

Canada Remembers Times

Breaking News . . . Canada Remembers the World Wars in 2014

The Great War, 100 Years Later



Photo: CWM - George Metcalf Archival Collection

Canadian troops returning from the trenches.

This year marks 100 years since the beginning of the First World War, a conflict that changed the course of history. Its repercussions still echo today as centuries-old empires were swept away, map borders were redrawn, and society was rocked by the bloodiest war ever seen to that time.

The First World War erupted on August 4, 1914. Britain declared war on Germany and that meant that Canada—then a part of the British Empire—was also at war. Many Canadians greeted the news of war enthusiastically and quickly enlisted so they wouldn't miss out on what they felt would be a glorious adventure that would be over by Christmas. Tragically, the fighting would drag on for more than four years on grim battlefields swept by deadly machine

guns, artillery and poison gas. More than 650,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the First World War and more than 66,000 lost their lives.

Our soldiers sacrificed greatly, but their courage and hard-won experience earned them a reputation for being some of the best troops on the Western Front. They achieved impressive victories at places like Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele and in the series of battles at the end of the war that came to be known as "Canada's Hundred Days."

A number of First World War centennial commemorative events will be taking place in Canada and overseas between 2014 and 2018. How will you remember?

A Century of Service

Two of Canada's best-known army regiments are marking 100th anniversaries this year. When the First World War erupted in 1914, our military had to grow quickly and new units were created.

Andrew Hamilton Gault, a Montréal businessman and South African War Veteran, offered to personally fund the creation of a new regiment in August 1914. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was named in honour of the then-Governor General's daughter. Applications quickly flooded in and almost all of the first 1,100 men who were accepted for service had previous military experience. It would be the first Canadian fighting unit to reach the Western Front and its soldiers saw heavy action throughout the conflict.

At the time of the outbreak of the war, our army was dominated by Anglophones. Pressure soon rose for French Canadians to have a regiment of their own. Quebec doctor and businessman Arthur Mignault offered to fund its formation and in October 1914, the 22nd (French Canadian) Infantry Battalion was created.



Images: Department of National Defence

Almost 6,000 men would serve in this unit during the conflict. Soon after the war, it would be honoured by being renamed the *Royal 22^e Régiment*.

The First World War would only be the beginning of the outstanding service that the "Patricias" and the "Van Doos" would offer in our country's wars and peace support efforts over the past 100 years.

Military Service and the House of Commons

George Baker



George Baker

Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

Born in Quebec in 1877, Baker was elected to the House of Commons in 1911. When the First World War broke out, the lawyer was Member of Parliament for the riding of Brome. He enlisted in May 1915 and served on the front lines with the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles. He was killed in action at Ypres, Belgium, in June 1916. Baker was the only parliamentarian to die in action in the war. A bronze statue of him is on display in the foyer of the House of Commons.

Milton Gregg



Milton Gregg

Photo: Department of National Defence

Gregg was born in New Brunswick in 1892. He was a student when he enlisted in Halifax in 1914 during the First World War. He was wounded several times and decorated with the Military Cross and the Victoria Cross. Gregg would serve again in the Second World War and later be elected as Member of Parliament for the riding of York-Sunbury. The University of New Brunswick named the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society in his honour.

There are many ways to serve your country. For some people, one way is not enough! Amazingly, since Confederation, more than 750 Members of Parliament have also served in the Canadian military—almost one fifth of all federal politicians over the years. Here are some of these dedicated citizens.



Distinguished Conduct Medal

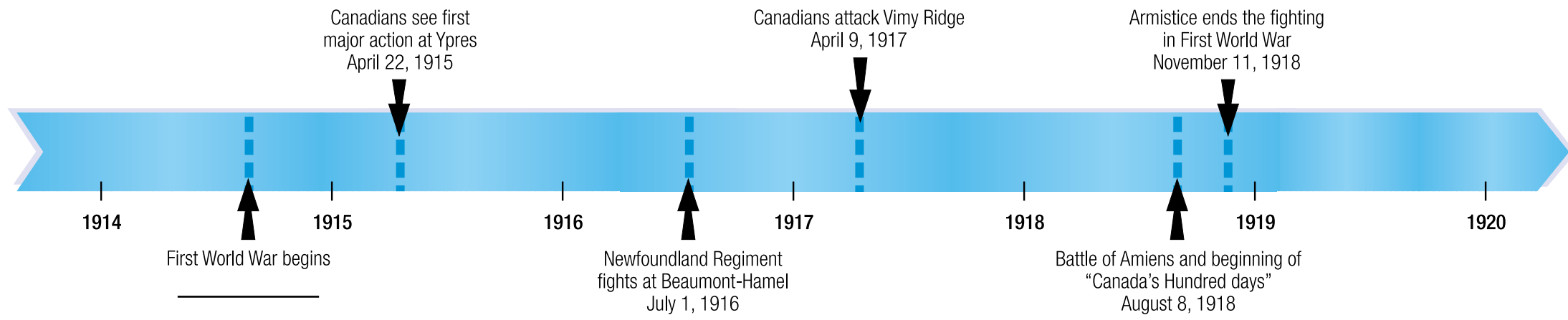
Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

