

UPDAT

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 November 1, 2004 the number of Canadian war graves or commemorations photographed on hand is:

77,824

On the above date

6,378

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

505

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



Hello again,

Another month goes by and we all get a little older. Where does it go? At least this past month a serious dent was made in our war grave photography numbers and in the project coffers.

Volunteer and Board member Eric Reid came over to France, from his home in Ottawa, for a week of photographing war graves. I met Eric at the home of another volunteer, from England, now a resident of France, Fred Killick. Fred was kind enough to host us for the week at his home just south of Arras. Over the following days, the three of us photographed some 8,000 graves, of which about 6,200 were Canadians and the rest were the Aussies, the Kiwis, the Brits and the South Africans. That is almost a 10% increase in our total number. Fantastic. Some would have called us the 'Three Musketeers', others would have said 'Los tres bobos'. Perhaps 'Three Amigos' would be a good compromise and be more accurate. I had to return to work after 5 days but Eric and Fred continued after I left. With volunteers like them, and many others, this project is in good hands.

The project received another good shot in the arm this month. It is a little early to reveal all the details but suffice to say that it is a web development grant that will help us get our online searchable database structure developed and ready for the uploading of all these photos we have taken already. All details will be revealed in an upcoming issue of the newsletter. Once the database is ready, you, as volunteers, should be able to upload your photos directly to the database and fill in the appropriate fields of information on each war grave. These will then go into a holding area until they have been checked for accuracy and picture size and quality before going live online. We will be needing all sorts of help with image management once everything is in place.

This Remembrance Day I will spend at work for the most part. It is our biggest day of the year for sales in a military bookshop in Ypres. However we do close for the ceremony at the Menin Gate, which is about 200 metres from the shop. I will be trying to get some nice new photos of the ceremony this year.

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I will also attend the Remembrance Sunday event at the Vimy Memorial on November 7th. I hope to have photos for the next issue of Update. I trust you are all planning to attend your local Remembrance Day ceremony.

Till next time, and apologies for the lateness of this issue. My fault, not Dale's.

Steve Douglas
Founder and Director

(left to right) Steve Douglas with Eric Reid in the Grange Tunnel at Vimy Ridge. Notice what's on the wall behind Steve and Eric – The inspiration for the MLLP logo -- a maple leaf that was carved by an unknown soldier during the battle for Vimy Ridge in July 1917. You can view a close-up of the carving and read more about its history by visiting the MLLP web page at www.mapleleaflegacy.ca and following the link "About the Logo".



Bizarre Coincidences

Thanks to volunteer photographer, Martyn Obbard, of Peterborough, Ontario, and MLLP founder and director, Steve Douglas, for their contributions to this month's "Bizarre Coincidences". If you have your own bizarre stories, please send them along to: dcroxy@chebucto.ns.ca. Thanks!

From Martyn Obbard:

On October 24, I was back to the Little Lake Cemetery in Peterborough, and while searching unsuccessfully for a grave in an area of the cemetery where it was supposed to be according to the list provided, I came across two graves that were not on the list. Both soldiers had died during W.W. I., so I decided to take photos because of their dates of death even though they were not on

the list. On returning home, I checked the CCWGC web site, and both soldiers appear there. So, for whatever reason, those two soldiers were not on the list that had been provided to me a while ago. Maybe they called out to me as Kenn Doerksen suggested in the recent newsletter that others had called to him and his wife on their trips.

From Steve Douglas:

In the spring of 2000, I was living in England, as was Matt Smith, who had just started the Australian War Graves Photographic Archive. We got together one Saturday afternoon to visit and photograph graves at Brookwood Military Cemetery. After a short tour, to show Matt around, he went off to photograph the 448 Australian graves while I went off to do some more of the 2728 Canadian war graves. After a couple of hours, my batteries were dead and my back was killing me so I called

it a day. I realised that I had brought 4 little Maple Leaf flags with me so I decided to put them in front of various graves. I picked my wife's uncle's grave, a native Canadian's grave, a fireman's grave and I had one left so I just picked a grave at random, of a soldier who had been awarded the Military Medal.

About three weeks later I received an email from Warren Otto, later to become our Manitoba co-

ordinator. After a couple of emails I had mentioned that I was living in Reading, Berkshire. Warren said that his wife's grandfather had been from Reading and could I get a photo of his grave at Brookwood for her. 'Sure, no problem', I said, as I had planned to go back there the following Sunday to continue with the rest of the graves there.

