

The
Maple Leaf
Legacy
Project



L'heritage
de la feuille
d'erable

UPDATE!

A Project in Remembrance of Canada's War Dead

Latest Numbers

The aim of the Maple Leaf Legacy Project is to photograph or obtain a photograph of every Canadian War Grave of the 20th Century.

On August 22, 2004 the number of Canadian war graves or commemorations photographed on hand is:

71,356

On the above date

80

commemorations were added.

This project relies solely on the kind assistance of the hundreds of volunteers and sponsors around the world to get the photographs or to donate funds to help pay for the good work of the project. To date the project has been honoured with the assistance of at least

493

wonderful and generous volunteers from around the world who have contributed photographs or other services.

*For Canada, for Canadians,
for the fallen, lest we forget.*

We remember

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Back to basics



Hello all,

Well, here we are, already in the diminishing days of summer. No sooner had it arrived and before I knew it the sun was past the yardarm of August and the fangs of autumn are nipping at summer's heels. It brings to my mind the old Mennonite saying 'Too soon old, too late smart'. Is it

just me or are summers a lot shorter than they used to be.

Actually I love and miss the autumns in Canada. The cool crisp days, the wonderful colours of the autumn foliage and the particular symbolic relationship with the Maple Leaf Legacy Project - that being the autumn ritual of the gathering of our fallen maple leaves.

Many volunteers find photographing the graves in the autumn most pleasurable as the cool weather makes for a most pleasant walk, kicking up the leaves through the cemeteries and one is neither sweating buckets nor freezing one's assets.

Which brings me to the main subject of my sermon this month. Many of the fallen leaves which have blown my way in the form of war grave photos have unfortunately been below standard for the project and therefore unusable. While some are borderline, legible but not great shots, others leave me wondering 'What was this person thinking?' One of the hardest parts of this project is having to tell people that all their hard work was for nothing. But any way I look at it, it must be done. Either through misunderstanding the project photo requirements or an error in camera settings or taking a photo in desperation because they just travelled 2 hours to get here and now the light is no good so I better shoot it anyway and hope for the best, some of the shots I receive are to say the least, puzzling. I have included some samples of the type of thing I am talking about below. I don't do this to embarrass those that took them. I know their intentions were good. I present them here so that hopefully people will see what not to do and why not to do it.

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I also want to emphasise that for the families and descendants of the men in these graves, the photo you are taking as a volunteer with this or any of the other war grave projects, will likely be the only photo they will ever see of this grave. Therefore it is our duty to present the best possible photo of the grave that we can reasonably be expected to get. It is the least we can do for them and for the memory of our fallen.

A few simple rules should eliminate most war grave photo problems.

- 1) If shooting with a digital camera, shoot at a minimum of 1200x800 resolution but preferably 1600x1200 or higher.
- 2) Move in close to the stone. Use the wide angle setting and shoot from no more than 5 ft (1.5 metres) from the stone and at headstone level and get the whole stone in with just a bit of space around it. When I shoot a regular commission style stone, I am only about 1 – 1.3 metres away.
- 3) If at all possible, shoot with the sun on the face of the stone or on an overcast day. Overcast days usually provide the best results. Never ever use a flash. If shooting into the sun, try to keep flares out of the image by adjusting your position slightly. If you have to shoot into the sun, using some

sort of white reflecting surface to bounce the sunlight back on to the face of the gravestone can do wonders for the quality of the image. A white T-shirt, pillow case, cardboard or photo reflector will do nicely. Even if someone is wearing a white shirt, just ask them to come beside you and kneel in front of the grave so that the light bounces on to the stone face will produce an amazing amount of fill light.

If you are doing a cemetery near you, you can go and scout the location first and see what the orientation of the stones you're going to shoot is. You can then come back when the light is best for those stones. Again, this isn't necessary if you do it on an overcast day or the stones are situated in the shade.