A Bold and Brave Aboriginal-Canadian Soldier

George McLean was born in Kamloops, British Columbia, in 1875. A rancher from the Head of the Lake Band in the Okanagan district, McLean served with the Canadian Mounted Rifles in the South African War.

McLean enlisted again during the First World War at the age of 41. In the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917, he launched a daring attack and single-handedly captured 19 German soldiers. For this brave action, Private McLean earned the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the second-highest award for gallantry in the war.

That same day, he was shot in the arm by a sniper and was sent back to Canada to heal. His courageous service continued in a new way as he would become a fireman in the Vancouver area. George McLean passed away in 1934.



Remembering the Second World War

Following the approval of the Canadian Parliament, Canada officially entered the Second World War on September 10, 1939, and would spend almost six years locked into the largest conflict the world had ever seen. Canadians bravely served on land, at sea and in the air against the totalitarian Axis powers of Germany, Japan and Italy. They saw action around the world, from Hong Kong to the dusty mountains of Italy, from the dangerous skies over occupied Europe to the freezing seas of the North Atlantic.



HMCS Assiniboine on the Atlantic Ocean during the Second World War.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-180611

More than one million Canadian men and women served during the conflict and over 45,000 gave their lives. Our country’s society was forever transformed by the mammoth war effort. This year will see the beginning of a series of special Second World War 75th anniversary commemorative events in Canada and internationally that will stretch until 2020. Check out the Veterans Affairs Canada website at veterans.gc.ca/eng/events to find an event near you!

The Berlin Kid

Roger Coulombe was born in Montmagny, Quebec, in 1920. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940 during the Second World War and became a pilot with Bomber Command. He flew on Lancaster planes with the No. 426 “Thunderbird” Squadron.

Flight-Lieutenant Coulombe completed an operational tour of 30 missions, which was an impressive accomplishment as it was extremely dangerous duty.

His bomber was once attacked by two German fighters, but Coulombe managed to escape and safely land his crippled aircraft.

Of Coulombe’s 30 missions, he flew a record 12 raids over Berlin, the most heavily defended city in Germany. A raid on Berlin, deep inside German territory, meant flying for more than seven hours through a gauntlet of enemy fighter planes and formidable anti-aircraft defenses. Coulombe was nicknamed “The Berlin Kid” and awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, Coulombe became a dentist. He was inducted in the Quebec Air and Space Hall of Fame in 2003 and died in 2010.



Roger Coulombe during the Second World War

Photo: Fondation Aéronavale Québec

The Lord of the Rings

Sam Jacks was an inventor and a Canadian soldier. He was born in Scotland in 1915, and his family immigrated to Canada when he was six years old. In his twenties, Jacks introduced a new game played in a gym using a straight stick and a felt ring. He called this Floor Hockey, and later created the first official rules.



Sam Jacks returning from the war, met by his bride Agnes and their son Barry.

Photo supplied by Bruce Jacks from family memorabilia

Jacks served with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion during the Second World War. While in England, he met and married Agnes, who was a worker at a munitions factory. She immigrated with their son Barry to Canada as a war bride.

Sam Jacks wasn’t done with sports. He coached a junior Olympics track and field team and invented a new type of ice sport for girls. Using a ring instead of a puck, a straight stick and a special set of rules, ringette was born in 1963 in North Bay, Ontario. Over the last 50 years, ringette has thrived and is now played in rinks worldwide.

D-Day: 70 Years Later

If you were to walk today on the beaches of Normandy, France, you would likely be struck by their serenity and beauty. But 70 years ago, the Canadian soldiers who went ashore there on D-Day were met with a very different scene.



