

Tales of Animals in War



A trip to remember

"Woof! Hey everyone, I'm Gandy the dog. I'm here with my animal friends, looking at our amazing photos. What a summer our Remembrance Clubhouse had. We travelled to France in July. It was a trip to remember!"

"We arrived on July 1st in time for a special ceremony at the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial. Being a Newfoundland dog myself, it was important for me to go there," barked Gandy. "Canadians celebrate Canada Day on July 1st, but for Newfoundlanders like me, it is also a day of remembrance. On that date 100 years ago in 1916, the Newfoundland Regiment fought at Beaumont-Hamel on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Sadly they suffered terrible losses. There is a special monument there to remember those who died. It is a statue of a caribou, an animal known to many Newfoundlanders. We had a moment of silence and then took a group selfie around it."

"After we left, we stopped along the way to look at some poppy flowers growing on the side of the road and took more photos,"

purred Simone the cat. "The poppies were gently blowing in the wind as we recited the famous poem *In Flanders Fields*."

"We then travelled to Vimy. The beautiful monument towers above the area where the Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought in April 1917. Did you know the 100th anniversary of this important event will be commemorated next year?" growled Win the bear excitedly.

"You can see the majestic Canadian National Vimy Memorial in this neat photo I snapped with my trunk. It's even bigger than me if you can imagine!" trumpeted Ellie the elephant.

"It was designed by Walter Allward, a famous Canadian sculptor," neighed Bonfire Jr. the horse. "The two tall white pillars represent Canada and France. Carefully engraved around the base of the memorial are more than 11,000 names of Canadians who died in France during the First World War and have no known graves."

"If you could fly like me you would have had a great bird's eye view of all the interesting sculptures that are attached to the memorial," squeaked Squeaker the pigeon. "These symbolic figures represent concepts like sacrifice, peace and hope."

"Wow, a lot of thought went into the design of both the Beaumont-Hamel and Vimy Memorials," woofed Gandy. "If you could create a monument to remember our brave Canadian men and women who served in uniform, what would it look like?"



The caribou: here, there, everywhere



Gandy

Being from the “Rock”, as Newfoundland is known, I take a great interest in our province’s military history. My ancestor Gander served in the Second World War and received a Dickin Medal for bravery. I’m pretty proud of him.

To remember the sacrifices made during the First World War, the people of Newfoundland erected caribou statues at Beaumont-Hamel and five other sites in France, Belgium and Newfoundland. It is a special caribou trail of remembrance.

The caribou is an important symbol to the people of

Newfoundland and Labrador. They are native animals there and can be found on the cap badge of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment as they symbolize the strength of its soldiers.

During the First World War, you could also find the caribou emblem on hockey sweaters and special pins that were



sold at home to raise money to help the soldiers overseas. Caribous could also be seen engraved on the headstones of Newfoundlanders who died and on bronze memorial plaques. This tradition continues today as a recent project saw the Royal Newfoundland Regiment caribou added to more than three dozen street signs in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador’s capital city.

Animals as symbols of remembrance are a great choice. Bow wow! It makes me want to wag my tail!

Royal Newfoundland Regiment hockey team in 1917.
Photo: The Rooms Provincial Archives Division, SANL 1.26.01.074

Tunnels, sheep and socks!

When we visited Beaumont-Hamel and Vimy Ridge, I liked seeing all the sheep! Did you know that these cute woolly animals are put to work keeping the grass short on these old battlefields for a very good reason? There are still many unexploded artillery shells from the First World War under the soil there and people with lawn mowers could potentially get hurt ... luckily the sheep can do this chore safely.

While we were at Vimy, we saw lots of trenches and tunnels that soldiers actually dug with picks and shovels here during the war. Underground tunnels were very useful as they helped protect soldiers from enemy fire. Some of them were pretty fancy, even

having electric lights, piped water and storage spaces—but they sure weren’t comfortable for the men.

When I first saw the sheep, it reminded me of a special way that people back home helped the soldiers during the war. Women

would knit thousands of pairs of warm woolen socks and gloves to send to the men who were serving overseas, stuck outside at all times of the year. Hmmm, maybe I could get wool from the sheep here and make socks for all the Remembrance Clubhouse animals. It sure would take a lot to make some large enough to fit my big feet, though!



