Force personnel.¹²² As these requests were coming in, City Council was unable to get a response from the Director of National Housing Administration in Ottawa on the subject. They did, however, hear from Member of Parliament, Wanley J. Edwards, who sent two telegrams stating, "no action could be taken regarding the obtaining of the huts at No. 2 Wireless until after the army had completed a survey to find if the huts were of

¹¹⁹ Brushett, "Where Will the People Go: Toronto's Emergency Housing Program and the Limits of Canadian Social Housing Policy, 1944-1957," 380.

¹²⁰ "Council Chamber Letter No. 6 To J.L. Ilesley, Minister of Finance From City Commissioner."

¹²¹ "Letter to City Commissioner From Women's Voluntary Services, Calgary."

¹²² "Letter No. 10 To J.M. Miller, City Clerk From Calgary Real Estate Board," March 17, 1945, City Council Minutes 1945, City of Calgary Archives.

service for their future plans.”¹²³ Therefore, it was not until 29 October 1945 that City Council was able to give consent to the renovation of five of the wireless huts. As City Council gave consent for the renovations, the Army released a sixth hut, hut 29; however, City Council had to wait for Ottawa to release it to Calgary. Once City Council was able to get the hut, it would be operational within a week at the cost of \$9,000 to \$10,000 per hut.¹²⁴

The housing shortage remained a problem in Calgary well into the post-war period. Despite the Dominion government recognizing Calgary’s housing shortage was caused by a large increase in military personnel in the city, without any major war industry in the city, Calgary was unable to receive help from Wartime Housing Limited until almost the end of the war. Thus, the military in the city was both a cause for pride and a source of pain for Calgary. Without the large military presence in Calgary, it is likely the city would not have experienced the housing crisis as much as it did. In addition, the continued base development in the city meant that building materials were scarce and a vital part of the war effort. This led to competition among civilian groups and servicemen for lodgings such as the Lougheed House. Finally, the effects of the housing crisis also bled into other aspects of daily life in the city, as demonstrated by overcrowding in hospitals. Yet despite these tensions, overall, Calgarians were prepared to make the necessary sacrifice when it came to housing.

¹²³ “Commissioners Report,” March 29, 1945, City Council Minutes 1945, City of Calgary Archives.

¹²⁴ “Council Chambers, New Business,” October 29, 1945, City Council Minutes 1945, City of Calgary Archives.

Chapter Three: “A Magnificent Gesture”

When it came to the financial war effort, Calgarians certainly made the necessary sacrifice. Almost as soon as men started enlisting, citizen groups began raising funds on their own initiative. Within ten weeks of mobilization, Calgarians gave enough money to build a sports hall for the troops. Children collected money on Halloween for the children of London and employees opted to forgo annual company picnics to give more money to the war effort. Calgarians also rallied together to reach their quotas in the many war loan drives and took pride in their accomplishments. Celebrations occurred in the streets when the thermometer prominently displayed on the Hudson’s Bay Company building announced that the citizens of Calgary’s efforts resulted in the ‘breaking’ of Hitler’s and Mussolini’s necks. Yet it was not always smooth sailing. For instance, when the sports hall burned down in the spring of 1941, local prominent businessmen questioned military authorities about what was to become of their investment. Despite this, Calgarians gave their money to the war effort, surpassing quotas often with ease because they hoped every dollar they gave towards the war effort could lead to one less dead son.

Only ten weeks after mobilization commenced, Calgarians raised enough money to help cover the cost of construction on a sports hall for the troops.¹²⁵ In November 1939, work started on the sports hall, at a cost of \$15,000.¹²⁶ This sports hall, located at 9th Avenue and 11th street west, was “equipped with a basketball court, hand-ball court,

¹²⁵ “Plan to Open Sports Centre Early in Year,” *Calgary Herald*, December 19, 1939; “Twenty-First Anniversary of Peace Sees Dominion Marshaling for War.”

¹²⁶ “Plan to Open Sports Centre Early in Year.”

boxing and wrestling rings, and a projection room and screen.”¹²⁷ In addition, it would be “used as a troop lecture hall if the occasion demands, and possibly for church service on Sundays.”¹²⁸ At the grand opening in January 1940, a crowd of 2,000 soldiers and citizens attended.¹²⁹ The sports hall played host to a variety of sporting events that brought Calgarians and soldiers closer together until a fire destroyed it in the spring of 1941.

However, when Calgarians gave money to the war effort, it was usually with the understanding that it was an investment. In other words, Calgarians would get back what they put in, often with interest. For example, on top of the money donated to the building of the sports hall, the Calgary Highlanders approached several prominent individuals and Calgary-based businesses to loan the regiment \$2,550.00 until the Canteen began making a profit at which time the loan would be repaid.¹³⁰ Two things prevented the timely repayment, including a fire that burned down the sports hall in the spring of 1941, resulting in some conflict between the military and the prominent Calgarians. The growth of the military in the city meant that a number of organizations came forward to provide free entertainment, such as dances, for the soldiers. As such, the sports hall, which charged twenty-five cents for admission, faced a steady decline in attendance at its dances. By February 1941, revenues earned from the dances were less than \$100.00 a month half of what the revenue was in September and October 1940.¹³¹

¹²⁷ “Work Is Started on Sports Hall for City Troops,” *Calgary Herald*, November 3, 1939.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ “Soldiers’ Sports Pavilion Is Opened,” *Calgary Herald*, January 13, 1940.

¹³⁰ “Letter To Trustees, Calgary Highlanders, C.A.S.F.,” May 23, 1940, Eric Harvie Fonds G1/508, Glenbow Archive.

¹³¹ “Letter To Mr. H.A. Howard From W.K. Jull,” February 5, 1941, Eric Harvie Fonds G1/508, Glenbow Archive.

This lack of income was the least of the Calgary Highlander's loan repayment problems when the sport hall burned down in the spring of 1941. With the building destroyed, a series of letters passed between some of the men who loaned money to the Calgary Highlanders, such as prominent Calgarian businessman Eric Harvie, Trustee H.A. Howard of The Trusts and Guarantee Company Limited and military officials, Lieutenant Colonel Scott, Officer Commanding, Calgary Highlanders and Captain H.G. Nolan, Assistant Judge Advocate General, M.D. No. 13. Before the building burned down, the civilians made it clear that the Calgary Highlanders were to receive all the money owed to the battalion before the civilians received any money. In their correspondence with the DND, the civilians made it clear that they only wished to receive seventy percent of what was owed to them; the rest was to be given to the Calgary Highlanders.¹³² However, with the building destroyed, several citizens demanded their money back. This was certainly a problem because as Lieutenant Colonel (Lieut-Col.) Scott pointed out, "at the time of the loan it was explained to the civilians that if the War should cease they probably would not get back their money. [Scott did] not remember if it was explained to them that if the building burned down that they might not get back their money."¹³³ Though documents were only available from Harvie, it seems that this issue was eventually settled with the civilians receiving their money back.¹³⁴ This episode demonstrates some of the problems surrounding war loans and civilian-military

¹³² "Letter To Captain H.G. Nolan From H.A. Howard," February 13, 1941, Eric Harvie Fonds G1/508, Glenbow Archive.

¹³³ "Documentation Attention of Capt. H.G. Nolan From Lieut-Col. J.F. Scott," March 13, 1941, Eric Harvie Fonds G1/508, Glenbow Archive.

¹³⁴ "Letter to Lieut-Col. J.F. Scott From Eric Harvie," April 23, 1941, Eric Harvie Fonds G1/508, Glenbow Archive; "Letter To Lieut-Col. J.F. Scott From Eric Harvie," May 16, 1941, Eric Harvie Fonds G1/508, Glenbow Archive.

interactions. It appears clear that at least for the civilians and businesses involved in this episode, the loans were treated as such, a loan. That is to say, while they were more than willing to support the war effort, it had to make sound business sense.

To demonstrate further, in May 1940 the Calgary Aero Club received orders to resume training pilots for the R.C.A.F. after their training program was stopped in April. The main problem for the club was finding qualified instructors. To get around this, the club decided to train at least six instructors to R.C.A.F. qualifications at their own expense, of \$300 a man. To complete the necessary training, the club required \$35,000 and had to turn itself into a company to raise the money. A prominent Calgary unnamed businessman who was also a director of the club guaranteed the money to the club. He did this because his financial contribution would be repaid by the profits made by the training courses and the bonuses received from the Dominion government for every pilot trained.¹³⁵

In addition to raising funds for local military needs, the Dominion raised money for the national war effort by appealing to the citizens of Canada to give their money without hesitation or limitation. As the war went on, the Dominion government explored new avenues of fundraising. Early in the war before the creation of the better-known Victory Bond Campaigns, the Dominion raised money through War Savings Drives and War Savings Stamps. In Calgary, organizations involved with the war savings drives worked together to ensure all possible avenues were tapped. For example in July 1940, the Rotary Club of Calgary persuaded 750 retailers and outlets to buy \$4,800 worth of

¹³⁵ "Orders To Speed Up Air Scheme Received," *Calgary Herald*, May 23, 1940.

war savings stamps. Calgary's investment houses also received objectives to reach and various women's organizations came together to sell stamps at jointly operated sales booths.¹³⁶ Within major Calgary retail stores, employees also bought war savings stamps in large numbers. For example, employees at the Hudson's Bay Company decided to forgo their annual picnic to put their efforts towards buying stamps instead; Eaton's employees did a similar thing. In addition, both groups of employees planned to attend an upcoming war theatre party to support the war effort further.¹³⁷

The coverage given to these two employee groups in local newspapers was likely meant to spur other groups into action. The heavy advertising of the war savings stamp drive and theatre party in the newspapers also suggests there was a great deal of cooperation throughout the city in support of the financial war effort. Calgarians certainly responded well to the efforts of the local organizations. For example, nearly 9,000 people attended a war effort theatre party on 15 July 1940 that was held at eleven different theatres across Calgary; hundreds more were turned away. The theatre party was a fundraiser created by the Theatre Owners of Canada and the Motion Picture Industry to aid the sale of War Savings Stamps and Certificates. A single night raised \$18,996 in purchased stamps in Calgary alone as part of "the movie industry's magnificent gesture to 'lick Hitler with stamps.'"¹³⁸ Final figures showed that Calgary's figures even beat Ottawa's contribution by a remarkable \$6,270.¹³⁹ Campaigns such as these sought to reinforce patriotism by fostering a purpose in the war effort in all Calgarians. This was so

¹³⁶ "War Savings Drive Nets \$70,000," *Calgary Herald*, July 11, 1940.

¹³⁷ "Employees Forgo Picnic To Buy War Savings Stamps," *Calgary Herald*, July 13, 1940.

¹³⁸ "Nearly 9,000 Attend War Effort Theatre Party," *Calgary Herald*, July 16, 1940.

¹³⁹ "Provincial Total Reaches \$58.812," *Calgary Herald*, July 20, 1940.

important to the war effort because “participation brought a greater sense of belonging and direction.”¹⁴⁰

In addition to the war theatre party, Calgarians continued to support war loan drives. For instance, to usher in the second war savings loan in September 1940, civilian and military authorities planned a grand military display. Not only was the city ‘bombed’ to mark the start of the drive, a gas-masked decontamination squad performed a demonstration for thousands of Calgarians.¹⁴¹ Authorities also hoped that the war loan would help improve morale as well as stimulate enlistments. In a speech at the Palliser Hotel in Calgary, Hon. J.L. Ralston, former Minister of Finance and recently appointed Minister of Defence, told Calgarians “nothing will improve and strengthen the morale of the Canadian people more than an overwhelming response to Canada’s Second War Loan.”¹⁴²

Similarly, in one of the “largest patriotic demonstrations ever to march through the streets of Calgary,” 3,200 soldiers marched to promote the 1941 Victory Loan on 31 May.¹⁴³ While close to half of Calgary’s population turned out to watch, these ‘stampede crowds’ were surprisingly quiet, because as one woman put it, “my boy is marching, yet I don’t feel like shouting, I’m going to buy a bond.”¹⁴⁴ The increased recruitment drive of the spring meant more of Calgary’s sons than ever before were wearing a uniform and perhaps brought the reality of the war closer to home. Thus, to avoid their sons having to

¹⁴⁰ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 23.

¹⁴¹ “City To Be ‘Bombed’ Monday,” *Calgary Herald*, September 7, 1940; “Parade, Gas Attacks Usher In New Loan Drive,” *Calgary Herald*, September 9, 1940.

¹⁴² “War Loan Answer Key To Our Morale,” *Calgary Herald*, September 10, 1940.

¹⁴³ “3,200 Soldiers Will Parade,” *The Albertan*, May 30, 1941.

¹⁴⁴ “‘Stampede Crowds’ Hall Victory Loan Marches,” *The Albertan*, June 2, 1941.

lay down their lives, Calgarians could buy more bonds and win the war that way. This feeling was reflected two weeks later when a full-page ad was featured in *The Albertan* entitled, “He Gave His Life That We Might Live.” This ad struck an emotional tone featuring a letter written by a dying Royal Air Force gunner, Sergeant Alfred Harrison, to his mother. Calgarians were reminded not to allow his death be in vain, and to “finish the job... buy Victory Bonds.”¹⁴⁵ Two days after that ad appeared, another was published urging Calgarians to “never let it be said that Calgary failed.”¹⁴⁶

Filling Calgary’s loan quota was not only directly linked to civic pride, but also was an attempt to avoid the meaningless death of any soldier. Despite these appeals to the emotions of Calgarians, Calgary was one of twelve units, out of a 118 total, in Alberta lagging behind in its loan quota at the start of a drive in the summer of 1941.¹⁴⁷ Calgarians rallied to the cause however, and by the evening of 20 June, Calgarians raised another \$123,000 to reach its quota. In celebration, Hitler’s neck, serving as the mercury of the Victory Loan thermometer, was broken by the local fire department and paraded through the streets by thousands of Calgarians.¹⁴⁸

Despite the continued strains placed on Calgarians’ daily lives by the war effort and the military, they continued to support the financial war effort wholeheartedly. In June 1941, war savings campaigns were reorganized under the banner of the newly formed National War Finance Committee (N.W.F.C.). The first Victory Bond campaign

¹⁴⁵ “He Gave His Life That We Might Live,” *The Albertan*, June 14, 1941.

