


# Canada Remembers Times

Veterans' Week Special Edition – November 5 to 11, 2007

**Breaking News** 2007 marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dieppe Raid. Read a first-hand account from a Veteran who was there. See page 2.

**Weather**  


**October 30, 1917**  

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*Passchendaele, Belgium*  
43°F Rain

## Canadians Take Vimy Ridge

In 1917, Canadians took part in a First World War battle that even 90 years later is a national point of pride. The scene was Vimy Ridge—a long, heavily defended hill along the Western Front in northern France. The British and French had tried unsuccessfully to capture it earlier in the war. On April 9, 1917, it was Canada's turn.

Early that morning, after months of planning and training, the first group of 20,000 Canadians attacked. Through the snow and sleet, Allied artillery laid down a “creeping barrage,” an advancing line of precise shell fire. Canadian soldiers followed closely behind the explosions and overran the enemy before many of them could leave their underground bunkers. Most of the ridge was captured by noon that day, and the final part was taken on April 12. Canada had done it!

It has been said that Canada “came of age” as a country that day. Canadians from coast to coast fought side by side and achieved one of the greatest victories in our country's history.

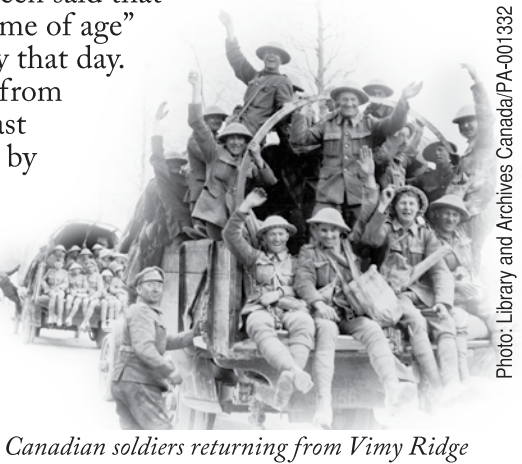


Photo: Library and Archives Canada/PA-001332

Canadian soldiers returning from Vimy Ridge

## Mud and Death at Passchendaele

In the fall of 1917, Canadian troops in Belgium fought in the Third Battle of Ypres, better known as the Battle of Passchendaele.

The autumn rains came early that year to Flanders Fields. The fighting churned the flat terrain into a sea of muddy clay. Trenches filled with cold water and collapsed. Shell holes overflowed with muck. Men, equipment or horses that slipped off the “duckboards” (wooden walkways in trenches and on paths) were sucked into the swampy mess—often never to be seen again.

The Canadians joined the battle to help battered British forces, who had been fighting there since July. On October 26, Canadians began to advance on the enemy through often waist-deep mud. They were bombarded by German artillery and machine-gun fire. It was a nightmare of dirt and death. Finally, on November 6, 1917, Passchendaele was captured.

What was the cost to capture those few kilometres of land and the ruined remnants of the town? Almost 16,000 Canadian casualties. Nine Canadians earned the Victoria Cross for their valour during the battle.



Evacuating a wounded Canadian soldier at the Battle of Passchendaele.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada/PA-002107

## Be Part of Bringing the Past to the Present

In April 2007, thousands of young Canadians travelled to France to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Many youth researched a soldier who died in the battle and shared their soldier's life story during their visit to the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

You can research the story of someone who gave their life serving

Canada in times of war, military conflict or peace. The Canadian Virtual War Memorial is an on-line database with information about every Canadian who has died in military service. In some cases, photos, letters and other items of information have been added to [www.virtualmemorial.gc.ca](http://www.virtualmemorial.gc.ca).



Youth from South Huron District High School in Exeter, ON, wearing t-shirts which honour the 41 young men from the same school who were killed in the First World War, Second World War and the Korean War.

Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)

**DIARIES** *from the Front*

Canadians serving far away from home turned to writing as a way of making sense of their experiences. Letters home, poetry and diaries helped them get through tough times.


**An Air Battle**

“This morning saw a grand duel between a British and a German squadron of planes ... the fight centred around two machines, which were manoeuvring about each other like hostile eagles. Backwards and forwards over the breathless trench-lines they soared, each seeking to swoop upon the other from higher ground. Finally, “our man” got the advantage, opened his deadly machine-gun fire and sent his opponent blazing to the ground ...

During the fight, all traffic had halted and the whole activity of war seemed to have stopped like a

piece of clockwork. Now the wheels automatically started again—teams trudged over the roads as before; men picked up their discarded rifles, or fell into step, or went back to dinners and cardgames; and the colonels climbed back into their dugouts.”

