

War Revisualized: The Changing Image of War in Canadian World War I Propaganda Posters

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The Great War of 1914 altered many aspects of Canadian society and is often considered a defining moment in characterising Canada's national identity. Canadians mobilised to support Britain and its allies, achieving crucial victories against the German Empire that established Canada as a global power. Over the course of the First World War, propaganda was an incredibly effective tool in influencing public opinion, often used to garner support for the war effort.¹ In order to impact as many citizens as possible, large posters containing bold texts and simple images became the most effective device in mobilizing society. The Robert Borden government utilized propaganda posters throughout the conflict to present the image of war to Canadians. The image of war was how the conflict was displayed to society, while also having exhibited the means in which it took to defeat the enemy and ultimately win the war. The initial war plan followed traditional wartime strategy, however, due to the enhancement of technologies, casualties began to increase among armies, resulting in longer, more disastrous types of battles than in previous wars.² As a result, the Canadian government needed to change its approach in order to mobilize more of its society and resources towards the war effort, thus adapting its propaganda posters and its fundamental image of war. Canadian propaganda of the First World War changed significantly in displaying the image of war to its population due to the altering ways in which war needed to be won.

After the assassination of Austro-Hungarian heir Archduke Franz Ferdinand, relations between European countries began to deteriorate. Nearly a century of imperialistic tensions and technological

¹ Lynette Finch. "Psychological Propaganda: The War of Ideas on Ideas During the First Half of the Twentieth Century." *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 3 (2000): 367–86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45346379>.

² H.G Wells. "CIVILIZATION AT THE BREAKING POINT: Man's Increasing Power of Destruction, Unchecked, Will Overwhelm Hope, Beauty and Freedom in the World." *New York Times*, May 27, 1915. <https://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fhistorical-newspapers%2Fcivilization-at-breaking-point%2Fdocview%2F97701471%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D9838>.

advancements among European empires had succumbed and war was eventually declared. On August 4, 1914, German soldiers invaded neutral Belgium to attack France, provoking Britain to declare war on Germany for violating Belgian sovereignty. Although an overly simple explanation in regard to the beginning of the First World War, this was how Canadians viewed the origin of the conflict – Germany as the aggressor.³ As a British dominion, Canada was also at war with the German Empire. Military historian Terry Copp described the situation, having stated, “Canada’s leaders played no part in the decision for war in 1914, and it is literally true that Canada went to war because Britain was at war.”⁴ Nevertheless, the Canadian government was able to determine the extent in which they would aid the war effort, which consisted mostly of providing soldiers to Britain. As soon as battle began, propaganda posters were being distributed throughout Canada in order to encourage recruitments due to the traditional war tactics being employed. The morale was high and the images reflected the enthusiastic attitudes of many Canadians.

The propaganda posters in 1914 displayed two prominent aspects of Canadian society that encouraged many young men to enlist in the army; the interconnectedness to the British Empire and the masculine glamourization of war. The poster titled, *Your King and Country Need You* (Figure 1) was distributed in 1914 and consisted of a singular message, “Your King and Country Need You: Join the Army Until the War is Over.”⁵ The message called upon Canadians to serve their King, referring to George V of England, and it was presented in blue, red, and white lettering, symbolising the colours of the British flag. The *Empire Needs Men* poster (Figure 2) also displayed the interdependence between Canada and Britain. Britain being portrayed as the ‘Old Lion’ and the ‘Young Lion’ as Canada, demonstrating the unity between the two nations, as if related by blood.⁶ Additionally, the poster, *This is Your Flag* (Figure 3)

³ Terry Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914–1918" In *Canada and the First World War, Second Edition: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown* edited by David MacKenzie, 35-61. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018, 36 <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.3138/9781487519681-006>.

⁴ Copp. “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 36.

⁵ Imperial War Museums. “Your King and Country Need You,” n.d. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/28388>.

⁶ Imperial War Museums. “The Empire Needs Men!,” n.d. (Figure 2) <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/37297>.

exhibited a commanding officer pointing to the British flag. The message beneath wrote, “This is your flag, it stands for liberty, fight for it.”⁷ All three of these images displayed war as honourable, evoking British national pride sentiments among Canadians that glorified the notion of fighting and possibly dying for one’s country.

