

“Not Unless Necessary”: Student Responses to War Work at the University of Toronto, 1914-1918

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During the First World War, participation in the war effort at the University of Toronto was defined by gender. The university encouraged male students to enlist and female students to work in munitions and agriculture. Though public reaction to the war was overwhelmingly positive in Toronto and at the university, University of Toronto student publications such as The Varsity, student records from the Office of the Registrar, and writings by university students capture more complex student reactions to the war. These sources present voices of discomfort and tiredness with the university's support of the war effort and complicate gendered expectations of participation during the Great War.

Au cours de la Première Guerre mondiale, la participation étudiante à l'effort de guerre à l'Université de Toronto était définie en fonction du sexe. L'université encourageait les hommes à s'enrôler et les femmes à travailler dans les usines de munitions ou en agriculture. Si la réaction publique à la guerre a été très manifestement positive, les publications étudiantes telles que The Varsity, les dossiers étudiants du bureau du registraire et certains écrits d'étudiants permettent de nuancer cette impression. Ces sources révèlent en effet un malaise et une certaine lassitude à l'égard du soutien de l'université à la guerre et complexifient l'histoire des attentes à la fois des étudiants et des étudiantes par rapport à la participation à la Grande Guerre.

“WE BELIEVE that in the time when you are tested, and you receive your baptism of fire, you will be brave ...[and] quit yourselves like men ... true to the high moral ideals and traditions of this University.”¹ These words, spoken at a farewell dinner for departing student soldiers in early 1915, were both encouraging and grim. The reality was that many of the young men who heard these words never returned from war. Two thousand University of Toronto students, staff, and alumnae enlisted in the First World War. The campus newspaper, *The Varsity*, urgently stated that

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1 *University of Toronto Monthly*, April 1915, p. 305.

these student soldiers did not enlist because they wanted to but because they must. Theirs was a decision rooted in early twentieth-century ideals of manly duty.

In Canada, as in other commonwealth countries such as Australia, the current prevailing narrative of the First World War presents the conflict as a moment of national birth.² In *Death So Noble*, Jonathan Vance demonstrates the belief that “[war] was a fulfillment of the principles by which Canada had evolved as a nation.”³ Pierre Berton explains that, in the decades after the Great War, Canadians continued to justify it through iconic battles: “Because of Vimy, we told ourselves, Canada came of age; because of Vimy, Canada found its manhood.”⁴ Tim Cook characterizes the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) as shock troops comprised of “nearly as many foreign-born soldiers as Canadians ... but all fought under the Maple Leaf.”⁵ However, the complexities of the war effort cannot be summarized as a unified nation-building narrative. The work of Amy Shaw and Thomas Socknat on conscientious objectors and pacifists reminds us that not all Canadians embraced wartime service, and many resisted active military service for cultural and religious reasons.⁶ French Canada generally opposed the war on imperial grounds, and the country was bitterly divided on the issue of conscription.⁷ While the divisiveness of issues like conscription has been acknowledged in the historical literature, such complexities have generally continued to be overshadowed by an emphasis on wartime patriotism.

This article gives voice to the discomfort and restraint present in the martial climate that overtook the University of Toronto between 1914 and 1918. For much of the war, public sentiment in Toronto regarding the war effort was overwhelmingly positive. According to Ian Miller, war brought Torontonians together as they grieved losses and celebrated victories during four long years.⁸ However, University of Toronto student publications such as *The Varsity*, student records from the Office of the Registrar, and writings by university students capture a more complex understanding of the Great War. In these documents we can locate voices of discomfort and tiredness with the university’s support of the war effort.

2 Jeff Keshen, “The Great War Soldier as Nation Builder” in Briton C. Busch, ed., *Canada and the Great War: Western Front Association Papers* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), p. 10. On Australia, see Marilyn Lake et al., *What’s Wrong with Anzac? The Militarization of Australian History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

3 Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), p. 157.

4 Pierre Berton, *Vimy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), p. 307.

5 Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War 1917-1918* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2008), p. 9. See also Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989); Tim Cook, *Clio’s Warriors: Canadian Historians and the Writings of the World Wars* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

6 Amy Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in Canada during the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009); Thomas Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

7 Jack Granatstein, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977); Martin F. Auger, “On the Brink of Civil War: The Canadian Government and the Suppression of the 1918 Quebec Easter Riots,” *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 89, no. 4 (December 2008), pp. 503-540.

8 Ian Hughes Maclean Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

Official policies and speeches from the University of Toronto glorified the sacrifices that both the university and the student body made in the war effort. Repeated efforts to build support for the war and the constant encouragement for students to enlist also suggest, however, that university administrators were directing their remarks toward an implicit audience: students who chose not to volunteer for military service. Gendered ideals set the parameters for expected participation in the war effort. Male students were expected to enlist for active service whenever possible, while female students were encouraged to work with the Red Cross and complete National Service in munitions and agriculture.⁹ However, some objected to the strong social and administrative pressures to engage in the war effort within the increasingly militarized climate of the University of Toronto. The men and women who chose to object, as Amy Shaw explains, made a personal choice: “conscientious objection is an individual step.”¹⁰ A careful reading of articles published in *The Varsity*, of the private papers of university students such as Kent C. Duff, and even of the National Service Cards filled out by students in the winter of 1917 suggests that Canadians’ reactions to the war effort were more complicated than allowed within the rigid binary of, for, or against the war.

