


Canada Remembers Times

Veterans' Week Special Edition – November 5 to 11, 2008

Weather



August 8, 1918

Amiens, France
70 °F Fog then Sun

Special Skills Required

Aboriginal-Canadian soldiers brought special skills to the army during the First World War. The traditional hunting and trapping lifestyles that many led in Canada often made them particularly skilled to work as snipers (military sharpshooters) and scouts (soldiers who quietly crossed the front lines to gather information about the enemy). They also served as dispatch carriers quickly running across great distances to deliver messages.

Francis Pegahmagabow was an Ojibwa-Cree from Ontario who served in the war. He was so skilled at reconnaissance it was said that he used to “go behind enemy lines, rub shoulders with the enemy forces and never get caught.”

“Peggy,” as he was called by his fellow soldiers, served bravely during almost the entire First World War and would become one of Canada’s most-decorated soldiers.



Francis Pegahmagabow

Canada and the First World War

The First World War was fought from 1914 to 1918. It was the largest and most deadly war up to that time. For this reason it was called the “Great War.” More than 650,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders served and more than 66,000 of them died in service to their country.

Most of the Canadians and Newfoundlanders who saw action fought along Europe’s “Western Front”—a line of trenches that stretched almost 1,000 kilometres across Belgium and France from the North Sea to the border of Switzerland.

Living in the trenches was a miserable experience. It was often cold and muddy with rats and fleas everywhere. Danger and death were ever-present due to enemy snipers, machine-gun fire and artillery bombardments. Canadian soldiers bravely overcame these challenges and were widely considered to be among the best of the Allied troops on the front. They played an important role in helping win the war with a series of impressive battlefield victories during the conflict’s final months—a triumphant period known as “Canada’s 100 Days.”



Canadian troops taking cover in a ditch alongside the road to Cambrai during “Canada’s 100 Days.”

In 2008, our country is taking the opportunity to honour these Canadians in ceremonies commemorating the 90th anniversary of the end of the fighting in the First World War. Ninety years is

a long time and the world has changed in many ways, but the contributions and sacrifices they made played an important role in Canada’s development into the free and peaceful country we have today.

Webcasting Remembrance

In 2006, a group of 39 Canadian youth travelled to Europe as part of a Veterans Affairs Canada event in honour of the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. They were moved by their time in France, seeing firsthand the places in which Canadians served during the First World War. One young Canadian who visited a French war cemetery later shared a moving moment in a webcast:

“There was an inscription on a tombstone that said he was 16. The inscription said “Mother’s Dearest” and I realized it could have been me or my brother or my cousin or a friend of mine ... that was a really big moment for me.”

Listen to these youth reflection webcasts on the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site: go to www.vac-acc.gc.ca and search on “Youth Overseas.”



Youth delegates and Veterans gather for Candlelight Tribute Ceremony at the 2nd Canadian Sunken Road Cemetery near Beaumont-Hamel, France. June 2006.

Women at War

The Canadian Nursing Sisters (military nurses) who cared for the sick and injured during the First World

War were relied on and respected by those they helped. It could be a very dangerous job when these women served in casualty-clearing stations close to the battlefields. Even hospitals far from the front lines were not safe. Three Canadian Nursing Sisters were killed in a German bombing raid on a hospital in Étaples, France on May 19, 1918. In total, about 45 Canadian Nursing Sisters died during the First World War.

The contributions of Canadian women in the military have evolved over the past 90 years. Today, women serve in all roles in the Canadian Forces, including active combat in Afghanistan.



Nursing Sisters mark the grave of a fellow Canadian nurse who died in the air raid on Étaples, France.

Letters from the Front

Today the Internet and long distance telephone calls help keep members of the Canadian Forces in touch with friends and family when they are serving far from home. During the First World War, letters and postcards were how people shared their news. It often took months to get mail from across the ocean. Here is a letter that Canadian soldier Harold Taylor wrote in April, 1917.

Dear Mother:

Well, it is quite a while since I wrote you a letter but when we are in the trenches, we do not get much time to write ...

