

## Gas Attack!

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres in Belgium during the First World War. On the deadly front lines swept by machine gun and artillery fire, the Germans introduced a terrible new weapon on April 22, 1915—poison gas. The Allied troops beside the Canadians’ positions took the worst of the thick clouds of yellow-green chlorine, forcing them back and leaving a large gap in the defences.

The Germans pressed forward, threatening a massive breakthrough. All through the night and into the next day, the Canadians fought to close the gap and also drive the enemy out of nearby Kitcheners’ Wood. Little ground was regained and casualties were heavy, but these actions bought some precious time for the Allies to recover.

On April 24, the Germans launched another gas attack—and this time the Canadians would be hit squarely. In a nightmare of fighting that saw the Canadians gasping for air through soaked and muddy handkerchiefs, they held on against all odds until reinforcements arrived.

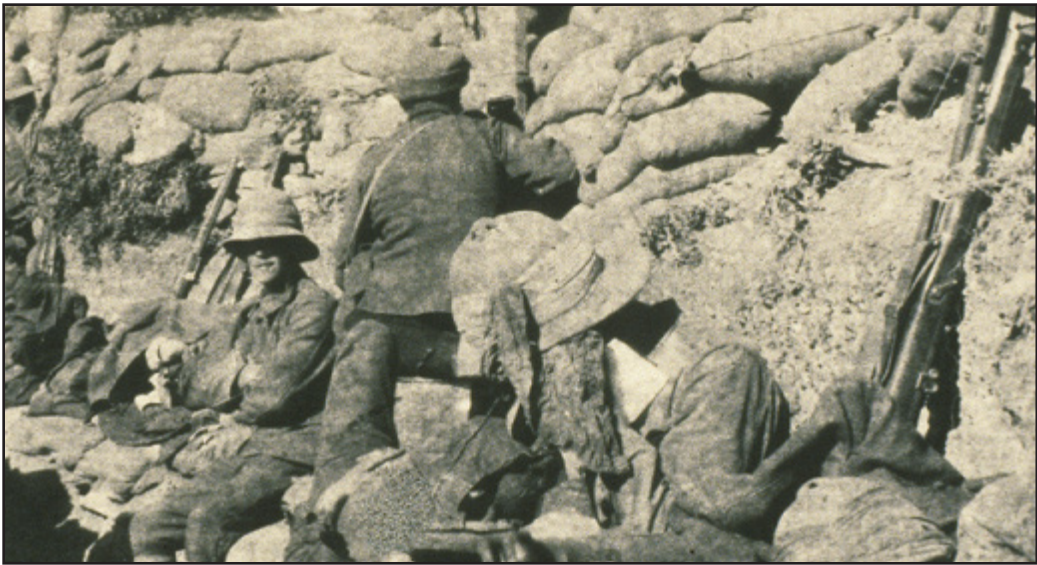
In their first major action of the war, our soldiers had begun building a remarkable reputation for skill and valour on the battlefield. It came at a steep cost, however, as more than 2,000 Canadians were killed and 4,000 wounded.

## Newfoundlanders at Gallipoli

When Britain declared war in August 1914, Newfoundland, which was a colony of Britain at the time and not yet a part of Canada, responded quickly and began recruiting men for overseas service.

The fighting in the First World War occurred in more places than just Western Europe. On September 20, 1915, the 1<sup>st</sup> Newfoundland Regiment landed on Turkey’s Gallipoli peninsula, joining British, French, Australian and New Zealand troops already there. Gallipoli would be the Newfoundlanders’ first experience of the horrors of trench warfare—artillery fire, snipers, punishing heat and cold, and disease caused by living in such harsh conditions.

In November they earned their first battle honour when they captured “Caribou Hill”—named



Soldiers in the trenches at Gallipoli.

after the animal that represented their regiment. These soldiers later successfully covered the withdrawal of Allied troops from the region, being among the last to leave in

January 1916. Approximately 40 Newfoundlanders had died there, a grim taste of the great casualties the regiment would soon suffer on the Western Front.



