

Brian Masse M.P. Windsor West



Remembering our local veterans.



Our community Remembrance Ceremony will be held this November 11, 2011, at the cenotaph at City Hall Square at 11:00 a.m. **Please come out and remember along with our local veterans.**



***“Without freedom there
can be no ensuring
peace and without
peace no enduring
freedom.”***

*~ King George VI at the dedication
of the National War Memorial
(Ottawa, May 21, 1939).*

Dear friends,

This year we remembered the 95th Anniversary of the Battles of Somme and Beaumont-Hamel. I have highlighted this, as well as some history of Black Canadian soldiers to ensure that each year we share new stories of importance with our community.

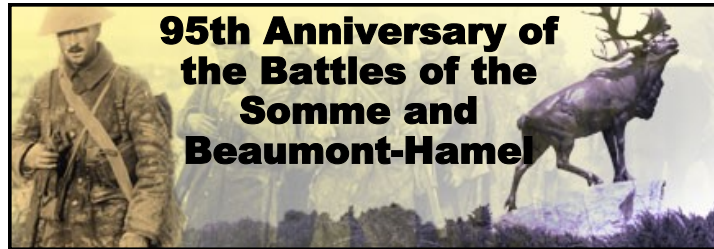
Instead of sending out the memories of local veterans to each household separately as I have in the past, I have formatted this booklet to reach all residents in Windsor West in order to share these stories with our whole community.

Lastly, I do encourage everyone to participate in this year's Remembrance Day ceremony held at the cenotaph in City Hall Square at 11:00 a.m., on November 11, 2011.

I hope to see you there.

Yours truly,

Brian Masse MP
Windsor West



The Battle of the Somme began early on the morning of July 1, 1916, near the town of Beaumont-Hamel. Thousands of soldiers from Britain and Newfoundland climbed out of their trenches to walk through a hail of machine gun fire, toward the German line. In less than half an hour, the fighting was over.

57,470 British soldiers were killed or wounded on what remains the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army.

Newfoundlanders suffered especially heavy losses on that day: of the approximately 800 who had gone into battle, only 68 were able to respond at roll call the following morning.

Almost every Canadian regiment carries the battle honour "SOMME, 1916", which was a result of the way in which First World War battalions were perpetuated in the post-war Canadian Militia. In addition to the regiments, the Royal Canadian Artillery, Royal Canadian Engineers, service corps, medical corps and many other groups saw action in the Somme in 1916. Our own Essex and Kent Scottish is on the list of 57 Canadian regiments who officially carry the battle honour.

By remembering Veterans' service and sacrifice, we recognize the tradition of freedom they fought to preserve. Those who fought in the Battles of the Somme and Beaumont-Hamel were everyday citizens who became heroes by standing up for what we as a nation believe in:

peace, freedom and justice.



Black Canadians in Uniform— A Proud Tradition

Black Canadians have a long history of service in uniform. Often having to overcome great challenges just to enlist in the military in earlier eras when our society was less inclusive, they persevered to make their mark. From the days before Canada was even a country of its own to the current efforts in Afghanistan, the sacrifices and achievements of Black Canadians are numerous.

The tradition of military service by Black Canadians goes back long before Confederation. Indeed, many Black Canadians can trace their family roots to Loyalists who emigrated North in the 1780s after the American Revolutionary War. American slaves had been offered freedom and land if they agreed to fight in the British cause and thousands seized this opportunity to build a new life in British North America.

This tradition of military service did not end there, with some Black soldiers seeing action in the War of 1812, helping defend Upper Canada against American attacks. A number of volunteers were organized into the “Company of Coloured Men,” which played an important role in the Battle of Queenston Heights. Black militia members also fought in many other significant battles during the war, helping drive back the American forces.

They also served in the Upper Canadian Rebellion (1837–1839). In all, approximately 1,000 Black militia men fighting in five companies helped put down the uprising.

Like so many others swept up in the excitement and patriotism of the First World War (1914-1918), young Black

Canadians were eager to serve King and country. At the time, however, the prejudiced attitudes of many of the people in charge of military enlistment made it very difficult for these men to join the Canadian Army. Despite these barriers, some Black Canadians did manage to join up during the opening years of the war. Black Canadians wanted the chance to do their part on a larger scale, however, and pressured the government to do so.

Little more than 20 years after the end of the “War to End all Wars,” the Second World War (1939–1945) erupted and soon spread across Europe and around the globe. The Second World War saw considerable growth in how Black Canadians served in the military. While some Black recruits would encounter resistance when trying to enlist in the army, in contrast to the First World War no segregated battalions were created. Indeed, several thousand Black men and women served during the bloodiest war the world has ever seen. Black Canadians joined regular units and served alongside their white fellow soldiers here at home, in England, and on the battlefields of Europe. Together they shared the same harsh experiences of war while fighting in places like Italy, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Black Canadian soldiers also participated in the Korean War (1950-1953). Over the decades since the Korean War, Black Canadians have gone on to serve in every branch of the military, in duties both here at home and in operations around the world during the Cold War and in international peace support efforts (right from the first large-scale United Nations peacekeeping mission to Egypt during the Suez Crisis of the 1950s).