¹⁴⁶ “Never Let It Be Said That Calgary Failed,” *The Albertan*, June 16, 1941.

¹⁴⁷ “Calgary Lags In Loan Quota,” *The Albertan*, June 20, 1941.

¹⁴⁸ “Thousands Watch As ‘Hitler’s Neck Broken’,” *The Albertan*, June 21, 1941.

raised an impressive \$836 million across Canada for the national war effort.¹⁴⁹ This first campaign was also very popular with Canadian businesses after the Excess Profit Tax was introduced in 1941, which took “all declared earnings at a 50 percent rate above a firm’s 1936-39 average profits,” rising to seventy-five percent the following year and by the later part of 1942, all profits above the 1936-39 average were taken.¹⁵⁰ Calgary’s businesses were no exception. Most Calgary businesses formed special employee committees dedicated to selling bonds to their co-workers. For example, at the United Grain Growers Calgary office, employees were told it was hoped “that [they] will not merely earn the Certificate of Honour for having reached [their] objective but will greatly exceed it.”¹⁵¹ In addition, businesses understood that a certain amount of goodwill could be gained by making large contributions to the campaign. Robin Hood Flour Mills subscribed to a half million dollars in bonds, with each province receiving a portion of the subscriptions.¹⁵²

While Robin Hood Flour Mills recognized the potential for goodwill, management at the Calgary office opposed interfering in their employees’ personal affairs. One manager, in a letter to employees, wrote that he had “always been opposed to the matter of taking part in appeals to the employees as their employer. It has always looked to [him] as a ‘stick-up’ proposition, and interference in the employees’ personal affairs.”¹⁵³ The overall tone of the letter created tension with management, who felt they were being

¹⁴⁹ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 32.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁵¹ “Letter, United Grain Growers,” February 13, 1942, W.H. Herriot Fonds, M-8094, Glenbow Archive.

¹⁵² “Second Victory Loan Campaign,” February 14, 1942, Robin Hood Flour Mills Fonds, M-2437-14, Glenbow Archive.

¹⁵³ “Letter,” February 9, 1942, Robin Hood Flour Mills Fonds, M-2437-14, Glenbow Archive.

backed into a corner by the government. The manager also noted that he was “going to find it hard to refuse to do as the Committee suggests without giving the Company a black mark on their record.”¹⁵⁴ Despite this hesitation, Robin Hood Flour Mills and other businesses throughout Calgary allowed employee Victory Bond committees to function throughout the war. In fact, business contributions to the Victory Bond campaigns made up almost half of the contributions in Canada.¹⁵⁵

Newspapers and bonds salesmen in Calgary also promoted the Second Victory Loan campaign heavily. They acted as agents of the government to ensure a total war effort on the part of Calgarians. Articles and advertisements sought to appeal to the reader’s sense of duty. For example, Calgarians were reminded that if the government was not provided with the funds required to finance the war effort, they would have no other choice “but to restrict the nation’s war effort.”¹⁵⁶ Indeed, in an overt attempt to appeal to Calgarians’ sense of patriotism they were reminded that “Canada bears too proud a name among the concert of world nations for her citizens to permit the disgrace of failure.”¹⁵⁷

To encourage Calgarians to buy more war savings stamps, both national and local committees used the courage and ‘successes’ of the Calgary Regiment (Tank) in the Dieppe raid. Committees used the raid to remind Calgarians of the importance of war savings and “the need to keep the men fully supplied with munitions of war, together with

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 31.

¹⁵⁶ “The Enemies Ranged Against Us Have Asked For Total War. Let Us Make Sure They Get It,” *Calgary Herald*, February 2, 1942.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

all active service units.”¹⁵⁸ Capitalizing on the nationalistic momentum, a nation-wide savings drive, ‘15 Minutes for Canada,’ was held. From 3 to 3:15pm 3 September, all Canadians were asked to “rededicate [themselves] to the task ahead and pledge [themselves] to finance and produce the weapons of war which our men of battle require.”¹⁵⁹ The members of the Calgary committee made plans to ensure every Calgarian was involved. Every retailer was only allowed to sell War Savings Stamps for the period of the fifteen minute drive and plans were made for special services in city churches “to pray for the welfare and success of [their] fighting forces”¹⁶⁰ as well as special radio broadcasts.¹⁶¹

War savings drives, specifically Victory Bond campaigns, were remarkably successful in Calgary and across Canada. Over the course of the war, Canadians bought \$11.8 billion in Victory Bonds, an impressive feat for a country of about 11 million. Further, in 1945 alone, Canadians purchased approximately one-seventh of Canada’s Gross Domestic Product in 1945 in Victory Bonds.¹⁶² By the end of the war, the campaigns were so successful that “virtually every Canadian who could afford to buy a bond did.”¹⁶³ The National War Finance Committee (NWFC) accomplished this by saturating public and private spaces with publicity for the campaigns, enlisting the

¹⁵⁸ “Raid On Dieppe Stresses Need For War Savings,” *Calgary Herald*, August 21, 1942.

¹⁵⁹ “Fifteen Minutes Given To Canada,” *Calgary Herald*, August 26, 1942; “Ad- 15 Minutes For Canada,” *The Albertan*, August 25, 1942.

¹⁶⁰ “Fifteen Minutes Given To Canada.”

¹⁶¹ “12,000 Stores Join 15 Minute Drive,” *Calgary Herald*, August 27, 1942; “12,000 Stores To Co-Operate,” *The Albertan*, August 25, 1942.

¹⁶² Wendy Cuthbertson, “Pocketbooks and Patriotism: The ‘Financial Miracle’ of Canada’s World War II Victory Bond Program,” in *Canadian Military History Since the 17th Century* (presented at the Canadian Military History Conference, Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2000), 177.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

support of the local elites and shaping public opinion all in the name of creating awareness for buying bonds.

However, the NWFC did not rely just on the ideal of patriotism, as discussed earlier in conjunction with Calgarians supporting the sports hall for the troops. Sometimes selling bonds came down to the consumer's self-interest and ensuring purchasing bonds made sound business sense.¹⁶⁴ For example, while the city was preparing for the end of the war in Europe, the 8th Victory Bond campaign was launched. Beginning in April 1945, the campaign focused on the need for Calgarians to buy bonds to support the rehabilitation of the troops.¹⁶⁵ It was stressed, "the cost of war does not end when the last shell has been fired."¹⁶⁶ The military was also canvassed heavily with bond salesmen approaching servicemen in the training areas, firing ranges, hospitals and barracks. Through aggressive campaigning, M.D. No. 13 alone fulfilled its quota of \$760,000.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Calgary passed its loan objective for the eighth consecutive time by raising \$6,755,900 or 106 percent of the objective, surpassing all previous campaigns.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps the greatest reminder to Calgarians of the need for continued financial support of the war effort came with the tragic crash of 'F-For-Freddie' and the deaths of two of its pilots. The plane, after completing 211 operational flights over Germany, was brought to Canada to take part in the campaign. Piloted by Flight Lieut. Maurice Briggs and Flying Officer John Baker, the plane was a part of a noon-hour ceremony in downtown Calgary. The

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 182.

¹⁶⁵ "Must Buy Bonds To Help Bring The Troops Home," *Calgary Herald*, May 7, 1945.

¹⁶⁶ "Rehabilitation Needs Bonds," *The Albertan*, April 24, 1945.

¹⁶⁷ "Currie Barracks Leads Bond Drive," *The Albertan*, April 24, 1945; "Soldiers Will Set New Record," *The Albertan*, April 24, 1945.

¹⁶⁸ "Calgary Passes Loan Objective," *Calgary Herald*, May 7, 1945.

plane crashed during an exhibition of low flying manoeuvres over the airport.¹⁶⁹ It is likely that the tragic crash was a stark reminder to many Calgarians that the dangers of the war were not over yet.

The importance of supporting the financial war effort saturated the city. Calgarians responded favourably to both local and national campaigns and were prepared to make a financial sacrifice. Aided by a lack of consumer goods to buy and numerous employment opportunities, Calgarians were able to find the money to surpass loan objectives with ease. Tensions, while they did exist, were relatively minor as shown by the loss of the sports hall in the spring of 1941. Investors and military authorities were able to come to a compromise. However, what became clear from this event was that some Calgarians were not motivated solely by patriotism.

¹⁶⁹ “Death of Flying Heroes In Crash of ‘F-For-Freddie’ Shocks Calgary,” *Calgary Herald*, May 11, 1945.

Chapter Four: “Tea may be Soothing but Rationing [is a] Headache”

The outbreak of the Second World War forced Calgarians to alter how they went about their lives. As this thesis has already noted, both City Council and the citizens of Calgary faced some obstacles in balancing their desire to make the necessary sacrifice in the name of the war effort and keep their city, families, and businesses running. This was an especially hard task coming out of the Depression of the 1930s. For instance, many hoped the war would bring an immediate change to the unemployment problem facing the city. Unfortunately, it followed seasonal trends as the main sources of employment were still in farming and mining. While unemployment did drop significantly, later in the war it also created a new problem. Employers began struggling to maintain their workforce between enlistments and increased employment opportunities across the country. In addition, community groups came together at the start of the war, with little government influence, to find ways to support the war. Women’s groups in particular adapted their routines to fit in volunteer war work and ensured that soldiers without families had somebody in Calgary thinking about them. Perhaps more importantly, however, the failed raid of Dieppe in the summer of 1942 reminded Calgarians that their sacrifices, no matter how large, could not be compared to the seemingly unending casualty lists in the daily newspapers.

At the outbreak of the war, many in Calgary believed that the war would have a positive effect on the relief rolls. While it would take time before the war would have a substantial effect on the rolls, some prominent citizens in Calgary felt that the heads of

families on relief should be among the first in the city to enlist.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, to encourage enlistments, the Calgary Relief Committee decided to support those who enlisted in Calgary until their first pay.¹⁷¹ In the immediate aftermath of the declaration of war, unemployment figures did fall in Calgary; 259 men found jobs bringing Calgary's male unemployment to 1,476 men.¹⁷² This drop was short lived however, because unemployment in Calgary followed seasonal trends. The end of the harvest brought now unemployed harvest workers back into the city before September was over, diminishing any effect the declaration of war and recruitment had on the city relief rolls.¹⁷³ This trend of steadily rising unemployment continued into December, reaching 2,463 unemployed men in Calgary by 6 December.¹⁷⁴

By 1941, unemployment was still a concern in the city. In fact, Calgary saw a sharp increase in unemployment in January, as the freezing temperatures drew increasing numbers of transient men into the city, attracted by rumors of war construction work.¹⁷⁵ For example, by 22 January, there were 1,672 men and 168 women unemployed in the city compared to 1,390 men and 126 women the previous week.¹⁷⁶ In the face of this rising unemployment, Calgarians questioned what the post-war world would look like, fearing another depression and more social upheaval. Indeed, Major F. J. Ney, Dominion Secretary of the National Council of Education warned Calgarians it was not the current

¹⁷⁰ "Considering New Setup on Relief as War's Result," *Calgary Herald*, September 11, 1939.

¹⁷¹ "Relief Recipients Who Enlist Here To Be Supported Until First Pay," *Calgary Herald*, September 13, 1939; "Six Relief Recipients Among City Recruits," *The Albertan*, September 12, 1939; "Aid Reliefers Who Enlist," *The Albertan*, September 27, 1939.

¹⁷² "Alberta Unemployment Figures Again Show Decrease," *Calgary Herald*, September 13, 1939.

¹⁷³ "Jobless Total Is Increased; Harvest Wanes," *Calgary Herald*, September 22, 1939.

¹⁷⁴ "Unemployment Here Remains At High Level," *Calgary Herald*, December 6, 1939.

¹⁷⁵ "More Transient Jobless Men Arriving In City," *Calgary Herald*, January 6, 1941.

¹⁷⁶ "Alberta Jobless Take Big Jump In Past Week," *Calgary Herald*, January 22, 1941.

war that was the problem, but the peace that was to follow. In March, at a Canadian Club meeting, citizens were told that the post-war world would require long-range planning and greater education.¹⁷⁷ Thus, Calgarians were often caught between their concerns regarding the immediate reality of the war and their fears for the post-war world. Many Calgarians seemed to understand that somehow the world went wrong in the previous post-war era and sought to avoid it in the next.