Private Frank Walker, (from Prince Edward Island) Canadian Field Ambulance The Somme, France September 11, 1916



## Nursing Sisters Help the Women's Right to Vote!



Photo: Library and Archives Canada/PA-002279

Nursing Sisters voting during the First World War.

War has had a great effect on Canadian society. During the First World War, the role of women in public life evolved. The service of women as Nursing Sisters during the war, tending to the needs of sick and wounded soldiers overseas, lent power to the movement to give women the right to vote federally—something they had been denied until that time. In the general election of 1917, Nursing Sisters and women whose relatives were serving in the military were allowed to vote. The federal right to vote was extended to all Canadian women by 1918.




Young people were asked to contribute to the war effort too, as this First World War poster shows.

Image: McGill Library Collection/WP1-F10-F2

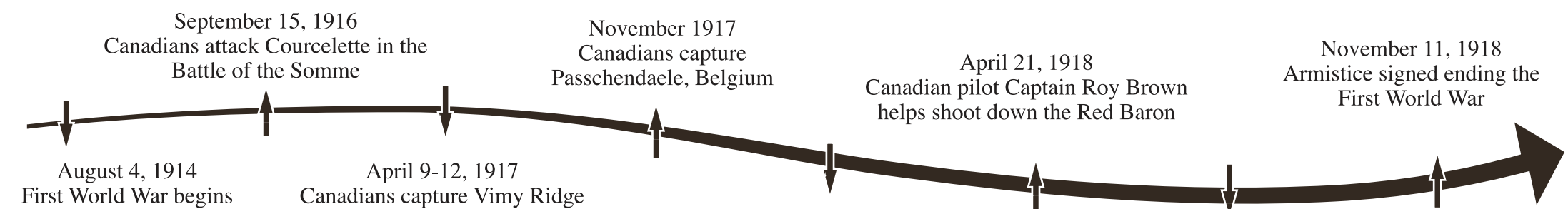
**Did You Know?**

Canadian soldiers risked life and limb in First World War trenches, but bombs and bullets weren't the only dangers. “Trench foot” was also a major concern. After too many hours of standing in the muddy, wet trenches, blood circulation in soldiers' feet slowed down. The result was a condition similar to frostbite. Many soldiers lost toes or entire feet.



**Contents** 

First World War .....	1
Weather .....	1
Second World War .....	2
Korean War .....	3
Break the Code .....	3
Post-War Efforts .....	4
Where in the World? ....	4
Time Lines .....	1-4



September 15, 1916  
Canadians attack Courcellette in the Battle of the Somme

August 4, 1914  
First World War begins

April 9-12, 1917  
Canadians capture Vimy Ridge


November 1917  
Canadians capture Passchendaele, Belgium

December 17, 1917  
Some women get to vote in a Canadian federal election

April 21, 1918  
Canadian pilot Captain Roy Brown helps shoot down the Red Baron

May 19, 1918  
Three Canadian Nursing Sisters killed in bombing of French hospital

November 11, 1918  
Armistice signed ending the First World War



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# The Dieppe Raid

Today, the French port of Dieppe is a beautiful seaside resort town. However, 65 years ago, on August 19, 1942, Dieppe's stony beach was a very different scene. Almost 5,000 Canadians came ashore in an ill-fated early morning raid against strong German forces. They paid a terrible price. More than 900 Canadians were killed and almost 2,000 were taken prisoner.

**John Patrick Grogan of Ontario was there ...**

"We knew what we were supposed to do all right. We were to get to land and get over the beach as quickly as we could and get up over the sea wall. But

on landing, I guess the first thing I recall is that ... the beach was lined with people all lying there ... I just couldn't understand what they were all lying there for. But they were dead ... and the ones that I had waved good-bye to that morning, and the ones we had joked with such as Sammy Adams, he was one of the first that I saw. Joe Coffey, Huey Clements, Ernie Good, all of these people all dead in such a short space of time."



Aftermath of the Dieppe Raid.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada C-014160

# In the Footsteps of a Prisoner of War

Jack Morrison, a Second World War Royal Canadian Air Force Veteran from Nova Scotia and a former prisoner of war (POW), always has an interesting war story to tell.

He was a gunner on a Hampden bomber when his plane was shot down over Germany in July, 1943. He bailed out but was captured and put into a German POW camp in Poland. Near the end of the war, as Allied forces closed in on German-occupied areas, his

POW camp was emptied. The prisoners were forced to march 950 kilometres in the dead of winter. Morrison survived and was liberated three months later when the war finally ended.