Furthermore, propaganda posters also revealed the masculinity aspects of war that were extremely prominent.⁸ Posters such as *It’s Men We Want* (Figure 4) and *Why Don’t They Come?* (Figure 5) displayed to Canadians that enlisting in the army was a masculine duty. For instance, the message in *It’s Men We Want* stated, “Here’s your chance: It’s MEN we want.”⁹ The statement is phrased as if it was offering Canadian boys an opportunity to prove that they were true men. It utilized rhetoric that presented warfare as an inherently masculine event. In *Why Don’t They Come*, the message explained that war overseas was a chance to play a man’s game, further suggesting that engaging in battle was crucial in achieving masculinity.¹⁰ It is evident that these notions influenced many young Canadian men to join the army in 1914. Prior to the Belgian invasion, the Canadian army was composed of 3,000 soldiers; after the attack, approximately 30,000 men rapidly volunteered to fight in Europe to honour both their British heritage and achieve masculinity.¹¹ As a result, men were enthusiastic when enlisting due to the heroic image of war presented in early propaganda posters. Each poster in this time period was designed solely to increase recruitment numbers in order to employ a larger army against the Germans. The posters made men believe that by simply joining the army, they would be able to win the war. Unfortunately, the realities of modern

⁷ Canada and the First World War. “Recruitment Posters - *This Is Your Flag* | Canada and the First World War,” n.d. <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/propaganda/recruitment-posters/this-is-your-flag/?back=1580&anchor=2101>.

⁸ Copp. “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 38-39.

⁹ Ontario, Archives Of. “War Posters - Recruitment: Here’s Your Chance - It’s Men We Want [Canada],” n.d. (Figure 4) https://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/posters/big/big_27_war_poster.aspx.

¹⁰ Imperial War Museums. “Why Don’t They Come?,” n.d. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31015>.

¹¹ Copp. “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 37.

warfare were becoming increasingly realized among Canadians and the propaganda posters began to reflect the change in mentality.

During the initial campaign of World War I, both the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance followed conventional battle techniques, deploying troops forward and conquering territory as implemented in large-scale battles prior.¹² However, heavy artillery, machine gun fire and attempts to outflank one another forced both sides to excavate trenches along the Western Front. Consequently, military advancements were nearly impossible and a stalemate was formed, causing Canadian soldiers to experience limited combat. However, Canadian military commanders such as Arthur Currie and R.E.W Turner still believed that victory relied on frontal assaults.¹³ It was not until 1915 when the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) had begun to engage in large-scale battles with the Germans, particularly during the Second Battle of Ypres. Canadian troops were deployed to the Ypres Salient in April and fought in areas such as St. Julien where they were subjected to the second ever use of chlorine gas in warfare.¹⁴ Amid the barrage, the CEF had sustained severe casualties; nearly 6,000 soldiers were killed, injured or taken prisoner of war.¹⁵ The Canadian casualty rate of the battle was 37% and it would not be exceeded later in the war, not even at the notoriously gruesome Battle of the Somme.¹⁶ Although official casualty reports were not published after the engagement, newspapers in Canada had begun reporting surviving soldiers' narratives of the event, introducing society to the brutal realities of modern warfare.¹⁷ In order to combat the increasing hesitancy of enlistments that resulted from the Second Battle of Ypres, Canadian

¹² Bill Rawling. *Surviving Trench Warfare : Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918, Second Edition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/detail.action?d ocID=4670293>.

¹³ Rawling. *Surviving Trench Warfare : Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918, Second Edition*. 43.

¹⁴ L. F. Haber. *The Poisonous Cloud : Chemical Warfare in the First World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1986. Accessed November 5, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁵ "CANADA'S LOSS IS 6,000: MONTREAL HIGHLANDERS SUFFER MOST IN YPRES BATTLE.." *The Washington Post (1877-1922)*, May 03, 1915. <https://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login>.

¹⁶ Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918," 43.

¹⁷ Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918," 43-44.

propaganda posters had shifted from glorifying war and exhibiting symbols of masculinity to instead presenting more somber images, instead focusing on sacrifice.