‘The Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April to 25 May 1915’ painting by Richard Jack.

Image: 19710261-0161  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art.  
© CWM

## A Ukrainian-Canadian War Hero

Filip Konowal was born in the Ukraine in 1888 and immigrated to Canada shortly before the First World War. When the conflict erupted, he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and served with the 47<sup>th</sup> (British Columbia) Battalion. During the Battle of Hill 70 near Lens, France in August 1917, Corporal Konowal was leading soldiers in attacks when he courageously charged German machine gun positions that were taking a heavy toll on his men.



Portrait of Filip Konowal by Arthur Ambrose McEvoy.

Image: 19710261-0410 Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © CWM

Armed with his gun, bayonet and explosives, he personally took out 16 of the enemy in these efforts before being seriously wounded himself. For his great courage, he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award

for valour that a Canadian could receive. Konowal died in Hull, Quebec, in 1959 and is still admired as a true hero by many proud Ukrainian Canadians.

## In Flanders Fields

The famous poem “In Flanders Fields,” widely recited every Remembrance Day, was written a hundred years ago. Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, born and raised in Guelph, Ontario, was a doctor in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. He was inspired to put pen to paper after being shaken by the battlefield death of a close friend.

Despite the passage of time, his words have remained relevant to every conflict since it was written in May 1915. The evocative poetry pulls at the heart strings, reminding us of the loss of those who served. It also challenges the living to remember their sacrifice, as seen in the powerful words from the poem’s final verse:

*To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.*



Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae and his dog Bonneau.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada C-046284

## A Strong Bond

Jack Munroe was born in Nova Scotia and travelled widely before settling in Ontario. He was a celebrated heavyweight boxer in the early 1900s.

At the outbreak of the First World War, he enlisted at age 41 in the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry. Accompanying him was his faithful collie, Bobbie Burns—smuggled in a potato sack. While at Camp Valcartier in Quebec, Bobbie was attacked by a dog twice his size. Bobbie had to fight

back and earned what was called “the first Princess Pat’s victory of the war!” A strong fighter, just like his master, he was named the regiment’s mascot.

Munroe went to France and was severely wounded by a sniper’s bullet in June 1915, losing the use of his right arm. He would spend more than a year recovering in a hospital in England, where his old pal Bobbie had special visitation privileges.

Munroe would write *Mopping Up*, a unique war story written through his dog’s eyes. In the book, he wrote:

*“I had wondered what war was. Now I knew. It had been war when I had been at the throat of the mongrel who had so wickedly assaulted me when I had not harmed him [...] Somewhere, some big mongrels of men must have attacked littler dogs of nations, and we were going to fight for the little dogs!”*



Jack Munroe and his faithful friend.

Photo: Public domain



Portrait of Rear Admiral Victor Brodeur in 1945 by Irwin Crosthwait.

Image: Library and Archives Canada e002505830

## A Royal Canadian Navy Pioneer

Victor Brodeur was born in Beloeil, Quebec, in 1892. He enlisted in 1909 and became part of the first group of cadets in the newly-formed Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). During the First World War he served on British warships in the Caribbean Sea and the waters off Europe, later becoming a gunnery specialist.

He returned to Canada where he was stationed at naval headquarters in Ottawa before taking command of his first ship in 1929, HMCS *Champlain*. He would command other ships on the West Coast in the 1930s and eventually take charge of all destroyers based in Esquimalt, British Columbia.

Shortly before the start of the Second World War, he helped create the Fishermen’s Reserve to patrol the West Coast. In 1940, Brodeur became the RCN representative in Washington, D.C. before returning to the Pacific in 1943 to command naval forces there.

Brodeur retired in 1946 after 37 years in the navy and was honoured by being named a Commander of the British Empire. The École Victor-Brodeur school in Esquimalt is named in honour of this Francophone naval pioneer.