The response of the student body towards university policies encouraging enlistment also changed as the war continued. While initially very successful, by 1917 volunteer recruitment waned at the university as it did across the nation.¹¹ Enrolment at the university continued to drop during the war years; in 1918 enrolments were lower in every faculty except medicine.¹² Of the 1,027 men who filled out National Service Registration Cards, only 617 were “prepared to do national service in agriculture, munitions, or in some other employment.”¹³ Even the university administration conceded, “As was to be expected the academic work of the year has not been in most cases of the same quality as before the war. The spirit of the students was not as keen as in normal times; they were living in the midst of more or less distraction....”¹⁴ University students such as Kent Duff sometimes went along with the war work expected of them, while students’ answers on National Service Cards indicated others were unwilling to participate in the war effort “unless necessary.”¹⁵

The President’s Report of 1915 for the University of Toronto explained, “At the opening of the session efforts were made to impress upon the students of the University the meaning of the war and the necessity of their preparing themselves

9 See Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw, eds., *A Sisterhood of Suffering and Service: Women and Girls of Canada and Newfoundland during the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012).

10 Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience*, p. 120.

11 See Desmond Morton, *When Your Number’s Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House, 1993).

12 University of Toronto Archive [hereafter UTA], President’s Report for the Year Ending June 30th, 1918, p. 7.

13 UTA, President’s Report for the Year Ending June 30th, 1917, p. 25.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

15 UTA, Duff, C. Kent, B94-0001; and Office of the Registrar, A1965-0013/071, University of Toronto National Service Cards, James Arthur Vanderburgh, 24, Medicine.

for serving their country in the present crisis in whatever way their service might most be needed.”¹⁶ The university was not alone in this aim. Students mobilized for war at other institutions across Canada, including the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, Queen’s University, Dalhousie University, Acadia University, Mount Allison University, and McGill University.¹⁷ Paul Axelrod and Charles Levi illustrate that Canadian “universities offered their services quickly when the war broke out, but there was some confusion over what they could actually do.”¹⁸ The University of Toronto responded to the war by raising funds, equipping hospitals, establishing rehabilitation centres, and aiding in scientific innovation. As demonstrated by Robert Rutherford, Canadians across the country mobilized as citizens “on a profoundly gendered homefront.”¹⁹ The message from administrators at the University of Toronto was clear: every student should engage in war work to the best of his or her ability.

Gender, Education, and War Work

The answer to the question—“what [does] it mean to be a man?”—is complicated and historically contingent.²⁰ According to Michael Kimmel, manhood meant “different things at different times to different people.”²¹ Joan W. Scott argues that societies construct ideas of difference between men and women that correspond to behaviours identified as either appropriate or inappropriate.²² Theorist Judith Butler argues that gender is rooted in time and performed “through a *stylized repetition of acts*.”²³ Sonya O. Rose demonstrates that masculinity is relational and that “manhood and womanhood are defined in relation to one another.”²⁴ Masculinity was subject to scrutiny, especially by other men, suggesting that manliness was understood and constructed not only in relation to women but also in relation to other men. To be “manly” was to be the opposite of effeminate; however, the demonstration of manliness was concerned not only with a gendered hierarchy that placed men in positions of power over women.²⁵ In early twentieth-century Canada, men looked to their participation in military exercise and martial activities as an expression of both their manhood and their standing in

16 UTA, President’s Report for the Year Ending June 30th, 1915, p. 12.

17 For more on Canadian and British universities generally in war, see Paul Axelrod and Charles Levi, “Universities, Students, and the Conduct of War in Canada and Britain: A Comparative Perspective” in Paul Stortz and E. Lisa Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict: Histories of Canadian Universities and War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 253-271.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

19 It is important to recognize the various ways the war created and exacerbated conflict at provincial and local levels. For more, see Adam Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War” in David Mackenzie, ed., *Canada and the First World War: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 230-271; Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada’s Great War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), p. 94.

20 Christine Ramsay, “Introduction” to *Making it Like a Man: Canadian Masculinities in Practice* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2011), p. xvii.

21 Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 5.

22 Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 91 (December 1986), p. 1067.

23 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 179.

24 Sonya O. Rose, *What is Gender History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 58.

25 *Ibid.*

their communities. This martial participation corresponded to wider national and imperial understandings of masculinity that presented war as the ultimate test of manhood and fraternity.²⁶

War, and the associated glorification of martial imagery, profoundly influenced the consciousness of late-Victorian English Canada.²⁷ War presented an invitation to defend and preserve not only the nation and the empire but also the larger abstract principles they were believed to represent: freedom, civilization, and democracy. As George Mosse explains, the Great War extended an “invitation to manliness” to men living within countries brought into its folds.²⁸ James Wood notes the prevalence of what he identifies as the “militia myth,” or the belief “that citizens fighting in defence of their homes made the best soldiers.”²⁹ This belief in the superiority of the citizen-soldier over the professionally trained regular bolstered Canadian participation in the militia, military, and rifle organizations prior to the Great War.

A combination of military training and education was believed to transform boys into good citizens. Building upon established connections between military training and citizenship in the late nineteenth century, Mark Moss demonstrates that military training and cadet corps were introduced in Ontario public schools to instil discipline and morality into young boys. He argues that physical drilling, textbooks, sport, games, and boy’s organizations trained young men in Ontario to become soldiers through romanticized ideas of war and patriotism. Due to these influences many Ontario boys, he contends, enlisted for service in 1914.³⁰ Connections between education, citizenship, and military training were further cemented during the war as the Ministry of Defence not only looked towards Canada’s universities for potential recruits, but also set up an educational training scheme, or the Khaki University, for the education of soldiers overseas.³¹

Though a select group, university students were expected to exercise active citizenship and employ their education in the improvement of society.³² As a

26 Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada, 2001); George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

27 Paul Maroney, “Lest We Forget: War and Meaning in English Canada, 1885-1914,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 32 (1997/1998), p. 109.

28 Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 61. For more on masculinity and the Great War in Britain, see Meyer, *Men of War*; Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*.

29 James Wood, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), p. 5.

30 Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, p. 3.

31 Tim Cook, “From Destruction to Construction: The Khaki University of Canada, 1917-1919,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 109-143.