Ellie



Sheep grazing at Vimy Ridge in France.
Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

A foal named Vimy

Life for Canadian soldiers in the First World War was tough. They often had to march for hours carrying a rifle, ammunition, a heavy sack, a gas mask, shovels and more. They were strong young men, but they needed help to get much needed supplies to the front lines. In fact, tonnes of ammunition and rations had to be hauled each day—about the weight of several elephants like Ellie! Thankfully hard-working pack horses helped ease the load.

Horses like me were the backbone of the army, and 50,000 were shipped from Canada overseas to carry supplies and pull artillery guns. With so

many horses around, sometimes there were even baby animals born on the battlefield. One little horse was born on Vimy Ridge, and soldiers named the cute foal Vimy. It is neat to be named after something so important as this iconic Canadian battle of April 1917. For our soldiers, many of whom grew up on farms, looking after Vimy must have been a welcome break from the harsh life in the trenches. Having a young animal to care for helped keep their minds off their worries, even if it was just for a moment.

I like stories like this. After all, I am named in honour of

my ancestor Bonfire who was the horse of John McCrae, the Canadian First World War army doctor who wrote the famous poem *In Flanders Fields*.



Vimy the foal with its mother and a friendly Canadian soldier.
Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-001690



Bonfire Jr.

Snuggly stuffed mascots

While many real animals have been mascots and special friends for Canadians who served in the military over the years, these days it is more common for stuffed animals to play this role.

I heard a neat story about a Canadian navy ship that had a cuddly plush penguin mascot named Quincy. Years ago, one of the officers of HMCS *Terra Nova* brought Quincy to meet the students of Sidney Elementary School, in British Columbia, and described the many adventures that his

little friend had experienced around the world. The kids were inspired to get a cool school mascot of their own, so Percy the penguin soon arrived on the scene.

In a neat stuffed animal connection, the students and sailors began to exchange letters, sharing stories about what their penguin buddies had been doing. It was great! The men and women at sea had a chance to take their minds off more serious matters during their duties in places like the Middle East in the Gulf War of 1990-1991. In turn,

the children made many new friends and were able to show these brave Canadians serving so far from home that they were remembered and appreciated. Hearing this story makes my pigeon feathers fluff up in joy. I think we should all write letters to Canadian Armed Forces members to show that we care, too!



Squeaker

DID YOU KNOW?

A large Newfoundland dog named Sable Chief was the mascot of the Newfoundland Regiment during the First World War. He would march with the regimental band and visit wounded troops. Sable Chief could even respectfully stand still at the playing of the Newfoundland anthem. The furry friend really boosted the spirit of the regiment.

Painting on a steel canvas



Win

Travelling in Europe last summer was a great way to be exposed to lots of art. I have developed a new appreciation for it and recently watched a documentary on art made during wartime. It was really interesting! The part that surprised me the most is when they showed pictures of specially decorated military vehicles. During the First World War, some tanks were painted with the maple leaf, years before this symbol was selected to be on Canada's flag. These artists were visionaries!

In the Second World War, many different drawings were done on planes. There were so many that there was even a name for that: nose art. Some planes proudly displayed the squadron's emblems, while others had mythical



creatures like dragons or famous cartoons like Bugs Bunny. Special camouflage patterns were also painted on ships, to make them less visible to the enemy.

The tradition of military art continues today and I was amazed by the talent of artists who painted cool images on Canadian helicopters that flew in Afghanistan. Keep up the creativity!

Canadian helicopter with "Wildcat" team mascot artwork on its nose.
Photo: Cplbeaudoin

Unknown but not forgotten

Vimy and Beaumont-Hamel are so amazing, but Canada has some beautiful war monuments too. The National War Memorial, in Ottawa, honours Canadians who fought and died for our country. In front of it can be found another very special memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It contains the remains of an unidentified Canadian who died during the First World War and was originally buried at a war cemetery in France. In the year 2000, however, this fallen soldier was taken back home to Canada.

The Unknown Soldier's casket was placed on Parliament Hill where thousands of people came by to pay their respects. He was then reburied in a major ceremony

where he came to represent all the Canadian men and women in uniform who have given their lives in service over the years. The low stone tomb is decorated with a bronze helmet and big sword, and has maple and laurel leaves on top. You can also find poppies and other neat symbolism around it, too. If you visit after a remembrance ceremony, you will also see that people really like to leave their own red poppies on it to show they care.

And the headstone that the unknown soldier originally had in France? It can now be found in its own special room at the Canadian War Museum, only about a two-kilometre cat stroll from the National War Memorial!