Fascinated by the stories told by Morrison (his wife's uncle), Michael Hughes was inspired to learn first-hand about his harrowing journey. Hughes, a high school teacher also from Nova Scotia, travelled to Europe in the summer of 2005. He set out on

a bicycle, carrying a bagful of Canadian pins, to retrace the steps his relative took 60 years earlier during the forced march.

By following in the footsteps of a Canadian POW, Hughes helped honour the sacrifices of Veterans.



Hughes and Morrison before the 2005 trip.

Photo: Republished with permission from The Halifax Herald Limited

## Reduce Reuse Recycle

Canadians on the home front during the Second World War often had to do with less because of the need to send supplies overseas for the war effort. However, the people in war-torn Europe were in worse straits. After the war, many luxuries were almost impossible to find on store shelves in many countries.

One enterprising young Dutch woman was determined to have a nice dress for her wedding despite the short supply of material. Her solution? To make a dress from a parachute her fiancé received from a downed Allied airman during the war. There was so much silk in the parachute, she made a wedding gown, bridesmaids dresses, a flower girl dress and even silk boxers for her husband!



Photo: VAC

A wedding dress made of parachute silk is on display at the Caen Memorial Museum, Caen, France.

**Editor's Note:** Historical place names have been used in all instances. Veterans Affairs Canada recognizes that names and spellings of some countries/locations may have changed in recent times. However, for the sake of historical accuracy we have used the name and spellings used at the time of the event(s).

This publication is available upon request in multiple formats.

Web site: [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)  
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# A U-boat in Nova Scotia?



U-889 surrendering to the RCN.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-134333

German submarines (called "U-boats") were a huge challenge for the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. These U-boats threatened the navy's warships and the cargo ships of the Merchant Navy. Ships were the primary mode of transporting troops and supplies to help the war effort in Europe and it was vital that they cross the ocean without sinking. The struggle to control the ocean was called the Battle of the Atlantic.

When the war ended in May 1945, several U-boats surrendered to the Canadian Navy. *U-889* was taken to the small fishing port of Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Imagine how the residents felt to see an enemy submarine close-up!

# Courageous Royal Canadian Air Force Gunner Earns Victoria Cross

One of the most dangerous ways Canadians served during the Second World War was on air force bomber crews. These men needed great courage to carry out their dangerous and difficult duties.

Pilot Officer Andrew Mynarski of Manitoba faced that danger in 1944 when his Lancaster bomber was hit by a German fighter over Cambrai, France. The plane was going down—and fast. Mynarski, a mid-upper gunner, was on his way to the escape hatch when he noticed the rear gunner trapped in his turret at the back of the plane. Through flames and smoke, he desperately tried to free the man without success. The tail gunner told Mynarski to save himself. Reluctantly, he made his way back to

the hatch with his clothes and parachute in flames. Before jumping from the burning plane, Mynarski turned, stood at attention and saluted his comrade one last time.

Miraculously, the rear gunner survived the crash. Mynarski, however, was badly burned and did not live. For his heroic efforts, Andrew Mynarski earned the Victoria Cross, the highest award for valour that a Canadian could receive.



Pilot Officer Andrew Mynarski, VC.

Photo: VAC

## Did You Know?

Anytime you use a microwave oven or see someone clear their windshield with washer fluid, you are seeing the lasting benefits of Canadian wartime inventions. War is horribly destructive, but our country's amazing efforts on the home front also brought great technological innovation.

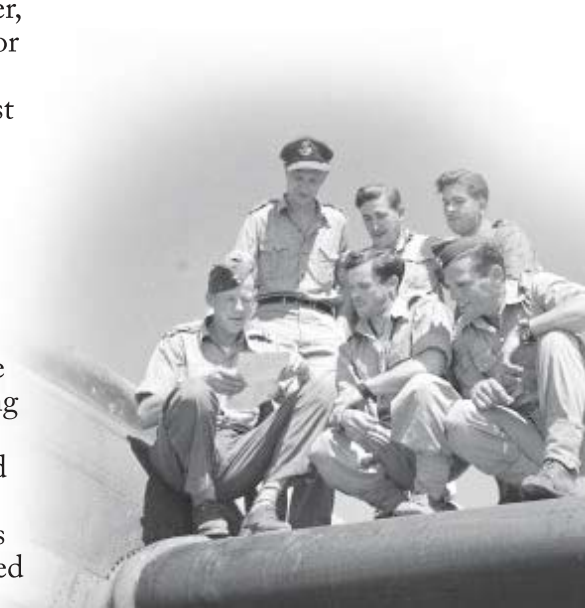
During the Second World War, scientists and industry developed and produced many new inventions that would help the Allies triumph. The war helped transform Canada's industry into one of the most advanced in the world.