Canadians approaching D-Day beaches during the Second World War.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-132790

By mid-1944, Germany had occupied much of Western Europe for four years. To defend the conquered territory, the Germans heavily fortified the coast with mines, beach obstacles, barbed wire, heavy artillery, machine guns and troops. An Allied assault would be an enormous challenge and would take years of careful preparation. On June 6, 1944, the time had finally come. Canadian, British and American forces landed along an 80-kilometre stretch of shoreline in

Northwest France, supported by a massive naval fleet and thousands of warplanes.

More than 14,000 Canadian soldiers went ashore at Juno Beach that day, with some 340 losing their lives. It was only the beginning of the tough Battle of Normandy, but the Allies had finally cracked the walls of Fortress Europe.

Canadians in the Italian Campaign

At dawn on July 10, 1943, the Allies launched Operation *Husky*, the invasion of Sicily. This sun-baked Mediterranean island would be captured after weeks of hard fighting. This was only the beginning of the Second World War’s bitter Italian Campaign, in which the Canadians would play an important role.



Canadian tank near Potenza, Italy, September 1943.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-144103

After the Allies went ashore in mainland Italy on September 3, 1943, they faced a difficult advance against skilled German troops. The Allies kept pushing forward in the many months that followed despite the mountainous Italian terrain and challenging weather. In one well-known chapter of this campaign, during Christmas 1943, the Canadians were thrust into a fierce battle for Ortona. Stones from shattered buildings littered the coastal town’s steep and narrow streets, making it impossible for tanks to pass. Our soldiers grimly fought from building to building until Ortona was finally taken on December 28. The troops then continued their push north, fighting in the Liri Valley and helping breach the Hitler Line in central Italy.

Our troops would not take part in the final Allied victory in Italy, however. By February 1945, they had joined the 1st Canadian Army in Northwestern Europe. The Canadians had fought bravely in Italy, but this came at a high cost. They suffered approximately 26,000 casualties, including almost 6,000 dead.

Canada’s Most Decorated Naval Officer

Prince Edward Island-born Frederic “Fritz” Peters had the rare distinction of receiving medals for valour in both the First and the Second World War.

After growing up in British Columbia, he joined the Royal Navy in 1905 at the age of 16. He was serving aboard HMS *Meteor* during the First World War when it was torpedoed by a German cruiser in January 1915. With incredible calmness, Peters rushed to the burning engine room and saved the ship. This action earned him the Distinguished Service Order—a first for a Canadian. He was decorated again in 1918 when he received the Distinguished Service Cross for his skills in attacking enemy submarines.

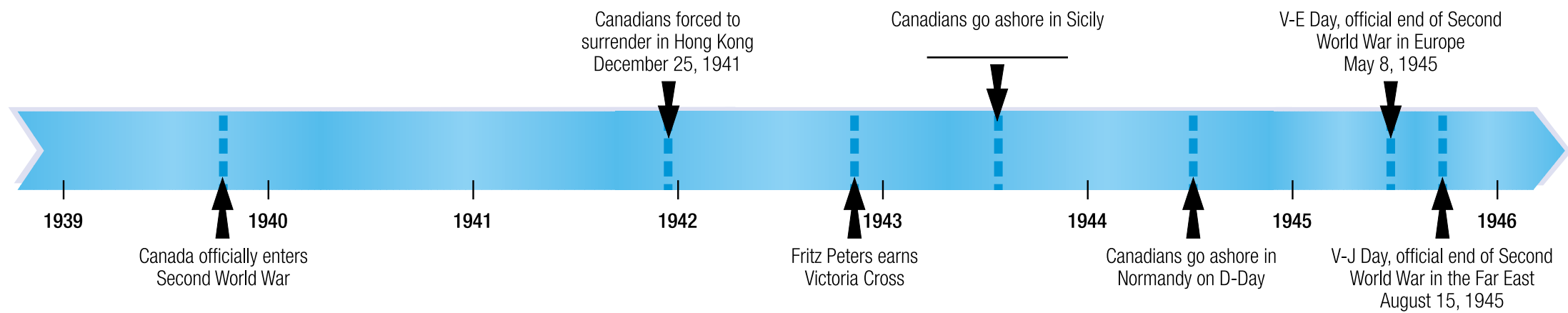


Photo: Public domain

Peters returned to service in the Second World War and saw action during an invasion of North Africa. On November 8, 1942, Peters’ ship entered an enemy harbour and the vessel was damaged by point-blank fire. He still managed to land his ship and secure the lines so the surviving troops could disembark. Unfortunately, the ship took a direct hit in the engine room that blew Peters off the bridge. Blinded in one eye, he was one of the few survivors.

