

# EVELYN DAVIS

## CANADIAN WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS

### BALL PLAYER, RADIO OPERATOR AT CAMP X

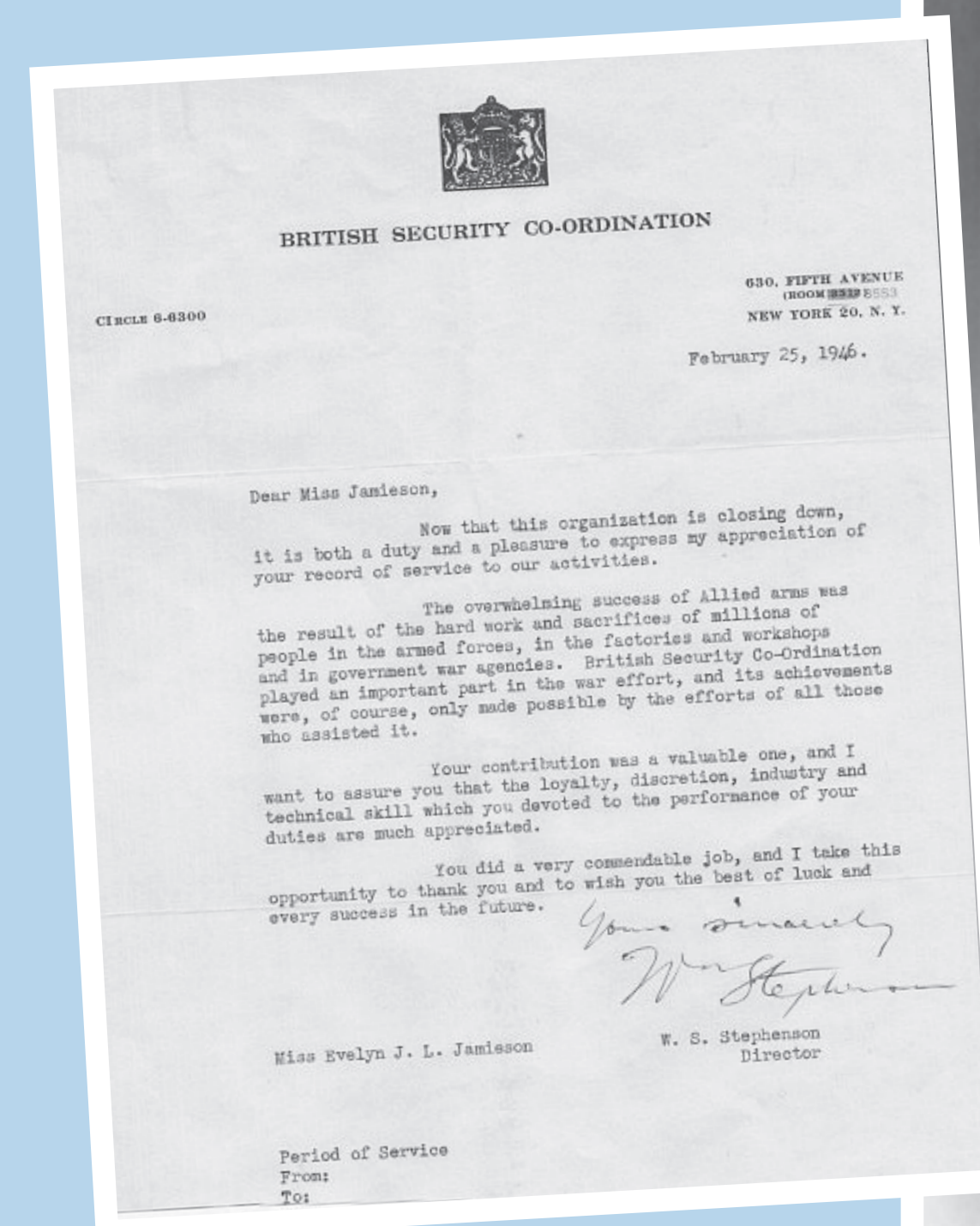
Evelyn Jamieson was born on a farm just north of Cobourg and attended high school in Port Hope. She decided to join the Canadian Women's Army Corps in response to posters asking for women to join the army so the men could be relieved for front line duty. She was 20 years old when she signed up in March, 1943 as W21244.