Photo: Department of National Defence (DND)/PL-60334

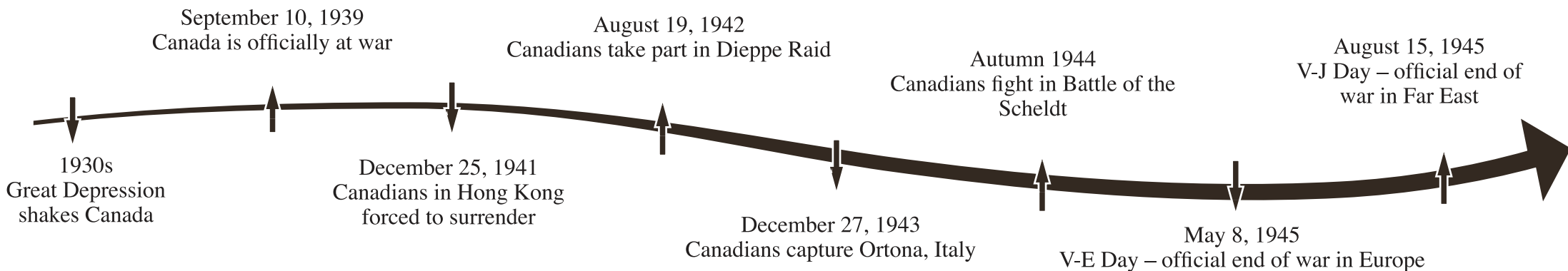
# Canadians in Burma

Canadians served in many theatres of operations during the Second World War, but one of the least known is Burma. Canadian airmen served in Allied transport, reconnaissance, bomber and fighter squadrons in the region. Burma was an especially tough place to fight, with much of the country

being covered by mountainous jungle crisscrossed by many rivers. Beginning in December 1944, Royal Canadian Air Force transport squadrons helped to deliver supplies by air—the only way possible—to support the soldiers fighting the Japanese who had invaded and occupied the country.



Canadian airmen on the Burma front





# Canadians in the Battle of Kapyong

Canadians who served in the Korean War saw a lot of fighting. Few episodes, however, were as intense as the experiences of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry during the Battle of Kapyong.

On April 24, 1951, the Princess Pats, along with other forces of the 27<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Brigade, defended an important valley near the Imjin River during an all-out enemy attack. The goal was to allow United Nations forces to withdraw from the area and stop the North Korean and Chinese forces.

The Canadians came under intense fire during the night from waves of charging enemy soldiers. At times they were completely surrounded. The situation was desperate—their ammunition was running low. The only way to get new supplies was to drop them by air.

During the fight, 10 Canadians were killed and 23 wounded, but the Princess Pats maintained their position. The Battalion received the United States Presidential Unit Citation for their bravery in Kapyong, a rare honour for a non-American military unit.



*Holding at Kapyong* – Edward Zuber.

Source: AN 1990084-001. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum (CWM).

## Canada's Navy and Air Force in the Korean War

Canadian soldiers weren't the only ones making sacrifices during the Korean War—Canadian sailors and airmen also served. Destroyers from the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) were Canada's first contribution to United Nations (UN) Forces fighting there, arriving in the waters off Korea during the summer of 1950.

Korea is a peninsula with many offshore islands. Canadian ships had many different duties, including shelling enemy positions during amphibious landings; escorting aircraft carriers; supplying islands holding out against the

enemy; destroying enemy trains running along the coast; and delivering supplies to isolated coastal villages.

The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) provided key support to UN Forces from early in the war. For example, No. 426 Transport Squadron made 600 round trips across the Pacific Ocean, carrying more than 13,000 passengers and three million kilograms of freight and mail. Twenty-two RCAF fighter pilots and a number of technical officers also served with the US Fifth Air Force.

Photo: DND/PL 52187



*Canadian pilots in Korea*

## The Monument to Canadian Fallen

One of the most visible ways we remember our heroes is by building monuments to commemorate their sacrifice and achievements.

