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## **Essay Describing Research Strategies & Application of Library Resources**

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Over the course of this semester, the majority of my research time has been devoted to the examination of primary sources, such as sheet music, photographs, war diaries and correspondence, and to the analysis of secondary sources, including journal articles and interpretive books. The majority of these sources were located in the online archives of IU Libraries. My time was also spent meeting with an expert in my topic here at IU and searching through a series of databases and digitized archives to find information that would be pertinent to my topic.

Honestly, one of the most difficult parts of this project was choosing what topic I wanted to research. I was very indecisive with picking my topic because there are so many historical topics that I find intriguing. My initial brainstorm topics were vast and varied in subject. Some of my initial brainstorm topics included the rise (and fall) of the Romanov dynasty; witchcraft and women; the era of Conservatism and the evolution of ballet. Having narrowed my topic down, I

intended to research nursing during World War II; I wanted to examine nursing units from The United States, Russia, Germany, Australia and New Zealand, and Great Britain. This topic was far too broad as I would have been overwhelmed by sources and would have not been able to research everything within the time span of a semester. After speaking with Professor McGraw and doing some preliminary research on IUCAT, I discovered that IU has a greater selection of secondary sources revolving around nursing during World War I. At this point, I decided to switch my focus to nursing during World War I, specifically looking at nursing units and the personal narratives of nurses from Great Britain and Canada. This topic was of particular interest to me because I had never learned very much about the wartime experience of women although I have always enjoyed learning about the various complexities of World War I. Having selected my topic, I then moved on to figuring out what my research question would be. Compared to other subjects within World War One, such as military history, and even other historical topics, there has been a historical disregard for the experience of nurses, both professional and volunteer. Thus, I decided that I wanted to look at the personal and professional experiences of these British and Canadian women: what role did they serve in the war effort and what was everyday life like for a nurse serving in World War I (what was the wartime experience for a nurse?). By early September, my research topic and question were solidified, and I could delve into the research process.

The very first thing that I did after solidifying my topic and question was to create a folder on IUCAT entitled “World War One Nurses (Canada, Great Britain, and Australia.” I then started playing around with search terms -”Nurses,” “World War One Nurses,” etc- to help me find five historiographic books on my topic. When I did my preliminary searches on IUCAT, I found a few of the books that I later went back to and saved in my folder. IU actually had access

to a good selection of books that pertained to my topic and that would allow me to look at my research question from all angles. During this time (September), I also searched through IUCAT to see what sorts of other sources IU might have had access to regarding my topic. I was able to find that the IU libraries system had copies of memoirs of nurses who served as VADs and professional military nurses, as well as copies of published war diaries. IUCAT also showed a series of digitized reports and proceedings from Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. These documents listed the social backgrounds/status, references, and appointments granted to nurses during the First World War.

It was at this point in my research that we were assigned the List of Provisional Databases and Primary Archive. I went to the Research Help tab on our class' canvas page and began my search through the databases listed for primary and secondary sources. I went through each database that appeared to have some relationship with my topic (filtering out the databases dealing with 18th century France etc.). I then conducted advanced searches within these databases using some key search terms in order to narrow my results to only those databases which would be valuable. Through this process, I found that the databases which contain pertinent information for my topic are AM Explorer, British Library Newspapers, JSTOR, and Newspaper.com World Collections. In the British Library Newspapers database, I found a number of newspaper articles on the Voluntary Aid Detachment, including articles on the formation and examination of these units. I also found newspaper clippings detailing honors awarded to members of the Imperial Nursing Service, obituaries of serving nurses, reflections on the Nurses Registration law, and conditions in military hospitals. I glanced at AM Explorer which has a collection of sources on World War I. In this database, I found propaganda posters aimed at recruiting nurses, with one reading "Remember Nurse Cavell." This database also

houses many photographs of various nursing units. This database has a “British Red Cross Certificate for Recognition of Valuable Services During the War” and various artwork (greeting cards, posters, and sheet music) depicting nurses from World War I. This database contains images of the uniforms worn by the various nursing units from Great Britain and Canada (and Australia). In the Newspaper.com World Collection, I was hoping to find sources for my research on Canadian nurses. I found a series of Canadian newspaper articles detailing the activities of their nurses in World War I. Topics for these articles include the rank of nurses, activities of nurses during and after the war, and nurses training. I also found a database of UK Parliamentary Papers (Proquest), containing reports on the Imperial Nursing Service. With regards to my primary on campus archive, I talked with Scott Libson when he gave a presentation to our class, and he recommended the university archives at Wells Library. I also spoke with the Maureen Maryanski at the Lilly Library, who told me that they might also keep some sources regarding my topic. On October 3rd, I visited the university archives at Wells Library and found seven primary and secondary sources on my topic.

On November 14th, I met with my expert Professor Lara Kriegel for roughly thirty minutes. Professor Kriegel was incredibly welcoming, and it was great to be able to sit down with her and discuss my research topic. Our meeting was incredibly illuminating as Professor Kriegel had a vast knowledge of other secondary sources by knowledgeable authors. At our meeting, she briefly looked through my five books and confirmed that they all were scholarly. She also gave me some other authors to look into including Sonya Rose, Joanna Bourke, Susan Grayzel, Deborah Cohen, and Jeffrey Bezich. She recommended a few more archives and databases to me including the National Archives in Britain, the Imperial War Museum, and the Royal College of Nursing.

Over Thanksgiving break, I began to read through my 5 scholarly books. As I read, I used post it notes to bookmark important sections, the authors' arguments, and any quotes I found interesting. Of my five books, the two that I found the most interesting were *This Small Army of Women* by Linda J. Quiney and *Sister Soldiers of the Great War* by Cynthia Tomen. After reading about three to four chapters in each book, I started writing my annotated bibliography. During the week immediately after break, I began to compile and cite all of the photographs, records, letters, war diaries, and posters that I had found during the research process. It is also during this time that I wrote my research proposal and started writing my narrative. I spent the last week of the semester compiling all of the various components of this project together and doing final edits. Overall, this project has been a labor of love for while I have enjoyed learning about the wartime experience of these nurse, it had been difficult to sort through thousands upon thousands of sources. I have learned about the importance of search terms and narrowing down sources to those that provide the best and most useful information for your research.