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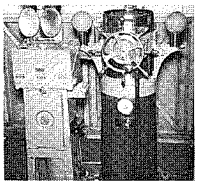

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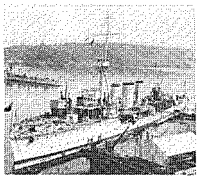

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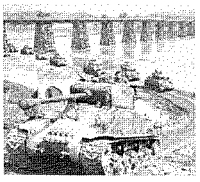

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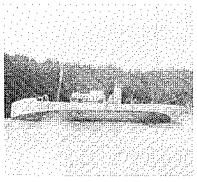

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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3C5, CANADA
Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext.4594; Fax: (519) 886-5057
Email: mbechtho@wlu.ca
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Editor-in-Chief	Terry Copp
Editor, Summer 2000 issue	Marc Milner
Managing Editor	Mike Bechthold
Canadian War Museum Editor	Cameron Pulsifer
Book Review Supplement Editor	Jonathan F. Vance
Business Manager	Ev Jones
Layout & Design	Mike Bechthold

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Canadian War Museum

General Motors Court
330 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0M8

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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Eulogy for Canada's Unknown Soldier

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada

Wars are as old as history. Over two thousand years ago, Herodotus, wrote, "In peace, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons."

Today, we are gathered together as one, to bury someone's son. The only certainty about him is that he was young. If death is a debt we all must pay, he paid before he owed it.

We do not know whose son he was. We do not know his name. We do not know if he was a MacPherson or a Chartrand. He could have been a Kaminski or a Swiftarrow. We do not know if he was a father himself. We do not know if his mother or wife received that telegram with the words "Missing In Action" typed with electrifying clarity on the anonymous piece of paper. We do not know whether he had begun truly to live his life as a truck driver or a scientist, a miner or a teacher, a farmer or a student. We do not know where he came from.

Was it the Prairies whose rolling sinuous curves recall a certain kind of eternity?

Was he someone who loved our lakes and knew them from a canoe?

Was he someone who saw the whales at the mouth of the Saguenay?

Was he someone who hiked in the Rockies or went sailing in the Atlantic or in the Gulf Islands?

Did he have brown eyes?

Did he know what it was to love someone and be loved back?

Was he a father who had not seen his child?

Did he love hockey? Did he play defence?

Did he play football? Could he kick a field goal?

Did he like to fix cars? Did he dream of owning a Buick?

Did he read poetry?

Did he get into fights?

Did he have freckles?

Did he think nobody understood him?

Did he just want to go out and have a good time with the boys?

We will never know the answers to these questions. We will never know him. But we come today to do him honour as someone who could have been all these things and now is no more. We who are left have all kinds of questions that only he could answer. And we, by this act today, are admitting with terrible finality that we will never know those answers.

We cannot know him. And no honour we do him can give him the future that was destroyed when he was killed. Whatever life he could have led, whatever choices he could have made are all shuttered. They are over. We are honouring that unacceptable thing – a life stopped by doing one's duty. The end of a future, the death of dreams.

Yet we give thanks for those who were willing to sacrifice themselves and who gave their youth and their future so that we could live in peace.

With their lives they ransomed our future.

We have a wealth of witnesses in Canada to describe to us the unspeakable horror and frightening maelstrom that war brings. What that first World War was like has been described in our poetry, novels and paintings. Some of our greatest artists came out of that conflict, able to create beauty out of the hell that they had seen. The renowned member of the Group of Seven, F.H. Varley, was one of those artists. Writing in April 1918 he said,

> "You in Canada...cannot realize at all what war is like. You must see it and live it. You must see the barren deserts war has made of once fertile country...see the turned-up graves, see the dead on the field, freakishly mutilated – headless, legless, stomachless, a perfect body and a passive face and a broken empty skull – see your own countrymen, unidentified, thrown into a cart, their coats over them, boys digging a grave in a land of yellow slimy mud and green pools of water under a weeping sky. You must have heard the screeching shells and have the shrapnel fall around you, whistling by you – seen the results of it, seen scores of horses, bits of horses lying around in the open – in the street and soldiers marching by these scenes as if they never knew of their presence. Until you've lived this...you cannot know."

It is a frightening thing for human beings to think that we could die and that no one would know to mark our grave, to say where we had come from, to say when we had been born and when exactly we died. In honouring this unknown soldier today, through this funeral and this burial, we are embracing the fact of the anonymity and saying that because we do not know him and we do not know what he could have become, he has become more than one body, more than one grave. He is an ideal. He is a symbol of all sacrifice. He is every soldier in all our wars.

Our veterans, who are here with us today, know what it is to have been in battle and to have seen their friends cut down in their youth. That is why remembrance is so necessary and yet so difficult. It is necessary because we must not forget and it is difficult because the pain is never forgotten.

And the sense of loss, what this soldier's family must have felt is captured in a poem by Jacques Brault, the Quebec poet who lost his brother in Sicily in the Second World War, and wrote Suite Fraternelle,

> I remember you my brother Gilles lying forgotten
> in the earth of Sicily...
>
> I know now that you are dead, a cold, hard lump
> in your throat fear lying heavy in your belly
> I still hear your twenty years swaying in the
> blasted July weeds...
>
> There is only one name on my lips, and it is
> yours Gilles
>
> You did not die in vain Gilles and you carry on
> through our changing seasons
>
> And we, we carry on as well, like the laughter of
> waves that sweep across each tearful cove...
>
> Your death gives off light Gilles and illuminates
> a brother's memories...
>
> The grass grows on your tomb Gilles and the
> sand creeps up
>
> And the nearby sea feels the pull of your death
>
> You live on in us as you never could in yourself
>
> You are where we will be you open the road for
> us.
>
> *[interpretation of original French poem]*

When a word like Sicily is heard, it reverberates with all the far countries where our youth died. When we hear Normandy, Vimy, Hong Kong, we know that what happened so far away, paradoxically, made our country and the future of our society. These young people and soldiers bought our future for us. And for that, we are eternally grateful.

Whatever dreams we have, they were shared in some measure by this man who is only unknown by name but who is known in the hearts of all Canadians by all the virtues that we respect – selflessness, honour, courage and commitment.

We are now able to understand what was written in 1916 by the grandson of Louis Joseph Papineau, Major Talbot Papineau, who was killed two years later: "Is their sacrifice to go for nothing or will it not cement a foundation for a true Canadian nation, a Canadian nation independent in thought, independent in action, independent even in its political organization – but in spirit united for high international and humane purposes...".

The wars fought by Canadians in the 20th century were not fought for the purpose of uniting Canada, but the country that emerged was forged in the smithy of sacrifice. We will not forget that.

This unknown soldier was not able to live out his allotted span of life to contribute to his country. But in giving himself totally through duty, commitment, love and honour he has become part of us forever. As we are part of him.

Originally delivered in Ottawa on Sunday, May 28, 2000 on the occasion of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Published with the permission of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada.