

Women at War and as War Artists

For the most part, women artists were hired to paint women's work, but during the First World War, the work itself evolved as thousands of women performed tasks usually dominated by men. Mabel May's stunning portrayal of women workers filling shells in a munitions factory illustrates the impact of the war on gender in the workplace, as women assumed new responsibilities in support of the war effort. The extent to which women replaced the men who had gone to fight is also illustrated by Manly MacDonald's lyrical painting, *Land Girls Hoeing*.



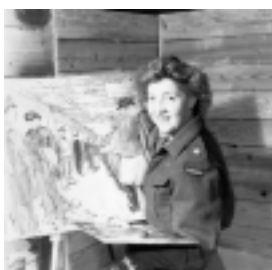
Salmon in the Galley, Pegi Nicol MacLeod, 1944 CWM 14215

Three women's services were created during the Second World War: the Canadian Women's Army Corps, the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service and the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division). Service women and civilians worked in new occupations such as aircraft construction and more traditional areas such as clerical work.

Molly Lamb was the only woman appointed an official war artist. She depicted the work of the Canadian Women's Army Corps overseas in 1945. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Canada, Pegi Nicol MacLeod portrayed women from all three women's services at work in Ottawa in 1944 and 1945.



Women Making Shells, Mabel May, 1919 CWM 8409



Molly Lamb Bobak, a member of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, was the only woman to be hired as an official war artist. She was posted to Holland after V-E

(Victory in Europe) Day, and painted the tasks and experiences of female soldiers overseas.



Canteen, Nijmegen, Molly Lamb Bobak, 1945 CWM 12017