Frederic Peters

Peters was flying back to England five days later to report on the mission when his plane crashed at sea and he was killed. He was posthumously awarded the highest decorations for valour he could receive from the United States and Britain—the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross and the Victoria Cross.



Twenty-Nine Courageous Canadians

More than 26,000 Canadians served on land, in the air and at sea during the 1950–1953 Korean War. There were famous battles, but not everyone has heard of the 29 courageous Canadians who fought at Song-gok Spur. This handful of soldiers from the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment were manning a forward outpost in central Korea on the night of November 2–3, 1951, when they were suddenly attacked.



Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment during the Korean War.

Photo courtesy of Red Butler

Enemy artillery, mortar and rifle fire pounded in as waves of Chinese soldiers stormed the Canadians. With great skill and courage, the platoon held out for some eight hours against incredible odds, driving the enemy back again and again. One of our men would be killed and more than half wounded in the battle, but the 29 Canadian heroes had done it, effectively stopping a major enemy attack.

Fighting at the Hook



Image: Canadian War Museum

'Welcome Party', a painting by Canadian war artist Ted Zuber depicting scene at the Hook.

During the Korean War, one of the front-line sectors where our soldiers saw action was in the area nicknamed “the Hook.”

Korea is a rugged land, criss-crossed with many ranges of high hills and deep valleys. After the dynamic early months of the war that saw the fighting rapidly sweep up and down the Korean Peninsula, the front stabilized close to the 38th parallel. The United Nations forces and the communist forces would soon dig in with well-fortified defensive lines that

would move little during the rest of the war.

The Hook was a curved piece of high ground on the United Nations' Jamestown Line, which overlooked the Sami-chon River Valley near where it joins the larger Imjin River. Its strategic location made it a site of sharp clashes. Canadian soldiers spent much time holding the line at the Hook in 1952 and 1953, building up its defences and repelling raids to help ensure it did not fall into enemy hands.

A Heavy Loss in the Middle East

Canada's long and proud history of service in international peace support efforts is a point of national pride. In recognition of this fact, our country marks National Peacekeepers' Day every August 9.

This date was chosen because it was on that day, in 1974, that nine Canadian peacekeepers were killed in the Middle East. Their military transport plane was shot down by Syrian missiles. It was the heaviest single day loss our country has ever suffered in a peace support mission.

The service and sacrifice of these nine Canadians—and of all of our brave men and women who have served in these efforts—have not been forgotten.



Photo: Department of National Defence IC 2002-9012c

Our country's 'Reconciliation' – The Peacekeeping Monument is located in Ottawa.

Keeping the Peace in Cyprus

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Canada's participation in United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Cyprus. The people of this Mediterranean island were largely of Greek descent, along with a smaller Turkish population. After Cyprus gained its independence from Britain in 1960, long-simmering internal tensions erupted into open violence in 1964.



Canadian peacekeepers patrolling the Green Line in Cyprus in 1974.

Photo: Department of National Defence CYPC74-295

Our country would soon intervene with a United Nations peacekeeping effort there. A large contingent of Canadians served in Cyprus between 1964 and 1993. Our soldiers helped diffuse conflicts between the two sides and a fragile peace was maintained for almost a decade. Unfortunately, this balance was rocked in 1974 when thousands of soldiers from neighbouring Turkey invaded and occupied the northern portion of the island. Canadian Armed Forces members suddenly found themselves in the middle of a war zone. The island would end up split into two parts, separated by the “Green Line” buffer zone that runs the full width of Cyprus—a situation that continues today.

More than 25,000 Canadians have served in Cyprus over the past five decades, with 28 losing their lives. While we no longer have a large force there, our country's commitment continues with Operation *Snowgoose*. An official Government of Canada delegation recently travelled to the island with Veterans who had served there over the years.

Honouring All Who Have Served

The National War Memorial is a powerful tribute to the Canadians who have served in uniform. It stands in Confederation Square, in the heart of downtown Ottawa.

