

# Canada Remembers Times

Veterans' Week Special Edition – November 5 to 11

## Weather



January 16, 1944

Ortona Salient, Italy  
30° F Snow and wind

## Profiles of Courage

Private Ernest “Smokey” Smith of British Columbia served in the Italian Campaign and earned a Victoria Cross for his actions at the Savio River on October 21 and 22, 1944. Smith died in 2005, the last living Canadian Victoria Cross recipient.



Private Ernest “Smokey” Smith, VC

Image: VAC

A former Minister of Veterans Affairs, the late Honourable Daniel J. MacDonald served as a sergeant in Italy during the Second World War. On December 21, 1944, at the Senio River, an exploding shell resulted in the amputation of his left arm and leg. MacDonald married after the war and returned to Bothwell, Prince Edward Island, to farm, raise seven children and later enter provincial and federal politics.



Daniel J. MacDonald

Photo: VAC

## Canadians in the Italian Campaign

At dawn on July 10, 1943, the Allies launched “Operation Husky,” the invasion of southern Sicily, with Canadians coming ashore at Pachino. The four-week battle was successful, but at a cost of more than 550 killed and more than 650 Canadians wounded.

This marked the beginning of the Italian Campaign of the Second World War. It was a series of Allied advances through the mountainous terrain of the island of Sicily and mainland Italy, which were under German control. Canadian troops played an important role in several battles between July 1943 and February 1945.

Germany needed to retain control of mainland Italy and reinforced its mountainous defences. A difficult Allied advance also encountered heavy rains, stifling dust or severe winter weather. Shortly before Christmas 1943, Canadians were thrust into a fierce battle for Ortona. Stones littered the steep and narrow streets and made it impossible for tanks to pass. Finally, on December 28, the coastal town was taken. Canadian troops then continued their push through



Canadian soldier on tank near Potenza, Italy. September 1943.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-136197

Italy, fighting in the Liri Valley and helping breach the Hitler Line, in central Italy.

Canadian participation in the Italian Campaign ended shortly before the final

victory in Italy. By February 1945, the Canadians were shifted to join the 1st Canadian Army in northwest Europe. Canadian troops fought bravely in Italy, suffering approximately 26,000 casualties, including almost 6,000 dead.

## Up the Taedong River in a Destroyer

In December 1950, during the Korean War, the port city of Chinnampo was facing a massive enemy advance and the order was given to evacuate. Six United Nations (UN) ships, including three Canadian destroyers, were sent to help. It would not be easy—Chinnampo was more than 30 kilometres up the Taedong River, a waterway heavily mined by the North Koreans.

Two UN ships ran aground and were forced to turn back but the remaining ships, led by HMCS *Cayuga*, reached the city after a nerve-wracking passage through shallow, confusing channels on a pitch-dark night. The destroyers guarded against possible enemy attack and helped destroy the railway lines, docks and supplies left behind, so they could not be used by the enemy. Their job done, the ships returned safely to the ocean.

Today, Canadian sailors continue to serve far from home. Canadian ships have been regularly patrolling the waters off southwest Asia in support of the war on terror.



Canadian destroyer HMCS Cayuga.

Photo: Department of National Defence

## Canadians Defend Nicosia Airport



Quick thinking is often the best defence. In 1974, Turkish soldiers invaded the small Mediterranean island of Cyprus, a key target being the airport in the capital city of Nicosia. With only a few heavy weapons, Canadian peacekeepers cleverly patrolled the airport under cover of darkness, creating the impression of a well-guarded location. The tactic worked. The Turks withdrew and the Canadians retained control of the airport.

To learn more, search the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site under “Cyprus.”

## Youth and Remembrance

Many Canadians who fought in Italy were not much older than today's high school students. Lizann Garbutt, a 17-year-old from Manitoba, took part in a Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Youth Learning Journey to Italy in 2004. She researched a soldier from Manitoba, killed in Italy in 1944 at the age of 24.

