

Canada Normandy Project



The Canada Normandy Project interactive presentation will consist of a 'touch screen' monitor display designed to encourage people to approach and explore. Participants will be able to easily and intuitively navigate their way through a variety of information (text, pictures, animated maps and short movies) relating to Canada's role in the liberation of Europe.



Since the display will be bilingual, there will be the option to choose a language at the highest level of the presentation.



An overview will offer participants access to information about the Canadian war effort at home, on land, sea and air.





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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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Canadian War Museum

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The mission statement of the Canadian War Museum is: "To share in the remembrance of, and serve as a memorial to those Canadians lost in, or as a result of war; to examine the war and war related history of Canada and its effects upon Canada and Canadians; and to document Canada's commitment to peacekeeping and the maintenance of international security." To this end the CWM maintains an exhibition facility with three floors of galleries, and a collections building housing close to half a million artifacts.

The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies

The purpose of the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) is to foster research, teaching, and public discussion of military and strategic issues of national and international significance. The Centre is intentionally multi-disciplinary: it has strong commitments in military history, with emphasis on the Canadian experience, and in strategic and operational studies, with emphasis on disarmament. LCMSDS supports both basic and applied research as well as teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, the extensive program of LCMSDS workshops, conferences, public lectures, and publications encourages informed discussion of international security and of Canada's national interests in military and strategic issues - past, present and future.

The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies was founded in 1991 as a Research Centre affiliated with Wilfrid Laurier University. Its primary support has come from the Department of National Defence and from Wilfrid Laurier University. The Director of the Centre is Dr. Marc Kilgour, Professor of Mathematics, and the Co-Director is Professor Terry Copp, Professor of History.

From the Editor

A good deal of the current Canadian military history is due to the attention focused on the 50th anniversaries of D-Day and VE-Day. Many Canadians who neither knew or cared about our role in the war were moved by the ceremonies on the beaches of Normandy and in the streets of the Netherlands. At the time most people said it would be the last occasion upon which large numbers of veterans would gather to remember their comrades and great long lost friends. But now, just a year away from the 55th anniversary of the Normandy landings and two years from the millennium and VE-Day plus 55, preparations are under way for another pilgrimage to the places in France, Belgium and the Netherlands where those who we promise to remember at the going down of the sun lay buried.

For the veterans and their families, the journey is filled with meaning. They were an important part of one of the major events of modern history and they know it. The beautifully-tended cemeteries and the warm welcome offered by ordinary people provide reassurance that their sacrifices are not forgotten. For other Canadians the meaning of the wartime experience is less clear. After years of neglect the Federal government has acted to revitalize the Vimy memorial by creating an interpretive centre. Beaumont-Hamel has also been designated a national heritage site and is to include an information centre.

No such attention has been directed towards commemorating the Second World War by our government but, in Adegem, Belgium, near Bruges, a private citizen, Gilbert van Landschoot, has created a Canada Museum of extraordinary quality. The displays focus on the struggle to clear the Scheldt Estuary in October 1944 but in the great hall, stained glass windows glow with the coats of arms of each province and the badges of Canadian regiments. The vehicles on display in the court yard and the gardens make this a not-to-be-missed experience for all Canadians.

Elsewhere in Europe the Canadian experience awaits interpretation. Visitors to Dieppe can find memorials in varying condition but to know more about the raid they must seek a small museum in Pourville-sur-Mer ("Green" Beach) located in a non-descript building at the western end of the beach. The museum is maintained by volunteers and may not outlive their individual initiative. At Calais, Boulogne, Rouen and other places liberated by Canadians our story goes unrecorded and unremarked. In Normandy, the place to visit is the museum in Bayeux where the Canadian army and navy is well-represented in the displays and an RCAF Spitfire, recovered from a farmer's field, anchors the air exhibits.

