Veterans' Week Special Edition - November 5 to 11, 2017

anada's great victory at Vimy Ridge during the First World War was perhaps the most iconic battle in our country's long and proud military history. After months of careful preparation and training, on April 9, 1917, all four Canadian divisions went into action together for the first time to take the heavily defended hill in northern France.

The first wave of more than 15,000 Canadian troops surged up Vimy Ridge in the face of heavy fire. The Allied artillery successfully

Victory at Vimy

employed a creeping barrage—an advancing line of carefully timed and precisely aimed shell fire which forced the Germans to take cover. The Canadians followed behind as closely as they dared and when the barrage lifted to the next line of targets, our soldiers overran and captured the enemy positions before the dazed German defenders could react

It was hard fighting but most of the ridge was captured by noon that day, with the remainder being taken into Canadian hands by April 12. Our soldiers had won a remarkable victory but this success came at a great cost. Some 3,600 Canadians lost their lives and more than 7,000 were wounded. Many have said that the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which saw Canadians

together to triumph, was a pivotal chapter in Canada's development into a strong and independent country.

The spring of 2017 saw several major commemorative events held both in France and in communities across Canada to mark the 100th anniversary of this enduring point of Canadian pride. How did your school or community mark this milestone?



Canadian soldiers advancing at Vimy Ridge.

On the beaches of Dieppe



"Dieppe Raid" painting by war artist Charles Comfort.

Today the French port of Dieppe is a beautiful seaside resort town but in 1942 its cobblestone beaches saw a very different scene during the Second World War.

Almost 5,000 Canadian soldiers took part in the Dieppe Raid on August 19, 1942. These daring landings at Dieppe, Puys and Pourville on the shores of occupied France were undertaken for several reasons. The Allies wanted to test enemy defences, gather intelligence on German technology and secret military codes, as well as practise coastal landing techniques for future operations. They also were hoping to take some pressure off the Soviet allies who were locked in a massive struggle with the Germans on the Eastern Front.

Sadly, things did not go as planned and the strong German

defences took a dreadful toll on the attacking Canadians. Some 916 of our servicemen were killed in the ill-fated raid and almost 2,000 more were taken prisoner. It was the bloodiest single day of the entire war for Canada.

Jack Poolton of Ontario was there...

"So I staggered up the beach and all I could see was dead men and pieces of bodies scattered everywhere and we landed right in front of... a belt-fed [German] machine gun that never stopped firing..."

Special ceremonies were held in Canada and overseas in August 2017 to mark the 75th anniversary of the Dieppe Raid. The people of France remember what our brave soldiers did to help their country regain its freedom, and so do we.

A brutal battlefield

Canadian soldiers saw action in many tough struggles during the First World War but few were as harsh as the Third Battle of Ypres, better known as the Battle of Passchendaele. This Allied offensive was launched by British, Australian and New Zealander forces in Belgium at the end of July 1917. As the fighting dragged on, heavy rains soon turned the battlefield into a sea of deep muck. Canadians were moved to this front in the autumn and on October 26, our soldiers launched their first in a series of attacks to drive the Germans back.

It was a nightmare—the Canadians were forced to advance across a desolate landscape of mud in the face of heavy German machine gun and artillery fire. There was little cover from the hail of bullets

and shrapnel as the men scrambled past countless shell holes that were filled with cold, filthy water and—all too often—the remains of fallen soldiers.

Slowly but surely, the Canadians were able to capture new ground. On November 6, the ruined village of Passchendaele itself was captured and by November 10 the remainder of Passchendaele Ridge was in Allied hands. The battle finally ground to a halt, with our soldiers having succeeded in the face of almost unimaginable hardships. This impressive victory had only come at a terrible cost, with almost 16,000 Canadian soldiers killed, wounded or taken prisoner. The fall of 2017 marks the centennial of this significant battle—how will you remember?



A destroyed Allied tank on the muddy Passchendaele battlefield.

Did you know?

The town of Léger's Corner in southeastern New Brunswick changed its name to Dieppe in 1946 to honour those who gave their lives in the ill-fated Dieppe Raid during the Second World War.



Fighting at Hill 70



Canadian troops in a captured German trench on Hill 70 in August 1917.

