



**SUPPLY
LINE**

Air Raid Precautions Armband

These armbands identified Air Raid Precautions volunteers, men and women trained to help in the event of an enemy air attack. Early in the war, many Canadians feared such attacks, even though they were unlikely to happen. This was especially true on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

Reproduction



Air Raid Precautions Armband © Canadian War Museum

Air Raid Precautions in Canada

During the Second World War, most countries prepared to help protect themselves from the effects of enemy air attacks. In Canada, and many other parts of the British Empire, this was called Air Raid Precautions – often abbreviated to “ARP” as on the armband in the Discovery Box.

The Canadian government had a national organization for Air Raid Precautions.

In British Columbia and the Maritimes, this responsibility was transferred to the provinces.

Volunteer organizations were formed in communities seen as vulnerable. This included cities on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, as well as in the province of Quebec. Air Raid Precautions relied heavily on volunteers – women and men alike.

What did they do?

Air Raid Precaution volunteers learned to fight fires and provide first aid. They also encouraged the public to participate in training drills, and to observe regulations such as **blackouts**.

Volunteers often wore armbands as identification. There were different armband designs in different regions. The armbands were usually made of cotton, with elastic to help hold them in place. Lettering on the fabric could be printed, painted or stitched.

Air Raid Precaution volunteers wore a version of the Mark II helmet. They had special firefighting equipment, including hand-operated pumps to put out small incendiary (fire-starting) bombs. They also had to learn how to identify and deal with **chemical weapons**, and could help out in other emergencies.

Vocabulary

Blackout:

Measures making cities harder to see from the air. Outdoor lights were turned off, and thick curtains hid any indoor light. Streetlamps were also turned off, and motor vehicles used very dim headlights.

Chemical weapons:

Toxic chemicals used to hurt or kill people.