



The Torch

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Canadians and the "Polish Invasion" of 1917-1919

by Edward Poznanski

Poland disappeared from the map of Europe in 1795 as a result of its third partition between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 offered a chance for the rebirth of an independent Poland as these partitioning powers were now at war with one another.



Polish exiled leaders, particularly in Paris, hoped to raise a national Polish Army to fight on the Western Front with the Allies. A Polish military contribution was expected to bolster the chances of Polish independence if the Allies won

the war. Russia, as one of the allies from 1914 to 1917, was opposed to such an idea from the start since much of the Polish lands were part of the Russian empire in 1914. By 1917, however, circumstances had changed. The Western Allies desperately needed more reinforcements and Russia was in revolution. After a series of negotiations, an agreement was reached in fall of 1917 whereby France agreed to finance a Polish Army to fight on the Western Front, the United States agreed to allow Polish-Americans to join it, and Canada agreed to train it. Thus began the "Polish invasion" of Canada.

The small summer militia training camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL), Ontario became the home for the Polish recruits, starting in October 1917. Almost immediately, thousands of Polish-American volunteers began to flock to the camp, as well as some Polish-Canadians who had not yet been recruited to the Canadian Army. The training centre became known to Canadians as the "Polish Camp". Over 22,000 Polish recruits were received at NOTL between 1917 and 1919 and just over 20,000 of these Canadian-trained soldiers went overseas to France to become

the core of a new national Polish Army. In 1918 the Polish Army took part in the Western Front battles of the Champagne sector (June-July) and in the skirmishes of the Lorraine sector (October).

Many Canadian soldiers and civilians figured prominently in the training, care, and legacy of the Polish Army during its "invasion" of NOTL. A few prominent ones are mentioned below.

MGen. Willoughby Gwatkin (1859-1925), the British-born Chief of the Canadian General Staff in World War I, was key in arranging for the NOTL militia camp to be made available to the Polish Army. He became known as "the Godfather of the Polish Army" and continued his support for the Polish Camp for its duration in Canada.

LCol. Arthur D. LePan (1885-1976) was the commander of the Polish Camp. He had also been in charge of an earlier Polish officers' school in Toronto and in Camp Borden. LCol. LePan's report about the closure of the camp in 1919 noted the excellence of the Canadian staff, the



Canadian admiration for the discipline and patriotism of the Polish soldiers, and the positive relations with the townspeople of NOTL. He was highly decorated by Poland after the war and his diary as commander is in the collection of Library and Archives Canada.

Maj. C.R. Young was LCol. LePan's adjutant. He wrote an article in the *Niagara Advance* in 1919 about the Polish soldiers and noted their spirit, as reflected in the patriotism of their songs and music, which left memorable impressions on the Canadians.

Mrs. Elizabeth C. Ascher (1869-1941) was a local news reporter and active worker in the Red Cross who took a great interest in the

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President's Message

Linda Colwell



As the summer fades to black and the autumn colours become a memory, Friends across Canada are preparing for and participating in various Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day activities. In keeping with past practice, the Friends and the Canadian War Museum (CWM) will jointly lay a wreath at the National War Memorial during the 2014 Ceremony. This year, the ceremonies, sights and sounds of parades and gatherings and the readings of the "Act of Remembrance" will be even more poignant as we acknowledge the centenary of the beginning of World War I.

November 2014 is an appropriate time to outline a new Friends-CWM project currently known as "The Medals Stories Project". We have committed to providing \$130,000 over six years, plus volunteer assistance in assembling the data necessary to tell the stories of the individuals who were awarded the 1,100 World War I medal sets currently held in the Museum's collection. The funds will support the conservation of the medal sets, which will be displayed on a Medal Stories Website, the acquisition of new medals and the development of the Website itself.

As the Medals Stories Project is launched, we acknowledge with gratitude, the receipt of a legacy from one of our Charter Friends and long-time supporters, Vice-Admiral (Retired) Ralph Hennessy, DSC, CD. Thanks to Mrs. Diane Hennessy's vision and her understanding of her late husband's interests, the legacy was transferred to the CWM specifically to support the Medals Stories Project.

