

***Leaders, All: Women in the Canadian Armed Forces Since WWII*, by Helga Rausch**

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Leaders, All: Women in the Canadian Armed Forces Since World War II details the history of women in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) from the post-war period to the present. It shows how, over seventy years, while their brothers served to fight, women fought to serve, leading the way for themselves and for those who would come after them, one slogging step at a time. Publication is expected for Winter 2027.

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When Sheila Hellstrom died in December 2020, Canada's first woman general was in danger of being forgotten. Women veterans mobilized to lift her up and preserve her legacy. This story has opened a window for Helga Rausch to take readers into the untold story of women as Canadian military professionals. Famously a key part of Canada's WWII effort, women were sent home, and their service branches disbanded in 1946. But peace was fleeting, and by the early 1950s, with the onset of the Korean War and the Cold War looming, the Canadian military needed manpower and once again opened the door to women; Sheila was one of the women who eagerly signed up. They were forced to remain single—in effect, married to the service—and were relegated to non-operational jobs. But they endured and proved their worth, forging a path for those who came after. From Sheila Hellstrom to General Jennie Carignan, who became Canada's first female Chief of the Defence Staff in 2024, Helga Rausch charts the story of the women who stepped up and defied all obstacles to take their place in the modern Canadian Armed Forces—leaders, all.

About the Author:

Helga Rausch is a Canadian Armed Forces veteran who retired in September 2020 after 38 years of service. She desired a military career since joining Air Cadets in 1976 in her hometown of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Against the advice of her high school guidance counsellor, who insisted she would not succeed, Helga entered the Royal Military College of Canada Kingston, Ontario, in 1982 with the third class of women. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Honours English and Philosophy and was commissioned as an Army logistics officer in 1986. She added a Master of Arts in War Studies, also from RMC, in 2001. In a career encompassing regular and reserve force service, she served in various postings across Canada and, in 2019, as a future operations planner in the Coalition Joint Task Force Headquarters of Operation Inherent Resolve, the anti-terrorism mission in the Middle East.

In retirement, Helga has shifted to storytelling. She graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction from the University of King's College Halifax in 2023. She also runs a home-based editing business. She is a board governor with the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, an active member of the Order of St. George, and sings with the Kingston chapter of the Military Wives Choir. She is an avid cyclist, a doting grandmother, and helplessly in love with dogs.