One of the most impressive Canadian victories during the First World War came at the Battle of Hill 70 in France during the summer of 1917. The Allied high command

tasked our soldiers with capturing the coal mining town of Lens and Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie, recently appointed as commander of the Canadian Corps, came up with a clever plan.

On August 15, 1917—after extensive planning, training and diversionary actions elsewhere—the Canadians launched a surprise attack on the slopes of nearby Hill 70. Knowing that the Germans would not want to allow the strategically-important hill to remain in Allied hands, Currie had ordered the Canadians to immediately set up strong defences to cut down the inevitable enemy counterattacks. The plan worked as the shocked Germans would unleash a total of 21 assaults in the days that followed and suffered huge casualties in the face of

250 Canadian machine guns and punishing artillery fire.

It was then the Canadians' turn to again go on the offensive as they turned their attention to Lens itself. On August 21 and 23, the Canadians clawed their way forward, capturing portions of the blasted town and suffering heavy casualties of their own before the battle finally ground to a halt on August 25. Despite not having achieved all of its objectives, the Battle of Hill 70 had been a remarkable success. The victory came at a high price, however, with some 9,200 of our soldiers being killed or wounded. A hundred years later, Canada still remembers the courage and sacrifice of those who fought there.

Boots on the ground in Afghanistan A fallen hero

The first regular rotation of Canadian Armed Forces members deployed to Afghanistan in early 2002. Our brave men and women in uniform were sent to this war-torn country in southwest Asia as part of the international community's response to the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Our country's efforts there were our most significant overseas military mission in decades. A total of more than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members would serve in the Afghanistan theatre of operations over the years by the time the mission came to an end in March 2014.

Canada's military played a variety of roles in Afghanistan, from active combat against the Taliban regime to national development and humanitarian efforts. Our service members also helped train the Afghan police and military forces to give them the tools to better protect the people of their own country.



Canadian soldiers in eastern Afghanistan in March 2002.

The threat of violence was never far away when our men and women in uniform left the relative safety of their bases to go "outside of the wire." The possibility of improvised explosive devices, suicide attacks and enemy ambush was very real and some 158 Canadian Armed Forces

members sadly lost their lives during the Afghanistan mission. Many more came home with injuries to bodies and mind that they would have to live with for years to come. Their courage and sacrifice will never be forgotten.



Trooper Marc Diab

One of the courageous Canadian Armed Forces members who lost his life in Afghanistan was Trooper Marc Diab of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. He was killed northeast of Kandahar City on March 8, 2009, when an improvised explosive device blast hit the armoured vehicle in which he was traveling. Four other Canadian soldiers were also wounded in the attack. Diab was only 22 years old and was due to return home in just a few weeks. The avid photographer had taken thousands of pictures and short videos of his time overseas to share via social media.

Our country's military reflects the richness of Canada's diverse society today. Diab was born in Lebanon and immigrated to Ontario with his family as a young teenager where he would soon become active in his church and community. His loss hit his hometown hard and Trooper Marc Diab Memorial Park was unveiled in Mississauga in 2010. A film about his remarkable life called "If I Should Fall" was also released that year.

Canadians in the war-torn **Balkans**



Canadian soldiers on patrol in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1999.

Tens of thousands of Canadian Armed Forces members served over the years in peace support missions in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Macedonia—new nations that arose out of the ashes of the former Balkan country of Yugoslavia.

Large-scale peacekeeping efforts (initially known as the United Nations Protection Force, or UNPROFOR) began there 25 years ago this year in 1992. The situations that Canadian Armed Forces members encountered in the wartorn land wracked by ethnic hatred were unique. Our troops performed many roles, like monitoring fragile cease-fires and forcing open lines of supply to besieged areas in order to bring in humanitarian supplies to civilians. In the waters of the Adriatic Sea, our country deployed naval and air resources to assist the UN in its blockade of arms shipments to the region. Canadians also tried to protect areas of ethnic minorities, took part in air strikes to defend vulnerable groups, cleared mines and helped rebuild a shattered society.

Today, the active fighting is over but the recovery there continues. The last sizable Canadian Armed Forces presence left the region in 2004, but not before a total of 23 Canadians had lost their lives in the various missions in the Balkans. Many more of our men and women in uniform came home with injuries to body and mind whose effects continue to this day.