*“After doing my presentation on Lance Corporal Argue in the Cassino War Cemetery, I felt a greater appreciation for what all of the soldiers did ... you see all the headstones jutting up out of the ground and all the names of the young soldiers, many of them only nineteen years and younger.*

*I think about what I plan on doing in two years and I know that I am able to have the freedom and choices that I have today because these young boys, these young men, fought for my freedom and the freedom that all Canadians enjoy today.”*

Canadians are still serving far from home in places like Afghanistan, Haiti and the Sudan.



Canadian youth with Veteran Douglas Langtree in Italy, 2004.

Photo: VAC



Painting of William Barker, VC, “The Man Who Wouldn't Die,” by Merv Corning, from the Esterline Leach International Heritage of the Air Collection. Used with permission.

## Flying Aces

A “Flying Ace” is a military aviator credited with bringing down at least five enemy aircraft in combat. There were more than 180 Canadian aces during the First World War. Three of them ranked among the top 10 aces of the war: Billy Bishop (72 victories), Raymond Collishaw (61 victories) and Donald MacLaren (54 victories). William Barker narrowly missed being in the top 10, with 50 victories. He is one of Canada's most decorated servicemen. He received the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Service Order and the Military Cross, among other honours.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE** about what you read in this paper or need help researching an assignment about Canada's military history? Visit the “Canada Remembers” section of our Web site at [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca) and do a search by entering a keyword.



# Canadians Come Ashore on D-Day

In the early years of the Second World War, Germany occupied most of Western Europe. They built a string of formidable defensive positions along the Atlantic coast, transforming the continent into “Fortress Europe.”

The Allies planned “Operation Overlord” to liberate Western Europe—history’s largest combined (sea, land and air) invasion. On “D-Day,” June 6, 1944, British, American and Canadian forces came ashore in Normandy, France. Canadian paratroopers landed behind enemy lines in the pre-dawn hours, while approximately 15,000 Canadians began landing at “Juno Beach” later that morning. They pushed the farthest inland of any of the Allied forces that day. Thousands of Canadian sailors and airmen also participated in the invasion force, weakening the German defences

and protecting the landing force from enemy counter-attack.

Nursing Sister Georgina Seeley of New Brunswick was working at a military hospital in England on D-Day. The day started quietly... but that would soon change.

*‘And can you believe that one minute we had not one patient. Twelve hundred empty beds with hot water bottles in them. ...I looked out the window, you could not see the end of the ambulances. [Soon] every bed was filled. Twelve hundred beds.’*

The landings would be followed by almost a year of fierce fighting, taking the Canadian Army through France, Belgium and Holland, and liberating millions by the time the war in Europe officially ended on May 8, 1945.



Canadian soldiers coming ashore at Juno Beach on D-Day.

# Flying for Freedom

To win the Second World War, the Allies needed to control the skies. Canada was selected as a major site of Allied aircrew training in 1939. It had the geographical space for a large training program, was out of range of enemy bombing and close to North American factories producing planes and needed equipment.



Canadian women contributed to the success of the BCATP as well, sometimes working as ground crew to keep the planes flying.

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) saw construction of more than 100 airfields across Canada. More than 130,000 pilots, navigators, wireless operators, bombers, air gunners and flight engineers were trained by 1945. They came from the Commonwealth countries of Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Men from Poland, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and France were trained as well. It was dangerous work: more than 850 died, many buried in the communities where they had trained.

The BCATP was one of Canada’s most important and successful contributions to the war effort. It was a huge financial commitment for our young country. The new air bases created jobs and an economic boost in many towns. After the war, these airports would be key elements in the growth of civilian air service across the country. More than 3,700 of the airmen who came here to train married local women, many returning to live in Canada after the war.

# NATO Marks 60 Years

After the Second World War, a new threat to world peace emerged. The Soviet Union and its Communist allies faced off against the United States, Canada and Western Europe for political and military dominance in the post-war world. Known as the “Cold War,” this tense showdown lasted from the mid-1940s to the early 1990s.