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa.
Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

Simone



Newspaper Activities



Who said...?

Do you have an elephant's memory? Try to remember which Remembrance Clubhouse animal said what.

"It was a trip to remember"



Bonfire Jr.

"The poppies were gently blowing in the wind"



Ellie

"We then travelled to Vimy"



Gandy

"You can see the majestic Canadian National Vimy Memorial"



Simone

"The two tall white pillars represent Canada and France"



Squeaker

"These symbolic figures represent concepts like sacrifice"



Win

Be my
Valentine!

Did you know that there is a crafty way to say thank you to many Veterans? Simply use construction paper, markers and your imagination to create special Valentine's Day cards for these real-life heroes. A few words of appreciation can tell our Veterans that young Canadians care about them. Many schools and organizations across the country already participate. Hooray for Valentines for Vets!

Hidden Word

Place all these words at the right spot in the grid below to reveal the hidden word.

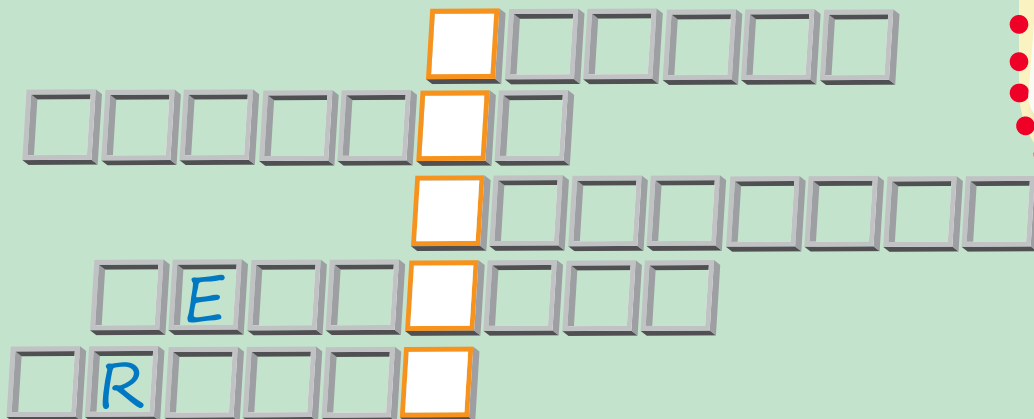
CARIBOU

FRANCE

MONUMENT

REGIMENT

STATUE



Hidden word: _____

Clue: Battle fought by Newfoundlanders and Canadians in 1916.

DID YOU KNOW?

Stuffed animals have long been found by the sides of Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen. "Ruthless Robert" was the fuzzy mascot of the aircrew that flew on a Canadian bomber plane in Europe during the Second World War. Now that is one tough-sounding name for such a cute stuffed wildcat!



"Ruthless Robert" with friend in a plane during the war.
Photo: National Defence Image Library PL 28520.

Word Search

The following list of words are placed horizontally, vertically and diagonally, both forwards and back-to-front in the word search.

When you have spotted a word, simply circle it.

Have fun!

A	S	O	M	M	E	A	A	S	K	S	Q	T	S
R	F	N	S	V	R	N	D	L	A	N	H	N	C
S	S	G	E	C	I	F	I	R	C	A	S	E	U
T	I	A	H	M	L	E	T	A	C	R	E	M	L
A	O	L	A	A	C	A	M	F	S	E	Z	I	P
T	W	L	E	N	N	O	I	R	F	T	N	G	T
U	O	A	A	N	U	I	T	R	T	E	O	E	U
E	V	R	T	F	C	N	S	U	O	V	R	R	R
W	F	F	L	T	E	E	N	T	B	M	B	N	E
B	E	A	U	M	O	N	T	H	A	M	E	L	S
W	G	M	U	S	E	F	T	Z	Y	N	T	M	V
E	R	N	Q	L	C	A	R	I	B	O	U	V	I
P	O	Y	S	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	Y	D	M
M	C	A	N	A	D	A	E	P	O	R	U	E	Y

AFGHANISTAN

OTTAWA

ANIMAL

RATION

ART

REGIMENT

BEAUMONTHAMEL

SACRIFICE

BRONZE

SCULPTURE

CAMOUFLAGE

SILENCE

CANADA

SOMME

CARIBOU

STATUE

EUROPE

TUNNEL

FRANCE

VETERAN

MEMORIAL

VIMY

MONUMENT