Yet despite any post-war concerns Calgarians may have had, continuing to support the immediate war effort was the prime concern of most Calgarians. The majority of Calgarians engaged in the war through social networks, such as service clubs, craft groups and community groups. Middle and upper class Calgarian women in particular found an outlet for their patriotism through their volunteer war work. At the national level, women's organizations were among some of the first to offer their services to the war effort. For instance, on 13 September, the National Council of Young Women's Christian Association wrote to the Prime Minister, offering their services as they did in the Great War. Similarly, the Catholic Women's League, the Canadian Red Cross Association, the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire (IODE), and the Canadian Women's Press club volunteered for service in September 1939.¹⁷⁸

At the local level in Calgary, smaller women's groups were eager to do their part as well. For example, Constance Pearkes, the wife of Brigadier George Pearkes, encouraged women to start "waging battle with knitting needles" and to form sewing

¹⁷⁷ "Sees Long Range Planning Needed For New Order," *Calgary Herald*, March 6, 1941.

¹⁷⁸ Donna J. Swicker, "Alberta Women and World War Two" (University of Calgary, 1985), 107.

groups for the purposes of war work.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, women's patriotic participation through domestic services became recognized as a social necessity as total mobilization came to fruition and the Dominion government began actively recruiting women for domestic volunteer work.¹⁸⁰ According to the Calgary Branch of the Red Cross, by 8 November 1939, 8,000 Calgary women were participating in war work through knitting and sewing. A further 113 groups were registered and a schedule was worked out for making garments to avoid the overlapping of services.¹⁸¹

The enthusiasm for the war effort continued into September 1940, when Calgary women held a meeting at the Hudson's Bay Company to discuss the formation of a Women's Service Corps. The women responded with incredible enthusiasm. All of the 450 women present at the meeting said that they were willing to "accept a certain form of military training and wear some sort of uniform just for the sake of discipline and good appearance."¹⁸² They hoped to eventually be recognized by the defence authorities and train to take over men's jobs if necessary. A provincial committee also met to work out the details of organizing courses in clerical work, visual signalling, wireless army routine, motor transport, map and compass reading and first aid.¹⁸³ Without the war factories present elsewhere in the country, Calgary women were seeking ways to contribute beyond knitting and sewing.

¹⁷⁹ "Wife Of The Brigadier Asks Women To Start Waging Battle With Knitting Needles Right Away," *Calgary Herald*, September 13, 1939.

¹⁸⁰ Ruth Pierson, *They're Still Women After All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto Ont.: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 41.

¹⁸¹ "8,000 Calgary Women Busy On Their Bit Of War Work," *The Albertan*, November 8, 1939.

¹⁸² "Enthusiasm Cheers Women On War Plan," *Calgary Herald*, September 7, 1940.

¹⁸³ "Hundreds Of Women Attend Meeting Called To Organize For War Emergency Service," *Calgary Herald*, September 7, 1940.

Yet women's domestic work, including knitting and sewing, remained an important part of many Calgarian women's war experience. The significance of knitting groups, such as Mrs. Peterson's, long predated the Second World War. A poem in the magazine *Echoes* in 1917 boasted the therapeutic qualities of knitting for mothers in relation to war:

A peaceful valley in the West;
The evening shadows flitting;
A trembling heart, a glist'ning tear;
A lonely mother knitting.

Knit, Mother, Knit. The cross is thine;
The cross that mothers borrow;
For all must knit and some must mourn;
While war brings need and sorrow.

Dream, Mother, Dream. The night is here;
Dream that its shadows borrow;
A radiance from the great beyond;
To light a blest to-morrow.¹⁸⁴

In 1918, *Echoes* ran a caption under a picture of a young film star that read: "two weapons of the Anglo-Saxon race are doing tremendous work to win the war for freedom – the bayonet of our soldiers and the needle of our loyal women. The knitting, the sewing, and the unparalleled helpfulness of women in all lines of activity have doubled the effectiveness of our men in the field."¹⁸⁵ Knitting, motherhood and the fight for freedom intertwined in the lives of women during the war. Historian Katie Pickles argues that for the IODE and its maternal identity, the term 'home' included any place war took Canadians. Thus, "the IODE's contribution can be read as a group of imperial daughters

¹⁸⁴ Chris J. North, "Women of the West Work to Support Our Boys in the Trenches," *Echoes*, October 1917, 31.

¹⁸⁵ "Caption," *Echoes*, May 1918, 29.

providing the comforts associated with their place in the domestic sphere of the family and as mothers of the nation, from the Homefront of Canada to the frontlines of war.”¹⁸⁶ This, in part, also reflects Mrs. Peterson’s group. Their knitting work and donations to the Tobacco fund were comforts associated with the domestic sphere sent from the homefront to the frontlines.

This connection between the domestic sphere and the frontlines was also apparent in parts of the work done by the knitting group, specifically in their adoptions of two soldiers. To help mobilize women into the war effort, the government and military encouraged women to ‘adopt’ soldiers as part of their patriotic duty. By adopting these soldiers through dinner invitations, writing letters, and sending parcels, the government helped ensure that as many people as possible had connections to the front lines and the homefront. Mrs. Peterson’s group was no exception. For example, in the group’s journal, an article from April 1940 cited the group’s adoption of two soldiers, Private Eves and Private Young, from the Calgary Highlanders.¹⁸⁷ Private Eves, a thirty-eight year old man was “single, a heavy built chap, and cheerful disposition, has a middle aged mother in Ontario who is not able to give him any help, and he has passed grade 10 in school.”¹⁸⁸ The second man, Private Young, was “a nice lad 24 years of age, slim, medium height, and has an education of grade 10, religion church of England.”¹⁸⁹ His parents died when he was seven years old and “he comes from Parry Sound, Ont. His hobby seems to be

¹⁸⁶ Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2002), 44.

¹⁸⁷ April 1940, Calgary Herald, “Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Journal,” n.d., M-9111-1, Glenbow Archive.

¹⁸⁸ Letter, Lt. Colonel J.F. Scott, Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

stamp collecting.”¹⁹⁰ Connections such as these ensured not only that all the soldiers had somebody at home to fight for, but also more importantly, the women at home had a personal engagement in the war. This was particularly true if the women did not have fathers, brothers, sons, or husbands serving. Given that Peterson and Harvie, for example, did not have a son or husband serving by adopting these soldiers, they gained a personal connection they might not otherwise have.¹⁹¹

The evidence from the journal also demonstrates that the women took the adoptions seriously. For instance, the 1941 report of the group’s activities shows that each member of the group sent ten parcels and a Christmas package to each of the men. While only a handful of letters from the men exist in the group’s fonds an interesting picture emerges. An undated postcard from Private Young suggested that the men truly appreciated the connections to the women. He wrote about his appreciation of the cigarettes he received, but also expressed concern that he had not heard from anyone in the group since before Christmas.¹⁹² Similarly, Young wrote again on 15 November 1943, expressing his wish to keep up correspondence with the women writing, “would you please write as you’ll never quite realize just how much a letter helps a persons morale.”¹⁹³ These two letters suggest not a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the women, but instead the complicated nature of the mail system overseas and the life of a soldier.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ This assumption is made based on the information available at the archives though one member, Mrs. H.G. Nolan was the wife of Captain H.G. Nolan of the Calgary Highlanders.

¹⁹² Postcard. Pte. Young. Undated, “Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Letters,” n.d., M-9112-2, Glenbow Archive.

¹⁹³ Letter. Pte. Young. 15 November 1943, Ibid.

This is apparent because of a letter from Lieutenant Colonel D.G. MacLauchlan¹⁹⁴ sent on 1 May 1943 to the knitting group. MacLauchlan wrote to the women addressing their concerns of not hearing from their adopted soldiers citing that “sometimes the men are negligent,” but there were also mail difficulties.¹⁹⁵ The adoption then, was important for both sides. Likewise, in her work Pickles also briefly explores the importance of adoptions in relation to the IODE. She notes that the women of the IODE, as “mothers collectively” often adopted ships and military bases because “the authorities have found the interest taken by a civilian group in a ship and its sailors to be very beneficial to the morale of the men.”¹⁹⁶ Again, such as with knitting, adoption of soldiers was both an act of motherhood – a connection between the domestic sphere or homefront, the frontlines and a patriotic act.

The ‘Mrs. Peterson’s knitting group’ collection also offers an interesting glimpse into the interplay between women’s volunteering and government influence through 210 postcards. The postcards were a government initiative through the Overseas League Tobacco and Hamper fund. The knitting group donated frequently to the fund, sending regular donations of \$2.00 starting in March 1941 and continuing throughout the war. A single \$2.00 donation bought a remarkable 800 cigarettes for soldiers overseas.¹⁹⁷ With each pack of cigarettes, the soldiers received a postcard, with the picture of a smiling soldier with a cigarette on the cover, addressed to the donor, so that they could write a note of appreciation. On the reverse appeared the message “if you appreciate this gift

¹⁹⁴ Lieutenant Colonel MacLauchlan was promoted to Officer Commanding, Calgary Highlanders following Lieutenant Scott’s posting overseas.

¹⁹⁵ Letter. Lt. Col. MacLauchlan. 1 May 1943, “Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Letters.”

¹⁹⁶ Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire*, 97.

¹⁹⁷ Letter. “27 March 1941,” “Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Journal.”

package of cigarettes won't you drop a line on this card to the donor whose name appears on the other side."¹⁹⁸ The postcards in this collection date between November 1941 and February 1944. Given such a large number and the amount collected by the group (\$24.00 in 1941),¹⁹⁹ postcards are missing from the collection.

The messages on the postcards vary, but all portray a humble, thankful soldier. The most popular theme was that of the soldier thankful that people at home were still thinking of him. N. McIntosh wrote, "we are glad to know the people back home is thinking about us we sure do appreciate it."²⁰⁰ Similarly, F. Forbes wrote, "its nice to know that you aren't forgotten by the folks back home."²⁰¹ Often this theme was also connected to a soldier's Calgarian roots, such as J. Dick, who wrote, the troops "certainly appreciate the good work done for us over here by such groups as yourselves. Being a Calgary boy myself, the cigarettes were double appreciated. Knowing that the folk of our home town are not forgetting us is a big help."²⁰² Messages from soldiers such as J. Dick, a Calgarian, to women of the same city were important because it helped women understand the war at a local level.

It is likely that commanding officers or government officials influenced these messages. Certainly, it was important for the soldiers to show their appreciation for the gifts on a personal level; however, it is more likely that the importance lay in cementing the connection between the front lines and the homefront. It was hoped that the postcards would help create a sense of patriotic duty in the women and ensure that they believed

¹⁹⁸ "Mrs. Peterson's Knitting Group Postcards," n.d., M-9112-3, Glenbow Archive.

¹⁹⁹ 1941 report, "Mrs. Peterson's Knitting Group Journal."

²⁰⁰ Postcard. N. McIntosh, "Mrs. Peterson's Knitting Group Postcards."

²⁰¹ Postcard. F. Forbes, Ibid.

²⁰² Postcard. J. Dick, Ibid.

everything they were doing was for the greater war effort. Their community thus spread beyond the geographical boundaries of Calgary to include overseas. This was emphasized further through the adoption of the corvette HMCS *Calgary* and the R.C.A.F. ‘Wolf’ Squadron by the City of Calgary.²⁰³ Therefore, the Canadian government and the national volunteer organizations understood the importance of a sense of community in influencing a woman’s sense of patriotic duty.

As Calgarian women sought ways to participate in the war effort, so too did the veterans of the Great War, who were unable to enlist because of “alleged age qualifications.”²⁰⁴ Many of these veterans sought to fill the jobs left open by enlisted men because as one veteran argued, “they were trained at public expense, and their training and experience should now be made use of to the advantage of the country and the cause at stake.”²⁰⁵ The veterans believed that they should replace men of military service age to free them for enlistment. In part, this was out of a patriotic desire; however, and more importantly, these veterans were dissatisfied with how wartime re-adjustments were occurring.²⁰⁶ It quickly became apparent that these veterans had to re-evaluate their place in society. For many, the experience of the Great War meant that their ideas of patriotism were interconnected with their identities as soldiers.

Calgarians learned on 24 May 1940 that the registration of Great War veterans would begin immediately, creating a Veterans Home Guard. The Veterans Home Guard’s

²⁰³ “Letter To City Clerk From Squad Leader Exec. Assistant for Director of Public Relations,” October 10, 1944, Box 352 File 2294, City of Calgary Archives; “Letter To Mayor From Secretary, Naval Board,” July 19, 1944, Box 352 File 2294, City of Calgary Archives.

²⁰⁴ Fred A. Davis, “Utilize War Veterans,” *Calgary Herald*, December 21, 1939, sec. Letter to the Editor.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ “War Veterans Seeking Posts Left By Soldiers,” *Calgary Herald*, December 7, 1939.

purpose was for “more adequate protection of military property or any other purpose that may be found necessary.”²⁰⁷ Calgarians supported the creation of the guard and M.D. No. 13 easily achieved its quota of 250 men, with more than seventy veterans registering in Calgary on 25 May alone.²⁰⁸ However, while pleased with the creation of a Veterans Home Guard, Calgary’s Mayor Davison, along with other mayors from around the province, believed that 250 men were not nearly enough personnel. They argued that M.D. No. 13 required at least 1000 men, preferably attached to the R.C.M.P. as there were not nearly enough police in Alberta to maintain law and order or deal with enemy threats.²⁰⁹ Nonetheless, the Veterans Home Guard helped provide many veterans with a sense of purpose in the war. Much like the Air Raid Precaution committee that will be discussed in the following chapter, the Veterans Home Guard helped engage veteran Calgarians in the war effort regardless of a threat, perceived or otherwise.

