



**SUPPLY  
LINE**

## Norma Etta Lee

### British Commonwealth Air Training Plan

Norma was one of very few women air-traffic controllers during the war.



Norma Etta Lee operating a radio in an air traffic control tower.  
George Metcalf Archival Collection  
Canadian War Museum 20060058-020

## Before the War

Norma Etta Lee was born in Québec City, Quebec in 1917, the daughter of a civil servant.

## British Commonwealth Air Training Plan

In April 1942, Norma took a job with Quebec Airways at L'Ancienne-Lorette airport near Québec City, working with aircraft from the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

The BCATP was a massive joint program that trained more than 130,000 aircrew in Canada for service with Allied forces. Norma worked with the No. 8 Air Observer School, which was based at L'Ancienne-Lorette.

Norma first worked as a Traffic Control Tender Operator, using a signal lamp and a flare gun to direct aircraft. She then went to Toronto, Ontario, to take a course in parachute-packing with the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division.

In June 1942, she was offered a position as an air traffic controller, which she accepted. Very few women were working as air traffic controllers at the time, and Norma was the only woman in her tower crew.

Norma was one of four operators running the control tower on eight-hour shifts. Her work included handling the radio, keeping track of all flight plans in and out of the airport, compiling aircraft reports, tracking the weather and making sure all equipment was in order, including emergency backups.

Norma was on duty during the First Quebec Conference in August 1943, a major, high-level Allied series of discussions between the British and the Americans, hosted by Canada. From her tower, she controlled incoming and outgoing traffic associated with the conference.

## End of Wartime Work

Norma was let go from her job in March 1945, as the school was set to be closed. Little is known of her life after the war, but material related

to her wartime experience is now part of the Canadian War Museum collection.