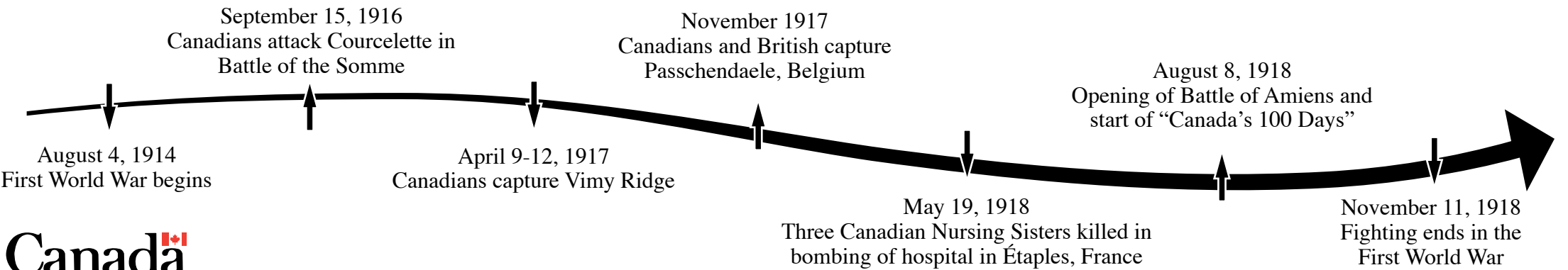
I received your parcel the other day, the one dated February 2nd, and believe me I was pleased to get it. Everything came in just right. It was just the kind of parcel that I like to get. Those chocolates and candy were great, and the insect powder sure did its work all right. I suppose that you have been worrying that I have not written sooner, but never worry about that for I always write whenever I have a chance, but in the trenches it is hard for us to write as we do not have much time for letters. But do

not fret about me, because I am all right and am feeling fine. Of course, there is the unpleasant side and the hardships, too ...

The [Germans] were shelling one morning and a shell burst right amongst us and killed two and wounded four or five ... I tell you they are a wicked thing when they land in a bunch of men ...

Give my love to everyone and write often.

Harold



Second World War Has Huge Impact

The First World War was called “the war to end all wars” but sadly, it did not. Barely 20 years after the end of the First World War, our country found itself in conflict again. The Second World War (1939-1945) truly was a world-wide conflict and Canadians served around the globe from the Arctic to Southeast Asia. More than one million Canadian men and women enlisted and more than 40,000 died protecting peace and freedom.

The war had a huge impact on Canada. In 1939 our Navy, Army and Air Force, as well as the Merchant Navy, were relatively small. However, by the end of the war, our Navy, Air Force and Merchant Navy were among the largest in the world. Many of the places where Canadians served during the war—Hong Kong, Dieppe, Ortona, Normandy, the Scheldt and the Netherlands, to name just a few—still echo in our country’s

consciousness more than 60 years later.

The fighting also took place closer to home. The Battle of the Atlantic brought the front lines to our doorstep as the Germans attacked Allied shipping along the East Coast. 2008 marks the 65th anniversary of this pivotal battle and Canada is honouring and thanking those who gave so much in the struggle. Without their great efforts the war could not have been won and our country might have become a very different place.

Canada’s war effort on the home front led to impressive advances in science and industry and helped transform our society in many ways—from the expanded roles of women to our country’s position as a new world power in technology and manufacturing. In many ways, the Second World War changed our country forever.



Composite photo: Supermarine flying boat of the RCAF Escorting Convoy, April 1941. Frigate HMCS Swansea, January 1944.

Supermarine photo: Credit unknown. Frigate photo: Library and Archives Canada/PA-107941

War Art Then and Now

Italy - 1944



The Hitler Line - Charles Comfort

The extreme emotions of war are difficult to capture on paper or film, but journalists and photographers have worked hard to document Canada’s efforts in conflicts over the years. During the Second World War, as had been done during the First World War, Canadian artists were also sent overseas to create works depicting the contributions of our men and women in uniform. This war art tradition has continued during Canada’s efforts in Afghanistan ...

Afghanistan - 2002



Armoured Fighting Vehicle on way to Tarnak Farm - Allan MacKay

An on-line collection of Canadian war art can also be found on the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site. Go to www.vac-acc.gc.ca and search on “War Art.”

Editor’s Note: Veterans Affairs Canada recognizes that names and spellings of some countries/locations may have changed. For historical accuracy, we have used the name current at the time of the event(s).

