

# Canada Remembers Times

Veterans' Week Special Edition - November 5 to 11, 2016

## Beaumont-Hamel one hundred years later

In most of our country, July 1<sup>st</sup> is simply known as Canada Day. In Newfoundland and Labrador, however, it has an additional and much more sombre meaning. There, it is also known as Memorial Day—a time to remember those who have served and sacrificed in uniform.

On this day in 1916 near the French village of Beaumont-Hamel, some 800 soldiers from the Newfoundland Regiment went into action on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. The brave men advanced into a thick hail of enemy fire, instinctively tucking their chins down as if they were walking through a snowstorm. In less than half an hour of fighting, the regiment would be torn apart. The next morning, only

68 were there to answer the roll call. It was a blow that touched almost every community in Newfoundland. A century later the people of the province still mark it with Memorial Day.

The regiment would rebuild after this tragedy and it would later earn the designation “Royal Newfoundland Regiment” for its members’ brave actions during the First World War. Today, the now-peaceful Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial overlooks the old battlefield and commemorates the Newfoundlanders who served in the conflict, particularly those who have no known grave. Special events were held in Canada and France to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July 2016.



Caribou monument at the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial.

Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

## Force C in Hong Kong



Canadian soldiers training in the hills of Hong Kong before the invasion.

Photo: Imperial War Museum KF 189

Our soldiers’ first major action during the Second World War took place 75 years ago this year. ‘Force C’ was a contingent of some 1,975 Canadians that was largely made up of members of Manitoba’s Winnipeg Grenadiers and Quebec’s Royal Rifles of Canada. They set sail for Hong Kong in late October 1941 to help defend the British Crown Colony from the threat of Japanese invasion.

Only weeks after the Canadians arrived in the Far East, the enemy attacked on December 8. The outnumbered Allied defenders fought bravely before finally being forced to surrender on Christmas Day. Approximately 290 Canadians were killed and almost 500 wounded in the heavy fighting. Life for the survivors in Japanese prisoner of war camps would be incredibly harsh. More than 260 more of our men would lose their lives due to malnutrition, hard labour and physical abuse over the next four years before finally being liberated with the end of the war in August 1945.

## The “Black Battalion”

Black Canadians were eager to serve their country during the First World War. In an era when our society was less inclusive, however, it was difficult for them to enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. On July 5, 1916, the N<sup>o</sup>2 Construction Battalion was formed in Pictou, Nova Scotia—the first Black battalion in Canadian history. Recruitment took place across the country, but the majority of the

## The Gulf War not forgotten



Canadian Armed Forces CF-18 readying for take-off in the Middle East in 1991.

Photo: Department of National Defence ISC91-5253

The Gulf War of the early 1990s was an important chapter in Canada’s military history, and this year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of Kuwait and the end of the conflict. More than 4,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the tense Persian Gulf region in 1990-1991 as part of the international coalition of countries that came together to push the invading forces of Iraq out of neighbouring Kuwait.

## Intense fighting on the Somme

The Battle of the Somme was launched in northern France on July 1, 1916, and was one of the bloodiest chapters of the First World War. The fighting would drag on for more than four and a half months. The Canadian Corps would take part, with our soldiers’ first major battle beginning on September 15 when they attacked the village of Courcellette.

The soldiers advanced behind a creeping barrage, a new tactic that saw attackers closely follow a line of artillery fire that moved forward on a carefully timed schedule. Tanks were also used—the first time in history these new weapons appeared

Our service members played a variety of roles, from crewing three Canadian warships with the Coalition fleet, to flying CF-18 jet fighters in attack missions, to operating a military hospital, and more. It also marked the first time that Canadian women served in combat roles. The active fighting ended on February 28, 1991, when Coalition forces offered a ceasefire to Iraq after some six weeks of a devastating air campaign, followed by a ground campaign that quickly liberated Kuwait.

Fortunately no Canadians were killed in the Gulf War but it took a lasting toll on many of those who were there. Canada remembers the men and women who bravely served.

on the battlefield. The action was a success and Courcellette was soon taken, with the French-Canadian 22<sup>e</sup> Bataillon playing an important role in capturing the village.

