

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.

As of January 11, 2007 the number of Canadian war graves or commemorations photographed on hand is:

100,000

On the above date

2362

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

696

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



Greetings all from sunny Italy. I am writing from Ortona, on the Adriatic coast and scene of some of the fiercest fighting involving Canadian troops in the battle for Italy in WW2. The scenery is spectacular. Rough, rugged, mountainous country that helps one to understand just what our troops had to overcome in the pursuit of the German army north, up the boot of Italy. Deep canyons, ravines, hills and mountains to climb and descend, rivers to ford, and, unlike the current warm conditions, bitterly cold conditions in the winter of 1943-44.

The cemeteries here, as almost everywhere, are immaculately kept and a credit to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and their dedicated staff. Each one seems to be in a stunning setting, but none can surpass that of Agira Canadian War Cemetery in the centre of Sicily. Only a few kilometres from the still active Mt Etna volcano, Agira enjoys a 'bella vista' in a remote and peaceful setting. (sorry if that sounds like a real estate ad) I will put a photo of it on the next web site update.

Too bad I cannot speak so highly of Naples War Cemetery. The cemetery itself is fine. As well cared for as any CWGC cemetery. But the location is very difficult to find and, according to the local policeman who drops by frequently to check on any visitors, is located on the edge of a 'danger zone'. By that he means the nearby neighbourhoods are better left alone and not wandered about in. Visitors and even commission staff have been robbed here and it was with some trepidation that we visited this cemetery. But we needed good photos from here and so, with the cause in mind, we embarked on the trek to Napoli. Getting there using the CWGC instructions was not an exercise in relaxation. More likely to test one's stress levels and good humour than anything else. Driving in some places in Italy is chaos at best. Napoli is one of those places best avoided in my opinion. Having visited the cemetery, getting out of Napoli was even worse. We travelled for 30 minutes before any hint of a road sign was seen. And that was in the heart of the city, which I had no intention of visiting in the first place Take my advice, if ever contemplating a visit to Naples War

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Cemetery, fly in to Naples airport, get a taxi, have him wait and take you back to the airport and fly out again. That is the only way I would do it again.

On the other end of the scale, finding Sangro River War Cemetery was a breeze. Maybe we were just lucky but the signage sure helped. Moro River Canadian Cemetery was not too bad but again the CWGC instructions were useless. Stop and ask for help seemed to work the best. Other locations that were a stress test were Caserta, Siracuse and Catania. Someone at the commission needs to review all of their online driving instructions. Surely they should be clear enough for two grown adults to be able to follow. And the signage on the roads could also stand a review and improvements.

Anyway, enough for now on that subject. The project is now in its 10th year. Our anniversary is in April and we are marking the event, which coincides with the 90th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge and the rededication of the newly renovated Vimy Memorial, with a battlefields tour. You are invited to come along. There are still seats available for the trip which is April 6-15 and covers the battlefields of the Ypres salient in Belgium and the Somme and Normandy in France. We will also attend the rededication ceremonies on Vimy Ridge Day, April 9. It should be a huge event and one not to miss. Please email June Bates at junebug24@sasktel.net for more information as soon as possible. Cost is 880.00 Euros starting and ending in Paris. Pickups can be arranged for those travelling from Britain from the Eurostar station in Lille, or in Ypres, Belgium.



*Cassino, just one of the many Commonwealth Cemeteries in Italy
Photo courtesy of the
Canadian Armed Forces*

One more milestone recently met is the 100,000 photos collected. We went over the top with the 490 photos I did at Agira. But thanks to so many people out there who have contributed, we have averaged 10,000 photos per year. It could not have been done without you and for that you have my eternal appreciation and the appreciation of so many more people who have requested and received copies of those photos or who have just checked in on the project and have expressed their thanks to you through me over the years.

Thank you, Merci, Dank U, Tac, and Cheers!!
Steve Douglas
Director
Maple Leaf Legacy Project,

NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

This is the section that belongs to you - the volunteers, regional representatives, and people having an interest in commemorating Canada's fallen. 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 dcroxy@chebucto.ns.ca with "MLLP Newsletter" in the subject line. Here are a few items for this edition:



Here's an interesting item from **John Thompson** who tells us what happened to two of his fellow volunteers. Thanks, John for letting us know about this:

...One weekend last year, Mike and Rob were planning to go out together to some cemeteries. However, when Rob walked outside his house the morning of their trip, he discovered he was without wheels literally. Somebody had ripped him off. (Whatever happened to the days of just pilfering hubcaps?)