It is important to understand that although the image of war did change, the means in which it took to defeat the Germans did not; it was still believed more recruitment in order to outnumber the enemy was the determining factor. Nonetheless, posters in 1915 exhibited the first change in the image of war. For instance, the *Battle of St. Julien and Festubert* poster (Figure 6) displayed a soldier standing in the 'slope arms' position, a calm stance compared to propaganda posters of the previous year that called men to action, such as *This is Your Flag* (Figure 3) and *Why Don't They Come* (Figure 5). In contrast, the *Battle of St. Julien and Festubert* honoured the dead men and posed the question, "Shall We follow their Example?"¹⁸ The question was meant to manifest guilt into Canadians, asking them if they would keep distance and allow the enemy to keep annihilating, or would they follow the bravery of the dead, enlist in the army and ensure the sacrifice made by fallen was not futile. The message was no longer concerned with honouring the British Empire, but rather honouring the Canadians who had lost their lives in battle.

The consequences of modern warfare were continuing to reach the homefront as the German navy torpedoed the passenger ship, *Lusitania*, along the coast of Ireland in May, 1915.¹⁹ Over 1,300 civilians had lost their lives, many of whom were Canadian women and children.²⁰ Immediately after the tragedy, posters such as *Remember the 'Lusitania'* (Figure 7) and *Take Up the Sword of Justice* (Figure 8) were distributed throughout Canada to display the savage actions of the Germans and encourage further recruitment. The majority of Canadians in 1914 believed that the war would be short-lived and would

¹⁸ Imperial War Museums. "Heroes of St Julien and Festubert - Shall We Follow Their Example?," n.d. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31045>.

¹⁹ Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918," 43.

²⁰ Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918," 43.

incur limited casualties.²¹ However, when the *Lusitania* sank the war had been active for nearly a year, the Allies had suffered nearly 200,000 losses in May and June alone, and Canadian civilians were caught in gunfire.²² Propaganda posters were no longer concerned with presenting war as a masculine duty or honouring British heritage. In order to increase recruitments, the image had changed. *Remember the Lusitania* described the event as, “the devil’s work.”²³ *Take Up the Sword of Justice* provided Canadians with a visual of the sinking boat accompanied by the hands of drowning passengers.²⁴ These two posters focused on the loss of life and the barbaric aspects of the First World War. By doing so, the image of war was fundamentally altered as they encouraged men to enlist in order to prevent the Germans from further committing atrocities, not to fulfil their masculine duty.

Furthermore, 1915 saw an additional change in the image of war in respect to the role of women. Between 1914 and 1915, Canadian propaganda posters primarily targeted men, with very few ever depicting a woman.²⁵ On the rare occasion that a woman did appear, she would be portrayed in a nurturing role, due to previous societal expectations developed in the Victorian era. The symbol of motherhood was conceptualized during the Victorian period, a time when a woman’s role in society was to raise their children.²⁶ Historian Susan Zeigler proposed that the image of ‘motherhood’ had been accepted for many years, and as a result, mothers were especially influential in determining the recruitment of soldiers. She wrote, “[that the government felt] mothers could disrupt the war effort and subvert the war by holding

²¹ Copp. “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 34

²² Copp. “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 34.

²³ Canada and the First World War. “Recruitment Posters - *Remember the ‘Lusitania’* | Canada and the First World War,” n.d. <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/propaganda/recruitment-posters/remember-the-lusitania/>.

²⁴ Canada and the First World War. “Recruitment Posters - *Take up the Sword of Justice* | Canada and the First World War,” n.d. <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/propaganda/recruitment-posters/take-up-the-sword-of-justice/>.

²⁵ Karen Ann Reyburn. “Blurring the Boundaries: Images of Women in Canadian Propaganda of World War I.” MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1998. <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp01/MQ35925.pdf>.

²⁶ Karen Ann Reyburn. “Blurring the Boundaries: Images of Women in Canadian Propaganda of World War I.” 34.

their sons back from the army.”²⁷ However, if mothers alone could deter their sons from volunteering, they could also single-handedly promote enlistments.