Engaging Calgarians, veterans and otherwise, further into the war effort was also accomplished through patriotic displays in the streets such as parades, mock invasions and routine military marches. Parades and routine marches, held for almost every occasion, were an excellent public demonstration of the military presence in the city. Sometimes the parades were for something as mundane as troops attending church services, yet Calgarians continually lined the streets hoping for a glimpse of the soldiers. For instance, a large group of Anglican citizens of Calgary gathered on 30 October 1939

²⁰⁷ “Start Listing Veterans Here For Home Guard,” *Calgary Herald*, May 24, 1940.

²⁰⁸ “Veterans Rally For Home Duty In Alberta,” *Calgary Herald*, May 25, 1940.

²⁰⁹ “Council Chamber RE: Meeting Alberta Municipalities,” June 8, 1940, City Clerk’s Department Fonds Box 318 File 2073, City of Calgary Archives.

to watch 800 members of the Calgary Highlanders march to the Pro-Cathedral.²¹⁰ Similarly, in the following week, over 2000 people lined the streets to watch forty-two men of the No. 113 Fighter Squadron leave for training.²¹¹ Smaller marches also caught the eye of Calgarians when the Y.M.C.A. pool opened its doors to servicemen, and groups of forty to fifty men marched daily from the armouries through downtown Calgary to the pools.²¹²

If the people of Calgary did not take to the streets to celebrate the start of the war, they did have a certain patriotic enthusiasm when it came to the first Remembrance Day of the war. In Alberta, the ‘poppy day’ campaign to aid disabled veterans and their dependents set a new record, distributing more poppies than any previous campaign over the previous fifteen years. In Calgary, over 24,000 poppies sold by 9 November.²¹³ To ensure the public remained engaged in both the war effort and upcoming Remembrance Day, newspapers utilized the imagery brought on by John McCrae’s poem, “In Flanders Fields.”²¹⁴ In a particularly moving editorial from the *Calgary Herald*, Calgarians were introduced to the first British soldier killed, William Roper, a 28 year old on guard duty in France. The editorial also borrowed from McCrae to move its readers into understanding the task and remind Calgarians why they gather at an empty tomb on Armistice Day:

There is nothing we can place within it that will not be charred and ruined by time. There are few words worthy to be written upon it—merely, perhaps, their names. Here stands only that silent solitary stone,

²¹⁰ “Highlanders March to Skirl o’Pipes,” *Calgary Herald*, October 30, 1939; “Colors Guarded By Gold Buttons,” *The Albertan*, October 30, 1939.

²¹¹ “Big Crowd Cheers Air Force Parade,” *Calgary Herald*, November 6, 1939.

²¹² “2,000 Soldiers Enjoy Dip,” *Calgary Herald*, November 4, 1939.

²¹³ “Poppy Campaign Sets New Record,” *Calgary Herald*, November 9, 1939, <http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/documents/ms/population1939.pdf>.

²¹⁴ “The Torch Accepted,” *Calgary Herald*, November 10, 1939, sec. Editorial.

to remind those who hurry past of their ultimate mortality, to challenge the value of their aims, to ask the unspoken question, to gain the unspoken answer, 'Have you kept faith?'²¹⁵

Finally, marking Remembrance Day of 1939 also re-created a certain amount of the pageantry of the previous war. The parade through the city brought together all three services and was considered "the greatest military display seen in Calgary since the days of 1916-1917 when thousands of men were stationed at Sarcee Camp just southwest of the city."²¹⁶ Approximately 4,000 men of the Canadian Active Service Forces took part in the parade²¹⁷ and three separate services were held; the troops had a private service at the armouries before they marched to join the veterans to continue the parade. It was also the largest turnout of veterans in Calgary since the 1919 Armistice Day parade.²¹⁸

Patriotic displays also came in the form of a number of mock invasions and drills the military conducted throughout the city during the war. These exercises had multiple purposes. First, they offered a training situation for the military to prepare for overseas deployment. Second, they had the dual purpose of promoting recruitment and war savings campaigns. Finally, they allowed the citizens a glimpse into a battle they could only imagine.²¹⁹ For example, in conjunction with the 5th Victory Loan Drive in November 1943, 300 soldiers from Currie Barracks participated in a river crossing demonstration that was attended by thousands of citizens.²²⁰ Much like the time spent outside of Currie

²¹⁵ "The Immortals," *Calgary Herald*, November 1939, sec. Editorial.

²¹⁶ "Calgary Pays Solemn Tribute To Men Who Died Fighting For World's Freedom," *Calgary Herald*, November 11, 1939; "War Services Are Observed," *The Albertan*, November 13, 1939.

²¹⁷ "All Alberta Will Pay Tribute Saturday."

²¹⁸ "Calgary Pays Solemn Tribute To Men Who Died Fighting For World's Freedom"; "War Services Are Observed."

²¹⁹ Kelly, "A City Reborn: Patriotism in Saskatoon During the Second World War," 13.

²²⁰ "Army to Repeat River Crossing Demonstration."

Barracks watching airplanes take off, mock battles and training exercises offered Calgarians a moment of excitement and a window into the world they were sending their sons, fathers, and brothers into overseas.

However, it was the summer of 1942 that undoubtedly altered Calgarians fundamental understanding of the war and the importance of supporting a total war effort. On 19 August 1942, a raid at Dieppe, on the French coast, was carried out with disastrous results. Historians have spent a great deal of time analyzing the events of the summer of 1942 to understand how the disaster came to be. They have found that it was a combination of political pressures, notably from the United States for the opening of a second front, a need to support the Soviet Union and pressure from a group of Canadian politicians and generals eager to see their troops in battle. From the Canadian perspective, their troops had not seen action since the failed Dunkirk invasion since landing in England in the beginning of 1940.²²² It was therefore important that Canadians see action quickly for the morale of the troops and those at home.

Under the original code name, *Operation Rutter*, a ‘reconnaissance in force’ was necessary to help the Allies open a second front. Canada’s 2nd Division, under the command of Major-General J.H. Roberts made up the main assault force. Training for the assault began 20 May, on the Isle of Wight and resulted in two full-scale ‘dress rehearsals.’²²³ The assault force planned to depart on the night of 2 July, but poor weather stopped the invasion from going ahead. Nonetheless, a new operation, *Jubilee*, was in the

²²² Granatstein and Morton, *A nation forged in fire*, 50.

²²³ W Douglas, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), 111.

works, with Dieppe still as the objective. Some military officials argued against the new operation because of security concerns caused by disappointed soldiers vocally expressing their displeasure about not getting to see action in France. However, one of the main planners of the raid, Admiral Lord Mountbatten argued against the cancellation of the raid, despite the security concerns, because he believed the Germans would not anticipate the raid occurring against the same objective.²²⁴ A new date of 19 August was assigned.

Of the 5,000 Canadian troops involved in the action, 3,367 became casualties. The raid experienced problems even before the first soldier set foot on the beach. The invasion force came across a German Coastal convoy who alerted German shore defences immediately. What troops did make it to shore were pinned down and slaughtered as the second and third waves landed and met the same fate. After landing at about 5:10am, by 8:30am the survivors at Puy surrendered.²²⁵

Far away from the battle, the citizens of Calgary had a large stake in the outcome of the raid. The Calgary Regiment (Tank) composed a large portion of the main assault force. The 14th Canadian Army Tank Regiment (14 CATR), of which the Calgary Regiment was a part, was the first Canadian armoured regiment committed to the battle. The operational plan for the 14 CATR at Dieppe demonstrated “a total lack of understanding by senior Allied commanders concerning limitations and capabilities of the operational employment of tanks in a built-up area.”²²⁶ Additionally, at the regimental

²²⁴ Granatstein and Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire*, 50–51.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

²²⁶ Henry Jr., “The Tanks of Dieppe: The History of the Calgary Regiment (Tank), 1939 to August 19, 1942,” ii.

level, the regiments were only trained to support the infantry and not in how to cope in the battle conditions present at Dieppe.²²⁷ Moreover, not only did the tanks have to traverse the beaches and the dug-in German defences, they then had to negotiate narrow streets in a heavily defended town out into the countryside and hold a “defensive perimeter and then [withdraw] through the town” all in four to five hours.²²⁸ An overly ambitious plan at best and one that quickly fell apart.

Problems quickly arose for the Calgary Tanks. The Calgary Tanks intended to land as a part of the first wave at the main assault beach; however, they arrived half an hour late. The first tank out sank in the deep water. Those who made it to shore had problems manoeuvring and once they reached the seawall they bogged down. Adding to this, the tanks’ light guns had little effect on the Germans and by noon all the tanks were immobilized.²²⁹ By 9 a.m., the raid was considered a disaster, by 11 a.m. the evacuation order was placed and by 2 p.m., the disastrous raid was over.²³⁰ 14 CATR left England with thirty-two officers and 391 other ranks. Two officers and ten other ranks were killed and fifteen officers and 142 other ranks were taken prisoner.²³¹

However, when Calgary’s newspapers reported the raid, a different story was told. Initially, Dieppe was reported as a success rivalling Vimy Ridge,²³² though this was not the fault of Calgary reporters. As Timothy Balzer argues, both the Canadian and the

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid., 64.

²²⁹ Ibid., 114; Granatstein and Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire*, 53.

²³⁰ Granatstein and Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire*, 53.

²³¹ Henry Jr., “The Tanks of Dieppe: The History of the Calgary Regiment (Tank), 1939 to August 19, 1942,” 115.

²³² “Courage Of Canadians Rivalled Men Of Vimy,” *Calgary Herald*, August 21, 1942; “Dieppe Stands Beside Vimy,” *The Albertan*, August 22, 1942.

British authorities planned ahead of the raid to manipulate the press into portraying the raid as a success, even if it was a failure.²³³ And manipulate they did. The day after the raid, Calgarians were told that not only did Calgary tanks lead the way into Dieppe, but that “the Canadians carried out the underlying objective of the raid which was to test German defences on the coast and obtain information about them.”²³⁴ In addition, Lieutenant General Kenneth Stuart, Chief of the Canadian General Staff, told Calgarians and the rest of Canada, “in Wednesday’s raid on Dieppe we walked into the Bosche’s parlor through the front door at a time we chose and we left by the same front door when we wanted to leave.”²³⁵

Further, the Canadian Bureau of Public Information²³⁶ told the press to emphasise the bravery of the troops. The Bureau was able to accomplish this because the military throughout the war acted as the main source of news regarding operations. Information passed down using official channels, from the military, to the Canadian Bureau of Information and later the Wartime Information Board, to newspapers such as the *Calgary Herald* and *The Albertan*. Thus, as part of the story telling of the Dieppe raid, Calgarians were told that not only did the courage of the Canadians rival the men at Vimy Ridge, they returned hardened and battle-tested.²³⁷ Headlines rang out with personal stories of valour, such as: “Had To Swim From Dieppe;” “City Men Fought To End On Beach;”

²³³ Timothy Balzer, “‘In Case the Raid Is Unsuccessful...’ Selling Dieppe to Canadians,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (September 2006): 411.

²³⁴ “Calgary Tanks At Dieppe Carry Brunt Of Attack,” *Calgary Herald*, August 20, 1942; “Britons Cheer Calgary Tanks Rumbling Home From Dieppe,” *The Albertan*, August 21, 1942.

²³⁵ “Sees Dieppe Defence Test,” *The Albertan*, August 24, 1942.

²³⁶ In September 1942 the Canadian Bureau of Public Information became the Wartime Information Board.

²³⁷ “Courage Of Canadians Rivalled Men Of Vimy”; “Dieppe Stands Beside Vimy.”

and “Dieppe Hero Gridiron Star.”²³⁸ Despite a distinct lack of details, the story of Dieppe continued to be front-page news in the city for a month after the raid. These stories of courage were especially important in the face of growing casualty lists featured daily in the newspapers.

Indeed, the growing casualty lists reminded Calgarians that their own sacrifices were nothing compared to those who died in Dieppe. Paying honour to the dead, Calgarians pledged, “nothing worth doing to bring victory would be left undone... pledge [themselves] to victory and a just and lasting peace.”²³⁹ On the same day Calgarians learned of the 134 page casualty lists, including the names of nine officers and 136 other ranks from the Calgary Regiment listed as missing or killed in action, the city was told to soon expect two meatless days a week.²⁴⁰ The timing of the meat-rationing announcement could not have been planned better. It is unclear whether this was a coincidence or not, however, it is clear that any rational citizen of Calgary would be hard pressed to find an excuse not to follow the new rationing. Even though Alberta had large supplies of meat available and was also the leading producer and shipper in the country, Calgarians were informed that Alberta’s supplies were needed in other parts of the country to make up for deficiencies. By linking the sacrifice of the soldiers at Dieppe with the importance of meat rationing, the government was able to foster and encourage a united war effort.

By 1942, most Canadians understood that the country was now in total war and with that came increased rationing. Food rationing in Canada during the war was

²³⁸ “Had To Swim From Dieppe,” *The Albertan*, August 22, 1942; “Dieppe Hero Gridiron Star,” *The Albertan*, n.d., sec. 1942 August 22; “City Men Fought To End On Beach,” *The Albertan*, August 21, 1942.

²³⁹ “Citizens Pay Tribute To ‘Men Of Faith’,” *Calgary Herald*, September 8, 1942.