32 See Chad Gaffield *et al.*, “Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queen’s University, 1895-1900” in Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, eds., *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), p. 11; R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), pp. 6, 18; A. B. McKillop,

relatively small cohort, students at the University of Toronto reflected the largely middle-class population of Ontario's high schools. Seventy-seven per cent of high school students left during or after the completion of their first year of secondary studies, while only five per cent of all students continued on to Forms III and IV.³³ Though enrolment increased in the decades before the Great War, as universities became vehicles that prepared students for competitive careers in business and commerce, less than one per cent of all Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 attended university.

By the early twentieth century, Canadian universities formed a robust intellectual, political, scientific, and social network.³⁴ Universities, argue Peter Stortz and Lisa Panayotidis, were "influenced by social, political, economic and intellectual forces driven by contested motivations, interests and behaviours of historical agents."³⁵ Times of war, they continue, forced Canadian universities to negotiate these contested motivations. Universities were places where scientific discoveries were made. They trained future doctors, dentists, scientists, intellectuals, politicians, and clerks. The militarism students encountered at elementary and secondary levels also persisted, as universities too were seen as essential places where boys were made into men and citizens.³⁶ In some cases, war turned universities into "war machines."³⁷

The University of Toronto was not alone in its support of the war effort or in its commitment to war work during the Great War. Nor was the University of Toronto alone in its call to enlist men by appealing to their masculinity. In his study of the University of Saskatchewan, James Pitsula acknowledges Canadians had many reasons to go to war—loyalty to nation and empire, national interests, resistance of German aggression—and that these reasons were also "shaped by prevailing notions of manliness."³⁸ University students and officials at Saskatchewan found themselves embroiled in debates over the meaning of war. University President Walter Murray and Professor of English Reginald Bateman publicly disagreed about the validity of Bateman's enlistment when he was needed to teach classes at the university.³⁹ At Acadia University, students participated and enlisted in a war that was believed to be an extension of social service; the war was believed

"Marching as to War: Elements of Ontario Undergraduate Culture, 1880-1914" in Axelrod and Reid, eds., *Youth, University and Canadian Society*, p. 82.

33 Gidney and Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education*, p. 309.

34 See Robin S. Harris, *A History of Higher Education in Canada, 1663-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).

35 Stortz and Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict*, p. 1.

36 As demonstrated by Mark Moss in *Manliness and Militarism*, public schools in early twentieth-century Ontario educated young men to become soldiers through military education and ideals connecting citizenship and duty to active service.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 7. For more on Canadian universities and the ways in which students interacted with each other, their courses, and institutions of higher learning, see the work of Paul Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class: Student Life in English Canada during the Thirties* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010). Axelrod explores the university as a space for the middle class and demonstrates that students fostered relationships at university with each other in social and professional ways that improved their economic status and furthered their knowledge of current social issues and movements.

38 James M. Pitsula, "'Manly Heroes': The University of Saskatchewan and the First World War" in Stortz and Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict*, p. 124.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 125-131.

to be the war to end all wars and a catalyst to usher in a new world order.⁴⁰ Other Canadian universities also faced serious disruptions during the war as male enlistment dropped and faculty members entered war service or headed overseas. Some, such as Queen's University and the University of Toronto, considered closing their doors. "One of the realities of student life," explain Paul Axelrod and Charles Levi, "was the expectation to enlist for military service."⁴¹

How did ideological connections between masculinity and war manifest on campus at the University of Toronto during the Great War? By virtue of education and training, the male student body at the University of Toronto was viewed by university officials and military recruiters as "rich in embryo officers" waiting to be organized and trained to serve nation and empire.⁴² Although efforts to organize a Canadian Officer's Training Corps (COTC) dated to 1911, the contingent was not officially sanctioned until October 1914.⁴³ The organization's mandate was to "provide students at Universities and Colleges with an opportunity of acquiring an elementary military training, with a view to their eventually applying for commissions."⁴⁴ Administrators and patriotic organizations looked to the student body of the University of Toronto not only to support the war effort but to lead it.

Proposals to form a Canadian Officers' Training Corps claimed the Corps was necessary to meet the military demand for officers during the war. A report submitted to President Falconer by the Graduate Society of McGill University called for the formation of COTC corps in all Canadian universities, "Since it is stated that officers will be greatly needed for active military service, machinery should be provided at every University through which all University men, desiring to assume the responsibility of an officer, will have every opportunity afforded them for becoming trained and qualified as officers."⁴⁵ The next year, G. M. Smith wrote to the president of the University of Toronto urging him to recommend that the COTC be recognized as an Officers Training Corps, and thereby train men for commissions in the British Army or within the CEF: "Most of our men are drawn from a class of potential officers, many of them already Certificate 'A' men ... of course men enlisting now sign up for any purpose and with no conditions but the good men with even remote chances of commissions are laying back."⁴⁶ The desire to enlist university men as officers was so great that in February 1913

40 Barry M. Moody, "Educating for War and Peace at Acadia University: The Great War Generation" in Stortz and Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict*, p. 38.

41 Paul Axelrod, "Universities, Students, and the Conduct of War in Canada and Britain: A Comparative Perspective" in Stortz and Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict*, p. 256.

42 *University of Toronto Monthly*, November 1914, pp. 3-4.

43 The recruitment drives and voluntary drilling with the Canadian Officer's Training Corps (COTC) of 1914 were joined in 1916 by the creation of the 67th (University) Battery, and in 1917 by policies mandating the completion of registration cards and obligatory physical inspection.

44 UTA, Office of the President R. A. Falconer, AC67-0007/16/056, Canadian Army Officers Training Corps 1910-1911. For more on the COTC, see James W. N. Leatch, "Military Involvement in Higher Education: A History of the University of Toronto Contingent, Canadian Officer's Training Corps" (PhD dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 1995).

45 UTA, Office of the President (Robert Alexander Falconer), A67-0007/37, The Military Situation and the Duties of the University in respect to it: an opinion emitted by the Graduate Society of McGill University.

