



The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles

a project of the [Halifax Women's History Society](#) | Unveiling November 16, 2017, Halifax, NS

A WOMAN ON THE WATERFRONT



CN IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE HALIFAX WOMEN'S HISTORY SOCIETY IN ITS INAUGURAL PROJECT HONOURING THE THOUSANDS OF WOMEN IN HALIFAX WHO VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME AND LABOUR DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.



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Minister of
Innovation, Science and
Economic Development



Ministre de
l'Innovation, des Sciences et du
Développement économique

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H5



**Message from the Honourable Navdeep Bains,
Minister of Innovation, Science and
Economic Development and Minister Responsible for
the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency**

**The Halifax Women's History Society
Halifax, NS, November 16, 2017**

**Congratulations on the unveiling of
The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles monument**

Gender equality is not just about equality of
opportunity: it's about equality of recognition.

Women were only first recognized as persons under the
law in Canada in 1929. The trailblazing women who
made this possible were recently honoured in a group
of statues on Parliament Hill.

Now, The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles monument
recognizes unsung female volunteers: the women who
knit millions of articles and fed over 100,000
servicemen passing through Halifax during World
War II, especially African Nova Scotian women, and
the patriotic girls who enthusiastically salvaged old
metal pots for planes and broken toys for tanks.

The Government of Canada salutes the women and
girls who volunteered to preserve our freedom, and this
public recognition of their contributions.

The Honourable Navdeep Bains, P.C., M.P.

**Message de l'honorable Navdeep Bains,
ministre de l'Innovation, des Sciences et du
Développement économique et ministre responsable
de l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada
atlantique**

**La Halifax Women's History Society
Halifax (N.-É.), le 16 novembre 2017**

**Félicitations pour le dévoilement du
monument The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles**

L'égalité des sexes n'est pas que l'égalité des
possibilités : c'est aussi l'égalité de la reconnaissance.

Au Canada, les femmes n'ont été reconnues comme
personnes qu'en 1929 au sens de la loi. Les pionnières
qui ont rendu cela possible ont récemment été honorées
par un ensemble de statues sur la colline du Parlement.

Le monument The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles rend
maintenant hommage aux femmes bénévoles méconnues :
celles qui ont tricoté des millions d'articles et nourri plus de
100 000 soldats qui étaient de passage à Halifax durant la
Deuxième Guerre mondiale, notamment les
Afro-Néo-Écossaises, ainsi que les filles patriotiques qui
récupéraient avec enthousiasme de vieux chaudrons en
métal pour les avions et des jouets brisés pour les chars
d'assaut.

Le gouvernement du Canada salue les femmes et filles
qui ont été bénévoles pour préserver notre liberté, ainsi
que cette reconnaissance publique de leur apport.

L'honorable Navdeep Bains, C.P., député

Canada



Premier's Message

On behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the Halifax Women's History Society's "Unveiling of First Monument to Women in Halifax".

The Province is pleased to hear of the Society's efforts to improve the visibility of women's history in Nova Scotia. The commitment of the Halifax Women's History Society over the last four years to develop, install, and unveil the first monument honouring women – and specifically the thousands of women volunteers during World War II – is valued and appreciated.

Working to achieve greater balance in our public spaces and stories is an important part of our collective work to advance women's equality in Nova Scotia. Our province welcomes the opportunities to collaborate with groups like yours to tell a more complete story of the women who have shaped our communities, and are pleased to be able to support this initiative through the Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage.

Congratulations on this achievement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen McNeil".

Honourable Stephen McNeil, M.L.A.
Premier





Greetings from the Mayor



Volunteering has a long and proud history in Halifax and across Nova Scotia. During good times as well as in challenging times, citizens have given of themselves without question. They seek no pay, no recognition, nothing beyond the satisfaction of being able to help their community.

During the Second World War, women made a significant and essential contribution to the war effort at home and in service to those serving abroad. This monument, which not surprisingly is the culmination of many hours of volunteer work, is a fitting tribute to the efforts of women during one of the darkest times in world history.

