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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

Re-thinking Remembrance Day

In many ways the laying to rest of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa this past spring was a fitting end to the 20th century - perhaps the bloodiest yet in human history. It also raised a great many questions about how we remember those wars after all the veterans are gone. Unquestionably we will continue to do so, not least because as the Governor General reminded us so poignantly, our Canada was shaped by traumatic events of the first half of the 20th century. On Remembrance Day we have traditionally honoured Canada's sacrifice - the one commemorated by the Unknown Soldier - by focussing on the young lives taken in battle. Indeed, the remains of 100,000 Canadians scattered in war cemeteries around the globe are mute testament to the ultimate price of establishing the peace and prosperity that we enjoy today. But maybe, as the veterans dwindle and the names on the cenotaph become distant - and unknown - relatives, it might be appropriate to broaden the act of Remembrance a little to help it connect with younger generations.

For example, it is now possible to distinguish the Great Wars and the Great Depression of 1914-1945 as a distinct historical period which gave birth to modern Canada. The generations who were decimated by those wars and side-swiped by economic depression struggled on all fronts to make this not only a better country, but also a much better world for their children and grandchildren. The blood spilled on the world's battlefields by young Canadians was the ultimate price, but it was only part of the battle. The suffering, sweat and deprivation at home - to modernize Herodotus, the fathers and mothers burying their sons - were endured not simply to liberate foreign lands from oppressive and evil regimes. There had to be more to it than that. And there was. By 1945 there had to be an international system established to ensure that such catastrophes did not happen again. What we got was the United Nations and all its subsequent agencies, created to impose the rule of law on international affairs. It has never lived

up to everyone's ideal, but the UN has been central to the maintenance of global peace since its founding. Those who remained saw to it that the blood sacrifice was not in vain. We ought to think about that accomplishment at the cenotaph this November.

We ought to think, too, about the kinder and gentler Canada that those men and women - at home and at the front - fought to establish. They used the catalyst of war to create a caring society, with publicly funded health care, social assistance and a more equitable distribution of wealth. We have all been beneficiaries of that effort. When you look at the lines of aging faces, grey hair and stooping frames at the cenotaph you would do well to reflect on the country they built and be grateful.

And who can say that it was not worth the effort? Despite all the trials and tribulations of the modern world - the homelessness, abuse, stress, unemployment, crime, terrorism and economic volatility - none of it compares to the despair, systemic inequalities, abject poverty, narrow horizons and international challenges faced by the generations who made the Canada which we all-too-often take for granted. They, those aging veterans and their contemporaries, checked the ambitions of an expansionist militaristic regime in the "War to End all Wars." And their children - our parents, grand parents, aunts and uncles - crushed the evils of fascism a generation later in the Second World War: the largest and bloodiest war yet fought. As part of that struggle they also tackled the chronic and systematic injustices and inequalities found at home, too. Their energy, their wealth, their ambition and their hope for the future - and their lost children - are all commemorated by the cenotaph.

So the cenotaph is now, for me at least, more than just a monument to the dead: it is a monument to generations of Canadians who had an ideal of country, society and community. And so on 11 November, as you stand at the cenotaph, hearing the names read out and trying to imagine what is going through the minds of those aging

veterans, you should also ponder the obligation of younger generations to keep up their work. The killing and oppression hasn't stopped: fifty million people have died in war since 1945, and hundreds of millions more live in fear because of race, religion, creed or colour. Kosovo and East Timor are brutal reminders of that. We have inherited from those earlier generations a notion that we ought to care about this. As an infantry officer told one of my classes - as much in anger as in frustration - at the height of the Kosovo crisis in the spring of 1999, "We can stop that, that's what I'm trained to do!" Maybe. Canada alone cannot save the world from tyranny, but it is not clear that we ought to let it happen either. For me, at least, that dreadful dilemma hangs over the cenotaph like a pall every Remembrance Day.

So too does a deep sadness for the erosion of the kinder and gentler Canada that those earlier generations fought and sacrificed so hard for. Like the monument at Vimy, the country built by the war generations has been allowed to decay in body and in spirit, withered by neglect and, of late, actively eroded by budget slashing and corporatism. Lately I think of that when I stand at the cenotaph. And I wonder if some of the sadness on the face of veterans and their generation is not a reflection of a feeling that their ultimate victory is being squandered. The legacy of a better Canada may prove the harder one to preserve for future generations.