The Canadians would capture a number of other enemy positions in the weeks that followed in costly battles that would take a high toll on our soldiers. More than 24,000 Canadians would be killed or wounded in the Battle of the Somme, but our soldiers’ courage and skill added to our country’s reputation for having some of the best troops on the Western Front.



‘Canadian Artillery in Action’ war painting by Kenneth Keith Forbes depicting fighting on the Somme.

Image: Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum 19710261-0142

Today, the dedicated service of the “Black Battalion” is remembered as an important chapter in the proud tradition of military service by Black Canadians in our country.



N<sup>o</sup> 2 Construction Battalion soldiers in 1917.

Photo: Public Domain

## Against all odds at Kapyong

Canadians saw heavy action during the Korean War, but the Battle of Kapyong stands out as one of our soldiers’ most intense experiences. On April 24, 1951, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, along with other Commonwealth forces, defended the important Kapyong River valley during an all-out enemy attack.



‘Holding at Kapyong’ war painting by Ted Zuber.

The Canadians came under intense fire during the night from waves of charging enemy soldiers on the hills above the Kapyong. At times our soldiers were completely overrun and the situation so desperate they even requested their artillery to fire on their own positions to drive off the attackers. They later became surrounded and their ammunition ran low, so they had to get new supplies dropped by air.

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

Image: Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum 19900084-001

## Six decades of fostering peace



Photo: Department of National Defence ZK-1946-17

Canadian peacekeepers patrolling the Egypt-Israel border.

2016 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of large-scale United Nations (UN) peace support efforts. Our country has been involved in these special missions from the start, dating back to the Suez Crisis of 1956. This tense Middle East standoff between Egypt on one side and Israel, Britain and France on the other threatened to draw the international community into war.

Lester B. Pearson, Canada's minister of External Affairs and future prime minister, successfully proposed that a multinational force drawn from UN countries (including Canada) would go to Egypt to enforce a cease-fire and oversee the pull out of foreign forces. This idea of sending neutral forces to nurture peace in regions in turmoil earned Pearson the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize. It would have a lasting impact on the way the world responded to conflicts and helped define Canada's international military role in the decades that followed.

## All in the family

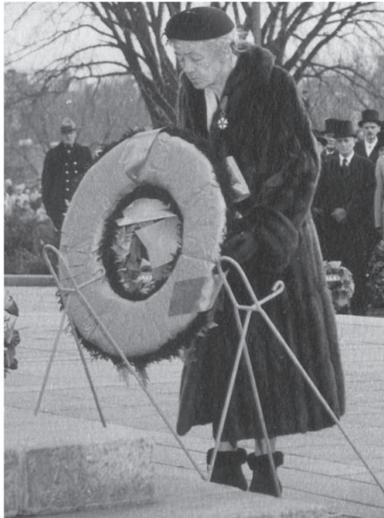


Photo: Courtesy of Albert Cantin

National Memorial Cross mother Julienne Cantin laying a wreath.

Many Canadian families sacrificed greatly during the war years but few can match the contributions of the Cantins from the farming community of McCreary, Manitoba.

Albert, Amedee, Clement, Joseph, Lionel, Marie, Maurice, Noel, Wilfred, sons and daughter of Julienne and Amedee Cantin, all served in the Canadian military during the Second World War. Clement Nivon, a nephew who was raised by the family, also enlisted. Daughter-in-law Evelyn would serve too.

In total, 11 members of the family volunteered. Five of the boys joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, the other four chose the Fort Garry Horse armoured regiment. Marie became a Nursing Sister and Evelyn joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps. Sadly, Wilfred, Maurice and Clement lost their lives.

In recognition of the family's great service and sacrifice, Julienne Cantin was named the 1960 National Memorial Cross Mother.

