

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 July 15, 2005 the number of Canadian war graves or commemorations photographed on hand is:

90,394

On the above date

7,093

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

639

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 from sunny Belgium.

Well, it's sunny today and most days I suppose. But of course rain must fall occasionally. Our project is like that. Most of the time it is a sunny day project. Not much bad news is likely to come out of a project like this. It is people helping people and that's good. We volunteers feel good about it. The people we help feel good about it. It really is a win-win situation. However, just like the weather, every so often a big black cloud comes along just to say 'not so fast sunny boy...it's time to rain on your parade'.

Well, that may not have been the intended attitude, but that's the way I felt about it when I recently received a registered letter from the Royal Canadian Legion lawyers which threatened to take us to court because we had two graphics of poppies on our web site. Now, you are either laughing so hard you've made a puddle on the floor, or your jaw just dropped out of joint from disbelief. Yes, you heard it right. Some legal beagle at the RCL, with more time on his hands than he knows what to do with, came up with this supremely petty complaint, claiming that they have the rights to all poppy graphics in Canada. Our poppy was not their poppy. I designed it. Well, I seriously doubt their claim will hold up in court, but since the board and all the regional co-ordinators were named in this letter and the board members thought it too risky and potentially too expensive to fight, I decided to remove that offensive international symbol of remembrance with one of my photos of a poppy, which the RCL guy actually suggested. I guess that's what they wanted really. They knew us little guys would be intimidated at the prospects of an expensive court case and they got the desired results with the cost of a scary letter of intimidation from the big bad lawyer.

Okay, on to less petty things. Since our last newsletter, our super volunteer and Board member Eric Reid came over to France again in May and spent another week photographing graves with another super volunteer, Fred Killick, who lives in France and hosted Eric and I while in the area. Between the three of us, and

continued on page 2

with some help from a young Canadian, Jonah Smith, travelling Europe on his own, who tagged along for a few days, we managed to bag another 9,000 or so graves from the Somme area and two of the big cemeteries at Etaples and Terlincthun, on the north coast of France. Thanks very much gentlemen.

Our very frustrating search for a database structure drags on. Seems those who do these things want very big paydays for this work. I am convinced there is a better way but have, to now, been unable to find it. I have recruited a good friend, in London, Ontario, to head up the search for the right tool for this job. He is well educated in this field and should be able to come up with the answer soon.

The hope is to have something in place and working by the end of the year at the latest. Someone out there knows what we need and can deliver the results for a reasonable price or even free. If you are that person, please get in touch.

And now, if you will allow me to indulge in a little reflection, I would like to express my awe at the effect this project has had on so many people. April

marked the eighth anniversary of the conception of the project and the laying down of the project aims and principles. Since then, hundreds of people around the world have been moved to help.

We have had people come forward from such diverse locations as Ghana, India, Indonesia, The Sudan, The Czech Republic, South Africa, Norway, and even Quebec. Our oldest volunteer that I am aware of was 81 when he first came on board in 1997. Our youngest was 9.

Some people have become so dedicated to the idea they have gone to some extreme measures to help out. Travelling many miles by car, plane or train to take just one photo or to take many thousands of photos. Four people have been inspired to start up other national projects which in turn have involved hundreds more volunteers.

Graves and even whole cemeteries that were previously lost have been found by some super sleuthing volunteers. Headstones that were damaged have been replaced with new stones thanks to volunteers pointing out problems. Many hundreds of people have seen photos of family head-

stones that were previously unavailable to them. All of these things make for poignant reflections but the most poignant for me has to be that one volunteer, John Forrester, of Clydebank, Scotland who died of a massive heart attack in front of a cemetery in northwest Scotland while on his way to photograph the headstones of two Canadian airmen buried there.

John died doing something he loved doing, while travelling across the countryside he loved while in the company of two loved ones, his wife and his sister. What more can someone ask if it is your time to go. His enthusiasm, dedication and love for life inspired me and, I am sure, all who knew him.

Best wishes are in order for the upcoming September wedding of my good friend Matt Smith, Director of the Australian project. He managed to convince the lovely Alison Blunt to take his hand and put up with many years of farting, belching and grave hunting. Not only that, but she managed to get him to quit smoking. Now that is something. Good on ya Ali! We all wish you both many happy years together.

*continued on page 3*

I must also say a sincere thank you to Nelson Mercier, who has recently stepped down from the regional co-ordinator's role in eastern Ontario and Quebec. Nelson did some fine work over the past few years and he shall be missed. I wish him well in his upcoming endeavours.

And while one person steps back from the project, another steps forward to fill his shoes. Welcome to Steven Dieter, formally a volunteer in the SW Ontario area, now residing near Kingston, Ontario.

