

# Working Memory

## Women and Work in World War II

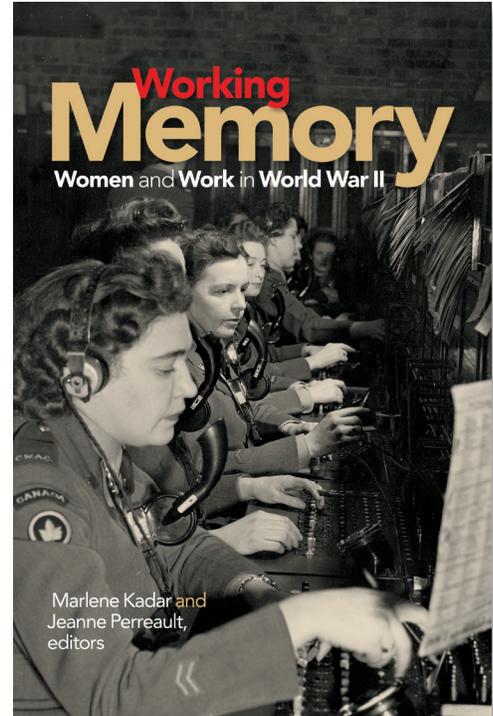
Marlene Kadar and Jeanne Perreault, editors

*Working Memory: Women and Work in World War II* speaks to the work women did during the war: the labour of survival, resistance, and collaboration, and the labour of recording, representing, and memorializing these wartime experiences. The contributors follow their subjects' tracks and deepen our understanding of the experiences by examining the imprints. The efforts of these contributors are a part of the making of history, and when the process is as personal as it has been for many of them, the making of history is also the working of memory. The implication here is that memory is intimate, and that the layering of narrative fragments that recovery involves brings us within touching distance of ourselves.

These are not stories of the brave little woman at home; they are stories of the woman who calculated the main chance and took up with the Nazi soldier, or who eagerly dropped the apron at the door and picked up a paintbrush, or who brazenly bargained for her life and her mother's with the most feared of tyrants. These are stories of courage and sometimes of compromise—the courage of bravado and hype and big guns, but the courage of hard choices and sacrifices that make sense of the life given, even when that life seems madness. *Working Memory* brings scholarly attention to the roles of women in World War II that have been hidden, masked, undervalued, or forgotten.

**Marlene Kadar** is a professor in the departments of Humanities and Gender and Women's Studies at York University, Toronto. She has published extensively in the field of life writing, especially in relation to traumatic historical events, archival lives, and memory studies, and is the co-editor of three volumes of life writing theory. She is currently writing a study of the social and cultural contexts of medical diagnosis and misdiagnosis. She is the editor of the Life Writing series at WLU Press.

**Jeanne Perreault** recently retired from the University of Calgary, where she taught women's writing, Indigenous literature, and American literature. Her publications include *Writing Selves: American Feminist Autography* (1995), *Writing the Circle* (1993), co-edited with Sylvia Vance, and *Photographs, Histories, and Meanings* (2009), co-edited with Marlene Kadar and Linda Warley.



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## Table of Contents

### Working Memory

Women and Work in World War II

Marlene Kadar and Jeanne Perreault, editors

Introduction: The Lives and the Archives | **Jeanne Perreault and Marlene Kadar**

Prologue: “Things gone astray”: The Work of the Archive | **Marlene Kadar**

“People Dealt This Fate to People”: The War and the Holocaust in Zofia Nałkowska’s Life Writing | **Eva C. Karpinski**

Re-dressing Women’s History in the Special Operations Executive: *The Camouflage Project* | **Lesley Ferris and Mary Tarantino**

Two Sisters: Contrary Lives | Charmian Brinson and Julia Winckler

From Planter’s Daughter to Imperial Soldier and Servant in Britain’s War | **Patrick Taylor**

Resisting Holocaust Memory: Recuperating a Compromised Life | **Marlene Kadar**

“Snow White in Auschwitz”: The Tale of Dina Gottliebowa-Babbitt | **Natalie Robinson**

Perpetual Pioneers: The Library of Congress Meets Women Photojournalists of World War II | **Beverly W. Brannan**

“Girl Takes Drastic Step”: Molly Lamb Bobak’s *W110278—The Diary of a CWAC* | **Tanya Schaap**

“These Dutch Girls Are Wizard!” The Dutch Resistance as Matriarchy in *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* | **James D. Stone**

Facing Death: The Paintings of Australian War Artist Stella Bowen | **Catherine Speck**

Acknowledgements

Contributors

Index