In my last President's Message I promised an update on our accomplishments as measured against our 2014/15 Priorities. Given space limitations, this update is limited to only one of our seven priorities: **'Complete the implementation of our new website and expand our strategy for using Social Media'**.

By the time you read this article, our new Website Membership Page will be available to all members. The page will allow on-line membership renewals and donations. As well, the Friends Website will provide members of the general public the ability to make on-line donations to the Friends and to take out first time memberships. On the Social Media side, we hope to have better access and linkages among our Website, Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Polish “Invasion” (concluded)

the Polish Army in NOTL. She conducted a press campaign on behalf of the Polish Army and the Polish nation. She was a major force in organizing care for the wellbeing of the Polish soldiers, especially during the outbreak of the Spanish influenza in 1918-1919. After the war, she also tended to the graves of the Polish soldiers in NOTL and was also highly decorated by Poland.

Miss Janet Carnochan (1839-1926) was a teacher from Niagara. She helped to found the Niagara Historical Society and wrote many of its papers, one of which (published in 1923) described the experience of hosting the Polish Army in NOTL. It spoke of the soldiers' exemplary behaviour and the goodwill and help offered by NOTL's citizens.

Charles W. Jefferys (1859-1951) was a Canadian artist who was commissioned by the Canadian War Records Office in 1918. His war art included many paintings, sketches and drawings of the Polish Army at NOTL. The Canadian War Museum has many of these in its collection.

The armistice on the Western Front on 11 November 1918 coincided with the declaration of Polish independence on the same day. But the fighting was not

over for the Polish Army; in the spring of 1919 it was transported from France to Poland where it fought in the wars to secure Poland's eastern borders from 1919 to 1920.



About the only tangible reminder of the “Polish invasion” of Canada in World War I is the small Polish Army cemetery next to the St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church in NOTL. Of the 41 Polish soldiers who died in NOTL, mostly from the Spanish influenza of 1918-1919, 25 were buried in this cemetery (with the Army's former chaplain being buried there later, in

1949). The Polish Army of World War I and Canada's role in training it is commemorated every year in NOTL on the second Sunday of June. It is an occasion to remember the brave volunteers and Canada's role in contributing to the rebirth of Polish independence and freedom in 1918.

Edward Poznanski is a Friend of the Canadian war Museum

Battle of Atlantic Place

When war was declared in 1939, Canada was primarily an agrarian country with a population of barely 11 million, limited industry and minimal military forces. Along with residents of the neighbouring colony of Newfoundland, Canadians across the nation quickly rose to the challenge of total mobilization. Britain's survival and the ultimate Allied victory in Europe were almost entirely dependent on the supply of men, materials, equipment and food from North America. As part of the Allied forces, Canadian ships and aircraft played a decisive role in this six-year campaign.

In 2011, the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust launched the Battle of the Atlantic Place Project to create an innovative experiential centre to celebrate the extraordinary national achievement of Cana-

dians which enable the Battle of the Atlantic to be won, and to commemorate the service and sacrifice of those at sea and on the home front.

Discover why Battle of the Atlantic Place is of significant national importance, and what the Trust's design concept is for commemoration and celebration of our national achievement during Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, in this video released in January 2014.

[Battle of Atlantic Place - Design Concept](#)

Shorncliffe Military Cemetery Commemorates Canadians Lost in First World War by Monica Thomson

Each year, on or around Canada Day, a special service takes place at Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, near Folkestone, Kent, U.K., to commemorate the many young Canadian soldiers who lost their lives during the First World War, and who are buried there.



Shorncliffe Military Cemetery

There are 296 Canadian soldiers buried at Shorncliffe. They had been stationed there whilst completing their training before going into action.

The annual service is held beside the Canadian servicemen's graves and is attended by veterans, local people, and many schools as well as civic dignitaries and representatives of the Canadian High Commission.

