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It's time women were recognized for their efforts on D-Day and during the rest of the Second World War, says a former female auxiliary member of the Royal Air Force.

"I've seen lots of war memorials or cenotaphs and all you ever see is men, you don't see women on these memorials," says Dorothy Jamieson, a 76-year-old Mississauga grandmother.

"I know they (women) didn't fight, but they did so much and they should be honored."

Jamieson, who was a women's auxiliary sergeant, remembers supervising about 30 women aged 18 to 21 on D-Day at a Canadian airfield in Digby, Lincolnshire near England's east coast. She worked from 8 a.m. onwards overseeing plotting of plane routes on a map in a fighter control operations room.

Hundreds of planes piloted by young men headed across the English Channel to France where the allies were poised to knock out the enemy.

"I felt excited, but I felt sorry for the boys (some of whom) I knew wouldn't come back."

Jamieson says she can't remember how many hours she worked on D-Day. But, she recalls, "It felt like 24 hours."

Only 26 at the time, the tragedy of D-Day hit home when Jamieson lost her fiancée in the aftermath of the June 6, 1994 battle. Navigator Pat Kelly went missing about 36 hours after D-Day. She learned he was dead on Christmas Day.

About six weeks after D-Day, Jamieson took the first 49 female volunteers over to France from the Royal Air Force's women's auxiliary.

"We went across the English Channel by a boat that had seen service at Dunkirk. It was a very shabby little boat, but it got us there and the whole way across we were followed by a German submarine."

Jamieson and her contingent were taken to an aerodrome near Amiens, France where they continued to work in fighter control operations for several months.



JAMIESON

"You lived day by day. Your attitude was very nonchalant: 'If I'm going to die tomorrow, I'm going to die.'"

"We'd seen so many people die, what good was it if you were afraid? You weren't going to be able to do your job (if you were afraid)."

Jamieson was stationed in France until February 1945 when she returned to England for a few weeks before being transferred to Ghent, Belgium for four months. She returned to England in July 1945.

Jamieson, who married Canadian Spitfire pilot Ronald Jamieson near the end of the war

and moved to Canada in 1946, says women contributed "a lot of energy" to the war effort and were caring towards the men, who were sent to fight.

"They (the men) were so brave. I think everybody was scared."

The mother of two says she doesn't know why women aren't recognized for their contributions, which included nursing and filling jobs vacated by the fighting men. Women were also members of the Army and Navy.

"The part that women played as a whole in the victory of the Allies should be recognized," says Jamieson, who received a Canada 125 commemorative medal last year for volunteer work in the amateur sport of canoeing.

I would like to see a war memorial or a cenotaph created — and Mississauga would be an ideal place — or something to recognize the women of World War II."