This publication is available upon request in other formats.

Web site: www.vac-acc.gc.ca
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A Victoria Cross during the Battle of the Atlantic

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest battle of the Second World War, lasting from the war’s first day to its last. It was a showdown between the Allies who were transporting desperately-needed troops and supplies from North America to Europe and the Germans who wanted to cut that supply line.

Canadians showed great courage during the Battle of the Atlantic. Flight-Lieutenant David Hornell of the Royal Canadian Air Force earned a Victoria Cross (the highest award for military valour a Canadian could earn) in 1944 for his actions while attacking a German submarine (called a U-boat). Hornell’s plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire but he and his crew courageously kept up



Flight-Lieutenant David Hornell, V.C.

their attack and sank the enemy submarine. Hornell then had to land his damaged plane on the waves. The crew had to take turns sitting in the one undamaged lifeboat. Hornell encouraged his crew during the 21 hours it took for them to be rescued, but the crash and the ensuing exhaustion were too much and he died shortly after. His crew credited Hornell with saving their lives.

When they were ready to give up he proved a selfless and caring leader.

A Long Time Far from Home

Being away from home for years on end was a hard reality for many Canadians who served in the Second World War. Some men who had to leave their pregnant wives at the outbreak of the war in 1939 would not see their new sons or daughters until they returned at war’s end in 1945. Imagine meeting your own



child for the first time after being away from home for almost six years. That happily-expected baby would be in the first grade!

Enemy Spies in Canada

German submarines brought the war to Canada’s shores during the Second World War. In 1942 and again in 1944, U-boats slipped into the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River, looking for Allied targets. Ships were torpedoed less than 300 kilometres from Québec City.

These U-boats did more than threaten our shipping. In November 1942, German spy Werner von Janowski was put ashore near New-Carlisle on Québec’s Gaspé Peninsula. His unusual behaviour was quickly noticed in rural Quebec, however, and the police soon found and arrested him on a train to Montréal. In a scenario like something out of a spy movie, the German became a double agent who worked for the Allies instead.

Trading Uniforms

Many National Hockey League players put their careers on hold during the Second World War to serve in the military. Most players, though, did not enlist as dramatically as Milt Schmidt, Woody Dumart and Bobby Bauer. The three forwards for the Boston Bruins’ best line (ironically nicknamed the ‘Kraut [German] Line’ because of their German ancestry) hung up their skates and enlisted together in the Royal Canadian Air



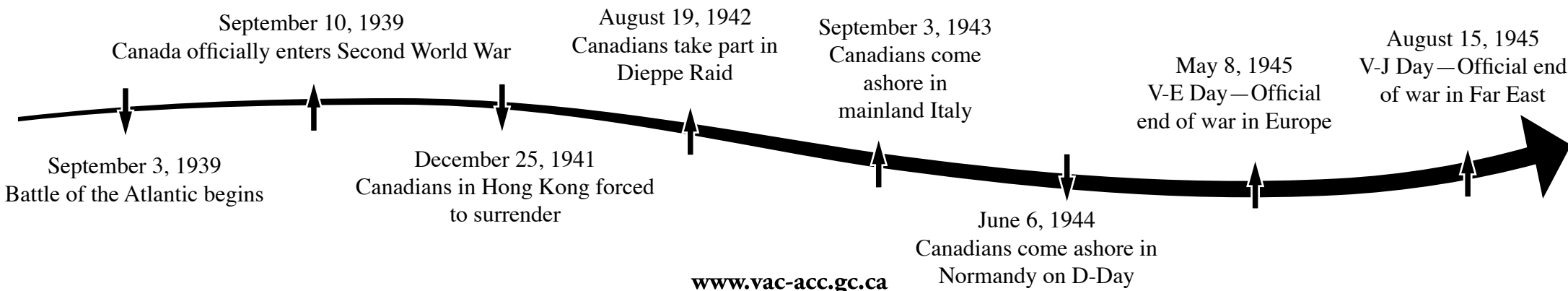
The Boston Bruins’ Bobby Bauer, Milt Schmidt and Woody Dumart.

Force on the same day in 1942. The fans went wild!