Training took place at a barracks in Kitchener, Ontario that housed 70 girls from diverse backgrounds. Upon graduation, Evelyn returned to Toronto's Trinity Barracks (fondly known as "Cockroach Palace"! ) to await her posting. During that time she recalls attending a Victory Bond drive in Toronto with women from all branches of the military, singing wartime songs as they rode street cars with the windows down - much more fun than washing dishes in the barracks!

In early June, Evelyn was sent to #26 Canadian Army Basic Training Centre in Orillia as a stenographer. That was a good time, and even included playing for the local softball team, Bryson's Bread.

Having expressed an interest in wireless radio, Evelyn was sent to Barryfield, Kingston, for further training. Next, she was posted to Camp X near Whitby. Camp X was a former spy training school, at that time being used as a communications centre. This posting fell under the Official Secrets Act and her family had no knowledge, until after the war ended, of where she was stationed or the duties she performed.

In October, 1945 Evelyn was discharged from the army, but continued to work at Camp X until her marriage in 1946. In May 2010, she was awarded the Bletchley Park Commemorative Badge from the British government to recognize her work done to help bring the Second World War to a successful conclusion.



Letter of appreciation from  
Wm. Stephenson  
(A Man Called Intrepid)



*"The work that we did was very important, which we never realized. But we weren't like the service people fighting in the war. Nobody was shooting at us. We were safe."*

Evelyn Davis

*"My first job was on a teleprinter as a teletypist. Later, I worked on a Kleinschmidt machine, rather like a clunky typewriter with tape. I spent most of my time working on the Boehme tape puller or undulator. We were sending and receiving traffic to England and to New York and Washington. It was many years after the war, we learned we were sending to Bletchley Park (Britain's Secret Intelligence Headquarters). All traffic was in five letter groups and plain English was never used. My knowledge of Morse code was important."*

(Transcript from *The Memory Project* - Historica Canada)



Bletchley Park  
Commemorative  
Badge

# CAMP X

## CANADIAN WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS

### CAMP X

Camp X was set up on 200 acres of farmland fronting on Lake Ontario between Oshawa and Whitby by the chief of the British Security Coordination, Sir William Stephenson, a Canadian from Winnipeg Manitoba. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbour and the entry of the United States into the war, Camp X trained allied agents from the Special Operations Executive, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Office of Strategic Services. The Camp trained over 500 Allied units in a wide variety of special techniques including silent killing and sabotage. There were many names assigned to Camp X: S25-1-1, by the R.C.M.P.; Project J, by the Canadian Military; Special Training School 103 (STS-103).

One important feature of Camp X was Hydra, a very sophisticated communications centre capable of both coding and decoding information.

After the war, the camp was renamed Oshawa Wireless Station, turned over to the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and became essentially a spy listening station. It ceased operation in 1969 and all the buildings were either demolished or moved to a new location.

The site of Camp X is currently Intrepid Park where a monument erected in 1984 honours the men and women of Camp X.

### THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS

The Canadian Women's Army Corps was authorized on August 13, 1941 in response to an ever increasing demand for personnel in the navy, army and air force. The CWAC at 22,000 strong was a milestone for women in the military.

Prior to 1939, Canadian women served as nurses in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, continuing through the South African War(1899-1902) and the First World War (1914-1918).

*In addition to freeing up the men for active combat duty, the CWAC proved its efficiency and dedication in the war effort and set the stage for women to be permanently integrated into the military.*



*Camp X Teletype Room,  
c.1944-1946, Whitby Archives.*

In September 1939, dozens of unofficial women's corps organized into such groups as the Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps and the Canadian Auxiliary Territorial Service. These determined women paid for their own training in Morse Code, signalling and map reading. They also learned regulation infantry drills.

Ottawa appointed Elizabeth Smellie, formerly Matron-in Chief of the Nursing Sisters as the first Officer Administering the CWAC. Joan Kennedy would eventually succeed Smellie as Director in 1942. Subsequently, Lieutenant-Colonel Margaret Eaton, of the department store chain Eaton family, would assume the position of Director General from 1944-1945.

After the war, the authorities deemed the women's service no longer necessary and disbanded the Canadian Women's Corps on September 30, 1946.