

MEDALS AND MEMORIES MINUTES

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Maharaja Ganga Singh
FirstWorldWar.com

The Bikaner Camel Corps

Camel Corps were important to the Allied cause in Africa in both World Wars. The Bikaner Camel Corps, founded by the Maharaja Ganga Singh of the state of Bikaner, was a force of

500 when the Maharaj himself led the troops in Egypt during WWI. The troops routed the opposing Turkish forces in a camel cavalry charge at the Suez Canal in 1915. In WWII Compagnies Meharistes/camel corps formed part of the Compagnies Sahariennes with motorized French and French Foreign Legion units; they saw service against Axis forces in Fezzan and southern Tunisia. Each company of Meharistes, originally recruited from the Chaamba nomadic tribe, was comprised of six officers, 36 non-commissioned French officers and troopers and 300 Chaamba troopers.

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Alice Taylor

When Alice C. Taylor (née Grimes) died Oct. 12, 1999, she was just 18 days shy of her 102nd birthday. She was the last Silver Cross mother for a WWII veteran and the only woman to be a Silver Cross mother twice. She followed up her first appearance on the national stage in 1991 with her second visit when she was 100 years old in 1997.

Hansard, for Nov. 6, 1997, reports M.P. Marlene Catterall's recognition of Alice in parliament. "Mrs. Taylor represents all Canadian mothers who lost loved ones to the war. But she also represents all the homefront heroes who preserved a country of civility and love for our troops to come home to. She also represents a century in which this country moved from colonial status to a proud place on the world stage" On Nov. 11, 1997, the Speaker of the House presented Mrs. Taylor with the page from the *Book of Remembrance* that contained the name of her son Richard who died Aug. 17, 1944, on the march from Normandy to Falaise. Trooper Clifford A. Chute of the 10th Armoured Division, Fort Gary Horse, a comrade of Richard Taylor, visited with Mrs. Taylor in 1994 after seeing her on television during the 1991 Ottawa Remembrance Day ceremonies. Trooper Chute relayed details of the day they lost four tanks in combat. "We had a comforting visit with Mrs. Taylor and her family, and Richard's girlfriend who had never married. I was able to explain to Mrs. Taylor the care the crew was able to give Richard until the ambulance arrived. Richard as a member of our crew was highly respected and I will always remember him as a valued comrade."

By the time Alice Taylor died, she had lived with the loss of her son Richard for 55 years and the death of her husband, a WWI veteran, for 22 years. Councillor Wendy Byrne of Ottawa Regional Council paid the remarkable Alice Taylor tribute at her passing in 1999. "What truly illustrates, not only the importance of the Cross to Mrs. Taylor, but her courage and indomitable spirit, was her reaction three years ago to the attempted robbery of her purse in the courtyard outside her home. When some thugs grabbed her purse and ran off, she gave chase and got her purse back. When the police reprimanded her for her "dangerous" actions, she firmly told them that it contained the Silver Cross given to her in memory of her son, and she was not going to let it go." The active Mrs. Taylor worked in the War Records Office during WWII, did a lot of volunteer work, took up bowling at 86 years of age and never missed the merry-go-round at the Ottawa Exhibition.

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WO2 Lorraine Rigden
Photo: Christina Bernardo, Midland Free Press

The Wind Beneath Her Wings

Lorraine Rigden,
studying in a con-
current Bachelor of
Music and
Education program

at McGill, retired as a Warrant Officer second class from the Silver Star Air Cadet Squadron of Unionville after an exceptional cadet career. She had received the Lord Strathcona Medal, Royal Canadian Legion Medal of Excellence, ANAVETS medal, Air Cadet Service Medal, the Doug Whitley Trophy and the Virginia Mitchell Award for Top National Female Air Cadet Power Pilot. She earned her Glider Pilot wings in 2006, her Power wings in 2007 and she was the first recipient of the Alfred Wong Memorial Scholarship in 2008. The medals tell only part of the tale. Lorraine was on her school's Nordic ski team, played with the concert and Jazz bands and was a member of the silver medalist OFSAA volleyball team. She played ice and ball hockey—and the saxophone, the latter frequently at retirement homes, for benefit concerts and during church services. She attained marks in the 90s in 12 of her 27 high school credits, with no mark dipping below 82%. When she wasn't working on Grade IX saxophone, Grade II Theory and Grade III Harmony and History, she was participating in a variety of major music festivals.