Surmounting this immense granite arch are bronze figures that represent Peace and Freedom. Under the arch, 22 figures represent the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who fought in the First World War. In 1982, the memorial was rededicated to also recognize the sacrifices of those who served in the Second World War and the Korean War.

Sadly, since the Korean War, an additional 1,800 Canadians have died in service. The Government of Canada rededicated the memorial once more in 2014 to honour all of the Canadians who have served in the cause of peace and freedom over the years.

Every November 11th, on Remembrance Day, thousands of people solemnly gather at the National War Memorial. Wreaths are laid and two minutes of silence are observed in memory of all the Canadians who have served.



Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

National War Memorial in Ottawa.

What's in a Name?

Last year, students at Thorndale Public School in Brampton, Ontario, launched a unique project to remember fallen soldiers and connect with them in a personal way. They created a large mural to honour the 391 Canadian soldiers who died in service on November 11 over the years, from the South African War to today.

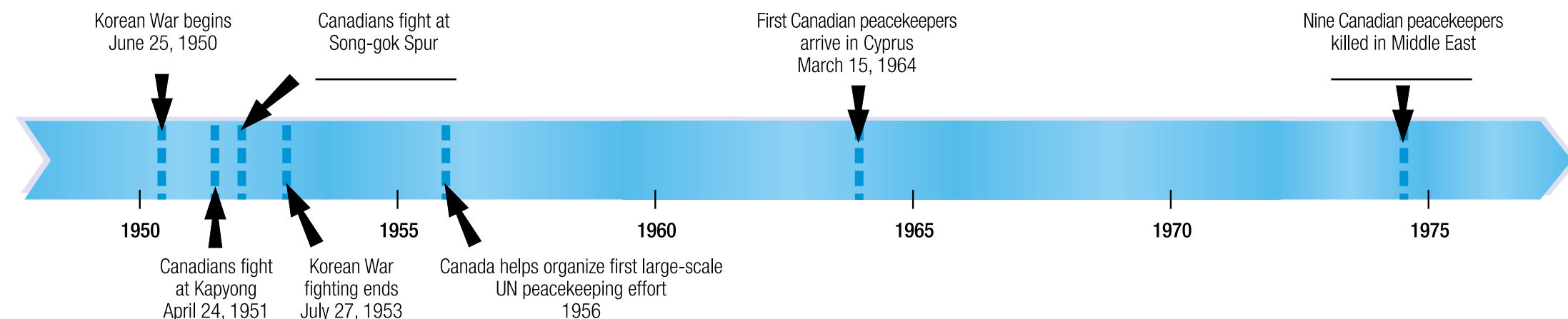


Photo: Chris So / Toronto Star

Students at Thorndale Public School in Brampton, Ontario, write the names of 391 soldiers who died on November 11 in Canada's wars.

Students were assigned one or two soldiers. They learned the names by heart and during a special assembly, went up to the mural and wrote them on the canvas. Many of these students are first-generation Canadians. The children may not have a relative who served in Canada's past conflicts, but they each developed a connection to our country's heritage. They now know a name.

By the end of the assembly, the mural was covered with poppies, hearts, maple leaves and Canadian flags scattered among the 391 names. What a great way to remember!



The Canadian Armed Forces Leave Afghanistan

Students in this year’s graduating classes were just in kindergarten when the first Canadian Armed Forces members arrived in Afghanistan more than 12 years ago.

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States set off a chain of events that would see Canada join a multinational campaign to oust the Taliban government from Afghanistan. These extremists had sheltered al-Qaeda, the terrorist group behind the deadly attacks in the United States. Our navy and air force patrolled the waters of the Arabian Sea looking for boats engaged in illegal activities. Our army hit the ground to help defeat the Taliban forces and try to stabilize the long-troubled country. Danger was never far away, but our soldiers would experience their most perilous duty in the enemy hotbed of Kandahar Province. Road-side explosions, ambushes and rocket attacks were a constant threat. In 2011, the Canadian efforts shifted to training the Afghan military and police forces to help them better secure their own country.

More than 40,000 Canadians served in this rugged Southwest Asian country. Sadly, 158 of them lost their lives there and hundreds more were wounded. Our military efforts in Afghanistan ended in March 2014, at which time our country’s flag was lowered there for the last time, was brought home and was then featured in a commemorative national parade.



A view of Parliament Hill in Ottawa during the National Day of Honour Ceremony on May 9, 2014.