In April 2002, the Monument to Canadian Fallen was dedicated at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea. It includes a statue of a Canadian soldier with two Korean children. Inscribed on the monument is, "We'll never forget you, brave sons of Canada" in English, French and Korean, along with the names of the 516 Canadians who were killed in service to Canada during the Korean War. A replica of the monument stands in Ottawa, not far from the National War Memorial.

The memorial shows no weapons or symbols of war. This reflects the quest for peace that inspired Canadians to serve in Korea—a desire that has fuelled all of Canada's contributions in overseas conflicts and international peace support operations.



Image: VAC

*Veterans Affairs Canada produced this poster, featuring the Monument to Canadian Fallen, for Veterans' Week 2003.*

## Want to Learn More?



Photo: DND / LAC / PA-128850

*Wounded Canadian soldier after night patrol in Korea.*

Check out the Korean War WebQuest at [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca). Click on "Youth & Educators" then click on "Youth Corner" to explore this learning activity.

## Did You Know?

Manitoba's Tommy Prince fought in the Battle of Kapyong. Sergeant Prince was one of Canada's most decorated Aboriginal soldiers. He earned 11 military medals for his service in the Canadian Army during the Second World War and the Korean War.

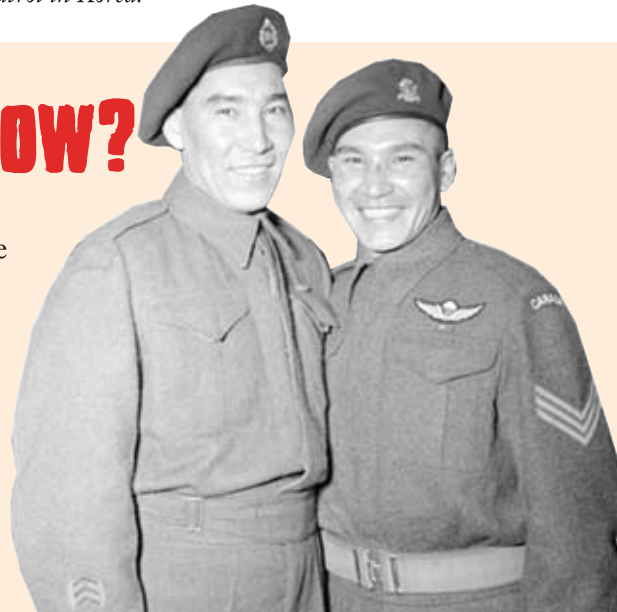
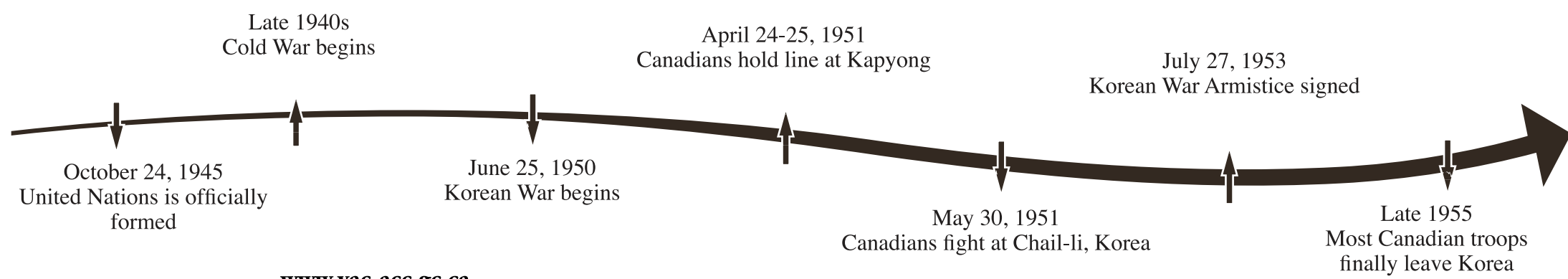


Photo: Library and Archives Canada/PA-142289

*Sergeant Tommy Prince (right) and his brother, Private Morris Prince.*





# The Origin of the Blue Helmets

The first United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force in Egypt in 1956 successfully kept the Suez Crisis from erupting into large-scale war. It wasn't easy, though. It took a lot of hard work and creative problem solving to make it work.

Egypt was hesitant when the UN suggested sending Canadian troops there. Canada has close historical ties to Britain, which was one of the countries initially involved in the Suez Crisis. It also didn't help that our army's uniforms looked like those of the British

—and that we were planning to send a battalion called the “Queen's Own Rifles.” In the end, Canadian troops went and contributed much-needed administrative, logistical and engineering support.