46 UTA, Office of the President (Robert Alexander Falconer), A67-0007/37, G. M. Smith, Lt. 2nd University Company to O. C. (Robert Alexander Falconer) COTC, Toronto, May 19, 1915.

the Canadian Minister of Militia Sam Hughes refused the university's proposal to create a new honorary class of officer, Lieutenant-Dressers, to serve in Casualty Clearing Stations.⁴⁷

The expectation to participate in military service was not confined to men only. At the University of Toronto, women were also recruited by university and patriotic organizations into the war effort. Fundraising efforts by Sophie Falconer, the president's wife, and other women's patriotic organizations on campus mobilized a network of university alumnae to raise funds for the war, while women on campus responded favourably to the Canadian Red Cross Society's (CRSC) call for patriotic service.⁴⁸ The University of Toronto distributed its own National Service Cards as part of a national effort in early 1917 to register and identify young Canadians willing to work in industry and agriculture to sustain war work within a national context of labour shortages.⁴⁹ While some university women indicated their willingness to be called for national service and work in either agriculture or munitions during the summer of 1917, others answered that they already had plans to work. Helen MacKay answered that she was unwilling to work in National Service as she had already engaged to work on her father's farm. Another stated she had "registered with the Women's Emergency Corps but had no call." Claire Frances Nangle, a 19-year-old student in Arts who planned to spend her summer "at leisure," agreed to work but only "with parent's consent." Some women expressed concerns about approval at home, indicating they would be willing to work "if circumstances at home permit" or "if absolutely necessary," as answered by Ruth Agnes Frost, who indicated she was "going to be married this summer" and underlined the word "absolutely" twice. For many, National Service would be their first entry into the workforce, as was the case for Edna M. Mitchell, who indicated she had "not been earning money, but hope[d] to henceforth"; others, such as Ettie Flanagan, agreed to National Service but only if the payment was found to be "at same as I would get for teaching."⁵⁰

Although the activities of women on campus increased during the war as male enlistment dropped, the university remained focused on the training and development of male university students as soldiers.⁵¹ A report on the activities of the university entitled *The University of Toronto and the Present War* outlined the contributions of the university to the First and Second Contingents and the actions of the University Senate and faculties. The report concluded with a short section on "The Women Students," which read: "At the same time the women students of the University have shown their determination to be of service by occupying the hours from 4-6 in the afternoon, when there is no instruction given

47 UTA, Office of the President (Robert Alexander Falconer), A67-0007/37, Minister of Militia Sam Hughes to E. N. Armour, May 23, 1915.

48 Quiney, Linda J. "We Must Not Neglect our Duty": Enlisting Women Undergraduates for the Red Cross during the Great War" in Stortz and Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict*, p. 72.

49 Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, p. 103.

50 UTA, Office of the Registrar, A1965-0013/071, University of Toronto National Service Cards. Quotes originate from National Service Cards within this fonds identified by the name of the student.

51 The presence of women on campus grew during the war years as the proportion of women students rose in relation to falling male enrolments as enlisted men left campus for service in the war.

in the University, with sewing and other work.”⁵² University women, however, did far more than knit. Roles for women at the university grew during the war years, although, as Terry Wilde points out, many of these gains receded after the war. Women were encouraged to participate in the war by volunteering with organizations such as the Red Cross and the League of Patriotic Service of Women Students of the University of Toronto, organized by the president’s wife Sophie Falconer.⁵³

Though many women were willing and able to participate in the war effort, they found their options limited and constrained. Women were involved in recruitment, entered the work force in business, munitions, and agriculture as labour shortages swept the country in 1917, and served the war effort both at home and overseas. By 1917, many women in Canada were eligible for the first time to cast their votes in a federal election under the newly minted *Wartime Elections Act*. However, Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw explain that “certain parameters” were placed around the participation of women in the war effort.⁵⁴ Fighting was not even considered, and even factory work was looked upon with some disdain. Linda Quiney observes the “feminine ideal of service, this characterization of women’s appropriate patriotic behaviour balanced the masculine construction of patriotic duty regardless of class, providing a gendered definition of appropriate service for both women and men.”⁵⁵ In her history of the Department of Social Service, which was established during the war years, Sara Burke argues that “the construction of gender roles in social service allowed the reform interests of men and women to be both segregated and placed in contention.”⁵⁶ Women students at the university existed in a social and academic culture where academic knowledge was assumed to be inherently masculine.⁵⁷ Therefore, women students participated in the war through their preferred participation with patriotic war-relief organizations; however, as suggested by their National Service Cards, they were generally willing to serve but only “if absolutely necessary.”

From Encouraging to Forceful: Military Service on Campus, 1914-1918

University administrators and publications clearly communicated an expectation that students would engage in military service and, whenever possible, volunteer

52 UTA, Office of the President (Robert Alexander Falconer), AC67-0007/037, Correspondence & Subject Files, “The University of Toronto and the Present War,” date unknown.

53 Terry Wilde, “Freshettes, Farmerettes, and Feminine Fortitude at the University of Toronto during the First World War” in Glassford and Shaw, eds., *A Sisterhood of Suffering and Service*, p. 83. In addition to the university’s fundraising and transportation of Military Hospital No. 4, Queen’s University, Dalhousie University, McGill, and The University of Western Ontario also financed and staffed hospitals to be sent overseas. Mark Kuhlberg, “An Acute Yet Brief Bout of ‘returned-soldier-itis’: The University of Toronto’s Faculty of Forestry after the First World War” in Stortz and Panayotidis, eds., *Cultures, Communities, and Conflict*, p. 52.

54 Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw, “Introduction: Transformation in a Time of War?” in Glassford and Shaw, eds., *A Sisterhood of Suffering and Service*, p. 2.

55 Linda Quiney, “Gendering Patriotism: Canadian Volunteer Nurses as the Female ‘Soldiers’ of the Great War” in Glassford and Shaw, eds., *A Sisterhood of Suffering and Service*, p. 106.