Thank you to everyone from the Halifax Women's History Society who has played a role in seeing this long-held dream realized. While "The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles" may be cast in bronze these striking figures by artist Marlene Hilton Moore will bring this chapter of history to life, serving to honour those long-ago efforts and shine an appropriate light on women's contribution to our city.

On behalf of Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Regional Council, congratulations to all on a job well done.

Kindest regards,

Mike Savage
Mayor

It's Time for a Woman on the Waterfront



Dr. Janet Guildford
Photo by Michael Creagen
Government House of Nova Scotia

halifax**womens**history.ca

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The Halifax Women's History Society has been dreaming of the day we would unveil The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles. In 2013, a small group of women began the journey that would give Halifax its first full-sized bronze monument recognizing women. Our message was clear: Women Make History. Our dream and its message are now fully realized with the unveiling of artist Marlene Hilton Moore's beautiful and inspiring monument.

It has taken many hands to accomplish our dream—and a great many thanks are in order. I want first to thank the Board of the Society for their tireless work. Their volunteer labour mirrors that of the women they honour.

Incalculable thanks go to the Halifax Port Authority for providing a splendid site at the Halifax Seaport and for its unfailing support and guidance. We are particularly grateful to Arthur Hay, Manager of Real Estate, to Krista Dempsey, Vice President Real Estate, and to CEO Karen Oldfield, who has been a constant backer.

Our first private donation was a very special one. Although the donor wishes to remain anonymous, we know it came from a woman. A donation from CN, with thanks to Robert Pace, Chair of the Board, was especially welcome because of the important relationship between the railway and the women who organized volunteer services in the city during the Second World War. We thank Scotiabank, an institution with deep roots in Nova Scotia, for a major donation in support of the project.

All three levels of government have contributed. The federal government's Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency made possible the renovation of the site on the Halifax waterfront boardwalk. The Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women have also supported the monument. Very early and very welcome backing was provided by the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Other significant donors include Senator Nancy Ruth, Honourable Margaret McCain and the Halifax Foundation. Our members and friends have been consistently generous. This grassroots support reassured us of the importance of our project.

We are grateful, too, to those who donated services. Gavin Giles of McInnes Cooper

provided essential legal services and Dr. Nicole Neatby of the St. Mary's University Department of History and Daniel Chanick provided French translation of our interpretive materials. Visual artist Doug Guildford provided us with a beautiful concept drawing early in our process.



The original inspiration for the monument as illustrated by Doug Guildford.

We have been fortunate to work with talented professionals whose enthusiasm for the project has been manifest in all they have done: Christel LeBlanc, of Forest Friend Creative Projects, designed our printed materials and website; Sue Sirrs and Jamie Clarke of Outside! Planning and Design Studio developed the plan for the monument site. This program has been printed as a gift in kind by the Chronicle Herald.

Thank you to all who helped make the dream come true.

Nova Scotia Helps the Fighting Man

At the end of the Second World War, the Government of Nova Scotia published *Nova Scotia Helps the Fighting Man* as a testimonial to the war effort and support from volunteers. Premier Alexander S. MacMillan paid tribute to the extraordinary contribution from women in the publication.