Perhaps its time, then, to broaden the burden of Remembrance Day a little from the brutality of battle and the tragedy of a sacrificed lives. In its original conception, after all, Remembrance Day was established by a society intent on honouring the ultimate sacrifice of its own fellow citizens. The remnant of that society

is now a small and fast fading part of modern Canada, and it would be entirely appropriate to balance the burden of Remembrance of the few with acknowledgement of the many who endured and completed the work. Perhaps Remembrance Day would connect better with the generations who did not know war - or even know those who fought them - if the balance shifted slightly in favour of remembering the higher ideals that the war generations sought at home and abroad. Maybe Remembrance Day could become a time to reflect not solely on sacrifice on the field of battle, but on the obligation that falls to all of us to make this country and this globe a better place.

This sentiment was well captured in the Governor General's remarks at the laying to rest of the Unknown Soldier when she quoted Major Talbot Papineau. The sacrifice of young Canadians in war, Papineau wrote, had to "cement a foundation for a true Canadian nation." It also had to do so "in a spirit united for high international and humane purposes." Those tasks have not changed and they remain a charge on all of us. Sir Michael Howard, himself a veteran of the Second World War, caught the mood of his generation when he observed that simply establishing "peace" was not enough. This is was task, he said, "which has to be tackled afresh every day of our lives ... no formula, no organization and no political or social revolution can ever free mankind from this inexorable duty." We would all benefit if the cenotaph could expand its role to incorporate not simply the notion of blood sacrifice, but also the "inexorable duty" not to let the torch slip from our hands.

Marc Milner
University of New Brunswick

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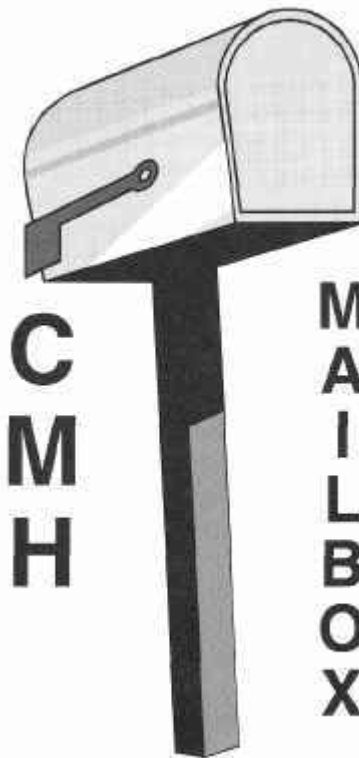
Dear Sir,

In the photo of the officers of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders on p. 93 ["Soldier, POW, Partisan: My Experiences during the Battle of France, June-September 1944" by Don Learment, *CMH* Spring 2000], there is a wrong identification. Perhaps you have had other reports of this by now. The individual in the front row, sitting to J.D. Learment's immediate left, is not H.G. Longley but E.C. Longley, his uncle. H.G. Longley, although in the unit at that time as a lieutenant, is not in the photo. Shortly after this photo was taken, E.C. Longley, then aged 43, was posted to an Officer Cadet Trg Unit in England. H.G. Longley was present at the time the next photo of the unit officers was taken, perhaps in early 1944, and was killed as 2i/c of "D" Company the day after D-Day. He was my cousin.

Yours,
James F. Doig
Wolfville, NS

Dear Sir,

As usual, I read the Volume 9, Number 2 edition of your *CMH*



magazine with a great deal of interest. Normally, I accept minor inaccuracies as the price to be paid for your much appreciated journal and the diversity of writers and subject matter presented. However, there are two

articles in this latest edition which compel me, as a reasonably well read student of military history, to comment formally.

Firstly, Brent Watson has committed a major error which, since he purports to be an aspiring military historian, must be brought to his attention. When one lists the infantry component of a formation one does so in accordance with the approved Order of Precedence. In the case of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade Group the correct listing is The Royal Canadian Regiment, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the Royal 22e Régiment. (*CMH* page 8, paragraph one, last sentence.) If Brent Watson needs assistance in this regard have him contact me.

Secondly, Jason R.H. Braida needs to edit his article and reduce the all too obvious repetitiousness. It reads, unfortunately, as the thoroughly researched work of an impecunious post-graduate student who is being paid by the word for his product. Sorry, but this article is not up to your established standards.

Sincerely,
James A. Cotter,

Dear Sir,

In my opinion Brent Watson's article, "Recipe for Victory: The Fight for Hill 677 during the Battle for the Kap'yong River, 24-25 April 1951," [CMH Spring 2000] is a very clear and understandable reconstruction of both the battle of Kap'yong and the events leading up to it.

Having said that, I feel compelled to comment on his description on page 19 of the friendly artillery fire called down on "D" Company. According to Dr. Watson, "the shrapnel shells, packed with steel balls, were fused to burst several metres above the ground. The fire had the desired effect, sending thousands of steel balls and white-hot shell fragments whistling through the inky blackness, decimating the Chinese ranks." I fear this reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of artillery ammunition, perhaps because of the common, but technically incorrect, use of the word "shrapnel" to describe the splinters produced by the detonation of a high explosive artillery round.