The Cold War dominated Canada’s military efforts for decades. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949 as an alliance of democratic countries who agreed to come to each other’s defence if any one of them was attacked. 2009 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this organization. Canada was one of the original 12 members of NATO, a number that has grown to 28 member countries.

Canada’s primary NATO contributions in Europe during the Cold War included an armoured brigade stationed in West Germany and a number of air force squadrons based in France (until the late 1960s) and West Germany. Today, the Canadian Forces contribute



Canadian Forces members are in Afghanistan as part of a NATO force.

support and personnel to a variety of ongoing NATO training efforts and operations. Indeed, Canada’s current military efforts in Afghanistan are part of a larger United Nations-mandated NATO force.



Reproduction of Second World War Canadian Red Cross poster.

# The Canadian Red Cross: There for the Troops



Those who served during the war years faced great hardships and Canadian civilians did their best to support them. Many Veterans would remember with gratitude the efforts of the Canadian Red Cross women.

During the Second World War, more than 15,000 Canadian women volunteered to serve on the home front and overseas with the Canadian Red Cross Corps. They supported patients and staff in military hospitals, drove ambulances, worked in administrative roles, helped civilians affected by the fighting, supported the families of military members and staffed hostels and

canteens for military men. The Red Cross also distributed care packages for Allied prisoners of war.

Saskatchewan’s Grace Maynard helped former Allied prisoners of war on their release from enemy prison camps.

*“Victory in Europe Day was spent in a camp among former prisoners of war. For many the war had been over for years but there were tears and hugs and much joy. An Irishman came over to me and we cried together when he said, ‘If only you knew how you people in the Red Cross saved our lives by sending us food parcels.’ I was told this over and over again.”* \*

After the war, Red Cross Corps volunteers also escorted war brides (European women who married Canadian servicemen) and their children sailing to Canada.

The year 2009 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Red Cross. Canadian volunteers continue to serve overseas in international Red Cross efforts in places like Afghanistan.

\* Quote taken from *Women Overseas – Memoirs of the Canadian Red Cross Corps*, edited by Frances Martin Day, Phyllis Spence and Barbara Ladouceur. Ronsdale Press, 1998.

Encounters WITH CANADA HISTORICA!CA Rencontres DU CANADA

## Canada Remembers Theme Week

The largest youth forum in Canada invites you to join more than 100 young Canadians at the Terry Fox Centre in Ottawa for an incredible week of learning and exploring during the Canada Remembers Theme Week. You will hear Veterans’ personal stories, participate in experiential workshops, attend the National Remembrance Day Ceremony, visit the Canadian War Museum and lots more!

Discover the adventure at [www.encounters-rencontres.ca](http://www.encounters-rencontres.ca).

# Did You Know?



Rear Admiral L.W. Murray (left) presenting awards to crew members of destroyer HMCS St. Croix in 1942.

Nova Scotia’s Leonard Murray entered naval college at 15, and served at sea during the First World War.

During the Second World War, Rear Admiral Murray, of the Royal Canadian Navy, was in charge of the Allied air and naval forces in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. He was the only Canadian to command an Allied theatre of operations during the war, protecting the Merchant Navy convoys from deadly attacks by German U-boats (submarines). The convoys transported Allied troops and vital supplies from North America to Europe for the war effort.



# Profiles of Courage

## One of the Best



Photo: The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #29 (Worthington)

Henry Louis Norwest, MM.

Henry Louis Norwest was one of the best snipers of the First World War, with 115 fatal shots. He earned the Military Medal for his bravery and devotion under fire during the taking of the "Pimple," a strongly defended high point on Vimy Ridge, in April 1917. He was awarded a bar to his Military Medal the following year.

Norwest was born in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, a Métis of French-Cree ancestry. He worked as a ranch-hand and rodeo performer.