At Le Mémorial, the museum for peace in Caen, visitors will enjoy the Canadian memorial garden which is now complete, but will find the museum still ignores the Canadian role in the liberation. A proposal to create a new Canadian information centre in Bernières-sur-Mer may result in an extraordinary opportunity to tell the Canadian story to European and Canadian visitors alike. The project, spearheaded by Garth Webb and the 14th Field Regimental Association, now has the support of other regimental associations and the Federal government is showing signs of interest. If the Canada Centre at Bernières is built it will employ interactive video terminals to provide words, sounds and pictures on all aspects of Canada's war effort, not just the Battle of Normandy. Visitors will also be able to call up information on contemporary Canada. The content and displays will be developed here at the Laurier Centre. In a recent *Legion* column, Doug Fisher wrote the response to this project "may give us a line on both the depth of commitment among veterans to memorialize their story and the scale of interest of younger generations."

If you would like more information about the Canada Centre in Normandy write to us here at *Canadian Military History*.

Terry Copp
May 1998

Dear Sir,

I was surprised and delighted to find in my mail last week two copies of Winter 1998 Canadian Military History and to see the excellent 14 page feature "Pursuit to the Seine: The Essex Scottish Regiment and the Forêt de la Londe" with my late brother, Doug McIntyre as the author.

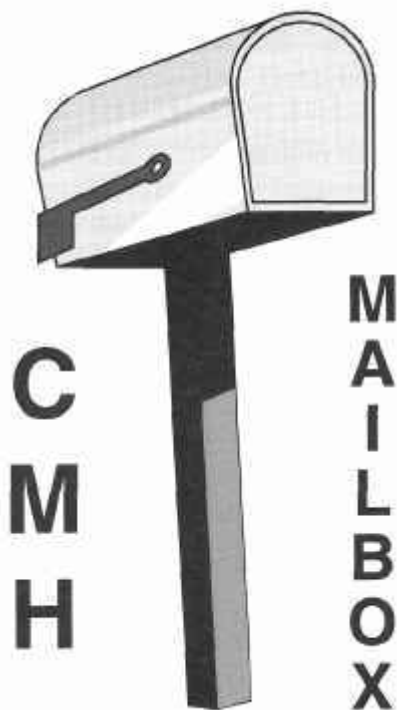
I had seen various drafts of Doug's work on this sad battle about 25 years ago, and knew that his widow, Rosie, had passed on the pages to the late Keith Crummer, but the photos and maps made the whole exercise top professional calibre. We went back to Forêt de la Londe with my wife, Doug and Rosie in 1974 after I'd celebrated my own 30th anniversary of D-Day. We then drove on eight miles to Pont de l'André, where my unit (the 23rd Fd Coy, RCE - of later fame at Arnhem) were ferrying the infantry of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division across the Seine in broad daylight under almost no enemy fire while the Essex, SSR and others were having the fierce battle around Port du Gravier.

Oddly, across the Seine, Captain Keith Crummer, of the Lincoln and Wetland Regiment, with a reduced platoon had paddled across in a small boat using shovels as paddles near Criquebeuf to be the first Canadians across the Seine at 5 pm on 26 August. Keith (now deceased) had been a champion discus thrower in the early 1930s, and he, my brother, Major Si Steele, and myself were all graduates of Chatham Collegiate Institute.

Again, many thanks and good wishes for the continual success of your publication.

Sincerely,

Donald J. McIntyre
Lt.Col., Ret'd, RCE
Surrey, BC



Dear Sir,

Your editorial in the Winter 1998 issue solicited views on the magazine, so I'm responding. Nothing so good has ever been published in this country in my memory! We've had some fine history publications, such as Jim Gooding's *Arms Collecting*, but for design, print quality, paper quality and written and pictorial content, *Canadian Military History* tops them all. *CMH* absolutely *must* survive.

I was disappointed to see that you have moved to a stapled binding. I'm sure the decision was prompted by the reduction in issue size, however, the glued binding had a much greater feel of permanence that stapling simply doesn't evoke. I cannot think of another magazine on the market that utilized the glued binding. *CMH* was a cut above the rest - sort of like a big corporation's annual report. That uniqueness is now lost.

As the founder of the 70-man commemorative unit of the King's Royal Yorkers, I was extremely

pleased to read René Chartrand's excellent article, "Loyalist Lieutenant Jeremiah French and his Uniform," in the Winter 1998 issue. Unfortunately, the loyalist era in Canada is all too frequently ignored when one considers that these folks founded Ontario & New Brunswick and that so many of our current regiments claim lineage from loyalist roots.