²⁴⁰ “3,350 Casualties At Dieppe, Calgary Tanks Are Hard Hit,” *Calgary Herald*, September 15, 1942; “Two Meatless Days Weekly On The Way,” *Calgary Herald*, September 15, 1942.

introduced in May and June 1942 with the rationing of tea, coffee and sugar²⁴¹ and swiftly became a prominent part of life in Calgary. Calgarians responded to rationing positively for the most part, and understood that there was a definite connection between patriotism and rationing. Negative attitudes to the restrictions were minor. For example, in the wake of tea rationing in August 1942, the *Calgary Herald*, reported the rationing measures only to be a “headache.”²⁴² The lack of any real opposition was not surprising, especially in the late summer and fall of 1942. The unsuccessful raid on Dieppe was clearly bringing the war home to many Calgarians.

Meat rationing was also linked to cultivating Victory Gardens. In the *Alberta Homemaker's Supplement* of *The Albertan*, housewives were given a variety of ‘victory recipes’ to make for their families on meatless days.²⁴³ In the face of increased rationing, victory gardens gained popularity in the city and 1943 saw record numbers of Calgarians participating with excellent results. For example, the city’s 2,414 vacant lot gardens were expected to produce approximately \$125,000 worth of produce in 1943. The Calgary Vacant Lots Garden club, with 2,405 members, reached record membership numbers.²⁴⁴

Families also took to eating out at restaurants more often as a way of circumventing rationing. Indeed, Canadians as a whole began eating at restaurants more and expenditures at restaurants increased from \$157 million to \$211 million between

²⁴¹ Anonymous, “Rationing of Meat in Canada,” *Monthly Labor Review* 57, no. 1 (July 1943): 39.

²⁴² “Tea May Be Soothing But Rationing Headache,” *The Albertan*, August 4, 1942.

²⁴³ “Many Substitutes Given For Meatless Days,” *The Albertan*, June 17, 1943, Alberta Homemaker's Supplement edition.

²⁴⁴ “Vegetables For Victory,” *Calgary Herald*, June 3, 1943; “Expect Vacant Lots to Yield \$125,000,” *The Albertan*, June 17, 1943.

1942 and 1945 across Canada.²⁴⁵ However, this increase in restaurant traffic for Calgary restaurants was not always good for business. For instance, in the summer of 1943, Calgarian café owners faced a waitress shortage. With so many jobs available to women in the city, café owners found it hard to keep women employed for any length of time. There was also a definite deficit in skilled female restaurant workers, making the situation worse. For many café owners, the lack of skilled employees was a greater problem than rationing.²⁴⁶

A further pitfall of the increased manpower requirements of the military was the reduction of manpower available for civil service. When the war broke out, civil servants in Calgary were encouraged to enlist and promised they would not lose their position or seniority.²⁴⁷ However, by 1942, the staffing shortages were becoming critical. Though a “gratifying” number of city employees enlisted, some departments were “seriously depleted.”²⁴⁸ This was especially true for Calgary’s fire department. While some firefighters enlisted with the military, many more signed up as civilian members of the Canadian Fire Fighters for Service in the United Kingdom. As the first fire fighters went overseas, individuals were handled in a case-by-case fashion and were granted the same privileges as other Calgary fire fighters who enlisted in the military. By 28 June, to combat severe staffing shortages, City Council was forced to close No. 4 Firehall at the

²⁴⁵ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 110.

²⁴⁶ “Waitress Shortage Adds To Cafe’s Woe,” *The Albertan*, June 23, 1943.

²⁴⁷ “Position, Seniority Of Permanent Staff Will Not Be Lost By Overseas Service,” *Calgary Herald*, September 6, 1939.

²⁴⁸ “Letter To All Department Heads From Mayor,” June 24, 1942, Box 20 File 476, City of Calgary Archives.

rear of the General Hospital until November 1942.²⁴⁹ Thus, following the closure of the firehall, Calgary's Fire Chief, Alex Carr, recommended to Mayor Davison that leaves of absences for fire fighters for overseas service should no longer be allowed. He also recommended that all members of the fire department be on full time status.²⁵⁰ By July, the fire department had to return to a six-day work week for the duration of the war to combat staffing shortages.²⁵¹ Thus, City Council found itself in a difficult position. The desire to "make every necessary sacrifice"²⁵² was still strong and City Council did not want to prevent employees from enlisting, even though the city still had to function regardless of the war effort. Yet, it seems as if City Council did not have a choice in the matter.

While civic departments struggled to retain employees, the increased labour requirements in the city meant that opportunities for employment were seemingly endless for men and women in Calgary, with job vacancies outnumbering job seekers. For example, coming into the fall of 1943, Calgary faced a growing teacher shortage. This was due to enlistments, federal compulsory labor orders and other wartime factors such as increased employment opportunities across the country and families following servicemen to bases in other cities.²⁵³ Employment opportunities were not just limited to within the city limits. The growth of the Boeing airplane manufacturing plant in

²⁴⁹ "Letter To Mayor Davison From Fire Chief Alex Carr," June 29, 1942, Box 20 File 476, City of Calgary Archives.

²⁵⁰ "Letter To Mayor Davison From Fire Chief Alex Carr," June 26, 1942, Box 8 File 50, City of Calgary Archives.

²⁵¹ "Letter To Mr. L.H. Maclean, Local Union No. 255 From Mayor Davison," July 3, 1942, Box 20 File 476, City of Calgary Archives.

²⁵² "Council Minutes, 5 September 1939."

²⁵³ "Shortage of Teachers More Severe This Year," *The Albertan*, July 14, 1943.

Vancouver, British Columbia drew many young Calgary women out of the city. In September alone, almost one hundred women left the city to work for Boeing. These women were between the ages of twenty and thirty and were predominantly single. However, some of the women noted that they were leaving the city to find work in war industry because their husbands were on active service, and they too wished to do their part in the war effort.²⁵⁴ By October, the Selective Service noted that 1,963 jobs were available in the city.

When the news hit of the Allied invasion of mainland Europe on 6 June 1944, most of Calgary was still asleep. Nevertheless, much like when war was declared almost five years previous, D-Day was the only topic of discussion in the streets. Reminiscent of the declaration of war in 1914, Calgarians took to the streets, and “the crowd, comprising the largest mass of citizens ever gathered in one spot in Calgary, overflowed ... while many office workers perched on window ledges overlooking the scene.”²⁵⁵ Approximately 15,000 people, about one-sixth of the city’s population, gathered on 1st Street West between 7th and 8th Avenue to take part in a special D-Day prayer service held downtown.²⁵⁶ Calgary’s radio stations also broadcasted the services and schools held special assemblies to offer prayers and celebrate the invasion. The prayer service was not completely spur of the moment however, as the Calgary Ministerial Association planned to hold a service on Invasion Day, “whenever that might be.”²⁵⁷ Despite this, author Grant

²⁵⁴ “Calgary Girls Go West For Work, ‘Excitement’,” *The Albertan*, September 17, 1943.

²⁵⁵ “Most Calgarians Sleep As ‘Greatest Story’ Hits,” *The Albertan*, June 7, 1944; “Calgarians Generally ‘Glad It’s Started’,” *Calgary Herald*, June 6, 1944.

²⁵⁶ Grant MacEwan, *Calgary Cavalcade: From Fort to Fortune* (Edmonton: The Institute of Applied Art Ltd., 1958), 209, <http://www.ourroots.ca/e/page.aspx?id=891305>.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

MacEwen described the service as almost occurring “by magic” as the word spread across Calgary and “stores closed at 11.20 a.m., and at 11.35 a military band led the huge host of earnest people in the singing of O Canada.”²⁵⁸

With victory believed to be well within the Allies’ sights, Calgarians turned towards planning for V-E Day. As early as September 1944, planning began for V-E Day parades, celebrations and prayer services.²⁵⁹ Less than a year later in April 1945 the V-E Day committee decided mark the end of the war with prayers and thanksgiving services rather than celebrations.²⁶⁰ The committee felt that thanksgiving services were more appropriate because though the day marked the end of the war in Europe, the task was not over yet. Not only did the troops need to be brought home, the war in Japan still had to be won. The housing shortage was also at the forefront of Calgarian’s minds as they sought to find space for the returning troops.

Thus, the Calgary V-E Day committee made the decision to hold more somber celebrations because they felt “it was not a day for celebration, but one for thanksgiving and respect for those who had sacrificed with their lives. Pageants were declared ‘too hilarious’ and bombs, rockets and gunfire ‘without the proper respect.’”²⁶¹ In addition, on V-E Day, a snowstorm hit the city. Yet thousands of Calgarians braved the weather to partake in a public prayer service. And, unlike in Halifax where the civil and military authorities did nothing to plan for the celebration, resulting in riots and violence in the downtown business district, military officials in Calgary planned ahead. Though

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 210.

²⁵⁹ “Flags, Bunting Emerge From Moth Ball Storage,” *The Albertan*, September 7, 1944; “Prayers, Celebrations Will Mark Victory Day,” *The Albertan*, September 21, 1944.

²⁶⁰ “Calgary to Mark V-Day In Prayer, Thanksgiving,” *The Albertan*, April 5, 1945.

²⁶¹ “V-Day Celebrations As Gloomy As Weather,” *The Albertan*, May 10, 1945.

businesses and restaurants remained closed in the city, the Servicemen's Centre was open and volunteers served food and alcohol to approximately 3,500 men in the course of a single day.²⁶²

While V-E Day signified the end of the war in Europe, the hardships of war were not over for those living in the city. While the war waged on in Japan, Calgary began the slow process of transitioning from a city at war to a city in peace. As a city at war, however, Calgarians successfully balanced continuing the war effort with carrying on in their daily lives. This balancing act did not come without a cost. The manpower shortage experienced by the Calgary Fire Department highlighted that, for the City of Calgary, supporting the war effort by allowing their employees to enlist often hampered the operation of the city on a day to day basis. The closure of a fire hall, an essential service, even in a time of war, undoubtedly had a negative effect on the city. Nevertheless, city official's hands were tied; not allowing their employees to volunteer for the Canadian forces was not an option.

²⁶² "VE-Day Record One At Service Centre," *Calgary Herald*, May 11, 1945.

**Chapter Five: “Swept off Their Feet by War Hysteria, by the Glamor of Uniforms
... and by the Desire for Good Times”**

While Calgarians accepted the hardships of war in their daily lives, their war experience was not without some conflict. Early in the war, Calgarians saw potential threats to their safety everywhere. In particular, a hysteria surrounding a believed ‘Fifth Column’ or enemy alien threat led many to call for a national registration and highlighted Calgarians’ belief that home defence troops were required. While this was an imagined threat, it did have a positive outcome in that it helped engage citizens in the war effort. The perceived air raid threat had much the same outcome. For instance, participation in air raid drills allowed Calgarians to experience a part of war they could only imagine and hopefully connect them with their compatriots in London, thus further engaging in the war effort. However, the perceived air raid threat also brought Calgary in direct confrontation with Premier Aberhart and his Social Credit government of Alberta. Founded on the anti-Semitic doctrine of Major C.H. Douglas, who believed Jews, Nazis, Communists, Socialists and financiers were to blame for the Second World War; the Albertan Social Credit government was at constant odds with many Albertans and the Dominion government because of its beliefs. This tension continued throughout the war and many believed the conspiracy theories of the Social Credit government hampered the overall war effort. Finally, concerns over the spread of Venereal Disease (VD) and delinquency embodied many people’s fears about the post-war world. Civilian and military authorities came together to eradicate VD resulting in the persecution of waitresses and single women as the perpetrators of the disease. Throughout the war,

Calgarians were quick to react to threats to their safety. More often than not, these threats were imagined and the result of war hysteria. However, threats, imagined and otherwise, to Calgarians' safety and daily lives often helped in increase engagement in the war effort.

When Canada declared war in September 1939, hundreds of thousands of Canadians and Canadian residents were declared person(s) of enemy origin. Public pressures and political need prompted the Canadian government to act quickly in the face of a frightened public. Canadians demanded the government and police take visible action against the perceived threat.²⁶³ To make the situation worse, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) had only 2541 police officers for the entire country. For provinces like Alberta without a provincial police force, the thinly stretched RCMP was responsible for enforcing local law as well as federal.²⁶⁴ After the fall of France in June 1940, many Canadians blamed the “dreaded fifth columns – unseen and fanatical groups of Nazis, who had infiltrated behind the lines wreaking chaos and breaking the defenders’ morale before Hitler’s armies arrived.”²⁶⁵ Rumours and fears quickly spread across the country and the Canadian government feared that citizens would take matters into their own hands in vigilante actions, without a strong police force.²⁶⁶ There was historical precedence for this fear; for instance, local groups came together during the Depression when Mayor

²⁶³ Robert H. Keyserlingk, “‘Agents Within the Gates’: The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada During World War II,” *Canadian Historical Review* 66, no. 2 (1985): 213.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

Davison of Calgary led a campaign to deport unemployed immigrants. After the war started, he led a similar campaign in Alberta against enemy aliens.²⁶⁷

Davison was not alone in his fears in the city. Calgarians started coming together with increased frequency to discuss their fears of enemy aliens. On 1 May 1940 for example, Calgarians felt they had cause for concern after the local Communist party distributed subversive literature throughout the city. The party was an illegal organization and membership was enough cause for arrest. Calgarians were assured that aliens were being closely monitored by the authorities, and out of the 800 to 1000 Communists in the city,²⁶⁸ only a small portion was active and did not pose a threat. At the same time, Mayor Davison and Police Chief Ritchie called a meeting to discuss the 'Fifth Column' threat in the city. The Davison and Ritchie invited the military, RCMP and veteran organizations to join them in discussing the problem. Again, like the Communists, the threat posed by enemy aliens, of mainly German origin, was slim and mostly the result of paranoia. As Davison and Ritchie were investigating the danger posed by the feared 'Fifth Column,' Calgarians were reminded in the newspapers that Calgary was second only to Victoria for high percentages of British 'stock,' with seventy-nine percent of the population of British origin and only five percent German.²⁶⁹

Fears of this perceived enemy alien threat also grew into calls for a national registration of all citizens and home defence units. At a provincial meeting of eighteen towns and cities from across Alberta, resolutions were passed demanding the "registration

²⁶⁷ Howard Palmer, "Ethnic Relations in Wartime: Nationalism and European Minorities in Alberta During the Second World War," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14, no. 3 (1982): 6.