Another area of concern is that of submitting the photos. If possible, please submit them either on CD or by uploading them to my online storage folder. (You will need to ask me for instructions if you want to do this) Either way, I need you to make sure that all of the images from a particular location are in a folder with that location name and that all of the images are renamed according to the name of the person in the grave in this way - if the person's name is 'John B Smith', the file should be named 'Smith JB.jpg' While this may take you some time with large numbers of

graves, imagine the numbers of images I receive every week and if I have to do this, it will take more time than I have available. In fact it won't likely get done because of the time already spent on the project and the fact that I have a day job as well. Your help on this matter is most appreciated.

In other news this month, our project treasurer has just opened the project bank account at The TD Canada Trust in Calgary. Donations can be sent to The Maple Leaf Legacy Project, c/o Suite 401, 933 17th Ave SW, Calgary Alberta, T2T 5R6, Canada.

The first of our web page French translations has been submitted by volunteer Kevin Adams of Ottawa. Now the work of getting this on the site can begin. I will get it on there as soon as I can.

September 12 is Canada Day in the area around Maldegem, Belgium. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the liberation of this town by the Canadian forces in 1944. A large ceremony of remembrance will take place at the nearby Adegem Canadian War Cemetery where 842 Canadian soldiers lay. Belgian Prince Filip and his wife, Princess Mathilda are expected to attend as well as Albina Guarnieri, the new Canadian Minister of Veterans' Affairs. I will also attend and lay a wreath on behalf of all project volunteers. I will report on this event in the next issue.

If you are not on the mailing list for this newsletter and

would like to be, please see the instructions at the end of the newsletter.

Some of the submissions about bizarre happenings in the world of war graves this month are terrific and my thanks to all who submitted them. We have more for next

month. If you have anything along these lines – or anything else our readers may find of interest, please send it in and we'll see about adding it in the next issue. I must remember to submit my own bizarre coincidences. But I've gone on enough for today. See you in September.

Oh, and my love and best wishes for a happy birthday on September 6th to Mary and Gillian.

Regards,

Steve Douglas
Project Director

* * * * *

The following photos have been uniformly reduced in size here for editorial and illustrative purposes. The original submitted photos were larger than shown. Photos 9 & 10 were cropped by me for illustrative purposes and the complete photo is shown in No.12. If you have photos like these bad ones, please keep them. Save us all a lot of time and be sure of what you are taking. With today's digital cameras and the preview screen, there is no excuse for submitting a bad photo. Use your best judgement and be critical. We must work towards the best possible photos. I take part blame on this problem for not being more diligent when receiving the images and for not being clear enough with the photo guidelines on the web site. In the past it was much too time consuming for me to open each image for judging. It pains me to have to reject so many photos but the time has come to lay down the law on this. We just don't want poor second rate photos for a first rate project and a first rate volunteer army.



Photo #1

Strongly backlit. Appears to have been taken with a flash to compensate for backlight resulting in washed out inscription. Could be taken closer. Low resolution resulting in small image.



Photo #2

Backlit but helped by the fill light provided by the snow. Subject off centre and crooked. No need to be taken from the side. Low resolution resulting in small image.



Photo #3

Strongly backlit resulting in dark face. Could have been salvaged in Photoshop but resolution is too low.



Photo #4

Taken from too far away. Inscription illegible. Water on stone did not help. Water on stone should be on whole face of stone if being used to avoid the damp patch look. Stone crooked or photo crooked? Low resolution resulting in small image.



Photo #5

Flash used resulting in washed out inscription due to flash bouncing back at the camera.



Photo #6

Now we're too close. Take a step back. We need the whole stone please. Strong backlight but stone face reasonably lit. Taken from slightly lower angle and from further to the left may have saved this image.



Photo #7

Good composition but very low resolution resulting in difficult to read inscription.



Photo #8

Low resolution resulting in small image. Taken from a high right angle for no apparent reason. Low res means inscription difficult to read.