# A Deadly Passage



One of the most dangerous routes sailed by the Merchant Navy during the Second World War was the notorious Murmansk Run. Despite constant German attack and extreme weather conditions, supplies were shipped to the Arctic port of Murmansk to assist the Soviet Union in its fight against Germany. It was so dangerous that if a ship was sunk, other vessels were not allowed to stop to help the survivors because they too could have become an easy target for attack.

From 1941 to 1945, more than 40 convoys sailed, transporting millions of tons of supplies, such as aircraft, tanks, jeeps, locomotives, flatcars, guns, ammunition, food, fuel and millions of pairs of boots. This support helped the Soviet Union to continue fighting Germany on the Eastern Front, thus preventing the Germans from concentrating all their forces against the Allies in the West.

# Victory at Long Last



Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

Canadians in a Japanese prisoner of war camp.

During the Second World War, approximately 10,000 Canadians served in Asia. Almost 2,000 soldiers from Manitoba's Winnipeg Grenadiers and Quebec's Royal Rifles of Canada set sail for Hong Kong, in late October 1941, to help defend the British Crown Colony.

Many other Canadians also saw action in Asia during the war, including thousands of Royal Canadian Air Force airmen who served in the Burma Campaign as radar operators and members of bomber, transport, reconnaissance and fighter squadrons.

Squadron Leader Leonard Birchall of Ontario was even dubbed "the Saviour of Ceylon" by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill after his plane spotted a Japanese invasion fleet in the Indian Ocean that was heading for the island of Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka).

Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

V-J (Victory over Japan) Day marked the end of years of fighting in the Second World War. The Canadian prisoners of war were finally liberated and returned home.

*"Well, I went down to a hundred pounds, you know. I was maybe a hundred and eighty odd pounds when I was my normal weight, but I was down to about a hundred pounds."*

# A Showdown in the Skies



Photo: Public domain

Royal Canadian Air Force pilots in the United Kingdom in October 1940.

# The Liberation of the Netherlands

This year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands during the Second World War. In late 1944 and early 1945, the Canadians battled to push the Germans from the country they had occupied since the spring of 1940. With its challenging terrain of canals, dikes and floodlands, the Netherlands was a tough place to fight.

After opening battles in the fall of 1944, including the bitter Battle of the Scheldt, bad weather brought the Allied offensives there to a halt. That winter was a terrible time for the Dutch—food and fuel supply reserves were gone; people ate tulip bulbs and scavenged through garbage to survive. Thousands starved or froze to death.

Early in the new year, the push began anew to liberate the entire country and finally end the war in Europe. The Canadian troops were cheered as one town after another was freed.



Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-116668

Canadians being welcomed in Rotterdam in May 1945.

It was a memorable period, as one Dutch teenager at the time recalled:

*"As the (Canadian) tank came nearer [...] there was a big hush over all the people and it was suddenly broken by a big scream, as if it was out of the earth. And the people climbed on the tank [...] and they were crying. And we were running with the tanks and the jeeps all the way into the city."*

Helping liberate the Netherlands was a proud achievement for our country and one which the Dutch people still remember today with great gratitude. Sadly more than 7,600 Canadians died in the effort.

# Hooray for Hermie!

The Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit was established in 1941 to record our country's involvement in the Second World War.

The unit was made up of people familiar with photography and filmmaking. They were a unique bunch, with backgrounds ranging from movie directors to Hollywood stuntmen! Standing out in this group, however, was one female photographer. Against great odds, she eventually found a place in a field traditionally filled by men. Her name was Sergeant Karen Hermiston, and she was the first (and only) female photographer in the Canadian Army during the war.

"Hermie," as she was known, spent more than four years in uniform snapping pictures of her fellow Canadian Women's Army Corps



Photo: Library and Archives Canada R112-1842-0-E

Sergeant Karen Hermiston with her Speed Graphic Camera.

members. During that time she also gradually took on additional assignments like those done by the male photographers.