²⁶⁸ "City Communists Liable To Immediate Arrest," *Calgary Herald*, May 15, 1940.

²⁶⁹ "Call Meeting On 'Fifth Column' Threat Here," *Calgary Herald*, May 20, 1940.

‘of all those of foreign birth.’”²⁷⁰ City Council also acted on Davison and the City Commissioners’ recommendations that all city employees that were born in an enemy country be fired, but discovered that there were no German-born employees. Twenty-four Italian-born employees were identified however, and summarily fired.²⁷¹ Similarly, Davison, supported by Calgary’s City Commissioners, wrote to Prime Minister King urging King to start a national registry of manpower. Davison declared to King “everything possible should be done by the government to develop Canada’s home defence as well as to exert a powerful war effort.”²⁷² Other Calgarians, at local meetings and in the newspapers, went so far as to suggest that concentration camps be opened to house all enemy aliens. Many felt that both men and women should be arrested because many alien women too could be working with the enemy. Consequently, many citizens objected to the releasing of enemy aliens and instead called for tightened regulations.²⁷³ The Canadian Legion in Calgary was reportedly overwhelmed with offers to help against the threat of enemy aliens and demanded the internment and public naming of all enemy aliens to suppress the ‘Fifth Column.’²⁷⁴

However, it was not just the ‘Fifth Columnists’ that posed a threat in the eyes of some Calgarians. With so many uniformed men in the city, disturbances were bound to happen. In April 1940, a racially driven attack occurred causing a military inquiry. The previous weekend, his girlfriend paying too much attention to a local black musician

²⁷⁰ Palmer, “Ethnic Relations in Wartime: Nationalism and European Minorities in Alberta During the Second World War,” 6.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² “War Registration Of All Citizens Urged,” *Calgary Herald*, May 21, 1940.

²⁷³ “Home Defence Units Urged Across Canada,” *Calgary Herald*, May 21, 1940.

²⁷⁴ “Legion Deluged With Help Offers,” *Calgary Herald*, May 22, 1940.

angered a soldier from Currie Barracks. In retribution, the man incited a group of his fellow soldiers to attack the home of any black musician they could find. The men choose the home of Lou Darby. Unrelated to the attack, Darby's sister recently married Private Thomas Liesk of the Calgary Highlanders. The soldiers found Liesk at Darby's home on the night of the attack and beat him. Unfortunately, this incident was not isolated to the military. Reportedly, a group of civilians encouraged the soldiers to attack and some went as far as to join in. The majority of the soldiers and civilians headed into the city after attacking Darby and Liesk, intending on raiding coloured hangouts. A reported 200 soldiers were involved in the disturbance.²⁷⁵ Though this incident was an isolated one, it does highlight the racial tensions that were prevalent in the country at the time. Considering the concerns City Council members and Calgarians at large had about enemy aliens, it is surprising that more events such as this did not occur. In light of this attack, Mayor Davison's calls for a greater police presence in the province to combat the enemy alien threat gained credit, as there was a clear need for a greater police force in the city.

Despite this clear need, Calgary produced a somewhat negative response to King's 21 June 1940 announcement of compulsory military training under the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA). The NRMA was meant to be a short-term measure with compulsory military service being limited to home defence,²⁷⁶ but the conscription crisis of the Great War was still fresh on everyone's mind. As one historian notes, "the new NRMA was a political compromise that gave the government any conceivable power

²⁷⁵ "Army Court Will Inquire Into Sunday Disturbance," *Calgary Herald*, April 8, 1940; "Report More Arrests Due As Result Of Military Inquiry," *Calgary Herald*, April 10, 1940.

²⁷⁶ Daniel Thomas Byers, "Mobilizing Canada: The National Resource Mobilization Act, The Department of National Defence, And Compulsory Military Service in Canada, 1945-1945" (McGill University, 2000), 29.

that it might need in the dark days of June 1940, while making it clear that the government would not go so far as to impose conscription for overseas service.”²⁷⁷ For most Canadians, the war up until this point was fought on the idea of ‘limited liability.’ The focus was on the production of food, raw materials and industrial goods for the Allied war effort. However, the fall of France and the end of the Phoney War period put an end to limited liability.

Thus, it was relatively unsurprising that on 19 June, reports of men rushing to enlist voluntarily hit the newspapers as soon as the words ‘conscription’ and ‘compulsory military service’ were heard.²⁷⁸ The compulsory training was for home defence for all single men between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five. Men had until 15 July to establish their married status to be exempt from conscription for home defence resulting in a rush of marriages. If not married by that date, men were legally considered single for the rest of the war, regardless of any marriages that occurred after 15 July.²⁷⁹ During this July weekend, the Calgary marriage license office experienced an unprecedented boom. The marriage license office was filled with women and in many cases, underage girls, accompanied by their parents waiting to marry men so that the men could avoid compulsory training. Local jewellery stores and churches also felt the rush. Forty-five licenses were issued on 14 July alone and a total of 295 marriages occurred in July, with a further 223 in August. These numbers were especially high in comparison to the 487 total

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷⁸ “Mobilization Move Speeds Enlisting,” *Calgary Herald*, June 19, 1940.

²⁷⁹ Byers, “Mobilizing Canada: The National Resource Mobilization Act, The Department of National Defence, And Compulsory Military Service in Canada, 1945-1945,” 39.

marriages that occurred between January and June 1939.²⁸⁰ This episode was not unique to Calgary. In Sherbrooke, Quebec, for example, before the marriage status cut-off, so many couples married that local jewellery stores ran out of wedding rings.²⁸¹ Concerns were rising across the country regarding the motives of those getting married.

At the same time, hundreds of young single men were reported as “calling up themselves” and enlisting voluntarily, particularly in the R.C.A.F., following the announcement of compulsory military training.²⁸² The events surrounding the first two weeks of July present an interesting look at how some Calgarians viewed the war. While some parents were anxiously marrying off their daughters, many were also rushing to give their money to support the war effort. Though the total number of men who avoided conscription into the NRMA through marriage was small, they represent a portion of the population who were unwilling to be forced into service. Was it unpatriotic? Or perhaps it was a reflection of where the war was at. Beyond the fall of France, the war really had not progressed to a point where Calgarians felt they needed to sacrifice no matter the cost. Thus, it would not be until the fall of Hong Kong and the attack on Pearl Harbor that Calgarians and Canadians as a whole would fully support conscription, though not without some conflicts with the provincial government of Alberta.

Calgary’s war effort was also often affected by the conspiracy theories and the anti-federal government stance of the provincial government of Premier Aberhart and the

²⁸⁰ “Couples Rush Into Marriage Before Deadline,” *Calgary Herald*, July 13, 1940; “90 Brave Lengthy Wait, Beat Military Deadline,” *Calgary Herald*, July 15, 1940; “Weddings Set Mark, 1,500 In Ten Months,” *Calgary Herald*, November 1, 1940; “Big Increase In Marriages,” *Calgary Herald*, July 30, 1940; “It’s Leap Year More Marry,” *The Albertan*, July 4, 1940; “Conscription Rushes Cupid,” *The Albertan*, July 15, 1940.

²⁸¹ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 123.

²⁸² “Call First 50,000 For Training Soon,” *Calgary Herald*, July 17, 1940.

Social Credit party. Aberhart's fascination with Major C.H. Douglas's Social Credit platform began in the early 1930's. With Alberta's financial crisis caused by the Depression, Albertans were looking for a new way of doing things. For instance, Alberta's farmers, who made up a large portion of the population, "could not understand an economic system in which they received nothing for their crops while shops in towns and cities were filled with goods that no one could purchase."²⁸³ Many Albertans had a mistrust of the 'east,' specifically the Dominion government. This mistrust, combined with the economic situation of the Depression made it easy for many to blame a "conspiratorial dictatorship of bankers and financiers who had consigned Albertans to 'poverty in the midst of plenty.'"²⁸⁴

Social Credit itself was a British import created by Major C.H. Douglas. Douglas established the movement in Liverpool, England in the early 1920s. Anti-Semitism permeated Douglas's theories and doctrine. For example, Douglas believed that Judaism was the foundation "upon which 'monopoly capitalism' was based," and argued "that pre-war Germany and post-war Russia were under the direct influence of Jews who were the protagonists of 'collectivism,' which included socialism, communism and big business."²⁸⁵ Aberhart built his version of Social Credit out of this anti-Semitic rhetoric, though Aberhart's conspiracy theories were not as explicit.²⁸⁶ Douglas's influence over Aberhart grew after negotiations in 1935 between Aberhart and Douglas to bring the Social Credit founder to Alberta. In 1937, Aberhart created a Social Credit Board, which

²⁸³ Janine Stingel, *Social Discredit Anti-Semitism, Social Credit, and the Jewish Response* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 8, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10135206>.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

Douglas took part in, that formulated plans for controlling the financial institutions of Alberta. Together with the Board, Aberhart's government passed a great deal of Social Credit legislation from 1937-1938, however, none of it was constitutional. This was because the provincial government was trying to make legislation in a federal jurisdiction, specifically banking and currency.²⁸⁷

Under the guidance of Major Douglas, Aberhart and Social Credit fell prey to Douglas's conspiracy theories that the Second World War "was a sham, part of a plot by Jews, Nazis, Communists, Socialists and financiers to enslave the world."²⁸⁸ Yet, while Social Credit saw enemies in every darkened corner, they also supported the war effort in their own ways. For instance, five days before Canada officially declared war; a resolution was passed in the Alberta legislature that called for Canada doing everything necessary to support Britain in the war.²⁸⁹ At the outbreak of the war, Social Credit recognized it had to put its struggle on hold for the duration of the war due to heavy criticisms of disloyalty to the nation. By 1942, in the wake of the plebiscite on conscription this was no longer the case and Aberhart and Social Credit renewed its fight against those they deemed enemies.²⁹⁰

Even before the war, Aberhart was in constant battle with the Dominion government over Alberta's rather provocative legislation especially concerning monetary

²⁸⁷ Alvin Finkel, *The Social Credit Phenomenon in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 42.

²⁸⁸ Doreen Barrie and University of Regina. Canadian Plains Research Center, *The Other Alberta: Decoding a Political Enigma* (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 2006), 46–47.

²⁸⁹ Bob Hesketh, *Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 193.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 184.

policies, creating resentment on both sides. Consequently, this created problems in the war effort between Calgary, the provincial government of Alberta and the Dominion. In the provincial general election of 1940, Calgary's mayor, Andrew Davison,²⁹¹ ran as an independent, in direct competition with Aberhart for votes. Davison beat Aberhart in the election although they both won seats in the legislature. This caused tension between the two men that also played out in dealings between the municipal and provincial governments. The conscription crisis of 1942 in particular demonstrated this. As early as September 1938, Social Credit called for the conscription of wealth before manpower in case of war.²⁹² The call for the conscription of wealth was directly related to Social Credit's concerns over how the financial war effort was conducted in Canada and their conspiracy theories regarding financiers and banks. And, by the summer of 1941, Aberhart and Social Credit became more insistent in their criticisms of how Canada was paying for the war, for example through the War Savings Drives and Victory Bond campaigns. Again they called for the conscription of wealth before manpower, thus when King announced the plebiscite on conscription on 22 January 1942, Aberhart and his Social Credit government stood firmly against King. Aberhart called the plebiscite "an unwarranted expenditure of energy ... a serious loss of valuable time ... [and] an inexcusable expenditure of public funds."²⁹³

Yet for Calgarians, the news of the plebiscite was met with an outpouring of support for the Dominion government. For example, in an informal survey of thirty

²⁹¹ Andrew Davison held positions as both Mayor of Calgary and represented Calgary as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

²⁹² Hesketh, *Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit*, 194.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 201.

people, the Calgary Herald found that thirteen were in favor of conscription and six were furious that the question was even being asked. These Calgarians felt the government should just go ahead and conscript because it was time for the country to give one hundred percent towards the war effort.²⁹⁴ Similarly, delegates of the Anglican Church passed a resolution endorsing “the total mobilization of both the human and material resources” of the country in February 1942.²⁹⁵

Support increased leading up to the vote on 27 April and ‘yes’ committees, meetings and advertising campaigns appeared all over Calgary. For example, the Calgary branch of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) passed a motion to endorse a ‘yes’ vote at the beginning of the month.²⁹⁶ The Citizens Committee, fearing Calgarians lack of interest in the matter, appealed to City Council to encourage local leading citizens to take a greater role in obtaining a ‘yes’ vote.²⁹⁷ Four committees were formed to ensure a successful campaign, with Mayor Davison acting as the Chairman of the Affirmative Vote Committee.²⁹⁸ Calgarians’ efforts did not stop there. Three local radio stations donated airtime for fifty different speakers to express their views as to why Calgarians should vote ‘yes.’ An aggressive print advertising campaign was also run, which included eleven large billboards, 10,000 pamphlets, 25,000 sample ballots and streamers or large displays on almost every streetcar.²⁹⁹ Finally, the Calgary Herald held a “Why I am

²⁹⁴ “Calgarians Are Asked Opinion On Plebiscite,” *Calgary Herald*, January 23, 1942.