56 Sara Zena Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 7.

57 *Ibid.*

for active service. In February 1915, the president of University College delivered a farewell speech in front of 136 student-soldiers who were preparing to join the 2nd Canadian Division overseas. He expressed to them that students were “preparing to fulfill the first, and for most the highest duty of man: [they were] going to the front.”⁵⁸ Yet this message was not always welcome. One student complained that President Falconer had become some kind of recruiting officer.⁵⁹ K. C. Duff, a student at the University of Toronto, wrote to his mother in the fall of 1914 describing the special meetings called by Falconer in Convocation Hall where he urged students to enlist. Duff wrote to his father about a sermon delivered at the university by Archdeacon Cody: “It was a war sermon (I’m getting sick of them) on the tenet—‘he that saveth his life shall lose it: etc.’ He urged that our duty was to fight for our country and he once more explained the righteousness of the British cause.”⁶⁰

During the first two years of the war, the University of Toronto encouraged students to enlist by presenting military training as a social activity and granting academic leniency to those who volunteered for active service. Faculties and colleges organized their own enlistment drives urging students to take an oath of allegiance agreeing to “undergo a systematic training in military work.”⁶¹ Debating clubs argued the validity of German claims to war, while campus newspapers wrote that Germany was barbaric and lacked any “essential culture.”⁶² The university cooperated with the military in health care, weapons development, and officer training, while German culture, literature, and language were systematically removed from the curriculum.⁶³ In December 1915 the university organized a series of nine public lectures on the causes of the war. Topics included the diplomatic causes, the German politics of aggression, and the organization of the British Army.⁶⁴ Training and drill on university grounds was so prevalent that weekly orders for the COTC were published on the front page of *The Varsity* outlining the timetable for company “parades.”⁶⁵

The administrative pressures and incentives that encouraged students to enlist and participate in war service mirrored social and cultural pressures. In a letter to his parents, Duff notified them that he had enlisted in the COTC. He explained, “I didn’t know whether you would be quite pleased to have me join ... but with president and profs and fellows all urging you to join, I could scarce do otherwise.”⁶⁶ Letters to the Student’s Administrative Council (SAC) from the university principal provided instructions about what articles to include or

58 UTA, 168-0003/15, M. B. Watson, ed., “Canadian Officers’ Training Corps, University of Toronto Contingent,” p. 11, as cited in Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” p. 102.

59 Kuhlberg, “An Acute Yet Brief Bout of ‘returned-soldier-itis,’” p. 57.

60 UTA, Duff, C. Kent, B94-0001/0001, File 01, Kent C. Duff to Father, Toronto, October 19, 1914.

61 *The Varsity*, October 3, 1914, p. 1.

62 *The Varsity*, December 2 and November 18, 1914.

63 Martin L. Friedland, *The University of Toronto: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 260.

64 UTA, B1972-1273, Free Public Lectures on “The War and Its Causes,” October 12 – December 14, 1914.

65 *The Varsity*, October 8, 1915, p. 1.

66 UTA, Duff, C. Kent, B94-0001/0001, File 01, Kent C. Duff to Mother and Father, Toronto, October 28, 1914.

stories to cover in *The Varsity*. In a university made up of federated colleges and institutions, the student-run *The Varsity* represented a campus-wide student voice. The paper was published three times a week by the Student's Administrative Council (SAC) and reported principally about social and political ideas and events on campus.⁶⁷ In 1916, the president wrote to the editor of *The Varsity*, G. G. MacDonald, reiterating the importance of a united war effort on campus. "This is a time of great need: the demand for men is growing rapidly. I urge you with all emphasis to consider carefully what your duty is in the present circumstance."⁶⁸ It is difficult to know to what extent the student paper was urged to support the war effort on campus and to what extent this support was forced.

As early as March 1916, tensions between those on campus and in the city were rising. In a letter to his mother, Kent Duff described an altercation between a group soldiers and temperance advocates. On March 8, 1916, recounted Duff, a group of temperance marchers with banners that read "No Booze for Us" was violently confronted by some Officer's Training Corps men.

We noticed a couple of wagons going along beside the parade with opposition signs—"British Fair play—wait till the war is over" etc... Crowds composed largely of soldiers lined the route, of course, and the soldiers and recruiting officers kept shouting—Why aren't you in khaki—Why don't you enlist? etc. Some of the O.T.C. men in uniform were in the parade and they were they objects of special derision. The soldiers called them yellow-bellies and the rest of us slackers and shirkers ... around the Armouries there were soldiers thick and as we came along, they began throwing snow and ice at the banners and at us ... [they] rushed into the parade from both sides, captured and destroyed some of the banners and roughly handled some of the students.⁶⁹

67 The value of *The Varsity* was to meet the need for a publication "to serve the University as a whole, every faculty and section," unlike the more collegiate focus of surviving undergraduate newspapers (*The Varsity*, February 17, 1915, p. 2). Published three times a week by the Student's Administrative Council (SAC), the newspaper had subscriptions both on and off campus. The effort to produce as many as five undergraduate publications appearing alongside *The Varsity* – including *The Trinity Review*, *Hya Taka*, *Applied Science*, *The Wycliffe Magazine*, and *Acta Victoriana* – were considered by *The Varsity* to be "wasteful competition," especially in the area of competition for advertising space. Other than *Acta Victoriana* and *The Trinity Review*, records of these other undergraduate publications survive in a very limited capacity or not at all. SAC was also responsible for publication of the university's yearbook, *Torontonesis*. Established in 1913 as an all-male student organization, SAC was joined in 1916 by the Women Student's Administrative Council. In 1919, these two councils were joined into the Joint Executive Students' Administrative Councils. For the fee levy of \$2, every male student on campus received a copy. After 1917, so did every female co-ed student. Subscriptions for the 1914-1915 school year, spanning the first year of the war, were listed as 2,323 male students, with a further 150 subscriptions attributed to ladies and various veterinary, religious, and pharmaceutical offices. See UTA, Student's Administrative Council, A70-00012/17a; UTA, Office of the President R. A. Falconer, AC67-0007/45a/027, Caput; UTA, Office of the President R. A. Falconer AC67-00007/037/8, Caput. For an extra subscription price of 50 cents *The Varsity War Supplements* presented the individual photographs of all Varsity graduates or undergraduates on active service, as well as special articles by university administrators and other writers deemed of international reputation. The principal profits of *The Varsity War Supplements* were donated to the Canadian Red Cross through the Hospital Supply Association and accounted for a sum of \$8,000 by the time the last supplement was issued in 1918. See "The University Hospital Supply Association," *The Varsity War Supplement 1918*, p. 80.