Whatever it would take to find the right angle, this trailblazer's shots were picture perfect.

# A Living History Lesson



Photo: The Memory Project, Historica Canada

Lester Brown in uniform in 1944.

Lester Brown was a Canadian Second World War soldier who came ashore at Juno Beach on D-Day on June 6, 1944, and fought in the Battle of Normandy.

Twenty-three-year-old Private Brown of the Queen's Own Rifles and his platoon

were fighting in a village in France called Bretteville-sur-Laize when they were ambushed by the Germans. To escape the hail of fire, Brown and a fellow soldier ran for the cover of a nearby tank but, sadly, his comrade was killed at his side.

Brown was wounded in the face and knee, however there would also be invisible scars from what he had experienced. He survived the war, married and raised a family, but would long be haunted by nightmares about that horrific day before passing away at the age of 92.

Listening to the stories of Veterans who were there can help us begin to understand the hardships that happen in war. Search online for the Memory Project ([thememoryproject.com](http://thememoryproject.com)) or explore the Heroes Remember collection ([veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca)) to hear more touching first-person wartime accounts.

The Battle of Britain raged 75 years ago in the late summer and fall of 1940. The German air force attacked the United Kingdom in an effort to gain control of the skies and pave the way for an invasion during the Second World War.

Against great odds, the outnumbered Allied airmen—including hundreds of Canadians—successfully defended the island nation and beat back the determined enemy.

It was a crucial turning point that would allow the Allies to maintain a foothold in Western Europe and eventually return to the occupied continent and help liberate its people in 1944 and 1945.

In the words of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill about these brave heroes of the sky, "Never was so much owed by so many to so few."

## The Korean War – 65 Years Later

The Korean War erupted in the Far East, 65 years ago, when North Korean troops poured over the border into South Korea on June 25, 1950, touching off over three years of bitter fighting. More than 26,000 Canadians would courageously serve with United Nations forces on land, at sea and in the air during this conflict. Alberta's Ray Nickerson enlisted in the Canadian Army at age 16 and served in Korea. He remembers his first encounter with the enemy:

*"[...] We took an attack at night [...] one wave and another wave behind and another wave behind, like, it seemed like they had endless, endless, endless men. [...] And it was pretty damn scary when the flares were going up and you could see all these, it looked like a bunch of ants crawling around, coming up the hills [...] it was scary, but you knew you had a job to do and you had to do it, you know."*



Canadian soldiers in snowy Korea in 1951.

When an armistice was finally signed on July 27, 1953, the border was back close to where it had been before the war. Canada had helped restore peace and freedom to the people of South Korea—a peace paid for in part by the 516 Canadian servicemen who died during the war. No formal peace treaty was ever signed, however, and tensions along the border between North and South Korea remain high today.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-128817

## A Train Tragedy



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in action in Korea.

Photo: Library and Archives Canada PA-128280

The dangers of serving in times of war are not only the obvious ones of guns and bombs. Often the risks can begin with enlistment and training. The tragedy that struck the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, 65 years ago during the Korean War, shows how true this is.

On November 21, 1950, the soldiers were on their way from Camp Shilo in Manitoba, to Fort Lewis in Washington State for additional preparation and then shipping out for Korea. Near Canoe River, British Columbia, their troop train

accidentally collided head-on with another train that was on the same track. The engine and front passenger cars derailed and slid down an embankment.

Some of the unhurt soldiers frantically dug out the injured and dead from the wreckage, using their rifles to pry the twisted debris to get their comrades free. Sadly, 12 soldiers died in the crash and another five would die of their injuries soon after. The names of these men can be found among the 516 Canadians inscribed in the *Korean War Book of Remembrance*.