Bluebirds at the ballot box

In the early 1900s, Canadian women struggled to gain the right to vote. Women's suffrage groups existed but the general view at the time was that giving women political equality would cause domestic strife.

During the First World War, it became harder to ignore this injustice. After all, women were also serving in the war as Nursing Sisters (nicknamed the "Bluebirds" because of their distinctive blue uniforms and white veils). On the home front, women were taking on new roles in factories and on farms, as well as holding their families together while the men were fighting overseas. They were also working in various organizations

that supported the war effort such as the Red Cross. Women wanted and deserved to be fully active on the political front, as well.

One hundred years ago, finally some women were allowed to vote in the December 1917 federal election. The Military Voters Act gave the right to vote to women who were serving or had a relative in the military. Because of the time difference between France and Canada, the Nursing Sisters who were serving in Europe were actually the first women to cast their ballots. This was a major milestone for women gaining universal voting rights across the country.



Canadian Nursing sisters voting in Europe in 1917.

Dieppe hits families hard



Bernadette Rivait with photos of her sons who had served in uniform.

It is difficult to imagine the stress felt by parents when their sons or daughters are serving in uniform during times of conflict. The news that something bad has happened to their loved ones is a message that families dread receiving. Imagine if the tragic news came not once, but multiple times. Sadly, during the First and Second World Wars, this was the experience of some families.

Just after the Dieppe Raid in France on August 19, 1942, Elizabeth Murphy received four separate telegrams in the span of a day that a son was missing in action. All four brothers were serving with the Essex Scottish Regiment from Windsor, Ontario—a unit which had been practically decimated at Dieppe.

Bernadette Rivait, another mother with sons in the same regiment, received similar news. Two of her five sons were killed in action at Dieppe and one was taken as a prisoner of war. Two years later, another tragic message came that a fourth son had been killed in the Netherlands. In her role as National Silver Cross Mother in 1964, Mrs. Rivait laid a wreath at the national Remembrance Day ceremony in Ottawa on behalf of all those who had lost children in military service.

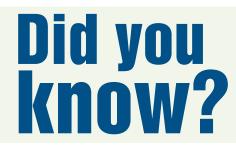
A family tradition



Louis Arcand in uniform during the Second

Louis Arcand, a farmer from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, was born in 1897. He enlisted with the 232nd Battalion in 1916 and served during the First World War. Although he was wounded in August 1918, he decided to serve again during the Second World War. He joined the Veterans Guard, a special group of soldiers who had seen action during the previous war. These seasoned soldiers were tasked with protecting military targets across the country and guarding prisoners of war.

Louis was not the only one of his family to serve in war. Remarkably, he was followed by his ten sons, who all volunteered in the Armed Forces during the Second World War. Two sons, Clément and Patrick, even went on to serve in the Korean War with the Canadian Army Special Force. What a huge contribution by one family!



Canadian teenagers too young to fight served in uniform during the South African War as buglers. These loud horns were used as a way to signal the soldiers to charge on a noisy battlefield. Douglas Williams of Toronto was one such boy bugler who, during the bloody Battle of Paardeberg on February 18, 1900, jumped atop an anthill and sounded the call to charge while bullets flew around him. Fortunately, he survived and would also serve again during the First World War.

The painting "Incoming" by Edward Zuber depicting Canadian action at Hill 355 in October 1952.

More than 26,000 Canadians served in the Korean War which raged in the Far East from 1950 to 1953. One of the front line sectors where our soldiers would see the most action was around Hill 355, located about 40 kilometres north of the city of Seoul.

After experiencing heavy action in the area earlier in the war, Canadian soldiers would again find themselves in the midst of hard fighting there in the fall of 1952. The Royal Canadian Regiment came under attack by Chinese forces in the early evening of October 23. The enemy put down a

heavy artillery barrage, then charged our positions.

Under heavy assault and with communications cut off, some of the Canadians had to fall back. However, United Nations troops poured tank and mortar fire onto the attacking Chinese soldiers, which forced them to withdraw. The enemy driven back, the Canadians succeeded in reoccupying the position in the early hours of October 24. Sadly the fighting had taken a heavy toll—18 Canadians were killed, 35 wounded and 14 more taken prisoner.