All three saw action overseas as aircrew. Fortunately they survived the war and returned to the NHL, but not before they had given up 3½ years of their hockey careers to serve the cause of peace and freedom. The teammates quickly regrouped and helped the Bruins reach the Stanley Cup finals in 1946.



Canadians were warned in war posters like this one not to talk too freely in case an enemy spy might overhear.



In the Land of the Morning Calm

With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Canada decided to serve along with 16 other United Nations countries.

After Japan's empire in Asia was dissolved at the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union moved into the northern portion of Korea and helped establish a Communist government. Meanwhile, the United States helped establish a democratic government in the South. The Americans and Soviets eventually withdrew but the North/South division caused civil tensions. On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the South Korean border and triggered an international crisis in the place that had traditionally been known as the "Land of the Morning Calm." The United Nations decided to send an international force to intervene and

restore peace. Canada agreed to be part of a Commonwealth force in Korea. More than 25,000 Canadians served during the Korean War and 516 died.

2008 marks the 55th anniversary of the signing of the truce in Panmunjom that ended active fighting on July 27, 1953. We stop to honour significant military anniversaries like this one as a way to show that we recognize the importance of what the Canadians who served in these efforts have done. It may have been many years since the fighting ended, but Canadians who gave so much in Korea are remembered.



Machine gun crew of the Royal Canadian Regiment in Korea, May 1951.

Library and Archives Canada PA-129115



Remembrance Day Ceremony at the National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces

Photo: Department of National Defence SJ2007-0540-26

A Hero Remembers

Veterans are our direct link with important chapters in our country's history. Their stories and reflections are important snapshots of significant times and places. Noel Knockwood, an Aboriginal-Canadian who served in the Korean War, shares his thoughts about Remembrance Day:

"Remembrance Day, to me is a very important event. At one time I paid very little attention to it because I thought it was just another parade ... And one day my brother, Henry, called me aside and said 'Listen, you got medals up there somewhere in the house, put them on, they're yours, you earned them, take part in those parades and be proud that you're a Veteran. Don't stay at home on the

11th of November, go to the Cenotaph, go and say a prayer for your friends that died, and for others that sacrificed their lives.' And I decided to listen to my brother and from that time on I take a very active role in all the events and parades and any kind of a celebration that goes on amongst native people. I'm there."

The "Heroes Remember" section of the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site has a wide variety of video interviews with Veterans you can "meet". Go to www.vac-acc.gc.ca today and search on "Heroes Remember" for first-hand stories about many interesting topics and people.

Did You Know?

Death and destruction are defining features of war, and so it is comforting when the people serving can find and enjoy moments of compassion and normalcy. This spirit showed itself in some unique ways during the Korean War.

During the Christmas of 1952, opposing Canadian and Chinese troops slipped across a sector of the front line during the night and left food and small gifts on the barbed wire that separated them. After the holiday was over, however, life on the front returned to normal and the fighting began again with the two sides exchanging gunfire instead of gifts.



Stealth Patrols



Wounded Canadian soldier after night patrol in Korea.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-128850

Imagine being a Canadian soldier in the Korean War and spending months living outdoors on the front lines. Korea is in the Far East but its climate is far from tropical. The winters there are cold!

As the Korean War progressed, broad areas of the front settled down into lines of opposing trenches. Canadian troops were often sent out on dangerous patrols to gather information on enemy positions. They also took prisoners for questioning. In a typical raid, the soldiers waited for nightfall and crossed their

own defensive positions through a gap in their barbed wire and mine fields. They then stealthily made their way to the enemy lines and sometimes called in fire on the defensive positions they would see. Often the enemy positions were a maze of trenches connected by underground tunnels that were confusing and confining places to fight. Upon gathering what information they could, the soldiers then hurried back to the relative safety of their own lines.