Photo #9

Poorly presented shot. A few minutes cleaning up the stone would have made a world of difference. Recumbent headstones (those lying flat on the ground) usually require a bit more attention. Watch out for your feet or shadow in the photo. Try to shoot from directly above rather than from an angle.



Photo #10

This is a sample of many shots received that are just a bit too close thus chopping off the top of the stone.



Photo #11

This is another example of the way some photos were taken. The shots were clear and beautiful but they only shot the inscriptions and not the whole stone. What were they thinking? Thankfully this has only happened twice.



Photo #12

Practically perfect picture. More like this please. Now this one is taken at a medium low resolution but because of the type of stone used, the excellent lighting conditions and the excellent composition, the results are acceptable and pleasing. Headstones in Canada, USA and Scotland are usually a granite with a mottled pattern in the stone which makes legibility more difficult if the light and resolution are not ideal.

Bizarre Coincidences

*I had no idea that my call last month for people to send in their bizarre coincidences would elicit such a tremendous response. Kenn Doerksen, who with his wife Sue has been so magnanimous in devoting his time to the MLLP, takes the top prize. He has had so many bizarre experiences that we've had to save some for the next edition of **UPDATE!**. Hope you don't mind that we split up your stories, Kenn. Here's his first segment...S.D.*

I am not, by nature, superstitious, but taking photographs for the Maple Leaf Legacy Project has begun to make me a believer in the supernatural. My wife and I have just had too many serendipitous expe-

riences to disregard the possibility of 'voices beyond'.

Just becoming involved with the MLLP was totally unexpected. I was aware of the project through the Manitoba Co-ordinator, Warren Otto,

who works down the hall from me in the Continuing Education Division of the University of Manitoba. I am a former member of the Canadian military and Warren occasionally approached me with questions about things military, thereby

introducing me to the Project. In the Spring of 2003, my wife and I holidayed in Orkney and spent one day traveling around the small island of Hoy (the southern boundary of Scapa Flow). With an hour to kill before our ferry arrived at the end of the day, we found ourselves outside the small Lyness Royal Naval Cemetery. As we wandered through it, we discovered the headstones of four Canadians and, remembering the MLLP, I took the requisite photos. We we're hooked.

I was to have a couple of free days while on business in Nova Scotia later that Spring, so, with the help and encouragement of Steve and Susan Borgersen (who had just taken

on the task of Co-ordinator for Nova Scotia), I headed off to several cemeteries in the Annapolis valley. I quickly discovered that, without some decent research beforehand, finding rural cemeteries in NS can be a challenge. Having spent nearly an hour in and around one small town, searching for a cemetery, without success, I stopped for a bowl of soup at the local Tim Horton's. As I was paying the teenager who had served me, I impulsively asked if she might know where the cemetery was, to which she replied "Certainly, my father is the local undertaker...". What are the odds?

Later the same day, having failed again in another small

community, I dropped in to the local RCMP office to get directions. As I was standing at the counter, waiting for the officer on duty to finish with a phone call, another gentleman came in. Since strangers in such small towns are very evident, he asked if he could help me and I explained my mission. It turned out that he drove the hearse for the local funeral parlor and he would be pleased to lead me (in the hearse) to the cemetery, where he introduced me to the very helpful superintendent. I had my photos in short order.

Kenn Doerksen
Winnipeg, Manitoba

* * * * *

Here are some similar coincidences with the MLLP, as submitted by British Columbia Representative Heather Darney. These are just too incredible.....

1 Coincidence

My experience with 'coincidences' since 'coming on board' with the Maple Leaf Legacy Project is truly amazing.

In June of 2000 while visiting Vimy Ridge, I took photographs of some of our Canadian war dead graves. That autumn, I saw a television report about the Vimy Memorial and the Maple Leaf Legacy Project. Wanting to donate the photos I had taken at Vimy, I contacted the Alberta regional rep., Brian Walford, who in turn suggested I contact Steve Douglas, the project director.