To distinguish themselves as members of the international contingent, Canadians and the other UN Forces painted their vehicles and helmets blue. In the process, they created the well-known symbol of UN peacekeeping—the blue helmet.



Canadian soldiers arriving in Egypt, 1956.

UN Photo

## UN Peacekeepers Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

In 1988, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to all those who had served in United Nations peace support efforts over the years. Thousands of Canadian Forces members, like those who had served in places such as Egypt, the Congo, Cyprus and the Golan Heights, were honoured for their work in helping to end bloodshed and promote peace in troubled spots around the world.

This award inspired the creation of the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal in 2000. It is awarded to Canadians who served in an international peace support operation.



Photo: DND

Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal.

## Fighting the Cold War

The Cold War began almost as soon as the Second World War ended. The Iron Curtain descended across Europe and divided Soviet-dominated communist countries in the east, from democratic countries (including Canada) in the west.

This standoff was called the Cold War because there was never direct fighting between the main forces. Instead, the two sides competed for power in world affairs, with both sides soon possessing large stockpiles of nuclear weapons. It set the stage for a tense showdown that would last for decades.

Soviet submarines and bombers stealthily probed our coastal waters and the edges of our airspace. Canadian ships and aircraft constantly patrolled our frontiers. Tens of thousands of Canadians Forces personnel were stationed in Western Europe to help counterbalance the communist troops massed in Eastern Europe. Canadian Forces members were on alert for decades, ready for an attack that never came.



Canadian Forces Argus patrol aircraft and a submarine.

Photo: DND

## Izzy Dolls: A Legacy Lives On

Canadian Forces members have put their lives on the line countless times in the course of international peace support efforts. Master Corporal Mark Isfeld, a combat engineer from British Columbia who removed landmines, died in Croatia on June 21, 1994, in a landmine explosion. It had been his third tour of duty in a peace support mission within a three year span.

Isfeld was known for distributing small homemade dolls that looked like peacekeepers to the young people living in the conflict areas where he served. After his death, others took up this work and called them “Izzy Dolls.”



Izzy Dolls wear the UN blue beret.

Photo: Courtesy of Isfeld family

## Hockey Night in Afghanistan



Photo: Canadian Forces Combat Camera/IS2006-1163

Playing ball hockey in Afghanistan.

There aren't many things more Canadian than hockey. Wherever you find Canadian Forces members, hockey is not far away. In Kandahar, Afghanistan, where temperatures often reach 40°C, Canadian soldiers have traded an ice rink for a ball-hockey rink. They have a 13-team league that plays three nights a week.

This little piece of Canadian life helps those serving far from home face the challenges of their posting.

## Want to Know More?

Canadians mark special anniversaries in 2007 for the Battle of Passchendaele, the Dieppe Raid and the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Check out the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site at [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca) today to find out more about these important chapters in our country's history and the Canadians who were there!

## Digger the Dog in the Golan Heights

Serving far from home in international peace support missions is hard. Canadian Forces members who take on these challenges sometimes try to bring some things from back home to make the situation more bearable. One way they do this is with animal companions.

Digger the dog was the official mascot of the Canadian Forces Maintenance Platoon. This platoon served in the Golan Heights of Syria as part of Canada's long-standing contribution to the United Nations (UN) mission. The lovable pooch held the honorary rank of Sergeant. Digger completed more than 20 tours of duty in the tense buffer zone between Israel and Syria.

Canadian Forces members first went to the Golan Heights in 1974 as part of a UN mission to supervise and monitor the ceasefire between Syria and Israel. Canadians served there in considerable numbers until 2006, and a small Canadian presence remains today.



Digger the dog

Photo: Canadian Forces Combat Camera/IS2002-2790a



## Where in the World?

This edition of *Canada Remembers Times* highlights the sacrifice and achievements of many Canadians in military operations around the world. Can you find exactly where in the world they've been?

Here is a world map. The maple leaves represent just some of the places Canadians have served in times of war, military conflict and peace. Match the locations with the correct numbers on the map.

- |                              |                                   |                                |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Korea – 1950-1955          | E Atlantic Ocean – 1914-present   | H Egypt – 1956-1967; 1973-1978 |
| B Afghanistan – 2001-present | F West Germany – 1945-early 1990s | I 1987-present                 |
| C Burma – 1942-1945          | G Passchendaele, Belgium – 1917   | J Vimy Ridge, France – 1917    |
| D Rwanda – 1993-1996         |                                   | K Syria – 1974-present         |