A shrapnel shell was a hollow casting filled with metal balls stacked on a small expelling charge of a low explosive such as black powder and capped with a fuse that could be set to ignite the expelling charge at a pre-determined time of flight. When the round functioned, the balls were pushed out the nose of the shell and distributed in a narrow cone forward along the trajectory.

A high explosive shell was a high quality forged steel round filled with a bursting charge of high explosive such as TNT. The round could be fitted with a variety of fuses designed to function on impact or in the air. On functioning, the high explosive charge detonated, shattering the steel body into thousands of steel fragments (splinters) that flew outwards in all directions. (Studies and experimentation promulgated a few years before the Korean War had concluded that the ideal splinter weight for field artillery was 1/80 of an ounce. By way of comparison, 50 years before, the ideal weight for a shrapnel ball was considered to be about 40 to the pound.) There had been attempts to combine shrapnel and high explosive in the same round

in the early years of the twentieth century, but these efforts seemed to have been discarded as the lessons of trench warfare were absorbed. During the First World War high explosive gradually replaced shrapnel, and the latter was certainly obsolete before the Second World War. Furthermore, I have never seen a reference to a 25-pounder shrapnel shell in either official or unofficial publications. It seems likely that Brent Watson erred in his description quoted above, perhaps because of a too literal interpretation of the word "shrapnel."

Yours truly,
Brian Reid
Kemptville, ON

Dear Sir,

Most appropriately, your main feature article, "Recipe for Victory: The Fight for Hill 677 During the Battle of the Kap'yong River, 24-25 April" by Brent Watson [CMH Spring 2000] appeared during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the Korean War. There is no doubt that the Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (please, NOT the "Princess Pats") well deserve the recognition bestowed upon them, willingly by the United States and begrudgingly by the Canadian authorities.

There is little doubt that, had the US not seen fit to award a Presidential Unit Citation, the Patricias would have ended up, as did the other two infantry regiments which served in the Korean War, with the single "Theatre" catchall battle honour only.

It is especially unfortunate that the other two regiments (and, indeed, the PPCLI's First Battalion) took part in other battles which were arguably just as hard-fought as Kap'yong, but received little recognition. Credit is due to David Bercuson, whose article, "Fighting the Defensive Battle on the Jamestown Line: The Canadians in Korea, November 1951," appeared in a recent issue of this journal [CMH Summer 1998]. He, at least, was aware that after Operations MINDEN and COMMANDO (which established what was to become the

Commonwealth Division's forward defensive line) Canadians continued to get killed, repel strong enemy attacks and hold their ground for another two years under atrocious conditions.

Without wishing to detract from the Kap'yong defenders, and while the amount of casualties incurred is not necessarily a measure of the intensity of the fighting, I feel that the valiant defence of Hill 227 by the Royal 22e Régiment in October of 1951 (which may well have prevented a major breakthrough by Chinese forces) and the battle of Kowan-San by 1 RCR a year later deserve equal recognition. In both of these battles our losses were considerably higher. There were other hard-fought and costly actions during the "defensive" period.

By all means honour 2 PPCLI - they fought well and deserve the credit, but let us not overlook the other eight infantry battalions and their supporting arms, who stood firm on the Jamestown Line.

Yours, etc.
Les Peate
Ottawa, ON

Good Morning!

Timothy Dubé's editorial in the Winter 2000 issue of CMH points up the need to recover the personal archives of the Second World War. The veterans of this war alas, are dying at a steady rate. They and their families may not know the value of their letters, diaries, and other memorabilia.

In the United States, according to a recent *New Yorker*, a venture has been launched to recover letters written by service personnel to friends and family.

In Britain, Dr. Peter Liddle, who built up the archive and collection named after him at the University of Leeds, now heads the Second World War Experience Centre in that city. He is particularly keen on collecting Commonwealth material, including the taped reminiscences of those who served at the sharp end. The Centre can be reached at 6/8 York Place Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK LSI 2DS. email enquiries@war-experience.org; website: www.war-experience.org

Here In Canada, "Canada 150" was launched in 1997 with the aim of collecting 150,000 family histories\ stories. The 20-year project has secured a commitment from the National Library of Canada to house the collection. Among other groups,

the organizers are working with the Canadian Legion and senior's groups. Contact: Harry van Bommel, Resources Supporting Family and Community Legacies, Inc., 11 Miniot Circle, Scarborough, ON, M1K 2K1; Phone 416-264-4665; Fax 416-264-

4665; email harryvb@Inforamp.net;
Website: www.inforamp.net/~harryvb

Yours, etc.
Jim Lotz
Halifax, NS