WO2 Alfred Wong
Alfred Wong Memorial
Scholarship

If they had met, **WO2 Alfred Wong** and WO2 Lorraine Rigden would have liked one another for their shared love of cadets and music. Alfred Wong died in a bicycle accident on his 18th birthday.

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"Cadets taught me how to fly. I never knew how high it would take me."

Chris Hadfield, Canadian astronaut



Air Cdt. WO2 Alex Harmsen

Photo: Sabrina Byrnes, Northumberland News

July 8, 2009, as the city of Oshawa lay beneath him, Air Cadet Warrant Officer second class, **Alex**

Harmsen of

Cobourg, could see into his future. He had just logged his first solo flight in a Cessna 172 as part of a flying scholarship he had earned. One of 82 Air Cadets selected from across Ontario, Alex will log enough hours during the summer course to qualify for his Transport Canada Private Pilot Licence and his Royal Canadian Air Cadet wings. Alex has another year of school at Cobourg District Collegiate Institute East, where he scored an 97% average in the grade 11 International Baccalaureate program. Last year Alex earned his glider licence at Loyalist College and in April 2009 he spent 12 days with the Canadian Network for the Detection of Atmospheric Change in that organization's Northern Experience program. He earned his arctic berth as Ontario's representative in a nationwide application. Having scored first in Ontario in the national University of British Columbia Science Challenge, probably helped. Alex Harmsen's recent experiences have taught him about Canada's Armed Forces, Arctic history, culture and climate change, navigation, meteorology and airmanship. He told a reporter recently that he's interested in pretty much everything. With his solid character building background and his eyes set on becoming an aerospace engineer so that he may be in the forefront of designing new space flight technologies—the sky's the limit for Alex Harmsen.

MEDALS AND MEMORIES MINUTES



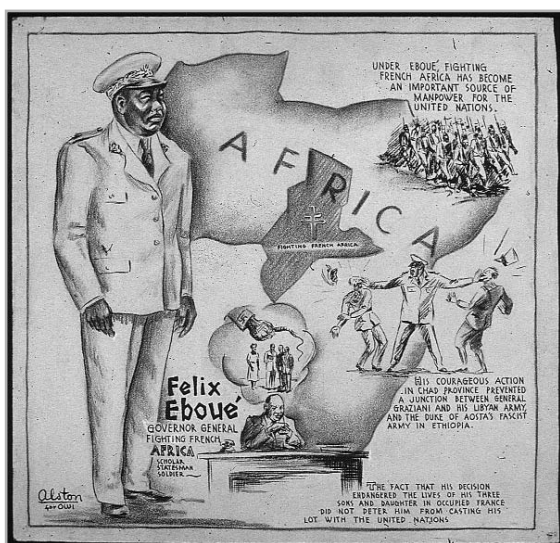
Private Buckam Singh's grave is the only known Sikh Canadian soldiers grave in Canada.
Photo: sikhmuseum.com