Sikh-Canadian soldiers in the Great War



A young person visiting the grave of Private Bukkan Singh.

At least ten Sikh-Canadians served in the First World War. One of these brave men was Private Bukkan Singh. Born in the Punjab region of South Asia, he immigrated to Canada at the age of 14. He worked as a miner in British Columbia before moving to Toronto. He enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915 and would be wounded twice.

Sadly, the 19-year-old later died of tuberculosis back home in Ontario in August 1919 and is buried in Kitchener's Mount Hope Cemetery.

John Baboo also immigrated to Canada as a young man and settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he worked as a labourer. He enlisted with the Winnipeg Rifles in January 1916 and served on the Western Front. During the famous Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917, he was wounded in the leg by an exploding shell. Permanently injured, Baboo was discharged and returned to Canada. He died in Saanich, British Columbia, in 1948.

One hundred years later, we remember the stories of this determined group of Canadians who so courageously served our country. Lest we forget.

Boots of the fallen

Combat boots at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial on April 9, 2017.

Combat boots provided a powerful symbol of remembrance during the ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France on April 9, 2017. Thousands of empty boots, many laid by Canadian and French students, represented the almost 3,600 Canadian soldiers who lost their lives at Vimy. Even Prince William and Prince Harry placed boots at the base of the monument. Why not put your hands on history by having your class borrow a pair of these special Vimy memorial boots? Search "Borrow a Boot" on our website at veterans.gc.ca.

Disaster on the home front



Soldiers performing rescue work in the aftermath of the Halifax Explosion.

The city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, was a busy port during the First World War. On the morning of December 6, 1917, the SS *Mont-Blanc*, a freighter loaded with tons of ammunition and explosives, was in the harbour. The transport ship SS *Imo* was leaving for New York City to collect aid supplies for Belgium. Through the morning fog, *Imo*'s course was heading straight for the *Mont-Blanc*. There was a

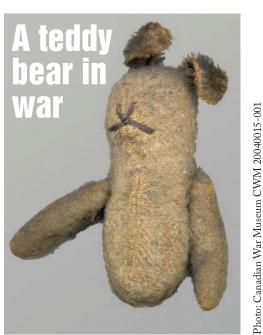
flurry of whistles back and forth, but unfortunately the two ships collided.

Within minutes, the *Mont-Blanc* was in flames and the crew abandoned ship. At 9:05 am, the *Mont-Blanc* exploded. The massive blast flattened areas of Halifax and even flung the ship's anchor, now preserved as a monument, more than four kilometres inland. At the time, it was the largest man-made explosion that had ever occurred. Sadly, over 1,900 people died and 9,000 were injured. The flying glass from broken windows blinded more than 300 people in the shattered city.

After the explosion, help rushed in from all over. The city of Boston, Massachusetts, even sent trains full of doctors, nurses and medical supplies. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were also donated for the major relief efforts that followed. One year later, Nova Scotia sent a return gift to Boston: a huge Christmas tree! This tradition lives on today, a poignant symbol of Nova Scotia's lasting gratitude to those who helped a century ago.

Did you know?

In the days before the attack at Vimy Ridge, Canadian soldiers took cover in underground tunnels. Some soldiers passed the time creating carvings in the soft chalk walls that are still there today. Visit **veterans.gc.ca** and search for "Chalk it Up to Remembrance" to see some of these interesting works of art that connect us with our past.



Aileen's teddy bear.

Lawrence Rogers of Quebec enlisted in the Canadian Mounted Rifles in 1915 and served as a medic during the First World War. His ten-year-old daughter Aileen gave him her beloved teddy bear as a good luck charm and a memento of home. Lawrence wrote in a letter to his wife in 1916:

"Tell Aileen I still have the Teddy Bear and will try to hang on to it for her. It is dirty and his hind legs are kind of loose but he is still with me."

Sadly, Rogers was killed by a German shell on October 30, 1917, during the Battle of Passchendaele. He died on the muddy battlefield while treating a wounded comrade, with Teddy still tucked in the pocket of his jacket.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele. Every Canadian who fought there has now passed away, but Aileen's Teddy is still around. The bear is on display at the Canadian War Museum, a powerful connection to the First World War. He symbolizes the thousands of families who endured separation and suffered the loss of their loved ones.