## Did You Know?

The *Books of Remembrance*, which list the more than 118,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who have given their lives in service for our country since Confederation, are located in the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. In November 2014, striking new carved altars were unveiled on which books are now displayed.

## Canadians in the Congo

The year 2015 marks the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada's first military efforts in the Congo to try to help bring peace and stability to the troubled African country. Hundreds of Canadians would serve there as part of a large-scale United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission that ran from 1960 to 1964.

It would be very challenging duty for those tasked with peacekeeping in a place with so little peace to keep. Weapons and violence were widespread in a country that had been virtually reduced to chaos after the former Belgian colony had gained its independence.

Despite some successes, in the end the UN troops were unable to stop the greater forces of upheaval rocking the Congo and they departed in 1964. Two Canadian soldiers died during the mission.



Canadian soldier bandages a child's leg in the Congo in 1963.

Photo: Department of National Defence UNCC63-39-5

Unfortunately, the situation in the Congo has remained troubled and a small Canadian Armed Forces contingent has again been serving in the country in recent years.

## An Ojibwa Airman Flies High

More than 3,000 Aboriginal-Canadians volunteered from every region of the country to serve in the Second World War. One of those courageous individuals was Willard Bolduc, an Ojibwa man from Chapleau, Ontario.

Bolduc's father, Telesfore, had lost his life while serving with the Canadian Railway Troops during the First World War. Willard followed this family tradition of service and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War. He trained in Mont-Joli, Quebec, at the No. 9 Bombing and Gunnery School and graduated in September 1942.



Flying Officer Willard Bolduc, DFC.

Photo courtesy of the Bolduc family

Pilot Officer Bolduc served with the Royal Air Force's No. 15 Squadron, flying dangerous bombing missions over occupied Europe. As a gunner, he helped repel enemy fighter attacks on his aircraft during missions to targets like Cologne and Nuremberg. Bolduc was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1944 for his courage under fire.

## Sam Sharpe - A Man of Duty

Samuel Simpson Sharpe was born in 1873 in Zephyr, Ontario. He became a lawyer in Uxbridge and was first elected to represent the area in the House of Commons in 1908. He also served in the militia and when the First World War broke out he helped recruit the 116<sup>th</sup> (Ontario County) Battalion in which he would also serve.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sharpe served bravely in a number of actions like the Battle of Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

In 1918, remarkably, he would also be re-elected to Parliament in absentia while overseas, the only federal politician to do so.

The strain of the battlefield took a great toll, however, and Sharpe's mental health began to suffer. He was sent back to Canada and hospitalized for nervous shock. Tragically, he took his own life in a Montréal hospital on May 25, 1918.

Invisible psychological wounds like those suffered by Sharpe were not as understood back then. Fortunately many strides have been made and more help is available today for Canadian Armed Forces members who have suffered operational stress injuries in our country's more recent military efforts.



Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Sharpe, DSO during the war.

Photo: Public domain

## A Dangerous Northern Rescue

When ships run into problems at sea or aircraft go down in remote areas, Canadian Armed Forces members are often first on the scene to aid those in distress. These missions can be very dangerous and challenging, like when a Hercules military transport plane went down near CFS Alert in the High Arctic in October 1991. In a raging blizzard, search and rescue technicians were sent to parachute down to the crash site at night. Sadly, five on the downed plane had died but the rescuers helped save the lives of 13 survivors.



Inuksuk near CFS Alert in Nunavut.

Photo: Department of National Defence IS2010-3015-02

# Modern Day Hot Spots

Our country’s military efforts in Afghanistan came to an end in 2014, after more than 12 years of dangerous service. Unrest continues in many parts of the world, however, and our men and women in uniform have answered the call to join our allies in missions in other hot spots since then. Operation *Impact*, in the Middle East, has seen Royal Canadian Air Force warplanes conducting operations against insurgents in Iraq, including aerial surveillance, refueling duties and ground strikes against enemy targets.