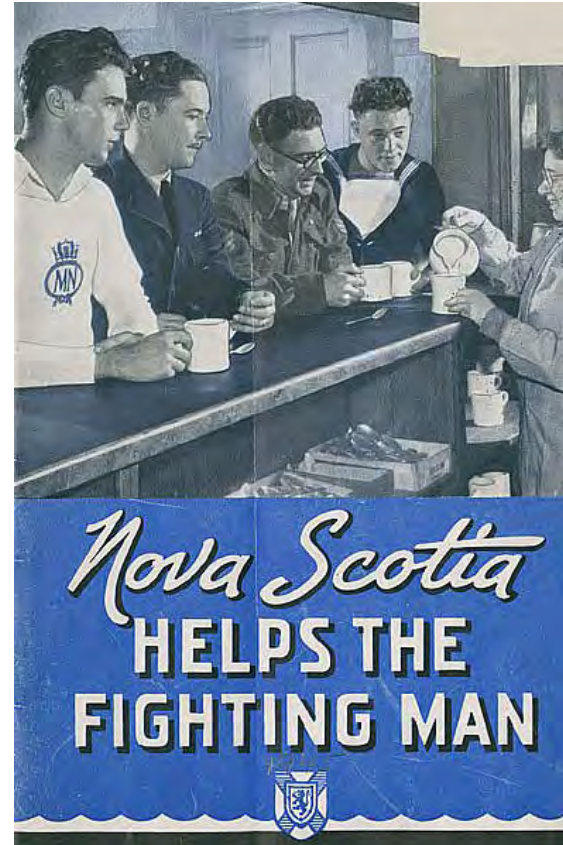
"The whole story of the part played by Nova Scotia during this war cannot be told yet. But we have tried to present a comprehensive picture of the fine work done by volunteer citizens, largely women, on behalf of the armed services. It has been carried on for more than five years and is a record of achievement that tops everything of its kind on this continent."

A.S. MacMillan, Premier of Nova Scotia
Halifax, NS, August 1, 1945

(Excerpt from the foreword of *Nova Scotia Helps the Fighting Man*)

"Halifax, the port of a thousand ships, was the greatest centre for seamen from all parts of the world. As many as 28 ships limped into this port in a single day, looking for repairs. Men in thousands spent days of leave ashore. Men of the Army and Air Force waited days for transportation. They all milled about the grey old seaside city, looking for entertainment."

(Excerpt from *Nova Scotia Helps the Fighting Man*)



COVER of *Nova Scotia Helps the Fighting Man*, 1945

Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives

"The work of these organizations has been an epic endeavour which, repeated day by day, evening by evening, through five long years, reached a scale out of all proportion to the population of the province. The devoted and efficient work of these volunteers, largely women, meant more to the cumulative war effort than has ever been realized."

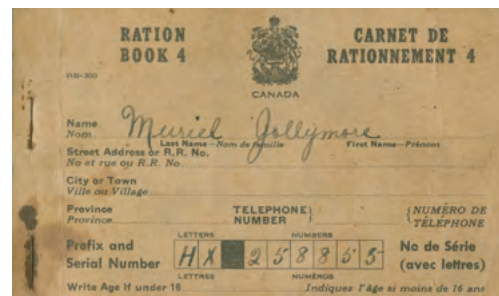
(Excerpt from *Nova Scotia Helps the Fighting Man*, 1945)



TOP Red Cross handcraft display

TOP RIGHT Poster advertising War Bonds

BOTTOM RIGHT Ration book



ALL PHOTOS courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives

Volunteer Participation and Support

Canadian Red Cross

Senior members knitted comforts, made hospital supplies and staffed blood donor clinics and mobile canteens. Junior members raised money, wrote letters to servicemen overseas and collected salvage. Auxiliary nurses met hospital ships and accompanied the wounded on hospital trains leaving Halifax for Montreal.

Salvation Army

Two hostels in Halifax provided meals and lodging, movies, free bingo parties, sing songs and religious meetings.

Mothers Corners

In hostels and huts, women mended servicemen's uniforms, knitted comforts and provided clothing for those in need.

Catholic Women's League ▶

Members provided meals in the Knights of Columbus Hostel. They also visited servicemen in hospital and helped write letters so they could stay connected to family.

Canadian Legion War Services

Women Legion members operated hostels and canteens. They provided library services to hospitals, organized concerts and served meals.

I.O.D.E.

Members filled ditty bags for the Merchant Navy and Personal Comfort Bags for women and children of Britain. They sent clothing to Polish war victims in Russia. They also established a library in Camp Hill Hospital.



YWCA

Lodging was provided for servicewomen. Home hospitality was arranged and included Sunday dinner as well as accommodation for five day leaves. A Traveler's Aid Department was staffed at the railway station. Assistance was provided to approximately 75,000 servicemen, women and their families during the war years.