As a result, the government utilized the influence of mothers in order to increase recruitments in 1915. The poster, *To the Women of Canada* (Figure 9) asked women, primarily mothers, four questions. The third and fourth questions stated, “Do you realize that the one word ‘GO’ from you may send another man to fight for our King and Country? When the War is over and someone asks your husband or your son what he did in the great War, is he to hang his head because you would not let him go?”²⁸ The poster was not only claiming that men would volunteer to fight overseas if their mother encouraged so, but also that if they refrained from enlisting, the mothers were responsible. By placing the blame onto the mothers, it questioned their ability to properly raise their sons. As previously mentioned, war prior to the aftermath of the Battle of Ypres was viewed as an inherently masculine event in order to achieve true manhood. When a son rejected or avoided the opportunity to become a man, it was viewed as the selfish attitude of the mother, ultimately failing to raise her son.²⁹ In 1915, W.G. Raymond explained to citizens in Brantford, Ontario, “the real source of patriotism comes from the mothers. If we do not have patriotic mothers, we would not have patriotic sons.”³⁰ His statement reflected the societal attitudes displayed in the poster, *To the Women of Canada*. The poster suggested that a woman was powerful enough to influence a man’s decision to volunteer in the army. Therefore, it provided mothers and wives the opportunity to join the war

²⁷ Susan Zeiger. "She Didn't Raise Her Boy to be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription, and the Culture of the First World War." *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring, 1996): 7.

<https://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fshe-didnt-raise-her-boy-be-slacker-motherhood%2Fdocview%2F1295981817%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D9838>.

²⁸ Archives Of Ontario, “War Posters - Recruitment: To the Women of Canada [Canada],” n.d., https://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/posters/big/big_30_war_poster.aspx.

²⁹ Paul Maroney. ‘The Great Adventure’: The Context and Ideology of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914–17.” *Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 1 (March 1, 1996): 62–98. <https://doi.org/10.3138/chr-077-01-03>.

³⁰ W.G. Raymond to Brantford Audience 1915. Quoted in Paul Maroney, “The Great Adventure”, 95.

effort, as they had a direct impact on Canadian enlistments, presenting a new image of war involving women that was not initially relevant in early distributed propaganda posters.

In addition to mothers being utilized to support enlistments in 1915 from the homefront, propaganda posters expanded to non-married women in order to receive supplementary assistance in Europe. The aforementioned influence that mothers had on their husbands and sons was exploited by the government in order to deploy more men to the front line. However, due to the increased battle in 1915, more soldiers were wounded and required medical assistance. In order to aid the injured men, nurses were becoming crucial. Propaganda posters such as *V.A.D.* (Figure 10) and *If You Cannot Give a Life, You Can Save a Life* (Figure 11) began promoting organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross and the Voluntary Aid Detachment in order to help treat the increase of wounded soldiers. Together the two organizations were able to deploy young, spouseless women towards the war effort, working in hospitals, medical camps, and other care facilities.³¹

Nurses became a crucial aspect in aiding the front line, as they rehabilitated soldiers who had been struck by shrapnel or bullets, suffered frostbite, contracted influenza, lost limbs, or had endured other gruesome afflictions of war. As a result, the traditional, Victorian role of women as nurturing mothers transcended to un-married, young nurses, and propaganda posters rapidly exhibited the conversion. Posters such as *Help the Red Cross* (Figure 12) and *The Greatest Mother in the World* (Figure 13) depicted women physically aiding the war effort overseas. Both posters displayed a young woman healing a wounded soldier. In *The Greatest Mother in the World*, the woman was draped in all white and was portrayed in a Madonna-Esque light, occupying most of the frame to further present nurses as the ‘eternal mother’. In contrast, the soldier, who had been portrayed as tough, masculine figures in previous posters,

³¹ Sandra M. Gilbert. “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War.” *Signs* 8, no. 3 (1983): 422–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173946>.

was miniscule, posed in the arms of the nurse as she cradled him. Sandra Gilbert expanded on this notion, suggesting that it was essential for young women to equip the Victorian ideals of motherhood to properly attend to the injured soldiers. She stated, “After all, when men are immobilized and dehumanized, it is only these women who possess the old (matriarchal) formulas for survival.”³² It was important that posters such as *Help the Red Cross* and *The Greatest Mother in the World* displayed the nurturing attributes of nurses as vital in ensuring the survival of soldiers because it affirmed female war contribution. More nurses were needed to help re-mobilize injured men due to low recruitments.³³ As a result, the image of war changed, presenting women, in their assigned gender role, as active participants, altering previous notions that war involved men alone.

