The Scottish Lumberjills

Timeline
1917 WWI - Women’s Forestry Service created as part of the Land Army – recruited 200 women in Scotland – many worked alongside Canadian Forestry Corps
1939 Outbreak of WWII - Women’s Land Army (WLA) reformed – first tranche of women recruited into forestry
1941 All young women called up for war work (originally aged 20-30 unmarried, later up to age 43 including married women without children, many teenagers joined)
1942 Women’s Timber Corps (WTC) formed, separated from WLA – training camps set up including in Scotland – women sent to FC and private estate forestry
1943 WTC numbers peaked with official figures of c12000 across Britain, including about 2500 in Scotland – but probably underestimates
1945 WWII ends, WLA and WTC members excluded from financial benefits given to other war service personnel
1946 8th June - Victory Parade, London – only 5 WTC members (2 from Scotland) asked to join WLA in parade
1946 31st August - WTC officially disbanded, most women returned to ‘civilian’ life, a very few stayed on in forestry in UK, Germany & Canada
2007 Formal recognition at last - Lumberjill statue unveiled at FC site Aberfoyle – UK Government recognised WTC and WLA with badges of honour & certificates
2017 FCS reported that 35% of its staff were women. Work continues on equality, diversity and the gender pay gap in Scottish forestry.

Some of the Scottish Lumberjills and their forestry work

Enid Lenton (nee Anderson). Born 1915. WTC 1940 - Feller and supervisor at Alyth and Blairgowrie, Perthshire, in charge of 40 women. Photo: Jo Foat

Molly Paterson (nee Douglas). Born 1922. WTC 1940-1944 - Clerical work for the timber section of the Ministry of Supply in Ardblecknish Forest, Argyll. Later calculated wages, cubic feet of timber, preparing dockets for the stationmaster and loading. Photos: Jo Foat

Marjory Stark (L) laying in with the axe at Bowmont c.1944 (R) loading, standing on lorry

Timber rafting on Loch Voil

Marion Vickers with Prince, Inverarnon, Loch Lomond

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This poster was first presented by Coralie Mills at the NWDD 2019 Woodland History Conference on ‘100 years of state forestry in Scotland’ as a tribute to the wonderful Lumberjills.