

PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING

Soldiers killed on duty and the Izzy doll

"Too often, however, Canadian peacekeepers feel the courage they display and the sacrifice they make are ignored by the media and forgotten by an uncaring Canadian public." Murray Johnston, "Canada's Peacekeepers Remember", Canadian War Museum

Character Education

- Recognize characteristics that contribute to peacekeeping
- Appreciate the sacrifices of duty to country
- Consider the many faces of compassion and contribution

Facts

- Over 120 Canadians have been killed while serving on UN peacekeeping missions
- At its height NATO had 50,000 international peacekeeping troops from 39 nations in Kosovo of whom 1,470 were Canadians
- Someone is killed or mutilated by a landmine every 20 minutes of every day

Before the Reading

- Why are Canadian peacekeepers serving on NATO or UN missions largely unrecognized?
- Make a list of how the public shows its compassion after a natural disaster. What stimulates these outpourings?
- How many languages do the families in your class speak? What are the advantages of a second language?

Readings

Lieutenant Colonel J.A. Berthiaume

UNOC, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1960–1964

The United Nations Operation in the Congo, UNOC, involved over 20,000 troops and logistical support from 30 countries. Many foreign troops did not speak French,

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"Izzy Dolls" – photo courtesy of Isfeld family
www.veterans.gc.ca

Carol Isfeld and the Izzy Doll

After her son Mark's death in 1994 Carol Isfeld found that the demand for Izzy dolls for Canadian soldiers to give to children on peacekeeping missions outgrew her capacity to knit them. She made the pattern available online and soon Canadians every-

where were helping her—especially elderly women. According to her husband Brian, “I have watched those who’ve become involved in Carol’s brainchild regain interest, energy and enthusiasm to help others—a rebirth of energy, something to gladden the hearts of children in war-ravaged lands and to revive hope and optimism in mothers who have lost sons on these missions.”

When the distribution of dolls outgrew the capacity of Master Corporal Isfeld’s unit, the Canadian Military Engineers Association stepped in to provide a network of military engineers to collect and deliver dolls to troops in the field throughout the world. Lieutenant-Colonel (Ret) Ken Holmes, President of the Canadian Military Engineers Association, said, “It was a way to recognize the contributions made by Canadian soldiers and the Isfeld family.”

In 1998 Carol gave Sandra Bast permission to make dark-faced dolls for HIV and AIDS orphans in Africa. By 2007 more than 200,000 Izzy African Comfort Dolls had been packed with medical supplies and in the travel packs of medical personnel—humanitarian stuffing.

In the summer of 2008 ICROSS Canada (International Community for the Relief of Starvation and Suffering) sent 3,000 Izzy Comfort Dolls to the Congo and Nigeria, 10,000 dolls to Malawi in a medical container and readied 2,500 more for survivors of the genocide in Darfur. ICROSS Provincial Director Mike

Comeau of Bradford coordinates the supply of dolls that comes from all over Ontario from Niagara Falls and Alliston to Orillia and Owen Sound. “Our kids have so much. When the program first began, the majority of African children receiving the dolls were HIV-positive, or had AIDS; many were buried with their Izzy dolls when they succumbed to the disease.”

The Order of the Eastern Star became involved with the creation and collection of Izzy dolls at the request of the Isfeld family in 2005. Since then, the Order has provided more than 18,000 Izzy dolls to Canadian Forces. Shirley O’Connell of Perth who took over as national coordinator for the Izzy Doll Project said, “It gives me great joy to be able to knit a little doll, using my imagination to make each one different and unique, but especially to know that somewhere on the other side of the world it will bring a little comfort to a child who perhaps has never had a toy before, or just needs something small and soft to hug for comfort.”

The Dunnville Chapter of the OES made approximately 1,500 in 2008. One of its organizers Jean Goodfellow noted, “There are lots of families around the Dunnville area who remember having treats given to them by Canadian soldiers during the Second World War.”

Patterns for Izzy Dolls:

www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/sub.cfm?source=activities/kid_szone/colour/izzy

the language of the Congo. Canada, reluctant to participate in what turned out to be the first peacekeeping war in 1960-64, sent about 420 troops of which approximately 200 were from various Royal Canadian Corps of Signal Units. Francophone communications were pivotal in the French-language Congo. Canadian troops maintained logistics and communications for the entire UNOC force. The RCAF supplied almost all the air control tower personnel.

Lieutenant Colonel Berthiaume served in a key ONUC position in Leopoldville. He oversaw and supported UN forces attempting to restore order in the complex rivalries of the post-colonial, strife-torn Congo. For his impressive organizational skills, initiative, linguistic ability, special skills in negotiating and his bravery, Berthiaume was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, the first Canadian to receive the honour after the Korean Conflict.