Propaganda posters had displayed the shift of female participation in the war from being exclusively available to married women and mothers contributing on the home front, to young spouseless women deployed overseas, actively engaging with soldiers. Despite the change, women’s role in society was still conventional, embodying Victorian values and traditions.³⁴ From 1916 to 1918, the image of war in Canadian propaganda posters had completely altered. Women were presented as even more crucial in defeating the Germans than it had in the previous two years due to the Conscription Crisis of 1917. In 1916, the Canadian Expeditionary Force had fought in the Battle of the Somme alongside British troops. Although Canadian soldiers were not present on the first day of combat, the Newfoundland Regiment had deployed 790 men, of which, 710 were wounded or killed.³⁵ In the aftermath of the battle, the Allies had suffered 600,000 casualties; 24,000 were Canadian soldiers.³⁶

³² Sandra M. Gilbert. “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War.” 435

³³ Gilbert, “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War,” 439.

³⁴ Gilbert, “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War,” 432.

³⁵ Copp, “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 49.

³⁶ Copp, “2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918,” 50.

As war waged on and large casualties were being incurred, it became evident that better military technology was crucial in both attacking and defending against German forces. Developments such as steel helmets, tanks, and the Stokes mortar were produced and provided to British and Canadian armies in 1916.³⁷ However, during the same year, enlistments had begun to decrease and those who volunteered selected corps other than infantry.³⁸ The army lowered their recruitment standards in order to keep the trenches heavily occupied, consequently removing men from factories that supplied the front line with the newly implemented technologies. In order to keep the soldiers fighting overseas well equipped, propaganda posters sought to employ women in factories. The most prominent of posters distributed was *These Women Are Doing Their Bit* (Figure 14) between 1916 to 1917. The picture presented a woman preparing to work along an assembly line with other women in work overalls engaged in manufacturing military equipment, primarily ammunition.³⁹ The reason in which posters such as, *These Women Are Doing Their Bit*, were so significant were that they presented the notion that women were essential in continuing the war effort.

The depictions of female contribution in the war prior to 1916-1917 suggested that women could assist the war effort where deemed necessary, whether it had been encouraging their sons to enlist or medically aiding wounded soldiers. However, supply shortages occurred and women were employed into factories, working what were previously considered male jobs, established their labour as of equal importance in defeating the Germans. Without women producing military equipment, the Canadian Expeditionary Force would have suffered supply shortages, thus weakening the front line. The German government had not employed women in their factories during 1916 as Canada had, instead they divided their men between the front line and production work, ultimately leading to supply shortages that lasted

³⁷ J. L. Granatstein. *Canada at War : Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics*. Toronto ; University of Toronto Press, 2020.

³⁸ Granatstein, "Canada at War," 40.

³⁹ Imperial War Museums. "These Women Are Doing Their Bit," n.d. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24058>.

into 1917 and remained until the end of the war.⁴⁰ Propaganda posters encouraging women to work in factories became increasingly distributed throughout Canada as they were viewed as vital in continuing the war machine. The image of war had changed significantly since 1914, initially portraying men as the determining factor in defeating the German Empire, to displaying women as crucial in continuing the ongoing fight. For they kept the trenches heavily armed, suggesting that the conflict was becoming a war of attrition, relying on the contributions of both men and women.

Canadian propaganda posters had sought to promote both men and women towards the war effort, however, the approach in which the war would be won remained the same – outnumber the enemy and gain territory.⁴¹ However, when women began working in factories, resources along the front line had already been scarce for the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. In addition to low supplies, the Bolsheviks had exited Russia out of the war, allowing for the Germans to deploy more soldiers to the Western Front in hopes of achieving major success before American troops were sent overseas.⁴² Fortunately for the Allies, the blockade of Germany resulted in a depletion of their supplies, weakening the strength of their army. Both the Canadian government and the Canadian Expeditionary Force realized that in order to effectively defeat the German Empire, they had to outresource them.⁴³ A conventional war became a war of attrition and propaganda posters were beginning to mobilize all of Canadian society towards the war effort to reinforce the front line, exhausting the enemy's supplies.