Three months before the end of the war, Henry Louis Norwest was killed by an enemy sniper. He is buried in the Warvillers Churchyard Extension Cemetery in Warvillers, France.

## E-MAILS FROM THE FRONT

May 2, 2006

Dear Mum and Dad,

The days seem to move along at their own pace. Some days fly by, and others creep along. We are officially at the halfway point now, though I can't believe I've been here for three months. I try to remind myself to appreciate every experience—even the ones I don't really enjoy. :)

I have been thinking a lot about fate lately. It was such an accident of birth that we ended up where we did when we did, that we are where we are now, with the choices that we have available to us. It seems to me that we have such a burden of responsibility to make the world a better place for those who were born into far worse circumstances. It is more than donating money to charities; it is taking action and trying to make things better. You have both shown me that throughout my life, but here I realize it more than ever before.

My current job and role in Afghanistan is part of that, but it is more the non-governmental organizations that come later. They are the ones that really make the difference. I like to think that my being here means they will be able to come that much sooner and operate more freely. I will be looking for more opportunities to volunteer in Wainwright [Alberta] and to really try to make a difference. It is very humbling to be here, part of something so much bigger than myself.

Love always,  
Nichola

Canadian Forces (CF) members serving far from home have always done their best to keep in touch with family and friends. Captain Nichola Goddard, the first female CF member killed during combat duty, wrote the following e-mail to her parents from Afghanistan just weeks before her death.



Captain Nichola Goddard

Photo: Department of National Defence

## Brilliant Refused to Quit

Jean Brillant, from Assametsquaghan, Quebec, was a lieutenant with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, known after the war as the *Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment* or affectionately named the "Vandoos."

Brillant was in action on August 8, 1918, during the Battle of Amiens.

While leading his company in two separate attacks on enemy machine-gun posts, he greatly assisted in the capture of some 150 prisoners and 16 machine guns. He was wounded in both attacks, but refused to leave his company.

During an attack on a third enemy post, Brillant was wounded a third time and died of his wounds two days later. Decorated with the Military Cross in May 1918, he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in September 1918. He is buried in Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, France.



Lieutenant Jean Brillant, VC

Image: VAC

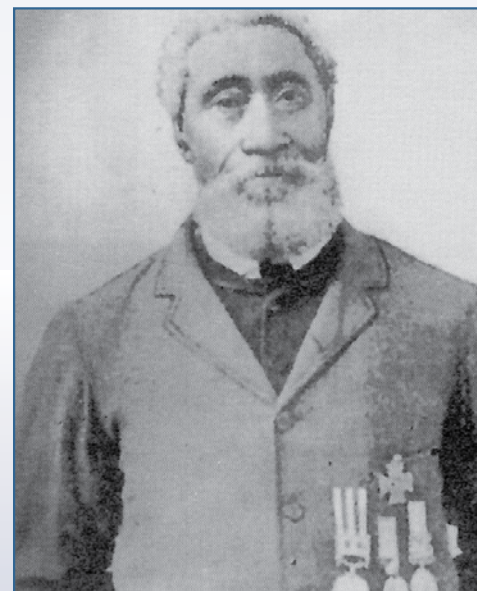
## Nova Scotia Hero Receives VC

William Hall, who served on the British Royal Navy Ship HMS *Shannon*, was the first Nova Scotian, and the first black person, to receive the Victoria Cross.

In 1857, Hall was sent with a brigade of soldiers to Lucknow, India, to relieve the besieged British garrison.

As a member of one of four gun crews, Hall was attempting to break through the walls of an important enemy stronghold. Heavy enemy gunfire left only Hall and another officer alive. They continued to load and fire the last gun until the wall was broken, allowing the soldiers of the British garrison to escape.

Hall died in 1904 at his farm in Avonport, Nova Scotia. His Victoria



William Hall, VC

Cross is on display at the Nova Scotia Museum in Halifax, alongside his other medals.