²⁹⁵ “Full Conscription Resolution Before Anglicans,” *Calgary Herald*, February 3, 1942.

²⁹⁶ “Endorse Move For ‘Yes’ Vote,” *The Albertan*, April 2, 1942.

²⁹⁷ “Letter To Mayor Davison Re: Obtaining ‘Yes’ Vote,” April 13, 1942, Box 336 File 2182, City of Calgary Archives.

²⁹⁸ “To Give Help On Plebiscite,” *The Albertan*, April 9, 1942.

²⁹⁹ “Business Manager’s Report on Activities to Date,” April 23, 1942, Box 336 File 2182, City of Calgary Archives.

Voting ‘Yes’” letter writing contest during April and letters were published daily in the newspaper.

These campaigns were so successful that some Calgarians took to answering their telephones with ‘vote yes’ rather than the usual ‘hello’ as suggested by the Calgary ‘Vote Yes’ committee.³⁰⁰ Because of this aggressive campaign, over 43,000 Calgarians voted ‘yes’ with only 7,041 against. In West Calgary 17,581 ‘yes’ votes were received and 1,969 against. Similarly in East Calgary 20,930 voted ‘yes’ and 3,185 voted ‘no.’³⁰¹ Only a single poll in the West Calgary district at the military hospital on the Burns property resulted in a majority for the ‘no’ vote.

However, despite Calgarians wholehearted support of the plebiscite, Premier Aberhart was steadfast in his refusal to support the ‘Vote Yes’ campaign. When Calgary’s city clerk spoke to Aberhart requesting he participate in a radio broadcast supporting the plebiscite, the Premier said he was “too busy” to participate.³⁰² Aberhart argued that the vote was a “federal matter, and [he was] striving to keep provincial affairs separate from the Dominion obligation.”³⁰³ Aberhart’s position was heavily criticised by Calgary’s press and politicians, including Mayor Davison. Indeed, throughout Alberta, Aberhart faced opposition for his stance, yet he refused to moderate himself.³⁰⁴ Aberhart and Social Credit’s position on the plebiscite therefore was complex. Aberhart was not necessarily against conscription, as long as the conscription of wealth was carried out first. His stance

³⁰⁰ “Slogan Now ‘Vote Yes’,” *The Albertan*, April 21, 1942.

³⁰¹ “City’s ‘Yes’ Huge,” *The Albertan*, April 28, 1942; “‘Yes’ Vote Gets Big Majorities From Calgarians,” *Calgary Herald*, April 28, 1942.

³⁰² “Hints Voting Means Little,” *The Albertan*, April 20, 1942; “Aberhart Says He’s Too Busy To Urge Yes Vote,” *Calgary Herald*, April 17, 1942.

³⁰³ “Hints Voting Means Little.”

³⁰⁴ Hesketh, *Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit*, 201.

seemed to have less to do with conscription itself and was instead a result of both Social Credit's conspiracy theories regarding Financiers, and the troubled relationship the province had with the Dominion government. The complex relationship between the City of Calgary, Aberhart and the Dominion was strained further in 1942 by Calgary's Air Raid Protection program.

The Air Raid Protection (A.R.P) program initially met great success in Calgary and garnered many volunteers. However, the citizens of Calgary were confident that the city was safe and how seriously Calgarians took the program is questionable. Yet, much like their fears of a 'Fifth Column' or enemy aliens, the fact that the A.R.P committee existed at all meant that whether the threat was real or not, it helped Calgarians to further engage in the war effort. Participating in air raid drills allowed Calgarians to imagine life in war torn Europe and develop at least a rudimentary understanding of life in bombed cities such as London. By making these connections, no matter how basic, Calgarians were able to both have a patriotic outlet for their experience of war and develop a drive to support the war effort to an even greater degree. By experiencing what their compatriots in London were going through, they could create ties that were more tangible, and perhaps, gain greater satisfaction in their fundraising efforts.³⁰⁵ Therefore, the A.R.P program represented a complex situation. The City of Calgary and its citizens were willing to support the A.R.P as long as it did not cost them too much. A prime example of this occurred in April 1942, when the city hospital board refused to construct a

³⁰⁵ Kelly, "A City Reborn: Patriotism in Saskatoon During the Second World War," 13.

bombproof basement in the new wing because it was too expensive and the possibility of the city being bombed was too slim.³⁰⁶

Similarly, though controversially, Alberta Premier Aberhart refused to allow a provincial A.R.P meeting to take place because he felt it was “wholly unreasonable and impractical” and any planning should be left to the individual cities.³⁰⁷ Despite the understanding that the threat of enemy air raids was slim, Alberta mayors, including Mayor Davison, urged the Premier to reconsider.³⁰⁸ This was because despite the slight chance of enemy air raids, complacency in the war effort was not an option, it was important to keep the civilian population engaged in a total war effort. Aberhart’s refusal to allow a provincial committee also created a problem because Calgary’s City Council argued that under the constitution, municipalities were not able to have direct contact with the Dominion government and all interactions were to occur through provincial cabinets. However, this was untrue. Indeed, the local and national war effort repeatedly demonstrated the ability for municipal governments and the Dominion to work together without using the provincial governments as an intermediary. Instead, this episode demonstrated City Council’s misgivings regarding Aberhart and Social Credit. While there was no obvious evidence to prove this, it is likely that Davison and his supporters were looking for any excuse to discredit the Premier. Yet, despite Aberhart’s resistance to the A.R.P, and the lack of any real threat of air raids, Calgary’s A.R.P committee remained active.

³⁰⁶ “Blackout At Hospital Will Prove Difficult,” *The Albertan*, April 1942; “Hospital Board Decides Against Blackout Plan,” *Calgary Herald*, April 24, 1942.

³⁰⁷ “Provincial A.R.P. Talk Rejected By Aberhart,” *Calgary Herald*, April 15, 1942.

³⁰⁸ “Ask Provincial Conference On A.R.P. Plan,” *Calgary Herald*, April 8, 1942; “Would Confer On A.R.P.,” *The Albertan*, April 9, 1942.

Fears of civilian complacency in the war effort on the part of both the City Council and Dominion governments meant that the Calgary A.R.P committee remained active into 1943. Many Calgarians met citywide blackouts with excitement. This was because like the demonstrations the military put on in the city, they could experience part of the war without danger and with little personal cost. In March 1943, over 4,000 A.R.P volunteers took part in a citywide blackout. Homes were ‘bombed’ and 125 ‘casualties’ were cared for by the organization.³⁰⁹ Nonetheless, whatever excitement Calgarians may have gotten from the drill, by 1943 the cost of citywide blackouts was too high. The March 1943 blackout cost a reported \$6,850 and was deemed by City Council, “a waste of time, money and effort.”³¹⁰ Thus, A.R.P planning lost enthusiasm in the city. With the Canadian army finally actively fighting overseas, after the invasion of Sicily, money was better spent supplying the troops rather than protecting the city against an enemy that was more than likely never to come. As a result, in October, Mayor Davison announced after the recommendation of the Calgary A.R.P committee that blackouts would no longer be held in the city.³¹¹ The Dominion government agreed and in November 1943, announced that blackouts would no longer occur west of the St. Lawrence.³¹²

Even though the A.R.P. committee no longer had blackouts to prepare for, they felt their job was not over. Many on the committee turned their attention to sexual disease education, hosting a series of lectures. Throughout the war, regulating the sexual activity of servicemen was a concern for both military and civilian officials. This concern largely

³⁰⁹ “4,000 In Action In Friday Blackout,” *Calgary Herald*, March 8, 1943.

³¹⁰ “ARP Cost \$6,850 Alderman Told,” *Calgary Herald*, March 25, 1943.

³¹¹ “A.R.P. Will Continue No More Blackouts,” *The Albertan*, October 1, 1943.

³¹² Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 37.

focused on limiting the spread of venereal disease (VD), if not eradicating it completely. In the earlier years of the war, military authorities placed much of the focus on the men themselves by segregating the infected men in hospitals as a means of stigmatizing and humiliating them.³¹³ Similar actions occurred outside of the military. In civilian circles, Calgarians were warned that if a person suffered from syphilis “he or she is a menace to the community and something should be done.”³¹⁴ However, much like their policy of promoting sexual abstinence as the best way to control VD, military officials realized these methods were not effective. By mid-1942, medical treatment and education replaced military penalties such as treatment in segregated hospitals for the purposes of stigmatizing VD and humiliating the men. The military also created the position of VD Control Officer and Early Prevention Treatment centres (EPT) were open around the clock at most military bases. Lectures, films, posters and pamphlets were used to educate the men on the dangers of VD and how to spot the symptoms. In addition, with the creation of the VD control officer position, military and civilian officials were able to work closer together to both locate and take action against sources, or in other words, the women men had relations with, of VD, that infected servicemen identified.³¹⁵

By moving to identifying the sources of infection, women were brought into the discussions of VD control.³¹⁶ Once servicemen identified their sexual partner, letters were sent to the women or in some cases where exact identities were not known, personal visits

³¹³ Ibid., 138.

³¹⁴ Unknown, “Venereal Diseases 4th Lecture Notes,” October 19, 1943, 1, M8201, Glenbow Archive.

³¹⁵ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 138.

³¹⁶ Ruth Haywood, “‘Delinquent, Disorderly and Diseased Females’: Regulating Sexuality in Second World War St. John’s Newfoundland” (Memorial University, 2002), 27.

were made to the women.³¹⁷ This of course led to “scandalous rumours, ostracism, breakdown of relationships and, too often, mistaken accusation.”³¹⁸ Though there was a crackdown on prostitution, a 1942 study conducted in Alberta found that only one percent of servicemen identified prostitutes as their VD contact, while twenty-three percent of the men named a waitress.³¹⁹ Across Canada, as well as in Calgary, public health and military officials found that closing prostitution houses to servicemen did not stop the spread of VD.³²⁰ The survey also found a further twenty-three percent claimed to not remember who they contracted the disease from, likely to protect their partner and in some cases, their male partner. If discovered to have homosexual contacts, servicemen “could be sentenced to penal servitude with hard labour or a dishonourable discharge, which entailed the forfeiture of veterans’ benefits.”³²¹ Therefore, while many sources of infection were located, it was not a perfect system and many women found their rights curtailed and their sexual practices becoming a part of the public dialogue.

The identification of waitresses as a primary source of infection among servicemen also raised great concern in Calgary. In a VD campaign mid-1944, one doctor called waitresses the “principal sources of venereal disease in Calgary”³²² causing a large public outcry by many Calgarians. The Alberta Restaurant Association argued that waitresses were labelled unfairly because prostitutes, when arrested, often said they were waitresses to avoid punishment. In addition, they argued that many waitresses were

³¹⁷ Ibid., 174.

³¹⁸ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 139.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ “Urge Detention Home For Infected Females,” *The Albertan*, July 6, 1944.

³²¹ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 139.

³²² “Waitresses, Angered Go After Dr. Pilcher,” *The Albertan*, June 2, 1944.

“grey-haired mothers, widows and wives of soldiers who [were] overseas” all of whom did not fit into the category of sexual delinquent.³²³ J.C. Watson, Trades and Labour Council President, similarly noted that “it [was] the opinion of some citizens that certain undesirable persons may have been hiding behind the cloak of waitresses.”³²⁴ Thus, by labelling waitresses as sexual delinquents, there was a risk that women would avoid the profession and therefore make the labour shortage even worse. It also had the potential to drive away customers. Instead, the Alberta Restaurant Association “urged that the government put into effect compulsory V.D. examination of all persons engaged in the handling of food.”³²⁵

The city of Calgary and the province of Alberta worked together to combat the spread of the disease beyond what the military was implementing. Already in 1943, a ban was placed on the admission of unescorted women to Calgary dance halls to help stop the spread of VD. Officials thought that unattended women were the most promiscuous and therefore likely to be infected. It was believed this ban did help lower the infection rates among servicemen as rates fell over the following year.³²⁶ However, it is more likely a combination of education and identification of sexual partners on the part of infected servicemen allowed for more people to receive medical treatment.

In addition to the ban, at the provincial conference on VD in July 1944 at the Palliser Hotel in Calgary, delegates passed a resolution calling for combined clinics and

³²³ Ibid.; Mary Adams, *The Trouble with Normal : Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto ;;Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 59.

³²⁴ “Waitresses Get Support,” *The Albertan*, June 3, 1944.

³²⁵ “Waitresses, Angered Go After Dr. Pilcher.”

³²⁶ “Ban On Girls Lacking Escorts Reduces V.D.,” *Calgary Herald*, June 1, 1944.

detention homes for infected women.³²⁷ The resolution allowed infected women, who refused voluntary treatment at local clinics, to be sent to the Fort Saskatchewan Detention hospital for enforced treatment. By May 1945, nine Calgary women were confined to the detention hospital along with forty-two other women, until they were cured. Yet, officials faced another problem because “the gonococci strain in Alberta had reached a peak of resistance against sulfanilamide in the treatment of gonorrhoea and the disease, as far as women are concerned, was becoming increasingly difficult to cure.”³²⁸ Some of the women had already been in treatment for over nine months, prompting officials to ask the question, what if they cannot be cured? Again, officials insisted these women were not prisoners, yet they remained confined until the treatments were successful. The introduction of penicillin as a treatment option offered hope, though Canada had a limited supply, with the majority going to the armed forces overseas.³²⁹ While officials claimed that those women who voluntarily received treatment would not receive a black mark against them, a certain stigma certainly remained.³³⁰ This was highlighted in January 1945, when city health officials began producing weekly health reports to “prove [the] relative ‘purity’ of Calgary.”³³¹

This need to prove the purity of the city, along with calls for the round up and detention of infected women was part of the moral panic that was occurring not only part of the moral panic that was occurring not only in Calgary, but the rest of the country. An

³²⁷ “Urge Detention Home For Infected Females.”