Right: Four soldiers with the Canadian Corps pose with ammunition before loading it into tramway cars to be taken up the line in WWI.



Source (info & photos): <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/sub.cfm?source=feature/blackhistory>

REMEMBERING



Priscilla Connolly
(W.A.A.F., WWII)

Priscilla Connolly was seventeen years old when she began serving with the British Royal Air Force in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force unit. She served for four and a half years. One of the things she remembers most from the war was being in London during the Blitz and experiencing the horrors of the sounds and the commotion that caused chaos around the city. It was one of the most terrifying moments of her life. Connolly's job in the W.A.A.F. was that of a plotter. Her task was to follow the R.A.F. pilots on their missions and hope that they appeared back on the map when their missions were completed. It was a very trying job. Today Connolly is a dedicated volunteer for the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project and she volunteers her time with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

LOCAL HEROES



Larry Costello
(R.C.N., WWII)

Larry Costello was sixteen years old when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1940. He and a friend altered each other's baptismal certificates so they could sign up. Costello was a wheelman and a quartermaster. He remembers a time when he was supposed to be manning the ship station but had forgotten his life jacket. When he went back to get it he was knocked into the water—but he didn't know how to swim. Two men from out West saved his life. Costello loved the life of the navy and he continued his service into peace time. He was discharged in 1963, the very day that President Kennedy was shot, something he will always remember. Today Costello is a coordinator for the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project and he works tirelessly to promote the cause of Veterans throughout the Windsor Area.

REMEMBERING



Bernie Kelly
(R.C.A., Peace-Keeping)

Bernie Kelly joined the Royal Canadian Army in 1960 and his training required him to shoot 105 Howitzers. Trained as a communications officer, he could handle top secret information and was sent overseas to both France and Germany. He was involved with the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and remembers how that little crisis could very easily have turned into World War Three.

One of Kelly's most memorable moments in his military career was in the summer of 1963 when he went to Vimy Ridge with his unit and got the opportunity to walk in the original trenches of WWI. Kelly and his wife Doris are valued volunteers with the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project, which gathers stories and records audio/visual war-time testimonies from local veterans.

LOCAL HEROES



Bob Kelly
(Royal 22nd Regiment, Peace-Keeping)

Bob “Snowbird” Kelly is a Native of the Mi’kmaq Maliseet from New Brunswick and enlisted when he was sixteen. He joined the Royal 22nd Regiment which was known as the Van Doos, a corruption of the French “vingt-deux”. He was highly trained as a reconnaissance soldier where he would gather information on Germany during the day and inform his commanding officers of the intelligence in the morning. Kelly later served not only in Holland but also in Germany and England from 1954-1959 before serving in the Canadian Reserves from 1960 to 1965. He is one of 12 Native Canadian Veterans to receive a service medal acknowledging his native culture and military service. Kelly comes from a strong military family with two uncles who fought at Normandy, five cousins in the navy, an uncle in Korea, a son in Afghanistan and a grandson who recently enlisted. He is a devoted volunteer for the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project and proudly states that if asked to go off and fight tomorrow he would be there.

REMEMBERING



John Neville
(R.C.E.M.E., WWII)

John Neville joined the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1939 and worked to support the front line soldiers with his job as a welder. He travelled to France, Belgium, and Holland. His job was to fix the different pieces of equipment when they didn't have any parts and he would take them from jeeps and lorries. His troop did carry rifles but it never had to fire a shot.

Neville remembers building motorcycles in France and riding around the countryside to collect parts and food for his troop. He was discharged in 1946 and since then has made five return trips to Holland since 1995, where he made a lasting friendship there with his host family. Neville is a valued volunteer at the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project.

LOCAL HEROES



Stan Scislowski
**(Perth Regiment of Canada,
Italian Campaign of WWII)**

Stan Scislowski arrived overseas in 1943 in the Perth Regiment of Canada and soon found himself in Italy. He served in the Italian Campaign from 1943-1945 and was part of the liberation of Italy from German occupation. One of the moments Scislowski remembers most is when he was trying to pull a friend to safety amidst gunfire and mortar flying around them. He fell to the ground, exhausted and expected to die when four Italian men, one in his forties and the other three in their sixties and seventies, came running out of their own shelter to bring him and his friend to safety. They saved his life. Since the war, Scislowski has been invited back to Italy many times to be honoured. He is not only a dedicated volunteer at the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project but also the author of the book, "Not All Of Us Were Brave."