Chandi Kaur, Medals from a Far Land

In 1907, 14 year old Buckam (Bukkan | Buk Am) Singh, born in Malipur, Punjab came to Canada to make a future. He left behind a child bride, Pritam Kaur, to whom he had been betrothed when he was 10 years old—as was the custom of that day. Buckam worked in mining camps in British Columbia before moving to Toronto. For six months, until April 1915, he worked on the farm of Wm. Henry Moore of Rosebank, (now Pickering) Ontario. Then, as the Canadian call for soldiers became louder, Buckam made his way to Smith Falls to enlist with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, 59th Battalion. Described as 5'7" tall and of "swarthy complexion" on his enlistment form, Buckam was one of nine Sikhs who served in integrated Canadian units in France and Belgium. His mother Chandi Kaur, in Malipur, did not know that her son sustained a shrapnel wound to his head in June 1916. When a bullet shattered his left leg below the knee in Belgium July 20th, she did not know that he was treated in the Canadian Hospital run by Dr. John McCrae, the author of Canada's famous poem, "In Flanders Fields". She did not know that his life was ebbing from him as he suffered from tuberculosis. The first news she had of her 25 year son's soldiering for Canada came when she received a death notice and a Silver Cross. The child bride, Pritam, who had never really known her husband, received a Silver Cross as well. The Memorial Plaque and Scroll which only Buckam's mother received bore the words, "He died for freedom and honour." Although Chandi Kaur may not have been able to read the words in English, the Sikh-Canadians who celebrated around the grave stone of Private Buckam Singh in Mount Hope Cemetery, Kitchener, November 2008, proudly understood their meaning. Toronto war historian Sandeep Singh Brar, who has documented the life of Buckam Singh one of the first Sikhs to live in Ontario, stated, "As Sikhs, we can feel we're no longer outsiders. We helped form Canada's history."

Documentary: Sikh-Canadian Heroes of the First World War by David Gray
www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/515245
<http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/540217>

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Félix Adolphe Éboué, born in French Guyana, educated in France to be a civil administrator was considered to be the most influential black man of World War II. In 1940 with France defeated and governed by collaborationists headed by Pétain in Vichy, **Éboué**, as Governor of Chad was faced with the difficult decision of siding with the Vichy government or supporting the Free French forces who had joined the Allied nations to fight the Axis powers. Éboué chose to back De Gaulle's government in exile. As the first major colonial official to take this stand at a critical hour in the war's progress, Éboué helped push other French colonies in Africa over to the Allies. In 1941, a grateful De Gaulle appointed Éboué Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa, a position from which Éboué brought substantial manpower, materials and strategic locations to the Allies. Thanks to Éboué, British and American planes were landed and assembled in Nigeria, flown eastward to Khartoum in the Sudan and then northward to the Middle East. For his significant contributions to the war effort, among which was the outfitting of Fort Lamy, Felix Éboué was made an Officer of the Legion of Honour and received the Companion of Liberation and Colonial Medals, the latter with clasp. Felix Éboué's ashes are interred in France's Pantheon; he is the first black man to be thus honoured.

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The Mighty Eleven

The names of Khan, Negi and Thapa appeared in the Reading for WWI. Another eight Indian names are among the roll call for Victoria Crosses, the highest British Commonwealth award, during WWI. **Sepoy Chatta**

Singh of the 9th Bhopal Infantry was awarded the V.C. for his devotion in protecting his commanding officer. Sepoy Singh bound up his C.O.'s wound, dug cover for him with his entrenching tool and remained with him for five hours until nightfall, shielding him with his own body, until eventually under the cover of darkness he was able to take the officer to safety.

Lance Naik Lala dragged a British Officer of another regiment lying close to the enemy to a temporary shelter which he had made and in which he had already bandaged four wounded men. When Lala heard calls from the Adjutant of his regiment who was lying severely wounded in the open, he wanted to go to him even though the enemy was no more than 914 metres distant. Denied permission to rescue the Adjutant, Lala stripped off his own clothing to keep the wounded officer warm and then stayed with him until dark. Under cover of darkness, Lala carried the wounded officer to safety in the main trenches and then returning with a stretcher, brought his Adjutant to safety.

Lance Dafadar Gobind Singh volunteered three times to carry messages a distance of 2.4 km over open ground under heavy enemy fire. Each time his horse was shot and Singh had to finish his journey on foot. Singh received his Victoria Cross from King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

Rifleman Gobar Singh Negi (1894–1915) of the 2nd Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles won his V.C. on March 10, 1915, at Neuve Chapelle. Ten V.C.'s were won in this battle, the first of which went to this Rifleman.