## In the heat of battle in Afghanistan

More than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in a variety of roles on the ground, in the air and at sea in the Afghanistan theatre of operations from 2001 to 2014. The challenges and dangers these brave men and women faced were great and they were frequently targeted by roadside bombs and suicide attacks. They also took part in major combat with the Taliban forces who were trying to destabilize the country.

Operation *Medusa* was a Canadian-led offensive in Kandahar Province that was launched in September 2006. The goal was to clear insurgents from the Panjwai district. The many hostile villages, irrigation ditches, trenches, tunnels, extreme climate and improvised explosive devices made it a difficult place to fight. More than 1,000 Canadians, along with over 400 soldiers from other countries, took part. It was Canada's largest combat



Photo: Department of National Defence AR2006-F005-0011

Canadian Armed Forces members during Operation Medusa.

operation in more than 50 years and our soldiers took heavy fire, but the Taliban was pushed from the district. The cost was high, however, and 12 Canadians were killed in the two-week offensive.

Sadly, a total of 158 Canadian Armed Forces members lost their

lives in Afghanistan. Those who served have been remembered in many ways, from the "Highway of Heroes" commemorative roads to the dates of the Afghanistan mission being inscribed on the National War Memorial.

## A country's coming of age

April 9, 2017, is going to be a special milestone for our country as it will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. This major First World War battle along the Western Front in France saw 100,000 Canadians come together to achieve the biggest Allied offensive success up to that point of the conflict. A high price was paid, however, as some 3,600 Canadians lost their lives during the four days of fighting at Vimy and over 7,000 more were wounded. Some have said that the

experience of soldiers from coast to coast fighting together to achieve such a great triumph at Vimy Ridge helped us forge a stronger national identity—that it was indeed Canada's 'coming of age' as a country of our own.

Thousands of students will take part in commemorative events in Canada and France next spring to mark this centennial anniversary. How will you be remembering Vimy Ridge?



Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-001017

Canadian machine gunners digging in on Vimy Ridge.

## Tough cookies, smart cookies

Similar to our military members, the Girl Guides of Canada wear uniforms with badges. Appropriately, they have had many interesting connections to our country's war efforts over the years.

During the First World War, the newly formed group helped in various ways, like knitting socks for soldiers. In the Second World War, the girls once again whole-heartedly volunteered many hours, and even fundraised enough to help purchase two air ambulances for the Allies.

In the 1950s, Girl Guide units were formed at Canadian military bases

in Europe to help the daughters of service families feel connected to home. More recently, during the 1990-1991 Gulf War, our Girl Guides managed to send their famous cookies to Canadian Armed Forces members serving in the Middle East. What a sweet treat!

This determination hasn't faded as new generations of girls keep up this tradition of support. Many participate with great pride in the "Valentines for Vets" program, sending hand-made thank you cards to Veterans living in long-term care facilities across the country.



Photo: Girl Guides of Canada Archives

Girl Guides contributed to buying two air ambulances during the Second World War.

## A life of service

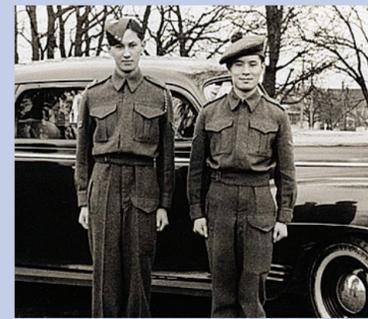


Photo: Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society

Douglas Jung (left) with John Ko Bong.

Douglas Jung was born in British Columbia in 1924. He joined the Canadian Army during the Second World War and trained for secret operations in Asia. Jung became a lawyer and ran in the 1957 federal election. He was elected in the Vancouver Centre riding, becoming the first Chinese-Canadian Member of Parliament. Jung later represented our country at the United Nations. Throughout his life, he lobbied for the rights of Asian-Canadians and Veterans. He received the Order of Canada in 1990.

## Waves of change



Photo: Public Domain

Fern Blodgett with ship's radio equipment.

Fern Blodgett was born in Regina, Saskatchewan and raised in Cobourg, Ontario. She was 21 years old when the Second World War began. She had long hoped to sail and the war would help her achieve her dream.