Corporal Michael William Simpson, May, 1974 at Camp Shams, Egypt
Photo: Jack Simpson (Michael’s brother) www.buffalo461.ca

Corporal Michael William Simpson, Canadian Army Logistics Branch, UNEF II, Egypt, 1974

Corporal Simpson, the son of William (Bill) James Simpson and Loyola Helen Park (née Harrington) of Toronto, Ontario, joined the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps under the Soldier Apprentice Program. After he was promoted to Corporal, Simpson worked as a Traffic Technician at CFB Petawawa. In 1974, he went with the Canadian Contingent of

the United Nations Emergency Force Middle-East II, known as UNEF II to Ismailia, Egypt.

UNEF II was charged with placing a UN buffer force between Israeli and Egyptian forces. Canada’s contribution to the control of the renewed hostilities was an Air

Transport Unit initially comprised of two CC-115 Buffalo aircraft. They provided airlift support for UNEFII and for UNDOF, the UN Disengagement Observer force serving on the Golan Heights as observers of the cease fire between Israel and Syria.

By August 1974 Buffalo Flight 51 was on a six day a week schedule from Beirut to Ismailia, Egypt. From there it would fly over Lebanon on its way to Damascus where the crew unloaded and flew back to overnight in Beirut. As crews stayed in miserable camp conditions in Ismailia when not on duty, flight duty provided the opportunity for a good meal and rest in a hotel in Beirut without flies, and a risk of a gastrointestinal illness dubbed "Gypo Gut."

On August 9, 1974, Cpl. Michael William Simpson was one of nine Canadian Forces personnel killed on Flight 51 when it was shot down by Syrian missiles. The Buffalo was at its usual 3,353 metres above sea level when a hit by a surface to air missile fired from a Syrian airfield 22.5 km from the Lebanese border. A few minutes later when the Buffalo was 13 km into Syrian airspace on a controlled descent with a trail of smoke from its tail and at less than 305 metres above ground level, two more missiles struck. The last missile ploughed into the cabin area and destroyed what remained of the aircraft. Wreckage was scattered for kilometres near the town of Ad Dimas, Syria.

The Canadian Board of Inquiry could not determine if the missile attack was a Syrian Air Defence error or a planned and deliberate attack on a UN aircraft for political purposes. The Board concluded that if the flight was intentionally shot down it was possible that the Syrians wanted to put pressure on the UN to address the issue of Israeli over flights. During the investigation the Syrians attempted to link the fate of the Buffalo to Israeli over flights of their air space.

Twenty-six-year-old Corporal Simpson's mother, Loyola Helen Park, was the Silver Cross Mother for 1999 in recognition of her son's sacrifice. She was the first mother of a slain peacekeeper to be selected as the National Silver Cross Mother.

August 9th was designated National Peacekeepers' Day by Canadian parliament on June 18, 2008 to honour past and present Canadian peacekeepers. The day was chosen in honour of those who died on Flight 51. On Peacekeepers' Day 2009 a DHC-5A Buffalo aircraft, similar to the one in which Corporal Simpson and eight others lost their lives, was dedicated at the Hamilton, Ontario, International Airport.

Ron Griffis, President of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping (CANVUP), said the following in "The President's Message," The Thin Blue Line, summer 2009 edition

"Once again in partnership with Veterans Affairs Canada and The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, The

CAVUNP held a huge ceremony at the Hamilton Ontario, International Airport (Mt. Hope, Ontario) presenting a restored DHC-5A Buffalo aircraft. This restored aircraft was painted in United Nations colours and numerical marking of Buffalo aircraft 115461 that was shot down on August 9, 1974. The aircraft was dedicated to the nine Canadian Peacekeepers that were killed on that day."

August 9, 1974 continues to be the day of the greatest single loss of Canadian lives on a peacekeeping mission.

Photos: www.buffalo461.ca/dedication.htm

Master Corporal Mark (Izzy) Isfeld, UNPROFOR Peacekeeping Tour in Croatia, 1992–1994



Tag for Izzy Doll

"A little doll has lost her girl – a little girl has lost her doll." Mark Isfeld's caption on a photo

Thirty-one-year-old Mark Isfeld, a Military Engineer with the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, served in three peacekeeping missions before losing his life in a landmine explosion in Croatia in 1994. While clearing approximately 60 landmines a day, he found the time to distribute comfort items to the afflicted: slippers, mittens, candy.

Home from a tour, Mark showed his mother a photo of a little girl's doll on rubble that had once been a home. Carol decided then and there that she would knit small dolls that Mark could easily carry to distribute to orphans and children in war-torn areas. They had so little. Some of Carol Isfeld's dolls were girls in pigtails, others sported blue berets. Many a child's first impression of Canada came from such a doll.

MCpl Isfeld had a box of dolls with him and another two more were shipped to Croatia before he was killed. In a letter home Mark Isfeld had written, "In Croatia, where no one trusts soldiers of any sort, they see us as some sort of trouble, but I will keep on doing my duty of protecting nations that wish for peace At the moment I am traveling from infantry checkpoint to checkpoint and teaching private soldier and officer alike about the mines (anti-personnel and anti-tank), unexploded ordnance, and booby traps that are still too frequent."