So, off I go and when I got to Brookwood I went over to the building where the register book is

kept and looked up this fellow Thomas Cove. According to the register the grave was just alongside the building about 15 rows up the pathway. As I approached the grave, I could see in the distance that one of the flags I had placed a few weeks before was still there. Imagine my shock, as I got closer, to discover that the grave I had placed the flag on was that of Thomas Cove. Of the 2728 graves I could have picked, I picked his. It makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up every time I think about it.

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 with "MLLP Newsletter" in the subject line. Thanks to the following representatives and volunteers who have already sent us material.

- ❖ Kenn Doerksen and his wife Sue of Manitoba, who have traveled extensively across Canada on behalf of the MLLP, just wrote to let us know that they have returned from their two-week vacation in the Maritimes. Kenn reported that they were able to complete all the cemeteries in Prince Edward Island, which saw them travel some 2,000 kilometers in eight and half days. They also completed eight more cemeteries in Nova Scotia. On a personal note Kenn said it probably was the most relaxing vacation that either he and Sue had ever been on. Thanks for the report Kenn and we hope you enjoyed the lobster!
- ❖ Here's a great story from Nova Scotia Coordinator Ken Roberts about his adventures with fellow Nova Scotian Fred Gorrell. Fred has been a great help to Ken in navigating the back roads of his native Cumberland County in search of small graveyards, and as Ken reports, all without a map! *I had recently purchased a bright yellow Jeep. It was a nice bright sunny Nova Scotia summer day. Fred and I had stopped in Springhill for a moment while photographing graves. He stayed in the Jeep and I went to get a Tim's coffee. When I returned Fred was nowhere to be found. I eventually found him in a pharmacy getting some anti-sting ointment. Apparently while he was sitting in the Jeep he was stung by a wasp. It was not until a while later while parked in a cemetery, I again noticed many wasps around the Jeep. It then became obvious that the wasps were being attracted by the yellow colour of the Jeep which they must have thought looked like a big yellow flower! Little did Fred realize the danger he was in volunteering and sitting in my new yellow Jeep!*
- ❖ Ken also has another story about a recent discovery he made at Halifax's Fort Massey cemetery. It seems while doing some photographing, he came across two gravestones for what surely must be the same man! Ken said there is only one "LJR Finbow" listed in the CWGC database, yet there are two stones and strangely enough are located just a few plots away from each other. It also leads to the other question of who is buried in the other grave with the wrong headstone? Hopefully the CWGC can straighten out this problem.



(left to right) Fred Gorrell
with Ken Roberts

- ❖ The Chairman and the directors of the Last Post Association are happy to announce that on October 29 Her Majesty the Queen decided to promote Chief Bugler ANTOINE VERSCHOOT to Honorary Member of the British Empire (MBE) for his faithful and 50 years-long service as bugler of the Last Post Association at the daily Ceremony at the Menin Gate. He must have sounded the Last Post for nearly 11.000 times in this 50 years 1954-2004.

WEB LINKS

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has a terrific section on Canada's war history, consisting of radio clips and articles on numerous wartime events that have become part of our country's history and heritage. Just some of the topics covered include:

Reports from Abroad: Matthew Halton –
1942-1956

Remembrance Day 1944

A Soldier's War: 1939-1945

Royal 22nd Regiment: Canada's Fighting 'Van
Doos' 1914-1999

On Every Front: Canadian Women in the Second
World War

Forgotten Heroes: Canada and the Korean War
1950-1999

D-Day: Canadians Target Juno Beach
Unveiling of the Vimy Memorial

Check it out at: http://archives.cbc.ca/IDT-1-71/conflict_war

PRESS CLIPS



St. John's, Newfoundland-Labrador "The Telegram" 13 Sept 04
"Gone But Not Forgotten"

Royal Air Force Flight Lieut. David Staunton-Lambert (left) and Sgt. Keith Edwards, RAF liaison at Canadian Forces Base Gander, salute fallen comrades after laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in St. John's, Newfoundland on Battle of Britain Sunday. The ceremony marked the 64th anniversary of the battle, which saw the outnumbered Royal Air Force defeat the German Luftwaffe in the summer and early fall of 1940, preventing a German invasion of England.