Blodgett attended night classes to become a ship's radio operator but it was hard for a woman to get a job at sea. In June 1941, however, she heard that the Norwegian merchant ship *Mosdale* was desperately seeking a reliable radio operator. Blodgett knew she could do the job and travelled to Montréal to meet with the captain, convincing him that she was qualified for the position. She made a total of 78 voyages with the ship on the dangerous waters of the North Atlantic during the war. She also found love at sea, marrying Gerner Sunde, captain of the vessel. Blodgett was decorated with the Norwegian War Medal for her gallant service. She had become a beacon for other women in the Merchant Navy that would follow in her wake.

## Brothers in arms



Military Cross.

Approximately 4,000 Indigenous soldiers served valiantly in the First World War, and at least 50 received medals for bravery on the battlefield. Many excelled as scouts and snipers, due to their hunting and wilderness skills.

Two brothers from the Six Nations Cayuga band in Ontario, Alexander and Charles Smith, enlisted three months after the outbreak of the First World War. Both had previous militia training and were commissioned as officers.

In September 1916, Alexander earned the Military Cross during the Battle of the Somme, in France. He helped capture an enemy trench and 50 prisoners, despite being buried twice by dirt from exploding shells. Charles earned the Military Cross in France on November 9, 1918, two days before the war ended. He and his platoon stopped enemy sappers preparing to blow up a road mine and, later that day, captured a machine-gun position.

The Smith brothers returned to Canada after the war, fine examples of the courage shown by so many Indigenous warriors.

Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

## A heavy cross to bear



Charlotte Wood at Vimy Ridge in 1936.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-148875

no one hopes to receive, but for those who lost a loved one, it's a special way to share their grief, while also showing their pride.

In 1936, many Canadian mothers made a pilgrimage to France for the unveiling of the Vimy Memorial. Among them was Charlotte Wood, from Winnipeg, who lost two sons in the war. She became the first National Silver Cross mother and the tradition continues today. Every Remembrance Day, the Royal Canadian Legion selects a mother to lay a wreath at the National War Memorial in Ottawa to represent all those who lost a son or daughter.

The Memorial Cross (or Silver Cross as it is also known) was established as a memento for family members of those who died in military service. Sadly, tens of thousands have worn the Silver Cross since the end of the First World War. It is a medal that

When we remember those who gave their lives, let's not forget that for each of them there is a family that also feels the pain of war.

## Busy fingers on the home front



Women knitting socks for Newfoundland soldiers in 1915.

Courtesy of The Rooms Provincial Archives Division B 5-173

Thousands of Newfoundlanders enlisted during the First World War. The women of Newfoundland also wanted to contribute to the war effort and started the Women's Patriotic Association. They knit tens of thousands of wool socks, gloves and scarves for their sons and other soldiers serving overseas. The women were very proud yet worried about their boys and wanted to make sure they were getting some comforts from home.

Sometimes, women wrote short notes such as "into this sock I weave a prayer." Occasionally, soldiers would write back and some even developed romantic relationships when they returned home!

For the Newfoundlanders in the cold trenches, the gifts from home reminded them that they were still tightly knit with the island they had left behind.

## POW Nursing Sisters



Kathleen Christie (L) and Anna May Waters (R)

Photos: Bay Chaleur Military Museum, Quebec

Kathleen Christie of Toronto, and Anna May Waters of Winnipeg served as Nursing Sisters during the Second World War. They sailed with Force C to Hong Kong in October 1941.

When the Japanese captured Hong Kong, Christie and Waters were looking after the wounded in a British military hospital. The staff became prisoners of war (POWs) and endured lack of food, scarce medical supplies and harsh treatment by their captors. Typhus, tuberculosis, malaria and vitamin deficiency took a great toll.

The Nursing Sisters' skills helped many of the sick soldiers survive. These brave women stayed with the wounded Canadian men, working under atrocious conditions until they were finally forced to move into a civilian internment camp.