Steve lived in Reading, England at that time.

My father was born in Reading, England in 1899, and I wondered if the house he was born in was still standing. Dad died in 1977 and although my parents had been to England in the early 70's, my mother had not been back there since dad's death.

I sent Steve a note asking if he could find out if my dad's house was still standing. What a shock and surprise I had when I opened an email from him a couple of days later to read the following:

Subject: In the world book of coincidences...

Message: I am looking out my back door at your Dad's back door!

Steve lived directly behind my father's home!

#2 Coincidence

In April of 2001 my sister gave me my maternal grandmother's scrapbook. Inside were newspaper articles from WWII. My grandmother died in 1959 and I had no idea this scrapbook even existed. My

sister's comments to me as she handed me the scrapbook were "You love to read anything about Canadian military history so you can have this." On one of the pages was an article about the Big Ben in London and a photo showing the damage done to it during the war. Grandmother had cut out the article as per the shape of the Big Ben.

I turned the 'cutout' over so I could read the stories on the other side. A story caught my eye and I read "The Hellenic Society of Vancouver sends

their deepest sympathy to Mr. & Mrs. Hugh MacKie of Coldstream, B.C. following the news of the death of their eldest son, Flight Lieutenant John Fylton MacKie, RAF, who had been killed over Greece. After I read this, I sat there in amazement because.....

The very first war grave photo I ever took in B.C. for the Maple Leaf Legacy Project was Geoffery Fylton Mackie, RCAF, KIA 15 Feb 41, buried in the family plot in the Vernon Coldstream Cemetery. On the family stone along with Geof-

fery's name was John Fylton MacKie, RAF, KIA 16 Apr 41.

John is also commemorated on the Alamein Memorial in Egypt.

By the way, I don't believe in coincidences, but I do believe in synchronicity! I have never questioned my work for the MLLP since these two 'coincidences' occurred!!

Heather Darney
BC Regional Representative
Maple Leaf Legacy Project

NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

This is the section that belongs to you - the volunteers and regional representatives. Why not let everyone know what's going on in your part of the world by sending us photos, progress reports or news about events? Please send your submissions to dcory@chebucto.ns.ca with "MLLP Newsletter" in the subject line. Thanks to the following representatives and volunteers who have already sent us material.

Here's a short update from **Michael Fleming**, one of the volunteers in **Newfoundland and Labrador**:

"I am a volunteer from Newfoundland and I have been working closely with Gary Hebbard (the Newfoundland coordinator) and at present, by my calculations, there are only 4 sites each with one grave site left in the province to visit." Thanks, to Michael for his report and his hard work.

Thanks as well to **Colin Hotham** of **Wiltshire, England** for the following.



"Surely one of the most beautiful settings anywhere, for a war grave cemetery. For the second year running I visited the island of Sicily to continue my research into the Canadians part in the fighting in Sicily in Operation Husky during WW2.

I made a return visit to the Agira cemetery and photographed five headstones for Project Director Steve Douglas and one for British Columbia Representative Heather Darney. This year the weather was perfect on the day and the result shows the cemetery with Lake Pozzallo below and Mount Etna as the background. It was a moving

Agira Cemetery, Sicily with Lake Pozzallo below and Mount Etna as the background Photo by Colin Hotham

(When the call went out asking readers to send in examples of some bizarre circumstances we got this great story from Linda Terry of Barrie, Ontario. While not exactly a bizarre story it's certainly a funny one, which you should all enjoy.