68 UTA, Office of the President R. A. Falconer, AC67-00007/45A/02, Letter from Robert Falconer to the Editor of the Varsity, December 11, 1916.

69 UTA, Duff, C. Kent, B94-0001/0001, File 03, Kent C. Duff to Mother, Toronto, March 9, 1916.

The *Globe and Mail* reported that six students had been injured. Those marching were reported to have had chunks of ice hurled at them by onlookers, with more than one student's face cut by ice.⁷⁰ A student was reportedly pulled from the procession, knocked down, and dragged into the Armouries by his hair, and another claimed a soldier had chewed on his fingers during the fight.

Debates about war service in Toronto were taken into the streets that day in March as temperance marchers met aggressive crowds who challenged the masculinity of those out of uniform and marching for a non-militant cause. *The Globe* presented a critique of manliness in its coverage of the altercation published the next day; it was not the temperance marchers who were cowardly but instead the men who attacked their convictions from the sidelines. C. C. Grant, chairman of the student section of the demonstration, reported to the newspaper, "It needed considerable moral courage for a man to parade in anything but khaki to-day. The greater part of the men who took part in the great procession would have enlisted long ago 'ere this had they not been urged by military authorities to hold themselves in reserve for the officers training corps and the battery recently organized. Everybody knows what the University of Toronto has done."⁷¹ Accusations from the aggressive crowd that those marching for temperance were avoiding active service and thus cowardly were unfounded; some marched in uniform, while others awaited instructions to enlist in the university battery. Both groups involved in the altercation—the marching protestors and onlookers who attacked them—accused each other of cowardice and in doing so questioned each other's manhood. In the contested debate about manliness and war service, there seemed no clear strategy to define manliness in men publicly out of uniform. The altercation on March 8 demonstrated that men in Toronto were subject to lingering suspicion of their commitment to the war if they remained out of uniform and illustrated the violent consequences that could result from the martial climate of Toronto during the First World War.

"I am Needed at Home": Dissent and Discomfort on Campus

University policies of mandatory physical drilling came at a time of mounting local and national pressure concerning the state of Canada's war effort. By the winter of 1917, coal shortages in Toronto forced the university to consider the possibility of closing its doors. Food rationing meant Canadians conserved and limited their consumption of sugar, while materials needed for industry, such as gasoline, were also in short supply. Revolutionary action in Russia only increased fears of socialism and bolshevism across the Canadian home front, which was already rife with fears about enemy aliens in Canada.⁷² Looming labour shortages created fears about Canada's industrial section and whether it would be able to

70 "Mob Attacks 'Dry' Paraders," *Globe and Mail*, March 9, 1916, p. 1.

71 "Six Students Hurt in Fight with Soldiers," *Globe and Mail*, March 9, 1916, p. 9.

72 See, for example, Bohdan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Lubomyr Luciuk, *Without Just Cause* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2006); Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*; Benjamin Isitt, "Mutiny from Victoria to Vladivostok, December 1918," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 87, no. 2 (June 2006), pp. 223-264.

withstand the continued strain of the war effort.⁷³ Declining enlistment fuelled rising concerns about conscription. Following one of the most contested federal elections in Canadian history and the introduction of electoral reforms through the *Military Voters Act* and the *Wartime Elections Act*, conscripted men were asked to report for service in early 1918.⁷⁴

In this climate the University of Toronto introduced mandatory military drilling in June 1917, just before conscription became law later that summer. The President's Report announced that "after careful discussion the Senate transmitted to the Board of Governors a recommendation that, beginning [this] autumn ... a system of compulsory military instruction and physical training should be established in the University for all men undergraduates proceeding to a degree."⁷⁵ What was once encouraged was now mandatory; men on campus were forced to participate in military drilling to remain enrolled in their courses at the university. Men were required to report for physical examination in early October 1917, after which they were to be divided on the basis of physical fitness and handed over to the COTC for organization and instruction. Upon learning of the conscription of all male students into compulsory drilling, one freshman at the Dental College remarked that "he was not aware that [the college] had been turned into a recruiting office."⁷⁶ Another article printed in *The Varsity* alongside criticism of compulsory drilling claimed that "every male student will have to do his part." *The Varsity* stated publicly that it welcomed "the introduction of compulsory drill and [felt] sure that the majority of students will see that it is, after all, more fair."⁷⁷ That October, a front-page article in *The Varsity* claimed women had an unfair academic advantage, as "who wouldn't want to be a co-ed when the university imposes one less subject on them than on the men?"⁷⁸

The *University of Toronto Roll of Service, 1914-1918*, published three years after the signing of the armistice in 1918, claimed that "very few men were found to be fit for active service, so that when some months later the Military Service Act came into force, even on a lowered standard it had no appreciable effect in the University."⁷⁹ Yet a debate over military training on campus suggests its transition from volunteer to compulsory was targeted at those who continued to resist institutional and social pressures to enlist. In claiming that the remaining male student body was unfit for military service either because of the men's physical condition or their status as "non-British," the university publicly absolved fears that it allowed eligible men to remain enrolled in academic classes.⁸⁰

73 For more on labour during the war years and beyond, see Craig Heron, *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

74 See J. L. Granatstein, "Conscription in the Great War" in Mackenzie, ed., *Canada and the First World War*, pp. 62-74.