Steve has assumed the regional co-ordinator role for Eastern Ontario and, for the time being, the province of Quebec. Lt Dieter is a Associate Air Force Historian and Master of Arts - War Studies Candidate at the Royal Military College of Canada. I welcome Steve aboard the project and thank him for taking on this challenge. I think he's up to it.

Finally, a note about our sister project for New Zealand. Due to medical complications with the youngest son, Donna and Gary have had little time to

devote to the project. For the time being, Ralph McLean, Matt Smith and I will update and maintain the NZ cemetery lists so that volunteers can see what the status of any cemetery is. Give us a few weeks to get this done and then if you are aware of any other corrections needed, please let us know.

Til next time, have a great summer.

Steve Douglas  
Project Founder & Director

## 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 [dcroxy@chebucto.ns.ca](mailto:dcroxy@chebucto.ns.ca) with "MLLP Newsletter" in the subject line. Thanks to the following representatives and volunteers who have already sent us material.

Ronald Cormier, one of the MLLP volunteers in New Brunswick, wrote to Project Director Steve Douglas recently to let him know that the City of Dieppe (outside Moncton) had unveiled a Wall of Remembrance in the lobby of the Dieppe City Hall. The wall is actually a collection of photographs taken by MLLP volunteers which honor 15 Dieppe area men who lost their lives in the Second World War.

Here's Ronald's message to Steve and thanks to Ronald for letting us know about this.

*Hello Steve,*

*One of my greatest regrets is not having been able to be in The Netherlands for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the end of the war. In the past, I have attended the 40th, 50th and 60th anniversary as well as the 50th and 60th commemoration of the Dieppe Raid. I spent lots of time watching Newsworld last week and saw most of*

*the ceremonies.*



*The Wall of Remembrance at the Dieppe (NB) City Hall was inaugurated on Monday, May 2. About 60 people attended the ceremony where the 15 names were read out. The event was covered by the Moncton Times-Transcript, L'Acadie Nouvelle (French provincial daily), L'Étoile (local weekly), CBC radio and*

*Rogers Cable (local community access channels).*

*I did an interview for cable TV where I mentioned the Maple Leaf Legacy Project and how important it's work is in remembering the fallen.*

*Regards,*

Here are some funny submissions from two of our British Columbia MLLP Volunteers: B.C. Co-ordinator Heather Darney and her fellow volunteer photographer Tom Houghton who wrote about their recent visit to the Burnaby Ocean View Cemetery. Thanks Heather and Tom for sharing some of the lighter moments in your service to the MLLP!!

First, here's Heather's story:

*Over the past few years when I've been out photographing our war dead graves I have come across some interesting sights. Today (May 28) was definitely one of those...*

*Today as Tom Houghton and I searched for one of our war dead graves in the Burnaby Ocean View Cemetery we noticed many crows flying around, as well as squirrels running through the grounds. Upon finding the grave I could hear crows raising hell over something, but I was intent on getting the 'perfect MLLP picture', and paid no attention to them. I focused in on the headstone, and as I clicked down the camera button, a black object suddenly raced past my feet. I screamed in surprise as I saw a terrified squirrel flying by me with two squawking crows on its' tail! We*



*watched as the 'rat' eluded the 'spitfires (Tom's quote). The squirrel won the race and we stood back laughing.*

*Now I didn't think anymore of this until later when I checked my photos - that 'perfect MLLP photo' wasn't perfect at all...for flying in on one side was that poor little squirrel dodging the swooping crows! And so I leave you with laughter and the following two questions....*

*Did that squirrel run to me for safety or .... was he wanting to volunteer with the MLLP due to the fact that he resides there and he knows exactly where the graves are?*

*Heather Darney  
British Columbia Co-ordinator*

Now here's Tom's story as told by Heather:

*Some time ago, Tom was photographing war graves in this same Burnaby Ocean View Cemetery. As he progressed through his list of war dead, he was trying to locate one particular head-*



*stone when he suddenly became the target of a pair of crows dive-bombing him. They became*

*extremely aggressive as he moved closer to the area of the headstone. Tom became concerned about his own safety when he felt the wind pressure from their wings on the back of his head. He quickly did a 180-degree turn and headed back to his car. The crows kept circling and squawking so he headed off to a different section of the cemetery. Sometime later he came back to resume the search figuring that the crows had moved on. However, they were still there, the squawking began and the dive-bombing resumed.*

*It was then he saw a baby crow hopping through the grass on the other side of the road. It must have fallen from one of the trees near the headstone, and Ma & Pa Crow were just protecting their young.*