Naik Shah Ahmad Khan in charge of a machine gun section, **Jemadar Mir Dost** at Ypres, **Rifleman Karan Bahadur Rana** of the 14th Gurkha Rifles and **Risaldar Badlu Singh** of the 29th Lancers—all Victoria Cross recipients—deserve their own recognition. Research their acts of valour. As you explore your own character development, the self-sacrifice, tenacity, loyalty, daring and courage of these men serve as good discussion starters.

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Tul Bahadur Pun

In Mogaung, Burma 65 years ago, a young Rifleman seized a Bren gun and started firing from the hip as he charged a heavily bunkered Japanese position. Rifleman Tal Bahadur

Pun was the last man standing of his platoon from the 6th Gurkha Rifles as the sun came up behind him. He and two other men had made it 510 meters but there were 27 meters over open ground, deep mud, shell holes and fallen trees to go. Against all odds, the 21 year old Rifleman, a clear target for the enemy, took the bunker and provided the covering fire that allowed the remainder of his platoon to reach their objective, a railway bridge. Pun received the Victoria Cross for valour during his World War II service for the British Army. Today, Pun is still firing from the hip and again almost the last man standing as he fights the British Government for veteran Gurkha pension and settlement rights. The much decorated soldier who attended Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953 and had tea with the Queen mother won his own battle to settle in the U.K. in 2007 after much publicity surrounding his case. However, Rifleman Pun has not stopped fighting as there are still 27 meters to go and he hopes to achieve his objective once again—equality for Gurkha veterans.

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Mon Cher Ami

October 4, 1918, the American 77th Infantry Division of 500 men was down to just around 200. The men were trapped in a small depression on the side of a hill and surrounded by enemy

soldiers. Major Whittlesey had unsuccessfully sent out several pigeons to tell his commanders where the division was. When the American command, not knowing exactly where the 77th was located, started dropping big shells right on top of them the Major sent for his last bird, Cher Ami.

The Germans saw Cher Ami rising out of the brush and opened fire. For several minutes Cher Ami rose through the hail of bullets, but then, he was hit. The doomed American infantrymen looked on in despair as their last hope started to plummet to earth. Then somehow miraculously Cher Ami spread his wings and started to climb and climb—out of the reach of the enemy guns. When the wounded bird reached his coop, the soldier that answered the bell wire he had tripped found him lying on his back covered in blood. He had been blinded in one eye and had a hole the size of a quarter in his chest. Attached to his almost severed leg was the silver canister with the life-saving message.

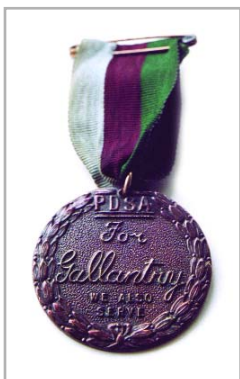


Dedicated medics saved Cher Ami's life but couldn't save his leg; they did carve a small wooden leg for him. When the one legged hero was well enough to travel, General

Pershing, the commander of the

U.S. Army personally saw him off. The French presented Cher Ami with a Croix de guerre with a palm leaf. Cher Ami had saved 194 lives.

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Another Look at Monte Cassino

At the beginning of 1944 during the battle for Monte Cassino on the outskirts of Rome, a company of Nepali Ghurkhas and British troops were pinned down on

Hangman's Hill, a rock outcropping near the monastery on the hill. American bombers dropped food and water for them, but, much of it fell into German hands. Cut off from their lines for nine days, the situation seemed hopeless. Finally three British volunteers, each with a haversack containing an American homing pigeon, set off by three different routes to try to penetrate the German lines. One man was pinned down by machine gun fire, but, the other two managed to get through. All three men sent messages about their routes to headquarters. That night Allied guns provided the fire to clear an escape route along the safe paths the scouts had identified. Three men and three pigeons saved the day.