Resource conservation was incredibly encouraged throughout 1918. However, most of the posters created were in regard to food rationing, which promoted all Canadians, old, young, male or female to be more mindful with their nutrition habits in the interest of saving food for the front line. The Canadian

⁴⁰ Tomas Balkelis. 2022. "Humanitarian Crisis in German Occupied Vilnius, 1916-1917." *First World War Studies* 13 (1): 67–83. doi:10.1080/19475020.2022.2052929.

⁴¹ J. L. Granatstein. *Canada at War : Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics*.

⁴² Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918." 55.

⁴³ J. L. Granatstein. *Canada at War : Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics*.

Food Board distributed the poster, *Remember We Must Feed Daddy Too* (Figure 15) in 1918. It depicted a mother with her child sitting at a table, sharing a small meal. Appearing in the background was the father amid battle, shooting his rifle as a shell exploded near his trench. The title of the propaganda piece included quotations, implying that it was a statement the mother said to her child, reminding them to save food for their father.⁴⁴ Unlike previous posters, this particular one included a child, suggesting that it targeted Canadian children. The use of the word, ‘daddy’ and the image of a soldier fighting was to remind children to help their fathers on the front line through the conservation of food. The poster demonstrated that Canadian children were also part of aiding the war effort, suggesting the means in which to defeat the Germans relied on the participation of everyone on the home front.

Additionally, the poster titled, *Fight With Food* (Figure 16) was produced in 1918 and expanded on the notion that the Canadian war effort was becoming reliant on the actions of the domestic front. The text urged Canadians to consume less wheat, meat, canned produce, and dairy products in order to adequately supply the soldiers overseas. The first sentence beneath the title read, “The Fate of Europe, so far as food supply, is a vital condition of Victory for the Allies.”⁴⁵ The poster was explaining to Canadians that they were also essential in winning the war. The slogan, “Fight With Food” drew parallel with the soldiers fighting overseas, emphasizing that civilians had the ability to fight the Germans as well. It provided Canadians who were unable to contribute to the war effort overseas an opportunity to participate. Other posters such as *Boys to the Farm* (Figure 17) also bore comparison to soldiers on the front line. The poster read, “S.O.S: Soldiers of the Soil,” comparing the children’s efforts on farms to those of soldiers

⁴⁴ McGill University. “Canadian War Poster Collection: Remember We Must Feed Daddy Too.” n.d. <https://digital.library.mcgill.ca/warposters/search/searchdetail.php?ID=8717&version=e>

⁴⁵ Canada and the First World War. “Materials for the War Effort - *Fight With Food* | Canada and the First World War,” n.d. <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/propaganda/materials-for-the-war-effort/fight-with-food/>.

on the battlefield.⁴⁶ It displayed young boys donning uniforms, marching united, and holding harvest tools in the ‘slope arms’ position, all similar to a soldier and how they were displayed in propaganda posters from the previous four years. The image of war was being presented in an alternative fashion once again, as the sentiment of war among society had changed. The Canadian propaganda posters of 1918 reflected the notion that war was to be won with efforts beyond just outnumbering the enemy and gaining territory. It was won by out-resourcing them, mobilizing all of society to support the front line.