The "Spirit" of Volunteerism By Linda Terry

I had driven into the cemetery at Rosseau, Ontario carefully with the van (always turning off my radio before entering a graveyard) doing well not to get a flat or scrape the bottom over the tree roots, this cemetery being well away from habitation and somewhat off the beaten path. As I was putting it into park, the vehicle was immediately and totally engulfed in deerflies. I was thinking to myself, "Great!" and that I would never get any good pictures as I would be busy swatting the swarming horde of nasty biters away from me and the camera lens, all the while being mindful not to engage in my normally salty language at this invasion, especially in a place deserving peace, quiet and reverence. So I remembered that in the back seat I had one of those mosquito nets that hikers and campers use that you can suspend over your sleeping bag to keep them off if you choose to sleep outside. I figured if I put that over my head I should be able to see out the white mesh and perhaps would have a better chance of getting some half-decent pictures. As it turned out, it

covered me completely even standing up...so, encouraged, I grabbed the camera gear and headed out of the van to take pictures. Worked like a charm! The bugs were promptly frustrated and left me alone. There was enough netting material that I could afford to stick my hand and camera out to take some shots while still remaining totally covered. So I continued on, stepping carefully and making photographs of the cemetery and reading all the markers for memorials. Normally, I walk with quiet veneration through a cemetery out of a deep respect for the dead and as Steve once suggested, speak the casualty's name softly and thank him for his service to humanity and my freedom when I take his marker picture. It suddenly occurred to me when I got my foot caught in the hem of the mosquito netting and all but

tripped onto my face, that I must present a rather frightening picture if anyone were to happen into the graveyard - a filmy white ghost floating along and muttering quietly to grave-stones - although "clumsy" and "ghost" aren't usually a concomitant utterance. I had to hold in a severe case of the giggles at that point and fervently hoped that the inhabitants of this quiet burial ground had a sense of humour in their afterlife. Fortunately, I didn't send any living visitors into cardiac arrest as I had the cemetery to myself that morning apart from one curious squirrel. Good thing I was finished taking pictures, too, as I doubt I would have been able to keep the camera steady for laughing and had forgotten my tripod.



*Linda Terry as the
"Spirit" of Rosseau
Cemetery*

Quick Notes

- ❖ Congratulations to Saskatchewan volunteers June and Bryce Bates on the birth of their second grandchild. Young Alaidria Jaye was welcomed to the family in early August.
- ❖ Good luck to Ian Forsdike in England who starts a new job soon.
- ❖ Get well soon to volunteers Gary Nelson in Virginia, USA, Ralph Graham in Merritt, British Columbia, and Mrs. Doug Cole in Medicine Hat, Alberta.
- ❖ Pat on the back! to Heather Darney in Vernon, British Columbia for giving a talk on the MLLP at the local museum.

PRESS CLIPS

Charlottetown (PEI) Restores Two War Memorials / Plans Underway for Third

City officials in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island have completed their restoration of two war memorials in the city's downtown. One, which honours the fallen from the two World Wars and the Korean War, was damaged due to exposure to the elements. Sadly, the work required on the second, a memorial to those who fell in the Boer War was to repair damage inflicted by vandals.

War Memorial, Charlottetown PEI

Officials are also proceeding with plans to erect a memorial fountain near the existing



monuments that will honour all those who have served and protected their country since the Korean War. Costing \$(Can.) 450,000 the fountain will have the Canadian and provincial coat of arms and the words, "Service, Sacrifice, Peace and Freedom", incorporated in both English and French. It will also contain a line from John MacRae's poem In Flanders Fields that reads "To you with failing hands we throw the torch. Be yours to hold it high."

(Source: Charlottetown "Guardian" Saturday, July 31, 2004)

Stolen Victoria Cross back on display

OTTAWA - A Victoria Cross medal that had gone missing for 31 years went on display at the Canadian War Museum Monday for the first time in three decades.

The medal, which had been

awarded to Ukranian-Canadian war hero Cpl. Filip Konowal, was stolen from the museum in 1973. It turned up this past April in a Hamilton auction house.

It is not known who took the

medal or how it ended up at the auction house 30 years later.

Konowal volunteered for army duty shortly after arriving in Canada from Ukraine in 1913.