Entertaining the Troops

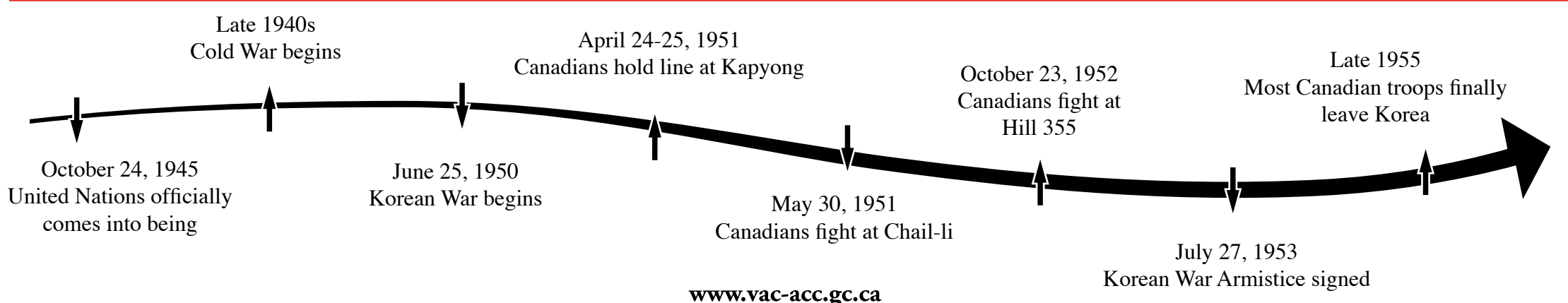
Canadians at home have supported the men and women serving overseas in many ways over the years to let them know they are not forgotten. During the Korean War, popular Canadian performers like country music star Hank Snow and the comedy team of Wayne and Shuster travelled halfway around the world to entertain the troops. Sometimes as many as 5,000 troops sat on a hillside, even in the rain, enjoying the stage show—a welcome taste of "regular life" back home.

This tradition continues today in Afghanistan. Canadian entertainers like Rick Mercer, Maritza, Julian Austin, the Wilkinsons and Terry Kelly, as well as athletes like Guy Lafleur have gone overseas to visit with the troops. Even the Stanley Cup has made the long journey to be seen by the many hockey fans who are serving with the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.



Canadian comedy team Wayne and Shuster in uniform.

Photo: DND / LAC / PA-141069



Current Support in Afghanistan

Canada has built an international reputation for serving in peace operations over the years. Our country's efforts in Afghanistan over the past seven years are an evolution of this dedication that sees us serving in a place where the fighting never stopped. Canadians are there to help the people of Afghanistan recover from decades of conflict and build a stable country.

Canadian Forces members are some of the best-trained in the world. They are rigorously prepared before deploying to Afghanistan. But it is a place where the danger never really relents, especially when they have had to leave the relative protection of their camps to go "outside the wire" to patrol, battle the Taliban, work with the local people or lead convoys—while constantly on guard for suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices and ambushes.

The environment alone can pose a great risk. Afghanistan is a harsh land of mountains and deserts with choking dust everywhere and temperatures commonly topping 50 °C. Just keeping hydrated can be a matter of life and death. The conditions experienced by the Veterans of our efforts in Afghanistan have been unique but Canadians have a long

tradition of enduring the hardships of service. From the muddy trenches of the First World War to the freezing cold of aircraft high over Europe in the Second World War, to being lashed by wind and water on the seas of the Far East during the Korean War, Canadians have always looked after their comrades.



© Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS)



Canadian Forces members help school children in Afghanistan by providing resources and materials.

Dozens of Canadians have died since they first arrived in Afghanistan in late 2001. Canadian Veterans have paid a great price for their service there, even if they have avoided the scars of physical injury. Just being away from home for a six month or one-year rotation in the country is difficult and families must deal with the day-to-day stress of not knowing if their loved ones are safe. The emotional strain of experiencing such violence can take a heavy psychological

toll on these Veterans that can last a lifetime. Despite these difficulties, Canadian Forces members have willingly put their lives on the line every day. They have done so for the same reason Canadians did in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and in dozens of international peace efforts around the world—to uphold the Canadian values of truth, justice, peace, freedom and knowledge and to protect those who need help the most.

Sum 41 in Africa



Sum 41 band members in Africa with Chuck Pelletier.

Sum 41, the Canadian rock band, went to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2004 on a tour to raise awareness of humanitarian issues in the impoverished African country. While the band was there, the country's fragile peace was shattered and the four musicians suddenly found themselves in

the middle of armed fighting. A United Nations employee (and former Canadian Forces member) named Chuck Pelletier took them under his wing and helped keep them safe until they could leave the country. To salute the man who risked his life to help them, Sum 41 named their next album *Chuck* in his honour.