Here's a great photo sent to us by Belgian volunteer **Real Desmarets** who is in the Belgian army and currently on duty in Afghanistan. He is here inside a derelict tank in a tank graveyard. Thanks Real!



Two of our volunteers have come together to produce a third future volunteer...Parents are **Eric and Sylvia McGeer**, of Toronto and as Steve noted – What timing! Here's what Eric said in his message

“Our beloved little girl arrived at 10:20 a.m. on Remembrance Day, just in time for her first minute of silence. Here she is a couple of days ago, and she has become even more beautiful ever since. Sylvia is doing well, although the labour and first few days have been trying for her. Our little darling is settling in to life at home, calling the tune every couple of hours, and is a delightful gift to her parents.

Hope all is well with you,

Eric



REMEMBRANCE DAY IN IEPER



Steve had the pleasure of meeting up with vacationing Nova Scotians Lesley Fraser and Jackie Ball who travelled to Ieper to commemorate Remembrance Day. Lesley, a reserve member of Nova Scotia's 33rd Field Ambulance (Halifax) is shown on her way to the Menin Gate to lay a wreath on behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces. Behind Lesley and Jackie is Matt Smith the director of our sister project, the Australian War Graves Photographic Archive. Later that day Jackie placed a wooden cross at the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Monument in memory of her cousin Private Nathan Smith a member of the PPCLI who was killed in Afghanistan on April 18, 2002.

REQUEST FOR HELP

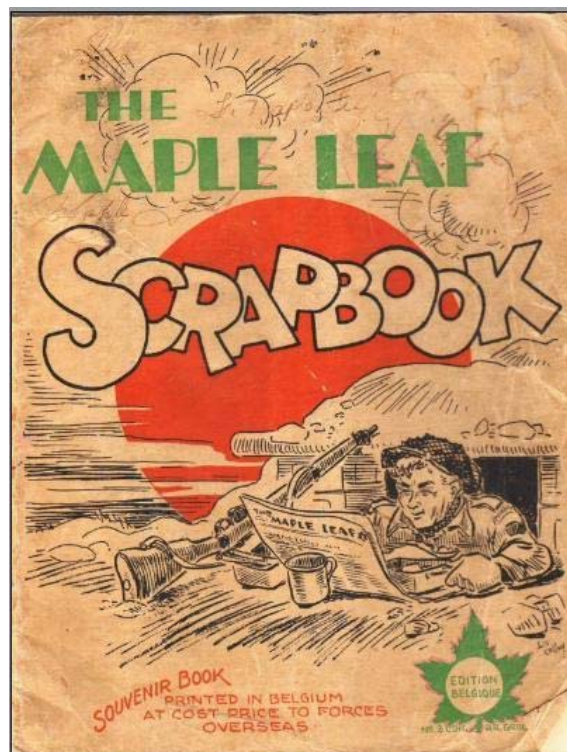
If anyone can help Mr. McDonald, please get in touch with him directly at [cjmcdona @ healthy.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cjmcdona@healthy.uwaterloo.ca).

Steve

Hello: My father-in-law served in the RCAF during WWII. He passed away 2 years ago.

We are now in the process of moving my mother in law into new living arrangements and I've come across an interesting old magazine. I was searching the internet and came across your web site. The magazine is called "The Maple Leaf Scrapbook". I've attached a scan of the cover. It appears to be a magazine that was printed in Belgium for the troops. This may not be relevant to your web site, but I was curious if you've heard of this magazine or know of someone who might be able to tell me more about it.

Thanks,
Craig McDonald



NEWS RELEASES

The Matrix Project - Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group

The Matrix Project is a unique element of the CEF Study Group. Initially developed and hosted on an associated CEF member's website, the project is an integral part of the CEFSG. The Matrix is a web-based database of collective information provided by the CEFSG Members and provides information on all of the structure and components of the CEF during 1914 to 1919. The main CEF Matrix (the Army Corps and Army Troops) is supported by a number of "Utility Functions" for both the inexperienced and seasoned researcher. The Utility Functions are: Matrix Updates, Navigation Chart, Unit Summary Tables, Great War Maps, CEF Study Group Recommended Websites, Common Abbreviations, ORBAT Directory, and War Diary Links. The Matrix presents most of the information in a "loosely defined" Order of Battle [OBBAT] format. In addition, the Matrix Section has re-transcribed Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919, Colonel G. W. L. Nicholson, C.D. as a true facsimile of the original document. [CEF Study Group - Dec 2006 - Updated]

NOTE: A correctly paginated document at with maps and a GoogleEarth overlay is now available at <http://cefresearch.com/matrix/Nicholson/> For detailed information on The Matrix please see : <http://www.cefresearch.com/matrix/>