PMO photo by Jason Ransom

Olympian Soldier

With the 2014 Winter Olympic Games having taken place in Sochi this year, it seems fitting to remember Olympian soldier Mark Graham.

Born in Jamaica, Mark moved to Hamilton, Ontario, with his family when he was a child. An exceptional athlete, he was a member of the Canadian 4 x 400 metres relay team in the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. Graham’s skills in track-and-field would also earn him athletic scholarships at American universities.



Private Mark Graham

Photo: Department of National Defence

In 2004, he enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces. Private Graham was sent to Afghanistan with the Royal Canadian Regiment. Sadly, the 33-year-old was killed by friendly fire on September 6, 2006, when his platoon was mistakenly attacked by an American warplane during an operation to capture a Taliban stronghold west of Kandahar. Graham is buried at the National Military Cemetery in Ottawa.

Operation Renaissance in the Philippines

The Southeast Asian country of the Philippines was hit hard by Typhoon Haiyan on November 8, 2013. Canadians responded immediately, donating supplies and money to help international organizations assist the local population in need.



Canadian DART Liaison Officer in Philippines, 2013.

Photo: Department of National Defence IS2013-2006-103

The Canadian Armed Forces were quick to deploy personnel to the troubled area, sending the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART). The first DART members arrived on November 15 to provide much needed humanitarian assistance. During Operation *Renaissance*, DART members helped clear roads, re-established communications, repaired power lines, purified water and treated the injured. More than 300 Canadians took part in the operation, which came to an end on December 15, 2013.

Canine Comrades

Gunfire, mayhem and death; Canadian Armed Forces members who saw action in places like Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and Afghanistan experienced things that often had a lasting effect on them. Those battlefields caused not only physical injuries, but also many invisible scars.

Operational stress injuries, like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), can result from traumatic experiences. Symptoms vary from person to person, but can include things like depression, anxiety, flashbacks and nightmares.

Traditionally, those diagnosed with PTSD are treated with counselling and medication. However, is it possible that man’s best friend could also help? Some Veterans have had positive results by also using service dogs. These special dogs are trained to perform tasks for their handlers, such as reminding them to take their medication, guiding them away from stressful situations, or helping to support them if they become dizzy.

While dogs once helped deliver medicine to soldiers on the battlefields in the First World War, they are still looking after soldiers’ health today in a very comforting way.



Specially-trained dogs have long helped soldiers during times of war and may also offer comfort for some Veterans after their service.

Photo: Department of National Defence IS2010-3031-20

Women’s Brush with War

In a time before modern technology transformed the way we share information, war art was an important way of capturing Canada’s efforts in the two world wars. Hundreds of thousands of women had to assume many new responsibilities and perform tasks traditionally dominated by men. Some women artists were soon asked to portray this “women’s work.”

For example, during the First World War, Mabel May used an impressionist technique to show women working in munitions factories. During the Second World War, Molly Lamb Bobak, Pegi Nicol MacLeod and Paraskeva Clark were some of Canada’s leading female war artists.

Their artwork helps us see the war years from a female perspective. Mothers of soldiers, factory girls, military nurses, and women serving in a variety of roles with the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, the Women’s Royal Canadian Naval Service, and the Royal Canadian Air Force - Women’s Division were immortalized for future generations. These artists’ creations help paint a fuller picture of our collective memory of war. Several women today are part of the Canadian Forces Artists Program. They have been deployed to places such as Kosovo and Afghanistan, ushering in a new era of Canadian military art.



‘Private Roy, Canadian Women’s Army Corps’ by war artist Molly Lamb Bobak.

Image: Canadian War Museum 19710261-1626

Crossword

ACROSS

- 3. Area in Afghanistan where Canadians saw dangerous duties.
- 4. City where Milton Gregg enlisted during the First World War.
- 5. Hometown of Roger Coulombe, “the Berlin Kid.”
- 7. Codename of beach where Canadians came ashore on D-Day.
- 8. Italian town where Canadians fought during Christmas 1943.
- 9. Southeast Asian country where the DART team was deployed in 2013.
- 10. Place in Belgium where George Baker was killed in action.

DOWN

- 1. Codename of the ongoing Canadian military operation in Cyprus.
- 2. City in British Columbia where Private George McLean was born.
- 6. Last name of Olympian soldier who was killed in Afghanistan.