After two hard years in captivity, Christie and Waters returned to Canada in a prisoner exchange, the first members of Force C to return home.

## The Olympic-military connection



Steve Daniel at the 2008 Summer Paralympic Games in Beijing.

Photo: Canadian Paralympic Committee

Did you know that there is a long relationship between sports and military service in our country? Tom Longboat, Percival Molson, Jack Varaleau, Ken Money, Mark Graham and Sharon Donnelly are just some of the Canadian athletes who have proudly worn both a military uniform and an Olympic uniform over the years.

Steve Daniel, of Ontario, is a Veteran of peace support missions in Bosnia, Croatia and Afghanistan. Unfortunately he suffered a spinal injury during a parachute training jump in 2005 and was paralysed from the waist down. After rehabilitation, Daniel took up arms-only rowing and quickly rose to an elite level. He went on to compete in rowing at the 2008

Summer Paralympic Games.

The peace and freedom we in Canada enjoy today is only a dream in many of the countries that compete in these international games. To learn more about Canadian Olympians who served in uniform, visit [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca) and search for "Olympics."

## Canadian tank ace

Very few Canadians have had their names used as an award in the gaming world, but most people don't have the military achievements of tank ace Sydney Radley-Walters!

Born in 1920 in Québec, Radley-Walters studied science and played football at Bishop's University. During the Second World War, he joined the Sherbrooke Fusiliers

Regiment in 1940. The unit was made up of French and English speaking volunteers and became the 27<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Regiment.

Their baptism of fire was on June 7, 1944, the day after the Normandy landings. Radley-Walters was quick to strike, destroying a German tank on that day. The young commander was a gifted tactician and he would exploit weaknesses in German tanks, concentrating fire at the base of the turret to knock them off. To improve his own tanks' protection, he

encouraged his men to weld used tank tracks to the base of their own turrets and put sandbags on the thin floor of their vehicles, to absorb the force of a mine explosion.

Radley-Walters always insisted on the importance of preparing his soldiers well. He led from the front, his tank in the middle of the action. He and his crew would be credited with a remarkable total of 18 victories during fighting in Normandy, the Netherlands and Germany. Radley-Walters remained in the Army until

1974, retiring with the rank of Brigadier-General. He passed away in April 2015, but his memory lives on with his family and friends, and in a well-known tank video game.



Major Radley-Walters receiving the Military Cross in Belgium in 1944.

Photo: Library and Archives PA-128092



Image: Canadian War Museum

Dr. Paul Kavanagh and his son were having lunch at the Canadian War Museum cafeteria in 2009 when a proud looking older Veteran in front of them caught their attention. When the Veteran tried to pay for his lunch, to his embarrassment, he could not afford it. Kavanagh quietly paid the bill but never forgot that day.

That year, he founded Operation Veteran with the Ottawa museum to make sure that all Veterans would be honoured with a complimentary meal there. Thanks to contributions from across Canada, it has raised over \$200,000 so far. Thousands have benefited from this initiative!

Operation Veteran also supports the "Supply Line" program, which invites teachers from across the country to borrow a Discovery Box from the Canadian War Museum so students can better understand history. These boxes are full of First World War-related materials such as barbed wire, maps, scratchy wool uniforms and steel helmets for hands-on learning.

What a great way to honour Veterans and raise awareness of their sacrifices with youth. Operation Veteran is truly food for thought.



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa.

Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

Canada and many other countries around the world have their own Tomb of the Unknown Soldier—special public memorials that contain the remains of a fallen serviceman whose identity is not known.

During the First World War, conditions on the battlefield were often very chaotic and many of those killed in action could not be recovered or identified. To serve as a way to honour all who gave their lives, the remains of a single fallen unknown soldier were taken and reburied in a special tomb in his home country.

In May 2000, Canada's Unknown Soldier was disinterred from a war

cemetery near Vimy Ridge, in France, and laid in state on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, where thousands filed past to pay their respects. He was then buried with great ceremony in front of the National War Memorial, with soil from every province and territory across Canada being added, as well as an eagle feather to represent our First Nations.