(Photo by Gary Hebbard of "The Telegram" and used with permission)

Strathcona News Tuesday, November 02, 2004
"Boer War Graves Desecration"

Reprinted from the National Post dated 11 March 2004. by Tim Butcher, with files from Chris Wattie. South African witch doctors, looking for human bones, and grave robbers have desecrated the graves of soldiers from the Boer War, possibly including those of 261 Canadians who died in the conflict. Graves from the 1899-1902 war are now in such a poor state that the British government has drawn up a 500,000 GBP emergency rescue

plan. Skeletons have been exhumed for use in muti, or black magic, bronze name plates have been pried off grave markers and melted down for scrap, and large memorials have been demolished by grave robbers mistakenly convinced they contain gold. The African tradition of burying warriors with their most valuable possessions has persuaded many South African robbers to dig under memorial stones and headstones. There are more than 25,000 British war graves in South Africa from the Boer War, which marked Canada's first deployment of troops overseas. The small

Canadian contingent left 261 fallen troops behind. Philip Michael, a spokesman for Veterans Affairs Canada, said the stories of grave robbery were shocking. "I would hope that we would have been notified about this sort of thing going on," he said. "[But] this is the first I've heard of this." He did not know if any Canadian graves were among those

desecrated, but said the federal government is joining with the British in negotiating a four-year contract to maintain the South African war graves with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Canadian Press - 25 Oct 04: Stamps honour VC winners

Canada's only living recipient of the Victoria Cross, the military's highest honour, received a standing ovation Sunday at a ceremony unveiling the two new stamps saluting Canada's 94 VC recipients.

Ernest (Smoky) Smith told the crowd in a video that winning the Victoria Cross was "a great honour."



"I never expected to get a VC," said Smith, who earned the medal for his courageous actions the night of Oct. 21-22, 1944 in Italy. "We used to say the VC was a soldier's dream."

Over 200 people attended the unveiling ceremony at National Defence headquarters, including Canada's Defence Minister Bill Graham and Minister of Veterans Affairs Albina Guarnieri.

The release of the commemorative stamps marks the 150th anniversary of the first Canadian Victoria Cross recipient, Lieut. Alexander Roberts Dunn, who fought in the Crimean War.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island "Guardian": 1 Oct 04 **"Remembering the Italian Campaign of the Second World War"**

Submitted to the *Guardian* by Mary Gard

"During the Second World War, the Italian Campaign was a major allied offensive and one in which Canadians played an important role.

It began with an Allied invasion of Sicily in the early hours of July 10, 1943, and it was one of the largest sea borne invasions in military history. After more than four weeks of fighting in difficult mountainous terrain, Sicily was taken.

After losing Sicily, Italy was heavily defended by the Germans, making Allied progress slow. One of the most difficult battles for Canadians was the one for Ortona where tanks and artillery could not be used, so the Canadians had to engage in vicious street fighting. A hard year followed as the Allied Forces fought their way north. By the end of the Italian campaign, in the spring of 1945, Canadian casualties had risen to 26,000, with nearly 6,000 of those being fatal.

We must not forget those Canadians who fought in wartime – the ordinary Canadians who became extraordinary because they were prepared to fight to stop aggressive nations. And we must remember that we in Canada enjoy our freedoms because of the sacrifices they and so many others made. "



Graphic courtesy of the Canadian Department of Veterans Affairs

POEMS AND PROSE

"I write poetry (in tribute) and one of the many pieces I have written to say thank you to the Veterans called 'Its A Gentle Place to Rest' was read at Beny Sur Mer on the 55th Anniversary of D-Day at the cemetery ceremony. Yet few if any Canadians ever know how passionately others as well as myself believe that the story and the legacy of how it was obtained must continually be told." (Stephen J. Fowler - excerpted from the October 2000 edition of the Readers' Digest (Canada))

It's a Gentle Place to Rest
by Stephen J. Fowler

*Don't worry mother, have no fear.
The most beautiful breezes are blowing here.
I can smell the ocean and see the grain,
in spingtime the gentle falling rain.
Father cry not, for I feel no pain
except that I'll not come home again.
I'm with good friends on either side,
about the same age the day they died.
In this cemetery, near two thousand lay
we died for "FREEDOM", and saved the day.
From Juno Beach we took the stand,
over three hundred died there in the sand.*

*The French take care of our final home
they keep the faith, do you at home?
Remember the children have to learn
That when each of us died it was our turn,
to defend Canada strong and free
a nation forged out by you and me.
At Beny-sur-Mer they laid us to rest,
the Maple Leaf as the headstone's crest.
The Maple Leaf is our emblem dear!
We wore it proud, we showed no fear,
it protects us as we are lying here . . .
As it's a gentle place to rest.*

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NEWSLETTER

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