A stamp of remembrance

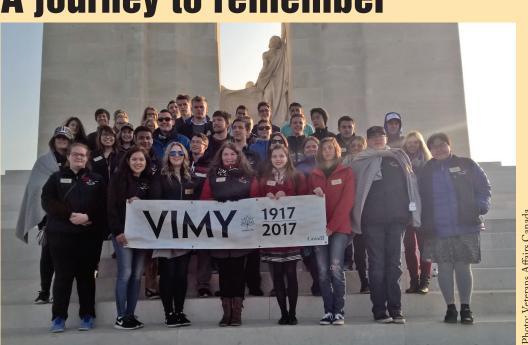


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This year, Canada Post and France's *La Poste* created special stamps to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle

of Vimy Ridge. The stamps both feature the Canadian National Vimy Memorial. This iconic monument, designed by Canadian architect Walter Allward, incorporates symbolism that represents the strong ties between our two nations. The names of 11,285 Canadians who died in France during the First World War and had no known grave are inscribed on its base. The two stamps are available together as a special collectors set. Now that's remembrance that "sticks" around!

A journey to remember



Students from each province and territory were part of the official Government of Canada delegation at Vimy.

In April 2017, thousands of Canadian students travelled to northern France to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Visits to battlefields, war cemeteries, monuments, as well as meeting Veterans young and old helped these youth make a special connection to our country's military history. Students from coast to coast to coast were at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial on April 9, showing they remember the brave soldiers of the four Canadian divisions who had fought there exactly 100 years earlier. The torch of remembrance is still burning brightly!

Yukoners rush to serve



Yukoners posing with one of their machine

The First World War began in August 1914 and many volunteers quickly flocked to recruiting stations across the country. It was a remarkable national response and Canadians in the north wanted to be part of the action too. Some 50 residents of the Yukon soon joined a unit that would become known as the Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery. Its men left Dawson City in June 1915 and eventually proceeded overseas where they trained in England for some time while waiting to be fully equipped for service on the front lines. They were finally sent to the Western Front in the late summer of 1916.

The Yukon machine gunners would see heavy action throughout the rest of the conflict, including fighting at the Somme, Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, Amiens and the Canal du Nord. Its original ranks greatly reduced by combat casualties, the survivors were eventually combined with other units to keep going. The men's fortitude was unquestionable and it was said that, by the end of the war, every officer in the Yukon battery had received medals for their great courage.

Rosalie's incredible journey



Rosalie was a unique First World War weapon. The rifle belonged to Henri-Paul Lecorre, who had volunteered with the 22nd French-Canadian Battalion in Montréal in April 1915.

Lecorre used a pocket knife to carve the names of the battles in which his battalion participated on "Rosalie," the nickname he had affectionately given his rifle. As it was strictly forbidden to damage military equipment, Rosalie was confiscated and orders given to destroy it. To protect Rosalie, Lecorre quickly carved a second rifle and swapped it for his precious weapon.

In June 1918, Lecorre was fighting near Neuville-Vitasse, France, when he was wounded during a gas attack. He was evacuated to a military hospital and then sent home, but Rosalie was left behind on the muddy battlefield.

Rosalie was later recovered and sent back to the rifle factory in England to be inspected, where an employee decided to preserve the unique-looking weapon. A few years later, during the Second World War, a Canadian general was visiting the same factory and noticed the distinctive carvings. He arranged for Rosalie to be sent to the Royal 22e Régiment headquarters in Quebec, where it was put on display in their military museum.

The rifle's origin remained a mystery until October 1956, when Lecorre and his wife amazingly spotted it in a travelling exhibit. It had taken 38 years, but Lecorre and Rosalie were finally reunited. Today, Rosalie is proudly displayed in La Citadelle de Québec.

Under fire in Korea

Canadians served on land, at sea and in the air during the Korean War. As part of these efforts, a total of eight Royal Canadian Navy destroyers served in the waters of the Far East at different times during the course of the conflict.