ANA (Army, Navy, Airforce) Club

The club was exclusively for servicewomen providing a place to relax, write letters or enjoy simple meals during the day. Guests were welcome in the evening. A summer camp was available at Parrsboro for women on leave.

▼ North End Services Canteen

The Canteen was established in October 1939 in St. Mark's Church Hall. Dances were organized, games provided, movie and theatrical shows were staged weekly. From opening to VE day, approximately 850,000 meals were served.

*ALL PHOTOS courtesy of the
Nova Scotia Archives*





▲ Central Magazine Exchange

Volunteers worked six days a week supplying the armed services, merchant marine, hospitals, hostels and canteens with magazines, books, playing cards and chess boards. 8 million magazines were distributed from 20 million collected.

Gerrish Street Hall

During the Second World War, Halifax was a segregated city. Black servicemen from across the country and beyond were welcome at the Gerrish Street Hall where entertainment and meals were provided. In 2006, Gerrish Street was renamed Buddy Daye Street.



▲ Uncle Mel's Talent Club

Uncle Mel's Talent Club, a weekly talent show on CHNS radio, was hosted by business man, Hugh Mills, the voice of 'Uncle Mel'. In 1939, Mills, his wife and sister, founded the Halifax Concert Party Guild. Every day of the war, entertainment was provided somewhere, in a club or theatre, on a naval or merchant vessel, or at a coastal battery. 700 volunteers signed up to perform, manage and coordinate a production or to transport sets and costumes.

St. John Ambulance Brigade, Nursing Division

Auxiliary nurses worked at the Allied Merchant Seamen's Hostel caring for injured seamen in the Sick Bay. They served at 24 First Aid Posts, assisted professional nurses in the Naval Hospital Well Baby Clinic and at Blood Donor clinics.

Halifax Church Groups

Thousands of servicemen were fed and entertained at 'Friendly Hours' held on Sunday evenings. Hospitality was offered in the homes of church members. Many of the women served in canteens and hostels and visited the wounded in hospital.



Quinpool Road Hostel

Members of the Jewish community operated a hostel on Quinpool Road. They held concerts, organized dances, served meals, and invited servicemen to participate in the Passover seder.

ALL PHOTOS courtesy of the
Nova Scotia Archives

Marlene Hilton Moore



PHOTO by Ballantyne

Marlene Hilton Moore is an award winning Canadian artist, known for her outstanding achievements in public art and monuments. One of her most prominent works is The Valiants Memorial in Confederation Square in Ottawa. This Monument of 14 life-size bronze historical figures and busts represents 350 years of the evolution of Canadian history.

Hilton Moore was intrigued by the opportunity The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles offered to permanently celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of women in a public monument. Volunteerism and the many contributions of women at home and in the community have often been underrated in terms of heroics, but the daily consistent attention to the needs of everyone is one of the most heroic tasks of all.

"My concept for the The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles is based on creating a 'living presence' so that one feels they can approach and talk to each sculpture as though the sculpture is alive. The authenticity in historical costume and the exacting detail greatly add to this living presence."

Hilton Moore's significant works also include the Borden Legacy Monument at CFB Borden and Two Freedoms in the prestigious McMurtry Gardens of Justice, Toronto. Additional works include Sir Wilfred Laurier University's 100th Anniversary, Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville for Ocean Springs, Mississippi, and Wiidookdaadiwin, Simcoe County, which celebrates the relationship between First Nations and settlers in Huronia for over 200 years.

Born in New Brunswick, Hilton Moore has received awards from the Canada Council for the Arts, The Ontario Arts Council and the Sheila Hugh MacKay Foundation. The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles is her first commission in Atlantic Canada.

Margaret Pelletier, renowned Mi'kmaq artist

PHOTO by Mario Studio



MONUMENT



“The Seated Woman exemplifies one of the most consistent of volunteer activities, knitting for the soldiers, a skill especially of the older women. I commissioned a **Mi’kmaq basket from renowned basket maker Margaret Pelletier** to hold the knitting on the woman’s lap. This exquisite basket incorporating multiple Castle Bay twists adds to the cultural tradition of Nova Scotia.”