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Canada's Canine Hero "Sergeant Gander"

PDSA Dickin Medal Award citation:
"For saving the lives of Canadian
infantrymen during the Battle of Lye
Mun on Hong Kong Island in
December 1941."

As a black 60 kilo family pet chasing planes on the Gander airstrip, Pal the Newfoundland dog, was a nuisance. As a playful mascot for the Royal Rifles of Canada Regiment, the newly-named Gander was a joy; he learned to drink draft beer and even showered with the men. When the regiment shipped out with "C Force" to defend Hong Kong in fall 1941, "Sergeant" Gander was on board.

On three documented occasions Gander engaged the enemy. When the Japanese landed on the beach near Lye Mun, Gander faced them down with frightening barks and nipped at their legs. On another occasion he charged at the enemy when they neared a group of wounded soldiers. Seeing a ferocious bear-like force bearing down upon them, the surprised Japanese quickly changed routes. In a final act of bravery December 19, 1941, Gander, who knew what grenades were, rushed to pick one up that had landed next to a group of seven Canadian soldiers. The grenade exploded in his mouth as he was carrying it out of range; he died instantly. *i*

Sgt. Gander's August 15, 2000, Dickin award was the first for a dog in 55 years. During the award ceremony in Ottawa at a gathering of veterans, Fred Kelly, the soldier responsible for Gander's care in WWII, had with him another Newfoundland dog to represent Gander, the brave Canadian mascot-soldier.

Listen to August 11, 2000 CBC Radio Archives with Fred Kelly and Jeremy Swanson from the Canadian War Museum at http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/veterans/topics/1039-5847/

i "Dog-Roll of Honour" PDSA Dickin Medal: the animals' VC, www.pdsa.org.uk/page309_2.htm

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The Nine Lives of Simon the Cat

Simon was a stray cat on Hong Kong's Stonecutter's Island until he was taken on as a mascot for the British Naval frigate HMS Amethyst. Simon's playfulness amused the ship's crew—especially when he fished ice-cubes out of a jug of water. Things became serious for Simon in 1949 when The Amethyst headed up the Yangtze River was bombarded by artillery fire killing 17 men including the captain. Simon was sleeping in the Captain's cabin when it took a direct hit from a shell. With whiskers and eyebrows burnt off, fur singed, gashes in his back and legs and punctured lungs, the little cat was not expected to survive. Simon's amazing survival and recovery revived the spirits of the demoralized crew, especially as the grounded ship was soon invaded by hordes of rats. During the three months the ship was stranded, Simon took on the task of protecting the ship's dwindling food supplies. He waged intense war on the rats and hunted down as many as he could. When Simon wasn't on rat-catcher duty, he and the ship's terrier dog played with and comforted their weary shipmates. Commander Kerans in his recommendation for the PDSA Dickin Medal wrote, "... Throughout the incident Simon's behaviour was of the highest order. One would not have expected him to survive the shell that had made a hole over a foot wide in diameter in a steel plate. Yet, he did and after a few days, Simon was as friendly as ever. His presence on the ship was a decided factor in maintaining the morale of the ship's company."

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Edith Anderson Monture

(1890-1996), a descendant of Joseph Brant, was born on the Six Nations Grand River Reserve.

Unable to study nursing in Canada, Edith graduated in New



York State. She was the first Native Canadian woman to train and work as a nurse. In 1917, along with 14 other Canadian nurses, she joined the U.S. Medical Corps; she was one of only two native nurses sent to Vittel, France. Anderson spent her time treating shot and gassed soldiers. "We would walk right over where there had been fighting. It was an awful sight—buildings in rubble, trees burnt, spent shells all over the place, whole towns blown up." Edith remembered a young 20 year old American patient with a neck wound. "We finally managed to stop the bleeding and settled the boy down The night after that he died. I got his mother's address in the States and wrote her telling her I was with her son when he passed away." After the war, Edith married and raised a family working part time as a nurse in the Six Nations Reserve Hospital.