The local towns and villages come to remember the young soldiers and their great sacrifice. Approximately 300 children from local primary schools are each allocated a grave and near the conclusion of what is always a very moving ceremony, each child lays a posy of flowers on a grave while the Last Post sounds.

The children are encouraged to read the inscriptions on the headstones so as to understand that these young men were not much older than they themselves. Many of the Canadians had left home aged just 17 years, never to return. Most of the young men buried in Shorncliffe were in their early twenties.

Friends Participate in VIP Events at CWM

Recently, the Friends of the Canadian War Museum were front and centre at two VIP visits to the Canadian War Museum.

On August 4, 2014, Prime Minister Stephen Harper attended a reception organized by Veterans Affairs Canada, which was held at the Canadian War Museum to mark the 100th Anniversary of the beginning of the First World War and the start of Canada's First and Second World Wars Commemoration period.

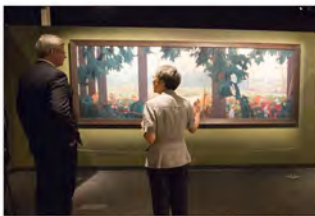


Photo courtesy of the Prime Minister's Office

Mai-yu Chan, a Friend led the Prime Minister; the Honourable Shelley Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages and guests on a brief guided tour of the exhibition, *Witness – Canadian Art of the First World War*.

On Thursday, 25th September, Dr. Laura Brandon, Historian, Art and War, CWM, and also a Friend, led the President of Germany, Joachim Gauck, his partner Daniela Schadt, and his entourage through "Transformations", the First World War art exhibition about A. Y. Jackson (Canadian) and Otto Dix (German).



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Federal President of Germany

Take a Veteran to Dinner 2014 Night by Tobin Kelly

Few people have skied to the Magnetic North Pole in Canada's North. Even fewer have done so with just one leg. Sgt. Bjarne Nielsen did just that when he participated as member of an April 2014 expedition — with 11 other injured veterans — which trekked the last 122 km to the Magnetic North Pole. Sgt. Nielsen recounted the challenges and triumphs of the journey for the guests at Ottawa's seventh annual Take a Veteran to Dinner Night on Sunday, October 26. Sgt. Nielsen was the guest speaker at the 2013 dinner as well but this year he definitely had some new stories to share.

In 2010 Sgt. Nielsen was injured by an IED while leading a patrol in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. His left leg was amputated eight inches below the hip and he required extensive surgeries to his left side. His recovery has been difficult but since taking first steps again in 2011 Sgt. Nielsen has completed the Army Run three times and competed in track and field competitions in Canada and Europe. Continuing his work with the Forces as a Soldier On peer supporter, Sgt. Nielsen acts as a mentor for injured soldiers.

The idea for Take a Veteran to Dinner Night is to express appreciation of the men and women who sacrificed much for Canada during their military service. The annual event offers those who have not served a chance to say thanks to those who have served — including active Canadian Forces members. Organizers of the dinner were inspired by a similar tribute that first occurred in Orillia, Ontario in 2005.

This year's crowd at Tudor Hall rallied after a tragic week for the Canadian Forces and for all of Canada. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Cpl. Nathan Cirillo were honoured with a toast. CTV Ottawa's Carol Ann Meehan served as the evening's emcee once again and Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson was on hand to make the Toast to Canada. Col. Jang Min Choi and Angela Choi were guests of Korean Veterans Association, Unit 7. Col. Choi is the Defence Attache for the Republic of Korea and he serves as a fighter pilot with the Republic of Korea Air Force. Plans are already underway for the next Take a Veteran to Dinner Night, which is scheduled for October 2015. For more information visit <http://www.veteransdinner.ca/> or call 613.680.5486



Photo: Courtesy of Jerome Scullino

(Back, l. to. r) Carol Ann Meehan, Darlene Moll, Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, Tobin Kelly, Sandra Kiveho