Marlene Hilton Moore



“The Standing Figure is a young African Nova Scotia woman smartly dressed in a 1940’s suit and shoes. She carries a tray serving mugs of coffee and hearty sandwiches for the soldiers. This serving of comfort food was a quintessential volunteer activity.”

Marlene Hilton Moore



The Little Girl was delightful to dress in her 1940’s overalls, blouse and hair ribbon. She is pulling an old wooden wagon filled with broken tricycles, tops and old kitchen pots. These articles contained metal and rubber, among the most valuable materials to recycle for the war effort.”

Marlene Hilton Moore

The Unveilers



CHARLOTTE GUY JEFFRIES

Charlotte was an accomplished pianist and accordion player during the Second World War. Her talents were in high demand. She joined performers recruited to entertain in theatres, concert halls and on ships anchored in Halifax Harbour. She worked during the day and at night, joined fellow entertainers to create shows and perform. Charlotte was also recruited to join the Halifax Heralds, a performing group sent to the UK, France and Germany to entertain servicemen waiting to go home at the end of the war.



MARGARET GORDON

Margaret met her husband at the Gerrish Street Hall where she helped serve and entertain black servicemen during the Second World War. Her husband Arthur was an army gunner from Fredericton New Brunswick. Margaret was a member of the Portia White Choir. She sang on radio, in canteens and during concerts organized to entertain the men waiting to be shipped out from Halifax.



JOYCE PURCHASE

Joyce remembers working a four hour shift at the North End Canteen every Friday afternoon. At 17, she and two friends stood behind a counter and served roast beef, potatoes and vegetables to as many as 375 servicemen at one sitting. She helped salvage items from her own home in Rockingham to contribute to the war effort. Children received free admission to movies in exchange for salvage.

Thanks To Our Donors

The unveiling of The Volunteers/ Les Bénévoles is truly a cause for celebration. It would not have been possible without support from many people. Our rallying cry—"It's time for a woman on the waterfront"—was heard by Canadians from Newfoundland to BC, by private citizens, by Canadian corporations, by all levels of government, by not-for-profit organizations and foundations. The members of the Society, nearly 400 of them, opened their cheque books and persuaded family and friends to do the same.

We are profoundly grateful for every single gift made towards the achievement of our goal to commemorate the volunteer work of women in war time Halifax.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

up to \$100	196
\$101- \$500	49
\$501-\$1000	23
\$1001-\$5000	8
\$5001-\$25,000	9
\$25,001-\$50,000	1
\$50,001-\$100,000	1
\$100,001-\$125,000	2

Halifax Foundation	\$25,000
HRM Community Grant	\$25,000
Canadian National Railway Company	\$100,000
Province of Nova Scotia.....	\$125,000
Atlantic Canada	
Opportunities Agency.....	\$125,000

Halifax Women's History Society



BACK ROW Sharon MacDonald (Corresponding Secretary), Bridget Graham (Member at Large), Frances Gregor (Vice Chair & Fundraising), Sarah Toye (Social Media Manager & Recording Secretary), Elizabeth Ryan (Membership), Wanda Lewis (Member at Large), Susan Dower (Member at Large), Anne Marie Lane Jonah (Special Events).

FRONT ROW Mary Somers (Communications), Janet Guildford (Board Chair), Joanne Ducolon (Treasurer & Investment), Robin MacInnis (Member at Large).

We're proud to
help communities
become better off.

Scotiabank is proud to support Halifax Women's History Society dedication of The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles.

Our commitment represents the passion of our employees, the insight of our partners, and the spirit of our communities. Enjoy this event knowing you're helping our community.

www.scotiabank.com/community



**A VISUAL MEMORIAL IS A
NECESSARY ADJUNCT TO A
LIVING PAST, AND IT IS FAR
MORE ILLUMINATING THAN
THE MOST ELOQUENT WORDS.**

- Katharine McLennan *Katharine*

**The Chronicle Herald is a proud supporter of
the Halifax Women's Historical Society.**

**The
ChronicleHerald**