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Francis Pegahmagabow

(1891-1952) three times awarded the Military Medal in WWI was an expert marksman and scout credited with killing up to 378 Germans and capturing 300 more. The Ojibwa from Parry Island was twice wounded but willingly returned to his unit after recovery. His citation for the Battle of Passchendaele reads, "November 6th/7th, 1917, this NCO did excellent work. Before and after the attack he kept in touch with the flanks, advising the units he had seen, this information proving the success of the attack and saving valuable time in consolidating." Francis served in the Algonquin Regiment after 1919, as chief of the Parry Island Band 1921–1925 and as Supreme Chief of the Native Independent Government in 1943. Joseph Boyden's 2005 novel *Three Day Road* was inspired in part by Pegahmagabow.

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When **Tommy Prince (1915-1977)** was presented the Military Medal and Silver Star on behalf of the American President by King George VI at Buckingham Palace, he had come a long way from being turned down for military service in Manitoba. Prince made his name with the elite First Special Service Force dubbed the Devil's Brigade. In 1944 in Italy Prince set up for four days behind enemy lines in an abandoned farmhouse to report the location of German assembly points. When the 1,400 metres of telephone wire connecting him to his forces was knocked out, Prince grabbed a hoe and civilian clothing and rejoined the break in the wire while pretending to tie his shoe laces. The citation for his Military Medal read, "Sergeant Prince's courage and utter disregard for personal safety were an inspiration to his fellows and a marked credit to his unit". Later in Italy under similarly difficult circumstances, Prince reported information that led the brigade to capture over a thousand German soldiers.

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Avalanche at Kangiqsualujjuaq



Disaster struck the 1999 New Year's celebration in a remote village on Ungava Bay in Quebec when a three metre high wall of snow tore out the wall of the gym and buried many of the more than 400 partiers. Ignoring 100 km winds and -20 degree C weather, survivors used shovels, frying pans and even bare hands to free those trapped. The avalanche killed nine and injured many more. Fortunately the remote Inuit community, surrounded by heavily scoured rolling glacial highlands, had a 28 member patrol of Canadian Rangers. These Canadian Forces volunteers helped dig out those trapped, built coffins and dug graves. The Rangers monitored the cliff face to assess further avalanche risk, patrolled the avalanche area to protect the young and curious from harm and helped at every stage of need as the community dealt with the disaster and grief. Forty additional Rangers from 11 different patrols flew in or assisted the community in some way. For example, the Coral Harbour Patrol, NWT, harvested and shipped fresh caribou to the disaster area. For their extraordinary leadership and co-operation the 2nd Canadian Rangers Patrol Group was awarded the Canadian Armed Forces Unit Commendation.

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Lance Corporal John Shiwak who received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, died at the Battle of Cambrai in northern France Nov 20, 1917. Shiwak, a hunter and trapper of Inuit descent from the remote Rigolet community

in Labrador, was a sniper and a scout with the “F” Company of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment. Shiwak distinguished himself as an expert sniper while serving on the front lines. An unidentified officer reportedly called him the best sniper in the British Army. Captain R.H. Tait of the Newfoundland Regiment called the 28 year old Lance Corporal, “a great favourite with all ranks, an excellent scout and observer, and a thoroughly good and reliable fellow in every way.” Shiwak attributed his sniping prowess to his experience “swatching” seals—a Newfoundland and Labrador term for watching the water to shoot seals as they resurface to breathe. When he died on the battlefield of shell wounds, he was 28 years old. Fellow “F” brigade member **Private Frederick Freida**, from the remote Hopedale community of Labrador was more fortunate. He returned home. When he was 55 years old in 1951, Private Freida decided to serve his country as a Canadian Arctic Ranger.

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*The WWI Memorial at
Osgoode Hall, Toronto by
Frances Loring
Image: The Law Society of
Upper Canada*

Frances Loring

Mary-Ann Liu of Mission, B.C. designed the bronze overlay for Canada's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier unveiled in 2000. Marlene Hilton-Moore co-designed the Valiants Memorial unveiled in 2006.