Image: Library and Archives Canada PA-006759

## HEY EDUCATORS!

Check out the Educators' Guide on the VAC Web site ([www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)) for suggested learning activities to accompany this newspaper. Questions? Call **1-877-604-8469** toll free.

## Connected by a Thread

In May 1944, Lieutenant George Williamson of the Royal Canadian Engineers removed his uniform before swimming across a river on a mission in Italy. Unfortunately, he was captured, and given a replacement uniform by the Red Cross at his prisoner of war camp. Military uniforms are a source of pride and

identity, but his new gear did not display his rank or unit badges. Determined to keep his connection with his comrades and the outside world, he handstitched replacement identification and rank markings for his new jacket, using scrap thread and material scavenged from others in his camp.

Williamson's uniform jacket with hand-sewn badges.



Photo: © A Needle Pulling Thread Magazine

Complete this time line by finding the missing dates from stories in the newspaper.

William Hall earns Victoria Cross

First World War begins  
**August 4, 1914**

1st Newfoundland Regiment goes over the top at Beaumont-Hamel  
**July 1, 1916**

Canadians triumph at Vimy Ridge  
**April 9-12, 1917**

Canadians capture Passchendaele  
**November 1917**

Canadian sniper Henry Norwest is killed in action

Armistice ends First World War  
**November 11, 1918**

Great Depression  
**1930s**

Canada enters Second World War  
**September 10, 1939**

British Commonwealth Air Training Plan begins

Canadians come ashore in Sicily

Canadians come ashore on D-Day

Battle of the Scheldt comes to an end  
**Early November, 1944**

V-E Day – Official end of Second World War in Europe  
**May 8, 1945**

V-J Day – Official end of Second World War in the Far East  
**August 15, 1945**

United Nations officially formed  
**October 24, 1945**

Canada joins NATO

Korean War begins  
**June 25, 1950**

HMCS *Cayuga* sails up Taedong River during Korean War

Armistice signed ending Korean War  
**July 27, 1953**

Canadian Forces hold Nicosia airport in Cyprus

Canadians first deploy to Afghanistan  
**Late 2001**

Captain Nichola Goddard killed in combat in Afghanistan



# Toronto Wins 1942 Grey Cup

The Western Interprovincial Football Union and the Interprovincial Rugby Football Union, two unions who would later come together to form the Canadian Football League, suspended operations for the duration of the Second World War. Why? Many of their players enlisted for service.

However, this suspension of operations did not mean no one played for the Grey Cup. Teams were formed in the military services, which included players from the two football unions.

The Toronto Royal Canadian Air Force Hurricanes and the Winnipeg Royal Canadian Air Force Bombers played for the 1942 Grey Cup at Varsity Stadium, in Toronto. In icy field conditions Toronto defeated Winnipeg 8 to 5. In London, England, Canadian servicemen and civilians listened to a radio broadcast of the game.



1942 RCAF Hurricanes.

Photo: Canadian Football Hall of Fame

## Did You Know?

To improve their weather forecasting capabilities, the Germans secretly placed weather stations in sparsely-populated areas in the Arctic during the Second World War. In 1943, an automated weather station was placed in northern Labrador by a German U-boat. It stopped working after only a few days and was forgotten about until the late 1970s. It is now on display at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.



Second World War German weather station at Canadian War Museum.

Photo: Public Domain

## Keeping Fit in the Desert

Being a member of the Canadian Forces means you have to keep in top shape. But how to get a good workout when you are in war-torn Afghanistan? Surprisingly, finding a gym is not usually a big problem! The larger army bases have modern weight rooms, but even the smallest bases often find a way of setting up a bench and some weights so the soldiers can still workout.



Canadian soldier working out Afghanistan.

Photo: Department of National Defence. IS2007-7335

## The Inter-Allied Games

Even though fighting in the First World War had ended with the Armistice on November 11, 1918, there were still thousands of Allied soldiers in Europe, either waiting to go home or as part of the Army of Occupation.