Brian Isfeld, a retired Canadian Forces veteran with a 32-year military career described his son's death. "There were

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"Peace doesn't always happen with soldiers and guns; sometimes it happens with kids, dolls and grins." From a letter of a Canadian soldier whose unit in Kosovo distributed 500 Izzy dolls

- The Order of the Eastern Star (OES) presented more than 7,000 hand-knitted dolls to members of the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment at the Perth Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in 2008. The dolls joined the next rotation of troops headed to Afghanistan
- The knitters from a seniors' home, Hickory Hills in Tillsonburg, made 900 of the 7,000 dolls. In four years of knitting, the group made 8,200 dolls. They won 2010 ICROSS Humanitarian Award
- 60 knitters from Eastern Ontario knit 2,357 Izzies in 2008 according to Marlene Harnden of Grafton. One lady in Madoc made 500 dolls; another in Brighton over 200
- Eileen Helpel of Owen Sound and her neighbour made 100 dolls
- Gwen Brain, a nurse from Foxboro, made 500 dolls between 2006 and 2010
- Knitters from the Calvary Lutheran Church in Thunder Bay made 100s of dolls in 2010

- In 2011 The Purple Socks Knitters Club in Coldwater handmade 254 Izzies for the annual medical mission organized by Georgian College students and faculty

Therapist and adoption practitioner Sandra Webb took Izzy dolls knitted by Sheila Johnson of Cobourg to orphanages in Haiti, Russia and China. "It warmed my heart, made me teary and made me smile as the children hugged the dolls and walked away with a smile on their faces. I felt so happy for Sheila Johnson. She wasn't there to see the joy, but I got to be the witness to how her little Izzy dolls gave a little delight to the children of Haiti."

WHO IN YOUR COMMUNITY IS KNITTING?

Organize an Izzy Drive.



The Izzy Dolls go to Haiti
www.snapdragonink.com

I couldn't speak for a while after this picture was taken in the tent community

a team of de-miners, and Mark was guiding an armoured personnel carrier up a berm where they were repairing a water pipe in Sector South near Split, clearing this berm along a canal. The carrier hit a wire and set off a bounding mine, which was linked to some other mines. It blew his legs off. They revived him, packed the wound the best they could, and choppered him out to Knin, to the Czech hospital there, but he died in the operating room."

"He shouldn't have had to die, because mines are insidious and should not exist. But I know that if Mark were alive, he'd do it again because he had a great feeling for the elderly and the very young and the helpless. He got killed doing a most honourable job. We never think it's going to happen to us. I feel very proud of my son for what he did and for his service, and I am doing what I can to perpetuate his memory, to save someone else's life."

Mark's Troop Warrant Officer asked Carol Isfeld if she would continue to send them some more of her dolls which they'd nicknamed "Izzy's" dolls as the members of Isfeld's regiment wanted to continue to distribute them in

his honour. For the rest of her life until she passed away in 2007 Carol Isfeld knitted dolls, usually about 30 a year. Her husband Brian said of her, "Some people take a lifetime to impress us with their deeds and actions; others impress us in an instant, for a lifetime." Carol Margaret Isfeld was the National Silver Cross Mother in 2000 and the recipient of the Civil Division Meritorious Service Award in 2005.

- Memorials for Master Corporal Mark Isfeld include a 27,000 square metre area of land close to where MCPL Isfeld died de-mined in his name, a B.C. high school named after him, a mine detection dog named and trained in his honour and an essay writing competition.
- A DOCUMENTARY film dedicated to, and about, Mark and the Canadian Military Engineers carrying out their dangerous duties in the Balkans called "THE PRICE OF DUTY," was made by the NATIONAL FILM BOARD of CANADA, 1-800-267-7710 and broadcast by The CBC Newsworld's ROUGH CUTS.

After the Reading

- Why will the memories of Corporal Simpson and Master-Corporal Mark Isfeld probably last longer than that of Lieutenant Colonel Berthiaume? What aids generally in the process of Remembrance?
- Describe the very different contributions these three Canadian peacekeepers made and continue to make in the process of Remembrance
- How do skill and compassion feature in these stories?

Extensions

- Explore the controversies around the UN missions to the Congo, Egypt and the Balkans, the former Yugoslavia. Why are post WWII Canadian Armed Forces missions more controversial than WWI, WWII and Korea?
- The Barbara Kingsolver novel *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998), the 2011 documentary *Blood in the Mobile* and the historical book and movie *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998 and 2006), are all set in the Congo. Present one to your class
- The stories in the Reading featured methods of commemoration from dolls to dogs. Explore the values that each method of commemoration targets
- Research UN and NATO missions that required francophone personnel
- www.izzydoll.ca/

Audio | Visual

- HEROS REMEMBERED
www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/sub.cfm?source=collections/hrp/hrp_detail&media_id=4461

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