These two artists have a fore-runner in Frances Loring (1887-1968). Loring and fellow sculptor, Florence Wyle, met while

art students in Chicago and moved to Toronto in 1913. Their studio/home (formerly a church) on Glenrose Avenue was a focal point for artists, scholars and students for almost 50 years. In 1918 they received a commission from the Canadian War Records Department to portray civilians in the war industry. Loring created seven bronzes including a bronze plaque "Noon Hour at the Munitions Plant" which depicted active, strong women in a positive way. Loring's reputation became so great that she worked tirelessly on memorials throughout the 1920s. In 1928 in Italy she completed her finest memorial for the Great Library in Osgoode Hall. Loring's seven-foot tall Carrara marble statue depicted a draped, nude young man, palms upward, before a panel of names of those who lost their lives in the Great War. The unveiling ceremony took place Nov. 11, 1928. At the head of a grand procession were Bishop Sweeney and Canon Baynes followed by the choir of St. James cathedral, the Lieutenant Governor and the justices of the Supreme Court. Then came all the benchers, in full regalia with robes and war medals, followed by the relatives of those who fell in battle. In the awesome silence thereafter Col. G.R. Geary read the roll of the fallen. At the same time as Loring worked on the Osgoode Memorial, she sculpted "The War Widow", a mother and two children and a tympanum figure panel, "The Recording Angel" for the memorial chamber of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa—a work all Silver Cross Mothers have seen. The Art Gallery of Ontario has 250 Loring and Wyle works in storage and evidence of their creativity waits to be re-discovered in many Ontario communities.

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Valiants Memorial

Nov. 5, 2006, Governor General Michaëlle Jean unveiled a collection of five statues and nine busts in Ottawa. The 14 life-sized men and women were selected by the Valiants Foundation to commemorate Canadian military history from the 17th to 20th centuries. Seven of the 14 portray individuals from WWI and WWII, including Lieutenant Hampton Gray featured in one of the Reading and Remembrance lessons on the Victoria Cross. The sculptural works, designed by artists Marlene Hilton-Moore and John McEwen, circle the Sappers Staircase underpass on a corner of Confederation Square. A wall nearby bears a Virgil quotation, *Nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo* No day will ever erase you from the memory of time. Sculptor Hilton-Moore, who was active in the Durham Region arts scene for years, stated that she wanted to make the sculptures at real scale so that the historical figures would be 'one-to-one' with the public. The Valiants Memorial website includes a lengthy quotation by Pierre Berton, part of which says, "Canadians are not a warlike people. Yet when the trumpets sound and the cannons roar, we have, throughout our history, answered the call. The men and women memorialized here stand as symbols for a nation shaped by conflict and strengthened by sacrifice ... we know, deep in our hearts, that without the hard example provided by the kind of Canadian remembered here, this country would not dare call itself a nation."

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Lieut. Gordon M. Flowerdew
Image: Veterans Affairs Canada

Lieutenant Gordon Muriel Flowerdew of "C" Squadron, Lord Strathcona's Horse, Canadian Cavalry Brigade led the charge at Moreuil Wood that so unnerved the enemy that the German spring offensive of 1918 turned into a retreat. The Victoria Cross citation read, "...

Lt. Flowerdew saw two lines of the enemy, each about sixty strong, with machine guns in the centre and flanks, one line being about two hundred yards behind the other ... The squadron ... passed over both lines, killing many of the enemy with the sword, and wheeling about galloped at them again. Although the squadron had then lost about 70% of its numbers, killed and wounded, from rifle and machine gun fire directed on it from the front and both flanks, the enemy broke and retired ... Lt. Flowerdew was dangerously wounded through both thighs during the operation, but continued to cheer on his men. There can be no doubt that this officer's great valour was the prime factor in the capture of the position." Gordon Flowerdew died the next day; he lies buried in Somme, France.