Photo: Department of National Defence HS2014-0747-013

HMCS Toronto departing Halifax to serve as part of Operation Reassurance in July 2014.

Canadian Armed Forces members on land, at sea and in the air have also been active in Operation *Reassurance*, supporting North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts in response to the troubling Russian actions in the Ukraine. From our navy frigates in the waters of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to our warplanes and soldiers in Eastern Europe, Canada had continued to stand up for peace and freedom.

# Operation Gratitude

Carl Willms of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War. In November 2013, he and 12 other Veterans residing in a local nursing home were honoured by grade seven students from Birchwood Intermediate School in ‘Operation Gratitude’.



Photo: The Guardian

Second World War Veteran Carl Willms

After marching into the retirement facility accompanied by a bagpiper, students shared their ‘Gratitude Rock Garden’ that contained personal messages of remembrance. They then presented a special certificate to each of these true Canadian heroes.

Willms and the other Veteran recipients were very touched to see young people who cared so much for them. Mission accomplished for Operation Gratitude!

# Remembering Afghanistan



Photo: Department of National Defence TN2007-0761-03

The Highway of Heroes in November 2007.

Remembrance Day is a special time to reflect on those who have lost their lives in military service and thank our Veterans, young and old alike.

For some people, unfortunately, remembrance can hit home with painful emotion on a daily basis. One hundred and fifty-eight (158) members of the Canadian Armed Forces from across the country died during our country’s efforts in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. The bodies of the fallen were returned to Canada for a formal repatriation ceremony, then carried down the Highway of Heroes before being returned to their families. The Canadian flags that were waved along the Highway of Heroes are now put away and our nation is beginning to heal. The friends and families of the fallen, however, continue to quietly bear their deep loss. The wounds of Afghanistan live on in other ways, too. Many soldiers returned home with injuries to body and mind that, for some, will last a lifetime.

Canada is remembering those who served in Afghanistan in many ways. The Government of Canada recognized and supported the friends and families of the fallen with a “National Day of Honour” on May 9, 2014. On Remembrance Day 2014, there was a formal rededication of the National War Memorial to add the dates of the Afghanistan mission. Other memorials, like the Afghanistan Vigil that has travelled across the country recently, have also been unveiled and more will be in the years to come.

# Newspaper Word Shuffle

Use the syllables in the boxes to answer each clue related to stories in the newspaper. Once complete, piece together the leftover syllables to solve the question at the bottom.

- Turkish peninsula where Newfoundlanders served. \_\_\_\_\_
- African country where Canadian peacekeepers served. \_\_\_\_\_
- Difficult naval supply route in the Second World War. \_\_\_\_\_
- Naval officer who served in both world wars. \_\_\_\_\_
- Female war photographer. \_\_\_\_\_

MUR	GO	LI
HER	FI	CON
BRO	DEUR	NO
KO	PO	MIS
GAL	MANSK	LIP
WAL	TON	LI

Which Canadian earned a Victoria Cross at the Battle of Hill 70 in 1917? \_\_\_\_\_

# Memorials from Coast to Coast to Coast

There are more than 6,000 memorials across the country dedicated to different wars and various branches of the military. Explore the map below to see some of them and identify the province or territory where each is found. Use social media to share photos of war memorials in your community to show you remember.

**Dawson City**

Territory \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: RCI Dawson City Branch #1

**Fort Smith**

Territory \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: DND

**Iqaluit**

Territory \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Doreen Follett

**Grand Falls**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: VAC

**Charlottetown**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: VAC

**Musgrave Harbour**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Torben Briner

**Calgary**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Google Earth

**Port Alberni**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: DND

**Batoche**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Peter Bestard © Gabriel Dumont Institute

**Brandon**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Bill Hillman - Volunteer Museum Webmaster

**Brampton**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: DND

**Montréal**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: Matt Pavola

**Lunenburg**

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: www.cpl.ca/monuments