75 UTA, President's Report 1917, p. 8.

76 *The Varsity*, October 3, 1917, p. 1.

77 *The Varsity*, September 28, 1917, p. 2.

78 *The Varsity*, October 12, 1917, p. 1.

79 University of Toronto, *University of Toronto Roll of Service 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1921), p. xvii.

80 James W. St. G. Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 70, no. 1 (March 1989), p. 3.

There seemed, however, to be a discrepancy between university claims about ineligible students and the actual response of the student body. Though the university's *Roll of Service* later claimed that few university men were found fit for active service, *The Varsity* reported that only 86 of the 886 students who underwent physical examination in 1917 were declared unfit for any kind of military service. The majority of students examined were classified as eligible for military training; 272 men were immediately declared fit for overseas service. A further 209 were declared fit for non-combatant service overseas, while another 260 were classified as being fit for service only in Canada. Fifty-nine men did not, or were unable to, report to the gymnasium for inspection.⁸¹ Although none was identified as a "fit, but conscious objector" by *The Varsity*, some commentaries and letters to the editor openly criticized the university administration and its policy of mandatory drill.

In addition to complaining that the imposition of military studies as an extra course was unfair to male students, a letter to *The Varsity* by a student writing under the pseudonym of "Arts 18" claimed that the expectation on students to drill for two afternoons a week was unreasonable, especially for those who were working their way through university. "Arts 18" challenged the university to "be honest and publish in their literature no poor need apply."⁸² He accused the university of punishing students unable to pay for their education by forcing them to comply with mandatory drill and complained that students would have to make the journey to campus an extra two times a week for no academic merit. Furthermore, "Arts 18" demanded to know the consequences of refusing to comply with compulsory drilling.

If I absolutely refuse to take the drill outlined by the Senate or authorities gone insane over militarism, and wishing to foist on us the German system, making men mere sheep and goats, the very system we are fighting against, what will the authorities do? I do not believe that their Charter would allow them, if I should get my six subjects prescribed, to keep back my degree from me? Why not be fair to those boys earning a living, either give them exemption from this drill or consideration on one other subject. Be fair, be decent, be British.⁸³

"Arts 18" turned imperial sentiment on its head, using it to justify his disapproval of university academic policies. His appeal to university officials on the basis of Britishness, principally his appeal for them to "be British" and grant exemptions or academic leniency, rejected the widely accepted rhetoric that it was the patriotic duty of every eligible man to enlist. In urging the university to grant leniencies and exclusions, "Arts 18" presented reasons, rather than excuses, why otherwise "eligible" men could be exempted from active service. Presented were his own valid reasons for not participating in military service: he was busy working to support himself in addition to financing and completing his education.

81 *The Varsity*, October 15, 1917, p. 1.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

83 *Ibid.*

“Arts 18” demonstrates that not all students complied with the university administration’s support of the war effort, nor did they necessarily back the introduction of mandatory military drilling. Many students were concerned with their economic survival in Canada rather than fighting a war overseas. Although published anonymously, the criticism illustrates the presence of dissent on campus regarding the University of Toronto’s policies concerning military training.

Students’ answers on their National Service Cards also illustrated their unease with the call to military service that predominated across campus. President Falconer explained to the editor of *The Varsity* that “by the authority of the Board of Governors and of the Senate a card is being issued containing certain questions which every student (man and woman) is required to answer.”⁸⁴ The cards included a series of questions:

1. What is your full name?
2. How old are you?
3. In what country were you born?
4. Are you a British subject?
5. Have you good average health?
6. Have you full use of your arms?
7. Of your legs?
8. Of your sight?
9. Of your hearing?
10. Have you offered for Military Service?
11. How do you spend your summer vacation?
12. Would you be willing to work in the summer of 1917 for National Service?
13. If you have been earning money are you willing to work under the National Service Board at the same pay?
14. If you have not been earning money are you willing to work under the National Service Board at the usual rate of pay?
15. Which would you prefer? Agriculture of Munitions?⁸⁵

Students were instructed to return their completed cards to the secretary of their faculty by January 31, 1917.

The majority of students indicated “yes” when asked if they would be willing to work for the National Service Board. Those who answered in the negative often included a reason for their response. After having indicated his unsuccessful attempts to enlist in the first three contingents, Peter Sauder, a 22-year-old medical student, recorded: “My own work is as important as anything else I could do. We cure many cases where surgery has failed.” James Arthur, a 24-year-old who planned to spend his summer in hospital work, answered “not unless necessary.” “Probably,” answered 19-year-old George Todd Zumstein. Elford John Nelson

84 UTA, Office of the President (Robert Alexander Falconer), AC67, Falconer to the Editor of “Varsity,” January 17, 1917.

85 Files of the Office of the Registrar retain the National Service Cards completed by students at the University of Toronto. See UTA, A1965-0013/070-72.

responded, “Can’t say definitively.” Another student responded, “Yes, if you give me my year.” Cyril R. Moose, a 17-year-old Arts student, answered “No—3 brothers at the front. I am needed at home,” while John Cantius, a 25-year-old theological student, answered simply “Impossible.”⁸⁶ The range of responses from male students to registration for National Service suggests that many did not yet view their participation in the war as necessary. It is difficult to know the reasons for these men’s answers. What would change George Todd Zumstein’s answer of “probably” to a definitive yes or no? Was the card filled out by the theological student “John Cantius” some sort of spoiled ballot, with a student showing his unease with the war effort by using the name of a saint and declaring his participation in the war as “impossible”? The examination of student responses on their National Service cards raises questions about the motives of student reactions to the war effort; what remains clear, however, is that, for many men on campus, the war was not yet considered necessary.