(Front, l. to r.) Alison Houston, Margaret St. Aubin, Jean Paul St. Aubin

It's Renewal Time



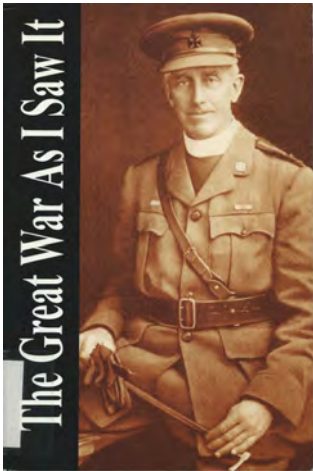
It is time to renew your FCWM membership for 2015. All members should have received a personalized renewal form and return envelope in early November. Early renewals allow us to better gauge our financial and membership posture for the coming year and to plan accordingly. Your attention to this matter

will be appreciated.

You are also encouraged to recruit others to become members or, perhaps to give someone the gift of membership in the FCWM.

If you did not receive your renewal form or require a replacement, please contact the Friends' office: (819) 776-8618, fcwm-amcg@magma.ca

The Great War As I Saw It by Canon Frederick G. Scott, Reviewed by John Anderson



For me, this is a difficult book to review. My taste runs to history and narrative, and this is not "a priori" a narrative of the First World War.

Yet this book is important because it provides a glimpse into the totality of the experience of Canadian soldiers on the Western Front. When we think of the First World War we tend, rightly, to think of the mas-

sive casualties and the horrors of trench warfare. But troops were not in the trenches continuously; they rotated in and out on something like a two-week cycle. Behind the lines, they had a chance to rest and recuperate, and considerable effort was put into keeping the troops stimulated.

Life away from combat was the particular province of the chaplains. Canon Frederick Scott was 54 years old, an Anglican minister with a parish in Quebec City, when he signed on as chaplain with the 14th (Montreal) Regiment. He went to Europe in the first great transport in December 1914, and rose to become senior chaplain in the First Canadian Division.

Scott gives only isolated accounts of his interactions with particular soldiers. But he does speak a lot about what he calls "parish visiting", where he would go forward to the front line trenches and visit with the troops in the line.

But in spite of being a pastor, he was always a great supporter of discipline. Soldiers who "wanted out" were asked: why should you get out and leave the burden and risk to your mates? He also writes of counselling a man sentenced to death for desertion; he was horrified by the punishment while at the same time understanding the necessity for deterrent.

Scott writes frequently, and with great feeling, about the esprit du corps of the Canadians. "Live for today;

tomorrow we will do our duty -- even if injury and death are the result". They knew, especially in the last eighteen months of the war, that every battle was going to involve substantial casualties. Yet the feeling, according to Scott, was, "Let's get on with it; we are all in this together". Indeed he speaks about being uncomfortable while on leave rather than being with the troops on the front lines going into battle.

Scott's tone is very patriotic, almost jingoistic by today's standards. There was no question in his mind that the allies were "on the side of right" and that the Germans were evil -- or worse. But such attitudes and convictions were the norm during the First World War.

The book is written in a very "rich" style. Scott was a published author of poetry, and this shows in his command of English and his aptitude for vivid description.

Canon Scott's war ended with his being wounded in both legs during the attack on the Canal du Nord in October 1918. He died in 1944. His book was originally published in 1922 and then reprinted in 1934. CEF Books published this edition in 2000.

A remarkable and important memoir. I commend this book to you.

John Anderson is a Friend and a Volunteer Interpreter in the CWM.

Planting Poppies to Commemorate Start of First World War by Valerie Mansfield

The British Legion has launched a Centenary Poppy Campaign. The Campaign originated as an idea in the Greenhithe and Swanscombe Branch of the Legion. It captured the imagination of the public, including the Prime Minister, and has now been rolled out nationally.

The aim of the campaign is to cover the UK with poppies during the centenary period in commemoration of all those who lost their lives in the First World War.

The national campaign, which is being run with in partnership with retailer B&Q, will see the Legion asking the public and local authorities to purchase Flanders poppy seeds to plant on their own land.