³²⁸ “Girls In Jail Hospital With V.D. Are Problem,” *Calgary Herald*, July 5, 1944.

³²⁹ Haywood, “‘Delinquent, Disorderly and Diseased Females’: Regulating Sexuality in Second World War St. John’s Newfoundland,” 179.

³³⁰ “Urge Detention Home For Infected Females.”

³³¹ “To Tabulate V.D. Cases,” *The Albertan*, January 5, 1945.

American pamphlet circulated during the war by the Canadian Youth Commission entitled 'Teen Trouble,' described wartime delinquency to the concerned public. Undoubtedly read by many Calgarians, the description, which included warnings of girls in the streets and in local taverns and more importantly chasing after soldiers, combined with gainfully employed teenage boys spending their wartime profits on girls, more than likely struck close to home.³³² Therefore, it was unsurprising so many Calgarians saw so much potential for delinquency with so many soldiers in the streets and youths finding summer employment with relative ease.

Indeed, the absence of parents and more importantly mothers, from the home was sure to have a negative impact on the development of Calgary's youth into responsible citizens.³³³ One Calgary newspaper column went so far as to say, "nothing else in the whole war is so terrible as the utter demoralization it has brought about among the teen-age girls... It is not hard to see how adolescent girls are swept off of their feet by war hysteria, by the glamor of uniforms... and by the desire for good times."³³⁴ However, only one person was to be blamed in the family for a girl's delinquent behaviour because "what one cannot understand is why the mothers of these girls have not had the intelligence to realize the temptations that were being put in their teen-age girls' way and the courage and firmness to deal with it."³³⁵ In addition, Calgary's A.R.P. committee warned Calgarians the only thing that could be done to avoid the spread of syphilis was to

³³² Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, 59.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 41.

³³⁴ "War Blights Teen-age Girls," *The Albertan*, April 5, 1944, sec. Dorothy Dix Says.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

“educate and impress upon our young people, their own worth, and the value of their young body.”³³⁶

Calgarians’ imagined threats, fears and war hysteria were more often than not unfounded. People had a tendency to react quickly and irrationally, understandable for a country at war perhaps. Though the outcome of these knee-jerk reactions were sometimes negative, can they be viewed in a negative light if they influenced people to engage further in the war effort? Until Canadian troops began seeing action, no matter how ill fated, such as the Dieppe raid, governments at all level across Canada needed to ensure their people were behind them. Preparations for home defence and air raids were therefore not just about being prepared. Much like Calgarians’ fears of a ‘Fifth Column’ or enemy alien threat, the fact that an Air Raid Precaution committee existed at all meant that whether the threat was real or not, it helped Calgarians to further engage in the war effort. Moreover, as Jeffrey Keshen argues, the Second World War was a ‘good’ war because so many in the country and indeed Calgary were determined to not allow Canada to go ‘bad.’³³⁷

³³⁶ Unknown, “Venereal Diseases 4th Lecture Notes,” 2.

³³⁷ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War*, 11.

Conclusion

When war erupted in Europe in September 1939, the greatest change Calgary experienced was the previously unmatched build-up of the armed forces within the city limits. It is unknown whether this daily interaction with the armed forces resulted in a greater war effort on the behalf of Calgarians compared to other non-militarized cities; however, it certainly influenced the way in which Calgarians experienced the war. The military in the city represented both Calgary's ability to take a more active role in the war effort, through housing troops, adopting soldiers, and raising money, but was also the reason for many of the challenges Calgarians faced in daily life. With a modest population of just over 85,000 in 1939, the influx of military personnel into the city would have been remarkable. Indeed, it is likely that the average citizen of Calgary could not go a day without coming into contact with some form of the military.

The military's physical presence in Calgary was not new, of course. The growth of the militia in major Canadian cities also brought the development of armouries, drill halls and rifle ranges within city limits and Calgary was no exception to this. For instance, after the Great War, Calgary's Mewata Armoury, as Whitney Lackenbauer argues, served as a physical reminder of war and its place within the community. Similarly, the construction of Currie Barracks in 1935 not only brought much needed growth to Calgary during the Depression; it also ensured that the military would have a long lasting and important place in Calgary.

It is unsurprising then, that Calgary's main contribution to the war effort was in hosting the Canadian military. In particular, without a major war industry, the military

itself became the industry, employing many Calgarians and affecting how the city operated on a day-to-day basis. In addition, after City Council promised to “make every necessary sacrifice,”³³⁸ the lengths that the City Council and Calgary’s citizens went to in order to support the military defined what they believed to be a necessary at any given time during the war. For example, City Council was prepared to do whatever was necessary to host a large portion of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). The cadets of the HMCS *Undaunted* were forced out of their training space and similarly, the Calgary Institute of Technology and Art was forced to vacate its buildings to make way for the air training scheme. Moreover, when No. 4 Air Training Command relocated from Regina to Calgary in September 1941, Calgarians came together to help find space for the 600 Air Force personnel that came with it.

Financial sacrifices were necessary as well, but more importantly, these sacrifices represented an investment that was convenient and that did not require the lives of Calgary’s sons. For instance, Calgarians independently raised enough money to build a sports hall for the troops within ten weeks of mobilization. However, when the sports hall was lost to a fire in the spring of 1941, several prominent Calgarians voiced concerns over what happened to their investment. It seemed that, at least at that point in the war, Calgarians were prepared to give money, providing their money would be an investment for the city and themselves. This attitude, however, changed through the war. For example, the sombre crowds at the May 1941 Victory Loan parade demonstrated that

³³⁸ “Council Minutes, 5 September 1939.”

Calgarians were beginning to make a connection between supporting the war financially and the belief that buying bonds could save a soldier's life.

In August 1942, a controversy arose in Calgary. The Department of National Defence's (DND) purchase of the Trader's Block and Northern Electric buildings from the Lougheed Estate elicited an outcry of protest from City Council and the business community. Though the purchase would be a time- and money-saving measure for DND, many affected businesses, some of whom had occupied the buildings since the end of the Great War, were unable to find new accommodations because of the civilian building curtailment. Protests did little to stop the sale, but they demonstrated that disrupting Calgary's business centre in the name of the war effort was not a 'necessary' sacrifice. Similarly, in the summer of 1943, protests again arose when the DND tried to purchase land in Elbow Park for the expansion of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve base. While City Council assured DND that they were willing to do whatever was necessary to assist, the people "with beautiful homes in Elbow Park" were ultimately protected,³³⁹ and DND was forced to find a new location for the base.

Finally, an acute housing shortage developed during the war and, with few exceptions, Calgarians did not deem it necessary to find accommodations for the families of military personnel. With the growth of the BCATP, accommodations became increasingly scarce. Individual soldiers were able to find housing; however, as Mrs. M.R. Goldie, General Secretary of the Y.W.C.A., argued, the "hospitality of [Calgary] did not

³³⁹ "Naval Barracks Site Decision Postponed."

seem to extend to the wives and children of men in the services.”³⁴⁰ Throughout the war, families of soldiers appealed to the public for support in local newspapers. However, while these stories shocked many in Calgary, the shock did not translate into change and finding suitable accommodations remained a problem well after the war.

In part, this was due to Calgary’s place in the war effort. Without a major war industry, Calgary did not fall under the legislation of the Wartime Housing Limited until well into 1944. After a housing survey of Calgary was completed in the spring of 1941, Calgary officials were told that “there would usually be adequate housing accommodation in localities such as [Calgary], were it not for the fact that the relatives of Soldiers, Airmen etc., moving into the towns, [took] up all the accommodation.”³⁴¹ Therefore, while hosting the BCATP and other military initiatives was a source of pride for Calgary and their main contribution to the war effort, it forced Calgarians to make tough sacrifices.

Daily life was also altered a great deal for a city at war that was hosting a large portion of the military. While Calgarians accepted the hardships of the war in their daily lives, it did not always mean smooth sailing. The outbreak of war led thousands of Canadians to be deemed enemy aliens. In Calgary, there was also a mounting paranoia surrounding an imagined ‘Fifth Column’ or enemy alien threat, leading to calls for a national registration and internment to suppress the threat. Their fears led many to support the creation of home defence troops, such as the Veteran’s Home Guard. Further, out of this grew air raid precaution (A.R.P.) committees. Much like their fears of a ‘Fifth

³⁴⁰ “Citizens Patriotic Enough In Words But Unwilling To Be Inconvenienced.”

³⁴¹ “Letter No. 20 To Mayor From War Time Housing Limited.”

Column' or enemy aliens, the fact that the A.R.P. committee existed at all meant that whether the threat was real or not, it helped Calgarians further engage in the war effort.

Indeed, City Council and military officials in the city built on these fears. Air raid drills or black outs not only gave citizens training, it allowed them to experience a part of war that they would not otherwise get to. Similarly, performing military manoeuvres in a public setting, such as the river crossing demonstration attached to the 5th Victory Loan in November 1943, increased enlistments, promoted the Victory Loans, and gave the citizens a glimpse at what their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons were doing overseas. By not allowing the citizens to become complacent, and through enabling Calgarians fears and patriotism, City Council and military officials helped ensure that the population would accept what they deemed to be 'necessary' sacrifices. For instance, after the failed raid at Dieppe in August 1942, meat rationing was accepted readily because in the face of over 3,500 casualties, one or two meatless days a week was hardly a sacrifice. Instead, the meat rationing encouraged Calgarians to grow Victory Gardens as a source of alternative meals and an outlet for their patriotism. Victory Gardens were so popular in Calgary that during 1943 alone, \$125,000 worth of produce was produced in the city's vacant lot gardens.³⁴²

However, the impact of the military and the war on the city also forced City Council to make tough decisions. In particular, the increased manpower requirements of the military meant a reduction in manpower available for civilian services. The Calgary Fire Department was forced to close one of their fire halls temporarily and required their

³⁴² "Vegetables For Victory."

firefighters to work six days a week. Additionally, because of serious depletion in staffing, Calgary's Fire Chief recommended to Mayor Davison in the summer of 1942 that leaves of absences for firefighters for overseas service should no longer be allowed. Yet City Council was in no position to refuse leaves of absences or prevent their employees from enlisting, despite the city still having to function regardless of the war effort.

Following the disastrous raid at Dieppe and the entrance of Canadians into the frontlines, the fundamental definition of what was necessary for Calgarians changed. The Dieppe raid weighed particularly heavily on Calgarians, and not only because of the high casualties. The Calgary Regiment (Tank) was a part of the main assault force that led the raid. Most Calgarians therefore had a personal connection to those lost. The careful work of civil and military authorities promoting the 'adoptions' of soldiers ensured that even those in the city without a family member in the forces had a connection to the war. Thus, the new definition of necessary meant an understanding that the city and country were engaging in total war, making almost every sacrifice necessary. This transition was not just in the minds of Calgarians, but also in almost every aspect of their daily lives.

The war also highlighted a changed definition of a united war effort, much like the definition of necessary. Calgary and Alberta served as a prime example of this. Calgary's war effort was often affected by the conspiracy theories and anti-federal government stance of the provincial government of Premier Aberhart and the Social Credit party. At the outbreak of war, the provincial government passed similar legislation in Calgary that

called for a united Canada to do whatever was necessary to support Britain in the war.³⁴³ Yet, on several occasions, such as the plebiscite of April 1942 and Air Raid Precaution committees, Aberhart stood against the federal government. He argued that the plebiscite was not only a waste of resources, but also called for the conscription of wealth before manpower. Similarly, there were untrue claims in newspapers that Aberhart's refusal to allow a provincial A.R.P. committee forced Calgary to interact with the federal government in a way that was unconstitutional. Even with an uncooperative provincial government, however, Calgary's war effort remained united within the city and to the country.

As Jeffrey Keshen argues, the Second World War was a 'good war' because so many were determined to prevent the country from going 'bad.'³⁴⁴ From preventing the alien threat to regulating the sexual activities of young men and women in Calgary in order to stop the spread of VD, Calgarians engaged fully in the war effort because of patriotism and a hope for the future. Despite any concerns Calgarians had regarding challenges to their daily life the war caused, continuing to support the immediate war effort remained their primary purpose. Further, the military remained at the centre of life in Calgary. Almost every aspect of life was affected by the military and civilian and military officials ensured that Calgarians supported their main contribution to the war effort.

This thesis has sought to further understand how a city at war operated on a day-to-day basis. Calgary's Second World War experience was unremarkable as compared to

³⁴³ Hesketh, *Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit*, 193.

³⁴⁴ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War*, 11.

other Canadian cities; however, that is precisely why a study of the city can contribute to a greater discussion of the national homefront experience. The balancing act that occurred between City Council, the military and the citizens in Calgary during the Second World War was complex and meant that the City Council and the Calgarian population had to continually redefine what was necessary, and what necessity meant to them.

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Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Journal, M-9111-1

Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Letters, M-9112-2

Mrs. Peterson’s Knitting Group Postcards, M-9112-3

Robin Hood Flour Mills Fonds, M-2437-14

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