*Today Tom was able to finally get that photo suc*

*cessfully due to the fact that he fed Ma & Pa Crow crumbled cookies!*

*Tom Houghton  
MLLP/B.C.*

A note from Dale Crory of Halifax, Nova Scotia

*This month marks the end of my first year with the MLLP and wow, what a great year it has been!! For the country as a whole, there have been many memorable events throughout the year – all which have done so much to honor those Canadians who have fought and died for our great country. In June 2004 we paid tribute to the thousands of Canadian soldiers who landed on Juno Beach. Later in the year, we honored those soldiers who participated in the Italian campaign,*

*The New Year got off to a great start with the Canadian government declaring 2005 as the Year of the Veteran – an initiative that has been enormously successful across the country. In May Canadians came together again to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in Europe. Also in May we saw*

*the opening of nation's new war museum which will ensure that Canada's war history is preserved forever (see "Web Links" section). Next on the horizon will be the ceremonies to mark the end of the war in the Pacific.*

*For me personally, this year has been equally memorable. First, working with MLLP Director Steve Douglas, the **Update!** newsletter was resurrected which has turned out to a very educational*

*and gratifying experience, not to mention a lot of fun. Like a lot of MLLP volunteers, I haven't always had the time to devote to the project, but I still believe my time has been worthwhile in helping to preserve the memory of Canada's fallen. Also this year, I had an opportunity to make a return trip to Belgium and France. While there I revisited Vimy Ridge and made my first trip to Newfoundland Park at Beaumont Hamel, two sites that I wish every Canadian could see and experience.*

*Also and equally significant was a side trip that I made to the Lorraine region of France where I visited the grave of one of my relatives who was killed while serving with the Canadian Air Force in post-war Europe. It was truly an overwhelming experience, but many Canadians will never have this opportunity to visit the grave of their loved ones. This is what*

*makes the MLLP project so important, not that anyone of*

*us need any reminders. With that and as I enter my second year with the MLLP, a big thanks to all the MLLP volunteers especially those who have sent contributions to the newsletter. You are a great group and I am proud to be associated with you all.*

*Dale Crory  
Halifax, Nova Scotia*



*Restoration work at Vimy Ridge – Photo By Steve Douglas*

## PRESS CLIPS

### Sunday, May 8th – Canadians Honour Second World War Veterans (adapted from a May 8 news release from Veterans Affairs Canada)

Ottawa - Canadians from coast to coast to coast paused to pay tribute to the thousands of Canadians who fought for freedom in the Second World War.

Veterans Affairs Canada in partnership with federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, veterans' organizations and community groups, held numerous ceremonies of remembrance and parades across the country and abroad on May 8 to mark the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE-Day) and the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.

"The Year of the Veteran is our chance to honour the sacrifices our brave Canadian veterans made sixty years ago to protect our freedom and quality of life," said the Honourable Albina Guarnieri, Minister of Veterans Affairs. "It is an honour to be able to celebrate this day and pay tribute to our veterans in Canada and in the Netherlands."

### Events in Canada to mark VE-Day

In Canada, major remembrance events included parades, marches, and ceremonies as well as more light-hearted celebrations such as swing dances held in every provincial capital. Thousands of Canadians turned out to thank Canadian veterans for a century of sacrifice. In Ottawa, a major remembrance ceremony with Prime Minister Paul Martin was held at the National War Memorial followed by a parade of veterans, including a military convoy of Second

World War vehicles, to the new Canadian War Museum to mark its official opening.

### The liberation of the Netherlands

The largest Government of Canada veteran delegation ever, led by the Honourable Albina Guarnieri, Minister of Veterans Affairs, travelled to the Netherlands on May 1st and participated in ceremonies of remembrance to mark the 60th anniversary of the Netherlands' liberation. One hundred and twenty-eight Canadian veterans and their caregivers along with 13 Canadian youth, one from each province and territory in Canada, as well as three representatives of the War Amps Operation Legacy program, made the journey to celebrate the anniversary with Dutch citizens.

"The Dutch are as thankful for their freedom today as they were sixty years ago and have welcomed our veterans as cherished friends," said Minister Guarnieri. "The story of their liberation has been passed on to future generations. To see a Dutch child walk up to a Canadian veteran to say thank you - it touches your heart."



*Prime Minister Paul Martin walks past the tombstones of Royal Canadian Air Force casualties following a remembrance ceremony at Amersfoort General Cemetery, in Amersfoort, Netherlands, Monday, May 9. (CP Photo/Tom Hanson)*

During the 10-day overseas event, the official Government of Canada delegation participated in major ceremonies of remembrance at the Canadian War Cemeteries in Groesbeek on May 3 and Holten on May 4.