One of our sailors' tasks was shelling enemy shore targets, including the rail lines that ran close to Korea's eastern coast. The ships of the United Nations fleet that scored hits on these tempting but elusive targets were said to be part of the "Trainbusters Club."

It could be dangerous duty, as sadly proved true for HMCS Iroquois on October 2, 1952. The destroyer was exchanging fire with an enemy gun battery on shore that day when it took a direct hit, killing three Canadian sailors and wounding ten. It was our navy's only combat-related deaths of the Korean War.



Wounded sailor being taken for medical treatment after HMCS Iroquois was hit.

HMCS Assiniboine's daring attack



Crew of HMCS Assiniboine and their mascot soon after sinking a German submarine in 1942.

During the Second World War, Allied and German forces struggled for control of the Atlantic Ocean. This clash was known as the "Battle of the Atlantic" and lasted for the duration of the war in Europe, from September 1939 to May 1945. Allied merchant ships that carried the troops and provisions were vulnerable to attacks by preying German submarines called "U-boats." Our navy provided armed escorts across the Atlantic Ocean to protect the convoys.

On August 5, 1942, the Canadian destroyer HMCS Assiniboine was leading merchant ships travelling from Sydney, Nova Scotia, to the United Kingdom. When one of the ships was torpedoed, HMCS Assiniboine went chasing after the attackers.

After a long and nerve-wracking hunt in the fog, the Assiniboine spotted the German submarine U-210. A high-speed chase and exchange of heavy gun fire ensued, culminating with the destroyer daringly ramming the German vessel just as it was submerging. The submarine began to take on water and resurfaced, allowing the Assiniboine to strike again and finally sink it. Sadly, HMCS Assiniboine lost one crew member, but the ship managed to rescue 37 German submariners.

Born to fly

Alan McLeod was only 18 years old when he left his hometown of Stonewall, Manitoba, to join the Royal Flying Corps, graduating from his training with flying colours. While serving in the skies over the Western Front during the First World War, Lieutenant McLeod performed an amazing feat on March 27, 1918, which made him one of the youngest recipients to receive our highest military honour, the Victoria



Painting by Merv Corning depicting the heroic

McLeod and his flying partner, Lieutenant Arthur Hammond, were in the air over Albert, France, when they were attacked by eight German fighter planes. Hammond shot down three of the enemy aircraft but not before their own plane was hit and caught fire, with both airmen being badly wounded. Reacting swiftly, McLeod managed to climb out onto the left wing in order to tip the plane and keep the flames away from the trapped Hammond.

After their crash landing in No Man's Land, McLeod was wounded again while bringing his partner to safety. The pair had to take cover in a shell hole for several hours before being rescued by Allied soldiers. Sadly, after several months of recovery back in Canada, and still weakened by the ordeal, McLeod died of the Spanish Flu, just five days before the end of the war.

Image via Canadian Aviation Historical Society and Leach Heritage of the Air Collection, 1963

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

2. Manitoba hometown of heroic First World War pilot Lieutenant Alan McLeod.

5. Last name of general who commanded the Canadian Corps at Hill 70.

9. Nova Scotia city where a tragic explosion occurred on December 6, 1917.

11. Home province of Louis Arcand, who served in both the First and Second World Wars. 12. French seaside town that was the main objective of an August 1942 raid.

13. Last name of war artist who created a painting of Canadians in action at Hill 355.

15. Last name of the 1964 Silver Cross mother who lost three sons in the Second World War.

16. Name of ridge in France where Canadians fought in April 1917.

1. Home province of Lawrence Rogers who died with a teddy bear in his pocket.

3. Country where more than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served 2001 - 2014. 4. Ontario city where the Trooper Marc Diab Memorial Park was unveiled in 2010.

6. Nickname of Canadian soldier Henri-Paul Lecorre's unique First World War rifle. 7. Battle in Belgium where Canadians saw heavy action in the fall of 1917.

8. Name of Canadian destroyer that sank a German submarine on August 5, 1942.

10. Last name of a Sikh-Canadian soldier who was wounded at Vimy Ridge. 14. Name of Canadian destroyer hit by enemy shellfire during the Korean War.



Did you read the newspaper stories carefully? All the answers to the crossword clues are found in the newspaper.

Editor's Note: Veterans Affairs Canada recognizes that names and spellings of some