Similarly, War Bonds, later known as Victory Bonds, were also distributed to employ all Canadian citizens towards supplying the Western Front. War Bonds had existed prior to the Conscription Crisis, but became increasingly popular between 1917-1918 when they were promoted as Victory Bonds.⁴⁷ Countless posters were produced encouraging Canadians to purchase bonds, certificates, as well as stamps, labelling them as essential in defeating the Germans. Uniquely, Victory Bond posters utilized prominent aspects of previous posters promoted throughout the war. For instance, *Back Him Up!* (Figure 18) and *Be Yours to Hold It High!* (Figure 19) presented conventional notions of war as masculine and honouring the British Flag, but with the statement, “Buy Victory Bonds” prominently displayed at the bottom of the image.⁴⁸ Comparably, the poster titled, *If Ye Break Faith – We Shall Not Sleep* (Figure 20) exhibited a calm soldier standing over a grave surrounded by poppies, memorialising the Battle of Flanders, evoking sentiments of sacrifice while also including the large assertion, “Buy Victory Bonds.”⁴⁹ Additional posters displaying nurses, women in munition factories, and children were produced, also incorporating the Victory Bond statement.

⁴⁶ Toronto Public Library. “Boys to the Farm Bring Your Chum and Do Your Bit Soldiers of the Soil,” n.d. <https://digitalarchive.tpl.ca/objects/357289/boys-to-the-farm-bring-your-chum-and-do-your-bit-soldiers-of?ctx=d678f03911a1ebc931a4c28a4fd43138cc131b72&idx=1>.

⁴⁷ David Roberts. *Boosters and Barkers : Financing Canada's Involvement in the First World War*. 1st ed. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774869607>.

⁴⁸ Archives of Ontario. “Canadian Posters From the First World War - Victory Bonds,” n.d. <https://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/posters/bonds.aspx>.

⁴⁹ Imperial War Museums. “If Ye Break Faith – We Shall Not Sleep.” <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/20332>

These posters displayed the combination of all the images of war that were presented to Canadian society, but had now included, 'Buy Victory Bonds.' This was to exhibit to Canadians that the soldiers, nurses, munition workers, children, and all the other citizens on the domestic front were contributing to the war and needed financial support. The purchase of Victory Bonds were advertised as having actively contributed to all areas of the war effort; the army, medical camps, munition factories, farms, and more, and were presented as the final stages of achieving victory over the Germans. The image of war had shifted from asserting that victory solely relied on equipping large numbers of masculine, patriotic men conquering territory, to relying on the mobilization of everyone participating in supplying the war effort. The message empowered citizens and presented their contribution as of equal importance in defeating the German Empire. Ultimately, in September of 1918, the Allies were able to outsource the German army and break their final defense, the Hindenburg Line.⁵⁰ In the following two months, Germany was completely depleted of resources and negotiated an armistice with the Allies. The propaganda posters had succeeded in deploying its citizens in the war, despite having undergone significant change.

Due to the altering way in which war needed to be won, the image of war in Canadian propaganda posters of the First World War had changed in various ways throughout the conflict. It had reformed in displaying why Canadians should fight the war, as well as the means in which victory could be achieved. Initially posters presented war as an inherently masculine event. The posters focused primarily on enlistments as it was believed in order to achieve victory, Canada and the Allies needed to outnumber the Germans and occupy more land. However, modern war technology inflicted large casualties that deterred men from enlistments. To combat the effects, posters began presenting the image of war in an alternative fashion, displaying calm images accompanied by somber messages. Men were prompted to fight for the fallen soldiers, ensuring that their sacrifice would lead to victory, rather than fighting for personal gain.

⁵⁰ Copp. "2. The Military Effort, 1914-1918." 55.

As casualties increased and recruitments decreased, posters had sought to employ women towards the war effort. Mothers were asked to encourage their sons to enlist and young women were called to assist wounded soldiers overseas. The image of war presented women as essential in aiding the front line in order to re-mobilize more men to fight the Germans. Additionally, as more men were deployed overseas, less were employed in factories, reducing production. Instead, women were mobilized to factories and posters presented their contribution as essential in not just aiding the front line, but crucial in defeating the Germans, altering the image of war as no longer dependent on men alone. Furthermore, conventional war strategy had changed and the means to defeat Germany relied on outsourcing the German army. Posters encouraging food conservation and financial support became prominent, displaying the means of victory as reliant on the contributions of all Canadian citizens, portraying all efforts as of equal importance in defeating the Germans. Canadian propaganda posters of the First World War had exhibited a fundamental change in presenting the image of war to society. For destructive technology led to a longer conflict that no longer relied on the mobilization of soldiers, but rather everyone, altering the way in which war needed to be won.

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