Helping Out Closer to Home...

Canadian Forces members have not only helped protect our country and defend peace and freedom around the world, they have also provided aid in domestic and international disaster relief operations. For example, during major natural disasters like the 1997

Red River floods in Manitoba, the ice storm of 1998 in Quebec and Ontario and Hurricane Katrina in the southern United States in 2005, Canadian Forces members answered the call to help those in need.



Canadian Forces members helping to clean up in Quebec after the 1998 ice storm.

Unique Peacekeeping Monument

A monument is one of the most visible ways to show that we remember and honour the sacrifices and achievements of Canadians in service. Canada, like other countries, has many war memorials. In addition there is a unique monument in Ottawa. The Canadian Peacekeeping Monument is the only national monument in the world that specifically honours those

who have served in international peace operations.

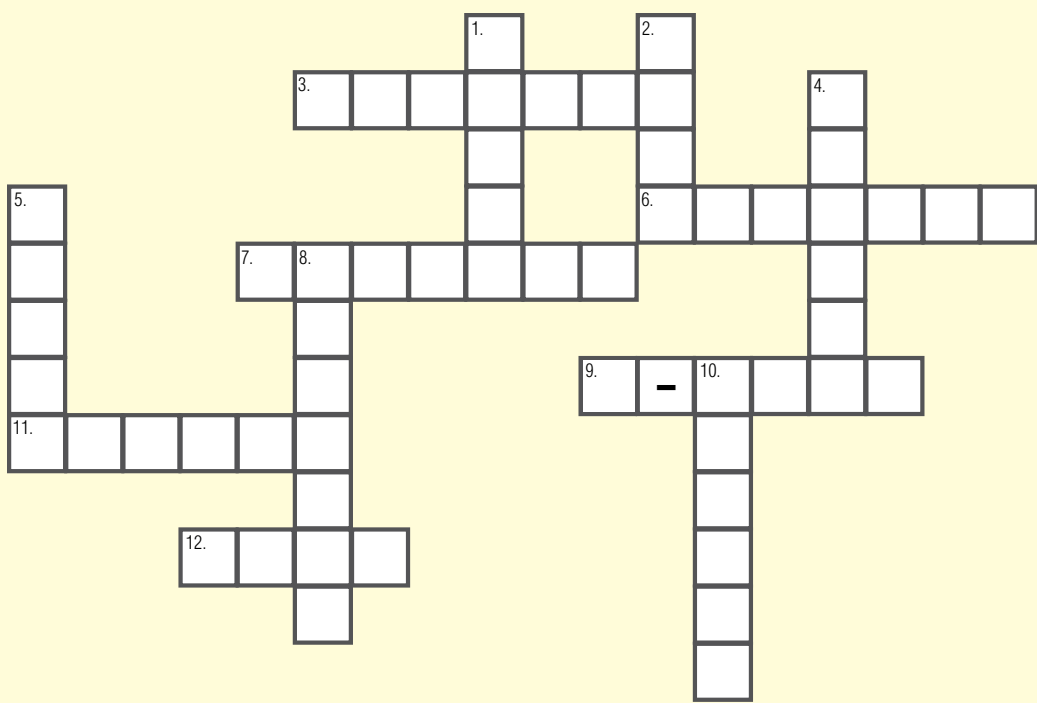
There are many Canadian war monuments and memorials located across our country and in other countries. Go to the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site at www.vac-acc.gc.ca and search on "Memorials" to learn more about them.



Canadian Peacekeeping Monument. August 9 is National Peacekeepers' Day.

Crossword

The answers in this crossword puzzle are taken from the stories featured in the pages of the 2008 *Canada Remembers Times*. How many clues can you solve?



ACROSS

- 3. Hurricane _____
- 6. Nursing _____
- 7. Wayne and _____
- 9. German submarine
- 11. _____ War (1950-53)
- 12. 'Land of the Morning _____

DOWN

- 1. 'The Western _____',
- 2. 'Canada's 100 _____',
- 4. Peacekeeping Monument city
- 5. Sum 41 CD
- 8. David _____, VC
- 10. Boston _____