In the Battle of Hill 70 near Vimy Ridge in France, Konowal stormed two machine gun posts and killed 17 enemy soldiers before a sniper shot him in the face.

As King George pinned the

Victoria Cross on Konowal, he told the young corporal his exploits were "some of the most daring in the history of my army."

Konowal, who spent his last years as a janitor scrubbing

floors in the House of Commons, died in 1959. His medal were then sold to the War Museum.

Written by CBC News Online staff

REFLECTIONS

"There's nothing glamorous about a war. There's nothing exciting about a war. It's a terrible thing to see your comrades that you've know for a long time, worked with, served these men had been denied the kind of life that you and I have been able to lead. And it was a feeling of great sorrow."

The Honourable George Hees (1910 – 1996) reflecting on his overseas visits to many of the cemeteries and the memorials to Canada's fallen. A former

with, suddenly have their lives snuffed out; or receive a terrible wound that's going to debilitate them for the rest of their life. It's a dreadful thing to see, and my feeling was a Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister, Hees was a decorated Veteran of the Second World War, a former football player and businessman who served in various key economic departments including Trade and Transport - but was probably best known as Minister of Veterans Affairs.

feeling of great sorrow, as I walked through those graveyards, to see the names of some people that I knew, others that I didn't, of course. Most that I didn't realize - that Having been wounded during the Battle of the Scheldt, Belgium in 1944, he understood Veterans and he proudly advanced Canada's tradition of providing benefits and services for those who served.

SISTER PROJECTS

Australian project Director, Matt Smith, reports the appointment of Peter Bennett as project co-ordinator in the

United Kingdom. Peter has been a volunteer for the MLLP and the other projects for some time now. He can be

reached at:
peterbennett88@hotmail.com

WEB LINKS

And now for something completely different...Do you have colour film that was shot overseas or in Canada during the war years of the 1930s and 1940s? If so, the producers of a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) documentary

would like to borrow your film for a new series entitled, "Canada's War in Colour". Researchers believe that there are all kinds of undiscovered coverage of Canadians at war overseas and at home and they are asking people to have

a look around for film in their basements and attics. Surprisingly, it was not that unusual for service people to take their cameras with them on their tour of duty. Respected Canadian historian Jack Granatstein, the consult-

ant for the series, says these films can add a wholly new aspect to our understanding of the soldiers' lives overseas. Keep an eye out for this com-

selling series, which will be shown on the CBC network in three parts beginning in January 2005. In the meantime, visit the series web page for

more information on how to submit your film and also on other material that might be of interest such as colour photographs and diaries:

<http://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/canadaswar>

Some interesting web sites:

Remember September 44 – Operation Market Garden - <http://www.rememberseptember44.com/>
 The Battle of the Scheldt – Liberation of Belgium and the Netherlands in September, 1944.
<http://www.lermuseum.org/ler/mh/wwii/belgium.html>

Found a new, interesting link to share? Just drop me a line at: dcrory@chebucto.ns.ca and I'll put it in the next edition. Thanks! – Dale Crory

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERISM



Volunteer Ron Cushman got a pleasant surprise recently when he visited CBL Data Recovery Technologies Inc of Markham Ontario, looking to recover some MLLP files from his crashed hard drive. The Company's original quote for the work could have been as high as \$(Can.)1,490.00, plus tax, but quick-thinking

Ron figured it might be worth asking if there might be a discount for not-for-profit charitable organizations, such as the MLLP. Imagine his delight when the answer that came back there was "no charge" at all!

It seems that the CBL management had a quick glance at the MLLP web page (www.mapleleaflegacy.ca) and were sufficiently impressed to do the work gratis. What a ringing endorsement for the Project from the corporate world! Our thanks to CBL Data Recovery Technologies Inc., (590 Alden Road, Markham, Ontario 1.800.551.3917 www.cbltech.ca) for their generosity.

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