Today, our Tomb of the Unknown Soldier honours the more than 118,000 brave Canadian men and women from all branches of service who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace and freedom over the years.

## An airman in three wars



Photo: Canadian War Museum 19770650-010

Wilfred Curtis.

Wilfred Curtis was born in Havelock, Ontario, and enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915 during the First World War. In a time before Canada had an air force of its own, he transferred to Britain's Royal Naval Air Service and served as a fighter pilot on the Western Front. He was decorated for his bravery twice, being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and bar. Curtis ended the war as a member of the Royal Air Force and was credited with a remarkable 13 aerial victories—officially making him an ace.

When the Second World War erupted in 1939, Curtis would earn an impressive reputation while serving in several senior staff positions with the Royal Canadian Air Force in Canada and in the United Kingdom.

After the war, Curtis was Canada's Chief of Air Staff from 1947 to 1953, and held this post during the Korean War. He also oversaw a major growth in the size of the Royal Canadian Air Force as the development of the Cold War saw our country enlarge its military forces to meet the possible new threat. For his great drive and leadership, Air Marshal Curtis is considered by many to be the "Father of Canada's Post-War Air Force."

## Six thousand kilometres in the saddle



Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

Paul Nichols during his 2015 journey.

How far would you go to share an important message? Imagine leaving the Pacific coast in April on an eight-month journey on horseback across Canada, and arriving at the Atlantic Ocean just before winter! That's what Paul Nichols, a Canadian Armed Forces Veteran who served in the Balkans in the 1990s, did with friends.

One of the things that Nichols wanted to accomplish was spread a simple message: Canadians are proud of their Veterans but they sometimes forget about younger service men and women. People tend to think of Veterans as older men who served in the Second World War or the Korean War. Yet some of today's Veterans are still in their twenties, but they have taken part in intense military missions in troubled places around the world that took a heavy toll on them.

During his journey, he was joined at different points by a total of more than 300 Veterans of all ages, helping share the message and connect with their communities. The amazing ten-province ride across Canada ended in November 2015 in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, but it could just be the beginning of a new appreciation for our different generations of Veterans. To learn more, go to [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca) and search for "Paul Nichols."

## No stone left alone



Photo: Nic Wolch

Ceremony at South Haven Cemetery in Edmonton in 2014. To learn more, visit [nostoneleftalone.ca](http://nostoneleftalone.ca).

For years, a family visited their relatives' graves at Edmonton's Beechmount Cemetery to lay a poppy. As the children grew older, they started to ask who remembers the other Veterans buried there.

It was a very good question, so their mother Maureen Bianchini-Purvis would go on to launch the *No Stone Left Alone Foundation*. The purpose was to recognize the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform by placing a poppy on every Veteran's headstone.

The program has expanded and ceremonies now take place across the country. Each includes the reading of the *Act of Remembrance* and the playing of the *Last Post*, followed by students placing a poppy on each Veteran's grave marker in the cemetery.

More and more fields of poppies are sprouting up across Canada. How about in your community?

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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

### Across

- Province in Afghanistan where Operation *Medusa* was launched in 2006.
- Hometown of Wilfred Curtis, Canadian airman who served in three wars.
- French village where tanks were used for the first time during the Battle of the Somme in 1916.
- Nova Scotia town where the N° 2 Construction Battalion was formed in 1916.
- Ridge in France that Canadians captured in April 1917.
- Place in Europe where Canadian Armed Forces Veteran Paul Nichols served in the 1990s.

### Down

- Province where war-time ship radio operator Fern Blodgett was born.
- Fierce Korean War battle fought by Canadians in April 1951.
- Last name of Chinese-Canadian Veteran elected MP in Vancouver in 1957.
- First name of the Smith brother who was awarded the Military Cross in September 1916.
- Edmonton cemetery where the "No Stone Left Alone" project began.
- Last name of the 1960 National Memorial Cross Mother.
- Last name of Canadian Veteran who competed at the 2008 Summer Paralympic Games.