On May 6, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada unveiled a plaque in honour of Second World War veterans. On May 8, more than 300,000 Dutch and Canadians gathered in Apeldoorn as Canadian veterans led a parade in vintage military vehicles.

*For more information visit the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site: [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca).*

## WEB LINKS

Canadians across the country joined some 3,000 veterans and their families on May 8 to celebrate the official opening of the new Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Celebrated as the first National Canadian museum opening of the 21st Century, the Canadian War Museum has been hailed a world-class institution for its architectural design, historical significance, and thought-provoking exhibitions. To do a virtual tour of this magnificent institution visit [www.warmuseum.ca](http://www.warmuseum.ca)



## REFLECTIONS

*Following is a heartfelt piece by veteran CBC News anchor Peter Mansbridge which he wrote for MacLeans magazine. (Courtesy of MacLeans Magazine [www.macleans.ca](http://www.macleans.ca))*

### **From the heart: Nowhere are Canadians more appreciated than in the Netherlands** PETER MANSBRIDGE

It's always special to witness your country being thanked, and as a Canadian, there is nowhere the thanks are as sincere as the ones offered in Apeldoorn, Netherlands. Apeldoorn is one of



*Canadian veterans reach out to shake hands with the crowd during the veterans parade to mark VE-Day in Apeldoorn, Sunday, May 8. Canadian veterans were riding on Second World War vehicles in what could be the final big parade for many of them. (CP Photo/Ryan Remiorz)*

many Dutch communities that witnessed the sacrifice of Canadian blood in the liberation of their country. Young soldiers from across Canada fought their way up from France and through Belgium into Holland as part of the successful Allied effort to end the war in Europe 60 years ago this week.

I was in Apeldoorn in May 1995 for the 50th anniversary. Canadian flags were flying everywhere -- from street signs, lampposts, apartment balconies and car aerials. Hundreds of thousands of people, many from surrounding towns and villages, lined the streets to watch Canadian veterans walk by, just as they did all those years ago when many were still in their teens. I saw more than a few children with one arm around a parent's neck and the other stretching out to touch a vet. At one point, a reporter asked a young Apeldoorn mom why she felt it was so important to bring her five-year-old to the celebration. Her answer was simple: "I wanted him to know what a Canadian was."

That answer has stuck with me, especially when we have such a hard time trying to answer the question: What is a Canadian? The Dutch have no such trouble. To them, a Canadian is someone from a far-off land who risked everything to liberate them from one of the worst kinds of oppression the world has ever seen. As the mayor of Apeldoorn said to me later that day, "You must have experienced occupation to know what freedom means. And then to appreciate who gave it to you."

The Netherlands is good at remembering, partly because there is so much to remember. The country fell to a Nazi invasion that took just days, and then it suffered through five years of brutal rule that left tens of thousands dead. In that last winter of 1944-1945, the occupiers brought in a rationing program that meant starvation for thousands more, and for some of the living, food was tulip bulbs. It was into this horror that the young Canadians came by ground and from the air, and they too died by the thousands. In war cemeteries across the Netherlands they lie -- 2,338 in Groesbeek, 1,355 in Holten, 968 in Bergen-op-Zoom -- and hundreds more

elsewhere. Dutch children, as part of their grade-school curriculum, help tend the Canadians' gravesites so they, too, will never forget.

There are stories at every gravestone, including this heartbreaking one about one couple who stayed long after the fighting ended to help with everything from mine clearing to reconstruction. In the Holten cemetery are buried two 20-year-olds, Edward and Winifred Brewster. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, she was in the Canadian Women's Army Corps. Theirs had been a love story in the midst of a war-torn country that led to marriage on April 14, 1946 and ended tragically the next day when they died in a car accident.

This week, the Canadian veterans, fewer in number and walking a little slower now, make their way back to Apeldoorn, many knowing this will likely be the last time. The flags will be there and so will the crowds. And so too, will the thanks of a grateful nation.

*Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Anchor of The National.*

## SOLDIER POETS

### DULCE ET DECORUM EST

By Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,  
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;  
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
 Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.  
 Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!--An ecstasy of fumbling  
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.--  
 Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,  
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight  
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.



*Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)  
 poet, patriot,  
 soldier, pacifist*

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace  
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,  
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs  
 Bitter as the cud  
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,--  
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
 Pro patria mori.

*1 DULCE ET DECORUM EST - the first words of a Latin saying (taken from an ode by Horace). The words were widely understood and often quoted at the start of the First World War. They mean "It is sweet and right." The full saying ends the poem: Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori - it is sweet and right to die for your country. In other words, it is a wonderful and great honour to fight and die for your country*

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