British Daily Record, 4/7/18.
DOMINION AROUSED BY SINKING OF CANADIAN HOSPITAL SHIP.
CANADIAN DAILY RECORD
 ISSUED BY THE CANADIAN WAR RECORDS OFFICE TO ALL UNITS OF THE OVERSEAS MILITARY FORCES OF CANADA.
 No. 456 THURSDAY, JULY 4, 1918.

THE KING HANDS V.C. TO MOTHER OF DEAD CAVALRY OFFICER.

Big Army column, C.I., 27, N.C., 24-25. *54-456, C. N. 1111, B. 111.*

12-114, C. N. 1111, B. 111. *111-111, C. N. 1111, B. 111.* *111-111, C. N. 1111, B. 111.*

At the last ceremony, the King presented the V.C. to the bereaved officer's mother, and she accepted it on his behalf. Lieut. Flowerdew, of the Canadian Cavalry, headed a brilliant charge through the enemy lines.

Newspaper account of V.C. presentation to mother of Lieut. Gordon Muriel Flowerdew
Image: Cdn. Daily Record/Veterans Affairs Can.

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Lt.-Col. William George Barker
Image "Manitoba Historical
Society/Archives of Manitoba"

WWI pilot ace, **Wing**

Commander William George

Barker, was the most decorated

Canadian soldier in WWI; no

one has surpassed his record.

Barker's pal, Owen Sound born

William "Billy" Bishop, also a

pilot ace, was credited with 72

victories, but fell short of

Barker's medal count. The two

ran Bishop-Barker Aeroplanes for about three years after WWI. Bishop received his Victoria Cross for his actions June 2, 1917, when he single-handedly attacked a German air base on the Arras front. He destroyed seven airplanes on the ground and shot down another four before leaving the scene due to a lack of ammunition. Barker earned his Victoria Cross Oct. 27, 1918, in a dogfight with 15 or more enemy aircraft. Although wounded three times in the legs and with his left elbow blown almost away, Barker controlled his Snipe aircraft to bring down a four enemy aircraft before crash landing behind British lines in France. Bleeding heavily, Barker would have died but for the speedy actions of the RAF Kite Balloon Section which transported him to a field dressing station. Both Barker and Bishop were credited with having exceptional eyesight and being exceptional shots. The play *Billy Bishop Goes to War* by John Gray and Eric Petersen, chronicles Billy Bishop, Commander of the "Flying Foxes" and the greatest Commonwealth Ace of the war. Barker became the first president of the Toronto Maple Leafs Hockey Club.

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A.B. William Edward Hall
Image: Nova Scotia Museum

William Edward Hall was the first Canadian seaman, first black in the British Empire and third Canadian to receive the Victoria Cross. Before receiving the V.C., Hall had earned a medal from Turkey and one from England with clasps for Sebastapol and Inkerman.

When Quartermaster Hall retired as a petty officer, first class in 1876 he left behind a distinguished 28 year naval career which included a seven year stint as a gunnery instructor. Hall earned his V.C. Nov. 16, 1857, when he and Lieutenant Thomas Young were the last men standing from his ship, the *Shannon's*, gun crews. One 24 pounder and these two men were the last hope to breach the wall of the heavily fortified Shah Najaf mosque in Lucknow, India. The *Shannon* and her crew were part of a much larger effort to relieve a British garrison besieged during the Indian mutiny. Hall and Young were at such close range to the mosque's seemingly impregnable wall that debris from their shell blasts rained upon them; each recoil sent them out into a hail of concentrated enemy gunfire to bring back the gun, reload and fire again. Finally they succeeded in opening up a breach large enough to allow in Highlander troops. Hall's V.C. citation read, "Finally in one of the most supreme moments in all the age of a long story of courage, Hall fired the charge which opened up the wall and enabled the British to push through to the relief of the garrison and ultimately to the quelling of the mutiny and the restoration of peace and order in India." Hall, was born in Horton, Nova Scotia to former slaves who had found freedom in Canada during the War of 1812.

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