A few comments and additions to Chartrand's material may be of interest to the readership.

In 1778 a plan was put forward to form a 2nd Battalion of the Royal Yorkers by amalgamating the fragments of loyalist units which had survived the Burgoyne debacle. Jeremiah French was proposed as a Captain commanding a company. For various reasons, the plan did not move forward, however, French's acrimonious disagreement with John Peters may have sprung from that incident.

Although French undoubtedly was an officer in the 2nd Battalion, KRRNY, he appears to have never served actively with the Regiment. It is ironic that this is the one coatee to survive of the some 3,400 that must have been issued to the old corps.

Unfortunately, René gave added credence to the KRRNY sobriquet - "Royal Greens." In my extensive research in British and American wartime documentation, that nickname has never appeared. "King's Royal Yorkers," "Yorkers," "Sir John's Corps" and variations on those themes were used, but never "Royal Greens."

Keep up the good work.

Gavin K. Watt
President, Museum of
Applied Military History
King City, ON

Dear Sir,

Opinions on Canadian Forces effectiveness and the nature of the operations they are involved in the 1990s are abundant among

scholars, journalists, policy makers, and even the general public. The Increase in frequency and danger of Canadian Forces missions since the end of the Cold War coupled with the so-called "Somalia Affair" has stirred a defence policy debate of an intensity not seen in Canada for decades. Yet, while authorities in this debate express widely diverging views, they are united in their failure to contemplate the how and the *why* of today's military operations. Instead, pundits direct their analysis toward specific, sensational events, chosen by the media, and usually negative, such as the murder of Shidane Arone.

Largely based on scant details brought to light by the press, military commentators often make judgements about individual commanders and units as well as sweeping generalizations about mission success. They do so with no consideration of examples other than those highlighted by the media or without bothering to weigh evidence that would provide an accurate measure of unit and command performance. The most infamous product of this research deficiency is the popular perception of the Canadian Airborne Battlegroup and its mission in Somalia.

Virtually all those who express opinions about Canadian

operations in Somalia assume the mission was a catastrophic failure. That assumption is the consequence of a media focus on the torture and death of Arone at the hands of two Canadian Paratroopers and its alleged subsequent cover-up by the Department of National Defence. The dramatic success story of the other 900-odd members of the Canadian Airborne Battlegroup was lost in the fracas.

A closer look at the Battlegroup's effort in Somalia reveals that in three short months, Canadian soldiers brought peace and order to a region where violent death and armed clashes were common-place. They achieved stability using an uniquely Canadian combination of force and diplomacy that earned them the respect and admiration of international aid agencies, other UNITAF contingents and most importantly, the Somalis themselves. Yet how many in this country are aware of this?

The Balkan crisis provides another example of popular perception differing from reality. According to the western media, our soldiers serving under the United Nations in the Former Yugoslavia were a band of ill-equipped cowards who bolted at the first sign of danger and accomplished nothing during their three-year stay. This is the

impression left by selective press coverage of the disasters that befell the mission.

Apparently, UN successes were much less newsworthy. In fact, despite several setbacks, UNPROFOR troops, including Canadians, saved hundreds of thousands of lives both from ethnic cleansing and starvation. To achieve this, our troops often used force to shoot their way through hostile roadblocks, ferret out snipers or stop attacks on civilians. Do we dare imagine what the toll of death and destruction would have been had the Blue Beret's not intervened.

Collectively, these incomplete analyses of Somalia, Yugoslavia and other operations portray an incomplete picture of Canadian Forces effectiveness in the last ten years. But responsibility for this deficiency does not rest entirely with military commentators. In their defence, they have little to work with. Accurate information about the "sharp-end" of modern operations is scarce. By comparison, scholars and writer's interested in the Second World War draw on a wealth of published material about military operations during that period.

In my opinion, what is needed from students of modern military affairs are not more broad assessments of the evolution of war and the changing face of peacekeeping. Instead, the defence studies community must place each Canadian Forces operation under the microscope. Only after they understand success and failure at the level of individual platoons, companies and battalions, will they be able to theorize about larger matters or pass judgement and offer suggestions for the future.

Lee Windsor
Conference of Defence
Associations Institute
Ottawa, ON

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