



RCAF book
earns distinction

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Photograph: Corey Wilkinson

Bala author Glad Bryce was awarded an independent book publisher's award for her book about women who served in the Second World War.

Women of RCAF book earns award

By Corey Wilkinson

A Muskoka author is getting recognition on an international scale.

Bala author Glad Bryce recently won an award at the Independent Publisher Book Awards, or Ippy Awards, in New York City for her book *First In Last Out: The RCAF Women's Division and Nursing Sisters in World War II*.

"It's a prestigious award, and quite a coup to win it," says Bryce. Her book, about the contributions and lives of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Women's Division, won her the award in the category for Canada-East, Best Regional Non-Fiction.

The Ippy Awards have been handed out to the year's best independently published books for the past 16 years, in a wide range of subjects. This year's Ippy competition attracted 5,200 entries, with 372 medals handed out in 74 national, 22 regional, and five e-book categories with gold, silver and bronze medallions and foil seals for their book covers.

The Ippy awards were launched in 1996 as the first unaffiliated awards program open exclusively to independent, university, and self-published titles.

The books are judged by a panel, on both the content of the book and the quality of the physical book itself.

The RCAF was the first group of the Armed Forces to allow women within its ranks, although not in a combat role. The Women's Division made valuable contributions to the war effort by working as secretaries, technicians, radio operators, mechanics and many other positions within Canada and overseas.

"They did every job except pilot the plane," says Bryce. "The book is about the full breadth of their contributions to the war. We would not have won without them."

The motto for the Women's Division was 'we serve that men may fly.'

Bryce found researching the Women's Division difficult since little previous research had been done on the subject. She received much of her information through interviews with former members of the Women's Division.

"I interviewed lots of Women's Division members," says Bryce. "They're getting older, and if I didn't write this book all of the information would've died with them."

During World War II there were 17,038 members of the Women's Division. The RCAF was the first member of the Canadian Armed Forces to be mobilized for the war, and was the last to leave, giving inspiration for the title of Bryce's book.

"We would not be free today if they hadn't done what they did," says Bryce.