REMEMBERING



Ralph Earl “Boots” Scofield
(R.C.A.F., WWII)

Ralph Earl “Boots” Scofield enlisted when he was sixteen into the Algonquin Regiment Reserve Army. When he turned eighteen, he volunteered for the Royal Canadian Air Force where he served from 1943-1945 as an Air-Gunner in a 4-Engine Halifax Bomber in the 415 Squadron East Moore Yorkshire of the 6th Group. He participated in over seventeen missions over Germany. One of Scofield’s most memorable (as well as scariest) recollections was in January of 1945 when his crew crashed hard on an attempt to take off. He wanted to jump out but it was difficult to do so at 120 miles per hour. The plane hit some trees and the impact of the crash caused the tail to whiplash. Scofield was thrown out, losing his boots along the way. The aircraft exploded and he was given the nickname “Boots”. Today, Scofield is a retired Senator and a valued volunteer at the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project.

LOCAL HEROES



John White
(R.C.A., WWII)

John White tried to enlist in 1939 but was too young so he joined the Essex-Kent Scottish Regiment in 1940 and began his training at Camp Borden. He was later transferred to McNabb Island outside of Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1942, White was dispatched to the Gaspé region of Quebec where he was in charge of developing a coastal defense system to protect the Canadian Merchant Ships from German U-Boats. He participated in the construction of Fort Preval, which defended the opening of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. In 1943 he was sent to England for preparation of the invasion of Europe as part of the 3rd Legion Artillery Regiment (which was later ordered for burial duty). In 1944-1945, his regiment was part of the Canadian Liberation of Holland. Today, White is an active volunteer for the Windsor Historical Society Veterans Memories Project and has become famous for his recitation of "In Flanders Fields."

REM**EMB**

Wayne Hillman (Vietnam War)

Wayne Hillman was born, raised and educated in Windsor, where he was a member of the Army Cadets and later a member of the Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment.

Wayne joined the United States Army in January of 1963 where he spent 16 weeks of basic and advanced infantry training at Fort Gordon, Georgia to gain paratrooper classification and his jump wings.

Wayne was on leave visiting his wife and newborn son when he received the call to be deployed to Vietnam. This was one of the most important decisions he would have to make, to either stay in Canada with his wife and not to ever be allowed to back to the U.S. or to return to duty.

His new battalion left for Vietnam aboard the USS Geiger and arrived in September 1965. His duties included radio operator, a door gunner- bringing ammunition and other supplies to the battlefield and airlifting casualties.

The four months he served in Vietnam changed his life forever and he will always be grateful to his comrades who helped through this difficult time.

Currently Wayne is involved with the Vietnam Veterans, Royal Canadian Legion and the Windsor Veterans Memorial Services Committee ensuring that Veterans of all wars receive the respect and care they deserve.

LOCAL HEROES

Photo: Jeff Gravel in Cyprus November 2010, teaching Re-integration techniques to Canadian soldiers returning from Kandahar.



Jeff Gravel (Afghanistan War)

Sergeant Jeff Gravel is a retired Afghanistan war veteran who has served two tours of duty for Canada. He had enlisted at the age of 18 to help pay for college, and after basic training he was deployed in 2002. During his first deployment, Gravel was based in Kandahar, the Southern region of Afghanistan, where at the time there had very little direct combat however for his second tour, Gravel was stationed in the northeast capital of Afghanistan, Kabul. Unlike Kandahar, Kabul was a constant threat, and one of the most volatile places in the country, which made it both mentally and physically taxing. The constant threat of a Taliban suicide bomber or open fire was on always the mind of every soldier serving. Despite these harsh conditions, Canadian soldiers like Gravel had overcome obstacles and set out a level of trust between the residents and the soldiers. During his deployment Gravel made many friends on base and developed strong relationships which continue today.

Jeff Gravel has been featured on the CBC Program Broken heroes and is a member of the Canadian forces, currently working as a veterans' counsellor at the Essex-Kent Scottish regiment. With this he also travels with the Windsor Historical Society to schools to speak with students about their experiences.

WAYS TO REMEMBER

Every year I like to share different ways that you can remember and here are some that everyone can take from:

- Wear a poppy
- Thank a veteran in person
- Send an e-card to a veteran at: www.veterans.gc.ca
- Attend, if possible, a local Remembrance Day ceremony
- Lay a wreath or poppy at your local cenotaph
- Visit the Veterans Affairs website (above) and learn about the history of the wars and peace-keeping missions that our Canadian soldiers have participated in
- Visit our local Essex-Kent Scottish regiment website and learn about our local EK Scots history: <http://www.ekscot.org/>
- If you cannot attend a ceremony on November 11, pause for a moment of silence at 11:00 a.m. and remember.

SPECIAL THANKS

Thank you to the Windsor Historical society for providing the photos and biographies used for this years remembrance day. The Windsor Historical society is a non-profit charitable organization which focuses on local Veterans. For more information visit <http://www.windsorhistoricalsociety.com>

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