Letters from university men overseas published in *The Varsity* indicate a growing unease with conditions at the front and the duration of the war. According to Malcolm W. Wallace, a student stationed overseas:

The scholars and would-be heroes of U of T and Knox College have become quite reconciled to cleaning harness and grooming horses. The men who can “roll to bed with a Latin phrase and rise with a verse of Greek” do not always make the most efficient gunners or NCO’s, and clearly the man from the Peace River country who has been ranching for years has in him the making of a better horseman than the average student.⁸⁷

Another wrote, “Many of us are tired of war. For it simply means position after position, and it is perhaps quite natural that we should wish to be done with it all and be back to a more normal way of living.”⁸⁸ Writing to his mother from England, university student Gerald E. Blake expressed his wish to transfer into the Flying Corps, as “the infantry is sure death—and the flying corps isn’t—that’s about what it amounts to.”⁸⁹ In 1916 *The Varsity* reported that “from the men who have looked death in the face we hear of new views of religion and morals and politics and social relations. What are we going to offer them when they return from the war? It will have to be something better.”⁹⁰

Conclusion

Of the 2,000 students, staff, and alumni from the University of Toronto who left for war, 600 never returned.⁹¹ President Falconer stated, “While to us [the soldiers] cause sadness as they go, we are yet proud they are going.”⁹² Yet we

86 UTA, Office of the Registrar 2.3, A1965-0013/071, University of Toronto National Service Cards.

87 *The Varsity*, November 30, 1917, p. 3.

88 *Ibid.*

89 UTA, B2006-0025/001, Blake, Gerald E. to Mother, July 9, 1917.

90 “Vacation Conversations,” *The Varsity War Supplement 1916*, p. 32.

91 Friedland, *The University of Toronto: A History*, p. 255.

92 *University of Toronto Monthly*, April 1915, p. 305.

cannot discount that this war made many feel a great sense of unease. At the University of Toronto this unease can be found in student writings, in their responses to National Registration, and in the varied reactions to mandatory drill presented by *The Varsity*. Though the university sought to mobilize its students along gendered lines and particularly to encourage, and later force, eligible male students into active service, there remained voices of discomfort or ambivalence toward to the war and the war effort.

Appeals to masculinity may have aided in recruiting soldiers into the war; however, these same masculine narratives excluded wounded and often disfigured returned men.⁹³ The men who did come home were helped to “take up the broken threads of life” through “functional re-education” at the university.⁹⁴ In “functional re-education” centres, war amputees were fit with “special appliances for billiards, tennis, croquet and bowls [to] develop the control and strength of stumps.”⁹⁵ Machines, apparatuses, and weights were developed and used to help wounded soldiers recover use of their extremities and attempt to regain their independence. Through these university initiatives, returned men worked to re-learn how to walk, how to write, and how to adapt to their new physical and mental state.

One article printed on the front page of *The Varsity Newspaper* in early 1918 claimed that, “when one considers ... the various apparatus and the fair masseurs at the convenience of the wounded soldier, one cannot understand the need for the enforcing of the Military Service Act.”⁹⁶ However, the large number of casualties and the often long and difficult struggle to return to civilian life created another vision of war, with scars that lasted long after the guns were silenced. Within this context of war work in Toronto, amid violent outbursts against those who were not in uniform as well as the long casualty lists and the public struggles of men to return to university and civilian life in military hospitals and patriotic organizations throughout the city, there were those unwilling to view war as an appealing or masculine prospect.

The war was a setback for soldiers not only due to wounds they may have suffered, but also due to the time they spent returning to and in some cases repeating studies abandoned at the time of enlistment. The Soldier’s Aid Commission wrote to the president in April of 1917 on behalf of C. W. Marshall, a returned soldier suffering from tuberculosis and declared medically unfit for further military service. Prior to his enlistment he had been enrolled in, but did not complete, his matriculation. While the university invited Marshall to write his matriculation alongside other students, the Commission “felt that, because of Pte. Marshall’s service overseas, he is entitled to something more than this, and should, if possible, be given his matriculation standing and be allowed to enter the

93 For more on the male body during the First World War, see Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*.

94 “Editor’s Preface,” *The Varsity War Supplement 1917*, p. 8; The 1918 *Varsity War Supplement* recorded that 57 per cent of students and 25 per cent of faculty from the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering fought overseas. Of these, 14 per cent died, and a further 16 per cent were disabled. See “Training Disabled Soldiers at the University in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering,” *The Varsity War Supplement 1918*, p. 139.

95 *Ibid.*

96 *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, February 13, 1918, p. 1.

Medical College next fall.” “I would point out to you,” wrote the Commissions Secretary, “that this young soldier has served his King and Country for over a year and been returned home, suffering a serious disability.”⁹⁷ In response the president explained that, though the university endeavoured to do what it could for returned men, such a student would find it difficult to keep up with the rigours of his medical education without preparing for matriculation.⁹⁸ The benefits of active service would go only so far; for many students their time in active service delayed the completion of their education and eventual re-entry into civilian life.

A more complicated history of Canadian wartime service emerges from this examination of University of Toronto students’ responses to the Great War—in particular those students who were willing to support the war but “not unless necessary” and on their own terms. Stories of discomfort have, in some cases, been destroyed or identified after the war as dangerous to the national narrative. As discussed in depth by Shaw, locating the voices of objectors within the historical record proved a lengthy task within a climate in which the definition of objection was changing, malleable, and often silenced.⁹⁹ At times, communities and individuals supported or objected to the war; still others placed conditions on their commitment to Canada’s war effort such as familial responsibility, work, or education. Despite repeated calls by university administrators for students to join the war effort and to fight for freedom and democracy along gendered lines, the Great War remained for some students an unnecessary war.

97 UTA, Office of the President (Robert Alexander Falconer), AC67-0007/045a, Soldier’s Aid Commission to President Falconer, April 13, 1917.

98 UTA, Office of the President (Falconer), AC67-0007/045a, President Falconer to Soldier’s Aid Commission, April 16, 1917.

99 Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience*, pp. 14-17.