To keep these soldiers busy—and fit!—the Inter-Allied Games were held at Pershing Stadium just outside of Paris, France, from June 22 to July 6, 1919. Twenty-nine countries were invited and nearly 1,500 soldier-athletes participated in some twenty events including baseball, rugby, swimming, track and field and boxing. Canada took home the silver



Canadian team after winning second place in 4 x 200 m relay at Inter-Allied Games in 1919.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada. PA-006677

medal in the 4 x 200 metre relay event, while J. Howard and H. E. Lapierre won the bronze medals in the 100 metres and 1,500 metres, respectively.

## Entertaining the Troops

To help maintain the morale of soldiers during the rough crossing to France on D-Day, Sergeant Johnny Lombardi, an Italian-Canadian from Ontario, played popular songs on the trumpet. Lombardi remained in Holland until 1946, entertaining troops waiting to return to Canada. On June 6, 1966, exactly 22 years after D-Day, he established CHIN Radio in Toronto. The station is devoted to multicultural programming and is still broadcasting today.



For more information, see the “Juno Beach” Historica Minute at [www.historica.ca/minutes](http://www.historica.ca/minutes).

Alice Robitaille was born in Québec in 1923. A musical prodigy, she joined Rose Ouellette’s troupe at the Théâtre National in Montréal at age 12, changing her name to Alys Robi.

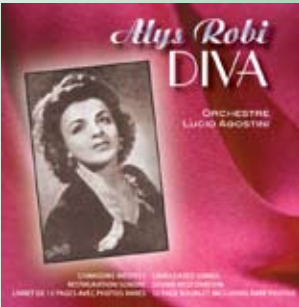


Photo: Collection Jean-Pierre Sévigny

During the Second World War, Alys toured military bases, becoming the “soldiers’ darling.”

In 1947, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) invited Alys to sing during the first-ever televised programme. She sang “Vive la Canadienne,” the military march of the Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment.



### ExperienceVimy

You can visit the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France, the site of one of Canada’s famous battles of the First World War, from the comfort of home!

View it from different angles, zoom in for a closer look at the statues, or read the 11,285 individual names inscribed on the Memorial.

Go to the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site at [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca) to “Experience Vimy” today!

### Student Guide Program

Live in France for four months, learn and teach others about Canada’s military history and make friends while working at a Canadian War Memorial! The Veterans Affairs Canada Student Guide Program offers this unforgettable experience.



## A Hero on Two Fields

Jeff Nicklin was a star lineman for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers football team in the 1930s. He joined the army in 1940 and became a paratrooper (a soldier who parachutes onto the battlefield). He landed behind enemy lines on D-Day and was wounded in action, earning a decoration for bravery. Lieutenant-Colonel Nicklin became the commanding officer of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion. He was killed in March 1945 during the Battle of the Rhine.

The “Jeff Nicklin Trophy” is now awarded annually to the most valuable player in the Canadian Football League’s Western Conference.





Photo: 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Association Archives and Photo Collection

Photo: Library and Archives Canada. PA-201178

## Public Announcements

**December 18, 1916**

The St. John’s branch of the Newfoundland Women’s Patriotic Association will be collecting any mitts, socks and scarves, which local ladies have knit for the boys fighting overseas in the Great War this Thursday at Government House.

**May 2, 1943**

St. Catherine Street will be the site of a parade today to kick off the next Canadian War Bond campaign. Help Montréal meet its fundraising goal for the war effort. Alys Robi will perform.

**September 7, 1952**

All servicemen are invited to a dance in the Officers’ Mess at CFB Shilo Saturday evening, prior to deployment to Korea. Volunteers from the Ladies Auxiliary will be present. Dress uniforms are mandatory.

## Canada Remembers Word Game

Put the letters from each column into the proper order immediately below to create a sentence about Veterans.

O W W	E F H	O	P R	E S	M A E	R E C	M E V	E B	D E A	R N	D I	N C	A F	N R T	H E A	E E D	I D	A O C	M A N	S U	S	E