The Royal British Legion's Director of Fundraising, Charles Byrne, said, *"We want to see members of the public making this campaign their own in their local communities, working in collaboration with local government, schools and community groups, and we will be taking discussions*

forward with central Government to engrain this campaign in the centenary commemorations."

Poppy seeds are available nationwide from outlets of B&Q with a donation of £1 going towards the work of the Legion.

Sounds like a great campaign.



Poppy Field – Hampton Common

First World War Commemorative Service by John Robertson

On the 4th of August my wife and I attended a commemoration service marking the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War at the National War Memorial.

We gathered in the heat before the War Memorial and the program started at 1100 hours. There was music from the Peace Tower Carillon, the Ceremonial Guard was on parade, two replica First World War aircraft performed a fly past and Prime Minister Harper laid a ceremonial wreath. Later a smaller group of honorary guests were invited to a reception at the War Museum where my wife and I were invited to the Prime Minister's table for the luncheon.

The Prime Minister in his speech at the reception stated that *"A century has past now since the dull roar of the guns of August was first heard and all across Europe the lights of peace faded. This great conflict on the other side of an ocean need not have involved us,"* but, he added, *"Canadians do not turn away."* He further commented that *"Canada is still today loyal to our friends, unyielding to our foes, honourable in dealings and courageous in our undertakings. This remains the character of our country."*

When the luncheon was over my wife and I went up to the foyer and listened to the North Lakeshore Mass Chorus give a concert dedicated to the memory of the First Contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. We then board-

ed a special OC Transpo bus which was to return us downtown. We were fortunate to have our friend Garth Hampson, the 'Singing Mountie' on the bus and he led everyone on board in a sing-along of First World War era songs!

All in all it was a memorable day that my wife and I shall never forget.



The Robertsons with Prime Minister Harper

John Robertson is a Volunteer Interpreter at the CWM

Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times

This exhibition of 12 unique wartime sculptures portrays ordinary Canadians touched by the extraordinary circumstances of the First World War. A number of them have not been exhibited since the end of the war, some 96 years ago.

They are all from the Museum's Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, which includes more than 13,000 paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures.

This exhibition is graciously supported by the Friends of the Canadian War Museum and Michael and Anne Gough.

In the picture, FCWM volunteers, Pamela Brunt and Michael Braham are shown admiring the exhibition.



Afghanistan—A Canadian Story 2001-2014 by Col. (Ret'd) Andrew Nellestyn

Afghanistan A Canadian Story 2001-2014 offers readers a chronological compilation of the personal stories and photos of some 150 men and women who served in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. The anecdotes include accounts from members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP, Corrections Canada and the many civilians who participated in the mission in their capacity as Canada whole-of-government contributors. The stories are accompanied by a brief history of Afghanistan and the roles of the Canadian mission, the various service elements and other departments of Canadian government. Messages from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the CDS General Tom Lawson, the service commanders, the Royal Canadian Legion and others, as well as an introduction by Jack Granatstein, complement the album.

The project, a wholly private volunteer effort, was the initiative of a number of CF Public Affairs Officers, some of whom served in Afghanistan, who wanted to provide the valiant men and women who participated in the Afghan mission a broader venue in which to share their personal reminiscences.

The editorial team consists of Lt (N) (Retd) Melanie Graham, Capt Susan Magill, LCol Kimberly Unter-ganschnigg, WO Daniel Ferland and Col (Retd) Andrew Nellestyn.

Many individuals gave of their time to make the publication of the album a reality as did the sponsors of which the principal contributor was the Power Workers Union.

Proceeds from the sale of the album will be donated to the Edmonton Military Family Resource Centre, the Boomers Legacy Foundation, the Military Families Fund, Operation Dignity St Anne de Bellevue Veterans Hospital Foundation and the Soldier On Fund. The families of those who gave their lives during the mission will each be presented a commemorative copy. The book will be launched in Ottawa in November 2014 as well as across the country.

Priced at \$50, the album will be available from Chapters Indigo. Additional details about the project can be found at www.afghanistanaCanadianstory.ca.

